

LENT TERM 1959		EASTER TERM 1959	
January	Music Room	28th April	Old Music Room
	Musical Evening		Question Time on the University
	Downing		
	Pembroke	7th May	Benson Hall
			Music and General M
February	Old Library		I 6.
	To meet the Master of Pembroke	12th May	Travel Slide
	and Mrs. W. V. D. Hodge		
	King's	21st May	University Combin
			Mr. T. Knox-Shaw. Talks
February	Audit Room		Stanley L
	Mr. John Saltmarsh. Talks on		Dance and Far
	King's College with slides	4th June	
d March	Rushmore Room		
	Coffee Party		
	St. Catharine's		

ALL MEETINGS BEGIN AT 8.30 P.M.

History of Newcomers and Visiting Scholars 1958 – 2023



UNIVERSITY OF
CAMBRIDGE

Introduction

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Newcomers and Visiting Scholars (NVS) welcomes visitors arriving to work or research at the University of Cambridge as well as their families. Its aims are to welcome, inform, and help those visitors and families to make friends and settle into a new, and sometimes bewildering, environment with its own unique customs.

Every Tuesday morning in term time, there is a coffee morning with a lecture about the city of Cambridge, the University or something of contemporary interest such as recently a talk on 'Plastics: friend or foe?' and there is the chance beforehand to practise English with the Language Conversation Group. On other days there are art, cookery, crafts, crochet, knitting, cultural discussion, world women writers, and walking groups. There are also activities for young children and tea parties in homes.

Outside term time, the Tuesday coffee mornings and some of the other weekly groups continue. The groups are all run by volunteers, either local people (who often started as Visitors) or new members who are encouraged to start fresh interest groups. Yoga, film, and theatre were all popular before the COVID-19 pandemic.

Today it is fully part of the University, but it was not always so. It is now funded by the University and its importance recognised as adding value to the larger organisation.



Tuesday Talk



English Conversation with Margaret Callingham

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Beginnings

The Newcomers part of NVS reached its 50th anniversary in November 2021, having originally begun in 1971 as the **Newcomers Group (NG)** to complement the Cambridge University Society for Visiting Scholars, which had been recognised in 1964. For a long while, the two groups co-existed side by side before officially amalgamating in 2006. Both groups were initiated by determined women who realised that the University of Cambridge was not always a welcoming place for new arrivals, particularly women and, more especially, women with young families. The continuing success has been down to numerous volunteers over the last 60 years, some here for a year or so, others for much longer, who have wanted newcomers to enjoy their time in Cambridge.

The Society for Visiting Scholars (SVS) had its origins in the 1950s. The original society was the brainchild of Margareta 'Greta' Burkill who had grown up in various European countries and of whom it was said "she spoke eight languages, none of them perfectly." Greta was a truly outstanding person who founded GradSoc (the Society for Graduate Students), SVS and was also involved in the founding in 1954 of New Hall (now Murray Edwards College) and in 1965 of University (now Wolfson) College. During a year in the USA in 1954/5 with her husband, Charles, Greta heard a general complaint about Cambridge "that it was wonderful for the husbands and their interests but miserable for the wives and children." During this year, Greta had been extremely impressed by the help and friendship given by the Rice University 'Neighbors' Club in Houston and felt that something similar for visitors would be useful in Cambridge. Her notes say that although the Vice-Chancellor, at that time, was supportive of the idea, the administration felt that the University did not need to look after the dependents of visitors coming to the University, and Greta was told that she could organise something if it did not involve the University itself. The reason being that there were far fewer people coming to Cambridge on sabbaticals, they were nearly always male, and it was assumed that they would be looked after by their faculty or college. This, however, left out the wives and families. Greta felt strongly that if wives and children were happy, then the male visitors would work and study more effectively.

Greta therefore enlisted the support of Mrs Butterfield, whose husband Herbert Butterfield had been elected in 1958 to become Vice-Chancellor for the years 1959-61, and Lady Todd, (wife of Lord Todd, Master of Christ's College, and Professor of Organic Chemistry) who had lived in the USA and London before Cambridge. These friends started "The Cambridge University 1958 Society" which began in January 1959, with a Musical Evening at

Downing College, followed over the next six months by five talks and a general meeting, topped off by a dance in June. On the front of a small membership card it said, 'Cambridge University 1958 Society' with the names of the Steering Committee listed as: Mrs J C Burkill, Mrs Herbert Butterfield, and Lady Todd. The back of the membership card stated,

'A Club for Senior members new to the University, and for Visiting Scholars with their wives. Established members of the Regent House who are interested are also welcome. Annual subscription £1.00. Terminal subscription 10/-. All meetings begin at 8:30 pm.'

The subscription covered postage, hiring of college rooms and coffee. The Society continued to hold several meetings each term until the Cambridge Society for Visiting Scholars (CSVS) was formally adopted by the University in 1968. There were four to six meetings a term, including a Christmas party for children and a reception during the year at the Vice-Chancellor's Lodge. Once a term there was generally a lunch followed by a visit to a college, otherwise the meetings were in the evenings. Greta initially recruited friends to help with weekly coffee mornings held in people's private homes, but this lapsed after the first year when it was realised that (in those pre-internet years) visitors needed more help with practical information about matters such as local schools, doctors, housing, and supermarkets. A network of contacts with accommodation agencies was built up, household equipment was made available for loan and some individuals continued to organise coffee mornings. Greta contacted every University department and research body to learn of new arrivals. For many years this was all done from her home, a flat at Southacre, a Victorian house on Latham Road, Cambridge which had been divided into 17 flats. PhD students (graduates of any University) who could become members of GradSoc were excluded but new administrative and teaching staff were welcomed, together with their families. These were people who would not necessarily belong to a college or faculty. Organised social activities such as children's Christmas parties, visits to colleges, places of interest, wine tastings and a Vice-Chancellor's party were all made possible due to the goodwill of college contacts and the membership fee. In 1964, the University, initially reluctant to be involved, had agreed to fund the group annually with £200 and Greta Burkill became the first President of the newly recognised society in 1968. The University funding meant that the membership fee could be dropped, and the President received an honorarium.

By Michaelmas 1968 the programme card was headed 'Cambridge University Society for Visiting Scholars.' The society's remit was to welcome Visiting Scholars (and their wives) to the University and provide practical information. Greta had continued to run both GradSoc and SVS until June 1968 when she resigned as President of the former, her husband, Charles, having just become Master of Peterhouse.

During this time around 750 families were being helped each year. For some years SVS and GradSoc had shared offices and secretarial help at the Grad Soc club house but, in 1968, SVS was given its own office and a secretary at 11, Botolph Lane. In 1971 Greta stepped down from SVS due to ill health. She died in 1984 at the age of 87. A list of Senior Visitors to the University from 1st January to 31st August 1971 shows 248 men and 12 women, revealing the overwhelming gender bias in the visitor numbers.

Charlotte Pippard became the second President of the SVS in 1972. She was married to Professor Brian Pippard, Professor of Physics 1971 to 1982, and President of Clare Hall from 1966 to 1973. Greta chose her because of Clare Hall's involvement with Visiting Scholars. Charlotte had served in the forces during World War II and then been to art college.

At this time several leaflets were being produced by the SVS covering four sides of A5. They offered closely printed information on education, healthcare, travel, utilities, accommodation, and useful addresses. The Society continued to provide a social programme, help with finding accommodation, English language classes and loan of furniture. When the University Centre (for Graduate students, visiting members of the University and academic staff who had no college affiliation) was opened in November 1967, it backed onto and became responsible for the house at 12 Mill Lane and the SVS was given office space in this house.

Newcomers

In 1970, new arrivals Dorothy Whittington (Botany PhD) and Joan Andrew (head of the secretarial pool with the Trades Union Congress in London before marriage) met at a function in Sydney Sussex College and found common ground in the difficulties of adjusting to a new place. Dorothy was the American wife of Harry Whittington, Professor of Geology 1966-1983. She had lived through World War II in Yangon (Rangoon) and Chentu (West China), and then moved to Birmingham (UK) and Harvard (USA). Joan, with her husband, Roger Andrew, the newly appointed Bursar of Sydney Sussex College, had previously lived in Oxford and, before that, in Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia). Both Dorothy and

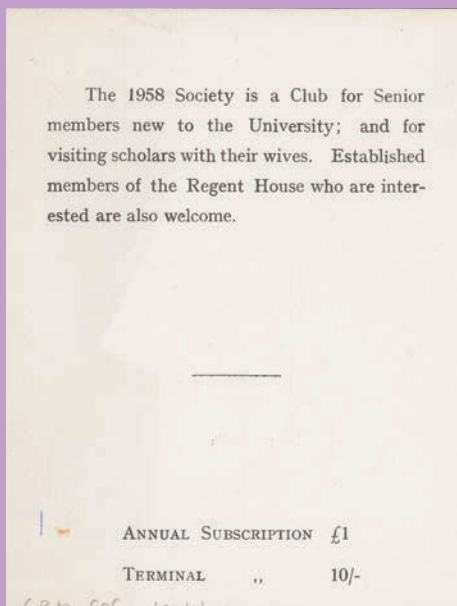
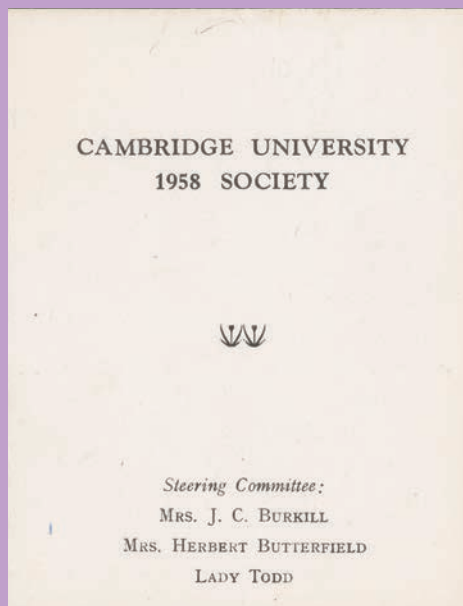
Joan had been members of Newcomers Societies at Harvard and Oxford, respectively. Feeling Cambridge needed something similar, they approached Ruth Chadwick, (wife of Owen Chadwick, Vice Chancellor 1969- 1971, and Master of Selwyn College 1956-1983) to suggest something to welcome the wives of newly appointed administrative and academic members of the University staff. At this time, SVS was concentrating on its practical support for short-term visitors, with usually only one daytime meeting a term.

Ruth Chadwick liked the idea and invited the wives of Heads of Houses to meet in the Lodge, at Selwyn College, in July 1971 to discuss what might be done to welcome the wives of new appointees to the University. Joan gave details of the Oxford Newcomers Society, Dorothy described what Harvard did, and they compared literature from both universities. Dorothy described the work being done by the SVS, under the direction of Greta Burkill, articulating that something more could be done for the wives of new appointees to the University.

This was during the 1970s, when many women gave up their careers when they had children and, with no internet, it could be exceedingly difficult to meet people with similar interests. If they had young children, they might meet at the school gates or otherwise via neighbours' coffee invitations, church groups, bridge, tennis clubs or other social clubs, but there was an element of potluck to this, and wives of new appointees could find themselves isolated and lonely.

The outcome of the meeting was that it was agreed that a neighbourhood scheme, in which Newcomers could be matched with nearby residents, would be useful. Those present agreed to find out if any of the fellows' wives from the colleges with which they were associated would be willing to assist and, by September, over 300 women had offered to help. From September to November, the names of Newcomers were obtained from the University Centre, the *Reporter* (the journal of official business of the University of Cambridge) and the SVS. Ruth Chadwick, Dorothy Whittington, Joan Andrew, and Charlotte Pippard met several times to group the volunteer Neighbours into areas within the city and its outskirts. In October 1971, a meeting took place for those who had volunteered to become Neighbours. The chair of the Oxford Newcomers came to explain their scheme and the names of Newcomers were allocated to volunteer Neighbours.

