

NEWNHAM COLLEGE

US COMMITTEE

Issue 4

P.O. Box 286303 · New York, NY · 10128-0013 · 212-714-4547

March 2007

CIVIL SOCIETY IN THE PRINCIPAL'S LODGE

Dame Patricia Hodgson greets Lord Puttnam with an uninhibited whoop in the drawing room of Newnham Principal's Lodge. An old friend of hers, David Puttnam, Director of 'Chariots of Fire' and 'The Killing Fields', former CEO of Columbia Pictures and prominent in British politics for the past 15 years, is visiting Newnham to talk to the students. He will discuss new ideas to improve the quality of discourse between the British media, the Government and the general public. The Lodge has been transformed into an intimate lecture theater. Students are in a side room with a large camera, making a short film about Newnham for undergraduate recruiting purposes, anticipating guidance from Puttnam. An undergraduate approaches Patricia hesitantly. She would like a career in the media. "Well, go ask him!" she gently propels the student forward into the huddle of young women who are asking a self-deprecatory Puttnam about politics, movies and careers. Later, a dinner is held at the Lodge in which Cambridge and London-based academics, high level government and independent policymakers and a senior director of television news tackle the issues raised by Puttnam more intimately.



Events like this are opening a vista for students into the possibilities of shaping the future and making Newnham a forum of active exchange with the outside world as well as the haven it has always been for digging deep into one's academic interests. Patricia explains "My experience has shown me what a range of institutions depend on the students who graduate from our great universities and how important it is for them to equip themselves to run those institutions in the future. They can begin to see how the big issues in public life can be discussed here and see the discussion feed into public life."

A transforming experience

She recalls her own life-changing opportunity: "My family had never sent any members to University but an inspiring history teacher, in her first job, told me 'You could go!' Suddenly, at Newnham, I was mixing with people who didn't apologize for being really interested in their subject and curious about the world. I was fantastically supported here. Then, when I reconnected with the [Newnham] Associates and the College in the early 90's I found that Newnham is still all about supporting you in the way you want to develop." She credits Dame Onora O'Neill, past Principal, with providing particularly distinguished intellectual leadership which attracted a first rate Fellowship and, (much less well-understood outside the college) presiding over a complete transformation of the college finances. The endowment was doubled during Onora's tenure and by assiduous attention to the unexciting and expensive task of repairing Newnham's beautiful but elderly buildings, she ensured that all the foundations were laid for the College to go from strength to strength in the 21st century.

'Keeper of the BBC's conscience'

After Cambridge, Dame Patricia's early career was a mixture of freelance journalism, broadcasting and politics. Her first job at the BBC was as an education producer for the Open University. She was involved in production of education, history, philosophy and some current affairs programs. In the early 80's she became a member of the BBC Secretariat, by 1985 Secretary ("keeper of the BBC's conscience" as she once said) and then the BBC's Director of Policy & Planning, one of the most powerful positions in British Broadcasting. Responsible for the BBC's corporate strategy, policy and relations with government she was also put in charge of lobbying on the BBC's behalf in Westminster and Brussels and oversaw the BBC's technical research and development, and corporate engineering. During her tenure she negotiated a 7-year license agreement, the 10-year renewal of the BBC's charter and the planning of the launch of the BBC's digital and online services.

Newnham calls

In 2000, she became Chief Executive of the Independent Television Commission and led planning for legislation to integrate the regulation of broadcasting with telecommunications in the UK. She has just stepped down from this and the Board of GCap, the largest commercial radio company in the UK to take her role at Newnham. She also rejoined the BBC in a non-executive capacity. She is on the board of the Higher Education Funding Council for England, (responsible for £6.3 billion of public funding to the universities and further education colleges in England) and also a Governor of the Wellcome Trust, at £13 billion one of the world's largest foundations focused on biomedical research.

At Newnham, Patricia feels her mission will be fourfold: to ensure that the quality of teaching (including the intimate supervision system) is not compromised by drastically reduced government funding, that the Fellowship is maintained at its current very high level of quality and student achievement is, if anything, heightened. She will also continue the task of modernizing and maintaining Newnham's buildings and gardens.

