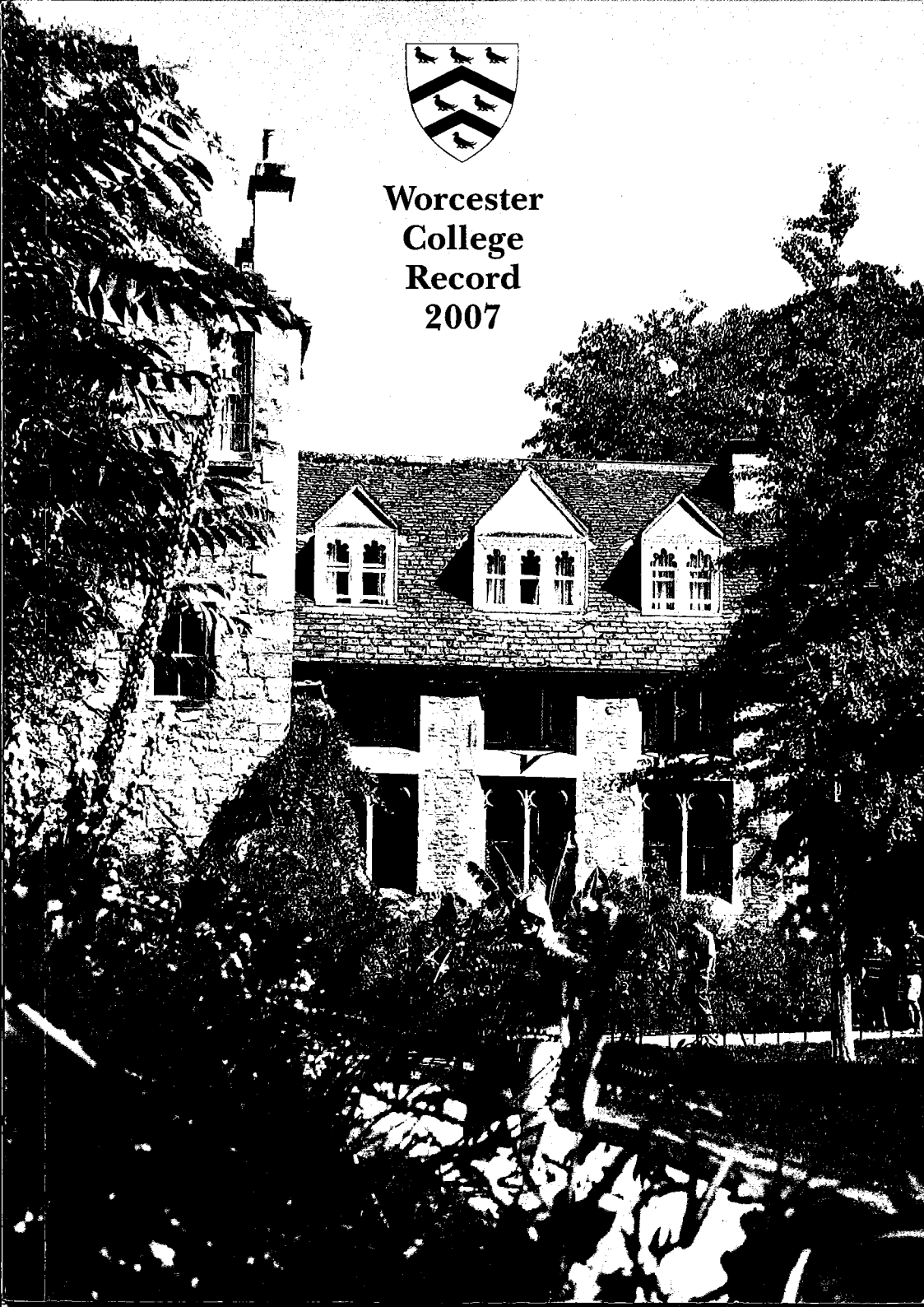




**Worcester
College
Record
2007**



MCR Report

The 2006 – 2007 academic year has again been one of continued excellence within the MCR. With over 190 members from around the world, covering numerous disciplines, we are by definition a very diverse group. However, I would like to hope that despite this the MCR has remained a very close-knit group and that everyone feels they have found their place within Worcester College.

