



# Worcester College

MAGAZINE

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Issue 22





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Benefactors' Garden Party 2017  
Photo: Keith Barnes

**Coleen Day** Director of Development  
Alumni Relations and Fellow Reports

**W**orcester has once again had an amazing year; our students have been flying high, coming fourth in the Norrington Table with students achieving forty seven 1sts, fifty-eight 2.1s, three 2.2s and one 3rd. Five of our Fellows have been awarded Professorships in Recognition of Distinction in their fields: Dr Peter Frankopan—Senior Research Fellow, Director of the Oxford Centre for Byzantine Research. Dr Mark Howarth—Fellow and Tutor in Biochemistry. Dr Antonis Papachristodoulou—Fellow and Tutor in Engineering. Dr Grant Ritchie—the John and Patricia Danby Fellow and Tutor in Chemistry. Dr Gabriel Stylianides, University Lecturer in Education (mathematics), Supernumerary Fellow.

Huge congratulations to them and to our students for all that they have achieved in helping to make Worcester, as I'm sure you will agree, the best College in Oxford.

Two of our most distinguished Senior Fellows, Professor Don Fraser and Professor Tony Blakeborough, are retiring this year. Don will continue to work in collaboration with Professor Grant Ritchie for the next 3 years on a recently awarded EU grant which seeks to use ultrasensitive chiral-cavity-based polarimetry to study chirality at interfaces. They will study biomolecular interfacial processes such as the selective adsorption of sugars, nucleic acids and nucleotides in vermiculite gels and layered double hydroxide materials. Tony will be continuing to assist the College in various capacities.

As I am writing this piece, I'm thinking of Professor David Bradshaw, our Tutor and Fellow in English; interviews are currently

taking place in the Lodgings for his replacement. David had been suffering from cancer and sadly died on 14th September last year. A Memorial event is to be held on the anniversary of David's birthday 27th October, in the new Sultan Nazrin Shah Centre. "Words and Music in Memory of David Bradshaw" is going to be a very special occasion, to which everyone who knew David is welcome. This is particularly apt as David sat on the College Committee responsible for managing the building project; as in everything he did, he was passionate about the building insisting that it must be the best that any Oxford College had to offer, regardless of the cost! I'm sure he would be very proud of the result.

With events in mind I can report that we have had many successes this year, some of which are mentioned on page 22. We have some very interesting events in the planning: on the 14th – 15th April Michail Peramatzis is organising a weekend of Philosophy; on Sunday 19th August 2018 Mark Bainbridge, Fellow Librarian, is planning an exhibition of the Library's earliest books; further events are listed on the back page and on the College website, which is regularly updated [www.worc.ox.ac.uk](http://www.worc.ox.ac.uk).

I can't finish without mentioning the Benefactors' Garden Party, which, along with the Gaudies, has become a favourite event and was held this year outside the Sultan Nazrin Shah Centre on the edge of the College Sports Field, overlooking the newly completed lake extension. We had amazing weather, sun sun sun... with a huge number of Benefactors attending. On behalf of all of us at Worcester, we would like to take this opportunity to thank all our donors for their magnificent support.

# Meet the Junior Research Fellows

Meet the Junior Research Fellows who joined us in Michaelmas 2016



**Dr. Cassandra Sampaio Baptista** is a neuroscientist and currently a Junior Research Fellow. She is a Senior Postdoctoral Researcher at the Functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging of the Brain (fMRIB) Centre, in the Nuffield Department of Clinical Neuroscience (NDCN) at the University of Oxford.

Cassandra's research focuses on brain plasticity in response to experiences such as skill learning during adulthood. Further, she is interested in how intentional modulation of brain activity, through neurofeedback, can lead to brain changes and behavioural improvements as a potentially adjunct rehabilitation therapy for stroke survivors.

She completed her DPhil in Professor Heidi Johansen-Berg's lab at fMRIB in collaboration with Professor David Bannerman at the Experimental Psychology Department, University of Oxford.



**Dr James Felce** is a molecular immunologist based at the Kennedy Institute of Rheumatology and supported by a Sir Henry Wellcome Postdoctoral Fellowship.

James' work focuses on how cells of the immune system become activated in response to infection. Specifically, he is examining how the central decision-making cells of immunity (T cells) integrate information from different sources during their activation, and how this impacts the extent and nature of their activity. This uses a range of microscopy and genome engineering technologies to dissect the different processes involved in signal cohesion.

Prior to his post-doctoral work, James completed his DPhil in the Weatherall Institute of Molecular Medicine examining the behaviour and evolution of pharmacologically important receptors at the cell surface.



**Dr Lisa Mullen** is the Steven Isenberg Junior Research Fellow in Twentieth Century British Fiction and Literary Journalism.

Lisa is currently working on a book on George Orwell provisionally called *Orwell Unwell: Pathology and the Medical Imaginary in the Fiction and Journalism of George Orwell*. This will place Orwell's politics in the context of his complex medical history and examine his literary responses to disease and the suffering body.

Before coming to Worcester, Lisa held a six-month Wellcome Trust ISSF Research Fellowship in Medical Humanities at Birkbeck, University of London, where she completed an interdisciplinary project called 'Medical Material: Reading Objects and Bodies'. This considered how literary and aesthetic responses to disease were mediated by the material and somatic structures of medicine in the twentieth century, and how clinical technologies tend to configure the human body as a site of semantic crisis.

She was awarded her PhD at Birkbeck in 2016, with a thesis called *Mid-Century Gothic: The Agency and Intimacy of Uncanny Objects in post-WWII British Literature and Culture*. It analysed gothic narratives about bombsite ruins, autonomous technologies, and haunted commodities as poetic critiques of post-war consumerism, and considered texts by George Orwell, Elizabeth Bowen, Alan Turing, Rose Macaulay and Marghanita Laski, among others, alongside a range of mid-twentieth-century cultural artefacts including the films of Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger, and the curatorial practices of Barbara Jones and the Independent Group.

