



Worcester College

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Coleen Day Fellow, Director of Development and Alumni Relations

Trinity Term has to come to an end with the College now in full conference season mode. But today (Wednesday, 27th June), like many other Oxford colleges and the University departments, Worcester opened its doors to students who are considering whether to apply to Oxford. It must be quite daunting wondering what subject to read and which college to choose. Help was at hand with our Admissions and Access Officer Charli Hopkins, aided by an enthusiastic team of Worcester students, doing a great job of welcoming all. They took small groups on tours of Worcester and provided as much information as possible. It was a glorious sunny day; the College looked at its very best and the Open Day could not have gone better. The Main Quad, with its newly mowed lawn in yet another imaginative pattern, looked superb. I don't know how Josh our Deputy Head Gardener manages it!

If you have been following our tweets @WorcCollegeOx, you will have seen that the Royal Institute of British Architects has announced that the Sultan Nazrin Shah Centre is one of the 49 winners of the prestigious 2018 RIBA National Awards for architecture (see page 6). Indeed, the highlight of the past year has been the opening of the Centre. We were thrilled that on Wednesday, 18th October, HRH Sultan Nazrin Shah and his family were present for the official opening by HRH The Duchess of Cornwall, mother of our alumnus Tom Parker Bowles who read English in 1994. I hope you will enjoy the coverage as much of the magazine is dedicated to the opening of this magnificent new building.

We are not forgetting the historic fabric of our Main Quad; thanks to the huge generosity of Lord John Sainsbury and the

Linbury Trust, the refurbishment of the Hall is now complete. The project will be featured in our next edition. In the meantime, if you happen to be visiting the College during the summer, do put your head around the door to see just how vibrant and colourful the Hall now looks. To the far end of the cloisters you will also notice that we have started refurbishing Staircases 1 and 2. Much work still needs to be done.

The Development and Alumni Relations Office continues to be busy, and I am delighted that our events are always so well attended. Do check the back page and the enclosed booking form to see if you can find something of interest. If not, please let us know what you would like us to organise; we are always keen to hear from you.

To keep you better informed about College events and news, we have employed a former journalist and PR professional, Maria Coyle, in the newly created post of Media and Communications Officer. She will assist the Development team in sending out twice-yearly magazines, termly e-newsletters, and the *Worcester College Record*. The *Record* will arrive in your in-boxes in Michaelmas Term in the form of an e-Book unless you have indicated that you would prefer a print copy.

As the Provost, Sir Jonathan Bate, would say, 'Your College is going from strength to strength'. We congratulate him on recently joining the 60 Club. On behalf of us all, we would like to thank you for your continued support and we wish you a fabulous summer.

Creating spaces which work well

Níall McLaughlin Architects explain their understanding of Worcester's brief to design a new conference centre.

We understood the Sultan Nazrin Shah project as not simply the provision of buildings, but also as the development and enhancement of the setting of this significant part of the College site. This includes the broader landscape setting and the network of intimate courtyards that bring the visitor in to the site. Whilst the relationship between the new buildings and the cricket pitch is important, it is only one part of a complex setting. We have worked to resolve and improve the spaces between the new buildings and the existing College buildings. In particular, we thoughtfully considered the arrangement of our proposals in relation to the neighbouring Earl Building and Sainsbury Buildings. The brief asked for landmark building and we interpreted this as one that will develop out of and enhance the extraordinary landscape around it.

As you arrive through the gatehouse from Worcester Place, you are presented with a dramatic set piece which frames the view out onto the cricket pitch. The lake is extended north to touch the new buildings. The dance studio becomes the dramatic ending for the water that leads all the way back to the weir beneath the Provost's Lodgings at the other end of the lake. In the new square, a bridge leads directly out across the open land. All the existing courtyards extend away through archways and narrow openings. The water and the dance studio frame a new entrance court for the Sultan Nazrin Shah Centre. The auditorium is sited at the heart of the building with the properties of an amphitheatre, allowing intimate performance whilst also opening out into the wider foyer and beyond when the occasion requires.

We believe that these strategies have created spaces which work well as part of the ordinary life of the College, as well as being suitable for conference usage during summer months. The new squares, foyer and open terrace should work together to form a sociable setting for student life. We imagined these spaces being open to formal and informal performance that is an important aspect of the college community.





Photo: Keith Barnes.

“Níall McLaughlin Architects is a practice that designs high quality modern architecture. We put a strong emphasis on the inventive use of building materials, the qualities of light and the relationship between the building and its surroundings. We consider these issues to be more important than working in a particular style and hope that each project will be an original interpretation of the client, site, brief and budget.”



Photo Keith Barnes

RIBA national award for the Sultan Nazrin Shah Centre

The Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) has announced that the Sultan Nazrin Shah Centre at Worcester College is one of the 49 winners of the prestigious 2018 RIBA National Awards for architecture.

The judges' report said: 'The setting for this building is unbeatable. It is beside a perfectly mown cricket pitch within the secluded, rambling and idyllic garden of one of Oxford's most historic colleges. And there's a lake nearby too.'

'To not only preserve but enhance this context would require a building of assured calm and grace. It would need to use materials with a tactile gravitas and be imbued with a timelessness which would make it feel as if it had always been there and need never leave. The Sultan Nazrin Shah Centre does all this and more.'

'Every space is high-ceilinged and flooded with daylight, every element is designed and crafted to the most exacting tolerances and standards, and every part fits together sweetly from the radial brick pavers to the curved seats and huge oak doors of the auditorium up to the spaces themselves, formally arranged as discrete stone forms around which the forum flows.'

'The building is classical in spirit, with crisp proscenias and a slender stone stoa marching along the cricket pitch façade. However, it is uncompromisingly modern in style, with smooth planes of stone and glass and minimal detailing. Yet there is

nothing alien or mechanistic about it; in fact, it is surprisingly traditional in its craftedness, relying on stonemasons, plasterers and joiners at the very top of their game. It is the natural materials, superbly honed, that ground the building and make it belong. It is the architectural design – the timeless pursuit of ordering space and light and form – that makes it a thing of pure joy.'

