



In 1974, the BBC visited Oxford to film the Tortoise Race for *Blue Peter* — 35 years on, they returned to record the 2009 race

well. She is looked after by ‘Comrade Tortoise’ who is ably assisted by gardener, Steve Taylor, who used to work at Cotswold Wildlife Park at Burford.

Trinity College, having owned various tortoises since the reign of George III, apparently had a gap from some time after the Second World War to the present. However, in 2008, they were offered a pair of Hermann tortoises from the estate of the late Mr Leonard Cripps of Wheatley Mill.

Readers with long memories may recall the article about the restoration of the mill’s sails in the September 2007 edition of this magazine, and the report of Mr Cripps’s death, five days short of his 100th birthday. The end result was the arrival of Toby and Plum (both girls, by the way) at Trinity College where they have now been in residence for

a year.

On July 1, 2008, die President of Trinity College, Sir Ivor Roberts, and Lady Roberts, held a tea party in their garden to thank Toby and Plum’s donors and to welcome the aforementioned members of the chelonian family to their new home.

Fellows and visitors enjoyed tea and cake and the tortoises enjoyed a gift of lambs’ lettuce — apparently they are also very partial to the clover in the president’s lawn. Surely Lewis Carroll must have been there in spirit!

Corpus Christi College, the holders of die annual Tortoise Fair usually held in late May, are die proud owners of Foxe and Oldham named after the founders of the college.

Regent Park College’s tortoise, Emmanuelle (now aged 90), had been the fastest in Oxford for many years. Only in the last couple of years has she been out-distanced by the college’s newer tortoise, Fred.

It seems Emmanuelle was originally named Emmanuel, meaning ‘God with Us’, an appropriate name for a college with strong religious affiliations. However, a vet who came there to train for die ministry" discovered she was female, hence the re-naming. Sadly, Fred has had to be rehomed after some unacceptable goings-on with Emmanuelle!

If you are looking for examples of British eccentricity, Oxford is a pretty good place to start and they don’t come much more eccentric than Oxford University students, while learning to be future prime ministers or world leaders, holding an inter-collegiate tortoise race,

Hopefully they- will look back on their salad days with nostalgia. It just shows, one should never underestimate die value of a good, well-rounded education.

The result of the May' 2009 race? A home win for Oldham, one of the two Corpus . . . tortoises.