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## elcome

#### A new landscape unfolds

Shaking things up is one of the themes of this issue. In the cover story, Oxford mathematician Professor Marcus du Sautoy - well known in print, on the TV and as Simonyi Professor for the Public Understanding of Science - explores the enormous shift underway at Oxford, from the single subject focus that most of us grew familiar with at school, to problem-based research drawing on several subjects at once.

Elsewhere in the same issue, we consider a deep-rooted historical debate about British identity, via genetic mapping; we look at the complex evolution of University finances, and recent innovations in the management of its wealth. We meet novelist Alan Garner, who reflects on his decision to leave Oxford prematurely, and recent Turner Prize-winner Dr Elizabeth Price, an alumna who has returned to the University as a fellow. It is striking how in every story science and technology lap at the shores of the humanities, and vice versa. Although most of us will still remember studying single subjects, there is a noisy and colourful revolution towards inter-disciplinarity. We are in its midst.

On a house-keeping note, please tell us what you think about Oxford Today – there's a reader survey with prizes attached on pp41-42 (online at: www.futuresurvey.com/oxfordtodayfeedback).

Finally, if you haven't yet visited our website you really must. It has evolved greatly even since the last print issue. It has become a dynamic platform for fresh material that you cannot access in print, such as the very popular series of short films we are hosting, about Wytham Woods (p7). Similarly, the full details of our new wine offer and photographic competition (p59) are all online.

**EDITOR: Richard Lofthouse** 

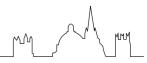


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## FOR

In this issue...

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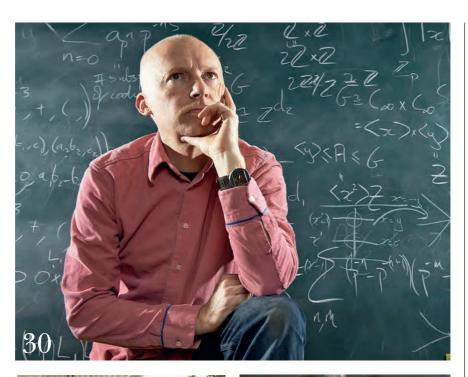
Term 2013

MY OXFORD

Giffords Circus on how her Oxford years were bittersweet

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#### TRINITY HIGHLIGHTS



## **Oxonians**

Tracking the careers of alumni forging their own paths, including Berenika Schmitz.



## Alan Garner

The author of The Weirdstone of Brisingamen on life at Oxford and beyond.



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From being in a pop band to winning the Turner Prize with The Woolworths Choir of 1979.

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Dr Keith Kirby, ecologist (above right) and woodsman Matt Williams (below) – both Wytham wanderers who explain why their woods are a national treasure



## Wytham Woods: exclusive online series

A special *Oxford Today* film series explores
Wytham Woods

Lying west of Oxford and comprising 390 hectares (almost 1,000 acres), Wytham Woods are owned by the University of Oxford and used for environmental research. In a four-part film series, *Oxford Today* tries to capture the magic of the woods by interviewing some of the remarkable characters at work there. 'Woods' actually means a variety of habitats, including ancient semi-natural woodland, secondary woodland and plantations and a variety of ponds.

The site has an exceptionally rich flora and fauna, with more than 500 species of vascular plants and 800 species of butterflies and moths.

Wytham Woods are one of the most researched areas of woodland in the world. Wytham has a wealth of long-term scientific measurement, with bird data dating back for more than 60 years, badger data for more than 30 years and climate change data for the last 18 years. Although the majority of the research activity is Oxford-based, any organisation can utilise the site.

The Laboratory with Leaves is a four-part video series. The fourth and final part will go live at www.oxfordtoday.ox.ac.uk in the first week of May. 

Output

Description:



Oxford Today is now on the iPad. Visit Apple Newsstand to download www.oxfordtoday.ox.ac.uk

## Letters Your correspondence

We welcome letters for publication, but may edit them to fit. Unless you request otherwise, letters may also appear on our website. Write to us at: Oxford Today, University Offices, Wellington Square, Oxford, OX1 2JD

### In response to...

*OT* 25.1: 'Elitism.'

Should universities consider the backgrounds of poorer students?

Your correspondent (Harry Quick, Michaelmas 2012) completely misses the point I made regarding elitism and the disruption of the boat race (Trinity 2012). His confusion seems to lie between academic and financial elitism. Oxford, and other high class universities, exist to create an academic elite and a centre of learning. To achieve and maintain standards requires the selection of the very best students. If financial assistance can be given to our brightest young people from poorer backgrounds (how very welcome is the Moritz donation) we will all benefit from fine minds. Certainly academic standards should never be compromised, but nor should excellent candidates be frightened away by either cost or the thought that "It's too posh for me." I am not interested in making any university an instrument of social policy, but I am interested in getting the best possible students.

The man who swam across the boat race had a very different agenda. He mistakenly believed that Oxford and Cambridge provide an education for the financial elite. Happily he is way behind the times! HARRIET WILSON Somerville, 1969

I grew up in a severely cash-limited working class household in Hackney. My father worked as a 'packer' in the East End rag trade. But



Oxford Today's Michaelmas issue printed two letters on the nature of elitism which have caused a debate

my parents did not suffer from the worst form of poverty – namely poverty of aspiration – and in 1962 I won an exhibition to read modern history at Oxford. Had anyone suggested that the entrance requirements might be lowered simply because of my socio-economic background I would have been deeply insulted and offended.

GEOFFREY ALDERMAK Lincoln, 1962

Why does the University admissions process reveal which sort of school an applicant went to? Why is that not just replaced by a code number? Do that – and stop asking what their parents do for a living and whether they went to university – and there could be no social engineering. ANDREW TUREK Hertford, 1971

1 had no school qualifications on admission to Oxford University. I had studied for two years at Ruskin College for a University Diploma in social studies, and before that had been a shipbuilding shop steward, a community activist and volunteer. After Oxford I went on to be a college principal in Manchester. Harry Quick seems not to understand one of the implications of what being a 'university' means, that it is to do with broadening, widening and deepening; his notion is so narrow. DAVID BROWNING Magdalen, 1973

S Like Andrew Cole (Letters, Michaelmas 2012) I came from modest origins to Hertford, but did not then, and do not now, assume that opportunities to reach Oxford are therefore fair and equal for all, regardless of socio-economic and educational background. It seems important to seek out potential for academic success at Oxford by considering applicants in the round, including not just their high A-level achievements but also the road they have trodden to achieve them. His and my college, and doubtless many other colleges, are putting substantial and increasing time and effort into trying to assess such potential and I hope they will be successful. GORDON DAVY Hertford, 1956

#### Korda

It was interesting to read Michael Korda's memories of Magdalen ("My Oxford", Trinity issue, p66). I'd guess most of his contemporaries remember how his facility in Russian gave him a leading role in welcoming Bulganin and Khrushchev to the college in April 1956. Stalin was dead but the Cold War was well underway and the visit aroused curiosity rather than any enthusiasm. I remember we politely clapped as they went by.

The duo had arrived on a Russian warship which docked in Portsmouth harbour. The mysterious disappearance of Commander Crabb, while apparently investigating the hull of the ship, was perhaps the public's main memory. A headless body was found a year later and the coroner said he was satisfied it was him.

It was a couple of months after the visit that the *Observer* published Khrushchev's denunciation of Stalin. I remember my initial disappointment that Sunday morning in the JCR to find the paper had omitted all their usual articles to make way for the speech. KEITH TUNSTALL *Magdalen*, 1953

#### Moritz

John Garth's piece about Michael Moritz's gift began with a quotation from the donor, "I would not be here today were it not for the generosity of strangers." I can say the same. In my case those strangers were the ratepayers and the taxpayers of my country, whose contributions enabled me, a boy from a low-income, working class household, to enjoy a university education. I applaud Moritz's

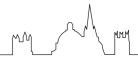
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For full versions of these letters and to read further alumni correspondence, visit www. oxfordtoday. ox.ac.uk



generosity, but I would rather be part of a society in which students from poorer families are supported by the consenting, collective actions of their better off fellow citizens, than one in which they are dependent upon the fortuitous philanthropy of super-rich individuals. JOHN WEEKS Brasenose, 1967

#### Cricket

As Mansoor Ali Khan Pataudi is listed as one of the 'Famous Indian Oxonians' in the Michaelmas Term edition, it is a pity you did not choose to correct the glaring mistake in Francis King's letter in the Trinity edition. To say that: "Since the accident which tragically cost him his eye Tiger struggled against bowling any faster than military medium" is complete bunkum. The whole of Pataudi's distinguished test match career was completed after he lost his right eye. To overcome such a major handicap was an amazing feat. The failure to acknowledge Mr King's error in a year when we have been celebrating men and women's triumphs over disabilities is a sad omission. MICHAEL BURNS Keble, 1976

#### Dons

Reading Noel Annan's The Dons (1999) recently made me reflect how many great dons were around when I was a student, many of them household names: AJ Ayer, Dacre Balsdon, Max Beloff, Isaiah Berlin, Maurice Bowra, Alan Bullock, Lord David Cecil, Richard Cobb, Lord Franks, Helen Gardner, Christopher Hill, Iris

Murdoch, Christopher Ricks, AL Rowse, John Sparrow, Enid Starkie, AJP Taylor, JRR Tolkien, Hugh Trevor-Roper, Francis Warner, RC Zaehner, Theodore Zeldin - to name a few. Charismatic, inspirational, often eccentric and larger than life, their presence gave the university a tremendous sense of vitality and prestige.

I remember as a freshman walking up Parks Road behind Balsdon, Bowra and Berlin, all armed with shooting-sticks and talking brilliantly, and feeling I was at the centre of the intellectual universe. Where are their like today? I can scarcely name any current Oxford dons. Will anyone in 50 years' time think to write a book about the dons GRAHAM CHAINEY Exeter, 1965

#### Cowley

David Datta's letter (OT 25/1) at last answers the question I first posed nearly 50 years ago when I was the Oxford Mail columnist, Anthony Wood. Amused by local organisers' attempts to cash in on the fast-growing iconic status of the term by rechristening their fête a mini-festival, I asked Cowley who had dreamed up the name of their best-selling product, the Mini-Minor. After days of harrying the top brass I was eventually fobbed off with the statement: "Nobody. It was a committee decision." DON CHAPMAN St Catherine's, 1952

#### Degrees for women

I realise this is only a peripheral mention in a letter about something else ("Letters", Trinity issue, p12), but surely Phillida Bunkle knows that

Oxford gave women degrees in 1920 and Cambridge not until 1948! CHRISTOPHER WAIN St Peter's, 1971

#### Aung San Suu Kyi

Thank you for Oxford Today. The article regarding Aung San Suu Kyi is particularly interesting. Since my novel Forgotten Life had extensive passages concerning Burma in it, I sent a copy out to Burma when she was confined to her house. She wrote back, thanking me, saying, "I loved the sex." (One entirely understands.) BRIAN W ALDISS OBE

#### Cherwell

I enjoyed Chris Baraniuk's 'Who Guards the Guardians?' in your Michaelmas issue, and look forward to his book. Lack of space, I expect, meant he wasn't able to give full weight to the fundamental change that took place in Hilary term 1953, when two New College undergraduates, Clive Labovitch and Earl White, purchased Cherwell and transformed it from nondescript magazine to tabloid newspaper. Similarly, although Cherwell journalists' proposal to survey undergraduate sex in 1956 may, as Baraniuk writes, have tickled Fleet Street's palate, that topic had been in the public domain since Norman Longmate (Worcester, 1947) in his 1954 book Oxford Triumphant calculated, on what it would be flattering to term flimsy evidence, that one in three female and one in five male Oxford undergraduates were enjoying active sex-lives; one wonders if Fleet Street's

successors would express a flicker of interest today? This year will mark Cherwell's Diamond Jubilee as a tabloid: those familiar with student journalists confidently anticipate a party of some sort. CSLADEN

Christ Church, 1953; Cherwell, 1954

#### **Indian Oxonians**

A couple of comments on Naomi Canton's interesting article about her contacts with Dr Chandrasekhar. The impression is somehow given that partition was Britain's fault. As in "a small number of older Indians who still resented the British because of the British Rai and partition." Well, I can't speak for the Raj. It happened and I expect history will have a verdict (or several).

As for partition, though, the record needs putting straight. It was not our fault at all. Partition was no part of any British plan for an independent India and no part of the Congress plans either. It was made inevitable by the action of Mohammad Ali Jinnah, who was utterly intransigent in his view that a minority Muslim population could not live in security or equality in what would be a predominantly Hindu state. Whether he was right or wrong we will never know, but Dr Chandrasekhar was quite right in believing that partition was a disaster. Virtually all Indian versus Pakistan troubles stem directly from partition.

I wonder what is taught in Indian and Pakistani schools today? Maybe it is convenient to blame such a huge mess on the departing imperial power. ROY NAPIER Balliol, 1952

## Oxonian News University news



Sir John Bell, Regius Professor of Medicine, opens the Big Data conference

## On the brink of a revolution

The University hosts a landmark conference

Supported by the Li Ka Shing
Foundation, the University joined forces
with Stanford University to host Big
Data: Challenges & Opportunities for
Human Health. The first event of its
kind to be held anywhere, the two day
conference concluded that we are poised
for a revolution in the way society
understands disease and treats patients
in the 21st century.

Big Data merely refers to the burgeoning amounts of data held in a digitised form, ranging from genome sequences to medical records, adverse drug reports, and even social media (see p16). The challenge and opportunity for medical science is to develop a formidable array of new tools to mine the data to ask questions – such as who falls ill and why, and how to prevent their diseases from killing them.

In terms of speed, cost-effectiveness and scope, society has never had this capacity before. The biomedical research community, in conjunction with commercial companies, policy makers and health providers, are already producing new findings in epidemiology, genomics, therapeutic intervention, and drug discovery and development. However, considerable challenges remain, including data quality, analysis, privacy and security, and a regulatory framework that remains in its infancy. ©



## Alumna Elizabeth Price wins Turner Prize

Currently a University lecturer in fine art at the Ruskin School of Drawing and Fine Art, and fellow of Lady Margaret Hall, alumna and video artist Elizabeth Price (Jesus, 1985) landed the Turner Prize in December, one of the art world's most prestigious awards. Her winning video is titled The Woolworths Choir of 1979. During her acceptance speech Price, who attended a comprehensive school in Luton, criticised the withdrawal of state funding for humanities and arts.



#### China Centre begun

Building has begun on the University's China Centre, as depicted above by architect David Morley. When completed in 2014, it will embody yet another example of inter-disciplinary collaboration, as it will comprise more than 40 academics drawn from a wide range of subjects, with common research and teaching interests related to China. The new building, at St Hugh's College, will also provide 63 student bedrooms and additional teaching and conference space.

### 18 Crowd-sourcing public health

See how mobile phone data is helping health workers to track the spread of malaria

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Tell us what you think of *Oxford Today* and enter a prize draw!

#### 22 Oxonians at large

A Soviet-inspired artist, a concert pianist and an energy entrepreneur



## VC warns on public funding

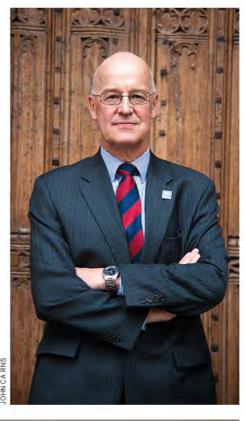
The fall in state funding has caused "anger and sorrow" for the University

Vice-Chancellor Andrew Hamilton announced plans to increase the University's fundraising target from £1.25 billion to £3 billion, while issuing a warning that philanthropy is not to be seen as a substitute for public funding.

Making the announcement during his annual oration in October, he noted that the retreat of state funding from some areas of higher education was "a trend that has caused a great

deal of anger, sorrow and soul-searching."

He said that the notion of private US universities being privately funded was misunderstood in the UK. Around 80% of research income at Harvard is from public sources, he noted, compared to around 40% at Oxford. "Governments can bring to bear resources on a scale that dwarfs every other funding stream, even the most generous philanthropic endowment."



#### Alumnus to lead Bank of England

Mark Carney, Oxonian Governor of the Bank of Canada and current Chairman of the G20's Financial Stability Board, will become the next Governor of the Bank of England. He received a master's degree at St Peter's College and a DPhil in Economics at Nuffield in 1995. He is expected to take up the Governorship, an eight-year term, on 1 July.



