



Jesus College  
OXFORD

# JESUS OLD MEMBERS' GROUP (XL NETWORK) NEWSLETTER

February 2018

Unusually this newsletter is going out to all those who are eligible for the Jesus Old Members' Group not just actual members. For those not aware, membership is free and open to all those 40 years on from matriculation. Our group's main purpose is to enable old friends to keep in touch or to renew old friendships (as retirement looms!) through various social activities, and to keep in touch with what the College is doing currently. Information is available in the newsletter, on the website ([www.jomg.org](http://www.jomg.org)) or by email.

There are some events for 2018 that members may wish to note. There is a trip over 2 days based on Cowbridge on 5/6th June. After the success of the Abergavenny weekend in 2016 it seemed a good idea to revisit a South Wales theme. The trip will take in the old market town itself including the Physic Garden, a visit to the Vale coast and the spectacular St Donat's Castle the home to Atlantic College as well as the nearby St Illtud's Church. There are many historic links between the Cowbridge area and Jesus and it should be a splendid trip. Further information is available on the web-site. You may also wish to note that Old Members' Day this year is on 23rd June. The Curry Club will next meet on Tuesday April 17th as usual in El Vinos in Fleet Street at 5.30pm before

adjourning to India India nearby. All are welcome but if you are a first timer do contact Norman Wright for further details on [norman.wright233@ntlworld.com](mailto:norman.wright233@ntlworld.com).

The Old Members' Bursary for students from very low income families is making progress towards its £100k target. We are 60% there but still need further donations to this worthy cause. So if you are thinking of giving please do so and the details if you no longer have them can be found through this link [www.alumniweb.ox.ac.uk/jesus/support/make-a-gift](http://www.alumniweb.ox.ac.uk/jesus/support/make-a-gift), choosing XL Group Bursary Fund on that page.

In this edition there is an article in the series that reflects on the changes in a profession /industry over a working life. The excellent visit to the Wallace Collection in London is described here as well as an article on the Curry Club. Sadly Ted Belmont (1968) died recently and Chris Hicks has written an affectionate appreciation here.

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**Peter May (1968)**

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# VISIT TO THE WALLACE COLLECTION

**On the last Wednesday in October a group of twenty of us, gathered together by Chris Hicks ably assisted by Malcolm McIvor, met at The Wallace Collection in the heart of London for a guided tour.**

This fantastic collection of mainly 17th and 18th century paintings, porcelain and furniture plus armoury going back hundreds of years earlier would need many days to do it justice but we were treated to an hour and a half's "taster tour" to whet our appetites.

The collection was started by the 3rd and 4th Marquess of Hertford and extended by the latter's illegitimate son, Richard Wallace.

Among the highlights of the tasting session for me was Frans Hals "Laughing Cavalier" acquired by outbidding Rothschild and which we were told is not a cavalier and very probably not laughing! We also heard the story of the commissioning of Fragonard's "The Swing" where the instructions were ... "paint my mistress on a swing pushed by a bishop and place me where I can see her legs and more if you wish to enliven the picture". We agreed that Fragonard had not held back in enlivening the painting but we were a little unclear of the relevance of the bishop.

We saw the "Rainbow Landscape" by Rubens, acquired by the 4th Marquess in 1856 for 4,500 guineas outbidding the National Gallery and a self portrait only recently attributed to Rembrandt alongside his sympathetic portrait of his 15 year old son, Titus. We also took in Sevres Porcelain, Louis XIV heavily gilt cabinets by Boulle but Titian, Velazquez, Canaletto,

Reynolds, Gainsborough and many others plus "some of the most spectacular Renaissance arms and armour in Britain" were left for another day.

Mental appetites well whetted, we repaired to the Lamb & Flag and thence to Carluccios to ensure our collective "mens sana in corpore sano". It was an excellent chance to chat with old friends as well as meet with members from other eras.

As the Wallace Bequest of 1897 stipulates that no further items are to be sold or acquired, the collection will be unchanged in perpetuity for the inspiration of future generations of art loving Jesus graduates and their partners.

Our thanks are due to Chris and Malcolm and our excellent guide for making the visit so informative and enjoyable.

**Barry Green**

## FOR MATHEMATICIANS (OR THOSE WHO LOVE MATHS)...

I was very fortunate to hear Andrew Wiles, (Fermat's Last Theorem), at the Science Museum. A star sell-out event as Wiles rarely appears in public. I also learned that the Science Museum has on Level 2, the Winton Gallery which is devoted to Mathematics. The Science Museum has moved on!

The Oxford Institute of Mathematics, which was behind the event, is also very active with public lectures now. I can recommend being on their mailing list.

