From the President

Professor Sir Richard Evans looks back over the highlights of the year, and forward to our 50th Anniversary.

As the College approaches its 50th Anniversary milestone in 2015, we have launched a Campaign with the target of raising £5 million. Wolfson’s endowment is still small compared to those of most other Cambridge Colleges, and we need to build it up so we can refurbish our ageing buildings and provide scholarships and bursaries for our students as fees and living expenses increase and government support is cut back.

The 50th Anniversary Campaign has got off to a very good start, with an exceptionally generous grant of £1.25 million from the Wolfson Foundation to help upgrade the residences which the Foundation enabled us to build in the mid-1970s, and a munificent donation from His Excellency Mahfouz bin Mahfouz, Lord of Abernethy, GCMLJ, FRSA, which we will use for student support. Our alumni have continued to be enormously supportive of the College.

The year has been academically successful for the College too, with Professor Jon Crowcroft elected Fellow of the Royal Society, Dr Steve Hoath Fellow of the Institute of Physics and Professor George Salmond Fellow of the American Academy of Microbiologists. Senior Member Mrs Sherry Coutu was appointed CBE for services to entrepreneurship, while Senior Member Dr Rupert Curwen received two Queen’s Awards for his company Ubisense. And we were all delighted when Honorary Fellow the Honorable Janet Wolfson de Botton CBE, Chairman of the Trustees of the Wolfson Foundation, was appointed Dame Commander of the Order of the British Empire in the Queen’s Birthday Honours List.

Wolfson’s students continue to improve their academic performance, with more than a quarter of our undergraduate Tripos candidates obtaining First Class Honours in 2013 and Wolfson Master’s and Doctoral students gaining a very good record of achievement. The revived Research Event in May showcased the achievements of our graduate students and was the occasion for an inspiring speech by Cambridge University Vice-Chancellor and Wolfson Honorary Fellow Professor Sir Leszek Borysiewicz, who stayed on to listen to students’ presentations and chat with them over dinner.

Though it’s hard to believe, our Director of Music, Lynette Alcántara, celebrated 20 years as conductor of the Choir this year, marked by a splendid concert and a surprise party afterwards; we hope she continues for a long time to come. Its active and inclusive musical life is one of the aspects of Wolfson that gives it a real sense of community, and much of this is down to Lyn.
Karen Stephenson, Development Director

This has been a wonderful year for the College’s fundraising, and I am delighted to thank all our generous supporters who have given gifts to Wolfson, as we approach the College’s 50th Anniversary in 2015.

Our £5 million Anniversary Campaign has students at its heart and is raising funds for all areas of student support: from the improvement of our accommodation to provide appropriate facilities which cater to the specific needs of our mature students, to bursaries, scholarships and conference grants to enable the best and brightest students to benefit from Wolfson’s uniquely egalitarian and cosmopolitan ethos, irrespective of their financial means.

In June this year, we were delighted to learn of an award from the Wolfson Foundation of £1.25 million towards the refurbishment of our core student accommodation. We are enormously grateful to the Foundation and the Trustees for all their advice, support and interest in our wonderful institution which bears their name. We share a vision for excellence and look forward to working with the Foundation to complete this exciting refurbishment project. The student accommodation, in East and West courts, flanks the Porters’ Lodge, and comprises the buildings originally constructed with the first Wolfson Foundation gift in 1972, which secured the College’s future and led to the College being renamed Wolfson College, Cambridge, on 1 January 1973. Work was carried out on A and B blocks over the long summer vacation, and the next phase will take place in summer 2014, to ensure that student life may continue unhindered.

Also during the summer months, we were extremely pleased to admit Wolfson’s first Bredon Fellow to the College. His Excellency Mahfouz bin Mahfouz, Lord of Abernethy, GCMLJ, FRSA, very generously gave an unrestricted gift, with which the College has chosen to support student scholarships at Wolfson. This wonderful gift will make an enormous difference in our ability to provide scholarships for the brightest students from across the world, producing a yearly income from our endowment.
We were delighted to welcome His Excellency to Wolfson in July with his brother Mohammad Marei Mubarak bin Mahfouz and his advisor Mr Busief Lamlum, when they met Wolfson students and learned more about those who will benefit from this munificence.

Our thanks also go to a number of Wolfson members and friends who have made outstanding gifts to Wolfson this year. Among them are alumna Ms Yidi Lu (2005) and Emeritus Fellow and former Senior Tutor Dr Joan Whitehead (1976), both of whom gave unrestricted gifts to the Campaign; College Research Associate and former Visiting Fellow Professor Irene Ng, who established the Dato Ng Kong Yeam Prize in honour of her father; Santander Universities UK who supported eight Scholarships; Fellow Professor Brian Moore FRS (1983), who gave matched-funding for monies raised towards a new concert-standard grand piano; and student Mr Todd Treusdell (2011), who generously contributed to a new ‘scull’ for the Boat Club.

Another new venture this year was Wolfson’s first ever telephone fundraising campaign. Our callers spoke to almost 1,000 Wolfson members over a period of six weeks, and £65,000 was raised during that time, with a further £40,000 pledged towards the 50th Anniversary Campaign: proof, if ever it were needed, of the generosity of Wolfson’s altruistic members. From gifts of £10 to over £100 per month, every penny will be used to support Wolfson’s core aim to promote education, learning and research. Thank you so much to everyone who took the time to speak to our callers and who gave (or pledged to give) their support so generously: there is potency in working together and we are enormously grateful for every single gift.

As our 50th Anniversary approaches ever more rapidly, the President, his wife Dr Christine Corton and I are making plans to travel to Asia in spring 2014. In 2015, we hope to visit the USA, and we are very much looking forward to seeing old friends and meeting new ones among Wolfson’s worldwide membership. We are also drawing up a programme of events for the anniversary year. We plan a series of 50-minute lectures on the past 50 years in a wide range of subjects, as well as celebratory events to mark the occasion. Please do let us know if you have particular suggestions for the College to consider via alumni@wolfson.cam.ac.uk

In particular, do send your summary of Wolfson in 50 words to Tom Laws at communications@wolfson.cam.ac.uk: we will place a selection on the 50th Anniversary section of the College website.
New Fellows 2012–2013

Bredon Fellow

On 1 July 2013, His Excellency Mahfouz bin Mahfouz was elected the College’s first Bredon Fellow. He holds a Law degree from King Abdulaziz University, Saudi Arabia, and is the Chief Executive, Finance Director and controlling shareholder of the Marei bin Mahfouz Group, a leading corporation based in Mecca in Saudi Arabia.

The Group was founded by his father, Sheikh Marei Mubarak Mahfouz bin Mahfouz, whose family originally came to Saudi Arabia from the Yemen. The Marei bin Mahfouz Group is a diversified group of companies engaged in the business of retail and wholesale trade, and also has substantial property holdings, including hotels.

In 2012 HE Mahfouz bin Mahfouz set up a registered charity, The Mahfouz Foundation, with the aim of advancing education in the United Kingdom with regard to the culture, history, language, literature and institutions of the Middle East. His strong interest in British culture has led him to seek to develop a long-term relationship with Wolfson College, and he has been most generous in making a substantial donation to the College.