The first coffee morning was held in the University Centre on 30th November 1971, where there was an information table, a crèche, and representatives from



*Front and back of the
Cambridge University 1958
Society Membership Card*

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Margareta 'Greta' Burkill



Lady Todd



Charlotte Pippard



*Joan Andrew and
Dorothy Whittington*



Pam Ceadal

the Red Cross, Women's Voluntary Service, and several other organisations. As Joan's handwritten notes in the hard-backed A5 notebook (used for all records until the mid-1980s) declared triumphantly, 'we were off.' After this, coffee mornings were held at the University Centre every Tuesday morning in term time. People had to pay for their coffee or tea (but there was free squash for children). There is no record of rent being paid, the Centre seeming to appreciate the exposure of new people to its facilities and from the very beginning members were encouraged to stay on for lunch in the cafeteria. Meanwhile, those willing to help with the geographical matching of 'Newcomers' to 'Neighbours' met, after lunch at the Centre, to pair new arrivals with Neighbours and send out details by the University Messenger Service or post. At a morning meeting in June 1972 a committee was formed:

The positions of husbands have been recorded here as that mattered: the higher your husband was in the University hierarchy, the more influence you potentially had within the University and colleges. This made it easier to seek favours to support the group.

By this time 15 to 20 people were coming regularly to the Tuesday coffee mornings and using the information table with its details of facilities in and around Cambridge including clubs, classes, hobbies, shops, transport, and excursions. Toys were provided for the children. Neighbours were encouraged to bring their Newcomers to at least one coffee morning. During the Easter term there was a tour of Darwin College and a visit to the Country Centre on Huntingdon Road (which offered Adult Education classes in handicrafts and art).

In June, a tea party for Neighbours at the University Centre explained how the scheme worked. The city and nearby villages had been divided into 22 areas in which people had volunteered to be Neighbours.

One volunteer in each area and in the larger villages had been asked to act as a 'pairer' and, when given the name of a Newcomer, to link them with a near or appropriate Neighbour using the forms that had been devised.

By April 1972 about 450 Newcomers had been paired with a Neighbour. However, the numbers of Neighbours and Newcomers did not always match in each area and Neighbours had to be asked to go further afield. Names were obtained from the SVS file of visitors, and the *Reporter* was checked for new appointments.

In June 1972, an evening 'dips and wine' party for about 60 Neighbours was held at Christ's College to thank people for their involvement and receive a report of activities to date, which was posted to all who could not be there. From the beginning, there was immense goodwill from the partners of many Heads of Houses. These supper parties became an annual event enabling volunteers to talk about any difficulties that had arisen and to discuss ideas for improving the scheme. Everything was run in an informal way with only some agreed roles as designated in the list below.

The first ten years of the 'Newcomers Group' (NG) show a regular pattern of events with termly committee meetings, an annual supper for Neighbours, exchange visits with the Oxford Newcomers Society in alternate years, termly bring-and-buy sales to raise money and term-time coffee mornings and pairing.

Newcomers and Neighbours Committee, June 1972

President	Charlotte Pippard, (wife of Professor and President of Clare Hall) and new President of SVS
Chairman	Ruth Chadwick (wife of Vice-Chancellor, Master of Selwyn)
Vice-Chairman	Dorothy Whittington (wife of Professor, Fellow of Sidney Sussex)
Secretary	Joan Andrew (wife of Bursar, Sidney Sussex)
Hospitality – organising coffee mornings	Pam Ceadel (wife of University Librarian, Fellow of Corpus Christi)
Information	Evette Bower, Vet School researcher, (wife of Emmanuel College Fellow) Sheila Harrison (wife of Senior Tutor, Selwyn)
Newcomers	Mrs Gwen Plumley (wife of Professor of Egyptology and Fellow of Selwyn)
Neighbours	Mollie Burge (wife of Bursar, Selwyn) Nicolette Budden (wife of Professor and Fellow of St John's)
Newcomers' Rep	Vacant
Members at Large	Eva Darby (wife of Professor, Fellow of King's) Mrs Crook (wife of Fellow of St John's) Muriel Routledge (wife of Dean and Fellow of Corpus Christi)

From the beginning the January 1972 SVS programme included details of the NG coffee mornings. It was later agreed that people acting as Neighbours could attend events in the SVS programme if they did not crowd out the Visitors. By June 1973 over 1,006 cups of coffee had been served during the previous four terms, an unrecorded number of children had been given free squash and at least 400 Newcomers had been paired. The number of cups of coffee served each year has proven to be a good indicator of attendance.

A bring-and-buy sale in the 1973 summer term raised £6, which meant that the kitty held a grand total approaching £13. At this time, the NG was self-financing with no financial help from the University. Coffee mornings proved to be the most successful activity, along with trips, outings (more were requested) and tours of the colleges.

Charlotte Pippard (President of SVS) ran an experimental summer vacation programme with three day trips to different places of interest and an additional two coffee mornings. The Visitors' Book began in November 1972, and between then and June 1974, showed 308 people coming from 32 countries, with the vast majority from just five: the USA (127); Australia (40); Canada (39); the UK (25) and Japan (13). At the other end of the scale, only one person came from each of 13 countries situated in South America, Europe, Africa, and Asia. In the early years there was repeated mention of the need to continue publicising the Group, contacting new members, the mismatch of areas where Neighbours and Newcomers were living, concerns about finances and improving the pairing system. But the group continued and, in most years, served an increasing number of coffees.

There were several successful local visits but trips outside Cambridge were abandoned temporarily in 1973 with the outbreak of the Arab Israeli war and subsequent oil embargo which had led to a global fuel shortage. By June 1974 new names were being added to the committee and a member was looking after the 'Visitors' Book, analysing figures and nationalities. Another member had volunteered to oversee raising money and effectively became the first Treasurer, running raffles and the bring-and-buy sales (a novel concept to many visitors). The numbers of Neighbours fell, probably because by this time women no longer had to give up their careers upon marriage and were returning to full or part time work or to study. The NG idea of helping wives of appointees to feel more quickly at home continued, with one visitor requesting an explanation of the customs at formal events, such as proper usage of the vast array of cutlery and glasses at formal dinners.

By August 1974 Neighbours were drawn from 27 Colleges and from October the SVS was allowing the use of their office equipment and stationery and the University was giving a small annual grant, paid via the SVS, to help with postage and printing. The coffee mornings at the University Centre meant that visitors were introduced to and encouraged to use the restaurant, self-service dining room, bar, coffee bar, snooker, billiards and T.V. room within the Centre. A suggestion that people who were leaving Cambridge should be asked to donate, as in the past, unwanted items to the SVS for the use of future visitors was adopted.

A letter about the Group was prepared for fresh staff attending the University Orientation Day at the beginning of the academic year. It was also agreed to see if, in future, a coffee morning could be held in September, giving people time to enrol in Adult Education classes. An offer had been made to arrange a music group and a note was put in the programme asking people to say if they were interested in forming a new activity group. Finances were slowly building up, with £27 raised at the bring-and-buy sale, leaving about £40 in the post office account after paying for the Neighbours' party. By October 1976, NG were opening each academic year with a talk on the organisation of the University and an explanation of the Neighbourhood scheme and, while NG and SVS continued to arrange separate visits, participants overlapped. The Newcomers' Group was delighted to receive a donation of £30 from the British Council.

In the academic year 1975-1976, between 430 and 460 Newcomers were put in contact with a Neighbour and attendance at coffee mornings averaged over 50, plus children, illustrating the continuing demand for this service. A summary of the first five years, 1972-1977, shows a steadily increasing number of visitors from an ever-greater number of countries:

Year	Number of Visitors	Number of countries they came from
1972-73	122	24
1973-74	142	23
1974-75	197	31
1975-76	219	31
1976-77	260	33

Oxford continued for many years as the only exchange although there was a visit from a Nottingham University Group. Visitors and Neighbours continued to enjoy an annual party at the Vice-Chancellor's residence. At this time, Vice-Chancellors were elected from the Heads of Colleges, to serve for a two-year period, during which time their College Lodge became the official residence. It was not until 1992 that a permanent Lodge was established at Latham Road.

Every two years on 1st October the Head Porters of the respective colleges handed over the brass plaque engraved 'Vice-Chancellor's Lodge' and the silver-gilt Essex cup (presented to the Vice-Chancellor and his successors in 1598 by Robert 2nd Earl of Essex upon his election as Chancellor) which is now part of the

Vice-Chancellor's insignia. (The original resides in the Fitzwilliam Museum with a copy used at official functions.)

Each year there were around four or five new Heads of House, and the President of Newcomers would write, introducing the group and asking if any of them or their wives would be interested in helping. The Deputy Registry, on Newcomers' behalf, sent a letter to each new appointee to an academic position within the University, and SVS provided a list of everyone who had registered with them. A note was put in the *Reporter*, and the University correspondent of the Cambridge Evening News was asked to put a note in their Quarterly Supplement.

Statistics from the first 10 years

Overall, there were visitors from 52 countries, with Visitors from the USA, Australia, Canada, the UK, New Zealand, and Japan being the most numerous.

Country/Continent	November 1972 – August 1974	1980-81
USA	127	84
Australia	40	19
Canada	39	28
UK	25	22
New Zealand	7	5
Japan	13	34

Europe

Austria	3	
Denmark		2
Finland	3	1
France		1
Hungary		2
Italy	2	4
Netherlands	1	4
Norway	1	2
Switzerland	3	
West Germany	2	

Near East

Iran	4	1
Iraq		1
Israel	4	2
Jordan	2	1
Saudi Arabia		1

Far East

Hong Kong	3	1
India	4	4
Malaysia		3
Pakistan	1	
Singapore	1	1
Sri Lanka		1

Central & South America

Colombia		1
Venezuela	1	1
West Indies	2	

Africa

South Africa	5	5
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During this time, there were one or sometimes two visitors from each of Argentina, Belgium, Botswana, Egypt, Eire, Ghana, Greece, Iceland, Libya, Luxembourg, Mexico, Nigeria, Peru, Puerto Rico, Rhodesia, Sweden, Taiwan, Thailand, Turkey, and Uganda and nine were unknown.

Interestingly there were, during these first ten years, no Visitors from China.

The annual suppers to thank volunteers, held at the lodges of Heads of House, were an appreciated way of enabling Neighbours to visit buildings usually closed to them, and keep them informed as to the success of coffee mornings, results of pairings and visitors' country of origin.

Settling Down

When Charlotte Pippard stepped down in 1981, Ruth Chadwick became President of NG with Dorothy Whittington as Chairperson and Joan Andrew continuing as Secretary.

By this time, a regular pattern had been established, with many of the founding members still involved and the structure of the Group still informal.

A party to celebrate the 10th anniversary took place in March 1982 at the School of Pythagoras, (the oldest secular building in Cambridge, built around 1200 AD in the grounds of what is now St John's College) with 50 to 60 people present, including Greta Burkill. This was also an opportunity to introduce the new President of the SVS, Brigadier Michael Crosthwait, (previously Bursar of Darwin College) who continued to arrange a programme of visits, help find accommodation and sort out problems for Visiting Scholars.

In May 1983 Ruth Chadwick resigned as President of the NG when her husband retired as Master of Selwyn and was followed by Freddie Lewis who, after a science degree, had taught Maths to Adults and then brought up a family while helping establish a new college. (Her husband was the first Warden of Robinson College). People began to call for a more formal organisation and office accommodation was a continuing concern. By Lent term 1983, the programme for SVS, printed on a larger card, began with booking arrangements for visits, then information about the NG Tuesday Coffee Mornings and the bring-and-buy sale followed by details of SVS evening lectures, an afternoon visit to Cambridge Guildhall, and a lunch at the University Centre rounded off by guided tours of the colleges. The

annual supper parties for Neighbours and Newcomers continued in friendly Masters' Lodges, providing further opportunities for people to exchange ideas. In April the University allocated £100 pa to the SVS to cover the expenses incurred by the Newcomers Group.