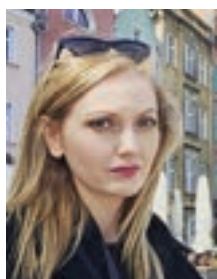
"Lisa is currently working on a book on George Orwell provisionally called *Orwell Unwell: Pathology and the Medical Imaginary in the Fiction and Journalism of George Orwell*."

“In a world in which the amount of information that our brains are confronted with is increasing by the day... it is becoming increasingly important to understand the mechanisms by which our brains efficiently cope with this.”



**Dr Frederik van Ede** is a post-doctoral research fellow at the Oxford Centre for Human Brain Activity (University of Oxford, Department of Psychiatry) and current holder of a Marie Skłodowska-Curie Individual Fellowship. Frederik is originally from the Netherlands where he also obtained his DPhil.

Frederik's research targets the neural basis of flexible, dynamic cognition. In a world in which the amount of information that our brains are confronted with is increasing by the day (mainly as the result of technological advances such as the smart phone), it is becoming increasingly important to understand the mechanisms by which our brains efficiently cope with this; i.e., by which we filter relevant from irrelevant information. Frederik investigates the neural bases of such attentional filtering, predominantly in healthy humans, and using a variety of state-of-the-art neuroimaging techniques such as electro- and magneto-encephalography. His research has a particular focus on the role of rhythmic neural activity in sensory brain areas in shaping the cognitive and neural dynamics that enable adaptive perception and memory.



**Dr Katie Jakobiec** is currently the Scott Opler Research Fellow in Architectural History.

Katie is working on a book project that examines the architecture of commodities – buildings and spaces that enabled mercantile exchanges around the Baltic Sea region, c. 1550-1650. Before moving to Oxford, Katie worked at the University of Edinburgh where she taught the history of architecture of the early modern period.



**Dr Christian Schilling** studied Physics at the Johannes Gutenberg University of Mainz with an external Diploma thesis at ETH Zurich and graduated in February 2014 with a PhD in Theoretical Physics at ETH Zurich.

Christian's research in the Clarendon Laboratory, funded by the EPSRC, concerns many-body

quantum systems from a general and conceptual viewpoint motivated by Pauli's well-known exclusion principle. This principle originating from the indistinguishability of identical particles plays a fundamentally important role on all physical length scales: on the microscopic scale it describes the structure of atoms in the form of the Aufbau principle, and on the macroscopic one it is responsible for the stability of matter. Given this universal relevance of Pauli's very old principle it is quite surprising that a recent mathematical breakthrough has revealed the existence of further, stronger constraints on the way particles can distribute in space. By exploiting an analytical approach supplemented by numerical calculations, Christian Schilling is exploring and quantifying the physical relevance of those generalisations of Pauli's principle. A first result found by him, the so-called quasipinning-effect, provides strong evidence for such physical relevance with potential applications in Quantum Chemistry and Materials Sciences. Furthermore, new insights are expected into the structure of matter and the concept of quantum correlation.

“Christian's research in the Clarendon Laboratory, funded by the EPSRC, concerns many-body quantum systems from a general and conceptual viewpoint motivated by Pauli's well-known exclusion principle.”



Photo Credit: Anthony Morgan

# Genome Editing: A New Technology

**Dr John Parrington**, Associate Professor and Tutor in Medicine, discusses genome editing, and the complexities this type of genetic engineering brings. John's research interests include: molecular mechanisms of reproduction and early embryogenesis, the role of calcium signals in mediating key physiological events, and genomic and proteomic approaches to understanding cell signalling.

Imagine if living things were as easy to modify as computer software. In such a world, farm animals or plants could be engineered to produce leaner meat or juicier fruit, or to withstand extremes of climate. Medical research would be transformed: we could generate mutant animals to model human disease, or engineer plants to be a source of new drug molecules. In fact, medicine itself would look very different. Instead of

patients suffering the terrible effects of genetic diseases such as cystic fibrosis or muscular dystrophy, clinicians could just eliminate the defects from affected cells. But why stop there? Such conditions themselves could become a thing of the past. IVF embryos might be screened for genetic defects and corrected, before being implanted into the womb.

Such a vision might either excite or horrify, depending on your

point of view. But if all this sounds like science fiction, it's time to talk about the new technology of genome editing. Compared to past forms of genetic engineering, genome editing is highly precise, very efficient, and easy to use. Most importantly, it can be applied to practically any cell type, including a fertilized egg. This means it's possible to create genetically modified plants or animals of any species, as well as modify the cells of adult organisms, including humans.

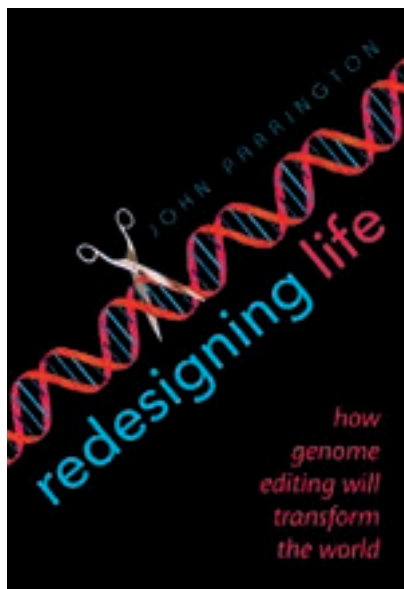
One way genome editing could transform medicine is by expanding the variety of modified organisms available for modelling human health and disease. Recently, my research group at Oxford used genome editing to make a mouse that has a mutation in a gene involved in the fertilization process that is equivalent to one we identified in an infertile man. This mouse 'model' of infertility will make it easier to devise new ways of diagnosing and treating this condition, which affects 1 in 9 couples worldwide.

