

Downing and the two World Wars



Gwyn Bevan, John Hicks & Peter Thomson

Cover picture: The OTC parading outside the Hall in 1916

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FOREWORD

It is very easy to lose touch with the past without intentionally doing so. The authors of this book have helped prevent Downing from doing so by assembling the recollections of those who fought in or attended College during the Second World War, as well as presenting valuable material and information from our archive, with the help of Kate Thompson, our exceptional archivist. Baby boomers such as myself understood the horror of two World Wars through our parents and grandparents and through growing up in the post-WWII society in which food was still rationed. But even for us it is difficult to imagine a College in which the students were men in their mid-twenties who had lived and often fought through these conflicts and a College that was requisitioned by the RAF and in part given over to supporting Britain's war efforts. Not everyone wishes to remember and record what happened during the wars in which they served. So it was during my childhood; I never heard from my father about his life as a rear gunner in a Lancaster bomber, but heard instead about the camaraderie and friendships that formed during his training in Canada. His memories are now lost to me, but those recollected within these pages are now preserved for us all. They are sometimes poignant, often funny and always informative and our thanks go to all those old members who have contributed and shared their memories. The historical information about what was going on in Downing in the wider context of the periods of war and their aftermath are both informative and compelling. Gwyn Bevan, John Hicks and Peter Thomson are to be congratulated and thanked most sincerely for their hard and dedicated work in bringing this volume to fruition in an astonishingly short period of time.

*Barry Everitt
The Master's Lodge
November 2010*

INTRODUCTION AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We got the idea for this book from Girton. In 2009 we heard that some members of the Girton Roll (their equivalent of the Downing College Association) were working on a book about the college and its members in the two World Wars. We had already been thinking about collecting reminiscences and memorabilia from Downing's veterans of the Second World War through Gwyn Bevan, who acts as the representative of pre-1950 alumni, with a view to adding to the College archive, but Girton's example led us on to produce this short book.

Our thanks go to the Girton team who visited us and talked so helpfully and openly about their project – Eileen Rubery, Deryn Watson, Barbara Megson and Catherine Tilley.

The memories of the men who were at Downing before, during, or just after the Second World War formed the starting point, but we thought that the picture should be completed by taking material from the College archives and other sources to describe life in the College in 1939–45. John Hicks, then the Secretary of the Association, largely took responsibility for that. The First World War obviously offered no scope for the collection of reminiscences and the material here is largely, but not entirely, derived from the College archives, and I looked after that.

This is not a work of scholarship although we have tried to be accurate; it is aimed at the general reader. We have occasionally used terms such as “servant” or “Empire” which might be considered politically incorrect now. They are there because they were the words used at the time.

We would not have got very far without the help of the College's professional archivist, Dr Kate Thompson, to whom we are very grateful for her cheerful and well-informed guidance. In fact, the book would probably not have been able to be produced without her. She had already done work on mounting an exhibition about the College in the First World War and was able to take us through what was on record for both conflicts. We hope that, in return, we may have provided her with some useful material to enhance the archives in a number of ways. If there are any mistakes in this book they are ours and not hers.

John Hall, a former Assistant Secretary of the Association, gave invaluable help in the final editing and proof-reading, and two Fellows of Downing, Dr David Pratt and Dr Paul Millett, have read the manuscript and made helpful comments. Work done as an undergraduate by Hannah Salisbury (2006) provided useful information about the early days of the First War.

Finally, we would like to thank the old Downing men who contributed their memories of the Second War. Some were reluctant to say much about their military exploits either through modesty or through a wish to forget traumatic experiences, but they were unfailingly courteous and kind in their response to our intrusion into their lives.

We hope that the book will be of interest, not least to younger readers, who, happily, have never experienced global conflict.

Peter Thomson

President

Downing College Association 2009-10

THE FIRST WORLD WAR

GENERAL BACKGROUND

The Great War of 1914–18 was an absolute catastrophe for the countries of Europe and was almost certainly avoidable. It was not only enormously damaging in human and economic terms but its aftermath led directly to the conditions that brought about the even more catastrophic Second World War. Living in the twenty-first century, after more than sixty years of comparative peace, it is very difficult to imagine the impact that it had on the entire population. More than 5.7 million British men served in the war and over 700,000 were killed. To get some basis for comparison: at the time of writing (mid-2010) the deaths of our troops in Afghanistan cause widespread concern and sadness, but the total deaths there in eight years of conflict there are only about two-thirds of the average *daily* losses the British forces suffered throughout the four years of the First World War. The losses on the first day of the Battle of the Somme alone exceeded those killed by enemy action in the Crimean, Boer and Korean Wars put together, and in the five months of that battle there were a million casualties on the two sides in an area about seven miles square. In addition to the loss of life, the economic damage was enormous. By 1917 the war effort was absorbing nearly 60% of GDP and this had a lasting effect on the British economy.

Yet, for most ordinary people, used to peace and preoccupied with their own local and family interests, the war seemed almost to come out of nowhere.

THE OUTBREAK OF WAR

In Cambridge the summer of 1914 seems to have been pleasant enough, although the College's tripos results were pretty poor and the cricket team only won two of their ten matches. The latter may well have been of more concern to many of the undergraduates than the former. They appear to have been largely untroubled by the possibility of a major European war breaking out, and led a carefree social life, with a penchant for practical jokes of what now seem a rather juvenile kind. Term ended before events on the continent began to turn really nasty and the assassination of the Archduke Ferdinand in Sarajevo took place a couple of weeks or so after most people had gone down. The actual outbreak of war happened almost exactly half-way through the long vacation. In the following Michaelmas Term's edition of *The Griffin*, the editorial began:

“Looking back to the end of last term, we remember that every prospect seemed good this year; there was no hint of the trouble to come”.

Even in July there was little talk of a European war. Civil war in Ireland seemed a more likely prospect. *The Cambridge Daily News* did not feature on its front page the possibility that Britain might be involved until 25 July. On 29 July, a young Fellow of Newnham, Evelyn Spearing, sent off the last set of proofs of a book to Louvain University Press, not believing that

there would be war. Within six days the Germans had invaded Belgium and in less than a month, in one of the war's first major atrocities, Louvain was in flames.

As late as 31 July the *Cambridge Independent Press* was still expressing a hope that "hostilities will be localised".

Among the academics there was a substantial group unwilling to fight and opposed to the whole idea of war. On 1 August, *The Times*, *Manchester Guardian*, and *Cambridge Daily News* all published a Scholars' Protest signed by four senior Cambridge dons, including the Nobel laureate, J J Thomson, and others from Oxford, Harvard and Aberdeen. On 3 August another protest, this time signed by a large number of Cambridge academics, appeared in the *Manchester Guardian* and the *Cambridge Daily News*. This may have been organised by Bertrand Russell, a Fellow of Trinity and well-known pacifist.

War was declared on 4 August and the news was received in the town with patriotic but subdued feelings, with little of the jingoistic fervour seen in some other places. The Territorials and Army Reserve were mobilised and groups of them left from Cambridge station over the next three or four days. All were given a hearty send-off by crowds of a few hundred, singing patriotic songs and making impromptu speeches while they waited at the station. The Yeomanry, before leaving, had to equip themselves with horses which were simply requisitioned from their civilian owners. One was actually taken from between the shafts of a cab at the station.

A recruiting office was set up in the Corn Exchange, and in the first two weeks of hostilities a total of 122 men from the town volunteered. In a town of 50,000 this was a fairly low figure in comparison with what happened in many places. Regular troops moved into camps that were erected on many of the green spaces in and around the town, and by mid-August there were 60,000 of them. The townspeople rallied round, setting up canteens manned by volunteers and providing other comforts, and the colleges entertained some of the officers to dinner. Concerns were expressed, nevertheless, about the effect the troops might have on the morality of the population, especially on young women. The pubs were forced to close at 9.30pm and consideration was given to having Women Patrols working with the police to supervise behaviour on the streets at night, as was done in London. Most of the regular troops moved on in September, however, and things quietened down.

There was a very real fear of invasion. Plans were drawn up by the authorities for the evacuation of civilians via minor roads in order to keep the main roads and railways free for our troops to travel to meet the invading enemy. Boy Scouts and the Officers' Training Corps (OTC) patrolled telephone lines which it was feared might be tampered with.

The Hall at Pembroke was converted into a hospital ward so that local detachments of the Red Cross could be trained to deal with the expected influx of wounded. The Red Cross in Cambridge almost doubled in size in the first three weeks of the war, with a number of college servants among the new volunteers. As the war went on they regularly met trains of wounded at the station and helped to transport them on stretchers to the military hospital. Many local citizens helped with gifts of money or clothing.

The students took a much more gung-ho approach to the war, their attitude being epitomised by the poetry of Rupert Brooke, then a Fellow of King's. They came from a social class that regarded it as their duty to fight for the nation, and, indeed, to act as leaders in the battles to come. A fair number of them had been members of the Cambridge University OTC, and they at once came forward to offer their services. The OTC did not mobilise in the sense

that the Territorials did, as they had no obligation to do so. There was a small headquarters in Market Street which was immediately overwhelmed as members on vacation hurried back to volunteer and apply for commissions. On 5 August the HQ of the Corps was moved to Corpus, with interviews for those who applied for commissions taking place in the Hall, and an office set up in the Senior Combination Room. Within a fortnight of the opening of hostilities, the number of applications for commissions from students had passed 1,000 and by mid-October was over 2,000.

The first time the College Governing Body, which then consisted of eight Fellows and one Supernumerary Fellow, had any formal discussion about war was on 6 August, two days after it started, when they agreed, in response to a request to the University from the government, to place the College at the disposal of the authorities for the duration of hostilities. The first manifestation of what this meant was when a lot of nurses arrived.

In 1908 the army had established the First Eastern General Hospital in Addenbrooke's. It was small and the matron of Addenbrooke's acted as matron of it, too. Once the war started emergency beds were put into Trinity and the Leys School and the HQ of the military's medical operation was established in Trinity. Shortly afterwards, a large hospital was set up in huts which were built on King's and Clare sports grounds, where the University Library stands today. Initially, this had 520 beds and by the end of 1915 it had grown to 1500. It continued in existence until 1920. The development of the hospital meant an influx of substantial numbers of staff, particularly nurses. At first the nurses were accommodated in Downing and King's. They started moving into College in the second week of the war and left in late September, before term began. The College charged 2/- per nurse per week for their accommodation and a report said that a Fellow's set of three rooms could be used to accommodate as many as eight nurses "when roughing it in time of war".

LIFE IN COLLEGE

The Michaelmas term began on 7 October 1914, and the first and most obvious change in the College was a sudden and dramatic reduction in the numbers in residence. In Easter term 1914 there were 140 undergraduates in Downing. In the Michaelmas term, this number was down to 61 and in the Lent term of 1915 there were only 45. By 1916 there were only 25 and a year later a mere 16. In the University as a whole the male undergraduate numbers came down from about 4,400 before the war to 1,658 in Michaelmas 1914, 825 in 1915 and 575 by Easter 1916. The number of female students at Girton and Newnham remained constant at about 400 throughout the war and the gender ratio in 1916 was not repeated until about seventy years later, when most colleges had gone mixed.

The reductions were, of course, almost entirely due to men volunteering for military service, leaving only those who were unfit, training in key subjects such as medicine, or conscientious objectors. Some, who had been in the OTC, were able to arrange for commissions as soon as the war started. Others joined the OTC late in the vacation or at the beginning of the Michaelmas term and waited a few weeks until their commissions came through. A few impatient souls had gone off during the vacation and joined up in the ranks. Practically all of them expected it to form a temporary hiatus in their education and the widely held view was "It'll all be over by Christmas". Private Godfrey Buxton (Trinity 1913) may have been more optimistic than most

when he wrote later that he had been quite clear that Germany would be defeated in time for him to return for the Michaelmas term. Later in the war he was commissioned, won the MC and bar in 1917, and was invalided out after being severely wounded, returning to Cambridge to complete his degree considerably later than he had expected.

For the rump of undergraduates who returned or came up as freshmen in October 1914 life in College initially remained largely unchanged, except that the bulk of them were in the OTC and had drill or other training on most days. About 900 students in the University were in the OTC, forming a battalion. Downing and Peterhouse combined to form a company, but the numbers were constantly changing as men left to take up their commissions. Lectures and supervisions continued, albeit with much smaller audiences and a different gender mix at lectures. Many of the College servants were too old to join the forces and the domestic arrangements in College were pretty much the same as they had been before. Conditions were a strange mixture of the spartan and luxurious.

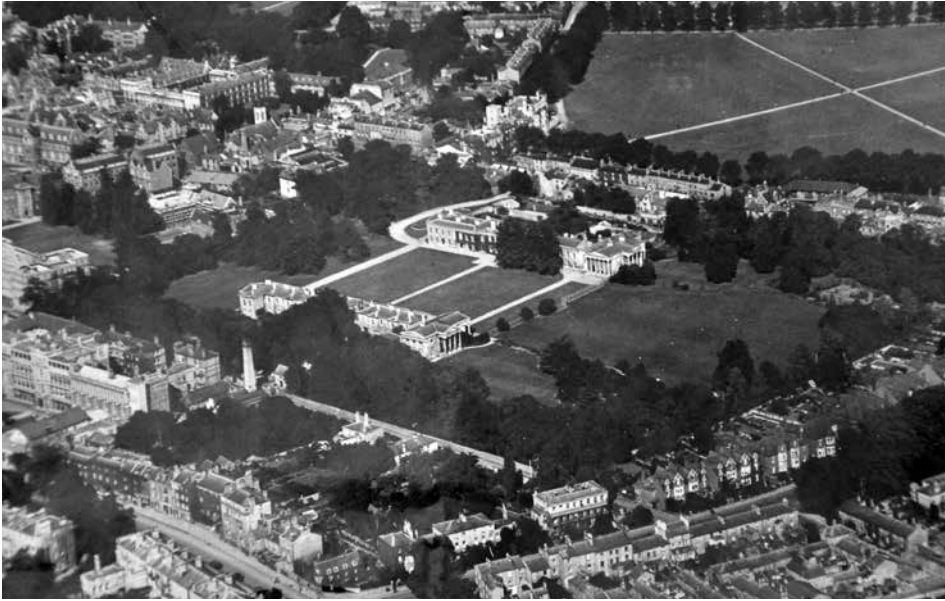
When Rex Salisbury Woods came up in 1910 he was shocked to find that the students had no running hot or cold water. There was a jug and ewer on a stand and a shallow tin bath, which was kept under the bed. When the gyp arrived at about seven o'clock in the morning his first task was to pull out the bath and pour about two inches of cold water into it. As Salisbury Woods said, it was not a heart-warming start to the day, and it must have been a great temptation to neglect personal hygiene, especially in winter. He, and presumably others, eased the problem slightly by getting hold of some cans which could be filled with water and left for a time in front of the fire (lit, of course, by the gyp) to provide at least a supply of tepid water for bathing and shaving.

Baths had been installed, one each on I and K staircases (the present O and Q), in the winter of 1913-14 at a cost to the College of £100 (which, curiously, was taken from the surplus on the wine account). Men living on those two staircases could use them whenever they liked, at a cost of 6/8d per term. Others could use them at a cost of 3/4d per term, but only in the afternoons, so it is likely that by the time the war started a good many of them still relied wholly or partly on the gyp and the tin bath.

Salisbury Woods also describes the lighting as "primitive", with students relying on oil lamps which were regularly, but not always expertly, trimmed by the bedmaker. In February 1912 the Bursar was authorised to have the Hall wired for electric light and later that year to install electricity in student rooms as and when they came up for redecoration. How many were done by August 1914 is not known, but again it seems probable that most undergraduates were still struggling with smoky oil lamps when we went to war.

On the other hand, many aspects of life were rather comfortable. Each student had a "set" of sitting room and bedroom, and some of them were very large. Salisbury Woods recalls that it was possible to have cycle races round the table in his sitting room, although, one imagines, only if the participants had first consumed a sufficient amount of alcohol. Because the College then only consisted of the East and West ranges, and the East and West Lodges were the homes of the two Downing Professors, and the Fellows all had extensive accommodation, the availability of rooms in College was limited and a good many people lived out, many in the Parkside area.

The only meal taken in Hall was dinner, which was compulsory at least five times a week. Breakfast and lunch were taken in students' own rooms and delivered to them by kitchen boys carrying trays covered in green baize. This service extended to those who lived on the other side



The College at the time of the First World War

of Parker's Piece, and one wonders what sort of temperature the food was at when it reached its destination. A breakfast of fried eggs delivered at walking pace over a distance of half a mile in winter was not likely to be terribly appetising on arrival.

Besides the gyps and bedmakers and the kitchen staff there were various other servants to make sure the young gentlemen were treated in the manner in which they had been brought up. For instance, the only servant to be killed in the war, the splendidly-named Joe Blogg, was employed to clean shoes and cycles, for which he was paid £1 a week, presumably with tips on top. There appears to have been only one porter, who lived in the Porter's Lodge. There was one telephone in College, which was in the Porter's Lodge, and the porter was responsible for collecting the money from any student who used it, keeping 20% of it as his commission. On the other hand, the Royal Mail delivered the post to each individual student's room.

There is no evidence of any austerity measures in the early days of the war although there was initial anxiety about food supplies and, at first, some townsfolk hoarded food in anticipation of shortages. There were no real shortages in College and life in many ways continued much as it had in peacetime. It was not until the effects of the U-boats were really felt in 1916 that belts began seriously to be tightened.

People still led active social lives, some more active than the College authorities cared for. Visitors were not allowed in College after 10pm and the Governing Body minutes for 28 November 1914 note that two men, Line and Sproat, had, the night before, "quitted the College surreptitiously and subsequently returned to it surreptitiously, bringing with them two other persons from the outside". The coy failure to mention the gender of the two other persons makes it a fair bet that they were not male. Line was rusticated and Sproat sent down and they both joined the army. Line was shot by a sniper and died of his wounds early in 1916, having gone to the front on the previous Christmas Eve, but Sproat survived the war and won the

Italian Croce di Guerra. After the war, Sproat sought permission to return to College, and this was granted.

Social life was largely centred on the College, with men entertaining each other to lunch or breakfast in their rooms or meeting at tea or after dinner to talk. Mixing with the young ladies of Girton and Newnham was not easy, given the draconian rules imposed by the women's colleges. Any meeting with a man required a chaperon to be present and a visit by a man to a woman student's room was quite out of the question. They could only meet in the women's colleges in the public rooms with, of course, a chaperon. At meetings in the town friendly chaperons occasionally absented themselves temporarily, but the process of wooing a female undergraduate must have required both ingenuity and tenacity. In lectures, the women sat apart from the men, and, as they were not regarded as full members of the University (they were not able to take degrees until 1948) many misogynistic lecturers completely ignored them, addressing the entire audience as "Gentlemen".

The OTC became a major feature of College life. A number of men had been members before the war, but the vast majority of the rest joined when term started. The Vice-Chancellor, in a notice in the *Cambridge University Reporter*, had said that it was the duty of the University to continue its academic work, but also to encourage all physically able students to serve their country. It was naturally assumed that the young public school educated gentlemen would become officers in the forces and a convenient route to that was via the OTC.

The OTC, besides guarding bridges and telephone lines in the locality, had military training five afternoons a week (four of infantry drill and one of physical training and trench digging), plus two evening lectures and one night operation. A training camp at Royston was used for some exercises, but most training took place in and around the colleges. The company formed jointly by Downing and Peterhouse drilled on the Paddock, which was the College's only playing field at that time. They were later allowed to drill on the quadrangle on Monday and Wednesday afternoons, provided the weather was suitable. The OTC's lectures were on Monday and Friday evenings, with night operations on Wednesdays. The Men's Voluntary Aid Detachment, consisting of those who wished to serve but, for conscientious or other reasons, not to fight, were initially permitted by the College to perform their stretcher drill on the Paddock from 6.15 to 7.15 every morning, although this was later changed to a more congenial time. Later in the war, a section of the OTC was formed for MAs and other senior members of the University. They drilled only three times a week and were on the receiving end of a certain amount of good-natured scorn from their juniors.

By November there were 133 Belgian student refugees in Cambridge. The College made a grant to the University fund which helped to support them. It also made the Hall available to them for their Christmas entertainments and moved three undergraduates from lodgings into College so that some of the Belgians could take over their rooms. This sympathy for the Belgians seems to have been short-lived, however, as by the following June the Governing Body resolved not to renew the grant.

In 1915, through the efforts of the Serbian Relief Fund, Serbian refugee students attended several English universities, including Cambridge, and two came to Downing. Professor Seward, who had become Master in 1915, was president of the Fund's education committee, and was instrumental in setting up the scheme and getting the universities to participate. The refugees attended a three month intensive course leading to an examination.

The first zeppelin raids on Britain took place in early 1915 and in March the Governing Body authorised the Bursar to take out insurance on the College buildings against all war risks, including air attack. Cover for £15,000 cost a premium of £33-10s-0d. Later in the year, the College-owned houses and shops in Regent Street were similarly insured.

By the end of 1915 there were the early signs of austerity, and the College dispensed with the services of one of the gardeners and decided to leave the Paddock and the Fellows' garden largely untended, although shortly afterwards it also agreed to make the Paddock available as a sports ground to the military cadets housed in various colleges, so long as they provided for its upkeep, a rather clever way of making up for the loss of a gardener.

Another sign of austerity was that, in 1916, the Tutor had his pay reduced as a consequence of there being so many fewer students than normal.

At the end of 1916 fifty military cadets who were training in Cambridge were billeted in College. The army was charged 4/6d a day for each of them and a servant was taken on at a wage of 25/- a week "for carving in Hall and doing all other needed work". The records show that the College cook was requested to supply four meals daily at a cost to the College of 3/4d per day. For reasons which are not apparent, the records show that he was also required to provide plates, forks and spoons, but not knives. The cadets left after three months, presumably to fight and not as a result of unsatisfactory catering arrangements or inadequate cutlery.

The College's finances were affected by the reduction in the number of students and by the fact that the cost of living more or less doubled between 1914 and 1918. By modern standards, the amount of money it cost to run the place seems paltry. The net income in 1917 was only £6,255-11s-4d, on which a surplus of £227-3s-1d was recorded. Tuition fees were £7 a term; dinner cost 2/-, and bedmakers were paid 10/- a week (up from 8/- at the beginning of the war).

By 1917 food was in short supply and the quality of meals had deteriorated, prompting adverse comments in *The Griffin*, and by the end of the year, with food shortages worsening and rationing imminent (it came in in January 1918), the Bursar was authorised by the Governing Body to convert the lawn of the Fellows' garden into a potato-ground, "if he finds it practicable to do so". Unfortunately, there is no record of whether he did find it practicable, but, given the circumstances, it seems likely that it was done. At the same time the College was making strenuous efforts to prevent the Bursar being conscripted, on the possibly spurious grounds that, as the person supervising the College's agricultural estate of 5,000 acres, he was providing important national service in the matter of food production.

In January 1918 rationing meant that no meat was served on two evenings a week and macaroni and lentils featured prominently on the menu, prompting sarcastic comments in *The Griffin*. Fuel was also in short supply, and unscrupulous undergraduates resorted to pinching coal from their fellows.

All in all, though, life was a very great deal better in Cambridge than at the front.

MILITARY SERVICE

After the war, the University went to great lengths to compile a list of all members of the University, past or present, who had served in the forces and in later years a few additions have been made to the College's numbers as more information has come to light.

A total of 359 Downing men are known to have served in the war, including alumni, students and Fellows. The total includes those who had places to come up as freshmen who volunteered for service before they could take up their places, but does not include Professor Marsh, who was the Master in 1914 and was given an honorary colonelcy in the RAMC. He was ill throughout the first winter of the war and died in June 1915 without having been on active service. The figure does not include staff, as there is no record of how many of them were in the forces.

Of those who served 38 lost their lives, and 55 were wounded, some of them more than once. They served in the forces of 15 countries, including a number of colonies which were not then self-governing but have since become independent.

The bulk of them served on the Western Front, but, between them, Downing men covered most theatres of war, including Serbia, Italy, Russia, Mesopotamia, Gallipoli, East Africa and, of course, at sea. The College's strength in medicine is shown in the fact that 65 served in the Royal Army Medical Corps and a further five in the Indian Medical Service. Five served as chaplains.

Between them the Downing men were awarded the following decorations for gallantry:

- 1 Victoria Cross
 - 4 Distinguished Service Orders
 - 31 Military Crosses
 - 1 Military Medal
 - 2 French Croix de Guerre
 - 2 Belgian Croix de Guerre
 - 1 Italian Croce di Guerra
- and 43 were Mentioned in Despatches.

A list of winners of medals is shown in Appendix D

It is not possible to give a full account of what they did, but we have picked out a few which are of some interest.

The most notable medal-winner was John Leslie Green, who won a posthumous VC on the first day of the Battle of the Somme, 1 July 1916. He was one of two Downing men killed that day, among the more than 20,000 dead from the British and Empire forces. Green had matriculated in 1907 and went on to complete his medical degree at St Bartholomew's Hospital. He was an enthusiastic oarsman and rowed for the College in each of his three years. At the beginning of the war he joined the RAMC and in 1916 he was attached to the Sherwood Foresters.

The citation for his medal read as follows:

"For most conspicuous devotion to duty. Although himself wounded, he went to the assistance of an officer who had been wounded and was hung up on the enemy's wire entanglements, and succeeded in dragging him to a shell-hole, where he dressed his wounds, notwithstanding that bombs and rifle grenades were thrown at him the whole time. Captain Green then endeavoured to bring the wounded officer into safe cover, and had nearly succeeded in doing so when he was killed."



Capt J L Green VC



Capt Green's grave in
Foncquevilliers Military Cemetery

Green had married on 1 January that year. His widow was also medically qualified and was working at a military hospital in London when the King presented her with the medal at Buckingham Palace in October 1916. Some time later she made a gift to the College of a boat (a “funny”) which had been owned by her husband. Captain Green is buried at Foncquevilliers Military Cemetery and his VC is in the Army Medical Service Museum in Aldershot.

The other Downing man who died on the same day was Captain W H Round, who was also with the Sherwood Foresters. He had come up as an exhibitor in 1913 to read economics but joined up as soon as the war started, going to the front early in 1915.

A notable casualty was John George Will, who was an exceptional athlete. He came up in 1911 and got his rugby blue in three successive years as well as being prominent in athletics and other sports. When the war started, he had already been capped seven times by Scotland. Eager to get involved, he volunteered as a private and went to France in 1914. In February 1915 he was commissioned in the Leinster Regiment and was wounded at Ypres that summer. After recovering, he joined the Royal Flying Corps as an observer and went to Egypt. Returning in May 1916, he took a pilot's course and became a flying instructor before returning to France early in 1917. In April, he and another aircraft on escort duty were attacked by twelve German planes. The two held off the enemy until the six aircraft they were escorting got away but, in a confused fight, Will was shot down and killed. Afterwards he was given much praise for the way he flew and fought against overwhelming odds.

The University indirectly benefited from the loss of another Downing man, Alexander James Keith, who was hit by a shell at Trones Wood while serving as a machine-gun officer in the Middlesex Regiment. In 1965 the University was informed by the executors of Keith's sister that she had left the residue of her estate “in trust for the income thereof to be paid to her brother Mr Campbell Keith, during his life and after his death upon trust as to both capital and income to be paid to the University for the foundation of a scholarship or studentship in Agricultural Research in memory of her brother, Alexander James Keith, who was a student at Downing College and who was killed in the First World War”. The choice of subject is slightly puzzling, as Keith read history. These studentships are still available to students of agriculture from the UK or EU.