Mark Carney (St Peter's 1991)

#### University Church restored

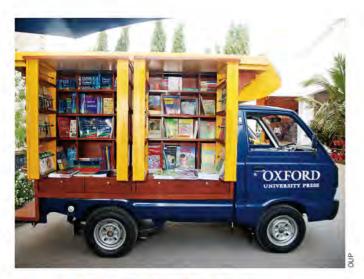
A £5.5m restoration of the University Church has been completed. A major addition is a newly painted celure (decorative ceiling) which recounts a story from the Book of Job. The tower alone receives 300,000 visitors per year.



The University Church, St Mary the Virgin

## S ILLUMINATIO MEA · DOMINUS ILLUN





## **OUP** Pakistan

...celebrates 60 years of publishing there

The University Press marked 60 years of publishing in Pakistan by inaugurating a mobile library (pictured, above). The Oxford Mobile Library is designed to develop a library culture among underprivileged children, many of whom have little access to books. The library aims to get them into the habit of borrowing, reading and caring for books.

OUP's Pakistan branch was established in 1952, within five years of the creation of the country, and today has a head office in Karachi, two regional offices, and a wide network of bookshops spread across the country. It employs more than 300 people and publishes more than 200 titles every year, ranging from school textbooks to academic titles, dictionaries, and reference works.

### Bodley news

Joining forces with Cambridge

As this issue went to press, the Bodleian had just launched its first ever joint fundraising campaign with Cambridge University Library, to acquire the £1.2m Lewis-Gibson Genizah Collection. The collection comprises more than 1700 fragments of Hebrew and Arabic manuscripts, which give invaluable insights in to the history of the Jewish people.

The Bodleian has successfully been awarded a £1.2m grant from the National Heritage Memorial Fund towards the £2.2m needed to acquire

the Personal Archive of William Henry Fox Talbot. Talbot (1800-1877) laid the foundation for modern (pre-digital) photography with his invention of the negative/positive process and was also an outstanding Victorian polymath.

In other news, one of the great jewels of the Bodleian Special Collection, Shakespeare's 1623 First Folio, has been digitised and published online after a £20,000 public appeal. Now the book can be studied without fear of damaging it at http://shakespeare. bodleian.ox.ac.uk



60 seconds with...

### Sir John Gurdon

2012 Nobel Prize winner and Oxonian (Christ Church 1952)

#### How did you first become interested in studying biology?

From an early age I had been fascinated by growing plants and breeding insects, although I was especially interested in developmental biology, rather than genetics. I had to take the entrance exams for Oxford in classics as that is what I had studied at school. But, by that time, I had already decided that I wanted to convert to biological sciences. I knew that I would not have been allowed to study classics at Oxford because my entrance papers were not good enough.

#### You received a poor report from your teacher at Eton, who said it would be a "waste of time" for you to study science. Why did you not thrive at school?

When I was at school, there were no textbooks and I had to learn by taking notes and listening to what the teacher said. Maybe a good teacher tries to find out what interests a student rather than forcing them to learn facts by memory. I am amused to keep my unfavourable school report in my office. It must be one of the best examples of a complete turnaround in the fortunes that can accompany a career in science.

#### What are your current research interests?

My current research interests are the same now as they have been since starting my graduate work in 1956, to understand the mechanisms by which somatic nuclei can be reprogrammed and hence

provide the results that have been the basis of my career. We are try ng to find ways of obtaining embryo cells from the cells of an adult with the aim of provid ng replacement cells of all kinds, starting from easily obtainable cells of an adult individual; for example, to find a way of obtaining spare heart or brain cells from skin or blood cells. I hope to contribute to the eventual understanding of the mechanism of nuclear reprogramm ng, on the grounds that it will surely have some therapeutic benefits.

#### You're 79 and a Nobel Prize winner. Are you not tempted to retire?

If I am fortunate enough to receive funding, I hope I will be able to continue. If I feel that I, or others, have fully understood the mechanisms of somatic cell nuclear reprogramm ng, then that would be a good time to retire. There are a number of problems of interest to me if I no longer have access to a sophisticated laboratory. For example, what is the mechanism by which colour patterns are generated n the development of insects orfish?

#### Are you proud of your legacy and the significance of stem cell research for curing disease in the future?

I never feel I am just "doing my job". The greatest reward for the efforts I have been able to make is that they help us understand how cells and parts of the body work and hence should have therapeutic benefits.



To read more interviews like this (and web exclusives) visit www.oxfordtoday.ox.ac.uk





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## Appointments & awards

The latest awards and honours from across the University

#### Honours and awards New Year Honours

Five academics were recognised:

HEW STRACHAN, Chichele Professor of the History of War and a fellow of All Souls College, was knighted for services to the Ministry of Defence.

CAROL ROBINSON, Royal Society Professor, Dr Lee's Professor of Chemistry and a fellow of Exeter College, was made a DBE for services to science and industry.

**DAVID M CLARK,** Professor of Experimental Psychology and a fellow of Magdalen College, was appointed CBE for services to mental health.

#### RAYMOND DWEK,

Director of the Glycobiology Institute, Emeritus Professor of Glycobiology and an emeritus fellow of Exeter College, was made a CBE for services to UK-Israel scientific collaboration.

#### JUDITH FREEDMAN,

Professor of Taxation Law and a fellow of Worcester College, was made a CBE for services to tax research.

#### CHANCELLOR'S COURT OF BENEFACTORS

In October, a record 16 new members were admitted to the Court in recognition of their generosity to the collegiate University and



University Chancellor Lord Patten shakes hands with Mr Leonard Blavatnik as he receives the sixth Sheldon Medal

Americans for Oxford, Inc. Those admitted were: **DR** PETER J BRAAM, Founder, CEO and Chief Architect of Parallel Scientific; **CAROLINE BUTT, Trustee** of the Calleva Foundation; STEPHEN BUTT, Chairman of Silchester International Investors; MICHAEL DANSON, Executive Chairman of Progressive Digital Media Group; MICA ERTEGUN, Founder of MAC II, a New York city design firm; JULIA HANDS, Chairman and Chief Executive of Hand Picked Hotels; CHRISTOS IOANNOU, an Executive Director of the J&P Group; ALASDAIR LOCKE, Chairman of Hardy Oil & Gas; NICHOLAS NOPS,

an Insurance Analyst with Hampden Agencies Ltd; PATRICK PICHETTE, Chief Financial Officer and Senior Vice-President of Google Inc; TAMAR PICHETTE, a director of Positive Coaching Alliance, a youth sports training organisation; CHRIS ROKOS, a founding partner of Brevan Howard Asset Management; BERNARD SELZ, Managing Partner of Selz Capital LLC; LISA SELZ, Manager of the Selz Foundation; TIMOTHY TACCHI, Senior and Founding Partner of the London-based management fund TT International; and BERNARD TAYLOR, Chairman of Evercore Partners International LLP.

Due to their exceptional support for the University of Oxford, **MICA ERTEGUN** (through Americans for Oxford, Inc.) and **DICKSON POON**, **CBE**, were recognised as new Fellows of the Court.

Membership of the Chancellor's Court of Benefactors stands at more than 190 and the impact of the Court's generosity is felt both in Oxford and around the world.

#### The Sheldon Medal

As part of the annual meeting of the Chancellor's Court of Benefactors, Oxford's highest honour for philanthropy, the Sheldon Medal, was presented to MR LEONARD BLAVATNIK in honour and recognition of his transformative benefaction of £75 million to create the Blavatnik School of Government, Michaelmas term saw the first cohort of Blavatnik Scholars begin their studies and many of them were able to attend the special ceremony to see Mr Blavatnik receive the medal. As Chairman of Access Industries, which he founded in 1986, Mr Blavatnik is a leading global industrialist, with interests in natural resources and chemicals. real estate, and media and telecommunications. This is only the sixth time that the Medal has been presented to an outstanding Oxford benefactor since its inception in 2002. Previous recipients are the late Lord Wolfson, FBA, Chairman of the Wolfson Foundation; Mr Wafic Rida Saïd; Dr James Martin; Mr Michael Moritz and Ms Harriet Heyman; and Lord and Lady Sainsbury of Preston Candover.

#### **Appointments**

#### Zoology

TIM COULSON, Professor of Population Biology at Imperial College London, was appointed Professor of Zoology and became a fellow of Jesus College.

#### Sociology and Social Policy

MARY DALY, Professor of Sociology at Queen's University Belfast, was appointed Professor of Sociology and Social Policy and became a fellow of Green Templeton College.

#### Education

HARRY DANIELS, Professor of Education at the University of Bath, was appointed Professor of Education and became a fellow of Green Templeton College.

#### **Human Resources**

#### **JULIAN DUXFIELD,**

UK and Ireland Human Resources Director at G4S, was appointed Director of Human Resources.

#### Estates

#### PAUL GOFFIN, FRICS,

Director of Estates at the University of Leicester, has been appointed Director of Estates.

#### Genomics and Global Health

#### DOMINIC KWIATKOWSKI,

Professor of Tropical Paediatrics; Director, MRC Centre for Genomics and Global Health, Wellcome Trust Centre for Human Genetics; Honorary Consultant in Paediatrics, Oxford University Hospitals NHS Trust; and Head of the Malaria Programme, Wellcome Trust Sanger Institute, Cambridge, was appointed Professor of Genomics and Global Health and became a fellow of St John's College.

#### Legal Services

ANDREW MACKIE, Partner at Linklaters LLP in New York, Hong Kong and London, was appointed Director of Legal Services and General Counsel.

#### International Law

#### CATHERINE REDGWELL,

Professor of International Law at University College London, has been appointed Chichele Professor of Public International Law and a fellow of All Souls College with effect from 1 September.

#### Visiting **PROFESSORSHIPS** 2012/13

#### George Eastman Visiting Professor

KOFI AGAWU, Professor of Music at Princeton University and Adjunct Professor, University of Ghana, was appointed George Eastman Visiting Professor and became a fellow of Balliol College.

#### Cameron Mackintosh Visiting Professor

#### SIR MICHAEL BOYD,

theatre director and artistic director of the Royal Shakespeare Company from 1996 until September 2012, was appointed Cameron Mackintosh Visiting Professor of Contemporary Theatre. The post is based at St Catherine's College.

#### Harold Vyvyan Harmsworth Visiting Professor of American History

#### **GARY GERSTLE,**

James G Stahlman Professor of American History at Vanderbilt University, USA, was appointed to the Professorship and became a fellow of The Queen's College.







#### Fine Art

JOSEPH KOERNER,

Victor S Thomas Professor of History of Art and Architecture at Harvard University, was appointed Slade Professor of Fine Art. The post is associated with All Souls College.

#### Newton Abraham Visiting Professor

DAN LITTMAN, Martin Kimmel Professor of Molecular Immunology at New York University Medical Center, was appointed Newton Abraham Visiting Professor in Medical, Biological and Chemical Sciences and a fellow of Lincoln College from 1 October 2012 until 31 March 2013.





Clockwise from top left: Joseph Koerner, Mary Daly, Richard Schrock, The Reverend Dr Simon Gaine, Paul Goffin

#### Newton Abraham **Visiting Professor**

#### RICHARD SCHROCK,

Nobel Laureate in Chemistry (2005), Frederick G Keyes Professor of Chemistry at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, was appointed Newton Abraham Visiting Professor in Medical, Biological and Chemical Sciences and a fellow of Lincoln College from 1 April to 30 September 2013.

#### HEAD OF **House**

#### Blackfriars

THE REVD DR SIMON **GAINE**, **OP**, Tutor in Systematic Theology at Blackfriars, was appointed Regent.

CHRDIT, ROB JUDGES, JUSTIN KNIGHT PHOTOGRAPI

## Discovery

Research breakthroughs across the University



## Writing uncovered

The art of deciphering ancient texts using the latest technology

You're looking at an ancient text written in proto-Elamite: the world's oldestknown undeciphered writing system, which was used between 3200 and 3000 BC in what is now Iran. While it shares similarities with archaic Mesopotamian writing, almost 90 per cent of it remains a mystery to scholars. Fortunately, a new high-definition imaging system, known as Reflectance Transformation Imaging (RTI), has been developed by scientists at Oxford and Southampton especially to analyse inscribed artefacts of its type. The device is made up of a dome of 76 lights with a camera at the top. When a specimen is placed at the dome's centre, it is photographed 76 times, with each shot illuminated by just one of the lights. Subsequently, the 76 digital images are merged to deliver researchers with a means of virtually manipulating the light cast on the object.

It allows specialists to pick up subtle clues from the object's surface - and may help solve the riddle of proto-Elamite. "The quality of these new images is simply incredible," explains Dr Jacob Dahl, co-leader of the international Cuneiform Digital Library Initiative and fellow of Wolfson College. "Every time I sit and look at the images from the RTI, I make a new discovery. I've spent ten years trying to decipher the proto-Elamite writing system, but I think we're finally on the point of making a breakthrough." @ http://cdli.ucla.edu



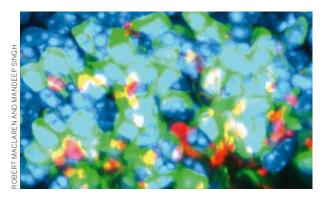
#### Redefining BMI

Professor Nick Trefethen from Oxford's Mathematical Institute is proposing a new formula to calculate Body Mass Index. "Currently, BMI may divide weight by too large a number for short people and too small a number for tall people," he explains. His update to the equation divides a person's weight in kilos by their height in metres raised to the power of 2.5, then multiplies that number by 1.3. The new number may be a better reflection of your health.



#### The planet which has four suns

Amateur astronomers have helped Oxford physicists discover a new planet, called PH1, which is the first known to have four stars. It orbits one pair and another pair revolves around it. The discovery is a result of citizen science project PlanetHunters.org, which lets volunteers help find stellar quirks to enable astrophysicists to identify new planets. "It's fascinating to try and to imagine what it would be like to visit a planet with four suns in its sky," explains Dr Chris Lintott, who leads the team. "But its formation remains a complete mystery to us." www.planethunters.org



## Looking good

Sight restored to blind mice

A team of researchers, led by Oxford's Professor Robert MacLaren, has restored sight to blind mice by injecting new light-sensing cells into their eyes (above, green). The researchers injected "precursor" cells, which over time develop into the retina, into the eyes of mice that could not tell the difference between light and dark. Two weeks later, new retinas had formed and the mice reacted to light. The finding could be used to develop new treatments for humans with eye diseases.



## Dating ballads

Software helps to date illustrations

A team of Oxford English scholars and engineers has developed software to identify the origins of 17thcentury illustrations which accompanied broadside ballads. The ballads - illustrated song-sheets, sold for a penny a time - were pinned on the walls of inns around the UK. Many give no indication of the date they were printed, but the software is allowing researchers to identify and date anonymous prints. The Bodleian Library holds more than 30,000 ballads, from the 16th to the 20th centuries, which can be viewed online. @ http://ballads.bodleian.ox.ac.uk



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without notice at any time on or after your first renewal date.

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## The patterns concealed in digital data

Predicting outcomes using everyday tech

Wireless digital communications buzz around us all the time. But while they're simple personal messages to us as individuals, for scholars across the University they are rich seams of data to be analysed.

Take the work of Professor Bob Snow from the Nuffield Department of Medicine. Based in Nairobi, he seeks to understand the public health burden and spread of malaria - but with little data explaining how people move around the country, it's an uphill struggle. Recently, though, he has worked with colleagues from Harvard to analyse mobile phone data from 15 million people in Kenya to ascertain how humans travel around the country - and how they are likely to contribute to the spread of malaria.

"We've shown that Kenya is so connected by travel that it would be almost impossible to eliminate malaria anywhere," explains Snow. "Having this data has enormous value when in dialogue with politicians who might think elimination is possible."

Elsewhere, Oxford researchers are using similar tricks to map support for future politicians using Twitter - the social network that allows users 140 characters to express their thoughts. By analysing 132,771 tweets mentioning Barack Obama and 120,637 mentioning Mitt Romney, Dr Mark Graham from the Oxford Internet Institute was able to predict Obama's victory in the November 2012 US election. In fact the Twitter analysis predicted a modest 52.4 per cent majority for Obama, while in reality it was 59.5 per cent, but "overall the outcome was accurate", suggests Graham. 🛭 www.kemri-wellcome.org



60 seconds with... Kathy Willis

**Biodiversity Institute Director** and Fellow of Merton College

#### How did you become interested in the study of long-term ecology?

I originally studied a degree in environmental science because I've always been interested in whole organism ecology. Then I did a PhD in plant sciences, looking at plant responses to climate change through time. I became very interested in a discipline known as paleoecology, or long-term ecology, and through that I developed my interest in the dynamics of ecology.

