



# ALUMNI NEWSLETTER

## MAY 2007



Hi there all you ex-CTK people and welcome back!!

In this third edition of your newsletter, we have a variety of articles on job hunting and career planning, three personal stories written by former CTK students, news and pictures of the college which grows and improves every year. We also show a list of all alumni who have registered their details – and fascinating reading it makes! But we start with a message from Dr Jane Overbury.

### **THE PRINCIPAL'S REPORT**

The 2006/07 academic year got off to a high profile start when Phil Hope MP, Parliamentary Under-secretary for Skills, was guest speaker at our annual leavers celebration. The Minister congratulated students on their outstanding success and acknowledged the hard work of staff.

The examination results for students were exceptional, with both A Level and Vocational courses achieving above national averages.

In the spring term the college was delighted to find itself one of only three colleges named by the BBC as 'the best of the best' – as CTK had appeared in two Ofsted Chief Inspector Reports as an 'outstanding' institution.

The spring term also featured the annual careers conference, this year titled 'CSI: Careers Scene Investigation'. We hosted over one hundred guests from universities and employment organisations, who contributed to the exhibition and a range of lively discussion groups. In addition, large numbers of ex-Christ the King students returned to the college to share their experiences of university and work. Almost nine hundred current students participated in the day and they found the input of visiting speakers and ex-students particularly helpful.

As a member of our Alumni scheme, your input into college activities would be most welcome. We would be very pleased to hear from you if you are interested in coming in to the college to share your experiences, either in relation to being a higher education student, your degree subject or your employment. Let us know if you can help by contacting Dawn Dowdie at [ddo@ctksfc.ac.uk](mailto:ddo@ctksfc.ac.uk) or Brian Hurn at [bhu@ctksfc.ac.uk](mailto:bhu@ctksfc.ac.uk).

I hope you have had a successful year and wish you all the best over the coming months.

*Dr Jane Overbury*



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### IF JOB HUNTING IS YOUR NEXT TASK

– you may be interested in some recent research carried out by the University of Hertfordshire.

They asked over 500 employers what made them reject applicants – and top of the list (77%) was poor spelling and grammar.

Next, with 34%, came obvious exaggerations – people who claim to have climbed Everest and speak ten languages.

What most attracts an employer is relevant work experience (46%) and having a good work ethic (43%) – knowing that punctuality and a willingness to work until the job is finished is important to the company.

Soooo:

- 1 Double check your CV for typos and other mistakes
- 2 Provide evidence of your abilities – and be honest!
- 3 Get experience in the field you are interested in
- 4 Be ready to show you are prepared to work hard and conscientiously.

*Good luck to all job seekers!!*





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## QUICK NEWS... QUICK NEWS... QUICK NEWS... QUICK NEWS...

- Very few staff left last year, the longest serving being **Mr Barry**, who taught Engineering for many years. He began a well-earned retirement by visiting China and is now relaxing while considering his next journey. We wish him happy landings and a long and happy retirement.
- Last summer, new laboratories were opened in the **Science Department**.



- This year the **canteens** are due for refurbishment – pictures in our next edition.
- We also had a fascinating aerial photo taken, and just look at all the places you can spot!





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**Three former students reflect on their progress so far... and if you have your own reflections which could be included in the next newsletter please email Brian Hurn at [bhu@ctksfc.ac.uk](mailto:bhu@ctksfc.ac.uk) or Casper Jelly at [cje@ctksfc.ac.uk](mailto:cje@ctksfc.ac.uk).**

**Lara Fatukasi** studied Maths, Further Maths, Physics and Computer Science at CTK from 1998 to 2000. She writes:

I decided to study Electronic Engineering because I liked Physics and Maths, and Electronics just seemed like the next stage for me.

I went to the University of Surrey as it was one of the top universities for Electronics. I studied hard but I also had a great time as I met people from different nationalities and made life long friends. I studied up to Masters level for four years, working every summer for electronics companies including Sony. I graduated with a distinction in 2004.

I then decided to study some more and I am currently in the final year of my PhD in Pattern Recognition. My research concentrates on the investigation of biometric data. I look at data obtained from face images and speech. I investigate ways to fuse information in order to improve the response to a claim. That is, when a person enrolls in a system and provides their face and voice to make a claim, the system should recognise the person; if a claim is made by a person not in the system, the claim is rejected. In the future I hope to continue my interest in research by working in industry.

Another PhD student is **Kate McAllister**. This is her story so far:

I was at CTK from 1999-2001 during which time I studied Biology, Chemistry, Maths and Further Maths A levels. After leaving, I went to UCL to study Biology and chose to specialise in Human Genetics.