Winners of the national award will now be considered for the 2018 RIBA Stirling Prize shortlist, which will be announced on 19th July. The overall winner of the Stirling Prize will be named on 10th October.

The Provost, Sir Jonathan Bate, said: 'We are honoured that Worcester College's newest building has received the prestigious National RIBA award for architecture. We are very lucky to have had Níall McLaughlin Architects, craftspeople and a gardening team led by Simon Bagnall, who had the vision to create this inviting, exquisite space to be used by students, staff and visitors alike. Many have remarked already that they regard the Sultan Nazrin Shah Centre as one of the most beautiful modern buildings in Oxford, and the RIBA judges seem to agree.'

The Centre has also received both the RIBA South Award 2018 and RIBA South Building of the Year 2018, as well as an award from the Oxford Preservation Trust in its New Buildings category.

Designing a garden fit for royalty

Simon Bagnall, Head of Gardens and Grounds, on how the project came to fruition



It is not every day you are asked to design a garden that needs to meet with royal endorsement. However, this was the challenge set around Worcester's latest building project, the Sultan Nazrin Shah Centre.

The brief was to give thought to a structural element on the east of the plot, providing a sense of shelter and the feeling that the building lived within its own space. Finally, the main door was to be a key element, so the landscaping had to draw visitors to the

entrance and not distract or obscure it. Working closely with the building architect Níall McLaughlin and, in the planning stages, the landscape architect Kim Wilkie, we put the hard landscape elements in place.

We wanted the planting to feel natural, light and airy but also have formal elements that linked back to the building. It had to be low maintenance, give year-round interest and we also felt that the design should ebb and flow in both structure and flowering.



Stipa gigantea, a tall grass producing many long stems with heads of oat-like, sparkly gold flowers, partnered with Agapanthus, Gaura, Geraniums, Iris, Lythrum and peonies.

"I put my ideas on paper and worked out the planting densities but, for me, it is an organic process. I am not one for relying solely on large-scale plans, but go onsite to try to achieve a three-dimensional image of what the project will finally look like."

An abundance of *Paeonia lactiflora* 'Border Gem Peony' with *Iris siberica* 'White Swirl', planted near the main entrance.



Betula nigra 'River Birch'



Allium multibulbosum



Geranium x magnificentum



Iris Sibirica 'Persimmon'



Iris Sibirica 'White Swirl'

Photo Keith Barnes

Trees

One of the most enjoyable parts of my job is having the opportunity to plant trees that will last for generations. It is the ultimate honour, so choosing trees for this corner of College was a complete joy. To find the best trees and shrubs, I visited nine nurseries and read numerous catalogues, as well as discussing ideas with close gardening friends and colleagues. After great thought and deliberation, I selected *Betula nigra* (River Birch), *Liquidambar styraciflua* Slender Silhouette (Gum tree), *Cercidiphyllum japonicum* (Katsura tree), *Salix erythroflexuosa* (Twisted Willow) and *Quercus suber* (Cork Oak).

Two particularly noteworthy trees we planted are the *Cercidiphyllum japonicum* and *Betula nigra*, which has an amazing, flaking, cinnamon-coloured bark. We went to Deepdale Nurseries in Cambridgeshire to select these wonderfully statuesque trees, which provide an element of maturity to the planting. However, we had not envisaged quite how big they were until we got them back. They were huge! With the help of an eight-tonne excavator, the nurseries' groundworks team and five College gardeners, we managed to wrestle them into place.

The Katsura tree is a stunner with its heart-shaped leaves which flush pinkish-bronze, gradually turning to apple-green in summer and brilliant fiery colours in autumn. For me, its best quality is the smell it exudes in the autumn of sweet burnt sugar and candy floss.

Mid-layer trees and shrubs

The main body of planting was made up of *Myrtus communis*, an evergreen shrub with aromatic leaves and solitary, bowl-shaped white flowers. *Viburnum x Hillieri* 'Winton', which produces

creamy-white panicles of flowers followed by red fruit, was positioned in the border next to the main entrance. Its narrow leaves are bronze when they emerge in spring, but darken to green before turning vivid shades of plum-purple or red in autumn.

Salix purpurea (Nancy Saunders), *Cornus sanguinea* (Midwinter Beauty) and *Cornus sericea* (Bud's Yellow) will provide interest in the winter months, with their stems brightening up even the dullest days. *Viburnum Plicatum Mariesi* has showy, large, white lace-cap spring flowers so we planted this shrub near the water to soften the poolside edges. For spring, we have planted a tree with bling, *Prunus Serrulata Shimidsu*. This dainty Japanese Cherry is, in my opinion, one of the most attractive flowering cherries on the market.

Perennials

The site is large enough for planting perennials en masse next to the studio. We also put them close to the entrance in a matrix style, which is where different varieties of plant species grow together harmoniously, supporting each other to form a self-sustaining community.

The studio planting is very simple: three *Cercidiphyllum japonicum* are under-planted with *Iris Sibirica* 'Persimmon' and *Hakonechloa macra*. We planted over 200 Iris plants and, although they are short-lived, their exuberance when in flower is worth seeing.

The main planting next to the entrance of the building is more naturalistic, with grasses woven through perennials. We used *Stipa gigantea*, a tall grass producing many long stems with heads of oat-like, sparkly gold flowers, partnered with *Agapanthus*, *Gaura*, Geraniums, Iris, Lythrum and peonies. The white peonies with their flamboyant blooms add an aesthetic sense of decadence to the planting. Above these herbaceous plants at its full height of 1.8m rises the stately *Foeniculum vulgare* 'Purpureum'. Its finely divided leaves and star-shaped yellow flowers are already loved by bees and butterflies.