In December 1985 some of the visitors organised an International Lunch with people bringing a dish from their own country. This went down so well that it became an annual event organised by the NG and then NVS, continuing, barring the COVID-19 years, to the present day. Initially held in Emmanuel United Reformed Church (URC) Hall, (conveniently situated at the end of Little St Mary's Lane) before moving in February 2003, when Emmanuel opened a café, to St Columba's URC Hall in Downing Place.

A record of visitors for the year 1985-86 showed that over 350 visitors were 'paired' and 253 visitors from 23 countries had come to coffee. Attendance at the weekly Tuesday morning meetings varied between 40 and 60, with fewer children of pre-school age attending, and there was a plea (again!) for Neighbours to recruit younger friends as Neighbours. In June 1987, the SVS held a lunch for about 50 people to thank the NG.

In 1989, two articles appeared in *Centre Piece* (the official journal of the University Centre, Cambridge). Issue No. 3, Easter Term, briefly mentioned the SVS while giving a full account of the NG. Issue No 5, Michaelmas Term, had an article headed 'The Society for Visiting Scholars', which mentioned the NG. Both articles explained the differences between the SVS and the NG and their joint aim of welcoming new visitors and members of the University.



International Lunch



Afternoon Tea

Moving On



Sally Williams

By the autumn of 1989, Joan Andrew felt that the NG, still with many of its original members, had settled into what she called a 'coffee klatch'. She believed that new blood was needed, so enlisted the support of Sally Williams, the wife of the incoming Vice-Chancellor and President of Wolfson College. Sally had been a Neighbour in the early 1970s but had then had a full-time career as a Senior Careers Adviser for the local education authority whilst caring for her young family. The joint approach by Joan, Sally, and others whose help they enlisted, led to a new generation of people joining the group. They drew widely on their friends and contacts, including those with current Heads of House and Sally made the most of the opportunities to meet people at numerous social occasions in her role as Vice Chancellor's wife. These contacts included the newly appointed University Chaplain, a member of the Cambridge University Press Public Relations team, the Registry and the first appointee to the new International Office. The initiative led to a closer relationship with University central offices, which has remained in place to this day.

In 1990 June Johnson who had been training as a Blue Badge Guide, needed to practise her group skills, and found enthusiastic volunteers among the visitors she had been entertaining to tea and coffee at her home. Thus did the ever-popular walking group begin. It was, however, becoming clear that a more formal structure was needed. Therefore, in March 1992 at the Annual Neighbours' Supper Party a committee

was elected comprising a mix of founding and new members. They also approved a constitution setting out the aims of the Group. There were 243 visitors in the year 1991-1992 and the 21st anniversary was celebrated in May 1992 with an evening reception at Downing College with Dorothy Whittington as guest of honour.

By the Easter term 1992, the programme for the SVS had a paragraph about the NG Coffee mornings describing it as being for 'the wives of Visiting Scholars and of new senior members of the University ... Children are welcome'. It also mentioned an extra coffee morning in September to discuss evening classes. Mention of these special meetings continued until the Easter programme 2002.

Welcome publicity came in the March/April 1993 *Newsletter* of the University of Cambridge in which details were given of the NG, describing the weekly coffee mornings attracting 50 visitors, organised by local volunteers, and totalling well over 200 visitors in a year from up to 35 different countries. It also reported on the Neighbourhood scheme and highlighted the close working relationship with the SVS, the Registry, Colleges and Departments. The report referred to a small budget from the University to help with postage and stationery but noted that it was otherwise self-sufficient and entirely run by volunteers.

Also in the Michaelmas term 1993, the *Reporter* Special No. 9 - Annual Reports, had an entry headed, 'Report of the Cambridge University Society for Visiting Scholars'. This explained that:

- The SVS provides information about accommodation, schools, etc., provides a social programme for 'those on leave from their home institutions and [who] are working in the university or one of the associated institutions for a limited period', and that in the last year, Visiting Scholars dealt with people from 63 different countries.
- The NG provides weekly coffee mornings for around 50 people and a neighbourhood scheme to match Newcomers with locals.

At the end of term several tables were reserved at the University Centre for a Christmas lunch, with the pulling of crackers being a new experience for many.

From the Lent term 1994 onwards, the programme showed a more welcoming aspect by referring to 'families of ...'. The NG steadily increased its programme of events to include the dates of the bring-and-buy sales (from 1989), September mornings giving details of part-time and evening classes (from 1992), International Lunches (from 1995), lunches at Selwyn

College Master's Lodge (from 1996), evening Discussion group (from 2001) and Book group (from 2003).

In March 1994 over 55 people were at the first designated NG AGM which included thanking Michael Crosthwait and introducing Stephen Bragg, respectively the retiring and incoming SVS Presidents. Stephen had previously been the Administrator, American Friends of Cambridge University and before that the Vice-Chancellor of Brunel University. A committee was elected and 22 people were appointed to various positions. The agenda included rules for the election and rotation of the committee, Neighbourhood scheme recruitment, (noting a decline in the use of Neighbours), rota for coffee mornings and a need for a Newcomers' Representative.

The stage was now set for change, the most important of which occurred in the Lent term 1994 when Anne Ffowcs Williams, a former journalist and co-founder of Conference Associates (the forerunner of Conference Cambridge), put the Neighbours scheme onto a computer disc. Her husband, Professor Shôn Ffowcs Williams, had donated an old computer from the Engineering Department for Newcomers to use. Anne remembers her horror at finding all the Newcomers data written on cut-up Christmas cards and trying to learn how to use the more complicated system of the SVS.



Anne Ffowcs Williams

The Newcomers' notepaper and invitation cards now read 'Newcomers, c/o the Cambridge University Society for Visiting Scholars', 12 Mill Lane, Cambridge'. The bring-and-buy sales generated £20 to £30 each term, the grant had increased from £190 in 1993 to £200 for 1994, the University was paying for stationery and there was £229 in the bank.

Anne Ffowcs Williams, as Neighbourhood Secretary, was by October 'pairing' visitors by computer, which was a particularly important change. A book club had been set up and attracted a membership of seven by the end of the academic year. The last meeting of term ended with Christmas lunch in the University Centre, following an earlier Tuesday talk about Christmas, explaining that there was no meat in mincemeat, the story behind pantomime, what to do with crackers and other British seasonal customs.

January 1995 saw the adoption of a logo to head the Newcomers notepaper, representing the global reach of the Society.



In June 1996 there was the first of what became regular and extremely popular alfresco lunches at Selwyn College Master's Lodge, organised by Sheila Harrison, (a member of the original committee in 1971), and David Harrison who had just returned to Cambridge as Master of Selwyn.



Sheila Harrison

During the 1990s there were real changes in life within and outside the University, with computers being introduced into the workplace, more women coming as Visiting Scholars and people arriving from a more diverse and broader range of countries. Those wives who had accompanied their husbands and who had had careers in their own countries were now looking for something more than a coffee morning. For NG, the lack of their own office space with storage for documentation and posters continued to be a problem. The University Estates Management Division had considered various premises but both the Accommodation Service and SVS stressed that a ground

floor reception space was essential, both for disabled people, wheelchair access and for those with prams and young children.

By 1996 there were 15 people helping with various rotas, with June Johnson and Margaret Maddock responsible for walks. Two people were running the Children's Corner which provided toys and books for under 5's. There was close co-operation with SVS (Stephen Bragg) but still no designated office space. There were some changes to the committee with Krystyna Stevenson succeeding Pam Ceadel (retiring after eight years as Treasurer and who had been involved since the start). Lindsey Payne became Secretary, and Valerie Townsend initiated and prepared a Children's Information leaflet with details of clubs, organisations, upcoming plays, and holiday activities. The June 1996 NG 25th Anniversary Reception was announced in the *Reporter* and in the *Cambridge Evening News*, (which at that time still had a specific university reporter). Over 70 people, including partners, came to the party on the West Lawn, Downing College. Tributes were paid to the co-founders Joan Andrew and Dorothy Whittington. This was the last NG event attended by Dorothy who died in August 1997.

Following concerns raised about confusion around and duplication of accommodation services, the University appointed a committee to review the role of three university agencies: the Accommodation Syndicate, the Society for Visiting Scholars, and the Property Letting Section of the Estate Management and Building Service. This resulted in the recommendation in 1997, that there should be one agency dealing with accommodation and, although the NG fell outside the remit of this review, "the Committee was most impressed by the quantity and quality of their work and would recommend most strongly that the University's support for these activities in terms of space and funding should be continued at at least their present levels, and that if possible they should be co-located with the Accommodation Service."

In 1997, for the first time, the crest of the University featured on the SVS programme, indicating a fuller regard for its status within the University. A significant step came soon afterwards in early 1998 when it was agreed that a representative from SVS should come to NG coffee mornings to sell tickets for SVS outings, rather than visitors having to call at the SVS offices at 12 Mill Lane. This weekly presence led to a much closer relationship. Stephen Bragg retired in the summer of 1997 and was succeeded by Roger Andrew. As his wife, Joan, was Chair of the NG, this again strengthened the link between the two groups.

At the helpers' party/AGM in March 1998, Anne Ffowcs Williams reported on the matching of Visitors that year and that only 60 out of 216 visitors had not been visited, which was a positive outcome. The funds were £109.59. The University was considering the location of the Accommodation Service and it was hoped that, if they were moved, Newcomers would be offered a designated office space. There was a list of committee members and volunteers, each responsible for organising the rotas for pouring coffee, staffing the welcome desk and information tables, (general, music and children), looking after toys and for door safety watch (some energetic and resourceful toddlers having recently made a bid to conduct their own unescorted tour of Cambridge whilst their mothers were chatting). Two people were responsible for organising group activities and outings. The Director of SVS continued to organise weekly visits within and outside Cambridge while NG continued with its usual programme and with weekly walks throughout the year. Nicky Blanning (Head of Accommodation Service) had been extremely helpful in allowing the use of a small office at 18 Silver Street for meetings and office work. The Neighbours' party heard that the accounts were in a healthy state (Current a/c £230.19 and Savings a/c £636.49), having gained from two donations totalling £130 plus £34.05 from the International Lunch. Coffee invitations had also been sent to 55 Senior Members new to the University whose names had been culled from the *Reporter*. Information about the group was automatically passed to everyone who arranged their accommodation through Visiting Scholars; posters were regularly distributed to Addenbrookes Hospital and there was a contact in the Medical Research Laboratories.

Before the advent of home computers, it was a massive task and perennial problem to maintain contacts across a large University with a constant turnover of employees and Visitors. Partners did not always share or act on information and requests sent to them via the University, thus limiting outreach to spouses. For many years, Mary Hannigan (a retired administrator) cycled termly to all the departments to deliver the posters.

In June 1998, Sally Williams wrote to Dr Mead, the Registry, telling him of the difficulties in contacting new Senior Members joining the University and asking if a list could be provided prior to the start of the academic year. This letter was copied to Anne Lonsdale, President of New Hall, Pro-Vice-Chancellor for External Relations, and Chair of the Accommodation Review Committee, to show that NG were indeed trying to 'reach a wider audience'. The problems with the relocation of the office continued and, after



Anne Lonsdale

a visit to 4 Trumpington Street, NG joined with the Accommodation Service and SVS in expressing critical concern over this property. Dr Mead undertook to investigate the possibility of using 12 Mill Lane instead and to review the legal position of the University Centre and 12 Mill Lane, (the Centre having recently commandeered the NG cupboard).

Contact with the Chaplain for people who worked in the University but did not have a link with a college led to several highly enjoyable gatherings at Merton Farmhouse, part of the University estate.



Nicky Blanning

1998-1999 Concerns continued both about contacting Newcomers – the University did not maintain a list - and the lack of office premises. Nicky Blanning, Head of the Accommodation Service, hoped that the three services would be together in 12 Mill Lane and continued to allow NG the use of a small office in Silver Street. By March 1999, 4 Trumpington Street had been deemed

unsuitable as well as several other premises visited at this time. The Newcomers' Group was added to the front page of the SVS Easter program. In June of that year, Nicky Blanning wrote to the Registry expressing concern about the duplication of work because of applicants applying to both the Accommodation Syndicate and the SVS, at their different addresses, thinking they were separate organisations, but also asking what was happening about premises.