#### How have you found yourself in the Zoology Department?

I was a professor in the Geography Department at Oxford for 10 years and during that time a colleague and I set up the Biodiversity **Conservation Masters** Programme. When the Tasso Leventis chair was advertised, based in Zoology, it offered a fantastic opportunity to set up a Biodiversity Institute, funded by a generous donation from the Oxford Martin School.

#### What is your department working on?

We have three key research themes: ecological and evolution processes responsible for biodiversity; biodiversity technologies; and biodiversity beyond protected areas. In biodiversity beyond protected areas we're looking at where, outside of nature reserves, we need to conserve biodiversity and identifying areas that businesses can safely 'damage'. It's important that we build a dialogue with people in industry.

#### How are you harnessing new technology to protect biodiversity?

We're developing web-based tools to enable people to easily identify the areas of least risk within a granted concession area (e.g. a 20km zone) where they could decide to build their factory or mine. We're finding that companies are coming to us for help with risk assessment now, mainly because of some of the recent high profile natural disasters. Companies are realising that preserving biodiversity is not just a nice 'add-on', but is incredibly important.

#### In what ways is the Institute engaging in interdisciplinary collaboration?

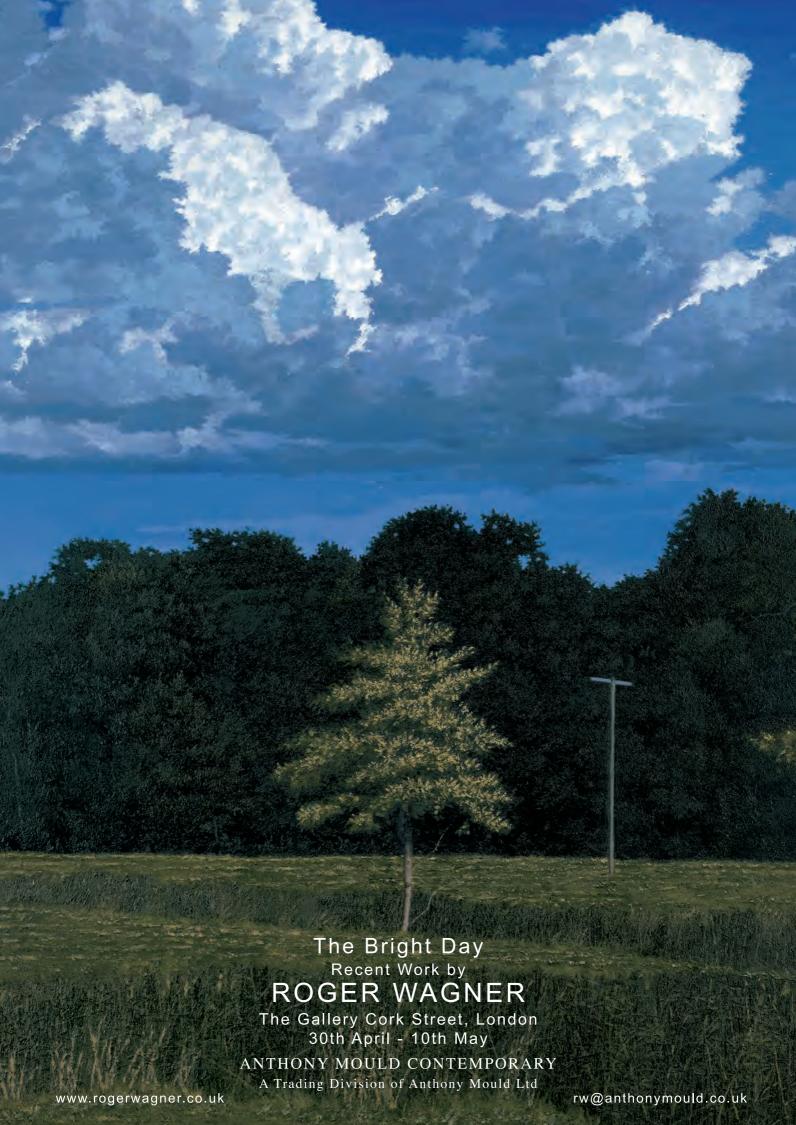
I believe that we have nine disciplines involved in our projects now, from economics to engineering science. For example, we're developing an app that captures sound to determine if there are malaria or dengue-carrying mosquitoes in the area. This will enable us to get a better understanding of the distribution of diseasecarrying insects across these landscapes.

#### In terms of your own pure research, what questions are you hoping to answer?

I'm interested in ultraviolet B (UVB) variations through time and the impact on everything from ecosystem dynamics to genetic variability. Looking into the future, what I'd love to discover is the impact of UVB on the genetic stability of plants and to find out if a rise in UVB is a key driver of plant speciation.



To read more interviews like this (and web exclusives) visit www.oxfordtoday.ox.ac.uk



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## Alumni notices

#### Oxford Alumni Weekend 2013 20-22 September



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How does wear and tear on our bodies lead to cancer? What was life really like for the medieval English nobility? How can we address the challenges of feeding the global population sustainably, healthily and equitably?

The beauty of an Oxford Alumni Weekend lies in inter-disciplinary adventures, challenging discussion and re-engagement with Oxford fellows. Highlights include:

- Exploring 'hidden' Oxford, from the pre-University city to some of its lesser-known pubs.
- Visiting a range of Department Open Houses.
- Learning new skills, from choral singing to conversational Spanish.

To join our mailing list, view the programme and book online (from June), please visit:

www.alumniweekend.ox.ac.uk

Key dates:

Booking opens: 24 June Booking closes: 30 August Weekend: 20–22 September

Follow @OAWeekend on Twitter and use #OAW13

#### Alumni resources



JSTOR Oxford is currently participating in a pilot

project to give alumni access to the JSTOR online journals service. Find out more at

www.alumni.ox.ac.uk/jstor



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www.alumni.ox.ac.uk/oao



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alumni website at: www.alumni.ox.ac.uk



Alumni groups Engage with Oxonians wherever you are,

and whatever your interests, by joining one of the regional, subject or interest based alumni networks. A full list can be found at www.alumni.ox.ac.uk/networks. If you're based in London and a graduate of the last decade you might want to consider joining the Oxford10 group, too: www.alumni.ox.ac.uk/oxford10



You need the number on your **Alumni Card** to register for events,

the email service and for an alumni account. The Card gives you access to colleges and has a range of associated discounts. Find out more at www.alumni.ox.ac.uk/card



**Graduation and MAs** A list of forthcoming degree days can be

found on the University website at www.ox.ac.uk/students/ graduation/ceremonies/dates but whether you still need to graduate for your first degree or want to get your MA, booking is via your college.

### **Bulletin Board**

#### You spoke, we listened

Thank you to everyone who responded to our 2012 Alumni Survey. Visit www.alumni.ox.ac. uk/2012survey for the key findings, as well as information on how we're planning to respond to the results.

#### Update your details

One of the key findings from our alumni survey was a greater desire for more targeted communications. So that we can make sure that we only send you information you want to receive, please register or log on to the alumni website to update your interests, and to set

your communications preferences. www.alumni.ox.ac.uk/account

#### Alumni groups

Oxford boasts a significant network of alumni branches spanning the globe – some run in conjunction with Cambridge.
Collectively, they host a diverse programme of events, enabling alumni to remain engaged with the University beyond their studies at Oxford. The latest additions to our ever-expanding network are:

#### **Dublin: Niamh Fawl**

(St Anne's, 2006) dublin@ousoc.oxon.org Latvia: Carl Bredberg (Linacre, 2005) carlbredberg@yahoo.se

#### Bulgaria: Rossitsa Bolgurova

(Templeton, 2005) oxbridgebulgaria @gmail.com

#### Malta: Anthony Ghirlando

(St Peter's, 2007) anthony@ mediterragroup.com

#### Vietnam: Huong Ngo

(The Queen's College, 2010) ngothanhhuonghn @gmail.com

## Oxonians at large

What Oxonians are doing in the world. Words by Lindsey Harrad



## Musical youth

Working to bring music to a new generation

#### Berenika Schmitz

Christ Church 2007

In a unique position as both artistic and executive director of her own orchestra (the Dana Point Symphony, California) Berenika Schmitz has the rare combination of leadership skills and creative talent. An innovative curator of the orchestra's programming, she's also an accomplished concert pianist. During her time at Oxford reading for an MPhil in EU cultural policy, she knew she wanted to do more to foster a love of the arts in others. "The highlight of my time at the University was a performance I gave with the Oxford Philomusica at the Sheldonian," she says. "But even then

influential people around me felt that I was capable of taking a leadership role."

Currently Berenika holds one of ten coveted nine-month paid fellowships at the DeVos Institute of Arts Management at the Kennedy Center in Washington. "The sheer magnitude of the programming here makes this one of the most prestigious opportunities in the arts in the country," says Berenika. "I'm based in the marketing department at the moment. We're working on making our programming more accessible to the 18-30 age group, which is a particular passion of mine. Young people have a lot to say and we need to create exciting events that will speak to them." @ www.danapointsymphony.com



Fashion Station Amy Anderson University 1999

After graduating in Fine Art, Amy Anderson went on to build a hugely successful jewellery and accessories business called Comfort Station, which shows at Paris Fashion Week and is stocked in shops including Selfridges in London. Anderson designs it all and everything is made in a studio below her shop in Shoreditch, East London, by her and a team of three others.

But is what she sells art? "That's a loaded question," she laughs. "I wouldn't say it's art. But it's certainly conceptual. The thoughts and ideas behind it are important to me. All the jewellery is concept-based as opposed to being pretty.'

www.comfortstation.co.uk



#### **Talking** points **Emily Kasriel** Jesus 1985

While researching her geography dissertation, Emily Kasriel lived in a remote Israeli Druze village to explore the tensions within the community. After graduating, she took up a Rotary Fellowship studying International Relations in the USA before returning to work with the BBC World Service.

In 2008, Emily launched *The Forum* programme. The show brings together commentators from different disciplines and cultures, combining a Nobel Prize-winning scientist with a poet and a historian, for example. "I believe there is far too much thinking in silos, and I get moved when there is a genuine exchange of ideas," Emily says.

www.bbcworldservice.com

We welcome suggestions from alumni for these pages. Please send details to the Editor at oxford today@admin. ox.ac.uk



## Sustainable skills

Helping to fund community energy projects

**Emily Mackay** Jesus 2003

For Emily Mackay, reading music at Oxford proved the perfect platform for developing the problemsolving and research skills she would need to launch Microgenius, the UK's first and only web platform to specialise in community shares in sustainable energy. "I discovered it wasn't possible to install solar panels on our roof, so I looked online for alternative investment opportunities," she says. It's a growing market, with more community energy projects launching all over the UK, and a new dedicated government unit focusing on this sector. "Within two years I've won the CEDAR Enterprise Fellowship, an UnLtd Millennium Award, been shortlisted for two other awards and invited to Whitehall, all while juggling young motherhood and a consultancy job. It's been quite a rollercoaster!" @

## For Russia with love

The artist inspired by Soviet history

#### Janet Treloar Somerville 1961

Eight years ago, a trip to Russia sparked a creative connection with the Russians' experiences during the Second World War for Cornish watercolour artist Janet Treloar. "I grew up in the Cold War era and for the first time I started to understand what had happened in Russia in the earlier war years," she says. "I produced a series of paintings in the middle of winter. I responded to the cold and severity of the country."

Although Janet read geography at Somerville, she admits to being "terribly bored" by the subject and

often wished she had switched to history. She eventually turned to painting, an interest that became a profession. Historical themes have often influenced her work, but Janet, who served six years as vice-president of the Royal Watercolour Society, discovered an affinity with Russian culture and landscape. "I felt very at home there," she says. "I hope that after my paintings have been exhibited at London's Russian Embassy as part of the commemoration of the Battle of Stalingrad, the collection may find a permanent home with the Scotland-Russia Forum in Edinburgh. These paintings are my way of saying thank you to the Russian people." ©



## 'These are concerts which change one's perception of music and enrich it beyond measure'

There surely can be few greater musical pleasures than listening to music in the places most closely associated with the composer or the first performance.

Hearing the music of Bach in the very towns and churches where he lived and worked, or the finest religious music of Spain and England in such glorious venues as Seville Cathedral or York Minster – these are just some of the memorable and moving experiences you can expect to have if you join a Martin Randall Travel Music Festival.

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The audiences on our festivals number no more than two hundred and are formed of participants who take a package which includes access to all the private concerts, accommodation, flights from the UK and transfers, meals with wine, talks by a musicologist, tips and much else besides.











#### The Johann Sebastian Bach Journey

7–13 July 2013 • 8 concerts including Pieter Wispelwey in Mühlhausen, Freiburg Baroque Orchestra in Leipzig's Town Hall, Cantus Cölln in the Schloss at Weimar, Himlische Cantorey and Musica Alta Ripa in the church in Dornheim where J.S. Bach was married. Talks by Sir Nicholas Kenyon.

#### The Danube Music Festival

16–23 August 2013 • 9 concerts, among them Angelika Kirchschlager in Schloss Eckartsau, The Wihan Quartet in the Primatial Palace in Bratislava, The Austro-Hungarian Haydn Philharmonic in Vienna's Palais Ferstel.



#### The Rhône Music Festival

17–24 October 2013 • 8 concerts to include Le Concert Spirituel in the Chapelle de la Trinité Lyon, Ensemble Gilles Binchois in the Papal Palace in Avignon, Tenebrae in Viviers Cathedral.

#### English Music in Yorkshire

22–27 September 2013 • Among the 11 concerts: Mark Padmore and Britten Sinfonia at Castle Howard, Ben Johnson at Duncombe Park, the Cardinall's Musick in York Minster.

## THE THOMAS TALLIS TRAIL

1–3 November 2013 • Five concerts with the Tallis Scholars, to celebrate their 40th anniversary. Concerts in Canterbury Cathedral, the Chapel Royal at Hampton Court, Dover Priory, St Mary at Hill (London) and Waltham Abbey.

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## University Voice

## **William James** on providing for the University's future during tough times



Professor William James Pro-Vice Chancellor (Planning and Resources)

t can be hard to discern the ebbing of the tide as one watches the waves breaking on the shore, but where state funding of universities is concerned, the tide is well and truly going out.

Between the mid-nineteenth century and the 1920s, successive parliamentary

and the 1920s, successive parliamentary commissions of enquiry into the finances and organisation of Oxford and Cambridge recommended increasing grants of government aid in return for much-needed internal reform and modernisation. The decisive moment was the creation in 1919 of the University

Grants Committee, whose remit, scope and size grew enormously over the next 50 years. The rising tide of government support carried

many of us into higher education in the 1970s, but since then it has turned.

The renewal and replacement of our physical infrastructure, including buildings, equipment and latterly IT systems, was something the UGC (then the UFC, now HEFCE) provided for with capital grants calculated by them to be adequate. Although this system "wobbled" in the early 1980s, it was a fairly dependable part of our funding environment.

Until, that is, it was cut by nearly three-quarters last year.

It is unlikely that the cut will be reversed. If the University is to continue to flourish, rather than decline, the necessary funds for capital investment must be found from elsewhere.

Accordingly, we have developed a strategy that recognises the need for the University to generate a sufficient surplus from its operations that, when taken together with grants and philanthropic donations, will enable us to sustain our academic goals for the long term.

Generating a surplus means adopting a new attitude. It is no longer responsible just to achieve "break-even". Rather, responsible custodianship of the University means that we must achieve a minimum cash surplus of five per cent. Last year we achieved this for the first time, but maintaining it will be tough. Over the last three years, we have held our administrative and support costs flat in cash terms, and are continuing to apply three per cent efficiency gains in coming years. In academic departments and faculties, we are achieving better value for money by sharing equipment and facilities, and by negotiating University-wide purchasing deals. We are developing more rigorous processes for devising and evaluating capital proposals

If the University is to continue to flourish, the necessary funds for capital investment must be found from elsewhere

to get the maximum academic gain on our investment.

On the income side, our investment professionals are generating sustainable returns on our endowment that have enabled us to increase our draw-down rate by 25 basis points (see p34), and our researchers have secured increases in grant funding in a declining market.

Naturally, philanthropy is also at the centre of our plans. We have set ourselves the target of raising £3 billion in the re-launched Oxford Thinking Campaign. These are turbulent times, but if we can achieve our ends I am confident that the University will be stronger, that its voyage of discovery is set fair.  $\odot$ 



## WHAT MAKES THE BRITISH?

An extraordinary DNA project run by Oxford scientists has mapped out the DNA of the Peoples of the British Isles – **Judith Keeling** explains

hat makes us
British? Do the
English, Welsh,
Irish and Scots
have much in
common at all?
And how different are we from our

European neighbours?