It has been a year of great change within the College, and also a year of change within the MCR. Perhaps the main task I was presented with when I came into office was to continue the earlier work done by the previous committee to refurbish the MCR. I am very pleased to say that after some extensive research, and deep thought about fabric colours, we were able to create a new budget proposal that the College very kindly agreed to fund. I am happy to say that most of the furniture has now been installed, and I am grateful to Accommodation Manager Nighat Malik for all her help during this project.

I am also pleased to report that the MCR voted in favour of creating a charity budget which will be managed by the committee. As from the beginning of next year each graduate student will be paying an opt-out amount on their termly battels, which will be put towards a charity budget. It will then be up to the individual members of the MCR to suggest which charities would most benefit from our donations, with some emphasis placed on local charities or those charities which have a connection to members of the MCR. The idea was that the MCR could give a little bit back to those less fortunate, and I am pleased that everyone voted in favour of such a motion.

However it was on the social side of things that I believe the new committee arrived with a bang. Trinity Term has always been one of the most vibrant in the social calendar and we wanted to continue this tradition. After a helpful suggestion from Neil Turner, the SCR Butler, we decided to see if we could hold a summer BBQ in the Fellows' Garden, somewhere few graduates would ever have visited. Indeed even after five years at Worcester I had never set foot inside this part of College. With the kind permission of Edward Wilson, the Garden Master, and Simon Bagnall, the Head of Gardens, we were allowed to hold this inaugural event. The day was a great success and was repeated this summer, and I hope it will soon become a staple on the Worcester MCR calendar. The main event of the summer was of course the summer garden party in the Provost's magnificent garden. As usual the champagne, Pimms and strawberries flowed freely, and this time we were entertained by not one but two a cappella groups, In The Pink and the Oxford Alternatives, all

combining to make it a memorable afternoon. Even the arrival of the summer vacation could not tame our social secretaries, with another BBQ in the sun and a pub golf being the more notorious events of the summer. I would like to thank all the members of the old committee who assisted us in this maiden term. Special thanks go to Kjell Konis, Dave Robinson, Dave Gilbert and Fintan Fairmichael, from the previous committee, who volunteered to carry on serving on the new committee.

Michaelmas Term started the year in style with a very hectic Freshers' Week. A crowded brunch was followed by an even more crowded cocktail night in the evening, with myself, Jamie and Harriet doing our best impersonations of Tom Cruise behind the bar. However, we soon found that when it came to student cocktail nights it was a case of substance over style, and we just ensured there were plenty of drinks to see us through the night. Other highlights of the week included taking over most of Zizzi's bottom floor, and a trip to the new indoor paintball venue which left several committee members exceptionally battered and bruised. Other events of the term were the MCR bop, Halloween bar night, Thanksgiving dinner, and Christmas dinner. Michaelmas Term also brought with it change within the committee, as Dave Robinson decided to leave the committee after three long years of service as Vicky Strawson expressed keen interest in becoming our new sports rep. Also, with the loss of bar managers Dave and Fintan at the end of the previous year, we were very grateful for Geraldine McGeer stepping into the role with her two assistants, Jamie Kitt and Zac Etheridge.