The mouse is not always a good model for human disease. Most obviously, their brains are very different to ours, which limits the usefulness of mice studies for understanding mental disorders such as autism or schizophrenia. But Guoping Feng of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology is now using genome editing to create monkeys with defects in the SHANK3 gene, which regulates how nerve cells communicate, and which has been linked to autism.

Genome editing may also eventually be used to directly treat genetic diseases like cystic fibrosis or muscular dystrophy, as well as combat bacterial infections or viruses like HIV.

There's also a good deal of interest in using genome editing to create new animals and plants for food. Domestic pigs are highly susceptible to a lethal disease called African swine fever. However, wild warthogs have a genetic difference that protects them from this disease. Bruce Whitelaw and colleagues at the Roslin Institute in Edinburgh have begun using genome editing to create domestic pigs containing the genetic difference found in warthogs.

Despite the potential of genome editing to transform medical research, there are likely to be heated debates about creating a wider range of genetically modified animals as disease models. A particularly explosive question is whether scientists should ever use the technology to genetically modify our closest biological cousin, the chimpanzee. This ape species would be an excellent model for studying mental disorders. Chimps might be also be



*How Genome Editing Will Transform the World*  
(OUP, 2016)

“One way genome editing could transform medicine is by expanding the variety of modified organisms available for modeling human health and disease.”

used to explore the genetic differences that underlie human abilities such as self-conscious awareness and language capacity. Such studies might well lead to important insights into our own nature. Yet it is very likely that such studies would be seen as step too far as they might also lead to the creation of more human-like chimps.

Most unsettling is the possibility of scientists using the new technology to manipulate the human genome at the point of conception. Junjiu Huang and colleagues at Sun Yat-sen University in Guangzhou, China, recently successfully used genome editing to correct the gene defect that causes beta-thalassaemia, a potentially fatal blood disorder, in human embryos. No scientist I have spoken to believes it would be right to use genome editing to alter the genome of a human embryo for clinical purposes yet. But as Dana Carroll, of the University of Utah, recently told me: ‘In the long run, I would not be surprised if editing in embryos was used as a therapeutic strategy, but that could be many years down the road.’

Could genome editing ever be used to try to ‘improve’ a person’s genetic make-up? Tetsuya Ishii, a bioethicist at Hokkaido University in Japan, fears that genome editing of human embryos could mark ‘the start of a slippery slope to designer babies in countries with lax regulations’, adding that ‘the Brave New World will emerge’. Yet while stressing that genome editing would need to be ‘safe enough’ before being used on human embryos, John Harris, a bioethicist at the University of Manchester, believes that ‘if we could become more resistant to disease, more resilient to injury, improving our cognitive powers, or increasing our life expectancy, I don’t see why we would not do that’.

There are, of course, innumerable technical intricacies to overcome on the way. The genetics of common disorders such as diabetes, heart disease, or mental conditions such as schizophrenia, as well as human characteristics such as physical appearance, musical or sporting ability, temperament and intelligence, are all turning out to be highly complex. It is unlikely that enhancement of human individuals by genome editing would be a straightforward matter. Nevertheless, the fact is that our understanding of how the human genome works, and our ability to manipulate it, are increasing at a tremendous rate. It’s for that reason that I believe we need a proper debate in society about genome editing, about its great potential for improving human health and well-being, but also possibilities for misuse.

“A lot of  
hard work  
and then  
**letting go.**”

“It was writing the score for a student film – Privileged – with Hugh Grant as one of the actors that set Rachel on the path she realised she wanted to follow.”





**Jeremy Wright** (Law 1965) interviews Honorary Fellow **Rachel Portman OBE** (Music 1979) about her life and work as an Oscar-winning composer.

**F**or an Oscar winning composer, Rachel Portman is refreshingly straightforward, if occasionally diplomatic. In the year in which she has been made an Honorary Fellow of Worcester College I enjoyed meeting her over a simple but delicious lunch at Sally Clarke's in Kensington. What was intended to be an "interview" became a delightful free-ranging conversation. Instead of me putting her at her ease, it was more the other way round.

The fifth of five children of supportive parents, especially her mother who encouraged her music, Rachel played piano, organ and violin ("badly"), wrote all kinds of music in her teens, took Economics, English and History, as well as Music, at A-level, and was awarded a Music Exhibition to Worcester College.

Rachel chose Oxford rather than one of the London music colleges because she didn't want to mix only with other musicians. She chose Worcester because it had a Music Fellow and Composer, Robert Sherlaw-Johnson.

Here she could "hang out" with students from other disciplines. She learned about twentieth-century music, and from her tutor RSJ a great deal about orchestration. In those days melody and harmony were not in fashion, so she had to follow her own course, being always interested in setting words to music, and using music to tell a story. Her interest in music for theatre, TV and film resulted in scores for many student productions, including a production of *Twelfth Night* which toured northern France (see picture, courtesy of Peter Kosminsky (1976)), with a spinet constantly going out of tune over the bumps in the French roads.

It was writing the score for a student film – *Privileged* – with Hugh Grant as one of the actors that set Rachel on the path she realised she wanted to follow. Through that she made a connection with the producer David Puttnam and sent him a tape of her score. He listened to it, and asked her if she was interested in writing the music for a film he was making in which he was not happy with the existing score. She had two and a half weeks, took the risk, and – I can't resist the phrase – the rest is history.

