

TW

The magazine of St John's College, Oxford

2024

Turning light into electricity

Oxford Kafka 2024 Festival

Historic Libraries & Canterbury
Quadrangle – official reopening

The language of flowers

The power of internships

TW

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St John's College
Oxford

Cover image by John Cairns



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From the Editor



In comparison to other Oxford colleges, St John's has more than its fair share of saints. Thanks to its early years as a redoubt for Roman Catholics, it produced a small clutch of martyrs, the most famous of whom is the Jesuit Edmund Campion, who preached at the Founder's funeral in 1567, and met a grisly end at Tyburn in 1581.

As innumerable portraits and memorials so vividly demonstrate, St John's has also had its bishops and archbishops. Without William Laud, after all, there would be no Canterbury Quad.

But until this year, the College lacked any cardinals. While our neighbour, Trinity, could point to the Victorian John Henry Newman and Balliol claimed no fewer than three, when it came to this important role in the Church, our cupboard was bare.

Congratulations, then, to Timothy Radcliffe, whose appointment to the College of Cardinals by the Pope was announced as *TW* was being assembled.

And it's not just a pleasure to see one of our most distinguished Honorary Fellows recognized in this way; nor simply satisfying to tick off another achievement for the College community. This lovely piece of news is also yet another reminder that, after all these years, St John's is still capable of surprising us.

This year's *TW* is a record of other ways in which an old college can generate new things, whether path-breaking research or inspiring teaching. I do hope you enjoy it – and do let us know if there is anything you would like to hear more about.

The Revd Professor William Whyte
Editor



From the President

As we reflect on the past year at St John's, I am delighted to see our 2024 annual publication, celebrating the vibrant and dynamic life of our community. This year has been one of remarkable achievements, inspiring events, and exciting new beginnings. From welcoming distinguished new Fellows to hosting thought-provoking initiatives such as the *Pollution Pods* installation and our lively St John's Arts Week, our College has truly thrived in every aspect of academic and cultural life. The official opening of the restored Canterbury Quadrangle and Historic Libraries by Professor Robert Darnton in October was an excellent start to the new academic year.



Our students have excelled not only in their studies but also in sports, music, and the creative arts, contributing to a rich and fulfilling experience for all members of the College.



Our students have excelled not only in their studies but also in sports, music, and the creative arts, contributing to a rich and fulfilling experience for all members of the College. The College has also continued to foster a strong sense of community through our various events, whether through insightful lectures, engaging performances, or simply coming together to support one another.

I hope that as you read through this issue of *TW*, you will share our pride in the accomplishments of College members and feel inspired by the dedication, talent, and enthusiasm that make St John's such a special place. My heartfelt thanks go to everyone who has contributed to the College's success during the past academic year, and I look forward to another year of growth and achievement together.

Professor Lady Sue Black, Baroness Black of Strome
LT DBE FRS FRSE FRAI FRSB CHFA
President



College News

President awarded multiple honours

His Majesty King Charles III appointed the President to the Most Ancient and Most Noble Order of the Thistle, the highest honour in Scotland, in March 2024. Revived by King James VII of Scotland in 1687, the Order has a complement of sixteen Knights and Ladies. The King is the Sovereign of the Order, and appointments to the Order of the Thistle are entirely in the personal gift of the monarch.

Professor Lady Sue Black was installed as a member of the Order of the Thistle during a service at St Giles Cathedral in Edinburgh on 3 July.

The President was widely honoured during 2023/24. She was awarded Honorary Doctorates from the University of the Highlands and Islands in Inverness in November 2023 and from Anglia Ruskin University in July 2024. She was also elected as an Honorary Fellow of Homerton College, Cambridge in March 2024.



Sue filmed a piece for Lucy Worsley's BBC2 series, 'Killing Sherlock' in the Long Gallery in July.



2024 Leverhulme Medal and Prize

Professor Maggie Snowling, Emeritus Research Fellow in Psychology and former President, was jointly awarded the 2024 Leverhulme Medal and Prize.

The Leverhulme Medal and Prize is presented triennially for significant contributions to knowledge and understanding within the humanities or social sciences. The award was made jointly with Professor Charles Hulme for their commitment to understanding children's learning difficulties, particularly dyslexia and developmental language disorder.

Following decades of research into children's educational development, Professors Snowling and Hulme recently founded OxEd and Assessment, a University of Oxford spinout company that provides practical resources for oral language assessment, intervention, and enrichment in schools.

Dr William Hayes

The College was sad to announce, just as we went to press, the death of Dr William Hayes FInstP Hon MRIA on 16 March 2025.

Bill Hayes (1930–2025) was born in Ireland and educated at University College Dublin. He arrived at St John's in 1955 to read for a DPhil in Physics with Brebis Bleaney and continued as Official Fellow and Tutor in Physics (1960–87), Principal Bursar (1977–87) and finally as President (1987–2001). Amongst many other roles in the University, he was also Director and Head of the Clarendon Laboratory (1985–87).

St John's flourished under Bill's bursarship and presidency with new buildings (the Garden Quadrangle, Middle Common Room and development of 14 and 15 St Giles) and arrangements for research fellowships of many kinds, including the launch of the St John's Research Centre.

As a physicist, he specialised in spectroscopy, the idea that signals of different frequencies provide fundamental information about their source. He particularly studied imperfections in crystals and defects in solids, investigating the spectroscopic signatures of imperfections in alkali halides and semiconductors, using varied research techniques that included inelastic light scattering (Raman and Brillouin spectroscopy), magneto-optics, nuclear magnetic resonance (NMR), electron paramagnetic resonance (EPR) and muon spin resonance (mu-SR).

A full appreciation of Bill's contribution to St John's and Physics will appear in *TW* 2025.



New Nuffield Professor of Population Health

Professor Prabhat Jha has been appointed as Nuffield Professor of Population Health and Head of the Nuffield Department of Population Health. He will succeed Professor Sir Rory Collins who has been Head of Department since its inception in 2013. Professor Jha will take up the post with effect from 1 September 2025 and will hold a Professorial Fellowship at St John's.

Professor Jha studied Medicine at the University of Manitoba and was awarded a DPhil in Epidemiology and Public Health at the University of Oxford, where he was supervised by the late Professor Dame Valerie Beral and Professor Sir Richard Peto. He is currently the University Professor of Global Health and Epidemiology at the Dalla Lana School of Public Health and Temerty School of Medicine, University of Toronto, and Director of the Centre for Global Health Research, Unity Health Toronto. He has served on a number of advisory boards and has been a health adviser to several governments.

New portrait of Professor James Maynard FRS

A new portrait of Professor James Maynard FRS was unveiled on 29 February 2024 and is now displayed in Hall. The portrait was commissioned by Governing Body to celebrate the award of the Fields Medal in 2022 for Professor Maynard's 'spectacular contributions in analytic number theory'.

The artist Benjamin Hope NEAC RP studied Mathematics and Physics at Cambridge and has a PhD in Theoretical Nanoscience – making him the perfect choice for this painting. He described the process of painting the portrait:

'Initially the painting was going to be a straightforward observed portrait of James and I'd even said I was reluctant to try to add meaning through references to Mathematics. But then having got to know James better through five sittings – and not being satisfied with what I'd painted – I realised I needed to make big changes. As someone with a mathematical background myself, I decided that I really should do something a little different and make it a painting about James existing in both the real world and the space of mathematical forms and ideas (which to him is, in a sense, even more real). On the train home after the final sitting, I got a whole bunch of ideas that drew on what we'd talked about and the setting we'd been in. Many of these ideas went into the final piece which I constructed back in my studio. This isn't how I usually work, but partly for that reason, I really enjoyed it.

James is very humble and I know he didn't want the Fields Medal front and centre so initially it wasn't going to appear at all. But then I decided to include it anamorphically projected in a nod to Holbein's Ambassadors, which shows a skull distorted so that it only reveals itself when viewed from a particular spot to the side of the painting. I used the same method that most experts think Holbein used but with a different viewing spot (10 inches to the left, 20 inches below and 10 inches away from the plane of the painting) that will hopefully be more appropriate for the position where the piece will hang. I also added an additional step: the medal is mirror-reflectied.



Above: James Maynard by Benjamin Hope

Left: The anamorphic Fields Medal

Bottom left: Benjamin Hope (left) with James Maynard

This was to make Archimedes look up at James, but I also liked the idea of having one further transformation that might require a modern viewer with a phone to perform.'

Dr Georgy Kantor, Keeper of the Pictures, added:

'The new portrait of Professor Maynard continues the long tradition of celebrating and creating a pictorial record of the achievements of our Presidents, Fellows and alumni. Portraits on the walls of our Hall celebrate achievements in medieval history, biochemistry, study of modern French literature, experimental psychology and many other fields of study, as well as outside academia, and have been painted by distinguished artists, from Marcus Gheeraerts the Younger to Enoch Zeeman to Ruskin Spear and Bryan Organ. It is a great pleasure to add to this collection a work by Benjamin Hope, who brought to the subject not only his remarkable artistic talent but also an understanding of Mathematics fostered by his own work in science.'

Anne of Cleves

The College's portrait of Anne of Cleves, usually ascribed to Bartholomaeus Bruyn the Elder, starred in the major exhibition, *Six Lives: The Stories of Henry VIII's Queens*, at the National Portrait Gallery from June to September 2024.

The portrait was purchased in c.1734 by the President, William Holmes, for his private collection. It was later acquired for the College by his successor, William Derham in 1748. Anne of Cleves was only officially recognised as the sitter in 1855, in J. W. Burgon's *Arms of the Colleges of Oxford*. Following major conservation work on the portrait in 1989/90, the conservator Candy Kuhl and the then Keeper of Pictures at St John's, Professor Peter Hacker, persuasively argued in the *Burlington Magazine* that the portrait dates to the 1530s at the court of Cleves, before Anne came to England to marry Henry. Bartholomaeus Bruyn the Elder (1493–1555), a Cologne painter known to have worked for the court of Cleves, emerged as the most likely artist. As Hacker and Kuhl noted, 'it is within the bounds of possibility' that this is one of the two portraits that the Cleves ambassador Dr Henry Olisleger had shown to Henry VIII's representatives to initiate the marriage negotiations.

A note of uncertainty remained, however, as Bruyn did not sign his paintings, and at a later date the painting was glued to a new panel, dated by dendrochronology to c.1650, which made narrowing down the date within the sixteenth century difficult. At the time of Candy Kuhl's conservation work, the frame of the portrait was seen as part of the later work, contemporary with the panel at the back, particularly as it was gilded and given additional decoration in the Victorian period. The portrait was redisplayed in a new frame made by a local Oxford frame-maker, and the old panel was gathering dust in our picture store.

In 2015, as part of a major survey of historic picture frames in our collection undertaken for St John's, Timothy Newbery identified the frame as having characteristic stylistic features for the Lower Rhine workshops in the 1520s–30s, which confirms the dating of the portrait and its attribution to an artist connected to the court of Cleves. The unusual arched form of the panel and the frame makes it almost 100 per cent certain that it was custom-made for the portrait. He was able to remove the Victorian gilding and restore the original colour scheme of the frame. As he notes in his report, 'the arch format and moulding profile of this frame is derived from altar triptychs which were made in Flanders from about 1518', such as *The Last Judgement and the Seven Acts of Mercy* of c.1518–19 by Barend van Orley (1487–1541) now in the Royal Museum of Fine Arts at Antwerp or the later *Noli Me Tangere* by Jan van Scorel (1492–1562) now in Birmingham. Significantly, there is a double portrait of *Johann von Rolixwerth and his wife Christina von Sternberg*

(1529) by Bruyn, now in the Mauritshuis, The Hague, for which the original frames with very similar arches to that on the St John's *Anne of Cleves* survive. This makes the attribution to Bruyn or an artist from his workshop additionally likely.

Following the restoration of the frame, the portrait itself was conserved by Georgie Dennis for Anne's triumphant return to London. She is now back in splendour in the President's Lodgings.



Georgy Kantor addresses Fellows and guests in the President's Parlour, marking the return of Anne of Cleves to St John's in November 2024.



Simon Whittaker



Attendees at the Simon Whittaker conference

Celebrations of retiring Fellows

Professor Simon Whittaker retired at the end of September 2023. Dr Marco Cappelletti reported on the conference held in his honour:

On 25–27 September 2023, St John’s hosted a high-profile conference to mark Professor Simon Whittaker’s retirement and to honour his scholarship in the field of comparative law. The organisers of the conference, Dr Marco Cappelletti (Lecturer in Law at St John’s), Professor Ciara Kennefick (Christ Church), and Professor Dorota Leczykiewicz (St Peter’s) gathered leading scholars from all over Europe to present and discuss their work, displaying the comparative law scholarship which has benefited from or coincides with Professor Whittaker’s contribution to the field.

Contributors and other participants included distinguished scholars such as Hugh Beale, John Bell, Jean-Sébastien Borghetti, John Cartwright, Sergio Cámara Lapuente, Matthew Dyson, Michele Graziadei, Birke Häcker, Yves-Marie Laithier, Ben McFarlane, Donal Nolan, Barbara Pozzo, Solène Rowan, Pietro Sirena, Sandy Steel, and Robert Stevens.

The conference was a great success, with lively discussions and fruitful exchanges of views. The papers will be revised and published in a volume intended to become a reference point in the field of comparative private law for years to come.

In August 2024 Professor Fraser Armstrong celebrated his 70th birthday with a ‘platinum jubilee’ event in College. The two-day ‘Meeting of Minds, Mechanisms and Memories’ conference honoured Professor Armstrong’s scientific contributions to understanding and harnessing the redox mechanisms of life and included talks from an international group of former Armstrong group students and researchers. The subjects covered reflected cutting-edge developments

in redox enzymology enzyme discovery, as well as structural, spectroscopic and bioelectrochemical method developments and important industrial applications of biofuel enzymes.



The ‘Meeting of Minds, Mechanisms and Memories’ conference



College works

While the major project to restore the Historic Libraries and Canterbury Quadrangle was being completed, refurbishment also began on 19–21 St John Street. The project will upgrade the rooms to en-suite accommodation, whilst also making improvements to the existing fabric to reduce heat loss as well as removing gas services and installing alternative heat and hot water supplies, all as part of

the College's carbon-reduction initiative. The building will also benefit from a new single-storey common extension to the rear together with re-landscaping.

The Dolphin Art Gallery was also made fully accessible with step-free access for all by lowering the external paving and raising the internal floor to provide level access.

Visiting Scholars

Six Visiting Scholars arrived during the Long Vacation: Francesco Bono, Professor of Roman Law at the Department of Law, Political and International Studies, University of Parma; Russell Cummings, Professor of Aeronautics and Managing Director of the DoD HPCMP Hypersonic Vehicle Simulation Institute at the US Air Force Academy and a Department of Engineering Science Visiting Fellow for 2024–27; Anne Duprat, Professor of Comparative Literature at Université de Picardie–Jules Verne and currently also a Senior Member of Institut Universitaire de France; Katerina Kaouri, Reader (Associate Professor) in Applied Mathematics and the Departmental Director for Impact and Engagement at the School of Mathematics, Cardiff University; Dr Alexandra Lewis, Senior Lecturer in English and Creative Writing, College of Human and Social Futures, University of Newcastle (Australia); and Wendy Ugolini, Professor of Second World War Studies, University of Edinburgh. The diversity of fields represented brought stimulating discussion and interest, and a chance to welcome new scholars to the College.

Green action

Zoe Hancock, Principal Bursar, spoke at a Climate League of Oxford and Cambridge (CLOC) panel in February 2024, where she participated in a discussion of the different ways that colleges can become greener. St John's achieved one of the highest marks out of all the colleges on CLOC's climate ranking. The College has taken a number of actions in recent years to set and monitor targets on a number of carbon reduction initiatives, and to plan in a meaningful way to target net zero as soon as possible, and by 2040 at the latest.



John Cairns



John Cairns

Vice-Chancellor's Colloquium

Laurence Cooke (2023, Philosophy and French) and Meira Lee (2023, PPE) were members of one of the runner-up teams for the Vice-Chancellor's Colloquium on Climate Change with a project called 'Thriving but not Flying'.

Laurence described the event:

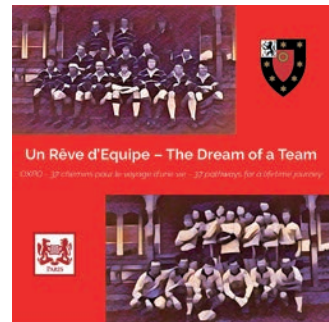
The Vice-Chancellor's Colloquium is a new programme established by Professor Irene Tracey to promote interdisciplinary thinking in Oxford students. The first Colloquium ran during Hilary Term, under the theme of Climate. Through our participation, we attended lectures considering the causes, nature and effects of climate change from scientific, historical, technological and literary perspectives. We developed quantitative and qualitative skills through handling climate data and considering ethical dilemmas posed by the issue of climate responsibility. The programme culminated with a project competition, and our project – led by ourselves and a student each from Keble and Jesus – reached the final. Our proposal centred around undergraduate travel grants offering more funds for students who took sustainable modes of transport, as well as insisting on train travel for certain routes (e.g. London to Paris). This would lower the emissions of the student body and mitigate the temptation of overusing ultra-low-cost airlines.

An entente cordiale

St John's College and Sciences Po have played each other at rugby annually since 1979 when a touring party from Paris visited Oxford after a chance encounter between two students on a train. Having triumphed over their Parisian visitors in the inaugural 'OxPo' game, St John's students toured Paris the following year, thus beginning an annual tradition. Since then, OxPo matches have alternated between Oxford and Paris each year, coinciding with the date and location of the England vs. France Six Nations match.

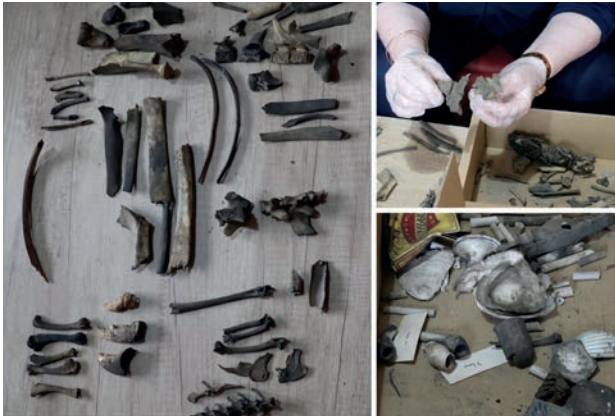
In 2024 rugby alumni published a book '*Un Rêve d'Equipe – The Dream of a Team*' to celebrate this long friendship between England and France thanks to university sport and, in particular, to rugby. The book contains thirty-eight testimonies.

The St John's men's rugby team are the current holders of the OxPo trophy, winning the 2024 game in Paris with a dramatic last-minute interception try.



Starry, starry night

Shubham Kulkarni (DPhil Planetary Physics, St Edmund Hall) produced a beautiful image of Front Quad, the result of a stack of 300 photos taken over an hour. From the left you can see the star trails of Draco, Hercules, Corona Borealis, Serpens, and Bootes. The brightest star trails are formed by Vega and Arcturus, along with the faint trails of globular star clusters like the great cluster in Hercules (M13), Rose Cluster (M5), M92, and M3. Shubham takes star-trail images of various colleges to promote interest in space and astronomy (see more on Instagram @ox_stars).



Bones in the attic

A box of bones and bits and pieces was discovered during the refurbishment of a room at the top of the Buttery. The President's forensic expertise was put to good use in sifting through these to reveal chicken, lamb, rabbit, pork and turkey bones, as well as oyster shells and lobster claws, all of them very hard to date by eye. Clearly members of St John's from years gone by enjoyed their food just as much as our current students. Apart from the bones, there were also pieces of clay pipe, a cork, an old matchbox, and a broken egg cup. It was a wonderfully eclectic mix.



The President was a keynote speaker at the Global Young Scientists Summit in Singapore in January 2024. She also visited alumni there and in Hong Kong.



John Cairns

A reception for donors to the College was hosted by the President at the House of Lords in March 2024.



Snowling Fellowship in Psychology

In April there was a gathering of donors who had generously funded the College's new Tutorial Fellowship in Psychology, held by Professor Laurence Hunt (second row left). The College's other Fellowship in Psychology, held by Professor Kate Nation (second row, middle), has been named the Snowling Fellowship in honour of former President, Professor Maggie Snowling.



Welfare and wellbeing

The College appointed a new Head of Student Welfare and Wellbeing, Hanne Clark, to support students through all aspects of their College and University life and to help create an environment where everyone can thrive.



Tim Webber

Tim Webber, SCR Front of House Manager, retired at the end of March 2024. Tim started at St John's in 1984 as SCR Butler, at the age of 21, at a time when the expected attire was black tie and morning suit. To break with tradition, Tim gradually started to don ever brighter and brighter ties. It soon became a part of the fun of working at St John's for people to bring Tim outrageous ties and dare him to wear them in the SCR and in the Hall. This he happily did with gusto, extending occasionally to an amazing non-matching suit. Tim's ties have always been a talking point for everyone and a source of enjoyment and endless teasing.

Tim had a sale of his ties in aid of Maggie's Cancer Support, raising £1,200 for the charity.



A rowing challenge

Boatman Jim Ronaldson – together with his friend Ian Davies – set a world record as the oldest male pair of rowers to cross an ocean after completing the Talisker Whisky Atlantic Challenge 2023. They set out from La Gomera on 13 December 2023 and arrived in Nelson's Dockyard, Antigua on 18 February 2024 after a 66-day, 17-hour and 39-minute journey of 3,000 miles. Team Never2Late had a combined age of 132 years and 48 days and raised more than £25k for their chosen charities of Myeloma UK and Papyrus.

President's Values Awards

The President's Values Awards are an opportunity for the College to recognise the contributions of its professional staff members and everyone is encouraged to make nominations.

A number of staff won awards for demonstrating the College values over the year. Kathryn Fletcher (Housekeeping) went above and beyond to support a guest staying in the Alumni House, while David Martin (Deputy Lodge Manager) won an award for the way he went about his work with such positivity and diligence when he was unwell with cancer. The recipients chose to donate to Oxfordshire Wildlife Rescue and Oxford Mutual Aid respectively.

Porters Tony Friary, David Martin, and Pete Wheeler also won an award for the support they gave to the mother of a student who had tripped in St Giles. She suffered a head laceration and the porters (in the words of the nomination) were 'extremely kind, caring, reassuring, and ensured that she was taken care of until she could be assessed by the paramedics... the porters were a testament to the ideals of going above and beyond to care for the community'.



The Fibre Arts Society is flourishing and held a winter crochet/ knitalong challenge. The students' creativity was very impressive with the College shield, lamb and flag logo, and black, red and gold used to great effect. Winners were Lili Torocsik (2023, PPE; cardigan), Margarita Stefanova (2021, Mathematics and Statistics; gloves), and Ruby-Anne Birin (2019, DPhil Archaeological Science; hat).



Paul Barnes, Head Chef (Main Kitchen) on Degree Day



Sophie Bacchus-Waterman, Special Collections Photographer in the Library team, was elected an Associate Fellow of the Royal Historical Society. A Tudor historian, Sophie featured on a number of podcasts talking about her research on Anne Boleyn's Psalter.



In May, Glen Hiles, Steven Bradbury, Mark Couling, and Tony Davidson went on a stained-glass restoration course. Glen described the day:

'The course offered us lots of new skills. It was very satisfying to restore the badly damaged windows – and completely start from scratch and make them new again. We look forward to tackling some of the lead windows around College'.

Research News

From books to talks to articles, papers, and media appearances, there has been plenty happening at St John's. Here we sample just some of the past year's activity.

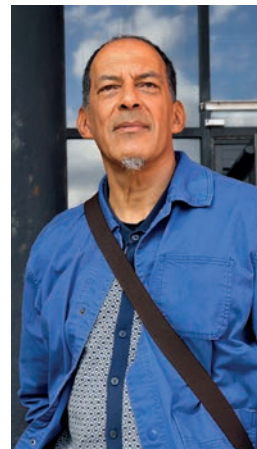


Founder's Lecture

In this year's Founder's Lecture, 'Reflecting Realities: Cultural Leadership Now', Honorary Fellow Catherine Mallyon CBE looked at executive leadership within the performing arts, specifically theatre. Exploring the lessons she learned as Executive Director of the Royal Shakespeare Company from 2012–23, she highlighted the constantly changing tensions that required thoughtful navigation so that people of all ages and backgrounds could be provided with opportunities to experience the arts as widely and as fully as possible. This lecture, and many of our other lectures, can be found on the College's YouTube channel.

Black History Month Lecture

Professor Hakim Adi was the first historian of African heritage to become a professor of history in Britain when he was appointed Professor of the History of Africa and the African Diaspora at the University of Chichester, a position he held from 2015–23. In his lecture, 'Defending the history of African and Caribbean people in Britain' he explored themes raised in his *African and Caribbean People in Britain: A*



History (Allen Lane, 2022). Looking at the evidence for the actions of African and Caribbean people in the history of Britain, Professor Adi showed how much the country's collective achievements – universal suffrage, the fight against fascism, the forging of the NHS – owed to these men and women, and how understanding our history in these terms enables us to fully understand our present moment.

Donald Russell Memorial Lecture

Established by the College to celebrate and honour the contribution of Professor Donald Russell FBA (1920–2020) to the discipline of Classics, and his exceptionally generous support for Classics at St John's, this new lecture series is dedicated to the fields of Classical studies in which he had particular interest, including the art of Greek and Latin prose, rhetoric, and imperial Greek literature.



The inaugural lecture was given by Professor Michael Trapp, Professor of Greek Literature and Thought at King's College London. In *Dio, Aristides, Russell*, he reflected on Professor Russell's

work on Dio Chrysostom and Aelius Aristides and its place in his scholarship overall, the current state of the field, and its future direction.

Festschrift for Professor Sir David Cannadine

One of the foremost historians at work today, Honorary Fellow David Cannadine is a much-published author and a leading public intellectual. A celebration of his career brought dozens of his colleagues to College in April. Focused on institutions and individuals in modern Britain, the symposium was inspired by themes arising from Professor Cannadine's own contribution to national life.



Two former directors of the National Portrait Gallery – Charles Saumarez Smith and Sandy Nairn – reflected on its history, as well as the role he played as chair of Trustees. Hermione Lee spoke on the British Academy (which he headed as President), and Alice Prochaska on the Institute of Historical Research (which he led as Director). His work as the editor of the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* inspired other papers. Honorary Fellow John Darwin spoke on 'Ornamental Imperialists Abroad' while current tutor William Whyte reflected on another member of the Great and Good, the historian Noel Annan. The Festschrift that results will be edited by Cambridge Professor Jon Parry and will constitute a tribute to David Cannadine and a happy memory of two days of celebration.



Robert Penson Garden History Lecture

This year's Penson lecturer was the renowned landscape historian, David Lambert, a director of the Parks Agency (a consultancy focused on the conservation of public parks) and for ten years Conservation Officer for the Garden History Society. His lecture, "My garden's boundaries are the horizon": gardening in a time of climate and ecological collapse' quoted Derek Jarman's description of the garden he laid out at Prospect Cottage on the shingle of Dungeness, and its starkly vulnerable position. David Lambert showed how gardens offer a front-row seat to the environmental challenges we face, from changes in seasonal weather to the arrival of migrating birds and the presence of moths and other insects on a summer night and asked what it meant to garden in such times. Attendees also enjoyed a tour of the Groves.

David Lambert (right) with Michael Lear, Lear Associates (left)

‘A book must be the axe for the frozen sea within us’:

Looking back on the Oxford Kafka 2024 Festival

Barry Murnane, Tutorial Fellow in German, reflects on an exciting year.



Franz Kafka is one of the most iconic writers of modern world literature, his canonical status and widespread recognisability captured in the ubiquitous adjective ‘Kafkaesque’. 2024 saw the centenary of the Prague-based, German-speaking writer’s untimely death from tuberculosis in a sanatorium on the outskirts of Vienna in June 1924. The Bodleian Library is home to the largest collection of Kafka’s papers in the world, and together with colleagues from across the University, as well as another St John’s Fellow, John Fulljames, I had the privilege of being at the forefront of the Oxford Kafka 2024 Festival, celebrating both the writer himself and Oxford’s role in his global reputation. This was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to celebrate the importance of Kafka, literature and language learning more generally, and the transformative potential of the creative arts as a force for social good.

Supported by a major grant from the Arts & Humanities Research Council, funding from the Oxford Research Centre in the Humanities and the Humanities Cultural Programme, as well as by private donations, Oxford Kafka 2024 gained national and international headlines, drawing media attention from Central Europe, Israel, East Asia, and North America. ‘After talking to Barry soon after my arrival as the Director of the Cultural Programme, we quickly identified Kafka as one of the flagship projects leading up to the opening of the new Schwarzman Centre for the Humanities in 2025’, says John Fulljames. ‘Oxford



This was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to celebrate the importance of Kafka, literature and language learning more generally, and the transformative potential of the creative arts as a force for social good.

Kafka 2024 is a real example of how valuable college communities can be. Working with him and his colleagues Carolin Duttlinger and Meindert Peters, it was clear that St John's commitment to supporting the arts could help us to reach entirely new audiences around Oxford and hopefully beyond.' Alongside a major exhibition hosted at the Weston Library, *Kafka: Making of an Icon* which I co-curated, Oxford Kafka 2024 included public readings, lectures, and newly commissioned artworks like Tessa Farmer's *Insect Enemies*, an astonishing multimedia dance adaptation of *A Hunger Artist* by award-winning choreographer Arthur Pita, and a scenic reading of Kafka's shorter fiction by Kristin Scott-Thomas entitled *Deep Cuts*.

From obscure Prague writer to global icon

At the time of Kafka's death in 1924, the idea of Oxford being at the centre of a worldwide celebration of his works would have raised many eyebrows, not least those of Kafka himself. He was virtually unknown outside Prague and only a small circle of writers and critics would have been familiar with his works. It is well known that he did not finish any of his novels like *The Trial* (1925) or *The Castle* (1926), but his shorter fiction was published by some of the leading avant-garde publishers of the day, such as Kurt Wolff in Leipzig, and in widely-read German literary journals like *Die neue Rundschau*. We only know of a handful of public readings of his works, including one of his breakthrough story *The Judgement*, in Prague, and another of *In the Penal Colony* in Munich. The latter reading was a notorious disaster, with the audience disgusted by the goriness of the story. Indeed, contemporaries like the author Franz Werfel – now almost forgotten, but one of Prague's most successful writers of the time – said that Kafka's literary fame would never reach beyond Bodenbach, the border town between Bohemia in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and Saxony in the German Empire. His friend of many years, Max Brod, was convinced of his literary genius, however, and ignored Kafka's dying wish to have all of the unpublished works, letters, and diaries burned.

Starting with *The Trial* and *The Castle*, Brod began publishing Kafka's works posthumously, culminating in



John Fulljames (left) and Barry Murnane

the first collected edition of his works in the 1930s. It was arguably Willa and Edwin Muir's English translations, starting with *The Castle* in 1930, that were most influential in securing Kafka's place in the canon of world literature, however. Indeed, it was with reference to their translations that Irish poet and Oxford alumnus Cecil Day Lewis first coined an adjective possibly more famous than any of Kafka's literary texts themselves in 1936: Kafka-esque. The Muirs made Kafka's works available to a global audience and to the publishing centres of London and New York, and from there to readers and writers in Europe, the Americas, Asia, and Africa. Kafka's posthumous global resonance is evidenced by the importance of his works to writers and artists as different as Gabriel García Márquez, Jorge Luis Borges, Jean-Paul Sartre, Albert Camus, Samuel Beckett, Philipp Roth, Orson Welles, Andy Warhol, J. M. Coetzee, Alan Bennett, Margaret Atwood, Haruki Murakami, or this year's Nobel Prize-winner Han Kang. Perhaps the greatest sign of this fame is Andy Warhol's iconic portrait of 1980, part of his series *Ten Portraits of Jews of the Twentieth Century* (1980), although Kafka's global celebrity has lasted far longer than the fifteen minutes of fame Warhol famously claimed we would all experience one day.

Kafka and Oxford

Oxford occupies a central role part in Kafka's global legacy. When the Nazis marched into the Republic of Czechoslovakia in 1939, Max Brod took what was literally the last train to leave Prague towards the East with a bag containing Kafka's manuscripts, travelling via Turkey to Mandate Palestine, settling in Tel Aviv, from where he continued to shape Kafka's global fame through multiple updated editions and arrangements with publishers in Germany and the US. Brod deposited Kafka's papers in the Schocken Library in Jerusalem, only for them to be moved to a safe-deposit box in Zurich for safe-keeping during the 1956 Suez Crisis, until they were eventually released to the remaining family heirs. Kafka's three sisters had been murdered in concentration camps and ownership had passed to their daughters, one of whom – Marianna Steiner – was living in England. Her son Michael happened to be studying in Oxford and was contacted by Malcolm Pasley, Fellow in German at Magdalen College, who was aware of the unsatisfactory arrangements in Zürich. Pasley offered to mediate in negotiations with the Bodleian Library, where the largest collection of Kafka's known manuscripts are stored to this day. Pasley oversaw the monumental task of producing a critical edition of Kafka's works, including diaries and letters, starting with *The Castle* in 1982, and nearing completion with the final volume of letters due to be published in 2025.