Hilary Term also saw the introduction of a new event that I hope will become a regular occurrence within the MCR. At the suggestion of Marion McKenna, our famous hall manager, we decided to explore the possibility of introducing an MCR Parents / Family dinner. Such an event has been popular within the JCR for many years, and it was thought only appropriate to give the graduates their own dinner. It wasn't long before Marion came to regret her decision, as the dinner soon became a reality, and she was left facing a night of controlling not only a bunch of graduates but also their parents and other family members. Despite a slight case of Petit Fours theft and some overindulgence in port, it was a very successful night and one that won't soon be forgotten. The end of term saw an excellent opportunity to celebrate Saint Patrick's Day, as it happened to coincide with the last Saturday of the Six Nations rugby tournament. With Guinness aplenty and a well decorated bar it was a very enjoyable day, despite the competitive nature with which some people approached hat collecting!

Throughout the year we have kept alive some of the best traditions of the MCR, with numerous GDCs (Graduate Dining Club), guest night

dinners, MCR bops and exchange dinners. The home leg of the three-way dinner with Exeter and Magdalen will always stick in my mind, after a careful word in the ear of the head chef meant we showed these other colleges that Worcester's reputation for culinary excellence was well deserved. The Franks Society, under the organisation of Nirmali Fenn, also continued to flourish with talks as diverse as 'How Dead is a Dead Language' by Luuk Huitink to 'How to Lie with Statistics' by Kjell Konis.

Of course none of this would have been possible without the help and support of my wonderful committee; Matthieu Roussellier (treasurer), Sarah Pennant (secretary), Jamie Kitt and Harriet Payne (social secretaries), Jason Mander (welfare rep), Dave Robinson and Vicky Strawson (sports reps), Dave Gilbert, Fintan Fairmichael and Geraldine McGeer (bar managers), Sedef Gavaz (environment rep) and Kjell Konis (computer rep). I couldn't have done it without you guys, you're all legends.

Yet despite all these many opportunities for revelry, the graduate students still found time to excel both in terms of academic and sporting achievements.

Following on from the creation of the Elite Sportsman Grant by the previous committee, we were delighted to award the first set of grants at the end of Trinity Term. Zac Etheridge received one grant for his formation and running of the Oxford University Kickboxing Club, which has proven particularly popular with Worcester students. Also receiving a grant was Vince Vitale for his role within the University football club.

Trinity Term last year saw a splendid effort on the cricket pitches, with the MCR managing to field their own team without the need to bring in undergraduate members. Under the keen captaincy of Jamie Kitt, and with the coaching points of Hermann Swart, good things were guaranteed. The team consisted of some veteran players, and quite a few novices (of varying talent!) but together they showed that Worcester was a force to be reckoned with. Our first match saw a decisive victory against Pembroke, with Dave Gilbert being awarded man of the match. Unfortunately the rest of the season did not live up to this early promise, with a few defeats and some cancellations due to weather delays. Undeterred, the team looked forward to 'the big one' – the end of term match against the SCR. By all accounts it was a close match, but the MCR emerged victorious. The perfect end to the season.

Michaelmas Term saw the start of the football season, the other sport in which we field an entirely MCR team. The season began with worried looks all around for the senior squad players, anticipating the first game against a strong Nuffield team, and unsure of how our many new summer

acquisitions would perform in the pressure-cooker atmosphere of intercollegiate MCR league division 2. They were able to draw the first game, and over the course of the next term and a half Worcester MCR swept all before them, scoring goals by the bucketload and truly showing the world how to 'play beautiful'. Alas, the brilliance couldn't last, especially when dependent upon the short-fuse sensibility at the heart of the team. The real killer was the injuries, with three key players succumbing in the final weeks of the season. Having been in a position to win both the league and the Cuppers, we lost our last four matches, finished fourth and went out in the Cuppers quarter-finals. It was a slightly annoying end to an otherwise wonderful season. Congratulations go to Neil Lennox, the players' player of the season, and best of luck to the team for next year.

