

AN INFORMAL HISTORY
OF
DARWIN COLLEGE
1970 - 1990



UNIVERSITY OF KENT
AT CANTERBURY ■ ■ ■ ■

AN INFORMAL HISTORY OF DARWIN COLLEGE

An appeal should be made, wherever it is possible, to *College Feeling*. This, like other species of patriotism, consists in a sincere belief that the institution to which you belong is better than an institution to which other people belong. The corresponding belief ought to be encouraged in others by frequent confession of this article of faith in their presence. In this way a healthy spirit of rivalry will be promoted. It is this feeling which makes the College System so valuable; and differentiates, more than anything else, a College from a boarding-house; for in a boarding-house hatred is concentrated, not upon rival establishments, but upon the other members of the same establishment.

F. M. Cornford, *Microcosmographia Academica*

*To Bryan Keith-Lucas
in his eightieth year
and to Mary:
founding parents of
the Darwin College family*

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OF
DARWIN COLLEGE
1970 - 1990

Compiled and edited

by

Peter Brown



Darwin College
University of Kent at Canterbury
1992

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INTRODUCTION

This booklet is called an informal history of Darwin College because it is intended to supplement the splendid account of Darwin's origins and development in the University of Kent's official history, *From Vision to Reality*, by the late Graham Martin. Professor Martin rightly stressed the important role which the four colleges have played in the evolution of Kent's distinctive identity, but within the confines of a single chapter he was unable to dwell for long on the idiosyncrasies of each. The present volume attempts to do just that for Darwin College, to represent some of the personalities and issues which have made Darwin what it is today.

It is an informal history also in the sense that it does not pretend to be comprehensive, nor even to provide interpretations to any great extent. Instead it reproduces a number of documents, chronologically arranged, which highlight different aspects of our brief past. Together they provide a vivid impression of an evolving college family of academics, administrators, students, porters and domestic staff with a strong sense of loyalty and communal identity.

The impetus for the *Informal History* was our twentieth anniversary, in 1990. That year also saw the launch of a fund-raising project, the 'Missing Links Appeal', designed to improve Darwin's social facilities and particularly our amenities for disabled people. Happily, this booklet combines those two functions: it at once celebrates twenty years of college life in Darwin,

and boosts our appeal, for the proceeds from sales will go to the Missing Links fund.

Some of the documents included in the following pages are from the college archive. Others were written specially in response to a request for reminiscences. What that request also revealed was the existence of several closet archivists: individuals who have cherished their memories of Darwin by hoarding documents. Chief among these was Leslie Harris, our first and only Bursar. He has generously donated his invaluable collection of ephemera to the college library, where it will in due course be properly indexed. A founding senior member, Tony Cooke, also produced some rare items from his horde. But perhaps the most startling record of Darwin life is that kept by a former student, Paul Daoust. Systematically over the past decade he has photographed major college events, and particularly our biennial reunions. Considerations of economy mean that we cannot include any of his pictures here, but they are the subject of this year's Darwin Week exhibition, 'Those Were the Days, My Friend ...'

It remains for me to thank all those who have contributed to the present volume, or who have supported it in other ways. Julia Stevens, the college librarian, has been a careful guardian of our growing archive. And without the hard work of my assistant, Gill Hogarth, and her secretary, Samantha Roberts, *An Informal History* would never have appeared.

Peter Brown
Master's Office
April 1992

Chapter 1

FROM THE ASHES OF A MEDIEVAL KILN

First published in the Kent Archaeological Review, Nos. 19 and 21 (1970) as 'Medieval Kiln' by Gerald Cramp.

The University Archaeological Society has continued its investigations of a number of sites on the campus where medieval pottery has been found. Recently attention was drawn towards the fourth college where further excavations by contractors had revealed more kiln debris of medieval date. With the permission of the contractors and the University authorities archaeological excavations were continued with the result that a kiln complete in plan was found just thirty feet from the new buildings. Before a detailed account of the kiln is given, a summary of the medieval finds around the University will be outlined.

The site of the University forms part of an area known as the Forest of Blean which lies to the north of Canterbury and which extends almost to Herne Bay and Whitstable. The Forest's clay subsoil and the high heat producing nature of the wood provide the two main raw materials for the production of tile and pottery. The wares of this industry are named after the village of Tyler Hill which lies about half a mile to the north of the University. During the past twenty-five years Messrs Spillet, Chappell and Swale have shown there is quite a concentration of such industrial activity around the village. Like similar medieval pottery and tile industries

the wares of the Tyler Hill industry are only found within about twenty miles of the place of manufacture. Whilst undoubtedly Canterbury was the main market, examples of tiles or pottery have been found in Dover, Sandwich, Reculver and Faversham. Because of the presence of similar potteries near Ashford the area of marketing did not expand further west than Faversham.

Although the extent of the industrial working area around Tyler Hill has been studied, very little work on the actual structure of the kilns has been attempted. The University Society aims to partially fill this gap with the total excavation of the kiln by the fourth college.

It is now known that the kiln lies at the centre of a region of much industrial activity. Under the east wing of the fourth college a number of features were observed during the contractors excavations. These include pits and ditches, many filled with roof tiles and kiln debris. One pit contained a complete flagon, except for a hole in the bottom entirely due to the flagon not being properly fired. Earlier in the year the Society partially excavated a series of pits and ditches at the south-east corner of the east wing. The finds consisted of a fine collection of pottery fragments, some more kiln debris, charcoal fragments, roof tiles and four fragments of decorated floor tiles. These are very similar to those found at the royal abbey at Faversham and the first two have been reconstructed with the aid of the report of the excavation at Faversham in 1965 (Philp. 1968).

The kiln, which lies between the fourth college and St Stephen's Hill, is basically rectangular in shape tapering towards its stoke hole. It is 14 feet long by 11 feet 6 inches wide externally, with walls 1 foot 2 inches

wide made of roof tiles. In the back wall of the kiln one tile has been found intact measuring 6 inches by 9 inches with two round peg holes situated near one of its ends. The baked furnace floor has been found almost all over the kiln. This floor rises about a foot from the stoke hole to the back of the kiln. In the back half of the kiln, wearing away of the floor can be seen and this divides the chamber into three equal parts. Between two of the chambers the impression of a wall eight inches wide can be seen. The position of the other similar wall is under the section. This internal arrangement only survives at the back of the kiln since the floor near the stoke hole has been worn away. It is now quite clear that the level in the stoke hole was deeper than the furnace floor in the last period of use. The whole of the remaining structure was situated below contemporary ground level.

A little pottery has been found associated with the kiln, but since dating of medieval pottery is very difficult, it is only possible to give an approximate date of 1300 for the operation of the kiln. It is hoped to get a magnetic date for the kiln. The problem of dating any part of the Tyler Hill industry is only one of many concerned with this industry. It is known from documentary sources that pottery and tiles were being produced around Tyler Hill between 1350 and 1850.

