

NEWNHAM COLLEGE

US COMMITTEE

Issue 8

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FROM NEWNHAM US COMMITTEE CHAIR

Dear Newnham Alumna,

The Members of the US Committee and several other alumni have been very active and generous in 2008 in funding not only the Travel Bursary Awards to two Newnham scholars for summer travel (see article below) but also opening their homes and cooking for local alumnae gatherings in San Francisco (Judith Brass N'77), New York (Janet Pickering N'61 and myself) and Boston (Antonia Von Gottberg, N'88) without charge to attendees. Jennifer Lilley (N'67) assisted with the underwriting of the very well-attended concert we organized with The Fitzwilliam Quartet in New York in July. Heather Wolfe (N'93) has organized a block of seats at a performance of Shakespeare to be held at the Folger Library Theatre in Washington, D.C. in November. In addition, Karen Silverman (N'82) will be generously underwriting a gathering at a San Francisco restaurant in November and Vidya Dehejia (N'61-see Spotlight in this issue) will be hosting a tour of her wonderful new Indian Silver of the Raj exhibition at Columbia University on December 6th. All told there will have been 11 events held in 2008 in New York, San Francisco, Boston, Washington, D.C. and New Orleans of which only three required modest charges.

Over 50 alumni all over the U.S. voted on the 2008 Travel Bursary proposals and sent comments and advice to the candidates via the website. The website has also been used to provide advice about applying to Cambridge from the U.S. and associated grants guidance, to connect up alumnae in specific fields for careers purposes and to advertise alumnae books, house rentals, etc. You are always welcome to send a query through the website, www.Newnhaminamerica.org, which can be done without needing a password, on any subject with which you feel alumnae may be able to help.

Penny Hubbard, Newnham's Development Director, will be traveling in the U.S. this November and looks forward to meeting many of you. Some very good news for Newnham this year: two U.S.-based alumnae have donated a total of \$120K to Newnham College with more promised in the next two years.

I hope you will consider a gift to Newnham this season, to the extent you can, in spite of the worldwide economic situation.

It has been wonderful to meet so many accomplished and enthusiastic women at so many events this past year and I very much look forward to seeing you again in 2009. For those of you who are not in the urban areas we are able to reach, please do let me know if you will be traveling through New York or to England so we may take the opportunity of seeing you then.

Sincerely yours, Victoria Elenowitz

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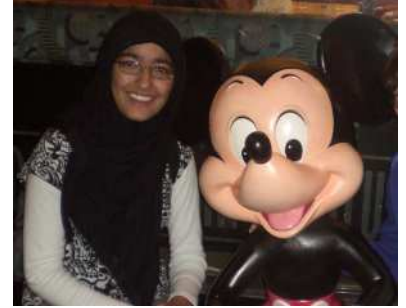
2008 US TRAVEL BURSARY AWARD WINNERS' NEWS

Michaela Freeland, winner of the US Committee's \$4K travel award for 2008 spent all summer in Boston working on two distinct projects. She was able to apply her physics/mathematics background to create computational models for the patterns of cell migration of glioblastoma (a very aggressive form of brain cancer) and the role of the Ena/Vasp proteins in that migration at MIT. Some of her work was presented at the NIH Cell Migration conference in September. The work continues and will likely result in the publication of at least one journal article. She also spent time in a collaborative group with the Harvard Systems Biology Department at Harvard Medical School and has made useful contacts at Harvard and MIT with a view to returning for post-doctoral work there later as well as gaining excellent practical experience as she begins her Ph.D. She enjoyed living at MIT, eating New England's 'brilliant' food and traveling in the White Mountains of New Hampshire, in Rhode Island, Maine and Cape Cod. She also visited Antonia Von Gottberg for supper with some Newnham alumnae.



From top left clockwise: Michaela Freeland (N'07), Antonia von Gottberg, Veronica Jordan (N'69) and Helen Sherrah-Davies (N'83) at Antonia Von Gottberg's home in Cambridge, MA.

Rabia Hassam, runner-up, who received a financial supplement of nearly \$2K to her travel budget, spent the summer at the University Muslim Medical Association (UMMA) clinic in South Central Los Angeles. Rabia very much enjoyed the challenges of working in an under-served, poor, minority community. She lived near UCLA (the vicinity of the clinic not being a safe area) and enjoyed meeting the denizens of Westwood and talking with a wide variety of friendly Angelenos on the bus to work. She found she was given much more responsibility and expected to examine patients more frequently than she could have expected in the U.K. She was surprised that so many patients spoke only Spanish and by summer's end was able to conduct a basic consultation in Spanish. South Central LA has the highest proportion of uninsured patients in the country and she saw the inequities and shortcomings of the U.S. system which made her more appreciative of the UK National Health Service. She made a close friendship with another medical student and learned about American customs and culture with her family, including Independence Day. She visited Hollywood and the Griffith



Rabia in Los Angeles.

Observatory and enjoyed the palm trees and warm weather at some local beaches.

Engineering at Newnham by Antonia Von Gottberg (N'88)

I studied Engineering at Newnham from 1988-1991. On my return visit to Newnham in September 2008, I met with Claire Barlow, Director of Studies in Engineering, to talk about engineering then and now.

