

WORCESTER
COLLEGE
RECORD



1998

My predecessors as President of the Worcester JCR seem, almost without exception, to have been historians or geographers whose writing skills have been honed over many years. You must forgive me if by contrast you find my style slightly mechanical for I am just a humble engineer.

During the first two terms of 1997, the JCR was in the safe hands of Tom Young. Helped by an excellent team (Rosie Slater and Alex Wynn deserve special mention), he kept the Common room running smoothly and efficiently. The only ripple in his proverbial pond was an attempted coup to overthrow his opposition to re-affiliating with the NUS. But you will be glad to know that he saw off the rebels after only a brief skirmish in one of last year's JCR meetings.

As always, sport has remained the most popular excuse for not finishing an essay or completing a practical. Full reports of our sporting triumphs will be found below but one item deserves special mention, even though properly it belongs to next year's *Record*. As we go to press we are still basking in the afterglow of Nick Booth's saving of the pride of Oxford in the recent varsity rugby match by scoring the only try.

Off the sports pitch and into the bar! It is quite clear the our bar has now become the venue for College bands. In Trinity 'Bodkin Lane' gave a massive performance of a set lasting almost two hours, and in Michaelmas, Dan Nash brought us hipp'n rhythms and funky bass lines from times past.

There has also been a revival in other types of music. The college choir, under its talented director Christopher Sparkhall, goes from strength to strength and there have been several well produced concerts under the guidance of Alistair Merry and James ('All Star') Redwood. Seven Worcester undergraduates – more than any other college could muster – took part in the sell-out production of Mozart's *Così fan tutte* at the Playhouse.

The College garden has seen many famous dramatic productions and, once again, its green sweetness provided the perfect setting for this year's choice of *Cyrano de Bergerac*. The play was beautifully directed in front of the lake by Noah Birksted-Breen and Rob Carter. Each member of the cast gave a splendid performance, but there is no doubt that Nick Thomas as Cyrano stole the show. What is more, our success in the Cuppers Drama Festival has confirmed Worcester's high rank in the pecking order of colleges with theatrical talent: both our entries reached the finals with two nominations for 'Best Actress'; *Winnie the Pooh* scooped the much coveted 'Spirit of Cuppers' award and our other entry, *Culpability*, was nominated for 'Best new writing'.

Worcester undergraduates have continued their domination of 'Oxygen', Britain's only fully licensed studio radio station, presenting programmes from news bulletins to late night talk shows. We also have in our midst several art connoisseurs. Under the supervision of Armelle Diamond, undergraduates can

rent masterpieces in the possession of the JCR for the princely sum of 50p a term. Paintings have been positively flying out of cupboards and on to the walls of our rooms.

The hitherto undisputed 'King of Entz',* Nathan Yeowell, has now been succeeded by new talent. Recent entz events have been well up to his standard. They have been inspired by Millie Hoffman, Luke Westell and Brian Chapman. Themes have included a 'Barbie and Ken Night' and 'Vicars and Schoolgirls'. At the same time, rather against the odds, 'girl power' seems to have taken Worcester's women by storm. Laura Castle has been organising all manner of underground activities. From the showing of girlie films (*When Harry met Sally* etc.) to a 'Women Only' dinner. At first the men felt distinctly hurt at being excluded, but then it dawned on them that they would have the bar to themselves that night and were completely reconciled!

Every member of the JCR Committee has been extremely efficient. Special mention must go to Preyen Dewani, whose organisation of Freshers' Week was exceptional. And in a year of concern about student fees, Worcester's fight has been coordinated by Frankie Morris who led a crowd of JCR members on a march through the streets of Oxford during an OUSU protest about the government's plans.

I would like to end with a 'thank you'. Without the support the JCR receives for its activities, many of the things I have mentioned would never happen. We owe a huge debt of gratitude to various members of the College staff. The manner in which the catering, domestic and bursarial staff always come to the aid of the party has amazed me. The Porters earn our special thanks, helping us find solutions to the most complicated problems and even playing in our football teams. It is this kind of generous, unobtrusive support that enables so many of us to enjoy College life to the full.

CHARLIE OSMOND

* *'Entertainments' for the uninitiated*. ed.



