



The Grasshopper

The Organ Of The Gresham Society

Peace on Earth and Goodwill Towards Men

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College Notes

An interview with Lucia Graves, Head of Communications (PR & Media)

What is your role as Head of Communications (PR & Media)?

To make Gresham College as widely known as possible for its excellent lectures and videos, and to make Gresham outputs - online and in person - as widely watched as possible. So it's a mixture of marketing and press work.

How have communications been affected by Covid?

In general, Gresham's lectures have done very well over the last 18 months - our video views were more than 50% up last year (6.5m). Covid has made everything a lot more digital. After ticketing everything online last year, the case for ticketing has really been made. It's the first time since 2016 that we've seen real growth in our subscriber mailing list (up by 11,000 last year). So that - and the data that we've got from ticketing, is hugely satisfying. We had over 10,000 school student attendances last year (up on some 700 in person the year before). Ticketing also lets us see what marketing actually works.

We invested significantly more in promotion during the first lockdown, and hired a new digital marketing manager, Linda Appiah-Spick. We made new investments in paid digital marketing too. Her work got us about 1.5m video views on Facebook alone last year. We also had an extraordinary ambassador in Professor Chris Whitty, who gave us most of our 590 media mentions last year.

What do you see as your greatest success to date?

Most of our success at Gresham is the result of collective teamwork; but the single most useful thing I've done since arriving is probably sorting out the permissions for getting a superfast broadband line installed at Barnard's Inn Hall, which has allowed us to livestream lectures here since 2017.

Where do you see communications going in the next couple of years?

At Gresham, we will have a new website next year led by James Bull, our Head of Communications Technology, and Sara Green, our new website manager. That will help our digital marketing to take off, as we'll be able to track exactly where people go and what they're interested in. We should also be able to do more to package lectures for schools and for other learners. Our five-year plan targets North America next year, so we will become more international. We're very interested in the YouTube algorithm and how to make our lectures work better on YouTube. And there we just have to stay ahead of the game.

Ave Atque Vale

And a warm welcome to Robert Franklin, son of Raoul (see next).

Professor Raoul Franklin CBE RIP

Senior members of the Society will be saddened to learn of the death of Professor Raoul Franklin, who died peacefully on October 7th. He was 86. Born in New Zealand, Raoul was a Fellow of Keble College Oxford when he was appointed as Vice-Chancellor at City University, a post he held from 1978 to 1998, and for which he was awarded his CBE. A distinguished physicist, he liked to spend his Fridays out at the UK Atomic Energy Authority's Science Centre at Culham, and was one of the few vice-chancellors to take part in the periodic university research reviews. He was a member of the Gresham College Council and a founder member of the Gresham Society.

As a liveryman he belonged to the Curriers' Company, but he was also instrumental in launching the Worshipful Company of Educators, where he was the founding Master.

His greatest achievement of course was to appoint me as City University's first director of language studies in 1990 (something which I attribute to the fact that he went to sleep after lunch during my



presentation on the first day of interviews). But this was merely symptomatic of the quiet efficiency and antipodean shrewdness which steered him through some difficult times for the university sector.

And we also note the death of Society member Peter Clark, who passed away on the 8th of February. Peter was a Past Clerk and Past Master of The Worshipful Company of Masons and Past Master of The Guild of Mercers' Scholars. He was one of the last intakes of Mercers' School before it closed in 1959. Peter had a career in banking.

Vita Vitarum

It is with some regret that we have to announce the demise of the Old Mercers' Club, which has disbanded in the light of increasing old age. Members are alumni of the former Mercers' School (which was located at Barnard's Inn Hall). Their President, Howard Worth, is of course a member of the Gresham Society and so we have (via his good offices) extended a cordial invitation to any former Old Mercer who may wish to join us.

New Publications

Gyles Brandreth has maintained his prodigious publishing output with *Odd Boy Out* (Penguin Michael Joseph) and *Philip: the Final Portrait* from Hodder Coronet.

Congratulations to Harold Thimbleby (Gresham Professor of Geometry 2001-2004) whose *FixIT: See and solve the problems of digital care* has just been published by Oxford. I see that it has got a rave review from Martin Elliott (Gresham Professor of Physic 2014 – 2018), so it must be worth reading. And we also note that Harold is completing his seventh year as a member of the Royal College of Physicians.

