

The Senior Tutor's Report

Creating an inspirational environment remains our *raison d'être*

In 1964, the *Cambridge Review* (as opposed to the *Trinity Hall Review*) ventured that it was a safer bet to imagine an astronaut landing on the moon than to envisage mixed colleges in Cambridge. The *Review* was correct: the moon landing occurred five years later, but it was not until 1972 that our neighbour college, Clare, together with King's and Churchill, became the first male-only colleges to admit women. Trinity Hall followed soon afterwards and this past year has seen a series of THwomen40 events celebrating that decision, including the unveiling of a handsome new portrait in the Dining Hall depicting two of my predecessors as Senior Tutor and the College's first female Fellows, Drs Sandra Raban and Karen Thorne. Painted by the 2017 BP Portrait Award winner Benjamin Sullivan, the portrait is a first step towards meeting regular objections received when I was an Admissions Tutor from cohorts of visiting school pupils – some contemplating applying for admission – who were baffled as to why there wasn't a single image of a woman displayed in College. (For what it's worth, I'd also often wondered, during committee meetings in the Leslie Stephen Room, whether just one of the five images of Leslie Stephen formerly on simultaneous display, could *perhaps* be substituted for a portrait of one of Stephen's interesting daughters, Virginia Woolf or Vanessa Bell?) Forty years nevertheless remains a small part of the history of a College that is soon approaching its 675th anniversary...

One theme in Sandra Raban's thoughtful and eloquent compilation *The First Women* – available from the Porters' Lodge and Alumni Office – is the characteristically consensual and friendly way in which the decision to admit female students was taken,

which was then echoed in the welcome accorded to early female alumnae. This is a college where the new has seemingly always comfortably cohabited alongside the old. Over the past year, for example, the Master's Lodge has re-opened to welcome a new generation of students, alumni and guests while, in Thompson's Lane, the Bursary received unexpected enquiries from nostalgic alumni regarding the fate of furniture and fittings amid the demise of St Clement's Gardens. On that site, WYNG Gardens now provides sleekly state-of-the-art accommodation for 72 students and vacation conference facilities, while its external façade bears an intricately woven, twisting timber installation by the artist Cath Campbell, the light spirals and swirls of steam-bent oak reinforced by hidden stainless steel bars.

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Whether through spirals or steel, creating an inspirational environment remains our *raison d'être*. In a world increasingly dominated by external metrics, mounting student debt and 'known unknowns', such as the impact of Brexit and A-level reform, some aspects of College life remain reassuringly consistent. Sporting performances have been mixed, with notable successes for the women's football team, coached by Porter Malcolm Pearman. Over a quarter of

(c) Ian Farrell



Dr Clare Jackson
Senior Tutor

our undergraduates were elected to academic scholarships based on First Class Tripos examination results last summer, with several undergraduates and graduates winning prestigious University prizes and studentships. As important as league tables, however, is the promotion of wellbeing throughout the Trinity Hall community and generous philanthropic donations now facilitate provision of a College Nurse, Counsellor, Mental Health Adviser and Cognitive Behavioural Therapist, while I remain consistently grateful for the unstinting support provided by the College's Tutors, Tutorial Office staff and JCR and MCR committee members. In this context, the varied and often surprising experiences accrued as a Tutor of Trinity Hall undergraduates will hopefully serve Professor Jane Clarke well, when she takes up her post as the first female President of Wolfson College next year!