* * *

The excavation of a medieval kiln adjacent to the fourth college of the University has continued throughout the winter. A preliminary account of the excavation appeared in the spring edition of the *Review*. Then the

excavations had only reached the rebuilt furnace floor of the kiln. Prior to the removal of the floor, magnetic samples were taken so that an independent date for it can be obtained. Under the floor extensive traces of the internal structure still remained. These related to the first period of the kiln, whereas the rebuilt furnace floor relates to the second period.

As can be seen in the accompanying photographs, the two internal spine walls and the side walls of the kiln supported three sides of arches. These arches which formed the floor of the upper baking-chamber had largely fallen intact into the flues below. On the spine and side walls the settings from which the arches sprang can be seen.

The kiln, which was built of tiles, was heated by a fire situated just in front of the spine walls. The hot air would pass along the flues then rise through gaps between the arches in to the baking chamber above. Excavations below the original furnace floor revealed the existence of a drain through gaps between the arches into the baking chamber above. This can be seen leading into the front of the kiln from the right and is one of the unusual features of this kiln. The drain was constructed of complete ridge-tiles placed end to end in a narrow trench, with the joints sealed by large fragments of roof tiles. This drain has yielded complete examples of all major types of roof tile. In the place of one ridge tile was a complete chimney-pot. Like the rest of the kiln this dates to around A.D. 1300, and thus it is possibly one of the earliest examples known. It stands 15 inches high and 7.5 inches in diameter at the base, tapering to 5 inches in diameter at the top, with fourteen irregular

and non-vertical columns of thumbing. Fragments of chimney pots of this date are only known from Kent and Sussex.

Just prior to the contractors filling in the kiln, the University Archaeological Society found a second kiln of similar date, only 80 feet from the first. Further rescue-research excavations are being undertaken on this kiln. The results, so far, show that this kiln is very similar to the first. The evidence of reconstruction and of a drain in the second kiln indicates that the two belong to the same complex of kilns. The chief differences between them is that whilst the stoke-hole of the first faces north, the stoke-hole of the second faces south.

Recently a selection of finds from the University was exhibited in the University Library. The fourth college has now been named Darwin College.

Chapter 2

'VERY MUCH A BRICKIE'S JOB ...'

(Comment on the building of Darwin College, from
the *Staff Journal of the Costain Group*, September 1969)

The following interview with the architect, Mr Faulkner Brown, appeared in FUSS, vol. 2, No. 3 (February 1970).

This college is in many ways similar to the other three colleges in its requirements, but we have had the advantage of seeing how the other colleges have worked and how far they have come up to the requirements of the University. In many instances, there are shortcomings in the first two colleges (Keynes had not been started when we were briefed) which were pointed out very quickly and forcibly to us before we started. This means that we had the chance to avoid the same mistakes. Which is not, of course, to say that this fourth college has no mistakes. There are bound to be some and we would like to hear about them from those living there. But we have benefited from the experience the University has had with the other colleges and we have tried to use that experience.

When you look at the college, you will be aware that it is in some ways different to the other colleges. We think that as a planning exercise, it is unique. But being different doesn't in itself give it any magical qualities. This in itself we don't claim as a merit. But because it is unique, I'd like to try and explain how it came about. However before I do that I should tell you

something about the principles we observe in our office. In every building we design, we try to follow these principles and give a building these qualities. And I would put these qualities in order of priority.

First -- and this overrides all the others and, we hope, permeates all the others -- is the quality of *simplicity*. Second, is the *suitability* of the building for its purpose. The University gave us a long list -- something which is called a Schedule of Accommodation -- and also a brief, telling us how they thought the college would be organised and how it would operate. From this information, the architect gives the building its form. So, first of all, simplicity; secondly, suitability. Now by suitability I mean suitability for the purpose of the building. This means that we must find out all the user requirements: all the needs of the students, the tutors, the cooks, the Bursar, the porters. Everything they do must be recognised. Their requirements must be seen and the architects must then be able to interpret all this into spaces which are attractive and which relate correctly to other space. It's very complicated -- much more difficult than watch-making.

The third is *compactness*. Of course it should be compact for obvious reasons. One is the economy of movement, for all those who use the building. Compactness cuts down the circulation of space, which means the building is more economical to build and thus money can be saved to use on other things that matter.

Fourth -- *value for money*. This is a very large, broad and difficult subject. It really means that an order of priorities has to be set up for various features and aspects of the building. A determination must be made

on which items are the most important. Should we cover parts of the outside with expensive stone at the cost of denuding the interior -- or are we going to concentrate on the interior and have a rather austere exterior? All these things have been considered by us and the Working Party and the decisions have generally been taken jointly.

Fifth -- *awareness of the route*. By this I mean the route one takes both approaching the building and the route one takes when inside. Surely many of us have got lost in the buildings, and not just the first time we have been there. It is very important to know exactly where you are at any specific time, and the simpler and more direct the route the better. Thus a distinct feature of this college are the two wide cloisters in a V-shape, each two-and-a-half cricket pitches long, that run the whole length of the residential wings like two main streets. These, made light and airy with windows, will reflect the main life and movement of the college. To move from any part of the college to another means that the pedestrians must come to the cloister level first. This has substantially reduced the distance of travel within the college and has achieved a small element of circulation strongly expressed. It is also very important to be able to determine where the entrance is. Thus, access to the cloisters is by means of a broad, circular staircase which rises from the main entrance hall, through the central complex. I think it will be clear that we put great emphasis on the clarity of the route.

Sixth -- one of the things the University asked for, and which is one of our qualities, is that the *function of the building should be expressed visually*. Thus we have

tried to make the residential areas as easily identifiable as the teaching, dining, communal and recreational areas. At the same time as creating a compact and easily accessible complex, the corporate nature of the college community has been emphasised.

Seven and eight are tied together: *flexibility and extendability*. Flexibility is very difficult to achieve in a college because of the non-flexible nature of the rooms. That is, the small rooms, such as the study bedrooms. Applying this principle, it means that, for example, we design the catering arrangements in a certain way so that if the college and the Domestic Bursar later decide to change these arrangements then the building will be such that it does not preclude changes from taking place. Extendability: one requires flexibility for extendability. If the policy of the government changes, and the University is unable to establish new colleges, then additions to the existing colleges might have to be made. Hence we have made a study on how this could.