Family in the Lodge

For the first time in many decades, Newnham is also home to a member of the opposite gender: George Hodgson, Patricia's husband, is a vigorous and warm presence in the Lodge. He has just retired after 18 years as Deputy Head of the Latymer School in North London, in charge of the Sixth Form (11/12th Grade), a highly competitive, state-funded school which sends many youngsters from varied backgrounds to Oxbridge every year. His experience is very relevant to Newnham, particularly in tackling a crucial issue facing all the top British Universities which is how to encourage and provide access to the broadest possible group of schoolchildren yet finding that many state schools simply are not teaching the fundamentals well enough for their students to be able to cope at Cambridge without remedial help. Patricia and George have one son who read Politics, Philosophy and Economics at Oxford and is now in pupillage, training to become a barrister. Patricia's two friendly and voluble black cats complete the Lodge's new family.

Dame Patricia Hodgson will be visiting Boston, New York and San Francisco in April 2007.
Those of you who live nearby will be receiving invitations to meet her. If you live further away but will be visiting those cities, please contact Anthony Aloise at 212-714-4547 or AnthonyAloise@nyc.rr.com to make sure you receive an invitation too.

SPOTLIGHT ON NEWNHAM US ALUMNAE

• ART AND GENDER

Madeline Harrison Caviness (N'56, Arch. & Anth. and English Literature), Mary Richardson Professor and Professor of Art History at Tufts University in Boston, is retiring after 35 years of teaching. She has had an exhilarating triple career: in medieval art history, in gender studies, and in international relations. After marriage and a move to Boston, she earned a Harvard doctorate (1970), and by 1975 she was the first woman department chair at Tufts, with an extraordinary opportunity to develop a growing program in art history, and later to chair the Women's Studies committee. Author of many books and articles, her most recent work, *Visualizing Women in the Middle Ages: Sight, Spectacle and Scopio Economy*, is being translated into Japanese. She has received Tufts awards for research and for teaching, and is among three faculty members to be included in a mural painting in the foyer of the Women's Center. She is also dedicated to international collaborative projects, having served as president of the teams who contribute to the cataloguing of medieval stained glass, then as president of a federation of fifty-five national academies of the humanities and social sciences (Union Académique Internationale), and most recently as president of the International Council for Philosophy and Humanistic Studies, a non-governmental organization and UNESCO affiliate. Her husband, Verne S. Caviness, neurologist and neuroscientist, is a professor at Harvard. They have two daughters: Gwen, a risk-assessment consultant for environmental clean-up (married to a clean-water engineer), and Chantal, a pediatrician and public health researcher (married to an astronaut). Three grand children, research and writing on illustrated German law manuscripts, and further international peace efforts, will comfortably occupy her retirement.



• SQUEEZING BANDWIDTH

Jane Perera (Critchley, N'83) writes: I completed my PhD in 1986, specializing in the field of digital signal processing and am currently working for Terayon Communication Systems in Santa Clara, California. I specialize in the processing of video signals, and help to develop products that squeeze more television signals into the available bandwidth. I also develop new features such as "squeeze-back" to rescale the picture to a smaller size, making screen area available for such things as the scrolling stock ticker or advertisements. We are currently developing some new products focusing on high definition television. These signals contains about 6 times more data than standard television, so bandwidth can be a real problem.



I am married to Wiren Perera (TH, '82) and we have 3 children, William (17), Adele (14) and Rachel (10). I live in Saratoga, a small city close to San Jose and the heart of the silicon valley. I enjoy reading very much, and belong to 2 mother-daughter book groups. Each one meets monthly, and each family chooses a book and hosts the book group approximately once per year. After the book discussions, mothers and daughters enjoys social time with their friends. I love watching my children's athletic events including soccer, basketball, track, cross country and swimming and, in my precious free time, I enjoy gardening, interior decorating, and spending time at home.



• AFRICAN FOCUS

Enid Schildkrout ('63, Architecture and Anthropology) writes: "After three decades as Curator of Anthropology at the American Museum of Natural History in New York, I retired in 2005 in order to join the Museum for African Art as Chief Curator and Director of Exhibitions. We've just formally announced our exciting building plan and will be opening a new permanent 90,000 sq. ft. museum facility in Manhattan in 2009. I'm having a great time working on exhibitions, books, and planning for the future. It's challenging and very rewarding to move from a big institution to a small one focused on exactly the things I love – African art and culture. I'm also teaching, occasionally, at Columbia and am still Curator Emeriti at the American Museum of Natural History. My husband, John A. Van Couvering, is a geologist who also worked in Africa. He has a Ph D. from St. John's. Although we never actually met at Cambridge, we both worked in the Sidgwick building at the same time. Our twins, Ben and Alicia, now 24, are both in finance and film, just about as far from academia as they could get."

