

NORTHUMBRIAN CAMBRIDGE ASSOCIATION Newsletter

President: Prof. Heather Cordell www.northumbrian-cambridge.co.uk Hon. Secretary: Em.Prof. Gilbert Cockton



A Renewed Normal

We had a full programme of events for 2022. After the events reported in the August 2022 newsletter, we followed a reception for Freshers at the Lit & Phil with our AGM and Annual Lecture at the same venue. We next attended an autumn concert together before the festive season gathered us for the NCA Christmas Lunch, with the Festive Tea & Film a week later. We have brief reports of these events in this newsletter, with more details on the NCA website (<https://www.northumbrian-cambridge.co.uk/>). Malcolm Pearce (Magdalene 1984-85) has kindly shared his experience of his college's new library (photo above). We introduce our new committee member, Dr. Joanna Quinton in this newsletter, and also remind you of our new bank account and next year's subscriptions.

Programme for 2023

Friday, February 10, 2023

National Glass Centre, Sunderland

Wednesday, March 15, 2023

Annual Dinner: Northern Counties Club.

Late April/early May, 2023

Spring Outing (tbc): Ryhope Engines Museum

Saturday, July 1, 2023

Summer Outing: The Auckland Project

Wednesday, October 4, 2023

AGM & Annual Lecture

Booking forms are emailed/posted to members and added to the NCA home page (www.northumbrian-cambridge.co.uk) as they become available. The Christmas Lunch and Festive Tea & Film dates in December will be advised once venues have been booked.

If paying via your bank, please note the new NCA bank account (details on back page).



NCA: The Next Generation

On September 14th, we once again welcomed freshers from the northeast and their guests to a reception before they went up for their first term at Cambridge University. Although the turnout was lower than in 2021, the event was very lively and sociable. All those who attended found it very valuable. We hope to see some of them back for future fresher and student events.



AGM and Annual Lecture

The AGM followed by a buffet and annual lecture was held on October 7th. Unfortunately, a change to Sir Liam Donaldson travel plans, due to the industrial action by rail staff, prevented him from being in Newcastle to

speak. NCA honorary secretary Gilbert Cockton gave a replacement lecture, *Coming Soonish, Design Tripos*, on the design practices that will add substantially to Cambridge's current meagre creative degrees, alongside Architecture, two M.Studies in Creative Writing, and one in Healthcare Innovation.

In 2024, the first undergraduates will join a new Design Tripos that brings together architecture, engineering, and materials science in a single degree. Gilbert outlined the research of five current Design Professors across Engineering, Computer Science and Architecture: John Clarkson (Trinity Hall), Nathan Crilly (Clare), James Moultrie (Selwyn), Alan Blackwell (Darwin), and Michael Ramage (Sidney Sussex, St. John's). Professors Crilly and Blackwell are active in CRASSH and CRUCIBLE, two existing interdisciplinary creative initiatives at Cambridge. Gilbert related their work to over a half-century of research into creative design practices.

Gilbert was able to quickly repurpose his presentation for a keynote address to a Brazilian national conference in Diamantina (below) eleven days after the AGM. In turn, that keynote benefitted from its recent presentation to a general audience. Gilbert also benefitted from Brazil's spring sun.



Autumn Concert

For this year's autumn concert, we reserved tickets at the Queen's Hall in Hexham on October 27th to hear the Teesside duo *Megson*. Their award nominations and successes have brought them much critical acclaim including The Sunday Times Folk Album of the Week for their *Contradiction* album. We dined beforehand at Danielle's Bistro on Eastgate. The evening was very enjoyable.

Christmas Lunch

On December 2nd, we again met for Christmas Lunch at Newcastle's County Hotel, a fine Victorian hotel with many original features. As last year, we had the beautiful County Suite with bar and dining area to ourselves. A great time was had by all with a very enjoyable lunch followed by festive carols.



Festive Afternoon and Tea

On December 10th, we met for the ninth NCA Festive Afternoon Tea and Film at the Tyneside Cinema, which proved again to be a wonderful pre-Christmas treat. We followed a glass of prosecco with sandwiches, cakes, and tea/coffee on vintage china. We were then thoroughly entertained by the classic British comedy *I'm All Right Jack*, which proved to be far more topical than we had expected when we booked this film. We were close to capacity in the Tyneside Cinema's digital lounge. The film was as funny now as it was in 1959. We all left smiling.

Magdalene's New Library

NCA Member Malcolm Pearce was fortunate enough to have a personal guided visit with Corinne Lloyd, Magdalene Fellow and Director of Development, to his college's new library in August 2022.

When Samuel Pepys died in 1703, he left 3,000 books to his heirs. When they were transferred to Magdalene in 1724, the Pepys Library became the 'jewel' in the College's 'crown'. Grade 1 listed status, it is still with us today nearly 300 years later. As lovely as the building is, it suffers from 'shoddy carpentry', 'inferior internal brickwork', 'lack of uniformity', annoying asymmetry, mismatched dimensions, and a paucity of space.

The question, 'What to do?' has been asked with greater frequency and urgency. According to the current Master, Sir Christopher Greenwood, it was the idea and energy of Duncan Robinson (Director of the Fitzwilliam Museum and Master 2002-12) that 'was the driving force behind the decision to build the library'. Dr. Rowan Williams (former Archbishop of Canterbury, and 35th Master 2013-2020) knew exactly what to do on behalf of his predecessor – make certain the new library idea became a reality. It was hoped it would: set a new standard for library buildings; be sympathetically placed and designed; meet environmental demands; and last at least 400 years. As the first new build on the original College site in over fifty years it had to be 'right' (as the current phrase goes, 'no pressure then'). It was completed in early 2021 and could so easily have fallen victim to the pandemic. It was not a small or ordinary project, and much could have gone wrong especially with the demands placed on everyone during the lockdowns. The fact it did not is testimony to the originality of the ideas, design, materials, construction, and unswerving belief.