While the project has been a huge undertaking, it has also been incredibly rewarding and enjoyable. I am very proud of the efforts of the gardens team, who carried out the entire soft landscaping – from preparing the beds, to planting the trees and thousands of plants. The German philosopher, Goethe, wrote: 'The garden is simple and you feel upon entering that the plan was not conceived by an academic gardener but by a feeling heart.' This resonates with me as I feel I put my whole heart into this project.

Cherry trees (*Prunus Serrulata Shimidsu*), planted with *Iris Sibirica* 'Persimmon' and *Cornus sericea* 'Bud's Yellow'. *Geranium x magnificum* appear in the foreground.

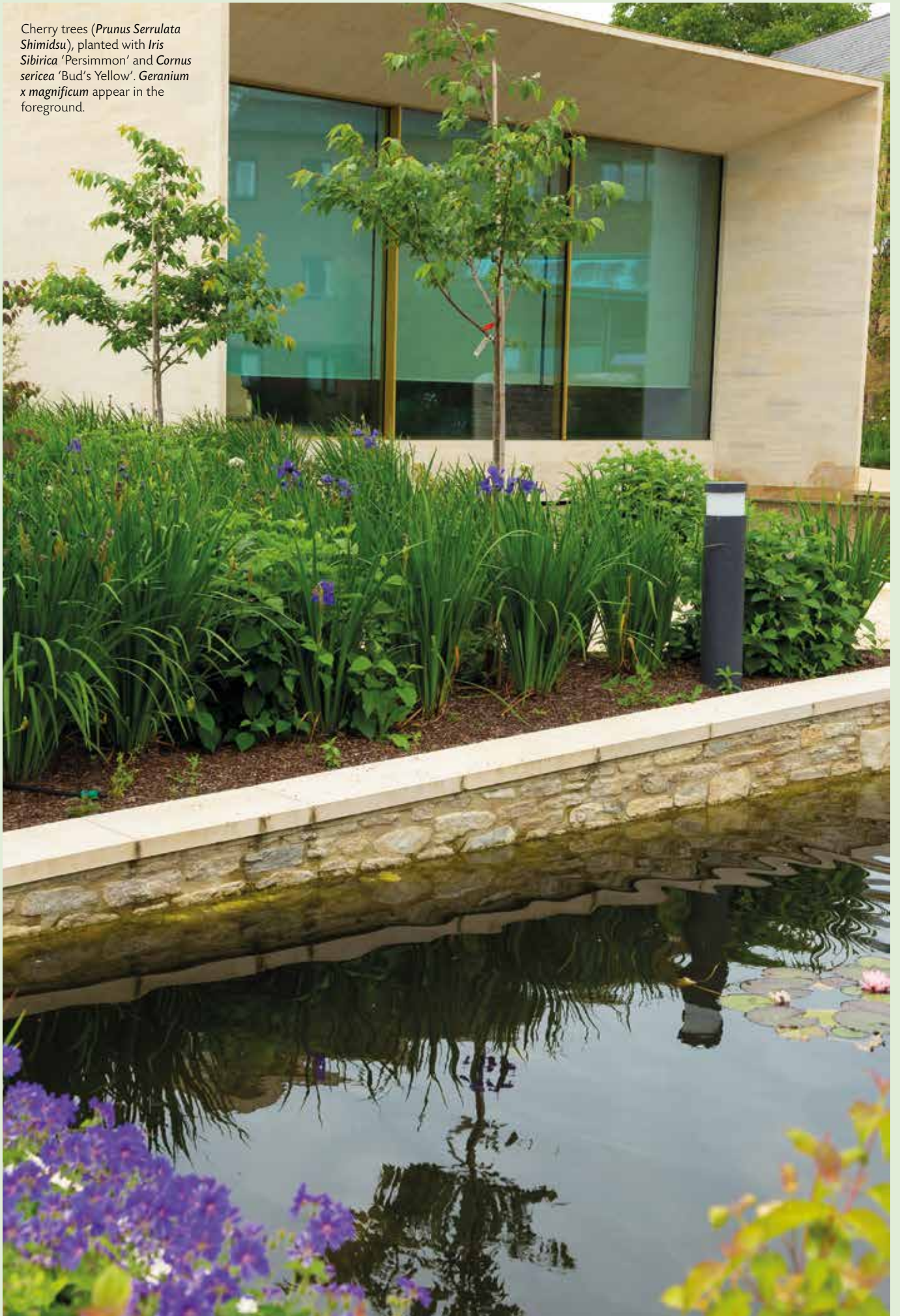


Photo: Keith Barnes



Photo Keith Barnes.



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Proceeds will go to support scholarships and bursaries at Worcester College.
The publication of this book is sponsored by HRH Sultan Nazrin Shah (PPE 1976).

WORCESTER WANDERINGS



A guide to Worcester College was produced by former Provost Dick Smethurst and Supernumerary Fellow Dr Afifi al-Akiti, with watercolours by Valerie Petts, to mark the opening of the Sultan Nazrin Shah Centre. The Sultan commissioned Valerie to produce a series of watercolours of the College, which form the basis of the beautifully produced guide. At the formal opening of the Centre the Sultan gifted all those who attended with a copy and, afterwards, all members of staff and the Governing Body. The book is now on sale for everyone to purchase at a cost of £5. All proceeds go directly to the Annual Fund, which supports projects and initiatives that enhance the student experience at Worcester. We are extremely grateful to HRH Sultan Nazrin Shah for funding the publication.

Signed by the artist Valerie Petts, nine selected fine art Giclee limited edition mounted prints are available. Proceeds will go towards supporting scholarships and bursaries at Worcester College. These prints are unique illustrations sponsored by HRH Sultan Nazrin Shah (PPE, 1976) for *Worcester Wanderings*.

To order a copy of any of the prints, please email: development@worc.ox.ac.uk. Alternatively, write to the Development and Alumni Relations Office, Worcester College, Oxford OX1 2HB, United Kingdom. For an additional cost, mounted prints can be framed – please email: sales@artofoxford.co.uk.



