

MUSINGS IN THE TURL

An Occasional Newsletter of the Northern California Branch of the Oxford Society

Number 11

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FROM THE SECRETARY

A bit late to report perhaps—but never wholly out of date, for Oxford is perennial—Margaret and I had an ideal three months at Oxford and elsewhere in the UK from May through July. For those who have not been back for a number of years, Oxford has had a few changes: ever increasing flocks of international tourists, more and more traffic with nowhere to park, all traffic prohibited in the Cornmarket and severely curtailed in the Broad and the High. To focus on one particular locality—appropriately, the Turl—Ducker and Son's shoe shop and Walters' mens wear remain, but all other commercial establishments, including the previously eternal Taj Mahal, have gone, and short-lived touristy shoppes have for the most part taken their places. On the more positive side, Lincoln College has a brightly cleaned face, following in Jesus' footsteps, and Exeter was soon to have the same.

On July 6th and 7th we participated in the Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Oxford University Society. The AGM is described in the enclosed newsletter

from the General Secretary of the Society at Oxford, Mr. Alastair Lack. Mr. Lack, who was appointed a year ago, is providing fine leadership and the Society is making good progress with its world-wide growth campaign as the University's official alumni association.

THE INAUGURAL EVENT FOR 2003

As described in the enclosed announcement and invitation, our Inaugural Event for the year 2003 will be a group attendance at an outstanding play, *The Colossus of Rhodes*, written by Oxonian Carey Perloff (St. Anne's) and performed by The American Conservatory Theatre (A.C.T.), of which Ms Perloff is Artistic Director. **In order to reserve the requisite block of seats we need your booking now.**

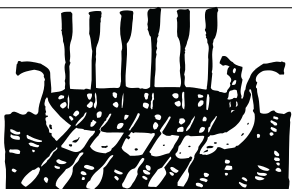
The play is a “vaudevillian musical tale ... with visual theatrics and a score reminiscent of British Music Hall.” The “Colossus” in this case is the entrepreneurial diamond industrialist Cecil Rhodes, and the play covers his life and loves in South Africa and the establishment

of the Oxford Scholarship that bears his name.

Our attendance will be at the 2:00 pm performance on Saturday, January 18th at the Zeum Theatre in San Francisco. Ms. Perloff will speak to us at a reception following the performance. There is only one class of seat at \$24, and the reception will be \$15 per person. **Please contact the Secretary at (707-546-5391 or email at oxfordusocncal@aol.com) by December 14th** if you can plan to attend. Further information will be given after the first of January.

WEB SITE AND GROUP EMAIL

In the last issue of *Musings* we announced our web site at oxfordusocietyncal.org. We try to stay reasonably current with information regarding the Society, news of past events and the announcement of future ones. Next years' program in its entirety should be available on the site by early January. We now also have group email capability. We are presently using it together with the usual postcards for the announcements by the Secretary, and we are also working towards internal group exchange for those who opt into that system. Those who do not so choose will not receive group communications from anyone other than the Secretary.



Moving?
Be sure to send us a change
of address.

EMAIL ADDRESSES

Please check your copy of the *Directory* to see whether your correct email address is listed. If it is not, please convey it to the Secretary for inclusion on the group service list and in the next edition of the *Directory*.

DIRECTORIES ARE STILL AVAILABLE

It is hoped that all of our subscribing members for 2002 have received their copy of the current *Directory*. If by oversight any have not received one, please contact the Secretary. And, subscriptions (\$15 per annum) will still be gratefully received from non-subscribers. At this time of the year, subscriptions will be applied to 2003 membership, and you will receive both a copy of the current *Directory* and of the *2003 Directory* when it is published in the spring. A bargain, indeed, although it is to be emphasized that your subscription does not merely pay for the *Directory*. The *Directory* is a benefit that accrues to our subscribing members whose payments assist in covering our overhead and making our organizational life possible.

JAMES R. FROLIK

We sadly report the death of Jim Frolik (Merton 1948), Steering Committee member since the foundation of this branch thirteen years ago, Oxford co-organizer of the San Francisco Oxford/Cambridge Boat Race Dinner for many years, and respected member of the San

Francisco legal community. Jim will be missed in grateful memory by many.

THE YEAR'S EVENTS IN 2002

Our branch of the Oxford University Society has had another highly successful and interesting year. The following events were enjoyed by many Oxonians, partners, and guests: **February**—attendance at *The Beard of Avon* by Amy Freed, with commentary following by Carey Perloff; **June**—presentation on the current Mars probe by NASA scientist, Dr. Geoffrey Briggs; **July**—picnic and Jazz concert at Stern Gove in San Francisco; **September**—picnic and walking/cycling tours on Angel Island with outstanding panoramic views of the Bay Area; **October**—the “Eternal Egypt” Exhibition of Egyptian Art from the British Museum collection at the Palace of the Legion of Honor, with reception following and commentary by Museums Archaeologist Dr. Renee Dreyfus; **November**—group attendance at a concert by the Oxford/Cambridge choral group, “The Sixteen,” together with a number of Cantabrigians (a hoped for social time afterward with members of the group failed by closure of the nearby pub); **December**—Pre-Christmas Party at the Huntington Hotel in San Francisco.

REGISTRATION WITH THE OXFORD OFFICE OF THE SOCIETY

It is requested by the Oxford office that all Oxonians formally associated with the Oxford University Society in their regional branch register as members with that office by submitting the form herewith enclosed. This assists with maintaining the legal standing of the world-wide Society as a charitable society under UK law. Your cooperation will be appreciated.

MARK TWAIN AT OXFORD

Among the most famous of overseas visitors at Oxford since Emo of Friesland initiated the University's tradition of international scholarship in 1190 was Mark Twain, who was invited to receive an honorary D. Litt. in 1907. “I don't know why they should give me a degree like that,” he said, quaintly. “I never doctored any literature. I wouldn't know how.”

On June 26, Twain processed in his scarlet and grey robes to the Sheldonian to receive his degree. After the ceremony, he was asked about his reaction. He replied, “I liked the degree well enough, but I loved the clothes.”

His true feelings, however, were revealed in a letter to Moberly Bell written six weeks before the ceremony. “Although I wouldn't cross an ocean again for the price of the ship that carried me, I am glad to do it for an Oxford degree.”