The Autumn 1999/Spring 2000 edition of *The Magazine of The Cambridge Society* featured a long appreciation of the work of the SVS by Robert and Ann Newton from the USA, who had first come to Cambridge in 1970. They wrote about the help they had received in finding accommodation, borrowing an electrical transformer (to use with the cumbersome computer of that era they had brought with them) and the loan of a stroller for a visiting granddaughter. Ann was not in paid employment during this visit and lists the opportunities she enjoyed: an evening at the Cambridge University Press Bookshop (wine, canapés and a modest book discount), with the opportunity to meet other visiting scholars; a tour of Kettle's Yard; a lunch in the Old Kitchens at Trinity College followed by a guided tour of some of the Colleges; the weekly walking trips organised by the NG member, and Blue Badge guide, June Johnson, including to Grantchester and Anglesey Abbey to see the snowdrops, and a trip to the Houses of Parliament. Other activities available were visits to the Pepys Library (Magdalene College), Corpus Christi's Parker Library, to Oxford Colleges (arranged by Oxford's sister club), *Othello* at the Royal Shakespeare Theatre in Stratford upon Avon. Also trips to visit the Cambridge University Library, enjoying the International Lunch in a church hall with visitors bringing a dish from their own country, attending a garden party in Selwyn College and the termly bring-and-buy sales to raise funds to support the Tuesday coffee mornings.

A step towards obtaining official recognition came in January 2000 when, in confirming details for the International Lunch, Emmanuel URC queried whether the group was covered by the University's insurance policy. It transpired that they were not, and neither were they known to the Insurance Officer of the Finance Division! Copies of various documents including the term's programme headed 'THE SOCIETY FOR VISITING SCHOLARS INCLUDING THE NEWCOMERS GROUP' and the June 1997 report of the *Committee to Review the Role of the Accommodation Syndicate* were provided and from then on, the group was insured.

By Easter 2000 the programme, an A5 printed card read, 'UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE Society for Visiting Scholars

including The Newcomers' Group'. It gave details about the coffee mornings, the special September morning with information about enrolling for Adult Education classes, the Neighbourhood scheme, and the date of the next bring-and-buy sale. There were also details about times and cost of English classes, the equipment for loan, and the University Centre and the University Combination Room. Names were given of staff in the Accommodation Service, the President of the SVS, the NG Committee and the relevant telephone and fax numbers and office opening hours.

In October 2000 the President wrote to Anne Lonsdale, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (and Chairman of the *1997 Review of the role of the Accommodation Service, the SVS and the Property letting Service of the Estate Management*) outlining the situation. The letter explained that a change in funding by the University, together with demands on the University Centre to provide space for another society, had meant the loss of the part-time base in Silver Street, and the consequent resignation of the Neighbourhood Secretary because there was nowhere to put an offered computer. In addition, the new management at Mill Lane were asking for an unaffordable rent, which had created further issues that needed to be addressed. This led to a flurry of correspondence between the General Manager of the Centre, the Head of the Accommodation Service, the Registry, the Chair of the NG and the University Treasurer concerning the availability of rooms for the coffee mornings, office space and the language classes, together with the sensitive issue of who was to pay. Two of the Committee went to see the Treasurer, explaining that many people gave their time freely to welcome new families and staff to the University, that many visitors were not attached to a college and, while the University was seeking to widen its attraction, the NG were struggling to keep going. The NG's annual grant from the University was £250 p.a., intended to cover postage, minimal office facilities borrowed from SVS and the Accommodation Service. The University Centre room alone was £150 per morning. After it was pointed out that a considerable number of volunteers contributed to the work of the NG, with the Centre Manager valuing the footfall of NG as it exposed members to the facilities available, negotiations led to an agreement that the coffee mornings and language classes should continue without charge. There was £240 in the current account and £753 in the savings accounts, so finances were still tight. Office space continued to be a problem, with Committee meetings held at the home of the President.

A further step forward came in February 2001, with the President's request to the University Treasurer asking

if, in future, with the recent changes in the University accounting methods, NG could be listed as receiving a definite amount, although still to be administered under the 'umbrella' of the SVS and Accommodation Service. The estimated need was for £300 p.a.

The programme continued to run on the same lines, with June Johnson's walks (helped now by Diana Sutcliffe) being the activity most frequently mentioned in surveys. At the beginning of the Michaelmas term there had been no further news about office space, and it was costing 8p per letter to use the University Messenger Service.

The new committee comprised President, Sally Williams; Chair, Joan Andrew; Secretary, Lindsey Payne; Treasurer, Krystyna Stevenson; Neighbourhood Secretary, Ann Ffowcs Williams; Overseas Representatives, Sylvia Terry and Angela Cole.

Sally Broom and Tina Alexander organised the inaugural meeting of the Evening Friendship Group in October 2001 at Sally's home. This was an immense success, and the group went on to meet fortnightly in the evenings at the Grads Cafe in the University Centre. After two years it transitioned to become the Book Group. Draft copies of a proposed amended Constitution had been given to all members of NG along with the programmes at the beginning of the Michaelmas term and, with no further comments received, it was agreed that the Constitution should be presented for formal acceptance at the next AGM in 2002. It was also reported that a computer had been purchased.

In November 2001, a 'Feasibility Study for the Relocation of the Accommodation Service' showed significant misunderstandings and inaccuracies in relation to the work of the Accommodation Service, its links with the SVS and NG and the volume and type of visitors. Its suggestion that the Accommodation Service move from 18 Silver Street to three floors at 12 - 13 Mill Lane being utterly impractical, the search for premises continued. In early 2002, the President of NG, the Head of the Accommodation Service and the President of SVS met with the Registry and it was agreed that NG could have a share of a room in Mill Lane, allowing the setup of the computer. A proposal that a t-shirt with NEWCOMERS be printed in varying languages proved difficult to implement as not all languages had a similar word for Newcomers. The amended Constitution was presented for adoption at the AGM. There had been a complaint to the Accommodation Service that a husband had felt unwelcome at a coffee morning and the couple had felt discouraged from going on visits. After enquiries, unfortunately it did transpire that some



Knitting Group

members of the Welcome desk had not realised that times had indeed changed, and that NG was now a service for all family members – not just wives. An article about NG appeared in a Japanese publication written by NG representative Waltraud Oka revealing the group's world appeal. At the Annual Helpers' Party / AGM in March 2002, the Secretary reported that Visitor numbers had dropped to 164 the previous year, a trend that was continuing, with so far that year only 108 new visitors to coffee compared to 116 at the same stage the previous year. Visitor numbers had fluctuated over the years, sometimes due to economic circumstances in other countries. More significantly, with the advent of many more working wives, more women were now Visiting Scholars in their own right and, if the sabbatical was a short one, more husbands were coming unaccompanied.

The year's social events included a family picnic in May at Wimpole Hall, outside Cambridge. The Treasurer's report showed a healthy position, with £283.05 in the Current and £762.57 in the Savings accounts. The University Treasurer had been persuaded to give NG a grant of £300 for the academic year, administered through the SVS with a view to agreeing a permanent arrangement for succeeding years.

The Neighbourhood Secretary's report explained that the loss of the office in Silver Street meant that it was difficult for her and her helpers to meet after the coffee mornings to undertake the administrative work of pairing 'Newcomers' with 'Neighbours'. She explained that she had to work from home using a simplified computer system and send out cards rather than letters. The reduction in the number of visitors, together with more working wives, meant that only 96 visitors had been contacted that year. However, her aim was still to 'Neighbour' wives with children and, despite the reduction in visitor numbers, NG continued to receive some incredibly positive feedback.

The Chair introduced the draft Constitution, explaining that the Committee felt that the objectives and needs of the NG would be more readily recognised by the University if there were a written Constitution. After discussion, it was agreed that a rewritten draft would be circulated to all.



Conversation Group

The Lent Term 2003 programme had evolved into a larger A4 folded card that gave equal prominence to all three services on the front page. It included the names and contact details of all the people involved, together with the email of the Accommodation Service and the address of the University website. After the usual mix of events organised by SVS and NG, information was also provided about the Accommodation Service, English classes, equipment for loan, and facilities available at the University Centre and University Combination room.

By January 2004, the University website under 'Information for Visitors' was giving brief details about the NG coffee mornings, Neighbourhood Scheme, walks and the book discussion group. In April, the University Resource Management Committee allocated £300 for 2003/2004 with the promise of the same amount for 2004/2005.

In 2004 following the successful changes in the Committee and Constitution, Sally Williams felt it was time for a new person to lead the NG. When Lord Wilson of Dinton (Richard) had become Master of Emmanuel College in 2002, she had talked about the NG with his wife, Caro, but at that time Caro had other commitments – she had had a varied teaching career in further education, Stoke Mandeville Hospital's school service and finally working with children with speech and language impairments. By 2004 Caro had relinquished these responsibilities and agreed to become the next President of NG.

With the expansion in size of the University, it was becoming increasingly difficult to reach Newcomers. In May 2005, the President invited representatives of departments and colleges to a lunch at Emmanuel College to hear about the aim of the Group to reach more visitors and enhance the quality of the visitors' stay in Cambridge. The subsequent questionnaire showed that visitors were most frequently coming from Europe and North America, and that they were confused about the roles of the three groups and found inadequate communication with poor contact information. The Committee resolved to make more use of electronic communication and, building on these new contacts, continue to work towards greater integration of the three organisations, with high-quality accommodation



Craft Group



Pub Visit



Summer Party



Tour with a Blue Badge Guide

for all activities. Letters were sent to Kate Pretty (Pro-Vice-Chancellor) and Anne Lonsdale (Chair of Enquiry) outlining plans for SVS and NG to combine and run alongside the Accommodation Service. Although the idea of amalgamation was very unpopular with some of the founding members of the NG, negotiations continued about accommodation and in September 2005 it was confirmed that the Accommodation Service, SVS and the NG would all move to Kellet Lodge, a central location on Tennis Court Road.

2005-2006 was a particularly important year when, in the Easter term, the University Council ratified the amalgamation of the SVS and NG into a new organisation to be called Newcomers and Visiting Scholars (NVS) with a new Constitution and new Committee structure. It was to be supported by the Accommodation Service, to work closely with the new International Service and to be run by a committee comprising a Chair, Vice-Chair, Treasurer, Secretary, Neighbourhood Secretary, a Visitors' Representative, and the Director of Visiting Scholars, with further co-opted members as required. The Committee was charged with the responsibility of proposing a name at the AGM of a candidate to be President. With the increase in size and alterations in the management of the University it was judged that a senior figure needed to be involved with the new society. This was to be an honorary position for a senior member within the University, with the person invited to all functions and able to be called upon for support, advice, and guidance. Existing activities were to continue, with additional ones added as appropriate and it was recorded that the committee would call upon a team of volunteer helpers.

There were discussions about the structural changes necessary for the future – the proposed role of Vice-Chair, length of term of office of committee members and the names of the three organisations.

A letter and questionnaire asked the partners of Heads of Houses if they could help by enabling small group visits or hosting the annual AGM. The results of the questionnaire were tabled, and a working group was set up to look at the future.

The Visitors' Book, for the coffee mornings in 2005–2006, was signed by 186 people from 40 different countries. (In the previous academic year there had been 143 people from 32 different countries). The three largest groups were (previous year in brackets) from Japan 41 (23), with 36 (34) from the USA and 18 (12) from China.

In June 2006, Joan Andrew's retirement after 35 years of devoted service as Co-Founder, Secretary and Director of the NG was marked by a lunch in the Emmanuel College Master's Lodge when the Vice-Chancellor presented a specially commissioned certificate. The occasion was attended by her family and many longstanding members of the group.

Earlier in the year Sally Williams had introduced Liz Reeve of the Cambridge University Press to the NVS which led to the Press not only giving a generous grant but also designing and producing new posters and invitations for Michaelmas 2006.

