UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE
ALUMNI
CAMBRIDGE SOCIETY OF VICTORIA

February 2017

Wed 15 Lunch with Chris Davey

Lunch with Chris Davey, Wednesday 15 February

Agatha Christie: the archaeologist

Most people associate Agatha Christie with crime stories based on Poirot and Miss Marple. But there is quite another side to her sleuthing interests. She met Max Mallowan (later Sir Max) at Ur in 1930 when he was digging with Sir Leonard Woolley. They married soon after and she then accompanied him every year on excavations until 1960 (except for WWII). The Australian Institute of Archaeology was a financial supporter of Mallowan and has a significant collection of artefacts from his excavations. Agatha was responsible for conserving some of these objects.

The talk will describe the excavations Agatha shared with Sir Max and discuss how these experiences may have influenced her crime writing. It will also draw upon her book *Come Tell Me How You Live*, still the best description of dig life in the Middle East.

Chris Davey became the honorary director of the Australian Institute of Archaeology in 2002 after retiring from National Australia Bank where he was a project finance executive. He has been responsible for the Institute's re-establishment at La Trobe University after it ceased to operate in 1999.

Chris began his archaeology at St John's College, Cambridge, where he also studied ancient languages, and then at the Institute of Archaeology, London. He has dug in the Middle East, Australia and the United Kingdom; he now digs regularly in Cyprus. He has published papers on the history of mining and metallurgy, ancient architecture and archaeology. He edits the Institute's annual journal *Buried History*.

Employment as an underground miner, surveyor, engineer, mines inspector, contract design engineer, tertiary lecturer (mining and systems engineering) and international bank executive has given Chris broad perspectives; the interconnections with archaeology and history are many.

This lunch will take place at the Savage Club in Bank Place at 12 noon for 12.30pm. The club is at 12 Bank Place (off Collins Street) in the city. Cost is $55 including drinks. All guests are most welcome; the more the better. Would you please advise Peter Baines at lunches@cambridgesociety.org.au or on 9820 2334 by latest Monday noon, 13 February, if you will be coming (and dietary requirements). Those emailing their intention to attend should ring Peter to confirm if they receive no email confirmation from him within 24 hours of booking.

Diary dates

Mar 15	Lunch with Prof Mark Dawson
Apr 21	Boat Race dinner with Oxford
May 17	Lunch with Prof Adrian Mouritz

Last month

AGM and Varsity Match lunch Wednesday14 December

The business of the AGM was briskly conducted, the Hon Auditor's report accepted and your new committee was elected as follows:

President	Christopher Briggs
Vice President	Janelle Ward
Secretary	David Rees
Treasurer	Jerry Platt
Magister Prandii	Peter Baines

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Committee members	
	Peter Adams
	Fabrice Boucherat
	William Usher
	Liz Williams
	Patricia Gowrie
	Raul Sanchez-Urribarri
Past President	Antara Mascarenhas
	(*ex officio*)

The relevant paperwork may be found on our website.

A good crowd then proceeded to lunch and a replay of the Varsity Match. Included in the audience were two Oxford followers, the Secretary of the Melbourne University Rugby Club, an American visitor and a Light Blue from the 1951 team, Gwyn Bevan of Downing, who has become a regular luncher and spends several months in Kew each year to escape the winter chills of Anglesey in Wales. Our American visitor provided some fascinating insights into US politics in exchange for a detailed explanation of the rules of rugby.

Such is the march of progress in technology that we no longer need to have tapes or DVDs flown in or copied at vast expense – both the men's and ladies' matches are available on YouTube within 24 hours of the match being played! Just search under 'Varsity Match'.

At the risk of being politically incorrect, your editor must report that the enjoyment to be had from each match this year lies in rough proportion to the size of the audience at Twickenham. After last year's ladies match, where the light blues romped home 52-0, this year's match was low scoring and unexciting, with Oxford scoring the only points from a penalty goal after 14 minutes.

The men's match was, however, quite different, with the result not sure until the last few minutes. The men's XV obviously thought it essential to farewell in style the outgoing Vice Chancellor Sir Boris (a Welsh rugby tragic) by winning an excellent game 23-18.