The Museum for African Art (www.africanart.org) is waiting to move into its permanent home at 110th and 5th Avenue, NYC. In the meantime, you can see one of Enid's exhibitions on the art of African architecture at the Chicago Cultural Center until April 15th. She would love to hear from people interested in the new museum at eschildrout@africanart.org.

AMERICAN STUDENTS AT NEWNHAM

Investigating the brain

Susan Bartko and Natalie Szarek are American students at Newnham. Susan is from Manassas, VA, got her first degree in Psychology from Virginia Tech, then an MPhil. at St Edmund's, Cambridge and wanted to stay for her PhD. She was awarded a Ruth L. Kirschstein National Research Service Award from the National Institute of Mental Health and joined Newnham a year ago. She is working in Experimental Psychology examining the role of acetylcholine in the perirhinal cortex. This is a substructure within the medial temporal lobe of the brain which contributes to learning and memory and is one of the first regions to degenerate in Alzheimer's disease patients. Her experiments investigate the specific role of populations of cholinergic receptors there. Some experiments involve mice which have been bred to lack these receptors and are trained to transmit quite complex perceptions by using touch-screen computer technology directly themselves. One of her supervisors is Lisa Saksida (Newnham Fellow) who collaborates with Jenny Morton, Newnham's star pharmacologist, who is investigating Huntington's disease (see November 2006 newsletter). Susan's lab also collaborates with Betsy Murray (NIMH in the USA) and Kim Graham (in Cambridge). She feels "Newnham has done an outstanding job with organizing events with students and fellows in biological sciences. I have enjoyed formal dinners and I have had the opportunity to attend numerous presentations given by scientists from Cambridge and around the world which I find particularly useful and enjoyable".



Susan Bartko (left) and Natalie Szarek in the Middle Common Room.

Susan just got married in August. Her husband also works in the Experimental Psychology department in Cambridge, but he is due to move to Canada or the United States in the fairly near future. Susan intends to join him after her PhD is completed in 2008 with a view to doing post-doctoral work in the pharmaceutical industry.

An undergraduate activist

Natalie Szarek is an undergraduate in her second year in Social and Political Sciences, specializing in sociology and politics. She wanted to get an international perspective in her university years, and applied to various universities out of the country from high school in Cleveland. She is involved in political activism in Cambridge, and is the Women's Union International Officer. She recently helped organize a demonstration against investment by Cambridge colleges in the arms industry and last week 250 people turned out (in the pouring rain!) for it. She counts Pembroke College as a group success as it has just pulled out of U.S. arms trade investments. She is hoping other colleges will follow and is helping to write letters to Bursars and organize students to pass motions through their JCR to support disinvestment in arms. She feels that British students may be more open to new political possibilities, perhaps because there is a longer history of big changes having been effected in the past. On a lighter note, she was amused by the intense enthusiasm among the students for a snowfall of only an inch or so on a February day in Cambridge (Ohio snowfalls being somewhat more impressive). She loves the fact that Newnham is all women. She hopes to run for Women's Sabbatical Officer at Cambridge after her degree and then go to graduate school and study human rights.