One of the biggest changes is the length of the course. I received a BA degree at the end of three years. Now, the undergraduates have fulfilled the requirements of the BA degree after three years, but they do not graduate. Instead, they graduate at the end of the fourth year with both a B.A. and a MEng. degree. In the second half of the final year the students undertake a major individual research project with a supervisor. I did a project in the third year – I vaguely recall spinning cylinders at 17,000 rpm at the tip of a wing in a wind tunnel, but really too little time was spent on the project to be much use as an introduction to research.

Claire says the number of students varies quite substantially year to year with as few as three in their third year now to twelve in the year that just graduated. A collaboration with MIT has recently allowed for a year of study at MIT in Massachusetts along the lines of US 'study abroad' programs. Claire says that the Cambridge students generally do very well at MIT, usually achieving all A-grades. The MIT students sometimes have a tougher time with the Cambridge course! Having done my Master's degree at MIT I agree that the Cambridge course was very strong on maths content, which was a huge advantage at MIT.



Claire Barlow

In the past few years, Claire has been able to arrange for about half the subjects to be supervised within Newnham, whereas I had most of my supervisions outside college. Claire is also the Director of Studies for Wolfson and so sometimes supervisions are joint with the Wolfson students. About a third to half of the Engineering graduates from Newnham go into engineering, which is well above the department average. In my year, four out of six of us stayed in engineering for at least the first 10 years of our careers. Other careers include finance, accounting and teaching. Over half of my year had industrial sponsorships when we were at Cambridge. This is less usual now, with only a handful of students being sponsored. About 10 percent of students get scholarships from U.K. engineering institutions.

About ten years ago, Claire started a preparatory course for first year engineering students. They come up a few days early and have the opportunity to meet the other students, work through the preparatory problems, get to know Cambridge and attend a lecture and a supervision. So by the time term starts the newness of everything has worn off and the students are able to get a head start on the year. Claire's own expertise is the relationship between a material's microstructure and its attributes. She is particularly interested in micro-alloys and is also very interested in new ways of recycling materials. She says the long term trend has been for stronger, lighter materials more suited to their primary use which contrasts with the recent push for greater recycling. She says it might be better to use slightly less good materials that can be recycled more effectively. The ecological ('carbon') footprint of most materials expands inversely with the size of the end-product. In the Engineering Department at Cambridge there are 13 women, including two full professors, about 13 percent of the total academic staff. Though still a modest proportion, it continues to increase steadily.

Claire says she is inspired by a Newnham Fellow active in the 1930's: Constance Tipper. Known only as 'Mrs. Tipper' in the Engineering Department, in spite of her Ph.D., and with anomalous status there she did work relating to steel. In particular she solved a problem of the 'Liberty Ships' which cracked and sank in the Atlantic due to metallurgical failure and invented the 'Tipper Bar' which prevented further failures and was a standard test for metals for many years.

DAME PATRICIA HODGSON'S APRIL VISIT TO SAN FRANCISCO AND NEW YORK

About eighteen alumnae and spouses from San Francisco and surrounding areas were kindly treated to a delicious, home-cooked buffet dinner at the home of Judith Brass (N'77) in San Francisco on April 3rd to catch up with Dame Patricia and news of Newnham. The following day Patricia moderated a session at the CAM West Coast meeting about the state of the Humanities in the English-speaking world. The following Tuesday in New York Patricia met alumnae of Newnham and New Hall over lunch at the home of Vicky Elenowitz (N'77). Her topic was 'Women in Cambridge' and she spoke of the ways in which women have achieved results often with career paths and approaches to management in ways that differ considerably from men, yet with great success.



New York City trip.

Pictured left:
Dame Patricia Hodgson,
Marion Seidemann (N'48)
and Patricia Gadsby (N'66).

Pictured right:
Jennifer Lilley (N'67) and
George Donaldson, Dame
Patricia's husband.



New York City trip left.

From left: Helen Goddard (N'65), Margaret Campbell (N'66) and
New Hall alumna.



San Francisco trip.

Pictured left:
Karen Silverman (N'82).

Pictured right:

From left: Étienne Deffarges, Judith Brass' husband; Victoria Elliott (N'70), Audrey Richards (N'59), Valerie Meyers (N'60), Caroline Miley (N'76), Caroline Godkin (N'93) and Jane Perera (N'82).





San Francisco trip.

From top left clockwise: Valerie Meyers (left) and Dame Patricia Hodgson; Judith Brass; Audrey Richards; Susan Lea (left, N'66) and Victoria Elliott; Caroline Miley (left) and Caroline Godkin.

GILL SUTHERLAND'S NEW ORLEANS VISIT

In October 2007 Gill Sutherland visited New Orleans, staying with Sylvia Frey, Honorary Fellow of the College, and also visiting Emily Clark, formerly Mellon Research Fellow in the Faculty of History and at Newnham, and now Associate Professor at Tulane University. They attended various sessions of the Southern Historical Association's Annual Conference in New Orleans. At this conference Emily was awarded the Julia Cherry Spruill Prize for the best work in Southern Women's History in 2007, for her book, *Masterless Mistresses: The New Orleans Ursulines and the Development of a New World Society, 1727-1834*.



Pictured from left: Gill Sutherland, Sylvia Frey (N'99) and Emily Clark (N'98).

UPCOMING EVENTS For information about upcoming Nov 8th event (San Francisco), Nov 10th (Boston), Nov 13th (New York), December 6th (New York), January 7th 2009 (jointly with King's College in New York) please contact Liza Torres at LTorres@elenowitz.com or 212-714-4547.