

# Worcester



Issue 26  
2022



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# In this edition

In this 26th edition of the Worcester magazine, we are delighted to share a snapshot of Worcester with you that is brimming with the return of the hustle and bustle of normal College life: you'll see on page 12 our students are once again playing and excelling at sport, and on page 27 we celebrate the return to in-person Old Member events in Trinity Term with some photographs. It was such a pleasure for me to meet many of you for the first time in person this Term, and for us to be able to resume our usual events programme and welcome many more Old Members back to College. On page 4 and 5 our Provost, David Isaac CBE - now three Terms in post - provides an update and shares his reflections as Worcester's Provost one year on from joining us, and shares his focus for the years ahead...

Our feature this year focuses on *Worcester and Sustainability* and provides a snapshot as to what College is doing in this area, our ambitions for the future, and how you can help. On page 20 in response to our alumni questionnaire, we establish a Worcester Young Alumni Group and introduce the new Chair, Andrew Mowll (2012, Mathematics and Computer Science). This group is for Old Members who are in their first ten years following graduation, and will provide twice a year social events and



some career networking opportunities. As usual we feature some profiles of Old Members who update us on their extraordinary lives after Worcester, and in our *Worcester Retrospective* section, we share the story of Dudley Perfect who matriculated at Worcester in 1915, written by his grandson. We review an Old Member event: *CampbellFest* dedicated to the life and works of the late Professor James Campbell who was a renowned scholar and Fellow in History at Worcester from 1957 to 2002 and sadly died in 2016. Archivist Emma Goodrum reviews the recent film *Operation Mincemeat*, which features former Worcester Provost John Masterman. Finally, test your Worcester knowledge with a quiz on the founding of the College and share our events programme for the year ahead on the back page.

On behalf of all of us in College, thank you for your ongoing engagement with and support of Worcester. We hope you enjoy this edition and we hope to see you at an Old Member event in College or around the world soon.

With heartfelt thanks for your continued support,

**Kate Foley**

Development Director and Fellow, and the Development Team.

# Provost David Isaac CBE, one Year on..



**How has your first year as Provost been?**

My first year has been extremely busy – and there is a lot to do as a new Head of House. The first task was to open up the College after the pandemic and to deal with the Omicron variant. The good news is that by Trinity Term things were very much back to normal.

I've also had to find my feet: by meeting and getting to know our wonderful students, staff and Fellows as well as our Old Members.

I've received a very warm reception. I now understand how important Worcester is for so many people who were educated, work or teach here.

**Has it been as you expected it would be?**

From talking to other Heads of House, I knew that being Provost would be demanding - but hopefully fun.

I meet the most amazing people in College during the course of any week – those who study or have studied here as well as those who visit for research from around the world.

I also took the opportunity to get involved as an interviewer for the Oxford Literary Festival. I had to do a lot of reading but I did especially enjoy quizzing Ed Miliband on how he would deliver on his 20 “Big Ideas” for society.

**What has been the biggest challenge?**

Restoring the College's finances after the pandemic is our biggest challenge. Notwithstanding the generosity of some of our donors, the College lost nearly £2m of conference income each year during the pandemic. Addressing this shortfall and dealing with increased costs and cost of living issues for staff and students is a major challenge.

We also need to make more progress on sustainability issues in College. This will be a major priority for the College in 2022/23 but I am optimistic that we can deal with these issues to deliver on our net zero targets.

**What is the best thing about being the Provost of Worcester College?**

The best thing about being Provost is being the custodian of the wonderful Worcester community – people, gardens and buildings. I've chatted to so many people since I arrived, I now know what College means for so many people and how it transformed their lives.

“The best thing about being Provost of Worcester College, is being the custodian of the wonderful Worcester community- people, gardens and buildings.”

**What is a day in the life of a Provost like?**

I always get up early and swim in the local open-air pool before breakfast. Over the winter it's often freezing but I return to College cold but invigorated – ready for the day. Each day is very different.

My meetings range from a visit from an overseas dignitary, drop-in meetings with students, meetings with Old Members, and chairing meetings. I try to have as many “walking” meetings in the gardens as possible. Not only is this an opportunity to showcase our wonderful gardens but also to keep as many meetings as possible off Teams or Zoom. We tend to stay very focused on our walks and it's a great opportunity for guests to meet Worcester students.