It was not unusual for educated young men of the time to write poetry. Among them was Frank Skelton, who came up in March 1916, but only managed two terms' residence. He joined the Royal Flying Corps in January 1917 and was killed in October that year, aged 19, after only three weeks at the front. Three of his poems were published in the same issue of *The Griffin* in

which news of his death appeared. The last was unfinished, having been written as he left for the front on 4 October 1917:

Train after train our armies pass,
 Boat after boat bears them along;
 And through the ever coming mass
 Echoes the battle song.
 Man after man our soldiers come,
 Shell after shell sends them to die,
 Disgrace with life are sought by none,
 From death they do not fly.
 Day after day the war is fought;
 Year after year rings death's deep knell;
 But where's the end that all have sought,
 Peace – an unbroken spell.
 God give them strength to fight the fight;
 God give them strength to win;
 God give them strength to stay the night,
 The dawn of Peace begin.

The Griffin for Lent Term 1917, having happily recorded only one death since the last issue, goes on to mention, almost as an aside, that Captain J M Howlett had been wounded for the fourth time. It also describes how Lieutenant J W MacKenzie “has been badly damaged”, having lain out in a shell-hole for forty-eight hours with three machine gun bullets in his thigh. Howlett won a Military Cross, and MacKenzie was wounded again on another occasion.

Five Downing men from continental countries fought in the war, although, as far as we know, none on the German side. One of the more colourful was Peter Fontaine, a Frenchman who matriculated in 1912 under his original name of Edmond Marie Roger Fontaine de Mazinghen, although the College's admissions register gives his first name as Achilles. He adopted the name of Peter Fontaine in 1932. He came from a well-to-do family with an estate which, early in the war, was within a few miles of the front line. He was conscripted into the French army early in 1915 and, as a corporal, was soon injured in a motor accident. Recovering, he was then wounded badly in the French advance on the Champagne front. He made another good recovery and managed to come to Cambridge in February 1916 and take his BA. At the congregation, on crutches and supported by the Tutor, he wore the blue uniform of the French infantry, while a member of Sidney Sussex took his degree in the uniform of the Serbian army. Fontaine won the Croix de Guerre. In 1940 he escaped from Paris as the Germans advanced and wrote a book about his adventures. Another Frenchman, Pierre Sterckeman, appears on the College War Memorial. He was taken prisoner in 1916 and died of wounds later.

A notable pre-war character was a Pole, Witold de Wankowicz. He came up in 1909 and read agriculture and economics, graduating in 1912. An enthusiastic member of the Boat Club, he kept in touch with the College, and with his old gyp, for the rest of his life. He joined the Polish army when the war started and two letters from him were printed in *The Griffin*. Initially, he was fighting alongside the Russians and wrote:

“The Russian soldier is high spirited and is fighting admirably. The Russian nation is ready to stand by the Tsar and army to the last. And we Poles, we shall fight against our eternal enemy, the German, to the very last”.

By 1916, he was working at the front with the Red Cross, but the next year his confidence in the loyalty of the Russians was dashed with the October Revolution, and he found himself fighting against them, rather than with them. After the war he served in the Polish Ministry of Commerce and later tried to persuade a group of Downing men to go to Gdansk to help train its rowing club. After the Second War he was unable to return to his home country, now under communist control, and he and his family went to live in America.

There were quite a number of men from what is now the Commonwealth, then more commonly called the Empire, and, indeed, there had been adverse comments before the war about the Tutor's willingness to admit so many, especially from India. Although they were clearly integrated into the social life of the College, and many were well-liked, there remained a slight air of condescension towards them. When G W Hilliard, a member of the Royal Naval Air Service, died of wounds received in the Dardanelles in 1915, he was described in *The Griffin* as “a colonial”. Unfortunately, his College records have been lost, so it is not possible to specify what variety of colonial he was.

The impact of the war is illustrated well by looking at the officers of the three sports clubs which reported in the Easter 1914 issue of *The Griffin*, the last before the war. The captain of the boat club won an MC and was killed in action; the secretary of the boat club appears not to have served in the forces; the captain of cricket joined up in 1915 and survived; the secretary of cricket was wounded twice; the captain of tennis was accidentally killed and the secretary of tennis was killed in action: a 50% mortality rate.

Men who were wounded occasionally returned to College in the hope of continuing their education, not always finding it straightforward. In May term 1916, “College Notes” in *The Griffin* records that “Capt J W A Ollard, Cambridgeshire Regiment, who has been incapacitated in France from further active service, has joined us this term”. Only two terms later (Lent 1917) “College Notes” says: “We regret the departure of Capt Ollard to the 3rd Bn Northamptonshire Regiment”.

Three Fellows served in the forces out of the eight that there were in 1914. They were Walter Aston, Hugh Hamshaw Thomas, and John Hammond (later Sir John Hammond FRS). Hamshaw Thomas also served in the Second World War, when Hammond was the College's Estates Bursar. Hammond was wounded twice but, sadly, Aston was killed, leaving a wife and two daughters. He had volunteered early in the war and was a captain in the Cambridgeshire Regiment when he died of wounds in November 1917. He matriculated in Downing in 1901 and got a double first in law, being elected to a Fellowship in 1907. He served as Fellows' Steward and Librarian as well as being a lecturer in law. During his Stewardship in 1912, it was found that the 1874 claret had deteriorated badly and the Governing Body minutes express great concern about the condition of the cellar generally, but Aston, as Steward, seems to have sorted things out and calmed a rather fraught situation.

John Hammond wrote a lengthy letter to *The Griffin* in Michaelmas 1915 in which he described a week of intensive fighting in a remarkably matter-of-fact way. He mentioned shooting Germans as if it were sport: “I marked down two very plump ones and rolled them

over". The last paragraph of the letter gives an idea of his stoic approach to the mixture of excitement and misery he and others experienced:

"The day following was the worst of the lot. We were all dead tired and perishing with cold, just on the point of being relieved, when the Germans attacked us. We had a great fight. Only about two of them got to our trenches. Their attack was beaten off about 11pm, but we had to wait till 4am before being relieved. It was cold. There were no dug-outs and we had to lie in the bottom of the trenches with very few clothes. Well! I suppose we must take things as they come".

There were others who served who subsequently became Fellows. Lionel Whitby had won an open scholarship to come up in 1914. Instead, he joined the army, serving in the Royal Fusiliers and the Queen's Own (Royal West Kent) Regiment. He fought in Serbia, at Gallipoli, at Salonica and in Flanders and won the MC at Passchendaele. In 1918, as a major, he finally came up to College, having been severely wounded, losing a leg and being invalided out. He walked with the aid of a stick for the rest of his life. After a distinguished career in medicine between the wars, he served as a brigadier commanding the Army Blood Transfusion Service in the Second World War. He became a knight, Regius Professor of Physic, President of the British Medical Association, Master of Downing from 1947 until his death in 1956 and Vice-Chancellor of the University.

Another future Fellow who served was F R Leavis. He was a local boy, whose father's piano shop was over the road from Downing, where Pizza Hut is today, and he went up to Emmanuel in 1914 from the Perse School to read history. As a conscientious objector he was unwilling to fight, but joined the Friends' Ambulance Unit, and served for 21 months, without leave, on the ambulance trains taking the wounded away from the front. He was said to have crawled along the roofs of moving trains with no corridor connection to take drinks to wounded men. His health, particularly his digestion, was permanently impaired as a result of being gassed. The experience of war affected him deeply, and he was unwilling to talk much about it afterwards. Throughout the war he carried a copy of Milton in his pocket, and when he returned to Emmanuel he read for the newly-established English Tripos, following it with one of the first Cambridge PhDs in the subject. He subsequently had a major impact on the world of literary criticism and was a Fellow of Downing from 1930 to 1962.

Someone who became a fellow of another college, and indeed its master, was Donald Portway, who came up to Downing in 1906 and won blues at boxing, water polo and athletics. An engineer, he joined the army in 1914 and rose in the course of the war to the rank of major. In the Second World War, having written extensively on military engineering, he served again as a lieutenant colonel in the Royal Engineers. He was Master of St Catharine's from 1946 to 1957. He wrote several books, including *Memoirs of an Academic Old Contemptible*, *Militant Don* (both autobiographical) and *Military Science Today*.

A number of College servants were in the forces, although we have no record of precisely how many, most of them joining after conscription was introduced at the beginning of 1916. The College normally gave their wives a small amount of money while the men were away, varying from 2/- a week to £5 a quarter, presumably depending on family circumstances. The only servant to have been killed was called Joe Blogg, who was conscripted in 1916 and was a

private in the Cambridgeshire Regiment. In April 1918 he took part, as a stretcher-bearer, in an action for which he was awarded the Military Medal, but was subsequently wounded and died in hospital in September 1918. The College gave his widow a pension of £2 a quarter for five years. It is an interesting comment on social and economic changes that Blogg, although paid so little (£1 a week), lived in a house in a street which now accommodates a number of academics and where properties change hands at around £300,000.

AFTER THE WAR

Britain and much of the rest of the world were ravaged in 1918-19 by the 'flu pandemic which, worldwide, killed more people than the war itself. Nearly a quarter of a million British people died. However, there is no record in the archives of its effect on the College and the Governing Body never seems to have discussed it, so we can only assume that the College was relatively free of infection. This contrasts with the much milder epidemic of 1958, when the West Lodge was converted into a sanatorium.

Not long after the Armistice, students began to return to Cambridge. In January there were 60, and by May 1919 there were 110 *in statu pupillari* in College. The Tutor, who had had his pay cut during the war because he had so few students, was now described as being "overburdened". Men were allowed to take into consideration up to four terms spent in the services as having been "kept" in counting towards their qualification for degrees and this meant that they came back for varying periods to complete them. And, of course, they arrived back at different times as the system of demobilisation dictated. Managing the arrangements in College must have been extremely difficult.

At the beginning of 1919 the College agreed to accept 20 junior naval officers plus one senior. They were in Cambridge to complete the training that they were undergoing at Dartmouth Royal Naval College when it was interrupted by the war, and they stayed until the summer. This was organised by Captain Richmond, who was director of staff duties and training for the navy. He was shortly afterwards promoted to rear admiral in charge of the Royal Naval College at Greenwich and in 1936, as Admiral Sir Herbert Richmond, he became Master of Downing.

A group of American soldiers, who had been students at universities in their own country before enlisting, came to the University from mid-March 1919 until the end of June, and six of them (five officers and a sergeant) came to Downing. A similar arrangement was made at the end of the Second World War and one of those who came to Downing then, David Braybrooke, has contributed his memories later in this book.

The question of a suitable memorial to members of the College who had fallen was first raised in 1917. It became a subject of much discussion through the summer of 1919 and in October that year a design by Philip F Alexander was submitted and approved. The tablet was completed in February 1920, and it was widely praised. In *The Griffin*, the view was expressed that:

"The chief feature of the Tablet is its dignified simplicity; the enamel work is admirably executed, and the chiselling of the letters is very effective".

It was intended that the Tablet should be placed in the Chapel when one was built, and, as an interim measure, it was put up in the Hall. It was not until after the Second War that it was

weatherproofed and moved to its present site under the western portico of the North Range, balancing a similar one on the eastern portico for the later war.

The College also favoured the idea that there should be a more substantial memorial, and an appeal was made in July 1920. Suggestions made in response included new buildings, some kind of monument or fountain, or additional scholarships. Some sort of new building providing additional undergraduate accommodation was by far the favourite. There were no funds, however, and it was not until 1931 that the College began the construction of the North Range.

One interesting side-effect of the war was that Dr W H R Rivers, who during the war, had run the Craiglockhart psychiatric hospital in Edinburgh, which had among its patients Siegfried Sassoon and Wilfred Owen, returned to St John's and was largely responsible for the establishment of the study of neuroscience in Cambridge, a subject in which the College is particularly strong today.

THE COLLEGE IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR

NATIONAL BACKGROUND

From the mid 1930s the United Kingdom had been making preparations for war to resist the German expansion in Europe, and which war was finally declared on 3 September 1939. Such preparations were not just in the manufacture of arms and equipment but in the provision of facilities for training personnel and for operational activities.

In April 1939 the Military Training Act was passed, under which men aged 20 and 21 were conscripted to complete six months military training. Then, at the outbreak of war, all men between 18 and 41 were made liable for conscription into the armed forces. However, in 1938 a Schedule of Reserved Occupations had been drawn up, exempting people working in certain occupations from conscription. The government was determined not to repeat the mistakes of World War One, when the indiscriminate recruitment of too many men into the military had left major war production schemes short of the necessary workforce.

INTRODUCTION

The effects on Cambridge University and its colleges were various. Undergraduates in residence were, except for some in certain categories, for example, those reading medicine, engineering and some sciences and teaching, the medically unfit and conscientious objectors, liable to be called up into the armed services and some civilian duties. The same applied also to fellows and other academics and domestic staff.

Royal Air Force recruits, mostly those destined for flying training, were billeted in nine Cambridge colleges. In addition Bedford College, the London School of Economics, St Bartholemew's Medical School and the School of Oriental Studies, with their teaching staffs, moved from London to occupy parts of some Cambridge colleges as did some central government departments. Cambridge academics went in numbers to Bletchley Park, Whitehall and other government establishments.

As in the First World War the Leys School became a hospital. Those students still in residence had to undertake civil defence duties. A few bombs were dropped on Cambridge causing some casualties. In the academic fields the University shortened tripos courses and ran special short courses for the services.

This part of this book seeks to describe the effects of these various circumstances on Downing College, its Fellows, students, staff and its buildings and estates. This has been achieved through searches of the University and College archives and from statements by members of the College who lived through the war.

THE UNIVERSITY

The published records of University governance are to be found in the *Cambridge University Reporter* which appears at weekly or at other intervals depending on the business being conducted. In the mid 1930s it was clear that thought had been given nationally and within the University

to actions which might need to be taken in the event of war but, even in the second half of 1939, the proceedings as described in the *Reporter* were still very low key with no hint that a major armed conflict was about to erupt. The first intimation of any action being taken is found in the 10 October issue when elections to professorships were postponed during “the present emergency”. The same issue reported that on 6 September, three days after war was declared, it had been decided that there was to be “an allowance of terms for those, whether matriculated or not, whose national service ... prevents them from keeping terms.” The number of terms to be allowed was not decided although it was noted that a maximum number of four terms was allowed in the First World War. In the event a maximum of four terms was to be allowed.

In the issue of 17 October was the weighty matter of “remission of a fee for graduation by proxy at any congregation during the present war”. More significant was the announcement that degrees were to be awarded on suitable examination results in two years with a year credited for national service. In the *Reporter* of 31 October 1939 emergency statutes were announced by King’s and Corpus with other colleges to follow. The first report of a practical effect of the war was a difficulty in obtaining building materials for the new block of the Cavendish Laboratory whose roof had just been completed. In the issue of 21 November the question of the stipends of University Officers released for national service was reported. “Free passages to Australia are withdrawn during the period of hostilities”. The *Reporter* tells us on 13 December that gold medals were no longer to be awarded and were to be replaced by bronze medals.

THE RAF AND CAMBRIDGE

The Cambridge University Air Squadron had been founded on 1 October 1925 and was the first squadron of its type anywhere in the world; it was followed by the Oxford University Air Squadron on 11 October. An Air Ministry memo at that time stated that the University Air Squadrons had been formed to stimulate interest at the two universities in air subjects and the RAF, especially regarding technical and research problems, and to encourage a flow of candidates for commission in the RAF, the Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve and the Auxiliary Air Force.

Two days after the outbreak of the war the Squadron closed down. It was not known how many undergraduates would be in residence, and it was clear that neither instructors nor aircraft could be spared to teach undergraduates to fly. However, by September 1940 it was clear that the University was not, after all, to be denuded of its undergraduates for the call-up age was still twenty, and even non-technical students were able to have one or two years at Cambridge before entering the services. Furthermore, the success of the RAF in the Battle of Britain was demonstrating the importance of quality in aircrews, and the Air Ministry began to realise that it was missing a valuable source of supply in the Universities. Any keen man who came up to Cambridge for a year or two before entering the services felt that he ought to do some pre-entry training, and there was only one unit he could join – the Senior Training Corps (STC). Once he was a member of the STC, his thoughts inevitably turned to tanks and artillery rather than Spitfires and Wellingtons, and eventually, rather than waste the training he had received, joined the army. In order to secure for the RAF its proper share of this promising material, the Air Ministry in October 1940 re-opened University Air Squadrons at Cambridge and Oxford. Shortly afterwards they re-opened the London University Air Squadron, which had been formed in 1935, and founded University Air Squadrons at twenty other Universities and

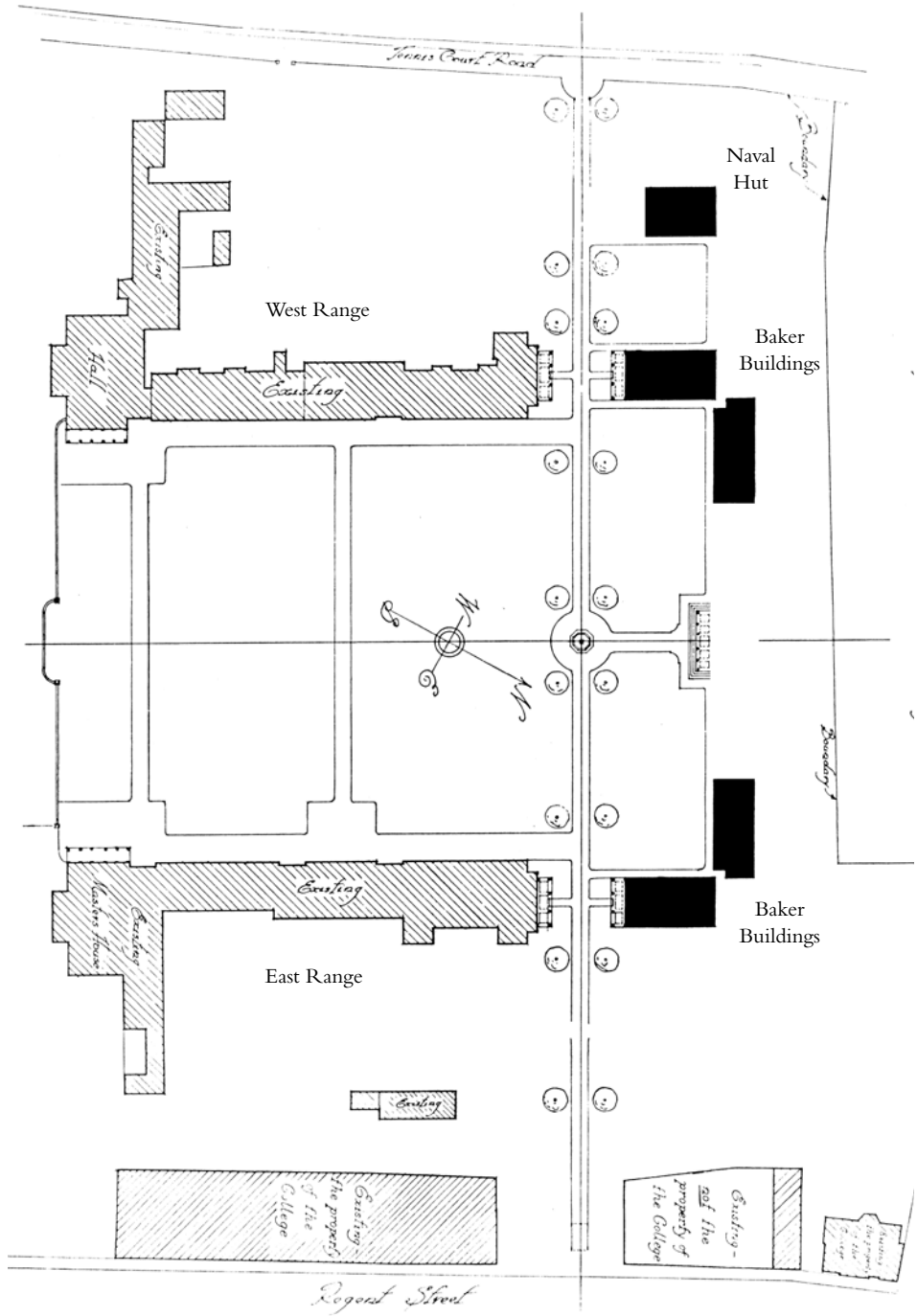
University Colleges in Great Britain and Northern Ireland. The first aim of the University Air Squadron was clearly defined by the Air Ministry: it was to recruit and train aircrew candidates of the highest quality. If any further vacancies occurred, they might be filled by undergraduates who were suited academically, and in other ways, to become technical officers in the RAFVR, or, if unfit for combatant duties, Administrative or Special Duties Officers.

It was made clear from the start that during the war there would be no resumption of flying training in the University Air Squadrons such as had been carried out from 1925-1939. Instead, undergraduates were to complete the ground training normally carried out at the Initial Training Wing (ITW), including such subjects as mathematics, navigation, law, hygiene, armament, signals and drill; engines and principles of flight were added later. A cadet who passed the examinations at the end of the course was awarded an Air Squadron proficiency certificate, and was to be excused from the whole ITW course when he entered the RAF.

With the lowering of the age of registration under the National Services Acts there was a steady decline in the number of aircrew candidates available for the Air Squadron. Early in 1941, the Air Ministry announced that a new scheme of aircrew training was to start at several universities in April. Young men who were recommended by their headmasters and by special Air Ministry selection boards as potential aircrew officers, and who had the necessary educational qualifications to benefit from a university course, were to be sent for six months to a university entirely at Air Ministry expense. They were to be attested in the RAFVR, but would come up as civilians while on deferred service, and would become full members of the colleges and of the University. The scheme of study at Cambridge for these short-course cadets was to be engineering (including mathematics), mechanics, physics, aeronautics and internal combustion engines. In addition to their university work, the cadets were to attend the Air Squadron for one and a half days each week, and were to complete the same syllabus as the normal entry cadets, the ITW syllabus.

The non-vocational nature of the university course was so marked that there was no reason for confining it to science subjects. It seemed clear that many cadets who were likely to make good aircrew officers had little aptitude for higher mathematics, and would profit more from following an arts course. Accordingly, in 1942, a Director of Studies for arts subjects was appointed, and 50 of the 120 cadets who came up that April were admitted to read an arts course, chiefly history, instead of science. The course was experimental, but it was considered successful, and in October 1942 the Air Ministry sent a short course of 100 cadets to Cambridge to read science, and 208 to read arts. The latter course now included history, economics, politics and physical geography, and aimed to give the cadets a general view of some of the problems of the time and their origins. With the course that began in April 1943 a further development took place. It was decided that cadets who came up with high qualifications in arts subjects should be allowed to specialise in their own subjects instead of reading the general arts course. At the same time the arts course was expanded to include law as a subject. During the period of the war the number of short course cadets who successfully completed their six month course at Cambridge and were awarded Proficiency Certificates was 1,576.

With the end of the Easter term 1943, the University had reached a turning point in its history during the war; henceforth there would be very few men other than service cadets taking arts courses. There had been a great contrast with the experience of the war of 1914, which had almost emptied Cambridge of undergraduates, whatever their lines of study.



Plan of the College in the Second World War

THE COLLEGE – FELLOWS

Admiral Sir Herbert Richmond was Master from 1936 until 1946 and there were ten Fellows. Emergency College Statutes, with amendments, extended the Master's tenure beyond its normal period during the war. Over the period of the war there were two contemporary records of life in the College: *The Griffin*, a termly record of activities, sports and clubs together with formal reports of members' activities and notices of deaths, edited by students, and the *Downing College Association Newsletter*, an annual publication including a list of Association members, written by the Senior Tutor, Mr Whalley-Tooker, who was the Association Secretary from 1931 to 1947. The Treasurer of the Association was the Bursar, Mr James Grantham. *The Griffin* was for internal College circulation and the Newsletter for sending to alumni. The exigencies of wartime caused publication of the Newsletter to be suspended between 1942 and 1946.

The minutes of the College's Governing Body record discussions and decisions at various intervals. The first mention of precautions against the effects of war was in April 1938, when a committee comprising the Master, the Bursar and Dr Hamshaw Thomas was set up to consider the question of air raid precautions. In the June of that year the sum of £35 (£1085 in 2010 money) was allocated for such precautions, but it was not until nearly a year later that the Committee was asked to buy sandbags "for defence against attack from the air".

Throughout the war the Governing Body minutes record discussions on air raid precautions and in particular the arrangements for firewatching for which the town (as it then was) was divided into areas, Downing being included with Addenbrooke's Hospital (now the Judge Business School and Brown's Restaurant). The allocation of students as firewatchers seemed to be at the root of many discussions. Firewatchers' duties included putting out small fires, particularly incendiary bombs, which could be extinguished by emptying buckets of sand on them if they were caught early enough.

Particular thought was given to means of maintaining the income of College officers and staff who were called up. Charges to undergraduates who were called up were considered as were the level of charges for shared sets of rooms, a feature which was introduced owing to the reduced accommodation in the College. A termly charge of £12 (£372 in 2010 money) per person, to include coal, was rendered.

Mr Grantham, the Bursar, joined the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve in January 1941 and served in the Far East. *The Griffin* of the Easter Term 1945 says that in his absence Mr A J Imms, University Reader in Entomology, had held the posts of Bursar and Steward. "His rank as a University officer prevented him from benefiting from the emoluments of a college office". However the Governing Body minutes of 13 December 1941 record details of sums to be paid by the College to Mr Imms and the University to take account of his different roles and that Mr Hammond had assisted him. It seems likely that Mr Imms received additional pay for being Steward but the time he put in for the College as Bursar was reimbursed to the University. Dr Hamshaw Thomas was in the Royal Air Force until 1943 and Dr Holmes in the Royal Army Medical Corps and so Downing then had a Fellow in each of the armed services.

THE COLLEGE – STUDENTS

The *Association Newsletter* of 1939 observed that:

“Fortunately the numbers of the College have not fallen since the war [began] as much as was feared. The Government’s decision not to accept men for the army before the age of twenty has been largely responsible, but other contributing factors have been the official advice to many medical students and scientists to continue their studies and the apparent intention of the authorities to postpone calling up those men who would suffer hardship by enlistment shortly before they were due to take an important University examination. It is greatly to be hoped that the Government would not find it necessary in the future to enlist men before they reach the age of twenty.

The University has issued wartime regulations which will enable a man, who subsequently serves in the armed forces, to take a degree after two years’ study. Clearly, therefore, it was a great advantage to a boy to leave school rather early and to complete his University course before being called up. All colleges are giving sympathetic consideration to applications for early entry”.

As further assistance to this aim Downing allowed successful candidates in the scholarship and exhibition examinations in December to be admitted in the immediately following January with the agreement of their headmaster.

In the Michaelmas Term 1940, a year after the war began, a writer in *The Griffin* observed:

“The war has affected College life in many ways, some most annoying, but others quite amusing. The decision to allow the use of a radio to listen to any news bulletin has been most welcome, for not only are the contents of these bulletins of value in themselves but as a whole they serve as a most valuable time-piece and coming when they do help to compensate in part for the silencing of the Hall Bell.* One man hearing the sweet sounds of the announcer’s voice decided to attempt an all-time record and get into breakfast, but it being the one o’clock news he was in excellent time for lunch.

The need for passes to get into our own College has been somewhat humiliating and we are extremely grateful to the Governing Body for their work in having the original restrictions relaxed.

All these irritations do not produce any resultant effect on College life, everything is much as usual. The Rugger Club has closed a very successful term with a most successful dinner and in a minor way several people have attained their twenty first birthday – the age of responsibility – which they invariably celebrate by doing the most irresponsible things”.

However, eventually, the numbers did fall and by 1942 the Officers of the Downing Association had decided that it was impracticable to hold the annual meeting and dinner during the war. It was hoped to resume both as soon as the war was over. The dinner was eventually held again on 27 September 1947.

* During the war, church and similar bells were silenced, to be rung only as a warning of imminent invasion. Warning of air raids was given by sirens.

In July 1940 the War Office asked the College to take candidates for commissions in the Royal Engineers for short courses beginning in January 1941.

For the latter half of the war the West Lodge was the headquarters of the University Naval Division, which was formed to give part-time training to short course naval cadets who became matriculated members of the University and during their six months of residence worked for a University examination. A few ordinary undergraduates also joined the Naval Division.