But not straightaway. In Rachel's twenties she did have some commissions, but had to fill the gaps by doing the sorts of things that one did in student days: voluntary work, even waitressing. But her determination to succeed in her chosen field succeeded. Directors and producers came knocking at her door. The result: many award nominations, an Oscar, an Emmy, a Richard Kirk Award. Not forgetting an O.B.E. But most of all, some wonderful music adding to the drama of some very good films.



On tour in Northern France

She also wrote a children's opera, *The Little Prince*, and a Proms commission among other works.

As a composer for films, Rachel is self-taught. There were no film music schools then, and the straightened times in the eighties were when she learned her "craft". By just getting on with composing.

Composing for films involves a particular approach. Some directors know exactly what they want and can say so; others have difficulty in expressing their wishes. Once Rachel has been engaged, and sometimes before, she will watch a film several times, as if from the outside. There then comes a time when she "steps into the world of the film, and the music comes". I asked how the melodies and themes come to her. "A lot of hard work and then letting go." I have no doubt about either in her case. As to talking about music, "It is impossible to talk about music because it is such an intuitive thing."

Her music is not from the intellect. To compose she likes to be alone and undisturbed, best of all in a retreat in her studio at home. It is a real "retreat" and as I suggested she will be "in the zone".

Much of her music is for romantic films, and it is a pity that even composers tend to be "typecast", in her case as a "feminine" composer. For you have only to watch *The Manchurian Candidate*, or the television series *Shoot to Kill* (Directed by Peter Kosminsky) to realise her versatility, and her ability to enhance action films as well. Some of the music for *The Manchurian Candidate* is truly frightening.

For the last few years Rachel has been taking a course to learn psychotherapy. With film music and three young children, she has not found much time for other things. But soon she will find time to diversify: sometimes giving psychotherapy as a volunteer to those most in need; and creating music to set words and tell stories.

It was a pleasure to meet someone so open and friendly as Rachel Portman. The end of lunch came all too quickly.

# 51 Years On



Hall during restoration 1966 – “Works to install under floor heating in 1966”

“This is an extremely exciting project. We plan to create a page on the College website to enable you to follow the progress of the work.”



“As Burges envisaged the Hall”

**T**hanks to the generosity of Lord John Sainsbury and the Linbury Trust, after 51 years the College is about to embark on the refurbishment of the Hall.

It has not been refurbished since 1966 when, as many of you will recall, it was controversially restored to the original Wyatt scheme when the Burges panelling was removed. The College had hoped that the panelling could be restored, but nothing is that simple in a Grade I listed building.

To refurbish the Hall the College requires planning permission, and to gain planning permission we need the support of the Georgian Society and Historic England. The good and the bad news, depending on your point of view, is that Worcester’s dining hall is the only remaining Georgian Hall in Oxford which makes us unique, however it means that we have to stick with the Wyatt scheme. What we now have permission for is to fit acoustic panelling under the dado rail and we are still awaiting permission to add acoustic plaster on the West Wall (the entrance). The works will include taking up the flagstones to replace the dated under floor heating, cleaning and repainting the walls and ceiling in Wyatt’s original colours (exact colours yet to be agreed), and rewiring, which will include a new lighting system and a hearing

loop. In addition, what are believed to be Wyatt’s original benches and tables are to be sent away and restored.

Benfield and Loxley, local contractors who have worked with a number of Oxford Colleges, including the recent restoration of the Wyatt Library at Brasenose, have just been appointed. They will start work immediately after Freshers’ Week when the Hall will be closed for Michaelmas and Hilary Term. We have built in a contingency for time slippage as we just don’t know what we might find when we take up the flooring. We are confident that we will be open for business at the start of Trinity Term when a number of celebration dinners will be organised, particularly for our students who will have had to put up with no formal Hall for two terms.

Alternative dining arrangements are in hand—after all, we still need to eat! We will be converting one of our seminar rooms to an informal dining space and on the occasions when more formal dinners need to take place, they will be held in the Linbury Building.

This is an extremely exciting project and we plan to create a page on the College website to enable you to follow the progress of the work. We are all excited and can’t wait to see the end result.



# The Alchorne and Eaton Feast

The Provost, **Sir Jonathan Bate CBE**, gives a speech at a feast in honour of benefactors **Margaret Alchorne** and **Sarah Eaton**.

**B**eing a poor College, Worcester does not hold annual feasts in the manner of our wealthier cousins across Oxford. But three years ago, we gathered in the Hall for our Tercentenary Feast, in celebration of the 300th anniversary of the founding of Worcester College and the launch of our Campaign to endow the College for the next three hundred years.

Now, as then, we are at a Feast for the Fellows and their guests. It is a chance for me as Provost to say thank you to my colleagues for looking after our students so well, teaching them with such dedication, supporting the College through our administrative offices and governance structures, and conducting important research that makes us into an intellectual powerhouse. As I said in my first ever Christmas video message to the Old Members, it is a privilege for me to lead a Fellowship from which there have emerged in the last couple of years such towering achievements as John Parrington's book: *How Genome Editing will Transform the*

*World*, Robert Gildea's Samuel Johnson prize-listed *New History of the French Resistance*, Peter Frankopan's mega bestselling *The Silk Roads*, not to mention such upcoming delights as *Conquest and Transformation*, Laura Ashe's groundbreaking new Oxford History of English Literature from 1066 to 1350, and Jo Quinn's eagerly-awaited *In Search of the Phoenicians*.