My so far unrecognised work on Toulouse Lautrec has thrown up the interesting point that he spent several holidays in Monte Carlo. So my next attempt at publication will (of course) be called *Nothing Toulouse...*

Members' Corner

Following on from my note in G9 about Mark Twain and his cycling mishaps, it is interesting that he makes a comparison with learning German. In *Taming the Bicycle* he says, "It is not like studying German, where you mull along, in a groping, uncertain way, for thirty years; and at last, just as you think you've got it, they spring the subjunctive

on you, and there you are. No - and I see now, plainly enough, that the great pity about the German language is, that you can't fall off it and hurt yourself. There is nothing like that feature to make you attend strictly to business. But I also see, by what I have learned of bicycling, that the right and only sure way to learn German is by the bicycling method. That is to say, take a grip on one villainy of it at a time, leaving that one half learned."

Adrian Seville on bicycle board games

Inevitably, distinguished Society member Professor Adrian Seville has sent in a remarkable piece about board games (which are his speciality) and bicycles. Particularly curious is the Pinkert Navigating Tricycle, which got halfway across the Channel in 1891. See [A history of cycling in six board games](#) for a fascinating read and some very rare illustrations from *The Ephemerist* No 194. And for the real cognoscenti, why not browse through Adrian's *Vintage Board Games*, published by White Star, Milan 2019. It presents a nostalgic look at 19th Century board games and their evolution.

Unexplained Phenomena

We are told that advances in Theoretical Physics allow for temporal paradoxes (though perhaps one of our professors could comment on that). Longstanding Society member Vivian Huxley has written to point out that Issue No.9 of 'The Grasshopper', including Professor Frank Cox's strictures regarding typesetting, landed on his PC alongside his freshly-written list of taxonomic ranks, including the physically impossible mnemonic:

Donkeys (Domain)
Kick (Kingdom)
Pelicans (Phylum)
Cauliflowers (Class)
Or (Order)
Flying (Family)
Geese (Genus)
and
Spiders (Species)

"Evidently some wormhole in the space-time continuum had opened up shortly beforehand, or some telepathic force was in play." We leave it to members to judge.

Napoleon versus Wellington

Following on from the Great European Bake-Off in G9 there were points in their respective careers where Napoleon and the Duke of Wellington overlapped. A propos de rien, they were both acquainted with the celebrated Italian opera singer



Giuseppina Grassini, Napoleon just before the Battle of Marengo and Wellington when he was resident in Paris in 1816. They were both born in 1769 and, although Napoleon derided Wellington as a “sepoy general” from his service in India, he evidently overlooked the fact that Wellington had originally trained as a cavalryman at the prestigious French military academy at Angers in the Loire Valley and probably learnt a thing or two while he was there.

The Jararacá again

Following on from the copperhead offering solutions to cancer through its venom, we now hear that our old friend the Jararacá (see G6) may have a cure for Covid-19 in its venom. It all has something to do with the proteins it contains. But then of course readers will recall that angiotensin converting enzyme (ACE) inhibitors, used for the treatment of some types of congestive heart failure, were developed from a peptide found in its venom. All one can do is wait and see, and thank goodness for those amazing people at the Butantan Institute in São Paulo. [[Snake venom could be used to develop drug in fight against Covid \(msn.com\)](https://www.msn.com/en-gb/health/fitness/wellness/snake-venom-could-be-used-to-develop-drug-in-fight-against-covid-19/news-AA1138888)]

Unfortunate Announcements (series of 1000...)

It is a known fact that after World War Two American philanthropists funded repairs to many of the City churches. History however does not tell us in which Church the American in question came to the Service of Thanksgiving for the re-building of the Church in the 1950s – and stormed out. The verger ran after him to ask what the matter was. “Did you hear that guy up the front?” said the outraged American. “He said, ‘Lord, we thank thee for this succour from America.’ ” (Oh, work it out for yourselves...)

Christmas Baubles

Who can identify all the poems included here?

First Prize: a weekend for two in Barnard’s Inn Hall.

Second Prize: an autographed photo of Professor Frank Cox.

Third Prize: a recording of all Puccini’s arias, as sung in the bath by Professor Robin Wilson.

I wandered lonely, as a cloud,
To the lonely sea and the sky.
The noblest Roman of them all
Will know the reason why.

There's a breathless hush in the close tonight,
(Cap'n art thou sleeping there below?)
The time has come, the Walrus said,
I will arise and go.

April is the cruellest month,
When icicles hang by the wall.
A man’s a man for a’ that,
With Uncle Tom Cobley and all.

The King was in his counting house,
Drinking the blude red wine;
The ploughman homeward plods his weary way.
Oh World! Oh Life! Oh Time!