Photo Keith Barnes

INAUGURATION ADDRESS BY
HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS SULTAN NAZRIN SHAH
THE RULER OF PERAK, MALAYSIA
AT
THE OFFICIAL ROYAL OPENING OF THE
SULTAN NAZRIN SHAH CENTRE

DATE: WEDNESDAY, 18th OCTOBER 2017, 11.30AM

VENUE: TUANKU BAINUN AUDITORIUM, SULTAN NAZRIN SHAH CENTRE,
WORCESTER COLLEGE, OXFORD UNIVERSITY, UNITED KINGDOM

Your Royal Highness, the Provost and Fellows of Worcester College, ladies and gentlemen:

Today is the grand climax of a journey that has lasted seven years! During Provost Smethurst's final year in office, I began a conversation with him about some way in which I might assist this College, to which I owe so much of my intellectual and personal development – thanks to the tutorials and the wider life that I was privileged to enjoy when I was an undergraduate here from 1976 to 1979. I read for the legendary degree in Politics, Philosophy and Economics, which for generations has been the nursery for so many world leaders and others who have achieved success in so many walks of life. I could not have gone on to complete my doctorate at Harvard, moreover, if it had not been for my time at Worcester.

Dick Smethurst explained to me that the one thing which the College lacked in its magnificent group of historic and newer buildings was an auditorium where an entire year of students could meet together, where visiting lecturers could speak and

special events be held, where the Buskins could have a wet weather alternative to the sometimes rain-drenched lakeside where they traditionally perform their summer Shakespeare play, and where, during the long summer months when undergraduates are away, conferences and summer schools could hold their plenary sessions.

“I would like to take the opportunity to thank everyone in the College who has worked so tirelessly to turn the original vision into a spectacular building.”

I was delighted to be able to help, though I did not know then that the journey would be so long. One of Provost Bate's tasks, early in his time as Head of House, was to fly to Kuala Lumpur to give me an update on progress. ‘What do you want first?’ he asked me, ‘the bad news or the good?’ I asked for the bad.

The news was that the great Catalpa tree overlooking the Nuffield Lawn had been deemed a Champion Tree – the tallest and oldest in Britain. This meant that planning permission had been refused for the proposed lecture theatre, which would have sat snugly between the old kitchens and the Nuffield Building. I wondered for a moment whether that meant the good news was that I would get my money back! But no, like a conjuror pulling a rabbit from a hat, the Provost then

When you look out at the terrace, you will see the College crest and mine, on opposite sides, symbolising the bond of loyalty and friendship that links us.

took a disc from his pocket, inserted it in his laptop and said to me, 'We've found an alternative site – have a look at this'. There was a video of this site, overlooking Worcester's wonderful, unique settings: the sports field and the lake. 'But this is a much bigger site,' I said, 'Inshallah, this is meant to be – we will build something even more glorious for the College and for future generations of students.' Sir Jonathan has been known to drive a hard bargain and he did gently inform me that a grander scheme might need a little extra help. I was once again delighted to offer it.

And so the journey continued, with the appointment of our visionary architect Níall McLaughlin and his team, and then the exemplary craftsmanship of Beard, an Oxford family firm which has built for the Colleges for generations. As in all such grand schemes, there were challenges – an undercroft to allow for the flood plain, a sewer to be diverted, a glazing sub-contractor who went bankrupt half way through the process, and so on.

But we have finally made it, and I am pleased to hear that this auditorium is already being hailed as the most beautiful modern space in Oxford. When you look out at the terrace, you will see the College crest and mine, on opposite sides, symbolising the bond of loyalty and friendship that links us.

In the Islamic tradition we learn from the great medieval Muslim theologian, al-Ghazali (d. 1111), that our parents are our first teachers and our teachers are our second parents. So I have named this auditorium for my mother, Tuanku Bainun. She had



hoped to be here today, but was unable to travel. I am pleased that my wife, Tuanku Zara, and my sister, Princess Eleena, have joined me in her place. In fact, al-Ghazali's own teacher famously quipped, 'The one who has a tutorial with me, even for a short session, becomes my child.' And so, I have named the seminar rooms in memory of the late Michael Hinton and Copper Le May, respectively, my Philosophy and Politics tutors here at Worcester. The studio is for Dick Smethurst, who still gives me Economics tutorials every time I come to Oxford!

Your Royal Highness, ladies and gentlemen:

I would like to take the opportunity to thank everyone in the College who has worked so tirelessly to turn the original vision into a spectacular building, especially the two Provosts, Dick and Sir Jonathan, and successive Estates Bursars, Andrew Jardine



Photo Keith Barnes

and Jonathan Forrest. Also to Rosalie Watkins, for her very flattering portrait of me! To Valerie Petts, for the watercolours of the College that I have commissioned to provide us all with a lasting memory of its buildings and grounds, and still more so for providing unique illustrations for our College's latest book, *Worcester Wanderings*. Its publication today celebrates the inauguration of this Centre. (I believe all of you will be given a copy as you leave the building.) Finally, I must not forget my friend and a Fellow of this College, Dr Afifi al-Akiti, who all along has been here behind the scenes, from the very beginning, to help see this dream through to its realisation.

So now we come to the final step on the long journey, the unveiling of the dedication stone, which will soon find its home in the graceful foyer. In keeping with College tradition, it is, naturally, in Latin – and the grammar has been checked by the

Senior Tutor, Dr Scott Scullion. Since the auditorium is named for my mother, what could be more fitting than to have as our guest of honour another Royal College Mother: Her Royal Highness The Duchess of Cornwall, whose son, Tom Parker Bowles, read English at Worcester and is also with us today.

The creation of this beautiful, amphitheatre-style auditorium, together with foyer, social space, seminar rooms and e-hub, in a position overlooking Worcester's sports field and lake, is a wonderful aspiration I have been privileged to help the College achieve as it marks its tercentenary.