Appendix C shows the number of students in residence before, during, and after the war. It had been the intention of the Governing Body that, as from October 1946, there should be 270 undergraduates and BAs until the post-war pressure was over. In the event there were 273 and a very high proportion were ex-servicemen, many of them having been members of the College before, or during, the war. This increase of about 50 over pre-war numbers was the utmost expansion which the College could take and was in accord with the relative increases of most other colleges. However it was intended to increase the numbers slightly for the next year to give places to as many ex-servicemen as possible and it will be seen from Appendix C that by 1948 the number had risen to 345. Unfortunately the College had to decline applications from hundreds of well qualified ex-servicemen and its resources were being strained to the uttermost to meet the need as far as possible.

As early in the war as November 1943 the American University Union had requested places for American ex-servicemen “after the defeat of Germany”. In July 1945 the College decided to admit ten American and Dominion students. There is no mention in the Governing Body minutes as to what pressure was brought to bear, as these admissions would have conflicted with the needs of the “hundreds of well-qualified ex-servicemen” referred to above.

Up to the outbreak of war, and to some extent during it, living conditions for students were little different from those in the First World War. After the war, living arrangements for students not only changed with the conversion of many sets to bedsits but with the provision by the kitchens of breakfast, lunch and dinner in Hall, instigated during the war, and continued afterwards. One of the less welcome effects of this change was to deny bedders* the pre-war perks of leftovers such as bread from undergraduate breakfasts and lunches.

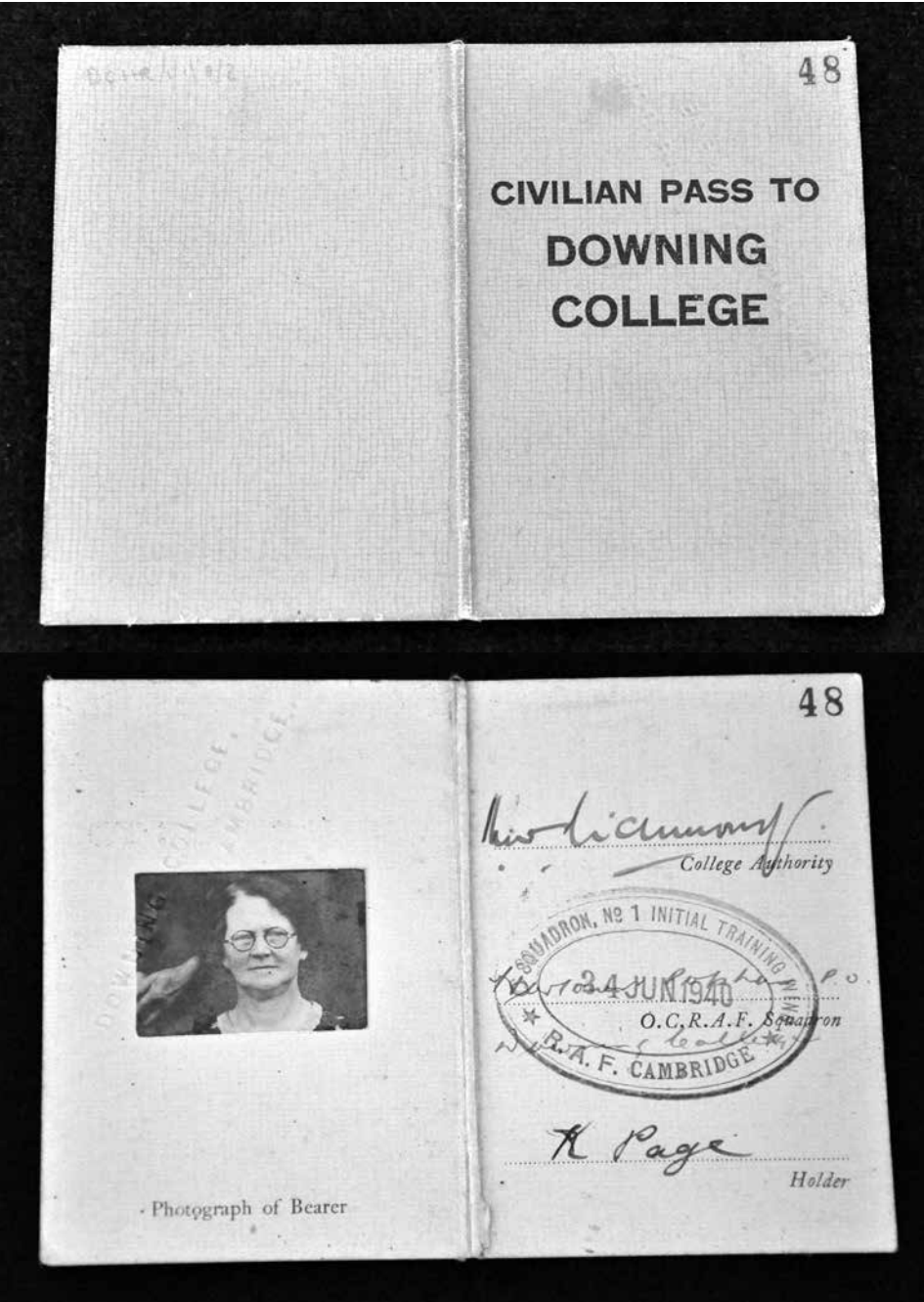
In the 1947 *Newsletter* is reprinted an article written by Mr Cuttle, Fellow, for the *Cambridge Review* shortly after the death of Admiral Richmond. In it he says “He [Richmond] had always felt strongly that young men at Cambridge ought to be well informed on foreign affairs, and among his most notable contributions to this object was a series of talks in the Junior Combination Room on the progress of the war. Of these the most memorable was given in the summer of 1940. After the war, the Amalgamation Club of the College wished that these lectures should be continued and extended, and known as “the Richmond Lectures” and the first visiting speaker, Lord Halifax, addressed the Club just over a week before Richmond’s death.”

THE COLLEGE – OTHER RESIDENTS

Although the College still functioned throughout the war in the academic sense, its buildings were also host to a large number of recruits to the RAF. They were, as members of Initial Training Wings, mostly men destined for flying training. In 1938 a major flying training school for the RAF Volunteer Reserve had been established by Marshall’s Flying School at Cambridge

* Bedders (bedmakers) were women employed by the College to clean rooms, make beds, wash up crockery and cutlery etc. In the later part of the 20th century such services became more limited and those providing them became known as Domestic Assistants.

and had trained over 600 new RAF pilots before the Battle of Britain commenced. In 1940 this school was changed to No 22 Elementary Flying Training School and became the largest in the country, one of a number run by Marshalls in various parts of the country. This school



College staff pass in the Second World War

increased in size and tempo so that by the end of the Second World War it had trained over 20,000 aircrew – pilots, observers and flying instructors. Some men were sent for flying training overseas, to Canada, the USA, South Africa and Rhodesia. Whilst in Downing these men were occupied with their RAF training activities but their presence, of course, coincided with the Fellows and undergraduates and they had joint use of dining, social and sports facilities. Some senior resident RAF officers were made High Table members and in turn some made gifts to the College, usually to the library. The RAF eventually left the College in March 1945.

THE COLLEGE – STAFF

In May 1940 the College decided to give kitchen staff a bonus of one week's wages for the Lent Term for the extra work generated by the presence of the RAF personnel and by January 1942 WAAF and RAF cooks were employed. In July 1941 the College paid Mr C Elsdon, the College Clerk, two lots of two week's wages on top of his normal pay prior to his joining the RAF. The Governing Body minutes of 31 July record its thanks for his public spirited services as a College air raid warden during several months of the previous year. Sadly, Mr Elsdon was killed in 1943, aged 21, and is buried in Cambridge City Cemetery. He is the only staff member whose name is on the War Memorial. Although, presumably, it has no direct connection with the war circumstances, it is interesting to note that in April 1942 the College gave the College Secretary, Mr Pate, a £30 (£1040 today) wedding present comprising a canteen of silver cutlery and some items of tableware.

THE COLLEGE – BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS

Most of what were then called “the old College buildings” (i.e. the West and East ranges) were requisitioned by the RAF very early in the war. The Governing Body minutes of October and November 1939 record the outcome of the Bursar's discussions with the Air Ministry on the financial arrangements in consequence of the RAF occupation. These amounted to £1,680 per annum for rent and rates, £653 for servants' wages, £300 for Hall, kitchen and buttery and £155 for wages of the boilerman. These were in line with a memorandum of October 1939 drawn up on behalf of the nine colleges used by the RAF. In addition, half the cost of measures against air attack was to be paid by the Air Ministry. The RAF were to have the use of the sports ground on three days a week and a dance was to be allowed in the JCR for members of the Boat Club and the RAF.

Over eighty Downing men were housed in the “new buildings” (i.e. the Baker buildings). It was indeed fortunate that these new buildings were available and that the College was able, while handing over the accommodation required by the authorities, to retain a large proportion of undergraduates in College.

In April 1940 the College sold the railings between the Paddock and the quadrangle for £73-2s-9d, part of a nationwide scheme to provide scrap to feed the steelmaking industry. In April 1942 the College “did not object to the removal of the railings between the Domus and the Downing site, provided that a substitute be provided”; the matter was referred to the RAF and the University Buildings Syndicate. There is no record of whether this action was pursued. In the 21st century many college and other buildings in Cambridge and elsewhere remain denuded of iron railings cut from low walls 70 years before.

In October 1940 eight bedrooms in J and K (now J and M) staircases were adapted as air raid shelters for undergraduates to sleep in “in the event of air raids becoming troublesome”. The restoration of the rooms to bedrooms was mooted in September 1944 but deferred in the November and eventually set for restoration in February 1945.

In 1942 one acre of the Paddock was allocated to food growing. That part of the Paddock on the east side, next to the Master’s garden, was dug up and used for growing vegetables. Apparently the RAF had an unorthodox way of planting in which they put rows of two different crops at right angles in the same plot! As in the garden of West Lodge, the past had left its reminders; coins were turned up, one of which belonged to the reign of William and Mary; so it had been struck when the College founder was a boy.

In the space between the Baker buildings, where the Chapel and adjacent staircases were to be completed in 1953, lodged a large steel static water tank, installed as in many places elsewhere, for emergency fire fighting.

For the latter half of the war the West Lodge was the headquarters of the University Naval Division which eventually moved out in September 1944. It left behind what was felt to be a somewhat unsightly hut in the College grounds near the Kenny gates, and it was hoped that the Admiralty would before long consent to its removal. However this hut remained until 1953 and had latterly been used by the Medical School. It was said to have been the warmest building in the College in winter!

During the period from 1939 to November 1943, when the last air raid took place, Cambridge had 424 air raid warnings and a total of 30 civilians were killed and 51 homes destroyed by bombing, but the College escaped any real bomb damage. Incendiary bombs fell on the night of 15/16 January 1941, one of which lodged between the roof and the ceiling of the Porter’s Lodge but fortunately proved to be a “dud”. On another occasion the blast from bombs which fell on Fenner’s broke one of the large window panes in the Hall – but this particular pane had been cracked for some years!

The RAF derequisitioned the old buildings in 1945; they had occupied nearly all of them throughout the war and the College then engaged in their redecoration and reconstruction. It was intended to convert many of the sets into bed-sitting rooms and in this way it was hoped to house about 70 men in the old buildings. However, the new buildings took only 44 men, and it was hoped that lodgings would be available in the town for the remainder. Town accommodation was, of course, a great difficulty, and it might have been necessary, as a last resort, to revert to the war-time practice of putting two men in each set in the new buildings.

THE COLLEGE ESTATES AT WAR

Since its foundation the College had owned a large amount of agricultural land in the west of Cambridgeshire which had formed part of the family estates of the Downings since the days of Charles II, when it was acquired by the first Baronet from whom it was handed down to the College’s Founder, his grandson, and later to the College.

The Estates Bursar, Mr John Hammond, wrote the following in *The Griffin* of Michaelmas Term 1943:

“To appreciate the situation on the College Estates at the outbreak of war, it should be remembered that from about 1922 onwards prices for agricultural products had collapsed. It was with the greatest difficulty that a living could be scraped from the land, and especially from Downing College land, which for the most part is difficult and expensive to work. The consequence of this was that little was spent on the land and much of it was allowed to fall down to poor grassland on which, although the returns were small, the expenditure was also small. Indeed about 250 acres or more could not be farmed at all and were allowed to return to primitive hawthorn bush thickets, as much of the surrounding land was and some still is.

When with the outbreak of war in 1939, the submarine began seriously to threaten the Nation’s food supplies, the Estates were called upon to grow food to their utmost capacity. To this call, all the tenants and their workmen, and Estates employees, responded nobly with the result that in the harvest of 1943 more human food, mainly in the shape of potatoes, wheat and other cereals, was produced than had ever been known to be produced there before. Estimates are difficult to make, but the amount was upwards of 20 times as much as was being produced by the same land when the war began. .

In the early stages of the war, before the great labour call-up, the Gamlingay Park sandy land which consisted largely of bush, bracken and broom, was taken in hand and cleared. The noted and historical quick-sands were tapped and drained. Scientific advice was obtained, which showed that the land was sterile mainly because it was acid, and so in the beginning it was sown with rye, a crop which will tolerate an acid soil. Later, tons of lime were applied to neutralise the acid and now even wheat has been grown on it with success. This year the old fish-ponds have been drained and await ploughing up and cropping in the spring.

On the heavy clay land of East Hatley, Croydon and Tadlow, with the advice and assistance of the War Agricultural Committee large areas have been thoroughly drained. Large grab-dredgers were used to lower the main water courses and streams several feet in order to prevent flooding and waterlogging of the fields in winter. Cable-driven mole ploughs were pulled by steam and diesel engines through the clay soil at a depth of some two feet, leaving a channel by which the water was drained from the soil into pipes and ditches. Water moving through the soil in this way brought in air, which enabled the roots of the crops to penetrate deeply in winter and so withstand the summer drought. High powered imported American tractors were purchased by the tenants and these completed the process of soil rejuvenation by deep autumn ploughing. Dressings of phosphate, in which this clay soil is deficient, then acted like a charm to fill the ears of corn with grain and to encourage clovers and beans to draw nitrogen from the air and so enrich the soil.

Before the war, about seventy per cent of the Estates consisted of poor grassland and the fields were surrounded by high impenetrable hedges of up to fifteen yards across. The grassland was ploughed up and crops were grown, so that now over eighty per cent of the land is under cultivation. The hedges had to be cut down to let in light and air, and by this time labour was difficult to obtain. In the days before the undergraduate was called upon to fill up all his spare time in training for the Services, lorries were to be seen leaving the College gates each morning during vacation for the Estates, where gallant but thoroughly

chilled squads did much destruction to the hedges and bushes, and a certain amount also to their implements of destruction. At a later stage of the war, gangs of Italian prisoners of war completed the work and tackled the worst job of all – the hawthorn thickets. The tops of the bushes were cut off about a yard from the ground, a chain put round their stems and affixed to a caterpillar tractor and they were yanked from the earth and burnt. The land was then broken up by a Gyrotiller – the battleship of agricultural implements – which churned up the roots from the soil. The extra crops called for much extra labour for harvesting and this was met not only by Land Army girls and Italian prisoners of war, but also by the employment of combine-harvesters from America, which not only cut but also thresh and put the grain into sacks. In addition to the corn and vegetables grown, various exotic crops, such as giant sunflowers for oil seed and field cucumbers, have also made their appearance.

The woodlands on the Estates have also played their part in the war effort. Upwards of 2,000 trees have been felled to supply timber and so lighten the work of the Merchant Navy. The lop and top from the trees have also been most useful when sawn into neat logs, samples of which may now be seen in College, in saving coal supplies.

At the present time a new drive is taking place to increase the number and improve the quality of the livestock, for, with a world shortage of animal products in view during the next few years, this will be a nursery for the continuance of our milk and meat supplies. The War effort on the Estates will have to continue for some years after actual hostilities cease if the nation is to have all the food it requires”.

Ironically, in 1945, the College sold almost the whole of its west Cambridgeshire estate comprising fifteen farms and some cottages, smallholdings and woodlands on over four thousand acres. The College took the advice of the economist Lord Keynes, then a Fellow and former Bursar of King's College; the financial advantage of selling the estate was so obvious that the Governing Body did not feel justified in keeping it. The sale realised in the region of £76,000 (a 2010 cash equivalent of something over £2 million; in 2010 the land would have had a value of some £20 million). It was with regret and only after considerable hesitation that this decision was taken but the College took some pleasure in that all the farms except one were bought by the existing tenants. The College did, however, retain the advowson of the livings of Tadlow and East Hatley, as well as the reading room at Croydon, and the tie between the College and these villages was not, therefore, entirely broken.

WARTIME AND POSTWAR MEMORIES

A significant number of Downing men who were resident before, during and immediately after the war are still alive at the time this book is being written and one of the authors, Gwyn Bevan, undertook to approach as many as possible by letter, telephone, e-mail or personal visit to obtain their recollections of their experiences of College life and beyond. Widows and children have contributed in some cases on behalf of the deceased. A few contributions are taken from the *Association Newsletter*, some of which are now posthumous, as well as reports from *Magenta News* in *Dow @ Cam*. We reproduce these recollections here bearing in mind that the passage of time can render memories somewhat volatile but we believe the results on the whole represent a broad and realistic picture of life in the years from 1939 to 1947 after which the College functions began to return to something equivalent to, if not the same as, pre-war years. A small amount of editing has been done, but not such as to change the overall stories. The contributions are set out in the order of the members' matriculation dates and within each year in alphabetical order. As these descriptions are mainly of events early in these men's adult lives and are not intended as biographies or obituaries we have omitted titles which they may have subsequently received.

We have shown the contributors' own words in italics and other accounts in plain text. Contributors who were deceased at the time of going to press are marked by a †.

An alphabetical list of contributors appears in Appendix B.

CHARLES L HEANLEY† (1925)

Although he has left a detailed account of his growing up years and some information on his peace-time medical work, little has been recorded about his wartime activities. His son, Dr Robert Heanley, has been able to help. It began in 1940 when he was asked to take a close support surgical unit to France. In the chaos of the retreat to Dunkirk, he and another Medical Officer, Bill Tucker, tossed a coin for who would remain with the wounded and be taken prisoner. Charles won and came back via the beaches. Fate was not ultimately unkind to Bill; he had friends in high places and benefited from a prisoner exchange, returning safely to England some time later.

Then with a surgical/plastic unit, service followed in India and Burma where initiative and flexibility were paramount: colleagues describe his work throughout his career as remarkable in terms of its range, innovation and speed. Adroitness in earlier days was very important in relation to the short operating opportunity which the unsophisticated anaesthetic techniques of the times provided. His unit was based for two years in northeast India and dealt with facial injuries, burns, skin grafting and reconstruction surgery. It also took in local problems of abdominal and obstetric surgery. He remarked on seeing the gratifying effectiveness on tetanus infections of the small quantities of penicillin which were occasionally available. Also in short supply were glass eyes; this was overcome by having a dental surgeon manufacture substitutes out of acrylic materials.

He died in 2009, aged 102.

LESLIE SOUTHWELL (1927)

Downing is fortunate to have its oldest member capable of remembering and recounting his wartime experiences with such a sound appreciation of the significance of events, and with such clarity.

He came up at a time when things were happening in the world which soon were to have great significance. It was the year in which the ban on Hitler's public speaking was lifted and, for example, it was also the year in which oil was found in Iraq. He read English and French in which he was sufficiently fluent to feel that he could pass as a Frenchman should the need arise. During his early teaching career he spent an action packed period with his wife in Amiens and neighbouring countries bringing about exchange of pupils and teachers from several prestigious schools and colleges. The outbreak of war obliged him to return home. His war related experiences then began; this is how he recorded them.

In the summer of 1941, being aged 33, I realised that I should soon be receiving call-up papers (a junior assistant grammar-school master was not in a "reserved occupation"). Wishing to exert some control over the use of my services I responded to a written invitation to apply for a commission in the RAF. As I was over 30 years old I was considered to be too old to start flying training, but at that time being well able to pass as a Frenchman, in answer to a question I expressed preference for the Intelligence section. In due course I was bidden to report to the RAF base at Uxbridge. To help meet the shortage of Cipher Officers I was to follow a fortnight's course on codes and ciphers at Headington near Oxford after which I should very soon be sent to the Middle East. Cyprus was specified but in the event I was deposited in Egypt.

I was issued with 'Advice to Officers'. It must have been drawn up in the 19th century to meet the needs of Officers and Gentlemen – who had perhaps bought their commissions. We were bidden to obtain a solid cabin trunk, two full-dress uniforms (in the Middle East we wore either battledress or khaki shorts and shirts), camp bed (canvas top, collapsible wooden frame), canvas washbasin with folding stand, small metal collapsible drinking cup (suitable for whisky (!) still available, never used, glasses always could be found) and I forget what else. After a few months I sent my trunk home full of gifts for my wife and a number of the above items which I had replaced with more suitable and necessary things. Thence forward I used a kit bag, bed-roll and a smallish box which I had had made.

We sailed in convoy on a month's voyage around the Cape and up to Suez, mooring briefly in harbour at Freetown and Capetown, being allowed ashore at the latter. On board SS. Strathnaver, alongside her sister Strathmore, both of the P&O cruise line, for officers, accommodation, catering etc. was as if in peacetime even though this was two years after the start of the war. A cabin was shared with one other and there was steward service of lavish meals in the First Class Dining Room. The main occupations were deck quoits, jogging around the deck for exercise and lying on one's bunk listening to an NCO outside the porthole lecturing the Other Ranks – one might hear: "We will examine the rifle. This is the stock. 'Ere we 'ave the barrel. The barrel goes from 'ere to 'ere. We will now examine the functioning of the safety ketch ... etc., etc." Embarrassed when in my turn I went below to 'inspect' the Other Ranks' Quarters putting the routine question – "any complaints?" Conditions merited complaints, but there never were any.

Early on, when well out into the Atlantic, unwanted destroyer activity suggested a submarine threat; otherwise the voyage was uneventful: so different from the Battle of Britain! In Egypt I was put in charge of a Special Liaison Unit with 'Ultra', (this linked with naval work in Taranto and later US Air Force duties in London). Deciphering could be tedious and must be carried out with the utmost circumspection. Where wireless telegraphy was used (that is Morse Code), atmospheric interference or a poor operator could

pose problems which demanded examination of all possibilities. Jumping to the wrong conclusions could be calamitous. For example, lacking the precise definition offered by today's techniques, when presented with the word 'DEFENSIVE', should the first two letters be 'DE' or 'OF'? I was lucky enough to realise that an officer had not achieved the precision necessary and was able to review and resolve the matter.

To give an experience of flying as it might be under operational conditions, I was invited on a practice flight in a twin-engined Bristol Beaufighter over the Canal Zone. With its normal crew of two, as passenger I was crouched uncomfortably on a ledge behind them as if squashed into a small two-seater car. Soon we ran into a sand-storm which my imagination compared with charging at full speed in a taxi through a London pea-souper of yesteryear. Throughout the trip I had noticed a small winking red light on the dash board. I learned later that before coming in to land the pilot had called up base asking "Is my undercarriage down?" When told 'No' he therefore pulled over the lever for the landing gear and landed...on one wheel. We slewed round, tilted to one side, one propeller hit the ground and the cabin filled with smoke. The crew leaped out. My bulky parachute did not allow me to clamber over the front seats and I could not exert enough force to release it. One of the crew reached in and succeeded in doing so. Miraculously there was no fire despite the strong smell of petrol. I was told 'You were very lucky to have a very good pilot'. I reflected that he would have been even a better one if he had consulted the flying tower after he had pulled the landing gear lever – not before!

Enemy activity was closer at hand when I returned to England in time to be within the range of the V1s and V2s. Throughout the war my wife at home had been in the greatest danger and in the earliest days before my call-up we had watched London burning from our home to the west. Cycling through north London on one occasion I passed wrecked houses and saw a corpse draped over an exposed main roof beam. My services abroad had kept me from home and my family for three years. From the age of four my son had enjoyed life with his mother and widowed grandmother playing one off against the other at will. Soon after my return he said to my wife 'I don't think that I much care for that man, do you?' When she answered 'Yes, I do rather', his retort was 'I'm afraid I don't agree with you'. This would be regarded in today's Nanny State as a huge tragedy. During WWII hundreds of thousands of people had to accept and deal with events and tragedies which would appear to be beyond the appreciation and understanding of many of today's populace.

As my service was centred on effective code cracking, I will mention a little about Bletchley Park which contributed so much to its success. I was recruited into the Special Liaison Units by a man under whom I had earlier worked, F S Winterbotham, author of 'The Ultra Secret' which describes how the Bletchley Units worked. Their results allowed information from the signals between top ranking German officers to be distributed to commanders in the field. I will make only the following comment.



Leslie Southwell's Civil Defence pass in 1950

One reads the fulsome praise of those in the know at Bletchley Park who never let the secret leak out. Those in the Special Liaison Units attached to Command Headquarters all over the world, self-effacing and outwardly appearing to be of little importance, never had the satisfaction of explaining their importance: they have never been recognised. This is illustrated by the low ranks given to very senior people engaged in this work. Winterbotham was Chief of the Air Department of the Secret Intelligence Service from 1930 to 1945 and even he never was given a rank above Group Captain.

Ranks wearing more gold braid would not have been able to visit and inspect the many small units without attracting attention and stirring up inquisitiveness. At my own level, soon after the war, interviewed by a civilian appointments board I was asked what I had been doing in the RAF I had to reply that I was not permitted to reveal this. A lady with a deadly sweet smile leaned forward – “Are you permitted to reveal what rank you attained?” I replied ‘Flight lieutenant’. Eye-brows rose, eye-lids drooped, head tilted ...all indicative of ‘ten a penny!’

Post Script: With the war over it had been tempting to think that robust peace would be ensured. But the fear of the return of aggressive violence led to the organisation of defensive measures. We know that Winston Churchill envisaged war with Russia if action by the USSR threatened oil supplies. It comes as something of a jolt to remember that in 1950 I found myself enrolling again. We received training in resuscitation and counter gas precautions, etc.

PETER B C KING (1928)

Peter King was born in the year Bleriot flew the Channel, the time when the new means of travelling by air and land were being pioneered and this was significant in terms of his subsequent interests and activities. His life spanned two world wars. He remembers the outbreak of World War 1 and the uncertainty of the times, having as little idea as his seniors what this would mean. What he did remember was being rushed down to the cellars of a holiday hotel in Hunstanton when zeppelins flew overhead to bomb Kings Lynn.

He came up to Downing in 1928 to read Engineering, joining the Cavalry Squadron of the OTC. He learned to fly at Marshall's airfield. After graduating he started an apprenticeship at Vickers in Barrow-in-Furness which saw him involved with a large diesel engine to go into a submarine under construction in the yard. Transfer to Vickers at Dartford brought work on anti-aircraft predictors – the pre-radar technology. Moving into the aircraft industry took him to Reading with Phillips & Powis. Their Chief Designer, Fred Miles, left them to spawn his own family of aircraft and in 1935 Peter bought a Miles Hawk monoplane.

What better way to gild the memories of a very active 1930s than to take a round the world ticket in the ‘Empress of Britain’, a gift from his mother? This, rather ominously, gave him his first glimpse of the Far East. On returning home, growing shadows led him to take a commission in the Territorial Army in the 78th AA Regiment.

He was mobilised just before the outbreak of war in 1939 and early duties were with semi-mobile 3-inch anti-aircraft guns which seemed to make sensible use of his knowledge and experience. He volunteered for service overseas and was soon in charge of transport with the 2nd AA Regiment, HKS RA – in Singapore. Then life changed so completely. After the fall of Singapore, he spent nearly a year in Changi Gaol before being taken in a box-truck to Bangkok then to various jungle camps and put to work on the Burma-Siam railway. During this time he suffered from the almost obligatory malaria, dysentery, jaundice and beriberi and atrocious treatment at the hands of his captors. The atom bomb thankfully ended the war in the Far East quickly – repatriation was however on a slow, slow ship. His return was to a very different life from what had gone before through farming in different Norfolk locations. He retired when he was 88 years old but even now takes an interest in the farm at Bylaugh Old Hall in a rewarding environment in rural Norfolk beside the meadows of the River Wensum. He visited Downing in early 2010, his first visit since 1931, and found that the famed Ackerman print of Downing bore a closer relationship to what he remembered than contemporary illustrations.