Lunch is either in Hall with staff or students or with Fellows in the Senior Common Room. It's a great way to pick up information about what's happening in College and to be available to hear any concerns. The afternoon tends to be more meetings before running into evening meetings over dinner or just formal dinners in Hall. One thing I've learnt is that you never go hungry in Oxford!

After I get back to the Provost's Lodgings I try to get a final hour to myself before falling into bed.

**Is College back to pre-pandemic life now?**

Very much so. This term a number of staff and Fellows have been isolating but students are very much back to normal.

**What's your focus for the year ahead?**

One of my ambitions for Worcester was that by the end of the first year we would develop a new College strategy.

We started with an Away Day in January and have had various staff and fellow workshops since then. In fact, we have just completed a consultation exercise with students, staff and Old Members.

The good news is that they are all enthusiastic about our approach: to create a forward-looking College which educates the best talent and balances both innovation and tradition.

**What are you most looking forward to in the academic year ahead?**

Now that I understand College life, getting to know everyone better - especially our brilliant students.

**Will you manage to find some time to relax over the summer holidays and what will you do?**

I'm off to Italy for a few weeks in July. It's a holiday that was cancelled twice because of Covid so I can't wait to be in one of my favourite countries – practising my Italian, eating lots of delicious Italian food and reading in the sunshine.

# Worcester and Sustainability

From practices that encourage biodiversity in our gardens, to the ambitious goals that our joint sustainability committee is undertaking and from student-led sustainability initiatives, to the innovative and groundbreaking research that our academics are working on, Worcester College is deeply engaged in matters related to protecting our environment and living and working in a more sustainable way for the good of our planet. Here we also highlight some ways you can help.



## Professor Iain McCulloch, FRS, talks about his Solar Energy Research and his route to joining Worcester

Professor of Polymer Chemistry, Department of Chemistry, Oxford University and Fellow and Tutor in Chemistry at Worcester College

I joined Worcester College in the middle of the first COVID lockdown in the early summer of 2020. And I am delighted now that the College is starting to open up, bringing back events and the gardens are starting to bloom. I feel very lucky to be here! I studied for both my degrees in my hometown of Glasgow, at Strathclyde University, then immediately headed to New Jersey to start work as an industrial research scientist for Hoechst, a large German chemical company, with a prolific research division. It was a great time to work in an applied research field and I learned a lot. After about 12 years in the US, we returned to the UK, again to work for a German chemical company, this time Merck, to head up their materials research in the electronic and solar fields. In 2007, I changed career to academia, taking up a faculty position at Imperial College, where I continued my research in functional organic materials. I then took an additional position at a new Saudi Arabian university, KAUST, as a professor and director of KAUST Solar Centre. This university was in an ideal location for solar energy, on the shore of the Red Sea, and it was interesting to contribute to the first stages of the renewable energy industry in the Middle East. I left both KAUST and Imperial College in 2020, to take up a Professorship in Chemistry and Fellowship at Worcester College.

My research explores solar energy. Solar energy today is the fastest growing segment of the energy sector, and now provides the cheapest source of electricity. It is clean, renewable, and unlike all other power sources, can scale from very small remote units (for example on your watch) to large grid-connected power stations.

I specifically look at designing materials that can enable new applications for solar, including transparent solar windows, solar fabrics, and coloured facades for architecture. These new energy harvesting products will contribute to lowering the power consumption of buildings for example, and when transparent panel windows are used in greenhouses, they can filter harmful wavelengths of light from plants, as well as provide power for cooling and irrigation. Solar, of course, is intermittent, and we need a reliable way to store energy for use at times when solar power is less efficient (night-time, winter etc.), and to transport it to remote off-grid locations. One way to do this is by generating solar fuels using sunlight, such as hydrogen from water. Such a fuel has a high energy density, required for applications where electrical power is not sufficient, such as heavy transportation and aviation.

Solar has grown from a niche product to the largest growing sector, with more

solar power plants installed in the last year than any other source of energy, including coal and gas. We will see ever-expanding domestic applications in the coming years, beyond the rooftop, such as those described earlier.