The New Combined NVS



Kate Pretty

The new combined NVS began life in 2006-2007 with Dr Kate Pretty, (Principal of Homerton College and Pro-Vice-Chancellor) as President, Caro Wilson as Chair and Joan Andrew as Honorary Patron. Although still in black and white, the cover of the Michaelmas term programme, for the first time, featured photographs (King's College Chapel and Queens' Mathematical Bridge). The programme integrated much of the former NG programme, and mentioned the Neighbourhood scheme, as well as an August morning providing early information about Adult Education classes and the Book Group. Later in the year there was a Shrove Tuesday Pancake Party and a bead working demonstration by a Japanese visitor. In February, at the annual Helpers Party/AGM, a presentation was made to Joan Andrew, marking her devoted service to the NG over many years. A summer barbecue was held at Merton Hall Farmhouse, courtesy of the University Chaplain. Janet Edwards was elected to continue as Secretary (combined with being Vice Chair).

In May there was a visit to the Oxford Newcomers Club who had celebrated their fiftieth anniversary. In January, NG had sent a letter of congratulation commenting on their premises and saying, "but if we had a room or two of our own there is much more we could do."

In that year, the three largest groups of visitors were again from Japan (43), the USA (26) and China (23). Newcomers from other countries included six from Mexico and Australia, five from Brazil, Korea, and the UK, four from Belgium, three from Austria, and two from Iran and Poland.

Building on the developments of the previous year, the format of the traditional AGM-with-party was altered,

with the two functions split, the AGM now being held after a Tuesday coffee morning and a thank-you party now held in the summer for the Neighbours and Volunteers. Mrs Anne Lonsdale (Deputy Vice-Chancellor from 2003 and Pro-Vice-Chancellor for External Relations from 1998) invited NVS to the first such garden party at New Hall in the summer.

In February 2008, the first new-style AGM was held at noon in the University Centre. More than 50 people were present, with Dr Kate Pretty, as President, in the Chair. Appreciation was expressed to Christopher Stevenson, President of SVS 2004-2006 and then Director of NVS 2006-2008 who, together with his wife Krystyna, had organised many successful visits. The Committee had worked to increase the variety of Tuesday morning activities which had included bagpipers, a brass band, trying on academic dress and love songs.

Thanks were given to people who helped in numerous ways on Tuesday mornings with the welcome desk, coffee rota, information tables and supervising the door to ensure there were no more toddler escapes. The weekly walks had continued including a Christmas visit to Grantchester, with between 12 and 15 visitors taking part. The Book club met monthly in term time, and a new weekly initiative of a Craft Group with up to 13 embroiderers and knitters meeting weekly at Kellet Lodge. This was so popular that it quickly divided into two. There was a tea party at Homerton College (hosted by the Principal, Kate Pretty) to thank the more than 30 volunteers who had been involved in running the NVS.

The NVS, now settled in Kellet Lodge, with committee meetings sometimes held in Fitzwilliam House, courtesy of the International Office, and sometimes in Emmanuel College Master's Lodge. Some coffee mornings had been held in the University Sports and Social Club, (Mill Lane) where it had been difficult to carry pushchairs and toddlers up the stairs. Financially the two accounts had increased, and the University had increased the annual grant. Kate Pretty, Tao Tao Chang (International Office), Nicky Blanning, Caro Wilson, and Janet Edwards had met the new Registrar, Dr Jonathan Nicholls, to discuss ways forward for NVS. He agreed to write to all departments requesting that they inform visitors, ahead of arrival, of the NVS, (a practice already started by the Law Faculty). The Accommodation Service continued to provide a great deal of support. The Cambridge University Press had generously donated the cost of reprinting a supply of posters at the start of the academic year and the University Messenger Service was doing a mail drop at the start of the Michaelmas and Lent terms to all the buildings they visited.

NVS continued to aim for two visits per term outside Cambridge, two to colleges, two to places such as museums and two to university events.

Christopher Stevenson's successor, Liz Hodder, was introduced in the summer of 2008 at a retirement lunch when a presentation was made to Christopher.

Liz had retired as Deputy Director of the Equal Opportunities Commission, been an Ombudsman, a tourist guide for Cambridge city and authored *The Book of Old Tarts*, (a history of baking). Coffee invitations continued to be sent to all visiting academics notified to NVS by the Accommodation Service and departments.

Anne Lonsdale CBE retired as President of Murray Edwards (formerly New Hall) College. She had been incredibly supportive of NG, and then NVS. With the increasing size, complexity, and awareness of its international profile the importance of having a 'friend at court' had become clear and Kate Pretty, a long-time supporter of Newcomers and the Principal of Homerton College, remained NVS President until 2013.

Autumn 2008 saw the introduction of a fresh style programme, on two sides of A4 paper, still black and white, with a single larger photo of the Mathematical Bridge. The term began with a welcome from Liz Hodder. Several new developments included coffee mornings throughout the vacations, a visit to a local pub after evensong at King's College Chapel, and a talk or activity every Tuesday morning. At the last meeting of term, the University Brass Band played and there was a visit from Father Christmas with toys for the children. There were nine visits, including to the Oxford and Cambridge Varsity match. Details were given in the programme about the Cambridge University Press, Accommodation Service and the University Centre, free English lessons, (run by qualified volunteers), equipment for loan and the University Combination Room.

In February 2009, the Chair and Director asked administrators and faculty secretaries to a tea at Emmanuel College Master's Lodge to share some of the committee's ideas and plans, followed a week later by the AGM at the University Centre, with Kate Pretty in the Chair. Kate Pretty expressed the gratitude of the University for all that was done by NVS and said that a venue in West Cambridge was being sought so that NVS could reach out to those living there. Financially, NVS was no longer running on a small budget, with a balance in the current account of £887.49 and £1401.19 in the savings account. Although a Neighbourhood Secretary

was appointed, the last mention in the programme of the Neighbourhood scheme was Easter 2007.

The weekly walks led by June Johnson remained a highlight of the week as mentioned in the feedback forms. The Book Group continued to meet monthly in the Senior Combination Room and the Craft Group was well established in Kellet Lodge. The office base continued at Kellet Lodge with good support from the staff. Committee meetings were regularly held in the Master's Lodge at Emmanuel, as was the December coffee morning. The Cambridge University Press continued in their support, with Heidi Mulvey extremely helpful in considering the best way to proceed with publicity. Development of the website was identified as a priority.

At the AGM the Director, Liz Hodder, suggested that time should be allowed for a social element at the end of outings, such as a cup of tea or a visit to a pub and that NVS were looking at how to work more closely with others in the international field. Work with the Cambridge University Press had highlighted the need to improve the group's presentation and website as well as to establish a Facebook page.

The University's growing focus upon outreach and widening participation now extended to include NVS. Kate Pretty as President acknowledged, on behalf of the University, the work done by NVS in this regard, saying that 30% of the University's employees were now coming from abroad and the need for the group's work would not diminish.

The Easter term 2009 programme drew attention to the University's 800th anniversary campaign and listed local and University websites, rather than telephone numbers. Also mentioned were the walks, book and craft groups, book lending scheme, an extra International Lunch at the West Cambridge Community room (providing a chance to see the new building) and the informal coffee meetings outside term. At the beginning of term, a large reception was held at Corpus Christi College for College, University, International Office, and University Centre Staff to raise awareness of NVS. A party for Volunteers was hosted in July at Girton College by Marilyn Strathern.

For the first time the programme asked that visitors ensure NVS had their email address or kept updated via Facebook. Michaelmas 2009 saw the introduction of a brightly coloured, extremely attractive programme on two sides of glossy A4 paper, beginning with a photo of Trinity College Gatehouse and printed 'Newcomers and Visiting Scholars' and 'University of Cambridge 800 years

1209 - 2009'. The back page had brief information about coffee mornings throughout the year, the Book and Craft groups and a (new) Film Group, English conversation, Facebook, the email newsletter, contact address and telephone numbers. Inside, the programme listed 20 events, talks and outings.

When Caro Wilson stepped down as Chair in 2010, she had successfully overseen the amalgamation of Visiting Scholars with the Newcomers Group, moving the new organisation to office space at Kellet Lodge, a new Constitution, a more open approach to innovative ideas, the introduction of more morning talks and an increasing number of group activities.

In September that year Caro handed over to Sibella Laing (wife of a former diplomat, now Master of Corpus Christi College). Sibella had worked for the British Council, learnt Arabic, and worked as an EFL teacher, before becoming a teacher trainer, while living in half a dozen Middle Eastern countries as well as Brussels, Prague, and Brunei.

Caro told how she had felt uprooted six years previously on coming to Cambridge but becoming involved with NVS had led to new friends and a new structure to life and she hoped this was true for all our visitors. After thanking everyone who had helped, she particularly mentioned Janet Edwards (Secretary – who was handing over to Marilyn Fersht) and the Accommodation Service, specifically Nicky Blanning and Julie Darsley.



Sibella Laing (white jacket) giving a group tour



Julie Darsley

Caro presented NVS with an old-fashioned handbell to help draw everyone's attention to the next activity and emphasised how all the activities would have been impossible without many volunteers.

Communication with Visitors had fundamentally changed. Posters were still sent out at the start of the Michaelmas and Lent terms via the University Messenger Service (UMS), but an increasing number of people were finding NVS electronically as the group had become more visible on the University website. More than 200 people had signed up to the NVS Facebook page, the Director was emailing a weekly newsletter, and the Overseas Representative was sending a welcoming email to all newly-arrived and registered visitors. Paper invitations to coffee were still being sent to visiting academics whose departments had informed NVS of their arrival. In an evaluation exercise, visitors expressed appreciation of all the activities, mentioning the music table, and the opportunities to network, to improve their spoken English, and to find out about Cambridge and other visitor's countries. It was also suggested that more men should be encouraged to attend, and there should be greater opportunities to hear about other cultures. In addition, speakers should try to speak slowly, loudly, and clearly!

Financially the group was in a healthy state, with almost twice as much in the current account as the year before, due to a particularly successful raffle of a blanket made by Janet Edwards, which had raised just over £2,200. Income had also come from bring-and-buy sales, donations and fees for trips and events. Outside trips were not planned to be money-raising but it was intended that they should not run at a loss. Expenditure from this account covered gifts (usually a bottle of wine) and fees to speakers and hosts, toys and books for the Children's Corner, files for the information tables and a new banner. The Director said that the redesigned and professionally printed new publicity material was much appreciated. NVS was now trying to link the Tuesday talks with a subsequent event, such as a talk about the Boat Race followed by a visit to a boat house. A highlight had been a visit to the Victorian evening at Emmanuel College. Departments and Colleges continued to be generous with their time.

At the AGM Kate Pretty thanked Caro for her hard work in continuing the momentum of NVS and for ensuring that it continued to answer the changing needs of Visitors. She said that the University recognised and valued the part NVS plays, and she hoped the University would continue to provide the financial support needed. The devotion of members, often over many years, was recognised. Presentations were made to Caro (2004-

2010) and Janet Edwards, retiring as Secretary, after five years. Janet was also the mainstay of the knitting group running throughout the year, she herself knitting many garments and blankets for sale for funds for the group.

The University published a leaflet: 'Newcomers and Visiting Scholars Group Activities 2010-2011' which listed groups for learning English language, Crafts, Book Reading, Walking, Cinema and French conversation for mothers and young children. It also encouraged the setting up of new groups. Scottish country dancing was introduced by Sibella Laing in November 2010 and proved immensely popular with NVS and Postdoc Society members. Visiting a pub after a service at King's College continued to be enjoyed.

