

*Updates from and about
former H-C scholars*



Off the Shelf

Jacqueline Osherow's *Ultimatum from Paradise* has been described as a collection of "perfectly formed, musical poems that glide between the worlds of art, architecture, literature, and religion" to "uncover the startling truths of memory and coax our own forgotten moments from the recesses of the mind." Osherow, the X-Y scholar in 19XX, is a Distinguished Professor of English at the University of Utah. She has published six previous books.



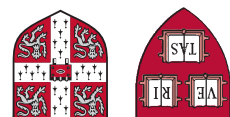
Golden Oldie

Even now, I can't hear the organ intro to Percy Sledge's sultry *when a man loves a woman* without that afternoon returning full force: it's on the radio – you're painting? plastering? the little bedroom and I'm giant pregnant reading *Middlemarch* for my PhD exams on the glassed-in porch – and suddenly you crank up the volume until the entire house begins to shake. Don't tell me there's no such thing as happiness. You racing down the stairs, ecstatic, shouting listen to this! listen to this! your whole heart audible, mine pumping fast. We were young, infallible. It wouldn't last.

Jacqueline Osherow

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would like to share,
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Scholarships

2014-2015 H-C Scholars Report from Cambridge

Immersion in History...with a Modern Flair

For **Eric Cervini**, Lionel de Jersey Harvard Scholar, time in the Harvard Room has offered a full immersion in the history of Emmanuel College – with a bit of modern flair. Eric arrived at Cambridge a month before term started with the intention of getting “settled in” and compiling the research he had done for his American history dissertation at the Library of Congress in Washington DC a few weeks before embarking for his year abroad.

Once at Emmanuel, Eric learned that he would be staying in temporary housing until term started. The reason: Old Court was being renovated. Eric soon learned why the Emmanuel administrators seemed so excited by this development, and he soon became rather excited as well: for the first time in 400 years, Old Court – which houses Emmanuel's celebrated Harvard Suite – would have its own bathrooms! Indeed, the Harvard-Cambridge Committee had warned Eric that the closest bathrooms were in a separate building; for years, students, including Harvard Scholars, could be seen dashing to the adjacent building in their bathrobes.

Three months later, Eric reports that the bathrooms (and kitchen!) in Old Court's G Entryway are spectacular. And while tourists may miss the sight of students running back and forth in various states of undress, he is grateful to enjoy the historic feel of Old Court with the convenience of modern amenities. The new kitchen has allowed him to host his supervisor and a law professor (a former Lowellian) for wine and cheese. It has also been put to good use by the newly formed, semi-satirical Harvard Drinking Society, whose inaugural event – aptly themed “Texas Rodeo” – drew a respectable crowd and painted a fascinating

portrait of how British students imagine Texans to dress and live. Meanwhile, the Society's Halloween event, “The Masquerade of the Undead” was a roaring success. Thankfully, Eric has built a friendly relationship with the porters and they have been exceedingly supportive of these events.

While such exploits might seem to suggest otherwise, Eric reports that his academic pursuits have been progressing “swimmingly.” He has completed most of his research and his dissertation outline is growing more robust by the day. On a more exciting note, Gary Gerstle, the new Mellon Professor of American History at Cambridge, has agreed to serve as Eric's Ph.D. supervisor if his application to continue is successful. In short, time at Cambridge has already proved fruitful “in every way possible.”

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2014-15 H-C Scholars: Miriam Farkas, Shelby Lin, Mariel Pettée and Eric Cervini

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2014-2015 H-C Scholars Report from Cambridge

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Excitement and Discovery, of the Expected – and Unexpected – Kind...

When moving into a new place in a new country, John Eliot Scholar **Miriam Farkas** didn't particularly want to discover that the previous occupants of her room at Jesus College hadn't moved out yet. She especially did not want to make this discovery the first weekend because said occupants were biting her at night. And no, Miriam isn't talking about her H-C predecessor at Jesus College, Charles Gertler – she's talking about the fleas that apparently moved in over the summer.

Dealing with a flea infestation made for an interesting introduction to life in Cambridge, since it meant moving in and out of her room several times during the initial week, lots of vacuuming, and first shopping destinations being pharmacies and a pet store. On the plus side, the flea story has proved to be an excellent way to make friends. And two pest treatments later, Miriam reports that the fleas have been evicted and she's settled into a still exciting but significantly less itchy routine that includes attending a broad range of classes in the linguistics department and exploring topics that she'd not had a chance to study as an undergraduate (such as the elegant algorithms of computational linguistics and the contradictions of language change models). If Miriam wasn't sure what her favorite area within the field was before coming to Cambridge, she's even less able to pinpoint it today.