We urgently need to make sure the new materials can deliver enough power for the envisaged product, for example, by designing molecules that can absorb as much sunlight as possible, while, in the case of solar windows, allowing visible light to pass through them.

Addressing climate change will take big steps and requires coordinated global approaches, way beyond individual choices. We need to hold government and business to account on carbon emissions, and demand a net zero (or negative) carbon economy. Solar energy will be a major, essential part of the future energy mix. I am a firm believer that big change needs to happen now, and any chance I get, I talk about the reasons behind this.

In terms of the experience of being a Fellow at Worcester, I really enjoy the close interactions between academics and students at the College, as well as the College social events, dinners etc., where there are lots of interesting and friendly people to get to know. I'm also partial to the occasional pint in the cellar bar, where I lose at darts to all my colleagues!



## Biodiversity and Sustainability in our Gardens and Grounds

The Gardens and Grounds Team have undertaken several initiatives to encourage more biodiversity in College.

Firstly, they have created Wildflower Meadows in the Upper Orchard and Provost's Garden.

The presence of wildflowers with nectar-rich plants helps support dwindling populations of native pollinators including butterflies, moths and bees, helping to sustain insects that pollinate our food crops. This is particularly important in an increasingly built up environment.

These two new meadow areas have over 1200 wildflowers planted including: *Primula veris* (Cowslip), *Campanula rotundifolia* (Harebell), *Leucanthemum vulgare* (Oxeye Daisy), *Lychnis flos-cuculi* (Ragged Robin), *Geranium pratense* (Meadow Cranesbill), *Knautia arvensis* (Field Scabious), *Ranunculus acris* (Meadow Buttercup), and *Succisa pratensis* (Devil's Bit Scabious).

### The other key areas of work that we have undertaken to encourage biodiversity:

- Planting of nectar rich shrubs such as Buddleja, Pyracantha, Ilex and Malus
- Encouraging year-round flowering Viburnum, Mahonia, Sarcococca and Ceanothus
- Pesticides are not used on meadow areas
- Fruit-producing planting to encourage wildlife Malus, Ilex, Sorbus and Cotoneaster

### Results

- Greater plant diversity which encourages insects, butterflies, bees and arthropods (spiders and millipedes)
- Shelter is being provided for small mammals and amphibians
- Less fossil fuels are being used to manage the long grass areas

The team have built five log piles, one dead hedge, one bug hotel and over 60 bird boxes have been installed in the gardens and grounds, including tit boxes, owl boxes, tree creeper boxes and five swift boxes. This work provides excellent shelter, nesting opportunities and food for insects, invertebrates and birds.

Where possible large areas are managed to provide green corridors; examples of this can be found at the bottom of the Provost's garden, the Canal side walk and the Nelson Street walk.

**“In May 2021, we surveyed the Lower Orchard as part of the ‘Every Flower Counts Survey’, an initiative run by British conservation charity Plantlife. The survey aims to raise awareness of the levels of nectar-rich plants in chosen grass areas. Our nectar score for bees fed per square meter was calculated as level B, with the national average being D”.**

Simon Bagnall, Head Gardener



### The Provost's Bees

As part of the Provost's vision for the sustainability of the College, he has always been keen to introduce bees into the wonderful gardens at Worcester. In mid-May, three colonies of bees arrived and are now happily installed at the bottom of the Provost's lawn. They made the transition well and are very contented in their new home - surrounded by wild flowers and long grass. Due to the warm summer we look forward to having Worcester's very own honey later in the year!

# Measuring Biodiversity

Worcester Gardener Alison Leslie has shared wildlife sightings records over the last 2-3 years. She has recorded 19 different butterflies and moths ranging from the earliest to emerge, the Brimstone Butterfly, to the spectacular Hummingbird Hawk Moth and the not-so-popular Box Tree Moth. 64 different species of bird have also been recorded. In Trinity term we started to do a bee count and in the first session recorded 10 different bees.