By 2011 the Director was concerned about how NVS was adapting to meet the changing needs of those approaching NVS and, as most were by then familiar with the internet, a top priority had been to improve the website. The Facebook page had grown from having no members in 2008 to 300 and there was an increasing collection of photos showing members involved in activities. Tuesday morning coffee attracted more than 70, with the mix of a short talk followed by time for a conversation having been well received and the information tables were heavily used. Groups continued to grow and now included Cinema, French classes for the young (plus parents), Tai Chi, Yoga and Dancing while the Book and Walking Groups continued to be extremely popular. The Craft Group on the West Cambridge site was at this time particularly well attended. Afternoon tea in people's homes continued to be a highlight. Newsletters and information about events were regularly exchanged with the Graduate Union and the Postdoc Society. The grant from the University had increased in four years from a few hundred to a few thousand pounds until in 2011-2012 it rose further to £7,500.

The 40th Anniversary was celebrated in February 2011 by a luncheon after the AGM at the University Centre and in June by a Tea at Lucy Cavendish. Sally Williams, as a former Chair, talked about the history of NVS, mentioning some of the older members, including Joan Andrew, (one of the two founders). In June, a talk about the Bumps was followed by a visit to those races. A children's Jubilee party was held at Leckhampton (a house and large gardens belonging to Corpus Christi College), which was so popular that it became an annual event. By the time of the summer party in 2011, there were 51 regular volunteers.

The new slogan, 'Turn up for Tuesdays', featured prominently on the front page of the Easter 2012 programme. Inside, both pages had photographs and

information about Tuesday mornings, which regularly included a speaker, along with website and Facebook details. The back page listed 12 talks, visits, coach trips and parties. The Director was sending out a weekly e-newsletter. Out of term, Tuesday coffee mornings continued to be held in the Grads Cafe at the University Centre, hosted by local volunteer members.

Joanna Womack became Treasurer of NVS in 2012, having joined as a volunteer after her retirement as Treasurer of the University of Cambridge (1993-2003).

NVS switched its accounts to match the University year, running from 1st August 2012 to 31st July 2013. The grant, fixed initially for three years in October 2012, was increased to take account of the expansion of NVS and closer links with OPdA (the Office of Postdoctoral Affairs) and Pdoc (Postdocs), which at that time were two separate societies. The bring-and-buy sales brought in £1,345.39 that year. The University grant of £11,000 included the Director's honorarium, office costs, printing, telephone, computer maintenance, the NVS banner, refreshments, room hire and support of various groups, including Art, Crafts, Yoga, Cookery, and Art and Reading for Children.

The alternate yearly visits with the Oxford NVS ended in May 2013 after an unfortunate incident when some silver cutlery went missing in Oxford. In July, during an afternoon tea party at Selwyn College, special thanks were given to Kate Pretty who was retiring as President. Gwen Borysiewicz (a former GP and wife of the Vice-Chancellor) succeeded her.

New Relationship. In 2013 NVS was asked by the Registry and the Vice-Chancellor to consider joining forces with the newly formed OPdA (Office of Postdoctoral Affairs) in the creation of new offices to be shared by both organisations. After many negotiations and much work, both groups were given permission to move their offices into 16 Mill Lane, although it was shortly due for demolition. Furniture was begged and borrowed from colleges, departments, and friends and, although it was seen as a short-term decision, the Director's office is still there in 2023. Opening in May 2014, the centre comprised a library, seminar rooms and meeting spaces as well as a base for NVS, OPdA and the Postdocs of Cambridge Society. It also meant it was possible for NVS to hold talks, parties, craft activities, meetings, and children's activities independently of the University Centre. This was the first of three centres for postdocs with others following in Eddington and the Biomedical Campus. With offices in the same building, much closer working with the PostDoc Committee was now possible.

During the year, as well as the usual activities and visits, the evenings of Scottish country dancing, held at the University Centre, continued to be popular. During the year 2013-2014, the new groups of Cambridge Connect, Cookery and After School were added, together with 'Tea 'n Tumble' at Corpus Christi Master's Lodge providing an opportunity for parents with young children to meet, with the existing groups of book, cookery, craft, and film continuing.

During the next year, 2014-15, the 9.45 Tuesday morning English conversation classes continued to grow in popularity, with the classes often linked to the 11.15 am talks that followed, with coffee available from 10.30 a.m. This left time to end the morning with discussion. The autumn bring-and-buy sale was replaced by a combined Christmas Fair, auction, carols, and mince pies in Corpus Christi Master's Lodge. The numbers enjoying the activities grew substantially at this time and it became necessary to add more events to the published programme so there was something for people arriving later in the term. New groups had started in Nordic Walking, Drawing and Craft. (Craft groups have come and gone over the years, with knitting a constant.) NVS was by now sharing premises with the new Office of Post Doctoral Affairs (OpDA) and they joined in launching a specialised evening lecture series on the history of Cambridge. These were well attended but, after the first two lectures on 'Medieval Cambridge' and 'The Revolution of the Dons', it became clear there was now too much competition from other societies, and they were too costly to continue.

There had been a 50% increase in usage of Facebook and the NVS webpage, with online bookings for lectures being trialled. Several outings were arranged in conjunction with the Post Doc Society. The committee bought a new electric piano to use with activities in the 'Bunker', as the basement office and activities space was known. By March there were 900+ members on Facebook and over 400 registered on the website, with China, Japan, and America the most strongly represented of the 43 nationalities.

A particularly inspiring talk in March 2015 on 'The Making of the Masters' Wives' Quilt of 1892' led to the NVS Quilt Project launched during the Easter term 2015 by Janet Edwards and Andrea Bronskill. Cotton squares were provided for members to embroider something of personal significance such as a college crest, an emblem of their home country or a favourite Cambridge scene. Over the next 18 months, 88 squares by 80 people from 25 countries were finished and assembled. The resulting quilt won two prizes at the 2017 Sandown Quilt Show – Best Group Quilt and Best Rookie (First) Quilt. This

was an amazing result for Janet and Andrea who had organised, encouraged, and persisted with the idea and a lovely outcome for all the embroiderers. A canvas copy was made to hang in the University Centre Dining Hall and the original is hanging on display in the Eddington Postdoc Academy building. A booklet was produced about the people who had contributed to its making.

The University grant amounted to £15,000 and, with the bring-and-buy sale, sale of knitted articles and a small charge for events contributing around £5,000, expenditure was almost the same as income with only a small deficit of £58.98, which was due to a loss on trips. Most of the University Grant went on running the group, which included the Director's Honorarium, office costs, the printing of publicity materials, brochures, and invitations. The Society had reserves of over £8,000 which were being kept for the costs of expansion into the NW Cambridge site. Nicky Chaplin became Secretary. Concerns were raised about communications, especially regarding the new e-mail list, newsletter versus weekly communication (with a view to co-ordinating communication), electronic registration, IT needs and coffee quality.

Liz Hodder felt that, after seven years and considerable change, it was time to hand over to a new Director and said she would be leaving at the end of September. In July, a party for members was hosted at Great Shelford by Laurel Powers-Freeling, in her own home, when a farewell presentation was made to Liz. In September 2015 there was a promotional lunch for key University administrative personnel, as had happened some years earlier.

The Director's Report at the AGM looked back on seven productive years, ranging from the realisation that the Lecture Series costs, initially supported by OPdA, would be difficult to cover in future and were in competition with many other free lectures, to the fact that a number of events were at that point perennial traditions. These included visits to the Newmarket Races, tours of the Ascension Cemetery, the Saturday Singing Workshop, and the Christmas Fair with carol singing and appearance of Father Christmas in Corpus Christi Master's Lodge. Some groups only lasted as long as the Visitor organiser was in Cambridge, but others were firmly established and the Language group enjoyed increasing popularity, with its links to the topics on the NVS programme. Closer working with the PostDoc committee had followed their co-location. Much of the essential behind-the-scenes organisation depended on the Accommodation Service in the persons of Julie Darsley in the office and Nicky Blanning, the Head of Accommodation. Tom Baer (previously of the Psychology department) who had

been running the children's corner for several years became the first man to join the committee.

Jane Luzio (for 21 years an administrator in the Engineering Department and wife of a former Master of St Edmund's College) became Director in September 2015 and brought an innovative approach to the first coffee morning in October. After the welcome and talk about the programme, visitors were free to meet with the group leaders, who were placed around the room, and to look at the information tables covering musical events, things to do in and around Cambridge and activities for children. The groups now included Art classes, Book Group, Cambridge Connect, a Choir, trips to the Cinema, Cookery Get-togethers, Knitting, Craftwork, English Language, Tea Parties, Cultural Discussion and, of course, Walking. An Adult Art class and Yoga were added in the Lent term 2016 and outings continued to be made outside and within Cambridge.

Sibella was also coming to the end of her six-year term as chair. She had undertaken a search and Laurel Powers-Freeling (a Management Consultant and wife of the President of Hughes Hall) had agreed to stand for election to the committee at the October AGM, with Sibella remaining as Chair until the end of December. People had been able to meet Laurel when she hosted a party for volunteers at her home in the summer.

In her leaving speech, Sibella spoke of her happy years as Chair, the support of the committee, the steady expansion of NVS over the years and the development of relationships with OPdA, the PostDoc Society and other University communities on which it was by then represented. The International Students' office had also asked for their families to be included in activities.

Sibella had been extremely generous with her time and college facilities, arranging Tea 'n Tumble, the Christmas event, Art classes for adults, plus the children's summer party at Leckhampton. She had also introduced Scottish Country Dancing and phased out the fundraising bring-and-buy sales.

By October 2015, there were 1124 Facebook members, and a weekly Newsletter was being sent to all who had signed up, giving details of forthcoming events in the town as well as the University.

At the AGM in October 2015, the President, Gwen Borysiewicz, explained that developing the NW Cambridge campus would continue for one to two years and thanked members for their help during the past momentous year.

In February Laurel Powers-Freeling as new Chair drew on her Management Consultancy background and emailed all volunteers inviting them to think about three ways NVS could enhance what it offered to participants and three things that were a worry or risk to NVS delivering. Members handed in comments ahead of a lunchtime workshop. The most crucial point to emerge was the need to continue recruiting younger members, a recurring theme since the early days of NVS. Of greater importance this consultation led to a strategy workshop to form the basis for a Five-Year Plan for submission to the University for increased funding.

By June 2016, the list of volunteers numbered 54 including Joan Andrew, now aged 96.

In June, the Vice-Chancellor issued a statement about the EU referendum result (Brexit) saying there would be no immediate effect on the way the University conducted its business. In the summer term, due to exams being held in the University Centre, meetings were held in Darwin College.

The Michaelmas Term 2016 programme listed fourteen group activities, seven Tuesday morning talks, a Christmas Fair at Corpus Christi College, 9 outings together with a Tea 'n Tumble for parents with very young children and an evening of Scottish Country Dancing with supper.

At the November AGM, President Gwen Borysiewicz began by commenting that a new Chair and Director had meant new skills and changes and it was important that NVS should work more closely with OPdA and play a part in the development of NW Cambridge. The Chair, Laurel Powers-Freeling, talked about the continued expansion of NVS with 1300 places offered at 37 events.

Jane Luzio thanked OPdA for their support during her first full year. She described how OPdA hoped to do more at Addenbrookes Bio-medical campus and would appreciate volunteers. She also described the development of the new Homepage with a drop-down menu, but worried that on-line booking had not initially proved popular. Plans were now available for the NW Cambridge site. The replacement of one Visitor representative by several country representatives had worked well (with more needed); the walks continued to be really popular, and the information tables were well used. More volunteers were needed to help with registrations at the English classes and to accompany some of the visits. Thanks were given to all the volunteers and the Accommodation Service.

During the next two terms there were visits as before with, in addition, a performance by the Choir in Corpus



Christ's College Garden Tour

Christi Chapel, and Morris Dancing. Before the talks, slides were being shown listing current and upcoming activities.

Joan Andrew's last morning at NVS was the Christmas Fair in December 2016. She died in March 2017, aged 96. Her memorial service was held in Sidney Sussex Chapel later that month.

The Constitution, which had been ratified by the University Council in the Easter Term 2006 and amended in Lent Term 2012, was amended again in Lent Term 2017. It set out clear guidelines for the election of committee members and officers at the AGM. With exception of the Director and Treasurer, they were to serve for a term of three years, with the possibility of re-election, normally for a maximum of a further three years. The Director and Treasurer were to serve ex-officio and remain on the committee until they ceased to hold qualifying office. Further committee members could be co-opted as required.