I'm still there now studying for a PhD which involves looking for genes that have a role to play in the development of ovarian cancer. Ideally I'd like to stay in academic research in the long term, which may include lecturing, or I may go into science policy, or perhaps publishing, as I do some editing of a student-run journal of science and society.

I have very fond memories of CTK, including hanging out in the canteen and chaplaincy, and lunchtime music recitals. I really enjoyed my time at college, and it definitely helped me to get where I am today. It was great to come back recently to speak at Careers Day, although somewhat scary to realise how fast the time has gone!



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**Fallon Alexis** attended Christ the King from September 2000 until July 2002 and studied Geography, Law and English A-Levels and IT AS-Level. Fallon writes:



On leaving CTK I attended Brunel University and enrolled on a four year thin sandwich Law degree. This course enabled me to gain two different six month paid work placements during my degree.

My first work placement was at HM Revenue and Customs Prosecution Office, where I worked alongside Government lawyers as a Case Manager.

My second work placement was at Matrix Chambers, where I worked as a Legal Information and Research Assistant to barristers. This second placement experience confirmed my wish to pursue a career as a barrister.

Having graduated from Brunel in July 2006 with First Class Honours (due to hard work!), I have taken a gap year to gain further legal experience and to save money to pay for law school, which I will commence in September 2007. This course, titled the BVC, lasts for one year if studied on a full time basis. Thankfully, I have just been awarded a scholarship to help contribute to the huge course fees.

Once I have completed the BVC (Bar Vocational Course, a mandatory course that you need to take if you wish to become a barrister) I will need to secure a pupillage at a set of chambers where I will have to shadow, for a year, a barrister who practises in the areas of law that I wish to practise once qualified. This will mark the end of the legal education and training which is necessary to enable me to practise as a Barrister.

**Yes, Lara, Kate and Fallon have done very well – but they put it down to hard work as well as enthusiasm for their subjects! We wish them, and all our former students, continued success and fulfilment in their careers and in all areas of their lives.**

### HOW TO PLAN AND MANAGE YOUR CAREER

Having spent 33 years as a Careers Adviser, I have reached the conclusion that it is impossible to *plan* a career. The reasons are that life – the world – is unpredictable and constantly changing. Consider this:

*In times of change, learners inherit the earth,  
while the learned find themselves beautifully equipped  
to deal with a world which no longer exists.*

Continued...



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You'll never stop learning; always be on the lookout for new information, adding to the bundle of skills and knowledge you carry on your back. Professional qualifications are often required as well as a degree, but your 'education' will not end there. As you progress, you will need to top up regularly, or retrain, to keep up with the new graduates.

To manage your career, you need to be able to manage change. This means being adaptable, flexible and ready to accept new ideas and new technology. Who knows what openings there will be in communications, or in medicine, in ten years time?

You need to be prepared for change – and to avoid much of the stress that change can cause. If you have family and mortgage responsibilities, being made redundant is not a change you want! So, how can these unpredictable events be managed?

Think ahead, anticipate what may happen, have a Plan B ready. If your job is threatened, you may move sideways, into a similar position with a similar company, or you may use your experience to move into a different part of the industry, or to teach, train or write about your profession. Or you may long to run your own restaurant, or retrain as a carpenter or counsellor when you're 35.

You will have heard the expression 'it's not what you know, it's who you know.' Try adding: 'and importantly, it's **who knows you.**' Who will think of you when an opportunity comes up? Make contacts, keep in touch, network, talk to people, join societies, clubs, community groups. You never know who may help in times of need. That boring bloke you met who took your phone number and passed it on to someone who he knew is looking for someone like you... you can't plan for that, you can't arrange for it to happen, but sometimes it does. Keep talking – and leave an impression!

Have confidence in your abilities, in the skills you have acquired. Believe in your self. What is your potential? If not president, chief executive, captain of sport or industry; if not rich or famous – what would you settle for? What would be a happy compromise? Accept the 'good enough' when the improbable becomes impossible and don't worry about what cannot be. It is not always the case that *you can if you think you can **BUT** you won't if you don't believe you will!*

Work hard, be committed, show determination. Be a lifelong learner, be curious, volunteer your time and effort, develop your abilities and your knowledge. Seek out fresh challenges, overcome difficulties. This positive attitude will help you to achieve your goals, to avoid or cope with the stress of setbacks, and to enjoy a contented, cheerful and worthwhile career.

*Brian Hurn*