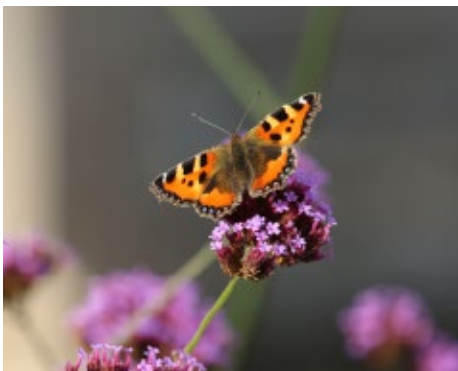
Worcester gardeners work in cooperation with the Oxford University Botanical Gardens and the Royal Botanical Gardens

at Kew to oversee their 26 acres of land, which contain several rare plants and trees and are considered to be among the finest gardens in Oxford.

The College is fortunate to have these rich biodiverse grounds which they are committed to protect and nurture. We enjoy running regular tours of the gardens during the year for Old Members and local community groups, which gives us an opportunity to share and discuss our gardens with enthusiasts.



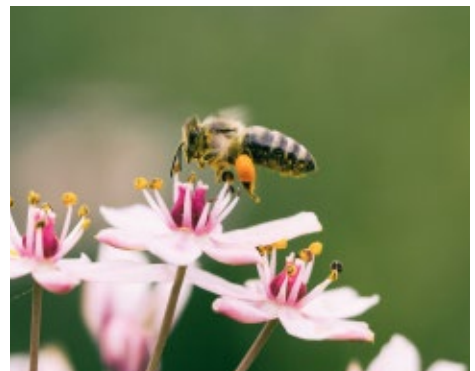
## Sightings include:



**Butterflies and Moths**  
**19 species recorded including:**  
Angel Shade Moth  
Box Tree Moth  
Brimstone  
Hummingbird Hawk Moth  
Orange Tip  
Peacock  
Small Tortoiseshell



**Birds**  
**64 species recorded including:**  
Chiffchaff  
Dunnock  
Fieldfare  
Goosander  
Harris Hawk  
Kingfisher  
Lapwing  
Little Egret  
Mute Swan  
Pied Wagtail  
Red Kite  
Redwing  
Siskin  
Tawny Owl



**Bees**  
**10 species recorded including:**  
Honeybee  
Gypsy Cuckoo Bumblebee  
White-Tailed Bumblebee  
Common Carder Bee  
Hairy-Footed Flower Bee  
Red Mason Bee  
Small Scissor Bee



# Student Sustainability

This academic year has undoubtedly been a year of transition, with COVID-19 rules easing in Hilary, allowing students to throw themselves back into College life. Thus, the sustainability focus of this year has been to gradually reincorporate many aspects of it back into student life “post-Covid”.

**Agata Czernecka**, JCR Sustainability Rep



## Bike Sharing Scheme

One of the main sustainability efforts has been the bike sharing scheme, which was a project set up three years ago that was interrupted by Covid restrictions. The beginning of the year saw a motion passed that allocated money towards the repair of the bikes. The bikes that were in worse condition were repaired this Trinity. The plan is that a new booking system shall be created over the summer and the scheme will be back by next Michaelmas term. Other finer details also have to be sorted, such as including helmet hire, but hopefully everything goes smoothly.



## Edible Garden

Worcester's student garden is a garden for all that was used to grow a variety of different fruit and veg, pre-Covid. Unfortunately, the garden was not kept up during the pandemic, leaving it in a state of mild disarray. During Trinity, students de-weeded the area, making it ready to be used next year. They also dug up some potatoes!



## Jumble Sale

The jumble sale fulfilled its main purpose of helping people get rid of unwanted items in an easy and sustainable way. As part of the time-honoured environment & ethics tradition, the sale took place in Trinity term. Over £100 was raised and plenty of donations were collected. The donations that weren't sold went to a local charity shop and the money went to one of the JCR's selected charities for this year. Many comments arose during the process of collecting donations, with the main one being that people did have a lot of things to donate, but they had already left Oxford. Thus, it may be a good idea to do a termly jumble sale and remind people to bring unwanted items with them before vacations end.

# Professor David Steinsaltz, Chair of Worcester's Joint Sustainability Committee



A decade ago Worcester College had a “Green Group”, which had an ill-defined remit, membership, and place in the college’s governance structures.