As we look back, breathing a sigh of relief as Finals are marked, the last Governing Body meeting of the year is concluded, the undergraduates depart, taking their memories and their demands with them, and the summer research period beckons, it is a chance to congratulate ourselves on seeing our charges through a year in which the challenge of welfare and mental wellbeing has never been greater, but also to reflect on our own privilege: on the fact that our terms are shorter than those of every other university in the world with the one well-known exception (though the intensity of those terms might just be a factor in the aforementioned welfare



Photo: Keith Barnes. Paula and Coco

challenge), that we have the privilege of teaching the brightest students of our nation in one-to-one tutorials (though we must rise to the challenge of finding those bright students in the homes and schools that have not traditionally sent their best to Oxford – our thanks to Peter and Jane Aitken, who are here tonight, for their latest generous gift of £50,000 which will go towards this cause), that our graduate students and postdoctoral researchers help to make this one of the three or four best universities in the world, that our libraries and museums are incomparable in their riches, our medical school at the forefront of present and future healthcare, and our science labs producing extraordinary innovations – one of my pleasures as Provost is to meet annually with all our graduate students and hear them telling me of their research on quantum computing, driverless cars, the defence of privacy against snooping drones, and a hundred other remarkable topics. And, what is more, we have the privilege of doing our teaching and research in one of

the most beautiful architectural and natural environments upon the earth: the historic buildings and glorious gardens (tended so lovingly by Simon Bagnall and his team) of Worcester College, not to mention the immaculate playing field and the lake graced by heron, kingfisher and cygnet. We have the privilege too of being so well looked after by our support teams in the lodge, the academic office, the bursary, the accommodation department, the kitchens and the catering team. Let us offer thanks to Stuart and his front of house team, and Rob, Arnie and the chefs for rising to the challenge of conjuring a feast in this new and unexpected setting.

All these privileges we owe to benefaction. A couple of weeks ago, it was announced that in 2016, benefactions to UK universities topped one billion pounds in a year for the first time. Of course that is nothing compared to the forty billion dollars raised in the same year by American universities, but it represents a high water mark for academic philanthropy in our country. £322 million of



that billion came from alumni. What is striking is that alumni giving to the Oxford and Cambridge colleges outstrips alumni giving to all other UK universities put together. Our privilege is to benefit from a virtuous circle: the special bond forged by the small familial community of the colleges and the unique intimacy of the tutorial system creates a unique sense of loyalty which leads our alumni to give back, in their lifetime and in their legacies, and that giving back enables us to sustain the tutorial system. Though this building is the most visible monument of our great campaign – three and a half years in, we have raised over £40m in cash and a total of £87m in cash and firm pledges combined – our greatest success has been in endowing Fellowships. And that is because of the gratitude of former students to their tutors.

Barrie Wigmore has endowed Fellowships in Economics, Philosophy and History, because of his gratitude to his PPE tutors, especially Michael Hinton. Sir Lindsay Owen-Jones has endowed the Fellowship in Modern Languages because he believes that it was thanks to his grounding in French here at Worcester that he, a humble boy from the Wirral, went on to transform a small French company, L'Oréal, into the world's largest cosmetics supplier. David Loevner has endowed the Fellowship in Statistics because he believes that he would not be a skilled money manager without the statistical knowledge he gained here.

Philip Mallinckrodt has endowed the position of Fellow Librarian because his tutor, James Campbell, taught him to love Worcester's Old Library. David Kemper has endowed the Fellowship in English simply because he thinks that John Wilders was a great tutor. More than a dozen law graduates have clubbed together to endow the senior Law Fellowship out of love and respect for the great Francis Reynolds. The tutorial brilliance of Asa Briggs in the early 1950s has led two of his former students to donate, between them, some £7 million to the College, with more to come in their wills. And so the list goes on.

This building, too, carries its mark of gratitude to tutors. There is a Malaysian saying that our mother is our first teacher: so Nazrin has named the Tuanku Bainun Auditorium. There is also a Malaysian saying that our teachers are our second parents: so Nazrin has named the seminar rooms and the studio for his PPE teachers, Hinton, Le May, and Smethurst.

Provosts and Fellows sometimes have their moments. My distinguished predecessor but three, Sir John Masterman, who always liked to tease, was at a dinner party. The lady next to him, unfamiliar with Oxford ways, asked "So, Sir John, how does one get to be Provost of Worcester?"

Masterman: "Well, Madam, all the Fellows gather in the Chapel and they are not allowed to leave until they have decided

who is the most handsome of them and he is duly elected Provost."

Lady, looking surprised: "You surprise me, Sir John, for, if you will forgive me, you would not exactly consider yourself an Adonis."

Masterman, "Madam, you have not seen the Fellows of Worcester College."

This Provost, by contrast, has nothing but admiration for his Fellows and their dedication to our students, which is revealed to me, term after term, when tutorial reports are read in Provost's Collections in the Lodgings dining room. Your work with your students will enable a future Provost and Development Director to carry on this tradition in the next appeal, perhaps in 2033 when Gloucester College celebrates its 750th anniversary.

My thanks to Coleen for this Campaign and to all of you for being exemplary Tutors. Especial thanks to Scott Scullion for his extraordinary hard work and his exceptionally fine judgment as Senior Tutor. Whilst in thanking mode, to my wife, Paula Byrne for all she does to support my work and that of the College,

despite holding down her own career as biographer, novelist, screenwriter, lead book reviewer for *The Times*, creator of the ReLit charitable foundation devoted to the stress-relieving potential of poetry, not to mention mother of three, and adopted mother of Coco Chanel the Havanese who, since stealing the show in last summer's *Buskins'* production of *Twelfth Night*, has become a college mascot. She is a force of

nature. Paula, that is, as well as Coco.