MCR REPORT

In 1996 and 1997, the MCR has maintained its membership of about 150 mature students by welcoming newcomers from all over the world. The enthusiasm and talent of this fresh intake has been most invigorating. There is no doubt that with the support of all members of the College, at every level, the Worcester MCR is securely established as a vibrant, involved and flourishing body.

During the past year, we have continued to build on our good-natured relationship with the Provost and Governing Body. Many important issues confront us. The introduction of undergraduate tuition fees, for example, inevitably will affect us. Moreover the conversion of the Canal building to exclusively under-graduate use has emphasised the very real need to develop new graduate accommodation. But discussion of these matters and of others has been both open and frank between the MCR and SCR and has been greatly eased by Dan Lunn, the new Tutor for Graduates, who is proving himself a splendid liaison officer between the two common rooms.

This year's MCR committee recognises the hard work of previous committees and has tried to follow in their footsteps. Nowhere is this more true than with regard to our computing facilities. We have pushed hard to update and improve those we already have and the acquisition of new computers and the installation of a more flexible server have made us the envy of the JCR – and indeed of other common rooms in the University. We are very grateful for the College's commitment to the improvement of technological resources.

The MCR continues to make a significant contribution to the academic life of the College by research and teaching. A number of graduates have distinguished themselves by winning College or University prizes and by moving on to prestigious post-doctoral fellowships at universities around the world. Two members of the Common Room, Laura Roman and Emma Hornby, have been awarded Junior Research Fellowships by the College.

As in previous years, Worcester graduate students have made significant contributions to the athletic teams of both the College and the University. They won Blues and Half-Blues in a number of sports from basketball to American football. Closer to home, in the intense inter-collegiate competitions, they have pulled their weight in the College First Eight and they have put their experience to good use by acting as coaches in various sporting activities.

Socially we have been as active as ever and very much hold our own in Oxford graduate society. Thanks to two enterprising socialites in our midst, we have participated in a wide range of events, including a week-end trip to Paris, exchange dinners with a number of other colleges such as St Edmund Hall and Trinity, a black-tie jazz and cocktails party, pub crawls and much more. For film buffs there have been two ongoing film series, featuring both popular and art films. The Franks Society has provided a forum for intellectual discussion of a standard which we hope is worthy of the Provost for whom the society was named.

No record of our activities for the past year would be complete without the announcement of the recent marriage of Lavonne Leong to Jeremy Colvin. Both Lavonne and Jeremy matriculated in Michaelmas 1996 and are pursuing M.Phil. degrees in English. All of us wish them the very best in their life together.

1997 has been a remarkably happy and productive year in the MCR. We look forward to an even brighter and busier 1998.

PAULA-ROSE STARK



SPORTS REPORT 1996-7

Writers of this column in recent years have been frustrated by a certain apathy among the sporting fraternity. So it is with great pleasure that we can now report a reversal of this trend and welcome a renewed commitment to College sport. Women's sport in particular has flourished and the men, faint but pursuing, are close behind them. The J.C.R. news letter bears frequent witness to successes of both College teams and of individuals. We are very grateful to the Provost for the added incentive of a Champions' Dinner in the Lodgings.

ROWING

Michaelmas Term 1996

After the frustrations of last season we set about recruiting new blood in anticipation of the Christ Church regatta in November. We made quite sure that everyone knew what the Boat Club had to offer by mailshots and posters and by talks at the College Freshers' Fair. We almost over-did it since about 85 freshers turned up at the river for an introductory session. This slightly swamped the proceedings, but thanks to the patience of the freshers and swift action on the part of the committee, everyone was put through the 'Bank Tub' for a quick assessment and was shown the Boathouse and how to handle boats and equipment. This initial training of novice rowers is essential. The Boat Club is financially strained and clearly lack of expertise can cause damage to expensive equipment. We also insisted that the correct terminology for the basics of rowing and the handling of the boats was used from the beginning, thereby ensuring that the coaches had an easier time of it later.

Because of this initial enthusiasm we were able to form seven crews, four men's and three women's, and training started in earnest before the end of First Week. Throughout the term morale was high. The new rowers supported the Ist VIII squads in training and their improvement was remarkable – this was particularly true of the Women's Boat Club where there was immense competition for places in the squad for the Christ Church Regatta, that high-spot of the Michaelmas term. This year the Regatta drew tremendous support