The University is also home to the Oxford Kafka Research Centre, founded in 2008 by St John's Honorary



Kafka is a writer who has enthralled me ever since my English teacher gave me a torn copy of his stories when I was 14 years old.

Fellow and former Tutor in German, Professor Ritchie Robertson. St John's connection with Kafka continues to this day, as I serve as Co-Director of the Centre and as a Co-Investigator on its three-year AHRC project, *Kafka's Transformative Communities*. Kafka has typically been seen as a lonely bachelor whose texts are concerned with isolation and alienation, but this project will focus on depictions of collectives in his texts to challenge such established views. Kafka's engagement with community acts as the springboard for the project's distinctive approach, which is structured around three themes.

The project's first theme, 'Community', will highlight Kafka's deep and sustained engagement with forms of communal life in light of his Jewish and Austro-Hungarian contexts around 1900. The second theme, 'Worldliness' (which I lead), widens this focus to consider Kafka's role as a world author and not only asks how Kafka has been read and seen by different communities in different times and places, but also takes his own



Above: Kristin Scott Thomas in the staged reading of *Deep Cuts*.



Right: Barry Murnane at the opening of the Bodleian Library exhibition.



engagement with questions of empire and ecology in a globalising world to assess what role this has played in transforming him into a world-literary writer. The third theme is entitled 'Transformation' and assesses Kafka's legacy in different art forms and media. This is built around an ambitious programme of outreach and cultural engagement and puts the experience of general readers, and of different groups and communities, centre stage. These interests are at the heart of the project's collaborations with artists and performers like Arthur Pita, Tessa Farmer, and Kristin Scott Thomas.

Oxford Kafka 2024

At the centre of the Oxford Kafka 2024 campaign was the major exhibition *Kafka: Making of an Icon*, which was on display at the Weston Library from May through to November 2024. Free to visit and featuring materials from the Bodleian archives, including Kafka's manuscripts, drawings, postcards, and private photographs, the exhibition was seen by tens of thousands of visitors during its five-month run. It also featured Andy Warhol's original portrait of Kafka and contemporary artistic responses to his works, but it was some of the more personal items that were the stars of the show, such as items not previously on public display, including some of the so-called 'Conversation Slips' that Kafka used to communicate on his deathbed, and the reunion of a page torn from the manuscript of *The Castle* with its original notebook for the first time since the 1920s. We were delighted to be able to borrow these items from Max Brod's literary estate, and it was an incredibly moving moment to see them being unpacked and placed on display when they arrived in May. Being one of the first people from Western Europe to see these items in over one hundred years, and knowing their incredible story of survival, was an unbelievable privilege.



Top left: *Kafka: Making of an Icon* at the Bodleian Library welcomed more than 100,000 visitors.

Top right: Arthur Pita's *Hunger Artist* played to sell-out audiences in the Old Fire Station.

Above: Jitterbug – an enormous 14-metre inflatable tent designed by Carl Robertshaw – landed in the University Parks for an unforgettable weekend.

To coincide with the centenary of Kafka's death on 3 June, the Bodley's Librarian Richard Ovenden hosted 'Oxford reads Kafka', a day of public events culminating in a communal reading of *The Metamorphosis* in a sold-out Sheldonian Theatre, co-curated by myself and my Kafka colleagues. We were joined by academics, students, and staff alongside actors and writers like Lemn Sissay, Hanif Kureishi and Ben Okri. Thrillingly, I was able to participate too. Kafka is a writer who has enthralled me ever since my English teacher gave me a torn copy of his stories when I was 14 years old. His aphorism that 'a book must be the axe for the frozen sea within us' certainly resonated with me. As I grew older, I realised I was far from the only reader who had such an immediate response to Kafka's works. Oxford Kafka 2024 certainly proved that this is true of writers, artists, and reading enthusiasts from all types of backgrounds.

Other events over the summer included a series of public lectures, symposia, schools events, and an ambitious programme of newly commissioned artistic responses to Kafka's works. Some of the highlights around Oxford and London were Arthur Pita's spectacular dance adaptation *A Hunger Artist* (starring Ed Watson) and Kirstin Scott Thomas's staged reading *Deep Cuts*, in partnership with Peckham-based group Bold Tendencies. Meanwhile, *Jitterbug* took over University Parks at the end of May, offering over 3000 visitors a temporary home for communal activities and free concerts. Celebrating Kafka's work *Metamorphosis*, *Jitterbug* was an enormous 14-metre inflatable bug tent designed by Carl Robertshaw and commissioned from outdoor theatre company Trigger by John Fulljames' Cultural

Programme. 'The Cultural Programme is committed to making arts and culture available to everyone in the city, and Kafka and *Jitterbug* was an extraordinary opportunity to do this. I am grateful to Trigger, Barry and the Kafka research team, and all of our partners for enabling us to bring some truly outstanding performances inspired by cutting-edge research to fruition', John observes. From talks, yoga and crafting to storytelling hosted by the Story Museum, a drag cabaret extravaganza in the evening, and an unforgettable performance by Melbourne-based chanteuse and international superstar, Meow Meow, *Jitterbug* was the setting for a programme of activities that truly was for all ages.

Other collaborations have reached further afield: I joined other colleagues to collaborate with the playwright Ed Harris to produce three new BBC Radio 4 audio dramas available around the world on BBC Sounds: *Amerika*, *The Trial*, and the prize-winning *Franz and Felice*. Likewise, Abacus Books published a book of ten brand new stories inspired by Kafka's work, *A Cage Went in Search of a Bird*, featuring major literary bestsellers and prize winners, including Ali Smith, Joshua Cohen, Elif Batuman, Naomi Alderman, Tommy Orange, Helen Oyeyemi, Keith Ridgway, Yiyun Li, Leone Ross, and Charlie Kaufman. It's been an incredibly busy year but also a real highlight of my time in Oxford. As a scholar of German literature, you rarely have the opportunity to reach such a wide audience, but to see people queuing around the block to visit the exhibition over the summer, or to be able to collaborate on audio plays that are listened to around the world has been truly amazing.

St John's alumni in North America had an opportunity to join in the celebrations when the Bodleian's exhibition was on display at the Morgan Library in New York (from the end of November until April 2025). Barry visited New York and the East Coast for a series of events in March 2025 and was delighted to meet alumni for a tour of the exhibition.





View of the exhibition, *Venezia 500, the gentle revolution of Venetian painting*, 26 October 2023–4 February 2024, Alte Pinakothek, Munich

Unmasking the Renaissance

Catherine Whistler (Emeritus Research Fellow in Art History) reports on two recent collaborations.

Exhibitions that bring together works of art from disparate sources can be catalysts for new thinking and, as an Emeritus Research Fellow, I can rejoice in the freedom to collaborate on appealing projects. For me, 2023–24 was marked by my involvement with two innovative exhibitions in Munich and New York.

Venezia 500: the gentle revolution of Venetian painting at the Alte Pinakothek set out to explore the sheer originality of Venetian art around 1500 in terms of the poetic turn in painting, where landscape took on an autonomous,

expressive character, and portraiture became infused with introspection (see above). For the accompanying book, I wrote about landscape and experimentation in graphic art – the paradoxical creation of radiant ‘green worlds’ in the monochromatic inked line of prints and drawings; and the fact that such images of verdant landscapes with unfolding hills and woodlands were enjoyed by Venetians who inhabited a densely-populated city of brick and stone, built on water. The imagery might include quirky rustic buildings deriving from recent prints by Albrecht Dürer,

Unknown Venetian artist, *Portrait of a man*, c.1492–1507, Paris, Musée du Louvre



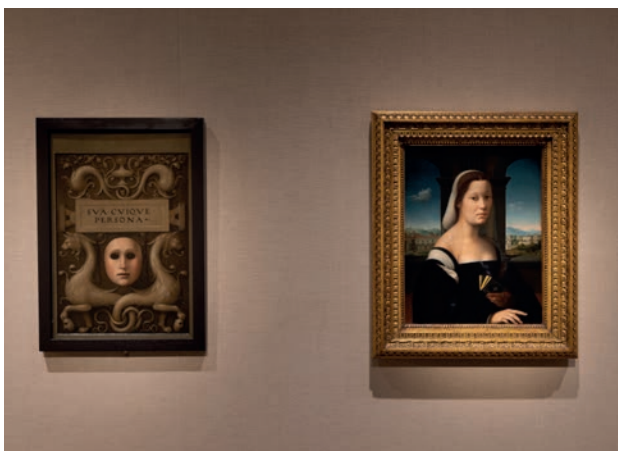
The viewer would decode the symbolic elements before moving the cover or turning the painting over to unmask the actual portrait.

references that connoisseurs could recognise. Apart from rural plenitude, these graphic works toyed with the idea of nature as a place where the poet could find solace and inspiration. Images of pastoral contemplation (often with music-making) invoked Petrarch and the elegiac poetry of Horace and Virgil, where the 'green world' is also the home of shepherds and nymphs, and of Pan, god of nature, and his followers.

In New York, *Hidden Faces: Covered Portraits of the Renaissance* at the Metropolitan Museum addressed the Europe-wide phenomenon of portraits that were concealed from everyday viewing; it spanned the later fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, with paintings by Roger van der Weyden and Lucas Cranach, and by Jacometto Veneziano and Titian. These portraits were designed as interactive works, with painted reverses and covers adorned with emblems and allegories that illuminated the sitter's character and reflected broader cultural values



(see above and right). The viewer would decode the symbolic elements before moving the cover or turning the painting over to unmask the actual portrait. In my contributions, I explored the phenomenon in Italy, where it relates to the tactile experiences associated with the personal *camera* or study, a space where conversations about inventiveness and elusive meanings were stimulated by handling medals, antiquities and small paintings. Beyond elite homes, a familiar practice in churches was the covering and ritual unveiling of paintings and relics, while inexpensive prints made visual puzzles and memory games fashionable. An arresting element in the exhibition was the portrait of an unknown Florentine woman, side by side with its enigmatic sliding cover alluding to classical antiquity, mortality, and personal emblems. The inscription on the cover reads 'to each his own mask' (see left). Painted covers had fallen out of fashion by the later sixteenth century; those that survived – such as the Ashmolean's *Triumph of Love* by Titian – did so by taking on an independent identity. The exhibition gave me a fascinating opportunity to delve further into this intriguing – and still little-known – tradition in Renaissance painting.



Detail of the exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, with the *Portrait of a woman*, c.1510, attributed to Ridolfo del Ghirlandaio, and its painted sliding cover (Florence, Gallerie degli Uffizi)



Painted reverse of the portrait on p.22 with an allegorical landscape incorporating allusions to matrimony

Politics as theatre in some nineteenth- century British cartoons

Professor Malcolm Davies is a classical scholar and former Tutor in Classics. He shares, as an offshoot of his new book *The Hero's Life-Choice*, an account of some nineteenth-century British political cartoons.

It seems an established cliché that UK politics have become ‘theatre’. Prime Minister’s Questions, for instance, is regularly denounced as merely ‘performative’. But why should a classical scholar be *professionally* interested in the origins of this phenomenon? The fifth-century BC Greek sophist Prodicus of Ceos, author of the once influential parable ‘Heracles at the Crossroads’ or the ‘Choice of Heracles,’ pictured the young hero as at a literal and metaphorical crossroads, confronted by two female personifications representing Virtue and Pleasure, between whom he had to choose. He plumped for Virtue. Already the subject of Renaissance and Baroque paintings, this theme became extraordinarily influential upon eighteenth-century

English culture, one representative of which announced: ‘the genius of the present age, whether Poet, Painter, or Statuary, should modestly content himself to make’ it ‘the subject of his Imitation’ (with a capital ‘I’, being a particular genre of Augustan literature: compare Pope’s *Imitations* of Horace, or Samuel Johnson’s of Juvenal).

It is then no surprise that in 1763 Joshua Reynolds parodied the story in his splendid painting (Fig. 1) of the Shakespearian actor David Garrick between his dramatist’s two opposing genres, Tragedy and Comedy. That they are female personifications derives ultimately from Prodicus, although Garrick’s body language strongly suggests he has opted for Comedy, descendant of the sophist’s Pleasure. Popularised by a large number of prints, this picture itself was parodied in three political cartoons by John Doyle.

Not coincidentally, the first (Fig. 2) dates from 15 March 1831. The historian Richard Gaunt has written that ‘by the dawn of the classic age of “parliamentary government” in 1830, the convergence between politics and performance was coming to be an accepted face of political life’. But this cartoon is rather incoherent, due to its deviance from Reynolds’s prototype. His placing of the two personifications on the left and right is reversed, while John Bull, representative of British public opinion, looks towards, and seems to approve more of, ‘Tragedy.’ Furthermore, there is inadequate contrast between the politicians, since both opposed parliamentary reform. For the requisite antithesis, therefore, we must look to the *manner* of their utterances and body language. John Henry North’s Tragedy is suitably apocalyptic: his speech bubble, ‘This is the first abyss in the revolutionary hell which is gaping for us’ quotes his recent speech in Parliament and, appropriately, he points downwards, not,



Fig. 1 Sir Joshua Reynolds, oil on canvas, the actor Garrick torn between Comedy and Tragedy (1761), private collection, Waddesdon Manor, Buckinghamshire

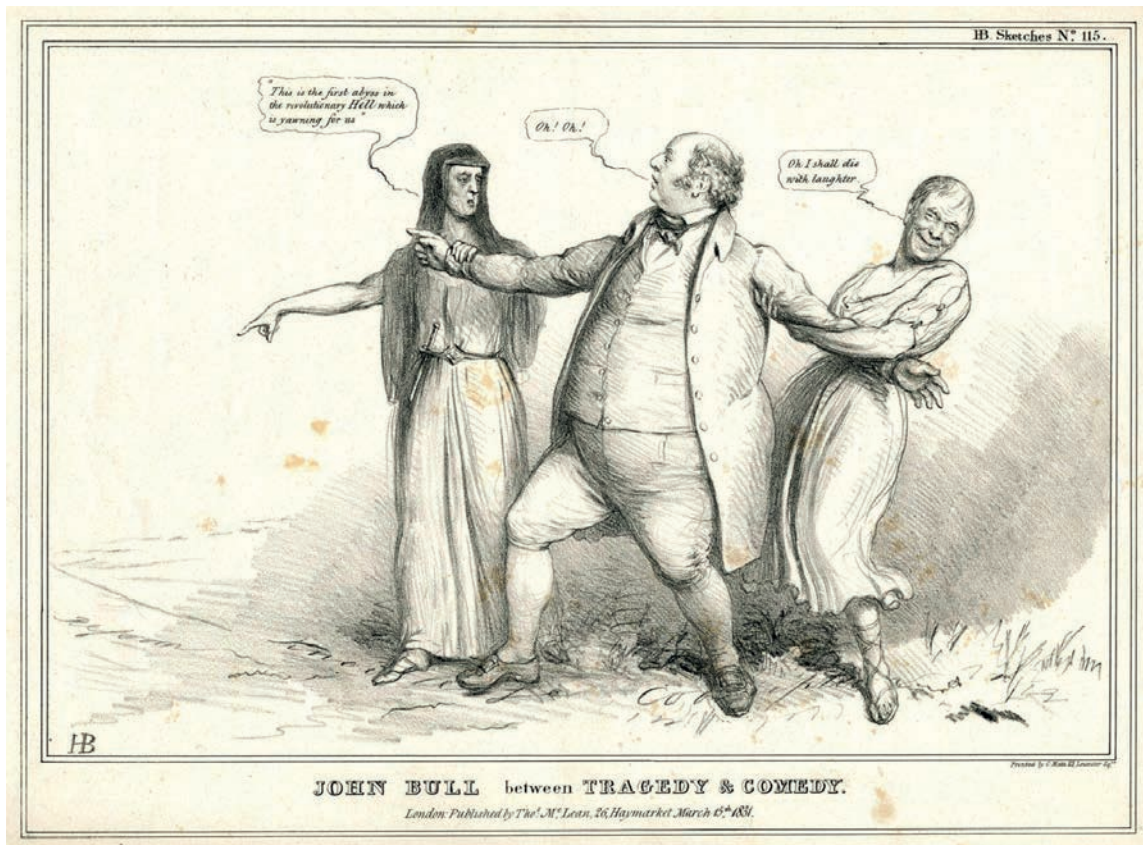


Fig. 2 John Doyle cartoon, 15 March 1831: John Bull between Tragedy (J.H. North) and Comedy (Charles Wetherell)

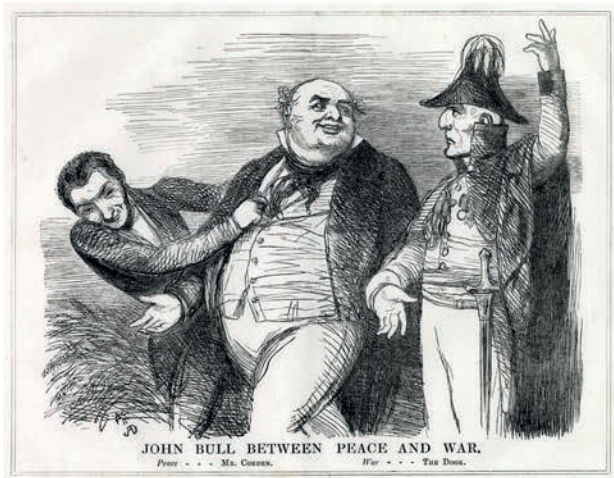
like Tragedy or Virtue, upwards. Charles Wetherell, by contrast, laced his parliamentary speeches of opposition to reform with quips and levity, hence his role as Comedy, and his word bubble, 'Oh, I shall die with laughter!' Another cartoon by Doyle had recently pictured Wetherell surrounded by friends and on the point of death, while exclaiming 'We shall have such a merry funeral!' 'Facetious to the last,' observed one of the friends.

Though it restores Reynolds's placement of the personifications, there is a similar problem with our second cartoon (Fig. 3), from 10 February 1834, since its two politicians not only both supported the 1830s' parliamentary Reform Bill but were members of the same political party (Whig), the same ministry, the same cabinet (Lord Grey was Prime Minister, Brougham Lord Chancellor). Again, the contrast lies not in policy, but in character and appearance. Grey was elderly and principled, whereas Brougham intrigued against him with the press, hoping to replace him. It is also worth contrasting the hairstyles of each: Reynolds's Tragedy wears a mantle from which numerous strands of hair extend forward. Her equivalent, Grey, has the same headdress, but no protruding hair; since, as other cartoons by John Doyle remind us, he was balding. Brougham's long, dishevelled locks likewise contrast with the neatly coiffured hair of Reynolds's Comedy and are

intentionally reminiscent of the long Lord Chancellor's wig which Brougham sported in real life, as well as in cartoons by Doyle.

The third cartoon, from 5 August 1845 (Fig. 4), finally achieves perfection of contrast between two antithetical forces. Tragedy is Sir Henry Inglis, who embodied opposition to any type of reform, particularly that threatening the 'Protestant Ascendancy' in Ireland. And Comedy, Daniel O'Connell, was acknowledged leader of the Irish Catholics. Reynolds's original painting portrayed Comedy appropriately holding her smiling comic mask, its edge visible behind Garrick's head (as likewise behind William IV's in Fig. 3). In our cartoon, the edge is slyly stamped with O'Connell's slogan 'REPEAL,' since in 1840 he had relaunched the Loyal National Repeal Association. The same visual contrast between facial and body language as in the two preceding cartoons has Inglis's face suitably grim and threatening, while the smile on Comedy's face matches that of the real O'Connell's face, 'not a handsome one but kindly,' to quote an early biographer, while his body exhibits that 'portliness which gave dignity to his later years,' to quote the tactful gloss provided by the same source.

Most interesting for politics as theatre is Sir Robert Peel's role here. 'The man widely regarded as the dominant personality of the period' (to quote Richard



Above left: Fig. 3 John Doyle cartoon, 10 February 1834: A great actor (King William IV) between Tragedy (Earl Grey) and Comedy (Lord Brougham)

Above: Fig. 4 John Doyle cartoon, 5 August 1845: A great actor (Sir Robert Peel) between Tragedy (Henry Inglis) and Comedy (Daniel O'Connell)

Left: Fig. 5 Richard Doyle *Punch* cartoon, 5 February 1848: John Bull between Peace (Richard Cobden) and War (the Duke of Wellington)

Gaunt again) has every right to occupy the same position as John Bull or William IV in the two previous cartoons. But even more to the point, he had moved away from an earlier negative attitude towards Catholics, which had earned him O'Connell's jibe 'Orange Peel'. His more conciliatory position thus explains his preference in the cartoon for 'Comedy' over 'Tragedy' in a way that has no equivalent in William IV's inexplicable preference for Brougham (see Fig. 2). But this very change led to charges of inconsistency or insincerity, of 'playing a part,' or behaving like an actor-manager. And this latter charge matches other criticisms of Peel's alleged 'melodramatic' or 'burlesque' style of politics. Even his tendency in parliamentary debate to explore the different alternative courses open to him is strangely reminiscent of the dilemma of Garrick between Tragedy and Comedy.

Finally, a *Punch* cartoon (Fig. 5) from 5 February 1848, by John Doyle's son Richard, paradoxically hews even closer to Reynolds's prototype than his father's last-mentioned piece, though its title features neither Tragedy nor Comedy. 'John Bull between Peace and War' reflects contemporary concerns in England of an

imminent French invasion. The Duke of Wellington, unsurprisingly, given past history, was particularly vocal in expressing these concerns to Prime Minister Peel, while Richard Cobden maintained his usual concern for international peace and his stress on France's pacific position. Since Wellington died relatively soon after this cartoon's publication, whereas Cobden was in 1860 sent to France to negotiate – successfully – a trade agreement between the two countries, this depiction of Comedy's victory in John Bull's choice must rank as admirably prescient. Certainly more so than the *Punch* cartoon of 10 February 1938, which made the female personifications International 'Co-operation' and 'Isolation' and the politician apparently choosing the former, Adolf Hitler (see my book p.16).

Reference

R. A. Gaunt, 'Robert Peel as actor-dramatist: theatre and society in nineteenth century Britain,' in P. Yeandle, K. Neway and J. Richard (eds.), *Politics, performance and popular culture* (Manchester 2016) pp. 216–36.

Turning light into electricity, and back again

Fig. 2 Bismuth oxyiodide single crystals for X-ray detectors

Robert Hoye (Tutor in Chemistry) introduces his groundbreaking research.

I work in the fascinating area of optoelectronic materials, which convert energy between light and electricity.

Such materials have become core to our technology for enabling the energy transition to carbon neutrality, but also play an important role for improving the quality of medical imaging and optical communications.

My work began in this area during my PhD at the University of Cambridge. But it was during my postdoctoral post at MIT that I began rethinking how we discover optoelectronic materials that could accelerate our energy transition. In particular, there needs to be an order of magnitude increase in the number of solar cells (which harvest sunlight to produce green electricity) used worldwide. But this is challenged by the sensitivity of optoelectronic materials to the presence of imperfections in crystal structure (i.e., defects), which necessitates expensive manufacturing methods to achieve high efficiency.

A new concept I pushed forward was discovering materials that could tolerate defects, and this led to new design rules based on the electronic structure. Some of the new materials identified include bismuth oxyiodide (Fig. 1). When I returned to the University of Cambridge

to take up a Junior Research Fellowship (at Magdalene College), I completed this work, and developed these materials into solar cells that could convert light with specific wavelengths with efficiencies (i.e., external quantum efficiencies) reaching up to 80 per cent. Importantly, these materials are stable in air, and can be made using cost-effective methods that are similar to what is already used industrially. Bismuth-based compounds also have low toxicity. For example, Pepto-Bismol is used for over-the-counter stomach medicine.

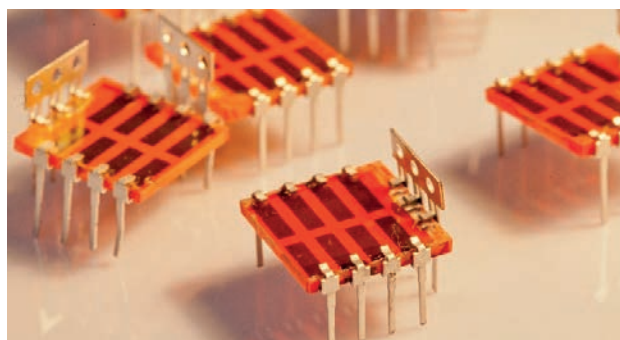


Fig. 1 Bismuth oxyiodide solar cells

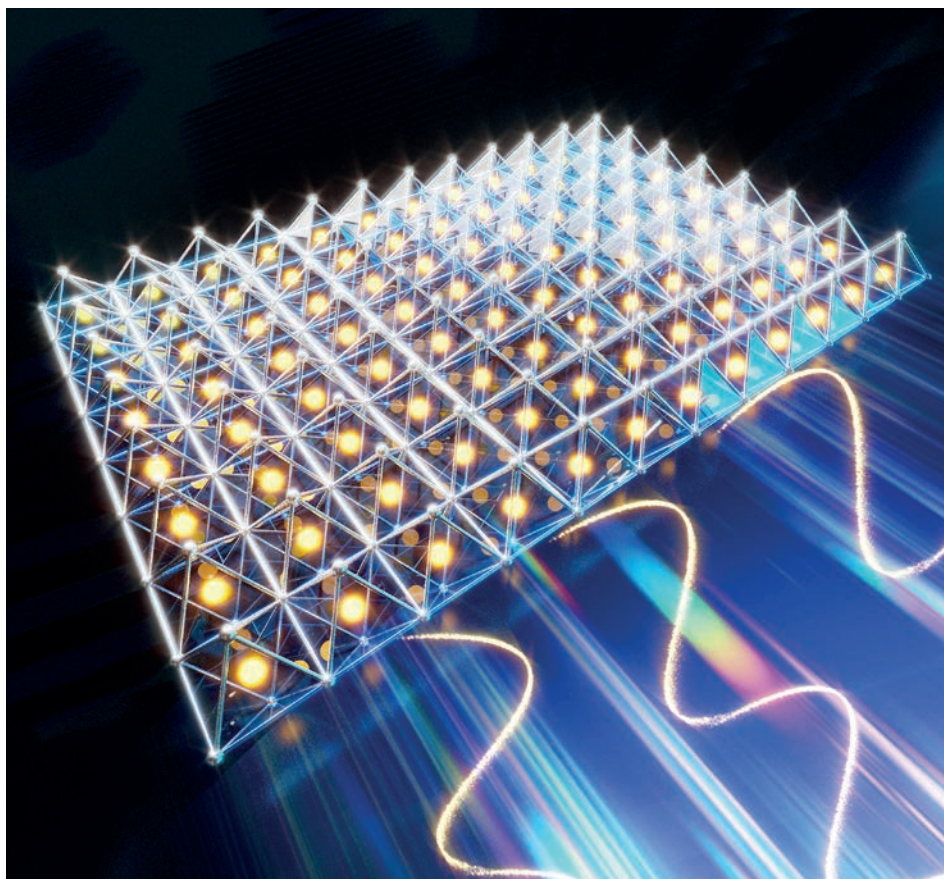


Fig. 3 Perovskite nanoplatelet polarized light emitters

As a materials chemist, what I find particularly exciting about optoelectronic materials is that once they have been developed for one application, this opens up the exploration of these materials for a wide range of other applications. Given that bismuth oxyiodide absorbs visible light, I showed the potential of these materials for harvesting indoor lighting to sustainably power ‘Internet of Things’ electronics, reducing their reliance on batteries. I also developed these materials into artificial leaf devices. Just as a leaf harvests sunlight to convert CO_2 into energy through photosynthesis, I combined bismuth oxyiodide with bismuth vanadate to make a thin film tandem device that could harvest sunlight to convert water into green hydrogen, as well as CO_2 into the precursors for making plastics. These artificial leaf devices could store excess solar energy in fuels, bolster our hydrogen economy, as well as provide a route for CO_2 removal to produce important products we need.’

Equally, bismuth is the heaviest element that is not radioactive. This makes bismuth oxyiodide not only a visible light harvester, but also a strong attenuator of ionising radiation. When I moved to Imperial College London as a Lecturer, I began investigating this material for X-ray detection, developing the growth of these materials as high-quality single crystals (Fig. 2). X-ray detection is important in medical imaging for non-

invasive diagnosis, and this is done by passing X-rays through the body, before being absorbed by the detector, which then generates electrons and holes through the photoelectric effect, producing an electrical signal that is used for analysis. But the commercial standard material, amorphous selenium, weakly transports electrons and holes, and the lowest dose rate of X-rays it can detect is 5500 nanoGrays per second. Taking a CT scan then exposes the patient to a few years’ worth of natural X-ray exposure, and can, in itself, increase the risk of cancer.

In response, I developed bismuth oxyiodide X-ray detectors that could detect X-ray dose rates down to 1.1 nanoGrays per second. The improved performance compared to amorphous selenium is due to the strong attenuation of X-rays, efficient transport of electrons and holes, and high resistivity of these materials, which minimise electrical noise. I have filed a patent on this technology, and am working on scaling up these detectors for commercialisation.

Beyond turning light into electricity, optoelectronic materials can also carry out the inverse process. This is the basis for light-emitting diodes (LEDs), which are now commonplace for efficient white lighting in homes. At the same time, LEDs emit light with a wide range of orientations. If we can obtain just one orientation, this polarised light is important for efficient transport over



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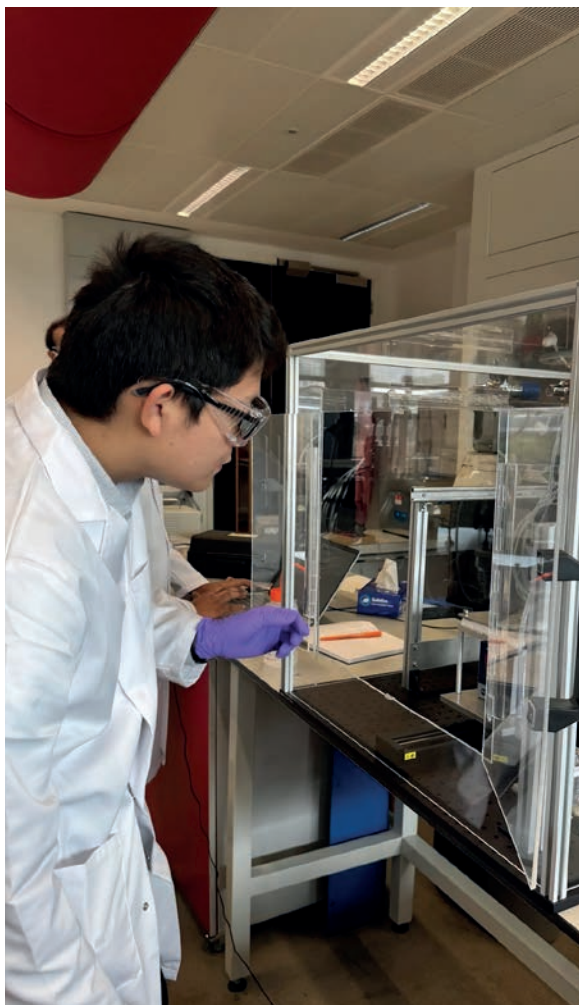


Fig. 4 Prof. Hoye is also CTO of the start-up company, NanoPrint Innovations Ltd.

long distances (i.e., optical communications), as well as bioimaging and making 3D TV displays.

Since moving to the University of Oxford, I have developed LEDs that could directly produce polarised light with a high degree of polarisation exceeding 70 per cent. This was using halide perovskites, which are very efficient emitters. (fig. 3) Importantly, I grew these perovskites as nanocrystals (*c.* 20 nanometres width) that were only a few atomic layers thick, leading to strong quantum confinement. By controlling how quickly these nanoplatelets were precipitated out of solution, I could self-assemble these, enabling the emission of polarised light. I received support from St John's College to develop this new technology further with a Wellcome grant.

Beyond the research my group has done, I have also contributed to establishing a start-up company. This was led by colleagues at the University of Cambridge, and is named NanoPrint Innovations Ltd. (Fig. 4). The start-up works on commercialising a nanomanufacturing method I worked on developing during my PhD, called spatial atomic layer deposition. This can manufacture thin film optoelectronic materials with near-atomic-level precision as easily and cost-effectively as printing ink onto a piece of paper. I serve as Chief Technology Officer of this company, and we are targeting the application of this system for the solar cell industry, both established and emerging materials, as well as for academic research.

At Oxford, there are many new initiatives aiming to bring together researchers working on sustainability from different disciplines, such as the ZERO Institute, and the Oxford Energy Network. I am looking forward to engaging more with these groups to explore the new opportunities for the optoelectronic materials my group are developing.

The language of flowers

Keeper of the Groves, Professor Noël Sugimura, reflects on developments in the College Garden.

The complete restoration of the 'Theatrical Shrubbery' Border to the left of the Great Lawn (as one leaves Canterbury Quad) takes its chief inspiration from the Rooker engraving of 1783.