Times have changed, and climate change has gripped us by the throat. It may be said to be the defining crisis of this generation, indeed of this millennium, and all institutions and all individuals have an obligation to consider what part they will play. Educational institutions such as Worcester have a special obligation, as the students who spend these formative years with us will go on to experience in their mature years an environment — physical, social, and political — utterly reshaped and possibly devastated by the destruction that we are currently still engaged in.

Worcester’s Governing Body decided in February 2020 that all committees should have Sustainability as a standing item, and that a “Joint Sustainability Committee” should be created to coordinate environmental initiatives across the College. “Joint” because it was not merely a creature of the Governing Body, but of the whole College, and particularly with strong influence of the students. As the former Governing Body representative on the Green Group, I was asked to chair the new Joint Sustainability Committee. (I am the College’s Tutor in Statistics, and have been a Fellow and member of the Worcester Governing Body since 2007.)

The JSC has been meeting once a term — since Trinity Term 2020. The discussions have been remarkably constructive and collaborative. It immediately became clear that the desire to improve our environmental performance went right across every department of the College. The Head Gardener shared plans already underway for increasing biodiversity and reducing the use of peat in the gardens, as well as fossil-fuel-driven garden machinery. The Head Chef has attended nearly every meeting, and has been tremendously pro-active in pushing to reduce waste in the kitchens and decrease the amount of meat, particularly the most environmentally destructive beef and lamb. Along the way his expertise has been invaluable to help explain to all of us the challenges. The Head of Works arranged for Thames Water to examine the whole plumbing system of the College, and take corrective actions (particularly to the many leaky toilets) that they estimated would save 126 thousand litres of water a year — enough to fill the Worcester College lake four to eight times over! The staff forum asked for

representation on the committee, and this has brought the crucial perspective of the scouts to our thinking about rubbish disposal and energy waste. The Development, Academic, IT, Conference Offices and Library have moved towards mostly replacing hard copy with e-communications when possible. In Michaelmas Term 2022 we expect to welcome our first external member.

Above all the students, the environmental representatives of the JCR and MCR, have been tireless in proposing new actions and in working behind the scenes to help move action along. They have been particularly helpful in research, in liaising with other colleges, and — since students do most of the eating in College — in pressing forward the sustainability agenda in the dining hall. Because of the enormous contributions they were making we changed the rules to include both present and former environmental representatives of the common rooms on the committee, as long as they were still students; giving more weight to the students’ viewpoints seemed to everyone quite appropriate in any case.

**“...a ‘Joint Sustainability Committee’ should be created to coordinate environmental initiatives across the College.”**



Gardener Kieron Smith with a new battery powered Allett mower

**“Above all the students, the environmental representatives of the JCR and MCR, have been tireless in proposing new actions and in working behind the scenes to help move action along.”**

To make our work more effective we set two foundational goals: A carbon audit for the entire College, to provide a baseline against which to measure our progress, and to help us set priorities for the most consequential next steps; and hiring a professional Sustainability Officer. A carbon audit is a technically challenging undertaking, and we quickly concluded that we needed an outside expert to carry it out. Finding the money in the tight pandemic-strapped College budget was not easy, but the new Provost quickly recognised it as a key priority, and the audit is now underway. We expect to have the complete results before the end of 2022. Hiring a Sustainability Officer is more challenging, as again, finances are an issue.

And the future? This will, of course, depend largely on the results of the carbon audit. Already we can be sure that our most important direct energy consumption is for heating. Our medieval and 18th century buildings are lovely,

but alas poorly insulated. The heating is piecemeal and highly inefficient. Windows will need to be replaced throughout the College, a huge challenge — and huge expense — in the context of Grade I listed buildings. We need to move toward efficient heat pumps and would like to start to add loft insulation to the Medieval Cottages and Nuffield Building as soon as is financially feasible.

The kitchens will have to further reduce their carbon footprint and still maintain the tremendous quality that we all cherish. Staff and students will need to change how they travel to and from College.

Our new committee can only hope that when our students are finishing their careers — and when our successors plan to celebrate Worcester’s quatercentenary in 2114, in a world radically changed — they will feel proud of their association with an institution that, on balance, used science and reason to make a positive contribution, in theory and in practice, to preserving their world.

