

Michaelmas Term 2011  
Volume 24 No 1

# OXFORD TODAY

THE UNIVERSITY  
MAGAZINE

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# WHITHER THE HUMANITIES?

Uncovering a global crisis in our midst



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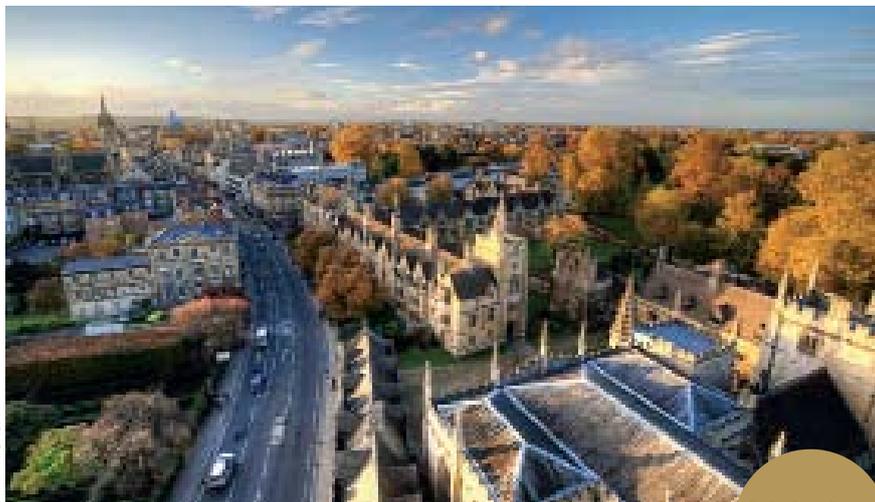
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JAANI RIORDAN

Michaelmas Term 2011

# Welcome

## Tackling a big subject

The University's governing body has voted 'no confidence' in Universities Minister David Willetts (p8). The issues surrounding this extraordinary vote are many, but one concern is the perception that the humanities are being marginalised in favour of subjects which (purportedly) result in higher levels of impact and thereby 'public value'. This issue of *Oxford Today* tackles the subject and finds that the problem is a global one, that it encroaches on science as well (pp26-33). If there is a solution, it requires persistent, strategic leadership from the University and all kindred institutions, not least 125-odd US liberal arts colleges, many of them under severe pressure. Universities need urgently to explain to society, government and alumni what it is that they do and why it matters – something that last month's sparkling Alumni Weekend did (p8).

When new views of Oxford appear, they deserve to be celebrated, not least the southern approach to the Radcliffe Observatory that graces this month's cover. The recent demolition of a tangled mass of utilitarian NHS buildings has returned the Observatory to a public position it hasn't enjoyed since completion in 1799. Recently restored by Green Templeton College, in whose grounds it sits, the Observatory is surely one of the great architectural gems of Oxford.

Elsewhere in this issue, don't neglect the launch of the *Oxford Today* creative writing competition with simply fabulous prizes (p45), a rich feature on Pre-Raphaelite painter Rossetti (p36) and the launch of a truly innovative official University app (p9).

EDITOR: Richard Lofthouse

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Cabinet War Rooms, the Operations Room at RAF Uxbridge and his country home at Chartwell among them. Two nights of the four are spent at Ditchley Park, Churchill's wartime retreat in Oxfordshire.

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# OXFORD TODAY

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MY OXFORD



A Pulitzer prize-winning author recalls fond memories of his days as a Rhodes scholar

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# Letters

## Your correspondence

We welcome letters for publication, which can be sent either by post or by email. We reserve the right to edit them to meet space constraints; the best way to avoid this is to keep letters to 200 or fewer words. Unless you request otherwise, letters may also appear on our website.

## In response to...

### OT 23.3: 'Fasten your seatbelts, there's turbulence ahead.'

Communism, climate change and the preservation of humanity...



☉ James Martin predicts "a time when conventional work is done by machines and humans spend their time on things that are uniquely human", when "higher levels of happiness will come from higher levels of creativity", and "cities will be dominated by social interaction and beautiful environments". All this bears a striking resemblance to William Morris' vision of 22nd century communism in his Utopian novel *News from Nowhere*. But Morris believed that the creation of such a paradise would have to be preceded by a socialist revolution in which the useful classes (most of humanity) take the means of production into common ownership. Surely this is the only way of resolving the contradiction that Dr Martin identifies between the findings of science and the profits of the corporations.

DAVID GROVE

*Balliol, 1941*

☉ James Martin's futurology recalls Charles Darwin's "Ignorance more frequently breeds confidence than knowledge," but what kind of ignorance? The ignorance of Dr Martin's IBM telling the world that PC's would not be of interest to anyone? The ignorance of Malthus' futurology that population growth would bring catastrophe? Sigmund Freud claiming we begin as *tabulae rasae*? Along comes gene theory. Einstein's science of a static universe? Along comes Edwin Hubble. Today dark energy? Scientists postulating an 'expanding Earth'. Now plate tectonics. Today global warming. Tomorrow? Are futurologists like

Martin not weakened by their own certainty? What of his certainty: Russia may muddle through with a massive consumption of vodka? The largest land mass in the world with 11 time zones rich with the natural resources he praises China for scooping up in Africa? How can he foretell "much of society will want... spirituality"? The science for this? In essence, is futurology a science, a pseudo science or another religion? "Doubt is not a pleasant condition," observed Voltaire, "but certainty is absurd".

MALCOLM RASALA

*Wadham, 1975*

☉ James Martin is right to highlight the importance of understanding the science of climate change and the impact of over-consumption of the Earth's resources. However, I also hope that humanity has the space and generosity to listen to the voices of those who seek to articulate a sense of meaning and vision for this troubled and fractured world – in other words, the artists, poets and other deep spiritual thinkers. The need for a genuine interdisciplinary approach of all the talents and creativity that humanity can muster has never been greater.

GILLIAN LEES

*St Anne's, 1982*

☉ Of one thing we can be sure: that James Martin's prophecy of the future, like all such prophecies, will be wrong. They always are. I would, though, just like to highlight one particular area: his prediction of the demise of conventional work to enable people to spend their time

on things which are uniquely human. What is more uniquely human than work? Far from being a curse, it is where we create ourselves and society. In work we develop our human capacities and virtues, finding opportunities to go beyond what we thought possible. Without work what would be the motivation for educating ourselves, as a life of leisure could be achieved at a lower price? In our work we collaborate with our fellow women and men to make the world we live in more human. By recognising the dignity of work we recognise the innate dignity of the worker and are encouraged to seek ways of making all work worthy of humanity.

DERMOT GRENHAM

*St Peter's, 1985*

☉ James Martin writes eloquently about the challenges facing us as a result of our growing demand for the Earth's diminishing resources. He comments on the world's human population growing from two billion when he was a kid to its size now. I fully expected him then to discuss proposals to limit further population increase, but was disappointed. Nowhere in his article does he suggest that the most urgent necessity in resolving the problems of diminishing resources on Earth lies initially in stabilising, then markedly reducing the size of the world's population. Without this, all the other measures to which he refers are no more than a stop-gap.

JOHN DEHNEL

*New College, 1968*

☉ I must take issue with some of James Martin's views. In attempting to gaze into the future, he starts from a questionable premise. He says: "Detailed computer calculations make it clear that dangerous climate change can be prevented only if action is taken quickly," yet fails to mention the limitations of those calculations. Using a mathematical model to predict what will happen will only work if the details of the model are correct. Inevitably they are not, because they are the modeller's best guess at how the system works. Climate models do not correctly predict the future, as they are neither right nor useful. He also states that a major concern is that powerful voices with no knowledge of science make themselves heard much louder than scientists. It was ever so, but that does not mean that scientists should be accorded uncritical reverence. They are humans with human failings, so their views need to be subjected to the most penetrating public scrutiny, not least when they wish fundamentally to alter the way in which we live. In climatology, that scrutiny has been absent.

FERGUS MOLLOY

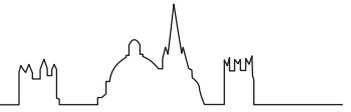
*Lincoln, 1966*



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## The long and winding road

As a Labour councillor in Greenwich, I do not normally agree with the Prime Minister, but on this issue [Oxford's failure to admit black students] he is absolutely right to highlight that Oxford and other elite universities have a long way to go before they can claim their student body reflects society at large. (It is just a pity that the huge hike in tuition fees that the current government is forcing upon universities will make it even harder to attract good students from non-conventional backgrounds). I went to a gaudy at Balliol (supposedly one of the most cosmopolitan of colleges) in March and 98% of the attendees – including me – were white. There was little evidence of the “wonderfully diverse, richly globalised student body” that Lofthouse waxes about so lyrically.

ALEX GRANT

*Balliol, 1993*

## A great helper?

I would like to comment on Dr Lofthouse's editorial in the Trinity issue. He writes that “It [Oxford] cannot be expected to mend inequalities that are deeply rooted in society.” Really? I always thought that one of the most important purposes of education – especially at institutions like Oxford that think of themselves as elite – was to help do exactly that. And in contrast to what Lofthouse suggests in his editorial, I think that that can be done without compromising merit-based admissions. I find the attitude expressed in his editorial to be rather shameful, and I earnestly hope that most of my Oxford colleagues don't share it.

MASON A PORTER

*Lecturer, Mathematical Institute, University of Oxford*

## Slow Motion

Professor Sir Andrew Motion was quoted as saying he considers the coalition to be “a very philistine government”. As nine of the present Cabinet of 23 are Oxford graduates (another five are from Cambridge), perhaps Oxford's much-vaunted education has not achieved the results one might have reasonably expected.

JOHN SLATFORD

*Jesus, 1963*

## Suspicious minds

Richard Gilbert's letter (Trinity 2011) quotes Bertrand Russell's remark that: “Belief systems provide a programme which relieves the necessity of thought”. Yes – for some – up to a point. But does the ‘belief system’ called ‘science’, which in its search for ‘truth’ seems fully to engage the theological faculty of the human mind, not leave the “necessity of thought” unrelieved? What then?

ELIZABETH YOUNG

*Somerville, 1941*

## Wryly amused

As someone who finds that her belief in God necessitates a good deal of thought, both personally and professionally, I could not resist a certain wry amusement at what seems like an own goal by Richard Gilbert (p6, Trinity issue). Certainly belief systems, Christianity among them, can function as Bertrand Russell describes, but the letter illustrates rather well that the Humanist belief system is not exempt from the tendency. Dismissing as “threatened” those who take a different position from one's own is as effective a way of evading robust intellectual engagement as any.

(REVD) PATRICIA HAWKINS

*Lady Margaret Hall, 1977*

## The very best

My fellow collegian, Sarah Wilson (Pembroke, 1985) writes of her concern about the absence of protection of public higher education and goes on to suggest that she is [now] “not sure what kind of education Oxford stands for,” (p6, Trinity issue). Well it doesn't stand for “public higher education” in the sense that Ms Wilson uses that phrase. As one of your other correspondents, Stephen Gratwick (Balliol, 1942) points out, there is no obligation on the state to subsidise university education. And with this in mind, the halfway house between (still subsidised) fees and (still onerous) loans is invidious. What kind of education does Oxford stand for? The very best achievable. And in the future, hopefully the near future, addressing this goal may require major changes. There have already been suggestions that the great universities should privatise along the American model. I, for one, wholeheartedly support this notion and would accept, with equanimity, the rows about the two-tier system such a move might create.

SIMON ROSTRON

*Pembroke, 1972*

## Great expectations

In the letters page of your Trinity issue, Stephen Gratwick suggests that students have no right to expect the taxpayer to subsidise their university fees. I would be interested to hear whether he also believes that universities have no right to expect taxpayer subsidies either.

OLIVER CRITCHLEY

*Magdalen, 1993*

## On your bike

*One More Kilometre and we're in the Showers* by Tim Hilton (Balliol, 1961) is indeed a good account of post-1945 British cycling (p42, Hilary issue). Unfortunately, his

references to university cycling around 1960 are very inaccurate. He writes: “In the 1960s I could not find another undergraduate who was a racing cyclist...I also lost the help of club life. With town and gown hostility still widespread, the two Oxford cycling clubs were not likely to welcome anyone from the University. My rides were solitary.” Not only had the OU Cycling Club been re-founded three years before Tim came up and would have welcomed him, but by 1961 road racing, time trialling and touring were all flourishing. His first year saw the fourth annual match against Cambridge. And I wonder whether he even tried approaching the city clubs, or whether he just assumed they would be hostile.

I joined the Oxford City Road Club in 1957 and was made very welcome. Furthermore, the OCRC president, Frank Needle, was happy to be official timekeeper for the annual Oxford/Cambridge match from 1958 to well into the 1960s – Tim's undergraduate period. In those days, both the OU Cycling Club and Oxford City RC happened to meet for their runs (occasionally joint training runs) at the Martyrs' Memorial, which makes it all the more surprising that Tim, as a Balliol man, never saw them.

PETER HOPKINS

*Exeter, 1956*

For full versions of these letters and to read further alumni correspondence, visit [www.oxfordtoday.ox.ac.uk](http://www.oxfordtoday.ox.ac.uk)

# Oxonian

University & alumni news



NICK KANE, RICK MATHER ARCHITECTS, LAURISAKSA, MATT STUART

## A bad day for Willetts

Oxford dons deliver a vote of 'no confidence'

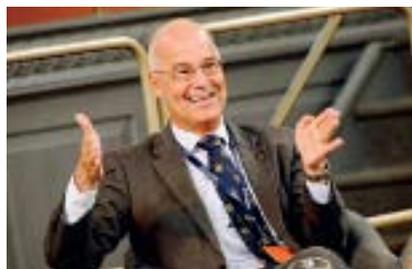
In June, Oxford University academics delivered a vote of no confidence in Universities Minister David Willetts. The University's governing body backed a motion condemning the government's higher education policy by 283 votes to five. St Antony's warden, Margaret MacMillan, attacked a higher education policy being "made up on the fly" while the University's student union president, David Barclay, argued that the move to market forces would "push some subjects to the brink of extinction". The University's council wrote to Willetts to

pass on the official condemnation; in July he spoke at an event in Oxford showcasing excellence in humanities research at the University. A similar no confidence vote in Cambridge failed in July, as 681 members of the governing body backed a motion condemning the government's higher education, but 681 opposed it. Other votes of no confidence have succeeded at universities in Leeds, Bath and departments at King's College London, while at Warwick, 1000 students and faculty have signed a petition against the government's policies.

## Questioning the future

Fifth annual alum gathering brings a buzz to Oxford

Alumni from as far afield as Malaysia and Australia, spanning matriculation dates from 1934 to 2008, convened at the University on a bright September weekend to discuss everything from the Olympics to 'What next? Surviving the 21st century,' the keynote presented by the Chancellor, Lord Patten of Barnes. A range of tours and workshops proved



DICK MAKIN

as popular as ever, including Marcus du Sautoy's mathematical tours of the city and a cognac tasting given by Bernard Hine. The Vice-Chancellor, Professor Andrew Hamilton (pictured) hosted an open forum in the Sheldonian Theatre, offering a wide-ranging commentary on the state of higher education.

## News in brief



### Unlocking Nubia

The Ashmolean Museum will open five new galleries (one of them shown above) of Ancient Egypt and Nubia (present-day Sudan) on 26 November, following a £5m redevelopment.

### New Mathematical Institute building

The University Council gave the go-ahead for the building of the Mathematical Institute building on the Radcliffe Observatory Quarter (ROQ) (see p26).

### Oxford's first digital showroom

Oxford University Press has launched a digital showroom inside its flagship store in the High Street.

### Anniversary season

St Peter's College celebrated the 50th Anniversary of its transition from 'Hall' to 'College'; the Environmental Change Institute celebrated its 20th anniversary, and the Business Economics Programme its 60th.

### Drawing like Ruskin

The Ashmolean Museum launched a major online resource and archive at <http://ruskin.ashmolean.org>

### Christ Church library restored

The restoration of the library at Christ Church was completed (detail below). In May, the work was awarded a regional prize for building conservation by the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors.



## 17 Academics acknowledged

All the prestigious awards including honorary degrees

## 19 Bright minds, top scholarships

Oxford's Clarendon scheme opens to students worldwide

## 20 Oxonians at large

From an environmental expert to a musical marvel

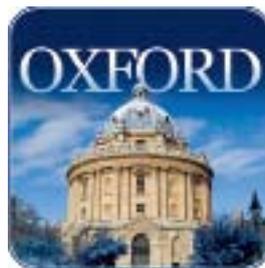


**More student bedrooms**  
Somerville College unveiled two new buildings in September. Designed by Niall McLaughlin Architects, the accommodation offers 68 en-suite student rooms and occupies part of the Radcliffe Observatory Quarter (ROQ – see p26). The first students took up residence in October.