Your Royal Highness The Duchess of Cornwall, it is my honour to invite you to unveil the dedication stone and to declare the Sultan Nazrin Shah Centre of Worcester College, Oxford, officially open.

Thank you.



The Portrait

Rosalie Watkins

A portrait of HRH Sultan Nazrin Shah greets visitors as they enter the new building. Painted in oil on canvas, it creates an impact at over five feet high and nearly four feet wide. Sultan Nazrin looks directly at the viewer with a gentle smile playing on his lips. He is standing in his library in Kuala Lumpur, wearing the red ceremonial robes given to members of the prestigious Chancellor's Court of Benefactors which recognises the collegiate University's most generous supporters.

The artist Rosalie Watkins travelled to Malaysia to produce a series of painting sketches from life before embarking on the big canvas we see today. How he appears in the portrait was 'quite a collaborative process', she said. On her arrival, they sat and had tea and a chat, discussing among other things where he should be painted. They tried several locations around the palace before alighting upon the library. She said that by using a standing pose in which Sultan Nazrin looks directly

at the viewer, she hopes she has captured something of his engaging personality, dynamism and presence.



Rosalie has won numerous awards with the Royal Institute of Oil Painters and Royal Society of British Artists. She trained and taught fine art in the atelier tradition, a classical education that emphasises the need to paint from life.

Rosalie created many small canvases in Malaysia, focusing on flesh-tone head studies, and the colour and folds of the fabric. The fact that there were two light sources in the library, roof lights as well as daylight, creates a challenge for any painter. Sultan Nazrin posed patiently for a series of two-hourly 'sittings' over several days before Rosalie returned to her studio in London to start the final canvas.

Revealing the portrait to the subject for the first time is always a nerve-wracking experience. 'It is always the worry that the painting will be a huge disappointment,' Rosalie said. 'But Sultan Nazrin gave a smile and a nod... and I felt just a huge sense of relief.'

An homage to funny man, Les Dawson

BBC orchestra to perform new overture by Dr Thomas Hyde

Twenty-five years after his death in 1993, the talents of comedian Les Dawson are being remembered in a new overture, 'Les at Leisure', which will be premiered by the BBC National Orchestra of Wales.

The seven-minute piece was composed by Lecturer in Music at Worcester, Dr Thomas Hyde, for this year's Lichfield Festival. On Friday, 13th July, it will be the curtain-raiser at a concert featuring Rachmaninov's Piano Concerto no 2 and Shostakovich's Symphony no 9.

His overture is a tribute to the comedian, who would sit at the piano singing and playing the classic song, 'Feelings', with off-key notes timed exactly at the moments most likely to hit the funny bone. 'To deliberately hit wrong notes is actually very hard to do,' said Dr Hyde. 'You have to hear the off-key note in your head and then pitch it against an orchestra playing in key. It is very hard to be completely off-key in this way, which is why I have always been interested in playing around with this idea in a composition.'

Dr Hyde's piece is written for the full orchestra but also includes a 'hornophone', a string of car-horns. It was commissioned by the Lichfield Festival artistic director, Damian Thantrey, who has worked with Dr Hyde on previous projects. Dr Hyde managed to convince him that writing a musical piece with surprising off-key moments was the challenge he had always aspired to, and that the audience might enjoy it.

Worcester is fortunate in the number of composers it can boast amongst its lecturers in music, including the Fellow in Music, Professor Robert Saxton, Dr Hyde's supervisor during his DPhil at Oxford. However, not many of them have experimented so obviously with humour although wrong notes have sounded throughout musical history, whether deliberately or not. Famously, Schoenberg's *Verklärte Nacht* (Transfigured Night), Op 4, for string sextet was booed because of an unprepared dissonance. Later, musician Gerard Hoffnung, and comedians Harry Hill and Bill Bailey made names for themselves in playing an assortment of instruments badly enough to raise a laugh.



So is Dr Hyde particularly nervous about imposing a piece made up of duff notes on an audience? 'Yes and no,' he answered. 'I wouldn't be human if I wasn't. It is hard enough to write a good tune these days, but one that will be recognised as going wrong is even harder. I tried it out on colleagues with a variety of notes, seeing if it raised a smile or even a chuckle.'

'I am huge fan of Les Dawson. He was a weird mix: on one level he obviously played on being a Northern comedian with his mother-in-law jokes which are now outdated, but his vocabulary was erudite. He operated on a much higher plain than many other comics of his time.'

The orchestra will start rehearsing the overture just a few hours ahead of the first performance. They will need to learn a lesson from Les Dawson, the master of the bum note himself, to ensure they get the wrong notes in all the right places.

The overture, 'Les at Leisure', will be part of the concert recorded for broadcast for BBC Radio 3.

Another composition by Dr Hyde, 'Symphony', was performed by the BBC Scottish Symphony orchestra in March and will also be broadcast soon on BBC Radio 3.