These are the qualities and the standards which we have moulded into this building. Now let's see how we set about it:

First of all, we took the smallest possible element -- a student. Each of the 300 residential students has to have a study bedroom. We tried to figure out the best size for a social unit for a student. What would be the best way for the students to live? We tried to think this out along the lines of our own experience, namely the experience of a family. The University suggested groups of about eight to twelve students. We thought to ourselves -- would we like to a family of eight or twelve, and thought No, I don't think we would. My particular

family happens to be a family of five. I've three daughters of University age. So we decided a unit of five was small enough to discipline itself and large enough to avoid people getting in each other's hair. So we said let's try a unit of five and let's put these people in close relation with one another, yet separated from each other, but nevertheless able to come together with the others quite easily. We took this unit of five, like a family flat of five bedrooms, put the necessary sanitary accommodation into it, and connected the group with a similar group of five by a small living room -- we called these the Cloister Common Rooms. These Cloister Common Rooms would be filled with easy chairs and would also contain cooking facilities.

We would then take into account the students of the college who would be living out. To give them a definite place in the college, we decided to add ten of them to each Cloister Common Room, giving them a locker each and a space for food. Thus you now have a permanent residential unit of ten, and a spasmodic daily movement of twenty students in the common room. This, of course, recognises that there will be other common rooms elsewhere in the college, larger in size and different in character. So students would then have a choice -- the freedom of choice -- of either sitting in their own private study bedrooms or in a intimate common room which, during the evenings, might have up to ten people and during the day a maximum of twenty.

So this was the unit which, after a great deal of discussion with the Working Party, was to be the basis, or a main characteristic, of the college.

Chapter 3

THE ORIGIN OF DARWIN, OR 'NO RED-UNDIES'

Bryan Keith-Lucas was the founding Master of the college from 1970 until 1974.

Note: this essay is based entirely on my personal memories of the early days of the college, without reference to the files in the Master's office, or to the recollections of my colleagues.

The original plan of the University provided for seven colleges, which were to be strung out along the main pathway, running from the Eliot roundabout to the site of Darwin. Along this, side branches would lead to the colleges, with the Library as the dominating feature, in front of which an imposing wide road would lead down the hill, through the University playing fields, towards the cathedral and the town. This was the grand pattern in the mind of the first architect, Lord Holford. His successor took a different line; he argued that the buildings should just grow, like a medieval town, so that you never knew what you might find round the next corner. The eternal conflict between the Classical and the Romantic.

By 1969 the Holford Plan had been abandoned, and money was becoming scarce. The fourth college had to be built as cheaply as possible, and the fifth, sixth and

seventh were never built. When I accepted the office of Master of the fourth college the broad outline of the design had been decided, but not the details.

My acceptance of the job was however conditional. The Vice-Chancellor had proposed that the fourth college should, for reasons of economy, be opened in 1970, but without any catering. It was on condition that we had full catering in the college that I accepted. I did not believe that one could build up a community such as I hoped for if there were no meals over which the members, senior and junior, would meet.

I had a somewhat optimistic picture in my mind of a college in which the senior and the junior members would be more partners in the enterprise than they are in the traditional Oxbridge pattern. For this reason I started by getting together a small committee to plan the running of the college, consisting of three or four undergraduates, who would in due course become the officers of the Junior College Committee, and the deputy master designate, Clive Wake, and myself.

Among the things we discussed were the arrangements of the bars. We felt that it would be best if the main bar were to be between the Senior and Junior Common Room, as a general meeting place; we planned also a more intimate bar in the adjoining building which would serve simple meals in an informal atmosphere. This, envisaged as a meeting place for everyone, senior and junior, was called the Missing Link.

Neither of these ideas really proved to be a success; the indoor bar was much too small, and at times tipsy undergraduates just by the entrance to the Senior Common Room were a bore. The Missing Link, though

attractive in ways, never attracted enough custom to make is economically viable.

One alteration to the architect's plans which I secured was the provision of a door leading straight into the Master's study from the passage; I did not want students to have to ask the permission of my secretary if they wanted to see me. So on this door I pinned the notice MEMBERS OF THE COLLEGE, PLEASE WALK IN.

In the original plans an important feature was the provision of the kitchen-common rooms, each of which served the inhabitants of ten study-bedrooms, but in which undergraduates living out of college would have the same rights, so that they would all have somewhere of their own in the college. We thought of these rooms becoming the centres of smaller social groups, based on the facilities for cooking simple meals. This also has been subsequently modified, partly as a means of providing more sleeping accommodation.

One way in which I tried to bridge the gap between the age groups was by playing croquet. It is a vicious game, but it does give a junior member an opportunity to knock his tutor's or his professor's ball into the bushes. It also gives all the players an opportunity to meet on neutral ground. I certainly found it a useful exercise. (There is I believe, somewhere in the college, a silver cup given by the JCR. as a challenge trophy for croquet).

The provisional committee, which had a majority of undergraduates, had, among other things, to make a recommendation to the Senate about the name of the college. It happened that the opening of the college coincided with the 800th anniversary of the death of

Thomas Becket, and it was felt that this was a suitable name, particularly appropriate as Becket was so much a figure in Canterbury history, and the other colleges had been named after people who had so little or nothing to do with Canterbury. So, unanimously, it was agreed that we should recommend that it be called Becket College.

Unfortunately on the day on which this recommendation was to come before the Senate the death was announced of Bertrand Russell. There was very strong pressure from members of the Senate who were not coming to join the college to reject our proposal, and call it Russell College. I was not prepared to accept this, for several reasons. (1) As the undergraduates who were coming to the college wanted it to be Becket College, I resented the interference by senior members who were not coming. (2) My father, who was a Fellow of Trinity College Cambridge when Russell was excluded in the first war, used to say that Russell gave a quite inaccurate account of the reason for his exclusion, which was in fact greatly based on his personal conduct, which was then felt to be unacceptable in a Tutor. (3) In his *Autobiography* Russell described meeting Eliot (after whom Eliot College was called) in October 1914, and wrote 'I naturally asked him what he thought of the War. "I don't know," he replied, "I only know that I am not a pacifist." That is to say, he considered any excuse good enough for homicide.' As I had myself been a pacifist before the second war, but, when war broke out, decided that I could not keep myself comfortably at home while others bore the brunt, and so enlisted as a private in the infantry, I found this

attitude extremely intolerant.

The outcome was that I proposed a compromise -- Darwin -- who was at least a resident in Kent. (Incidentally, his son, Sir Horace Darwin, was the professor with whom my father worked at Cambridge. When my father was killed in the war, he raised a fund for the education of my two brothers and myself. We also had distant family connections). There are still a few relics of the days when we thought we were Becket College: a Spode plate in the Private Dining Room, one of a limited edition produced to commemorate the 800th anniversary of the martyrdom, given by Bernard Porter, formerly mayor of Canterbury and an honorary D.C.L. of the University; and a print of a bit of stained glass in the cathedral showing the martyrdom (in the Master's study, done by Polly Keith-Lucas).