## 'Appy Days Out

University Guide app goes live

Live since 5 September, the University's first official guide app (search in the Apple iTunes store under 'oxford guide') is categorised under 'travel', costs £2.49 and offers an innovative guide to visitors. The app is designed for the iPhone, is compatible with the iPad, and an Android version is planned. One of its strongest features is that the app brings the city to life in real time with all the latest news, live weather and event and exhibition listings. Users can also draw on 20 suggested walking tours. The app opens up the University



App icon features Rad Cam [www.ox.ac.uk/apps](http://www.ox.ac.uk/apps)

by getting everyone from the Chancellor and heads of houses to current students, to recommend their favourite attractions for a perfect day in Oxford. Above all, you won't feel lost ever again, as the app pinpoints your exact location using the phone's GPS capability.

## Merton campaigns

Merton College launched a £30m fundraising campaign. The 750th Anniversary Campaign, Sustaining Excellence, aims to raise £30m in time for the celebration of Merton's 750th Anniversary in 2014.



MATTSTUART

## New pianos arrive

Mitsuko Uchida's spellbinding recital in the Sheldonian Theatre in January, to raise funds for the music faculty, raised £25,000. The money was used to acquire six new pianos, capping the refurbishment of the faculty practice block.



TOBYWHITING

## Blavatnik opens

The Blavatnik School of Government opened its application process in September. The first 30 students will begin the year-long Master of Public Policy program, in October 2012, housed initially in Merton Street (above). The innovative degree encompasses the social sciences but also introduces science and the humanities to the core curriculum for the first time.



### JANE AUSTEN NOVEL ACQUIRED

The only remaining privately owned fragment of a Jane Austen novel, in the author's own handwriting, sold at auction in London for nearly £1m. The manuscript from Austen's uncompleted novel *The Watsons* was acquired by the Bodleian Library for £993,250 at Sotheby's. Richard Ovenden, the Bodleian's deputy librarian, said it was delighted to succeed in saving *The Watsons* for the nation. He said: "The manuscript is such a valuable part of our literary heritage... We will make the manuscript available to the general public, who can come and see it as early as this autumn, when *The Watsons* will be a star item in our forthcoming exhibition, 'Treasures of the Bodleian'." The library was helped with a substantial grant from the National Heritage Memorial Fund.

## The Alumni Card

Created in 2005, the Oxford Alumni Card scheme has now grown to include around 70 partners offering discounts on everything from airport parking to electric bicycles. Each partner is carefully chosen to make sure that the scheme remains exclusive and unique. Favourites include discounts at Blackwell's in-store and online; Truffle Trees; and Seth Lazar's Oxford Panoramas. The Card is the primary way for alumni to be identified as having a connection to Oxford while in the city. It is widely recognised by college porters, and should give you access to most colleges free of charge (where tourists have to pay).



For more information about the Alumni Card and its benefits, visit [www.alumni.ox.ac.uk/card](http://www.alumni.ox.ac.uk/card)

## NEW HEADS OF HOUSE

### Nuffield College

**ANDREW DILNOT, CBE**, Principal of St Hugh's College and a Pro-Vice-Chancellor of Oxford, will take up the post of Warden in September 2012.

### Wadham College

**LORD MACDONALD OF RIVER GLAVEN, QC**, will take up the post of Warden in September 2012.

## NEW APPOINTMENTS

### Economics

#### **CHRISTOPHER ARMSTRONG**

Professor of Economics at University College London was appointed Professor of Economics and became a fellow of All Souls.

### Mechanistic Cell Biology

#### **FRANCIS BARR**

North West Cancer Research Professor of Molecular Oncology at the University of Liverpool, was appointed E P Abraham Professor of Mechanistic Cell Biology and became a fellow of Trinity.

### Development

#### **LIESL ELDER**

Director of Development at the University of Edinburgh was appointed Director of Development.

### Laws of the British Commonwealth and the United States

#### **SANDRA FREDMAN**

Professor of Law at Oxford and honorary Professor at the University of Cape Town was appointed Rhodes Professor of the Laws of the British Commonwealth and the United States and became a fellow of Pembroke.

### Personnel and Equality

#### **STEPHEN GOSS**

Director of the Oxford Learning Institute, and fellow and tutor in

Medicine at Wadham was appointed Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Personnel and Equality.

### General Practice

#### **RICHARD HOBBS**

Professor and Head of Primary Care Clinical Sciences at the University of Birmingham was appointed Professor of General Practice and became a fellow of Harris Manchester.

### Medical, Biological and Chemical Sciences

#### **ANDREW HOLMES**

Professor in the School of Chemistry at the University of Melbourne was appointed Newton Abraham Visiting Professor of Medical, Biological and Chemical Sciences and became a fellow of Lincoln.

### Planning and Resources

#### **WILLIAM JAMES**

Professor of Virology, fellow of Brasenose and James Martin fellow was appointed Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Planning and Resources.

### Israel Studies

#### **DEREK PENSLAR**

Samuel J Zacks Professor of Jewish History at the University of Toronto was appointed Stanley Lewis Professor of Israel Studies and became a fellow of St Anne's.

### Cellular Pathology

#### **CHRISTOPHER TANG**

Professor in Infectious Diseases at Imperial College London was appointed Glaxo Professor of Cellular Pathology and became a fellow of Exeter.

### Medieval English Palaeography

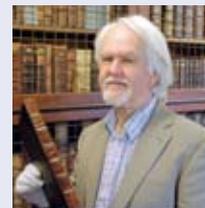
#### **DANIEL WAKELIN**

Lecturer in English at the University of Cambridge, was appointed Professor of Medieval English Palaeography and became a fellow of St Hilda's.

## 60 seconds with...

# Martin Brasier

Professor of Palaeobiology,  
Department of Earth Sciences



JACK MATTHEWS

### What is your research area?

My main interest is the history of life in deep time – three-and-a-half billion years ago, right at the beginning of the fossil record.

### You've been working in the Scottish Highlands - what's so special about them?

When you go to the northwest corner of Scotland, you enter a very ancient landscape. Many of the mountains on the far west are at least a thousand million years old. A waxy, quite hard material called calcium phosphate, like in your teeth, formed on the lake floor and, like amber, it entombed all the organisms that were inside it.

### What did you find there?

When we sectioned the phosphate and looked at it under our clever modern microscopes, we saw all sorts of things that had very complicated outer sculptures. This really grabbed the news. Only algae and higher plants have these complicated outer walls. Bacteria, the most primitive and simple things around, do not and we're now trying to work out how the bacteria evolved into much more complicated things like the algae, leading to the fungi, and also to the animals. The fossils we found show that this transition from very simple cells to algal cells had taken place

at least a billion years ago and they were already successfully colonising the land, so the land surface would have been going a bit green-like, like you see on a tombstone or a college wall these days.

### Was this a lot earlier than previously thought?

Yes, it's as much as 500 million years earlier than any previous evidence. It was a classic example - and I'm embarrassed about this - of a mofaotyof fossil. Everybody in my field is after a mofaotyof, which stands for "my oldest fossils are older than your oldest fossils". I've always been interested in old things – I'm ageist if you like – but that's what the newspapers publish.

### Palaeontology is an old discipline – is it still important?

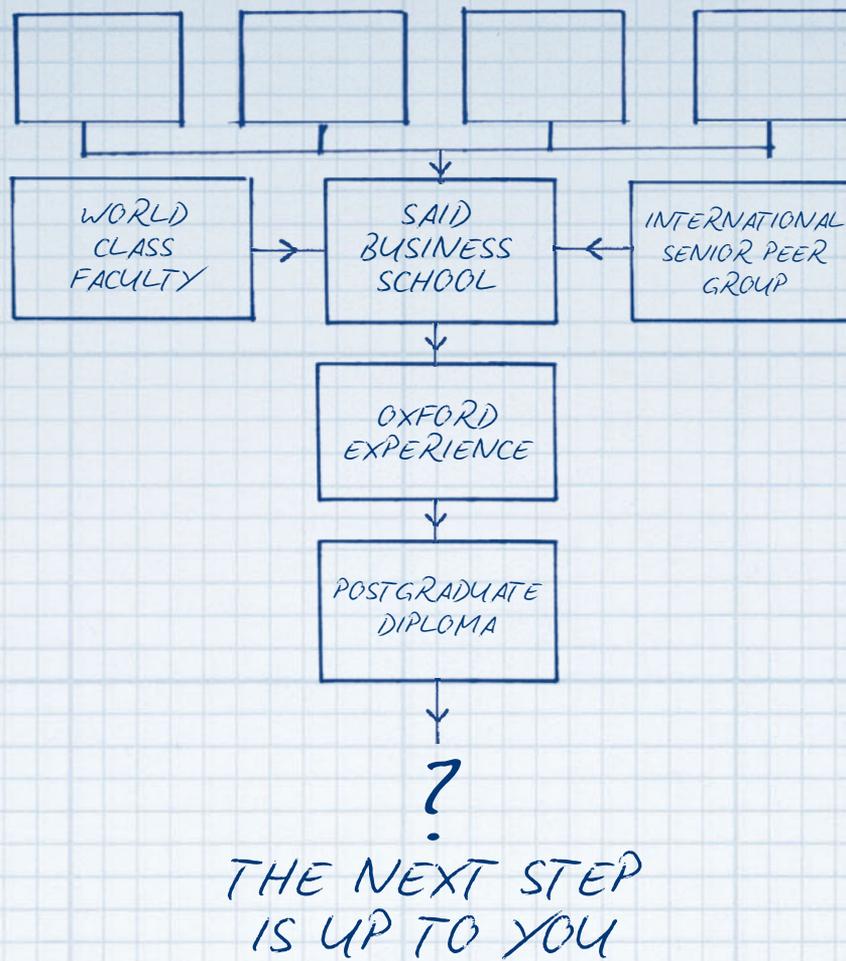
Palaeontology has the best questions. It's all about perspective. How did life begin? What does the future hold? Palaeontology shows us how tenuously beautiful our existence is. Most of what I have to say is relevant to looking for life on other planets, so I'd really call myself an astrobiologist, looking at life in the universe from a very large perspective. When our lives are so short, it's quite nice to have this vicarious experience of the hugeness of the system.

### Life on Mars?

Newspapers worldwide recently reported Professor Brasier's major co-discovery of a 3.4bn year-old fossil in the sandstones of the Pilbara region of Australia, proving that bacteria lived on earth without oxygen – a significant boost to the hypothesis that there might have been life on Mars.



To read recent press coverage of Martin Brasier's discovery, visit [oxfordtoday.ox.ac.uk](http://oxfordtoday.ox.ac.uk)



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*Tom Strickland, Merton 1977*

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\*FT Rankings May 2011: No.1 in the UK, No.11 in the World.



# JOHN MITCHELL

## FINE PAINTINGS



**Ambrosius Bosschaert the Elder (1573-1621)**  
oil on panel, 14¼ x 10¼ in. (36.5 x 25.7 cm.) circa 1609.

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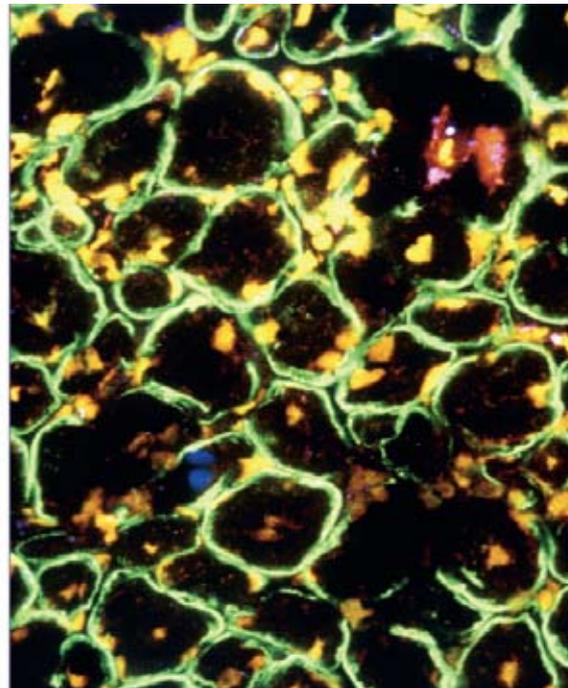
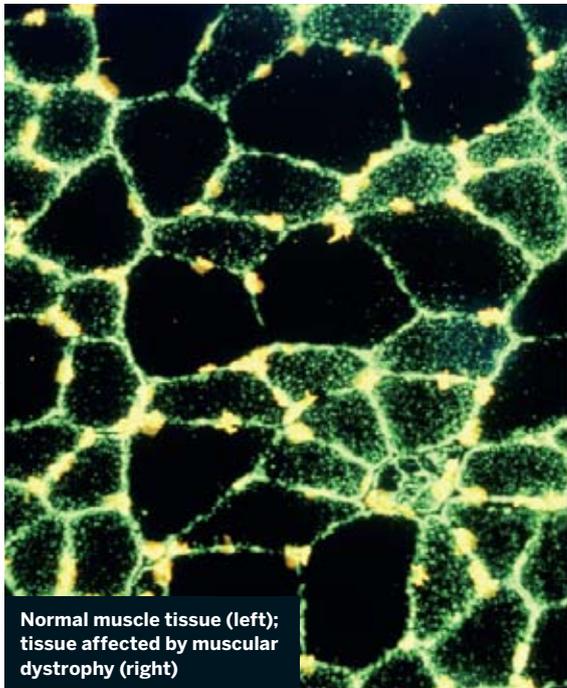
[www.johnmitchell.net](http://www.johnmitchell.net)

# Science findings Edited by Penny Sarchet

Investigating the treatment of muscular dystrophy and how a new way to unravel silk could develop world production



**Space and time**  
A team featuring Oxford scientists has discovered 10 new planets using the French-operated CoRoT telescope. One of the planets, CoRoT-18b, orbits a relatively young star, perhaps just a few tens of millions of years old. "Finding planets around young stars is interesting because planets initially evolve very fast," explained the UK's lead scientist for CoRoT, Oxford physicist Dr Suzanne Aigrain. "If we want to understand the conditions in which planets form, we need to catch them within the first few hundred million years. After that, memory of the initial conditions is essentially lost."



Normal muscle tissue (left); tissue affected by muscular dystrophy (right)

PATRICK LANDMANN/SCIENCEPHOTO LIBRARY; ALPHA/WIKIMEDIA; C. HOLLAND/OXFORD SILK GROUP

## Potential treatment for 'incurable' illness

Oxford researchers discover pill that could manage muscle-wasting disease

Research in Oxford suggests that Duchenne muscular dystrophy could be treated by simply popping a pill. Around 100 boys are born in the UK every year with the incurable disease, which is caused by a genetic mutation affecting a muscle protein called dystrophin. Sufferers are expected to be wheelchair-bound by age 12, living only until their late 20s. Now, a team led by Professor Dame Kay Davies of Oxford's Department of Physiology, Anatomy and Genetics, has shown that the

disease could be treated using a protein similar to dystrophin, called utrophin. In a collaboration with Oxfordshire-based biotech company Summit plc, they discovered a drug that makes mice produce more of this protein. They found that, at high enough levels, utrophin was able to substitute for dystrophin, protecting against the progressive muscle weakness of the disease. Over the next two years, the team will develop and optimise the drug for human use.



**Feeding the world**  
Oxford University's Wildlife Conservation Research Unit worked with the University of Amsterdam to study the environmental impacts of 'lab-grown' meat. Compared to conventionally produced European meat, this method uses up to 45% less energy and emits up to 96% less carbon. Raising livestock for meat currently produces more greenhouse gases than the global transportation sector. Hanna Tuomisto, who led the research, said that cultured meat should be considered as part of the solution to feeding the world's population, as well as cutting emissions and resource use.

## Silk production goes wild in Oxford

Oxford zoologists have discovered a method for unravelling the silk of wild silkmoths. The domesticated silkmoth, *Bombyx mori*, makes a cocoon which is easy to unravel, but many wild silkmoth cocoons are much more difficult. Using techniques like electron microscopy, they found that the mineral calcium oxalate is embedded in wild cocoons, forming a structure similar to reinforced concrete. The researchers found that treatment

with a warm organic acid removed the calcium oxalate from the cocoons, enabling them to be unravelled into silk. This method, which is very simple and uses a widely available weak acid, could open up silk production, which is currently concentrated in China and India, to Africa and South America, where wild silk moths are pest species. Oxford's Dr Fritz Vollrath and his colleagues are now seeking a patent for their technique.





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In addition to economical central London pricing\*, ROSL offers a varied events programme, inter-club younger members' group, quarterly journal, in-house art exhibitions and concerts, and short term access to over 80 other clubs around the world in Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Singapore, Hong Kong, Malaysia, India, Pakistan, South Africa, Kenya, Gibraltar, Ireland, Spain, USA and elsewhere.



Specially discounted joining fees for *Oxford Today* readers range from £61.50 to £144 depending on place of residence. Annual subscriptions for 2012 range from £83 to £288 and are effective from 1 November 2011 if wished, thereby giving 14 months membership for the same cost as 12 months.

For further information please contact the Royal Over-Seas membership department at the address below remembering to quote OXFORD TODAY.