The site was cleared and prepped under the direction of the Former Keeper of the Groves, Professor Rosalind Harding, and completed under the current Keeper of the Groves, Professor N. K. Sugimura. When it came

to decisions regarding planting, we decided – owing to considerations of climate change and environmental sustainability – that we could not simply replant what would have been present in the eighteenth-century historic garden. We therefore took our inspiration from the original Rooker engraving, and sought to capture the shapes and layout of the original in the scheme for our replanting. For instance, each of the trees we introduced





attempts to replicate the shape of the weeping trees seen in the eighteenth-century engraving: these include, *Prunus White Fontaine*, ‘Japanese weeping cherry’, with its lovely single-flowering cherries, which are extremely good for pollinators; *Wisteria Floribunda Macrobotrys*, which has the most long-hanging profusion of racemes, and is excellent not only from the perspective of biodiversity, but also for providing a key visual link to the wisteria draping the edifice of Canterbury; and the deciduous tree *Robinia pseudoacacia*, or ‘Twisty Baby’ (a.k.a ‘Lady Lace’), which was present in the original bed, and produces (once fully established) blooming white flowers and lime-green leaves that turn buttery yellow in autumn, thereby attracting both birds and insects. It is a favourite of our Head Gardener, Phil Shefford.

‘Theatrical Shrubbery’ has always been an example of how formal gardening can strive to look informal, thereby creating, from its inception, an important visual ‘bridge’ between the College’s Groves and the more formal planting elsewhere in College, including the East Front of Canterbury facing the Great Lawn (our current project for 2025 is to replant the right-hand side of the bed on the ‘East Front’). The plants, shrubs, and trees chosen for ‘Theatrical Shrubbery’ – from the roses to hollyhocks to *Osmanthus heterophyllus* (‘Goshiki’) and *Juniperus communis* (‘Hibernica’) – all seek to replicate

the informality and look of the historic border, while also carefully retaining the view originally created from the Daisy Lawn, which was meant to lead the eye across ‘Theatrical Shrubbery’ to the Great Lawn facing Canterbury. A notable aspect of the original ‘Theatrical Shrubbery’ bed was the historic rise in the centre, which we have carefully preserved as a vital part of the College’s own garden history and landscape design.

Using the model of the original historic bed, we also took care to update the planting to reflect and fulfil various biodiversity concerns while selecting plants and trees that would be flowering when undergraduates are in residence. Specific attention was paid to plants that would flower during the revision and examination period, Matriculation, and Degree Days (when we celebrate our undergraduate and graduate members taking their degrees with a luncheon on the Great Lawn). Non-native plants in the bed have proved to be good pollinators and insect-friendly while simultaneously demonstrating resilience in the face of ecological collapse. They help to ensure that our gardens will remain a future benefit not only for the immediate environment, but also to our larger ecosystem. The specific cultivars we have chosen crucially reflect the various connections that our undergraduate student body retain to places and plants around the world as well as throughout the UK. In this way, the language of flowering plants attempts to capture the diverse make-up of the College’s students and staff alike – not least because the sights and smells of such international flora can provide emotional connections for people from other cultures and homelands, thereby further contributing to the sense of pleasure and place, including wellbeing, that we hope everyone will find in the gardens at St John’s.

Just across from ‘Theatrical Shrubbery’ at the edge of the border on the East Front (otherwise known as the ‘Canterbury Border’) is the newly established ‘Scottish Border’, the first of its kind in Oxford (we think). It was conceived to commemorate Professor Lady Sue Black’s



We took our inspiration from the original Rooker engraving, and sought to capture the shapes and layout of the original in the scheme for our replanting.

installation as a Lady Companion of the Order of the Thistle on 3 July 2024. The ‘Scottish Border’ aims to incorporate, and wittily plays on, different periods of Scottish history and culture through the language of flowers – be it through Scottish plants or cultivars, or plants named after Scottish places and persons, or through allusions to things Scottish. An example is the jolly border of helianthemums – ‘Ben Fahda’, ‘Ben Hope’, ‘Ben Ledi’, ‘Ben Mohr’, and ‘Ben Nevis’ – which are all named after famous mountains in Scotland and, especially, the Highlands. The base colours of this bed are comprised of blue (or bluish-purples) and white to represent the Scottish flag. The white is prominently in view with a profusion of white roses, both generally classified as Scottish roses, that frame either side of the bed; these also have a touch of pink, itself a colour associated with the thistle, thereby picking up on the colours of the *Clematis integrifolia* and dahlias planted in the bed as well: on the left-hand side of the bed, one can see the hardy and wild-looking, repeat-flowering, *Rosa Spinosissima*, ‘Stanwell Perpetual’, which turns white-to-pink as it opens; on the right, the old-variety *Rosa Spinosissima*, ‘Mary, Queen of Scots’, with its off-white petals turning marbled pink, to reveal bright yellow centres that are extremely attractive to bees. The thistle-looking plants framing the centrepiece, itself a Scottish thistle, include *Cynara scolymus* (‘Globe artichoke’), a variety of blue-coloured *Eryngium*s (a favourite for insects proved to be ‘Blue Hobbit’), as well as different types of *Cirsium rivulare* (especially popular among bumblebees and bees was ‘Trevor’s Felley Find’, a silver-stalked plant with deep magenta-coloured flowers).



The Head Gardener, Phil Shefford, and Second Head Gardener, Jane Colquhoun, presented the ‘Scottish Border’ to the President as part of the Trinity Term perambulation on 8 May 2024. Their labours in planting and maintaining these two beautiful new beds are part of a continuous effort on the part of College to reintroduce colour and smells to our gardens, which will not only complement the magnificent architecture surrounding our main gardens, but also give renewed focus to the College’s rich horticultural legacy in line with recent biodiversity concerns. It emphasises how the language of flowers is itself in conversation not only with our own historic past, but also with the future of our College’s green spaces, including the arboriculture we have long enjoyed in our Groves.

Cutting the cake with David James, SCR Head Chef.

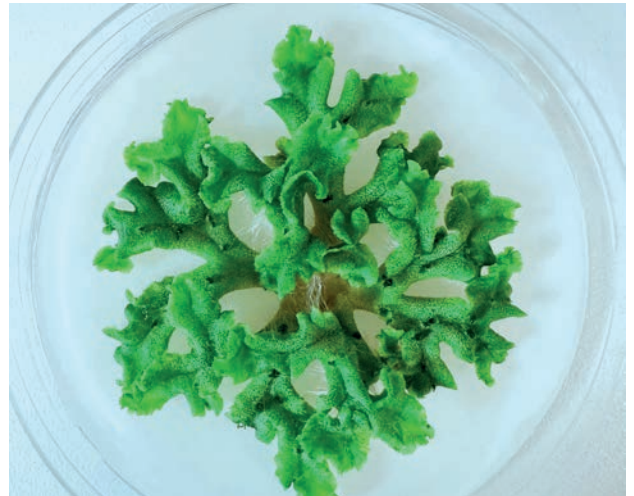
Putting evolution into reverse

Findings from Jason Schnell (Tutorial Fellow in Biochemistry) and Nicholas Harberd (Emeritus Research Fellow and former Sibthorpe Professor of Plant Sciences) suggesting a general mechanism for the evolution of the specific protein-protein interactions that drive life were published in *Nature Plants*.

Life works through the interactions of the thousands of different proteins that exist in cells. These interactions are often highly specific, with specificity frequently being determined by the plasticity of 3-dimensional protein shape. For example, the growth of flowering plants (angiosperms) is promoted when a regulatory growth-repressing protein (known as DELLA) interacts with another protein (known as SLY1). This interaction depends on a change in shape (form) of the DELLA protein. The plant growth hormone gibberellin (GA) changes the shape of the DELLA protein from an A form into an A' alternative. The SLY1 protein then binds specifically to A' (and not to A). This specific binding eventually results in destruction of the growth-repressing DELLA protein, and the consequent promotion of plant growth.

However, the specificity of the SLY1 - A' interaction is a property of relatively recently arisen land plants, such as the angiosperms, and not of the ancestors from which they evolved. How then did this specificity evolve? A multidisciplinary team comprising two St John's Fellows, geneticist Nick Harberd (Department of Biology) and structural biologist Jason Schnell (Department of Biochemistry), together with additional colleagues from Oxford and China (Chinese Academy of Sciences Institute of Genetics and Developmental Biology, Beijing and Nanjing Agricultural University), has shed new light on this question in a paper published recently in *Nature Plants*.

The team developed an innovative technique that applies yeast genetics methods to select for mutant angiosperm SLY1 proteins with altered specificity: proteins having affinity for both A and A' (rather than specifically for A'). These mutant proteins are effectively evolutionarily revertant, having ancestral rather than



angiosperm SLY1 properties. Zhe Ji (Department of Biology), first author on the paper, said 'the real surprise from our work was that we successfully used yeast genetics to reverse the processes of evolution'.

In a nutshell, the experiments indicated that, whilst the angiosperm SLY1 has specific A' affinity, the ancestral SLY1 had dual affinity for both A and A'. Proteins are built from a sequence of amino acid components, and the project identified the evolutionary change of identity of particular amino acids that caused the evolution from ancestral dual A + A' affinity to more recent A' specificity.

These findings are important because they show how evolution shaped a protein-protein interaction that enhances the regulation of plant growth in response to environmental change. More broadly, they suggest that narrowing of affinity from broad to specific may be a general mechanism for the evolution of the specific protein-protein interactions that drive life.



Exploring the past: inspecting the Baylie Crypt

Dressed to impress, the President led a team to explore the crypt beneath the Baylie Chapel, finding evidence of the College's past.

On 20 March 2024, the President, drawing on her expertise as a forensic anthropologist, led an inspection of the crypt beneath the Baylie Chapel. This periodic assessment aimed to evaluate the crypt's environmental conditions, building fabric, the entry of any water, and the state of preservation of the interred remains. The investigation team included Elizabeth Macfarlane (Chaplain), Ian Stokes (Works Bursar), and William Whyte (Keeper of Historic Buildings). Members of the Works team removed the stones from the floor of the Baylie Chapel to reveal the opening to a stone staircase.

This latest inspection confirmed that the crypt remains structurally sound with well-preserved coffins encased in brick and cement housings. The team concluded that, barring any unforeseen developments, another inspection would not be necessary for another hundred years.



Previous openings of the crypt

The Baylie Crypt has been opened on three documented occasions prior to 2024:

9 July 1843: The crypt was accessed to assess whether the installation of a new organ would compromise the structure. Notes from Bursar Pinkerton indicate that coffins belonging to Dr and Mrs Holmes were in poor condition, while the remains of Marlow, Dennis, Derham, and Baylie were in better shape. To prevent further decay, the coffins were enclosed in brick and cement housings.

1871: The crypt was reopened for the burial of President Philip Wynter, bringing the total number of interments to seven.

1996: At the request of President William Hayes, the crypt was inspected again. The arrangement of the burials remained consistent with the 1843 description, and photographs were taken for documentation. Soot stains on the walls were attributed to candles used in President Wynter's obsequies. A time capsule was left behind by the Senior Common Room butler, Tim Webber.

Earlier archaeological findings

In 2007, during preparatory work for installing a new organ, Oxford Archaeology conducted an investigation in the western end of the main chapel. They discovered six brick-built burial vaults dating from the late 17th to 18th centuries. Some vault roofs had been disturbed by 19th-century heating installations, but the burials were left undisturbed. Loose bones found in the area were carefully reinterred within the chapel grounds.

A historical archive lists forty-nine individuals buried beneath the chapel, including the College's Founder, Sir Thomas White, ten former presidents, and one woman (Sarah Holmes, wife of President William Holmes). The remains of Archbishop William Laud, who was reinterred in 1663, are believed to lie beneath the chapel altar where we believe that Sir Thomas White and Presidents Baylie and Juxon are also buried. Those buried under the Baylie Chapel include some of the more recent interments.



Top left: Hidden beneath a carpet, the entrance of the crypt is marked 'Vault'.

Top right: Once opened, a ladder was let down to give access for the investigation.

Above: Full protective equipment was required to avoid any risk of contamination, especially from any decaying lead coffins.

Findings from the 2024 crypt inspection

The latest exploration involved removing flagstones in the north-west corner of Baylie Chapel to reveal a stone staircase descending into the crypt. Inside, the interments were found largely unchanged since the last recorded opening in 1996.

Layout of the crypt

The crypt consists of a primary burial chamber with an additional enclosed section for Dr and Mrs Holmes. Their coffins lie within a separate space, possibly designed to accommodate a door, as indicated by visible recesses and remaining metal fittings for a wooden bar.

The timeline for the burials found there is as follows:

Richard Baylie (1674)

His burial is notably older than the others, which primarily date from the 18th and 19th centuries. His stone faceplate is also smaller and features an English inscription rather than Latin, an unusual deviation.

President William Holmes (1748) and Sarah Holmes (1750)

This is the first recorded interment of a woman in the crypt.

President Derham (1757)

His remains were placed beside Baylie, not with the Holmes couple.

President Dennis (1795)

The coffin was placed above Baylie's coffin.

President Marlow (1828)

The coffin was laid to the left side of the vault.

President Wynter (1877)

The final burial in the crypt. His coffin's rough concrete finish suggests a less refined construction method than earlier interments, possibly due to time constraints or limited resources.

Masonry marks and artefacts

The walls inside the crypt bear various markings, believed to be masonry symbols. These include letters ('A' and 'B'), stars, and hourglass shapes.

Two notable artefacts from the 1996 opening were rediscovered and left undisturbed in situ:

- a slate fragment inscribed with 'P Molan, Mason 1996' – likely a signature left by a craftsman;
- a 1978 bottle of Quinta da Eira Velha vintage port – placed near President Holmes' coffin as a memento or tribute.

The 2024 inspection of the Baylie Crypt confirmed its good condition, with no immediate need for further intervention. The crypt remains a historically significant site, preserving the memory of prominent figures in the College's history. The findings provide valuable insight into burial traditions, structural changes, and unanswered historical questions, such as the unexpected presence of Richard Baylie's remains in a crypt otherwise reserved for later interments. He was President Baylie's son while Baylie's daughter married the next President who was Peter Mews. We believe she was responsible for ensuring that her brother was buried in her father's chapel which had not been completed in time to bury Baylie himself down there, so he went under the altar with the Founder, Laud and Juxon.

The College continues to honour its past while ensuring the careful preservation of its heritage, with this inspection marking yet another chapter in the storied history of St John's.

Below left: A guide to the location of the tombs.

Below right: A relic of the last time the crypt was opened, in 1996.





Historic Libraries and Canterbury Quadrangle: official reopening

Daniel Haywood (2016, English Language and Literature; Communications Support Officer) reports on a very special event.

On Thursday 3 October 2024, St John's welcomed alumnus and Honorary Fellow, Professor Robert Darnton FBA, for a special lecture in the auditorium. Professor Darnton's lecture, 'Libraries as Time Machines', celebrated the reopening of the College's Historic Libraries and Canterbury Quadrangle after a near-decade-long project of essential restoration and environmental upgrades. The official reopening of the Historic Libraries and the Canterbury Quadrangle took place the following afternoon, Friday 4 October, with Professor Darnton cutting the ribbon to the Laudian Library.



The opening of the historic libraries was a great occasion in itself, one that will leave a permanent mark in the history of the College. It also was an affirmation of the importance of libraries, books, learning, everything at the core of our civilization at a time when uncivility threatens on every side.

**Robert Darnton FBA
Carl H. Pforzheimer University Professor
and University Librarian, Emeritus**

Libraries as Time Machines

Over 130 people gathered in the Garden Quad Auditorium for Professor Darnton's lecture. The diversity of this audience – which included librarians, historians, modern linguists, classicists, and bibliographers from across the University, as well as many members of the public – reflected the breadth of Professor Darnton's research interests and the interdisciplinary significance of his work.

'Libraries as Time Machines' was a passionate evocation of the power of libraries throughout time. Professor Darnton began by recalling his first visit to the Houghton Library (Harvard's library for rare books and manuscripts) as a freshman in 1957, where he read Ralph Waldo Emerson's *Essays* (1847), annotated by Herman Melville. The formative experience of reading Emerson through Melville's eyes shaped Professor Darnton's interest in 'analytical bibliography': the effort to reconstruct the history of reading through close examination of material texts. He spoke eloquently of the almost spiritual experience of reading in historic libraries, and of the profound sense of communion with past readers when consulting special collections and archival materials.

In the second part of his lecture, Professor Darnton offered a brief history of the utopian (or maybe dystopian) dream of a universal library. From the ancient library of Alexandria to the Digital Public Library of America, he explored the allure as well as the inherent dangers of codifying and collecting all available knowledge into a single repository. What would it mean, Professor Darnton

asked, to realise this previously impossible dream, and could it possibly be attained within our lifetimes?

Professor Darnton's lecture was followed by a series of stimulating questions from the audience. These ranged widely, from the challenges of preserving texts and other materials published digitally, to the critical role of authors in creating a universal library. Other questions touched on the problems facing public libraries, as well as what, if anything, is lost when studying special collections via a digital interface.

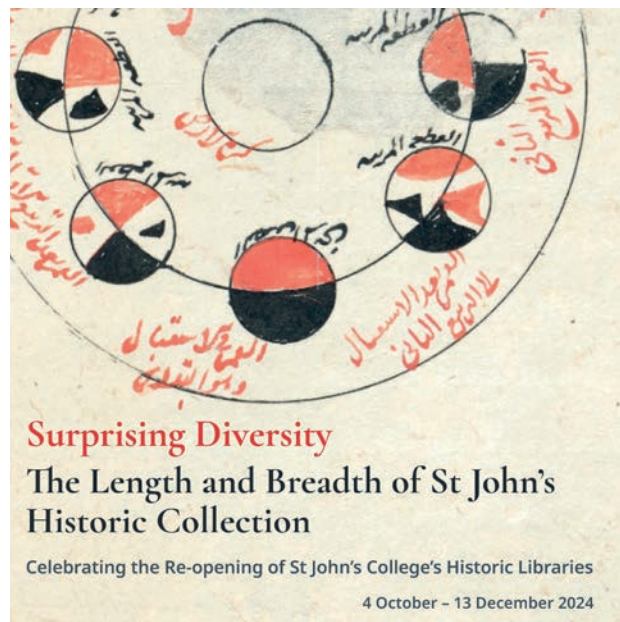
Professor Darnton's lecture is available to watch on the College's YouTube channel.

Official Opening

The Official Opening of the Historic Libraries and Canterbury Quadrangle took place the following afternoon. Guests gathered in the foyer of the new Library and Study Centre (opened in 2019) for a drinks reception and welcome remarks by the President. Professor William Whyte, Keeper of Historic Buildings, then reflected on the history of the College's libraries and recalled the pomp and ceremony with which Archbishop Laud celebrated the opening of his eponymous Quadrangle in the 1630s. On behalf of the College, Professor Whyte also thanked everyone involved in the remarkable refurbishment project, including the architects of Wright & Wright, Beard Construction, and a wide range of conservators and specialist craftspeople.

Attendees then reassembled at the entrance to the Laudian Library, where special guest Professor Robert Darnton delivered a short address and officially reopened the libraries. Professor Patrick Hayes, Fellow for Libraries, also unveiled a commemorative plaque. Following the ribbon-cutting ceremony, guests had the opportunity to explore the beautifully conserved libraries and to discover the exhibition curated by





Dr Petra Hofmann, College Librarian, that highlighted the surprising diversity of the College's special collections.

Visitors were also invited to tour the five restored teaching rooms beneath the Old Library. These rooms had been converted into additional library space in the 1970s. However, with the opening of the new Library and Study Centre, the Paddy Room (as the space was known) could be reinstated as teaching rooms for Fellows. With the generous support of the alumni community, each of the five refurbished rooms is named after a distinguished College tutor who made a significant impact in their fields and on their students: Professor Elizabeth Fallaize (Modern Languages – French), Professor George Fleet (Organic Chemistry), Professor Mark Freedland KC FBA (Jurisprudence), Professor Sir John Kay FRSE FBA (Economics), and Professor Donald Russell FBA (Classics).

Primary Literacy Day

The Official Opening of the Historic Libraries and Canterbury Quadrangle ran in tandem with the launch of an exciting literacy initiative at St John's. On Friday morning, the College Access Team welcomed Year 5 and 6 pupils from Windale Primary School in Oxford for a series of literacy-themed workshops. These workshops encouraged pupils to read, write, perform, and think imaginatively about literature. Pupils were also invited to write or illustrate a short story inspired by Sir Thomas White's 'Armada' chest, with the President and Professor Darnton awarding prizes for the most creative entries.

This Access initiative was a wonderful addition to the programme of events celebrating the reopening of the College's Historic Libraries and the Canterbury Quadrangle. From its inception, the project of restoration and renewal at St John's aimed to ensure that all members of College, as well as visitors from the wider academy and the local community, could enjoy excellent resources and welcoming educational spaces for generations to come. It was heartening to see the College's far-sighted ambitions already being met.



Left: The President, Robert Darnton, and Patrick Hayes welcome pupils from Windale Primary School.



Building student experience through internships

Jenna Ilett, Inspire Digital Platform Development Manager, reports on the Access Office's 'inreach' work.

The majority of outreach work done by the Access team involves working with schools. This includes our partnership with Bayard's Hill Primary School in Oxford, the provision of £5,000 grants to schools both locally and in our target regions, and our sustained-contact Inspire Programme, targeting students in Years 9–13. Just as important, however, is our focus on 'inreach' where we aim to provide opportunities for current St John's students – both undergraduate and graduate – to get involved with the College's access and outreach work.

Internships, placements, and similar schemes are a vital part of higher education, as the practical experience and employability skills gained help to bridge the gap

Left: Access Interns, Trinity Term

Below: Ambassadors for the 2024 Summer Schools

between academia and the workplace. The Access team are committed to ensuring our students can gain and develop these key skills and experiences, and offer a variety of ways for students to engage with the work we do.

In response to students' desires for more work experience opportunities within College, the first donor-funded Inspire Internships were launched in Trinity Term 2021 and Hilary Term 2022.

After a successful launch, the Access Office expanded its internship offerings for students, utilising philanthropic funding to offer two to four internships each term. These roles involve various tasks such as producing video lectures for virtual summer schools, crafting social media content, and creating timetables and session plans for study days.

Range of internships in the Access Office

- Digital and Communications Internship
- Digital Design Internship
- Social Media and Content Creation Internship
- Access and Outreach Internship
- Inspire Academic Development Internship
- Primary Internship

In addition to receiving the Oxford Living Wage, accommodation and weekday lunches are also included as part of each internship to ensure there are no barriers to participation. Interns complete information security and safeguarding training and attend sessions and workshops focused on CV writing, interviews, career planning, and professional writing. When internships involve additional responsibilities, such as creating social media content, we offer further training (for example photo- and video-editing software skills).

Our 2024 Primary Interns, Patrick and Keya, spent several weeks working closely with Bayards Hill Primary School, running regular arts and crafts workshops during lunchtimes, helping to staff the school library, and delivering guided reading sessions for Year Five students. Based on discussions with Teacher Leads, Keya and Patrick have proposed several programmes (including a book club, after-school science sessions, and termly projects) designed to be educational and enjoyable that will be developed across the next academic year.

Another way that current students can get involved with Access and Outreach is by working as a paid Ambassador at our events throughout the year, including



Quotes from student interns



Joining St John's as an Access Intern has been an incredibly diverse and rewarding experience. From immersing myself in critical thinking programmes, to assisting with primary school visits and teacher training days, the two weeks have been both enriching and enjoyable.

Patrick, former intern



I was able to challenge myself creatively and was given independence and freedom to make each project my own. I am proud of the work I produced during this internship and all the work being done by the Access Office throughout the year!

Lucy, former intern



The internships are a great way to get involved with a meaningful Access project and work on it long term – it gives you a chance to test out new ideas and see their outcomes.

Keya, former intern



I had a fantastic time working at the Access Office. With a very welcoming atmosphere and a variety of both office and more active work, I really felt part of a very important team. I would love to come back again in the future.

Lily, former intern

Open Days, subject specific study days, primary school visits, and our annual Summer Schools. Ambassadors also support visits to St John's from secondary school students in our link regions by delivering College tours and running Q and A sessions. Ambassadors play a huge role in helping our events run smoothly, and provide attendees with insight into the huge variety of subjects, experiences, and opportunities as a university student. Graduate students can also get involved, preparing and delivering academic lectures and workshops for Year 12 students, creating educational material that will be used in Inspire Club Classes by schools enrolled on our Inspire Programme, and writing articles and recording videos for our Critical Thinking Programme.

Ambassador opportunities in 2023/24

192

Ambassador
roles

19

Lead
Ambassadors

16

Access events



The College is ambitious about its internship scheme and there are plans to help fund internships for our students in different departments in the University.



Above right: Ambassadors registering students at the 2024 Summer Schools

Right: Creative sessions at Bayards Hill Primary School

Testimonial from Alfred Dry (2020, Human Sciences), who has been involved with the Access Office since starting as an undergraduate at St John's. Alfred first worked as an Admissions and Access Intern, and currently works as the Access Team's Digital Access Officer whilst undertaking an MSc in Social Anthropology.

Can you talk us through your work experience with the Access team?

I was lucky enough to be the first student intern of the Access Office in July 2021. I returned for multiple internships over the following years of my undergraduate degree before accepting a part-time job over the course of my Master's. Each internship presented new opportunities to learn with novel projects and collaborations.

Why did you want to work with the Access team?

As a state school student, the primary reason was recognising the importance of their work and wanting to be a part of such a worthy project. On a more pragmatic level, the internships are a great opportunity to construct a solid CV and receive training to prepare you for future careers. It's also lovely to have the chance to stay in Oxford during the vacations and appreciate the city without the hustle and bustle of term time!

What skills have you learned/developed?

I have been trained in Adobe Premiere Pro to the level where I now have a qualification in the programme and am able to use it to boost my CV. During the internships we also received weekly training sessions on skills such as CV writing, networking, and office conduct. Joining this training with the skills inevitably learned through the variety of work available makes for an incredibly enriching experience as an intern. Much of the work is collaborative with the other interns which also ensures that teamwork is at the heart of the skills learned.

What have you found particularly rewarding about the internships?

One of the most rewarding parts of the internships is that the Access team take the time to learn the skills and knowledge you have when entering the internship and give you the chance to incorporate this into your work. For example, when creating content for schools, as an intern you will be able to draw on your own academic interests and turn these into a worksheet, video, or game for pupils to engage with. You can thus directly have an impact on the education of the schools you are supporting and hopefully encourage pupils to take an interest in your subject.



Alfred Dry, former Access Intern

What tasks have you done with the Access team during your time?

I have been involved with a huge variety of tasks during my time with the Access team and they have always been engaging and insightful. As I started in 2021, we were still feeling the pressure of the pandemic, so the push was on to create high-quality online content. I assisted with the production of many entertaining and educational videos during this time – a skill which has continued to be developed throughout my time with the office. I have also been involved with in-person events such as visiting local primary schools, providing tours, and assisting with workshops. There is always something new to get involved with at the office and the support available from those working full time has been unwavering.

Would you recommend the internships to future students?

Absolutely. It is a great way to build your skills, collaborate with other students and members of staff, and earn while doing so. It is a truly enriching experience and will be a fond memory of your time at university. There are few other jobs where the positive impact of your work is as immediately apparent and rewarding.

Driving change:

the ongoing efforts of Oxford North's social value mission

William Donger, CEO of Thomas White Oxford, reports on developments at Oxford North.

As Oxford North heads towards opening in mid-2025, it is not just focused on creating a new innovation district to enable and boost science and technology discovery, but also on having a positive impact within the local community.

Across the 64-acre masterplan project, delivering one million sq ft of labs and offices, 480 new homes, amenities and infrastructure improvements, construction works have continued in earnest to deliver the first phase which totals 160,000 sq ft (15,000 sq m) across three buildings.

The landmark Red Hall at the project's heart will house the ground-floor café, co-working and break-out spaces, community and presentation space, and, on the four floors above, office space for start-ups, entrepreneurs, and SMEs.

1 & 2 Fallaize Street will be the first two laboratory-enabled buildings with stunning views across the new public realm including Fallaize Park, which will be the size of Trafalgar Square, and the market square to deliver places to eat, rest, spend time in nature, exercise, get together, and be inspired. Construction of the new timber cycle pavilion to serve the first three buildings will start soon.

Meanwhile, The Hill Group's new homes in Canalside Quarter welcomed their first residents in December and they have agreed a partnership with Oxford City Council's housing company, OX Place, for the affordable homes.

However, this project goes further than the built environment and enabling discovery and places to live. We're committed to Oxford North being an industry leader in delivering on Environmental, Social, and



Oxford North cycle pavilion



Governance (ESG) commitments.

Oxford North has been designed by a world-leading team of masterplanners, architects, and specialist consultants, ensuring it connects and enhances the local area with open spaces, public art, events, and culture. Progress is measured via regular ESG reporting, benchmarking, and performance indicators. By constantly adapting and evolving our approach, we'll ensure Oxford North will be an extraordinary place to live and work.

There is a strong focus on shared prosperity, which is delivered through our Community Employment Plans, which set out how the project will maximise the opportunities created for local people and businesses during construction. Since the project started in August 2021, there have been more than 1,400 jobs created of which 21 per cent have been from the local area, along with 29 apprenticeships. There have also been more than 230 hours of volunteering. We have attended Oxford City Council's Meet the Buyer event, worked with social enterprise company RAW Workshop to furnish our marketing suite, and exhibited at CareersFest, a gathering

What's in a name?

When developing the lands to the north of the College in the mid-nineteenth century, Governing Body was determined to ensure that it retained control. There were strict rules about what sort of buildings could be erected, with pubs and 'dissenting chapels' strictly forbidden. Every project needed to be approved by the bursar and a nominated architect to ensure a cohesive design overall. Even important new institutions were constrained, with LMH only permitted to put up temporary structures (for fear that women's education would never catch on) and the founders of Keble allowed to build on condition they did nothing to undermine property prices or the Established Church.

Above all, the long-term memory of the College was maintained by the choice of street names. Rawlinson Road recalled a notable benefactor. St Bernard's Road commemorated the institution that predated St John's: a Cistercian College, suppressed at the Reformation. The College's livings – those parishes where it had a right to nominate the vicar – were referenced in places like Charlbury Road, while the College manors were evoked in roads like Norham Gardens. Walk through North Oxford and you find a map of the College's past – as well as an explanation for its current prosperity.

In building Oxford North, the College sought to do something similar. Each of the new roads here is a tribute to someone significant in the history of St John's. Appleby Way commemorates Malcolm Appleby, the



Aerial view of Oxford North site

College's first tutor in Chemistry. Appropriately enough, he left academia for life as a scientist at ICI, which seems suitable for a place that will house spin-out companies. Fallaize Street is a tribute to Elizabeth Faillaize, the first female member of Governing Body: a distinguished scholar of French literature and Pro-Vice Chancellor before her early death. John Kendrew, our Nobel Prize-winning former President and major benefactor is celebrated in Kendrew Street, while Sherard Street recalls the eighteenth-century Botanist William Sherard, who studied at St John's and endowed the Sherardian Chair of Botany (now based at Magdalen College). Finally, there is Tull Street, named after the pioneering Agriculturalist Jethro Tull – who also has the unique distinction of being our only alumnus to have a band named after him (that we know of). Last, and by no means least, is Thomas White Street: a belated tribute to our Founder.



Top left: Governing Body visit to Oxford North site, October 2023

Above: BioEscalator Pitch Battle 2024 judges

Left: UK Property Forum Awards, September 2024

of 3,000 young people and their parents, carers, and teachers from schools across the county, where we highlighted the many construction career pathways and future science and innovation roles. Our construction partners took part in World Cleanup Day, collecting more than fifteen bags of rubbish from around Wolvercote and the canal. We are working with Wolvercote Young People's Club, and The Hill Group recently arranged a skip to enable a clear out of their facility, while Careys stepped in when they had a drainage problem. We are using our Community Infrastructure Levy funds to provide new central heating boilers for the Club. We are also working with them and Wolvercote Primary School to assist both to access grant funding and form a Community Hub at the Club.

We have hosted students from Activate Learning and Oxford Brookes University's School of the Built Environment, and hosted a placement referral from St Mungo's, the homelessness charity. On International Women's Day, our construction partners arranged a site visit for local young women studying level 1 and level 2 diplomas in electrics and bricklaying and we hosted them at the Red Shed marketing suite.

Oxford North was proud to sponsor the BioEscalator's Pitch Battle, an exciting showcase of fierce competition and ground-breaking biotech innovations designed to provide biotech companies with a platform to practise their investor pitches and receive feedback from a distinguished panel of industry experts. Ten companies competed for the top spot and £2,000 in prize money

with the judges, including Professor Dame Kay Davies on behalf of Oxford North, facing a formidable task in selecting the winners.

We were headline sponsor of the Oxfordshire Apprenticeship Awards 2024 and, for the third year running, we sponsored the 'NextGen of the Year Award' at the Oxfordshire Property Awards, supporting future and rising talent across the county.

We sponsor the IF Oxford Science and Ideas Festival and this will be our third year, with plans for next year's festival to use Oxford North as a venue. We also supported both Oxfordshire Youth's 'Youth in Mind' event and a 'Pint of Science', the annual worldwide science festival which brings researchers to local pubs to share their scientific discoveries.