One innovation in the college was the decision not to have a High Table reserved for senior members, but to have instead a 'Guest Table' open to any member of the college who was prepared to pay the price, and accept the formalities or conventions. In order to give more status to this, I decided to try to collect some good silver for use on this and other occasions. Some was provided on permanent loan from the Buffs (the 3rd of Foot), in which I served in the early days of the war (as a Private and acting unpaid lance corporal), by the Derbyshire Militia and by various other benefactors. The details are set out in my memorandum on the gifts to Darwin College.

Linked with this was the institution of the 'Darwin Seminars' aimed at bringing to the college a succession of people concerned in the process of government. They

would usually talk out of an armchair in the Senior Common Room on a Friday evening about their jobs to a group of thirty or forty undergraduates; I would then take them and a half dozen undergraduates to my room for sherry, and, having given the decanter an initial shove, remember an urgent duty so that I had to leave the speaker with the students, but no senior members, for half an hour or so. Then to dinner at the Guest Table, with one or two other undergraduates to sit near them. Among those whom we involved in this treatment were Alan Baith, M.P., Lord Armstrong, Lord Brooke of Cumor (former Home Secretary), Roland Butt, Dick Crossman, M.P., Lord Dilhorne (former Lord Chancellor), Roy Hattersley, M.P., Lord Feather (Trade Union leader), Jack Jones (Trade Union leader), Jo Grimond, M.P., Douglas Houghton, M.P., Cledwyn Hughes, M.P. (now Labour leader in the Lords), Sydney Irving (now Lord Irving, former Deputy Speaker), Selwyn Lloyd, M.P. (former Speaker), Lord Longford, Lord Justice Salmon, Sir Robert Mark (Metropolitan Police Commissioner), Hugh Scanlon (now Lord Scanlon, Trade Union Leader), Bernard Weatherill, M.P. (until recently the Speaker) and many others.

For the same sort of purpose we instituted the annual Darwin Feast, open to all members of the college, and to which we would invite members of the Darwin family, other notabilities, the President and Secretary of the JCR, etc. This has proved to be a lasting institution of some value.

Of course the way was not always easy; the worst years of student unrest did not leave Darwin untouched, though relations between junior and senior parts of the

college never broke down. There was particular trouble about the boycotting of the dining hall, when the students refused to eat in the hall, but demanded that the kitchen staff should in no circumstances be laid off or made redundant. One determined girl put up a fifteen-foot long poster on the stairs demanding 'No Redundies'.

The circumstances have changed much in the last ten years, and the way we tried to do things in the 1970s is the worst possible guide to how to do them now.

I offer these notes not as a guide, but just as a bit of history, as I saw it. Finally, let me pay tribute to a few of the many enthusiastic people who were involved in the early days, particularly Margaret Hollman, the first President of the JCC, and her successors; Leslie Harris, the Bursar in early days; and David Hutton the Deputy Master and, when it all proved too much for me, and I was removed to Hospital, the Acting Master.

Chapter 4

OF CROQUET, RIGHTEOUS WRATH AND SNOOKER

When Claire Palley became Master in 1974 (until 1982), she inherited the following notes of guidance from her predecessor.

The Missing Link

Originally the bar area was intended as a 'hobbies area'. In 1970, in view of the smallness of the college bar, we got a brewer to pay for converting it into a bar intended to be midway between a German *bierkeller* and a public bar of a country pub. It served bread and cheese lunches, meat pies, etc. In fine weather, it spilt out, on to small tables on the tarmac, with umbrellas etc.

Then the JCC persuaded us to enlarge it, by taking in the maintenance room and the music room. It was provided by the Union with juke boxes. It became a magnet for the noisy element of the University, and a fair amount of damage was done.

Recently the Bursar has found himself unable to get staff to open the bar. It has become something of a white elephant. What should we do with it?

The croquet lawn

We bought a low fence to surround the lawn, to prevent the balls going overboard, and cracking themselves. The gardener appears to have removed this.

In order to keep the croquet set in action there has to be a check on the balls, mallets, etc. Otherwise they get lost or broken, and no one does anything about it. So we initiated an office in the JCC of 'Keeper of the Hoops'.

There is a silver challenge cup given by the JCC for an annual competition.

Note that the balls, hoops, etc. belong to Darwin College, senior and junior. They are not Students' Union property. (The Union did once remove them to another college. I had them back pretty smartly.)

Control

The financial affairs of the college are in effect in the hands of the University Finance Committee. The college has very little say. Every year we are presented with our budget, when it is too late for the college to have any say in its form. Such protests as we have made have usually been in vain (e.g. when we protested against the 'pooling' of the large loss on Eliot Senior Common Room, while we got none of the benefit from our careful economy and austerity).

To some extent this is inevitable when the catering is coordinated, and some colleges do conferences while others do not. But it does make college autonomy a myth.

From time to time one has to dig ones toes in. I have refused to accept orders on what our barman and housekeeper shall wear, and how we shall use our Junior Common Room in vacation. It may be that the college should become a bit more aggressive about such

matters.

Assistant Registrars are a dangerous breed. They tend to regard the colleges as those bits of the University plant which lie in a particular area; not as separate organisations. Watch them. An occasional explosion of righteous wrath is valuable.

The flag

The one thing the Master can decide without referring to a committee or asking the Registry is when to fly the flag. Mr Barr puts it up.

This flag was made by a friend in the Women's Institute. It would be expensive to replace, so I refrained from flying it in high winds -- but did fly on such occasions as the beginning of the academic year, degree day, weddings, deaths (including those of college staff) etc.

Sin

Other colleges have (or used to have) a rule forbidding two people to sleep in the same room. It was entirely unenforcible. When Darwin opened the College Council decided on a prohibition of *regular use* of a room by more than one person. This is more or less enforcible. Some people in other colleges regard this as dangerously permissive. I think it is realistic.

* * *

A controversial episode of the Palley years was the installation of a snooker table in the inner SCR in 1979. Senior members were polled through their newsletter, from which this excerpt is taken.

The questionnaire in *Link 1* about purchasing a snooker table yielded the following result. Of 53 completed forms, 39 were in favour and 14 against. The vocal minority called the idea 'anathema' and 'a waste of space, money, time'. Someone suggested that senior members with time to waste could use the pinball machines. There was an equally strong reaction in the opposite direction. It was considered 'very desirable', a 'very good idea' which 'might bring some life to the place'.

In view of the two-thirds majority response, the SCR Committee has decided to proceed with the plan (see Minute 79/6.4). However, the Inner SCR is thought unsuitable and a room in the Tower has been proposed. The search for a second-hand or reconditioned table is now in progress. Any senior member who knows of the location of such a table is asked to contact the SCR secretary (Peter Brown), ext. 7492. Information about potential donors of tables or money would also be welcome.

The installation of the table was not without its difficulties. The following item is taken from SCR Committee minutes in the same year.