Honours for Society member

In the recent Australia Day Honours, Society member Prof Andrew Holmes AM was awarded the Order of Australia (AC) 'for eminent service to science through development in the field of organic and polymer chemistry as a researcher, editor and academic and through the governance of nationally recognised leading scientific organisations.' We congratulate him.

Some members will recall the memorable lunchtime talk Prof Holmes gave on the development of flexible solar cells printed on polymer sheet.

The Cambridge diaspora

Ever wonder where we all came from, or went to? Cambridge alumni can be found in more than 193 countries around the world, making us a truly global network. We are proud of our alumni communities. Our top ten alumni communities by population are:

1.	England	154,675
2.	USA	16,434
3.	Scotland	5,008
4.	Australia	4,029
5.	Canada	3,770
6.	Germany	3,451
7.	Wales	3,282
8.	France	2,534
9.	Hong Kong	2,328
10.	China	2,238

With Singapore squeaking in at 11 with 2083.

And in Victoria we number 1009, exactly in proportion to the total Australian population. We are predominantly male (71%) and 89% of us live in the Melbourne area, the most popular suburbs being:

1. Melbourne
2. Toorak and Hawthorn
3. Kew
4. Parkville.

The Mornington Peninsula and Ballarat are the best-represented non-Melbourne areas.

Those < 40 years of age make up 24% of our total; 40-60 are 40%; and those over 60 are 36%.

248 have Bachelor's degrees, 259 Master's degrees and 221 have PhDs.

The seven most popular subject groups studied are:

Natural Science	153
Law	106
Engineering	53
History	44
Economics	41
Education	39
Maths	38.

The five most well represented colleges are: Jesus and St John's (each 6%) followed by Trinity, Queens and Pembroke (each 5%).

Make of these statistics what you will.

Commercials

Cambridge Non-executive Director seminar in Melbourne

Society members who sit on boards may be interested in a new seminar from the University of Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership, to be held in Melbourne 5-6 March. It focuses on equipping non-executive directors to understand and manage the strategic implications of sustainability for boards.

For more information visit www.cisl.cam.ac.uk or contact jane.farago@au.ey.com.

If you have an offer, message or request of a personal or not-for-profit nature that you would like us to include in this section, please contact the editor at newsletter@cambridgesociety.org.au.

Snippets

We acknowledge our particular debt to Varsity and to the University News Release Service.

University considering major overhaul of BA degree classifications

The University is seeking consultation on plans to change the system by which it awards degree honours to account for both Parts of a BA degree. Currently, a class mark is not assigned to an entire BA degree, but to each part of a tripos. A first in each part can be called a 'double first', but this is merely an informal title.

The consultation document, issued by the Education Committee of the General Board of the University, cites multiple reasons for the change. It notes 'a lack of understanding of the system amongst students, academics and employers', in particular by employers who 'incorrectly assume that for Cambridge students the class awarded in the final year is the cumulative class for the Degree.'

It claims that the Careers Service has identified cases in which Cambridge students attempting to average the marks for Part I and Part II of their Tripos have fallen foul of investigations into their credentials, which often do not account for the idiosyncrasies of the Cambridge system.

Cambridge, the document observes, is out of step with the rest of the Russell Group in not assigning an overall mark, which is likely to cause difficulties as the organisation attempts to introduce a Grade Point Average system amongst its members.

It indicates a preference for only taking into account marks in second and third years, 'when students have gained an appropriate body of knowledge and understanding allows them to demonstrate the use of their skills to best advantage.'

Preliminary examinations ('Prelims'), which are currently taken by the English and History Triposes, will continue not to count towards either Tripos.

The Education Committee has put forward four proposals for weighting the contribution of each year. Two of the four suggest that the classification derive from some combination of second- and third-year exams: either each one would contribute 50 per cent of the overall classification, or third-year exams would contribute two-thirds and second-year, one-third.

A third proposal would allocate 20 per cent of the overall classification to first-year exams, 30 per cent to second-year, and 50 per cent to third-year. The fourth represents the status quo.