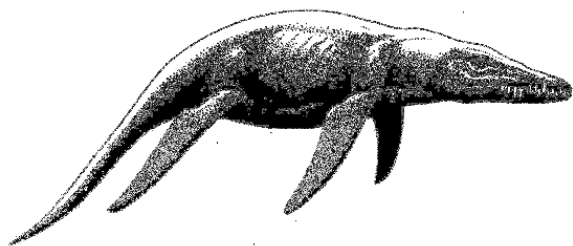
MARY BEARD TO VISIT LOS ANGELES

Mary Beard, renowned classical scholar and Newnham fellow will spend this Spring in Los Angeles and looks forward to meeting LA-area alumnae then. She will be a Visiting Scholar at the Getty Villa writing about Roman domestic religion. In the Fall of 2008 she will visit California again to give the prestigious Suther Lectures at Berkeley. Her book 'The Roman Triumph' analyzing triumphal processions, mainly in antiquity, but also taking a look at commemorations of victory within contemporary culture is in press now. The Faculty of Classics at Cambridge is 30-strong and has access to a very long tradition of scholarship as well as providing excellent opportunities for interaction with scholars in other disciplines. Mary is pleased that from being the only woman there, she is now one of 6. She says years ago it was enough to be an excellent translator of the texts. Now, classics is involved in examining the wider intellectual context as well as the quotidian phenomena and processes of the ancient world and why they matter today ('not the same as being 'relevant'). She includes courses now in sexual ethics and cultural identity in the ancient world. Mary writes a lively weekly blog http://timesonline.typepad.com/dons_life. In the last few weeks she gave her advice to writers when they receive criticisms of their work by reviewers (she writes for the Time Literary Supplement as well as some other newspapers); expressed her 'visa rage' when trying to obtain her visa to visit America; discussed Romans in Kabul, 'Rape Ancient and Modern' and included comments about the Elgin Marbles and Sevso Treasures controversies. Do look her up and participate if you like!



NEWNHAM'S GATES SCHOLAR

Marcela Gomez-Perez is in her third year of a PhD in paleobiology focused on an investigation of the fossil of a Colombian pliosaur (see picture). "It's 3 meters long and was found by a Colombian priest in the 60's and stored for years in a box at the National University of Colombia, in Bogotá. It's very rare because it's uncrushed and substantially complete. My aim is to try to understand it as a living animal by reconstructing the soft anatomy of the skull and investigating its evolutionary relationships". She uses computer tomography scanning and 3D computer modeling to "see" inside the fossil, especially the complicated labyrinths or semi-circular canals which comprise the balance and orientation system. She expects her investigations to throw light on the evolution of these systems in reptiles and help answer questions about why these animals went back to living in the water after adapting to life on dry land. Pliosaurus are also found in Europe (much older than Marcela's) and N. America (younger) and the comparison of morphology between this specimen and others will help to elucidate the dispersion processes of this group of extinct animals.



Pliosaur reconstruction, taken from R. Ellis. "Sea dragons predators of the prehistoric oceans" 2003

Marcela came to Cambridge after a first degree in Bogotá and would like to go back there to establish paleontology as a more developed science after she obtains her PhD. She notes that there are only a couple of paleobiologists working in Colombia in spite of a rich fossil record. Although

brought up in co-ed environment Marcela likes Newnham a great deal. She felt quite comfortable, for example, joining in college self-governance processes (such as the Middle Common Room Committee) whereas she felt she might have thought twice about trying to break into a traditional, male-dominated group as is the case in many academic environments. She also feels no inhibition asking for professional and domestic/social kinds of advice from the senior women at Newnham and has made some very good friends through our College. She likes the practicality of advice given her at Newnham in contrast to 'philosophical' answers she has sometimes received at other places. She supervises Newnham undergraduates in Earth Sciences, usually about 6 women each year for particular 4-week courses during the year.



For Marcela, the British Government Overseas Research Studentship award covers the fees difference between British nationals and overseas students and the Gates Scholarship covers the rest of the fees and full maintenance at Cambridge. She enjoys participating in the group events and values the opportunities for cross-disciplinary interaction and long term community which the Gates Foundation provides for its scholars.

The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (Microsoft), created the Gates Cambridge Scholarship Program five years ago. Over 400 alumni have graduated the program to date.

NEW US COMMITTEE TRAVEL BURSARY FOR NEWNHAM STUDENTS: **YOU CHOOSE THE WINNER**

The Newnham US Committee Members have committed to our College to provide a travel bursary with a preference for travel to the US or Canada during the summer. The bursary is being advertised now to Newnham's undergraduates and post-graduates for applications for this year. Three finalists chosen by Newnham will each send a letter of application to us which we will post on our website in May and ask for votes and comments from you, the US-based alumnae, to pick the winner. The winner will receive \$4000 and the two runners-up \$500 each. The winner will write to us again after her trip and we will post that on the website too.



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Editors: Helen Goddard, Victoria Elenowitz
Design and layout: Victoria Elenowitz, Helen Goddard
and Anthony Aloise

Published by volunteer alumnae in the USA to encourage connections between Newnham alumnae and with Newnham College, Cambridge.

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