College Site and Buildings

The following historical background concerning the pre-Lucy history of some of the buildings and the development of the College and its site in Cambridge is based on an essay written in 1992 by Eileen Clifford, a founding fellow and now Emeritus Fellow. The essay was revised in 1995 and 2002 to take account of changes in use to some of the buildings and new additions to the College site.

The Site

It is very easy to recognise the site of Lucy Cavendish College on the 19th-century maps of Cambridge. In spite of all the changes which have taken place along the Madingley Road over the past hundred years, the area where the college buildings now stand, bounded on the south by the Madingley Road and on the east by Lady Margaret Road, has from the air the shape of an axe head. On both the 1830 and 1888 maps of Cambridge there is a fenced area of about seven acres also bounded on the south by the Madingley Road, and on the east by Bandyleg Walk (re-christened Lady Margaret Road in the 1890s after the founder of St. John's College, Lady Margaret Beaufort, mother of Henry VII) but on the north by Mount Pleasant, and on these two maps, particularly the 1888 one, this area has the same axe head shape as the College grounds today, though they only occupy about half of it.

It was, and had been, a meadow since the Middle Ages. It was part of the property of the medieval hospital of St. John, and later belonged to the new college of St. John, which took over the property of the hospital, suppressed when that college was founded in 1511.

The 1830 map shows how abruptly the town ended on the west side of the Backs. Where the open fields had been there were now farms, some of which, like Grange Farm, have given their names to the roads of modern Cambridge. There were no buildings along the Madingley Road except the Observatory, built in 1823, and as yet Storey's Way, that useful link between the Huntingdon Road and the Madingley Road did not exist. But it appears

on the 1888 map, and that map also shows clearly the beginnings of a limited development along the Madingley Road. It consisted mainly of cottages, market gardens and small nurseries. The present Haymarket Street is on the site of the actual Haymarket, marked on the 1888 map as already 'Disused'. Rural Cambridge was fast disappearing.

Only fourteen years later the 1902 Ordnance Survey map shows a more recognisable Cambridge landscape. There is now a Westminster College on the site of what was once Richmond Gardens. The old meadow has been bisected from east to west by a lane and divided up into building plots, four to the north and four to the south, and on each of those plots stands a large house built in the last two decades of the 19th century. The four houses to the south of the lane, make up some of the present buildings of Lucy Cavendish College.

This was not the only part of Cambridge where a good deal of building and development took place at this time. The chief cause was the Revised Statutes of 1878. Up to this time, in both Oxford and Cambridge, fellows who married, with very few exceptions, were obliged to resign their fellowships. This rule was charmingly expressed by a Rector's wife in 1610:

"When Oxford gave thee two degrees in art,
And love possest thee master of my heart,
Thy colledge fellowship thow lefst for mine..."

And it was as true of the 19th as of the 17th-century. However, in such circumstances, some colleges were able to provide ex-fellows with college livings, thus sweetening the pill.

After 1878 it was for individual colleges to decide when to abandon the celibacy rule and in the case of St. John's College the magic date was 1882. For instance, Alfred Marshall of that college had given up his fellowship when he married in 1877. But in 1884 he was able to return to Cambridge and in fact was the first to build on the old meadow. Today the size of the houses and grounds shows what many then regarded as essential for middle class

living, not so surprising in those days of large families, and when domestic service still afforded employment to a sizeable proportion of the population.

Then, as now, the criteria of nearness to the centre of Cambridge and the pleasantness of the surroundings influenced the builders. It is not very surprising that seven of the eight original occupiers of the houses built on the old meadow were fellows of colleges, St. John's, Christ's and Trinity being the colleges represented.

Silver Street and Northampton Street

When, in 1965, Lucy Cavendish College first gained University recognition one of the first problems to be solved was to find suitable premises with the possibility of future expansion and this was not an easy task. Kate Bertram, in her history of the College, has dealt fully with this problem and its solution. It is interesting to look back and remember the temporary premises, which housed the College in its early years. I quote from Dr Bertram's account.

