Midnight last night, 30 September 2010, marked the transition point from Wolfson’s fourth President to its fifth.

Gordon Johnson is Wolfson’s longest-serving President, and his 17 years in office have been marked in a variety of ways this week, culminating in a party for staff and a celebration with College Fellows.

The Vice-President, Dr Don MacDonald, spoke of how much the College has grown and improved during the 17 years under Gordon’s leadership, and Gordon spoke movingly of his years as a Cambridge man and of his time at the helm of Wolfson College. Gordon and Faith received a standing ovation from the Fellows, and were presented with Champagne – one bottle to mark each term of their time at Wolfson – and a set of handmade glasses from which to enjoy the wine. The range of Wolfson’s musical talent was displayed during a short concert paying tribute to Gordon and Faith.

And today, 1 October, marks the beginning of term: a new academic year, a new Head of House for the College and a new Vice-Chancellor for the University.

Professor Richard Evans, Cambridge’s Regius Professor of History, takes up office as Wolfson’s fifth President and will be inducted at this Wednesday’s Governing Body meeting, with the Head Porter, the Vice-President, the Praelector and the Senior Fellow leading the ceremony.

Wolfson Honorary Fellow, Professor Sir Leszek Borysiewicz, today becomes the 345th Vice-Chancellor of the University of Cambridge at a Congregation of the Regent House.

Our Freshers have been arriving since last week, and WCSA – the energetic student association – are busy arranging College tours, events and welcome receptions, and are on hand giving help and advice to all who need it. The weather is suitably autumnal and the trade in bikes and cycle helmets is strong. The Porters are, as always, doing a marvellous job of welcoming everyone and helping them to settle in.
The influx of new students was matched last weekend by alumni returning for our third quinquennial and decennial reunion. A highly entertaining lecture was given by Wolfson Fellow Sir Tony Brenton, former British Ambassador to Russia, who revealed fascinating insights into the life of a diplomat. Afternoon tea was accompanied by Wolfson Jazz, and Gordon Johnson gave the President’s tour of the College in the sunshine. The Wolfson Chamber singers performed during a splendid dinner, where 145 members and their guests reconnected with old friends, and discovered new ones.


Last week also saw the launch of our Facebook page, at www.Facebook.com/WolfsonCollege.

Thank you to all our ‘fans’ who are actively watching from the UK and around the world. We continue to post photographs of last weekend, and will be adding more pictures to show the forthcoming week’s activities as they happen. Do have a look and let us know your thoughts – your feedback is always welcome.

Our group of Mentors within the Wolfson Network continues to grow: we have a dozen volunteers so far, with a range of career experience, and are aiming for around 60 to make the service viable. Wolfson has such a rich network of talent and experience around the world, and our endeavour is to allow members to tap into this exciting resource and strong support network. Our current group has offered to provide email advice both to current students and to Wolfson alumni on various aspects of career development, and it is our aim to launch the service during this academic year. If you would like to be involved, do please be in touch: development@wolfson.cam.ac.uk.

And so we look to the new academic year, and are making our plans for overseas travel. We will hold a reception in New York in early February, and our new President will be in Boston in May. In addition, we hope to visit South East Asia in the spring and the west coast of the US later in the summer: as soon as arrangements are finalised we will be in touch and, as usual, events will be advertised on the website at www.WolfsonEvents.com.

As always, do let us know if you are planning to come back to College. We are delighted that more alumni are now taking up their new dining rights and joining us for Formal Hall (on Tuesdays throughout the year and also on Fridays in Full Term). You are welcome to bring guests, and the cost is £23.70, or £18.05 if you prefer to have your meal without wine. Rooms are usually available to rent in College too, and many of our Friday diners choose to stay in Cambridge for the weekend.

We look forward to seeing you soon.

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