These topical questions – hot potatoes in political debates ranging from potential Scottish independence to Britain's role in the European Union - have now also been probed at the most fundamental level of all in ground-breaking research by an eminent team of Oxford researchers. The team, led by Oxford geneticist Professor Sir Walter Bodmer, has conducted a detailed and wide-ranging study of the genetic make-up of the Peoples of the British Isles (PoBI). Fascinatingly, their findings show that most people living in the British Isles are fundamentally extremely similar, genetically-speaking at least.

Where small, but marked, DNA differences do exist the researchers found they naturally clustered geographically – long predating the invention of county boundaries – despite the fact that analysis of the results took no account of where the samples had originated. Moreover, genetically speaking the average Briton has a great deal more in common with our French and German partners in Europe than some might currently like to think.

"It was always intended that we would look in some detail at the potential genetic differences to be found in the people of the British Isles because no survey like this had ever been done before," says Professor Peter Donnelly, Director of the Wellcome Trust Centre

(left to right) Professor Peter J Donnelly, Professor Mark Robinson and Sir Walter Bodmer on the Corpus Christi College Anglo-Saxon earthern rampart to the original city wall, adjacent to Christ Church chapel for Human Genetics and professor of statistical science at Oxford. Donnelly led the application of the sophisticated statistical techniques used to tease information out of the vast body of data collected. He also led the analysis of the results.

Effectively, after a five-year research programme involving nearly 4,000 blood samples from around the British Isles, the PoBI team produced a sort of DNA equivalent of the Domesday Book for the new millennium – a detailed genetic inventory of exactly what makes up the British.

The profound implications of the Oxford team's work for future medical research are obvious. Data obtained from the PoBI research, funded by the Wellcome Trust, effectively forms a 'control' sample that can be used in

#### 'I feel we've produced something of major significance and will stimulate much debate'

the future to compare against the DNA composition of people suffering from a range of diseases from diabetes to cancer. "By obtaining a good genetic definition of the British population, this can be used in future research into the genetic components of susceptibility to a number of diseases," explains Bodmer. But the PoBI genetic mapping project has also yielded highly significant results for archaeologists, with one leading Oxford archaeologist hailing it as "the most exciting discovery in Anglo-Saxon history in the past ten years."

The analysis of the PoBI data has, says Professor Mark Robinson, helped to conclude one of the most fiercely debated questions in Anglo-Saxon history: what happened to the native Romano-British population when the Angles, Saxons and

Jutes invaded following the fall of the Roman Empire in Britain?

Archaeological evidence from sources such as pottery fragments suggest that the Romano-Britons (the population left living in the UK when the Romans left) were virtually extinguished and replaced by the Anglo-Saxons in a short space of time. But what really happened?

"Genetical evidence such as this gives us information about what happened to the whole population – the small man, not just the leaders and the elites that history and archaeology tend to focus on," says Bodmer.

There have been a number of theories over the years as to what happened to the Romano-British population, says Robinson, an environmental archaeologist. One is that the Romano-British population was physically driven westwards to Cornwall and Wales out of the south-eastern and central portion of Britain which had been colonised by the Romans. "It has also been suggested that a small Anglo-Saxon elite arrived that somehow persuaded the Romano-British population to adopt their culture, customs and language," says Robinson. Other theories have involved a virtual genocide of the Romano-Britons by the invading Anglo-Saxons.

However, the PoBI evidence points firmly to a large influx of Anglo-Saxon DNA but also the presence in modern descendants of a substantial amount of an 'ancient British' DNA which most closely matches the DNA of modern inhabitants of France and Ireland.

This led the researchers to conclude that there had been an intermingling between the existing Romano-British population and the newcomer Anglo-Saxons, rather than a full-scale population wipe-out.

So how did the Oxford researchers arrive at their results? One key element of the project's success was its painstaking collection of samples. These were

POBI map of UK, created by Dr Stephen Leslie, showing the genetic clustering of individuals: big variations are at the periphery

taken from volunteers living in rural areas where all four grandparents had been born in the same area. This ensured that the samples were more likely to be locally representative. Effectively, the data gave an accurate picture of the genetic makeup of rural Britain in around 1880, before the wide-scale population movements of the 20th century or, more recently, immigration from other countries. "In order to really understand the British population genetically, you can't just go into the high street and look for someone who says they are British. You need to be more specific about where you look," says Bodmer.

Another vital point was the team's ability to measure a large amount of genetic material from each sample. More than 670,000 positions in the genome of each individual were measured and evaluated by Donnelly and his team in order to produce a precise picture of that person's genetic make-up. Sophisticated statistical techniques were then applied to sift and analyse the relevant data from this vast body of information.

The volunteer samples were analysed for ways in which their DNA was similar to each others'. They were then grouped according to their genetic similarities. The final results were then laid on top of a map of the British Isles... with astounding results.

"It is simply not the case that we have seen what we expected to see," says Robinson. "I feel we've produced something which is of major significance and will stimulate much debate."

"Broadly speaking, people look very similar to each other at the DNA level from one end of the UK to the other, so the differences we found were subtle but nonetheless real," says Donnelly. "However, we were struck by how clear the patterns of regional differences were, by how people had stayed in their geographic regions. Clearly, in some areas there had been quite a bit of isolation and relatively little intermarriage over the years."

When the data was first split, into two groups, it was the inhabitants of Orkney who were most different from the rest of the British Isles.

The researchers continued to break down the data, using increasingly fine distinctions between the samples. Wales broke away, then Cornwall and Devon; the Welsh borders separated from Wales, and Northern Ireland formed a group with north western Scotland; Northern England also split away.

By the final analysis, there were 17 cluster groups (see map) with north and south Wales showing two very separate clusters. There were also two distinct groups in the Orkney Islands. But by far the biggest homogeneous region was a large swathe of southern and central England (pictured in red on the map). The researchers then compared their PoBI results with DNA data from 7,000 people in Europe to try to trace the ancestry of the British DNA.

It was clear that the Orkney islanders had Norwegian ancestors, while the red central and southern English cluster had the largest Belgian, Danish and German contribution (relating to the Anglo-Saxon invasion and perhaps later supplemented in places by the Vikings). The Cornish and Welsh had more similarity with the modern French, while people in Northern Ireland and Western Scotland have substantial common Irish ancestry.

"We can see clear signs of certain patterns which are present in the DNA of samples from all over the British Isles – this means that they are likely to be very old, and is what we have termed the ancient British DNA," says Donnelly. Researchers agree that the DNA evidence fits the known colonisation patterns of early settlers to the British Isles after the Ice Age between 9,600 and 8,000 BC. The first settlers made their way across to the warming tundra that was then the British Isles from North-West Europe via the land bridge that still attached the UK to the area that is now the Low Countries.

Others came by boat from the Atlantic coast of France to the western side of England and Wales and Ireland. This is clearly reflected in the similarities to French and probably Belgian DNA in southern and central England, and the increased level of western French DNA in Cornwall and Wales. So our ancient British DNA has deep roots on the continent – and particularly in France. For the large section of the population living in the red section of southern and central England, their DNA contained substantial contributions from both the ancient British and the Anglo-Saxons. It is this that has led the researchers to conclude that although the Romano-British people were certainly overwhelmed by a large influx of Anglo-Saxons, they were not annihilated by them, but married and mixed with the newcomers.

Equally it's clear from the PoBI results that both the Roman and Norman invasions left relatively little genetic trace in Britain, being restricted to a relatively small number of elite rulers.

"One of the most rewarding aspects of this project has been the way that academics from different departments of the university – geneticists, statisticians and archaeologists – have collaborated and pooled their expertise," says Robinson.

But the researchers are far from resting on their laurels. Bodmer and Donnelly are now involved in a new project to understand exactly how our genes control the make-up of our facial features. Could this, for instance, lead to police giving out descriptions of wanted individuals based on DNA samples from crime scenes? "It's possible, in the very distant future, I suppose," says Donnelly, "but we're really a very long way from that at the moment."

Meanwhile, back in the archaeology department, there are plans to compare the modern PoBI findings with ancient DNA samples from skeletal remains in Anglo-Saxon graveyards. "I believe that this will back up our interpretations... but if it doesn't, well, that's how progress is made," says Robinson.

And there's also much more work to be done in understanding the DNA make-up of European populations and to extend the PoBI research to southern Ireland. One thing's for sure, however: and that's that after the conclusions of this project are finally published, many areas of academic research will never be the same again. 

Output

Description:

Judith Keeling is a freelance writer and editor contributing to a wide range of national newspapers and magazines. She is editor of Oxfordpeople, an interactive community website.

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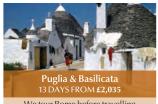
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Mathematician Marcus du Sautoy considers how many of the problems being addressed by academics are no longer amenable to a single subject focus

few months after I took up my chair as the Simonyi Professor for the Public Understanding of Science I got a phone call from a journalist. "The Nobel Prize for Medicine was announced this morning for the discovery of telomeres. I wonder if you could explain what a telomere is?"

I am a mathematician. Sequences of nucleotides at the ends of chromosomes are not my usual poison. Of course the title of my Chair does give journalists the impression that I might be able to explain the whole of science. I guess the last person who was able to do that was probably living in the nineteenth century.

Shortly after that phone call, the BBC asked me to make a programme about consciousness for them. Again my first reaction was: "But I'm a mathematician." Yet when I began to think about the subject matter, I realised that it's far from clear in whose domain a subject like consciousness lies. Philosophy, neuroscience, psychology, physics, biology, chemistry - even maths. The conclusion I came to at the end of making the programme was that it lies in all of them. Rather like the brain which shows extraordinary integration to create that sense of one identity out of many millions of neurons, the way to crack the big problems is not to use ideas from a single discipline, but to integrate modes of thinking from across disciplines.

One of the joys of my job as Professor for the Public Understanding of Science has been the chance to stick my head out of the world of mathematics and find out what is going on in the other subjects that surround me in the University Science Area. It's an increasing revelation across the academic world that many of the problems we

are trying to crack are not amenable any more to a single subject focus. Traditionally the picture of a university looked like a collection of isolated silos: the chemistry department here, the maths department over there. The truth is that increasingly the picture of the research being done looks more like some intricate Venn diagram of intersecting disciplines. Mathematical biology. Computational chemistry. The physics of finance. This interplay between subjects is absolutely necessary if we are going to tackle such complex problems as climate change, virus spread, economic stability and population growth. This is the motivation for the creation of bodies like the Santa Fe Institute or the Oxford Martin School that have championed this multi-disciplinary approach to the problems of the twenty-first century.

Even questions that don't at first sight have an obvious multi-disciplinary nature could equally benefit from discussions with those in the department across the street. The low-lying fruit probably exists in learning the language spoken by another department and applying it to the problems in your own field. I have seen how an economist who learnt gauge theory from a physicist, a mathematical language to describe the dynamics of elementary particles, was able to apply this new language to model the rate of change of inflation, a notoriously difficult problem given that the basket of goods you're trying to track changes with time as do the prices of the goods. But the breakthrough came only as a result of two previously alien cultures finding a common language of discourse.

In my own area of research, number theory, the most exciting progress on the Riemann Hypothesis, the great unsolved problem of mathematics, came from a chance meeting of a mathematician and a physicist over tea. That conversation led to the discovery that energy levels in large atoms like uranium have very similar patterns to certain

Professor Marcus du Sautoy stands beneath one of the atria in the new Mathematical Institute



The £70m Mathematical Institute, part of a £200m redevelopment

ways of looking at prime numbers. That in turn has provided our best clue yet that it is the mathematics that underpins quantum physics which might be the right tool to tackle the Riemann Hypothesis.

Despite the exciting new bridges being built, we still have a long way to go in breaking down the silo mentality traditionally found in universities. When I started as the Professor for the Public Understanding of Science, one of the missions I set myself was to get people from different scientific disciplines in the university talking to each other, finding out each other's research problems, and seeing if they might be sitting on tools in their own disciplines that might help others. I was amazed, talking to scientists, at how many had never set foot in each other's buildings. An astronomer who visited me declared, "This is the first time I've been in the Mathematical Institute." We're physically so close that I can see his office from my office window. Yet academically, it seems like we were on opposite sides of the universe.

To try to counter this, I piloted a series of podcasts that successfully brought experts together to share their stories in a Radio 4, Start the Week-type package. It is a project that I believe has the potential to provide a powerful vehicle for facilitating inter-disciplinary dialogue.

Of course this compartmentalisation of subjects has its origins in the traditional model of education in schools. Pupils go from a history lesson to a maths lesson to a music lesson to a physics lesson and are barely aware that the subjects they have just been studying have any connection with each other. One of the reasons I made the BBC documentary The Story of Maths was to make the important connection between mathematics and history. Most people's impression of mathematics is that it is a subject that was handed down in some great text book from the sky, that it's always existed and is a finished subject. I think Fermat's Last Theorem, for most, was exactly that – the last theorem. Maths has now been finished.

Profitable connections needn't just be between traditional academic subjects. Complicite's awardwinning play A Disappearing Number brought the worlds of theatre and mathematics together in a piece that surprised many who came to see it. I spent many sessions with the company exploring the mathematics at the heart of the play, the mathematics that grew out of the relationship between English mathematician GH Hardy and Indian mathematician Srinivasa Ramanujan. The

surprise for me was that it wasn't just my mathematics that was stretching the actors creatively; the questions posed by the actors in turn pushed me mathematically, making me see my own subject in a new light.

As part of the project we developed a series of workshops for teachers to explore the ideas at the heart of the play. The drama teachers are all big fans of Complicite, internationally recognised as one of the greatest theatre companies in the world. So when we advertised the workshops they all ran to sign up immediately. But we made it a condition of the workshop that each drama teacher had to come with a maths teacher. For many the common-room conversation about the workshop was the first time the drama teacher had ever talked to the maths teacher. The workshops had the effect of creating a new bond between two departments in school that had previously not seen any link.

It is one of many stories that have contributed to my belief that the best education would be one where we tore down the walls between classrooms and taught education in a more holistic way. Of course in some ways that is what Oxford has been doing for centuries. The college system has always been about cross-subject dialogue. As an undergraduate at Wadham, I sat with my fellow students talking about Derrida and deconstructionism, the poetry of Omar Khayyam, the philosophical ideas of Karl Popper, and into this mix it was my place to explain mathematics' important place in this intellectual melting pot. Part of the reason I was drawn to the Professorship for the Public Understanding of Science is that I've been practising it ever since I came up to Oxford as an undergraduate.

#### 'The best education would be one where we tore down the walls between classrooms and taught education in a more holistic way'

One of the many joys of being a professor in New College is the continuation of those inter-disciplinary discussions, finding myself sitting next to fellows from such different disciplines and sharing ideas, stories, problems. This summer the mathematics department moves into its beautiful new building on the Radcliffe Infirmary site. The building aims to create not just a place to facilitate conversations between mathematicians, but to invite dialogue with the many people we hope will pass through its doors from beyond the world of mathematics.

The building is part of a larger project in the University – not only to facilitate the chance cup of tea between researchers within the University in seemingly unrelated fields, but to create bridges between the laboratory and the art gallery, the lecture theatre and the factory, the university library and the corridors of Westminster. The more we learn to speak each other's languages, ask each other new questions, the more hope there is of finding the answers to the problems that have stubbornly eluded previous generations. @

Marcus du Sautoy OBE (Wadham, 1983) has been the Simonyi Professor for the Public Understanding of Science since 2008. A fellow of New College, and winner of the 2001 Berwick Prize of the London Mathematical Society, he regularly writes for The Times, The Guardian and The Daily Telegraph. He is a member of the University's Mathematical Institute and is a Senior Media Fellow of the EPSRC.



The Mathematical Institute is adjacent to the Radcliffe Observatory



# THE MONEY QUESTION

**Richard Lofthouse** looks at the financial history of the University and its current wealth management

ad the collegiate universities of Oxford and Cambridge managed their 19th- and 20th-century wealth brilliantly, instead of adequately, might they have retained their independence from government interference? It is a question commonly asked by alumni. And, like the referendum on British membership of the European Union, it opens a can of worms. Yet the question, like the referendum, has acquired an unstoppable momentum. It demands answers,

if only because the rate of government interference in academic matters has gone up in recent years, while the public funding of higher education has gone down.

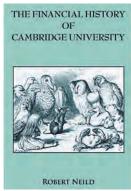
We could christen this situation the Neildian Paradox, after Professor Robert Neild, Professor Emeritus of Economics, Trinity College Cambridge. Wanting to explore the recent paradox of higher political interference in academic matters, yet reduced funding, he has published an elucidative and wryly amusing book, *The Financial History of Cambridge University* (2012).