Representing us at many industry events, Victoria Collett, Development Director, Thomas White Oxford, continues to speak about the work we're doing to deliver Oxford North as responsibly as possible:

'Oxford North will support the economic growth of the UK and also aims to foster a sense of inclusivity and empowerment within the local community. This commitment helps to create a more diverse and sustainable workforce, while also promoting local talent and skills. By investing in its own community, Oxford North is not just developing buildings and infrastructure, but also helping to create a better future for Oxfordshire and its residents.'

Find out more at www.oxfordnorth.com.

Striking the perfect note

Revd. Dr Elizabeth Macfarlane reports on the College choir.

A very successful year for the choir, including a short tour to Devon, a concert in Charlbury, and an evensong with the Chelys Consort of Viols, has culminated in their making their first recording since 2015. As many of their contemporaries headed home or on holiday at the end of June, the choir spent an intense (and sunny) few days working with director David Bannister, and Adam Binks from Resonus Classics, to record music mostly associated with Christmas. Alumni who attended the carol service in December 2023 will have heard some of the items, including the ‘Song of the Nuns of Chester’ which sounded incredibly evocative when sung in Canterbury Quad at the conclusion of Carols around the quads in Michaelmas. The recording also includes long-standing favourites such as Elizabeth Poston’s ‘Jesus Christ the apple tree’ as well as contemporary works by David Bednall, Bob Chilcott, and Philip Stopford. Do listen to ‘News of great joy’ – it’s available as a CD and as a download from all major streaming services.

It is a joy to see the choir flourishing after the disruption of lockdowns. Throughout those difficult terms, choir members continued to work with David to record items for online services, and as services in Chapel became possible again, I found the blending of voices, and the resurgent fun of *being a choir together* very moving. David and Helen Meyerhoff, the choir’s singing teacher, have guided the past five years’ work with great care, which has been met with the commitment and resilience of the singers, all of whom now receive individual voice lessons to enable their development.

In March 2025 we marked the four hundredth anniversary of Orlando Gibbons, who wrote the brilliant ‘This is the record of John’ for the College.



A photograph of two women standing in a room, holding a bust of a bearded man. The woman on the left is wearing a blue cardigan over a white top, and the woman on the right is wearing a dark blue shirt. They are both smiling. In the background, there is a framed painting on the wall and a wooden sculpture on a shelf.

Expanding our reach: community initiatives



That was one of the most exciting, interesting and well-balanced events I have ever attended in all my Oxford days.

Thank you for the meticulous organisation. Everything was to the highest standard in the best tradition of St John's.

Tony Morris, morrisoxford.co.uk

St John's has a long-standing commitment to building connections beyond its own walls. Over the past academic year, the College has hosted and supported several public-facing events designed to promote cultural engagement, broaden understanding of St John's work, and share our unique environment with a wider audience.

Through initiatives such as the November 2023 St Brice's Day commemorative event, the *Pollution Pods* art installation in Front Quad, and participation in the Oxford Open Doors weekend in September 2024, St John's has opened its gates to thousands of members of the public, creating opportunities for reflection, learning, and collaboration. The College's involvement in the Oxford Playhouse's *Open House for Schools* initiative further highlights our commitment to supporting educational initiatives that enrich young minds.

These engagements have not only fostered a sense of inclusivity and belonging but have also encouraged conversations on important societal and environmental issues. By offering the College's spaces and support for events that bring art, history, and education to life, St John's continues to build strong links with the local community and beyond.

St Brice's Day

The College hosted an interdisciplinary programme of events, centred on the remains of at least thirty-five men and boys discovered in a mass burial site underneath St John's in 2008 by Thames Valley Archaeological Services during preparations for building Kendrew Quad. The archaeologists argue that these were victims of the St Brice's Day Massacre, when, on 13 November 1002, King Aethelred II ordered the execution of all Danes in England.

The two-day event was designed to reflect on the rich links with the history of the College and 11th-century Oxford, and to think broadly about themes of identity, community, conflict, and otherness. It attracted a broad range of people including students, academics and members of the public with a programme of talks on 'Viking Oxford' (David Griffiths, Professor of Archaeology), 'Vikings, England and Poetry at the Turn of the Eleventh Century' (Professor Carolyne Larrington, Emeritus Research Fellow), and a lecture by Professor Caroline Wilkinson, Director of the Forensic Research Institute (FORRI) at Liverpool John Moores University, on her work reconstructing the head of the Viking skeleton that had featured in the President's first Royal Institution Christmas Lecture (this was unveiled at the end of the event). Professor Hannah Skoda chaired a discussion on 'Wild Tales from Early Medieval Britain' with author Dr Amy Jeffs and all the threads were drawn together in a panel discussion with Sue Black, David Griffiths, Carolyne Larrington, Amy Jeffs, and Angie Bolton (Curator of Archaeology, Oxfordshire Museum Services) looking at the questions raised in recovering identity and history from evidence such as that of the mass burial.

The event was rounded off with a spirited performance by Dr Mark Atherton, Lecturer in English at Regent's Park and Mansfield College, and his folk band, who performed a song written to commemorate the St Brice's Day Massacre.

In addition, there was a poster exhibition detailing the 2008 excavations around the area of Kendrew Quad and a walking tour of Anglo-Saxon Oxford led by Aloysius Atkinson (former Junior Dean) to discover Anglo-Saxon Oxford in the present day and to set the events of St Brice's Day in their geographical context, together with a life-drawing workshop with local artist and teacher Lucy Stopford focusing on the face as the expression of a person's identity.

The head of our Viking – we are calling him Johannes – is now part of the College's art collection. Until he finds a more permanent home he is sitting in the President's Office, looking out over Front Quad and the cause of some surprise to visitors.



We found another intriguing connection with the St Brice's Day Vikings when Thomas Shaw, a 2023 finalist in Ancient and Modern History, discovered through a DNA test that he had a very strong match to several of the skeletons. Describing his feelings about the finding Tom said:

'It is a surprising and moving coincidence that I have matched with the Brice's Day remains and one that has made me wonder what impact this technology could have on people's personal relationship with the past. Most people can use ancestry/church records but usually hit a dead end before 1700, whereas now people can associate and identify themselves with the distant past in a way that would be impossible without this technology. This opens up lots of new avenues for engagement with history. It was weird walking around College knowing that people who I am very likely related to met their end here. It put things in a new perspective. I was startled by how similar I look to the facial reconstruction and many of my relatives also bear an amazing similarity to the reconstruction. I would like to thank College for helping me discover more about my own past.'

Pollution Pods

Over 4,000 visitors came to St John's in October and November 2023 to view an innovative installation by artist Michael Pinsky designed to raise awareness about air pollution and its impact on human health in partnership with the University's Humanities Cultural Programme and the Environmental Sustainability Unit. The installation comprised enclosed geodesic domes that simulated different polluted environments and allowed visitors to experience the air quality of different cities around the world.

Each pod represented a specific location, recreating the distinctive atmospheres found in the highly polluted cities of Beijing, London, São Paulo and New Delhi. The pods utilised advanced air filtration systems and chemicals to mimic the specific composition and odours of polluted air.

The artist's intention was for visitors to experience first-hand the tangible effects of air pollution and thereby to foster a greater understanding of the need for environmental action and to advocate for cleaner air and sustainable solutions.

The Pollution Pods were part of 'Everything is Connected', a city-wide programme of events that also included an in-conversation event in the Auditorium, 'The Air We Breathe', chaired by Professor Heather Bouman, Professor of Biogeochemistry. Together with the artist Michael Pinsky, Chris Church from Oxford Friends of the Earth, and Rawz (Rory Campbell), Oxford-based poet and former Sound Artist-in-Residence at St John's, the conversation looked at how we can better understand the environmental impact of our choices and give value to actions and things that support a more sustainable world.

There were also two displays in Canterbury Quad: one on the College's work on sustainability and the Masterplan; the other on the University's Environmental Sustainability work.



John Cairns



John Cairns



Principal Bursar, Zoe Hancock, and Professor William Whyte appeared on *BBC Politics South* on 19 November 2023 to talk about the College's plans for getting to net zero, including the installation of ground source heat pumps beneath the Great Lawn to power the Study Centre, and how retrofitting the Historic Libraries with improved insulation was key to achieving this.



Open House for Schools

St John's is a long-time supporter of the Oxford Playhouse and owns the building where the theatre is located. In 2024 the College launched a new partnership with the Playhouse, a pilot project aimed at opening up live theatre performance for schoolchildren in the local area. 'Open House for Schools' focuses on breaking down barriers to theatre attendance and providing creative learning opportunities for Oxfordshire-based schoolchildren aged 5 to 11 to enrich their learning and development. As part of the project over 600 pupils visited the Playhouse to see the pantomime, *Sleeping Beauty*, with free coach travel included to enable them to attend. The project also supported further development of the Playhouse's Primary Playmaker scheme, which works in school settings to support children in writing their own plays and then seeing them staged in the theatre at the Primary Playmaker Showcase.



Oxford Open Doors

This year we were able to open the College for both days of the annual Oxford Open Doors weekend organised by the Oxford Preservation Trust.

Characterised by the *Muddy Stiletto's* website as 'simultaneously the richest and friendliest Oxford college', we offered a rich mix of content thanks to the support of the President, Fellows, Access team, Events team and Communications team. The President gave talks on the Kendrew mass grave of Viking skeletons and the Crypt; Professor Maggie Snowling talked on the myths and reality of dyslexia and language; Michael Riordan, College Archivist, talked about the treasures of the St John's archive; Dr Georgy Kantor introduced the pictures in Hall; and Professor William Whyte gave a tour to showcase the College's architectural history. In addition landscape architects and conservation specialists, Michael and Beverley Lear, offered garden tours and David Bannister, Choir Director, gave an organ recital and talk. There was afternoon tea available in Hall and self-guided tours of the College. New for 2024 was a guide to the trees in the Groves highlighting twenty-four spectacular and significant specimens.

We attracted 4,581 visitors across the weekend with 203 children taking part in activities, the strongest engagement by the under-18s for Oxford Open Doors as a whole.



What has come across, through your feedback and anecdotal feedback given to our team, is that the experience you were offering visitors definitely led to higher quality engagement, with more feedback, more recommendations to others, and hopefully repeat visits and increased numbers in future years. Our co-marketing worked brilliantly and the posts about the St John's opening received a lot of online interaction. Thank you from the whole OPT team for putting together such a wonderful and welcoming programme – it was very much in the spirit of Oxford Open Doors and something that we would be keen for other venues to emulate.

Oxford Preservation Trust

Arts at St John's

The College has been a hub of artistic activity in Oxford, with another full year of exciting musical performances across a range of genres, stimulating exhibitions in the Barn, and a vibrant St John's Arts Week in Hilary Term.



Artist-in-Residence

Rachel Pimm joined the College in Trinity Term. Rachel works in sculpture, video and performance to explore environments and their materialities, histories and politics, often from the point of view of non-human agents including plants, minerals, worms, water, gravity, and rubber. Rachel's work has been presented at the Serpentine Gallery, Whitechapel Gallery, and Royal Academy in London and is supported by Artangel's inaugural 'Making Time' programme.

JCR Arts Week

Arts Week ran in Week 4 of Hilary Term again with poetry, jazz, textiles, art exhibitions, Bhangra dance, and a play, *Frost–Nixon*, superbly directed by Elspeth Rogers (2021, Lit Hum). The play attracted wonderful reviews and was a great showcase for the College's theatrical talent with all the cast and crew being members of St John's.

The talents of Junior Members were on display again in the Mapleton-Bree prize in the Creative Arts: Iris Corran (2022, English Language and Literature), Yesim Desticioglu (2023, DPhil Geography and the Environment) and Emma Scanlon (2023, English Language and Literature) were joint winners. Entries for the 2024 Kendrew Songwriting Prize also represented the widest possible variety of styles and genres with first prize going to 'Make a Man' by Briana William (Somerville; Music, 2022) and second prize to 'Fight Them All Off' by Tegan Addison (Music, 2023).

The academic year concluded with an inspiring life-drawing exhibition, showcasing the impressive work of both students and staff, from beginners to experienced artists. Special thanks went to Olivia Holder (Arts Support Officer) and Lucy Stopford for their guidance, with musical accompaniment provided by Professor Hannah Skoda on the harp.

Exhibitions

A rich variety of exhibitions and events in the Barn attracted many visitors to College.

A conference on Gesture was convened by Dr Jennifer Johnson (Junior Research Fellow), Mark Rowan-Hull, Dr Rachel Coombes, and Dr Tim Coombes. This focused on work ranging across aesthetic and material forms, unpacking and investigating the contingencies and commitments of gesture, and was held in conjunction with an exhibition of work by Mark Rowan-Hull that featured a performance by the artist.

Patrice Moor's collages in 'The Presence of an Absence' were widely praised for their depth and emotional impact. The exhibition was also accompanied by talks for the Richard Wollheim Centenary, organised by the Interdisciplinary Psychoanalytic Thought network.

We welcomed 'Time to Get Ready', featuring the work of Maria Varela, a Civil Rights photographer. The exhibition was supported by St John's, the Rothermere American Institute, Christ Church, the British Association of American Studies, the Oxford Festival of the Arts, and the National Museum of Mexican Art.

The Oxford Art Society's annual Members' Exhibition also returned with a wonderful array of works by local artists.



Above: Patrice Moor

Below: Mark Rowan Hull, *Empty House Studies*



Pio Abad and 'Prince Giolo'

The drawing of an enslaved seventeenth-century Filipino, 'Prince Giolo', depicted in *Musæum Pointerianum* (MS 253) in the Library's special collections, inspired an exhibition at the Ashmolean Museum of new works by Turner Prize-nominated artist Pio Abad.

Abad's work concerns colonial history and cultural loss and is deeply informed by world history, with a particular focus on the Philippines, where he was born and raised in an academic family who campaigned for justice in the 1970s and 1980s. Abad's poetic, personal, and political art offers a powerful critique of the way many museums collect, display, and interpret the objects they hold and questions prevailing perceptions and perspectives.

'To Those Sitting in Darkness' (the title was a reference to American writer Mark Twain's satire *To the Person Sitting in Darkness* (1901), which strongly criticised imperialism) included drawings, sculptures, and text. The St John's drawing shows the enslaved 'Prince Giolo', a tattooed Filipino who was brought to Oxford in the 1680s and exhibited as an exotic curiosity in pubs and other venues. In 'Giolo's Lament,' Abad re-renders Giolo's hand through eleven engravings on marble arranged on the gallery's walls, a moving reminder of his fragile humanity.



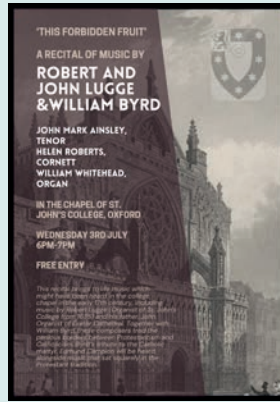
Top left: Pio Abad

Top right: *Prince Giolo*

Left: *Giolo's Lament*



Clockwise from top left:
 Attacca Quartet
 This Forbidden Fruit
 Suna Alan
 Erwartung
 Brighde Chaimbeul



Camille Lenoire



Music

St John's offers a rich diversity of musical talent. For the eighth consecutive year, Orchestra Vox captivated audiences with its annual opera production. This year's programme featured two intense one-act operas: Poulenc's *La Voix Humaine* and Schoenberg's *Erwartung*, both exploring psychological turmoil and resilience. Directed by award-winning West End director Jonny Danciger and conducted by internationally acclaimed Hannah von Wiehler (DPhil Music, 2016), the performances showcased the talents of St John's alumna Sofia Kirwan-Baez (Music, 2015), and Laura Coppinger, also an Oxford alumna. The sold-out performances highlighted the College's ongoing commitment to musical excellence.

The World's Music at Oxford featured Suna Alan and friends in a concert of Kurdish folk songs and Ki Bagus Baghaskoro Wisnu Murti, an internationally-acclaimed

puppeteer, dancer, musician, and expert practitioner of *wayang kulit* – a traditional form of Indonesian shadow-puppet theatre that tells thrilling epics accompanied by enchanting gamelan music. In Trinity we welcomed Brighde Chaimbeul, one of the most exciting musicians in the world of Celtic folk and a leading Scottish smallpiper. The Attacca Quartet also performed works by Caroline Shaw and Philip Glass in a concert co-promoted with Oxford Contemporary Music and Oxford Festival of the Arts.

Chapel welcomed organist William Whitehead and tenor John Mark Ainsley, for 'This forbidden fruit', a concert of music by Dowland, Byrd, and the Luge family (Robert Luge was organist at St John's for a few years) and in March Arculo, Consort of Viols, presented an afternoon of late Renaissance and contemporary music on the theme of royalty.

Tapestries

Professor Hannah Skoda, Keeper of Textiles and Silver, reports on one of the College's hidden treasures.

In January we took down the tapestries in the President's Lodgings from the walls for some curatorial, conservation, and research work. It was quite an undertaking, and members of the Works department did an amazing job handling these delicate and gigantic items. One of the tapestries dates from the 1560s and the others from the 1630s: the tapestries bear witness to politically and religiously fraught moments in the College's history. They are exquisite pieces, and it was such a privilege to look at the fine details. Although the gilt threads are now faded, they would have sparkled in candlelight. Up close, we were able to see the makers' marks on these tapestries, including a tiny, stitched hand in the corner of one indicating that it was made in Antwerp, a very unusual production place for a tapestry of this quality. They have been part of the College community for so many centuries, and we look forward to ensuring their continued presence among us for many more centuries to come.



With such a rich array of artistic activity, the College continues to foster creativity and intellectual engagement across multiple disciplines. As we look ahead, St John's remains committed to supporting and celebrating the arts, ensuring a dynamic and inspiring cultural environment for students and the wider community.

A photograph of a grand stone archway entrance. Above the arch is a detailed coat of arms featuring a shield with red, blue, and white sections, topped with a crown and surrounded by ornate scrollwork. The archway is set into a wall of light-colored stone blocks. A black door is partially open, revealing a glimpse of the interior with a patterned window. A dark mat is placed on the steps leading into the doorway.

We are delighted to welcome
new Senior Members to the
St John's community.

Arrivals

Honorary Fellows

In March 2024, the College elected three new Honorary Fellows. They are notable for their distinction, and we are delighted to welcome them back to College.

NADIA MOTRAGHI KC

Nadia Motraghi KC (1997, Jurisprudence) is a barrister and King's Counsel specialising in employment and discrimination, professional discipline and public law. She has acted in some of the most complex, important, and sensitive cases in these fields. Nadia is also known for her expertise in equality, diversity, and inclusion.



Nadia came to St John's after attending a comprehensive school in Newcastle upon Tyne. She was inspired to specialise in employment law after studying under Professor Mark Freedland.

Nadia was awarded the prestigious Frank Knox Fellowship to study at Harvard Law School and Harvard University's Center for Middle Eastern Studies where she obtained an LLM, the Dean's Prize for Leadership, and a Human Rights Fellowship. She was placed top of the year in the Bar Finals at Gray's Inn where she was a Beddingfield Scholar.

Since 2004, Nadia has been in full-time practice at Old Square Chambers and took silk in 2023. She regularly writes, commentates and lectures on topical legal subjects and has appeared on all the UK's major news channels. She is also an expert advisor to the non-profit organisation, the Girls Human Rights Hub.

'Now that the celebrations and speeches are over, I'm delighted to be able to share that I have been elected an Honorary Fellow of the College and to give some reflections.

A little while ago, I received an entirely unexpected letter from the College President, Professor Lady Sue Black, Baroness Black of Strome, with the news that I was to receive the College's highest honour.

After checking the letter was not an elaborate hoax, the thought of this special renewed connection made me reflect on the very start of my journey to St John's as a 17-year-old law interviewee, arriving from my comprehensive school, Gosforth High, now Academy, in Newcastle upon Tyne.

Back then I had no idea what to expect from a law interview so my mum gave me an orange jacket to wear,

saying that at least I would stand out and she gave me some advice to make sure that whatever I said made me stand out for the right reason.

After my interview I rang up my parents from a telephone box upset and saying that I had blown it because I had argued a point strongly against one of my interviewers, Professor (then Dr) Simon Whittaker. Generations of law students will remember Professor Whittaker as the perennial interview bad cop to Professor Mark Freedland's good cop. They were a formidable team.

That interview was the gateway into the College (and the University) that gave me an incredible education, lifelong friendships, great memories and that opened my eyes to amazing opportunities.

It was a sliding doors moment that ultimately led to my career as a barrister and to becoming one of the still small number of women or minority ethnic King's Counsels (KCs).

I have remained proud to be a member of the College in the twenty-five plus years since my matriculation, knowing the College as not only a community of scholars but also a community of people whose generosity and humanity makes a positive difference inside and outside the College and the world over.

In my new role, I hope to pay it forward and make my own small contribution to support the aims and objectives of St John's and its current and prospective students and alumni.

I very much look forward to getting to know many more College members and Fellows, past and present, from all walks of life.

In the meantime, I want to thank the College for making me and my husband feel so welcome at the new Honorary Fellows' dinner. It was wonderful to share the celebrations with brilliant new honorary fellow, Caroline Plumb OBE, CEO and entrepreneur, whom I was lucky enough to know as an undergraduate.

We were privileged to be hosted by our distinguished President, Professor Sue Black, who received us warmly. The evening was made all the more special by having there to welcome us Professor Maggie Snowling, our former President and trailblazing first woman President in the College's history; Emeritus Professor Mark Freedland, my employment law tutor who inspired me into my chosen field; and Musa Okwonga, the award-winning writer and also an Honorary Fellow. This time the orange jacket was not necessary.'

CAROLINE PLUMB OBE

Caroline Plumb OBE (1996, Engineering, Economics, and Management) is an entrepreneur and businesswoman who started her first business aged 21. She built and sold businesses across professional services and software, and is now Chief Executive of Gravita, a rapidly scaling accounting firm. Her businesses have won multiple awards and have been three-times listed in the Sunday Times Top 100 Best Small Companies to Work For.



Caroline writes a monthly column for *The Times* focused on small business, and is a Non-Executive Director at Mercia Asset Management, a specialist asset manager focused on early-stage and regional investment. She has a long-standing passion for supporting entrepreneurship and growth particularly in under-invested locations and groups. Caroline was previously an Independent Member of the Regional Growth Fund, on the Department for Business' Small Business Forum and National Council for Graduate Entrepreneurship.

She served as one of the Prime Minister's Business Ambassadors for eight years, representing the UK in the Professional and Business Services sector. Caroline was awarded an OBE for services to Business and Charity in the Queen's 90th Birthday Honours in 2016.

'I was absolutely delighted to be elected for this unexpected honour. It is a huge privilege to become an Honorary Fellow, and I am thrilled to be able to continue my association with St John's, a place that has been

incredibly special to me since my undergraduate days and that always feels like home. My years at St John's were transformative for me, sparking a passion for business, technology and innovation. I'm particularly focused on how these can be a force for good, particularly for under-represented groups, entrepreneurs and those running scaling businesses. I'm so grateful for the many opportunities that I had in studying at St John's, and for the friendships, networks and insights that flowed from these. I hope to be able to support the College in navigating a world changing ever faster through technology as it continues to deliver academic excellence and unique experiences for its current and future members.'



Caroline Plumb (left) and Nadia Motraghi (right)

PROFESSOR BRENDA STEVENSON

Brenda Stevenson joined the College in October 2020 as the inaugural Hillary Rodham Clinton Chair of Women's History. Her research focuses on the study of women and their histories, particularly those addressing women of colour, and fosters the creation of new students and schools of thought committed to advancing research on women and gender. She was elected as an Honorary Fellow on her retirement in July 2024.



Brenda Stevenson and colleagues at the launch of *What Sorrows Labour in My Parent's Breast? A History of the Enslaved Black Family*

Governing Body

PROFESSOR TAHERA QUTBUDDIN

Tahera Qutbuddin is Abdulaziz Saud Albabtain Laudian Professor of Arabic. Originally from Mumbai, she earned a BA and Tamhidi Magister from Ain Shams University, Cairo, and a PhD from Harvard. After posts at Yale and the University of Utah, she taught for two decades at the University of Chicago. Professor Qutbuddin researches classical Arabic literature and Islamic studies, focusing on intersections of the literary, the religious, and the political in poetry and prose. She teaches classical Arabic literature from its oral beginnings in the seventh century to the cusp of modernity around 1800, seeing it as a direct window into the rich culture and thought of the vast medieval Arabic-speaking world.



Ken Bennett

PROFESSOR ARMIN LAK

Armin Lak is Tutorial Fellow in Pre-Clinical Medicine. He was an undergraduate in Biology in Trieste, Italy and studied for a PhD in Neuroscience at the University of Cambridge. He held a Henry Wellcome Postdoctoral Fellowship at University College London and Cold Spring Harbor Lab in New York. In 2019, Professor Lak launched his lab in Oxford with a Sir Henry Dale Fellowship and an ERC starting grant. The lab aims to gain a quantitative circuit-level understanding of neuronal mechanisms that subserve learning and decision-making, focusing specifically on how the brain integrates external sensory signals with internal reward and motivational signals for making decisions, and how the brain learns to make decisions under uncertainty.



John Cairns

Supernumerary Fellows

PROFESSOR PETER VISSCHER

Peter Visscher is Professor of Quantitative Genetics, Nuffield Department of Population Health, with his lab based in the Big Data Institute. His research focuses on the causes and consequences of human trait variation. His group develops and applies statistical analysis methods to quantify and dissect the contribution of DNA polymorphisms to trait variation in families and populations.



PROFESSOR HEATHER HARRINGTON

Heather Harrington was elected as a Supernumerary Fellow on her appointment as a director at the Max Planck Institute of Molecular Cell Biology and Genetics and Professor of Mathematics at the Mathematical Institute in Oxford. Her research focuses on the problem of reconciling models and data by extracting information about the structure of models and the shape of data.



DR MATTHEW WINTERBOTTOM

Matthew Winterbottom is Assistant Keeper (Curator of Decorative Arts and Sculpture), Ashmolean Museum. Dr Winterbottom has a deep knowledge of European decorative arts from the late fifteenth century to the present day, including ceramics, metalwork, glass, furniture, and textiles. He is passionate about public engagement with research, and uses displays, publications, digital initiatives, and co-curation to share this knowledge of material culture with a broad range of audiences. He was lead curator for the Ashmolean's major 2023–24 exhibition, *Colour Revolution: Victorian Art, Design, and Fashion*.



PROFESSOR ANDREW GOODWIN FRS

Andrew Goodwin is Professor of Materials Chemistry and Professorial Research Fellow in the Inorganic Chemistry Laboratory at Oxford. He researches inorganic and solid-state chemistry, and his particular research interest is in understanding and exploiting structural flexibility and disorder in functional materials. He leads a research group which covers four key areas: fundamentals of disorder; advanced characterisation; disorder by design; disorder/property relationships.



Supernumerary Teaching Fellow

DR NICK JONES

Nick Jones is Supernumerary Teaching Fellow in Mathematics. He is interested in mathematical aspects of quantum many-body physics. His research looks at problems related to the interplay of symmetry and topology in quantum phases of matter and their transitions, often using integrable lattice models.



Junior Research Fellow

DR CHRISTOPHER FRUGÉ

Christopher Frugé is Junior Research Fellow in Philosophy. Before joining St John's in October 2023, Dr Frugé received his PhD from Rutgers University. He was a Departmental Lecturer in the Faculty of Philosophy and Hertford College, teaching many areas of metaphysics and ethics as well as social philosophy. He is interested in how we can create genuinely new aspects of reality, with an eye toward implications for value and death.



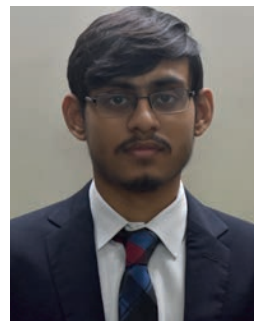
DR KAITLYN CRAMB

Kaitlyn Cramb is Junior Research Fellow in Neuroscience. Originally from Vancouver, Canada, she has a BSc in Microbiology & Immunology from the University of British Columbia and a MSc in Cell Biology from the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology. She completed her DPhil in Physiology, Anatomy, and Genetics at Oxford. Dr Cramb's research investigates dopamine release deficits in human Parkinson's patient-derived dopamine neurons and looks deeper into the intricacies of impaired dopamine metabolism in Parkinson's disease. Her research has the potential to answer many fundamental questions on the molecular causes Parkinson's.



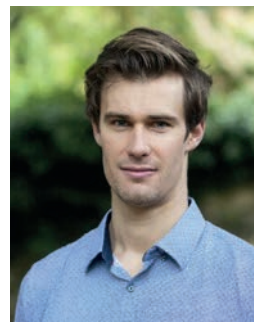
DR ANIRUDDHA SAHA

Aniruddha Saha is Junior Research Fellow in Politics. He holds a BA degree in Journalism and Communication Studies from Manipal University in India and an MA and PhD in International Relations at the Department of War Studies, King's College London, where he was a Sir Evelyn de Rothschild and Dr Duncan Anderson scholar. Dr Saha's research uses an interdisciplinary lens to examine identity construction, norms, international hierarchies, and stigmatisation approaches in nuclear governance. He co-convenes the Global Nuclear Order Working Group for the British International Studies Association.



DR SEAN HARDY

Sean Hardy is Junior Research Fellow in Biochemistry. He completed his undergraduate training in Biotechnology, at the University of Newcastle, Australia and his PhD as an international collaboration between the University of Newcastle Australia, and the Medical University of Graz Austria, conducting research on campus at both institutions throughout. His research focuses on the cellular, molecular, and biochemical mechanisms of cardiovascular disease, with a particular focus on heart attacks. He is specifically investigating the intricate crosstalk between immune and fibrotic (scarring) responses in the development, and wound healing, of cardiovascular diseases.





Leavers 2024

We take this opportunity to thank warmly those Fellows who are leaving St John's or retiring this year. We congratulate them on their new roles and look forward to welcoming them back to visit College.

DR AKANKSHA AWAL

Leverhulme Early Career Fellow, Anthropology

DR JENNIFER JOHNSON

Junior Research Fellow in History of Art

DR ZHENYU CAI

Junior Research Fellow in Physics

DR EMILY KATZENSTEIN

Junior Research Fellow in Politics

DR SEUNGHOO CHAE

Leverhulme Early Career Fellow, Politics

PROFESSOR CRAIG MACLEAN

Supernumerary Teaching Fellow in Biology

DR JANE COONS

Supernumerary Teaching Fellow in Mathematics

PROFESSOR BRENDA STEVENSON

Professorial Fellow; Hillary Rodham Clinton Professor of Women's History (now Honorary Fellow)

DR JORDAN ENGLISH

Supernumerary Teaching Fellow in Law

DR EMILIJA TALIJAN

Junior Research Fellow in Modern Languages

PROFESSOR GEORG GOTTLÖB FRS

Professorial Fellow; Professor of Informatics (now Emeritus Research Fellow)

DR ALEXANDER WEIDE

Leverhulme Early Career Fellow, Archaeology

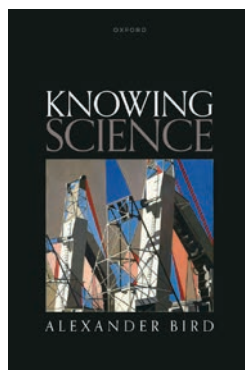
The Reading List

St John's Fellows have published widely over the last year, covering a range of diverse subjects. A small sample of their work is included below.

PROFESSOR ALEXANDER BIRD

Knowing Science, Alexander Bird (OUP, 2022)

In *Knowing Science*, Professor Bird presents an epistemology of science that rejects empiricism and gives a central place to the concept of knowledge. Science aims at knowledge and progresses when it adds to the stock of knowledge. That knowledge is social knowing – it is known by the scientific community as a whole. Evidence is that from which knowledge can be obtained by inference. From this, it follows that evidence is knowledge, and is not limited to perception, nor to observation. Observation supplies evidence that is basic relative to a field of enquiry and can be highly non-perceptual. Theoretical knowledge is typically gained by inference to the only explanation, in which competing plausible hypotheses are falsified by the evidence. In cases where not all competing hypotheses are refuted, scientific hypotheses are not known but instead possess varying degrees of plausibility. Plausibilities in the light of the evidence are probabilities and link eliminative explanationism to Bayesian conditionalization. Bird argues that scientific realism and anti-realism as global metascientific claims should be rejected – the track record gives us only local metascientific claims.

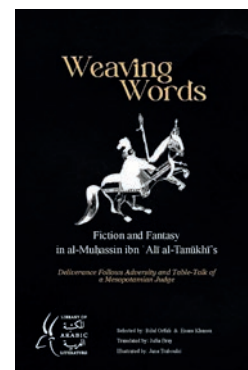


in Iraq in the second half of the tenth century AD by al-Muasssin ibn 'Alī al-Tankhī: *Deliverance Follows Adversity* and *The Table-Talk of a Mesopotamian Judge*. Born in 327/939, al-Tankhī was the son of 'Alī ibn Muammad al-Tankhī, a judge and leading literary figure in the city of Basra.