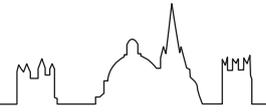
**Over-Seas House, Park Place, St James's Street, London SW1A 1LR**

Tel: 020 7408 0214 Fax: 020 7499 6738

(Enquiries: 9.00am-5.00pm Monday-Friday - exts. 214 and 216)

Website: [www.rosl.org.uk](http://www.rosl.org.uk) E-mail: [info@rosl.org.uk](mailto:info@rosl.org.uk)

\*London clubhouse: gin & tonic £4.85; pint of beer from £4.30; house wine from £4.00; bar food £5.00-£6.00; three course lunch/dinner in the restaurant from £26.50; three course lunch in the garden £23.95; scones, Devon cream and preserves with tea or coffee in the garden, buttery or drawing room £8.00; evening events from £4.00; air-conditioned bedrooms £105 - £200; e-mail and computer facilities in Central Lounge, broadband internet connection in bedrooms. Prices correct at time of design, September 2011.



# A YEAR IN THE LIFE OF THE BOAT RACE

Blood, sweat and tears. Yes, it's that time again, the dawning of a new academic year and the selection of a new boat race crew, some of whom will eventually contest the boat race next April. This year, *Oxford Today* will follow the Oxford crew in their

metamorphosis from raw brawn to finely honed racing squad, via a wide selection of digital multimedia ranging from video clips to video interviews and still photography. The result will be a unique insider glimpse at what it takes to attain a full blue in rowing.



To view the first video, visit  
[www.oxfordtoday.ox.ac.uk/  
boatrace](http://www.oxfordtoday.ox.ac.uk/boatrace)

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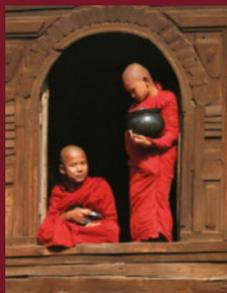
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# Awards

## Queen's Birthday Honours

Four Oxford academics were recognised.

**CHRISTOPHER HOOD**, Gladstone Professor of Government and fellow of All Souls College, was made a CBE for services to social science. **WENDY JAMES, FBA**, Emeritus Professor of Social Anthropology, was made a CBE for services to scholarship. **RICHARD DARTON**, Professor of Engineering Science, fellow of Keble and president of the European Federation of Chemical Engineering, was awarded an OBE for services to engineering. **JEREMY THOMAS**, Professor of Ecology and fellow of New College, was awarded an OBE for services to science.

## Honorary degrees

Eight leading figures from the worlds of science, the arts, politics and law received honours at Encaenia, the annual honorary degree ceremony.

### Doctor of Civil Law by Diploma

**HIS EXCELLENCY GIORGIO NAPOLITANO**, 11th President of the Italian Republic: "Most learned and liberal President, who have conferred great benefits on your own country and provided the leaders of other nations with an example of patriotism and probity..."

**Doctor of Civil Law JUSTICE EDWIN CAMERON**, Justice of the

Constitutional Court of South Africa: "Learned and compassionate judge, whose witness has consoled the sick and strengthened the fearful..."

### Doctors of Letters

**PROFESSOR SIR GEOFFREY LLOYD**, historian of ancient science: "Wondrous sun, who illumine West and East at the same time..." **DR MARILYNNE ROBINSON**, author: "Penetrating analyst of the human heart, who have brought out equally the sadness and the joy of life..."

### Doctors of Science

**PROFESSOR ELIZABETH BLACKBURN**, molecular biologist: "Brilliant scientist, who have penetrated nature's most inward secrets..." **PROFESSOR DAME LINDA PARTRIDGE**, geneticist: "A scientist who has made big discoveries from the scrutiny of little things..." **PROFESSOR OLIVER SMITHIES**, geneticist: "Master and friend, who have uncovered the secrets of mice and men..."

**Doctor of Music SIR GEORGE MARTIN**, record producer: "Master of your craft, whose productions have been heard by almost everyone in the world..."

## Royal Society – Awards

Three Oxford scientists have been recognised: **ANGELA MCLEAN**, Professor of Mathematical Biology in the Department of Zoology, a Senior Research fellow at All Souls College and Co-Director of the Institute of Emerging Infections at the Oxford Martin School, has been awarded the Gabor Medal in recognition of her work on the mathematical population biology of immunity. The Gabor Medal is given for acknowledged distinction of interdisciplinary work between the life sciences and other disciplines. **DR CHRIS LINTOTT**, an astronomer in the Department of Physics, has received the Kohn Award for his engagement with society in matters of science and its societal dimension. The award is given to a UK-based early-career stage scientist who has undertaken high-quality public engagement activities with

a strategic impact on institutions, organisations and cultures. Passionately engaged in efforts to improve the public understanding of science, Dr Lintott is best known as co-presenter of the BBC's *Sky at Night* and co-author of *Bang! The Complete History of the Universe*. **PETER EDWARDS, FRs**, Professor and Head of Inorganic Chemistry, has been invited to give the Bakerian Lecture 2012 for his decisive contributions to the physics, chemistry and materials science of condensed matter including his work on the metal-to-insulator transition. The annual Bakerian Lecture is the premier lecture in the physical sciences.

## Royal Society – Fellows

Eight University academics were elected new fellows: **PROFESSOR HAGAN BAYLEY** and **PROFESSOR DAVID MANOLOPOULOS** in the Department of Chemistry; **PROFESSOR ALAN GRAFEN** and **PROFESSOR ALEX KACELNIK** in the Department of Zoology; **PROFESSOR IAN HORROCKS** in the Department of Computer Science; **PROFESSOR STEFFEN LAURITZEN**, in the Department of Statistics; **PROFESSOR FIONA POWRIE** in the Nuffield Department of Clinical Medicine; and **PROFESSOR ANGELA VINCENT** in the Nuffield Department of Clinical Neuroscience.

## British Academy – Fellows

Seven Oxford academics are among the 38 to be elected as fellows for 2011: **PROFESSOR LYNDALE ROPER** and **DR RUTH HARRIS**, Faculty of History; **PROFESSOR LAURA MARCUS**, Faculty of English Language and Literature; **PROFESSOR JEREMY WALDRON**, Department of Politics and International Relations; **PROFESSOR CECILE FABRE**, Faculty of Philosophy; **PROFESSOR JOHN BAINES**, Oriental Institute; **PROFESSOR ANDREW HURRELL**, Latin American Centre.

## Distinguished Friends

The Distinguished Friend of Oxford Award recognises individuals who have acted as exceptional volunteers for the benefit of the collegiate University. In September, 13 individuals received awards: **DEREK J BENHAM** (New, 1972); **THOMAS BÖCKING** (Univ, 1970); **CHRISTOPHER DRAKE** (Exeter, 1975); **PROFESSOR SIR ROY GOODE QC**; **FRANCIS WILLIAM JOHNSTON FCA**; **ALASTAIR LACK** (Univ, 1964); **PROFESSOR JOHN LEDINGHAM** (New, 1950); **LILLIAN MARTIN**; **PETER S PAINE JR** (Christ Church, 1957); **SIR DAVID SCHOLEY CBE** (Christ Church, 1955); **MICHAEL STEINER** (Lincoln, 1958); **LORD WALDEGRAVE OF NORTH HILL MA, PC** (Corpus, 1965); **GRAHAM WHITE** (St Catherine's, 1974).



Sir George Martin, "the fifth Beatle", gracefully acknowledges the applause as he is presented with an honorary Doctorate of Music at Encaenia, the University's annual honorary degree ceremony

ROB JUDGES



For more details on Distinguished Friends and honorands, visit [www.oxfordtoday.ox.ac.uk](http://www.oxfordtoday.ox.ac.uk)

## Alumni news



ROB JUDGES, ASHMOLEAN MUSEUM

### The value of volunteers

Volunteering is one way to forge valuable links with the University and other alumni following graduation, and volunteers play a crucial role in the vibrant Oxford alumni community by helping students to develop their knowledge and skills and preserve the vitality of the University. Here are some of the ways to be involved:

#### Alumni networks

The Oxford alumni network is a key vehicle for alumni to stay connected with the University and each other. We have a range of networks, from those aimed at alumni in a distinct geographical location, to those united by shared interests, subjects, colleges, and even former membership of clubs and societies. The regional alumni network is made up of 198 alumni groups and contacts worldwide. Branches are volunteer-run, integral to the work of the Alumni Office and benefit the whole community. With varied social programmes, members can develop their skills and get involved with University activities. Visit [www.alumni.ox.ac.uk/networks](http://www.alumni.ox.ac.uk/networks) for more information, or to download the 'Alumni Networks at Home and Abroad' brochure and directory.

#### Oxford University International Internship Programme (OUIIP)

Launched in 2008, OUIIP offers Oxford University students access to summer internships, most of

them provided by Oxford alumni or through business or educational partnerships. If your organisation can offer a placement for 2012, then please get in touch.

[www.careers.ox.ac.uk/ouiip](http://www.careers.ox.ac.uk/ouiip)

#### Mentor a current student

Oxford10 – the network for graduates who finished their studies in the past 10 years – is currently looking for more volunteers for its alumni-student mentoring scheme. The aim of the scheme is simple: to help Oxford students prepare for the transition to paid work, by linking up recent graduates with students who are soon to graduate, offering the chance to share experiences and advice. If you graduated less than 10 years ago and would like to be a mentor, email [mentoring.oxford@gmail.com](mailto:mentoring.oxford@gmail.com) with your name, sector, college, matriculation year and why you'd like to be involved.

#### Oxford Hub

A student-run organisation that connects students with charitable causes, Oxford Hub is creating a community to help alumni keep in touch with the charities they were involved in at University. Participants have the chance to get involved in charitable and socially entrepreneurial activity, with training on social and environmental issues and careers. The community fosters networking opportunities between alumni and current students, with careers advice, training and mentoring often arising from the connection. <http://oxfordhub.org/alumni>

#### Alumni Volunteers' Leadership Conference

Forty two branch representatives from around the world attended the inaugural Alumni Volunteers' Leadership Conference in July to share best practice and ideas. The weekend also gave us the chance to thank our dedicated alumni branch officers. The three-day event was held at St Anne's (above) and commenced on Friday with a champagne reception in the Bodleian quad hosted by Vice-Chancellor Andrew Hamilton, followed by dinner in the Divinity School. Saturday offered a full day of activities including branches' different approaches to volunteering. David Langer (St Anne's), founder of Group Spaces, participated in a panel on communicating via print, the web and social networking, while Berlin and London branch representatives shared best practices in event planning. [www.alumni.ox.ac.uk/leadership\\_conference](http://www.alumni.ox.ac.uk/leadership_conference)

#### Oxford10 Christmas party

This year's Oxford10 Christmas party will be held at the London Film Museum. Alumni will have exclusive access for the evening and can explore the interactive galleries. Highlights will include a *Star Wars* photo booth. Although organised with the Oxford10 cohort in mind, the party is open to all alumni.



Read our new alumni blogs at [oxfordtoday.ox.ac.uk/blogs](http://oxfordtoday.ox.ac.uk/blogs)

#### iTunes U

Lectures, seminars and conferences can be accessed for free from iTunesU. Find out more at <http://itunes.ox.ac.uk>. You can search and choose content by department, centre or conference. Recent hits include:



- *The Elements of Drawing* by Stephen Farthing.
- *Pitt Rivers Museum* – A series of audio podcasts from the Pitt Rivers museum.
- *History of Art at the University of Oxford series* - Draws on a long tradition of teaching and studying the subject.

#### Recent highlights:

- *Alumni Weekend* Catch up on what you may have missed at the Alumni Weekend, by downloading lectures from various leading Oxford academics, on a variety of subjects. The theme for this year's event was *21st Century Challenges*.

- *Humanitas* Humanitas is a series of visiting professorships from Oxford to Cambridge and vice versa, intended to bring leading practitioners and scholars to both universities to address major themes in the arts, sciences and humanities.



# Student spotlight



PHIL SAVER

To read the three Clarendon scheme prize-winning essays, visit: [www.oxfordtoday.ox.ac.uk/clarendon](http://www.oxfordtoday.ox.ac.uk/clarendon)

## Clarendon scholarships

Now open to the brightest graduate students worldwide, reports Judith Keeling

Juggling the demands of work and motherhood is one of the most debated issues facing women from all different backgrounds across the world today. As such, Nitzan Peri's Oxford postgraduate research has relevance to the lives of millions of women that stretches far beyond the supportive environment of Oxford's colleges and faculties.

Nitzan, 29, is one of 300 current Clarendon scholars to benefit from an awards scheme now in its 10th year. The scholarship offers complete funding of tuition fees, plus a living expenses grant to the very brightest graduate students worldwide. The Clarendon Scholarships are funded by Oxford University Press, in partnership with Oxford colleges and external donors, and administered by Oxford University, aiming to ensure that the University continues to attract the very best postgraduate minds from all countries.

Applicants compete for more than 100 places each year, with the 1000th scholar joining this Michaelmas. Many scholars go on to pursue academic careers afterwards. Clarendon scholarships are the only scheme to be judged entirely on academic merit – and were originally started in 2001 to provide full bursaries for graduates from outside Britain and Europe. However, graduate applicants from all nationalities are now eligible to be considered for the awards, meaning that Clarendon scholars starting their studies in the autumn of 2012 could come from anywhere on the globe.

Nitzan is a graduate of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and she is currently studying sociology at Nuffield



**Nitzan Peri, Clarendon scholar, who wrote a prize-winning essay on the life-changing opportunity offered by the scholarship**

College. Under the supervision of Dr Oriel Sullivan, Department of Sociology, she is writing a DPhil thesis examining the different determinants of fertility in the USA, Europe and Israel. She recently won a £300 prize for an essay describing the opportunity afforded to her by the scholarship. "Studying abroad was a dream I had for a long time and Oxford had a special appeal, being a historic university with an international reputation," she says.

In common with other Clarendon scholars, Nitzan highlights how much she values the global element of the scheme and the opportunity to receive feedback on her ideas from scholars of all disciplines and nationalities, many of whom she would never have encountered if she had stayed in her home country.

This is echoed by fellow Clarendon scholar, Claire Higgins, from Victoria, Australia. She is currently writing a doctoral thesis at Merton College on Australian refugee policy in the 1970s and 1980s. She was one of two runners-up in the tenth anniversary Clarendon essay competition.

Claire, 29, says: "Oxford is a pioneering centre for refugee studies. The History Faculty and my supervisor have pushed my ideas and analysis in directions that I would never have understood before coming here."

Emma Kaufman, 25, currently at New College researching for a doctorate in the penal system and the other runner-up in the Clarendon essay competition, concurs. A law graduate of Columbia University, New York, she plans a career in legal academia, lecturing and advocating change in the American prison system. "It's the global dimension of Oxford that has taught me so much," she says. ☺

## Oxonians at large

Alastair Lack meets an energetic a cappella group, a vivacious publisher and an entrepreneur



JODEBANZIE, THE OXFORD AMERICAN

## Discovering the economics of ecosystems and biodiversity

The banker-turned-environmental pioneer who is leading the world towards a greener corporate future

### Pavan Sukhdev

Univ 1978

After qualifying as an accountant, Pavan Sukhdev spent much time in banking. While working at Deutsche Bank in India, he founded Global Markets Centre, Mumbai. So far, the story of many a successful business Oxonian.

Then in 2008, on a two-year sabbatical, he led two big environmental projects: The G8+5-commissioned Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity and UNEP's 'Green Economy Initiative'. The former proposed solutions to continuing worldwide biodiversity loss and ecosystem degradation, the fruits of which can now be seen in Brazil, India, Germany, Norway and elsewhere.

At present a McCluskey Fellow at Yale University, Pavan is writing *Corporation 2020*, a book on how "corporations and society can and should work together to achieve common goals and build a

green economy". The book will distil his 25 years' experience of financial markets as well as his more recent work on environmental politics.

He plans to develop his Green Indian States Trust (GIST) and its consultancy, GIST Advisory, to provide countries with an environmental risk and life-cycle assessment, plus "green accounting" for both governments and corporations. He believes India has emulated western-style growth, with the environment severely affected as a result. But now he senses a change in attitude towards a greener future. He wants to provide politicians with the ideas and intellectual analysis to help their decision-making.

So, amid all these projects, where does Pavan regard home? The UK, India or even Australia, where he regularly visits to plant trees on a plot of land he has bought? He gives a rueful laugh: "I'm a vagabond, a citizen of the world." ☺ <http://pavansukhdev.com>



## Writing it all down South

### Warwick Sabin

Brasenose 1998

This Oxonian's mission?

To publish the liveliest literary magazine in the USA, with the best writers documenting the complexity and vitality of the American South. And he is succeeding. Founded in 1992, the *Oxford American* has won three national magazine awards; published the fiction of celebrated American writers, including Donna Tartt, and brought to light previously unseen work by Southern writers such as William Faulkner.

After university in Arkansas and two years as a Marshall scholar at Oxford, Warwick worked in a number of jobs. Then, in 2008 he was asked to step in as publisher to the *Oxford American*, taking over from John Grisham. A recent partnership with National Public Radio and the magazine's first ever writers' conference keeps the print publication relevant and timely. And there's a lot to talk about. Warwick wants the magazine to celebrate a deep, nuanced culture and particular way of life. And what a well-versed celebration it is.