We travel over to Cambridge to talk directly to Neild, realising that the original question has already been complicated by the paradox. If there was a straight line between levels of wealth and academic independence, then the Neildian Paradox could not exist.

Yet Neild's own college, Trinity, is a reminder that astute wealth management can pay academic dividends. The richest college in Oxbridge by a long margin (endowment c.£900 million), Trinity has room for manoeuvre. Where public funding is pressured, it can replenish from its own sources. This alone lessens the sting of interference.

Asked about his 'paradox', Neild immediately furnishes a powerful clue. When writing his book, he notes, "I was amazed at the generosity of the state in the years following 1945, when funds for higher education ran far ahead of any other state funding." During this 'golden age', roughly the years 1945-1970, there was abundant government money and very little political interference. The





Robert Neild in his rooms at Trinity College, Cambridge. (above) Neild's recent publication, which is full of humanity and humour as well as economic analysis

outperforming Oxford because they had unified endowments, and economies of scale that individual colleges could not replicate. One result has been the creation by the bursar of St Catherine's College, Dr Fram Dinshaw, of an innovative cross-college investment vehicle called Oxford Investment Partners in 2005.

"It was a disintermediation strategy partly," recalls Dinshaw. "We thought, why pay Goldman Sachs for something we could manage at lower cost ourselves?" Secondly, it was an intricate strategy modelled in some respects on Yale University's endowment, involving high levels of diversification in order to measure the historical return of equities but without the volatility. It has grown well, and today manages about £650 million, approximately a third of it invested by five Oxford colleges, the rest managed on behalf of pension funds.

Bigger still is Oxford University Endowment Management (OUEM), which by the end of 2011 had £1,419.6 million under management, drawn from 23 investors across the collegiate University. OUEM is a regulated investment management firm set up in 2007 to manage the Oxford Funds. The chief investment officer of the Funds is Sandra Robertson, and OUEM is not a department of the University, but a collegiate entity.

There is an immediate historical context to the creation of OUEM, plus (inevitably) a deeper one. Sir Alan Budd, former chair of the central University's investment committee, recommended a more professional approach to the management of the University's endowment, which had grown to over £500 million by the end of the last century (approximately £700 million today).

Non-collegiate University investors have no access, part of the point being to align the two main funds - Endowment and Capital - with the specific needs of the collegiate University. This is a major advance over banks whose sole loyalty is to their shareholder base, and another example of a disintermediation strategy. Next, and a key reason why some US universities historically outperformed Oxbridge, the Endowment Fund includes scope for private investments - private equity - that can take years to come good but may permit a far larger return than conventional instruments.

Robertson commands a team of 14 and has so far favoured natural resources and emerging markets, although avoids cluster bomb and land mine manufacturers in accordance with an overseeing investment committee who in turn report to the Trustee of the Funds, the University Council. So far, the Endowment Fund has slightly outperformed its benchmark index, while the shorter term, more liquid Capital Fund has slightly lagged, in both cases defying the whipsaw volatility of the past four years and preventing a drop in income by investors.

The main point, however, is that the many gifts given to the University are now being managed professionally in a pool large enough to be efficient. Or as the bursar of Wadham puts it,

Neildian Paradox but reversed, and an academic cipher for Harold Macmillan's 1957 quip, "Let us be frank about it: most of our people have never had it so good."

It should be added for good measure that prior to 1917, when Oxford received no state grant, it did not follow that the government remained aloof. There were three Royal Commissions dating from the mid-1800s, and they all got into fisticuffs with Oxbridge over tricky matters such as governance. However, in academic matters - Neild is very emphatic here - it was an unwritten rule that the government had no voice whatsoever, something that is no longer true.

Of course, Neild is primarily concerned with Cambridge, but the lessons apply also to Oxford. Like so many other alumni, academics and students, he wonders whether there will be a greater sense of rapprochement between University and government in the future, returning matters to their 'normal', or at least pre-1945, broadly non-paradoxical state. This would be consistent with the tripling of student fees, which according to some estimates returns Oxbridge to an incomesplit comparable to the late inter-war years.

Excellent wealth management forms part of the picture. On this subject (this refers to both the University endowment and the endowments of some colleges) there have been striking recent innovations that are already yielding results. For example, the early years of this century saw a view emerge among some bursars that some American university endowments were far



The Oxford University **Endowment Management** (OUEM) team, including Sandra Robertson, **Chief Investment Officer** (far left) and Chloe Beeby, investment analyst and alumna (Exeter, 2005)

from a college perspective, OUEM "gives the College a relatively cost-efficient means of investing in a wide spectrum of asset classes."

OUEM has not yet been a springboard to Trinity-like levels of wealth. Over such a short span of time, it could not have been. Yet the Endowment Fund paid out a £41million dividend in 2011, allowing increased drawdown by the University (see p25), and thus a valuable contribution to the University's activities. These matters of investment might seem terribly remote from educational opportunity and the provision of hardship funds, student scholarships, and the like, but actually they stand in direct relation to each other.

Seen historically, one of the reasons why OUEM was set up only in 2007 was because until then the University's own endowment, as distinct from that of the colleges, had remained relatively small. This is why Neild's history of Cambridge's finances begins in the mid-nineteenth century. Before then, he notes early on, it scarcely had a financial history - the University was the sum of its colleges and little more. Oxford was much the same.

Oxbridge had become a "quasi-monastic backwater", says Neild, and was in grave danger of sliding into indifference, lacking the departmental focus and capital intensive equipment needed to compete in all manner of subjects already being avidly pursued by other nations (and indeed other universities in the UK).

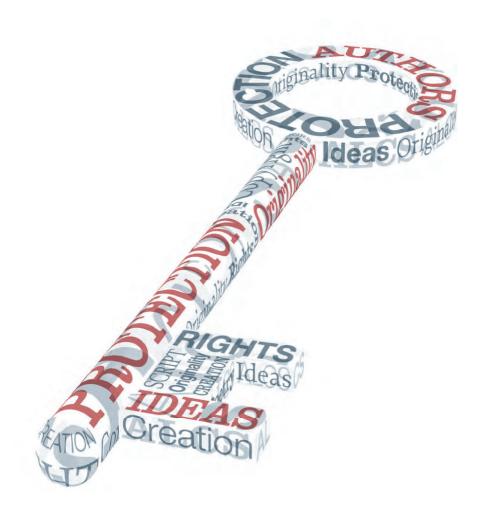
But the other reason for OUEM's inception in 2007, rather than 1950 or 1975, concerns the jealously guarded independence of individual

#### 'The Endowment Fund paid out £41 million in 2011, allowing increased drawdown by the University'

colleges and their wealth, which was serially attacked and defended by different government commissions over the past century. As if this wasn't reason enough to be wary of centralised wealth management initiatives, there was in the 1960s and 1970s a centralised OUEM-type forebear offered by Nuffield College, a unit trust. Its investments were, writes JPD Dunbabin in *The History of the University* of Oxford, "heavily geared and were therefore hit particularly hard by the collapse of the market in the mid-1970s." It was abandoned.

Dunbabin qualifies this narrative by noting that Nuffield's own investments did very well over the long term. In this simple sense all investment philosophies have strengths and weaknesses bounded by time horizons.

The premise of our original question, meanwhile, that Oxbridge could have done brilliantly instead of adequately in its management of its wealth, runs headfirst into two conundrums: humanity and tradition. Both fused seamlessly in that bedrock of all investments until the advent of equities: land. It is unwise to be judgemental of past generations of bursars wedded to poorly performing agricultural land investments that brought about the basis of the financial crisis that landed Oxbridge in the



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'A portion of the collegiate University wealth is being managed today in a superior manner to the past'

lap of the state by the end of the Great War.

The immediate cause of the crisis that led to the first state grants was war inflation, but the underlying cause, well documented, was that the colleges had been too slow to increase rents from tenants, compounded by 40 years of agricultural depression. On this subject there is no straightforward verdict, except that time-honoured relations with tenants were viewed humanely, avarice was frowned on, and land ownership was heavily clustered, in Oxford's case, around Oxfordshire, a pattern that continues to this day.

Neild and Dunbabin both note that various legal restrictions remained in force until well into the twentieth century, preventing colleges from selling land for their own benefit, the inheritance of Elizabethan statutes. However, as early as 1856, subject to consent of the Copyhold Commissioners, colleges were permitted to sell land as long as they bought new land. The thinking was to allow colleges to capitalise on the industrial revolution, a further reform two years later allowing for mining and building leases on college land. Yet little of this envisaged land-exchange took place. The majority of dons remained indifferent to industry, and to this day Shepherd and Woodward sell disproportionately large numbers of Barbours in their High Street store, and not just to tourists.

This is where the Trinity/Cambridge example remains compelling, because it shows how the development of industrial sites can completely transform a college's fortunes. Under the stewardship of Sir John Bradfield, senior bursar at Trinity 1956-92, the college developed the

Trimley Estate on which Felixstowe Dock sits, plus a tract of poor agricultural land upon which today there sits a flourishing Science Park. The college's £900 million endowment is the product of a lively imagination, worldly instincts and indefatigable energy. Compare this to the brief fashion for college land sales for housing development that followed 1918, and you encounter a defective bursarial imagination. Once the land was gone, it was gone for good.

So the answer to the question, 'Had the collegiate universities of Oxford and Cambridge managed their nineteenth and twentieth century wealth brilliantly, instead of averagely, might they have retained their independence from government interference?' receives a two-fold answer. Certainly they could, theoretically, have done better with their investments had they been more alert to non-traditional land investments. And as OXIP and OUEM may show show in the fullness of time, there might be good reason to think that a portion of the collegiate University wealth is being managed today in a superior manner to the past. To the extent that this is true, it strengthens the University and with luck may emulate Trinity, but as the Neildian Paradox shows most clearly, political interference and wealth do not correlate neatly, even if they bear a relation to one another that it would be foolish to ignore. @



See a filmed interview with Professor Neild at www.oxfordtoday.ox.ac.uk

# **Funding MBA** students

The two chaps on the right want you to fund student loans. Their private, for-profit company, Prodigy Finance, is filling a vacuum created by newly risk-averse bankers, who do not want to lend money to students. Prodigy has limited its scope so far to business school students, but its business model is evidence for a broader problem. In the UK there is no government loan scheme for post-graduate students, and other funding solutions are strained.

Prodigy's idea is that investors, some of them alumni, invest directly in MBA students. This has recently happened at Oxford's Saïd Business School. The student gets to take her MBA, and the investors receive interest payments. It is capitalism but there is goodwill involved. The rate of interest takes account of both parties. On that particular issue, founders Cameron Stevens and Ryan Steele insist: "We constantly agonise over the interest rate. It has to be fair to the students but attractive to lenders."



Ryan Steele and Cameron Stevens, co-founders of Prodigy Finance

They add that Prodigy Finance has had a zero default rate since its start in 2007, during which time it has funded 819 students from 84 countries at seven leading business schools.

The founders' main achievement is to develop a score card of risk for each applicant student, "A predictive model built on thousands of data points," according to CEO Cameron Stevens. The Vice-Chancellor highlighted "the

yawning graduate funding gap" at his annual oration last October. Professor Andrew Hamilton announced an Oxford Graduate Scholarship Matched Fund with an endowment goal of £100 million, "to ensure the most talented graduate students from all over the world can benefit from what Oxford has to offer."

He explained that £40 million from University funds will be followed by £60 million from philanthropic giving.



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We'd love to have your views on Oxford Today, an important way that the University stays in touch with alumni and friends. Please spare five minutes to give us your valued views on Oxford Today, and automatically be entered in our prize draw. Whether you are a regular or occasional reader of Oxford Today, we'd like to hear from you. Please post the questionnaire back to us FREEPOST or fill it in online at the address below.

All replies received by 13 June 2013 will have the chance to win a LSA Ono wine decanter or one of five Aeropress coffeemakers, both from creamsupplies.co.uk. We look forward to hearing from you. 🛞

Richard Lofthouse, Editor

Q1 When did you matriculate at







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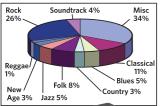
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# THE STORYTELLER

Alan Garner's years at Oxford heavily influenced his children's fantasy tales and have resonated across 50 years. **John Garth** meets the author, one of the subjects of a major Bodleian exhibition



# 'At the end of my first term, I realised that I didn't want to go home'

children's fantasy set in Alderley Edge, where he had grown up. A sequel, *The Moon of Gomrath*, hurled twins Colin and Susan deeper into an idiosyncratic and potent brew of Norse and Celtic folklore, yet left the plot unresolved: Garner had tired of the children. But last year, after a 50-year hiatus and numerous unrelated books, Garner unexpectedly completed their story with the elliptical and thoroughly non-juvenile *Boneland*, in which Colin is a deeply disturbed astronomer at Jodrell Bank, searching the night sky for his missing sister.

As Garner, now 78, talks for the first time at length about his relationship with Oxford, the dish of Jodrell Bank's radio telescope looms massively in the view from his book-lined study in a restored medieval hall. "I love the contrast," he says. "The great dish two fields away." Ancient and modern, hands and head, Cheshire and Oxford: such are the poles that have propagated Garner's creative spark.

By the time Garner won a place at Manchester Grammar School and first fixed his eye on Oxford, well-meaning adults had begun a severe deracination. For generations the Garner menfolk had been left-handed craftsmen, but his mother closed that road by stuffing his left hand up his liberty bodice to enforce right-handedness. At six, his teacher washed his mouth with soapy water for "talking broad" (Garner still uses 'received pronunciation', which he articulates with exceptional clarity). Meanwhile childhood sickness brought him close to death, confined him for months in bed and isolated him at primary school. He discovered books – an undiscriminating hunger for words – and a talent for running from bullies.

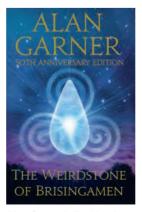
Garner was able to go to grammar school only because means-testing meant his fees were waived. It was a culture shock, not least for his family. They were thrilled that "Alan was going to get an education" but, he says, "There was no concept of what that was. I soon learnt that it was not a good idea to come home excited over irregular verbs." They felt threatened; he felt alienated: the classic pickle of the first-generation educated (vividly dramatised in Garner's Carnegie-winning novel The Owl Service and its successor Red Shift). He loved Aeschylus, Homer, and the subtle expressiveness of Greek regardless. Though at 18 he was Britain's fastest schoolboy sprinter and could have had a career in athletics, the Regius Professorship in Greek became his goal.

So Garner came to Magdalen as an applicant. His interview was abysmal until he was asked if he thought it were possible to break the four-minute mile. "I said, 'Yes, Roger Bannister will do it in May or June next year.' They were on to me like a hornet's nest. I stood my ground: and that was my interview."

National Service supervened, as a subaltern with the Royal Artillery. "I was stationed at Woolwich, →

n the window seat in Cloisters, looking out over the moonlit snow that had stopped falling, and seeing the tower and listening to the chimes, I said, 'If I don't get in here, I think I'm going to die.'" So Alan Garner OBE arrived at Magdalen for entrance exams in January 1953, picturing himself in the Chair of Greek one day. But after just four terms he left Oxford permanently for his native Cheshire. Oxford's loss was literature's gain, and this summer Garner is the focus of a Bodleian exhibition of children's literature along with Tolkien, CS Lewis, Philip Pullman and others, drawing on their papers at the library.

When Garner dropped out, he had already begun *The Weirdstone of Brisingamen*, an instant classic of



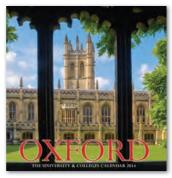
Alan Garner's first book, which drew on old legends

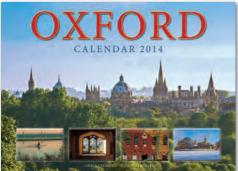
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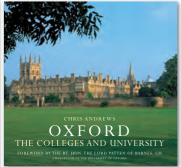
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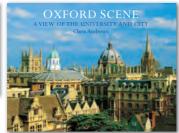


















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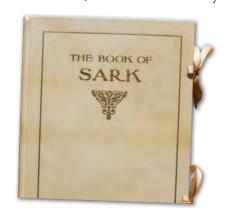
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which is what they did with the ones they realised they shouldn't have commissioned," says Garner. But acting as court-martial defence taught him about men, mendacity and responsibility. When he met up with old school friends he found them "still children". Yet one chance meeting made a decisive impact. In the first week of Michaelmas 1955, Garner bumped into an old friend who had been in the school dramatic society with him. "He was a bit of a fixer and before I knew what was happening, I was auditioning for the Magdalen Players Cuppers entry, which was Everyman, directed by a young Anthony Page. And that's how I came to play Antony in *Antony* and Cleopatra with..." Garner laughs, "...Dudley Moore as Enobarbus and Kenneth Baker as stage manager! Heady times."

