

Memories Never End

On a lovely sunny afternoon in October 2004, my friends Andy, Jess, David and I sat in Martin's Café, on Trumpington Street. It was my last day at the Architecture Department. The next day I would be going home to Shanghai to start my working life. It was a typical farewell gathering of classmates and good friends – with laughter, fond reminiscing and a farewell card. I still remember Jess's joke about an architect and a dentist which ever made us a big laughter. It was a sweet moment for me. I was pleased to bid farewell to my classmates at Martin's Café against the background of the Department building outside the window.

Two months later I received an email from Ming, my best friend and previous flat mate at Downing, in which she told me that the University would possibly announce the closure of the Department of

Architecture in January this year. I was completely shocked and could not ignore the news. I wrote to Jess, asking her if it was true. Her reply in one sentence: "This time it's no joke---we've been fighting!" That sunny afternoon at Martin's Café flashed through my mind. All the memories of my department during my one-year stint came back to me, turning from vague to vivid, like a film developing in the mind.

I remember the productive conversations with Koen, my supervisor, about sustainable design in China. I remember the kindly smile of Mrs. Marion, the Department Secretary. She is the only secretary I know who can remember every fresher's name after one encounter. I remember the high prices of printing and photocopying in the Department even as the speed of computers was annoyingly slow. I remember the chilly morning at 2 a.m. when David and I rode our bicycles

back from Martin Center to Downing and St. John's with a mixture of exhaustion and excitement, the day we finally finished our design project. I remember Andy and I discussing how to arrange an impressive presentation of Martin Center during the annual department exhibition.

I remember the day that Ming invited me and a friend, Karen, for tea at her place. We searched the must-see movies of Cambridge Movie Festival. I excitedly shouted out "My Architect!" when I read the programme, and Ming literally jumped in fright! I remember the extraordinarily intense feeling of pride at that moment of being an architect, the same feeling as I get being a member of the University.

"This time it was no joke---we've been fighting!" as Jess said. For me, I will fight for the memories that began the day I landed at Cambridge and seemed to have ended the day I said goodbye to my classmates at Martin's Café. But no... memories never end.

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