Another great discovery: all the music on campus. According to Miriam, an oboist, "there are almost as many concerts each week as there are oboists around, and the quality of musicianship is as least as high as that of a good American conservatory." She has been playing a tremendous amount and loving every minute of it. In fact, between linguistics, oboe, attending fantastic concerts and throwing last-minute dinner parties, Miriam is amazed to find time for any other pursuits. But she's been making new music and writing a bit on the side, too.

Approaching the end of 2014, Miriam planned to devote Christmas break to research, songs, and travel (including three concerts over four nights in Berlin). All in all, she knew a year in England would be exciting and challenging, but couldn't have predicted just how exciting and challenging it would be. Heading into 2015, Miriam is eager to see what more is in store for her H-C scholarship year – all she asks is that the fleas stay away!

Rugby, Writing, Research, and Recreation

As a former member of the Harvard Varsity Women's Rugby team, **Shelby Lin**, the Governor William Shirley Scholar at Pembroke College, was eager to come to Cambridge to play with some of the best rugby teams in the world. Unfortunately, an early-season knee injury soon sidelined those plans, but not before Shelby had the chance to sing the *Star-Spangled Banner* to a bus full of raucous English women rugby players, among them star international-level players from the recent World Cup championships (such as Maggie Alphonsi, for those in the know).

With rugby on hold, Shelby has been using the extra time to become involved with the Pembroke Choir, take life-drawing lessons, and try blind wine tasting, while also enjoying regular travel and occasional study. In November she tried her hand at NaNoWriMo, an annual worldwide project that challenges participants to write a 50,000-word novel in a single month (no word yet on whether she finished).

To Shelby's delight, the MPhil in Management Science and Operations has allowed her to take courses in economics-related research and pure mathematics. She's taking advantage of this flexibility to study optimal incentives and delivery structures for managing healthcare and to explore the mathematics of stochastic traffic networks.

In her busy weekends, Shelby has been to the all-night Nuit Blanche festival in Brussels, toured Copenhagen, and was planning to meet Harvard friends in Prague before the end of the fall term. Closer to Cambridge, Shelby can be found swimming and cycling with the university's triathlon club at ungodly hours of the morning as she prepares for the New York City Triathlon next summer.

Discovering a New Life – Work Balance

According to Charles Henry Fiske II Scholar **Mariel Pettee**, "If I didn't live and work in this large-scale playground every day, I would never believe that graduate school could be this fun." A few short months at Trinity College have already showed her a completely new way of approaching her work and way of life. Perhaps it's because time seems to pass differently in Cambridge – one of the first things Mariel noticed was that people aren't addicted to their cell phones and laptops in the way that most Harvard students are. "There isn't the same sense of rushing to work through lunch breaks or sprint from place to place." While it's been an adjustment, Mariel is encouraged to discover that she can be intellectually engaged without sacrificing her health or time with friends. And the experience has certainly put her insane college sleep schedule into perspective!

In a place "brimming with analytically-minded scholars of the sciences and humanities" Mariel has made friends whose research topics include atomic physics, nanotechnology, topology, and the portrayal of laughter in literature and art. This means she never lacks for willing partners in late-night conversations on just about any topic imaginable. But Trinity's legacy in physics – Mariel's room is right across from one formerly occupied by Isaac Newton – makes it a special place to pursue her MAST. Besides coursework in particle physics, relativistic astrophysics and cosmology, atomic and optical physics, and quantum field theory, Mariel will be embarking on a long-term research project in a new area of study for her: doing hands-on work in a lab to create new battery materials out of DNA and gold nanoparticles.

Outside class, Mariel is keeping busy too, having gotten involved with several theater projects, joined a hip-hop dance crew, and stumbled onto the rowing team. But perhaps the most important parts of her Cambridge experience so far have been the little things that wouldn't fit on a resume: stargazing on the balcony, hosting late-night dance parties, picking fresh blackberries on her morning commute, or enjoying long meals with new friends in various corners of the city. Mariel is grateful to the H-C scholarship for allowing her to relish these moments as essential parts of her education right alongside her classes and research. ■

Postcard from the Top of the World

For 2013-14 John Eliot Scholar **Charles Gertler**, the green lawns of Jesus College belong to a world that now seems very far away. That's because Charles is spending his post-graduation year in Nepal, working with the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development to research the impact of black carbon pollution in the Himalaya. Black carbon is the second most important man-made pollutant implicated in global climate change and emissions from factories and power plants in China and India – both major black carbon hot spots – may be having a disproportionate effect on rapid glacial melting in some of the highest and most remote mountains in the world.