For East is East, and West is West,
Nor all that glisters, gold,
Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
In the brave days of old.

Grasshopper cocktails

Yes folks, there really is a Grasshopper cocktail. It is not often seen on menu cards, but it has actually been around since 1919, when it was first served at Tuiaque’s Restaurant in New Orleans. Here is the recipe (which you might care to serve up as a Christmas treat):

A typical grasshopper cocktail consists of equal parts green crème de menthe, white crème de cacao, and cream—shaken with ice and strained into a chilled cocktail glass. Serve with a sprig of mint of course.

You can of course go one better if you wish:
A "Vodka" or "Flying" Grasshopper replaces the cream with vodka. A "Frozen" Grasshopper adds mint ice cream to create a more dessert-like drink. An "After Eight" adds a layer of dark chocolate liqueur to the crème de menthe, crème de cacao and cream. Cheers!

Envoi

Having revealed in G8 the shocking news that the Gresham College logo is a cricket and not a grasshopper, we cannot (in polite company at least) go on to raise the question in these gender-conscious times as to whether the Gresham Cricket/Grasshopper is male or female. We can only wait and see (or listen) as it is only the male that sings, and to date the signs in the Square Mile have all been mute.

Gresham Grasshopper signs in the City?

Indeed. The Grasshopper Himself notes with some pride the current grasshopper which sits proudly on top of the Royal Exchange. It is actually a survivor of the fire that destroyed the Exchange in 1838. Other portraits





of grasshoppers appear in different places around the building.

Tis said that this is because the grasshopper is the symbol of the Gresham family, but the Grasshopper Himself is sure that they commemorate fellow grasshoppers who are famous in their own right (and He has dropped a few sly hints about His own legacy, of course...). [Editor's note: Where else? Try Holborn Viaduct and 67-70 Lombard Street (image below) for starters.



Plus some readers will remember Martin's Bank, which used a grasshopper logo. Among their clients they included a football pools company, a major

airline and a famous shipping line, which may not be a coincidence as Martin's had a link at one time with the Bank of Liverpool. The grasshopper logo survived in some form or other until the 1980s.]

Editorial

The Grasshopper hits double figures

Little did we think that *The Grasshopper* would turn out to be such a runaway lockdown success. But now the dust is settling (we hope and trust) and we can move on to somewhat steadier times. The grasshopper is actually quite a prolific creature. The female can produce up to 25 pods in a single season, each containing between 10 and 300 eggs, most of which get eaten by predators, such as the squirrels which are digging up my lawn at this moment.

Of course, *The Grasshopper* first emerged some fifteen years ago as a single sheet newsletter in colour, and its revival did figure in the AGM minutes for at least the last three years. But the Grasshopper Himself hopped onto my shoulder at the beginning of lockdown and the rest is publishing history. We now plan to go over to a quarterly edition, with the occasional special when advertising Society events.

And as always, we welcome comments, contributions and compliments – but never (we trust) complaints.

UPCOMING DATES

The evergreen Soirée will be returning to amuse and bemuse on Wednesday December 15th.

Plus we have the Dinner with the unique 7-minute AGM at the National Liberal Club on Monday February 14th. Details to follow in a New Year flyer.

And don't forget John Scott's forthcoming exhibition and lecture on Thursday 16th December at the Royal Philatelic Society (15 Abchurch Lane) on "The Development of Decorative Writing Paper". (Exhibition open at 1pm, lecture at 4.15.) Please let John know if you can make it by emailing him at John.Scott@cityoflondon.gov.uk

And with the hope that things really have returned to normal, we plan to go back to our programme of visits and events in the New Year. More anon – and season's greetings in the meantime.

STOP PRESS STOP PRESS STOP PRESS

Congratulations go to Professor Alex Edmans, whose book *Grow the Pie* (based of course on his Gresham series "How Business Can Better Serve Society") was named the Financial Times Book of the Year for 2020 and has now won the Financial Times Award for Excellence in Sustainable Finance Education and the Finance for the Future award, the first time the award has been given to a person, not an institution. He has also been appointed as a Fellow of the Financial Management Association.

The Butchers' Company are re-starting their monthly lunches after their renovation work. Details of this (and much else) will be found in Society Member Ian Mansfield's interesting weekly [newsletter](#) of things to see and do in London.

And the College Academic Registrar, Dr Clare Loughlin-Chow, has just announced that the Gresham Chairs of Business, IT and Physic are now being advertised, with the closing date of 24th January. Details are on the College website under [vacancies](#).

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