The message of *Deliverance Follows Adversity*, spelled out in al-Tankhī's introduction to the book, is that our lives are full of tribulations and reversals, but if we trust in God's kindness and love Him steadfastly, He will make everything come right. Al-Tankhī wrote *Deliverance* for people like himself: members of the Iraqi upper bourgeoisie and service aristocracy who for centuries had been adept at surviving regime change. A lot of the stories in *Deliverance* are indiscreet first-person gossip about ups and downs in the careers of just such grandees, keyhole history that reflects their worldly and self-interested attitudes to patronage, politics, money, and success.

Weaving Words contains twenty-one stories in three sections: the stories of Part One are connected by motifs of dreams and promises, leading to spiritual or financial gain; Part Two tells of fate and its unforeseen workings, which sometimes result in justice being done and are sometimes simply strange; Part Three deals with chance encounters, puzzles, tricks and tests, some noble, like the Emperor of China's testing of Alexander the Great, and some treacherous, like the snake's attempt to trick the holy hermit.

The illustrated PDF is free to download at: <https://bit.ly/4!7sLsn>.



PROFESSOR JULIA BRAY

Weaving Words. Fiction and Fantasy in al-Muḥassin ibn 'Alī al-Tanūkhī's Deliverance Follows Adversity and Table-talk of a Mesopotamian Judge, selected by Bilal Orfali & Enass Khansa, translated by Julia Bray, illustrated by Jana Traboulsi (Library of Arabic Literature Young Readers, New York University Abu Dhabi, 2024)

Weaving Words contains selected stories from two celebrated works of Arabic literature, both written

**PROFESSOR RICHARD
COMPTON**

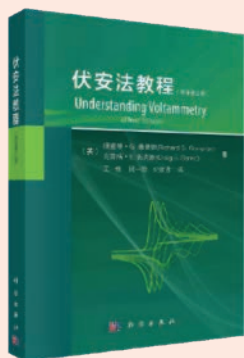
Understanding Voltammetry, R. G. Compton and C. E. Banks, 3rd Edition (World Scientific, 2023); translated by Yige Zhou, Wei Wang and Xiaobo Ji

The official Chinese translation of this best-selling textbook was published in October 2023. One of the translators, Dr Yige Zhou (Hunan University, Changsha) is a former Kendrew Scholar (DPhil Physical and Theoretical Chemistry, 2009). She wrote the following note about the process of the translation:

On 7 October 2009 I arrived at the office of my DPhil supervisor, Professor Richard Compton. He fetched a book from a shelf, eyes twinkling with mirth behind thick spectacles. 'Please read this,' he said. His words were brief yet imbued with joy and pride. Glancing down, I saw the title *Understanding Voltammetry* – the first edition and the author was standing in front of me.

I later learned that not every one of the six doctoral students joining our group that year received a copy of the book. This realisation filled me with apprehension and excitement, driving me to read it eagerly. As this was my first time reading an English academic monograph, I braced myself, expecting it to be the toughest nut to crack in my life. However, the experience turned out to be much smoother than anticipated, thanks to the book's readability. It began with the basics of chemical equilibrium and transitioned into the important theories of thermodynamics, kinetics, and electroanalysis related to electrochemical measurements, revealing the electrochemical behaviour and rules of molecules at nano-, micro-, and macro-scales. The book did not aim to cover all aspects of electrochemistry; instead, it offered a systematic introduction to the core methodology of electrochemical research – voltammetry – covering its fundamental theories, historical development, and cutting-edge progress. It especially focused on the integration of theory and experiment, providing strong guidance for beginners in electrochemistry in experimental design and result interpretation. The text aligned with my supervisor's daily language – concise, direct, accurate, and rigorous. Throughout the first year of my DPhil, many problems I encountered in the lab were solved through reading *Understanding Voltammetry*. I am deeply grateful for it.

During my doctorate, I had a mix of respect and fear for my supervisor, as he was exceedingly strict with students and scientific research. But each time I saw him at the pub outside the lab, enjoying a sandwich and a beer, any sense of grievance I had would instantly dissipate. My supervisor devotes all his energy to electrochemistry.



It is his lifelong passion and love: 'Countless volumes spanning ages devour the days, sitting aside a window from dawn to dusk narrates the fleeting years.'¹

The second edition of *Understanding Voltammetry* was published in the second year of my DPhil. Considering myself a productive and diligent student, I went to my supervisor's office to ask for a copy but, unfortunately, I returned empty-handed. He didn't have any copies at hand but promised to give me one when the third edition was published, no matter where I would be.

After leaving Oxford, I moved between Canada and the United States for postdoctoral research before returning to my home country of China. During these years, that first edition of *Understanding Voltammetry*, accompanied me across much of the world. Its words were like pearls, full of guidance and continually shining in my scientific career. Regardless of my career stage, I could always find new ideas and methods within its pages.

Not long after returning to my country, the third edition was finally published, and my supervisor planned a visit to Hunan the following year. He remembered his promise and agreed to bring the book for me then. However, I couldn't wait any longer, as I had started teaching undergraduates the 'Principles of Electrochemistry', using *Understanding Voltammetry* as a textbook.

Throughout its two subsequent editions, *Understanding Voltammetry* continuously integrated and presented the latest research findings. The third edition even included the electrochemistry study of single nanoparticle collision, which was the focus of my doctoral research, a pleasant surprise. As I incorporated my supervisor's thoughts and efforts into my lecture slides, I understood for the first time the concept of the inheritance of knowledge.

At the end of September 2019, my supervisor came to Hunan and visited Chairman Mao's birthplace. He had always admired the communist cause and proletarian revolutionaries, even treasuring Chairman Mao's *Little Red Book* at home. I never asked him why, but it became clear when I learned his favourite piece of music was Mahler's Symphony No. 5. My supervisor revered a life philosophy that journeyed from darkness, despair, and defeat to light, hope, and victory. It was this philosophy that drove his dedication to scientific research. During his visit, my students and I listened again to his guidance. It was the 70th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China, and he stood with us for a group photo, holding the national and party flags, smiling warmly and sincerely.

Shortly after my supervisor returned to Oxford, Professor Wei Wang from Nanjing University contacted me. He hoped to translate *Understanding Voltammetry* into Chinese and asked if I could discuss this with my supervisor and participate in the project. My supervisor enthusiastically agreed, often helping me and colleagues to resolve issues in our translation. Thus, during

the scorching summer of 2021, while eight months pregnant, I spent nearly ten hours each day at my desk, proofreading the chapters for which I was responsible. My only hope was that this book, now titled 《伏安法教程》, a culmination of more than forty years of my supervisor's dedicated work, could help more people engaged in electrochemical research worldwide. I also hoped that when the book was officially published, I could proudly and joyfully present it to my supervisor, Professor Compton, just as he handed me the first English edition on that autumn day years ago at Oxford.

¹ The original line is from the Chinese poem ‘题老学庵壁’ by Lu You: ‘万卷古今消永日，一窗昏晓送流年’. In plain translation this means: ‘I spend my days reading thousands of books spanning from ancient times to the present.’ Sitting beside a window from dawn to dusk, one becomes so concentrated that time passes unnoticed, just like the flow of water in a river. This metaphor implies the author’s lifelong companionship and guidance through books.

DR LAURA FLANNIGAN

Royal Justice and the Making of the Tudor Commonwealth, 1485–1547, Cambridge Studies in Early Modern History (CUP, 2023)

Hearings of the Court of Requests, 1493–1538 (TNA REQ 1), List and Index Society (2 vols., Kew: List and Index Society, 2023)

Dr Flannigan’s research deals with the principle and practice of royal justice in the early Tudor period through an analysis of the little-studied ‘Court of Requests’, a tribunal that allowed poorer people to petition the monarch about all kinds of interpersonal disputes, usually against wealthier and more powerful opponents. Published as a monograph, *Royal Justice and the Making of the Tudor Commonwealth, 1485–1547*, is based on a study of some 5,000 legal documents in the UK’s National Archives. The book combines a detailed analysis of the inner workings of government with attention to the social demands that influenced the development of justice-giving at the centre of

power. This has the potential to alter our perception of who had a hand in shaping Tudor England – besides the monarchs and ministers with whom we are most familiar.

The Court of Requests comprised men working in the king’s attendant household and council. It heard and determined all manner of interpersonal disputes presented by ordinary people from across England, Wales, and beyond. Its procedures of summoning subjects under subpoena, ordering investigative commissions, and gathering for hearings brought a wide range of people into contact with the royal administration. The two volumes of the *Hearings of the Court of Requests* calendar the entries from the Court’s earliest books of orders and decrees, from their commencement in 1493 through to 1538. It also prints selected decrees, lists entries by county, and provides indexes for names and places. These records allow us to glimpse the daily procedures of justice-giving in this transformational period, as well as the people they served.



DR LUCY FOULKES

Coming of Age: How Adolescence Shapes Us, Lucy Foulkes (Bodley Head, 2024)

Drawing on a decade of psychological research, Dr Foulkes’ new book gets beneath the recent myths and age-old stereotypes of adolescence to reveal the real reasons why teens behave as they do.

Why do teens take risks? What is it that makes them anxious? How do they think about sex, love, bullying and friendship? Adolescence is often difficult

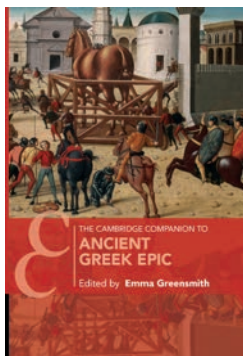


and it shapes us for life, but too often we fear, dismiss or even try to prevent aspects of it that are crucial to our development. Overturning many mistaken assumptions, Dr Foulkes shows that apparent recklessness is usually calculated; that teenagers are socially conservative as much as rebellious; that being popular can be just as hard as being lonely; and that self-consciousness and sensation-seeking are not just normal but useful. Above all, the book shows that adolescents have an extraordinary capacity for resilience, empathy and mutual support, and that even the most challenging experiences are part of an essential process of self-discovery.

PROFESSOR EMMA GREENSMITH

The Cambridge Companion to Ancient Greek Epic, edited by Emma Greensmith (CUP, 2024)

Ancient Greek literature begins with the epic verses of Homer. Epic then continued as a fundamental literary form throughout antiquity and the influence of the poems produced extends beyond antiquity and down to the present. This Companion presents a fresh and boundary-breaking account of the ancient Greek epic tradition. It includes wide-ranging close readings of epics from Homer to Nonnus, traces their dialogues with other modes such as ancient Mesopotamian poetry, Greek lyric and didactic writing, and explores their afterlives in Byzantium, early Christianity, modern fiction and cinema, and the identity politics of Greece and Turkey. Plot summaries are provided for those unfamiliar with individual poems. Drawing on cutting-edge new research in a number of fields, such as racecraft, geopolitics and the theory of emotions, the volume demonstrates the sustained and often surprising power of this renowned ancient genre, and sheds new light on its continued impact and relevance today.



PROFESSOR LAURENCE HUNT

Professor Hunt published a number of papers this year including:

Maria Ruesseler, Lilian Aline Weber, Tom Rhys Marshall, Jill O'Reilly, Laurence Tudor Hunt (2023) Quantifying decision-making in dynamic, continuously evolving environments. *eLife* 12:e82823. <https://doi.org/10.7554/eLife.82823>

Hassall, C. D., Yan, Y., & Hunt, L. T. (2023). The neural correlates of continuous feedback processing. *Psychophysiology*, 60, e14399. <https://doi.org/10.1111/psyp.14399>

Marshall TR, Ruesseler M, Hunt LT, O'Reilly JX (2024) The representation of priors and decisions in the human parietal cortex. *PLoS Biol* 22(1): e3002383. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pbio.3002383>

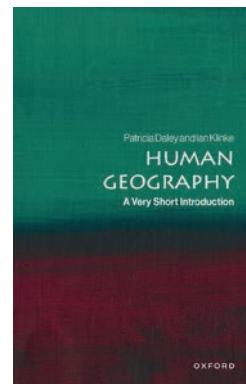
Yan, Y., Hunt, L. T., & Hassall, C. D. (2024). Reward positivity affects temporal interval production in a continuous timing task. *Psychophysiology*, 00, e14589. <https://doi.org/10.1111/psyp.14589>

PROFESSOR IAN KLINKE

Human Geography: A Very Short Introduction, Patricia Daley and Ian Klinke (OUP, 2025)

Human geography offers answers to some of the most important challenges of our time. To understand contemporary struggles over global economic inequality, forced migration, racial injustice, gender justice, and the climate crisis, we must grasp the ways in which these are fought over and through space.

This book explains how the subject can aid a better knowledge of the modern world. It examines the formation of power systems and the ways in which they have been constructed, subverted, and resisted over time. The book explores the topic through seven spaces that define the present: the colony, the pipeline, the border, the high rise, the workplace, the conservation area, and outer space. In addition, the authors take a critical view of the discipline and its history, but argue for its continuing vitality.



PROFESSOR CAROLYN LARRINGTON

Approaches to Emotion in Middle English Literature (Manchester University Press, 2024)

Over the last twenty-five years, the 'history of emotion' has become one of the most dynamic and productive areas for humanities research. This designation, and the marked leadership of historians in the field, has had the unlooked-for consequence of sidelining literature – in particular secular literature – as evidence-source and object of emotion study. Secular literature, whether fable, novel, fantasy, or romance, has been understood

as prone to exaggeration, hyperbole, and thus as an unreliable indicator of the emotions of the past.

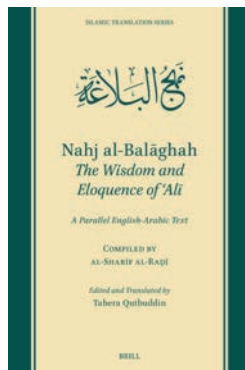
In this book Professor Larrington aims to decentre history of emotion research and asks new questions, ones that can be answered by literary scholars, using literary texts as sources: how do literary texts understand and depict emotion and, crucially, how do they generate emotion in their audiences – those who read them or hear them read or performed?



PROFESSOR TAHERA QUTBUDDIN

Nahj al-Balāghah: The Wisdom and Eloquence of ‘Alī, Tahera Qutbuddin (Brill, 2024)

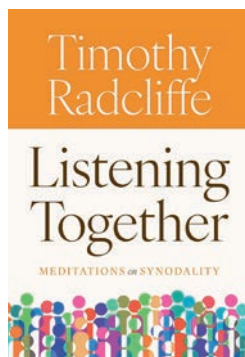
This book is a facing-page critical edition, translation, and introduction of al-Sharīf al-Raḍī’s (d. 406/1015) celebrated compilation of the orations, letters, and sayings of ‘Alī. The text is a masterpiece of Arabic literature and Islamic wisdom studied and memorised avidly and continually for over a thousand years. Showcasing ‘Alī’s life and travails in his own words, it also transcribes his profound reflections on piety and virtue, and on just and compassionate governance. The book is available on open access.



CARDINAL TIMOTHY RADCLIFFE

Listening Together: Meditations on Synodality, Timothy Radcliffe (Liturgical Press, 2024)

This book contains the full collection of conference talks by Timothy Radcliffe, heard first during the historic October 2023 General Assembly of the Synod on Synodality. The Synod was held in Rome in October 2023 and gathered Catholics from all over the world to listen, pray, and reflect on a



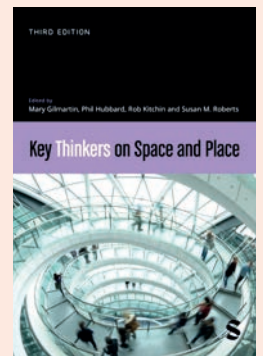
PROFESSOR LINDA MCDOWELL AND PROFESSOR GILLIAN ROSE

Key Thinkers on Space and Place, 3rd edition (Sage Publications, 2024)

‘To our delight, we find ourselves included in the third edition of *Key Thinkers on Space and Place*, edited by Mary Gilmartin, Phil Hubbard, Rob Kitchin and Susan M. Roberts and published by Sage in 2024. The essays on our work both emphasise our contributions to feminist geography, though in different fields. Linda’s contributions are mostly in the field of the contemporary social and economic geographies of the UK, focusing on labour market change, while Gillian works with urban and visual materials to elaborate feminist geographical theory and methodologies.

Our careers have followed remarkably similar paths, although a decade or so apart – Cambridge University as undergraduate geographers (Newnham for Linda, Sidney Sussex for Gillian), doctorates at the University of London, and some years on the faculty of The Open University.

Both of us moved to the University of Oxford for our final post, elected one after the other as the Statutory Professor of Human Geography in the School of Geography and to a Professorial Fellowship at St John’s. Linda held the post first – as the first woman Professorial Fellow – and Gillian succeeded her in 2017.’

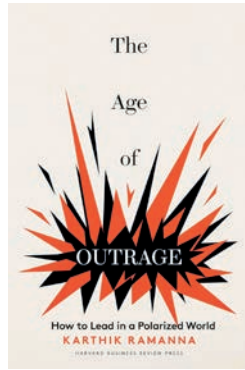


new way of being church. Timothy Radcliffe, the official retreat master and spiritual advisor for this assembly, was appointed by Pope Francis to deliver a series of retreat talks and meditations to the delegates during the assembly of the Synod on Synodality. The book contains further reflections on the church's current challenges and direction.

PROFESSOR KARTHIK RAMANNA

The Age of Outrage: How to Lead in a Polarized World,
Karthik Ramanna (Harvard Business Review Press, 2024)

This book is based on Professor Ramanna's leadership programme at the Blavatnik School of Government and case studies on organizations such as IKEA, Nestle, the Vatican and others. Professor Ramanna describes how outrage is everywhere – on the left and the right – with many companies finding themselves in the crosshairs: Go Fund Me was pressured to cut off funding to protesting truckers in Ottawa; Disney's CEO was dragged down for mishandling both sides of Florida's 'Don't Say Gay' law; Facebook and other tech companies have been accused of manipulating elections. The book discusses how people are angry with the world and now view companies as they do governments, as targets of their ire and potential forces for social change. Managing outrage has moved from being an occasional leadership challenge, like handling a PR crisis, to a necessary and critical leadership capability, like strategic thinking or financial acumen. Professor Ramanna offers practical steps to make sense of the outrage, work with relevant stakeholders to progress through it, and emerge stronger for it using a pragmatic framework, to help leaders 'turn down the temperature', analyse root causes, develop and implement responses that are mission-consistent, and build resilience.



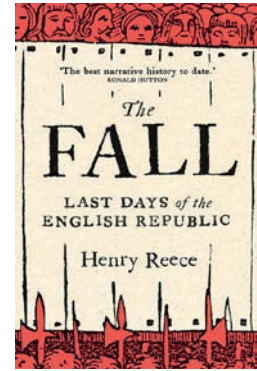
DR HENRY REECE

The Fall: Last Days of the English Republic, Henry Reece
(Yale University Press, 2024)

Oliver Cromwell's death in 1658 sparked a period of unrivalled turmoil and confusion in English history. In less than two years, there were close to ten changes of government; rival armies of Englishmen faced each other across the Scottish border; and the Long

Parliament was finally dissolved after two decades. Why was this period so turbulent, and why did the republic, backed by a formidable standing army, come crashing down in such spectacular fashion?

The book explores the full story of the English republic's downfall. Questioning the accepted version of events, Henry Reece argues that the restoration of the monarchy was far from inevitable – and that the republican regime could have survived long term. Richard Cromwell's Protectorate had deep roots in the political nation, the Rump Parliament mobilised its supporters impressively, and the country showed little interest in returning to the old order until the republic had collapsed. This compelling account transforms our understanding of England's short-lived period of republican rule.

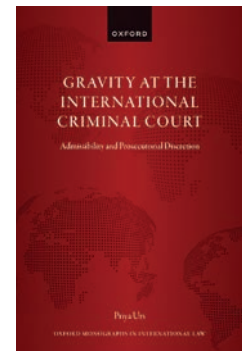


DR PRIYA URS

Gravity at the International Criminal Court: Admissibility and Prosecutorial Discretion, Priya Urs, (Oxford Monographs in International Law, Oxford University Press 2024)

The gravity of a crime or case features in various international and national legal frameworks for the investigation and prosecution of international crimes. At the International Criminal Court (ICC), 'sufficient gravity' is a requirement for the admissibility of a case specified in Article 17(1)(d) of the Rome Statute. The open-textured nature of the provision leaves the manner of its application and, ultimately, its purpose in the context of the Prosecutor's decisions whether to investigate and prosecute, open to discussion.

Set against the backdrop of ongoing debates on how to justify selective investigations and prosecutions at the Court, Priya Urs addresses the question of how the gravity criterion is to be applied in the context of the Prosecutor's respective decisions whether to investigate and prosecute. It argues that the purpose of the gravity criterion in this context is the allocation of investigative and prosecutorial resources.



Senior Members’ News

Professor Daron Acemoğlu was the Sanjaya Lal Visiting Professor of Business and Development during Trinity Term. He was awarded the Nobel Memorial Prize in Economic Sciences for research on global inequality in October 2024.

Professor Lady Sue Black (President) was appointed by His Majesty The King to the Most Ancient and Most Noble Order of the Thistle. This represents the highest honour in Scotland and appointments to the Order are entirely in the personal gift of the monarch as Sovereign of the Order. The President was also awarded Honorary Doctorates by both the University of the Highlands and Islands and Anglia Ruskin University in recognition of her contribution to science. She was also elected to an Honorary Fellowship at Homerton College, Cambridge.

Professor Sarah-Jayne Blakemore, Honorary Fellow, was elected as a Fellow of the Royal Society.

Professor Elleke Boehmer, Honorary Fellow, has been appointed to an Extraordinary Professorship, University of Pretoria, South Africa, 2023–25. She also received an International Fellows Award from the University of Adelaide.

Professor Peter Burke, Honorary Fellow, gave two lectures at the Universidad de la República, Montevideo, and was given the freedom of the city (more exactly, declared to be an ‘illustrious visitor’ at a formal ceremony in the town hall). He also delivered the second series of Gombrich Memorial Lectures at the Academy of Art, Hangzhou, in November 2023.

Sir Richard Catlow, Honorary Fellow, was awarded an Honorary Doctorate of Science by the University of Keele and elected as an Honorary Fellow of the Royal Society of Chemistry.

Professor Richard Compton, Emeritus Research Fellow, is Visiting Professor of Electrochemistry at the Hong Kong Polytechnic University.



Dr Jane Coons, Supernumerary Teaching Fellow in Mathematics, organised a Workshop for Women in Algebraic Statistics for twenty-nine female mathematicians in July 2024. The participants were at various stages in their academic careers, from Masters students to professors and worked in groups on novel research projects related to applications of algebra, geometry and combinatorics in statistics. The workshop was supported by a L’Oreal-UNESCO For Women in Science UK and Ireland Rising Talent Award, the Heilbronn Institute for Mathematical Research (HIMR) Small Grant Scheme and UKRI/EPSC Additional Funding Programme for Mathematical Sciences, and a St John’s College Research Committee Small Grant.

Professor David Edgerton FBA, Honorary Fellow, is a Fellow at the Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin for the 2024/25 academic year.

Professor Heather Harrington, Supernumerary Fellow, has joined the team of directors at the Max Planck Institute (MPI-CBG) in Dresden. She leads the interinstitutional Center for Systems Biology Dresden (CSBD) together with partners from the Technical University Dresden and the Max Planck Institute for the Physics of Complex Systems. She has also been appointed as Honorary Professor at the Faculty of Mathematics at the TU Dresden.



Dr Chao He, Junior Research Fellow, organised the first Oxford International Conference on Advanced Optics and Photonics. The conference was hosted by Dr He's Vectorial Optics and Photonics group and was organised in collaboration with St John's and the journal *Light: Science & Applications* (Springer Nature).



Professor Robert Hoye, Tutorial Fellow in Chemistry, was awarded a Senior Research Fellowship by the Royal Academy of Engineering. This award enables Professor Hoye to work in collaboration with the Rutherford Appleton Laboratory for five years to develop a new X-ray detector from his laboratory towards commercialisation. Professor Hoye was also awarded the Beilby Medal and Prize from the Royal Society of Chemistry, recognising work of exceptional practical significance in chemical engineering, applied materials science, energy efficiency or a related field.

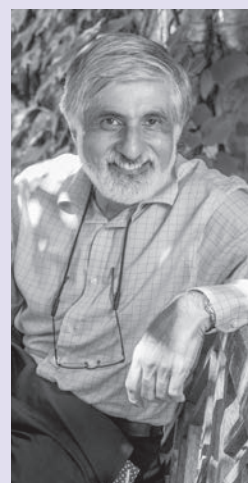
Professor Laurence Hunt, Tutorial Fellow in Psychology, co-chaired the 7th International Conference on Cognitive Computational Neuroscience, held at the Examination Schools in Oxford in August 2023. This was the first time the conference had been held in the UK, and was a great success with 600 attendees and 360 poster presentations (further details at <https://2023.ccneuro.org>).

Professor Carolyne Larrington, Emeritus Research Fellow, was awarded a prize from the Dag Strömbäck Fund by the Royal Gustavus Adolfus Academy in Sweden for her significant work in Old Norse literary studies and in particular for her translation of the *Poetic Edda*.

Professor Nikolaj Lübecker, Tutorial Fellow in French, won the R. Gapper Book Prize 2023, awarded by the Society for French Studies, for the best monograph, for *Twenty-First-Century Symbolism: Verlaine, Baudelaire, Mallarmé* (Liverpool University Press, 2022). He also held the O'Brien Lectureship at Scripps College, Los Angeles from September–October 2024.



Philip Maini, Professor of Mathematical Biology, was awarded the Sylvester Medal by the Royal Society for his contributions to mathematical biology, especially the interdisciplinary modelling of biomedical phenomena and systems. Philip was co-organiser of a six-month research programme, 'The Mathematics of



Movement', at the Isaac Newton Institute for Mathematical Sciences, University of Cambridge (July–December 2023). He was also awarded a Royal Society Yusuf Hamied Visiting Fellowship to start a collaboration with researchers at the Indian Institute of Science (IISc) in Bangalore.

Professor Zoltán Molnár, Tutorial Fellow in Human Anatomy, was elected to membership of the European Molecular Biology Organisation (EMBO) in recognition of his research on the mammalian cerebral cortex and his outstanding achievements in the life sciences. Professor Molnár's Einstein Visiting Fellowship at the Charité–Universitätsmedizin Berlin was also renewed.

Professor Barry Murnane, Tutorial Fellow in German, together with Professors Carolin Duttlinger and Katrin Kohl, has been awarded over £1m to support the project 'Kafka's Transformative Communities' by the Arts and Humanities Research Council.

Dr Matthew Nicholls, Senior Tutor, was renewed as a Visiting Professor at the University of Reading. Matthew also contributed to three episodes of Professor Mary Beard's BBC Radio 4 series, 'Being Roman'.



Professor Mohamed-Salah Omri, Tutorial Fellow in Modern Arabic, led a collaborative workshop in spring 2024 bringing together British and Tunisian Early Career Researchers. As part of a growing collaboration between the University of Oxford and Tunisia the event was organised by St John's College, the Tunisian Academy of Letters, Sciences and Arts, Beit El Hikma and the Tunisian Ministry for Higher Education. The multidisciplinary workshop in the Humanities and Social Sciences brought together sixteen British and Tunisian Early Career Researchers on the theme of 'Crises and Changes' at the Tunisian Academy in Carthage. Three St John's Fellows and graduates took part in the workshop. Plans are underway to publish the revised papers as a collection of essays by Beit El-Hikma.

Professor Joël Ouaknine, Emeritus Fellow and Scientific Director of the Max Planck Institute for Software Systems, was awarded a €7.5m Synergy Grant by the European Research Council for a project titled 'Dynamical and Arithmetical Model Checking'.

Professor Andrew Parker, Emeritus Research Fellow, has been appointed Senior Professor at the Otto-von-Guericke University in Magdeburg, Germany.

Peter Phillips, Honorary Fellow, celebrated the 50th anniversary of the Tallis Scholars in November 2023 with a gathering in Middle Temple Hall. He also gave a lecture at the Arvo Pärt Centre near Tallinn, on the subject of how Pärt's music was indebted to the techniques of renaissance polyphony.

Tahera Qutbuddin, Abdulaziz Saud AlBabtain Laudian Professor in Arabic, gave the opening keynote lecture on the book at the British Association for Islamic Studies (BRAIS) conference at Leeds University in May 2024, a book launch talk at Leiden University in April, and a podcast interview on the New Books in Islamic Studies Network with Prof SherAli Tareen in June.



Cardinal Timothy Radcliffe, Honorary Fellow, was created a cardinal by His Holiness Pope Francis at St Peter's Basilica in Rome in December 2024. He acted as 'Spiritual Father' to the Catholic Church's 'Synod on Synodality' in 2023 and 2024.



Cardinal Radcliffe also received an Honorary Doctorate in Divinity from Liverpool Hope University.



Professor Angela Russell, Bernard Taylor Fellow in Chemistry and Professor of Medicinal, was awarded the Chemistry Biology Interface mid-career prize: Jeremy Knowles Award, by The Royal Society of Chemistry. This recognises outstanding contributions made by a mid-career scientist working at the interface of chemistry and life science.

Professor Maggie Snowling, Emeritus Research Fellow,

spent 2024 adjusting to her new-found freedom by walking and doing yoga whilst also working on data analysis and continuing with



Professor Charles Hulme as a Director of the spin-out company OxED & Assessment. She was awarded an Honorary Fellowship by the British Psychological Society and also received, with Professor Hulme, the Leverhulme Prize and Medal in recognition of an outstanding contribution to the social sciences. The joint nomination was to reflect their complementary contributions to the understanding of children's learning difficulties, particularly dyslexia and developmental language disorder. Maggie won the Khalifa Award for Education for the NELI Preschool Intervention with Dr Gillian West. OxEd & Assessment Ltd received the EdTechX award for Diversity and Inclusion, and was funded for a fourth year by the Department of Education/ Nuffield Foundation to support language intervention in primary schools in disadvantaged areas. Maggie was a keynote speaker at the TDF Extraordinary Brain Symposium, Malta and the Big Sky Literacy Summit, Montana. She gave a public lecture on 'Dyslexia and Language' in the Gresham College series on Neurodiversity.

Professor Katherine Southwood, Tutorial Fellow in Theology, was awarded the 'Outstanding Service in Mentorship Award' by the Society of Biblical Literature's Committee on the Status of Women in the profession. This prestigious international award recognises women who have provided invaluable guidance, advice, and encouragement in the field of biblical studies. Professor Southwood was one of only two recipients in 2024. Professor Southwood was also awarded the title of Professor of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament by the University.



Professor Lionel Tarassenko, Honorary Fellow and President of Reuben College, was appointed as a crossbench life peer in the House of Lords in May 2024.



Bernard Taylor CVO, CBE, DL, Honorary Fellow, was appointed Chair of the UK Atomic Energy Authority in April. The UKAEA is the national organisation responsible for the research and delivery of sustainable fusion energy. UKAEA also undertakes cutting-edge work with academia, other research organisations and the industrial supply chain in many areas, including robotics and materials.

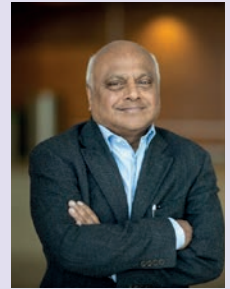
Professor William Whyte was appointed an Honorary Canon of Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford. He was elected Honorary Vice President, Friends of the Radcliffe Infirmary Quarter, and became a member of the Advisory Board, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.

Professor Elizabeth Wonnacott, Supernumerary Fellow, was awarded the title of Professor of Language Science by the University. Professor Wonnacott (together with Dr Sara Ratner, Department of Education, and Professor Rebecca Williams, Faculty of Law) was awarded funding by the Social Science Division to establish the AI in Education at Oxford University Hub.



John Cairns

Professor Salim Yusuf OC FRSC FRCPC, Honorary Fellow, became an Honorary Doctor of Science at Encaenia, the ceremony at which honorary degrees are conferred by the University. The award was all the more special as the Encaenia garden party was held at St John's.



John Cairns

Baylie, one of our three College cats, relaxing in the gardens

From the JCR

ELIZABETH HEYWOOD (2022, PHILOSOPHY AND THEOLOGY), JCR PRESIDENT

Having already spent a full year as Entz Officer, I was determined to make 2024 a year of fun for the JCR. St John's has always had a strong sense of community, and I wanted our events to reflect that spirit, making full use of our facilities, gardens, incredible bar and catering staff, and the creative talents of our students. With so many exciting traditions established by my predecessors, this was easy to achieve. The second annual Arts Week, run by Freya Thomas, culminated in a gripping performance of 'Frost/Nixon', attended by over 200 people, alongside a student exhibition in Kendrew Barn. The week ended with a much-anticipated 'Gothic'-themed bop, chosen by the student body.

Amongst these traditions, I was proud to create a new one. In Trinity Term, we hosted the first St John's College Garden Party, bringing together live music from two external bands, great food by the College catering staff, and an open bar in our beautiful gardens. It was incredible to come together as a community and appreciate the beautiful space we live in. The weather was perfect, and I can only thank Oliver Eastham, Ruby Breakwell, Alice Simmerson, and Lara Young for making this dream a reality. Seeing students enjoy the event reinforced my belief in the value of creating new traditions that enhance College life. Summer fun continued with our annual trip to Isis Farmhouse in Week 8, and college life was equally busy in the jam-packed Michaelmas Term, with another successful Fresher's Week (run by Bradley Croucher), as well as numerous guest dinners, bops, and Christmas dinners.