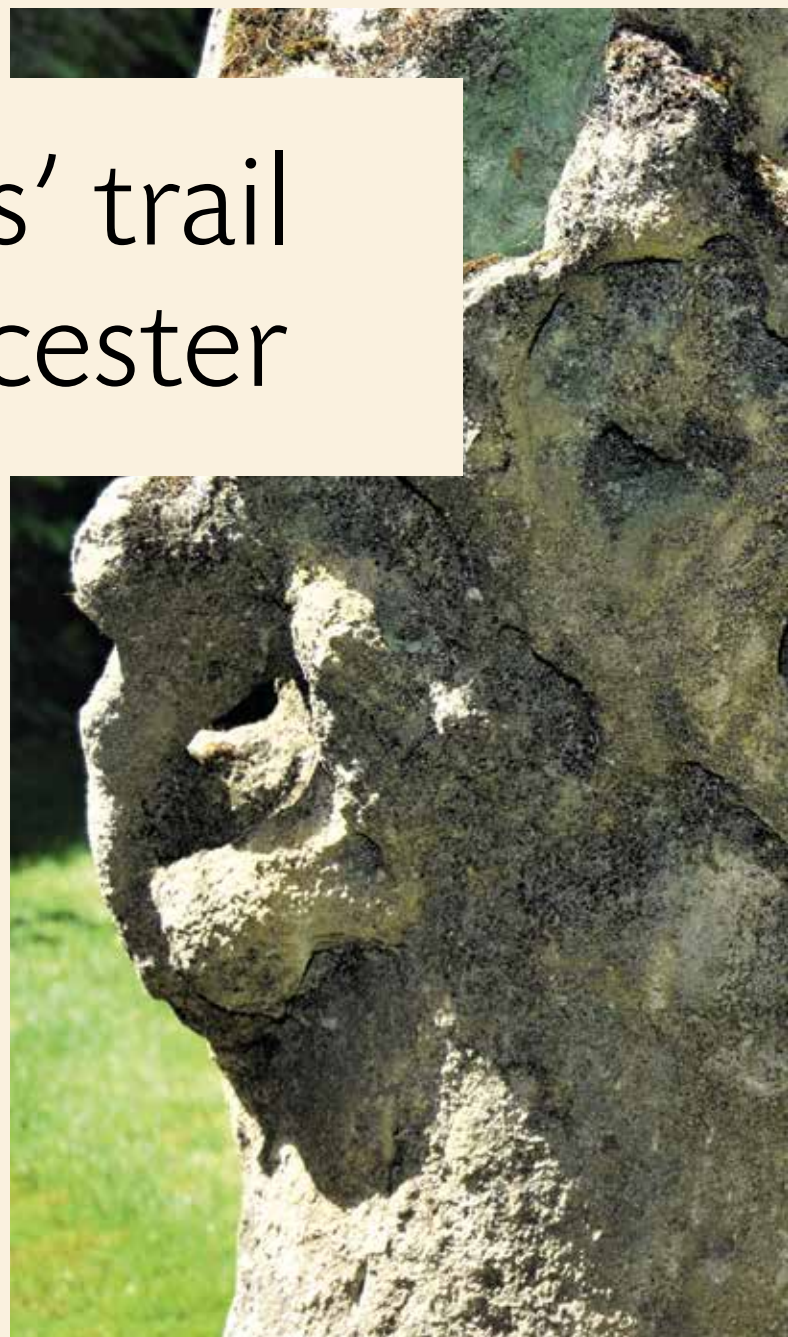
Head-hunters' trail leads to Worcester

For over three centuries up to 14 carved heads have guarded the Sheldonian Theatre on the instructions of Sir Christopher Wren, who completed the building in 1669. The heads have acquired different nicknames over the years – the Emperors, the Philosophers and the Apostles – although, in reality, they are not thought to represent anyone in particular. The heads have become limestone icons due to their association with the University's ceremonial hall and their world-famous glare, seen by countless tourists, on postcard stands and in every guidebook on Oxford. What is less well known is the fate of the worn-down heads once they retire from the limelight. This is now the subject of a research project led by Worcester Fellow, Professor Heather Viles, Director of the Oxford Rock Breakdown Laboratory and Head of the School of Geography and the Environment. The research findings will be displayed as part of a public exhibition in summer 2019, in collaboration with the Bodleian Libraries, to mark the 350th anniversary of the Sheldonian Theatre.

Two of the Sheldonian heads, now in the Provost's Rose Garden at Worcester College, are thought to be originals dating from 1669. Research suggests that some of the first-generation material came from Taynton quarry in the Cotswolds, which produced a resilient, very good quality stone that was relatively easy to carve. Sheldonian heads of the second generation, which replaced the originals in 1868, were made of Milton Stone. The latter quarry is not far from Taynton but, interestingly, the more recent heads made of this type of stone weathered much faster. By the early 1970s, they had become so blackened and disfigured that the University commissioned local stonemason Michael Black to create a third set, installed in 1972.

Professor Viles said: 'This project is a wonderful opportunity to improve our knowledge of the history of stone and how it has deteriorated over 350 years as the environmental conditions and stone type have changed. For example, the heads at Worcester are covered with lichens, mosses and even some higher plants. We want to see whether these green coverings are protective or whether they have contributed to the stone's deterioration.'

Worcester College archivist, Emma Goodrum, searched the date for when the Provost's Rose Garden acquired the heads. As the garden was not administered by the College until 1946, there is no documentary evidence for exactly when they arrived. However, in the College archives they appear in photographs of the Provost's Rose Garden that were taken for the magazine, *Country Life*, in 1948.



Emma said: 'It seems likely that they were brought to the College personally by Provost C Henry Daniel (Fellow 1864-1919, Provost 1903-19), probably shortly after he commissioned Alfred Parsons to create the Rose Garden in 1903. One of the heads is also mentioned in a poem by Robert Bridges, held in the College Library, which suggests that it was displayed in the garden of the house on College grounds where Daniel lived until his election to the provostship.'

'One of the things we are trying to figure out is why the heads ended up where they are,' said researcher Dr Martin Coombes, Tutor in Geography at Worcester College. One of the stone busts is in the corner of the Fellows' Garden at Wadham College after it was donated by the family of Michael Black, the Oxford-based sculptor who replaced the heads in the 1970s. Two heads were tracked to the University-owned Harcourt Arboretum, with other busts since identified in private gardens and a school playing area in north Oxford.



New information about the whereabouts of the heads came to light, including the news that two second-generation heads had been auctioned off to Wormsley Estate in the Chiltern Hills, home of the Getty family, after the researchers made a public appeal in the media earlier this year. Remains of several heads were also discovered at a stone repository in Nuneham Courtenay on land recently sold by the University, which the team have since rescued, moving them to a research site at Wytham Woods. Although most of the heads have been accounted for, the research team is still on the hunt for up to another ten.

‘Part of the project has been about discovery and informing the owners that they have really important objects,’ said Dr Coombes. ‘If we can discover what drove the deterioration of the earlier heads, this might help conserve the existing ones. Do we clean them or leave the plants and mosses growing on them? Some of our research shows that things commonly growing on stone might actually help conserve them in the long term.’