The President heard that "Magdalene College was starting to rehabilitate its dilapidated cottages in Northampton Street. She at once wrote to the Master of the College, then Sir Henry Willink, saying that she noted with interest the work being done, and then asked if there would be any room available for Lucy Cavendish. She got a welcoming reply and the long and the short of it was that the University then took a ten-year lease from Magdalene of three of the cottages (nos. 16-18) and most generously gave it to us rent free. With the money they received from the lease Magdalene was able to recondition the property so that when we moved out after ten years, they would be left with good lettable buildings. As the cottages could not be ready until Easter 1966, the University offered us the use of two rooms on the ground floor of 20 Silver Street, an offer which we gratefully accepted".

These two rooms into which we settled in October 1965 meant that we could for the first time employ a full-time secretary who occupied one room, while the other was mainly

used by our first Tutor and Secretary to the Governing Body, Kate Bertram. The rooms were not large - meetings of the College Officers filled the Tutor's room to overflowing, and more than one of us remembers at times having to find a seat on the upturned metal wastepaper basket.

But it was not for long. The work on the Northampton Street cottages was proceeding apace. They had to be stripped to mere skeletons and then rebuilt, first to be suitable for our ten years occupation and then as residential accommodation for research students from Magdalene College. In June 1966 we left Silver Street and moved into 16-18 Northampton Street. After February 1970 when we moved into College House we continued to use the cottages for residents, as some of our former students well remember. But between 1966 and 1970 they served us for offices, meetings, lectures, lunches on a limited scale and even accommodation for two resident students as well. No wonder we were sometimes known as 'the college in a cottage'.

Of course the search for something more permanent went on apace. In 1967 a large house, then known as St. Francis House, in Lady Margaret Road became vacant and in 1969 St. John's College agreed to let it to us for a minimum five-year lease at an annual rent of £700. This was to become College House and may be regarded as the first of our permanent buildings.

College House

Torrisdale was the original name of College House, taking its name (along with that of Barrmore) from a place in Kintyre, Scotland. It was originally let by St. John's College on a 99-year building lease from 1888 (the house was built in 1883) to Professor Alexander MacAlister, Professor of Anatomy, who lived in the house until his death in 1919. In 1920 the lease was assigned to trustees for the Oratory of the Good Shepherd, and became known as 'The Oratory House'. A hut in the garden was built in 1921 to become the first chapel,

but in 1925 the architect of Sidney Sussex Chapel, T. H. Lyons, built a chapel inside the house in the space now occupied by the Tutorial Office.

Frederick Brittain (1893-1969), a fellow of Jesus College, lived at the Oratory House during term time from 1922-1930. In his autobiography *A Don's Life* (1972), he describes life in the Oratory House, which then had ten residents and a 'pleasant old-fashioned garden'. The then Warden, Wilfred Knox, worked in the garden every day from lunch to tea. The journalist and broadcaster, Malcolm Muggeridge (1903-1990) confirms this in his autobiography *The Green Stick* (1972). He lived at the Oratory House during his last year at Cambridge in 1922-1923 and often in the afternoons worked with Wilfred Knox in the garden. Another resident was Dr. Joseph Needham (1900-1995), Master of Gonville and Caius College from 1965-1976. He was the husband of Dr. Dorothy Needham FRS (1896-1987), one of our founding fellows, and identified a small room on the top floor as the one he once occupied.

In 1940 the lease was assigned to trustees for the Society of St. Francis, and became known as St. Francis House. The lease was surrendered to St. John's College on 29 December 1967, and the house became vacant until its occupation by Lucy Cavendish Collegiate Society (LCCS) in February 1970. Part of the work of the Society of St. Francis was to assist tramps and roadsters, and for some time after LCCS moved in, the tramps continued to call and had to be redirected to Botolph Lane. This was in spite of the fact that the building had been empty for over two years, and both house and grounds were, to say the least, in a very rundown state when LCCS first took over the tenancy.