PETER MURSELL[†] (1932)

Peter wrote some years ago with much modesty, ascribing his knighthood as related to county political work and his war flying activity as out of the front line. He flew with the Air Transport Auxiliary delivering combat aircraft to operational stations. Further positions were in the organisational side of these activities.

JOHN BELLAMY (1933)

John Bellamy read Mathematics and graduated as one of Downing's five Wranglers in his year. After three years teaching, he joined the Royal Navy in 1939 and remained in the service until 1970, retiring as a rear admiral. His early service was in the light cruiser *Dauntless*. It had been built in 1916 and was not really up to the task of keeping the Far Eastern trade routes clear of German raiders. John considers that it was fortunate that none was encountered, as the outcome would probably not have been favourable. However, they did intercept German merchant shipping off Batavia (now Jakarta).

In 1942, having gained invaluable experience in seamanship, he returned to the King Alfred establishment in Hove, where he directed intensive training in navigation, which he found a very satisfying experience. His pupils generally became sufficiently competent to be promoted and assume, typically, navigation duties in frigates in the North Atlantic. He remembers regularly mustering at 0500 hours to take star sightings and again at noon taking sightings on the sun. The latitude of the site remains burned into his memory – 59° 49' north.

His later and last service at sea was in the carrier *Ark Royal*, after which he spent most of his time at the Admiralty.

ALAN LITHERLAND (1933)

I'm a bit hazy about the order of things, but in the early stages of the war I was unemployed and looked round for temporary jobs that would hopefully be useful. For a time I worked one day a week delivering the local free weekly newspaper to all the houses in Bramhall – about 90 I think. It was a long day – people in Bramhall have long drives! I also remember being a night-time volunteer at Burnage Babies' Hospital, though how long this lasted I don't know. Our only job was to be there, and to carry the babies to the shelter in the event of an air raid. There were no air raids while I was there.

A more substantial job was as a full-time fire-watcher at Manchester Cathedral. There were four of us, patrolling in shifts, the other three being boys under military age. The cathedral had already been badly damaged, one end having been demolished by a landmine. The organ pipes were impressively laid out on the floor, and I discovered a removable floor panel which revealed steps leading down to a sort of crypt containing coffins and skeletons. I also spent a lot of time reading the book of Jeremiah in the big pulpit bible. For patrolling the roof we were equipped with a bucket and great big asbestos gloves for handling incendiary bombs. There were no air raids while I was there – I think Liverpool was getting them instead. I remember paying the boys ten shillings each to let me have three days off to get married.

In due course officialdom caught up with me, and the Stockport magistrate sentenced me to 12 months in prison for refusing to join the army. On appeal this was reduced to a nominal three months, which meant two months actually spent in Strangeways prison – a very short time but long enough for me!

I well remember my first day, which was spent, with other new boys, in a special wing, picking fibre – I think it was coir (coconut), probably for mattresses. Very sensibly, I was allocated to the library, along with two

other conscientious objectors. I think we were allowed out for one hour each day: walking round the prison yards, single-file, no speaking. In those days there was only one man per cell and we spent our evenings in our cells – with more fibre-picking. I have little recollection of meals, but I do remember eating mushy Iceland cod with a spoon from a large aluminium container.

Coming out was a very special “liberation” experience, on a lovely May morning, but I still had the problem of finding a job as a chemist, which was not war-work. Eventually I was offered a job by a man in London who held the office of Public Analyst for several London boroughs – I think it was four – and also Reading. He said “I can’t pay you much but I’ll make a chemist of you”.

My wife and I moved to a top-floor flat in London, from which we had a splendid view southwards over a large open space. By this time the main bombing of London was over but we experienced the V1s and, later, the V2s. The V1s were crude, pilot-less aircraft which flew low until the fuel ran out, then dropped and exploded. We were outside their range, so we could watch them coming over and blowing up property further south. The V2s were ballistic missiles and, because their speed was faster than sound, you never heard them coming and could do nothing about it. One of these exploded some distance from our flat and I saw the window suddenly shoot inwards without breaking. A lot of plaster fell from the ceilings, and we rushed to the next room to see how our small daughter was. She was sleeping peacefully in her cot next to the wall, but there was a big pile of rubble in the middle of the room, where she had been a few days earlier. When the expert came to inspect the damage, he just pushed the window back into its place, unharmed.

Work in the laboratory was interesting and varied. We received official samples from the London boroughs, and private samples or requests from all sorts of people. Official samples were usually boring, but I remember that all samples of spirits had to be tested by the boss himself, because it might be necessary to report the results in court. Soft drinks were fairly frequent, and we tested these for the presence of lead. For this purpose it was necessary to add one millilitre of ten percent potassium cyanide, which we sucked up with a pipette that was simply a straight glass tube – a practice which would be strictly forbidden these days! I remember one analyst who accidentally sucked it into his mouth: he spat it out and rinsed with lots of water, and the only ill effect he suffered was a sore tongue. I remember receiving a sample which I think was official – a piece of wedding cake. I analysed it, I think, for sugar and fat, to make sure that they did not exceed the amounts allowed by wartime regulations!

Unofficial requests were often frustrating because the necessary materials were not obtainable in wartime. I was asked to make a soap substitute, but I was unable to produce anything satisfactory. And someone brought a liquid he had got from America, with which we blew lovely bubbles all over the library. Again, I couldn’t get the right materials to copy it.

There must have been many other interesting items – but it was a long time ago

ERIC RONALD WHITE† (1933)

He read Modern Languages and Law; after qualifying as a solicitor he volunteered for the RAF. His ability with languages took him to teaching Polish recruits to speak English until he was commissioned and drafted into intelligence work. An important part of his duties was to debrief bomber aircrews after their missions. In his subsequent peacetime career it was claimed by his peers that he was the best Justices’ Clerk ever.

JOHN J WILD[†] (1933)

He came up to Downing to read Natural Sciences and Medicine. Alongside the work there was play, too. Ever energetic, he proved in fact to be rather over active in a Cambridge student Rag Week event and was arrested.

His early medical career was at University College Hospital in London which extended into most of the war years. What may be described as a formative experience occurred when the blast from a V2 rocket buried him under debris for over twelve hours. It is not surprising that this experience quickened his interest in developing ways to relieve abdominal extension in bomb blast victims. At a more humble level, his inventive talents spurred him to develop a producer-gas unit which allowed him to run his Harley-Davidson motor cycle and side-car from charcoal, which was one of the few fuels available in wartime Britain. Eventually this arrangement was banned but, as he had obtained prior approval, he was allowed to continue with its use.

In 1944 he was the first to grow *trichomonas vaginalis* in pure culture and clarify its method of infection in humans. He was called up later in that year and became a captain in the Royal Army Medical Corps serving in Northern Europe. Most of his work was in venereology and he treated many hundreds of British and American personnel.

He extended his work on emigrating to the USA in 1946 where his active research programmes continued until he was in his nineties. By many he was considered to be the ‘father’ of modern diagnostic medical ultrasound which allowed examination of soft tissue structures and injuries.

ALAN BERENDS (1934)

Alan recounts that, from the summer of 1936, the view generally held in Cambridge was that war with Germany was inevitable. Reading French and German had almost patriotic overtones. A brief teaching career ended by him accelerating his call-up to the Military Police.

During his initial service as an NCO in Field Security his CO was the later notorious Anthony Blunt. After Dunkirk and being commissioned at Sandhurst he joined a Signal Intelligence Unit and served through Normandy and into Germany by the war’s end. Then further sensitive and varied work followed in the establishment of GCHQ, with tours of duty to Washington, Germany, Ottawa and Melbourne, where he now lives. In the College library is a copy of his book *Chasing the Enigma*, which enlarges on his work monitoring German radio nets and extracting the Enigma cipher messages for Bletchley Park. In a recent letter he wrote that “neither activity provided any opportunity for dashing ‘exploits’ which could be of interest to the College”.

After the war he was sent to the British Embassy in Washington to re-establish the wartime “special relationship”. At that time both British and American teams were scouring Germany for information on German research in nuclear and rocket technology. In this general area the late Downing alumnus Martin Krasny (1936) may have figured; Alan remembers him at Downing. Krasny’s involvement with another intelligence officer, Captain Stephen Norman (born Stephan Neumann), remains a field of speculation. It was headline news on both sides of the Atlantic when Norman committed suicide in Washington, jumping from a balcony in front of rush-hour crowds in circumstances that were regarded at the time as very mysterious, although it is now believed that he killed himself on hearing that both his parents had died in Teresienstadt concentration camp.

JOHN WILKINSON[†] (1934)

John Wilkinson read Classics and when visited (on two occasions) his continuing lively interest in history soon emerged. Living in Kingston, 10 miles west of Cambridge, he accounted for its name in terms of Saxon 'kings' who established themselves in East Anglia in the 5th century. His wartime itinerary whilst not planned with sight-seeing in mind, took him through lands which must have afforded him rich interest; he fought from Alamein through North Africa, into Europe via Sicily and up through Italy to Trieste. With his Corps he had sailed at high speed from the Clyde in the *Queen Mary* in 1942. Their passage was round the Cape of Good Hope into the Red Sea, thence by way of Cairo to become a Desert Rat in the Western Desert.

His academic background led to him serving in Signals and his description of his role sought to downplay the importance of his activities. Having recorded the experiences of Leslie Southwell (1927) above, it seems to be possible that as a 'Signals Security Officer' he was one of the links from Bletchley Park which brought the plans of high ranking German officers to the attention of those who were directing our own operations. He continually implied that there was a tale to tell but it remained untold.

He served with the 7th Armoured Division starting with the great Alamein tank battle which gave a much needed boost to the morale of our country and its fighting units. It was the first event to make the winning of the war seem to be a possibility rather than a mere daunting aspiration.

The war over, he married a remarkable Girtonian who had worked at Bletchley Park.

KENNETH J CHARROT (1935)

Having read natural sciences then geography, Kenneth graduated in 1939 and began a teaching career which lasted initially for a few weeks, enough time to organise the evacuation of his school's children from Ilford to Ipswich. He then presented himself to the Joint Recruiting Board to carry out what he considered to be more appropriate wartime work. The chairman of the Board was none other than the then Master of Downing. Choice was offered of meteorology at airfields or service in Signals, which he chose, rising to major in the 81st West African Division.

It was surprising to hear that tens of thousands of native West African troops fought in Burma. Their transport to the Far East was via Capetown where, because of the colour of their skins, they were not allowed into even the Cathedral for worship. A suitable alternative building was commandeered and Kenneth described how soldiers were able to worship together – roughly one third each of Christian, Muslim and Animist persuasion.

A feature of the wondrous five day train journey across India from Deolali (of madness fame) to Calcutta was that the train guards asked where they would like to stop en route. Places were chosen where the troops could play football! When subsequently in Burma the main deployment was in the Kaladan Valley where supplies were flown in by ever faithful DC3s. Despite the rugged terrain only one aircraft crashed; its fall was cushioned by a quarter-mile glide through thick bamboo which wrecked the aircraft but prevented there being any casualties. Many other experiences are recorded in a memoir that he wrote. With his son, he revisited Burma recently.

JOHN FOLEY (1935)

John Foley was born before the end of World War I and through study at Downing from 1935, qualified at the outbreak of World War II at the London Hospital. When in the role of Casualty Officer at the Nottingham General he was conscripted in 1942 into the RAMC with the 61st Field Regiment at Aldershot. Duties in the UK followed in Northern Ireland then Northumberland and Kent by which time he was ranked a captain.

On D+16 in 1944 he sailed from Tilbury and was soon in Caen. The following months took him through the heavy fighting in France, Belgium and Holland and he remembers with sad regret that many of his regiment's casualties were suffered as a result of inaccurate bombing by B25 Mitchell bombers. On the termination of the war in Europe and in preparation for the final assaults in the Far East, he was sent to India and via Delhi to a Field Hospital in Bangalore. The next move was to have been to Burma but the atomic assault on the two Japanese cities made this further build up in the East unnecessary. Perhaps the B29 Superfortresses involved to some extent made up for the inaccuracies of their colleagues in Europe earlier. He therefore was spared further live military activity and injury and was pleased to have avoided the possible sufferings of so many in the Far East of becoming a badly treated prisoner of war. He then began his return to the UK, but an infection delayed this and he was hospitalised in Egypt for a mastoid operation to be carried out. His wife Joan was a theatre sister and has pointed out that before the development of effective antibiotics, this operation was not uncommon – children were prone to ear infections and so often the operation was performed on young patients.

His subsequent medical career was as a neurologist in which he practised until his retirement at the age of 70. Regrettably he was registered blind after 17 years of retirement and is now very deaf. These notes have been made possible through the careful help and pride of his wife Joan and his eldest daughter.

RONALD FISHER[†] (1936)

Ronald Fisher came to Downing in 1936 and read natural sciences as the usual precursor to medicine. His *Daily Telegraph* obituary of 2007 tells of a post-war career in which he pioneered the Macmillan Nursing Service and chaired an expert committee reporting to the Council of Europe. His services in cancer relief were recognised world-wide. During the war he served in the RNVR as a surgeon, at first aboard the rescue ship *Zamalek* on the Arctic convoys for which he received the Arctic Star. As medical officer he later carried out duties in Indonesia at the naval base of Surabaya.

HAROLD HARGREAVES (1936)

Coming up to Downing to read natural sciences, he graduated in time to begin war work in armaments at Woolwich Arsenal, then later at Imperial College under the Ministry of Supply.

J D M MACKAY[†] (1936)

His daughter Pamela has sent notes of his life from his memoirs. After reading mechanical sciences and graduating in 1938, his career in engineering started at £2-10s per week. When war came he enlisted in the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers, (REME). After basic officer training he was posted to the Indian Army, and spent the rest of the war out there. At first his duties were

in various jungle camps and later at Mountbatten's Headquarters in Calcutta and then Ceylon. His later career took him to the ICI Nobel Division and later nuclear power generation.

JOHN COATES† (1937)

John read French and German and on graduating had a varied and unusual war. Having registered as a conscientious objector, he was called up to the RAMC in 1940. Subsequently deciding, as he put it, that what he thought of as his conscience probably wasn't a conscience at all and that, if he were going to be in the army, he might as well be in a combatant unit, so he applied for transfer and was posted to the Somerset Light Infantry and from there to the OCTU at Bulford. Whilst at Bulford he was selected for the Intelligence Corps, mainly because of his very good German. Many intensive courses followed (including one on interrogation back in Cambridge) before he was posted to Northern Ireland.

A chance conversation on a train while going home on leave led to an impromptu interview with Lord Mountbatten, then Chief of Combined Operations, and to him volunteering for the Commandos. He was given the task of helping to form a new Commando, No 10, which consisted of nine different nationalities and was stationed in North Wales.

Once No 10 Commando was formed and ready for action, Coates, himself seeking more active service, got himself transferred to No 30 Commando Assault Unit, based in the Mediterranean. After a complex journey via Lisbon (in civilian clothes), Fez, Algiers and Sicily, he caught up with them in southern Italy. He was stationed on the island of Ischia with another officer and a small troop of men, and then in Corsica where they acted in support of a Special Operations Executive Unit. Part of the work consisted of capturing German equipment of technical interest before it could be destroyed.

Back in Italy and impatient once again for action, he applied for a transfer to SOE and was posted to the Hungarian Section, based in southern Italy. After an explorative detachment to the Papuk mountains in Yugoslavia to help the Hungarian resistance, he was parachuted in September 1944 into occupied Hungary (in full uniform) at the head of a three-man mission consisting of himself and two Canadian Hungarians. They fell into a trap, were caught, interrogated brutally and imprisoned. Managing to keep the true nature of their mission from their captors, they escaped after three months. John was hidden by a family for a week on the outskirts of Budapest, from where he reported to an advance Red Army patrol. He was evacuated by the Russians to Bucharest, and although he sought action once more in the attack on Budapest, they gradually took him further back down the lines. For his action he was later awarded the DSO.

In spring 1945 he was posted to Prague, then back to Budapest to wind up SOE's commitments there; finally he joined the Control Commission in Germany. After the war he came back to Cambridge to take his doctorate.

In 1946 John married Bobbie (Norma Stuart Bishop), herself a flight officer in the WAAF, and sons were born in 1948 and 1957. They had met when both were serving in North Wales.

ROBERT MEYERHOF (1937)

As a German citizen, he came up in 1937 to read modern and mediaeval languages but after graduating in two years he left to join his father who had emigrated to the USA the year previously. When America came into the war he had a problem with his nationality; on trying to

join the armed forces as he was classed as an 'enemy alien'. However the pen became an agent of the sword when he was successful in obtaining three letters of recommendation from members of his Sierra Ski Club. As a result he was able to serve with the ski-troops in the 10th Mountain Division in Italy as a combat medic. In the fighting over a three year period he was awarded the Bronze Star and a Divisional Citation.

BOB ALAN RUSSELL (1938)

I started to read natural sciences but the war interfered with my studies and I joined the army. I was commissioned as 2nd Lieutenant Royal Northumberland Fusiliers serving in Europe with the 7th Battalion but requested a transfer to the Indian Army who were facing a Japanese attack on Singapore and Burma. My request was granted and I sailed from Scotland on the converted Dutch liner Bosevain, landing in Bombay three weeks later, having stopped off in Capetown en route. It was on this voyage that I shared a cabin with Captain Archie Wavell, the son of General Wavell, and we became firm friends.

Immediately after landing in India I was sent to Mhow, an Indian Army officer's training barracks, and underwent an intensive course in Urdu, a general language spoken by the Indian Army. On completion I was posted as a full Lieutenant to the 9th JAT Regimental Centre in Bareilly near Lucknow for service with the JAT Regiment machine gun battalion, destined for action against the Japanese forces threatening Burma.

I eventually left Mhow by train, arriving in Bareilly after two days. I was met by the Adjutant of the Centre and taken to the Mess for breakfast – a different world. The Mess was full of elderly majors having breakfast in complete silence. On asking one elderly officer what one normally had for breakfast, he replied, "mainly curried rice and pink gin." Such was life then but things soon changed considerably, for India was now at war. Most of the senior Indian Army officers, whose duties had consisted mainly of dealing with problems on the North West Frontier, were retired and shipped home.

The Regimental Centre became the first step of training and for transfer of fully trained soldiers to all the JAT Battalions which were already in action in both the Middle East and Burma. Being a trained Vickers machine gunner, I served as a captain for a year in the Specialist Training Battalion (Machine Guns and Mortars). In 1942, the machine gun battalion returned to the Centre to be brought up to strength and to train in new automatic weapons – the 4.2 inch mortar and the greatly improved Vickers machine gun – as well as automatic small arms. The battalion was stationed just outside Bareilly for approximately a year. This was one of the happiest years I spent and was a good time for both men and officers, the latter being able to relax most evenings and go to the Bareilly Club. All very relaxed.

With the onset of the Japanese advance into Burma in 1943, and the outstanding defeats it inflicted on the British army in the Rangoon area (Mankkdaw and Kalewa) and its rapid, almost unstoppable successes in western areas of the Kabaw Valley at Indaw, Phanta and Sittagong, the JAT Regimental Centre speeded up their recruitment and training of recruits, particularly for the machine gun battalion which had returned to Bareilly from over three years in Burma. The battalion was to be issued with heavy 4.2 inch mortars, Bren machine guns, more modern Vickers machine guns and new vehicles.

The battalion arrived at the Centre in early 1943 and was stationed just outside the cantonment. Having just been posted to the battalion I was indeed fortunate to soon get to know and form very strong friendships with both my brother officers and the Jawans (new recruits) who were to form my company. I also had the opportunity to perfect my knowledge of their standards, beliefs and abilities as well as becoming fluent in Urdu.

Towards the end of 1943 we received orders to join the allied corps stationed in and around Imphal. The battalion went by train to Calcutta and thence through Nagaland, Kohima and down to Imphal by

road. I was put in charge of the battalion transport and was supported by two officers, Lieutenant Squier and Lieutenant Eales. Our transport of some fifteen medium weight lorries carried the battalion armaments. The route was along the Great Trunk Road via Lucknow, Gorakhpur, Benares, Patna, Bhalgalpur, Krishnamager and Calcutta. A week was spent in Calcutta for servicing, repairs and replacements, then on through Bangladesh to Silghat where we spent two days stationed on a tea estate. Thence on to Kohima, finally reaching Imphal where we were stationed with the rest of the battalion at a small village on the outskirts of the town at Wanging.

The battalion dug in to a strong defensive position as the Japanese had continued the offensive and our 12 (Black Cat) Division had been forced to retreat from Kalemmyo to Tiddim on the Kalemmyo/Imphal road. They had moved along the Chindwin River towards Sittagong and were threatening Tamu and Palel in the Bishenpur area.

Having dug our battalion defensive positions in Imphal, further orders were given to move the battalion up the Tiddim Road to form the 15th Division near Tiddim which had been forced to retreat. The battalion set off but was unable to reach the division as the Japanese had cut the road. Further orders were received to move to a large hill feature which was already under attack. Having dropped off two companies en route, the one remaining company, commanded by myself, attacked at milestone 109 killing the Japanese commander. We continued on until we reached the peak of the hill where we dug in. A mortar company was deployed at the base of the hill to give fire power over our troops who were manning the fortified perimeter of the summit and explosives were laid immediately in front of the position. Patrols were made around the enemy positions and a prisoner was captured. He gave us valuable information on Japanese troop numbers and defences which we then mortared heavily during the day.

Three days later, after a number of other skirmishes, a fierce Japanese attack began at 3.00 am. Heavy bombardment was followed by an infantry attack by greatly superior numbers of troops than we had. Covering fire from our mortars and machine guns created heavy casualties but the attack was repeated again and again. Many of our forward gun pits had to be abandoned and were then occupied by the enemy. Hand to hand encounter followed and I received a burst of machine gun fire in the left thigh which shattered the limb completely. This, along with other shrapnel wounds to the head and shoulders made it difficult for me to fight on and I had to be evacuated. By first light the position was in Japanese hands and we had no troops for an immediate counter attack.

I was taken to the casualty clearing unit where my legs were put in plaster and my other wounds cleaned up. I was then evacuated on a stretcher, together with other casualties, along a small path through the jungle which connected with the Tiddim Road at milestone 80. All went well, although progress was slow, until the following evening when we were abandoned by our Sikh carriers and had to await the main body evacuation force to pick us up. It was a great relief to find that our new carriers were members of the American Red Cross, a service consisting of unarmed conscientious objectors whose bravery proved to be outstanding. I cannot speak too highly of these men. They carried no weapons but attended to the wounded in many dangerous areas.

In a further two days we reached milestone 82 on the Tiddim Road where there was an allied Field Dressing Station. We were given further care and packed into an ambulance and sent on our way to Imphal. After a very uncomfortable and dangerous journey we reached the British Military Hospital at Imphal. When I look back on those uncomfortable, painful days, I find it amazing that our ambulance negotiated the area of heavy fighting around Bishenpur and southern Imphal without any mishaps.

The decision to locate the Military Hospital close to Imphal was influenced by the fact that the 4th British Division stationed at Chittagong was to be flown into Imphal. The wounded could then be evacuated out of Imphal on these planes to a more peaceful area. All seriously injured personnel were flown

to Chittagong. I was one of the early ones to be flown out and I soon found myself at a large British Military Hospital at Dirgassi where I was able to get my wounds seen to properly. I was initially put on a hospital ship. We landed at Calcutta where we were transferred to a Roman Catholic hospital. From there I was put on a hospital train which got me to the British General Hospital at Bareilly which was situated near to the Regimental Centre. I cannot speak too highly of the kindness, patience and theatre treatment I received in the 14th British General Hospital at Bareilly. After a number of corrective operations, special massage and exercise, my leg had recovered remarkably well leaving me with only a slight limp and I was, after a relatively short stay, released to duty at the JAT Regimental Centre. Now promoted to the rank of major, I was commanding officer of the specialist training company comprising the JAT Boys Company, the Machine Gun and Mortar Company, and the Transport Company. The staff consisted of four British Indian Army officers, six Indian Army officers, a full complement of Viceroy Commissioned Officers (VCO's) and a small complement of administration staff. This was one of the most enjoyable periods of my service with the JAT Regiment. I was allotted excellent living quarters and enjoyed the duties immensely. The weapons involved were Vickers machine guns, mortars, grenades, etc.

During this time in Bareilly at the Training Centre I met and married my first wife, Nora, on 11 October 1943; our first son was born in Nanithal, India, in May 1945. After several months in Bareilly I was transferred to the Bengal Army headquarters (HQ) in Calcutta to take charge of a new unit set up to deal with the Indian Army returned allied prisoner of war (POW) organisation. This involved the setting up of an organisation to receive all allied POWs now being released from various POW camps run by the Japanese in Malaysia, Burma and Assam. Those men, Indians, British, Africans and Ghurkhas, had experienced terrible conditions and were, without exception, in an emaciated condition due to the appalling treatment they had received at the hands of the Japanese army over the years. To me it was a real pleasure to create an environment in which they could at last find comfort, friendship and every assistance in preparing themselves for their ultimate return to homes and families. Looking back on my life, this particular period was one of the most rewarding for me.

With the cessation of hostilities, the inevitable politics started to evolve. There was a strong demand for home rule for India and numerous rabble rousers emerged, particularly in Bengal (Calcutta and Patna). They were mostly Bengalis who had played no part in the defence of their country and who were now being released from detention. They whipped up trouble, demanding the instant handing over of power. The Indian moderates, Ghandi, Nehru and members of the Indian congress, dealt sensitively with the demands and requested calm, but even they were unable to quieten the real agitators. Calcutta, and especially Dum-Dum (where the Indian mutiny of 1857 had started), could be dangerous and the area around our unit was disturbed on a number of occasions. The task of our Returned Allied Prisoner of War Unit was now complete and my unit was dissolved. It was at this point that I requested a return to the UK, having been abroad for five years. This was approved and I received orders to return to my British regiment, the Cheshire Regiment, in England. I left by train with the family for Mhow, the transit camp north of Bombay where we awaited a ship for the UK. After some three weeks we left for England on a Cunard liner via the Suez Canal, Cairo and the Mediterranean to Southampton where Mother and Father met us and took us home. I shall never forget that meeting, not ever.

Following a short leave in London, I received orders to report to the 1st Battalion, Cheshire Regiment, who, with other British units stationed in and around east and north-east Germany, were moved to the newly formed British Zone west of the Rhine and the regiment was eventually stationed at Krefeld in the Dusseldorf area. I served there until 1947 when I was transferred to the 1st Battalion Kings African Rifles and went to Nyasaland. During this period I was engaged in suppressing the Mau Mau uprising. In 1951 I resigned my commission.

BOB DRAYSON[†] (1938)

He read modern languages and when the war intervened he joined the Royal Navy as a rating before taking a course for officers at HMS *King Alfred* at Hove, Sussex. He then volunteered for coastal forces, serving in motor torpedo boats until 1946. He became first lieutenant of MTB 236 and assumed command of it just in time for what was to become a well-known action. This concerned the German auxiliary cruiser *Komet*, one of several heavily-armed, disguised merchant ships which had wreaked havoc on lone Allied merchant shipping, particularly in distant waters outside the ambit of escorted convoys. The British discovered that *Komet* was attempting to slip through the Channel; she had already completed one successful raid into the Indian Ocean, and her captain was hoping to repeat this. *Komet*, escorted by both ships and aircraft, had already beaten off one attack when her consorts ran into a freshly-laid British minefield. After a delay to reinforce the escort, she continued her attempted break-out accompanied by a strong force of minesweepers and E-boats. But the British had the benefit of Ultra (the intelligence gleaned from decrypted German radio communications) and – despite the risk of revealing that the German codes had been cracked – a trap was set, involving four Hunt-class destroyers and eight MTBs, including MTB 236, commanded by Acting Sub-Lieutenant Drayson. Shortly after midnight on October 14 1942, off Barfleur, *Komet* was lit by flares dropped by a Fleet Air Arm Swordfish. In the ensuing battle several of the raider's escorts were damaged by their own fire. Drayson launched two torpedoes at close range at *Komet*, starting a huge fire; the flames spread quickly and were followed by a massive explosion which sent a ball of flame hundreds of feet into the night sky. *Komet* sank, taking her 251-man crew with her. The ship's destruction marked the end of this phase of raider warfare against the Allies, and Drayson was awarded a DSC for his "great skill and bravery". He finished the war in command of MTB 701.

