Welcome to the Michaelmas 2009 e-bulletin. We begin this term by looking back on the life of our distinguished former President, Professor Sir David Williams, and by looking forward to a new academic year. A memorial service for David will be held during the Lent term, and details will be placed on the Calendar as soon as they are fixed. Thank you for your thoughtful messages and your memories of David, all of which have been very gratefully received and which we have passed to his family.

Summer has been a busy time for the Alumni office, and we are delighted that so many of you have registered with the Wolfson Network. Providing this opportunity for you to stay in touch with each other has been one of our main goals, and we are very pleased that you continue to send us your feedback. Facilities for adding career information will be added later, so do keep an eye on the site.

For those yet to join, please go to www.wolfson.cam.ac.uk/alumni/network, where you can register and see a map showing those living close to you who are already members. As always, we are delighted that current students, Fellows and members of the College community, as well as our alumni throughout the world, continue to register. The Network also provides you with a Wolfson email for life forwarding service, which you can customise with your name, for example, sam@wolfsonemail.com.

An adjunct to the Network is support for various Wolfson Local Associations around the world. We now have emergent groups, some of which have already held their first event, in Delhi, Mumbai, UEA, Nepal, Pakistan, Israel and the USA, which join the more established groups in Hong Kong and Japan, with whom we are also working. See the Local Association page at www.wolfson.cam.ac.uk/alumni/network/associations or contact Kate Hampson in the Alumni Office at alumni.assistant@wolfson.cam.ac.uk for more information or if you are interested in establishing a Local Association close to where you live.

Remaining overseas, we are very grateful to Wolfson Senior Member, Richard Meade (1999), who generously hosted a drinks reception at his apartment in Paris for Wolfson alumni. The event took place on a beautiful September evening in wonderful surroundings, and we hope to arrange similar events during the forthcoming year. We are always very keen to be in touch with members willing to support Wolfson gatherings, and would be delighted to hear from you if you would be interested in hosting or helping us to arrange such an event. The evening was very well attended by Wolfson members and we hope to establish a Local Association in Paris soon: we will keep you informed as plans develop.
We were very pleased to see so many Wolfson members returning to College for this year’s reunion weekend. During the Saturday afternoon, those celebrating a 5- or 10-year anniversary of joining the College came together with current members of Wolfson to hear a fascinating debate, entitled ‘Is Google making us stupid?’. This was the question posed by the Internet commentator Nicholas Carr in The Atlantic magazine in July 2008. His article attracted a great deal of discussion about the extent to which changes in our media ecosystem brought about by the Internet were changing our cognitive ability, and we were delighted that Lord Rees, President of the Royal Society, agreed to Chair the debate. The distinguished Wolfson Fellows who took part were Andrew Herbert, Director of Microsoft Research; Ian Goodyer, Professor of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry at Cambridge; Anna Jones, Lee Librarian at Wolfson and John Naughton, Professor of the Public Understanding of Technology at the Open University, to whom particular thanks must go for this exciting event.

The debate was followed by afternoon tea and a tour of the College given by the President, after which dinner in Hall was attended by 105 members and their guests. A Grace and further musical entertainment during the meal were superbly performed by the Wolfson Chamber Singers, conducted by the College’s Director of Music, Lynette Alcántara. The evening closed with reminiscences and old friendships renewed in the Club Room, which was staffed for an extended opening session by Wolfson students Dan Wakeman and Dan Pennington.

Sunday saw a Tango class kindly arranged by Max Garagnani (2005), with the help of two teachers who taught members from Wolfson and the wider Cambridge community how to perform this exciting dance. Sunday lunch, as always, was available in Hall for everyone.

Next year’s reunion will be held on Saturday 25 September 2010, and will be for those who joined the College in academic years beginning October 1965, 1970, 1975, 1980, 1985, 1990, 1995 and 2000. Do save the date if you joined Wolfson during one of these years: we will send reminders and invitations closer to the time, and online booking facilities will once again be available.

Particular thanks here must go to alumnus Conor Bowman (1989) for both his kindness in providing copies of his latest double novel for all those attending the weekend, and for his generosity in agreeing to support both the Lee Library and the teaching of English in College: such munificence allows us to move forward in the much-needed support of our students and to strengthen our teaching provision in this important area.
Looking ahead to the forthcoming term, the President and Mrs Johnson will be visiting India in November, and plans are underway for alumni events in Delhi, Kolkata, Pune and Mumbai. We have been in touch with those in these cities for whom we have email addresses, but if you have recently moved to the area, do please let us know and we will forward details to you.

At the beginning of December we shall be visiting the US and alumni events will take place in Boston, New York, Seattle and San Francisco to coincide with the University’s 800th Anniversary celebrations. Do let us know if you live in any of these areas and have not heard from us during the past month.

Back in the UK, arrangements are being finalised for a Varsity rugby event at Twickenham on 10 December this year, and we will confirm details as soon as they are fixed. We also plan alumni gatherings in London and Dublin during the Lent term: we will contact members living in these areas closer to the time, but, in the meantime, do keep an eye on the events calendar – www.wolfsonevents.com – where details of all our events will be posted as they become available.

Our online donation facility at www.wolfsongiving.com continues to be a useful resource to those living both in the UK and overseas – very many thanks to all those who have already given – and you may also like a reminder that Wolfson is an Associate of the online shopping site Amazon.co.uk. If you visit Amazon via the College’s website at www.wolfson.cam.ac.uk/alumni/amazon, five per cent of the value of any purchases you make will come back to Wolfson as a general donation and, importantly, at no extra cost to you. This is a valuable revenue stream for us, and helps us to continue improving facilities at Wolfson, so do please make all your Amazon purchases in this way.

If you are planning a visit to Cambridge soon, please let us know. Similarly, if you would like to come to any of the Formal Halls listed in the Calendar – especially those where particular subject groups may sit together – or wish to make arrangements to stay overnight in College, please be in touch. You can see a full list of Alumni benefits via the ‘Rights and Privileges’ link on the College’s alumni pages at www.wolfson.cam.ac.uk/alumni.

We hope to see you soon.

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