To end with the question that must have been on your minds: why have we called tonight's celebration the Sarah Eaton and Margaret Alchorne Feast? The answer is this: Thomas Cooke's benefaction which founded the College in 1714 was only sufficient to endow a handful of Fellowships and Scholarships. The creation of our glorious eighteenth century buildings was owed to two women. In 1715, a Mrs Margaret Alchorne of St Giles – we know nothing of her connection to the College, if there was any, though we may suspect that she had a fondness for Richard Blechinden, the first Provost of Worcester – stated in her will that she would donate to the newly founded Worcester College "a whole year's profit of her real estate ... towards building a chapel, or other buildings, or repairs as the Provost for the time being shall approve of the best for the said College." The will was contested, but in 1717 – exactly three hundred years ago – it was proved and the legacy came to the College, allowing Hawksmoor and George Clarke to forge ahead with the designs for the Hall, the Library, the cloister and the chapel. Then some years later, Sarah Eaton, daughter of Dr Byrom Eaton, a rather undistinguished Principal of Gloucester Hall, left a legacy that allowed for the completion of the great north range that we call the Terrace and the Provost's Lodgings.

"We have the privilege of doing our teaching and research in one of the most beautiful architectural and natural environments upon the earth: the historic buildings and glorious gardens."



# Rowing Report

**Worcester College Boat Club** ended the 2016/17 year on a high, winning its first set of Blades in 2 years!

**A**fter a cold and wet Torpids, Summer VIIIs was summer rowing at its finest – glorious blue skies, warm weather and plenty of Pimms. A solid effort by M1 saw them hold on to remain in the middle of Division 2 while W2's endurance was put to the test as they rowed over, down the entire course, for 3 out of the 4 days. The girls proved that they were more than up for the challenge and put in a particularly impressive effort on the Saturday. Recovering from a crab half way down Greenbanks they went on, not just to hold off an approaching Lincoln W2, but to finish several lengths ahead of their pursuers. Sadly, things did not go quite as well for some of the other crews.

Despite long hours of training on the ergs and on the water by W1, and M2 recruiting extra support from St Benet's, both crews had the questionable honour of eating their Boat Club dinner with spoons.

Fortunately, W3's Summer VIIIs campaign was more successful. It was a mixed boat including a fourth-year veteran who managed to fit racing into a busy finalist schedule, some novices who had only started to row 5 weeks earlier and some last-minute subs but the girls came together to make short work of Keble W3, LMH W3, St Catz W2. The Worcester boat house was buzzing as they pushed off for their final race on Saturday afternoon. Luckily





spectators weren't held in suspense for too long, for almost as soon as the cannon was fired word came across the tannoy that Worcester W3 were closing on Pembroke W4, promptly catching and bumping them just past the bung lines. So strong were W3 that they managed to bump each day within the first 400 metres, never having to race further than Donny Bridge! The bump on Saturday secured the crew blades and was the perfect end to a fantastic four days of racing. Particular congratulations to Livia Dewaele who was selected for the Oxford University Women's Lightweight Blue Boat (having learned to row at Worcester only a year earlier!). She put in stellar performances at countless regattas

and against the Light Blues and, by rowing in W1 and coxing W3, won 'splades' in VIs. We're sure Livia will treasure both her spoon and her blade equally.

The entrance to the Besse Building now looks a bit brighter thanks to W3's handiwork. Luckily there are still plenty of blank walls ready for decorating next year.

**If you would like to be involved in future WCBC events, supporting the Club or would like to take part in WCBC's alumni races please contact WCBC Vice Captain, Leila Tai ([wcbc.martlets@worc.ox.ac.uk](mailto:wcbc.martlets@worc.ox.ac.uk)).**

# Widening Access: The UNIQ Summer School





Photo: John Cairns

The programme is open to students studying in their first year of further education who are from UK state schools or colleges. Students apply for a specific course that aims to give them a realistic view of Oxford student life, living in an Oxford College for one week during the summer vacation.

Students attend lectures and seminars in their chosen subject, and workshops about applying to Oxford.

35 different subjects are offered across the five-week programme and students pick one week containing their preferred topics. The summer school is designed to stretch a student's ability and to challenge their understanding of a subject. The week-long programme is an intense experience of non-stop academic studies in the day, mixed with key social experiences in the evening. The students attending build long-lasting friendships with others who have similar interests to them, as well as learning more about their preferred subjects.

In addition to Worcester, UNIQ 2017 was supported by Brasenose, Hertford, Keble, Kellogg, Lady Margaret Hall, Lincoln, Magdalen, St Antony's, St Anne's, St Edmund Hall, St Hugh's, Wadham and University College. In all 3960 applications were made and 875 successful students were selected for the programme and we are pleased to report that 250 spent their week at Worcester. Some 95% of the participating students met one or both conditions of being from a disadvantaged socio-economic background and/or from a neighbourhood with low participation in higher education.

This year's applicants were asked to provide:

- At least six GCSE/National 5 (or equivalent) grades
- A personal statement detailing interest in their chosen course and motivation to attend UNIQ
- School Information (current state school and past school)
- A-level (or equivalent) courses
- Teacher referee contact details

Students who attend the Summer School gain first-hand experience of a university environment, grow in confidence, meet like-minded individuals and gain a better understanding of their chosen subject...all while having fun! The UNIQ team are always on hand for help and advice and students receive 24/7 support throughout the week, with live-in staff at their chosen college.

**If you would like to know more about UNIQ please visit <http://www.uniq.ox.ac.uk>.**

# Girls will be Girls

Reviewed by John Livesey of Oxford Opening Night: an online magazine dedicated to reviewing student theatre. A performance involving 13 Oxford Students, three of whom are from Worcester Hannah Chukwu (2015) Director, Ben Darwent (2016) Technical Director and Caitlin Kelly (2015) Lead Actress, showing at The Burton and Taylor Studio in Oxford on 7th June.