In 1943 he had married Rachel Jenkyns, who was serving in the WRNS, and at the end of the war he returned to Downing where he switched to history. He won a blue for hockey and had a trial for the England team; he was to captain the Kent hockey XI from 1947 to 1956. Bob Drayson was headmaster of Stowe School from 1964 to 1969.

BERNARD S H STORR[†] (1938)

He carried out national service in the RAMC from 1947 to 1949 at the Cambridge Military Hospital, Aldershot.

TIMOTHY YEARWOOD[†] (1938)

Timothy, born in Barbados, came to Downing via King's School, Canterbury, to read law. In 1940, he volunteered for the army, in which he served for six years. He was promoted to captain, landing in Normandy on D Day and fighting in the subsequent campaign across northern Europe. Much of this action was in Crusader tanks.

GEOFFREY LEES (1939)

Along with the much looked forward to privileges of being able to sit at the feet of Leavis to study English literature, and the possibility of endeavouring to win a cricket blue, these both had to be put on hold after completing his first year. He joined up in 1940 and served for six years in Signals, being mentioned in despatches and rising to the rank of captain. He landed in

Normandy on D+7 and was engaged in action on the Continent up until the end of the war in Europe in May 1945. Before repatriation and in contrast to the recent fighting, he remembers with much pleasure seeing Laurence Olivier playing Richard II with the Old Vic Company at the main theatre which was still standing in devastated Hamburg.

With the matter of Japan still to be resolved, he began training for airborne assault, not as a parachutist but in gliders and now wearing the prestigious parachutists' red beret. He felt embarrassed when wearing it in public at receiving the then current praise and admiration bestowed on that branch of the armed forces. Old ladies would come forward to hail him hero.

Then there followed a wasted year in Egypt which had been hailed as operationally vital. Embarkation was insensitively scheduled for Christmas Eve and as a result some Other Ranks forced their way off the ship onto the quay at Liverpool. This became headline news and one newspaper referred to it as the "Hell Ship": not at all justified. Attempted over-heavy control on the quayside by Military Police resulted in some MPs being thrown into the docks but eventually they sailed away without further incident. Worthwhile however, whilst based in Egypt, he spent a month in Haifa at Formation College on Mount Carmel on a refresher course for those returning to full time study: a blissful month in every way.

The decisive solution of the Eastern problem by other means was a great welcome and demobilisation became the preoccupation of servicemen. Even with rates of around 100,000 per month the wait for many seemed intolerable. Finally the return to the UK was across the Mediterranean then with a rail journey across France lasting about two and a half days. The trip was most memorable for the fact that there were no lights on the train, most having been damaged by the previous occupants.

He was back to Downing in October 1946 with not even the banished 'square' to replace the beret, and after the ideal picture of Downing which he brought from his pre-war youth, he found post-war Cambridge to be 'awful and no fun' with the Downing site a 'mess'. The winter of 1947 felt so inhospitably cold with the blood thin after the heat of Egypt but none of this impaired his studying under the inspiration of Leavis. With marriage to Joan on going down, a very successful career in teaching followed, culminating with the Headship of St. Bees School in Cumbria from 1963 until 1980.

GUNWANT MALIK (1939)

Gunwant Malik came to the UK just as war threatened. As a British Indian subject of the King-Emperor he registered for service but nothing became of it except that he was given a gas mask. Reading natural sciences, he compressed Part I and Chemistry Part II into two years in the hope that he could contribute to the war effort as soon as possible. As a freshman he shared rooms with a Christian Tamil of Ceylonese ancestry from Malaya named Robert Chelliah and he admits to having to learn much about Chelliah's different race and religion. Christian missionaries had had little success with Buddhists but more with the Hindu Tamils: such was Chelliah. Their rooms were on K staircase sharing a sitting room and a bedroom across the corridor for the Michaelmas Term after which he found very good rooms at 39 Parkside across Parker's Piece – with a telephone! An even bigger asset were Mr and Mrs Chapman: each night after the BBC 9 o'clock News Mr Chapman would bring him a glass of warm milk and share 15 minutes conversation. With equal punctuality Mrs Chapman would fill the house bath

with hot water at 7 am – regardless of the possible needs of the other tenants. This punctuality continued further into the day as a famous Hungarian acquaintance, Judge Lengyel, a refugee de-luxe from Budapest residing in the University Arms, claimed that he could set his watch on Gunwant's transit of the Piece.

Many refugees of fairly recent diverse European origin coloured the Cambridge social and work scenes at these times. Meetings with them are described in Gunwant's memoirs and make entertaining reading, as do the following wartime events – he was charged under the Emergency Powers Act for getting onto his bicycle in King's Parade before switching on his lights after blackout time and was fined 40 shillings. Then in daylight in London he found a good vantage point on Westminster Bridge to observe a raid by a formation of 72 Stukas when it was pointed out to him that the bridge was a prime target – not to mention the Houses of Parliament.

An uncle had served as a pilot in the Great War and an RAF recruiting officer was delighted with this but turned him down for a like role because he wore glasses. On graduation he applied to join the Army but was told that chemists were more valuable than army officers. His knowledge of chemistry took him into the development of adhesives such as were used to make the wooden de Havilland Mosquito and the wood and metal Hornet high speed aircraft.

GEOFFREY STUTTARD (1939) wrote in the *Association Newsletter* of 2001:

I'm often asked what it was like to return to study at Downing in January 1946 after nearly five years in the army during the war in North Africa and Italy. I'd come up in October 1939 from Leeds Modern School, (Alan Bennett's school) awaiting call-up, to read English, supervised by F R Leavis.

"Wasn't it difficult to settle down?" The straight answer is "No, it wasn't". In fact it was delightful, easy and the perfect return to normal life. I know none of my war service colleagues in 1946 who didn't feel the same, and who didn't do better in their exams as a result. It was delightful to return to the peace of the College – I now had a room to myself, the ground floor corner room on H staircase, Colin Hill was upstairs. In 1939 we had shared rooms, mine was at the top of D with J G Lowe, and we shared the College with the RAF, whose sentries with fixed bayonets made climbing in more than usually hazardous! But now in 1946 I could sport my oak and gaze out onto the vast Downing lawns.

I remember early on in 1946 when the JCR Secretary called on me: he'd heard how active I had been in 1939-1941: in 1940 I'd been a member of the famous College soccer team which won the Cuppers without a goal being scored against us (11-0, 16-0, 6-0 and v St Johns, 5-0 in the Final), and played for Cambridge. I'd been involved in athletics; I was in the "sports" boat of Downing IV, where only the stroke had rowed before.

I'd acted in Sweeney Agonistes and Dr Faustus; played bridge for the College; debated a lot; was secretary of the University Yorkshire Society – (and written a weekly essay for Dr Leavis). But now I said to him "Please let me be on my own for a bit. I'm looking forward to a quieter life". Were we more boisterous in '39-'41? My recollection is that we were. (Who erected the rugby captain's bed on top of the dining hall in 1941 because of the noise the rugby crowd were making?) There was a certain frenetic nature arising from the awaiting call-up and the question mark over our futures. In 1946 many of us were clear we needed to work hard to prepare for jobs in an uncertain post-war world and to support our wives and families – and this tended to sober us down.

When I memorably first re-passed through the College gates in January 1946 I asked one of the porters who the boys were who were scattered about. "They're the undergraduates, sir" he told me. But there were

many of the older sort, too: a big change was that over fifty of us were married. In '39 only one was – Elvin Thorgesson. The mixture of war-experienced 26 year olds and the 18 year olds was a valuable one, looking back, and both groups must have gained from it.

I was married in September 1946; the Master, Admiral Sir Herbert Richmond, had been instrumental in arranging for my Slovene fiancée to reach England. We lived for two years in Warkworth House, across Parker's Piece, sharing with a married Downing student who much later became Lord Justice Templeman. It was a time of strict rationing (the College kitchens baked our wedding cake with eggs sent by one of my Yorkshire farmer friends) and I remember the winter of 1946-47 as the coldest of my life. In 1947 I suggested to Lady Richmond that it might be appropriate to arrange a special dance for the married students and their wives. She agreed, and with the help of the Richmond daughters, Mary and Bridget (later Lady Plowden), we held what must have been the only ever married students' dance in the Master's Lodge.

I'd read Part I of English from 1939 to 1941 and on my return, Dr Leavis advised a change, and I moved to Part II History, supervised by R J White and J H Plumb. I'd met Leavis once during the war when, in uniform, I sat next to him at high table, and remembered how he'd suffered in the 1914-18 war. In 1939, of course, we were under a shadow: we trained to fire watch for incendiary bombs, and at exams were warned what to do if there was an air raid. Because of the threat of a raid, we had to abandon a production of Eliot's *Murder in the Cathedral* (producer J G Lowe, with Peter Quinton as Becket, and a women's chorus from Newnham), which was to have taken place on the Dining Hall steps. We all had to join the University Corps – air, navy or army – and once a week for two years I trained up at Grange Road. In 1940, at the time of Dunkirk, as a member of the CUOTC I found myself alongside a platoon of the Cameronians defending Marshall's aerodrome with Vickers machine guns, in case the Germans invaded. One early shock was the overnight disappearance of all Downing students with a German connection, taken into internment.

On going to my first Hall in 1946 a surprised voice shouted, "Good heavens, I was sure you of all people would be killed." This was Godfrey Leonhardt, also returned and switched from English to Anthropology, later becoming professor of the subject at Oxford – (what happened to ex-Leavis students is fascinating: he saw English as a basis from which to jump off: I ended in Industrial Relations.)

But many of my other friends were no longer there, either dead or dispersed.

From 1939 to 1941, four of us were close: John Wearing, John Metcalfe, John Richardson and myself. We had our own tie – perhaps the most exclusive college tie ever? By the year 2000, all three had died, or so I thought! But in January, John Wearing's widow rang me to say John Richardson was still alive. So I rang him, after 59 years. "Good God," he said, "I thought you were dead". "So did I of you" I told him.

WILLIAM BERT WEBB (1939)

He arrived at Downing in 1939 just after the beginning of the war and described the rooms as being very good, with a bedroom and a sitting room and a communal bathroom. Most of the undergraduates' rooms were in the new Baker buildings, as the older accommodation had been taken over by the RAF. All meals were in College because everything was rationed and College had to hold the students' ration books. Initially, cooked breakfast was sent to their rooms but this was stopped after a while and they had it in Hall; tea was taken in the Regal cinema.

Undergraduate gowns were worn with squares, which were often carried doubled up in the pocket. Proctors would insist on undergraduates wearing them; the fine was 6/8d if you were caught without. Proctors would doff their caps when passing. A regular event was climbing in near the back gate, one had to put the foot at right-angles to avoid the spikes. The gates closed at 10pm.

Then up to midnight one could ring the bell at the Porters' Lodge, but your name was noted and reported to your tutor; this was not to be encouraged. There were loose railings between Downing and the labs which were occasionally cemented in but undergraduates would twist them to loosen them. Unfortunately, when it snowed, tracks would show up. There was a mention in *The Griffin* that someone had a very bad case of "Downing foot"; Brian Gethin Smith had put his foot on a spike. A great regular feature of Saturday mornings, when there were no lectures, was a visit to the Dorothy where there was community singing of songs such as "Roll out the Barrel" and "Run Rabbit Run". On Sundays, a punt would be hired to go to Grantchester for tea and one would occasionally find a chap stuck on a pole. The winters were very cold and it would stop the rugby, but when Grantchester Meadows flooded skating took place instead. The summers were warm and dry but there were no May balls because of the war. Dances were held in the back of a cinema which had a bad reputation and was out of bounds. The Proctors would raid it, but everyone would run out and walk away as if leaving the cinema.

There was a bit of bombing in Cambridge, where a string of bombs flattened a Greek restaurant, but the Germans were mainly trying to bomb the East Anglian airfields. Bert could identify the German multi-engined aircraft by their sound, as the German diesel engines were not capable of being synchronised.

The wartime student population had many different sources and characters. Bert remembers that there were many Jews from Eastern Europe and that in 1940 buses came and took them away seemingly indiscriminately to the Isle of Man, where many who were classed as aliens were housed. It was the time of a lot of Fifth Column activity in France and there were fears that it would happen over here. Later in the war, some of them reappeared, and some were taken to Canada.

The LongVac Term was spent doing pharmacology, and he was not encouraged to go home, as people in his home town would have queried why he was not in the forces.

Bert qualified as a doctor and joined the army after VE Day, but while fighting was still going on against the Japanese. Although many others were sent to the Far East, he was posted to North Wales. Later events took him to South Wales, where he practised medicine until retirement.

J R EDDOWES (1940)

I left Downing in June 1941. I had been interviewed by the War Service Appointments Board who, since I read mathematics and had a Cert B Artillery, said they would recommend me for training as an artillery officer. I went home to await developments. At some time, rather late in the summer, I received an invitation to attend a course on Radio Location at the AA Radio School, Petersham, with the view to a commission in the RAOC. I accepted, successfully completed the course and duly accepted my commission as 2nd Lieutenant RAOC. My training had been on the radar used to locate targets for and provide information for AA guns. (The Americans invented the word RADAR but the UK invented the science and technique calling it "Radio Location").

I was posted to Bristol, where I spent one night, and then to Plymouth where I spent a week. Thence I was sent to a gun site defending Falmouth, at St Just. Within a few days I was moved once again to Predannack to 'calibrate' a Mk I GL set; I was trained only for Mk II. I stayed there for a few weeks. 'Calibration' involved attaching an oscillator to a Mk VI balloon and sending that skywards. However, since the gun site was defending the aerodrome at Predannack, and usually it rained, suitable opportunities for doing this were rare.

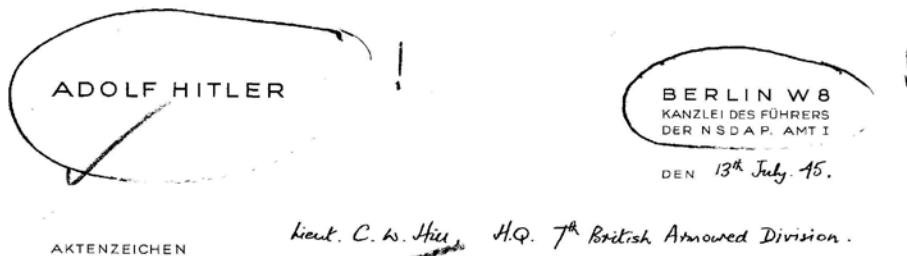
Eventually I completed this mission and returned to St Just, where I remained, without transport, looking after one radar set until my first leave. Sometime after my return, I was provided with a utility truck and a batman-driver. I moved to the other side of the Fal to a gun-site at Mylor whence I covered the two radar sites. At some time before this I had studied the establishment of my company and found it to be one major, two captains and twenty four lieutenants. The captains were labelled 'Inspection' and 'Calibration'. I let it be known that I was interested in calibration. This led to my specialising in this activity, visiting the various gun sites throughout Cornwall with my crew of three craftsmen, my balloon and lots of cylinders of hydrogen.

Then, of course, we were reorganised. In my new company I was required to be at Company HQ at Burnett where I dealt with mail and reports and anything else relating to radar. It was not until Christmas 1943 was approaching that I moved again. There was a possibility that I might be put in charge of the workshop at Cricklade, which I pursued and was replaced in my existing post. I actually spent Christmas 1943 in Cricklade – the one and only time that I have plucked a goose. However, the colonel decided otherwise and I became somewhat spare. I was sent to the workshop at Truro and was also used as a 'trouble shooter' and odd-job man. My odd jobs included a fortnight in charge of a crew making 'Piles Portable Platforms' at Weyhill workshops. These were conglomerations of sleepers and railway lines to support the static AA guns that were moved to the coast to shoot down the 'buzz bombs'. The guns accounted for well over 90% of the flying bombs destroyed. Then after a brief period at Callington, the workshops for the Plymouth gun sites, I at last left the west country for Sittingbourne. There I was put in charge of a power amplifier that had been made for a radar transmitter to be used in tracking the V2 rockets. It came to me untested and I could not make it run for more than a few hours before it again failed and required a day or two to repair.

Then the last of the launching sites was overrun by our forces and I was out of a job. After a short spell maintaining the radar for a Polish AA battery, I was sent on a 12 week wireless course. However, the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki and the consequent surrender of the Japanese, saved me from a trip to India and beyond. On completion of the course. I was posted to 'A' camp Donnington, Salop, where I was to give courses to the trainee storemen who were to handle radar stores. However, courses were suspended until I was again posted. This time I was selected to go to No. 5 Formation College at Luton Hoo to teach mathematics and physics. Formation colleges ran month-long courses, designed to help soldiers to return to their civilian training or occupation. On the closure of No.5, I transferred to No.1 at New Battle Abbey, Dalkeith and from there I went on release leave in January 1947.

COLIN HILL[†] (1940)

Colin joined the army after his first period of residence and fought from North Africa to Berlin via a short spell in Iraq. Of Montgomery's victory at El Alamein he said "Why, with all that equipment and manpower, I could have won the Battle of Alamein!" Among his experiences in North Africa was leading a raid on a brothel in Tripoli to remove servicemen who were sampling its delights. He told the story very wittily, but the details are unsuitable for publication. He was deeply affected by the sights he saw in Berlin when the Red Army were on the rampage, but an achievement of which he liked to boast was his purloining in that city of some of Adolf Hitler's letterheads. He used some of it to write a letter to Bill Cuttle, his Tutor, enquiring about returning to the College. Having read classics he decided on a teaching career, starting at Barnard Castle, then Bedford and Birmingham and retiring as head of Hills Road Sixth Form College, Cambridge, having overseen its transition from the Cambridgeshire County High School for Boys. He was Honorary Secretary of the Downing College Association for twelve years and its President in 1998-1999.



Dear Bill,

I hope you can forgive me for using this paper, but one reason is a genuine shortage of anything remotely resembling writing-paper, and even business paper can be put to use, however disreputable the firm! As you will have gathered, I am now in Berlin - a very changed and depressing Berlin, but nevertheless a city which can still provide a lot of interest. Most of the interesting buildings have been either destroyed or damaged beyond all recognition, and the people look dejected and half starved, but it seems to me that even now you can sense the spirit of pride which was one of the more pronounced features of Nazi Kultur. It is also noticeable that hardly any building is without its quota of machine-gun bullet marks, which suggests that not a single inch of the city was yielded without a struggle. The average person with any feeling for beauty could hardly fail to be moved almost to tears when touring the city, or when hearing of the primitively bestial carryings on of some of the Russians when they first entered. I think that if the Germans are still capable of feelings they must have been very relieved when the British contingent arrived.

When you last wrote you suggested that it was a little premature to make any decision about a career, but since then I've been thinking more and more making a career of teaching classics, and I've really made up my mind. It's something I'm really interested in, and I am now quite looking forward to the idea. If possible I should prefer

to carry straight on with the Teaching Diploma, and omit the Part II of the Tripos, if it can be done, and if it wouldn't be a serious handicap. I'm afraid I don't know much about the way of entering the profession, and I should be very grateful if you could tell me what the usual procedure, or tell me whom I should best contact. If possible I should prefer to do my studying for the Diploma at Cambridge, but then I don't even know whether that is catered for at Cambridge. I feel that if I can get into touch with such a department they will no doubt be able to give me advice especially with regard to doing a certain amount of work whilst I'm still in the army - and I shall probably have to serve for another 18 months yet. One can always find spare time to do study, and I feel that if I could once again establish some kind of contact I might be able to put in quite a bit of useful work. One thing which will be different if I return to Cambridge is that I shall be married. I became engaged to a girl near my home in March, and we hope to be married by Christmas. I can almost ~~hear~~ see you shaking your head and saying it's a mistake, but I'm quite determined!

I thought you might like the enclosed booklet - at least the outer cover is decorative and of interest, though Army religion always makes me wince.

I suppose it won't be long now before the College gets back into its stride, and you will find yourself with far more classical pupils than of late. With so many older types returning from the Services it will be a far different place - as I believe it was in 1919.

I hope you are in good health now. When I last heard from you you had been suffering from influenza - I suppose susceptibility to that you got from the mosquito! Look after yourself,

Yours as ever

Colin.

WILLIAM HODGES (1940)

With the irregularities typical of the war years, he came up in January 1940 to read medicine via natural sciences. The original intention was to enter Trinity at the start of the academic year in October 1939 but no place was available at that time, however one was found at Downing. It was remarkable that he was able to be successful in the tripos examinations in the next June and he had completed his degree by the age of 21. He lived in his mother's flat in Barton Road, not living in College at any time nor even eating once in Hall. His medical studies included periods at Addenbrooke's and the London Hospital. With pre-war connections he had climbed with the Munich Climbing Club on the continent and during his Cambridge days with the University Club in the UK. Apart from carrying out locum work at Abergavenny notes on his career relate only to more distant places. He joined the 13th East African Rifles and served in what was then Tanganyika and is now Tanzania. Work took him to the New Hebrides which were jointly governed by Britain and France before independence. His duties obviously took him to several other colonial territories as he has very firm views about the 'ratings' of the former colonial powers. In terms of the degree of enlightenment and fairness which the former rulers showed whilst in power, he defined a steeply descending league table. Britain, Italy, Holland, Belgium (or its monarch) and Germany. (Namibia suffered exceedingly harsh German oppression when it was German West Africa: Goering's father had held prominent high rank). His family continue his interest in working abroad.

ALEC RICHARDS (1940)

He came up from Truro Grammar School in October 1940 to read mechanical sciences. At that time the College was divided, with the roughly 90 undergraduates sharing the site and facilities with training facilities provided for the RAF and some other war related activities. Cambridge as a whole suffered less damage from bombing than might be expected given the nature of the activities underway there. College had air raid precautionary measures in place and one such was the Roof Patrol to deal with possible incendiary bombs. Despite the relatively shallow slope of most Downing roofs, this was a hazardous task especially after heavy snow: one foot had fallen overnight on one occasion.

In 1942 he began work at the Royal Aircraft Establishment at Farnborough where more appropriate development facilities had been provided than the Cambridge squash court where Whittle had pioneered the production of a gas-turbine jet engine. From Farnborough flight tests were carried out with an engine mounted in the tail of a Lancaster bomber. Later weapon development work was undertaken at the Royal Military College of Science at Shrivenham on guided weapons with test firing at Aberporth and Shoeburyness. Later still at Winfreth problems of exploiting nuclear power were addressed. Still at the forefront of modern technology work was undertaken with ICI on the production of penicillin.

HAROLD FARNSWORTH (1941)

Harold came up to read natural sciences. Military training was obligatory at the time and it was carried out in association with the Home Guard. After graduation in 1943 he was commissioned in the Royal Corps of Signals, and he saw action in the Middle East, then later with the Eighth Army Signals in Austria.

BRIAN LEONARD (BRUCE) GARNER[†] (1941)

After his first year at Downing reading engineering he was selected to join the Malvern radar research team by the controversial C P Snow. (Snow's mutual hostility towards Leavis is well documented but it manifested itself more fully after the war.) Snow's job in the fine rooms of his office in Christ's College was to pick out Cambridge scientists and engineers of talent to work directly on development programmes of wartime significance. The work to which he was assigned was specifically on the H2S radar system which so improved the effectiveness of airborne operations. It became a powerful tool in the deployment of the Pathfinder force. With Beeching he wrote joint papers describing the course of the research and the results achieved. This had involved much airborne testing first in a Stirling bomber, the first of the heavyweights, and then in an initial group of 12 operational Lancasters. The installation and adjustment of the parabolic reflectors with pre- silicon chip electronics was a difficult undertaking, however their effectiveness was soon recognised and acclaimed.

FRANCIS GRAHAM-SMITH (1941)

Natural Sciences Part I 1941-43 included a course on electronics, with practicals mainly concerned with radio. A wartime degree could be awarded in two years only. In 1943 I was interviewed by C P Snow and assigned to radar research at Telecommunications Establishment, at Malvern. After a brief introductory course including aerials and waveguides I joined Measurements and Testgear: my future wife Elizabeth followed the same route, ending up in Trainer Group.

By 1943 the major radar designs were complete; we were support services. My job was designing and constructing wavemeters for checking the frequencies of airborne radars. The head of this department was J A Ratcliffe, also recruited from the Cavendish Lab. Secrecy meant that we heard little about the progress of other aspects of radar, but we were aware of a Countermeasures Group which was involved in searching for enemy radar and devising ways of jamming. Martin Ryle was in this group.

For the last six months of 1945, immediately after VE day, I was sent to Bombay as part of a support group for the war in the East. VJ day came soon after I arrived, so there was nothing much to do. Fortunately I was given a further education and training grant for a third year, and re-started on Part II Physics. My wartime experience helped both directly in electromagnetic theory and in concentrating the mind.

Ratcliffe and Ryle both returned to the Cavendish to re-start radio research, and in 1947 I started with Martin Ryle in what soon became Radio Astronomy. Martin ended up as 12th Astronomer Royal and I followed him as the 13th! Martin married my wife Elizabeth's sister Rowena; the Radio Astronomy group was indeed very productive!

DAVID KENNETH HOLBROOK (1941)

David Holbrook was born in 1923 in Norwich, where he attended the City of Norwich School. In 1941 he came to Downing as an Exhibitioner to read English, where his Director of Studies was F R Leavis (from whom he later acrimoniously parted company). After one year, he left Downing to join the army, initially as Intelligence, Mines and Explosives Officer with the East Riding of Yorkshire Yeomanry; from 1942 to 1945 he served with the Armoured Corps, commanding a Duplex Drive 'swimming tank' that landed in Normandy on Sword Beach, on D Day itself. He had, as a junior officer, taken part (possibly illegally) in demonstrations for a 'Second Front Now!' He now found himself a prominent part of it.

It is fortunate that David has seen fit to depict his experiences at Downing and in the wartime army in a highly autobiographical work of fiction called *Flesh Wounds*. It was not published until 1966, by which time it seemed appropriate to him that the story should be told. The young Holbrook's experiences are seen through the eyes of Paul Grimmer (the Norwich years are covered in *A Play of Passion* from 1978). There are those who rate *Flesh Wounds* ahead of Norman Mailer's *The Naked and the Dead* as one of the most sensitive and credible novels to emerge from the Second World War. Since its first appearance it has rarely been out of print. As the title suggests, David was wounded quite early in the Normandy campaign, was evacuated back to Britain, but returned to active service, so seeing out the war. He came back into residence in Downing in 1945, graduating in 1947. He subsequently became a friend and associate of Edgell Rickword, literary critic and poet of the Great War. Thanks to David, Downing Library possesses the volume of John Donne's poetry that Rickword carried with him in the trenches on the Western Front.

In an article in the *Sunday Times* for 13 November 1988, David described his thoughts and feelings on revisiting some of the battlefields he had fought over more than forty years before. He has recently given readings from *Flesh Wounds* and talked about his wartime experiences to appreciative audiences of students from Cambridge studying 'Writers on Warfare'.

DERYK PROSSER (1941)

I was in the Admiralty Signals Establishment from 1942 to 1946, and this included a year on secondment to EMI's Research Laboratory. It also included some weeks prior to D Day in charge of a motley crew fitting radar countermeasures to the fleet sailing from that port. It included a memorable trip down the Solent the day before D Day looking for a ship that had eluded our best efforts to finish its final tuning up. However, most of 1942-1946 was spent working on infra red signaling and image converters.