☺ [www.oxfordamerican.org](http://www.oxfordamerican.org)



## A website with the whole truth

### Keren Mitchell

Corpus Christi 2004

Soon after leaving

Oxford, Keren Mitchell joined a management consultancy. He quickly realised that it was not the job he had applied for. The requirements involved, such as long, unpredictable hours, had been largely glossed over. It was a salutary lesson that information always comes from the company but never from the employees. And so the seeds for a business venture were planted in Keren's mind. In October 2010, he started a website, with his wife Natasha, today named theJobCrowd. With thousands of real job reviews in many areas of working life, the site provides details about the top (and bottom) companies to work for. There is a process of checking reviews before they go online: the website is not about giving disaffected employees the chance to criticise. In the future, Keren wants to consolidate theJobCrowd's position, making it the number one source for students. As he says: "It's nice to be building and creating something that is so useful". Now that's a job well done. ☺ [www.thejobcrowd.com](http://www.thejobcrowd.com)



# Oxford's Got Talent

'Out of the Blue', the award-winning a cappella group who took to the stage on *Britain's Got Talent*

In October 2000, an American student, Derek Smith, arrived in Oxford. He was surprised to find that there was no all-male 'a cappella' singing group at the University, groups that are very popular in America.

So he set up Out of the Blue, an a cappella group of 12 to 15 students. The group has now been European a cappella champions three times and most recently appeared on *Britain's Got Talent*. On a journey they described as "amazing", the group reached the semi-final and were critically acclaimed by the judges. As this year's president Dave Brennan (Brasenose, 2009) says: "As a result of the TV success, I get 200 emails a day,

many... offers to sing." A strong commitment is asked of members. Recruits join in October for the year, rehearse three times a week for two

hours and sing at more than one event a week. December sees the annual UK tour, Easter is the ever-popular American visit and summer is the Edinburgh Festival.

Rehearsals take place in college rooms, and new material is constantly added to the repertoire. With over 20 songs in every show, Out of the Blue boast a catalogue of some 60 songs, from classical to jazz and folk, all arranged by the singers themselves.

So what makes Out of the Blue so unique? Beyond the professionalism and enormous energy of the live shows, Dave suggests the combination of choreography and self-effacing humour – a humour that goes down brilliantly in the United States.

Income goes towards expenses such as CDs (12 have been made so far) and any profit goes to charity. With international tours now regular and TV exposure under the belt, Out of the Blue looks set for new heights. Meanwhile there are songs to arrange, shows to perform and overseas tours to undertake. ☺



  
We welcome suggestions from alumni for these pages. Please send details to the Editor at [oxford.today@admin.ox.ac.uk](mailto:oxford.today@admin.ox.ac.uk)



## All about the music Alexander Campkin

St Catherine's 2005

"Oxford is an incredible place and intellectually very stimulating." So says Alexander Campkin, now one of the UK's leading young composers and conductors. While reading music at Oxford, he founded a choir and an orchestra at his college. A Masters at the Royal Academy of Music and a postgraduate diploma in Vienna followed, then he founded another orchestra, the minimaLIST ENsemble, as well as another choir, The Oxbridge Singers. He booked the Sheldonian for the first concert. With almost one hundred performers, he recalls it as a "terrifying concept". It was a great success. Since then,

Alexander has secured his position as a composer and conductor in great demand.

His work is regularly performed in the UK, the USA and Europe. He was a prizewinner in the 2010 'Musica Sacra' international composition competition in Poland and he has also composed a chamber opera *Stone Heart* that debuted in 2010 and won critical acclaim. Alexander's compositions range from instrumental to choral. He loves conducting and has held many masterclasses. A musician with enormous experience and a calendar of commissions and appearances that is dizzying to contemplate. Now that is incredible. ☺ [www.alexandercampkin.co.uk](http://www.alexandercampkin.co.uk)

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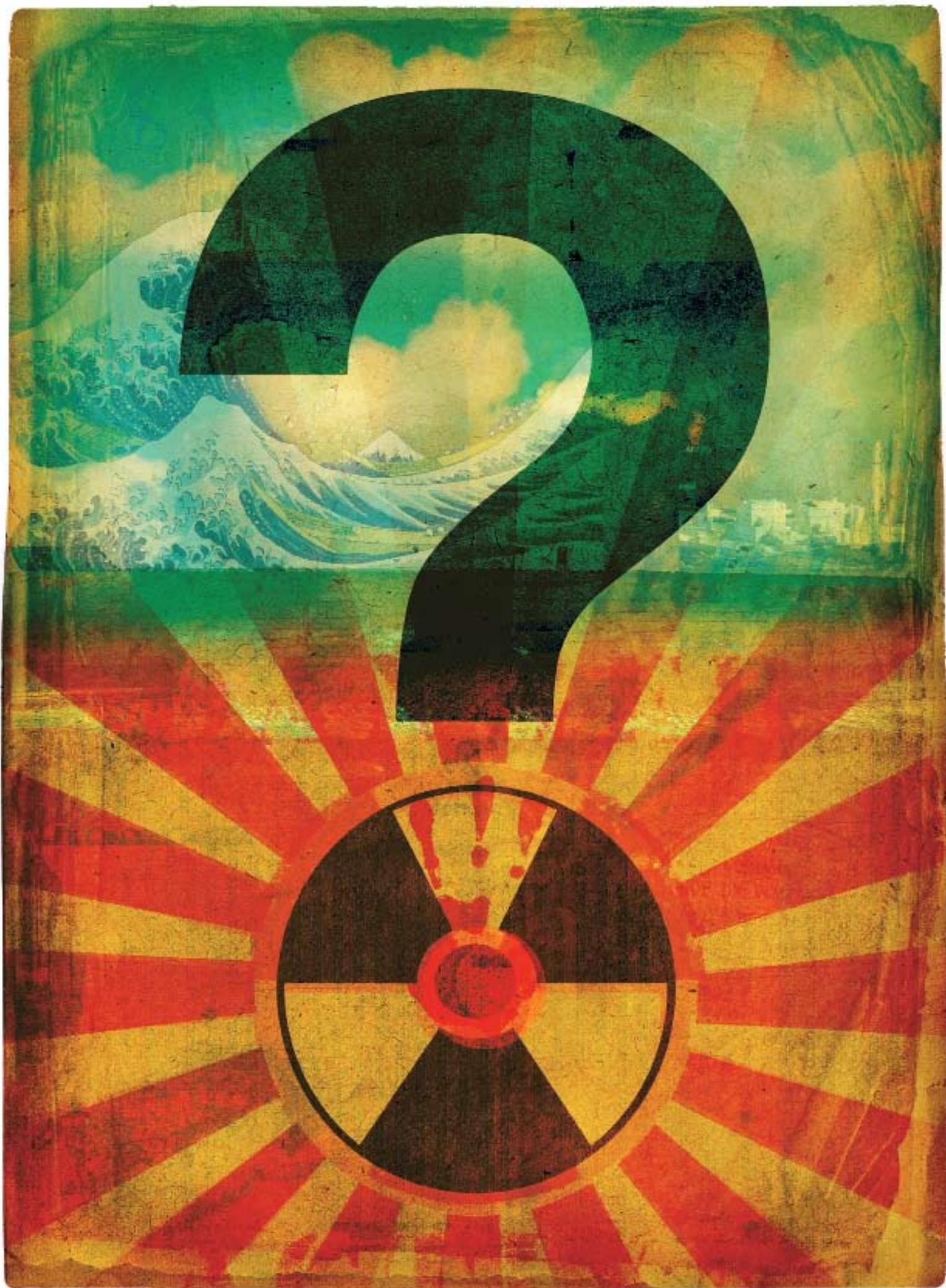


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# WHAT NEXT?

Post-Fukushima... post-nuclear? As we approach the first anniversary of the tsunami that shook the world, three experts share their divergent visions of the future

## ☉ Wade Allison

**I**ONISING RADIATION IS used extensively in medicine at a mild dose level in a CT, PET or SPECT scan. In a radiotherapy course a high dose is used to kill cancer cells. Parts of the patient's body near the tumour get a high dose and yet recover. Many people benefit from such treatment, yet this radiation is in principle no different from that found near the Fukushima plant, and the size of this dose is a thousand times greater than the annual dose used to define the Evacuation Zone.

This curious state of affairs has arisen because, for the environment, authorities have set radiation regulation levels as low as possible, as recommended by the International Commission on Radiological Protection (ICRP). This was a political imperative in the Cold War days – before the dangers of fossil fuels were appreciated, there was no strong reason to challenge these unjustifiably cautious regulations.

Much has changed in the 21st century. We understand how biological cells can repair themselves against radiation damage. This leads us to expect that little or no harm results from low levels of radiation, as confirmed by long-term medical records from Hiroshima, Nagasaki, and subsequent nuclear accidents. Medical information and peer-reviewed data are openly available on the internet. There is now a fair understanding of questions and no secrecy.

So what next? The anachronistic radiation “safety” levels should be relaxed as a priority. A more robust appreciation of nuclear radiation would benefit mankind – a matter for education. Its beneficial use in medicine is accepted. Its beneficial use in energy should now be added for the health of the planet. The use of radiation as an effective method of preserving food, approved by the World Health Organisation, could replace energy-consuming refrigeration. Nobody has died from radiation at Fukushima – and it may be expected that nobody will.

*Professor Wade Allison is an Emeritus fellow of Keble College and an Emeritus Professor of Physics at the University of Oxford. His most recent book Radiation and Reason (2009) has been recently published in Japan*

## ☉ David King

**T**he cooling of the nuclear reactors at Fukushima is the immediate priority. It will be some time before the area is fully under control. The Japanese government and TEPCO (the Tokyo Electric Power Company) are not being fully open and honest with the public about events at nuclear reactors. Yet it must be emphasised that the major impact of the tsunami was the devastating loss of life, and the destruction of towns, villages and factories along Japan's Eastern seaboard. Fortunately not one life has been lost from radiation at Fukushima.

The British government recognises that, even in the face of the accidents that have taken place at nuclear plants, the loss of life per unit of electricity produced is easily the lowest from nuclear power of all large-scale electricity-generating mechanisms. In the same week as Fukushima, a further 30 coal miners lost their lives. Will Greenpeace call for an end to all coal-fired stations as a result? Nuclear power is an essential element, alongside renewable power sources and energy efficiency measures, in de-fossilising the British electricity grid. I welcome the interim report of Dr Mike Weightman on the implications of Fukushima for the British nuclear industry. The safety of nuclear power depends on learning from accidents. A key lesson here may be to allow for the possibility that extensive flooding may occur causing a power shutdown in the auxiliary system, disabling the cooling process. Passive cooling may be a future necessity for nuclear plants.

There will be serious challenges for those countries which now choose to switch away from nuclear energy. Reducing greenhouse gases stimulates a country's economy, cutting fuel imports and creating employment. Fukushima does not place a technological block on the future important role of nuclear power alongside renewables as we move away from fossil fuel usage to avoid the worst impacts of global warming.

*Professor Sir David King, a fellow of University College, is the director of the Smith School of Enterprise and the Environment at the University of Oxford. In 2008, he co-authored The Hot Topic a study of climate change*

## ☉ Kumi Naidoo

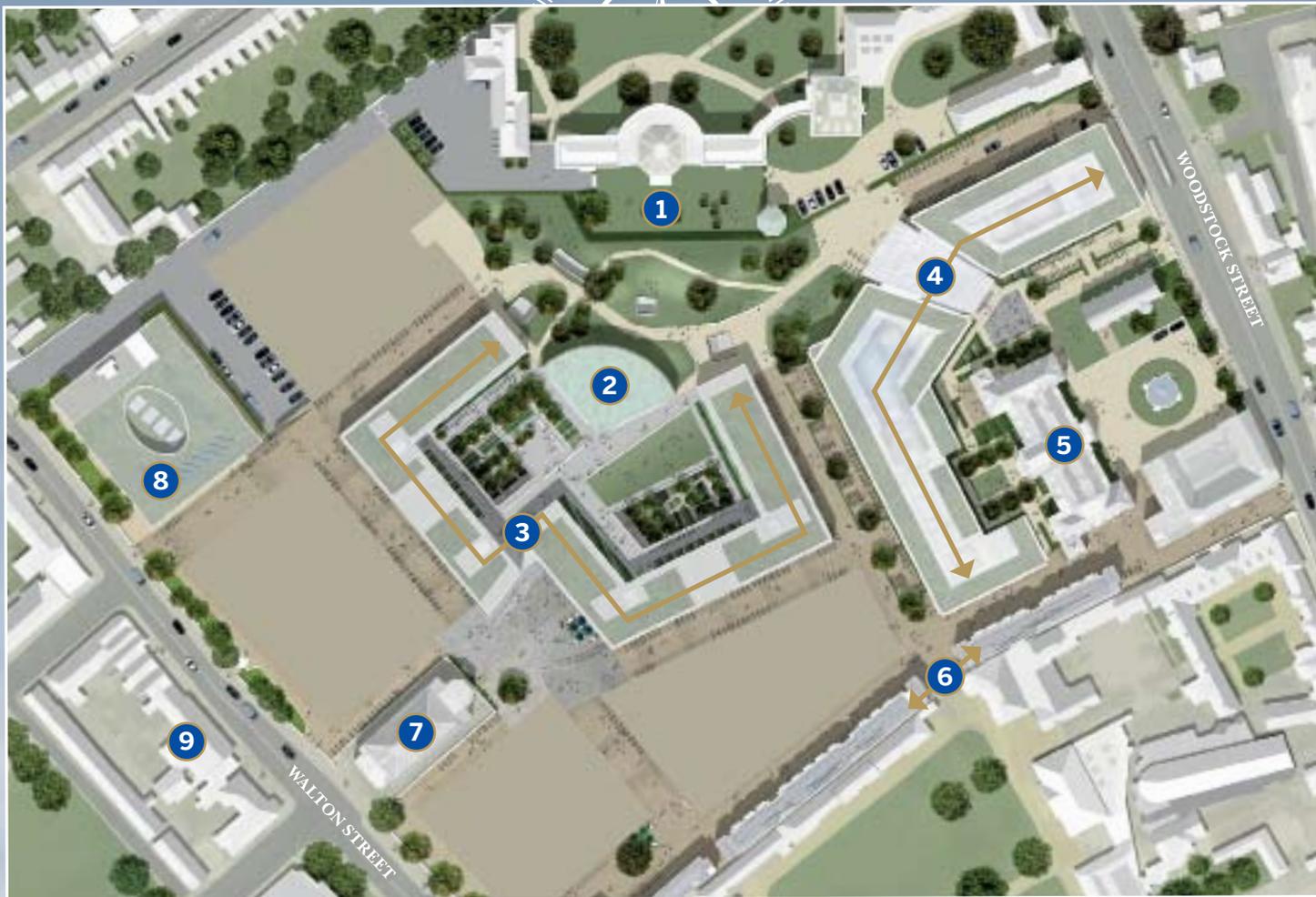
**A**fter over six months, the Fukushima plant is still not under control, it continues to pose a deadly threat to all who live in its shadow; deadly radioactive contamination continues to leach into the ground as well as the sea. There is no end in sight for this emergency. With a full meltdown of three reactors and damage to highly radioactive nuclear fuel in several storage pools, there is no way to achieve a complete clean up.

Greenpeace's own scientists have recently confirmed that radiation levels in schoolyards 60km away are above permissible levels. Parents and children should not have to choose between radiation and education. When it became clear that the Fukushima plant was in trouble, the authorities introduced an arbitrary 20km radius evacuation zone but failed to admit that radiation was drifting beyond this in a wind-defined pattern. Greenpeace's teams are finding dangerous levels of radiation in seafood caught off the coast.

Attitudes in Japan are changing too. While three-quarters of the country's reactors are not running, there are no blackouts even at times of peak electricity demand. A key government renewable energy bill was passed by the lower house of parliament. Opinion polls show that 75 per cent of the population favours a nuclear phase-out and the replacement of reactors by safe, renewable energy technology. Nuclear power is dangerous, expensive and supplies only around 13 per cent of global electricity needs. Nuclear accidents can be prevented by embracing a future without it. Natural forms of energy are not only being explored but renewable growth is already outstripping coal and nuclear worldwide, and supplies about a fifth of the planet's energy needs.

Backed by efficient energy use, renewable energy sources render the debate over whether or not nuclear power is worth the risk redundant. It is not necessary, period. ☉

*Dr Kumi Naidoo was a Rhodes scholar at Oxford, after being forced into exile for his part in the youth struggle against apartheid education in his native South Africa. He is Executive Director of Greenpeace International. He authored Boiling Point - Can citizen action save the world? in 2010*



## QUICK GUIDE TO THE ROQ

### THE RADCLIFFE OBSERVATORY QUARTER (ROQ)

- 1 Radcliffe Observatory (1772–1799)
- 2 Humanities Library
- 3 Humanities Building
- 4 Mathematical Institute (opens September 2013)
- 5 Radcliffe Infirmary (refurbished by September 2012)
- 6 Somerville accommodation (opened 17 September 2011)
- 7 Freud's Cafe
- 8 Jericho Health Centre (opens May 2012)
- 9 Oxford University Press



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# WHITHER THE HUMANITIES?