## How you can help:

**Worcester has established a new ring-fenced Sustainability Fund to help us to launch the next stage of our plans. If you would like to support College in its efforts in this area, you can make a donation to this fund today at [www.worc.ox.ac.uk/alumni/support-college](http://www.worc.ox.ac.uk/alumni/support-college). Gifts of all sizes will be hugely appreciated. Alternatively, if you would like to discuss making a gift, please contact the Development Office.**

**A gift of £500** would enable the JCR to run a campaign for a new student led sustainability initiative in 22/23.

**A gift of £1,000** would support the MCR and JCR’s efforts to substantially develop the edible garden.

**A gift of £6,000** could purchase another Allett Battery Cylinder Mower, or a John Deere Gator Mower to lower emissions in our gardens and grounds, whilst also lowering running costs and hand vibrations for the user and providing less noise disturbance.

**A gift of £15,000** a year for two years could provide seed funding for a part-time Sustainability Officer to lead and co-ordinate initiatives across College.

**A one off gift of £20,000** could provide loft insulation for the Medieval Cottages, improving thermal insulation and substantially reducing energy expenditure. Similar amounts could achieve the same thing for: Pump Quad, the Linbury Building, the Nash Building, Gloucester House, the Franks Building, the Wolfson Building or the Mitchell Building.

**A gift of £26,000** would provide one year of funding for a talented graduate student to undertake valuable sustainability related research.

**A gift of £30,000** or more would significantly contribute towards the establishment of a Career Development Fellowship in Green Chemistry.



# The Return of Student Sport

One of the things that students missed most during the pandemic was the ability to compete in team sports. For many Old Members, their memories of playing sports at Worcester formed an integral part of their overall student experience. It is where they developed crucial transferable skills and where enduring friendships were formed. In Trinity Term we finally saw a glorious return to student sporting life at Worcester, with students competing once more at every level. As the College with some of the best sports facilities: a playing field and cricket pavilion, tennis courts and one of only three colleges with their own

gym, Worcester has long attracted athletic students, so perhaps it should be no surprise that we currently have more sporting Blues than any other college. Even if not playing at a competitive standard, the wellbeing benefits mean that most students are grateful for our facilities, and playing sports in our own beautiful grounds is a treasured memory for many. This sporting Worcester tradition continues today and Old Members will be pleased to know that Worcester's teams have done very well since sport resumed post-pandemic. In this feature we include a few highlights from Trinity Term as we salute the return of student sport to Worcester!

# Interview with Natasha Smith

Captain of Boats 2020-2022

## When did you start rowing?

I started rowing with Worcester College Boat Club (WCBC) in MT 2018, the first year of my DPhil. I learnt to row within the club having no prior rowing experience.

## What are the benefits?

Rowing has huge benefits, the most obvious being it's a physical activity which has positive impacts on both your physical and mental health. There's a huge sense of community within the sport - you're a member of a crew who trains together regularly and endures a lot of discomfort with a common goal of getting to that finish line together. The bonds formed within crews, the boat club, and the entire sport of college rowing, is something which will endure well past our time at the university.

## What was the impact on rowing/the team during Covid?

During Covid, like most sports, rowing came to a halt. Access to the boathouse was removed for a long period of time and we were unable to train until restrictions were lifted. Once eased, we returned to training with enthusiasm; however, there was a significant hit taken on membership, experience, and institutional knowledge. A lot of work had to be done to rebuild the club to a state of being competitive again. Such a long break in a technical sport with high turnover (due to students graduating) proved to be quite damaging to the entire community.

## When was your first race back at Worcester and how did it go?

Our first race post-Covid was in November 2021. It was an Isis Winter League (IWL) race, which is a local event run by OURCs as a head race. We entered a women's eight and a men's four - the women ranked quite highly, which was a feat given the relative inexperience of the crew, so it was a large boost for the club. This was unfortunately the last race until TT 2022 as we re-entered lockdown shortly after.

## How did the team keep fit?

During the various lockdowns, I organised and led regular Zoom training sessions for the club. When we hired our wonderful coach, Max Lau, in MT 2021, he then took the lead with lockdown training - setting a training plan with Zoom workouts, runs, cycles and any other form of exercise accessible to members of the club. We ran various competitions and tracked training via a spreadsheet to help the club stay connected and motivated. The distanced training helped significantly when we returned to normal training.