MICHAEL A SHEARMAN (1941)

In the abnormal circumstances of the war Michael Shearman came up to read history in the January of 1941 from Portsmouth Grammar School. His family had a naval tradition with his grandfather, father and uncle all having served in the Royal Navy. He was thus qualified for and won a Kitchener Scholarship. With the expedition required by the times, he took his degree after five terms before call-up. After his military service, with an unexpired exhibition, he came back to Downing in 1944 for further study. In the early 1940s he recalls that about half of the Downing accommodation was shared with members of the forces under training but despite their presence, his view was that some senior academics appeared not to know that there was a war on. The Maitland Society was a body which afforded him much interest; teaching staff were shared with Emmanuel in which Dr Leavis played his part.

On call-up he served in Signals and fought in Italy then in Greece, returning via a Class B release from those kinder climates to a more bracing winter, first in a Thirsk workhouse and then in Fenham Barracks en route to Morpeth where he was given a warming welcome when on Christmas Eve, after evensong with carols, the mayor provided a splendid supper – with hot mince pies.

MICHAEL SCOTT-ARCHER (1942)

We were living in Llangollen in the Dee valley in North Wales; I was 15 and about to start my second year of Higher School Certificate, as A Levels were then called, when war was declared. My first memory was a frantic search for materials to cover the windows – ‘blackout’ – to be put in place at dusk each day so that enemy bombers had no lighted towns to guide them or to bomb. My father had, three years previously, designed a house with lots of windows, large ones, lovely to live in until he had to design and make demountable blackouts and, subsequently, keep the house warm enough during some very cold winters when fuel was rationed. Double glazing was not then an option! Fortunately we were both keen handymen and mother was kept hard at work supplying us with thick black material to nail onto frames we made to fit each window.

The autumn of 1939 was the ‘phony war’ period: little was happening in Western Europe while Russia was battling with Finland in the East. At school we had started a radio society, built with wave radio and with a half-wavelength aerial on the roof experimented with picking up distant European transmitters for war news. I had an eventful trip to Jesus College, Oxford, to try, unsuccessfully as it turned out, for a scholarship in December. January was exceptionally cold – the water main to our group of houses froze – to keep our central heating going we carried water from the canal some 200m up the equivalent of six flights to the tank in the roof.

By the summer of 1940 Liverpool, our nearest major city, was being bombed. One night bombs jettisoned on a moorland north of Llangollen set miles of heather on fire, the smoke enveloped the town and for some successive nights the Germans continued to bomb the burning moorland – the only damage was one remote farmstead plus, sadly, its occupants destroyed. My maths teacher, who lived on high ground at Acrefair, four miles away, told us of seeing Liverpool’s fires burning each night.

Evacuees to the area included a secondary girls’ school who for a term shared our buildings – they had morning shifts, we had afternoon. At home we had a soldier’s young wife and two tiny children occupying a flat we converted from our basement – about Easter she had the tragic news of her husband’s death in Greece during fighting. She promptly returned to her home in a very poor part of Liverpool to be near her parents.

Following the invasion of the Low Countries and France the Local Defence Volunteers (later Home Guard) was set up, my father was the major in command locally. All available men over 16 joined up – I remember exercises in the hills, grenade practice in a quarry when one nervous recruit dropped his live grenade in the throwing trench – fortunately a first World War veteran, John Roberts MM, was i/c and quick as a flash threw it out just before it exploded. I was one of five ‘locals’ who knew the countryside well and we were dropped at dawn some 8 miles away with instructions to try to penetrate the Home Guard defences of the town – I got within 100m of my target before being spotted.

When the Air Training Corps was set up I joined. Later, as a flight sergeant, I was given the chance to fly as a passenger in a Tiger Moth from Wrexham up the Dee Valley to Bala and back. Ostensibly the trip was to give the ground based Royal Observer Corps practice in spotting and identifying aircraft. For me it was a superb opportunity to see from above the hills I had walked so much.

Sport and physical fitness were not neglected in the war years – morning PT was done to instructions over the radio – sometimes too enthusiastically as when I punched the ceiling light shade above my head in the lounge and was showered in expensive glass fragments! I was chosen to represent the Denbighshire ATC at an all Wales sports in Swansea. It was a fascinating journey by train via Shrewsbury and the central Wales route through Llanwrtyd and Llanelli – I was delighted to win my 880 yards race.

Holiday jobs as a student varied. First as a milk lady’s assistant at 12/6d [£19 in 2010 money] a week meant delivering both bottled milk and pints drawn from the churn on the back of the van – one day

we ran out of full pint bottles so my resourceful boss said 'let's go to Emmy's on the Fron, today she may well have a full tub of suds from doing the washing'. Sure enough she did so we washed all the used bottles already collected in the tub, rinsed them, and topped them up from the churn. As far as I know all of our later customers survived! At the end of three weeks the farmer still hadn't paid me – I finally tracked him down in the pub but could only get 35/- out of him so I took a job in the forestry. This was a wonderful experience as almost all the workers were refugees from Europe – Czechoslovakia, Poland, Hungary under the leadership of a Norwegian, Charlie Prakes, who had settled in Wales. My first girl friend was a Czech from Prague whose banker parents had escaped to Haifa, and whom I was to meet in that city five years later at her wedding (not to me!). A Hungarian in the group always wore a very thick jersey – when it got really hot he would strip to the waist – that was when we discovered it was not just one jersey but six he wore: he had lost so many possessions on his escape route that now he retained everything on his person!

Many businesses in London were blitzed in 1940. One shop was that of a very famous stamp dealer, Charles Nissen – who had the honour of being Philatelic Adviser to King George V. He came to 'Branas', Abbey Road, Llangollen with his son Harry, who joined the Home Guard. Like most boys I collected stamps and it was not long before I got an invitation to visit Branas and see some of the great British stamp rarities. My other fairly regular holiday job was covering for the postmen on their week's holiday. When I had a letter from abroad I am ashamed to say I would ask the householder if I could have the envelope. This led to an event which brought the tragedy of war home to me – some months after the fall of Singapore I had a letter with Straits Settlements stamp to deliver – I handed it to the maid who answered the door – as she passed it to the lady I heard a howl of anguish; it was from her husband, written before his death in action, of which she had heard many weeks earlier through official sources.

In 1942 I gained a State Scholarship in double maths and physics but did not take it up as the new State Bursaries, which funded better, were available. I was accepted to read maths at Downing where I shared a room with a fellow Llangollen County School pupil, Raymond Minto – J5. We both owed our choice of college to our headmaster, Gareth Crwys Williams (classics at Downing), who had been appointed to that post five years previously at the tender age of 29!

My tutor was Bill Cuttle. I particularly remember pure maths with Besicovitch in a beautiful room in Trinity and another lecturer who stood in the centre of a wide board and wrote lengthy equations, left handed to the middle then right handed! Lectures were relatively few in number – two or three a morning. I was supervised by Mr Todd in his gas-fired oven across the river, once a week. After about three quarters of an hour we talked stamps as we were both keen collectors – I had discovered a back-street dealer down Newmarket Road and remember showing him some mint postage due control blocks I had bought – he was tactfully envious.

I played soccer for the College (goal or left wing), did some running at Fenners and explored the female delights of Homerton in preference to Newnham or Girton. Way beyond Grange Road was a lane of some army huts where we did weekly penances of weapons training: we soon realised that the Sergeant Instructors had no respect for academic prowess – ability to dismantle, reassemble and successfully fire a Bren Gun gained us their reluctant approval!

This was an eventful year: the tragedy of Pearl Harbor was followed by the wonderful achievements of Montgomery at El Alamein. Needless to say the spirits of the students fell and rose in tune with the events. As alumni will remember each floor had just one bathroom so every double bedroom was equipped with two chamber pots. On the morning after the news of Montgomery's success we came out to breakfast to see along the length of roof parapet of I block a line of chamber pots and a very large placard 'THE NIGHT WE LICKED THE JERRIES'.

In the angles of both I/J and K/L (now M/N) blocks were very large emergency water tanks. The threat of involuntary immersion was a valuable weapon. This features in an incident of which I was subsequently very ashamed. Wolf Mankovitz occupied a ground floor room in I block – one evening there was a very noisy party there which, for some reason, aggravated a group of us. After vigorous exchanges the Mankovitz party retreated to their room and sported their oak. We forced the door, sprayed the company with the fire pumps, extracted the revellers, and deposited them in the EWS tank. Next day we lined up before Bill Cuttle – alphabetically I came first (I learned to be Scott-Archer not Archer when convenient later on when in the RAF) – entered with the fear of being sent down. Bill Cuttle was at his fiercest but after about five minutes of bringing the College into disrepute his tone mellowed and his final phrase – “in my day we had better ways of dealing with unpopular fellow students; that will be £5 [£173 in 2010 money], Mr Archer, towards repair of door and furniture” – came as a tremendous relief. I had a feeling that Wolf was not one of his favourite students, though his subsequent literary career was highly creditable.

My results in May 1943 were not good enough to stay on in University and, being short sighted, RAF aircrew was not an option, so I did a radio course and was to spend the next two years in a radio factory in Croydon, testing Army and RAF radio units prior to issue. This was intensive work, long hours 7.30 am to 7.00 pm but only to 5.30 on Fridays and 12.30 on Saturdays. In addition we all did Home Guard duties at week ends. Croydon still suffered minor air raids in the winter of 1943-4 but then the flying bombs began and we were at the heart of the target area – or so it seemed. At least you could see one coming and could decide whether you could ignore it or dive for cover. One story, which may be apocryphal, tells of a big funeral in the area. The funeral director was a very rotund figure, I believe his name was Ebbutt, and as the coffin was being loaded into the hearse a flying bomb approached, obviously heading their way. Everybody dived for cover, the bomb struck a hundred yards away, and when the dust settled everybody reassembled except Ebbutt himself. It was some time before they discovered that he had dived under his own hearse and could not extricate himself!

VE day was, of course, memorable: everybody was in high spirits, we had all gone up to town as it was a public holiday. I subsequently discovered, on comparing notes, that my wife to be had been outside Buckingham Palace at the same time as me, and, later in the summer we had been in the same queue for the first night of the Proms. However, the end of the war meant a queue of ex-servicemen and women rightly having priority to return to or enter University. I decided that autumn to volunteer for the RAF and after basic training found myself en route to Cairo from where I went north to Haifa and No 6 Squadron at RAF Ramat David as one of three newly posted clerks in the orderly room. By typing faster than the other two I rapidly achieved the great height of corporal i/c! The squadron moved to Ein Shemer in central Palestine and then late in 1946 to Cyprus. One day in April 1947 I was shocked to receive a telegram from an old school friend, then in the Navy, ‘Sorry to hear your father died’. My CO said wait – if you get news from home about serious illness I will send you on compassionate leave – if the death is official you won’t get leave. I duly got the message about illness, his flight lieutenant flew me to Cairo and from there I was flown via Tripoli, Malta and Marseilles to London and home. A month later I returned by sea to Cyprus and got the news that I was transferred to be a sergeant in Education Branch at RAF Aqir where I opened the first and only science laboratory for pre-release training of servicemen in the Middle East. I also ran for the RAF against the Palestine Police with success in the 880 yards – and have managed to keep ahead of the police ever since then!

Moving up to Jerusalem in December 1947 I found myself on guard duty on the night the terrorists blew up the Palestine Post Newspaper Offices. I had a week’s leave in which I visited Petra – a wonderful experience, walking the 20 miles from Ma’an to the site and exploring for four days. I returned to Jerusalem and finally to Wales in Spring 1948.

E G BOUSFIELD (1942)

He came up in 1942 and spent a first year in College and a second in digs across Parker's Piece, a time which he describes as frugal and austere. In the serious climate of war, with patriotic resolve, work was central with the full natural sciences programme of lectures and laboratory work demanding resolute effort. Although terms were extended, time was short for frivolous activities. Most meals were taken in Hall under the food rationing regime and a self-imposed rationing of cigarettes kept his consumption down to ten per week: beer was not plentiful. It could be argued that life was well directed towards defeating the military enemy, obesity, lung cancer and liver degeneration.

Outside College, caps and gowns were still to be worn until about 1943 when a variety of circumstances led to a relaxation of this requirement. One such factor was the arrival in large numbers of American airmen in the nearby bases. Caps proved to be irresistible trophies to the aviators and a spate of pinching led to some retaliation by undergraduates and so the caps were put out of sight – never to return for everyday use.

Along with about six hours attendance per week with the Home Guard or an equivalent, harvesting work was carried out on corn and fruit in the area. Enemy action locally was little more than an inconvenience. An evening return from a London visit by train was delayed by a bombing raid necessitating climbing in. Wartime College security was more rigorous than most of us have known and the brilliance of the local searchlight batteries often caused more embarrassment to intruders on the ground rather than those in the air. As 1944 progressed, the manifestations of D Day included the sight of large numbers of planes and gliders heading towards the continent. One such spectacular display was seen to advantage on the transit of Parker's Piece for breakfast in Hall.

IAN DOYLE (1942) wrote this piece for the *Association Newsletter* in 2005.

I had sat a scholarship entrance examination for English in December in 1941 (swotting through the Blitz on Liverpool) and took the Higher School Certificate in July 1942. I came up in October 1942, aged just under 17, which entitled me for a few weeks to bananas, only one that I can remember. The College held one's ration book in term, but one got a small issue of butter or margarine and sugar, kept in jars, to use in Hall and one's rooms (which continued after the war was over for several years). We shared, two to a set, in my first year with a man from my own school, in the second with another companion in English, and the third with him in approved lodgings nearby in Fitzwilliam Street. There were a fair number of us reading English in each first year before those over 18 were called up for national service. And I was one of the very few men in the arts subjects exempt on medical grounds and so able to continue our courses throughout the war, while engineers, medicals and scientists were exempt on grounds of national necessity. Women continued at Girton and Newnham, and also from Bedford College, evacuated from London, they pursuing their own courses with their own teachers but participating in social and extracurricular activities such as meetings of the University English Society, of which I was on the committee. Their visits to College were subject to gate-rules regarding time, as were our own returns, though the Downing campus is of course only part-protected by railings and walls. Gowns had to be worn in the evenings in the town, at dinner in Hall and at supervisions, lectures and calling on College officers. The proctors and bulldogs were supposed to patrol the town but I saw them only once, unmenaced.

I think the College kitchens did a remarkable job of feeding us under all the restrictions of rationing and supply, and the perennial dissatisfaction of compulsory customers. An experiment with jugged hare (which I now esteem) was hardly enjoyed by men who had never met it before, and officially caught whale meat (which I found not unpleasant grilled with onions) was mostly unwelcome. We could make ourselves tea and supper in our rooms with bread and scrambled egg from egg powder bought on battels from the buttry. Outside there was at least one British Restaurant,‡ the hotels requiring ration coupons, a few frugal cafes and foodless pubs. There were no licensed college bars, not owing to the war but because they were then unthinkable in the ethos of good student discipline.*

There was of course an effective black-out of external lighting. In my third year (1944-1945) we had V1 “buzz bombs” straying into the county and falling within hearing, but without loss of life or damage that we ever heard of, while the unheralded V2 rockets never came so far. Some men before enlistment did part-time training and one from my staircase killed himself with a grenade. On VE Day, 8 May 1945, after a Te Deum sung at Fisher House (the Roman Catholic Chaplaincy) I was told by a Benedictine monk, who had heard from a friend, that the allies now had a weapon of unprecedented force: this was three months before atom bombs were dropped on Japan.

JAMES LINDSAY-SMITH (1942)

Facilities and equipment for rowing were not readily available during the dark mid days of the war and the ingenuity of these members of the Engineering faculty was stretched, but with the presence of the memorable Boatman, Bob Biffen, much was achieved against the odds and four eights were kept going. Coaching was by the Frenchman Monsieur Cordier with a French accent on stamina training, such as a day’s rowing to Ely and back. With an effort to recycle more reminiscent of today’s exhortations, oars, blades and shell parts were sought from many of the leading rowing centres including Eton and Clare College. Perhaps the greatest demonstration of goodwill was the extreme sacrifice of the one great College rowing perk on going down, forbearing to take with them their oars when the First Boat achieved three bumps! Ties, caps and blazers were to be found by pushing the Cambridge outfitters to scan the backs of their shelves and storage racks. Even parental skill with needle and thread made a contribution.

ALEX MITCHELL† (1942)

Alex came up from Dulwich College on an exhibition to read classics. He arrived in January 1942 and in the two remaining terms of that academic year completed his examinations successfully. He then recalls volunteering for the RAF as a navigator, going down to ‘the shop around the corner’ as the recruiting office was locally known.

Whilst billeted at St. John’s Wood, an initial assessment took place at Lord’s Cricket Ground in what he described as rather chaotic circumstances. Thence to Shrewsbury for basic training where, playing rugby on a ‘ploughed field’ a broken ankle interrupted his training. His initial navigation course took place in the Hotel Regina, Torquay (once the home of Elizabeth Barrett Browning), then designated No 2 Initial Training Wing. Flight training then began not inappropriately at Wing in Buckinghamshire in twin-engined Wellingtons. He was posted to 90 Squadron for operational duties at Tuddenham, a station shared with 187 Squadron. The crew, now flying the four-engined Lancasters, rapidly began to put their preliminary training into practice, learning to rely on each other and to work together as a team. When operations began just after D Day on 6 June 1944, Alex recalled that the crew exuded an unlikely calm.

* An Oxford term for a kitchen account.

‡ Non-profit-making restaurants run by local councils providing basic meals off-ration.
There was one in Cambridge on the corner of St Andrews Street and Petty Cury.

He spoke of the importance of keeping to flight schedules: time of crossing the enemy coast, time over target and time of recrossing the enemy coast and the need within these parameters to mislead the enemy as far as possible as to the raid's real target. All but one of these missions took place before his 21st birthday on 2 November 1944. Of the many experiences of peril and stress he recalls one in particular over the Ruhr where the branches of the German air defences were highly co-ordinated by that time of the war. Short of the target, his Lancaster was caught in a radar-controlled searchlight cone and in order to escape from it, with frantic manoeuvres they dived steeply at a speed well above that at which the airframe was at risk of breaking up – this whilst still carrying their full load of bombs. He was awarded the DFM; later he was commissioned. Returning to Downing in 1945 he graduated in 1948 and thereafter service to his country continued in the Colonial Service in Sudan, Melanesia and finally as Governor of the Turks and Caicos Islands. With the help of three of his close friends much of the above was tenderly recorded a few days before he died in Corbridge in July 2010 aged 86.

DENIS SANDIFORD (1942)

His wife Marjorie writes that he came up from Forest School in Essex to read natural sciences. He joined the University Air Squadron, played football and fives for the College and was elected to The Griffins' Club. After one year, faulty vision having thwarted his hopes to train as an RAF pilot, he was sent by the government to the Royal Aircraft Establishment (RAE), to work as a radio engineer engaged in developing equipment for the RAF. Later he was transferred with a team from the RAE to work alongside the radar research engineers of E K Cole Ltd. at a secret 'shadow factory' located in a country house in Wiltshire. There he met his future wife who had also been sent there for war work. The work was so 'hush-hush' that it was split between a number of firms around Britain, and the exact nature of the end product was withheld from each.



Cambridge University Air Squadron in 1943 (Denis Sandiford is second from the left in the second row)

Marjorie has carried out some careful research on the shadow factory near Malmesbury which was subsequently demolished and a new housing estate built on the site. The estate was recently opened by Sir Bernard Lovell (now 96) and this gives a clue as to the calibre of the scientific development which took place there during the war. About 3000 persons were involved in it and the survivors were invited to attend: not many were able to except for appropriate dignitaries and the national media who, after a cold ribbon cutting ceremony, retired with Marjorie indoors to the warmth and a decent lunch.

After the war Denis's research work, a talent for language, and editorship skills led him to a notable international career.

TONY TALBOT-WILLIAMS (1942)

Three hundred of us, split up between the colleges, came up to Cambridge in September 1942 from school having already been accepted for RAF aircrew duties. We spent six months as undergraduates at the same time completing the RAF initial training course with the University Air Squadron. Having already learned the military adage the "time spent in reconnaissance is never wasted" I arrived early and after dumping my kit in my "set" in the then K staircase, set off to recce the Air Squadron Headquarters which was in the engineering faculty buildings in Fen Causeway. Eventually finding the Mess I ventured in and strode confidently to the bar. There was only one officer by the bar, an old squadron leader with Flying Corps wings and WWI medal ribbons but wearing cavalry boots! Having ordered a drink I plucked up courage to open the conversation by asking "what type of aeroplanes did you fly, sir?" To which he replied "aeroplanes m'boy? I flew dirigibles." Not a good start. Later I found out he was a dear old chap in his mid forties, Squadron Leader Brain who owned Brain's Brewery in South Wales and had rejoined in 1939. In addition to the three hundred cadets in the University Air Squadron, the army had a similar number in the Senior Training Corps. Not to be outdone the navy came late to the party and established the Cambridge University Naval Training Squadron, but when they got round to putting the initial letters on the headgear they quickly had to substitute 'Division' for 'Training Squadron'.

Downing had a close connection with the Naval Division and the Master, Admiral Sir Herbert Richmond, allowed all their drilling to take place in Downing between the Porters' Lodge and what was then L staircase, now the site of the College library. The Admiral was held in awe by all, but in spite of rationing, had every Downing cadet to the Lodge in small groups for coffee a number of times during our six months. These were memorable events when he expanded on the progress of the war, and on occasions during the discussion came out with expressions such as "when I was on a spying expedition in Bizerte in '98," and others, which would now offend the Race Relations Act. The Admiral tried not to leave any undergraduates alone with Lady Richmond, not because she might form a liaison with a toy-boy but because she was an ardent "Oxford Grouper" and her first question to the few who did get caught was "How are you with God?" and in no time had them kneeling on the sofa cleansing their souls.

As with many other aircrew, flying training took place in the United States, in my case Pensacola. This led to service in the Mexican Gulf on anti-submarine patrol. The U-boats were active in these waters and I piloted amphibian Consolidated Catalinas. This was an elegant high-wing monoplane with its fuselage suspended by a flared tower from its uninterrupted wing – fine large planes but with only two radial engines, real devils to fly off the water in anything other than ideal conditions.

ROBERT J CATON (1943)

I went up to Cambridge in April 1943 on a short naval course – the Naval HQ was in part of Downing, which was very appropriate as Admiral Richmond was then the Master. I was fortunately allocated to Downing but surprised to find that, even though it was wartime, the College was full. We had some excellent rooms the other side of Parkers Piece and a delightful landlady. We moved into College in July. My tutor was Mr. Whalley Tooker and I read history, politics and economics.

My time at Downing mapped out my future career. We had a meeting to set up a welfare committee and the officer said “Is anyone a writer?” as a naval rating I obediently put up my hand. “Right” he said “You are the secretary of the welfare committee”. That episode led me to becoming involved in charity and welfare work so far spanning 57 years.

Cambridge made us very welcome during the war and our many allies stationed around the area. There was nearly an international incident when a notice appeared on the river “Paddles only – no poles”. It was happily settled over a beer. Apart from college activities we got our enjoyment on the river, at a pub on the river and at the Dorothy for coffee and tea dances. We organised a naval ball there – very upmarket. As there were no girls in Downing, Homerton (all girls) looked after us very well. There was no chapel at Downing [a room above the SCR served as a chapel] but the churches and chapels were most welcoming. One source of entertainment was the large tank in Downing’s grounds to help us put out incendiary bombs. We never had to do so but a number finished up in the tank after a night out!!

To sum up, despite the war, Cambridge was a very welcoming, friendly, and enjoyable place to live in and set many of us then aged 18 on the right path.

JACK DALGLISH (1943)

In December 1942 aged 17 years and 8 months, I was awarded a Minor Open Scholarship in English at Downing. Residence requirements were suspended during the war, so it would have been possible to go up in January: but not in my case because I had not taken Latin for School Certificate and could not therefore matriculate. However, it was possible to take the Latin Previous in March if I could learn enough Latin in under three months. I did so, and passed. So I went up for the Summer Term. Dr Leavis had sent me a reading list in the interim, and gave me some extra tutorials during the term. I took the Preliminary Exam of the English Tripos and passed with a 2.1.

I was due to be called up for war service in the autumn of 1943, and had volunteered for the Royal Navy. My eyesight was not good enough for Seaman Branch so I opted to train as a Coder. Towards the end of the training course I was invited to apply to train as a Japanese translator. I did so, was selected, and was sent on a six-month crash course which took place at London University School of Oriental Studies. This was very intensive: we were examined at the end of each month, and anyone who failed to reach the required standard was discharged from the course. As far as I remember, 26 of us started on the course and 11 passed it. We were then commissioned as Naval Intelligence officers and sent to Bletchley Park. It is now public knowledge that BP, as we called it, was where enemy codes were broken, but at the time and for 30 years after the war this was top secret. Code-breaking was essentially the combined work of mathematicians and linguists. I worked on intercepted radio messages in Japanese naval codes until the end of the war against Japan. In 1944-45 I was one of a group of translators working in Naval Section at Bletchley Park on intercepted messages in the Japanese Navy code JN 147. The code was initially used mainly for minor operations such as a movement of coastal forces, but its use gradually expanded. The intercepts produced a great deal of information, but those of us working on them seldom knew what use was made of that intelligence.

By May 1945 Japan had only two remaining large warships based in Singapore and operating in the East Indies. These were heavy cruisers, the sister ships *Haguro* and *Ashigara*. *Haguro* was sunk by British destroyers on 16 May, and there is evidence that its movements had been revealed by an intercepted message in the major fleet naval code JN 25, decoded and translated by the Royal Navy codebreakers at Colombo. *Ashigara* was torpedoed in the Bangka Strait off the coast of Sumatra by the British submarine *HMS Trenchant* on 8 June. It has not been previously recorded how *Ashigara*'s position and movements were discovered. In fact it was the result of an intercept in the JN 147 code, decoded and translated at Bletchley Park. One evening in early June, I and another officer, Sub Lt (Sp) Richard Rutt RNVr (who in later life became Bishop of Leicester), were on watch, translating intercepts as they were passed to us. Richard Rutt suddenly said, "This one's very important". It gave details of the movements of *Ashigara* en route from Batavia (now Jakarta) to Singapore. Richard completed the translation and sent it to Control. A few days later he received a note of congratulation from higher authority and the information that the cruiser had been sunk. The British official history records the sinking of the two cruisers, but was published when references to code-breaking were still banned under the Official Secrets Act. Thus the truth of what happened is revealed only by the memories of those of us who took part. As the location and sinking of the *Ashigara* resulted from the work of the JN 147 team, Richard and I believe that it should now be put on record as one of the many achievements of Naval Section at Bletchley Park.

It is interesting to consider the grounds on which people were selected for the six month course for Japanese translators. Some were students of modern languages, some of classics. I knew two who were bilingual in English and Welsh. But there were others who were not primarily linguists. There were several historians and several including myself, who were specialising in English literature. The common bond was that we were almost all people who had been first-year undergraduates, with a preponderance from Cambridge, or people who had gained university places but were unable to go up before being called up for war service. It was interesting also that there were only two RN officers in Naval Section. All the rest of us were 'hostilities only' RNVr officers. One day Naval Section was visited by an admiral who asked various people how much 'sea time' they had had. As most of us had never been to sea his expression became increasingly grim. I suspect he was one of those who regard code-breaking as ungentlemanly, like reading other people's private correspondence. Thereafter I worked on translating documents relevant to war crimes trials.

JOHN HAGEN[†] (1943)

I went up having been rejected for military service on medical grounds, so I was in residence for the last period of the war. I joined the fire fighting unit in College, which was set up to protect the buildings from incendiary bombs. We had regular drills and exercises, and a team was on duty every night to be called out if there was a raid. There weren't any, thankfully, as it happened, in my time. The old buildings (East and West) were occupied by RAF personnel (each man for six months) who followed short academic courses of individual choice, which supplemented their service training.