Beyond these flagship events, the JCR has worked hard to make tangible improvements for students. We have doubled guest dinner attendance, reinvigorated JCR elections, assisted with an expanding wellbeing team, and used our funds to support Oxford-based charities and subsidise student events. Of course, the year has not been without challenges. The College Disparities Report and changes in Oxford SU leadership created a turbulent year for Oxford politics. The report highlighted inequalities within Oxford, sparking difficult but necessary conversations about rent and student costs. While these discussions were not always easy, they were essential in ensuring that St John's remains an accessible and supportive environment for all students.

There are many exciting developments on the horizon. Much anticipation is building around the 'masterplan'



Elizabeth Heywood



Left to right: Elizabeth Heywood (President), Alice Simmerson (Domestic Officer), Freya Thomas (Arts Officer and Arts Week Lead), Lara Young (Domestic Officer)



JCR Garden Party 2024



renovation and, though plans are still in development, it will be exciting to see them take shape and I look forward to returning post-graduation to see the new bar, JCR spaces and wellbeing areas. We are grateful to continue to work with an equally dedicated College to ensure that St John's students are as well-supported as possible in every way they can be. I have no doubt that my successor, Laurence Cooke, will take these initiatives forward and build more with the same dedication and commitment.

Serving as JCR President has been an honour, and I am incredibly proud of what I have achieved with my team. This year has been a testament to what makes St John's special: its people, its traditions, and its unwavering community spirit. It has been a privilege to serve as JCR President, to work alongside such talented students, and to contribute to the life of this exceptional college.



The cast of Frost/Nixon

From the MCR

STANISLAS LALANNE (2020, DPHIL ECONOMICS), MCR PRESIDENT

As one of the last remaining MCR members who matriculated in October 2020, I have seen our social events evolve from online, to household based, to fully in person; a bizarre highlight was a late 2021 wine and cheese event where attendees were given a different coloured sticker depending on which household/staircase they lived in, and were only allowed to talk to those with the same coloured sticker.

Throughout the past four years the one constant I have seen has been a group of highly dedicated MCR committee volunteers, relentless in their efforts to preserve the sense of community in spite of difficult and changing circumstances, alongside strong support from the College's professional staff.

Recovering the sense of community took a while – one issue was that much handover was done orally, so, when it came to organising Freshers' Week in person again, there was limited information on how to do it. Looking back at 2024 and forwards to 2025, I am happy to say that we have reached the point where the community has recovered, and I am (I hope) the last MCR President to mention COVID in their report.

In 2024 the MCR had approximately 120 events. These included traditional events such as spectacular Guest Nights, SCR–MCR wine and cheese evenings, book clubs, and exchange dinners, but also a number of new events, including a *Hamilton* theatre trip, bachata dancing, brandy tasting, and Lunar New Year calligraphy. We introduced two new semi-regular events – second desserts and board games – which are continuing in 2025.

We often seek to do events with other MCRs. Apart from the usual exchanges, we did a joint bop with Keble College (*Night Under the Stars*), a campfire party on Hogacre Common with St Anne's, and Liquid Lounge at Magdalen.

Organised events are not the only way to bring the community together. In 2024 the MCR building gained an operational coffee machine, the first since 2020, and a new speaker system for parties. A successful Freshers' Week helped introduce the new cohort to each other. A now annual 'Palentine' event sees MCR members write friendship messages to each other.

A strong focus of my time as MCR President has been on improving wellbeing and welfare support. College President Sue Black joined St John's intent on making us known for our welfare provision. Traditionally there



Stanislas Lalanne

has been no resource available during vacations, yet graduates live here full time. Together with the first Head of Student Wellbeing, Hanne Clarke, the MCR successfully lobbied for provision to continue out of term time and we now have the College Psychologist, wellbeing events, and Student Welfare Advisors all available during vacations.

At Rents and Charges discussions with the Bursary we raised the challenging situation of Oxford DPhil students. Graduate stipends have not kept up with Oxford-based inflation over the past decade, there are forthcoming significant cutbacks in Arts and Humanities scholarships, and provision of graduate accommodation across Oxford is poor. St John's has provided extensive support, keeping us very near the bottom of the graduate rent table, committing to a long-term plan of housing 80% of graduate students, and providing generous funding of academic commitments.

Having served as MCR Social Secretary, Vice-President, President, and at times looked at a DPhil, I am now on my way out. I will always remember my time at John's with great fondness, especially for all the people I have met here. We have been lucky to do our degrees at such an amazing college.



Ben McFarlane, Professor of English Law and Fellow for Sports

This is my first year as Fellow for Sport and I am grateful to my predecessor, Professor Stuart White, for his work in many areas, including establishing clear processes for the setting of the annual Sports Budget and for the awarding of Blues Grants.

The role of sport in student well-being was emphasised by the past JCR President, Paddy Breeze, and, as well as celebrating some outstanding individual and team achievements, the focus at this year's Sports Dinner was on the breadth of participation in College sport. A number of the student teams recruited very well this year, in particular through a day at the sportsground near the start of Michaelmas Term which allowed clubs to showcase their activities. While rowing and men's rugby remain prominent, the football (both men's and

women's), cricket, squash, badminton, and netball clubs have been revitalised by increasing their membership, and the women's rugby team is very well-placed to expand similarly in 2024-25. A newly-established running club is a fine example of broadening participation and helping College members to access the benefits of exercise, with recruits who could not complete 1k at the start of Michaelmas able to complete 5k by the end of the academic year, and a healthy representation of over twenty members of College in the Oxford Town and Gown 10k.

Activities such as the Fellows/Staff vs. Student cricket match and the College five-a-side football tournament have also seen academics, professional staff, and students competing alongside, and against, each other, showcasing the diversity of the St John's community.



Saxon Stacey (2022, English Language and Literature) was selected to row in the University of Oxford Men's Crew for the 169th Men's Boat Race in 2024. Sadly the light blues won again...



Ultimate Frisbee team, Sports Team of the Year 2024



Above right: Musa Okwonga presents Sophia Lubecki (2021, Jurisprudence) with the Sportswoman of the Year award at Sports Dinner 2024.

Above: Ian Wright and Musa Okwonga present Max Barnes (2022, History) with the Men's Team of the Year award at Sports Dinner 2024.

Left: Women's Netball celebrate winning Women's Team of the Year at Sports Dinner 2024.



SCR/Staff vs. Students cricket match

The traditional SCR/Staff vs. Students cricket match was revived in June at the College's expertly maintained Woodstock Road sports ground. Both teams had a mix of experienced and novice players, with some taking the chance to play the game for the first time, and others merely looking like they had never played before. After a somewhat rocky start, with some excellent bowling in the powerplay from Jacob Hill and Tom West, the SCR/Staff powered to 114 off their allotted 20 overs, with scoring contributions from Justine Potts, Paul Ashman, Teresa Witcombe, Stuart Morbey, Liz Carmichael, Ade Hunter, Zakeria Shnizai, Carlos Mendez Olaya, Sam Payne, and skipper Ben McFarlane. Tim Webber provided some excellent wicket keeping and Stuart Morbey, Sam Payne, and Ben McFarlane also claimed some student scalps. Some forceful hitting from captain Yusuf Furniss and Patrick Breeze, as well as runs from Katinka Mitchell-



Thomson, the students, with Owen Casstles and Flora Timney at the crease, edged to a narrow but well-deserved victory in the penultimate over.

It is not possible to record here all the varied individual and team sporting successes over this academic year. Special mention should go to the rowing club, and Zoe Reed, their incredibly committed captain who organised a change of training location, the purchase of a new boat, and a training camp in Chester, with the latter contributing to some excellent performances in Summer Eights. Highlights included the re-entry of the Women's 1st VIII into Division 1, bumping four times, promotion of the Men's 1st VIII to Division 2, with three bumps, and the Men's 2nd VIII nearly making up a twelve boat lengths' gap on the first day of racing, and bumping on all other days. Other notable efforts, showing the wide range of College sports, include the victory of the rounders team in the nine-team Cuppers tournament, five wins from six league games in hockey, and Cuppers victories in both clay pigeon shooting and canoe polo. The student Sports Officer and Sports Treasurer have had significant input into the preparations for the Sports Budget and Sports Dinner this year: my thanks go to Ian Pebody (2021, Engineering) and Guy Griffiths (2021, Modern Languages), who discharged those roles very effectively this year.

It is very heartening to note the role of sport in maintaining relations with St John's alumni. The rugby team held its long-established old boys' game, the rowing club held a very successful inaugural alumni dinner, the St John's alumni cricket team has held regular matches in Oxford, the women's football team held a successful alumni day, and a men's alumni team, featuring the Warden of Keble, Professor Sir Mike Jacobs, more than held its own in the five-a-side football tournament. The bonds formed through shared sporting activities are long-lasting. Indeed, the importance of College sport in fostering such relationships was a central theme of the uplifting and moving speech given by our Honorary Fellow Musa Okwonga (1998, Jurisprudence) at the 2024 Sports Dinner. Many of those attending were also very pleased to meet (and have a photo with) Musa's podcast collaborator Ian Wright, who was the ideal person to present the Men's Team of the Year award to Max Barnes (2022, History), the men's football captain, following their promotion-winning season.



Oxford Town and Gown 2024

Over twenty members of St John's took to the streets for the Town and Gown 10km. The team included people from all around the College, JCR and SCR and, despite the sweltering heat claiming some casualties, the runners put on some fantastic performances, some battling through injury and all braving the lack of hydration. Some members of the College ran their first-ever 10km while others managed to run sub-40 minutes.

In addition, there has been work on our sports facilities this year. The old gym was converted into a new strength room to help meet student training needs and a fob access system to the sportsground has meant that it is now much more accessible for staff as well as students. We owe thanks to Ian Madden, the College Groundsman, and Jim Ronaldson, the Boatman, for ensuring that our students have opportunities to engage safely in a wide range of sports.

Below left: Canoe Polo Cuppers winning team

Below middle: Rounders Cuppers team

Below right: In April Maureen Baker (Events Team) completed the London Marathon in an impressive 04:20:49.





In Memoriam

Remembering members of the St John's College community

1941**Sir Mervyn Brown**

24/09/1923 – 28/09/2023

1943**Gilbert McMillan**

18/11/1924 – 13/12/2023

1944**Dr John Jones**

05/03/1926 – 2024

1947**Professor Andrew Cole**

21/04/1924 – 05/02/2024

1949**Allan Benn**

02/06/1929 – 03/05/2024

Norman Lake

12/08/1928 – 11/01/2024

1950**Dr George Mackie**

20/10/1929 – 23/08/2023

Peter Mayne

11/01/1931 – 15/02/2024

Michael Moriarty

03/07/1930 – 28/08/2024

1952**The Revd Canon Michael McAdam**

26/01/1930 – 21/10/2023

Bob Needham

06/01/1932 – 01/02/2024

1953**Dr Kenneth Lea**

21/07/1935 – 30/07/2024

1954**Jake Allsop**

05/06/1936 – 2024

David Cullingham

11/07/1933 – 26/01/2024

Ronald Lowry

03/04/1933 – 11/06/2024

1955**Terence Keane**

18/04/1933 – 14/03/2024

Professor Christopher Powell

26/01/1936 – 04/01/2024

1956**Alan Bushnell**

24/12/1936 – 29/09/2023

Barrie Stead

23/12/1935 – 18/03/2024

Rod Williams

22/11/1935 – 2024

1957**Tim Ambler**

30/05/1937 – 03/08/2024

George Facer

02/02/1937 – 21/11/2023

Brian Simmonds

11/11/1936 – 07/02/2024

1958**Harold Lind**

15/03/1938 – 19/09/2023

Julian Otto

08/03/1937 – 11/05/2024

Roger Short

17/09/1939 – 26/04/2024

1959**Peter McManus**

04/09/1941 – 18/04/2024

Simon Nuttall

06/10/1940 – 16/10/2023

George Saunders

01/01/1940 – 02/06/2024

Professor John White

25/04/1937 – 16/08/2023

1960**Dr Michael Fogden**

04/08/1941 – 05/06/2024

1961**John Griffiths-Jones**

30/08/1942 – 23/04/2024

1962**Ken Merron**

25/05/1944 – 04/02/2024

1963**Jerry Dicker**

05/03/1944 – 05/12/2023

1965**Christopher Woods**

27/02/1947 – 29/03/2024

1966**Rear Admiral Peter Barnard**

22/02/1927 – 01/12/2023

Professor Stephen Mitchell

26/05/1948 – 31/01/2024

Sir Geoffrey Tantum

12/11/1940 – 22/02/2024

1967**Dr John St Clair**

15/08/1948 – 02/01/2024

Michael Vincent

03/07/1948 – 06/08/2024

1968**Professor Stuart Ferguson**

20/09/1949 – 25/04/2024

1970**Katy Barratt**

19/09/1952 – 20/08/2023

1971**Howard Cockcroft**

23/11/1951 – 10/08/2023

Dominic Gwynn

18/08/1953 – 24/05/2024

1972**Professor Trevor Bench-Capon**

25/11/1953 – 20/05/2024



1974
Nicholas Hodges

28/12/1955 – 07/09/2023

Dr Michael Prior

08/06/1956 – 17/06/2024

1975
Julian Spilsbury

25/12/1955 – 29/10/2023

1994
Matthew Davison

10/12/1975 – 04/12/2023

1998
Dr Mary Silles

10/09/1975 – 07/05/2024

2013
Jack Lovell

11/12/1994 – 18/01/2024

This is a record of those whose deaths we have been informed of in the last year, up to 31 August 2024. We regret any omission and please do write to us if this has happened. We rely on information given to us by alumni, family and friends. Our publication schedule means we are not always able to include appreciations for all of those listed. If you would like to write an appreciation to appear in a subsequent issue, please do contact us.

Fellows

SIR ALAN BAILEY KCB

Sir Michael Scholar, former President and Honorary Fellow, writes:

Sir Alan Bailey (1951, PPE; Honorary Fellow; died 22 April 2023) was born in 1931 in Rushden, Northamptonshire. He came up to St. John's in 1951, from Bedford School, having in 1949 won a College Open Exhibition, and after spending two years' National Service in the Royal Artillery, an experience he later described as disagreeable, but a 'crash course in social realism'. He was elected to a College Honorary Scholarship in 1953 and, after a First Class degree in PPE in 1954, took a Harmsworth Senior Scholarship at Merton College, and began graduate work in Philosophy.

His enthusiasm, however, for what he called 'the approved Oxford linguistic style' and the 'subtle destruction of arguments' was short-lived, and in 1956 he turned to a more practical career as a Treasury official. I remember him first as – to me, then a junior Treasury official – a rather frightening Principal Private Secretary to Chancellor Anthony Barber, in the early 1970s. He went on to head the Treasury's European policy division, under Denis Healey, then played a valued part in the fraught negotiations for a loan from the IMF in 1976.

I next encountered Alan when, as a No. 10 Private Secretary, I was asked by Margaret Thatcher to rewrite, with 'the strong, silent Mr. Bailey', as she described him, a Cabinet paper by the Cabinet Office's Central Policy Review Staff, of which Alan was deputy head, which proposed some radical, and highly contentious, ways of reducing public expenditure. Alan and I did our best, but not well enough to avert a major explosion of anger when the paper was discussed in Cabinet. Uncharacteristically, Margaret Thatcher diverted some of that anger towards Alan and me.

This misfortune did nothing to impede Alan's progress. In 1983 he became the Treasury Permanent Secretary in charge of public expenditure, with the task of somehow reconciling the spending ambitions of all government departments – for example on social security, health, education, defence, and the rest – with the government's desire to contain overall expenditure within a total that could be afforded. In this task I was, for two years, his principal deputy, and found him a supportive and friendly boss. We used sometimes, after the heat of the day, to reflect together on the impossibility of our enterprise – identifying for Treasury Ministers the political levers by which they could persuade their colleagues to adjust their Departmental programmes,

so that voters could at the same time satisfy their strong wish for better public services, without sacrificing their equally strong disinclination to pay more tax.

In 1986 Alan was knighted, and left the Treasury to become Permanent Secretary of the Department of Transport under the maverick Nicholas Ridley as Secretary of State. The Department had recently seen its responsibilities enlarged to cover air and sea transport, and other areas like HM Coastguard, marine pollution, London Transport, and the regulation of taxis. During Alan's time in the Department these new duties were assimilated, and at the same time many of the Department's functions were delegated to the newly-created Agencies: a formidable administrative task, accomplished with characteristic efficiency.

After retirement from the civil service in 1991, Alan took on several non-executive roles, in London Transport and London Buses, and pursued his interest in walking, poetry, and music; he also revived his philosophical interests.

Some found Alan's quick, penetrating, and candid mind, together with his disinclination to engage in small talk, formidable. Many found it difficult to break through his innate reserve and air of detachment, and to get to know him. But he had a flashing smile, and he showed warmth and a caring personality to colleagues, like me, who benefited from his friendship and encouragement.

He was married, first, to Stella Scott, with whom there were three sons, Simon, Justin and Quentin; then, after this marriage ended, to Shirley Barrett.

STEPHEN MITCHELL FBA

Dr Georgy Kantor, Tutor in Ancient History, writes:

Professor Stephen Mitchell (1948–2024), Honorary Fellow, died in Berlin on 30 January 2024. With his tragically sudden death, the world of scholarship has lost one of the greatest experts on the history, archaeology and epigraphy of Hellenistic and Roman Asia Minor, history of early Christianity and 'pagan monotheism', and history of the Later Roman Empire. His published works will remain essential to anyone



working in these fields for many years to come; but for those of us who knew him he was also a shining example of qualities uncommon in any walk of life: he was entirely fair-minded, immensely modest about his own enormous achievement, deeply committed to the causes he worked on, unfailingly kind and attentive to younger colleagues, and indeed to everyone he encountered. I first met Stephen myself in the first year of my doctorate when he introduced me to a major inscription with the text of a treaty between Julius Caesar and the cities of Lycia in Asia Minor which he was about to publish, and it would not be an exaggeration to say that in a single hour he changed the whole course of my research, and he has remained a profound influence since. It came as no surprise when reading the fine collection of tributes produced for his memorial at St John's on 25 April 2024 how many colleagues, both of older and younger generations than myself, could tell similar stories.

Stephen's connection to College was deep and long-standing. When he came to St John's to read for *Literae Humaniores* in 1966, he was preceded by his father, Oxford philosopher David Mitchell (John Locke Scholar in Mental Philosophy, 1937, and later Fellow in Philosophy at Worcester College, after whom the philosophy post at Worcester is now named), and his uncle, the distinguished art historian Charles Mitchell (History, 1931); later, he was followed to St John's by his younger brother Charles (1969), who remembers Stephen in his final year as a fixture next to Ancient History books in the Laudian Library. Stephen was taught by Donald Russell and A. N. Sherwin-White, and shared tutorials with Nicholas King, who was to become a distinguished translator of the Greek Bible. He stayed for his ground-breaking DPhil thesis on 'The History and Archaeology of Galatia (1974)', supervised by Ewen Bowie (earlier a Woodhouse Junior Research Fellow at St John's) and E. W. Gray. As he himself later claimed, he picked the topic because 'the region had been neglected by historians and archaeologists for nearly half a century'. Stephen now put the barren Anatolian uplands at the centre of our understanding of Roman Asia Minor.

Perhaps precisely because he was so deeply rooted at Oxford, he took his academic career elsewhere, first to Swansea, and then to Exeter, where he was Professor of Ancient History in 2002–12, for a large part of that time the head of the Classics department and also the founding director of the Exeter Centre for Turkish Studies. The great commitment of Stephen's life was to the British Institute at Ankara, of which he was a member from 1970, Hon. Secretary (1996–9, 2009–14) and later Chair (2016–21) and Vice-President (2023). The obituary by Lutgarde Vandepuut, the current director of the British Institute, and colleagues in Anatolian Studies for 2024 makes clear how essential he was for British academic work in Asia Minor for the last half-

century and for international collaboration in this field, not least in his mentoring of the younger generation of Turkish scholars. After his formal retirement he taught at the Humboldt University in Berlin, from which he held an honorary doctorate in theology (2006), a remarkable honour for a resolutely atheist historian whose work has become indispensable to the understanding of the first three centuries of Christianity. Other honours included Fellowship of the British Academy in 2002, corresponding membership of the German Archaeological Institute in 1996, presidency of the British Epigraphy Society (1999–2001) and of the Association Internationale d'Épigraphie Grecque et Latine (2008–13), and the Gustave Schlumberger Prize by the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres in Paris in 2020 for the second volume of his majestic edition (with David French) of *The Greek and Latin Inscriptions of Ankara (Ancyra)*. St John's played its part in electing him to an Honorary Fellowship in 2018, and he delighted in returning to his old college in October to attend the Oxford Lieder festival, his abiding musical love.

Stephen as a historian was one of the leading exponents of the Braudelian ideal of 'histoire totalisante' in the field of ancient history, above all in his epoch-making *Anatolia: Land, Men and Gods in Asia Minor* (Oxford 1993), combining the breadth of historical vision with a most remarkable range of primary research, above all in epigraphy and in survey archaeology, of which he was an early proponent, particularly with the Pisidia Survey Project. The same qualities are to the fore in his last published monograph, *The Christians of Phrygia from Rome to the Turkish Conquest* (Leiden 2023), a monumental *longue durée* study of rural Christianity in central Anatolia, passing under the radar of older literary-oriented studies. At the same time, he produced a more traditional political history of late antiquity in *A History of the Later Roman Empire, AD 284–641* (now in its third edition), an array of epigraphic editions, including first publications of some of the most important inscriptions to be discovered in Roman Asia Minor in the last few decades, several archaeological monographs, as well as over two hundred academic articles on a vast range of subjects in institutional, economic, cultural, and religious history of Asia Minor.

What made Stephen a great historian and an example of how to be an academic was not just meticulous research, exceptionally hard work at his material and wide range of historical interests, but the depth of human understanding, clarity of moral vision and profound commitment to unselfish cooperation. He will be deeply missed by his friends and colleagues in this college and worldwide.

Alumni

ALLAN BENN

Allan Benn was born on 2 June 1929 and came up to St John's in 1949. He died on 3 May 2024. We are grateful to his son, James, for this appreciation.

Allan Cosmo Benn passed away on 3 May 2024, at the age of 94. Born on 2 June 1929, in Ilford, Allan's journey took him from humble beginnings to Oxford, where he came up in 1949 (after his National Service) to read Classics (*Literae Humaniores*). At St John's, he thrived both academically and socially, often taking the lead in organizing events. He played rugby and water polo with enthusiasm and skill and forged lifelong friendships.

Throughout his life, Allan maintained a strong connection to the College. His dedication to his alma mater and his interest in College events remained a constant, even in his final years at Mandeville Grange nursing home. Among the few personal possessions he took with him were the College crest and a small eighteenth-century engraving of St. John's, which adorned his wall – silent testimonies to the profound impact his Oxford years had on his long life.

After graduation, Allan's career in management consultancy led him around the world. It was during his time in Montreal working for PA Consulting that he met his future wife Shirley. They returned to the UK, where they raised their family. Allan's professional journey included a significant period at Trebor Sharps, where he eventually became overseas MD, earning the respect and affection of his colleagues around the world. He maintained those connections with his Trebor friends to the end of his life.

When Shirley fell ill, Allan cared for her with patience and compassion until her passing 25 years ago. In 2008, at the age of 79, he made the bold decision to relocate from the small village of Gretton in Northamptonshire to Berkhamsted (Herts) to be closer to his daughter Caroline. True to his outgoing nature, Allan quickly integrated himself into his new community, becoming an avid early morning swimmer until the age of 92.

Even in his later years at Mandeville Grange, Allan actively participated in social activities, always trying to see the humorous side of things. His life was marked by quiet strength, love for his family, and an enduring capacity for friendship.

Allan is survived by his children James, William, and Caroline, and his nine grandchildren. His legacy of connections, resilience, and quiet impact will live on through them and the many friends and colleagues whose lives he touched over the years.

ROBERT NEEDHAM

Robert Needham was born on 6 January 1932, and came up to St John's in 1952. He died on 1 February 2024. We are grateful to his friend, John Raper, for this appreciation.

Robert William Needham was born in 1932 and was educated at King Edward VII School Sheffield. His fellow school friend Jack Hallows was also at St John's in 1952 and read Greats. Jack, like me, worked at Lucas in later years and died in August 2024. Bob completed his National Service as a Pilot Officer in the RAF flying Meteors with 610 County of Chester Squadron before coming to St John's in Michaelmas Term 1952. He tried to take me for a flight in his Meteor and after a high-speed journey as a pillion rider on his motorbike, I managed to get in the cockpit only to be told by the CO we could not continue because I wasn't insured!

The College and University were very different in those days. St John's was ahead of most other Oxford colleges by taking about half its intake of 60 men from state schools. About ten newcomers in 1952 were from other countries. By 1952 the Second World War, and Korean War were over, and life was beginning to be more normal and optimistic. The Conquest of Everest, the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II, the visit of Khrushchev and Bulganin, Roger Bannister running the mile in under four minutes, *Salad Days* at the theatre, and *Mr Hulot's Holiday* at the cinema were all events to remember. Eights Week was a carnival of colour and fun with college barges displaying shields and flags along the bank, girls in summer frocks and hats and men in smart blazers, flannel trousers and ties. A trace of Brideshead and Zuleika Dobson in the air! The Oxford Union was dominated by Patrick Mayhew, Michael Heseltine, and Nigel Lawson, and the programme included well-known public figures like Michael Foot, Edward Heath, Barbara Castle, and Gerard Hoffnung. Two figures who stood out at St John's were William Costin, then a prominent member of the Senior Common Room and later President of the College, and Dick May, who was the highly respected Head Porter – rather like Sergeant Major Brittain keeping the troops in order.

Academic studies took priority and we all worked hard, often late into the night to finish essays and projects as well as attending tutorials and lectures.

Bob and I became firm friends in our first year. He read Chemistry under Harold Thompson and I read Engineering Science under Brebis Bleaney. Our close circle of friends included Ronald Dean, Geoff Ziman, Ron Middleton, Donald Eaton, Frank Vella, and Alan Mann, but we found the whole 1952 intake interesting and friendly.

I rowed in my first year and played tennis on the superb courts reserved for the top six. Bob was a very good Captain of Football for the College in 1954 and 1955. I played in the team as left back but made an 'own goal' when trying to keep out the opposition which was very unpopular! Bob joined ICI in 1955 and then went to Curacao where he set up a hydroponics factory producing salad vegetables. There was some evidence to suggest it was sabotaged by locals who saw it as a threat to their traditional methods. Later Bob was the Secretary of a men's Business Club in Bury St Edmunds and arranged lectures and programmes to get the members to meet and discuss common problems.

In 1958 Bob was the Best Man at my wedding to Janet Johnson in St Aldates and then St John's. Then in 1959 he married Margaret Schofield, a gifted musician and music teacher, and had three children. They lost their eldest daughter, Kate, from an asthma attack when she was 20 years old. Apart from that devastating event, it was a very happy marriage until Margaret died in 2023. In later years, our St John's circle of friends used to go to the Gaudies and Garden Parties, often meeting up for lunch beforehand at the Lamb Inn at Burford. Bob and I continued our friendship and played golf on various courses around the country.

After reaching the age of 80, the phone calls and correspondence began to fade partly due to distance but also due to Bob's deteriorating health. Bob's strengths were his loyalty to all the people and organisations he supported, his energy and commitment, his sense of humour and his integrity. We both benefited enormously from our time at St John's and marvel at the way its academic status and superb facilities have improved, thanks to the generosity of donors, the leadership of several Presidents, and the support of all the staff.

PETER MCMANUS

Peter McManus was born on 4 September 1941, and came up to St John's in 1959. He died on 19 April 2024. We are grateful to his son, Robert, for this appreciation.

After school at St Mary's College Crosby, Peter came up to St John's in 1959 with a Thomas White scholarship to read Mods & Greats. He had many happy memories of his studies, including evenings reading the *Iliad* for Mods with Donald Russell sustained by a glass or two of Marsala, and for Greats his Philosophy tutorials with Paul Grice. He made life-long friends (including Sir David Dein whose memories have helped with this text). In addition to college life, he was active in the University Catholic Chaplaincy and the Newman Society, where he met and fell in love with Margaret Hill (Modern History, St Anne's). They married in 1966, and their family grew, with three children and ten grandchildren.

Following graduation, Peter moved rapidly from ancient to modern, joining IBM as a graduate systems engineer. After many years working on mainframes and minicomputers at IBM Laboratories in Hursley near Winchester, his career peaked with the launch of the IBM PC in 1981, followed by a dozen years working on other IBM desktop and OEM products. He once gave a lift to two young college dropouts from a small start-up that had just started working with IBM – Bill Gates and Paul Allen of Microsoft.

After early retirement from IBM Peter found a new lease of life free from the corporate world. He founded Venta Technology with three old friends, providing guidance and consultancy to many companies developing emerging technologies. He had a particular connection with ActiveNav, with whom he continued to work until his death.

Retirement also gave him time to dedicate to his love of music. He helped establish LSO St Luke's as a rehearsal space and music venue; and he spent many years supporting the careers of up-and-coming opera singers through his work with Wessex Glyndebourne Association. Other charitable endeavours included acting as a trustee at Wells for India, now Water Harvest, working with villages in Rajasthan to store and use the monsoon rains throughout the year.

Following Margaret's death from Alzheimer's in 2016 he found true love a second time with Brigid, a fellow lover of music. Their move to Itchen Abbas led to many hours creating a beautiful garden, and to the opportunity for long country walks, including a 75 km sponsored ramble to mark his 75th Birthday (on which his children and grandchildren struggled to keep up with him).

Peter was a familiar figure in both the parish of St Peter's Winchester and the wider Christian community. Influenced by Michael Hollings, the Catholic Chaplain at Oxford, he worked for many years for ecumenism through Churches Together; he helped establish the parish Covenant with the Poor; and provided practical support to communities of refugees displaced by conflict, first from Syria and more recently from Ukraine.

At his funeral an old family friend remarked that, despite reaching the age of 82, it felt like he'd been taken from us in his prime. Throughout his life, and still deep into his retirement, he approached everything he did with energy, enthusiasm and commitment.

SIMON NUTTALL

Simon Nuttall was born on 6 October 1940, and came up to St John's in 1959. He died on 16 October 2023. We are grateful to his friends, Richard Lewis and Ed McGovern, for this appreciation.

First impressions of Simon Nuttall were subsequently confirmed by the numerous contacts I had with him both

professionally and as a friend. He was not just studious but learned and wise. He could ‘read’ people and offer good advice in awkward situations. He was modest but, not, I believe, and as some thought, reserved. His opinions were worth the effort of listening.

In the tradition of prospective senior English civil servants, he studied Classics at Oxford which honed his mind in the analysis of complex tasks and organisation. He was appointed to the Foreign Office – very appropriate – and served in what were then known as the Trucial States, now the United Arab Emirates (he was able to give me hints when I went to a big conference in Abu Dhabi in 1977). Following the UK’s accession to the then EEC, he was a natural for a key role in the Secretariat-General, running the Registry (under the eagle eye of the legendary Emile Noel). I would like to think that Simon added an element of pragmatism or even realism to Noel’s rather academic approach.

Simon then graduated to where, I believe, he made his greatest contribution. He was appointed ‘European Correspondent’, second-in-command of the Commission’s role in the then inter-governmental origins of European foreign policy. He made himself the indispensable official in developing a real role for the Commission under the sceptical eye of the Member States, not least the UK. So much so that he wrote two books on the topic: *European Political Cooperation* (1992) and *European Foreign Policy* (2000) both published by the prestigious Oxford University Press. Not many people can boast that.

Simon’s final appointment was as Director for the Far East in the European External Action Service from which he retired in about 2005, bringing an end to his career as a civil servant but not as a scholar. He had one of the best private libraries I have encountered and when I first met him, he had a copy of *The Bookseller*, the trade journal of the publishing industry (where I started my working life) on his desk. His knowledge of scholarly books was prodigious.

But Simon was a man of many parts. He loved nature and especially hills and mountains ranging from the English Lake District to the peaks of the Himalayas in Nepal where for many years he spent his holidays on trekking expeditions. Opera was a passion. After retirement he continued to teach at the College of Europe in Bruges. During its heyday in the early eighties both of us worked with the Social Democratic Party in the UK to develop its policies on Europe.

Simon never married. I believe that his first love was the beauty of the world and his books. I particularly remember his kindness to me in difficult times. I was not a close friend in the conventional sense but I could always turn to him for advice and solace.

He moved back to England shortly after retirement and eventually sold his apartment in London, settling

in Sherborne in Dorset, a rural county known as the setting for the novels of Thomas Hardy. I visited him in Sherborne a number of times and delighted in his courteous, almost old-fashioned, hospitality and welcome. He bore the onset of Parkinson’s Disease with his usual forbearance, never complaining, even when, towards the end, he became completely disabled.

This was a man who was part of a species which is disappearing, a civilised gentleman of the old school. He will be sorely missed by all who had the privilege of knowing him.