The external appearance of the house remains relatively unchanged, although a conservatory once ran along the west side of College House outside what is now the Bursary.

Strathaird

Strathaird, unlike College House or Barrmore, had remained very much a family home. It was the second house to be occupied by the College. This happened in 1973 when our

numbers were increasing, and a college dining room and kitchen were badly needed. (At that date we were still having a formal weekly dinner in Churchill College.)

It was originally let by St. John's College on a 99-year building lease from 1897 to Sir Donald MacAlister, the owner of Barrmore. From 1908 the lease was assigned to Mr James Duff Duff (1860-1940), Fellow and Tutor, Trinity College. Prior to their purchase of Strathaird, Duff and his wife rented a garden next to the Fellows garden at Trinity College which they kept as a playground for their children. After Duff's death in 1940 the lease was assigned to his widow, Mrs Laura Elizabeth Duff. The Duff family let it to various tenants. For a time it was used to house students from Bedford College for Women (part of the University of London) who were evacuated to Cambridge during the Second World War.

Georg Henrik von Wright (1916-2003), a Finnish philosopher, occupied the house from 1949-1950. He succeeded Ludwig Wittgenstein as Professor of Philosophy at Trinity College in 1948 but after Wittgenstein's death in 1951, he resigned his chair and returned to Finland to resume his professorship at Helsinki University. In his autobiography *Mitt Liv Som Jag Minns* (*My Life As I Remember It)*, von Wright includes photographs of family and friends (including Wittgenstein) at Strathaird and describes the house as large but cold in the winter. In November 1950 the lease was assigned to Denys Lionel Page (1908-1978), Regius Professor of Greek, who lived at Strathaird from 1953 until 1960 when he became Master of Jesus College.

In May 1960 the lease was assigned to Professor Oliver Meredith Boone Bulman (1902-1974), Woodward Professor of Geology, who with his wife Margo, and their children, occupied the house as a family home. With wonderful generosity the Bulmans made a gift of the rest of their lease to the College in 1973 when they decided to move to a smaller house in Mount Pleasant. They also left us a good deal of furniture, pictures and ornaments, which helped to ease our occupancy of the house in Michaelmas Term 1973. Not only could the house accommodate seven resident students but it could also provide a

pleasant common room, the Bulman Room, and that much needed kitchen and dining room.

Barrmore

Both in position and size, Barrmore, the house between College House and Strathaird, was an important addition to the College buildings. After some uncertainty and a long period of negotiation, the College was able to purchase the house, so that by 1975 the College owned both grounds and houses of three of the four houses built to the south of the lane which bisected the old meadow. In 1976 came the purchase of the freehold of the houses from St. John's College, which had been a very considerable benefactor to the College for some years.

The leasehold for Barrmore was originally let by St. John's College for 99-years from 1894 to Donald MacAlister (1854-1934), physician, and Fellow and Tutor of St. John's College, at a yearly rent of £28. 10s. It is interesting that in 1895 Barrmore (not then named) was listed in the Cambridge Directory with the Madingley Road houses, as "Dr D. MacAlister's house, then building" so it does appear that the main entrance of Barrmore was intended to be on the Madingley Road. It certainly stands much nearer that road than do either College House or Strathaird.

Donald MacAlister was no real relation to Alexander MacAlister (though it pleased them to claim a Highland cousinship) but he married Alexander MacAlister's daughter Edith Florence Boyle and decided to build his house next door to that of his father-in-law. As a Tutor at St. John's College, he felt it his duty to invite first year students to Barrmore at least once in their first term. His wife describes these occasions thus:

"...in order to work through the long list of 'freshers' in the short October term, it was necessary for us to have six men to

luncheon and another six to supper every Sunday. Those luncheon and supper parties tended to be painfully solemn and trying functions. Donald and I both desired to make our parties friendly and informal affairs...[but]...there seemed to be a tradition among the juniors that any entertainment given by their tutor must be reckoned as a boring duty, a necessary evil to be endured as patiently as might be, and to be got through as quickly as possible..." (E. F. B. MacAlister, *Sir Donald MacAlister of Tarbert,* 1935).