The '61 Mathematics group would have rated all this as 'Better than the average Boo Boo!' in tutorials. (Courtesy of Deputy Dog)

**Malcolm McIvor (1961)**



Members of the group at the Wallace collection



# HOW THE LAW HAS CHANGED...

**“All the fun has gone out of it.” “Yes. I wouldn’t advise a young lad or lass to go into the law now.” So they reminisce in Chancery Lane and Lincoln’s Inn. Is this just dinosaurs baying in the swamp? Has all the fun really gone out of the law? Is it still a good job?**

Well, it’s different and it’s the same. What would you expect a lawyer to say?

When I started my articles (no training contracts then) in 1976, my principal arrived every morning at 10. Sitting at his gold tooled, green leather topped partner’s desk he went through the post, puffing on the first of his many daily pipes. At 10.20 Sylvia came in carrying his coffee and her shorthand notepad.

Smoothing down her tight short skirt she perched on the chair and took dictation. The phone would go. Dictation stopped. Call finished. Dictation resumed. Phone goes. And on it went. She and I sat silently listening to the calls, non-verbally communicating, but always alert to show prompt appreciation of my principal’s wittier asides and there were many.

This could take all morning unless he had a meeting. Lunch was sacrosanct. 12.45: we went for lunch. Alcohol was always taken. The only question was one bottle or two? At 5.45pm the caretaker came round to remind everybody he was locking up at 6.15. Everybody went to the pub until 7 pm. This was in a well-established, medium-sized, traditional City firm. All the partners and most of the solicitors were Oxbridge males in suits and ties.

35 years later I retired as a commercial litigator. Where are the snows of yesteryear?

No offices, we all hot-desk at workstations in Open Plan barns. No smoking at all. No drinking at lunch-even in the insurance market the two-bottle lunch is a fond memory. No shorthand and very few secretaries. Lawyers all do their own typing or dictation on their computers.

The post has dwindled to vanishing point. Killed off by email. Most solicitors under 40 are female and wear trousers. Office hours have disappeared. You just work to get the job finished even if you do it remotely. Filing clerks- who were they? Paper files are extinct replaced by digital Document Management Systems. So are ties and suits.

Partnerships are now LLPs, ABSs and PLCs -some are even floated on the Stock Exchange. Non-lawyers run law firms. Many partners describe themselves as just highly paid employees not the owners or managers of their own business.



Is this just change or is it progress? Are dodgy looking sweaters and flashes of grey chest hair a better look? Is the Schengen style, boundary free work environment increasing happiness and productivity? No probably not. The work product is basically the same but costs much more. The law, like housing, has become too expensive for most people.

But the dinosauric gripes are not unique to the law: more regulation, more accountability, increased tempo of work, 24/7 availability, political correctness etc - so the cahier des doleances grows. Accountants, surveyors, medics, insurers, academics and even journalists quietly fulminate in resigned pessimism. But still the number of solicitors grows; more than 175,000 now.

So, all the professions have experienced the same forces of change. The three big generic ones are feminisation, computerisation and regulation. Are they Good Things? Yes they are. Mixed and diverse workplaces are much nicer and frankly more fun. Computers produce and check documents that took hours to find, compile and proof read- many happy hours were spent by highly educated articulated clerks reading over the original and the counterpart of agreements to each other. And regulation and compliance? Well that’s consumer protection for you. It’s just the way it is. And we are all consumers. Do lawyers work harder now? Yes, but everyone does. No Sunday closing these days.

But some things never change: the excitement of waiting for the judgment, the anxiety of where the next job is coming from, the anticipation of a new client coming in, the sheer joy of winning now and again, and more again than you might think, just the satisfaction of knowing that you helped someone who was in danger of being shafted. Would I do it all again? You bet.

Ah! Beware. The robots are coming! Is Richard Susskind right? Will the streets be full of litigators and conveyancers sleeping in doorways? Maybe, but not until we have robot judges and robot clients. Keep your Practising Certificates handy.

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**Steve Walker (1968)**





## ON FIRST ATTENDING THE JESUS COLLEGE CURRY CLUB\*

**It's not often nowadays at my advanced age (54) that I'm the youngest person at a social event. Or the only woman! But I managed to achieve both when I was invited to attend one of the regular gatherings of the Jesus College Curry Club in December.**

I hadn't even realised until a couple of weeks before that that such a mysterious-sounding body existed – I now know that it is technically known as the JCR, though the secretary admitted he wasn't entirely sure what the R stood for – he suggested both the Jesus Curry Recidivists and Recusants, before settling provisionally on Ruminants.