JOHN GRIFFITHS-JONES

John Griffiths-Jones was born on 30 August 1942, and came up to St John’s in 1961. He died on 23 April 2024. We are grateful to his daughter, Sarah, for this appreciation.

John Griffiths-Jones died on 23 April 2024, aged 81. He is survived by his partner Sharon Lesk, his daughter, Sarah Rutherford, granddaughters Abby and Rosie, and his half-sister, Susie Griffiths-Jones.

His cremation and subsequent memorial service were attended by his St John’s friends, Peter Williamson and Lawrence Sail. They had remained firm friends and travelling companions throughout their lives. Peter delivered a fabulously entertaining recollection of their St John’s endorsed travels at my father’s memorial service. Lawrence read one of his own poems at the Cremation service.

The following eulogy was delivered courtesy of his daughter at his memorial service at London’s Chelsea Old Church, on 22 May 2024.

‘My father was always more of a listener than a talker. In fact, if you had to assign him a “superpower” then I would say that was it. He learnt through listening, and if he wasn’t listening then he was reading. He had an unquenchable thirst for knowledge, which amongst other things made him an extremely formidable opponent in Scrabble!

Born in Cheltenham to Beryl and Charles, he later attended Cheltenham College, where his love of academia blossomed. Whilst he rarely talked about his own life, he studied hard and fully applied himself to whatever challenge was presented.

During his childhood he and his brother Christopher spent many happy holidays staying with their Aunt Mary and Uncle Jack at their farm in Warwickshire. When



Mary passed away and an area of this glorious estate became a designated charitable nature reserve – called ‘The Neal Trust’ – he joined both his brother and myself as a trustee. It was a place that was dear to his heart and somewhere he had run so freely as a child.

From Cheltenham he headed to St John’s to pursue his love of history. There he formed friendships that remained with him to the end of his days.

Not content with ending his academic studies here, whilst he was working as a town planner on the development of Milton Keynes, he went on to obtain a Masters from the London School of Economics. It was at this time that he met his first wife Jane, my mother, on a skiing holiday. He was awarded a Fellowship from the English-Speaking Union to complete his MBA at Indiana University and, just two days after their wedding, they left the Isle of Mull to catch a flight across the pond. Whilst in the States he was interviewed in Chicago and subsequently returned to the UK to join the firm McKinsey as a management consultant, and my parents set up home in Blackheath, London. His first project assignment involved a year working in Cardiff before heading back to London, which is when I appeared in the world. Shortly afterwards, as a family of three we all headed off for his first overseas assignment to Dar Es Salaam, in Tanzania.

It was whilst living in Tanzania that my father discovered the world of philately. Through the medium of stamps, he was able to further indulge his love of historical research. Years of dedication eventually resulted in the achievement of top International philatelic awards culminating in his book, *The Postage Dues of Zanzibar*. He was a key player in the East Africa Study Circle. Towards the end of his life my father was working on his PhD, which he so very nearly completed. Needless to say, his subject was his beloved stamps! Kings College London have kindly offered to give him a special mention at their upcoming graduation service, having also awarded him an interim Masters in 2007.

It was during his McKinsey days that my parents parted ways and he took up residence in ‘The Little Boltons’, a flat that he adored and lovingly filled with all his travelling treasures and photographs. I think of this as ‘The Concorde and Triumph Stag’ era. Weekend visits involved suppers of fish fingers, chips and peas, followed by the ever-delicious Mint Choc Chip ice cream. We took trips to the London museums, my favourite of which was always the Natural History Museum, and also trips to both the theatre and the cinema, with a tradition of seeing the latest James Bond or Indiana Jones films, often accompanied by a visit to what was the exciting new phenomenon, called McDonald’s! My father’s regular business trips gave him the opportunity to send lots of postcards to my school boarding house, with the amusing aim to make them increasingly brief. This culminated in

DSAMLD (Dear Sarah All My Love Daddy) in the teeniest, tiniest beautifully scripted handwriting, woven into the most obscure corner of the postcard.

It was whilst living at The Little Boltons that my father ventured into self-employment and was involved in the set-up Data Harvest. It was at this time that he met his second wife, Angela. It was she who inspired in him his true devotion to the Christian faith, something that would forever remain an important part of his life. Tragically Angela’s life was cut short soon after their marriage. Grief stricken, and with the support of Chelsea Old Church, he channelled his energies into fundraising which enabled churches and schools to be built in remote villages near Angela’s home city of Madras, now Chennai.

My first foray into the world of independent travelling took me, aged 19, to visit these projects. As he dropped me at the airport, he could barely contain his excitement at the prospect of my upcoming adventures, urging me to experience travelling on the roof of a train and really open my eyes to the greater world and all the amazing experiences that were out there to explore. I nearly missed the flight! I am happy to say that these projects continue to thrive as confirmed by a recent visit by Angela’s brother Terry who kindly shared photos, videos, interviews, and prayers of thanks from the many children who have benefitted. The girls and I will be returning to visit this coming January, as his granddaughter Rosie embarks on her own global adventures.

My father later moved back to the world of employment and joined the law firm that is now Dentons, as Advisor to the board, and moved to Brook Green with his third wife Ann, the daughter of one of his Oxford tutors. It was when this marriage dissolved that he jumped on a plane to come and stay with me in Indonesia, where I was living and working at the time. When asked ‘What can I bring?’, I suggested ‘afternoon tea for the workers at the furniture factory’ where I was working at the time. Shortbread biscuits, Dundee cake, and Earl Grey tea duly made their way to Java. The reception was mixed! Despite the circumstances it was a happy holiday and involved us all heading out to stay at the idyllic ‘hut on stilts’ on the gloriously untouched islands of Karamunjava, where we snorkelled, ate fresh fish, and he tried unsuccessfully to teach us bridge.

Over the years we went on many happy holidays, often accompanied by his half-sister, Susie, my partner in crime. Outward Bound courses, a canal boating holiday, trips to Paris, New York, The Grand Canyon, Disney World Florida, and Malaysia.

When he retired from Dentons, he was able proudly to announce that he had never taken a day’s sick leave in his entire working life. Towards the end, though, he did become rather known for his ‘quick zizs’, the routine 20-minute power nap behind his closed office door that recharged his batteries for the rest of his working day.

But now I talk of my father. Taking words from the kind letters, cards, emails, and phone calls, the words that have appeared again and again are ‘kind’, ‘gentle’, ‘caring’, ‘warm’, ‘devoted’, ‘hospitable’, ‘loving’, ‘intelligent’, ‘humble’, ‘resilient’, ‘remarkable’ – and not to forget, ‘handsome’.

Over the years my father quietly supported many people in their various endeavours, offering advice but never judgement. He was a devoted Churchwarden at Chelsea Old Church for over a decade, and was instrumental in the negotiations for the building of the Church Hall. My father took great comfort in the knowledge that this is where his ashes would eventually remain.

As a father he was very relaxed, open minded, and ‘game’. Not once did I hear him raise his voice. He happily accompanied me, aged 13, and a few friends to our first ever concert – A-ha – where he duly conceded that he at least tripled the average age! He remained utterly unfazed when, later in life, we would cross paths in the street outside the house as he was heading off to work in his suit and I was arriving home after a night out. The words he always used were ‘I trust you to do the right thing’. What pressure!

With many international friends his home always had an ‘open door policy’, with a serving of his famous Nosh, a G-J special (which was a Campari based drink), or a glass of wine for any who desired. I may have pushed this hospitality a little far on one occasion when I casually asked ‘if a few friends could come and stay the night’. When 19 of us turned up, he barely batted an eyelid and happily smiled and welcomed everyone in.

We all hold our own special memories of my father, and that is what we must hold onto and cherish. I remember his love of crusty bread, cheddar cheese with Branston pickle, baked salmon, taramasalata, brandy butter, and CDM (Cadburys Dairy Milk). He also loved nature – bluebells, wisteria, and acers in particular.

Personally, I only have to look in the mirror to see his legacy – the G-J chin, thick wild hair, big hands, and strong physique; but beyond that I take his love of travel, a deep love and pride in his two granddaughters, Abby and Rosie, a strong interest in architecture and design, houseplants, books, and music. He may have had more books, but I certainly have more houseplants.

The last three years of my father’s life were undeniably tough. However, he was surrounded by the love and support of his partner Sharon, and all those who cared for him. Through all his health difficulties he remained stoic and so rarely complained and finally made it through to a peaceful and dignified end. Sharon and I were both at his side, which is a huge comfort to us both.

He passed away on St George’s Day, which feels apt. Only hours beforehand it would have been the day of the London Marathon which would also have been fitting given that he ran it twice – the second time aged 70. But

St George’s Day it was: ‘Unleash the power within you, and you shall conquer every dragon on your path’. He really gave life his all, and will be sorely missed by all those who were fortunate enough to have known him.

TOMOYUKI ABE

Tomoyuki Abe was born on 17 November 1942, and came up to St John’s in 1967. He died in November 2020. We are grateful to his wife, Motoko, for this appreciation.

After St John’s College, Tomoyuki Abe worked as a government official holding a variety of positions at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, as Chief Cabinet Secretary, and on several overseas postings including Japanese Consulate General in Chicago and Japanese Ambassador to Turkey.

He worked at the Middle Eastern Culture Center in Japan until the very last day of his life.

JOHN ST CLAIR

Dr John St Clair was born on 15 August 1948, and came up to St John’s in 1967. He died on 2 January 2024. We are grateful to his friend, Christopher Ward, for this appreciation.

John St Clair came up to St John’s as an exhibitor in October 1967 from the Edinburgh Academy. Like his elder brother, the author and academic William St Clair (St John’s 1956–60), John read Lit Hum. His twin brother David also won a classical award, at Pembroke, but made the bold lateral leap away from Greats to read medicine.

Like his brothers, John had been a star of his school both academically and on the rugby field – Magnus Magnusson wrote in his history of the Edinburgh Academy about ‘the talented St Clair twins’. Before coming up, John was Guestmaster at the Church of Scotland community on Iona, where his great mentor was George MacLeod, later Lord MacLeod, Moderator of the Church of Scotland.

John always claimed never to have been in a pub before Oxford – and it is true that in our freshman photo he presents as quite straight-laced. Yet he made a highly successful transition to undergraduate life: the Lamb and Flag, the Bird and Baby, and later the Kings Arms and the Bear were favourite haunts. Martin Blocksidge (1967–70) recalls John ‘discovering the Bulldog in St Aldate’s, visits to the cinema (*Un Homme et une Femme*), lots of pipe smoke, and endless jokes’.

We had tutorials with Donald Russell in his noble Canterbury Quad rooms overlooking the gardens. For Mods, John read the classics eclectically. He was easily bored by the obvious but loved those sudden imaginative connections that his vigorous mind could make. Reading Ovid, for example, he came across the

myth of the sea-nymph Clytie who falls in love with the sun God Hyperion. But love goes wrong and, John wrote, 'she is turned into a sunflower chained to earth with unrequited love, eternally to gaze at the sun and follow him across the sky'. Immediately John went to the Botany Department with his friend Frank Bisby (St John's 1964-70) to watch a slow-motion film of the heliotrope 'counting the steps of the sun'. And all the time he was thinking of the exquisite beauty and transcendent lyricism of William Blake's poem *Ah Sun-flower*, a poem to which he returned towards the end of his life.

John took up rowing but resisted rugby. He was in the college First Eight but, unlike his brother William, he never won an oar. He retained his close interest in Christianity. When four of us invited the college chaplain Eric Heaton to tea to discuss religion, it was not me (by then a tepid Anglican), or Michael Atkinson (a cradle Roman Catholic), or Martin Blocksidge (proclaiming atheism), but John who dominated the conversation – and I think many other talks with Eric on the Chapel committee thereafter. And here I should say that in his last days John joked, 'What is the good of a conversation if you can't dominate it?'

Following Mods, we came under Sherwin-White and, for philosophy, Peter Hacker and Gordon Baker. John was more gripped here and worked hard on the topics that interested him, particularly legal and moral philosophy. At the same time, he became less interested in undergraduate life. He cultivated friendships with the more grown-up minds in the Middle Common Room, Frank Bisby, Stuart Hampson, Bob Anderson, and John Smith. And he lived for a while with men from other colleges out at Waterstock where they held a gambling party, recruiting as croupier a girl in a low-cut black number – she was reputed to be the prettiest girl in Oxford.

On graduating, John thought of joining the prison service but instead taught for a year in a girls' school in Germany. Subsequently he read law at Glasgow and then joined the Edinburgh bar as an advocate. Two of his cases were reported in the national papers – one, dwelled on by the *Daily Telegraph*, was an injunction to halt a strike, the other a case for Billy Connolly against an outsize menswear shop that had lifted Billy's soubriquet of The Big Yin.

Later John worked for Raleigh bikes as company secretary – Raleigh, he said, was famous for the spud, the weed, and the bike – and then for Bowater. Although his attempted management buyout at Bowater fell through, he remained full of business wheezes, including an attempted international arbitrage that involved buying up sets of the *Encyclopaedia of Philosophy* (four volumes) cheap in the US and shipping them to Britain (where sadly the hopes for a bull market proved chimerical).

During these years, John visited us often – in Iran, in the United States, in Kenya, in Morocco. We climbed

mountains, many of them with his twin brother David, from tough little Monroes to Mount Kenya and Kilimanjaro, the highest mountains in Africa; Damavand, the highest mountain in Europe and Western Asia, and Toubkal, the highest mountain in the Maghreb, taking in those minor peaks of Parnassus and Olympus on the way. John was famous in East Africa for being the first man to climb Kenya and Kilimanjaro wearing a tie and a pair of old knickerbockers – they had been made for his father 40 years previously. And he did the climb with just one kidney, coughing his heart out with a chest infection. In the end, the tie did actually come in useful. He lost weight on the climb and used it to keep his father's knickerbockers up around his waist. And incidentally on that caper he actually saved my life, stopping me sliding off the glacier by simply throwing himself across my legs.

Just one kidney because John had eaten some duff mushrooms up in the north of Scotland and suffered total kidney failure. After a gruelling year or two on dialysis, he received the gracious gift of life, a kidney transplant from his twin brother David. For some years after that, John was on steroids. However, genetic testing eventually showed that he and David were identical twins (despite a considerable body of evidence to the contrary!) and so he was able to give up the steroids with confidence.

John also qualified as a solicitor and worked for a time in an Edinburgh law firm. Later he worked in the Scottish government, crafting laws. His colleagues there had a generous admiration for his strengths – especially the more unusual ones. His colleagues wrote of him: 'I recall very fondly how I benefited from John's excellent wisdom, sparkling intellect, talent as a storyteller, and kind and generous nature. He was a true gentleman with a rebellious spirit and a formidable intellect.' His boss wrote: 'I was warned that John presented a management challenge but quickly discovered that as long as I didn't try to manage him there was no challenge!'

John had a complicated mind that embraced all the world of knowledge and of intellect, a thirst for understanding of history and politics and economics, and mathematics and science. Although at heart an arts man, steeped in classicism like his brothers, he also like his brothers roamed far and wide in the realm of knowledge. His twin-ness and the birth of his twin boys led him to research genetics and to publish on that, and to research and publish on twinning among the ring-tailed lemurs in the Edinburgh Zoo. He remained unpolitical, yet passionate about the ethics of government, outraged recently at the cruel treatment of asylum seekers, outraged at the threat to his identity from Scottish separatism and European disunion.

He also published several books – a history of the Advocates Library in Edinburgh, an unputdownable magnum opus on corporate insolvency in Scotland which earned him a doctorate, and a book based on his Uncle

Willie's papers about life and death in the trenches during the First World War. This last work led him to a profound reinterpretation of the scourge of war, and to deep questions about his own faith. The man who had read to us, crouched for shelter in a snowstorm below the lip of the crater on Kilimanjaro, from Saint James' Epistle 'For what is your life? It is even a vapour that appears for a little time and then vanishes away' – this man came later to believe, with Blake, that the 'mind-forged manacles' of religious oppression were a denial of the power of human love. He recalled movingly, in his last years, Blake's *Ah Sun-flower* which he had first read at the age of sixteen.

Ah Sun-flower! weary of time,
Who countest the steps of the sun
Seeking after that sweet golden clime
Where the traveller's journey is done.

Thinking, I believe, of that imperative to live every day as if it were your last, he wrote 'My Sun-flowers.... will be part of me until my traveller's journey is done and I aspire where my sunflower wishes to go.'

This serious, humane vision of his path through life sits with his loving, social, witty nature. He was long in his search for 'That not impossible she, that shall command my heart and me', but at last found her in his beloved Emma whom he immortalised in song at their wedding as Bonnie Emma Fearnie sung to the tune of Annie Laurie – not very well, it has to be said, but full marks for effort and everybody loved him for it. And then came the gift of his own twin boys, David and Andrew, who have grown into fine young men trained up by John in the 'St Clair humour gene' and in the art of late-night craic.

John worked to the last, for the intellectual stimulation, for the company of younger colleagues, and to set his boys an example of the work ethic. In November 2023, he was diagnosed with cancer of the oesophagus. It proved terminal. He was able to attend his son Andrew's wedding to Kate in December 2023 and to know the joy of a granddaughter Matilda but the cancer was untreatable and within two months he left us, dying at home as he had wished, surrounded by his family and friends.

His memorial service at the Canongate Kirk on the Royal Mile brought more than two hundred people together, and much bright memory and anecdotes at the Royal Society of Edinburgh afterwards. The legion of us who loved him for his complicated mind and brilliant talk, and for his generosity and kindness, will carry his memory forward: John at his ease in his comfy chair in his great drawing room, a glass of malt and a dense, thick book close to his hand, the endless good conversation and riotous jokes.

CHRISTOPHER WOODS

Christopher Woods was born on 27 February 1947, and came up to St John's in 1968. He died on 29 March 2024. We are grateful to his nephew, Tom, for this appreciation.

Chris, beloved brother to John and uncle to Lucy, Julian, Thomas, Richard, Angus, Hugh, Roderick, and Jessica died peacefully in Heather View care-home, Crowborough on Good Friday, 29 March 2024.

Christopher Charles Upton Woods was born on 27 February in Liverpool, as were his sister Diana

(born on 27 February 1945, so they shared a birthday exactly two years apart) and brother John. As his Dad, Douglas, moved to a job in Sussex, Chris spent only three years in the North West

At school in Horsham, the College of Richard Collyer, he concentrated on Maths and Physics, which led to him to Oxford and graduating in Physics at St John's in 1968; and then a Masters in Operational Research at Sussex University.

He was employed in the Operational Research department in British Rail, Channel Tunnel section. There then followed various jobs in teaching and finance within Greater London, with a move to Frant in Sussex in the mid-80s.

In sport he was an amateur skier, but in rifle shooting he was very accomplished, representing the British under 18s in 1965 in the Athelings' team to Ottawa. His keenness in cycling also led to amassing half a dozen machines, some built to his design.

Chris had an abiding interest in the Royal Observer Corps and purchased one of their bunkers in Cheshire – renovating it in the course of many visits there (hitherto virtually unknown to the family).

Chris never married. His sister Diana predeceased him and he is survived by his elder brother John and his nieces and nephews as well as their families who all miss him dearly.



DOMINIC GWYNN

Dominic Gwynn was born on 18 August 1953, and came up to St John's in 1971. He died on 24 May 2024. We are grateful to his widow, Antonia, for this appreciation.

Dominic made an outstanding contribution to the craft of organ-building over nearly half a century. He has left us not only with a glorious legacy of practical work but also

many pages of pioneering scholarship on the history of the organ in the British Isles. Dominic developed an enviable knack of merging practice and scholarship thanks to his excellent mechanical skills and great intellectual acumen.

Dominic was at the forefront of the nation's organ-builders, and was one of the familiar faces of his industry at home and overseas. Throughout his career Dominic engaged with fellow builders of all traditions and with many musicians and musicologists. He collaborated with his colleagues and mentored apprentices with an unfailing generosity of spirit. Dominic played his part too in the work and development of the Institute of British Organ Building (IBO) and the British Institute of Organ Studies (BIOS).

In 1980, with Martin Goetze, he founded the firm Goetze and Gwynn whose main interest has been in the revival of the early and classical English organ. The firm has now carried out around 130 projects, one third of them new organs based on historic models, and the rest restorations, from clockwork barrel organs to large three-manual organs. Of these the restored instruments at St Helen's Bishopsgate, St James's Bermondsey, St Botolph's Aldgate, and Thaxted Parish Church provide but a small sample. It is no underestimation to say that these and the many other historical specimens they have worked on have provided musicians with access to traditional British organs and organ music on a once undreamt-of scale. Dominic's skills, imagination, and scholarship have been at the centre of so many of these projects.

Dominic has been inextricably linked to the reconstructions of three Tudor church organs, all based on early-sixteenth-century fragments found in Suffolk. The first two were made for the Early English Organ Project, and the third was built for the Bangor University project 'The experience of worship in late medieval cathedral and parish church'.

Dominic's skills, imagination, and scholarly talents were crucial to this project and his painstaking research on the Suffolk fragments and his examination of the oldest extant English metal pipework, and winding systems and key actions from France and Spain, allowed it to come to fruition. It has been revolutionary.

In recognition of his distinguished achievement in organ-building and scholarship, and for his work on organ heritage in the UK, the Medal of the Royal College of Organists was awarded to Dominic in March 2024.



MICHAEL PRIOR

Dr Michael Prior was born on 8 June 1956, and came up to St John's in 1974. He died on 17 June 2024. We are grateful to his friend, Derek Knight, for this appreciation.

Michael (Mike to his friends) was born on 8 June 1956 in Swaffham, Norfolk, to Jean (née Burrows), a clerical assistant, and Leslie Prior, a railway signalman; he had an elder sister Helen, who survives him.

He passed away peacefully of metastatic malignant melanoma, having been able to stay at home, as was his wish, until he needed nursing care in the final weeks.

Michael lived in Norwich for most of his childhood. After passing the Eleven Plus, he chose to go to Paston School, a small traditional state boys' grammar school (Admiral Horatio Nelson was a notable alumnus). He was drawn to science, in particular Chemistry, partly due to Roger McPhee, an inspirational chemistry teacher and Michael's first mentor. Mr McPhee's encouragement was instrumental in Michael applying to Oxford to read Chemistry. He chose St John's because a talented chemist in the year above him, Steve Whittleton, had 'paved the way'. Michael recalls Helen bringing the letter from St John's offering him a place when he was working at his Saturday job in Norwich C&A.

Michael came up to St John's in autumn 1974. He recalls that the 1974 chemists were a close-knit group who enjoyed playing table football (see obituary for David Hope in TW 2023), coffee in Steve Whittleton's room after lectures, and punting with picnics in summer. Michael particularly enjoyed the organic chemistry experimental work in the Dyson Perrins laboratory, and he described the phenolic smells of the teaching laboratories. He clearly remembered presidential collections with Sir Richard Southern, who would become another mentor, with Sir Richard taking in feedback from the Chemistry tutors. Michael was in the 'Beehive' in his first year, then one of the first residents of the Sir Thomas White Building. He recounted how the atmosphere of St John's changed while he was there, due to a combination of factors: Sir Richard's re-emphasis on academic achievement, the building developments beginning with the Sir Thomas White Building, and the college going co-educational.

A key decision for Michael's subsequent professional life was choosing organic chemistry research for his Part II project and working for Gordon Whitham, with whom he stayed for a DPhil. In his Part II year Michael



began to lose his normal vitality, then his health began to decline seriously during his DPhil, at first without an identifiable cause. This was in the days when modern imaging was in its infancy but, as a 'last ditch' attempt at diagnosis, he was sent to Bristol for an MRI scan where an inoperable, possibly terminal, cancer was discovered. Michael was extremely fortunate to be in Oxford and to have as his consultant Sir David Weatherall, the Nuffield Professor of Clinical Medicine, because he received life-saving treatment, although aggressive, prolonged, and extremely unpleasant. With financial and pastoral support from St John's he was able to stay in Oxford, recover and complete his doctoral thesis. Sir Richard took a personal interest and gave moral support and encouragement: Michael recounts how Sir Richard arranged a travel grant for a holiday in Switzerland. Gordon Whitham and his wife Mary were also pivotal in helping and supporting Michael during his illness, and he stayed with them when he came out of hospital after various treatments.

In a life that had been marred early on by serious illness, it would have been all too easy to focus on that. However, Michael was determined to put it behind him. He moved to Nottingham and went on to have three distinct careers and a daughter, Olivia (born 1995), who is a hospital pharmacist.

His first job was with Boots Pharmaceuticals, initially in process development chemistry (from 1983 to 1986), then in plant management. He took an MBA at Loughborough University Business School, with a joint dissertation with his colleagues Alison Maddocks and Paul Newton on 'Aspects of strategic management in the Boots Company PLC'.

Boots had sold part of the business to Knoll Pharmaceuticals, and due to subsequent restructuring, Michael began his second career in 1998 in the Forensic Science Service, first as the Birmingham general manager, then as manager of the National DNA Database (NDNAD) from 2002, and finally as Custodian of the NDNAD from 2005.

Over the years Michael experienced side effects from the earlier cancer treatment. By 2009 the impact on his mobility and stamina became too much, and he took early retirement. Determined to put his knowledge and management skills to good use, he developed a varied and rewarding portfolio of activities, building on his scientific training and experience as a patient to become a stalwart of patient involvement, and contributing greatly to the research and student community. Over the years he was a Research Associate at Nottingham University as a clinical research co-ordinator for Prof Christopher Hawkey, Visiting Fellow at Nottingham Trent University for the forensic science programme, chair of the Royal Society of Chemistry Benevolent Fund Grants Committee, and a 'ChemNet Ambassador' promoting chemistry to schools, Patient Advisor for the

NHS Cancer Improvement Programme, member of the Patient Public Involvement Senate of Health Innovation East Midlands and he supported the EMRAD imaging network, the National Rehabilitation Centre, and Musters Health Centre. Michael was every bit as committed and professional in these roles as he had been at work, and his colleagues from this time speak of his kindness, humour and insight.

The above account gives a summary of the facts of Michael's life, but there was much more to him than this. He tended to keep the different aspects of his life separate, so that those who knew him would know him mainly from one perspective; in this sense he was a private man. He used to say that science had been central to his life. He was a man of principle, with strong values of integrity, determination, independence, and self-reliance. In his professional life, he believed in public service, good management practice, and clear communication, and these were reflected in his key strengths of networking and seeing connections between past and present activities to bring experience and insight. In his family life, he was first a 'cool' uncle to his nephew and three nieces when they were children, then a devoted and involved father to his young daughter. He was a loyal and good friend, with interesting conversation and helpful insights and advice. He was kind, chatty, well informed, and courteous. He had many and varied interests: railways, model railways, playing golf and badminton (before disability overtook him), watching sports (especially tennis, golf, football, and motor racing), music, and collecting Poole pottery, model cars and clocks. His immaculate home, with Ercol furniture, pictures, and memorabilia, was his haven, retreat and comfortable base.

Michael will be sadly missed by his family, friends, and colleagues. However, he will have an ongoing legacy at St John's in a graduate studentship in chemistry that is to be set up in his memory.

MATTHEW DAVISON

Matthew Davison was born on 10 December 1975, and came up to St John's in 1994. He died on 30 November 2023. We are grateful to his friend, Marielle, for this appreciation.

Matthew studied English at St John's from 1994 to 1997. He loved his subject and had a number of friends at the college, and also at Queen's and Christ Church. He is remembered by family, friends, and former teachers from his home town of Hartlepool as a writer and independent thinker of immense intellect and wit. He cared deeply about social problems and poverty. And he read everything.

College Record

FIRST IN FINAL HONOUR SCHOOLS 2024

Ahsan Al Mahir, Mathematics and Computer Science (MMathCompSci)
Cosimo Alberto Asvisio, History
Ciara Julia Beale, English and Modern Languages (German)
Max Booth, Mathematics
Jessica Louise Buckle, Geography
Annabelle Yi Ting Chua, English Language and Literature
Rachel Dastgir, Modern Languages (French and German)
Nicolae Alexandru Dobra, Physics (MPhys)
Sara Dragutinovic, Mathematics and Computer Science (MMathCompSci)
Flora Dyson, Music
Ayman El Amrani, Chemistry (MChem)
Jacob Feldman, History and Economics
Liam Bradley James Fowler, Chemistry (MChem)
Damyán Stoyanov Frantzov, Chemistry (MChem)
Sarv Gersten, English Language and Literature
Eleanor Rose Hetherington, Chemistry (MChem)
Alice Elise Hill, Music
Jacob Hill, Philosophy, Politics and Economics
Daniel Anthony Hobart, Philosophy and Theology
Benjamin Joshua Holdsworth, Biology (MBiol)
Natalie Holton, Philosophy and Modern Languages (German)
Runa Cairin Jarjour, Oriental Studies (Arabic)
Kush Kale, Medicine – Preclinical
Jasmeet Kaur, Chemistry (MChem)
Susan Kellaway, Fine Art
Amy Louise Knott, English Language and Literature
Isabella Malvisi, Human Sciences
Tádé Marozsák, Engineering Science (MEng)
Jake Aaron Masters, Mathematics and Computer Science (MMathCompSci)
Luke Moore, Molecular and Cellular Biochemistry (MBiochem)
James Morgan, Chemistry (MChem)
Xingyu Nie, Mathematics (MMath)
Alexander Norris, Literae Humaniores
Junsang Park, Jurisprudence
Grace Rees, History
Ana Maria Rischitor, Modern Languages (German and Russian)
Cleo Rae Scott, History of Art
Joshua Owen Sharkey, Physics (MPhys)
Adam Sikorjak, Chemistry (MChem)
Aoife Shanti Soni, Ancient and Modern History
Michael Gerard Sopp, Cell and Systems Biology (MBSci)
Margarita Velcheva Stefanova, Mathematics and Statistics (MMath)
Xavier St John, Molecular and Cellular Biochemistry (MBiochem)
Antonia Paula Jeanne Ariane Sundrup, Jurisprudence
Alexander Tennant-Holder, Chinese
Elizabeth Alexandrovna Tiskina, History and Modern Languages (French)
Samuel Wagman, History
Rachel Alexandra Walsh, Medical Sciences – Preclinical
Katherine Wang, Experimental Psychology

Mia Shau Wu, English Language and Literature
Yu Xiao, Mathematics (MMath)
Chung Hin Yue, Jurisprudence

DISTINCTION IN PART C (MMATH)

Xingjian Bai, Mathematics and Computer Science (MMathCompSci)
Gregor Gajic, Mathematical and Theoretical Physics (MMathPhys)
Simeon Joel Hellsten, Mathematics (MMath)
Petar Langov, Mathematics and Statistics (MMath)
Joe Arthur Lee, Mathematics (MMath)
Tezv Lotric, Mathematical and Theoretical Physics (MMathPhys)
Sergiu-Ionut Novac, Mathematics (MMath)
Zhe Ren Ooi, Mathematics and Statistics (MMath)
Felipe Pinto Coelho Nuti, Mathematics and Computer Science (MMathCompSci)
Ziyang Zhang, Mathematics and Statistics (MMath)

DISTINCTION OR FIRST CLASS IN FIRST PUBLIC EXAMINATIONS 2024

Tegan Addison, Music
Zaheen A-Rahman, Engineering Science
Athavan Arulalagan, Medicine – Preclinical
Zohaib Bhatti, Mathematics and Computer Science
Ava Chadderton, History of Art
Yvonne Clark-Lewis, Psychology, Philosophy and Linguistics
Laurence Cooke, Philosophy and Modern Languages
Samuel Dayan, Medicine – Preclinical
Emily Doughty, English Language and Literature
Gabrielle Faye Drutchas, Archaeology and Anthropology
Alice Verity Dunn, English Language and Literature
Thomas (Job) Estill, History
Oscar Fitzgerald, Theology and Religion
Elliot Lila Francolla, History and Economics
Jack Gamblin, Medical Sciences
Richard Garrard, Theology and Religion
Liv Goldreich, English Language and Literature
Yangchen (Patrick) Guan, Computer Science
Emily Louisa Gurney, Human Sciences
Feng Ming (Eric) He, Mathematics
Ella Mai Jackson, Music
William James, Physics
Rohan Joshi, Biology
Burak Karatas, Mathematics and Computer Science
Arran Kinnear, Biomedical Sciences
Dylan Knight, Mathematics
Martin Daniel Kopchev, Mathematics and Computer Science
Zheng Kuang, Chemistry
Nikola Lacic, Physics
Leandro Landolina, Music
Dimitri Lang, Mathematics
Joseph Leach, Mathematics
Ziji Lee, Mathematics
Joseph Munn, Philosophy, Politics and Economics
Alexander James Mylet, Mathematics and Computer Science
Sanaya Narula, English and Modern Languages

Alexander Prvulovich, Philosophy, Politics and Economics
Elena Radulova, Classical Archaeology and Ancient History
Jessica Rance, English Language and Literature
Cameron Setiadi, Jurisprudence (with Law in Europe)
Katie Skilling, Physics
Joshua Swan, Biology
Sofia Tagliani Beltran, Experimental Psychology
Gareth Meng Ian Tan, Jurisprudence
Amelia Taylor, History and Politics
Anna Trofimova, History and Politics
Zuzanna Wagrowska, English Language and Literature
Toby Oliver Franklin Webster, Classical Archaeology and Ancient History
Ruozhou (Joyce) Wei, Fine Art
Oscar Whittle, History and Politics
Ziyang Xing, Engineering Science