“*Girls will be Girls*, showing at the BT this week, is a sharp, witty and insightful piece of new writing from Ella Langley. Set over the course of 24 hours, it tells the story of seven girls waiting for their precious Oxford letters. Each character portrays different challenges posed by modern womanhood, but between them all runs a common thread, a tangible community, a shared experience of growing up. Its immediate precedent is obviously ‘The History Boys’, an influence it wears on its sleeve, even referencing it in one of the classroom scenes. However, where Alan Bennett’s play now feels dated, *Girls will be Girls* is fresh and exciting. This is the sort of feminist coming-of-age tale we see all too rarely. It offers 50 minutes of comedy, drama and social commentary, managing to be heady, anarchic and often very moving.

The play starts with an a cappella cover of ‘Isn’t She Lovely?’ as the seven girls act out their morning routines. Last-minute essays, arguments with parents, excuses to avoid eating—for each character, we get a snapshot of different lifestyles, attitudes and problems. Inventive direction, brilliant acting, and challenging themes alongside witty one-liners in this scene signal what we are to expect from the rest of the piece.

What is most impressive about this production is how skilfully each actress draws their character. Like the opening, many of the scenes are staged with more than one line of action, so the task of distinguishing the individuality of every girl naturally becomes harder – but the talented cast all rise to the challenge. Details like sarcastic eye rolls, murmurings and thumbs up add detail

to the classroom scene and create a whole new level of comedy and realism. Natasha Sarna gives a confident, charismatic and believable performance, standing out as being totally in control of the material, her style working perfectly with the writing. Elsewhere, Georgina Botham’s anxious interjections are consistently funny, although she sometimes feels underused. Anousha Al-Masud is focused, frank and engaging. Lara Marks may play the snootiest of the lot but when she lets the audience in to her character’s insecurities, the contrast feels truthful and genuinely upsetting.

As a piece of new writing, the language is also strikingly accomplished. We get a real sense of how sixth-formers communicate, dialogue peppered with the usual teenage verbal tics. The only point where ideas start to feel clunky is in some of the toilet-cubicle monologues where Langley’s broad

metaphors feel slightly laboured. References to internal prisons, belts, whistling kettles, and the ‘herculean effort’ of surviving jar with the rest of the play and don’t seem as honest as some of the simpler language. The brief line ‘I am too big’, for example, carried far more weight and felt both devastating and truthful.

Set on a thrust stage, this show puts us right back in the classroom, and its power comes from how quickly it makes you remember what Sixth Form felt like. It will be interesting to see how audiences react to the constant references to Oxford applications in the production’s Fringe run – but even if they don’t land as well as they do here, there is so much that still strikes home. You can’t help but feel nostalgic seeing all the girls get into pairs to speak broken French about their summer holiday and their favourite hobby.

At the end of the performance, in the small space of the BT, the audience could hear the actors giggling offstage. This energy and unabashed sense of feminist fun is the driving force for the show and a delight to experience. I was sad the show was over when the lights came up, although I have to say I don’t miss school one bit.”

**The show went on to perform at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival from 14th – 26th August.**

Yarsa village (top right) and new school (top left) above cliffs showing scars from earthquake rock-slides.

# Rebuilding Yarsa



Yarsa, Kashigaon new school with teachers and students, April 2016



**Professor Mike Searle** returns to Nepal, to see how funds raised helped to rebuild Yarsa village and Kashigaon school devastated by the 2015 Gorkha earthquake.

On 25th April 2015 a large earthquake of magnitude 7.8 struck the Gorkha region of the Nepal Himalaya rupturing a fault plane over 150 km length from Gorkha to south of Mount Everest. The earthquake resulted in over 9000 deaths leaving half a million people homeless and caused the destruction of thousands of villages across central Nepal. Many ancient Newari temples in the old city of Kathmandu, Bhaktapur and Patan were reduced to rubble. For over 15 years geologists from the Earth Sciences department in Oxford have been working in the Nepal Himalaya employing numerous porters and helpers from one village Yarsa, in Kashigaon, located in the Burhi Gandaki valley close to the epicentre of the earthquake.

Since the earthquake, funds have been raised to help rebuild the village of Kashigaon and build a completely new school for 150 children. Many members of Worcester College and alumni have generously donated to this cause over the last two years. One year after the earthquake £31,000 had been raised and in May 2016 the new school was opened. In March 2017 before some fieldwork in the Manaslu region, I trekked up to Kashigaon once again with two of the Trustees, Suka Ghale and Ash Bahadur

Ghale, both of Kashigaon, to see what state the village and the new school was in. We brought several porter loads of school books, pens, posters and other kit with us. I was given a fantastic reception by the Village Committee and the five school teachers and all 150 children. They are all so grateful to everyone who has donated and asked me to pass on their special thanks. Outside the main school building they had engraved a stone plaque with thanks to all the major donors, including Worcester College. The five classrooms were a hive of activity and the smiles on the faces were testament to money well spent.

We are continuing to fund-raise for Kashigaon with plans now to build two extra classrooms for about 50 Lower Secondary school children, and eventually a small clinic to serve the village. The villagers would like to entice trekkers to come and visit the Ganesh Himalaya, one of the least visited and most unspoilt parts of the Nepal Himalaya. They are also keen to welcome visitors and are planning to encourage them to teach at the school for a day or two. Eventually they hope to construct a hotel or lodge for trekkers.

There is now a school building high up in the Nepal Himalaya that will forever have direct links to Worcester College and Oxford.