Charles arrived in the Himalayas with no mountaineering experience but was soon working at 17,000+ feet above sea level on Yala Glacier, a 4-5 day trek from the nearest road in Nepal's Langtang Valley. Long days hiking the glacier, taking measurements and collecting samples, were followed by nights in a tent camp, trying to stay warm and hoping for some yak meat (nice, though a little gamy!) in the evening's curry. For the winter months, Charles has been grounded in Kathmandu where he's getting around on a bicycle,

eating untold volumes of lentils and rice, and playing squash at the Nepali Olympic training center. As soon as the weather permits, he'll be back in the mountains and then on to Bhutan to set up another high-altitude observatory at a site called Chele La. In the fall, Charles will return to Cambridge, this side of the pond, to start his doctorate studies in Climate Physics and Chemistry at MIT.

"Now and Then": *Note from the Chair*

The north and east exterior walls of the Christopher Wren chapel at Emmanuel College are not nearly as well-known as the western façade on Front Court. I saw the lesser-known walls for the first time last fall, 35 years after I'd spent my scholarship year at Emma. I thought I'd cased every inch of Emma and its grounds, but this perspective was new to me. I was looking at the chapel through a large sitting-room window in the Masters Lodgings, quarters in which I'd never before set foot. As a student, I'd treated this part of the College as if it were the Forbidden City. I'd also treated the Master at that time, the eminent Chaucerian Derek Brewer, as unapproachable; after a perfunctory greeting at the matriculation exercise I never spoke to him again. On my visit this past September, the current Master, Dame Fiona Reynolds, invited my wife and me to meet with her at home. She was as gregarious as Brewer was stoic. She gave us a tour of the rooms. We saw a table set for a dinner that evening to celebrate an anniversary (the 30th?) of the admission of women as Junior Members of the College. I told the Master that my year at Emma happened to coincide with the inaugural year for female graduate students. I told her a story about the time one of those students asked the Head Porter why there were still urinals in the College's only female washroom. The porter responded, "Before we go through the trouble of removing them, we want to make sure this experiment is going to work."

Somewhere in a box in my attic there is a letter from the same porter sent to me late in the fall term of 1978. In the letter he requested that my guests and I "refrain from urinating onto Chapman's Garden from the window of my rooms." The Harvard rooms at Emma are in Old Court – built in 1634 and showing very few improvements over the past 400 years – and the only plumbing for decades has been small wash basins on the landings in each entryway. Once in bed, the prospect of dressing, negotiating the narrow staircase, going outside and crossing to South Court to get to the facilities near the bar, was just too daunting. But on this visit, Eric Cervini, the current Harvard Scholar, told me to walk up to the top of the entryway. There at the top two rooms, that due to fire regulations were not available to house students, had been transformed into a new bathroom with showers and WCs. In part funded by Scott Mead (Emma '77-'78), this has set right an inconvenience that our Emma scholars have endured for more than 90 years. All of our Emma scholars in the future owe him their thanks.

As I expected, many things in Cambridge are much the same – the College facades, the front courts, the Backs, many of the narrow cobblestone streets. There are even a few merchants that I did not expect to see three and

half decades later such as Fitzbillies, Heffers Bookshop and the Varsity, which once served food only slightly more edible than that served in the dining hall. What I didn't expect was how much has changed: shopping arcades, squares filled with outdoor vendors, new retail stores everywhere, many new restaurants. Cambridge City Centre is vibrant and buzzing with activity, a sign that the pharmaceutical and scientific research centers that have developed here over the years have brought economic health (and higher housing prices) to the city and its environs.

In one of those restaurants I hosted a lunch for our four scholars, who were just beginning their fall terms: Eric Cervini, Miriam Farkas, Shelby Lin, Mariel Pettee. If it was not clear when we selected them, it was made clear at lunch, that they were better educated, better traveled and better prepared to take advantage of Cambridge's many treasures than I had been. They already had numerous anecdotes to share about porters, bed bugs, first meetings with tutors, pubs. After lunch, I wanted to walk around with them and reminisce about what the town looked like when I was at Cambridge. But my wife stopped me, as she often does, thanked the scholars for joining us, and sent them on their way. She reminded me of the time some years ago when we were taking one of our daughters to begin her freshman year at Harvard. My daughter said to me, "Dad, I've set aside almost four hours today for you to walk me around Harvard. I'll go anywhere you want; I'll listen to all your stories about places you had first kisses, threw up, ate late-night food, pulled all-nighters and all the rest. I will let you walk me down your memory lane. But when we're done, I don't want to hear any of it again. I have to make Harvard mine, too."