The year has also seen numerous achievements by MCR members in other teams, both at a university and college level. Tim Squires, who had obviously seen the light by transferring from the 'other university' to join Oxford, became a key member in the Worcester 1st football team who went on to become Premier league champions. Similarly several MCR players became permanent fixtures in the reserve football teams, with Rob Evans and Tom Butts playing for the third team in their cup run which led to the finals and Rob being named reserve team players' player of the season. Rob Lee and Jonathan Webb represented Oxford in the victorious Aussie Rules football varsity team. Dan Rosen, returning to Worcester after a year at Green, won a blue as hooker for the Rugby Union team and James Batstone won a half blue for playing for the Rugby League team. Zac Etheridge continued his work with the University Kickboxing Club, who entered a team in the first ever varsity kickboxing match, winning overall. Michael Canty was awarded another blue in golfing this year and has been appointed as Men's Blue Captain for the coming academic year. Chloe Parnell won a half blue for swimming this year at Varsity. James Imber competed in the Varsity Gymnastics competition in February. Aneka Smith sailed for Oxford University Yacht Club at the BUSA national team racing championships. She was helming for the ladies' team and they came second overall in the ladies' competition. Roger Abbott danced for the university dancesport team, coming fifth in the quickstep at the Southern Universities Dance Competition, and competed in the Varsity Match in June.

Finally, I was very pleased to see the graduates played an important role in the sport closest to my heart – rowing. The arrival of Magnus Fleming from America was greeted with many delighted smiles amongst the College Boat Club. Magnus became Worcester's first rower in the Boat Race since 2000, and then went on to become a key member of the men's

1st VIII in Summer Eights. Along with two other Worcester graduate students, Mark Lumb and Nils Pfullman, and one former Worcester MCR member, Craig Leaper, M1 moved up into the first division – a feat not seen for ten years – and only narrowly missed out on blades. It was not just in M1 that the graduates showed the importance of age, with every crew in Summer Eights having at least one member of the MCR in their crew.

Of course it was not just in sporting arenas that the graduates have excelled themselves this year, with many academic accomplishments as well. Daniel Goodman was awarded the best student paper prize for his paper 'Martlet: A scientific work-flow language for abstracted parallelisation' at the UK e-Science All Hands Meeting, and was nominated for best student paper at www2007 for his paper 'Introduction and Evaluation of Martlet, a Scientific Workflow Language for Abstracted Parallelisation'. Nallini Puri got a scholarship to NYU where she will be completing an LLM (Master of Laws). Jessica Lovaas will also be in New York as an Urban Fellow working for the City Government. Jason Mander completed a month's funded study at the British School of Rome, and has recently been appointed as Wilkinson Junior Research Fellow and Assistant Dean.

Even musically the MCR has done very well this year. Deborah Pritchard recently won a competition to set the college grace to music. She won for the anthem setting for choir and organ. This competition was set by the Provost to celebrate his 40 years at the college, and will be sung at the Gaudy in September. Alicia Grant, who is doing a D.Phil. in Composition, has had a number of premieres and performances of her works this past year. These have included performances of her work at the Carnegie Hall in New York and at Westminster Abbey in London. With such a rich musical talent in the MCR it is perhaps no surprise therefore that Jonathan Webb, the new MCR President, is also a highly gifted musician. Jonathan has spent the last year singing with the multi-award winning a cappella group Out Of The Blue.

I would like to thank all the members of college staff, without whom it would have been impossible to achieve all the things we did this year. I would especially like to thank the Provost; Dr Darrah, the Dean; Dr Tunstall and Dr Bradshaw, the two Tutors for Graduates during my year; Steve Dyer, Domestic Bursar; Nighat Malik, Accommodation Manager; Cath Fraser, Graduate Officer; Stuart McAllister and all the catering staff including Marion McKenna, Derek Marshall and Tony Wilson.

I would also like to wish Jonathan Webb and his committee all the best for the coming year. It was an honour and a privilege to serve as President for this last year, and I hope Jonathan finds the job as rewarding as I did. Worcester truly is a wonderful college, and the graduate community

makes up an important section of the college. Best wishes to all the members of the MCR in their future endeavours.

Tom Marshall
MCR President