UNDERGRADUATE SCHOLARS 2024/25

Tegan Addison, Music
M Ahsan Al Mahir, Mathematics and Computer Science
Zaheen A-Rahman, Engineering Science
Adam Arnfield, Philosophy, Politics and Economics
Athavan Arulalagan, Medicine – Preclinical
Yusuke Atsuta, Mathematics and Computer Science
Zohaib Bhatti, Mathematics and Computer Science
Allanah Jade Booth, Biochemistry
Patrick Breeze, Literae Humaniores
Benjamin Cave Calland, Chemistry
Ava Chadderton, History of Art
Junyuan Chen, Mathematics and Computer Science
Zeyu Chen, Chemistry
Alejandra Cilleruelo Pascal, Law with Law Studies in Europe
Yvonne Clark-Lewis, Psychology, Philosophy and Linguistics
Malina Constantinescu, Physics
Laurence Cooke, Philosophy and Modern Languages
Samuel Dayan, Medicine – Preclinical
Kieran De-Ville*, Chemistry
Bulscú Diossi, Philosophy, Politics and Economics
Emily Doughty, English Language and Literature
Sara Dragutinovic, Mathematics and Computer Science
Gabrielle Faye Drutchas, Archaeology and Anthropology
Alice Verity Dunn, English Language and Literature
Grace Dunn, Religion and Asian and Middle Eastern Studies
Megan Eastick, Biology
Saifir Elliott-Goddard, Oriental Studies
Thomas (Job) Estill, History
Oscar Fitzgerald, Theology and Religion
Suki Fogg, Biochemistry
Elliot Lila Francolla, History and Economics
Jack Gamblin, Medical Sciences
Richard Garrard, Theology and Religion
Ben Gascoyne, Biology
Liv Goldreich, English Language and Literature
Christian Goodwin, Jurisprudence
Guy Griffiths, Modern Languages

Yangchen (Patrick) Guan, Computer Science
Emily Louisa Gurney, Human Sciences
William Hartridge, Biochemistry
Feng Ming (Eric) He, Mathematics
Ryan Heppell, Mathematics
James Hindle, Engineering Science
Ambrose Hlustik-Smith, Biology
Gareth Hopkins, Physics
Edward Huang, Philosophy, Politics and Economics
Haozhe (Kevin) Huang, Chemistry
Jan Huebel, History and Economics
Ali Imam-Sadeque, Mathematics
Haru Ishizaka, Physics
Ella Mai Jackson, Music
Nathaniel James, Engineering Science
William James, Physics
Yuchen Jiang, Biochemistry
Rohan Joshi, Biology
Supatpong (Nat) Juntarawatt, Chemistry
Burak Karatas, Mathematics and Computer Science
Arran Kinnear, Biomedical Sciences
Dylan Knight, Mathematics
Mehmet Koca, Mathematics and Computer Science
Zhi-Xuan Koh, History and Politics
Martin Daniel Kopchev, Mathematics and Computer Science
Louisa Kotzee, Experimental Psychology
Zheng Kuang, Chemistry
Nikola Lakic, Physics
Leandro Landolina, Music
Dimitri Lang, Mathematics
Joseph Leach, Mathematics
Ziji Lee, Mathematics
Judy Li, Biochemistry
Atharv Mahajan, Physics
Jake Masters, Mathematics and Computer Science
Alex Middleton-Hill, History
Katinka Mitchell-Thomson, Biochemistry
Toby Morton-Collings*, Chemistry
Joseph Munn, Philosophy, Politics and Economics
Alexander James Mylet, Mathematics and Computer Science
Georgi Nedyalkov, Chemistry
Sanaya Narula, English and Modern Languages
Xingyu Nie, Mathematics
Matilda Noble, Biology
Atharva Parulekar, Mathematics
Ian Pebody, Engineering Science
Isabella Preschern, Law with Law Studies in Europe
Alexander Prvulovich, Philosophy, Politics and Economics
Elena Radulova, Classical Archaeology and Ancient History
Jessica Rance, English Language and Literature
Adam Rashid-Thomas, Arabic
Aamina Rizvi*, Mathematics and Computer Science
Emilia Rose-Fyne, History of Art
Cameron Setiadi, Jurisprudence (with Law in Europe)
Holly Shearsmith*, Chemistry

Jihwan (Ben) Shin, Engineering Science
 Alice Simmeron, Philosophy, Politics and Economics
 Katie Skilling, Physics
 Michael Sopp, Biomedical Sciences
 John Spence, Modern Languages
 Saxon Stacey, English
 Margarita Stefanova, Mathematics and Statistics
 Luke Storey, English
 Joshua Swan, Biology
 Sofia Tagliani Beltran, Experimental Psychology
 Elsa Tamayo Diaz, Chemistry
 Gareth Meng Ian Tan, Jurisprudence
 Amelia Taylor, History and Politics
 Freya Thomas, History of Art
 Flora Timney, Biology
 Anna Trofimova, History and Politics
 Jakub Ulik, Physics
 Andy van Horsen, Mathematics and Computer Science
 Chirag Verma, Mathematics
 James Wakefield, Biology
 Zuzanna Wagrowska, English Language and Literature
 Shaun Walker, Mathematics and Computer Science
 Toby Oliver Franklin Webster, Classical Archaeology and Ancient History
 Ruozhou (Joyce) Wei, Fine Art
 Oscar Whittle, History and Politics
 Eleanor Wilson, Experimental Psychology
 William Withers, Biology
 Sol Woodroffe, Philosophy, Politics and Economics
 Yu Xiao, Mathematics
 Ziyang Xing, Engineering Science
 Xinran (Nicole) Zhang, Biomedical Sciences

*Scholarship first awarded in 2023/24

UNIVERSITY PRIZES 2023/24

Xingjian Bai, Mathematics and Computer Science Prize for Best Computer Science Project
 Yvonne Clark-Lewis, Stephen Parkinson Prize (Proxime Accessit)
 Ayman El Amrani, (second place) Physical and Theoretical Part II prize in Chemistry
 Jacob Feldman, 2024 John Hicks Foundation Prize for best performance in Microeconomics
 Sorcha Finan, Best Practical Portfolio Prize for Psychology, Philosophy and Linguistics
 Oscar Fitzgerald, Junior Pusey and Ellerton Prize for the best performance in Biblical Hebrew in Preliminary examinations
 Damyan Stoyanov Frantsov, (runner-up) Inorganic Part II Prize for best performances in the Part II Examination in Chemistry
 Weronika Galka, Law Faculty Prize in International Human Rights Law
 Richard Garrard, Canon Hall Greek Prize for outstanding performance in New Testament Greek Preliminary examination
 Henry Hatwell, awarded the Law Faculty Prize in Modern Legal History

Martin Kopchev, Department of Computer Science Prize 2024 for performance in Preliminary Examinations
 Luke Moore, Gibbs Research Project Prize for Part II Molecular and Cellular Biochemistry dissertation
 Alexander Mylet, Department of Computer Science Prize for Mathematics and Computer Science in Preliminary Examinations
 Xingyu Nie, Junior Mathematical Prize in recognition of performance in the Final Honour School of Mathematics Part B
 Zhe Ren Ooi, Gibbs Statistics Prize for performance in the Final Honour School of Mathematics and Statistics Part C
 Junsang Park, (jointly awarded) Law Faculty Prize for Moral and Political Philosophy
 Rachel Walsh, Wronker Grant and the Gibbs Prize for performance in Preclinical Medicine examinations
 Chung Hin Yue, (jointly awarded) Law Faculty Prize for Civil Dispute Resolution

COLLEGE PRIZES 2023/24

Tegan Addison, Kendrew Songwriting Prize (second)
 Luke Barnes, Peter Fan Award (Proxime) in Medicine and Surgery
 Oliver Bredemeyer, Peter Fan Award (Proxime) in Medical Sciences
 George Corby, Peter Fan Award and Fan Support Award in Clinical Medicine
 Iris Corran, Yesim Desticioglu and Emma Scanlon, (jointly awarded) Mapleton-Bree Prize
 Kate Eastwick-Jones, Peter Fan Award in Clinical Medicine
 Maya Humphries, DL Davies Bursary and Peter Fan Award in Clinical Medicine
 Kush Kale, Peter Fan Support Award in Medical Sciences
 Katinka Mitchell-Thomson, Dr Raymond Lloyd Williams Prize (Biochemistry)
 Judit Molnár, Hans Michael Caspari UN Travel Grant
 Ivan Jim Paul, Peter Fan Support Award in Medical Sciences
 Erick Alfredo Moreno Superlano, Duveen Travel Scholarship
 Zoe Reed, Peter Fan Award in Clinical Medicine
 John Spence, Hanlon Prize
 Toby Webster, Ancient History Prize
 Tianyi Wu, Burke Knapp Travel Scholarship

CHORAL SCHOLARS 2023/24

Georgina Cooper
 Iris Corran
 Rachel Ing
 Ella Jackson
 Sophie Kenelm
 Meira Lee
 William Withers
 Maria Torras Perez

IOAN AND ROSEMARY JAMES UNDERGRADUATE SCHOLARS 2023/24

Zhe Ren Ooi, Mathematics and Statistics (2020/21)
 Ziyang Zhang, Mathematics (2020/21)
 Juanru Zhao, Mathematics (2020/21)
 Sara Dragutinovic, Mathematics and Computer Science (2021/22)

Atharva Parulekar, Mathematics (2022/23)
Martin Kopchev, Mathematics and Computer Science (2023/24)

REACH SCHOLARS 2023/24

Ahsan Al Mahir, Mathematics and Computer Science (2021/22)
Artharv Mahajan, Physics (2022/23)
James Wakefield, Biology (2022/23)
Burak Karatas, Mathematics and Computer Science (2023/24)
Hannah Fareed, History and Politics (2024/25)

BIG SCHOLAR 2023/24

Gvozden Lapcevic, Mathematics (2024/2025)

SIMON & JUNE LI SCHOLARS 2023/24

Zaheen A-Rahman, Engineering (2022/23)

GRADUATE DEGREES CONFERRED 2023/24

Doctor of Philosophy

Diala Al Masri, International Development
Yasmeen Raj Arif, Anthropology
Chiara Beghè, Molecular Cell Biology in Health and Disease
Patric Bonnier, Mathematics
Rebecca Susan Buxton, International Development
Yuqi Chen, Physical and Theoretical Chemistry
Ching Lok Chong, Mathematics
Rachel Elizabeth Coombes, History of Art
Alejandro Celso De Los Angeles, Psychiatry
Julia Ebner, Anthropology
Joseph Elliott, Physical and Theoretical Chemistry
Sophie Margarethe Erfurth, Geography and the Environment
Marco Samuel Fabus, Clinical Neurosciences
Maja Friedemann, Experimental Psychology
Aidan Nicholas Gomez, Computer Science
Christian David Harding, Interdisciplinary Biosciences (BBSRC DTP) – Physiology, Anatomy and Genetics
Pol Hernandez Llado, Synthesis for Biology and Medicine (EPSRC CDT)
Joanna Fatima Howe, Law
Alice Madeleine Huxley, English
Gabriella Sophia Kountourides, Anthropology
Young Seok Lee, Biochemistry
James David Steven Linyard, Bioscience
Bruno Marinic, Synthesis for Biology and Medicine
Rolf Morel, Computer Science
Jana Maria Muschinski, Anthropology
Brian Joshua O'Callaghan, Geography and the Environment
Adam Michael Packer, Geography and the Environment
Ignacio Juan Perez, Geography and the Environment
Natalia Perez-Campanero, Interdisciplinary Biosciences (BBSRC DTP) – Zoology
Aimee Jaye Ross, Particle Physics
Lola May Elise Salem, Music
Jelka Stojanov, Experimental Psychology
Daniel Sutton, Ancient History

Danu Suwatchara, Physical and Theoretical Chemistry
McNeil Christian Taylor, Medieval and Modern Languages (FRE)
Justin Conrad Rosen Wormald, Musculoskeletal Sciences

Master of Science

Yan Chen, Social Anthropology
Yuxin Guo, Water Science Policy and Management
Ritika Mukherji, Neuroscience
Tahlia Grace Smith, Contemporary Chinese Studies
Alice Rebecca Elizabeth Such, African Studies
Frederik Emil Thomasen, Biochemistry
Robert Sanchez Tsui, Educational Assessment
Aishwarya Vedula, Neuroscience

Master of Philosophy

Talav Laher Bhimnathwala, Economics
Yaroslava Bukhta, Social Anthropology
Maya Burhanpurkar, Economics
Elizabeth Xiangyi Guo, Economics
Jeongwon Ryu, Law
Hattie Jo Rebecca Seten, Politics: Comparative Government

Master of Studies

Yan Chen, Comparative Literature and Critical Translation
Lily Una Middleton-Mansell, English and American Studies
Carys Louisa Owen, History of Art and Visual Culture
Alessandro Ross Giacometto, Modern Languages (FRE)
Michaela Kaestl, Modern Languages (GER)
Yundi Li, Music (Musicology)
Lochie Springett, World Literatures in English

Master of Business Administration

Andile Maqhawe Dube
Grace Wambui Njunge
Victoria Meredith Powell

Master of Public Policy

Abeer Saleh A Alsumait
Tahlia Smith
Brian Wee

Doctor of Science

Roy Bicknell

Bachelor of Civil Law (BCL)

Weronika Hanna Galka
Henry Alexander Solomon Hatwell
Yeqiu Huang

BM BCh Clinical Medicine

Luke Christopher Barnes
Oliver Stefan Bredemeyer
Jola Bytyci
Maya Humphries
Maksim Richards
Yuxin Ying

NAMED AWARD SCHOLARS 2023/24

Nicholas Bratt Scholar

Guokin Liu, Engineering

Elizabeth Fallaize Scholar

Lynn Nguyen, Medieval and Modern Languages

Drue Heinz Scholar

Sara Lopes Borga, English

Beeston Scholar

Chang Liu, Asian and Middle Eastern Studies

Ioan and Rosemary James Graduate Scholars

Yuze Jin, Mathematics

Hsuan-Hsien Lee, Mathematics

Utkarsh Saxena, Public Policy (joint with Clarendon Scholarship)

Michael Pragnall Scholar

Roberto Interdonato, Medieval and Modern Languages

North Senior Scholars

Cedric Pilatte, Mathematics

Angelo Ryu, Law

Qiming Yuan, Experimental Psychology

Yuan Zhang, Anthropology

Kendrew Scholars (all joint with Clarendon Scholarship)

Tesfahivet Abraha, Earth Sciences

Joel Agorinya, Psychiatry

Yunchuan Huang, Engineering

Nour Obeid, Asian and Middle Eastern Studies

Lester B Pearson Scholar

Lea Anderson, Geography (joint with Clarendon Scholarship)

Katherine Saverd, Astrophysics (joint with Clarendon Scholarship)

St John's Alumni Fund Scholars

Sakina Amin, Biochemistry (joint with Clarendon)

Yi-Ting Chang, Geography and the Environment (joint with Clarendon)

Laura Dillon, Interdisciplinary Bioscience (joint with Clarendon)

Damyan Frantzov, Chemistry (joint with Clarendon)

Xianhui He, Experimental Psychology (joint with Clarendon)

Shuyi Luo, Experimental Psychology (joint with Clarendon)

Scott Maybell, Theology (joint with Clarendon)

Erik Moreno Superlano, Migration Studies (joint with Clarendon and Scatcherd European)

Ronya Ramrath, Philosophy (joint with Clarendon)

Xingchen Wan, Engineering Science (joint with Clarendon)

Qiming Yuan, Experimental Psychology (joint with Clarendon)

UKRI Partnership Scholarships

Mercedes Baptiste Halliday, Anthropology (joint with ERSC)

Kim Borsky, Musculoskeletal Sciences (joint with MRC)

Ruthanne Brooks, Theology (joint with AHRC)

Abigail Browne, Geography (joint with ERSC)

Rachael Chan, Geography and the Environment (joint with ESRC)

Javier Chico Vazquez, Mathematics (joint with EPSRC)

Jen DeNike, Fine Art (joint with AHRC)

Zachary Di Lello, Music (joint with AHRC)

Kieran Didi, Computer Science (joint with EPSRC)

Hannah Dobbs, Clinical Medicine (joint with MRC)

Natasha Durie, Anthropology, (joint with ESRC)

Isaac Ellmen, Biomedical Sciences (joint with EPSRC)

Alessandra Enrico Headrington, Migration Studies (joint with ESRC)

Gregory Evans, History (joint with AHRC)

Gustavo Fernandes Pedroso, Oriental Studies (joint with AHRC)

Gabriel Flath, Statistics (joint with EPSRC)

Natasha Gasparian, Fine Art (joint with AHRC)

James Glover, Philosophy (joint with AHRC)

Helena Harpham, Molecular Cell Biology in Health and Disease (joint with MRC)

Isobelle Hawkins, Experimental Psychology (joint with ERSC)

Arianwen Herbert, Interdisciplinary Bioscience (DTP) (joint with EPSRC)

Ahmet Inan, Fine Art (joint with AHRC)

Ibrahim Ince, Anthropology (joint with ESRC)

George Kirkham, Geography (joint with ESRC)

Elliot Koubis, Modern Languages (joint with AHRC)

Harry Lee, Molecular Cell Biology (joint with MRC)

Konstantinos Lekkos, Physiology, Anatomy and Genetics (joint with MRC)

Roshni Mansfield, Paediatrics (joint with MCR)

Amy McCall, Psychiatry (joint with MRC)

Sylvia McKelvie, Geography and the Environment (joint with ESRC)

Samuel Moore, Mathematics (joint with EPSRC)

Martin Mosny, Theoretical Physics (joint with EPSRC)

Aneta Niklas, Chemistry (joint with EPSRC)

Eduard Oravkin, Statistics (joint with EPSRC)

Aikaterini Panti, Clinical Neurology (joint with MRC)

Patrik Penc, Physics (joint with EPSRC)

Holly Roach, Clinical Medicine (joint with MRC)

Jacob Rose, Economic and Social History (joint with ERSC)

Jamie Sandall, Geography and the Environment (joint with ESRC)

Ruth Thrush, English (joint with AHRC)

Black Academic Futures Scholar

Chinedu Chukwudinma, Geography and the Environment

Daniel Slifkin Scholar

Samuel Cass, Law

Neil Matheson Scholar

Antonia Delius, Economics (joint with Clarendon Scholarship)

Angus McLeod Scholar

Rachel Hurwitz, Anthropology

Dr Yungtai Hsu Scholar

Ziqi Wang, Environmental Change and Management



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Associate Fellow

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Charles James Keith Batty, MA, MSc, DPhil, formerly Tutor in Mathematics

Julia Margaret Bray, MA, DPhil, formerly Abdulaziz Saud AlBabtain Laudian Professor of Arabic

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Nicholas Paul Harberd, (MA, PhD Cantab.), FRS, formerly Sibthorpeian Professor of Plant Sciences

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Yasmeen Raj Arif, MPhil, DPhil, British Academy Postdoctoral Fellow, Anthropology
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Henry Reece, MA, DPhil, (BA, Bristol), formerly graduate student; formerly Secretary to the Delegates and Chief Executive, Oxford University Press; Emeritus Fellow of Jesus College

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Stephen Wolfram, PhD Caltech, formerly Scholar; creator of Mathematica and Wolfram/Alpha; Founder and Chief Executive Officer of Wolfram Research

Sir Michael Charles Scholar, KCB, MA, DPhil, (MA, PhD Cantab.); formerly Permanent Secretary of the Welsh Office and the Department of Trade and Industry; sometime Chairman of the UK Statistics Authority; formerly President of St John's

Sir John Tooke, KB, FRCP, FMedSci, formerly Commoner; formerly inaugural Dean of the Peninsula Medical School; President of the Academy of Medical Sciences; Vice-Provost (Health), Head of the School of Life & Medical Sciences (incorporating UCL Medical School), University College London

Dame Angela Eagle, MP, MA, formerly Commoner; MP for Wallasey; formerly Shadow Leader of the House of Commons; formerly Minister of State for Pensions and the Ageing Society and Shadow Chief Secretary to the Treasury; Minister of State for Border Security and Asylum

Ruth Harris, MA, DPhil, (BA, MA, Pennsylvania), FBA, formerly Junior Research Fellow; Professor of Modern History and Senior Research Fellow, All Souls College

Evan Davis, MA, formerly Scholar; formerly Economics Editor for the BBC and presenter of *Today* and *Newsnight*; presenter of *PM* on BBC Radio 4

Ann Jefferson, MA, DPhil, formerly Junior Research Fellow, FBA; Professor of French and Emeritus Fellow of New College; *Commandeur dans l'Ordre des Palmes Académiques*

Sir David Nicholas Cannadine, DPhil (MA, LittD Cantab.), formerly Junior Research Fellow, FBA, FRSL, FRHistS; formerly Fellow of Christ's College, Cambridge; formerly Moore Collegiate Professor of History, Columbia; formerly Director, Institute of Historical Research; formerly Dodge Professor of History, Princeton University; Chair, National Portrait Gallery; Editor, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*

Andrew Harrison, OBE, MA, DPhil, FRS, MRSC, FRSE, formerly Fereday Junior Research Fellow; formerly Research Fellow, Nuffield College; formerly Professor of Solid State Chemistry, University of Edinburgh; Founding Director, Centre for Science at Extreme Conditions; Director General, Institut Laue-Langevin (ILL), the Neutron Source, Grenoble; Director, Diamond Light Source

Barbara Jane Slater, MSc (BA Birmingham, PGCE Loughborough), OBE; Director of BBC Sport

John Darwin, BA, DPhil, formerly Scholar, FBA, Professor of Global and Imperial History, Nuffield College, Fellow of Nuffield College

Rushanara Bini Ali, BA, formerly Commoner; MP for Bethnal Green and Bow, formerly Shadow Minister for Education, and for International Development; Co-Founder of the charity Uprising; Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Homelessness and Democracy

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Rt Hon Sir Nicholas Hamblen, KC, PC, BA, (LLM Harvard Law School); formerly Scholar; Lord Justice of Appeal; Justice of the Supreme Court of the United Kingdom

Sir Robert Devereux, KCB, BA, (MA Edin), formerly Commoner, formerly Permanent Secretary for the Department of Work and Pensions

Sir Nigel Carrington, formerly Vice-Chancellor of University of the Arts London; formerly Managing Partner and European Chairman at Baker & McKenzie and Managing Director of McLaren Group, Chairman of the Henry Moore Foundation and of Advance HE, Founder Director of the Creative Industries Federation and member of the Board of Universities UK

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Myles Robert Allen, DPhil, CBE, FRS, FInstP, Professor of Geosystem Science, Fellow of Linacre College

Alexander Bird, MA (PhD Cantab.), Bertrand Russell Professor of Philosophy, Cambridge University

Christopher Joseph Schofield, FRS, FRSC; DPhil (BSc Manchester), Head of Organic Chemistry, Oxford University

Khoo Boon Hui, MA, Légion d'honneur, Ordre national du Mérite; formerly Police Commissioner, Singapore (1997–2010) and President of INTERPOL (2008–12)

Peter Sayer Phillips, MA, former Organ Scholar; Bodley Fellow, Merton College; founder of The Tallis Scholars

Sarah-Jayne Blakemore, BA (PhD London), FRS, FBA, FRSB, Professor of Psychology and Cognitive Neuroscience at the University of Cambridge and Co-Director of the Wellcome Trust PhD programme in Neuroscience at University College London

Elleke Deirdre Boehmer, FRSL, FRHistS, MPhil, DPhil (BA Rhodes), Professor of World Literature in English, Oxford University

Sir John Oliver Frank Kingman, KCB, BA, FRS, Chairman, Legal & General Group

Sir Michael Graham Jacobs, KCB, BA (MB BS, PhD London), MRCP, FRCP, FRCPEd, formerly Consultant in Infectious Diseases, Royal Free London NHS Foundation Trust, Warden of Keble College

David Andrew Flood, BA (PGCE Cantab.), formerly Organist and Master of the Choristers, Canterbury Cathedral

Pratap Bhanu Mehta, BA (PhD Princeton), FBA, formerly Vice-Chancellor of Ashoka University, and President, Center for Policy Research, Delhi, Laurence Rockefeller Visiting Professor for Distinguished Teaching at Princeton University

David Edward Herbert Edgerton, BA (PhD London), FBA, Hans Rausing Professor and Professor of Modern British History, King's College London

Judy Hirst, DPhil, FRS, FMedSci, Director of the Medical Research Council Mitochondrial Biology Unit and Professor of Biological Chemistry, University of Cambridge

Musa Olara Cwa Okwonga, BA, FRSL, award-winning author and co-host of the Stadio football podcast

Sir Stephen Huw Powis, MMed (PhD London, MBA Warwick), FRCP, SFFMLM, Hon FRCP(G), Hon MFPH, formerly National Medical Director, NHS England and Professor of Renal Medicine at University College London

Salim Yusuf, DPhil, FRCPC, FRSC, OC, Distinguished University Professor of Medicine, McMaster University and Executive Director, Population Health Research Institute, Hamilton General Hospital, Canada

Brenda Elaine Stevenson, (BA Virginia, M, PhD Yale), formerly Hillary Rodham Clinton Professor of Women's History

Nadia Motraghi, KC, formerly Commoner, barrister in employment, professional discipline and public law

Caroline Bayantai Plumb, OBE, formerly Commoner, CEO and co-founder of Fluidly; formerly CEO of FreshMinds

News of Alumni

The College thanks alumni who have supported College committees and activity over the past year:

Audit and Risk Committee: Chair: The Rt Hon Alistair Burt (1974, Jurisprudence), Piers Kenyon (1986, Modern History), Tim Polglase (1980, Jurisprudence)

Committee for the Promotion of the Arts: Matthew Morrison (1997, Jurisprudence)

Development and Alumni Relations Committee: Bernard Taylor CVO (1975, Chemistry), Dr Kate Molesworth (1985, Biological Anthropology)

Development Board: Chair: Bernard Taylor CVO (1975, Chemistry), Dr Genevieve Davies (1994, Modern Languages), Tom Ewing (1995, PPE), Edward Hocknell (1980, Classics), Dr Yungtai Hsu (1971, History), Michael McDonough (1994, Visiting Student Programme), Dr Nigel Meir (1975, Medicine), Hannah Gilbert (1993, Arabic and Islamic Studies), Jonathan Ross (1991, PPE)

Finance and Estates Committee: Tom Hill (1980, Physics), Dr Nigel Meir (1975, Medicine), Nicholas Dunning (1981, Chemistry)

Investment Sub-Committee: Chair: Michael McLintock (1980, History and Economics), Nick Bratt (1967, PPE), Neil Matheson (1976, PPE), Peter Wilson (1985, Engineering, Economics and Management)

Oxford North: Bernard Taylor CVO (1975, Chemistry), Dr Isobel Pinder (1980, Literae Humaniores)

Remuneration Committee: Chair: Sir Nigel Carrington (1975, Jurisprudence)

Women's Network Steering Group: Chair: Dr Kate Molesworth (1985, Biological Anthropology), Alex Bollen (1991, History), Joanne Harrison Gross (1981, Modern Languages), Joanne Skolnick (1988, Modern History), Zoe Stockton (2016, Human Sciences), Rose Sundt (2015, Oriental Studies)

1957

His Honour Robert Taylor recently published his new book *The North Eastern Circuit 1976–2022: A Selective History* (Smith Settle Printing and Bookbinding, Yeadon, Leeds, 2022).

1960

Dr David Mitchell published his new book *The Wider Goldsmiths' Trade in Elizabethan and Stuart London* (Paul Holberton Publishers, 2024).

1967

Christopher Ward published his new book *The Resistance of Anna and Magdalena* (Minos Press, 2024).

1968

Professor Keith Bradley recently published his new book *Marguerite Yourcenar's Hadrian: Writing the Life of a Roman Emperor* (University of Toronto Press, 2024).

1972

Professor Chris Brewin, University College London, was chosen to receive the 2024 Lifetime Achievement Award by the International Society of Traumatic Stress Studies.

Giles Dawson celebrated his 70th birthday year with a concert with friends in Wantage Parish Church. Among those performing were Alasdair Hunter (1975) and Tim Smithies (1976). He also attended the premiere in Dorchester Abbey of Tim Cook's *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, for baritone and string ensemble, and had his first experience in a Glasgow pub as a karaoke singer. He has also been busy preparing 'Marriner 100', an

exhibition to mark the centenary of the birth of Sir Neville Marriner (1924–2016); this was opened at St Martin-in-the-Fields, London on Monday 15 April 2024.

1974

Paul Fairweather was awarded an MBE in the King's New Year Honours List 2024 for services to disabled people and to the LGBTQ+ community in the North West.

1975

Professor Humphrey Crick has recently been appointed as an Honorary Professor in the Faculty of Environment, Science, and Economy at the University of Exeter and is also now a Deputy Director of Nature Recovery Science at Natural England.

Professor Salim Yusuf, Honorary Fellow, was awarded an honorary degree by the University of Oxford.

1976

Nick Hunsworth and **Michael Lok** (2012) organised two wonderful events for St John's alumni in Hong Kong.

1977

Alex Sedgwick published his new book *Over* (Boffobooks, 2024).

1978

Professor Jeremy Black continued to publish many new books including *Paris: A Short History* (Thames and Hudson Ltd, 2024) and *A Brief History of America* (Robinson, 2024).

1981

Catherine Mallyon gave the annual Founder's Lecture at St John's in May 2023 where she highlighted the constantly changing tensions that require thoughtful navigation so that people of all ages and backgrounds can be provided with opportunities to experience the arts as widely and as fully as possible.

Dr Henry Reece published his new book *The Fall: Last Days of the English Republic* (Yale University Press, 2024).

1984

Dr Johannes Saltzwedel took early retirement at the beginning of 2022. In 2023 he published a book, *Werthers Welt*, a day-to-day chronicle and intellectual

portrait of the year 1774, when Goethe's seminal novel appeared; under the same title he has also curated a year-long 250th anniversary exhibition in the Goethe Museum in Frankfurt.

1985

Kate Montgomery recently showcased her artwork at 'A Spirit Inside', an exhibition at Compton Verney.

1986

The Revd Canon Dr Terry Clark was installed as an Honorary Canon of Manchester Cathedral.

Dr Nadine Pinede recently published her new novel *When the Mapou Sings* (Candlewick, 2024).

1988

Dr Geoffrey Hudson published his new book *An Accidental History of Canada* (McGill Queen's University Press, 2024).

1989

Dr Kedaar Kale presented 'Recruiting & Mentoring' to the Project Management Institute Melbourne Chapter as part of their Mentoring 2023 Year of Celebration Event.

1991

Sue Day was appointed as Director of Women's Football by the Football Association.

Professor Philomen Probert, Professor of Classical Philology and Linguistics at the University of Oxford, was elected to The British Academy.

1993

Professor Sarah-Jayne Blakemore, Honorary Fellow, was elected as a Fellow of the Royal Society.

1994

Praveen Herat recently published his new book *Between this World and the Next* (Restless Books, 2024).

2002

Carl Baatz and **Emily Rookwood** (2005) are delighted to announce their marriage on 21 December 2023 in Zurich, nineteen years after they first met in Garden Quad.

2003

Dr Sonja Mejcher-Atassi's new book, *An Impossible Friendship: Group Portrait, Jerusalem Before and After 1948*, was recently published with Columbia University Press.

2007

Dr Michael Docherty recently published his new book *The Recursive Frontier: Race, Space and the Literary Imagination of Los Angeles* (State University of New York Press, 2024).

2010

Jack Seddon and **Miles Kellerman** (2013) recently had their joint book, *Into the ether of the state? Legibility Theory and the Cryptocurrency Markets*, published by Cambridge University Press.

2011

Rowland Bagnall published his new book *Near-Life Experience* (Carcenet Press, 2024).

Francis Goodburn was announced as the founding headteacher of the new Aston University Mathematics School.

Dr Sam May was selected as a member of Team UK to compete in the Invictus Games 2025 in Vancouver & Whistler.

Professor Mimi Zou organised a successful event for St John's alumni in Sydney.

2015

Jacob Downs was announced as one of the best early career researchers in the country by the BBC and AHRC.

2016

Francesca Amewudah-Rivers starred alongside Tom Holland in their sold-out reinvention of *Romeo and Juliet*.

2017

Kieran Fitzpatrick realised his first original single. *If This Is A Man* asks how we navigate our feelings in a world that produces so much suffering and about which we can affect so little direct change.

2020

Florina Szabo and **Judit Molnár** were awarded scholarships by the Cambridge–Oxford Alumni Club of Hungary. They received their awards at the Annual Dinner at the Budapest Parliament.





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Oxford

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Visit the Alumni and Benefactors pages at www.sjc.ox.ac.uk

Find details of Oxford University alumni events at www.alumni.ox.ac.uk

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Keep in touch!

Have you recently moved house or changed your email address? Visit <https://www.sjc.ox.ac.uk/alumni/update-your-details-alumni/> to let us know.