**O**XFORD'S HISTORICAL IDENTITY is substantially bound up in humanistic values, one example of which is James Wyatt's magnificent eighteenth-century frieze of Greek wind deities that adorns the Radcliffe Observatory. If the Observatory was an early nod to empirical science at Oxford, history has bequeathed a neo-classical architectural masterpiece, recently restored. Today, the Observatory functions as the dining room and senior common room of Green Templeton College.

Imagine if the Observatory, the founding stone of which was laid in June 1772, was unveiled for the first time today. How many of us would be able to identify Notos, the south wind god depicted in this issue's cover, a blustery fellow who holds a gushing pitcher. Would it matter?

The question is raised because the humanities are threatened. The crisis is by no means limited to the UK, argues philosopher Martha Nussbaum in the first of three essays. It is global.

In a second essay, Shakespeare scholar Jonathan Bate reflects on this summer's UK riots before asking academic colleagues to justify in as few words as possible the funding of humanities research to an imaginary, cash-strapped cabinet minister harried by Treasury mandarins wanting clear evidence of 'Public Value'.

Finally, in a third essay, neuroscientist Colin Blakemore reflects on the meaning of art, brilliantly subverting the tired distinction between art and science by working with artist Patrick Hughes to explore brain function.

Oxford has long debated the merits of pure research and applied knowledge, art and science. The Observatory was a focal point for tension between those who saw it

function as bringing astronomy to bear on the urgent problem of marine navigation, and those who saw it as exploring the celestial heavens for further evidence of an Anglican God. But in the same sense that Google boss Eric Schmidt recently praised Lewis Carroll for writing fiction AND being a mathematician, the Observatory reminds us of the humanistic purpose of all knowledge. There is an urgent need to re-affirm the public role of universities in the twenty-first century.

Within this broad scenario, the threat in the UK seems to be the subjugation of research to the whip-hand of short term, monetary 'impact', plus a deplorable paper chase to justify slivers of the public purse. Such restrictions weigh on science, not just the humanities.

Oxford has a critical role in leading this debate, another aspect of which is its momentous redevelopment of the land overlooked by the Observatory, the so-called Radcliffe Observatory Quarter. Shown opposite, you can

see in the smaller image how, one day, a new Humanities Building and Library will face the Observatory. It will eventually house most of the humanities faculties.

The juxtaposition of Observatory and humanities library shadows the Athenian Tower of the Winds (50BC), on which Oxford's Observatory was later based, alongside which Hadrian built his library (AD132) – thus a fitting continuation in today's Oxford of an ancient idea, that knowledge does not suffer artificial divisions.

**The humanities are threatened and not just in the UK – the crisis is global**



For a tutorial reading list on the humanities crisis, plus additional feature content, visit [www.oxfordtoday.ox.ac.uk/humanities](http://www.oxfordtoday.ox.ac.uk/humanities)







# NOT FOR PROFIT

Philosopher **Martha Nussbaum** maps a global crisis of the humanities, in conversation with Richard Lofthouse

**M**artha Nussbaum. Superstar philosopher, educator, minority rights champion and honorary fellow of St Anne's. We speak by phone at exactly 1.30pm Chicago time (GMT minus six hours). "I've just run across to my office from our weekly law faculty round table," she notes, "...an event where anyone can talk about anything. We ended up talking about altruism in international relations." But the day had begun on a more dramatic note, with Nussbaum sheltering from a mini-tornado in a lakeside hut while out running. "It was a very amazing storm, a micro-burst, a bit like a horizontal tornado. You can see it coming towards you. I took shelter in a hut and listened to my audiobook of *Les Misérables*. When I re-emerged there were whole trees blown over, whole oak trees!"

A strong supporter of America's unique liberal arts tradition, Nussbaum is deeply worried that the humanities are being engulfed by a comparably nasty storm driven partly by greed. Policy-makers are in the process of turning against critical thinking, ideas and imagination, she argues in a manifesto published earlier this year, called *Not for Profit*. Sure, she concedes very early on; what economy or business does not want innovative, creative, imaginative employees versed in critical thinking? A great education system supports a great economy. But the idea that education is primarily a tool of economic growth is an idea she rejects passionately.

She has particular views of Britain's part in this baneful process, and the possible roles of Oxford in helping to solve it. But she is at pains to note that the crisis is global rather than local.

"The humanities and the arts are being cut away, in both primary/secondary and college/university education, in virtually every nation of the world. Seen by policy-makers as useless frills, at a time when nations must cut away all useless things in order to stay competitive in the global market, they are rapidly losing their place in curricula, and also in the hearts and minds of parents and children."

The 2006 Spellings report on the future of US higher education privileged highly applied learning over basic scientific research while virtually omitting the humanities. In India, she notes, the great Rabindranath Tagore is totally ignored by the education establishment. In Europe, the Bologna Process subordinates reflection to societal need. What about the cultivation of the soul, the preparation of meaningful lives and the needs of democracy, she asks? By linking the subject of higher education to what a democracy needs to flourish, she drives a powerful manifesto at policy-makers.

Nussbaum's connections to Oxford are at a tangent to these broad concerns, but in one obvious sense the

University's tutorial system is a strength because of the way it resists group think and promotes critical thinking skills.

But, she adds, "If the pedagogy is wonderful, the early specialisation of subject matter is a problem." The very basis of the US liberal arts tradition is the four-year degree, and until the halfway point all students are required to maintain a broad focus and several 'minor' subjects. This forces mathematicians to appreciate poetry, poets to maintain an interest in science, and everyone to keep learning a foreign language. "There's an unexpected payback later," she notes, "when they make money in their careers, they know what they're supporting and why, because they remember reading these great texts."

Does that last comment betray support for private education over public? Not exactly. But the US, which spends more of its GDP on higher education than the UK, has evolved (over two centuries!) a system in which it works. Combine tax incentives with a broad culture of private philanthropy, "and it's not a bad system". It only works, however, because of "robust traditions of academic autonomy, which prevent donors from having excessive control over academic matters." In a different context, such as in India where a corporate sponsor

## The idea that education is primarily a tool of economic growth is an idea she rejects passionately

may control a private educational establishment, the results are "educationally horrendous."

Nussbaum's main objection to the current British situation concerns the Research Excellence Framework, which in its various iterations under different governments both Labour and Conservative, has come to apply spurious, economic criteria of 'impact' to humanities research. She sees it as a completely unacceptable incursion of politics into the Academy. Citing Stefan Collini's 'Impact on Humanities: Researchers Must Take a Stand Now or Be Judged and Rewarded as Salesmen,' Nussbaum asks why the academics who this injures the most have not protested more. Why indeed?

But Nussbaum's central advocacy of the US tradition of partly private, partly state higher education is that it has bred a very proactive, outreaching faculty. "Part of our daily life is talking to funding donors and alumni about what we do and why we do it." If there's one lesson coming out of this interview it concerns the importance of public engagement by academics – they owe the public a broad and sustained account of what they do and why. If they are being subverted by wrong-headed assessment criteria, they must shout.

---

*Professor Martha Nussbaum pictured in the University of Chicago's Eero Saarinen-designed Law School. She is the Ernst Freund Distinguished Service Professor of Law and Ethics in the Philosophy Department, Law School, and Divinity School at the University of Chicago, and an honorary fellow of St Anne's College, Oxford*





# FINDING PUBLIC VALUE

Shakespeare scholar **Jonathan Bate** asks random academics to justify public funding of humanities research amid a recession

**W**hat price the advanced study of the humanities in a time when the world economy crumbles and our cities are looted? Some might say that to teach and research papyrus fragments of ancient Greek drama or the reading habits of sixteenth-century gentlewomen at such a time is to fiddle while Rome burns. We must be firm in our response to such claims: the humanities are there to teach us what it is to be human and what is to be valued in civil society.

What is more, the past has vital lessons to teach the present, and students of the humanities are among our foremost interpreters of the past. A little historical perspective might have been welcome amid the moral panic of August 2011: there has always been an underclass and there have always been riots in warm summer weather. The historian of the 1780 Gordon Riots, or for that matter the reader of Dickens's *Barnaby Rudge* (set at that time), could tell you a lot about the pattern of such events: an initial sparking point (anti-Catholicism then, a particular police action now), a failure to confine the initial peaceful protest (whereas our government ministers were on holiday, Lord North simply forgot to issue the order mobilising the constabulary), then escalation into looting and copycat violence unrelated to the initial cause. Perhaps the Home Office should consider employing a resident historian to advise on such occasions.

But it is vital to defend the humanities on the high ground of intrinsic value as well as the pragmatic territory of their relevance to contemporary society. In the course of editing the collection of essays *The Public Value of the Humanities*, I canvassed a range of colleagues with the following hypothetical question:

Imagine a civil servant responsible for the distribution of the research budget. Imagine them saying: 'I don't lose any sleep at night over the spending of taxpayers' money on medical research, but I do lose sleep over the spending of it on humanities research; I like riding my horse, but I don't expect the taxpayer to pay for me to do so.' Imagine, then, that you have the ear of that civil servant. What will you say?

I was especially struck by the variety of their responses: some use utilitarian criteria, while others took as their premise the belief that the humanities matter precisely because they take us to realms beyond the narrowly utilitarian. Both sets of responses seemed to me equally strong and symptomatic of how, when it comes to the value of the humanities, we can say, as the Prime Minister did as the brooms appeared to clear up after the riots, "the fightback has begun."

## Here are the replies of 10 colleagues:

**1** Without British humanities academics, there would be no *Oxford English Dictionary*, no *Macmillan Dictionary of Art*, no *Grove Dictionary of Music*, no *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, no *Oxford Classical Texts*, all of which are sold on to the world. We abandon this at our peril.

**2** Humanities research engenders and fosters critical thinking, which is indispensable to innovative work in any field whatsoever.

**3** One of the research councils' strategic priorities is 'global security'. If George W Bush's and Tony Blair's security and strategic advisors had been educated in the historical research of Erez Manela, the world would be a less dangerous place.

**4** To a person dying from cancer, the 'cure for cancer' is abstract. Recent research in 'bibliotherapy' suggests that reading provides an extremely effective (and cost-effective) resource for processing emotions aroused by dying. Literature offers public benefit in the arena of healthcare.

**5** If the civil servant's horse-riding were of a standard to make her a potential Olympic competitor, wouldn't the taxpayer be content to fund her? National prestige need not be confined to sport.

**6** Government nowadays frequently asks questions about 'Britishness' and cultural identity: these are questions that can only be answered properly by humanities research.

**7** The fact that medical research requires money is no argument for reducing the money for other kinds of research to zero. What can the beneficiaries of advances in medical science do with the health they retain or recover? Read books, debate ideas, go to plays and movies, develop their capacity for thinking, speaking and writing – at work no less than at play.

**8** If you believe knowledge is too expensive, try ignorance.

**9** Your analogy with horse riding is fallacious since it implies that humanities research is recreational. However, the slightest acquaintance with the history of ideas supplies numerous examples of curiosity driven enquiry in the humanities having great social consequences. For example, Bertrand Russell's philosophical investigations into logic and language paved the way for the artificial languages essential to computer science. The total budget of the Arts & Humanities Research Council for a year is less than the cost of the average completely-failed-and-written-off National Health Service IT initiative.

**10** A Syrian wanted to translate my book *Think* (Blackburn, 1999) into Arabic; he thought the Islamic world desperately needed an introduction to secular philosophy. Given the billions that the military option wastes, wasn't I more economically efficient?

*Professor Jonathan Bate, newly appointed Provost of Worcester College, pictured in the orchard of the college gardens*





# FEARFUL ASYMMETRY

Neuroscientist **Colin Blakemore** reconsiders the role of universities

It was a few years ago, at the end of Act One of *Die Walküre* at the English National Opera. Siegmund, abandoned son of a god and a she-wolf, has stumbled into the home of his mortal enemy, Hunding, whose unhappy wife, Sieglinde, is, unknown to Siegmund, his twin sister. After Siegmund pulls an unpullable sword out of a huge ash tree that happens to grow in the middle of the living room, they realise their identity and make passionate, adulterous, incestuous love as the curtain falls. Yes, a typical boy-meets-girl story. Despite the utter nonsense of the plot, the applause lasted for five minutes or more. But even that wasn't long enough for the lady next to me. When I stood up to head for the bar she apologised for not being able to move. Wagner had temporarily paralysed this poor woman. There are diseases and drugs that can do that to the brain. But how did Wagner do it?

Art is a wonderful mystery – an aspect of human communication that defies simple explanation in terms of individual survival or reproduction. Of course, sociobiologists have their stories, about social bonding and the Darwinian glue that stuck together the evolution of art. But such accounts can't explain away the sheer experience of witnessing artistic creativity.

Why do the animals that people are do such things? Why do they trudge through the mud of Glastonbury, queue for hours to ogle bits of broken pottery from Afghanistan, drool over Jude Law in *Anna Christie*, lose sleep worrying about characters in novels, or sit transfixed by vertical daubs of paint in the Rothko room at Tate Modern?

When I moved from Cambridge to Oxford 32 years ago, my more cynical colleagues warned me that Oxford was primarily an arts and humanities university. In reality, Oxford's grant income – most of it for science – is substantially higher than that of Cambridge. But, in any case, why should some scientists be disparaging about other sorts of scholars? Echoes of CP Snow, you say. It's 52 years since Snow's famous Rede Lecture, 'The Two Cultures and the Scientific Revolution', but it still resonates. The arts and the sciences were, in Snow's simplistic argument, divided by "a gulf of mutual incomprehension". Scientists had the knowledge to solve the problems of the modern world. But the literary intellectuals who ran the country were "Luddites", conspiring against progress.

No criticism of Snow compares with the venomous outpouring of FR Leavis in his Richmond Lecture at Downing College, Cambridge in 1962. (As a mere freshman medical student then, even I was aware of the radiant hot air emanating from Downing). His sarcastic response was that "if you insist on the need for any other kind of concern ... about the human future ... than that which talks in terms of productivity, material standards of living, hygienic and technological progress, then you are a Luddite." The sub-plot for

both Snow and Leavis was concern about the future of the universities. Leavis believed that the university (he recognised only one, maybe two) should be a bastion of cultural tradition, centred on literature, unashamedly elitist, with "a nostalgic addiction to the past". The Barlow Report of 1946 instead argued that the universities should expand to produce "roughly 5000 newly qualified scientists per annum at the earliest possible moment". Between the pre-war years and the late 1960s, student numbers in Britain tripled, and the ratio of science to arts undergraduates reversed – from one to two, to two to one.

The ghost of Leavis would surely fight alongside the sceptics who contend that our present government (ironically, dominated by Oxford arts graduates) has precipitated a new crisis for the humanities by cutting direct funding for teaching. But as long as student numbers (and their newly inflated fees) hold up, income for arts teaching might actually increase. More worrying is the stunting of much-needed growth of the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) and, most of all, the relentless emphasis on the economic value of publicly funded research.

In reply, the AHRC has wielded the sword of metrics, with a dazzling display of evidence that investment in the arts and humanities magically refills the public purse. Every pound spent by the AHRC generates as much as £10 of immediate benefit, we're told. Yet the humanities in our universities should be seen as more than just the fount of glitzier computer games, prettier cutlery, better conservation in our museums, or even the next generation of operatic performers.

Scientific discovery has transformed many areas of research in the humanities (image digitization, thermoluminescence dating, and computational methodologies spring to mind). But equally, disciplines that were traditionally counted as arts – psychology, anthropology, linguistics, sociology – have infiltrated and enriched the sciences. Neuroscience, my own field, is eagerly flirting with psychology, economics, philosophy, aesthetics, educational studies. I study vision, and I learn much from the work of artists. My friend Patrick Hughes is a painter of paradoxical pictures – representations of three-dimensional scenes on three-dimensional surfaces, the shapes of which contradict the visual information in the picture. The resulting perceptual conundrum forces the beholder's brain into illogical conclusions that cause the pictures apparently to move and deform. The aim of Patrick's work, like that of all creative artists, is not to test a hypothesis but to challenge his audience.

The ideal university (the word is from the Latin for 'whole') should be devoted to the totality of scholarship. It should be a place of intellectual freedom, tempered by intellectual criticism.

Most of all, it should be a powerhouse of discovery – about ourselves and the world around us. ☺

*Patrick Hughes, artist (above); Professor Colin Blakemore (foreground), the Royal Institution of Great Britain, with Seaside Reading (2008), one of Patrick's paradoxical works. Colin is Professor of Neuroscience, University of Oxford, Department of Physiology, Anatomy & Genetics*



## Aim, shoot...

Most images of the Radcliffe Observatory look up at the tower from a ground level perspective, missing the relief carvings of the Greek wind gods. So we decided to shoot the tower from a scissor lift generously loaned by construction company Laing O'Rourke, positioned at a tangent of 90 degrees to the east-west axis on which the Observatory was built. It was a long June evening for photographer Kevin Nixon, working with a long lens. As dusk settled, the celestial heavens did not twinkle as hoped, but the tower was gradually suffused with a rich orange light from the surrounding construction site.