Faculty Boards would be granted relative liberty to devise the details of their classification systems, within the bounds of the University's policy on the weighting of years.

The Committee also recommends that a ranking be assigned to every member of a Tripos cohort and published on CamSIS.

It suggests that each subject should be required to harmonise their marking systems to award a First to all examinations scoring above 70 per cent, an Upper Second to those between 60 and 69 per cent, a Lower Second to those between 50 and 59 per cent, and a Third to those between 40 and 49 per cent. While this is already standard practice, it is not currently officially required.

The technological revolution will change the face of work

Career plans for our generation are going to be very different from ever before: we're going to have to factor in whether the job we want will actually exist in a few years' time. Thinking of selling your soul to a corporate job or a bank for 'only five years until I make enough to retire at 27'? Well, you might not have to worry about

getting trapped in that world for much longer because chances are you'll be replaced by a machine pretty soon anyway. Okay, so maybe we're not that close to replacing the corporate bureaucratic world with computers, but we're not far off. It's no longer a question of it maybe happening, because it definitely will.

Perhaps many of us at Cambridge won't be affected by this technological revolution. Most of us will aim quite high and graduate with qualifications good enough to get us into jobs that won't be facing computerised replacement any time soon. But many people who will end up in the lower end of corporate jobs, jobs that are routine, repetitious and bureaucratic, will find that those positions simply won't exist in the near future.

And it isn't primarily corporate and financial careers either – jobs in the legal sector, even the medical sector, might be affected. There are already programmes that can write editorial copy and then pull it into a publication which removes any demand for human copy editors; but there are all sorts of jobs that can be wiped out by that kind of technology. Decentralised accreditation systems affect businesses like taxi services. Say you have someone checking on every taxi driver; where they are, who are they picking up, what orders they're taking – there is no need for centralised authority like that with the kind of technology that exists now.

It's not necessarily about profit increase by letting go of workers, which will be the case a lot of the time, but about a change in purpose and in human efficiency.

Consider the future of self-driving cars: removing the risk drivers represent means a diminishing motor insurance industry. Without the kinds of problems humans can encounter while driving, such as poor sight, distraction, drunkenness, sudden illness and tiredness, there will inevitably be less accidents. Computerised cars will be able to calculate everything going on around them in a way that humans are not capable of. Fewer accidents mean fewer police monitoring motorways, and less pressure on hospitals to deal with car-related injuries. The future of technology does not just replace jobs, it renders them obsolete.

But none of this has to be a bad thing. The future of technology does not signal the end of the world if we accept and let it take over. Jobs that will no longer exist will create new ones instead. If there are jobs that can be replaced by machines, surely there is some benefit to the humans who work like robots every day. This isn't quite like the Industrial Revolution either, where skilled labour was replaced by steam engines and new factory machinery. Then there was a loss in hand-made manufacturing, in human skill. This new technological rise will see the loss of a bureaucratic world that has run its course anyway.

It's possible that we'll see another 'Luddite' revolution. Workers threatened with unemployment rising against the machine. This is understandable, natural even. Perhaps it is already happening with the rail strikes where workers in jobs quite easily replaceable by computers are standing their ground. What needs to happen to prevent this is a better understanding of the technology that's coming in. Why are these computerised systems needed? What is going to happen to all the workers who will be out of a job?

The last question most likely won't be answered until the jobs are actually replaced. Hopefully we'll see a growth in creativity and in science. More jobs will open up that don't require robotic repetition, so perhaps there will be a rise in collaboration, in innovation. There must be a rise in the number of people working in the technology industry in order to keep up with the machines we're putting out there. We're already lacking in developers and programmers, so the demand will be huge.

What is so hard about this, as I guess was hard during the industrial revolution, is how to know what happens next. The hope is that the bureaucratic jobs that are no longer useful, that are outdated, will be eradicated, but any damage caused by subsequent unemployment is minimised. How do we make that happen?

Major advances in technology bring about a change that is desperately needed in the workplace. As a generation, we enter the workplace amid a revolution. So far it's a quiet one, it creeps up on us one new machine, one new programme, one new algorithm at a time. But it's there and it's happening. We just have to work out what to do with it once we get there.