Activities continued during the Easter term, with a list of 11 events and 13 groups, together with email addresses and an invitation to visit the new facilities at the Northwest Cambridge site in September. Coffee mornings continued in the University Centre throughout the summer along with 'From Spade to Plate' mornings, weekly Picnics in the Park and the Knitting group run by Janet Edwards, which continued all year.

The Vice-Chancellor invited NVS to the opening in September 2017 of the new Postdoc Centre at Eddington, Northwest Cambridge, where NVS was one of the groups thanked for their contribution in fulfilling the vision of the Office of Postdoctoral Affairs and to the establishment of the postdoc centres. (The Addenbrookes Bio-medical campus having opened in 2013, followed by Mill Lane in 2014).



NVS Chior

An immensely popular new initiative at the beginning of term was a 4:00 p.m. 'Families Welcome' party followed in subsequent terms by a morning session of 'Tea and Toys' for parents with babies and small children.

The Adult Art class had ended in December, but every other group continued and during the year there were eleven visits to colleges, a Halloween Ghost tour, Christmas Fair, International Lunch, Scottish Dancing, Leckhampton Garden Party and visits to Ousden House Gardens, Ickworth with Aldeburgh and two visits to Newmarket Races (one during the summer vacation). It was agreed that the Roland keyboard purchased for activities in 16 Mill Lane be moved to Eddington.

In October Gwen Borysiewicz said she was stepping down as President after four years. The Chair remained Laurel Powers-Freeling, with Sarah Maskell as Vice-Chair. Sue Green stood down after six years on the committee, having been particularly involved in the events for Families and Children and co-ordinating the summer weekly Picnics in the Park. The Treasurer reported a healthy balance with nothing yet spent on new office space at Eddington.

In November 2017 Laurel Powers-Freeling resigned with immediate effect (to become UK chairperson of Uber). A search group was set up and Marilyn Fersht (a previous Secretary) joined the committee as Acting Vice Chair to support Sarah Maskell as Acting Chair for the rest of the academic year (until Sarah moved away with her husband, Duncan, as he became the new Vice Chancellor of the University of Melbourne, Australia). Marilyn then became Chair until Amanda Farnsworth (formerly Head of Visual and Data Journalism at BBC News) agreed to become the next Chair. The administrative needs continued to grow, and the Treasurer proposed an application for £12,000 be made in the funding bid for 2018-2019. Because of the increase in the activities provided, Nicky Blanning was

concerned that the Administrative Assistant's contract, meant to be one day for NVS and three days with the Accommodation Office, had recently worked the other way around. It was asked whether there could be more help from volunteers or whether this could, or should, be paid for. It was agreed to hold at least one NVS meeting in the Easter term at Eddington as there was easy access via the Park and Ride service or the University bus, and some participants of the activities lived in Eddington.

During this year there were 10 visits to colleges and/or their gardens, a ghost tour, Christmas Fair, Scottish dancing, Newmarket Races, Fitzwilliam Museum, Museum of Cambridge, termly Tea 'n Tots, Families Welcome, Art and Reading for young children, summer party at Leckhampton, three coach trips, the Vice-Chancellor's reception, a Choir workshop and performance, and a pub visit after a chapel evensong. In January 2018 there were 63 volunteers, including three men, who, between them, were responsible for serving coffee, supervising tables for welcome/registration, music, general and children's information, the children's corner, and the door watch.

In June 2018, Amanda Farnsworth, (the new Chair), Christine Corton (an author and wife of the President of Wolfson College), as Vice-Chair, and the Committee met. It was reported that the weekly newsletter was now distributed via Mailchimp and in accordance with the latest Data Protection requirements everyone had been contacted to check if they wished to remain on the list. The Director was continuing to use PowerPoint for Tuesday presentations and it was hoped to use Ticket Source for future event booking. A new layout was agreed for the termly programme and Andrea Bronskill became the coordinator for NVS photographs. It was hoped to have five more DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) checks of volunteers by the end of the next academic year, and the NVS laptop was to be replaced. Julie Darsley, officially of the Accommodation Service but who, for many years, had been the main administrative support of NVS, retired and was thanked for all her



Art Group

support, efficiency, and cheerfulness. She promptly became a Volunteer! NVS had received its annual grant from the University but the bid for additional funding for part-time administrative support had been turned down.

The committee was concerned with the need for NVS to be more widely known and valued across the University and the need for evidence. Fewer visits beyond Cambridge were made that year, but the programme included visits to ten colleges, often preceded by a relevant Tuesday morning talk, the perennially popular Christmas Party, summer Garden Party at Leckhampton, Scottish dancing, Tea and Toys for younger children, Vice-Chancellor's Reception, and the International Lunch. There were also visits to several Cambridge Museums and a Ghost tour at Halloween.

The programme for the Michaelmas term 2018 listed 14 group activities with six taking place weekly, some monthly and the others depending on the members' choice. As well as the usual Tuesday meetings, there was also the opportunity to join a morning tour of the Senate House with a talk about the ceremonial year of the University. The Christmas celebration took place for the first time in Peterhouse Master's Lodge. Now the programme had maps showing the location of the University Centre at Granta Place, 16 Mill Lane and Kellet Lodge. After Christmas, the choir ceased meeting, the other groups and annual events continued and a weekly, rather than termly, pub walk was added.

Funds had only been allocated for six months to replace an Administrative Assistant, Jane as the Director had agreed to serve another year with the possibility of extension on a year-by-year basis, and nominations were needed for the committee, especially Visitors' Representatives.

At the AGM in October, Marilyn Fersht, as Acting Chairman, spoke of the proposed new appointments: Paula Rosen, (wife of the Vice-Chancellor and a Presentation Coach) had agreed to be President, Amanda Farnsworth was to be Chair, Christine Corton Vice-Chair, and Nicky Chaplin was succeeded as Secretary by Christopher Johnson (leader of the popular pub walks). Julie Darsley was to be the new volunteer coordinator and Tom Baer had agreed to serve for another three years.

It had been a stressful year for the committee, with Jane Luzio and Joanna Womack carrying a lot of responsibility. They were helped by Andrea Bronskill, Tom Baer, Tina Alexander, and Nicky Blanning. Naheed Kandil was elected as a new committee member. A representative for Eddington Postdocs was needed.

Eddington now had over 700 residents with an increasing number of activities and NVS had agreed to run English Conversation classes there. The PdOC centre had been so successful that NVS was now hot-desking rather than having a room of its own.

The University gave a grant of £22,500 and lesser sums came from fundraising and other events, especially the Christmas Fair and Janet Edwards's contribution through the creation and sale of knitwear. Until this time the NVS Treasurer, responsible to the University Registry, had always been elected from the membership and the Society was fortunate that Joanna herself had previously been the University Treasurer. While there was no desire to change this, with the larger membership, together with the increase in income and expenditure, it was recognised that in future the position might need to be an appointed one. Joanna, having looked at other societies within the University had drawn up a revised Constitution for discussion by the Committee.

By December, membership stood at 412 with 1,558 followers on Facebook showing a steady increase since the implementation of Mailchimp in May, and the online booking system was now functioning well. Activity Group leaders were encouraged to centralise bookings via the universal e-mail address system and to report participation statistics termly. There was now an Eddington English Conversation group meeting several times a term. Two members had been co-opted to represent Eddington and the PdOC community. The Christmas Fair had generated £1,575 (85% from Janet's knitting). There had been seven new volunteers from Spain, the UK, and the USA. For the second time, a Families' Welcome had been held at the beginning of the academic year (during the October half-term). Andrea asked that Group Leaders be encouraged to take photos, explaining that she would continue producing the Volunteer badges (showing home country) and would launch the Tile Project the following term. The revised constitution was agreed for ratification at the next AGM, and Christine Corton, having received funding for research, resigned as Vice Chair and from the committee. In June, the Chair hosted an afternoon tea for volunteers in Peterhouse Master's Lodge and gardens. It became noticeable during the year that visitors were taking fewer leaflets from the Children's table, preferring to photograph the information.

In recognition that the summer of 2021 would mark 50 years since the founding of Newcomers, Christine Corton and Sally Williams had been organising the photographs chronologically so that they could be handed over to the Cambridge University Library archive. Julie Darsley in her new role as a volunteer was to mastermind preparations

for a 50th anniversary party and Andrea Bronskill had an idea for a community project to mark the anniversary. A weekly rota of two volunteers meant that Tuesday coffee mornings continued throughout the summer in the ground floor bar of the University Centre.

By October 2019, the Director's weekly slides included a list of activities held in the area specifically aimed at children including theatres, libraries, museums and so on. There had been 471 Visitors during the previous year, and it was noted that a total of 470 current or former Visitors remained in Cambridge. Of the 70 nationalities coming to coffee, China was well in the lead. Eddington continued to grow, with 10 organised activities and more help was needed with English conversation. There was a thriving PdOC Committee. Jane Luzio was reappointed Director for another three years from October 2019 and Jenny McGuigan was appointed as Administrator. The amended Constitution was ratified.

At the Committee meeting in November 2019, plans were made for two volunteers to take over if the Director was snowed in and for continuing contact with Faculty Administrators. Plans were also made to mark the NG 50th anniversary in 2021, with a joint celebration of the SVS 60+ years. The number of volunteers had increased from 61 to 67, despite some departures. Several of the Newcomers were already helping with events. An average 53 members attended on Tuesday mornings. There was a strong demand for one-off events, evening events and events open to children. It was estimated that the time given by volunteers to groups, events and Tuesday mornings added up to an average of 71 hours a week. The feedback was incredibly positive from the over 70 parents who had attended the Families Welcome Tea, with the children occupied while parents talked and made new friendships. The PdOC group at Eddington was testing a variety of activities with increasing success.

Paula Rosen resigned after a year as President as she was now working within the University as a Presentation Coach.

During the Michaelmas 2019 and Lent 2020 terms, there were five visits to colleges, two to Ely and one to Hampton Court Palace, as well as a talk linked with a visit to the Fitzwilliam Museum, and the Christmas Celebration, again at Peterhouse Master's Lodge, as well as a Country Dancing and Burns supper in February. The last meeting of term was on 10 March 2020, with a talk concerning art and 'The Flight into Egypt'.

Newspapers had been increasingly reporting the incidence of COVID-19 in other countries and on 16th

March the Prime Minister announced that it was time for everyone to stop non-essential contact and travel, followed on 23rd March by an announcement that the UK would go into lockdown on 26th March. This meant that all plans for the summer term were suspended and from then until October 2021 all committee meetings took place by Zoom. Events for the Easter and Michaelmas terms were cancelled in accordance with University policy. Professor Chris Abell, Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research, had agreed in principle to become the new President. The Director worked from home on the NVS laptop and alternative arrangements evolved using virtual online facilities available through Zoom and WhatsApp.



Jane Luzio, Amanda Farnsworth, Christine Corton, Paula Rosen

Financially, it was an expensive year due to the need to use innovative technologies to stay connected, but Professor Abell used his knowledge of departmental funding to enable NVS to reclaim justifiable expenditure. Sadly, in October 2020 Professor Abell, who had only recently agreed to be the President, unexpectedly died. Despite the lockdown, NVS continued to offer a, albeit altered, service and the Committee continued to meet each term by Zoom. A weekly on-line newsletter was published giving details of how to join each talk, preceded by the chance to talk to other members. Several past members seized this new opportunity and joined in from overseas. The Director prepared a sheet listing '15 ways to have an English Christmas', 'From Spade to Plate' adapted to on-line meetings, the Writing Project prepared work for publication and from November there were informal discussion groups several times a week via Zoom. As restrictions were gradually lifted, there were picnics in the Botanic Gardens and Pub walks. In June 2021, 30 volunteers were able to meet, for the first time in fifteen months, at a very welcome party in the Peterhouse Master's Garden. Also present was Anne Ferguson-Smith (Interim PVC and subsequently PVC for Research and International Partnerships) who had agreed to be the new President.