# More and more people prefer Pernaton Gel

Severe osteoarthritis and a hip replacement meant Dorothy, 80, could only crawl up and down the stairs. That is until she discovered Pernaton green lipped mussel gel...



**“ I** have severe Osteoarthritis and I had a hip replacement in 2004. I use Pernaton gel on a daily basis; it eases pain and also helps mobility. Prior to finding Pernaton I often had to crawl upstairs and then backwards

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Mrs D. Wood, Chorley

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**“ I** purchased this product after my wife tried a free sample in a chemist. She suffers from Fibromyalgia and is in pain most of the time. Within 30 minutes of using this product her pain had lessened. She would recommend Pernaton to anyone suffering pain. It's brilliant. ”

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Pernaton is used by a wide age range of people, helping to provide relief from the aches and pains of everyday life. It can help anyone suffering from general muscle and joint pain or any of the following conditions: Osteoarthritis, Rheumatoid Arthritis, Bursitis, Carpal Tunnel Syndrome and Lumbago, as well as sufferers of Fibromyalgia.

**“ For** years I have suffered with neck problems. However a few months ago my daughter-in-law gave me a Pernaton sample and it really works. I have recommended it to several of my friends and family who are amazed with the results. I cannot speak highly enough of this product. ”

Mrs McCusker, Cheshire

In the survey users were asked how the gel had helped with their condition, many responded by saying that it had helped them sleep better as normally the pain would wake them as they moved in their sleep.

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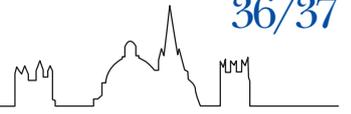
Pernaton Gel is also ideal for sports people as it has been found to help with muscle and training recovery actions and is currently being widely used by professional and amateur sports people within football, running, cycling, rugby, golf, body building and Irish dancing to name just a few.

**“ A** good product, it obviously is not going to act as a replacement joint but it certainly relieves the aches and pains in a pleasant way. I enjoy the smell and the fact it is not greasy on clothing or bedding. ”

Mrs Capel, Bucks







# DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI AND THE ANATOMY OF DESIRE

In a startling new biography of Rossetti, **JB Bullen** reconsiders why he was important

**T**HE GENIUS BEHIND the first Pre-Raphaelite movement, an inspirer of William Morris and Edward Burne-Jones and an underestimated poet, Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828-1882) is also rightly identified as one of the sources of British aestheticism and a founding figure of European symbolism. But too often he has been treated as either poet or painter, and when I tried to bring the two together in the context of his dramatic life, a remarkable pattern emerged. What has been missed in accounts of this saturnine, anglicized Italian is the vital spring of his work.

In some respects a Romantic, he didn't just intuit the overwhelming importance of sexuality in life, he made it his lodestar in life and art. The result was a sort of epistemology-cum-aesthetic grounded in libido, 50 years ahead of its time – the sort of thing we more readily associate with the post-Darwin, Nietzschean fin-de-siècle than the mid-Victorian period. Unlike Burne-Jones, who became an establishment figure by accommodating his erotic impulses to bourgeois values, Rossetti never abandoned his libidinous aesthetic. A consummate outsider, he ploughed a lonely furrow and was hounded to an early grave by public opprobrium – a role model for later avant-gardes.

Coming midway between William Blake (whom he hugely admired) and Stanley Spencer, whom in some ways he anticipated, Rossetti was born in 1828 into a period of intense prudishness. He was brought up in London with his brother and sisters by his moody Italian father, Gabriele, and his practical, half-Italian Anglican mother, Frances. Unruly by nature, he first expressed his rebellious temperament by escaping from family life into an imaginative world of painting and writing. At the age of 20, he encouraged the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood to challenge the conservative values of the Royal Academy. As an independent artist he adopted a bohemian lifestyle, made friends with 'fallen women' and even instructed the virginal Burne-Jones in the ways of Eros by paying



(Left, main image) *Venus Verticordia* by Dante Gabriel Rossetti, 1864–8; (above) *Portrait of Dante Gabriel Rossetti*, 1853, by William Holman Hunt (1827–1910)

a prostitute to accost him in Regent Street. He was swarthy, unkempt and gipsy-like, but also charismatic and sociable. Outwardly warm and demonstrative, he was liked by men and adored by women. Inwardly, however, his refusal to conform created a strong sense of personal alienation. He inherited a tendency to depression from his father; he was paranoid about criticism, but he remained defiantly firm in his attitudes to sex.

In one sense all of Rossetti's work is an expression of a struggle between the world of the flesh and the world of the spirit, between desire and conscience, and between the demands of society and freedom of the spirit. As a child he lived in a realm of kings, knights, ghosts, and legends. When he grew up, instead of turning away from these stories, they came to mean more and more to him. He ransacked the myths of Greece and Rome, the stories of the Middle Ages, and the legends of King Arthur for the expression of human desire. In this way, figures like Venus, Helen of

## Inwardly, his refusal to conform created a strong sense of personal alienation

Troy, Mary Magdalene, and Isolde came to represent the embodiment of the power of the libido. In his youth this power was called 'love' and it was in the poetry of Dante that he discovered its various shades and strengths. Above all, the character of Beatrice, guiding, gentle and benevolent, embodied the principle of love. So when in 1852 he met the strange redhead Elizabeth Siddal, she became his Beatrice and the couple acted out their nineteenth-century lives in the shadow of the Vita Nuova. Yet even now love for Rossetti was a complex and contradictory emotion, and when Siddal first appeared in a painting in 1852, *Beatrice Meeting Dante at the Marriage Feast*, that tension was apparent. Though the picture is filled with emblems of ripeness and fulfilment connected with the

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marriage feast of the title, the principal subject involves discord in love. Beatrice stands at the centre with Dante and his friend Guido Cavalcante to the right. A malicious story about Dante has made her jealous and she refuses to acknowledge his salutation; he, in turn, is startled and hurt. The conflict is expressed in the stark line of the wall that vertically divides the picture, marking their physical and psychological separation.

New realms of desire opened up for Rossetti in the mid-1850s. He was asked to provide some illustrations for a collection of Tennyson's poems, many of which were based on the legends of the Round Table. Going back to the originals, Rossetti discovered forms of desire very different from those in the poetry of Dante. *Le Morte d'Arthur* offered a world where love was complemented by lust, where fidelity and betrayal went hand in hand, and both often led to violence and destruction. The watercolour *Arthur's Tomb* (1855) gathers together some of these themes in a masterpiece of erotic tension. Lancelot violently demands a last kiss from Guenevere above the sculpted image of Arthur in a space so claustrophobic that the figures cannot even stand. The triangular relationship is replicated in the pattern played out between three heads, one demanding, the other fearful and the third silently marmoreal. The drama is deepened by scenes from Arthur's court represented on the side of the sarcophagus. The cemetery in which the meeting takes place is a parodic version of the Garden of Eden, complete with its apple trees, and a snake slithering away in the left-hand corner.

London had provided Rossetti with Beatrice in the early 1850s; in 1857 he discovered Guenevere in Oxford in the form of Jane Burden, an ostler's daughter. Together with Morris, Burne-Jones and some other artist friends, Rossetti had travelled to Oxford to decorate the new Union building. In a chance meeting he came across Jane at a theatre, was instantly struck by her metallic black hair and unusual, strong good looks, and persuaded her to model for the figure of the legendary queen. In the mural *Sir Lancelot's Vision of the Sanc Grael*, she appears as an object of dangerous sexual allure. Her body is temptingly stretched across an apple tree, preventing Lancelot who lies prostrate before her from achieving the highest spiritual goal by entering the chapel of the Holy Grail.

Though he was filled with desire for Jane, Rossetti had his hands tied by his connection with Lizzie Siddal. So, desperate to pin her down, he encouraged Morris to offer marriage then diverted his attention to the easygoing, voluptuous Fanny Cornforth, model and part-time prostitute. Parting with Siddal, his involvement with Fanny produced many richly corporeal paintings. Among these was *Bocca Baciata* (1860) or the 'Kissed Mouth' in which Fanny is dressed as a Renaissance courtesan. He painted it for the friend with whom he was sharing her body, WP Boyce and the title comes from a line in a story by Boccaccio about the endlessly renewable power of human sexuality. The painting works on two levels. On the one hand it is an almost abstract expression of libidinal delight: "gross sensuality of a revolting kind" as Holman Hunt described it. On the other, it was seen by many



*Arthur's Tomb* by Dante Gabriel Rossetti, 1855

contemporaries as a piece of 'subject-less' art with no narrative and no moral closure. Such work had hardly been attempted before and this picture represented a turning point in Rossetti's personal erotic vocabulary. It was also a significant moment in British art, opening the way for new kinds of painting where form took precedence over subject, anticipating the late nineteenth-century cult of aestheticism.

In 1860, Lizzie Siddal came back into Rossetti's life and the couple entered into a reluctant marriage. They attempted domestic regularity, but after a stillborn birth and postnatal depression, disaster struck: Lizzie committed suicide. To cope with his guilt, Rossetti returned to his bachelor existence and threw himself into his work. A series of female studies, beginning with *Bocca Baciata*, all explored the paradoxes and contradictions of sexuality. *The Blue Bower*, *Venus*

## He began a series of female studies, exploring the paradoxes of sexuality

*Verticordia*, *Lilith*, *Monna Vanna* – the women of these paintings were frequently mythological and exotic, but with their luscious red lips, long enervated hands, and soulful, yearning expressions they are not so much portraits as emblems of desire. One model emerges most prominently from among them: Jane Morris. She and William Morris came from Kent to set up business in Queen's Square, London. In the mid-1860s, Rossetti, then living in Chelsea, began to see more and more of them, and to make the most delicate and tender studies of Jane. Out of the passionately coruscating affair that followed came some of Rossetti's most memorable paintings and his most explicit poetry. In a late work, *Astarte Syriaca* (1875), Jane is cast as a figure of primal sexuality, a Syrian Venus that predates the Greek and Roman goddess of love. Rising powerfully out of the darkness in a flimsy dark green dress, she bears down upon the spectator. As the accompanying sonnet suggests, her 'twofold girdle clasps the infinite boon/ of bliss' - her breasts and vagina - while her 'love freighted lips and absolute eyes' exercise a mesmeric control over her subjects. Rossetti's relationship with



*Lady Lilith* (1867) by Dante Gabriel Rossetti

Jane also fed into his poetry. His first volume published in 1870 included sonnets containing detailed accounts of their lovemaking, poems celebrating her body, and others recording the intensity of his passion for her. To these were added verse referring to his relationship with Lizzie, and others like *Eden Bower*, *Willowwood* and *Jenny* that explored strange sexual encounters. The collection provoked a violent critical response and Rossetti became known as the painter of alluring women and writer of outspoken, erotic verse. Already feeling guilty about Elizabeth Siddal, and anxious about his adulterous relationship with Jane Morris, the final straw – public opprobrium – created such mental strain that in 1872 he attempted to follow Lizzie to the grave by overdosing on laudanum.

Rossetti never fully recovered from this breakdown. He continued to paint fine pictures, including *Astarte Syriaca* and to write sensitive verse, but his depressive moods became more recurrent and his dependency on drugs and alcohol increased. Jane withdrew to a polite distance, Fanny Cornforth moved back into his house to look after him. But in 1881 he died at the age of 53, old before his time. We can now see that his painting is not a mere gallery of beauties and his poetry a fantastic indulgence. The driving force of his imaginative experience was erotic desire, and the women of both his painting and his poetry were the means through



*Astarte Syriaca* by Dante Gabriel Rossetti, 1877



*Beata Beatrix* by Dante Gabriel Rossetti, c.1864–70



which he expressed that desire. Unlike most of his contemporaries he dared to explore the insistent pressures of sexuality, and to link them to spiritual aspiration. At a time when orthodoxies preached repression, he boldly claimed that the demands of the flesh were as important as those of the spirit. In this task the female form dominated and women in all their moods, strong and assertive, submissive and compliant, seductive and voluptuous, became the vehicles for the representation of the erotic life.

In his poetry, too, Rossetti's subject was always women; the courtship of women, the adoration of women, and the loss of women. In his imagination, some of these women became more important than others. Beatrice, Guenevere, Mary Magdalene, and Isolde were what he called "dramatis personae of the soul". In life and art he projected his anxieties, his pleasures, and his needs onto women so that Elizabeth Siddal, Jane Morris and others became for him Beatrice, Guenevere and Isolde. But this was a perilous activity filled with psychological danger. His passion for Jane Morris changed the course of her life and transformed her into a famous icon of Pre-Raphaelite beauty, but his treatment of Elizabeth Siddal, though it made her, too, an emblem of Pre-Raphaelitism, also acted as a catalyst for her suicide.

Critical writing usually divides Rossetti between the poet and the painter. Rarely are the two impulses treated as coming from the same source, and so often the connection between them is overlooked. Yet, I think that the springs of both can be found in his fascination with the working of the libido. Many of his contemporaries, to say nothing of later critics and some scholars, found this exploration of desire unacceptable, and on a number of occasions it was denounced as pornographic. But the demise of his reputation was not caused by scandal. The rise of Impressionism and then Post-Impressionism with its stress on 'significant form' made his work seem irrelevant. Finally it was strangled by the cool abstraction of European modernism and revived only in the 1960s in the form of languid posters for the walls of a new generation of self-styled romantics. With hardly a nude in his oeuvre, the erotic charge of Rossetti's painting was entirely missed. Even now he remains somewhat misunderstood, though one clue to his greatness lies in the title of his most famous sonnet sequence *The House of Life*. Such a house has in it many rooms and Rossetti explored them with unprecedented candour. Some were sensual, others spiritual. But his mission was to transcend the Manichean division that separated flesh and spirit and, through the visionary power of art, reconcile these fundamental elements in human experience. ☺

*JB Bullen is Professor Emeritus at the University of Reading, where he has taught English Literature and art history for more than 25 years. Rossetti: Painter and Poet by JB Bullen was published by Frances Lincoln in October (£35 hardback). A major exhibition of the Pre-Raphaelites begins at Tate Britain in 2012*

➔ To claim one of five free copies of *Rossetti: Painter and Poet*, visit [www.oxfordtoday.ox.ac.uk/rossetti](http://www.oxfordtoday.ox.ac.uk/rossetti)





# WRITING LIFE

Clare Morgan tells **John Garth** why Oxford's creative writing MSt stands out from the crowd

**N**O ONE COULD argue that Oxford has failed to bring forth its share of great poets, novelists and dramatists: from Sir Philip Sidney to Monica Ali, its alumni have helped shape the literary world. Yet until recently, graduates who wanted to pursue the craft of creative writing within a university framework have had to look elsewhere, to the University of East Anglia – where Professors Malcolm Bradbury and Angus Wilson launched Britain's first such course in 1970 – or to the many other institutions that have joined the fray.

*'A course that fuses traditional rigour with a spirit of avid creative exploration'*

Now, however, Oxford boasts a postgraduate course which takes inspiration from the older atelier model of teaching, and which fuses the University's traditional rigour with a spirit of avid creative exploration. "What we have is something entirely distinct and distinctive, and it is a model I have noticed other institutions are following at graduate level," says Dr Clare Morgan, the founder and director of the creative writing Master of Studies course.

Morgan – who was teaching at Christ Church and helped design the undergraduate creative writing diploma – was asked to set up the MSt by the Department for Continuing Education. Increasingly, applicants for English courses had been querying why Oxford had no such programme. Some might respond that creative writing is not a proper academic subject, or that it cannot be taught because it is a matter of personal inspiration. Yet, as Morgan points out, no one asks whether painting, sculpture or music can be



KEVIN NIXON

taught. “Developing craft can often feed into whatever inspiration is. If you have a greater, wider understanding of how things can be expressed, then the modes of expression that come into your head expand. That feeds inspiration. Instead of feeling around in a dark room, the lights come on.”

Colleagues almost universally backed the launch of the MSt and it was cleared for launch in Michaelmas 2005. The part-time course is now welcoming its seventh intake – graduate-level writers who show significant potential. Mostly based at Kellogg College, they will shape, hone and test their skills over two years. Students engage with a wide range of literary modes – prose fiction, poetry and drama – before specialising in one form in the second year. The goal is to encourage the student to find his or her own voice, not to impose a stifling “writing school stamp”, says Morgan.

An emphasis on critical analysis and wide reading sets the MSt apart from courses elsewhere. “We work with the individual and across genres, and in this critical-analytical realm, to enable our writers to think: ‘Where am I in this great stream of literary production coming from the past and going to the future? Where do I want to be in that? What does that imply for what I’m

Dr Clare Morgan, fellow of Kellogg College and Director, Master of Studies in Creative Writing, pictured in Kellogg College, standing in front of paintings by former student Joy Richardson: *Corn Row Blue Dress* (left), *Wine in the Wilderness* (right).

