

Tuesday, 30th March, 2004,

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Dear Master,

After receiving my copy of *New & Old* for May 2002, with the centre-page spread on Brin Newton-John, I wrote last year, offering the College the photographic portrait of Brin Newton-John that came into my possession. Having received a positive response, and having made a smaller copy for myself, I now enclose the framed portrait.

Let me explain how I came by it.

I have lived in two of the houses Brin Newton-John lived in during his life. The first of these is Allen House, for the last twenty months of my 4½ years of residence (1965 to August 1969, when I left Australia on a C.S.I.R.O. Overseas Studentship). The second is a house in the Upper Blue Mountains, at Dargan, near Bell, which my late wife and I bought from Gay Newton-John, Brin's third wife. Brin and Gay had bought the unfinished house, on nine acres of land, overlooking the Dargan Creek ravine, with distant views of Hartley Vale, the Cox's River Valley, and the Great Divide, to move to in retirement. They completed the house, but unfortunately Brin died soon after. Gay died two years after we had bought the house, including all furniture and furnishings, in late 1995. Brin's ashes are buried on the property under a flowering cherry. (My wife died in 1998, of the cancer we already knew was incurable at the time we bought the house, although we had two years of good health — bush walks, the kids outside playing — before the illness took its final toll.)

Amongst Gay Newton-John's possessions in the house was the photo portrait of Brin, a man in the prime, much younger than the man in Bill Leak's portrait, wreathed in smoke, looking very much the war-time boffin that I understand he had been.

I never met Brin (although I heard his mellifluous voice introducing classical recordings on 2MBS-FM here in Sydney), and I have never met Olivia, Hugh or any other member of the family, apart from the late Gay Newton-John. As such, I have no great attachment to the photo portrait. Since Ormond is now receptive to Newton-John reminiscences, the thought struck me that the old College might be a suitable permanent home for the portrait.



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I fondly remember my years at Ormond as a period of growing up and maturing. I had been at Scotch, did Engineering, but acted (I was the Chair of the O.C.S.C.P.S.C.), talked, and read. Since then I have studied at M.I.T., Cambridge University (Pembroke, with help from Davis McCaughey), and Stanford (where I completed my PhD in economics). I have been teaching at the Australian Graduate School of Management for almost twenty-seven years.

The photographic portrait is much more than a simple snap, and I wonder who the photographer was. Helmut Newton perhaps? Anyway, it's better off on the walls of Ormond.

Sincerely

Robert Marks