The secretary reported that he had received from Mr Hughes a letter, expressing a point of view endorsed by

other members of the committee, that the Maintenance Department be held liable for the cost of resetting the table. The table had been moved when the light was installed and a noticeable slope had subsequently developed. The secretary had written to Mr Reilly to notify him that the cost of resetting the table (estimated at £20) would be deducted from the amount paid for installing the light. He had then received a reply from Mr Edwards, complaining at the committee's 'offensive' attitude. The secretary circulated the three letters in question.

Mr Hughes said that he stood by his point, but it was the feeling of the committee that it did not want to sour relations between the college and Deputy Surveyor. The secretary proposed that he had been informed by the supplier of the table that it could be readjusted with the aid of a car jack and some thin wedges, such as beer mats, under the legs. It was decided to form a 'work-party' of senior members and set the table to rights. The secretary was instructed to frame a suitable reply to Mr Edwards.

It was estimated by the treasurer that the new meter was yielding some £11 per week, and it was agreed that, to prevent theft, a notice be placed on the meter announcing that it was emptied each day. It was felt that the tariff should remain at the present level, at least until the cost of the table was repaid.

The committee agreed that the temporary wooden top, used for buffet suppers, would make a suitable permanent top if stained. The secretary was asked to contact Mr Rome.

Chapter 5

A BONKERS SUPPLEMENT

Bonkers is the name of the Junior Common Room newsletter, named in honour of the first Master's dog. In 1980 Bernard Sharratt, then Deputy Master, used the columns of Bonkers to remind students that a college community includes more people than undergraduates and dons.

How many people work in Darwin -- not students, not academics (well, they work too, sometimes) -- the people who cook and clean, who look after the dining room and the bedlinen, who serve the beer or the breakfast, who make sure, in a thousand ways, that the college actually keeps running in a basic and necessary sense -- how many? What hours do they work, and what's it like -- in the kitchen or the porter's lodge, being a 'domestic assistant' or 'dining hall supervisor', working as a night cleaner or barman? How many students and academics have more than the vaguest idea of the answers to questions like these?

(How many students even know how many academics are attached to Darwin -- and vice-versa? But that's another story!)

This special supplement to *Bonkers* is a brief stab at breaking a few communication barriers, dissolving some faint mists of unknowing.

Students, academics and staff *can* get on each others' nerves, get in each others' way, blunder onto each others' toes -- sometimes without realising it.

Maybe it'll help, or just be of interest, to spell out something of what goes on 'behind the scenes'. Not all of it -- that would take a book. But a few fragments, a glimpse. Try filling out the sketch for yourself. Talk around.

FIGURES ON A TIME-SHEET: A DARWIN DAY, AND NIGHT

10.30 p.m. Enter 2 night-cleaners -- to face the day's debris, in lecture rooms, seminar rooms, the study space, the JCR ... to polish the dining room floor (ever thought how *big* that is?) ... all the way through the night ('Is it a lonely job?' etc.) -- till 7.30 a.m. L-o-n-g h-o-u-r-s. And the debris is there seven days a week, week after week. ('Do you work *every* weekend?' etc.)

(And a porter is there too, on night duty, come on at 10.00 p.m., go home at 8.00 a.m. -- ten hours, 600 minutes: 'On a rota, but nobody *likes* nights -- it's best to get them over with, 7 on the trot -- but they come round again'. 'There's no immediate back-up at night -- what if you had a heart-attack, say -- most of us are in our sixties -- that telephone is your life-line at night.' 'Think of all the things that can go wrong in a place this size -- they're all your responsibility, whatever happens; the safety of hundreds of people rests, in the end, on you.' 'Well, about 5.00 a.m. the milk and bread arrive ... ' 'And the paper-work that has to be done, the occurrence book, the breakdowns to be reported, the messages, people don't realise how much there is, every day ... ')

6.00 a.m. The day cleaner starts -- the stairs, the backstairs, the stairs (how *many* stairs in this place? Try

counting them), and the other seminar rooms, and the cloisters, and the rubbish to be taken out, and the stores that have to be carried, and the toilets that have to be cleaned, and

(I'm in Les's office; the phone rings; someone inquiring about a cleaner's job; ' ... Well, it does involve cleaning the men's toilets ... '; 'NO WAY!'; end of phone-call.)

6.00 a.m. to 3.00 p.m. Enough work for two people, 9 hours a day, 7 days a week. But one cleaner left 7 weeks ago. The other cleaner has worked 7 days a week for 7 weeks. Exhausting.

7.00 a.m. The 'early' morning porter comes on -- internal and external mail to sort, equipment to set up, inquiries at the lodge, the flow begins again ... The breakfast shift comes on -- three people to cook, to prepare a breakfast for sleepy-eyed students --

(You might come in to find the bus is late, so the girls haven't arrived, or the deliveries haven't come ... and the fruit-juice has run out, and you're trying to do the bacon: that can't be done half-an-hour before, has to be just done ...)

And the women who serve the food arrive, and the women who clear up the dining-room, and the kitchen-porter and -- any academics yet??

8.00 a.m. The second morning-shift porter arrives. (The night porter goes, after ten hours, a 70-hour week when it's nights). The porters' shifts are: 7/8-3, 3-10, 10-8; average 40 hours over 6 weeks, but working one weekend in two. Rotating shifts. Constant demands. The variety of things porters have to do, students ask them, expect them to be responsible for ... ('I've lost my key/Can I leave a message?/I want to complain/Can you tell me ... ?')

And the women who clean the students' rooms and kitchens, and the women who run the shop, and the women who run the serveries, and the woman who makes the 300 sandwiches a day, and the women who clean the SCR and the bar and the Missing Link, and -- ever travelled on the 0745 bus?

(Totals: 25 Domestic Assistants, 18 Dining Room Assistants, (only 4 on for each meal), 5 in the serveries, (2 or 3 at a time), 2 in the shop, and the linen-room, and the secretarial office, and ... 'How many people work in Darwin?' It's a big place, Darwin, bigger than you think.)

(Have any academics arrived *yet*? Or students? I'm still asleep. But I work to 4 or 5 a.m. Excuses. I'm writing this at 3.30 a.m.)

9.30 a.m. And the barman arrives. THE BARMAN at this hour!!? (Eric of course.) But it's not opening time yet! No, but

25 deliveries a week

45 barrels a week
27 pipes to clean (entangled snakes in the cellar)
51 dozen orange a week
12 dozen Light, Guinness, Newcastle ...
110 dozen bottles to line along the wall
and the wine and the gin and the scotch
and ... and the glasses
(Where *are* the glasses? Thousands go
missing over the year ...)

'That bar takes £3-4,000 in a heavy week. That's a lot of responsibility.' There should be *three full-time* staff to look after the bar. At present, there's one. ONE. With part-time help.

'I came in at 9 this morning. I won't get away till after 11.'