Normal training consists of multiple water sessions a week as well as set ergs (workouts on the rowing machine) plus the odd strength and conditioning/alternative workout.

## What is Worcester's rowing history for women and reputation?

WCBC was one of the first clubs to take part in bumps racing back in 1825, so the club has a very long history. Women were first admitted as students at Worcester in 1979, upon which they immediately integrated into the boat club and first competed in Summer Eights in 1980 and had multiple successful years climbing the charts. The club has a large community of women who often outnumber the men. The community is one of support and positivity; rowing has a reputation of being elitist and we have been actively trying to make it as accessible for as many people as possible.

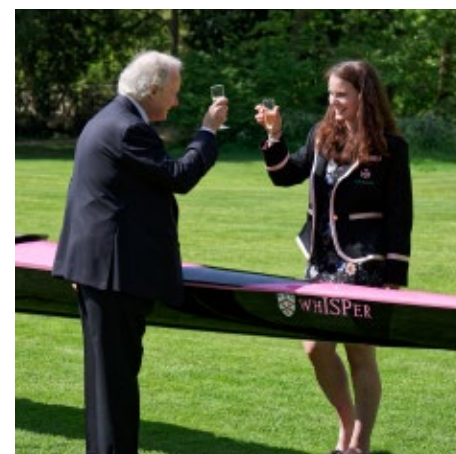
## 2022 highlights

Over this past year, membership of the club has continued to grow such that we were able to field three women's boats and two men's boats. Our W1 crew went up three places in Torpids, a grand success given the relative inexperience of the crew (a testament to our excellent coach and the camaraderie built). Three of our M1 rowers also entered Henley Royal Regatta this summer, unfortunately missing out on a qualifying spot but gaining some essential race experience.

A key moment would also be the christening of the new W1 boat - we moved the shell onto College grounds and had a large ceremony featuring the donors who paid for the boat, that was then raced in Summer Eights.

## Plans for 2023

We hope to continue to grow and improve over the next year, with hopes to field even more boats next year, fundraise to refresh some of the equipment, and enter external regattas to build experience within the club. The club has gone from strength to strength recently and we'd like to see that continue!



## W1 Boat Christening

On 6th May, on a perfect English spring day, WCBC christened its newest racing shell in fine style. The Provost, W1 (looking smart in their new rowing blazers), and representatives of our generous donor, Intesa Sanpaolo, gathered in the Provost's garden to watch as the new boat was blessed by the chaplain and then christened by WCBC's Captain of Boats, Natasha Smith. Thank you to Intesa Sanpaolo for their incredible generosity - we look forward to many happy years of racing in WhISPer.



## Frisbee Cuppers

After heartbreak in 2021 with an unbelievably close final against Unaffiliated, our time as Cuppers Champions has come. As usual, we put forward two teams for Cuppers, Worcester and RetsecroW. Both teams comfortably got through the group stages albeit with some fairly intense games against two other teams in particular, Unaffiliated and CCCCC.

Then came the shocking realisation that having placed 2nd and 1st in our respective groups, we would have to play each other in the semi-finals. The Worcester-RetsecroW showdown was a close-fought high-spirited affair, with plenty of trash talking beforehand and plenty of hammers during (thanks Dan). Shouts of 'Come on Worcester' and 'Let's go RetsecroW' could be heard from the sidelines and read on Sofia's banners. After around eight back-and-forth points - and surprise appearances from treasured alumni - Worcester finally clinched the lead and secured their place in the final.

## Football

The Football Dinner returned in force this year on 7th May, with a record number of Old Members returning to College for the event. The Football Club also organised an alumni and student football match, which was a lot of fun and well received by everyone.



**“The women’s, men’s 1st and reserve games were all hotly contested between the past and the present of Worcester College football, with the penalty shootout deciding the result of the reserves fixture in favour of the Old Boys being a particular highlight.”**

Andy Mowll (2012, Mathematics and Computer Science)

## Women's Varsity Rugby Match

The Varsity Match returned to Twickenham on 2nd April, celebrating its 150th anniversary after a three-year, Covid-enforced absence. It was an exciting match but in the end Cambridge and Oxford shared a 10-10 result, recording the first-ever stalemate during the fixture. Cambridge, however, retain the Varsity silverware for the fifth year in a row.