At Magdalen as organ scholar, Dudley Moore was just discovering his comedic talents. "We were very close friends," said Garner, "but it was one of those friendships that didn't survive university." The odd conjunction leads me to unearth a real surprise: on an online discussion forum, an eyewitness recalls that the two would practise deadpan comedy, as if in anticipation of Pete and Dud: Moore as 'Copper Knickers' and Garner as 'Des Carts', both riffing on philosophy. When I check with Garner he responds, "I'd forgotten!" Proof of Garner's taste for dry, crackling repartee may be found in his novels from *The Owl Service* onwards.

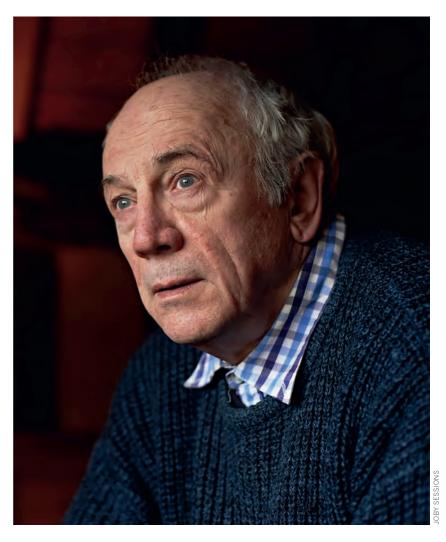
In private Moore was angst-ridden and would spend hours in Garner's room worrying about his debt to his parents and other matters. And Garner had his own unease at Oxford. "I loved and still love the place, but it was a dangerous place in the end," he said. "At the end of my first term, as the last week was

# '[My book] just lay there, dead – and the trouble was, so did Homer'

looming, I realised that I didn't want to go home. Then an image came into my head – I saw Oxford as a medieval map with whales in the water at the bottom and cherubs blowing at the city walls, and outside nothing; and I thought, 'This isn't very healthy.' That snapped me out of it."

In Hilary 1956, preparations for *Antony and Cleopatra* took over. In Trinity, Anthony Page, who was directing but was also billed as Caesar, grew increasingly manic. With a fortnight to go he decided he and Garner must swap roles. The company committee overruled him, and even found another Caesar. For Garner, Antony was an apt role – in the words of the programme he "cannot reconcile the demands of the two worlds".

Classics tutor Colin Hardie witnessed something similar when he asked Garner to account for the origin of Greek Comedy. Garner remembers: "I started to read round the subject, and I realised I was reading about something I knew. So I turned up at my tutorial and I performed for him, in the Cheshire dialect, the Alderley Mummer's Play. It had



(above) For services to literature, Garner was appointed OBE in 2001

the same basic characters as the Old Greek Comedy." Hardie awarded Garner's highest grade.

Garner kept a strange old oak shovel: both a symbol of home and an enigma. He'd seen it long ago on a hook at primary school and had forgotten about it until, at 17, he saw a picture of the selfsame object in a Victorian book by a Cheshire antiquary. Learning that the shovel had been found among some crude stone mauls in the Alderley Edge copper mines, Garner had retrieved it from his first school. He consulted the Ashmolean but was not satisfied when it was dismissed as a Victorian child's toy spade.

The insistent urge to make Cheshire count in Oxford was symptomatic of Garner's ongoing unease. A 'Damascene moment' came at an Alderley Edge bus stop during the summer vacation. "I was staring across the road at a wall that had been built by my grandfather's grandfather, and it almost came to me in words: 'You've got to follow this." He must emulate the standards of his craftsman ancestors, and that did not mean becoming Professor of Greek. He lacked the hand skills to be a craftsman, but his facility with language gave him one idea. In his diary that day, 21 August 1956, he wrote, "Became inspired to write."

For many years Garner has viewed that moment as irrational, but now he remembers some earlier glimpses of his future. Out of many dull primary



Alan Garner photographed for Oxford Today

school exercises, one had lit a spark: writing a fairy story. "It's still very good; you can see me coming," he says. As a child he had told stories to his cousins, as well as to school bullies so they wouldn't pick on him.

In 1956 diary entries, published here for the first time, Garner recorded that on 30 August he "did quite a lot of thinking over the book", and on 4 September, "Actually started to write the book." On that first MS page Colin and Susan, gazing on incessant London rain, seem to reflect their creator's own inertia; yet a holiday promises adventure. Garner crossed it out and wrote "mush", but five days later he had a complete draft of chapter one of *The Weindstone of Brisingamen*. The key ingredients had been with him all along: the sandstone Edge that towered over the Garner family home; and the local tradition that within it a wizard guarded a sleeping king and his knights, ready for Britain's direst peril.

He went back for Michaelmas term on advice from his elders, taking his newly begun novel. "It just lay there, dead – and the trouble was, so did Homer." Colin Hardie agreed Garner should leave "and discover whether you have an original mind"; if not, he could return to spend his life studying others. With Hardie's exhortation that "you will have to create your own Oxford", Garner left university at the end of 1956.

The Weirdstone of Brisingamen was published four years later. It was completed at Toad Hall in Blackden: a cottage which he recognised as a medieval hall and borrowed £510 to buy. With his first wife Anne Cook (Cleopatra) he had three children. In 1972 Garner married teacher and critic Griselda Greaves, with whom he had two more children.

Toad Hall shares its site – inhabited for 10,000 years – with six Early Bronze Age burial mounds, plus the Medicine House: a second medieval hall which was facing demolition until the Garners bought it and moved it there wholesale. Here Garner has indeed created his 'own Oxford': The Blackden Trust (www.theblackdentrust.org.uk), dedicated to cross-disciplinary education on local archaological and other matters, which hosts regular digs, talks, and performances. Tutors include experts from as far afield as Sussex and Orkney.

The old oak shovel that Garner had brought to Oxford exemplifies his non-writerly activities. Persisting with his investigations, in 1991 he took it to Manchester Museum, where carbon-dating revealed it was 4,000 years old. New investigations, triggered by this and other finds, showed the Edge mineworkings, too, to be far older than anyone had realised.

Garner has returned to Oxford many times since dropping out, including a 1960 stint at the Bodleian researching the spells used in *The Moon of Gomrath* (his notes are on show in this summer's exhibition). In the novels that followed, including the starkly different delayed sequel *Boneland*, Garner has increasingly turned from the direct and linear to the fractured, multi-layered and oblique. From Joyce to Picasso to Lennon, it's a hallmark of modern cultural pioneers. One aid in this dismantlement was Garner's stage experience: his third book, *Elidor*,

# 'a wizard guarded a sleeping king and his knights, ready for Britain's direst peril'

began as a radio play; and he adapted *The Owl Service* and *Red Shift* for television.

He says the academic rigour of Oxford has been "a permanent strength through all my life"; Tacitus taught him "the power of spare writing"; the *Oresteia* suggested ways to transmute his own internal tension and convey it to the reader. But Oxford, along with Cheshire, is part of the tension itself. The energy between these two poles has produced nine different novels bookended by a trilogy. Face to face, he gives every impression of having much more to say.

Magical books: From the Middle Ages to Middle-earth runs at the Bodleian from 23 May –27 October, accompanied by an illustrated volume of essays edited by Carolyne Larrington and Diane Purkiss.

John Garth is the author of Tolkien and the Great War.







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# Arts deas



A Seated Girl by Gwen John (1876–1939) from the Master Drawings exhibition at the Ashmolean Museum (25 May–18 August 2013)

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We interview Turner Prize-winner and fellow Elizabeth Price, who picked up the award after a day of interviewing for admissions...

# 58 CD reviews

Music by David Braid, Joseph Haydn and The Choir of Magdalen College









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Andrew Greenwood Group MD



Head Office, Investments & Property Management

Many investors come to us because of our expertise in managing their whole journey. Here is just one example of a scottfraser investor story....

In 1999, a High Street estate agent in Oxford was approached by John and Sylvia Griffiths, who wished to build up a significant portfolio of residential property in the city. Somewhat daunted by the task, the agent recommended that they speak to scottfraser.

For John and Sylvia, it was a case of meeting the right person at the right time. On their first meeting with Andrew Greenwood, they viewed an apartment and, deciding it was the right investment for them, made an offer then and there. Thus the journey began.

Building a strong relationship of trust over the coming months, we sourced a further four flats and a pair of brand new houses and advised on what would be necessary to prepare all the properties for the lettings market. We project-managed the refurbishments, some of which included significant works such as replacement kitchens and bathrooms, as well as creating and sourcing full furnishing packages.

In 2000, an opportunity arose to acquire a site with potential for residential development. Guided by our's knowledge and expertise they went on to build of a small block of five flats. These were then sold off-plan to scottfraser clients, and all are still let and managed by scottfraser today.

Such was the success of this venture, John and Sylvia went on to build another development, this time of fourteen flats in the heart of Headington. They cherry-picked their favourite, which they retained and the remainder were again sold to scottfraser acquisition clients, having been built with the buy-to-let market in mind.

Although John and Sylvia were living in the UK, they did not want to be responsible for looking after their properties, and have always retained scottfraser to manage their whole portfolio, including dealing with service charges and management of the two blocks of flats.

In 2008, following the loss of her husband, Sylvia returned to live in her home country of Switzerland. Once settled, she made the decision to dispose of all her properties. This has been a gradual process, with some flats being passed on through our acquisition department, and others sold to owner-occupiers by our own sales department. Using specialist solicitors and our network of contacts, scottfraser have also been able to guide Sylvia through the sale of the freeholds of both developments.

The Griffiths embody the very essence of scottfraser; a long-term relationship built on absolute trust. "I can look back and say that it was a real success story. We were so happy with all the results and felt proud about the new flats, as they fitted into the neighbourhood and were generously built. scottfraser have managed our properties faultlessly over the years, always doing their best to give great care and dedication." Sylvia Griffiths







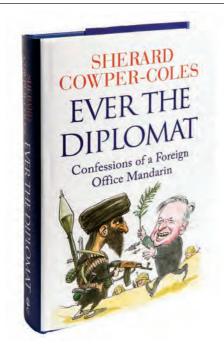






# Book reviews

All books are Oxford-related; their subject matter is the University or city, and/or the author is a current or former student or academic



# Ever The Diplomat: Confessions of a Foreign Office Mandarin

By Sherard Cowper-Coles

Harper Press, 9780007436002, £20

Sir Sherard Cowper-Coles' witty memoir offers a mandarin's eye view of the diplomatic process. When Margaret Thatcher objected to a speech he had written, she wrote "NO!" with such ferocity that her pen made a hole in the paper. Tony Blair, by contrast, was not a man for diplomatic detail. Heading for a summit, he would stare dreamily out of the aircraft window while his staff tried to make him focus. Robin Cook, as foreign secretary, had such an aversion to paperwork (unless it was The Racing Post) that Cowper-Coles had to ambush him, pen in hand, on the pavement at his front door to get him to sign.

Cowper-Coles was a natural for the Foreign Office, relishing the travel and intellectual and linguistic challenges. At the wheel of his Mini Cooper he drives out to Lebanon for Arabic language training, and then to Egypt. Servants, suffragis and fixers are on hand to smooth the way. After Anwar Sadat is shot in 1981, Cowper-Coles drafts a telegram which concludes with a Latin quotation from Lucretius. Alas, Lord Carrington, the foreign secretary, is not up to translating it. The Cairo embassy's crystal ball was not as sharp as its command of dead languages. The ambassador predicted that Sadat's successor, Hosni Mubarak, would not last six months. Oops. He managed almost 30 years.

His fluent pen and emotional warmth propelled him up the

'Cowper-Coles was a natural for the Foreign Office, relishing the intellectual and linguistic challenges' ladder. Sir Antony Acland hired him as private secretary, hoping the young man's Tiggerish character might cheer him up. When interviewed by Robin Cook to be his private secretary, Cowper-Coles saw the vulnerability behind Cook's prickly façade, and offered to provide him not just sound advice but also affection. He got the job.

There is more meat in the second half of the book. Cowper-Coles is caught up in the battle between Chris Patten, the last governor of Hong Kong who despised the "pre-emptive cringe" of the Foreign Office towards Beijing, and pre-eminent Sinologist, Sir Percy Cradock, over how much democracy to grant the colony ahead of the handover to China in 1997. Cowper-Coles laments the "bureaucratic pusillanimity" that ruled in the top echelons of the Foreign Office.

After his stint with Robin Cook, he got three posts which tested all his reserves of optimism. He served as ambassador to Israel - the first Arabist to do so - at the bloody height of the second Palestinian intifada. From Tel Aviv he went to Riyadh, at a time when Al-Qaeda was waging a struggle to the death with the House of Saud. And from there to Kabul to front Britain's mission impossible in Afghanistan.

The story of how one of Britain's most talented diplomats quit the Foreign Office is told in his book Cables from Kabul. Cheated of a promised ambassadorial post, he resigns, and relates with undiplomatic passion the folly of British forces marching into Helmand province behind blimpish generals promising a military victory which they knew was impossible, but needed to spin in order to protect their budgets.

Ever the Diplomat is meant to be a lighter read. But still, it cannot end without some soul-searching. The Foreign Office should stop being so "politely complaisant" and serving up what its masters want to hear. He regrets that nowhere in the archives is a minute warning ministers of the folly of joining the American invasion of Iraq. In the end, he insists that his 33-year career was like having Christmas every day. It is hard to imagine joining the diplomatic service in today's austere times and being able to write that. @



Sherard Cowper-Coles in a Typhoon at RAF Coningsby, June 2009.

Alan Philps (New College, 1973) studied Arabic and Persian. He worked as a foreign correspondent for Reuters (Moscow, Beirut, Tunis and Paris) and then The Daily Telegraph (Moscow, Jerusalem and foreign editor). He is currently Editor of The World Today, the Chatham House magazine.

We welcome review suggestions from authors and publishers. Please send brief details to the Editor at oxford.today@ admin.ox.ac.uk



# The Great Degeneration: How Institutions Decay and Economies Die

By Niall Ferguson

Allen Lane, 9781846147326, £16.99

Based on the 2012 Reith lectures he gave, Ferguson's sub-title to this book is important: *How Institutions Decay and Economies Die.* He's not talking about China, or India, or even Russia; countries riddled with stifling bureaucracy and corruption.

No, he's referring to the West: the USA, Europe and of course Great Britain. He attributes the relative economic decline of the west, fortified of course by the ongoing economic crisis, to a deeper collapse in four great institutions: representative government; the free market; the rule of law; and civil society.

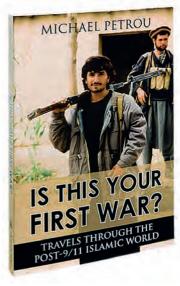
These were the same institutions (he means the term broadly) that allowed the west to beat the rest over the last 500 years. Their recent collapse is the principal explanation for The Great Degeneration, he says – not de-leveraging, and not globalisation.

There's a different narrative that Ferguson throws aside, even though it's obvious and he admits it: "Having been more than 20 times richer than the average Chinese in 1978, the average American is now just five times richer." (p35)

China, South Korea and others have done well for themselves. Short of refusing to buy their exports, the west could not have prevented it. But Ferguson sweeps the paradox of rest-erner economic success, along with non-representative government, corruption and the absence of good laws, to one side. "What interests me here is what has gone wrong in the west." If you can accept this rhetorical manoeuvre, the rest of the book unfurls as a sparkling sequence of controversial ideas.

He compares public accounts to Enron and says that western national accounting is fraudulent. He says that in the name of being more efficient and hands-on, governments have overregulated the economy and made fragile. The bond between the generations is broken because of unequally distributed debt obligations bestowed on today's young, and the nourishment of associational culture, where strangers say hello to each other, has been destroyed by Facebook. Private education is a public good, and parents who dislike academy schools are the true elitists.

An alumnus of Magdalen and fellow of Jesus College, Ferguson is frequently described by hacks as "dazzling". It's true.