11.00 P.M. that is. A fourteen-hour day.

'Eric's been doing 53, 57, 60-plus hours a week this last month ... '

'They can be three, four, five deep at that bar some nights ... '

'I've got the Missing Link tonight, there's a party tomorrow night, and a disco, another party on Monday, and the Link again ... '

'We should get a ten-minute break every hour. On a heavy night you're lucky to get ten minutes the whole evening, five hours solid ... '

'And some of them, once they've got a few inside them, are just -- well, you've seen them. You know what they can be like. *They* don't know, once they're drunk. From other colleges too, of course ... '

'He's come in on his off-day far too often, to help

out with the Link, or an extension, or there's a disco on -- and an extension means not getting home till way past midnight ... '

But it's nowhere near midnight yet. It's only, say, back in the kitchen, at:

11.00 a.m. 'I came on at 11 this morning -- I'm on 11-8 today -- and did the salad bar, cut all the meats ... then got the big beefburgers ready for frying -- there's always a lot of them wanted -- then took the laundry out, and did some cleaning up, the big pots, things like that ... I was serving on the salad bar right through the lunch ... then we had our own lunch, about 2 o'clock. After that, well, there was the soup to prepare, and the custard, and the pudding, then the veg, and the fish friers to get ready, and put out all the cold sweets and the yoghurts ... About 5.15 p.m. we had half-an-hour for our own meal, and then you really get ready for the rush. Students see us standing there during the meal and maybe they think, "That's a soft job!" -- but you're waiting for someone to shout "More beans!" or "More chips!" and then you rush because you know that in three minutes someone else'll ask for more pork, and you'll have to rush to get that -- by the end of an hour you could do with being on roller-skates to get from one thing to another ... Once you close the doors, you've got to get everything put away and cleaned up; there's not much time; you get away at 8.00 p.m. -- unless there's a PDR or you're doing High Table. Then it might be 9 o'clock or even later.'

'And you're on your feet all that time, from 11 to 8, or 7 to 4, apart from your own meals?'

'More or less, yes.'

'When did you get your summer holidays last year?'

'Late into September. I think there's some who haven't *had* last year's holidays yet.'

'When was the last time you had two consecutive days off?'

'Christmas.'

It's a 40-hour week, but the Darwin kitchens are going 7 days a week, so you're on shifts, alternating, with two days off, one long weekend in three. It's a 52-week year, not just term-times, with conferences starting as soon as term's over. Two weeks holiday. And the take-home pay? £30-33. £36. £47 – the extra hours help; otherwise you couldn't *take* a holiday.

(I get away from the heat of the ovens, beat a retreat to the chef's office. On the wall, dozens of pink slips – the Private Dining Room bookings. Well over a hundred of them recently. One every lunch and most evenings, it seems. More work. Three people to do all the cooking per shift. 400 meals each evening -- *and* PDRs. I need a coffee-break).

Mid-afternoon. Les's office. The phone rings five times, four people come in with problems, while I get some facts and figures. Les is between committee meetings. I daren't ask how many hours *he* works.

Sickness Rates (last few weeks)

	TOTAL HRS	SICKNESS HRS
Kitchen	4250	390

Dining Room	1699	151
H/keeper's staff	3628	135
JCR Servery	570	150
SCR Servery	140	16

(I'm getting lost in these figures, probably got some of them wrong anyway -- I'm too fascinated by the sheer amount of paper-work spread over the desk, column after column. Someone has to keep the accounts straight, has to prepare all this, type it up, check it, file it, have it instantly available. Les has one secretary. The mind wanders. I focus again.) The general picture is clear: *10% sickness rate in most departments recently.* Think what that means to, say, a kitchen shift. Not 10% but 33%. On a shift of 3 people, 1 person off that day means 2 have to do the work (there are still 400 meals to prepare) -- or someone else has to volunteer a day off, do an extra shift.

Multiply that right through the college. Last week:

8 sick from the housekeeper's staff, 2 in the dining hall, 6 kitchen assistants, the day cleaner finally exhausted after 7 weeks ...

This is almost where we came in.

3.00 p.m. The day cleaner finishes. The morning porters finish. The afternoon porters come on. Till 10.00 p.m. And the shop is still open, and the serveries, and the ovens are hot again, and the bar is being cleaned before it re-opens at 6.00 p.m., and my room has been

cleaned (Thanks Eva!), and the debris is piling up again and muddy feet are tramping up the stairs again, and again, and again.

'I wish they wouldn't leave the cups on the floor -- it's not easy bending down all day to pick them up -- we're not as young as they are!'

'I wish they wouldn't stub out cigarettes in the saucers and on the plates -- you have to scrub them by hand, hard, before you can put them in the washer.'

'I wish they wouldn't walk off with the cutlery -- they end up in the rooms for weeks, and then they get impatient because there aren't enough ... '

'My eldest is 37, I've got 10 grandchildren. I know what it's like, children growing up. I'm sure these students wouldn't speak to their own parents the way they speak to us sometimes.'

'It tires you out. And when you get home you've got your own family to look after -- meals to cook, the place to clean, and somehow you've got to fit in the shopping. It's a long day. You do get tired.'

'OK, they're young, they want to enjoy themselves, that's fine, and most of the time we get along OK. But we've got jobs to do. And we want to keep them. They're only here for three years after all. The place still has to be looked after, year after year, long after they're gone. It's hard work keeping a place like this going. Sometimes they seem to forget that.'

There's always another side, other sides, other stories, other angles. I've missed out a lot, assembled just a few fragments, the ones that seem to matter at the moment. To fill in a fuller picture would take pages. And it's 5.00 a.m. The milk and the bread are just

arriving ... I won't be up for breakfast. But some people
have to be.

G'night. G'd mornin'.

Chapter 6

MASTERING CONCRETE CANCER

Bernard Sharratt wrote this appreciation of John Butler (Master 1982-1987) for the University Newsletter.

Phones are funny things. They interrupt. A crucial discussion, even an intense seminar (yes!), cut into by the trill of something possibly quite trivial.

Sitting in John Butler's office recently, trying to see him about something that preoccupied *me*, I was initially very irritated by the constant interruptions from *his* phone. Ten times in the forty minutes I sat there. But as I listened to John's quiet, unirritated response to each caller I began to reckon that maybe my business was really the trivial interruption after all ...

– Concrete cancer attacking the staircase in Darwin? Schedule of repairs to be slotted into specific dates over the next two years. Checked against other maintenance priorities. Budget allocation. Co-ordinate site-visit with surveyor. OK. (This is clearly a man who teaches Public Administration!)

– TVS ringing for instant analysis of local election results. And to arrange date of John's next appearance as resident politics expert. (And I remember John was a Labour city councillor for several years. And parliamentary candidate. As well as Lecturer in Politics.)

– Call from Community Health Associations (John, of course, is national chairperson).