We each carry memories of our scholarship year somewhere enduring between our heads and our hearts. It's true, sadly, that no one wants to hear more than an anecdote or two about our own scholarship year, especially each year's new scholars. But what we give this year's scholars, and the scholars for many years to come, is the opportunity to create their own year at Cambridge. We are unique among Harvard scholarships in that our funding is provided by, and our scholars are selected by, former scholars. Each year we choose four remarkable Harvard seniors – seemingly more remarkable every year – to spend a year at Cambridge. A year later they too have a vast store of memories. They become part of a remarkable community of former scholars and join us in passing on this remarkable gift – and occasionally, with indulgence, a few of those memories.

Harvard-Cambridge Summer Fellows

Tyler Dobbs '16 divides his summer into the academic, the social, what Cambridge offered, and what traveling offered. The best of the academic portion was working with supervisor Dr. Nick Hardy to explore classical and late 17th century/early 18th century English texts. Just spending time in Trinity's Wren library was an "amazing" experience. Meeting a wide variety of Cambridge students in the Trinity dining hall and an evening with "all sorts of interesting characters" at the Harvard UK Alumni dinner were social highlights. Punting and pubs were the best aspects of being in Cambridge, while forays further afield included Oxford, Dublin, Paris, and Madrid. Dobbs's only complaints: a lack of library borrowing privileges and overly "workaholic" fellow students – including himself!

It was a thrill for **Becky Gould '15** to discover the vase that inspired Keats's "Ode on a Grecian Urn," tucked away in a corner of the Louvre, just days after submitting a paper on this poem for her Sister Arts class. Gould's art history course was similarly enriched by firsthand encounters with the museums and galleries of Cambridge and London. Altogether, Gould is grateful for the opportunity to "hone my analytic skills in both a familiar and a new discipline, to develop my research ambitions as I embark on my senior thesis, to immerse myself in British culture especially in the arts, and to spend time with peers who were similarly pursuing their own diverse passions."

Jonathan Jeffrey '16, had a "phenomenal" summer experience, exploring American diplomatic history from a "unique, foreign perspective" and learning about British culture and university life. Dr. Katharina Rietzler of Pembroke College was a dedicated advisor, meeting with Jeffrey weekly to discuss readings and research ideas. With her help and the discovery of a little-known fact of U.S.-Chinese relations during World War II, Jeffrey honed and redirected his research interests to develop a paper that he hopes will serve as a foundation for his senior thesis. Other summer takeaways: lifelong friendships and new experiences, from rowing on the Cam to exploring London and Madrid.

Garrett Lam '16 calls his time at Cambridge "easily the best summer I've had, and the one in which I grew most as a person." Besides the good food, the gothic architecture, and the beautiful surroundings, Lam enjoyed "intellectual freedom" and an opportunity to focus on philosophy that, as a neurobiology major, he'd "never experienced before." Lam particularly valued interactions with his supervisor Richard Holton, "a wonderful teacher and a very nice man." Lam returned to Harvard with new ideas about how to combine his interests in neurobiology and philosophy – for example, by exploring how neuroscientific findings can influence beliefs about free will and ethics.

For Zak Lutz '16, a summer at Trinity College studying early American political philosophy was "a trial run of sorts" for his planned career path in academia. Fortunately, he found it suited him. After initially focusing on the British public's response to America's war for independence, Lutz found his way to the topic that has since become the focus of his thesis project: British and American views on legitimate sovereignty before and during the Revolutionary War period. The summer also helped Lutz grow as an academic: "I learned how to research to an extent far beyond what I'd simply do for a class paper. I really enjoyed engaging deeply with a single subject for extended periods of time." Lutz says the most important thing for future applicants to be aware of "is the degree of independence we all had."