The exhibition in summer 2019 will be held at the Weston Library, opposite the Sheldonian Theatre. The team is requesting anyone with new information about the Sheldonian heads to get in touch. Email: heather.viles@ouce.ox.ac.uk





Much Ado About Nothing

This year the Buskins, Worcester's drama society, chose one of Shakespeare's most popular comedies, *Much Ado About Nothing*, for their Garden Show. In the depths of winter the students started planning their artistic concept, which was to produce as summery a look as possible.

Their five performances capitalised on the newly-painted purple College cricket pavilion as the stage setting. On arrival, the audience followed a lakeside route to the production that was marked whimsically with candles in jars and archways bedecked in fresh, fragrant flowers. Tied bunches of gypsophila and pale blooms on the pillars of the pavilion had tiny, cleverly concealed water reservoirs to keep the flowers as fresh as possible for the run of performances. In this bucolic setting, the audience sat under a marquee on the lawn, grateful for shade from the sunshine, as they watched the world famous 'romcom'.





Director, Agnes Pethers

‘We chose to stage the play on the cricket pavilion because it gives the sense of an enchanted little house in the wood. The Ancient Greeks had an idea about drama, that if you are inside the house you have order and serenity, whereas outside the house you have chaos and madness. While *Much Ado About Nothing* can be mad and exhilarating, it is also grounded by having the house or pavilion there. You have the sense that everything will be resolved in the end.’

Set and Costume designer, Anna Spence

‘Agnes wanted pastel colours and a fairy-like feel done in a summery way. We went overboard on flowers and fairy lights in jam jars, and received so much help from the wonderful Head Gardener at Worcester, Simon Bagnall.’

What did the audience think?



Iain Mackintosh – Buskins President (1958/59)

‘One of the great pleasures of the College is finding the right place for the right play. This is the first time the cricket pavilion has been used as a stage setting. The cast sent the speeches spinning to the boundary. The play had remarkable pace at 1 hour 55 minutes, which I think is almost a record. It was real; I enjoyed every moment of it.’



Heather Hall (1980)

‘The young people were just amazing... such talent, and such enthusiasm and energy.’



Elizabeth Turner (1981)

‘It was very beautiful: there were lots of lovely flowers over the pavilion. They put on such enthusiastic performances, with a theatrical use of eyebrows and the sweet use of a little dog, which drew the audience’s eye!’



Malcolm Booth (1958)

‘In terms of the movement, the humour and the general atmosphere they created, I thought it was a wonderful performance. Shakespeare is so funny when it is acted well; they really brought it to life and gave us a huge number of laughs.’



Student News

Bumped: St John's, Lincoln, Mansfield and Queen's

Despite foul weather, the Boat Club had a good Torpids campaign: M2 and W2 bumped rapidly, W1 slowed the falls of recent years, and M1 bumped twice before achieving an excellent 165th out of 330 boats at the prestigious Head of the River Race. Sadly, our resulting hopes for Eights were initially dashed by exam season, which for many replaced seats in the boat with seats in the library. Yet thanks to some superb lower boats captains, WCBC still managed to put out four Eights. M2 and W2 both had the prospect of hard weeks, surrounded by formidable crews; but through sheer determination, both managed to row-over once and avoid spoons. W1 were deeply unlucky, being bumped every day by crews whose sprinting starts proved too much. So whilst every crew got to enjoy the Summer Eights buzz, only M1 could salvage Worcester some glory. And that they certainly did. A straightforward bump on St John's kicked us off. The next day, M1 were at the back of a three-boat sandwich, with Mansfield at the front hanging on just long enough for us to catch Lincoln with mere seconds to spare; a thankful Mansfield repaid the favour by letting us bump them quickly the next day. And then came the toughest test, a confident and powerful Queen's crew. Merely on station at Longbridges, we reeled them in up the Green Bank and finally broke them shortly upstream from Worcester boathouse, winning our blades to the roars of the thousands-strong crowd of the Saturday of Eights. It was a wonderful moment which capped off a wonderful week of the rowing calendar.

Alexander Nevin (2017)