– Entangled problem (inevitably) from Registry:

inter-Faculty exam conventions. (John chairs that thankless committee).

-- Quick query from Darwin chef about a menu. (I remember John for years ran the Darwin Wine Committee, a less thankless task perhaps.)

-- A college problem about portering responsibilities (and John used to be Chairperson of NUPE too, one of the few academics in a 'real' trade union!)

-- Arrangements for a disciplinary hearing tomorrow; another Master about an overseas student with financial difficulties; a colleague about provision of computers for staff; another colleague about ...

John's responses to every query, to each diverse demand, was brisk, courteous, informed, exact. A patient explanation. A precise suggestion. A careful argument.

The years of accumulated experience, of repeated responsibilities across a range of commitments, showed clearly enough in that quiet combination of firm tact and efficient openness. John had been doing this job for five years already (and Deputy before that) -- and this was just forty minutes in another day.

By the time I left (a programme of college exhibitions safely in the diary -- John was paying for the receptions!) it somehow didn't seem that ten or so problems had been dealt with (well, eleven including mine). Just that a phone had rung several times. The room had remained basically quiet. No fuss. Calm.

It felt like that most of the time John was Master of Darwin. The phone may have been ringing constantly, with crises and questions and problems and confusions. But for the rest of us, Darwin academics and students,

and most of the college staff too, it seemed a basically quiet time, most of the time. John had answered that phone first, already dealt with the problems.

Five years can be quite enough for anyone. John can now perhaps have some relief from that ringing phone. For a while. But anyone with those skills, that experience, that capacity, that sheerly generous willingness to take on jobs the rest of us would shy away from, had better not relax too confidently. If I know John, his phone will soon start ringing again. And again.

For a start, I have this problem about exam conventions ... Are you there, John? Can you spare a minute? Thanks John. Many, many thanks.

Chapter 7

BROWNSDAY

Formal announcements make dull copy. So the Newsletter (July 1987) invited Peter Brown to divulge his first thoughts on assuming office as a college Master. Nothing too formal, they said, just a couple of hundred words, some stream-of-consciousness first impressions; Joyce rather than Johnson ...

She waved and smiled from a white car. Works here. Must remember names. Ask for lists.

Here now the good ship *Darwin*. In the valley the cathedral sails. Nave. Navy. Darwin's ship? Beagle College. For those in the dog-house? For the dogged pursuit of knowledge? Or Chaucer College? Thatch the SCR and stop the leaks. Cream teas in the Missing Link. Or Yorick College? Shandy Hill? Make mine a half of bitter. Fly the skull and crossbones.

Avoid the front entrance. Ironical salutes of porters. 'At ease. Carry on.' Across the garden. Or quad? Others watch from windows. Stiffening in the public gaze. Or cloister? The world was his ... 'And here, Mr. Longbottom, please plant an arboretum, with concealed and centrally heated double-glazed gazebo for the Master's "Sans-Souci". And here a trellised rose garden with palisade for which I can supply reproductions from an illuminated manuscript.' But will the frisbee players object? In committee. After committee. Will there be time? For what is central: thinking, writing, reading. *Cogitare, scribere, legere*. Origin

of *Species* among others.

Into the office. Books down. Collect newspaper. Highly evolved creature of habit. Carry on as normal in October. 'No college business before ten if you please, when ... Come in!' The housemaid. 'What you still here? The caff opened five minutes ago.' No sign of false respect. 'In future kindly tug your forelock, look at the ground and stand on your ceremony before speaking. I'm off!' 'At least I've got a forelock to tug!'

Along the causeway. Shafted sun-light, buttressing stairs, concrete gothic. How to animate the graves of academe? 'You have been selected from the Theology Board to take part in the Master's Charity Week Sponsored Fancy-Dress Slow Bicycle Race.' Loser wins. 'Hello, George!' (I hope.) Plastic plantpots must go. Also the midday coffee made of burnt rubber-bands. 'Café bouilli, c'est café f ... ' 'We don't normally sell Chelsea buns in vacation but we've ordered some each day so that you won't go without.' 'Favouritism already?' A practised smile at a colleague. To the usual chair. Back to the light. Settle down. Above all, enjoy. This heading now: Colleges Threatened by Departmentalism.

Four years on, Peter Brown submitted the following to the University's Annual Report.

The year began expansively, with the opening of Phase II of the Darwin houses: thirteen student residences providing sixty-nine study bedrooms. Darwin now has the largest number of resident students (500). As before, each house has a name associating it with the life of and

work of Charles Darwin (e.g. Finch House), or with the history of the college (e.g. Hutton House, named after a much missed Deputy Master who is now Chancellor of Liverpool Cathedral).

Throughout the year our fortnightly Guest Nights continued to be well attended and highly convivial occasions at which members of the University mixed with members of the local community. As usual, we entertained some of the open lecturers, including the Rt. Hon. Bernard Weatherill, Speaker of the House of Commons. We also continued to associate Guest Nights with musical entertainments and talks. Here we were much helped by our honorary members: David Flood, director of Music at St Edmund's School, provided an exquisite concert by the cathedral choristers; and Tim Tatton-Brown ex-director of the Canterbury Archaeological Trust, delivered an eighth centenary lecture on Archbishop Baldwin who (some say) founded the first University of Kent. By far the most popular of these occasions featured a talk by A. S. Byatt on the writing of her novel, *Possession*, which won this year's Booker Prize.

Twice a term the Darwin seminar met to discuss 'myth'. The topics ranged from religion, to science, to Zulu culture, to Ireland. Not infrequently, Darwin's theory of evolution was itself held up as an example of myth-making. College members' skills in framing arguments were further tested in the Kent Society's annual intercollegiate debate. Our convener of tutors, Stewart Miller, and his team-mate Trevor McCrisky (a final-year student in American Studies) carried off the Riceman Cup, having persuaded the judges that, *contra*

George Orwell, 'international sport is *not* an unfailing cause of ill-will'. That view was exemplified at the end of Trinity Term when the Senior Members remained remarkably cheerful in spite of a resounding defeat by the Porters' XI in their annual cricket match.

Darwin Week and the Darwin Feast provided a fitting climax to the year's activities. Darwin Week celebrates the achievement of Charles Darwin and the life of the college through an exhibition, film, excursion to Down House and naturalists' expedition. The week was crowned by a lecture from Jonathan Porritt on 'Green Politics: Evolution or Revolution?'

In such ways the college itself continues to evolve and to maintain a strong sense of its own identity. Perhaps nothing exemplifies better the vigour of the Darwin community than the success in raising money for the Missing Links Appeal. The college desperately needs improved social facilities for its numerous students, as well as better access to them for disabled students. Students, domestic and catering staff, and academics alike have raised £20,000 towards the cost of redeveloping the 'Missing Link', an outbuilding to the rear of the dining hall. In response, the University has committed some of its own funds; planning permission has been obtained; and we await the start of the next, if small, phase of expansion.