When Donald MacAlister was beginning to think of retirement in 1907, he was unexpectedly nominated for appointment by the Crown as principal to the University of Glasgow. He accepted, thinking that he would only be away from Cambridge for seven years. As it turned out the MacAlisters were away from 1907 to 1930 (he was elected chancellor of the University of Glasgow in 1929). During this period Barrmore was occupied by a series of tenants, nearly all of who were senior members of the University (the MacAlisters could never bring themselves to the thought of selling it). In 1930 the MacAlisters returned and, after Sir Donald's death in 1934, Lady MacAlister, with her unmarried sister Anne, occupied the house. In 1939 Lady MacAlister opened up their home not only to the students of Bedford College evacuated from London, but she also offered a home to a Jewish refugee from Austria, Harry Seidler. He recalls his experience of living at Barrmore in *Internment: The Diaries of Harry Seidler May 1940-October 1941* (1986).

Following Lady MacAlister's death in 1950, the lease was then assigned to Miss E. M. Wilkins in 1951. In 1952 St. John's College granted a licence for the conversion of the house to four flats. Miss Wilkins lived in Barrmore from 1953 to her death in 1972, and occupied the big ground floor flat that served as the College Library from 1976 to 1999. The lease was transferred in 1974 to a nephew of Miss Wilkins, Francis Crick (he who

discovered the double-helical structure of DNA with James Watson in 1953), and three other members of the Crick family, before finally being purchased by the College in 1975.

In 1989 The Sherlock Holmes Society of London published a handbook of essays, *The Light is Dark Enough*, that examine the evidence for Cambridge being the fictional university of Sherlock Holmes and the setting for some of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes stories. In 'Will the Creeping Man stand up?' it is suggested that College House, formerly 'Torrisdale', was the fictional home of Professor Presbury in *The Creeping Man*. However, although the name is given in the text as 'Torrisdale' and referred to as the home of Professor Alexander MacAlister, the description is more suited to that of Barrmore with its "tree lined drive...and stable", and indeed the text is illustrated with photographs of Barrmore and Barrmore coach house. It seems very probable that Conan Doyle had visited Barrmore on some occasion, possibly at the invitation of Donald MacAlister, whose great-niece has said that her uncle knew Conan Doyle and was, like him, interested in psychical research.

Marshall House

When Lucy Cavendish College became the owner of Marshall House in the summer of 1991 it was still known by its original name of Balliol Croft. It has now been renamed Marshall House in honour of its first owner, the distinguished economist Alfred Marshall (1842-1924). There is an explanation for its first name, so obviously an Oxford one. Marshall had been a fellow of St. John's. When he married the Newnham economist Mary Paley (1850-1944) in 1877 he had to give up his fellowship, as it was not until 1882 that fellows of St. John's could keep their fellowships when they married. He left Cambridge and went to Bristol as the Principal of University College, a post he held from 1877-1881, when he was forced to resign because of a breakdown in health. In 1883 he accepted an invitation from Balliol College, Oxford to succeed Arnold Toynbee as Lecturer in Political Economy and to become a fellow. But his time in Oxford was very brief. In 1884 he accepted the chair of Political Economy in

Cambridge, which he held until his retirement in 1908 at the age of 66. Returning to Cambridge, he was the first to build on the old meadow belonging to St. John's. Perhaps to call his house Balliol Croft may be regarded as a graceful apology for leaving Oxford so soon.