For more information about this degree course:

[www.conted.ox.ac.uk/mstcw](http://www.conted.ox.ac.uk/mstcw)

doing?’ We have a very talented second-year student who’s writing something quite new – not a verse novel but an extended piece that can be read as a novel or a narrative poem.” The diversity of the students, from as far afield as Nepal, adds further cultural perspectives.

Dutch–Belgian novelist and 2007 graduate Annette Pas testified to the strengths of the approach. Her novel, *Het land waar ik u liefheb* (*The Country Where I Love You*) has been adapted for a forthcoming English-language movie to be filmed in Brussels. “Lots of strange political stuff is going on in Belgium and the Netherlands right now – the rise of the extreme Right, nationalist-separatist movement: so many taboo areas, and no one in Dutch or Belgian literature has the courage to write about them or even touch upon them. I got that courage from Oxford, from being exposed to different ideas, literary theories and ways of looking at the world, writing about it – and trying to change it.”

All tutors are published novelists, poets or dramatists, in keeping with the atelier model of teaching. As Morgan, whose novel *A Book for All and None* was published by Weidenfeld & Nicolson in June, says: “Someone who’s a brilliant scholar of contemporary literature but who’s never written a word of it herself is not going to do the biz.”

The course recreates the rhythms of a writing life – periods of intense stimulation followed by solitary application at the grindstone. With workshops, seminars and talks from luminaries such as Jon Stallworthy and Philip Pullman, the residences are education at its most immersive. They also amount to controlled explosions that demolish the barriers between students.

The course also provides some direct networking advantages that are invaluable in an era when some 200,000 titles are published in Britain annually. “How a good, interesting writer gets noticed in that is tricky,” comments Morgan. “Sitting on a mountain in Wales and occasionally firing off a letter to somebody’s slush pile is not going to get you anywhere.” Literary agents attend the end-of-year showcases, with one agency, AM Heath, providing a £500 fiction prize to a graduating student each year. Each student takes up a research placement with an agency, a publisher, a journal and a production company – bringing what Morgan calls “a big dose of professional development realism”.

Each of the 15 newcomers had to fight off nine others for a place, and one in three applicants heard of the course by recommendation. Current students include two Clarendon Fund scholars and one Rhodes scholar. Last year, more than 40 per cent of graduating students achieved Firsts. Since 2007 the alumni have an enviable record of publications and literary prizes. Three of the current second-year students are going on to take doctorates in creative writing, including one at UEA.

The deeper success of the Oxford creative writing MSt goes beyond these numbers. The MSt helps build a sense of a writerly community that was more familiar in the intellectual beau monde of 50 years ago. Considering it is all about communication, writing can be a punishingly solitary craft, but the alliances built between the graduates have proved a source of mutual support enduring long after the course is over. ☺



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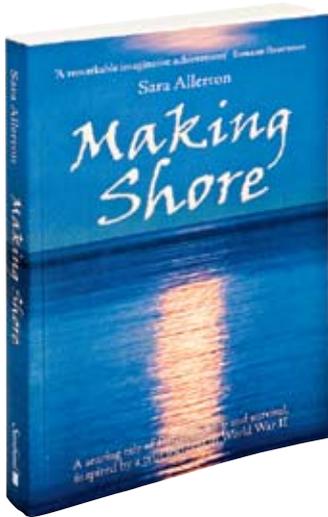


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# Arts & Ideas

## Book reviews



### Making Shore

By Sara Allerton,  
Saraband, (Worcester, 1988),  
9781887354745, £9.99

Our knowledge of the Second World War is informed by a patchwork of memories provided by those who experienced the conflict, pieced together by writers in the years since to form a picture of suffering and survival that spanned the globe.

Brian 'Cubby' Clarke, 87, was a merchant seaman during the war. He was keen to ensure his story would survive him but when his attempts at writing a memoir stalled, independent publisher Saraband put him in touch with Oxford graduate and first-time author Sara Allerton. Together, they brought to life a compelling, memorable tale of endurance.

*Making Shore* describes the perils faced by merchant sailors as they steered supply ships across an Atlantic ocean crawling with German submarines in 1942.

Allerton's fictional interpretation of Clarke's real experiences fuses the adventures of a young radio officer on board the *Sithonia*, with a poignant love story. When the

ship is torpedoed and sunk by a German U-Boat en route to South America, the sensitive depiction of the crew's struggle portrays the deep and bitter irony of being completely surrounded by undrinkable seawater, as the men are withered inside and out by thirst and sun exposure: "Water. The want of it had taken each one of us by the neck and forced us through the vale of death. And there, the garbs of social conscience, of sanity, of our fragile humanity, like the flesh about our bones, had dropped away." As the crew's "fragile humanity" gives way to conflict and desperation, the struggle for survival proves to be a deranged, dirty and dangerous business.

But *Making Shore* depicts an emotional journey and it is often the mundane, horribly intimate details that have the most power – creeping insanity brought on by drinking seawater and the unrelenting torpor of severe dehydration. But as these horrific events unfold, a touching bond flourishes between two newfound friends, that is strengthened, rather than divided, by their life-and-death ordeal. While the tale of survival is more vividly illuminated than the laboured encounters between the narrator and his friend's grieving lover, Allerton's powerful prose has secured considerable public support and the novel won this year's People's Book Prize.

*Making Shore* is a reminder, lest we forget, that the 'fictional autobiography' is an imaginative means to preserve the memories of extraordinary wartime events and ensure they do not die with those who endured them. ☺

*Lindsey Harrod (New College, 1995) is a freelance editor and writer based in Bath*



## Oxford Today Creative Writing Competition, 2011-12

Oxford Today launches a creative writing competition, open to all Oxford Alumni card-holders, offering the chance to win a Montblanc fountain pen.

Entries must be no more than 1000 words. The deadline is 9 January 2012 and winners will be announced in the Trinity issue of *Oxford Today* magazine.



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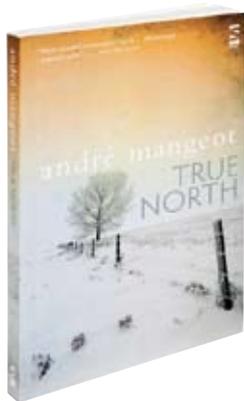
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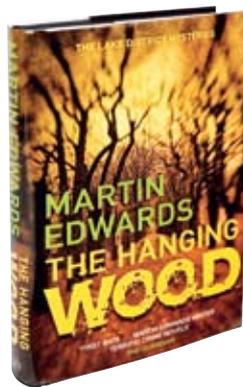
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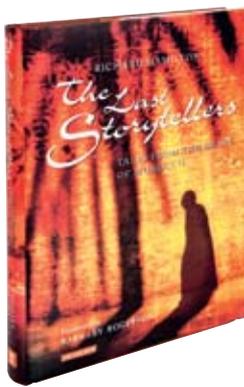
**True North**  
 By André Mangeot,  
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 9781844718283, £8.99

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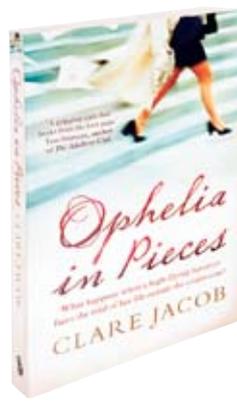
**The Hanging Wood**  
 By Martin Edwards,  
 Allison & Busby,  
 9780749010546, £19.99

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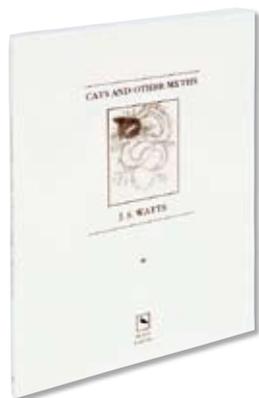
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 By Richard Hamilton,  
 I. B. Tauris,  
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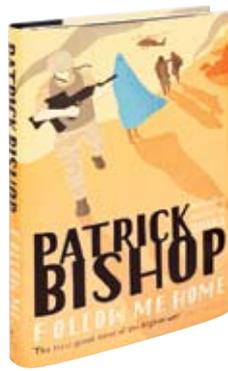
**Ophelia in Pieces**  
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 9781907595141, £12.99

A hard-working lawyer finds herself treading a very fine line between truth and lies after her world is turned upside down. An entertaining and original take on traditional 'chick lit'. ☺



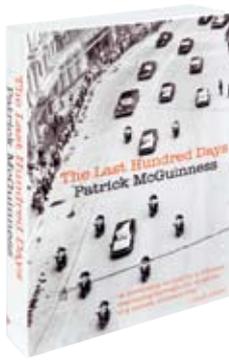
**Cats and Other Myths**  
 By JS Watts,  
 Lapwing Publications,  
 9781907276644, £10.00

Debut collection from Watts questioning the myth and legend of everyday life through expertly crafted poems on life and death, history and humanity. And, of course, cats. ☺



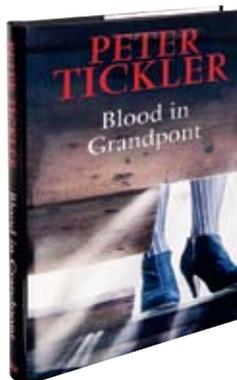
**Follow Me Home**  
 By Patrick Bishop,  
 Hodder & Stoughton,  
 9780340951736, £14.99

One of the most honest and evocative stories to come out of the war in Afghanistan. Authored by the acclaimed front line war reporter, this tale plays with ideas of love against a haunting backdrop of terror. ☺



**The Last Hundred Days**  
 By Patrick McGuinness,  
 Seren, 9781854115416,  
 £8.99

Scalpel sharp and highly readable eyewitness account of the dying days of Ceausescu's Romania. "It was surreal, or would have been, were it not the only reality available." ☺



**Blood in Grandpont**  
 By Peter Tickler,  
 Robert Hale Limited,  
 9780709090960, £18.99

Deliciously thrilling and wildly unpredictable murder mystery firmly rooted on the streets of Oxford. The second crime/detective novel from this popular writer (Keble, 1971). ☺



**Sacred Music**  
 By Johann Schelle, CDH55373

**Sacred Music**  
 By Sebastian Knüpfers  
 CDH55393  
 The King's Consort  
 conducted by Robert King,  
 Hyperion Helios, both £6.99

Johann Sebastian Bach was very far from being the only highly talented composer of sacred music in 17th and 18th century Germany, as these two newly released CDs demonstrate. Part of conductor Robert King's critically acclaimed Bach's *Contemporaries* series, these recordings showcase composers of imagination and flair whose works have been too long overlooked. Both composers were Bach's predecessors in the esteemed post of Thomaskantor, or organist and choirmaster, at the Thomaskirche, Leipzig. Yet despite being universally acclaimed during their own lifetimes, by no means all of either man's prodigious output of scores has survived. Some of their best surviving works are here – Knüpfers' Christmas concerto, 'Vom Himmel hoch, da komm ich her' ('From heaven on high I come here') and Schelle's 25-part setting of the first five verses of Psalm 103, 'Lobe den Herrn, meine Seele' ('Praise the Lord, my soul'). Exquisitely performed by top soloists including the renowned Oxford countertenor James Bowman (New College, 1960). ☺

[www.hyperion-records.co.uk](http://www.hyperion-records.co.uk)

# Come back for coffee?

*Oxford Today* joins the search for the Missing Bean and finds it in Turl Street

“Modern coffee culture has arrived in Oxford. There’s the usual metropolitan clutch of Costas and Starbucks; a strange AMT wagon-type thing at the bottom of Cornmarket Street; and an extraordinary place called The Missing Bean on the Turl, an independently owned and run coffee specialist, where I had one of the best coffees I have ever had anywhere.”

*Oxford Today* investigated this discovery by Paul Keers, one of its dedicated bloggers. Occupying the ground floor of an ancient building belonging to Lincoln College (the latter reflected in the plate glass, below), The Missing Bean is the brainchild of Israeli Ori Halup, 28, and Briton Vicky Troth, 32, who opened their stripped-down, purist vision of a coffee shop two years ago. Today, despite the Long Vac, it is filled to the brim.

Wasn’t it risky to open another coffee outlet in a city overflowing with branded franchises? That’s to underestimate the appeal of a passionate coffee specialist, claims Halup, especially in a University full of connoisseurs. So what’s the secret? Halup says, “keeping it simple, not being all

things to all women, and focusing on the coffee.” Plus, he adds, there’s the ‘Third Wave’.

If the First Wave was a broad shift from instant coffee back to real beans, the Second was characterised by branded franchises. The Third designates the return of an indie vibe, an Antipodean streak (Halup trained in Sydney, Australia) and smaller, stronger servings of coffee epitomised by the wildly popular ‘flat white’. A London equivalent familiar to some old members is Aussie-owned Taylor Street Baristas, down in the City. Finally, every cup is decked with ‘latte art’, where textured milk is poured to create a pattern.

Halup uses a Brazilian yellow bourbon bean roasted weekly by Stanton Harcourt-based Ue. The trick, he says, is to ensure that the beans are very fresh but also “rested”. “There’s a magic period when they are at their best, which lasts just a week or two”.

Having already served coffee at two May balls this year, Halup and Troth are keen to serve the University but have no further plans for store openings – after all, the whole point is not to become a chain. ☺



Ori Halup outside The Missing Bean, Turl Street

RALPH THORPE

60 seconds with...

## Nicola Lacey

Senior Research Fellow,  
All Souls College, and  
Professor of Criminal Law  
and Legal Theory



### What are you working on?

A cross-disciplinary study of the development of ideas of responsibility for crime since the 18th century; and on the comparative political economy of criminalisation and punishment.

### How did you first become interested in the law?

My first love was always literature; and I studied law principally to go into legal practice. But my study of criminal law threw up intriguing moral, political and conceptual questions; and in my final year, the jurisprudence course developed my interest in legal philosophy, which led to taking a graduate degree. By the end of my BCL, my main interest was in the nature of law in general, and of criminal law in particular, as a social system.

### Why are we so fascinated by criminals and villains?

Some people think that we are intrigued by criminality because, in our highly regulated world, reading about crime gives us a taste of transgression. Others suggest that literary treatments of crime sit within a long tradition of didacticism in fiction, while others point to a longer tradition of texts pondering good and evil. Crime raises fascinating and surprisingly intractable questions about the sources of human conduct and the nature of human agency. Daniel Defoe’s *Moll Flanders* is my favourite literary criminal, and she provided rich resources for my most recent book, *Women, Crime and Character: From Moll Flanders to Tess of the d’Urbervilles*.

### What is the biggest challenge to the criminal justice system?

Other than criminal responsibility, my main research interest is in the analysis of criminal justice policy in different countries. Why do we imprison about twice as many people per hundred thousand of the population, than do the Nordic countries? And why does the USA imprison about five times as many as us? With the apparent collapse of the Minister of Justice’s recent policy initiative to slow the growth of the prison system, and with the unfortunate explosion of criminal legislation over the last 15 years, we must work out how to prevent the criminal justice system operating as an accelerating force in the trend towards an ever more intolerant and divided society.

### Is prison the best available form of punishment for criminals?

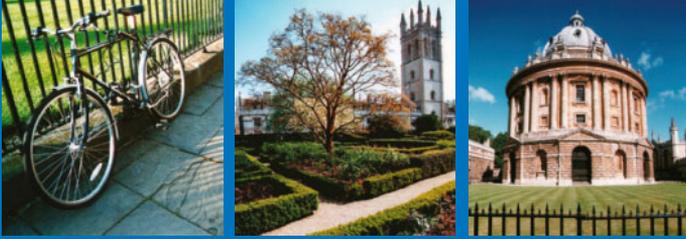
While it is necessary to send some people to prison, it should be used far more sparingly in this country. Even under more satisfactory conditions, such as less overcrowding, we know that any deterrent effect is seriously offset by the damage caused to a prisoner’s personal relationships, employment prospects and access to decent housing. It would be wiser to invest in social programmes and education.

### Are you working on a new book?

I am working on a further book on criminal responsibility. I hope in the future to continue alternating work on academic monographs with projects aiming to reach a broader audience, including, I hope, another biography.



To listen to an interview with Nicola Lacey, visit [www.oxfordtoday.ox.ac.uk](http://www.oxfordtoday.ox.ac.uk)



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Alan Smith, Surrey



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SEATON GORDON, FRANCIS HAMEL, MATTHEW SPERLING

*St Giles in the Rain* (2003) by Francis Hamel (Cooke) (Magdalen, 1981)

## Poetry

### Squares

A game of chess but not my country's rules.  
 These halting friendlies tend to stalemate.  
 The usual Saxon gambits out of luck,  
 I feel for squares and how the pieces move.  
 For days, my stutter-play in church and square.  
 Each night a lingering at single moves...  
 Know if I blunder into false attack,  
*J'adoubé*, my dear, *j'adoubé*. I take it back.