On Thursday 13 October 2022, after making the short list of six, the New Magdalene College Library was awarded the 26th Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) 2022 Stirling Prize for 'excellence in architecture'. 'Excellence' meant, 'the building that had made the greatest contribution to the evolution of architecture in

the past year', as well as meeting, 'high architectural standards and (making a) substantial contribution to the local environment'. Simply it was a triumph not just for the College but also for Níall McLaughlin Architects, Cocksedge building contractor and the family firm, Wedd Joinery, based locally in Stapleford. The joinery in particular is exceptional and exquisite achieving the difficult combination of solidity and lightness. Add to this passive ventilation, natural lighting, innovative internal design, minimal energy usage and other boxes being ticked throughout the building process.

On Malcolm's guided visit, it was obvious that the building, which also has archive and art gallery spaces, had melded seamlessly into the College's grounds. Its external footprint sits easily and comfortably amidst older structures. Its tall chimneys reflect others built centuries before. Bricks were specially made and laid to match earlier external walls. Interlocking quadrangular shapes and triangular gables pick up on earlier counterparts. It could have so easily dominated and overwhelmed older parts of the College, but it does not.

The main entrance has two huge automatic wooden doors that sweep open majestically and soundlessly as one approaches. The overwhelming feeling is of light and space – lots of both. A central meeting room has soundproofing so activities there do not disturb readers. Individual workstations are not regimented. There is the long 'mead table' as well as many quiet nooks. As the Stirling Prize Jury noted, it 'balances openness with intimacy', and is definitely 'built to last'. It is a truly multi-functional building which is open 24/7 to the fortunate members of the College.

For the Stirling Prize Jury, Magdalene College has an 'exquisitely built', 'bespoke' and 'quality' addition, with a status that goes far beyond Cambridge and the United Kingdom. It may well become the first of a new generation of such buildings. Given the brief to create a building with a lifespan of 400 years, when 2421 comes round, the Pepys Library will be 697 years old. Hopefully both will still be complementing each other seamlessly – two spectacular 'jewels in the crown' in this very fortunate seat of learning.

New Committee Member



We recently welcomed Joanna Quinton (Medical Sciences, Trinity 1983-1988) to the NCA Executive Committee after the AGM. Joanna went up to Cambridge only 5 years after Trinity had admitted its first female undergraduates, full of enthusiasm for her subject. After two years of preclinical studies, she spent her third year in the Anatomy department studying neuroanatomy and neurophysiology, and undertaking research on melatonin, resulting in several papers including in the *Journal of Endocrinology*.

Although busy with her studies, with a full timetable including Saturday morning lectures and practicals, Joanna found time to row for her college in the first year but was then invited to play for the University Women's Ice Hockey team in its national matches and twice in the Varsity match.

With the assistance of a small bursary from Trinity, Joanna visited China in the summer of 1984. Based at Xi'an Medical University, which was beginning to recover from the damage inflicted by the Cultural Revolution, she was able to learn something of the practice of modern medicine in China and its relationship to traditional healing methods such as acupuncture, herbal remedies, and cupping. She also assisted with the English language teaching program, using a mixture of seminars and by making recordings to accompany a textbook, and helping to translate research manuscripts on diseases caused by Selenium deficiency.

Joanna's clinical studies were completed at Addenbrooke's Hospital, Cambridge with further attachments throughout East Anglia. In 1988 she visited India and observed practice at Padhar, a small mission hospital in Madhya Pradesh, 4 years after the Union Carbide disaster in nearby Bhopal.

House jobs in Ipswich and Great Yarmouth, were followed by a Medical Rotation at London's St Bartholomew's and Homerton Hospitals, and then the Nottingham Radiology training programme, with extra training at the University of Adelaide and Vancouver's St Paul's Hospital. Some time was naturally allowed for scuba diving, sailing including crewing for the Royal South Australian Yacht Squadron and winter sports around the local slopes of Vancouver, Whistler, and the Blackcomb mountains.

On her return to the UK, she briefly worked as a locum Consultant Radiologist in Monaghan and Cavan (Ireland) and Hull, before taking up a substantive post in Northampton in 2001. She moved to the Northeast in October 2002 to marry fellow NCA member Dr Richard Quinton, whom she had first encountered in Cambridge some twenty years previously. She worked as a consultant Radiologist at North Tyneside Hospital, North Shields until illness caused her to take early retirement in 2017.

She now devotes her time to her three children, gardening, cultivating exotic plants and growing enough fruit and vegetables for six months of the year. She also enjoys gentle exercise, especially swimming, maintains an old tennis court and accompanies her elderly mother and children on the golf course. Joanna and Richard are slowly renovating an earthquake-damaged farmhouse in the Marche region of Central Italy.

Please note the new NCA bank account

Account: **Northumbrian Cambridge Association**

Lloyds Bank Sort code: **30 98 97**

Account number: **87980962**

All future payments for event bookings and your annual subscriptions (due by **March 1st, 2023**) should be made to this account. You can find an updated Standing Order form for paying subscriptions on our website *How to Join* page.