Maggie McGovern '16 came to Cambridge to research medieval French manuscripts. Working with Stella Panaytova at the Fitzwilliam Museum's Founder's Library, McGovern learned about the many layers of museum work and gained experience with the academic, financial, and managerial aspects of curating. Her projects included cataloguing and consolidating materials and researching an upcoming exhibition. Other summer activities included running – literally! – around Cambridge and neighboring towns, reading for pleasure, and learning to savor independence and occasional

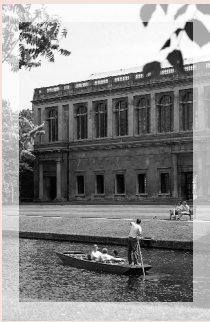
solitude. A trip to Wales for the Eisteddfod, a large arts celebration, was especially memorable, as was getting to know several Trinity students and finding out that "despite our different nationalities and interests, we were all, at heart, just young individuals trying to figure out what we wanted to do and learn in life."

As trite as it sounds, **Priyanka Menon '16** finds it hard to label her H-C summer as anything other than a "once in a lifetime opportunity" to pursue an academic passion outside her main field of study, explore and utilize the resources of one of the world's foremost educational institutions; and visit new places (Budapest, Prague, and Vienna). Menon is especially grateful for the guidance and support of her professor from a reading course in Indian intellectual history, and for the chance to explore new topics in mathematics, her chosen concentration. Reading G.H. Hardy's "A Mathematician's Apology" at Trinity College, where Hardy lived and lectured nearly a century before, represented the "perfect intersection" of Menon's two academic passions. She reports leaving Cambridge "with a renewed sense of purpose and a greater confidence in my own ability as a student of history."

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Memories of Cambridge

By Rediet Abebe



I have a very vivid memory of my first impression of Cambridge. I (and my two suitcases full of math notes and college mementos) had flown overnight from the other Cambridge and taken the bus from the airport, which got into town around mid-afternoon. During my entire walk from the Parker’s Piece bus stop all the way up to the Pembroke Scholar’s room, I was truly in awe of how magical the place looked. Walking down Pembroke street was like walking into a movie scene, the view of the inner court and garden from my room looked straight out of a postcard picture, and the porters were eerily friendly. I thought to myself, surely this magical-charm is going to fade away once I get settled in (and maybe even once I take my post-traveling nap), and certainly once I’m swamped with homework from my infamously hard program.

To my pleasant surprise, the opposite was true. Over the weeks, I got to explore pockets of my college, the university and town and fell in love with everything from the grand tourist attractions like Kings Chapel and Rainbow Cafe (a gem for vegetarian-food lovers) to small details like the prayer pillows in Pembroke chapel that have been carefully used and preserved since the 1600s. I explored the secret gardens of Pembroke, went to more formals than I’d like to admit, and made long-lasting friendships from both my college and program.

Pembroke was especially at the center of this almost dream-like year. The more I learned about my college and surrounding, the more mesmerized I was by it. Almost everything had a history or a fun fact: the coffee shop across the street that I went to every morning happened to have also been Stephen Fry’s favorite coffee shop, my college master was head of the MI6, the gate I walked through everyday was over 700 years old, and we could have a surprise guest like Stephen Hawking at any random formal. At Cambridge, anything can happen! Despite my constant amazement and fascination, I also found myself feeling more and more integrated into the place. Almost instantly, I was drawn into the chapel community through the Dean of the college, whose heart for community-building and service I admired, and a dear friend I was lucky enough to meet my first week of college. As a Chapel Clerk, I had the opportunity to learn about and soon enough care for the chapel, which had such a rich history.

My academic experience was also also unlike any other. As an undergraduate, I had always wished to learn more graph theory and extremal combinatorics – a topic that is largely absent in the Harvard-MIT area but for which Cambridge is a hub. To quench my thirst, I would work through various books including Professor Bela Bollobas’ “Model Graph Theory.” At Cambridge, not only was I able to take a class with him and Professor Imre Leader, I was also personally welcomed into their weekly Ph.D. seminars and the community of combinatorialists at the university. Every single class and seminar I walked into, I was overwhelmed with gratitude for having the opportunity to learn directly from academics I had been admiring from afar for years.

I also used my “year of grace” to explore various other fields. I was a regular attendee of seminars in economics, statistics, and the Stokes’ society for general science. Some of these dramatically shaped my academic interest, helping me find my calling as a network scientist which connects graph theory, combinatorics, theoretical computer science, and game theory. Others dramatically increased my knowledge of the design and construction of several London Underground lines (Jubilee line, anyone?).