Alfred Marshall's *Principles of Economics* was readily accepted as the greatest economic treatise of his generation; and for more than 30 years most serious work on the subject was built on his foundations. At the time of his death in 1924 he was recognised as the father of economic science as it then existed in England. His wife, Mary Paley, was herself not without distinction. She was one of the five students who went up to Cambridge in October 1871 to live with Miss A. J. Clough at 74 Regent Street, which became the nucleus of Newnham College. In 1875 Mary Paley became the first woman lecturer on Economics in Cambridge, and played a part in the development of the Marshall Library of Economics in Cambridge in the last twenty years of her life. Marshall's first book *The Economics of Industry* (1879) was written in collaboration with his wife, and for the 47 years of their married life he was completely dependent on her devotion and understanding. Mary Paley Marshall was also a gifted amateur water-colourist.

Writing her memoirs, Mary Paley Marshall recalls the building of Balliol Croft:

"...in 1886 Balliol Croft was built and we settled down there for good. In 1885 prices were still low and the contract for the house was £900, though on account of a mistake on the part of the architect it cost £1,100. For several years it was the only house in Madingley Road and we chose the site chiefly for its forest trees. Alfred took immense pains in planning the house and in economising space, especially in the kitchen department. He was anxious to have his study on a higher floor as he thought that in Cambridge it was well to live as far as from the ground as possible. However J. J. Stevenson the architect persuaded him to be content

with the first floor and a balcony..." (John Maynard Keynes, 'Mary Paley Marshall' in *Cambridge Women: Twelve Portraits*, Edward Shils and Carmen Blacker (eds), 1996).

John Maynard Keynes describes the Marshalls as having "a very small house and one faithful servant, but were endlessly hospitable not less to the rawest undergraduate than to visitors from the great world."

Alfred Marshall died in 1924 but Mary Paley Marshall continued to live at Balliol Croft until her death in 1944. Her ashes were scattered in the garden. For a time it was the home of Canon Whitworth, Rector of Great St. Mary's, and then Dr. and Mrs R. A. Green who occupied the house for many years until they sold it to the College in 1991 which now owned, freehold, all the land and houses on the south of the lane which bisected the old meadow. The house was initially converted into residential accommodation for students, but in the summer of 2001 it was restored to its original state and became the President's Lodge.

Incidentally, the novel *A deadly indifference* (1995) by Marshall Jevons is set in the Cambridge of the mid-1960s and revolves around Balliol Croft, which – in the story – is hoped to be converted into an institute for the study of free enterprise.

Oldham Hall

As the College grew and developed the existing buildings were proving increasingly inadequate. The College's first purpose built building was completed in 1989. Oldham Hall (named after Dr Barbara Oldham, one of the College's principal benefactors) was designed by Elaine Denby and built and furnished to provide specific College needs, both for student accommodation and teaching, and functional as well as public rooms. The building is currently undergoing re-development to accommodate a new Porter's Lodge,

additional teaching accommodation, and improved student facilities. The work is expected to be completed in September 2005.

The Music Pavilion

An attractive feature of the gardens is the Music Pavilion, situated behind College House against a background of trees. The College owes this building - completed in the summer of 1994 - to the generosity of two American ladies, Mai-mai Sze (painter, novelist and Chinese art scholar) and Irene Sharaff (stage and costume designer). They had read about the work and objectives of Lucy Cavendish in the New York Times in 1987 and decided to show their approval and give their practical support with a large bequest in 1993. It was at their suggestion that this building was erected as a place for music and meditation. Their bequest also endowed two fully funded research fellowships.

Bertram and de Brye Houses

The legacy in 1992 of Barbara de Brye, Honorary Fellow, was of major assistance in erecting these new buildings. They were designed by Van Heyningen and Haward and built by John Sisk and Son Ltd. The two residential blocks of student rooms, de Brye House and Bertram House (named after our second President, Dr. Kate Bertram, 1970-1979), were completed and in use by September 1994.