Chapter 8

TEUTONIC EFFICIENCY AND GALLIC SUBTLETY

Michael O'Connor was a Darwin undergraduate between 1986 and 1989.

'Darwin -- the college you can find your way around!'

That was to be the opening line in my planned reminiscence of the University of Kent's most welcoming college. But somehow I felt that it did not have quite the right tone, it did not truly represent my feelings. So I tried again.

Due to a slight health problem, I was fortunate enough to be granted the rare privilege of retaining a room in Darwin for the entire duration of my three years as an undergraduate. Consequently I feel I am particularly well qualified to discourse upon that imposing edifice.

No -- yet again the tone is quite wrong. It is too cold, too dry. How about this?

It was a wet and misty October day in 1986 when I first hauled two heavy suitcases through the doors of Darwin college. The vision which greeted me was chaotic, with confused soon-to-be

students milling aimlessly around the crowded lobby while a steady flow of humanity swept up a majestic staircase, past almost naked notice-boards, to the unimaginable realms above. Although pleasurable anticipation vied with unalloyed terror in my breast, I somehow felt, even then, that it would not be long before I knew every passage and corridor, each exit and walkway; that I would quickly come to look upon this unfamiliar building as a second home.

Well, this is far too pretentious of course. Why don't I try taking a different approach altogether?

A college is not just a building but is the people who are in it. In this respect, how well I remember the cosmopolitan ambience of dear old Darwin. The terrifying Teutonic efficiency of Mrs Barr, the housekeeper, the too often unappreciated Gallic subtlety of the French cuisine, the quintessential 'pipe and slippers' Englishness of the ever-welcoming porters' cubby-hole. And as to the Darwinite students themselves! Soft-voiced Americans confiding intimate secrets from the balcony to their friends in the lobby below, the machine-gun rattle of the Chinese debating which of their names internal mail was likely to be

pigeon-holed under, the incomprehensible
Esperanto of late-night revellers realising
that every staircase looks the same after
an evening in the bar ...

This is wrong as well. But I realise now that it is wrong for the same reason that my other efforts were wrong. Although accurate in themselves, each is incomplete, because every individual memory must, of necessity, be incomplete. How can I possibly recollect Darwin without mentioning the friends I made there, the lectures and tutorials I attended there, the essays I wrote, the meals, the bar, collecting mail, making telephone calls, giving and attending illicit parties, watching the Great Hurricane from the safety of my study-bedroom, lugging cases and posters up staircases, and then down again at the end of every term. How can I omit my personal tutor, the jolly porters, the bar and kitchen staff, and, perhaps most important of all, June and Pam, the two cleaners who looked after me, representing all of those domestic staff who were always ready to praise or to console, who were so anxious that everyone was happy.

At last! I think I have hit upon it. The perfect way to sum up my memories of Darwin. Through all the trials and tribulations of a university education, the ups and downs of campus life, I felt that there was always a warm and welcoming home to return to, a place where one could relax and shed one's worries. When I think back to my time in Darwin, one thought outweighs all the others.

'I was happy there.'

Chapter 9

COME BACK, JOHNNY KWANGO

David Heald, a Lecturer in German, has occupied the same office in P-block since the college opened in 1970.

As Emerson -- or was it Flecker? -- once said in a moment of preternatural wisdom: 'Nostalgia is the lost tram ticket found in the overdue Library Book of Life'. As I look back across the oceans of time to the year 1967 when I arrived here as an Assistant Lecturer in German (there was such a sub-species then) I break out into an unpleasant sweat when I lie abed at night and reflect that I have been at this University for a quarter of a century, and for more than twenty years in the same office in Darwin. The traffic up St Stephen's Hill is now so relentless that with the window open I can hardly hear a student sitting three feet away speak, but give or take a new lock, a computer terminal (in my case, superfluous) and the odd bookshelf or two, it is the same office, the carpet worn thin by generations of student feet, the air in it still faintly echoing with the thinly piping voices of long forgotten undergraduates.

When I first arrived at UKC I was posted to a crepuscular office in Rutherford, so positioned that it was never illuminated by even a tiny ray of sunshine, so that my light burned in it even during the height of a summer morning. All around me was the roar of pneumatic drills and air conditioning, and Rutherford had been a mere hole in the ground when I came for

interview a year earlier. Keynes in 1967 was not even that. I remember playing football on a field where the new Darwin annexes now are, there was no Computer building, the Library was housed in some prefabs, and I remember professional wrestling in Eliot Dining Hall (come back Johnny Kwango, all is forgiven). People still used portable typewriters (I still do), and did not play androidally all day long with bleeping, inhuman Amstrads and VDUs. In fact, people seemed more recognizably *human* in those dear, distant days. One's pigeon hole was almost always blissfully empty, Board meetings rarely took longer than an hour, and the staff cricket team played twice a week in summer from Fordwich to Falmer. My worst moment (among many)? The day I nearly slipped on a plate of overturned lamb curry as I ran the gauntlet to subsidised high table in Rutherford past a sea of vaguely impious faces. When the University opened, students actually stood up (quite rightly) as staff filed sheepishly up to high table.

After two years in a staff flat in Rutherford, where the din from disco evenings in the JCR below literally forced me out of my flat, and the smell of pot would waft sickeningly up the corridor, I moved to Darwin. I remember the then Master, Bryan Keith-Lucas, showing me my room and the truncated view of what he called 'the greatest example of English perpendicular' in England. As Darwin was built, and staff agonized about what name to give it – Russell, Groucho Marx, Karl Marx, Einstein and other luminaries – the football field disappeared and became a car park and bike sheds. Other buildings and shrubbery, tastefully landscaped, sprouted up everywhere, and what had been a homely

little campus of five hundred students became a sprawling concrete megalopolis.

Since 1970 I have seen generations of students and staff come and go, and at least three changes of Master. Hemlines have gone up and down, hair grown longer or shorter, beards and Mexican moustaches and jeans of various faded hues have wandered up and down the corridors. Ghostly voices of long departed staff still seem to hover in the SCR and now the click of snooker balls reverberates in the Inner SCR after a five year campaign, led by me and Peter Brown. The college on a wet day in January still looks from the outside like Alcatraz, but still has the friendliest atmosphere, the best porters, the best bar and the common rooms with the best views. Mrs Barr still runs the college with a rod of Styrian iron, and Don Jordan, Dave Tumber and co. still minister with endless good humour to the needs of disorientated undergraduates (and academic staff). Gill Hogarth too combines the patience of Job and Griselda in coping with the endless enquiries and demands made of her. Yes, in a very imperfect world, Darwin, with all its 'feminists' and its copies of 'Living Marxism' (surely a contradiction in terms?) in the SCR is still best.