During the 2021-2022 academic year, there was a gradual lifting of restrictions and the resumption of coffee mornings and talks, sometimes live and sometimes over Zoom.

Despite these challenges, numbers held up incredibly well and in June it was noted that an average of 30 people had attended on Tuesday mornings, six to eight groups had met each week, and that country membership had changed with a particular drop from China. (This was the year that China reduced the availability to its citizens of WhatsApp and other western social media platforms). The PdOC Group had continued to hold virtual events and, in the summer of 2021, offered pub nights and coffee hours.

In June 2022, a party was held in the Vice-Chancellor's Garden to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the NG and more than 60 years of SVS welcoming visitors to academic Cambridge.

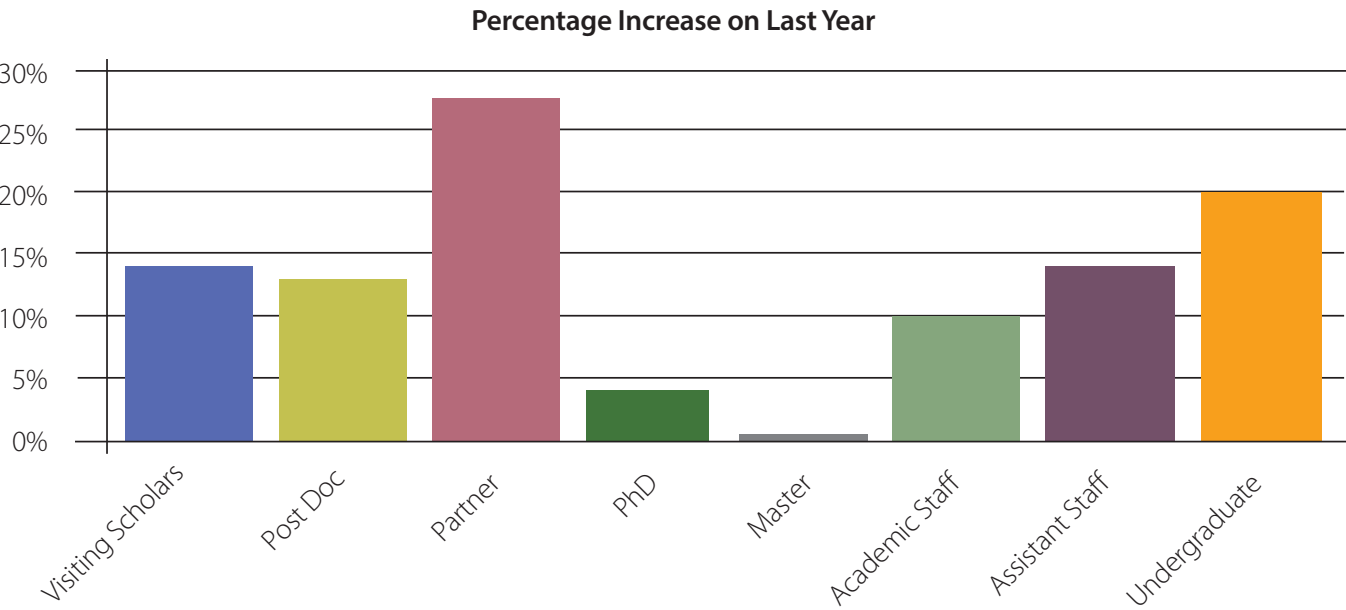
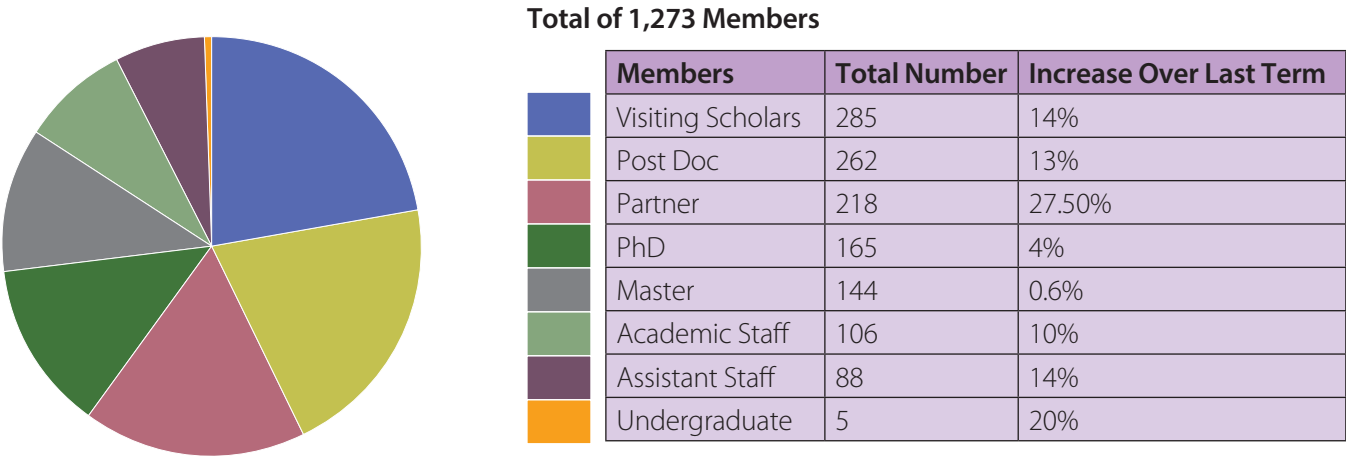
Three years since the COVID-19 pandemic began, at the Easter term 2023, NVS is full of life again, with swathes of visitors arriving from across the globe. The University approved a request to appoint a dedicated part-time NVS administrator and Naheed Kandil was appointed in January 2022. This has made an enormous difference to the role of Director, providing stability, continuity, and vision for the future.

The number of members attending Tuesday morning meetings is back up to pre-COVID-19 levels and the expanded range of activities offer an opportunity to take part in something every day of the week.

By measuring the total number of participants attending every event, we can show, in one term alone, a total of 1556 'touch points' (or engagement points) was achieved. This is only possible due to the generosity and kindness of our volunteers giving their time, skills, and experience. The total volunteer hours per term stands at 760 hours. There are 66 volunteers listed, with 55 active and 11 long-standing life-members.

The membership statistics charts at March 2023 show current member statistics, and percentage increase on the year before. Members come from 79 countries, with the top five being: UK, China, USA, India, and Japan. After initial difficulties with MailChimp and Zoom, regular meetings via Zoom or contact through WhatsApp continued throughout the week. On Tuesdays, a lecture via Zoom provided the opportunity to chat over coffee; on other days there was Water Colour Art, a fortnightly cultural discussion group, English Conversation, and a discussion about Women Writers.

Statistics at July 2023



Presidents of the Society for Visiting Scholars (SVS) 1964-2006

Year	Position	Name	Previous Role
1964-1971	Chair/ President	Greta Burkill	
1972-1982	President	Charlotte Pippard	Wife of President of Clare Hall
1982-1994	President	Michael Crosthwait	Bursar, Darwin
1994-1997	President	Stephen Bragg	Administrator, American Friends of Cambridge
1998-1999	President	Roger Andrew	Bursar, Sidney Sussex
2000-2002	President	Brian Thrush	Head Dept of Chemistry
2002-2006	President	Christopher Stevenson	Bursar, New Hall

Newcomers Group, 1971 – 2006

Newcomers Presidents (originally known as Chairs)

Years	President
1971-1975	Dorothy Whittington
1975-1981	Charlotte Pippard
1981-1983	Ruth Chadwick
1983-1989	Freddie Lewis
1990-2002	Sally Williams
2002-2006	Caro Wilson

Joan Andrew was the Chair 1994-2006.

Newcomers Secretaries

Years	Secretary
1971-1993	Joan Andrew
1994-1996	Krystyna Stevenson
1996-2004	Lindsey Payne
2004-2005	Nan Eells
2005-2006	Janet Edwards

Newcomers Treasurers

Years	Treasurer
1988-1996	Pam Ceadel
1996-2006	Krystyna Stevenson

In 2006 Newcomers united with Visiting Scholars and the combined organisation (NVS) became led by a Director and a Chair.

NVS Presidents

Year	President
2006-2013	Kate Pretty
2013-2017	Gwen Borysiewicz
2018	Vacant
2019	Paula Rosen
2020	Christopher Abell
2021-today	Anne Ferguson Smith

NVS Directors

Years	Director
2006-2008	Christopher Stevenson
2008-2015	Liz Hodder
2015-today	Jane Luzio

NVS Chairs

Years	Chair
2006-2010	Caro Wilson
2010-2015	Sibella Laing
2016-2017	Laurel Powers-Freeling
2017-2018	Sarah Maskell (acting Chair) Marilyn Fersht (acting Vice Chair)
2018-2022	Amanda Farnsworth
2018-2019	Christine Corton (Vice Chair)
2022-today	James McCarthy

NVS Secretaries

Years	Secretary
2006-2010	Janet Edwards
2010-2015	Marilyn Fersht
2015-2018	Nicky Chaplin
2018-2020	Christopher Johnson
2020-2023	Liz Tavner
2023-today	Margot Fergusson

NVS Treasurers

Years	Treasurer
2006-2011	Margaret Lawrence
2011-today	Joanna Womack

Groups

Walking Group	June Johnson, Lindsey Payne, Liz Hodder
International lunch	Jennifer Donkin, Maureen Bragg, Sally Broom, Diana Sutcliffe
Book Group	Sally Broom, Tina Alexander, Lindsey Payne, Ruth Collier
Afternoon teas and Newmarket Races	Alice Fleet
Knitting Group	Janet Edwards, Sabah Zeeshan
Craft Group	Andrea Bronskill, Janet Edwards, Kate Patterson
Cookery and "Bunker"	Ayesha Tahir, Elsa Strietman
Music Information Table	Janet Dye, Mary Bevan
Picnics in the Park	Genevieve Guetemme, Christine Qu
From Spade to Plate	Karina Wells
Pub Walks	Christopher Johnson, Jonathan Collis
French Conversation for mothers and young children	Genevieve Guetemme and Virginie Friend
Book Group	Sally Broom, Ruth Collier, Lindsey Payne
Childrens Corner	Tom Baer
Film Group	Moira O'Sullivan, Elfrida Heath, Dasha Tenditna
Yoga	Diane Landers, Helen Usenmez
English Conversation	Sheila Harrison, Margaret Callingham, Marianna Fletcher Williams, Gill Maynard, Christopher Johnson, Gail Featherstone
Art Group	Antonia Schaller, Nicole Keshav
Cultural Discussion	Samantha Sintes, Gail Featherstone
Cambridge Connect	Genevieve Guetemme, Simone Castello
Storytelling	Melendra Sutliff Sanders
World Women Writers Discussion	Inci Egeli

Visitors' Representatives

Year	Representative
1974	Margaret Green (UK)
1975	Mrs Paul
1976	Margaret Palmer (Aust)
1977	Mrs Mulvaney
1978-1997	Not recorded
1998	Maxie Weigert (Denmark)
1999-2000	Betty Dickson (USA)
2001	Alison Clarkson
2002	Sylvia Terry (USA) and Angela Cole (UK)
2002	Waltraud Oka (Austria/Japan)
2003	Suzie Powell (Australia) and Fran Rounds (USA)
2004	Betsy Cronan (USA) and Swanhild Wivestad (Norway)
2005	Marty Funkhouser (USA)
2006	Rita Dumont (Quebec)
2007	Sook Young Wang
2008	Annelle De Simone
2009-2012	Kate Denmead (USA)
2012- 2015	Ayesha Tahir (Pakistan)
2015	Andrea Bronskill (Canada)
2016	Introduction of Country Representatives

Researched and written by Sally Williams.

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Volunteers Group



Spade to plate with Karina



Quilt unveiling with Andrea and Janet



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