College and University life went on as near normal as possible, though because I had no experience of 'normal' in that sense I can't say how different it all was from peacetime activity. In arts subjects (I read English and history) most undergraduates had either been invalided out of service or (like me) were excused it. There were perhaps not more than a dozen or so in each year. Medical and science faculties were able to recruit men as they wished, because exemption from service was granted to those wishing to enter reserved professions.

Many clubs and activities flourished in the College and in the University. I played cricket and hockey for Downing, and (I believe) rather unusually, was Secretary of the JCR for two years. In the University my main interest was with the ADC and The Marlowe Society. Three meals a day were served in Hall, and

although rationing was in operation, the food seemed abundant and varied. Ration books were deposited at the buttery each term, and were taken home for the vacations. Strict blackout regulations were of course in force until the war ended, and small supplies of coal were available for heating individual rooms.

There was I think no central heating anywhere. Admiral Sir Herbert Richmond was Master. He used to give regular talks for undergraduates and others on the progress and strategy of the war. There was also a Home Guard unit in College, and in my first year one of its members (a medical student) was killed in an experimental exercise he was carrying out involving bombs.

In writing this piece John Hagen said that he had terminal cancer which prevented his doing any extended task.

JOHN LAITHWAITE (1943)

I joined the Air Training Corps as soon as it was started and volunteered for the RAF. I could not join until I was 18 but in the autumn of '43 I started the six month short course. My tutor was Mr Whalley-Tooker – a law man! My direction was engineering, not even precise science, so I felt quite at home in the University Air Squadron under Squadron Leader Lewis.

I enjoyed the six months at Downing and its friendly atmosphere. The master, Sir Herbert Richmond, kindly gave me two invitations to Sunday tea while there. He was very jovial and his wife and daughter were delightful, and the subject matter of the technical side of the short course was right up my street. Sir Herbert also invited those who wished to come to his Lodge to play the piano after dinner. I made it very clear that I would like to return after the war.

I started in the RAF proper in April '44 and went on to grading school at Shellingford near Faringdon for a month, was graded pilot and was able to find the way back to the airstrip by keeping an eye on Faringdon Folly. We were flying Tiger Moths. There were delays in further training so, along with many others, I was sent on a course for motor driving and then on to Weeton Aston in Staffordshire as a general driver and very often as an ambulance driver. My experience of a mangled body – the only one – came there. We were regularly summoned to Heaton Park and in April '45 a lot of us were posted to South Africa/Rhodesia to restart flying training. The journey was very pleasant going as far as where we changed to a tiny miserable tramp steamer to Durban. I still love Mombassa for giving me my first banana in four years. We got to hear of Roosevelt's death while we were in the Suez canal and the European war finished about the same time, but the Japanese conflict was still going strong. After a delay at Bulawayo we started flying again at Mount Hampden near Salisbury as it was then called.

The Japanese war suddenly ended and we were quickly mustered to Mombassa, stopped flying and got back to the UK in October. Many of my friends agreed to stay in the RAF and start flying again for four or five years where they flew Lancasters over the Middle East. My concern was to get de-mobbed ASAP and get back to Downing and the engineering labs. This took nearly a year during which I was trained as an aircraft maintenance engineer at St Athan and posted to Swinderby near Lincoln with a brief interlude teaching maths at the station education section. All things come to an end however and I was de-mobbed in time to get back to Downing. I shared a lovely room with an RAF friend, Brian Morton, and set about the Mechanical Sciences Tripos with great enthusiasm. In '48 I took a flat on the other side of Parkers Piece and in that December I was married. My wife was a junior school teacher and had a place in the school in Blinco Grove. I completed Part I in two years and did Part II in the following year. Downing was very generous to me and handed out two prizes which helped me. After a further design training experience at English Electric at Rugby, I joined the group of designers working on Calder Hall Power Station, which ran for 47 years before being closed.

NORMAN S LILLEY (1943)

I remember arriving in Cambridge (I think on a Thursday evening) in the black-out at the station having travelled from Bedford when the line was then open!!

I asked to be taken to Downing plus cases and a trunk. I arrived; the porters on duty were very kind and helpful (as they always were). I was taken to my room in L Block. The room number was L11. An odd number....LILLEY L11. It was the room above Mr W L Cuttle's rooms – my first Director of Studies. The room was dark...the black-out curtains were drawn and the fire had not been lit. The porter advised me that I would be sharing with another undergraduate who turned out to be John B Aldred, who I found was doing the same course. John arrived about an hour later and after introducing ourselves said that we were expected at dinner that evening in Hall and that we did not have to wear gowns as we had just arrived. In those days of rationing it was a real treat to find a three course meal provided. I think it was jugged here, a surprise dish, very welcome and what a great job the kitchen staff did for the College in those years.

Thinking back, I have one odd but strange memory during the time I was in College; every evening one of the porters would visit each block, enter the bathrooms and fill each bath up with cold water...an air raid precaution in case of fire!!!...and an opportunity for the residents to have a cold bath in the morning!!!

I had been called up for the Royal Navy in the summer but this had then been deferred for two years, but I was to join the University Naval Division which, by sheer coincidence, was based in Downing. My timetable of lectures, lab times, tutorials, naval parades on Sundays and Wednesdays soon established itself and College routines soon took over my life, although there was enough time also for visits to the cinema (The Regal was very close) and to join a number of Societies.

I occasionally managed a game of hockey but never made the College team. The lawns in the College grounds provided fine tennis courts and as a member of the Naval Division I had access to the swimming pool at the Leys School, a real bonus. Sunday Naval Divisions saw the lawns outside Hall filled with all the Naval Cadets from the University being inspected and reading the flashing morse lamp or semaphore flags to keep us on our toes; sometimes it was a trip to the river to bend our backs moving the 27 foot whalers. I am sure that the Master, Admiral Richmond, felt proud of the connection.

So my years at Downing passed all too quickly. I finished my national service actually in the army; the navy after VJ Day meant I was not required so it was the army that took my time and interest. Having had the good fortune to read physics/maths/chemistry and electronics for tripos, these were just what gave me such a good start in the Royal Signals with 21st Army Group in Germany. I finished up as an instructor at the School of Signals and eventually resigned my regular commission in 1949. My career in teaching followed in the UK and I finally retired as the head of the science faculty at a large comprehensive school in Oxfordshire.

So, what are my lasting thoughts and memories of wartime Downing. Several, of course. The friends I made...Frank Reavell and John Hagen; College life I have mentioned. The bar below Hall...Mr Stubbings dishing out the spare rations – tea and I think some sugar. The Tolly Ales were available too. The Sunday services of evensong in the little chapel, then above the Hall. The bicycle racks behind the Porter's Lodge – you could leave your machine there at the end of term and it would be there when you returned, no padlocks in those days. Life in digs following my first year...36 Warkworth Street, I think. Early walks across Parker's Piece for breakfast. No phones – or mobiles! The nearest call box was near the cinema...trunk calls home in the war were not easy, and expensive.

My thanks and gratitude for the influence Downing has had on my life. From my school, Bedford Modern, my headmaster, H W Liddle, and physics teacher, P J King, both Downing men; Mr Berry and

Mr Whalley-Tooker who guided and supported me; the Chaplain, who helped me so much on my spiritual journey. I treasure my Griffin ties, blazer and the crest that hangs in my hall. I feel so proud, honoured and grateful....thank you, Downing.

W RENNIE BARBOUR (1944)

Coming up straight from school in 1944, Rennie was struck by how quiet Cambridge was, no cars, few undergraduates and easy cycling. He had a strong feeling of the pre-war as the younger College servants had been called up and many of the older retainers were once more back at their former duties. Very quickly he found a passion for rowing which he retained long after and in the first year stroked the Second Boat. Because of wartime restrictions the Bumps programme was restricted to three nights – time enough though for some success. The crews from the Cambridge colleges were joined by those from the several London colleges which had been evacuated to Cambridge.

September 1945, with the war over, brought an overwhelming return of ex-servicemen, many with wives and families. With more beef in the boat and promotion to the First Boat, he had a successful season winning in both the Lent and Mays and gaining his still treasured and displayed oar.

OSWELL BARDSLEY (1944)

My recollections of Downing when I came up in wartime revealed a very different picture from what we see today. The buildings were essentially those bordering the main court, except that the chapel was not yet built. By and large only first year students were housed in College, and then rooms, bedroom and sitting room, were shared. The rooms were looked after by bedders. All meals were taken in Hall. It was of course a time of severe rationing and we were asked to hand in our ration books at the buttery to Mr Stubbins. In return we received some butter, sugar, and jam; sufficient to make afternoon tea, on some days. I don't recall much about lunch and dinner except that kitchen staff must have performed near miracles. All was distinctly edible. At breakfast, I don't recall very much about bacon and eggs, but I enjoyed the scrambled egg made from dried egg power, and fresh mackerel. I had not eaten mackerel before (nor since) but I developed quite a taste for it.

Many first year students only stayed for one year and were then required to do national service, but those taking science or engineering were allowed to stay the full three years. I read maths, so I had three. In 1944 Downing did not have a maths supervisor, but arranged for me to see Mr H A Webb, elderly Fellow of Trinity College and University Lecturer in Mathematics to engineering students. I could not have done better. In my first year I recall that a number of the College societies were active. In particular, the Dramatic Society produced a most entertaining performance of a Jacobean play (whose title for the life of me I can't remember). This also reminds me that the 'English school' in College was very evident. The English Fellow was F R Leavis (accompanied by his wife Queenie) who apparently held very controversial views, to the extent that after some of his supervisions excited students would emerge, not infrequently fencing, seriously, with umbrellas.

For the second and third years, although the war was over, we were required to find lodgings. I was one of three who found rooms at 36 Warkworth Terrace, on the far side of Parker's Piece. We still had lunch and dinner in College. Many is the evening when we needed to sprint across Parker's Piece to arrive in Hall before the student President (in Hall) could judge that we had arrived late and should be 'sconced.' i.e.

required to fill the large sconce jug with beer, present it to the President who would take the first drink before passing it round. We never were sconced. We had breakfast in digs. Happily porridge oats couldn't have been rationed. Our landlady served mountains.

At the end of or first year, the war just over, there was a Downing College Cricket Club tour, the first since probably 1938. This was wonderfully arranged by the Captain and his Deputy, Frank Hoyle and John Hagen. And as if to replenish our distant thoughts of pre-war England, it included a game against Hambledon on Broad Halfpenny Down with refreshments at the adjoining Bat and Ball. This had been the setting for the first organised cricket in about 1770. As recognition of the disparity in age and maturity current in many spheres at the war end, the 'boys and men' syndrome, our captain on winning the toss decided to put the hosts in first, why? – to allow the match to last until the afternoon.

JOHN V BEAN (1944)

As a young ex-serviceman John Bean came up in 1944 to read English at the feet of F R Leavis. He mentions many friends who helped him to relieve the bleakness of the 1946–7 winter. Save for Paul Baxter and Ted Drake, regretfully no more of their names appear in today's lists. That winter he describes as wretchedly cold with his bedroom window in Warkworth Terrace a poor match for the icy blasts from the wastes of Siberia. A broken-down gas fire in the sitting room added little comfort.

As spring arrived the snow drifts on Parker's Piece disappeared quickly and the new ideas from his studies began to fall into place and he resolved to enter the priesthood. In 1944 the 'The Upper Room' sufficed as Chapel where the only illumination came from candles in sconces set along the backs of old-fashioned high-backed pews. One evensong Lady Richmond, the Master's wife, sat with feathers in her hat hanging over the top of a candle. Being deaf, she could not hear the warnings and it was only the smell of burning which alerted her to her predicament.

JOHN K S BOURNE (1944)

He came to Downing from Bristol Grammar School on a six-month short course, an arrangement which provided training for the forces alongside academic study. After subsequent military service a return to College followed to allow the completion of tripos studies.

He had chosen to volunteer for minesweeping in the Royal Navy. During World War I his father had served in the navy detecting German U-boats. At Downing he attended Leavis's wide ranging Shakespearian lectures for which he had a taste, having at school played Cassius in *Julius Caesar*. He also had a taste for Queenies's teas which were part of the Leavis package. The contrast between Leavis's lectures and instruction on minesweeping was extreme – 'dismantle this unit, clean it and mantle it again!' he might have heard, but this is how the week was shared. Together with English he read history, the period being 1066 to 1200 which covered the last invasion of Britain – not an inappropriate topic given the recent perils. There were about thirty cadets doing similar courses who undertook four days of academic study and one day naval training each week: a reasonable balance. This training took place in the Naval Hut which after the war served as comfortable undergraduate accommodation. They learned about mines and how to spot them, how to read charts, how to keep watch and stay on course in a flotilla. Although the hot war was largely over when John's service began, the sinister treachery of sea-mines was still a hazard which

would have remained so for many decades unless positive action had been taken to remove it. He was involved in the extensive sweeping of the seas around Britain and Scandinavia to remove both surface mines for shipping and deep mines for submarines. John came back to Downing as a first lieutenant after two years in the Navy focussing his studies on history.

DEREK ELEY (1944)

Derek came up to Downing in 1944 to read mechanical sciences. His first recollection was of a welcome from Mr Whalley-Tooker followed by an unambiguous warning. It was well known, the Praelector said, that Downing was the easiest college to climb in to, but that this knowledge was not held only by the undergraduates but by the staff also; if caught, offenders would be sent down. He never heard of this happening. His service in the RAF began in 1945, after the cessation of hostilities. He shared a room with the late Francis Marshall who became adviser to the Australian government on aeronautical matters with the RAF rank of wing commander.

JOHN M GRANT (1944)

He had volunteered for service in the Royal Navy under the Y Scheme and as a cadet came up when Admiral Richmond was Master and the Royal Naval Division was centred on what was called the 'Naval Hut' (which many remember as the best heated accommodation in College). His two years in the Navy ended at HMS *Mercury*.

JOHN JAFFE (1944)

Unlike many contemporaries I was not on a short course, but a humble engineer, who went up in 1944 with the view to doing two years before joining up. My two years ended in 1946, by which time the war was over, and we were the first intake that was allowed to carry on for a third year. On going down I joined consulting engineers and was exempt from call-up for a number of years until the government finally decided that they no longer needed the likes of me in the services.

One of my lasting impressions of Cambridge is the inverse age profile of the undergraduates that developed during my years in residence. In my first year, they seemed to be mostly school-leavers like me. In my second year we were joined by men invalided out of the forces and then in my third year we were joined by the general discharge, who were older, had seen war service and made a big impression on me.

My third year was made memorable by the severe winter of 1947. Fortunately some of the wartime restrictions were over but College accommodation lacked any of today's comfort. I played hockey for the College and in the Lent term not a single game was played on account of the snow. I also did a bit of swimming and the University used the Leys School baths which were 30 yards long! How times have changed.

R BRYAN JAMESON (1944)

In that year towards the war end, they were seriously earnest times with the harsh realities of the war being clearly demonstrated by the steady flow of USAAF ambulances passing through the town on the way to the Madingley American Cemetery. The US 8th Air Force was still taking heavy casualties in their daylight raids on northern Europe. There were brighter aspects though, 'at homes' in the Master's Garden perhaps with croquet for example. Admiral Richmond saw to it that we understood the progress of hostilities by giving talks on the Far East naval activities. Later these were discontinued as it was feared that his analyses could have been valuable to the enemy.

JAMES NURTON (1944)

I went up in September 1944 on a State Bursary to read engineering. Such Bursaries were given to those of us wishing to read engineering or medicine. They were accompanied by an exemption from national service which was unnecessary in my case as I was only 17 years old. Blackout was still in force and static water tanks were in place around the College with a large one on the lawn outside J staircase where I had rooms. Along with other usual College activities, facilities for sports in general were limited.

Undergraduates were encouraged to join one of the pre-service training setups and I joined the STC (Senior Training Corps) to find that it was almost defunct following the successful invasion of Europe following the D Day landings by the various armies. In the STC my room-mate and I were the only two new volunteers and we were drilled by two sergeants and a sergeant major seconded from Guards regiments. Whilst we all surely value the unique benefit of one-to-one tuition afforded in normal times by our supervisors, we did find it a little difficult to be serious when the two of us were ordered each day to "Fall in" and took it in turns to be Right Marker.

ROBERT STRETTON (1944)

I came up in 1944 to read English and do have one general comment. In one of his published lectures Arthur Quiller-Couch described the dismay of the dons when Cambridge was emptied of young men during the First World War. They feared the University would never recover. I suppose this fear lay behind the creation of short courses for the three armed services in WWII. Accordingly most such courses allowed candidates to pursue the subjects they were interested in. The exception was those for the Royal Engineers (the only army ones available in Cambridge) where only the Mechanical Sciences Tripos was on offer. The Sappers were proud that in peace time all their officers took a Cambridge degree in this subject. Two serving sappers, a captain and a warrant officer, were posted to Cambridge to train us and as they presumably had nothing else to do they filled up our afternoons with bridge building, explosives and the like, so in retrospect it seemed more like army service than university life, though of course we enjoyed it at the time.

One personal memory is that three of us were confronted in the Court at Downing by a ferocious female from the secretarial staff who informed us that all the service undergraduates were bad but the army ones were worst. I am sorry I did not think to ask if this applied to scholars of the College, but I was young then and not nearly as pompous as I later became.

DEREK E T TOWLE (1944)

Seeking to read law Derek came to his interview on 6 June 1944: this of course was D Day... one could say in two senses. The news of the invasion reached him over the wireless in the station café at Bletchley where he changed trains. There was, however, another dimension to his experiences of that day. The Cambridge train was non-corridor and his fellow travellers were an American sergeant and a priest. Conversation led him to ask the priest his denomination; his own was Methodist. To his horror the reply was 'Roman Catholic' – a branch about which he had been given strong warnings! The priest said that he must join him for tea at St Edmund's should Downing accept him for Michaelmas Term. A strong mental note of avoidance registered in Derek's mind.

On coming up to Downing four months later fate mischievously arranged for the two to meet head on at the College gate. The tea invitation was repeated and the following Sunday

firmly specified. Declining it on the grounds that he was playing soccer for the University Naval Division only led to a later note from the priest announcing a changed tea time. Received by his host on the St Edmund's steps, he was taken to the Refectory to be presented to and sup tea with another visitor, Cardinal Hinsley, together with the Abbot. Cambridge does give much that is unexpected.

Other elevated persons were met at the Polish Officers' Club in the form of members of the Polish Government in Exile. This was as a guest of Kazig Waligowra with whom he shared digs and a landlady who made beautiful "crunchy".

As a reminder that the D Day operations had yet to complete their total mission, a buzz bomb (V1) interrupted a party at Newnham fortunately exploding away from the city. A closer connection with hostilities came with conscription which lasted until 1947 when he was able to return to Downing. As a manifestation of how age ranges were mixed as a result of the wartime interruption a new College member was Alex Jandrell, erstwhile colonel in the South African Air Force and then 35 years old. To be out of College after midnight he was required to obtain an absit from his tutor – this was Dr Frank Wild – 27 years old and looking even younger than that.

ERIC ASPIN[†] (1945)

Mrs Aspin kindly telephoned me to say that Eric was pleased to receive my letter but that because of difficulties with his memory he was unable to tell me much about his days at Downing – although he still had in a cupboard his gown and mortar board which he cherishes. She went on to tell me that he is managing well at home with outside visits to Church and elsewhere. Having read law at Downing his subsequent career was in accountancy in the Midlands: it included service in the Territorial Army.

DAVID BRAYBROOKE (1945)

David is now Professor Emeritus of Government and Professor Emeritus of Philosophy at The University of Texas at Austin as The Centennial Commission Chair in the Liberal Arts. In 1945 he was not even an ex-serviceman, he was still an enlisted man in the American army. Here is his account of his experiences of Downing and the US Army.

How did I get to Cambridge? I was a Technician 5th grade, the lowest rated cryptographic technician in the European Theatre, paid as a corporal but outranked. I was a noisy and unruly soldier, within limits; and therefore not popular with my battalion headquarters, which picked a safe place for themselves in Liege and sent me with the signal centre detachment assigned to Antwerp, then under bombardment with V1s and V2s (buzzbombs and rockets) by the Germans.

I don't recall hearing about anything called the Training Within Civilian Agencies Program, but I must have heard officially about chances to go to British universities. I applied and was turned down. Extreme measures were called for. A friend of mine also wanted to go to Cambridge and bolder than I led me into the message centre at Brussels, where we inserted a paragraph in the daily orders from the American general commanding there that we were to go to Cambridge. My battalion headquarters was ready to defy even this, but it heard that my father (a lieutenant-colonel in the US Engineers) was on his way from Paris to see me about this issue. They assumed that he was going to make a fuss. What he was going to do was try to console and reconcile me to the disappointment. (When I went into the army, he, already overseas, wrote

to me, "David, you are going to find lots of things in the Army irksome; and, David, you irk very easily." How true!) At any rate battalion headquarters backed down and Harvey and I were soon on our way by air from Brussels to London. So I went to Cambridge as in the earlier World War the Great Gatsby went to Oxford.

I knew that Brooks Otis, my mentor at Harvard, the mainspring of curricular reform there, later chair of classics at Stanford and then university professor at Chapel Hill, had caught Dr Leavis's attention, because Leavis, in a little book about education and the university, had spent some time with Otis's animadversions, congenial to Leavis, on misguided features of education at Harvard at that time. But Otis didn't play any direct role in getting me to Cambridge. It was that spurious order from headquarters in Brussels.

Downing offered me a place to stay for a degree (English Part One, Economics Part One.) in the 1945-6 academic year.

I shared a set and bedder with a Canadian lieutenant, and my beer was charged to the Army of the United States at the buttery. A step up even for the lieutenant, more so for me. J G Ballard and others describe this as a bleak and shabby time for life in England. And it was shabby, but too full of life and interest for me to find it bleak. Clothes, like food, were rationed, but when an English family, close friends, gave up a clothing coupon (perhaps more than one) so that I could buy a Downing College scarf, they did not cease to be comfortably clothed. The food in Hall can't have been wonderful, but I didn't find it at all dreary. I overheard another undergraduate say, "I've been frightfully lax lately; I haven't read my Punch for months." Americans are not used to irony and it took me a long time to realize that this was a wholly ironic remark.

It was a shock to find Leavis in his supervisions teaching by considering how best to cope with examinations, thus making old examination papers the basis of discussion. But this was understandable caution on Leavis's part as odd man out in the Faculty of English – he had to take special pains to make sure his students passed; and reasonably effective as instruction. Leavis's lectures were very effective; close reading a good preparation for analytical philosophy in the ordinary language style, which I learned during my later graduate study years at Cornell and Oxford.

I went to hear Basil Willey and Miss Bradbrook who were on Leavis's short list of recommended colleagues. I also attended lectures in anthropology, one by Evans-Pritchard, still in Army uniform and very well organized; and another series by a fiercely misogynous professor who did his best to embarrass women students by concentrating on "sticks and stones and dirty stories about black men," actually on rather disgusting rituals involving hands up inside cows' private parts. I went to hear Russell, very funny about Descartes in a stove but I didn't take advantage of Wittgenstein's presence. Though I afterwards became a philosopher and a professor of philosophy, too ignorant then.

My Canadian roommate, Jenness, son of a famous Canadian student of the Arctic, concentrated on courses in geography. He kindly gave me on inquiry the name of a Girton student who was doing geography and attracted my attention – Rosemary Roe. Took her to dinner (jugged hare – hare not rationed) at the hotel opposite the main entrance to Trinity [The Blue Boar]. Lovely girl; I don't know why I didn't follow her up, maybe because I was so far as an unfinished undergraduate from being able to offer her an attractive partnership in life.

The Master of Downing then listed in the London Gazette as Professor Admiral Sir Herbert Richmond, Royal Navy, Knight Commander of the Order of the Bath, was quite at his ease dealing with ranks far below. He had a huge cup for his breakfast tea and a story about an event during a review of the fleet in Portsmouth before the war. When the admiral came to visit Richmond's cruiser, he missed his footing on the ladder and fell into the water between the cruiser and his barge. Just as his head was disappearing, the voice of a rating on a lower deck rang out, "Why, fish the booger out!".

After the first orientation meeting at Bull College (in Trumpington Street, set up as a temporary centre for US servicemen at the University [now King's College Bull Hostel]. I saw pretty much nothing of the soldiers attached there; and apart from seeing Harvey occasionally, and the great football match, was hardly aware of the other Americans. I was absorbed and felt absorbed in English undergraduate life.*

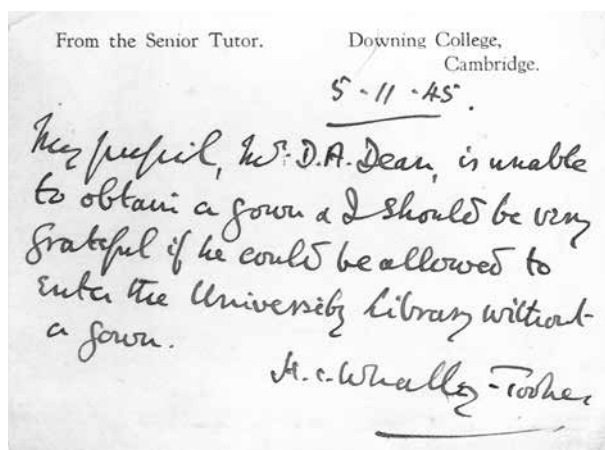
After the end of hostilities in Europe my battalion went home to the States while I was at Cambridge, thoughtfully transferring me to the signal centre at SHAEF in Frankfurt am Main, which meant three and half more months in the Army for me. But I reckoned having a term at Cambridge and an offer for me to stay on was worth it. As soon as I got to Frankfurt I got an appointment to see a major who had supposedly the power to let me go back to Cambridge, leaving the army before I was strictly eligible to do so on the system of accumulated points. He sat behind his desk twiddling his thumbs while I made my case to his secretary less than ten feet away; then had me repeat the case to him. (Just the sort of petty tyranny that hierarchical organizations make possible.) He turned me down, saying there were hundreds of soldiers in a position like me. "What !" I said, "hundreds with an opening at Cambridge to which I had to return if I wasn't to lose a year ?". He didn't have an answer to this, but he denied me nonetheless.

I went back to the States and finished my undergraduate degree with modest glory at Harvard. I took an MA and a PhD at Cornell, but no degrees in England. I had a year at Oxford during my graduate program at Cornell, and another year at Oxford on leave from Yale and appointed to Balliol as an honorary tutor not on the foundation, which entitled me to one meal at high table a week. I did get back to Cambridge, decades later, when I was a Visiting Fellow at Wolfson College in 1985-86.

DENIS DEAN (1945)

As I was not in residence during the war years I cannot give you any direct evidence on wartime Downing but I imagine that much of the wartime scene and limitations took some time to disappear.

After nearly four years in the army, culminating in a journey from Normandy to the Elbe, I came up in October 1945. The war in Europe had ended in May and I was on garrison duty somewhere in the Ruhr in the summer when I was listed on a draft for the Far East. Then two atomic bombs were dropped and instead of going to Japan I quite abruptly found myself going to Downing. On my second day there I stood



side by side with Cecil Benzecry before the seated Whalley-Tooker who spoke to us but received no reply, each of us thought he was speaking to the other! However our misunderstanding was soon cleared up but may have arisen from him having a slight cast in one eye.

I was up for three years, taking a couple of law degrees. A note from my tutor is illustrated here, explaining my lack of academic dress [clothing was rationed], I did eventually get a gown!

Note from the Senior Tutor about Denis Dean's lack of a gown

* A game played between "Bull College" and Pembroke at Grange Road on 6 December 1945, the first half being to rugby rules and the second to American football rules. The first half score was 18-0 to Pembroke and the second half 24-0 to Bull.