Reflecting on my year in Cambridge, I see that it was in a lot of ways similar to that of other scholars.’ (Although, to my credit, I never once rowed throughout my entire time there!) Cambridge gives us all the opportunity to do what we would do if there were no expectations, live in a town that manages to preserve its charm (and coffee shops) through the decades, and make long-lasting friendships and experiences that follow us even after this year of grace.

The more I learned about my college and surrounding, the more mesmerized I was by it.

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Harvard-Cambridge Summer Fellows

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Jasmine Opie ’16 describes Cambridge as “slow-moving, peaceful and yet, exciting and mysterious” in ways that made her “feel settled in some fundamental and visceral way, primed for all sorts of introspection.” In Opie’s case, introspection led to a fundamental re-thinking of her earlier plan to apply Kant’s philosophy to environmental ethics. Other highlights: English breakfasts in Trinity’s majestic old dining hall, croquet on the Emmanuel lawn, navigating back from Grantchester by boat at night, and “a lightness and joy in both my day-to-day adventures and in my studies.” Opie’s advice to future summer fellows: “Be ready to go with the flow a bit, particularly if your project, like mine, is rather abstract. At the same time, don’t limit your personal exploration to your formal academic experience – let this bleed into your daily life in Cambridge. It’s a special place...”

Kevin Parker ’16 isn’t sure why he felt like less a student and more like a young researcher during his summer studying mouse embryonic development at the Cambridge Department of Physiology, Development, and Neuroscience. Perhaps it was working on a new project and being encouraged to design and carry out his own experiments. Cambridge was “fantastic... big enough to still be exciting after 10 weeks, but comfortable and familiar to live in after only a few.” The H-C dinner was a highlight; a four-day trip to

Budapest, Vienna, and Prague with other H-C fellows was tiring – early morning trains and endless walking – but absolutely wonderful. According to Parker, “there is something intangible about the summer, unique from the academic year, that allows for an intensely deep research experience that is nonetheless still a refreshing break from one’s regular studies.”

Andrew Sanchez ’16 began his summer investigating the letters of Kenelm Digby, a renowned 17th century polymath, pirate, and catholic convert. An inquiry into the intellectual justifications for conversion led to the epistolary exchanges between Walter Montagu, another prominent convert of the time, and several important Protestant thinkers. The entire project was inspired by and evolved under the dedicated supervision and mentorship of Dr. Joe Moshenska of Trinity College. Sanchez also “thoroughly enjoyed” living at Trinity, including many afternoons enjoying evensong in King’s College Chapel, not to mention punting, visiting the colleges, and picnicking along the Cam.

Sam Sokolsky-Tifft ’15 arrived in Cambridge “unsure what to expect” in terms of work, weather, and fashion. He found himself overdressed for the Kings’ May Ball on the first day, but still warmly welcomed. Subsequent days were spent in the “alternate hedonism” of the Emma and University libraries, researching French and German existentialism and the writings of Samuel Beckett, while also becoming a proficient punter, bridge-hopper, croquet-player, and “real tennis” player. A day at Wimbledon was the most British experience of all: “tea on an early-morning train commute, underground delays, five hours of queuing in the pouring rain, and then another five hours of tennis in the pouring rain.” According to Sokolsky-Tifft, “in England, with the right companions, often what sounds objectively like a miserable day is pure delight.”

Academically, **Fiorella Vargas ’16** got far more out of working at the Centre for Advanced Photonics and Electronics than she hoped. Her supervisor, mentor, and fellow lab-mates were patient and helpful and Vargas found it easy to settle into life in Cambridge – even after two months, she hadn’t tired of taking in the breathtaking view of the colleges as she walked through town. Nighttime punting on the Cam and a whirlwind tour of Budapest, Vienna, and Prague with other H-C fellows counted among the other more memorable experiences of Vargas’s summer.

Madeleine Bersin ’14, spent her H-C summer interning at London’s Gate Theatre. Having long admired the Gate from afar, Bersin was thrilled to learn firsthand how this tiny, 70-seat theatre packs “such unbelievable punch” – artistically and logistically. Bersin built props, checked actor availability, assisted in casting sessions, helped organize an auction for the Gate’s upcoming gala, performed patron outreach, sold tickets, ushered, booked rehearsal spaces, designed posters, created and executed marketing plans, blogged...”and that’s not the half of it.” In the process she “gained an enormous number of practical skills” while also leaning that, in theatre, it’s important to “never lose sight of being committed to exciting work.” All in all, her experience at the Gate left Bersin with “the confidence to shoot for interesting, not safe.” ■