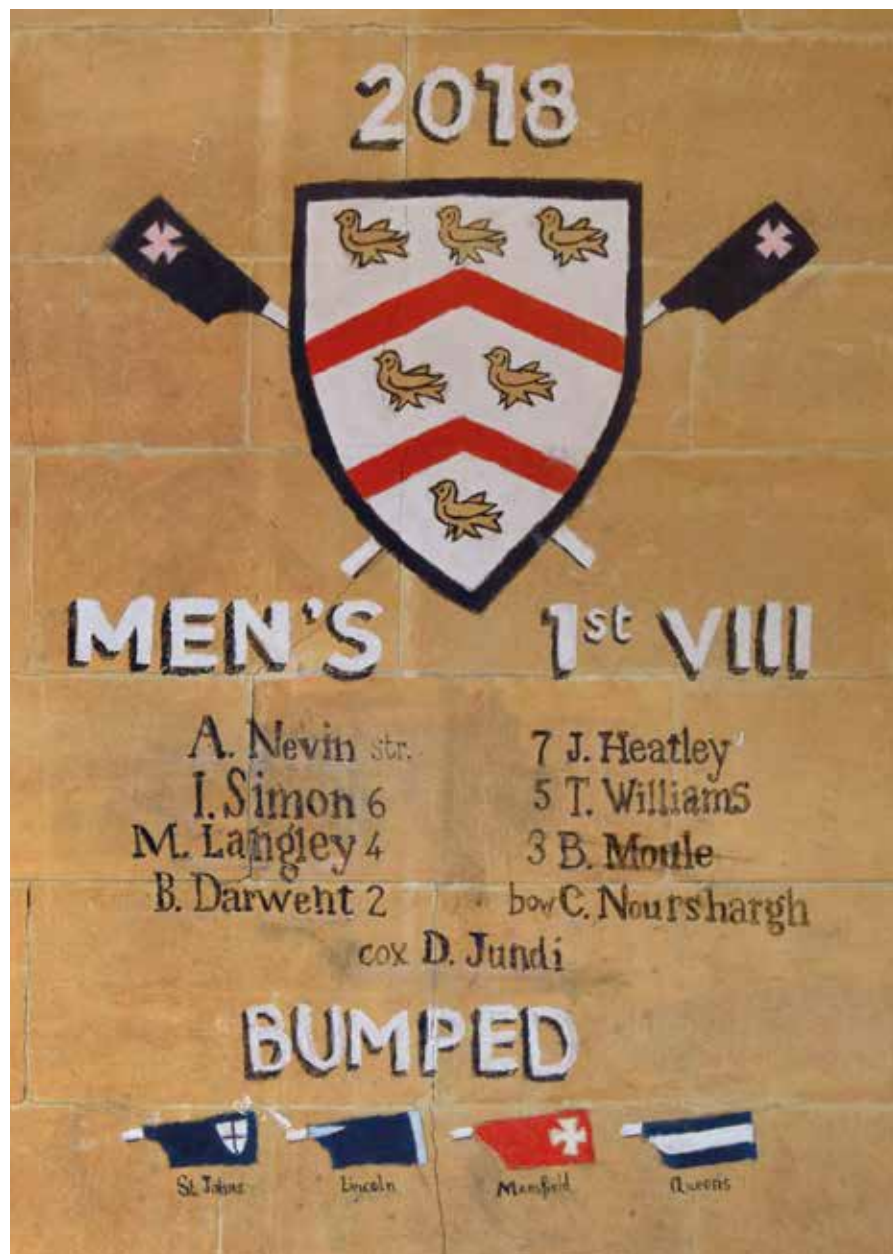




Photo Penguin Photography

Worcester Wins Cuppers Double

England fans dared to dream in Russia this summer and after an impressive Cuppers Double, Worcester College Football Club also aimed high to clinch it this season. Victories for the Men's 1st and 2nd XI teams in Cuppers and Reserves' Cuppers, respectively, capped off a superb season for Oxford's top footballing college, with the men's Cuppers won by Worcester for the first time since 2013.

The 1st XI's journey to the final had been a challenging one, with 2-1 wins against Hertford, Jesus and Exeter accompanying a 3-1 victory on penalties against holders Teddy Hall in the second round. Facing them in the final at Iffley Stadium was a confident New College team, recently crowned champions of the JCR 1st Division. In a tight first half, a string of saves from goalkeeper Jeff Sload kept the scoreline at 0-0 before centre-back Andrew Kinsella capitalised on poor defending at a corner to fire Worcester into the lead.

Worcester almost doubled their lead moments later, with midfielder Ben Jones' 30-yard thunderbolt beating the New College goalkeeper only for it to crash against the post and away to safety. After the break, a determined defensive display from Worcester led by Captain Matt Wilson kept New at bay, while Ryan Kavanagh's dangerous runs provided a constant menace up front. In the 85th minute, with the game still finely balanced, Olly Cobb evaded two tackles and burst into the New College penalty area. His low cross deflected off a hapless defender into the goal, sending more than a hundred Worcester fans in the stands into wild celebrations. With Sam Hale and Josh King controlling the game in midfield, Worcester easily saw out the

last five minutes to leave the final score 2-0, sealing the first Cuppers' win for the 1st XI since 2013.

A week later, WCAFC descended again on Iffley Stadium to watch the 2nd XI take on Merton and



Mansfield (M&M) in Reserves' Cuppers Final. Having overcome Regent's Park, Hertford, St Catz and Teddy Hall en route to the final, Worcester were hopeful of an historic double, despite an injury to star wingback Robbie Brown. A tricky first half saw Worcester go into half-time 1-0 down following an M&M goal in the 25th minute, despite efforts from Jake Brittain and Will Underwood testing the opposition goalkeeper.

Worcester grew into the game after half-time in search of an equaliser, with Tom Kershaw's tough tackling in midfield snuffing out M&M attacks. With 15 minutes to play, substitute Jona Boender reacted quickest to a melee in the M&M box, scrambling the ball over the line to take the scoreline to 1-1. In the 90th minute, Captain Harry McGhee struck a free kick from 25 yards out, sending the ball sailing beyond the opposition keeper's grasp and into the bottom corner. With the final whistle sounding moments later, the 2-1 win was sealed, and the double had been won.

Stuart Astle (2014)

Events Programme

Sunday, 19th August 2018

Treasures of Worcester Library: the Library's earliest books

Mark Bainbridge, Fellow Librarian, will be setting up an exhibition of the College's earliest books in the Old Library.

Thursday, 13th September 2018

50th Reunion

A black-tie dinner 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. Accommodation available in College. Please visit www.alumni.ox.ac.uk.

Friday, 14th September 2018

Maths Dinner

For all those who read Mathematics and joint honours.

Saturday, 22nd September 2018

Theology Conference

One-day conference and celebration of Professor Sue Gillingham's 30 years at Worcester.

Saturday, 29th September 2018

College Gaudy

For those who matriculated in 1970, 1971, 1972, and 1961 and earlier.

Tuesday, 6th November 2018

Worcester College Society Annual Dinner

To be held at the House of Lords.

Thursday, 6th December 2018

The Varsity Rugby Matches

To be held at Twickenham.

Saturday, 9th March 2019

Law Dinner

For all those who read or are practising Law.

Saturday, 16th March 2019

College Gaudy

For those who matriculated in 1973, 1974, 1975 and 1976.

Friday, 22nd – Sunday, 24th March 2019

Meeting Minds in Asia: Alumni Weekend

To be held in Tokyo, Japan.

Sunday, 7th April 2019

The Oxford vs Cambridge Boat Races

The events programme is constantly being updated – keep checking our website, www.worc.ox.ac.uk/alumni, for further details.

Events information and booking

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

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