Warburton Hall

HM Queen Margrethe II of Denmark unveiled the foundation stone for the new dining hall building on December 3rd 1993. This building reached completion in the spring of 1995, and in May of that year we held the Annual Dinner in our own hall for the first time since Annual Dinners began in 1967, previously they had been held in the Old Kitchen at Trinity

College. The building is named after our fourth President, Dame Anne Warburton, 1985-1994.

The Library

In 1996 the decision was taken to build a new Library to accommodate the needs of an expanding student body. Building works commenced in August 1998 and the Library was opened to students in October 1999. H.M. Queen Margrethe II of Denmark formally opened the Library on 4 December 2000.

The architects, Freeland Rees Roberts, designed the library to meet both the domestic character of the surrounding buildings and to be a comfortable environment for students. It rests on the southern edge of the College, protecting the central lawn from the noisy Madingley Road and creating a woodland walk on the south side of the building. Internally, the entrance foyer is lofty, rising the full height of the building and providing a perfect home in which to hang the 'Lucy in the Sky' mobile designed by the artist Bettina Furnée and commissioned by members of the Lucy Cavendish College Roll to celebrate the opening of the new Library.

The west wing contains the main library spaces with reading rooms able to accommodate up to 45 readers at any one time, and the College's computing centre. The latter has 15 workstations, as well as a multi-media room offering the opportunity to exploit the very latest in information technology for study and research. Specialised storage with temperature and humidity controls has been provided for up to 1000 rare books and 70 linear metres of College records and archives in the east wing, together with office accommodation for library and archive staff, and (at present) a large meeting room for the Governing Body and college committees. A more informal reading room is to be found at the very top of the building where students can relax on sofas to read or admire the panoramic view.

The Library can house up to 36,000 books on open shelves (our current book stock is more than 20,000) and an additional 10,000 books in reserved stacks.

The Gardens

Between 1970 and 1976, three large gardens had come into the possession of the College, with all the problems of upkeep, mowing, autumn leaves, and so on. They were, of course, divided from each other and shut off from the Madingley Road by a belt of trees and shrubs, except in the case of Strathaird, as that garden ended where the grounds of Marshall House began. Along Lady Margaret Road ran a wooden fence. Today the divisions between the gardens have gone and so has the fence.

The gardens of Barrmore and Strathaird had been looked after up to the time when the College took possession, but as College House had been vacant for two years, the gardens had run down badly and needed a good deal of work. This was sad as the trees and shrubs remaining as well as an overgrown rockery showed what care had once been bestowed on that garden.

The policy adopted with the gardens was one of amalgamation; therefore the gardens of the three houses have been turned into one garden with linking paths and the disappearance of former divisions. One of the most effective ways in which this sense of 'one garden' has been achieved was to remove almost the entire old fence along the lane. The stones of the old rockery were then very effectively used to mark the boundary between the gardens and the lane.

At least three special gardens - 'gardens within a garden' - have appeared at various times. Firstly, the rockery at College House which was the creation of Wilfred Knox when he was Warden of the Oratory. Secondly, Barrmore once possessed a Shakespearian garden. This was the creation of Anne MacAlister, daughter of the builder of College House, who came

to live with her sister Edith after the latter was widowed. No trace now remains. Thirdly, in recent years Dr Jane Renfrew has created a very special garden at Strathaird. It is an Anglo-Saxon garden in which the only plants grown are those which flourished in England before 1066 AD.

Some points of interest in the garden include the Handkerchief Tree (Davidia) on College House lawn planted by HRH the Duke of Edinburgh, Chancellor of the University and College Visitor, when he visited the College for the first time in 1985. It was originally planted on Barrmore lawn. Also on College House lawn is *Cavalcade* by Professor Philip King, the President of the Royal Academy, and on temporary loan to the College. There are two small tombstones in the grounds of Barrmore marking the burial place for Fly and Sheila, a Cairn and a West Highland terrier which belonged to Lady MacAlister and her sister.