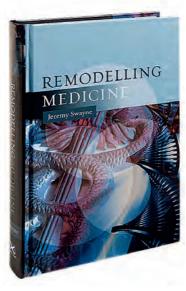


# Is This Your First War? Travels Through the Post-9/11 Islamic World

# By Michael Petrou

Dundurn 9781459706460, £16.99

One of Canada's leading foreign correspondents (St Antony's, 2002) presents a searing medley of gritty narratives drawn from a decade of reporting from across the greater Middle East. At times the plethora of stories threatens to obscure the author's objective, but his postscript successfully focuses around the Arab Spring. Petrou is a staunch supporter of the western mission in Afghanistan, and he is also deeply supportive of "resolute and not easily cowed" liberals in the Muslim world, who have often taken insane personal risks in the name of democratic reform and female emancipation. So the heroes of the narratives are Iranian political prisoners, Egyptian protestors, Syrian and Libyan rebels and educated Afghan women. The human narratives, in their unpredictable and subjective particularity, are collectively compelling. @



# Remodelling Medicine

# By Jeremy Swayne

Saltire Books 9781908127006, £48.99

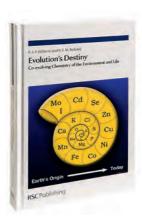
The Oxonian author (Worcester, 1960) re-imagines modern medicine as holistic, whole-person-based healing, rather than as expensive technological remedies admitting only of single-cause, biomedical ailments. If that sounds dull, think again. The book is full of rich historical, cultural and anecdotal reflection, and in no way comes out simplistically on the side of 'alternative medicine', as one might anticipate. Rather, the author considers the limits of science and the limits of non-scientific approaches ranging from homeopathy to the placebo effect, and re-introduces a body-mindspirit model of the patient in order to discuss a new synthesis of reductionism and holism.

The life work of a practitioner with much wider aspirations towards true healing, this book is destined to become a classic work for practitioners and lay persons alike. <sup>3</sup>



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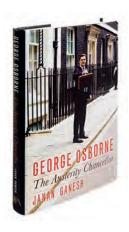




# **Evolution's Destiny** By RJP Williams and **REM Rickaby**

**RSC Publishing** 9781849735582, £69.99

Landmark work re-frames evolution as geochemistry as well as biology. Four billion years of chemical changes pre-dated what Darwin said in 1859. This work will interest chemists, geologists and biologists alike. @



# George Osborne: The Austerity Chancellor

By Janan Ganesh Biteback Publishing 9781849542142, £20

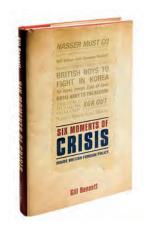
Financial Times political columnist Janan Ganesh produces a meticulously researched biography of the youngest Chancellor in over a century, and of course an Oxonian who read modern history at Magdalen. @



# Writing Talk By Alex Hamilton

Matador 978178088, £9.95

A gleefully eclectic mix of Guardian and Times interviews conducted by the author across the decades, taking in writers from all genres: from Stephen King to Beryl Cook to Hergé. Always good value; nicely written; occasionally dated. @

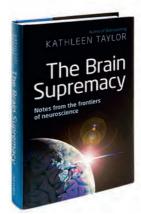


# Six Moments of Crisis: Inside British Foreign Policy

By Gill Bennett OUP

9780199583751, £20

Oxonian Bennett (Somerville, 1969) lifts the lid on how six crucial decisions were taken, and not just why. She concludes that British foreign policy is subject to deep continuity.

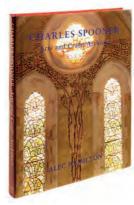


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# Charles Spooner: Arts and Crafts Architect

By Alec Hamilton Shaun Tyas 9781907730214, £45

A beautifully illustrated homage to the churchcentred work of one of the Arts and Crafts movement's less showy members. Ambrosia to classical modernists and fruitcake to ecclesiastics who still know what a cup of tea tastes like. @



Firm Commitment By Colin Mayer

9780199669936, £16.99

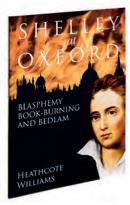
A constructive critique of the commercial corporation and ultimately an ambitious agenda for change. Worthy of wide readership because it is also a carefully weighed historical reflection, and thus unlike the majority of books published in this genre. @



Twelve Theories of Human Nature

By Leslie Stevenson, David L Haberman, Peter Matthews Wright OUP, 9780199859030, £30

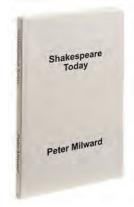
Confucianism; Hinduism; Buddhism; Plato; Aristotle; The Bible; Islam; Kant; Marx; Freud; Sartre; Darwin. The book you wished you'd had access to earlier in life. Now a new, 6th edition and as compelling as ever. @



Shelley at Oxford By Heathcote Williams

Huxley Scientific Press 9781909214026, £6

One incendiary wild-child poet writing poetry about another wild-child incendiary poet. Throws out the romantic Shelley and brings in 1990s anarcho-punk band Chumbawamba. Latest contribution from this quirky, Oxford-based indie publisher. @



Shakespeare Today By Peter Milward

FastPencil 9781607461937, \$16.95

A slender volume of brilliance, which situates Shakespeare within a matrix of scientific, cultural, literary and historical interrogation, perforated with a religious, vocational reflection. Ends with the view that Shakespeare is an optimist amidst modernity. @



# BEATNIK GIRL

**John Garth** talks to Turner Prize-winning video artist and fellow of Lady Margaret Hall Elizabeth Price

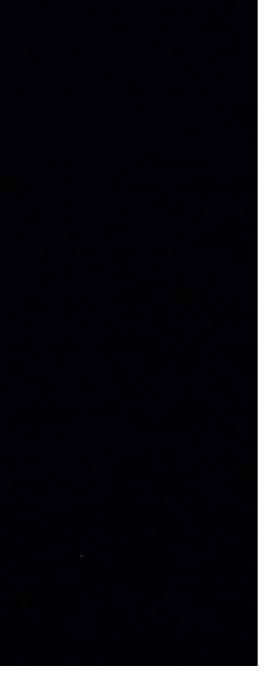
T WAS A DAY of contrasts for Elizabeth Price. First she interviewed applicants for the BA course at the Ruskin. Then she won the Turner Prize. As a newly appointed tutor, Price felt it was vital for her to take part in the admissions process. "And it put the whole thing in perspective," she said. "I went to Oxford, I did a morning of

interviews, I got the train, I went to the Tate."

Yet her journey from Oxford to victory at Tate Britain truly began nearly three decades ago, and it is this odyssey that came to mind as she stepped up on 3 December last year to be presented with the £25,000 prize by actor Jude Law for her video installation, *The Woolworths Choir of 1979*.

"It was thrilling but I also felt quite solemn, because there had been so many really hard years and points where you think you have to give up. It felt good, not in a triumphal way but, 'Phew, out of the terrible years!"

Price came to Oxford in 1985 as a shy 18-year-old attracted by the Ruskin's intimate scale and by the University's diverse intellectual life and collections. At Jesus College, everyone else seemed to know someone, but coming from a Luton comprehensive she felt isolated. At a gig by an indie band in the college bar, she met Amelia Fletcher, who was reading economics at St Edmund Hall.



Elizabeth Price at Tate Britain on 3 December 2012, where she was awarded the Turner Prize for The Woolworths Choir of 1979

"She came up to talk to me because we both had the same badge on. She was a lot more confident than me and the first thing she said was, 'Do you want to be in a band?' And I went, 'Uh, yes...'"

A whirlwind year on vocals, violin, guitar and tambourine in Talulah Gosh saw recording sessions in Glasgow, cult music paper the NME putting their debut single on a sampler cassette, and the classic entry-level touring experience: "Strings of gigs one after the other, travelling wedged between two amplifiers, and sleeping on someone's freezing cold kitchen floor."

Talulah Gosh stuck out. Price recalls: "We said a lot of things initially as an anti-rock'n'roll stance: 'We eat sweets, we don't take drugs.' At that time, goth was very dominant, and it was this really po-faced, serious and male-oriented rock." Then, when the music press lumbered

them with the label 'twee pop', Talulah Gosh spent the rest of their short career striving with punk energy to throw it off. The band eventually fizzled out, to be remembered only by diehard aficionados. (Since her Turner Prize win it has been called "one of the most over-achieving indie bands in history", with lead vocalist Fletcher now chief economist at the Office of Fair Trading, and guitarist Pete Momtchiloff senior commissioning editor for philosophy at OUP.)

Price's fledgling pop career almost derailed her BA course, and she had to retake her prelims. "When I failed, I think they felt I'd made my choice and I should go and do something else. But I just thought they were wrong, so I worked really hard over the summer. When I came back in the second year I was very much more focused." A pep talk from her "lucid and incisive" tutor, Douglas Allsopp, helped her through the crisis.

After the Ruskin she worked for a year in the Bodleian stacks. "I've done a lot of work on this as an artist," she said, "using the idea of this subterranean library." A 2009 video installation, User Group Disco, explores a fictional underground museum, ruined and disorganised.

The iconoclasm of Talulah Gosh lives on in Price's own artistic drive to dismantle the conventional categories of contemporary art. The Woolworths Choir of 1979 spans cathedral architecture and a fatal Manchester shop fire; it also reflects Price's musical interests, incorporating archive footage of the Shangri-Las and percussive handclaps. All this might suggest a grab-bag, but it's a surprisingly intense experience, with its disparate subjects hauntingly united by the soundtrack and by a recurrent hand gesture made from a high window during the fire.

Price had been nominated for a solo exhibition at Gateshead's Baltic Centre which also comprised two other video pieces, but it was The Woolworths Choir of 1979 that travelled to Tate Britain for the Turner Prize show, and which most impressed audiences. The Turner Prize jury, noting that Price's work had been consistently ambitious for several years, praised the piece as "seductive and immersive". Richard Dorment of The Daily Telegraph went further, calling it "an artwork that has the potential fundamentally to change the way knowledge is transferred, the way we teach and the way we learn."

If it augurs any tidal shift in the notoriously swirling waters of contemporary British art, Dorment

# 'It was thrilling but I also felt quite solemn, because there had been so many hard years'

suggests it is in applying modern, savvy communications media to deeper cultural concerns than the usual ephemera of infomercials and YouTube pop videos. It is embracing video that proved the turning point in Price's career about six years ago, and though she also works in sculpture and photography, she's most often described as a video installation artist.

Looking ahead, Price sees her life settling down after the media interest that followed on the Turner. She's working on a major new project as artist-in-residence at the Rutherford Appleton Laboratory at Harwell.

If Turner Prize winners are not normally associated with academic institutions like the University of Oxford, that's not the way Price sees it. She was drawn back to teach at the Ruskin by the same intimacy and diversity that originally brought her here as an undergraduate. "The scale of it, and the fact that the University supports the Ruskin so well, just seemed promising. And there are very good students.

"Also, in normal universities I would end up talking to cultural historians, art historians and artists," she said. "Their company's fantastic and very interesting; but when you talk to somebody about solar science over a chat at lunchtime, it's just a different kind of pleasure."

Price shuttles between Oxford and East London, where she has her studio and lives with her partner. "The time I'm not teaching is incredibly intense: I have the most dreadful deadlines and I work like a mad person," she said. "I find it frustrating if I then go to teach and it's a bit lacklustre. So I like working somewhere where it's ambitious, exciting and people want it to be great. Oxford is a place where there is that culture of expectation and ambition."

Elizabeth Price (Jesus College, 1985) did her MA at the Royal College of Art and a PhD at Leeds. She has taught at the Royal College and at Goldsmiths.



To see The Woolworths Choir of 1979, go to www.oxfordtoday.ox.ac.uk

# Music Reviews

All CDs are Oxford-related; their subject matter is the University or city, and/or the composer/artist is a current or former student or academic



# David Braid: Chamber and Instrumental Music

### **Toccata Classics**

Catalogue Number: TOCC0149 £13.50

# Joseph Haydn: Nelson Mass, Insanae et Vanae Curae

### Novum

Catalogue Number: NCR 1385 £13.99

# The Choir of Magdalen College, Oxford: Archive Recordings 1906-60

## OxRecs DIGITAL

Catalogue Number: OXCD-116 £10 (only for purchase from Magdalen College)

Oxford, city of screaming choirs, supports a wide variety of choral styles from plainsong to barbershop, but remains most identified with the English choral tradition, heard daily at evensong in college chapels throughout the University. There is in truth no single tradition, but a spectrum of styles, including first-rate mixed choirs now that choral scholarships are no longer the preserve of boy trebles and academical clerks. So what remains the distinguishing feature of the original all-male choral foundations at Christ

Church, Magdalen and New College (and their Cambridge counterparts at King's and St John's)?

Each has developed its own style and sound under particular directors, with recognisable heyday periods: King's under David Willcocks, Christ Church under Simon Preston. New College, under the indefatigable Edward Higginbottom, well into his fourth decade as Director of Music, has an impressively long discography, now appearing on its own Novum label. The latest addition is a recording of Haydn's Nelson Mass. New College's risky selling point is to draw all its soloists from the choir, most notably the gifted 13-year old treble Jonty Ward. There are some beautifully pure and lyrical lines, but moments too, notably the coloratura in the opening Kyrie, where the runs sound laboured and the treble voice is inevitably overpowered by the combined might of choir and orchestra. There are fine moments in the soloists' ensemble singing - often a weakness among operatic singers vying for prominence - and the choir itself sings with vigour and nuance.

Magdalen's discography has a more unusual addition in a CD of archival recordings, 1906-1960. It is prefaced, a little gratuitously, by John Betjeman introducing a BBC programme of 1966 with his Magdalen reminiscences. What follows is a unique musical scrapbook of live recordings, variable in sound quality.

Amid the crackle and hiss, there are Gounod arias sung by a lay clerk in 1906 and carols from the Magdalen Glee Singers in 1907. A fragment of a Pathé newsreel from 1931 features the choir on the tower at 6am on May morning, though the limelight is stolen by the birds, whose rival dawn chorus was evidently sung much closer to the microphone. The remaining tracks are from evensongs between 1957 and 1960, the early years of Bernard Rose's tenure as Director. Archival interest has taken precedence over musical quality, so there are some unfortunate moments (Sheppard's 'Haec Dies' sounds as though it was bellowed into a loudhailer at a village fête). However, there are some sensitive early renditions of works by Rose and his protégé Kenneth Leighton on the final tracks, which give a better glimpse of Rose's important contribution to Oxford's choral history.

The debut CD of chamber and instrumental pieces by Welsh composer David Braid avoids the demanding compositional density of much contemporary music, and has instead a more direct quality, generating atmosphere with a sparse, textural clarity, while demonstrating a keen interest in form. 'Morning', for soprano and string quartet, makes an arresting opening, with shimmering tremolando strings and the searing purity of Grace Davidson's vocal line; the work exhibits a paradoxical combination of intensity and attenuation, in which the words of a Spanish sonnet are strung out over 12 minutes of music. The more economical compositions for solo piano are true to their titles: 'Aria' is vocally inspired with an airiness to the compositional texture, while 'Three-part invention' evokes a vivid sense of technical construction in angular lines. 'Sonata for Quartet' (actually a piano trio plus clarinet) makes a progression from formless sonority to a satisfyingly structural and energetic fugue.

Braid dislikes the notion that listeners have to fasten their seatbelts for modern music, or scour the programme notes for elucidation. He urges his audience: "Just listen, as you would to Schubert."

Josie Dixon (University College, 1983) is a publishing and research training consultant, with more than 60 university clients in the UK, Europe and the USA.



# Oxford Today

# Photography Competition 2013

Oxford Today launches the 2013 Photography Competition with the theme of 'extreme weather'. The deadline for email-only submission of a single photo is 20 July 2013.



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1st Roger Teichmann, Warm are the still and lucky miles

2nd Daniel Swain, O Magnum Mysterium

**3rd** Stephen Wilkinson, Violence (Linear IV)

**Five Runners-up (not ranked):** Alan Davis, *Songs from Illyria*; John Hawkes, *Dance for oboe and strings*; Bernard Hughes, *Noble music for a ceremonial occasion*; Alexander Massey, *Come down God*; Sarah and Adrian Payne, *I hid my love* 



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# Crossword

## Across

- 1. Journo backing detective nabbing son he had a nose job (7)
- **6.** Redistribute bands in Alabama following oldfashioned advice (6)
- **10.** European vineyard offering pals shade (4)
- 11. Such as one day count broken pieces of marble collected by Greek character with energy (9)
- **13.** See preamble (4,1,4,4)
- **16.** Other ranks were fed on speck (5)
- 17. Concerted yelling by speculators, brisk, not quiet (4)
- 18. Impart a distorted duality to southern gardens (4)
- **21.** See Queen enthralled by stupid boy's odism (7)
- 23. Fuel contempt for Spanish funerary vessel (5)
- **25.** Almost set to import painting showing trouper from France (5)
- **27.** Hailing of intellectual capacity when in a public house one afternoon (7)
- **31.** Rounded space part of square actually (4)
- **32.** Old tux's cost that's exorbitant (4)
- **34.** Move on after difficulty (5)
- **37.** See preamble (4,9)
- **38.** Partner of ruder man here clumsily snatching separate articles (9)
- **39.** Pernod served in Outer Mongolia (4)
- **40.** Heartlessly intended, as words may be (6)
- **41.** 'Bulky' beverage served in social gathering mostly after brewing? (4,3)

1	2	3		4	5		6		7		8	9
10				11		12			1			
13				-				14			+	
			15				16					İ
17		1	1	18						19		20
21				22				23	24			1
25					26	27	28					
	29		30	1	31				32			
33	34		-					35			36	1
37												1
38			+						39			
40						41						

Every clue contains one misprint in its definition part. Correct letters in across clues spell out a title, those in down clues the first line of a verse. The two unclued rows supply this verse's fourth line.