# Past events



## Sir Ian McKellen speaks at Worcester

On Wednesday 8th March Sir Ian McKellen, who is a Distinguished Visiting Fellow of the College, introduced a screening of his gripping modern-dress film of Shakespeare's Richard III. The viewing took place in the Tuanku Bainun Auditorium, within the new Sultan Nazrin Shah Centre. After the film, Sir Ian took part in a question and answer session, which was chaired by Georgia Figgis (2013, English), the President of Buskins.



## Young Worcester at the Oxford and Cambridge Club

In August over 50 young alumni and their guests joined the Provost, Sir Jonathan Bate and Coleen Day, Director of Development, Alumni Relations and Fellow for a drinks reception at the Oxford and Cambridge Club. The event is part of our Young Worcester series, which cater for young alumni who have graduated within the last ten years.



## Ellie Kemper (2002, English) in Conversation

Over 60 Old Members and guests came together in New York to listen to actress, writer and comedian Ellie Kemper in conversation with Worcester's outgoing JCR President Hannah Chukwu (2015, English). Hannah and Ellie spoke about Ellie's title role in the critically acclaimed Netflix comedy series, *Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt*, as well as her film work and writing in the satirical newspaper *The Onion*, as well as *The Huffington Post*. The event was very generously hosted by David Loevner (1976).

## Oxford Literary Festival

Worcester was once again a Festival College Partner of the Oxford Literary Festival, now in its 21st year, which ran from Saturday 25th March to Sunday 2nd April. The College hosted multiple Festival events – including novelist Joanne Harris, pianist Alfred Brendel, human rights lawyer Philippe Sands, politician Lord Michael Heseltine, and the entertainer Nicholas Parsons – and on Sunday 26th March the BBC World Service broadcast from the new Sultan Nazrin Shah Centre, with BBC World Affairs Editor John Simpson leading a live transmission from the auditorium.



# Kingfisher

College Gardener Allison Leslie fulfilled a lifelong ambition when a male Kingfisher accidentally flew into one of the large glass doors of the Sultan Nazrin Shah Centre—she was on hand to pick up and hold the very confused bird! Luckily after ten minutes it had recovered, and was last seen flying off towards the lake.



## Rob's Recipe

The College Chefs once again did us proud at the Sarah Eaton and Margaret Alchorne Feast serving for the main course:  
**Roasted Guinea Fowl with Pancetta, Cep and Herb Butter**

### Serves 4

#### Four Guinea Fowl Supremes

Four thin slices of pancetta  
Olive oil  
Seasoning to taste  
Snow peas (for garnish)

#### Cep and Herb Butter

Roast ceps in 180°C oven  
Sauté 1 clove of garlic and 2 shallots leave to cool  
Blend with 100g unsalted butter, roll in greaseproof and chill

#### Method

##### Butternut Squash Puree

Halve the squash lengthwise and remove the seeds and strings. Rub the insides with 2 tablespoons softened butter; season with salt and pepper. Place on a roasting pan, skin side down. Bake in a preheated 200°C for 30 minutes or until fork tender. Remove the squash from the oven, scoop out the flesh and place in a food processor. Add the orange zest, honey and remaining 2 tablespoons of butter. Puree until smooth. Add a pinch of salt and cinnamon. Pulse a few times to incorporate.

##### Season and Pan Fry Guinea Fowl

Heat a non-stick, ovenproof frying pan, then add a splash of olive oil and cook Guinea Fowl for two minutes skin side down then turn. Place the pan in oven set to 180°C for 15 minutes, remove and rest for five minutes, top with cep and herb butter. Place pancetta on a baking tray and place in 180°C oven, remove when cooked and place on kitchen paper, put to one side.

Assemble butternut squash puree on plate and smear with back of spoon. Slice Guinea Fowl and place on squash puree, top with pancetta and garnish with snow peas.

#### Butternut Squash Puree

One butternut squash  
2 tablespoons softened butter  
Salt and pepper, to taste  
½ orange, zested  
One tablespoon clear honey  
Pinch ground cinnamon



# Events programme

## Friday 27th October 2017

*Words and Music in Memory of David Bradshaw*

To be held in the Sultan Nazrin Shah Centre from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. Open to all who knew David.

## Tuesday 14th November 2017

*Worcester College Society Annual Dinner*

To be held at the Oxford and Cambridge Club.

## Saturday 10th March 2018

*Law Dinner*

For all those who read or are practising Law.

## Wednesday 4th April 2018

*New York Gathering*

Details to be confirmed.

## Friday 6th – Saturday 7th April 2018

*North American Alumni Weekend*

The 2018 North American Alumni weekend will be held in San Francisco. Worcester events in San Francisco, New York and Washington to be confirmed.

## Saturday 14th – Sunday 15th April 2018

*A Weekend of Philosophy*

A conference for all those who have read Philosophy at Worcester or are interested in the subject, with papers presented by professional philosophers.

## Saturday 19th May 2018

*Dinner in Hall for all those who read Engineering*

## Saturday 9th June 2018

*Benefactors' Garden Party*

Invitation only.

## Saturday 23rd June 2018

*Gardens Day*

The Head of the Gardens and Grounds gives a tour of the College gardens, followed by lunch.

## Sunday 19th August 2018

*Treasures of Worcester Library: the Library's earliest books*

## Thursday 13th September 2018

*50th Reunion*

For those who matriculated in 1968.

## Friday 14th – Sunday 16th September 2018

*Oxford University Alumni Weekend*

A programme of lectures and presentations to be held over the weekend.

## Saturday 29th September 2018

*College Gaudy*

For those who matriculated in 1965, 1966, 1967, and 1961 and earlier.

Events information and booking

Please visit [www.worc.ox.ac.uk/alumni/events](http://www.worc.ox.ac.uk/alumni/events) or contact the Development and Alumni Relations Office:

Email: [development@worc.ox.ac.uk](mailto:development@worc.ox.ac.uk)

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