**Thomas Marks**



**Thomas Marks** (Magdalen, 2004) is from London. He gained an MSt and a DPhil at Magdalen, the latter on Victorian poetry and architecture. He is one of the editors of online magazine *thejunket.org*, and works as a freelance writer, reviewer and educational tour director.

### Perhaps Other Reasons

That cat gut you've inserted through my mouth,  
 It travels down my spine, fires & tugs  
 With every movement, specially in my loins ~  
 It is the fruit of all seasons; a bird  
 For every journey ~ on each vital organ.  
 It has a tension you wouldn't believe, a ssssspiccato  
 Belonging to the '60s. I mean the 1660s.  
 It is a little heinous corpus when I  
 Bend under. If you squared it with the up stroke,  
 You might smooth things over for a while ~  
 At least till I return to some other  
 Decimated breeding ground where the mood  
 Is fertile & the land more perchy.  
 Such times are tough, & I get easily strung out.  
 Also, I find with every era that goes by  
 This little throat gets less & less tuneful /  
 More grating to the ear. I hate to catch you  
 On the wing for such discussions.  
 & there are perhaps other reasons why  
 It's not the best idea

**Emily Critchley**



**Emily Critchley** (*St Peter's*, 1999) was born in Athens, Greece, and grew up in Dorset. She studied at the Universities of Oxford, Bristol and Cambridge. She gained a PhD in contemporary American women's experimental writing and philosophy from Cambridge. She now lectures in English & creative writing at the University of Greenwich. This poem comes from *Love / All That / & OK* (Penned in the Margins, 2010).

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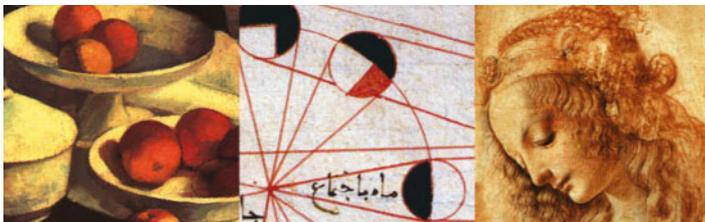


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# Events

## Museums & galleries

### Ashmolean Museum

*Until 8 January*  
**Claude Lorrain: The Enchanted Landscape**  
An examination of the life of the father of European landscape painting (1600-1682) with more than 140 works on display.

*9 February – 15 April*  
**Visions of Mughal India: The Collection of Howard Hodgkin**

### Botanic Garden

*24 November, 20.00*  
**International Year of Forests Lecture: Tony Kirkham: Trees – A Cut Above The Rest**  
Covers subjects relating to the growing of trees in cultivation. Saïd Business School, £12

### Bodleian Library

*Until 23 December*  
**Finding Treasure: The Best of the Bodleian**  
With some of the library's most iconic manuscripts and books. Members of the public can give their thoughts on which of the library's treasures should be put on more permanent display in the Bodleian's new Weston Library, opening in 2015.

### Christ Church Picture Gallery

*Until 23 December*  
**En Brunaille – Painted Drawings**  
A group of painted sketches executed in a hue of brown oil paints – en brunaille.

*Until 23 December*  
**Clouet to Claude – French Master drawings**  
An overview on French draughtsmanship.

*Until 15 January 2012*  
**Giulio Romano (1499–1546)**  
Raphael's collaborator and pupil, Giulio, was inspired by his master to develop his own designs.

### Museum of the History of Science

*15 November – 15 April 2012*  
**Time Machines**  
Mischievous scholar Nicholas of Oxford (*The Miller's Tale*) takes us through the history of timetelling.

*Until 22 January 2012*  
**Seeing Molecules**  
An Oxford story of the attempt to unveil molecular structures.

### Pitt Rivers Museum

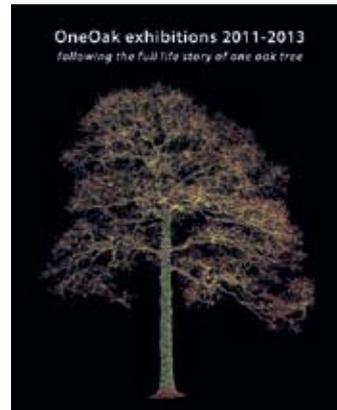
*2 December, 19.00–22.00*  
**Christmas Light Night**  
Enjoy the museum by torchlight and take part in the Ugandan embaire (xylophone) sessions (tickets on the night). Free admission, places on a first-come, first-served basis.

*Until 8 January 2012*  
**People Apart: Cape Town Survey 1952**  
A recently found photographic archive of images taken in the townships of Cape Town during the early years of apartheid.

*Until 27 January 2013*  
**Made for Trade**  
An insight into the world of trade through the Museum's collections.

### The Sheldonian Theatre

*2 November, 17.45pm*  
**The Romanes Lecture: 'The Limits of Science'**  
By cosmologist and astrophysicist Professor Lord Rees of Ludlow, OM, FRS, Astronomer Royal & Master, Trinity College, Cambridge, President, Royal Society 2005-2010. No tickets required. Places on a first-come, first-served basis.  
[www.ox.ac.uk/romanes](http://www.ox.ac.uk/romanes)



### University Museum of Natural History

*Until 7 January 2012*  
**OneOak Exhibitions**  
A 222-year-old oak tree is the focus for an education project.

## Music

### Oxford Bach Choir

*3, 17 December, 10 March 2012*  
**An evening of Bach Favourites Carols for All**  
**Mozart Requiem and Haydn's Maria Theresa Mass**  
Sheldonian Theatre, 19.30

### Oxford Philomusica

*16 November*  
**Hélène Grimaud and Oxford Philomusica**  
Sheldonian Theatre, 20.00

*10, 15 December*  
**András Schiff and Oxford Philomusica with Christ Church Cathedral Choir; Oxford Philomusica - with Choir of New College**  
Sheldonian Theatre, 19.30

10% discount for alumni cardholders:  
[www.alumni.ox.ac.uk/philomusica](http://www.alumni.ox.ac.uk/philomusica)

## Alumni events

*12 November*  
**Cardiff Study Day at the National Museum of Wales**  
A focus on Cardiff's treasures on a stimulating day of art, lectures and discussion.

*1 December*  
**Networking - Politics**  
The next professional networking event, looking at standards in public life and public policy.

*8 December*  
**Varsity Rugby Match**  
Cheer on Oxford at Twickenham as the Blues chase a 56th victory over Cambridge.

*10 December*  
**Oxford10 Christmas Party**  
Celebrate the festive season at the London Film Museum.

For a full listing of alumni events, visit [www.alumni.ox.ac.uk/events](http://www.alumni.ox.ac.uk/events)

**The 21st Century – the last century of youth?**  
**Professor Sarah Harper,**  
**Director, Oxford Institute of Ageing**

*Tuesday 13 March 2012*  
Assembly Hall, Church House, Westminster,  
18.45-20.00, followed by a reception.  
Details and booking at: [www.ox.ac.uk/oxfordlondonlecture](http://www.ox.ac.uk/oxfordlondonlecture)

# Obituaries

## Lord Rodger of Earlsferry

18 September 1944–26 June 2011

Alan Ferguson Rodger, Baron Rodger of Earlsferry, QC, PC, FBA, FRSE, Justice of the Supreme Court of the United Kingdom, died on 26 June 2011, aged 66. He studied for an Oxford DPhil on Roman law and was then a fellow and tutor at New College. He left in 1972 to practise as an advocate in Edinburgh. In 1992 he became Lord Advocate, and was made a life peer. From 1996 to 2001, he was Lord President of the Court of Session. He became a Lord of Appeal in Ordinary in 2001, and a Justice of the Supreme Court on its creation in 2009. From 2008 he was High Steward of the University. He was unmarried.

## Basil Mitchell

9 April 1917–23 June 2011

Basil George Mitchell FBA, Nolloth Professor of the Philosophy of the Christian Religion from 1968 to 1994, died on 23 June 2011, aged 94. He read greats at The Queen's College, and after wartime service in the Royal Navy became tutor in philosophy at Keble College in 1947, moving to Oriel on taking up the Nolloth chair. He was a prominent critic of liberal humanism, his major books including *Law, Morality and Religion in a Secular Society* (1966) and *Morality: Religious and Secular* (1980). He is survived by his wife Margaret and their four children.

## Ann McPherson

22 June 1945–28 May 2011

Ann McPherson CBE, health expert, died on 28 May 2011, aged 65. Trained at St George's Hospital Medical School, London, she became a GP in Oxford in 1979. In 2001 she joined Oxford University's Department of Primary Health Care as a lecturer and founding director of the Health Experiences Research Group. She was the author of over 20 books; her *Diary of a Teenage Health Freak* (1987) sold more than a million copies. The

founder of Healthcare Professionals for Assisted Dying, she was diagnosed with cancer but unable to end her own life. She is survived by her husband Klim and their three children.

## Dame Barbara Mills

10 August 1940–28 May 2011

Dame Barbara Jean Lyon Mills, DBE, QC, Director of Public Prosecutions from 1992 to 1998, died on 28 May 2011, aged 70. She studied jurisprudence at Lady Margaret Hall, and was called to the bar in 1963. From 1990 to 1992 she was director of the Serious Fraud Office and was the first female Director of Public Prosecutions. From 1999 to 2009 she was the adjudicator for HM Revenue and Customs. She is survived by her husband John and their four children.

## Margaret Hubbard

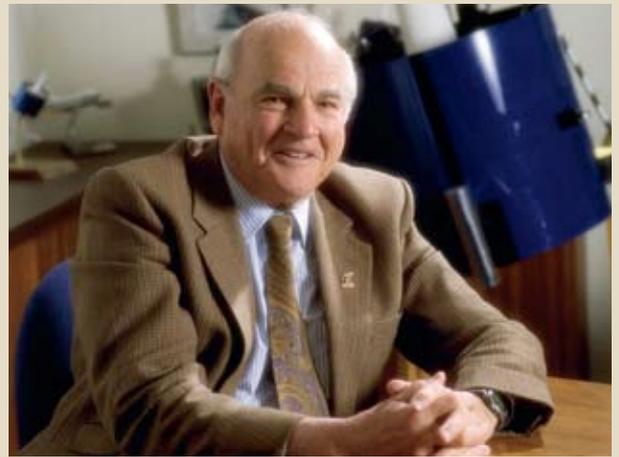
16 June 1924–28 April 2011

Margaret Hubbard, a founding fellow of St Anne's College, died on 28 April 2011, aged 86. An Australian, she took her first degree from the University of Adelaide, before reading greats at Somerville College; she was the first woman to be awarded the Hertford Prize in Latin. After working in Munich for the *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae* she returned to Oxford in 1957 to tutor in classics at St Anne's College. She remained there until retirement in 1986. Her commentaries on the first two books of Horace's *Odes* (1970 and 1978), written with Robin Nisbet, were widely acclaimed. She was unmarried.

## Wilfrid Knapp

4 December 1924–30 March 2011

Wilfrid Knapp, a founding fellow of St Catherine's College, died on 30 March 2011, aged 86. His studies at New College were interrupted by war service in the RAF Photographic Unit. After graduating in PPE, he studied for a year at the Sorbonne before becoming a lecturer at New College in 1949. He moved to St Catherine's



NASA

## Baruch Blumberg

28 July 1925–5 April 2011

Baruch Samuel Blumberg, the Nobel Prize-winning biochemist, and Master of Balliol College from 1989 to 1994, died on 5 April 2011, aged 85. After Union College in Schenectady and Columbia University, he came to Balliol College to write a DPhil thesis on the biochemistry of hyaluronic acid. He then worked at the National Institutes of Health and the Fox Chase Cancer Center. In 1976 he shared the Nobel Prize for Medicine with Carleton Gajdusek for the discovery of the virus that causes hepatitis B. Having spent a year at Balliol as visiting professor, in 1988 he was the first American and the first scientist to become Master of the college. He was later an astrobiologist at Nasa, investigating the possibility of life on other planets. He is survived by his wife Jean and their four children.

Society as tutor in politics in 1950. He persuaded his New College tutor, Alan Bullock, to become Censor of St Catherine's in 1952, and played a key role in the transformation of the society into a college in 1962. His work as a political scientist ranged widely, from postwar Europe, through North Africa, to the Middle East. He is survived by his wife Pat.

## Geoffrey Bownas

9 February 1923–17 February 2011

The founder of the Department of Japanese Studies, Geoffrey Bownas CBE, died on 17 February 2011, aged 88. After war service at Bletchley Park and with the Intelligence Corps in India, where he learned Japanese, he studied for a first degree in greats and a second in Chinese, at The Queen's College. He spent two years at Kyoto University and returned to Oxford in 1954 to establish the Japanese department. He published widely on Japanese history and society. He is survived by his wife Wiesia and two daughters from a previous marriage.



A more comprehensive list of obituaries of Oxonians is at: [www.oxfordtoday.ox.ac.uk](http://www.oxfordtoday.ox.ac.uk)



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# My Oxford

## Siddhartha Mukherjee – Magdalen College 1993

The Pulitzer prize-winning author tells John Garth how he came to Oxford to pursue the dream of working with his hero

### Why did you apply to Oxford after majoring in biology at Stanford?

Alain Townsend, who was to become my mentor at Oxford, had made one of the most seminal discoveries in immunology by solving the so-called ‘inside-out problem’, which is that if the immune system exists outside our cells, how can we eliminate those viruses that hide inside our cells? He figured out our immune system scans the cell surface for foreign pieces of viruses. Every biology student reads about his work. The combination of being a Rhodes scholar and working with Alain was just irresistible.

### What was your DPhil topic?

I looked at the flipside of Alain’s ‘inside-out’ question. There are some infections you never clear, such as Epstein-Barr Virus, which among other things causes mono [infectious mononucleosis]: it remains your partner for the rest of your life. So the ‘outside-in’ problem is: why can your immune system not eliminate such viruses? Working with Alain, I found that whereas the influenza virus can be chopped up and displayed on the cell surface so the immune system can sniff it out, the EBV proteins are specifically designed not to be displayed. The virus becomes a secret agent that hides inside the cells and doesn’t get eliminated.

### How did you find Oxford in 1993 after Stanford?

The differences were stark. Stanford is sunny, dry, very California, very informal; Oxford is cloudy, wet, and quite formal! Stanford was founded in the late 19th century, and Oxford’s ethos at first glance appears to belong

to another era. But both schools are places of ideas and have a very committed academic culture.

### What were your first impressions?

I lived at Magdalen in a ground-floor room looking onto Longwall Street. It was quite dismal so I spent as much time as I could in the Magdalen gardens. But in my second year I had a beautiful apartment that overlooked Rose Lane and the rose gardens in the Daubeny Building, and that was like being moved from a black hole into the most beautiful place on campus.

### What kind of student were you?

Studious. Much of my life revolved around the laboratory at the [Weatherall] Institute of Molecular Medicine. I had close friends including other Rhodes scholars with whom I’m still very much connected.

### Did you find time for any other extracurricular activities?

I did a bit of debating and music, but the DPhil was very immersive. I did a lot of reading, very much curricular.

### What were the people you worked with like?

I worked directly with Alain, with Vincenzo Cerundolo whom I deeply admire, with Sebastian Springer and Judy Bastin. We taught each other: I was as much their tutor as they were mine. I loved it.

### You’re currently an oncologist and you teach medicine at Columbia University. How has Oxford shaped your career?

I studied medicine at Harvard, but I gradually moved away from that

DEBORAH FEINGOLD, THE PRESIDENT AND FELLOWS OF MAGDALEN COLLEGE



Mukherjee in his university days

Siddhartha Mukherjee’s *The Emperor of All Maladies: A Biography of Cancer* is published by Fourth Estate

because it turns out that EBV, the virus I’d studied at Oxford, causes cancer as well. So I started becoming more interested in cancer, and my current interests lie in cancer biology and stem cells.

### Does Oxford have a role to play in the study of these viruses and of cancer?

It does, and it has. The Weatherall Institute has had a deep influence in all of this. There has been a renewal of interest in activating the immune system against cancer cells, and ultimately the lineage of that work goes back to Alain Townsend.

### How do you think of Oxford now?

It remains very dear to me. There were hard times for me; in my very first month a group of us were walking down the High Street and a band of right-wing thugs followed us in a car and really beat us up – part of it was to do with colour, I think. But Anthony Smith, the president of Magdalen, was unbelievably kind to me, and we’ve kept up an informal correspondence since then. ☺



To view interviews with previous subjects of this column, visit [www.oxfordtoday.ox.ac.uk/oxonians/my\\_oxford](http://www.oxfordtoday.ox.ac.uk/oxonians/my_oxford)

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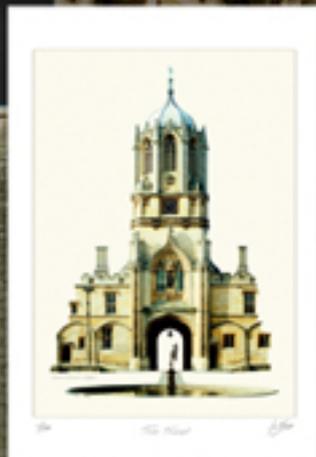
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