Michael Macdonald-Cooper (St Catherine's, 1962). Michael was crossword setter and editor at The Independent and The Independent on Sunday (1990–2005).

# How it works:

Every month during the academic year 2012-13, correct entries to the *Oxford Today* Crossword Competition will be thrown in a hat and a winner drawn. The winner will receive a bottle of wine (see below). There is one crossword puzzle in each of the *Oxford Today* print issues, published on 18 October 2012, and 18 April 2013 respectively, and then online during the other ten months, with alumni alerted to their going 'live' by the '*Oxford Today* Extra' email service. The deadline for the competition on this page is 31 May. Please post entries to Janet Avison, University Offices, Wellington Square, Oxford OX1 2JD.

Please include your full name, alumni number if known, college and matriculation year, and postal address and phone number.

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### Down

- 1. Norms of precipitation date metamorphosis of powders (8)
- 2. Distinctive sort of noose used by the Choctaws (4)
- 3. The successor to Pio being
- locked up in jail is arbitrary (8)
  4. Wound made by cutting
- nails when getting up (4)5. Best of logic and
- accuracy bringing form of kudos around University (6)
- 6. Eilat owner drifting north (6)
- 7. Doctor concealing alias in part of West Africa (5)
- **8.** Regular contributions from all comers used in traditional dedication (5)
- 9. Blub, reading article in French, with date (4)
- **12.** Goodness one's found in corn (5)
- **14.** Fess up completely, being discovered in tense spots (5)
- **15.** Hold image some worship, one connected with party line (4)
- **19.** Wife, American, one behaving dishonourably in opera house there (8)
- **20.** Eversion seen in medium enclosed by four articles (8)
- **22.** Question beginning to irritate mannerist (5)
- 24. Endlessly beat gong (4)
- 26. Dame swimming around Netherlands Antilles, woman gripped by frenetic manta (6) 27. Gap in which organ is played (5)
- 28. Must for small children
- strip mostly with woolly lining (6)
- 29. Argan's supplied by a South African in the Netherlands (5)
- **30.** Western Alliance promoted Norgay's divinity once (5)
- **33.** Drag a log about a third of a mile supported by police force (4)
- 35. Ships mostly bear it (4)
- **36.** Intimidating hype appearing in blog, regrettably (4)



Monthly crosswords, including this one, will appear on www.oxfordtoday.ox.ac.uk

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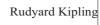
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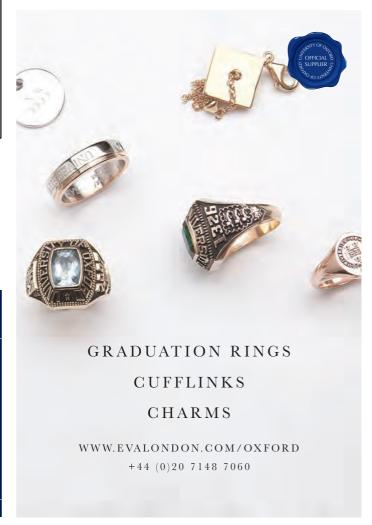
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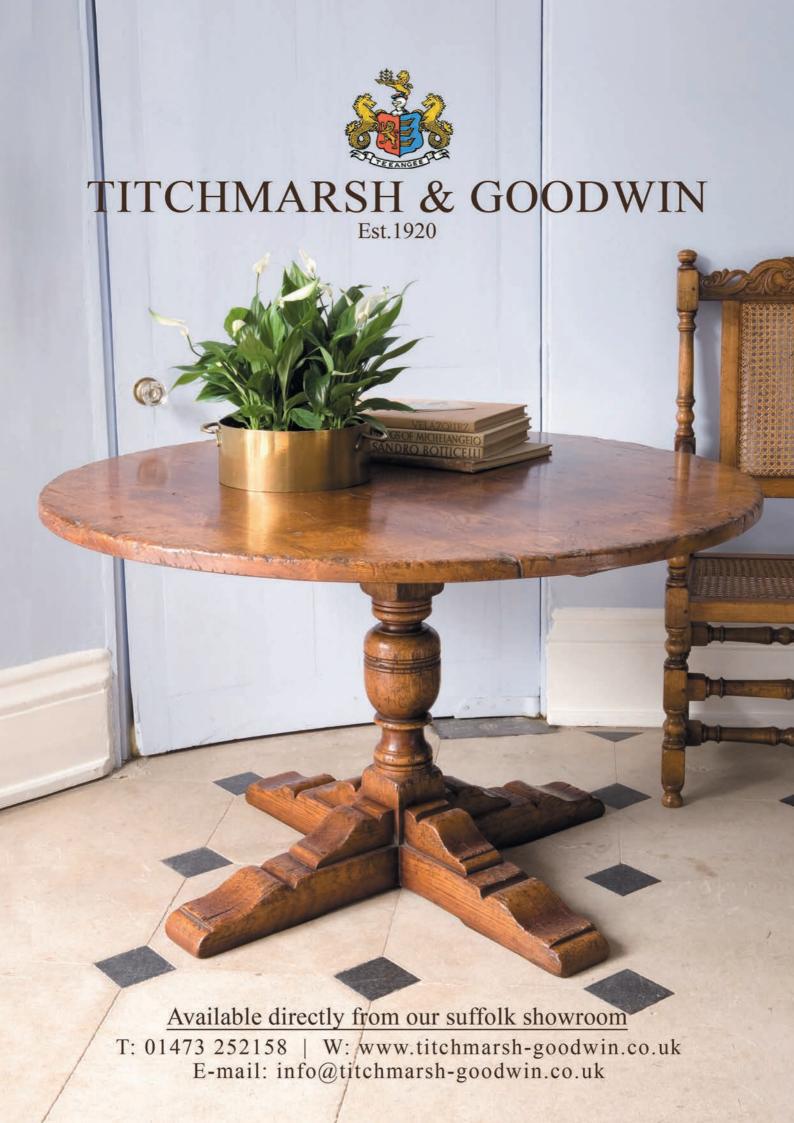
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# Obituaries

# Steve Abrams

15 July 1938–21 November 2012

Stephen Irwin (Steve) Abrams, campaigner for the legalisation of cannabis, died on 21 November 2012, aged 74. Born in Chicago, he attended Duke University in North Carolina and the University of Chicago. From 1960 to 1967 he was an advanced student at St Catherine's College, Oxford, and headed a unit in the Department of Psychology investigating extrasensory perception. In 1967 he shot to fame when he published a chapter on 'The Oxford Scene and the Law' in The Book of Grass. His claim that as many as 500 Oxford students regularly smoked cannabis led to many newspaper headlines. Later the same year he founded the Society for Mental Awareness, and organised a letter published in The Times calling for reform of the law, signed by 65 of the great and good. Abrams, who moved to London, remained closely involved in the movement for cannabis law reform, and practised as a Jungian analyst. His marriage ended in divorce.

# Output Lord McCarthy

30 July 1925–18 November 2012

William Edward John (Bill) McCarthy, Baron McCarthy, industrial relations expert, died on 18 November 2012, aged 87. Born in Islington, he left Holloway County School at 14 to become a shop assistant. During the Second World War he saw military service in the Middle East. An active trade unionist, he won a scholarship to Ruskin College, Oxford; he read philosophy, politics and economics at Merton College, and stayed on to study for a DPhil, awarded in 1962, on the closed shop. He became a research fellow at Nuffield College in 1959, and in 1970 succeeded Allan Flanders as university lecturer in industrial relations; he was also a fellow of Nuffield and Templeton colleges. He produced numerous books, sat on many committees, and was involved in numerous arbitrations (including for 13 years

as chairman of the Railway Staff National Tribunal). A longstanding supporter of the Labour Party (he was chairman of Oxford City Labour Party for ten years), in 1975 he was made a life peer; from 1980 to 1997 he was Opposition frontbench spokesman in the Lords on employment matters. He is survived by his wife Margaret.

# Maurice Keen

30 October 1933–11 September 2012

Maurice Hugh Keen OBE, FBA, fellow and tutor in medieval history at Balliol College from 1961 to 2000, died on 11 September 2012, aged 78. The son of Hugh Keen, Keeper of the University Chest at Oxford, he was educated at Winchester and, after national service in the Royal Ulster Rifles, Balliol College, Oxford. After graduating in 1957 he spent four years as a junior research fellow at the Queen's College before returning to Balliol, where he became tutor in medieval history. Among his many notable books were The Outlaws of Medieval Legend (1961), The Laws of War in the Later Middle Ages (1965), A History of Medieval Europe (1968), Chivalry (1984), and Origins of the English Gentleman (2002). He was elected FBA in 1990. He is survived by his wife Mary and their three daughters.

# Dom Mintoff

6 August 1916–20 August 2012

Dominic (Dom) Mintoff, Prime Minister of Malta from 1955 to 1958 and 1971 to 1984, died on 20 August 2012, aged 96. Born in Cospicua, Malta, he was educated at the Seminary and Lyceum in Valletta, the Royal University of Malta, where he studied engineering and architecture; and, as a Rhodes Scholar, Hertford College, Oxford, where he read engineering science, graduating in 1941. After working for the War Office he returned to Malta where he set up a thriving architectural practice and joined the Malta Labour Party, of which he became leader in 1949. In 1955 he swept to



# Dame Louise Johnson

26 September 1940–25 September 2012

Dame Louise Napier Johnson DBE, FRS, David Phillips Professor of Molecular Biophysics and Professorial Fellow, Corpus Christi College, from 1990 to 2007, died on 25 September 2012, aged 71. She was educated at University College, London, before pursuing research under Sir Lawrence Bragg at the Royal Institution, where she was awarded her PhD in 1965. After a short spell at Yale she joined the Department of Zoology at Oxford as a demonstrator in 1973. She became a lecturer in molecular biophysics and an additional fellow of Somerville College the same year. In 2003 she became Director of Life Sciences at the Diamond Light Source, Harwell, a position she held until 2008. She was noted for her work elucidating the structure and functions of enzymes and was the co-author of the classic textbook Protein Crystallography (1976). She was elected FRS in 1990 and appointed DBE in 2003. She is survived by her two children.

power on a manifesto which included integration with Britain, but negotiations foundered and in 1958 he resigned and threw his energies into the movement for independence, achieved in 1964. As prime minister from 1971 he pursued policies of nationalisation and non-alignment, introduced a republican constitution, and oversaw the final withdrawal of British forces. He retired as prime minister in 1984 but remained a member of parliament until 1998. He is survived by two daughters, his wife Moyra having predeceased him.

Obituaries are edited by Dr Alex May, research editor at Oxford DNB



A more comprehensive list of obituaries of Oxonians is at www.oxfordtoday.ox.ac.uk



# My Oxford

# Nell Gifford – New College 1993

The Giffords Circus impresario, talking to **Lindsey Harrad**, reveals bittersweet memories of her Oxford years

# Why did you apply to Oxford?

I grew up in Oxford and my father went to University College. I just always expected to go. My father came from a large family in the East End of London and he met my mum in Oxford and his experiences there opened up his whole life.

### What did you study?

I read English, it was my passion. I loved everything – drama, fiction, poetry; the whole world of words.

# What was your experience of Oxford?

While I was at Oxford my mum had a serious horse riding accident, resulting in a major brain injury that left her in a coma. She remains in a complete vegetative state today. It's hard to remember much about those years, apart from spending a lot of time sitting in the intensive care ward at Frenchay Hospital. I didn't have the dream student experience because it was such a traumatic time, but Oxford did become something of an escape and a sanctuary.



Nell in her New College matriculation photo, 1992

# What was your social life like?

I loved mixing with students reading other subjects. I had lots of friends who were scientists and my boyfriend at the time was a microbiologist.

# Did you get involved in drama at Oxford?

I did do a bit of theatre design while I was there, although in some ways it was a lesson in how not to do theatre design. But there's a sense that Oxford isn't 'real life' so you can try things out and take a few risks.

## What eventually led you to a career in the circus?

I fell in love with the circus life before I came up to Oxford, when I spent my gap year working at David Balding's circus in America. After I graduated I did all kinds of jobs in the circus, from washing elephants to being a ringmaster, but my lifelong passion for riding led me to explore the possibilities of performing on horses. In 2000, my husband Toti and I set up Giffords Circus.

### Has what you learnt at Oxford helped your career?

It helps my work every day. From knowing how to do research to articulating an argument, these skills have an impact on your life. It's common to underestimate how accomplished circus people are, but I work with very talented performers who have all reached a high standard in something, whether that is music, dance or horse training – but when I have days when I feel I'm not particularly skilled at anything, I remind myself that I am trained in words and I can write great copy for a new programme or contract.

# What do you treasure most about your student experiences?

Some students find Oxford a culture shock, but for me it was so familiar that I was haunted by memories of growing up in the city and happier times with mum. It was quite painful just to walk the streets at times. I did love my years at the university though, and am hugely proud of having been there.

# If you could go back and do it all again, would you?

Yes. It's not the college or my tutors' fault but I didn't get as much out of my course as I had expected, mainly because of our family tragedy and feeling completely adrift while I was there. I really enjoyed the 20th-century American literature course, and I would love to go back and study English again, but this time with much more emphasis on theatre.

### What does Oxford mean to you now?

I would be very happy to live in Oxford, but my husband isn't an urban person and our work means we have to be based in the countryside. I'm also thrilled that we're bringing the circus to the University Parks this summer; it's a fantastic opportunity for us and it's wonderful that the University has said yes. 
www.giffordscircus.com



To view an uncut version of this and the previous subjects, visit www.oxfordtoday. ox.ac.uk/interviews

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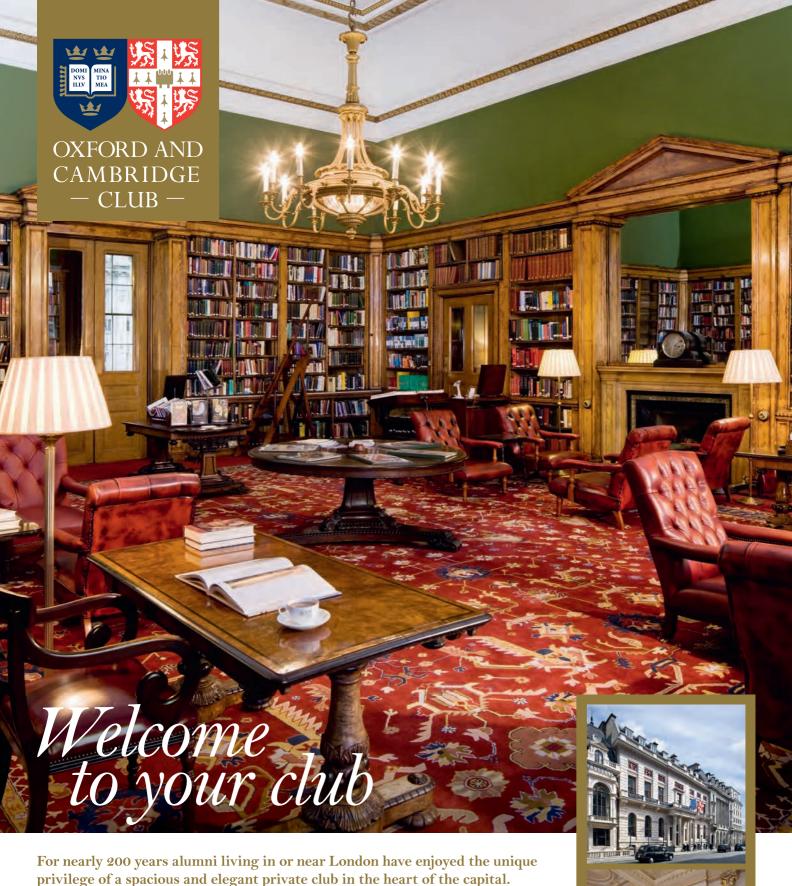


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