DAVID J HARGREAVES (1945)

David rang some time ago having just returned from a visit to the holocaust sites in Poland; he had been much moved. Events there had just been terminated when he came up to Downing in 1945. Quite apart from rationing and other restrictions, although the war was over, certain wartime arrangements were still in place and after his first year reading agriculture, David was conscripted into the army for two years, returning to Downing in 1949 for the remainder of his studies.

As a Mancunian he had been a pupil at that illustrious Grammar School which was evacuated to Blackpool on the outbreak of war but which returned to Manchester after one year – just in time for the Blitz. This prompted a move to Shrewsbury School. In the army he broke a leg skiing; this restricted his sporting activities at Downing.

BERNARD SPURGIN[†] (1946) wrote in the *Association Newsletter* of 2001:

I should have matriculated at St Catharine's in October 1939. Donald Portway, the tutor who interviewed me when I was up for the March Entrance and Scholarship examination (shared with Selwyn), had offered me a place to read natural sciences. When the time came I had to write regretting that I could not take up the place. This was not the result of a war having started; it was on account of financial hardship. I worked for a while in Lloyds Bank Ltd, as "temporary assistance", and then went into the Royal Artillery (Coast Defence). A very fortunate series of postings kept me in South Wales, Devon and Cornwall up to 1945, much of the time training operators for coastal radar. After VE-Day and VJ-Day I was shunted along to Dover and then sent out to Malta, to permit the return of someone whose service had been longer and more arduous than mine. In February 1946, after learning that my Release Group Number – 38 – would take me out of the army in August of that year, I wrote to St Catharine's from Malta, hoping for a place in October. All were filled. So I wrote to every college (about fifteen then, I think), and had offers from Fitzwilliam House, which did not then have the status of a college, and from Downing. Frank Wild sorted out this slightly complex (and irregular) situation and offered me a place for October 1946. A grateful government provided the necessary finance this time, with what today's undergraduates would have regarded, I am sure, as a very generous Further Education and Training Grant.

I would undoubtedly have mentioned my St Catharine's place for 1939, and I think it likely that Wild would have got in touch with Portway about me, for Portway was a Downing man. He became Master of St Catharine's in 1946. As a schoolmaster I was always encouraged by Frank to use my MA's privilege to dine at high table and I did so quite a few times, usually when attending an examiners' meeting or a committee in Cambridge. I am sure he wished me to keep in touch in the hope that I would be able to direct some able pupils to Downing. On one such occasion I was seated near to Donald Portway and, at his suggestion, I joined him at some unearthly hour the next morning at the bathing place for his swim in the river. It did not occur to me then to ask whether it had been he who had shoe-horned me into Downing. If it had, I would have expressed my very grateful thanks.

HOW TO GET A PLACE AT DOWNING IN 1946 BY ANON.

Reprinted from the *Association Newsletter* 2007.

In August 1946, the War Office suddenly announced it would consider sending us Regular Officers in the Royal Engineers to Cambridge again – if we could find our own places. I telephoned the headmaster of my school who arranged for me to meet the tutors at two colleges. They were both very friendly but had no spare places and advised me to try again the following year. So that was it: I had tried and failed to get a place. Not having been to Cambridge before I decided to look at some of the famous buildings. But the town centre was crowded with people celebrating “Salute the Soldier” in honour of the two battalions of the Cambridgeshire Regiment who had spent over three years as prisoners of war. So I turned round and went the other way: the most important “about turn” in my life, as it happened. I walked past Christ’s and Emmanuel and came across a porter’s lodge in Regent Street. I asked the porter the name of the college and when he said “Downing” I remembered that several boys from my school had been there. I nervously asked the porter if the tutor dealing with engineering was available and, after telephoning, he said Dr Wild would see me.

The first thing Dr Wild said to me was how pleased he was to see I was wearing the Eighth Army medal ribbon. He explained that he had been responsible for developing the thermite bomb we left on the engines of abandoned vehicles. That was a good start but then the questions got sharper. When I said I had got a place at Oxford just before the war to read chemistry which had to be declined for financial reasons, he replied “You don’t think getting a place to read chemistry at Oxford cuts much ice here, do you?” About ten minutes later he said he would give me a place and signed a letter saying so. I couldn’t believe my luck!

[The author graduated with a First in Mechanical Sciences]

TO THE EDITOR OF *THE GRIFFIN*. LENT TERM 1947

Dear Sir,

Much has been said, with full justification, of the difficulties of the ex-service man settling down to university life. Many have sought to enlist sympathy on his behalf and we have given it gladly and wholeheartedly. More perhaps might have been said of the difficulties of the University settling down to the ex-serviceman; more sympathy might have been extended to an Alma Mater clasping to her bosom sons who had long passed the usual age of weaning. Certainly this process of accommodation and assimilation was the outstanding happening of last term, and it was not an undue simplification to regard it as the “Term of the man who has completed his National Service and returned to civil life and study.” Nevertheless it was a simplification. No picture of college life, even in this academic year, could be complete without some attention devoted to the youthful minority of freshmen “par excellence” who have come up from school. I write as a member of this minority. We too have had our difficulties. Cambridge must seem more or less strange to every freshman; we experienced the added strangeness of a University not entirely sure of itself. Socially we were at a disadvantage. We could not convincingly claim to have met every other person in some remote corner of the world. We felt ashamed that our knowledge of geography was derived from books and maps, and that our knowledge of world affairs was derived from newspapers rather than from an intimate acquaintanceship with all the personalities and people involved. Conversationally we were hampered. Our fund of anecdote was exhausted when the veteran had merely given a foretaste of his tales and experiences. We could do no other than treat his remarks about wine, women and song as literally inspired. His language was spiced with new and interesting words; whereas when we ventured a remark in plain English, the English seemed embarrassingly plain.

The world is full of suppressed minorities. We consider it an honour that we have not become suppressed. Indeed our continued existence is a justifiable excuse for pride. We have survived the rigours of winter without the Burma hats, the RAF boots and the duffle coats which have lately seemed such a pre-condition of existence. We have not had wives patiently waiting by the fireside to warm our slippers. Yet we do not complain. This letter is written in no carping spirit. We do not begrudge the honourable and gallant gentlemen their resettlement clubs, their exclusive Balls and their coffee in high places. We feel an occasional flutter of pride when we are momentarily mistaken for the elect. We are thankful that the atmosphere of college has not been changed to that of an officer's mess. We do not demand a special consideration. We hold our youth and inexperience to be defects not entirely without compensation and, at all events, certain to be remedied. We merely bring to your kind consideration our existence. J E W

JAMES WINSTANLEY[†] (1948)

James Winstanley, who passed away in April 2009, had a reverse of the experience of many post-war Downing applicants. He had had a place at Manchester University but lost this to ex-servicemen coming home from the war. Through a son of a friend of his father he decided to try for Cambridge and was offered a place at Downing where he read mechanical sciences.

IAN BUCKLOW

Ian Bucklow, who flew Spitfires in the war, now supervises Downing engineering students in mathematics, but is not a Downing man. However his experiences described here show that Downing was not unique in Cambridge.

Having lived and been schooled in Manchester, in 1942 I took the Higher School Certificate in physics, maths, chemistry and half-subject English language. (This last was required by the school, which believed that scientists should be able to string more than two words together in a reasonably literate manner. I wonder where they got such a strange idea?) Manchester was followed by a short course (more of that later) at Oxford reading the same subjects (minus English) before joining the RAF – an education in itself. A late demobilisation in December 1947 brought a delay in returning to academic life, but this time it was to Cambridge in 1948. What follows combines both experiences.

The life of an undergraduate in wartime was probably not too dissimilar in many respects to the peacetime experience – with more restrictions, of course: the blackout, rations, general shortage and so on. For students, gown-wearing after 6 pm was compulsory both in and out of college and, unless you were a scientist, medic, engineer or vet, also in lectures and supervisions. Gates closed at 10.30pm, so climbing-in routes were well used and well policed by the porters (a fine of 6/8d if caught), but there was a gentlemen's agreement that the porters patrolled to a strict time-table.

Washing facilities were pretty basic: the scouts/gyps would leave a pitcher full of hot water outside your door in the morning, but indulging in a more extensive wash or a bath entailed walking across a (usually cold) quad to the bath house, complete with towel, soap, etc. I guess we all smelled somewhat. (This manner of washing persisted well into the sixties in many colleges. Conference delegates from the richer countries were at first tickled at the thought of living in these ancient halls, but rapidly changed to a hotel when reality struck!) The fire in your room was prepared during the morning ready for lighting, complete with your coal ration. Food ration books were handed to the College on arrival, thus dining in College was normal, with personal rations (butter, marmalade or jam, peanut butter, bread/pikelets and sometimes fruit) issued weekly*

* Scouts at Oxford, gyps at Cambridge.

from the buttery. The town was full of servicemen, some billeted in colleges; blackout was rigidly enforced even to the extent of shading your bicycle light, but as the roads were much less busy than today, that was no disadvantage.

Many of us were on short courses, completing six terms in 16 months before leaving to join up. The idea was to return after the war to do just the final year course before taking the degree but, looking back, it was a pretty barmy notion. The thought of walking into third year physics after a four or five year absence is now truly frightening; I know of no-one who tried it.

Returning after the war was rather strange after service life though we felt that we had simply swapped one uniform for another – no-one objected that I know of. Many of the earlier restrictions were in place but the number of students was so great that only a few could be accommodated in college and practically every house in the town (Cambridge was not then a city) was digs to a student in University-approved Lodging Houses. The Lodging House Syndicate licensed digs with an extensive set of rules that governed just about everything (6d per term for the use of the cruet, I forget how much cutlery cost). The licensed digs were regarded as an extension of the college, and so the 10:30pm rule was supposed to be enforced, but most landladies unofficially handed over a key – at least to the obviously ex-servicemen (school-leavers were evidently less trustworthy). However, there were complications with this scheme. A Polish ex-resistance fighter came up late one Michaelmas Term and the town was scoured to find digs for him. One house was eventually found but the lady who ran the Lodging Syndicate refused to licence it because the loo was at the bottom of the garden and, as she put it “if he had to answer the call of nature in the middle of the night he would have to leave college premises”. One proposed remedy was to give the poor man a sheaf of signed exeats, one of which he would hand to his landlady the following morning if necessary. The Senior Tutor didn’t look too kindly on that one, but in the end the objection was overcome by driving stakes on either side of the path from the house to the loo and then stringing tapes between them so that the loo was physically connected to the college. Here was a man who had lived for years, constantly in danger of his life, sleeping in ditches or barns and always on the move, but coming to peacetime England was not allowed to go out at night for a pee!

Landladies provided breakfast, and we had lunch either in college or in the British (later ‘Civic’) Restaurant (1/6d for bangers and mash, cabbage or cauliflower, and a stodgy pudding: very filling and cheap). Formal Halls (there was no other variety) were compulsory in some colleges – largely as a way of ensuring that students kept in touch.

The student mix was roughly 50/50 ex-servicemen/school-leavers, and on coming up I had rather expected there to be little interaction between the two groups, but thanks to the college system and the sports fields etc, we all mixed in pretty well. If one had been in the services for a minimum of three years one could take the degree after six terms, which meant that then as a BA one was not confined to licensed lodgings or by many of the restrictions placed on undergraduates. The down side was that any infringement of other rules (eg, gowns after 6pm – Proctors and Bulldogs were still in evidence) entailed a fine of 13/4d, and on an annual grant of £236, that was significant.

By the time that I became a research student rationing for catering establishments had been eased somewhat, so our ration books were handed to the landlady. I had only breakfast in my digs but my landlady insisted on giving me my meat ration for breakfast, a practice that contributed to my later conversion to vegetarianism. But then came marriage and eventual emergence into a working life some 11 years after leaving school.

Although our final story is of someone who was not at Downing either before or during the war, it bears out the reasons we thought it was worth writing this book.

WARD MOREHOUSE BOWYER[†] (1948)

Of British stock but an American citizen, early in the war Bowyer felt that he wanted to engage in active service against Germany. He made his way to Canada with some difficulty and then worked his sea passage to the UK. He enlisted in the RAF and qualified as a warrant officer bomber pilot. His plane was shot up on a mission in 1943 and on returning to base he made a crash landing; the plane's undercarriage was damaged on striking a tree on the final approach and the aircraft burst into flames on hitting the ground. He escaped from the wreckage but returned to rescue a crew member and was severely burnt. Burns on his hands and face necessitated 32 operations over the next five years, during which time he continued to serve in the RAF in an administrative role, having been commissioned.

He came to Downing in 1948 under the auspices of the Air Ministry and the Ministry of Education. His surgeon, the famous Sir Archibold McIndoe, who pioneered new ways of treating serious burns and helped so many aircrew, was his principal referee stating "I would recommend him with the greatest confidence as a man who has already overcome the most appalling injuries.....and remains a man of great pertinacity and high morale". The 1948 Freshers' photograph shows him confidently sitting in the front row. Despite the brilliant work of the surgeons his face showed well what he had been through. To other Freshers, exuberant at their recent arrival at Downing, this was a jolting reminder that many had given much to make this possible. The point was sharpened when, in February 1949, Bowyer's bedder found that overnight he had died in his sleep. As *The Griffin* recorded, "despite an unquenchable spirit, nature was exhausted". A strong representation of College and service personnel gave him a moving and appropriate funeral with full military honours at Cambridge Cemetery.

During his period of ongoing surgery he had a number of short stories published here and in America. He spent time researching at the British Museum and worked as a reader and synopsis writer for the European Story Department of the Twentieth-Century Fox Film Corporation, as well as being Assistant Editor of *The Guinea-pig*, the magazine for injured aircrew. It was in pursuance of a literary career that he came to study under Dr Leavis, who was a mourner at his funeral.

APPENDIX A

THE COLLEGE WAR MEMORIAL 1914-1919

The following names appear on the Memorial. Their matriculation years have been added.

ASTON, W D (1901)	JOLLY, B O (1913)
BENNETT, S G (1907)	KEARNEY, J J (1902)
BROWN, I M (1907)	KEESEY, G E H (1905)
BRYAN BROWN, S G (1904)	KEITH, A J (1912)
BUCHANAN, A (1910)	LINE, J Y A (1914)
BURGESS, W C ((1909)	McLAREN, A D (1908)
CORKE, G H (1909)	O'REILLY, H D R (1914)
DAVIES, F C (1903)	REES, K D (1915)
DAWE, A H (1913)	ROUND, W H (1913)
DEWAR, D (1912)	ROWLAND, S D (1889)
DUNKERLEY H (1907)	SKELTON, F (1916)
EDMUNDS, C H (1908)	STERCKEMAN, P (1909)
EMINSON, R A F (1909)	STRATFORD, E P (1903)
EVERETT, W W (1910)	STRINGER, G M (1911)
GREEN J L (1907)	TOPHAM, M (1914)*
HARMER, G (1914)	WHITWORTH, A G R (1914)
HILLIARD, G W (1906)	WILL, J G (1911)
HUCKLE, H W (1907)	WILSON, F T A (1917)*
JENKINS, J D C (1912)	WILTON, S B (1911)

* had a place for that year but did not matriculate

Unlike after the Second World War, no place was found for the one member of the College staff who died, so the list should include

BLOGG, J A M

The College unveiled a plaque in memory of Private Blogg beneath the main memorial at a service to mark the centenary of the end of the First World War on 11 November 2018.

THE COLLEGE WAR MEMORIAL 1939-1945

The following names appear on the Memorial. Their matriculation years have been added.

BARLOW, R F (1937)	HUGHES, J D (1939)
BEALE, R S (1936)	HUMPHRIES, C A (1932)
BEECHING, K R (1935)	IREMONGER, K G (1930)
BOON, J (1931)	JOB, M I B (1939)
BOSTOCK, T M T (1930)	LASCELLES, F A G (1932)
BRINDLEY, A H (1941)	LAWFORD, P W R (1939)
CARLTON, V J (1941)	MITCHELL, T E (1924)
CARRICK, R J D (1936)	PARNALL, D G (1935)
CHAN, O (1938)	PARSONS, P T (1935)
CHURCH, F N J (1932)	PEARSON, J H (1937)
CLARKE, M W P (1941)	ROCYN-JONES, A H (1928)
COWIE, K C (1939)	SHAW, E D L (1933)
DARLOW, J M (1941)	SLIGHT, H T (1937)
DAVISON, P E (1941)	SOKOLOW, G S (1932)
DEVEREUX, J S (1938)	SPRAKE, N G (1937)
DOOYEWAARD, H O (1938)	STEVENS, D (1938)
DREW, B W (1939)	STOUT, G S (1939)
DUFTON, C T (1931)	STRATTON, P H (1944)
EDWARDS, W L (1937)	TAN, S E (1933)
ELLIOTT, A McK (1940)	VARLEY, H (1935)
EVANS, J (1941)	WAYMOUTH, A (1932)
GELDARD, H M (1931)	WHITING, W R H (1938)
GLAISHER, J M (1922)	WIESSNER, C F H (1932)
GOULDEN, E O (1913)	WILKIE, J P (1943)
HARDEN, G J (1932)	WINTON, T S (1935)
HIND, W (1939)	WOODHOUSE, H W (1936)
HOWARD, L A (1931)	ELSDEN, M C (Clerk)

A name not on the Memorial, but of one who died on board a hospital ship during repatriation after internment by the Japanese is:

EARL, H G (1902)

The memorial tablet was designed by Mr Bamford of Northfield and Company, Cambridge and was cast in bronze by the Birmingham Guild. It was unveiled by the Master, Sir Lionel Whitby, and dedicated by the Bishop of Ely on September 25th 1948 in the presence of members of the Association and their wives assembled for the Annual Meeting together with relatives of the fallen.

War memorials tell us of those who died but do not acknowledge those who suffered bereavement. In the 1999 Association Newsletter we published a poem by a Downing man, Arthur Andrews (1934), who died in 1998. He had lost his father in the First World War and he himself served in the Royal Army Medical Corps in the Second World War. It is a poignant piece derived from his experiences of both World Wars:

SHADOWS – A TRILOGY BY ARTHUR JOHN ANDREWS

Next of Kin (1917)

*Not three years old, how did they understand,
In from their garden play in soft September sunshine,
Their mother's sobs, and grief distorted face,
Half-hidden in her apron; or know why questions,
Anguished and pressing, failed to penetrate
Her monolithic isolation from them both?
Climbing her knees, how did they understand
What the lone caller meant, whose leaning shadow
Darkened the window; or the folded paper
Lying unheeded where it had been tossed,
Her wild resistance checking their concern?
Yet out to play again they found all changed
The garden cheerless, the sunshine drained of warmth,
The game without its mirth, and everywhere
A bleak and haunting emptiness of lost.*

War memorial (1924)

*One boy, carefully holding the heavy wreath,
A burdensome token of public mourning,
Stands exposed in the vacant silence,
Isolated, uneasy, encircled by sorrowing elders,
And submits to the spell of ritual
That salves erupting memories, past cure,
That conjures up multiform spirits,
Elusive, yet fitfully present,
Swept round on the gusts of emotion
He faces the dark stone, distantly reading the names,
Till, smitten by one most familiar name,
His father's, he reels and halts...
No poignant memories erupt, no rising spirit hovers;
Only twin ghouls no rite can exorcise:
Still-haunting emptiness and dark, amorphous dread.*

Casualties (1944)

*Grown man scans here no names, but looks upon those dead:
This face, fixed in surprise that life
Was rudely snatched away; these, strewn
Over the bare hillside and along the road,
In panoramic still of the attack,
Each in a position prone, when the barrage burst;
One, held boot-deep in mud; one a tattered torso
Hanging precarious in the clinging hedge;
This, back propped against a solitary tree
As if at rest from harvest labouring;
This, starkly supine, rotting in a ditch,
Missing, until a stench betrayed a corpse.
Sees here revealed all that memorial names concealed,
All that that sudden dread presaged,
Grasps all that that lonely caller's slanting shadow meant.*

APPENDIX B

SUBJECTS OF SECOND WORLD WAR MEMORIES

These are listed in alphabetical order.

† known to be deceased when this book went to press.

Eric Aspin [†] (1945)	R Bryan Jameson (1944)
W Rennie Barbour (1944)	Peter B C King (1928)
Oswell Bardsley (1944)	John Laithwaite (1943)
John V Bean (1944)	Geoffrey Lees (1939)
John Bellamy (1933)	Norman S Lilley (1943)
Alan Berends (1934)	James Lindsay-Smith (1942)
John K S Bourne (1944)	Alan Litherland (1933)
E G Bousfield (1942)	J D M Mackay [†] (1936)
Ward Morehouse Bowyer [†] (1948)	Gunwant Malik (1939)
David Braybrooke (1945)	Francis Marshall [†] (1944)
Robert J Caton (1943)	Robert Meyerhof (1937)
Kenneth J Charrot (1935)	Alex Mitchell [†] (1942)
John Coates [†] (1937)	Peter Mursell [†] (1932)
Jack Dalglish (1943)	James Nurton (1944)
Denis Dean (1945)	Deryk Prosser (1941)
Ian Doyle (1942)	Alec Richards (1940)
Bob Drayson [†] (1938)	Bob Alan Russell (1938)
J R Eddowes (1940)	Denis Sandiford (1942)
Derek Eley (1944)	Michael Scott-Archer (1942)
Harold Farnsworth (1941)	Michael A Shearman (1941)
Ronald Fisher [†] (1936)	Leslie Southwell (1927)
John Foley (1935)	Bernard Spurgin [†] (1946)
Brian Leonard (Bruce) Garner [†] (1941)	Bernard S H Storri [†] (1938)
Eric George [†] (1938)	Robert Stretton (1944)
Francis Graham-Smith (1941)	Geoffrey Stuttard (1939)
John M Grant (1944)	Tony Talbot-Williams (1942)
John Hagen [†] (1943)	Derek E T Towle (1944)
David J Hargreaves (1945)	William Bert Webb (1939)
Harold Hargreaves (1936)	Eric Ronald White [†] (1933)
Charles L Heanley [†] (1925)	John J Wild [†] (1933)
Colin Hill [†] (1940)	John Wilkinson [†] (1934)
William Hodges (1940)	James Winstanley [†] (1948)
David Holbrook (1941)	Timothy Yearwood [†] (1938)
John Jaffe (1944)	

APPENDIX C

Numbers of undergraduates in residence immediately before, during and after the Second World War.

1938-1939 :	211
1939-1940 :	182
1940-1941 :	108
1941-1942 :	93
1942-1943 :	120
1943-1944 :	101
1944-1945 :	108
1945-1946 :	180 (undergraduates and BAs)
1946-1947 :	235 undergraduates and 38 BAs
1947-1948 :	247 undergraduates and 51 BAs and research students.
1948-1949 :	286 undergraduates and 59 BAs and research students.

APPENDIX D

FIRST WORLD WAR GALLANTRY AWARDS

The College has a comprehensive record of those members who won awards for gallantry in the First World War and these are listed here. Unfortunately, no such record exists for the Second World War.

VC

J L Green

DSO AND BAR; MC AND BAR

P F Hone

DSO; MC

J Fisher; Rev HV Gill

DSO

S J Steward

MC AND BAR

M M Lewis; F J Mallett; E Simons; M E Thomas

MC; BELGIAN CROIX DE GUERRE

D P J Kelly

MC

J A Bell; G A C Clarke; H A Crouch; A N Dickson; C A W Duffield; C G Gardner;
E O Goulden; J L Hamilton; J M Howlett; D H Layton; J C Matthews; W Ormrod;
I Rothfield; A P Saint; J W Turner; L E H Whitby; C J R Whitmore; J A Wilcock; S B Wilton

MM

J A M Blogg

FRENCH CROIX DE GUERRE

E M R Fontaine de Mazinghen; D L M Girard

BELGIAN CROIX DE GUERRE

M A Solvay

ITALIAN CROCE DI GUERRA

R H Sproat

APPENDIX E

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APPENDIX F

A NOTE ON MONEY VALUES

At various points in this account we have mentioned prices, wages, and other sums of money. In some cases we have tried to indicate what the equivalent might be today. This is not an exact science, and where it is done we have used a calculation based on retail price (cost of living) indices.

The first government price index was introduced in 1914, rather conveniently, and later versions were introduced based on 1939, 1947, 1952, 1956, 1962, 1970, and 1987. Using these as a basis, we can say that, in broad terms, the cost of living in 2010 is about 71 times what it was in 1914 and 46 times what it was in 1939. This is a crude comparison, however, as we all have far more disposable income and a wider range of things to spend it on than at the time of the two wars. The basket of goods on which the index is based has changed completely. For instance, in 1914, 60% of household income was spent on food; now it is 19%. Almost half of the present index is made up of items that did not figure at all in 1914. During the course of the First World War the cost of living more than doubled and in the Second World War it increased by about 30%.

An alternative would be to look at how wages have changed or to consider the value of things as a proportion of GDP. Average pay has gone up by around 372 times since 1914 and, in broad terms, many of the College staff of that era (and in the Second War) were being paid much the same in relation to average wages as their counterparts are now. However, it gave them a much more basic standard of living.

A second alternative is to express £1 as a fraction of GDP in the years under consideration. On this scale the 2010 figures would be 236 times those for 1939 and 569 times the 1914 numbers.

Some economists and others have devised complex mixtures of these ratios, but our view is that it is best to use the simple retail price index which we can all understand and relate to.

APPENDIX G

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AA	Anti-aircraft (“Ack-ack”)
ATC	Air Training Corps
CO	Commanding Officer
DFM	Distinguished Flying Medal
DSC	Distinguished Service Cross
DSO	Distinguished Service Order
FRS	Fellow of the Royal Society
GCHQ	Government Communications Headquarters
i/c	In command
ITW	Initial Training Wing
MC	Military Cross
MM	Military Medal
NCO	Non-commissioned Officer
OCTU	Officer Cadet Training Unit
OTC	Officers’ Training Corps
POW	Prisoner of War
RA	Royal Artillery
RAFVR	Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve
RAMC	Royal Army Medical Corps
RAOC	Royal Army Ordnance Corps
REME	Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers
RNVR	Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve
SOE	Special Operations Executive
STC	Senior Training Corps
TA	Territorial Army
USAAF	United States Army Air Force
VC	Victoria Cross
WAAF	Women’s Auxiliary Air Force
WRNS	Women’s Royal Naval Service

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THE QUEEN VICTORIA HOSPITAL
PLASTIC SURGERY AND JAW INJURIES CENTRE
EAST GRINSTEAD, SUSSEX

FROM SIR ARCHIBALD MCINDOE.

AHM/mac

PHONE: EAST GRINSTEAD 987

6th January, 1948.

Dear Sir,

This is in recommendation of W/O Ward Bowyer who is desirous of entering Cambridge for the study of English Literature.

Bowyer is an American who while flying in action with the R.A.F. was shot down and very severely burnt. During his long period of recovery at this hospital and as a means of resettling himself in a new field he has begun, with some success, to attack the problem of writing. He feels that further study is necessary to make this possible. I would recommend him with the greatest confidence as a man who has already overcome the most appalling injuries. He has undergone some thirty operations and remains a man of great pertinacity and high morale. The expenses of study will all be defrayed for him.

Yours faithfully,

Archibald McIndoe

The Registrar,
University of Cambridge,
Cambridge.



Letter from the famous burns surgeon Sir Archibald McIndoe recommending Ward Bowyer for a place

This book describes life in Downing College during the two World Wars and gives some account of the military exploits of members of the College. At the centre of the book are the reminiscences and experiences of men who were at Downing before, during, and just after the Second World War. These men are now in their late eighties or older and, if the authors had not collected their stories now they would fairly soon have been lost. Some are poignant, some are funny, some conceal or play down great bravery and courage, but they are all worth preserving.

In addition to individual memories, there are descriptions of what happened in College itself in the two wars. For instance, in the Second World War it was largely taken over by the RAF although it continued to be full of students, mostly on short courses before joining the forces, while in the First World War it almost emptied, being reduced to only 16 undergraduates in 1917, with the rest all having gone off to fight.

The book is a useful addition to the records of the College's history and should be read not only by members of Downing of all ages but also local historians and anyone interested studying life during the two wars.