I also now know that only alumni who matriculated at least 40 years ago are supposed to attend, so it was very kind of the members to let me in. I wasn't quite sure what I was letting myself in for when I descended the stairs to the India India restaurant (I wonder what sort of food they serve there?), off one of those secret (to me) passageways near the Inns of Court – but the welcome from the Jesus alumni couldn't have been warmer. The restaurant had a pleasingly retro air, despite having recently, as one of the Curry Club subsequently wrote in mock outrage, "after 30 years unilaterally changed its name and management without consulting our group!". I could imagine the ambience of the place not having changed at all over that period, though - after a while I realised that I wasn't just the only woman at the Curry Club, I was pretty much the only woman in the entire restaurant!

But as I say, I was made to feel extremely welcome by the members, and it was fascinating to hear the stories of those I talked to – it is always nice to compare notes on one's Jesus experiences. The food was delicious, and I was sorry to have missed the pre-dinner drinks at the infamous El Vino's on Fleet Street. I am now very much looking forward to going to another meeting and talking to more Recusants, Recidivists and Ruminants – I would recommend the group to anyone, male or female!

(\*Unfunny parody of 'On first looking into Chapman's Homer' by Keats)

**Katherine Jarman (1980)**

## IN MEMORY OF TED BELMONT (MATHS 1968)

Ted died peacefully in his sleep at St Gemma's Hospice, Leeds on 22nd October. He had been suffering from prostate cancer for some time and more recently the cancer had spread to his bones.

Ted was one of 8 mathematicians who matriculated in 1968. All (apart from one in Australia) attended his funeral in Leeds. The service was packed, with standing room only; a testament to the number of lives touched by Ted.

After Oxford Ted entered the actuarial profession working for a number of years at Legal & General before moving on to Martin Paterson Associates. MPA was taken over by Buck Consultants and shortly afterwards Ted was invited to open an office in Leeds. He headed that office and grew its client base until 1997 when Mellon took over Buck and closed the office.

Rather than work in Manchester Ted chose to join Hogg Robinson, which somehow became Xafinity, and was still working there (although contemplating retirement) when taken into hospital.

He was highly regarded by colleagues and clients alike. As one former colleague put it, his greatest strength was an ability to explain complex ideas in a way that non-specialists could understand.

Ted met his wife-to-be, Linda, when he was at Oxford. They married shortly after he started work and had a long and happy marriage. They have one son, James, and two grandchildren, to whom Ted was devoted.

Ted had a quick wit and encyclopaedic knowledge, qualities which no doubt explained his exceptional ability with crosswords. He would routinely complete several before lectures – and he wasn't late! Some years later he came fourth in the Times National Crossword Championship, an outstanding accomplishment given the fierce rivalry in that competition.

Three of us who matriculated with Ted in 1968 travelled up from London for his funeral in Leeds. On the train back home we attempted the day's Times crossword. It was a valiant effort, completing the final clue (incorrectly it so happened) as the train approached Kings Cross. More than once the comment was heard: 'Oh, Ted would have got that straight away!'

Ted was a kind and considerate person. He would have attended his '50th' Gaudy next year. He will be sorely missed by everyone who knew him.

**Chris Hicks (1968)**





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29 March 2018

It is my pleasure to introduce you to the Jesus College XL Network, (formerly Jesus Old Members Group). This alumni community was established in 1991 and originated for the years 1954-1964, but has now grown to include all eligible members up to 1978!

The Group is historically open to all Jesus alumni, but primarily celebrates in name (**XL**) those who have reached the milestone of **40 years** since their matriculation date. There are currently 230 XL members and we look forward to this number growing over the years.

This Group has its own website, [www.jomg.org](http://www.jomg.org) and a Committee including Malcolm McIvor – Chairman, Paul Seward – Secretary, and Richard Cosier – Membership Secretary.

The Group brings friends, old and new, together at several social events each year including, multiple day trips across the UK, regular evenings in London, including a Curry Club, and Old Members Day (usually in Oxford), which is open to all.

The All Alumni Dinner, taking place in College on 6 April this year, is followed the next morning by a short presentation from an XL Bursary recipient and a virtual AGM over coffee. This allows the Committee to listen to members' ideas and proposals for the future. We hope that many of you will be able to join us if you are planning to attend.

Although the XL Group is independent, the Development Office is pleased to support the Group by publicising events on the College website, printing and posting the Group's Newsletter, and facilitating communications especially to prospective members, whilst ensuring alumni data protection.

The Group is not now a fund raising body, but it is supportive of College developments. Its history includes helping over 150 members of College and donating over £300,000. We are very grateful for this generous support, and for all of the ways in which this special network enriches the Jesus alumni community.

All alumni are automatically eligible for membership on reaching the 40-year milestone. We do hope that you will be interested and will join this interesting and entertaining Group.

May your relationship with the College be long, and may it continue to be fruitful.

Very best wishes,

Brittany Wellner James  
**Director of Development**