Congratulations to Worcester College students Alex Travers and Tabs Preston who play in the Squad.



## Life after Worcester

The College is very proud of our community of Old Members. It is important to us that you stay connected to College and to each other. In this regular feature, we profile some of our Old Members and share what happened after they left Worcester.

If you have recently embarked on a new professional challenge, please do update the Development Office, so that we can keep our alumni records up to date.



## Bill Broyles (1966, PPE)

I left Worcester in the summer of 1968. I'd read PPE with some wonderful Worcester tutors: Politics with Godfrey Le May, Philosophy with David Mitchell, and Economics with Dick Smethurst. I'd made lifelong friends like Bill Bradley, Andrew Cockburn and David Kendall, rowed in the second eight, marched in anti-war demonstrations, been a night watchman in an Irish castle, and dropped acid at a Jimi Hendrix concert (and given some to the ducks in the Worcester pond, which I still feel badly about). I'd been accepted to law school and graduate school, your fairly typical American post-Oxford path to success.

A year later, through a sequence of unexpected and unwelcome events, I was with a platoon of fifty other young American marines in the jungles of Vietnam. That wasn't so typical. One night I was taking my turn on watch and thinking, here I was, a failure, about to die on a mortar-blasted mountaintop in a pointless war, while my Oxford friends were getting on with their successful careers. I watched a streak of light cross the sky – a satellite I thought.

A month earlier I'd gone to the Hospital at China Beach to visit my men who'd been wounded. The hospital was full of maimed teenagers, a horrific counter-vision to the Worcester Hall full of healthy, lucky young men. The sight made me faint dead away. I broke my nose in the fall, which to my good fortune was my only war wound. A nurse helped me up. I couldn't imagine what her life in that hellish place was like.

I tell this story because at this low point in my life, I was unknowingly being given a preview of my future. Twenty years later that nurse became the inspiration for my first venture into TV, the ABC network series *China Beach*. And that streak of light was Apollo 13, on its ill-fated mission to the moon. My screenplay for that mission became my first film and got me an Oscar Nomination.

Of my ten films, my favourite is *Cast Away*. To write it, I spent two weeks on a deserted Mexican desert coast, learning to survive from scratch, as the Tom Hanks character did. Twenty-plus years after its release, that film still teaches me lessons about overcoming the unexpected and building life anew from its failures and disappointments. Worcester and Vietnam aren't mentioned, but that experience was my inspiration for the film. I'd had a "normal" successful life planned, and then those plans crashed like Tom Hanks' plane. When I returned from the war everyone had gone on with their lives, and the life I had imagined I no longer fit into.

**“Of my ten films, my favourite is *Cast Away*. To write it, I spent two weeks on a deserted Mexican desert coast, learning to survive from scratch, as the Tom Hanks character did. Twenty-plus years after its release, that film still teaches me lessons about overcoming the unexpected and building life anew from its failures and disappointments.”**



After I was discharged from the Marines, inspired by Andrew Cockburn and his father Claud, who'd started *The Week* in the 1930s, I started a magazine called *Texas Monthly* with some friends. We had no money and no credentials and no idea what we were doing. It's become a mini-media conglomerate and will celebrate its 50th anniversary next year. At 37 I became the Editor-in-Chief of *Newsweek*, which in 1982 was a big deal. It symbolized my return to so-called success, but I hated it. I wasn't cut out to run a big bureaucratic organization. I like building teams – on my own magazine, a movie production or a TV series, in a Worcester eight, or in the jungles of Vietnam. Whenever I began feeling too successful, I would move on and fail a little, succeed a little.

These days I've been enjoying my five kids and two grandkids. I still climb mountains and ski double blacks, and I'm still writing. I'm working on matters of mortality, and have been exploring what the Irish mystics called "thin places," where the boundaries between this world and others dissolve. My recent 400 km pilgrimage on the Camino de Santiago was one journey, my explorations of Stalingrad and Auschwitz another. I've also been involved in serious explorations of the use of psychedelics in death and dying, and of their role in healing, spiritual rituals and the origins of Christianity. And that too all began with my first LSD journey, me and the ducks on the Worcester pond.

I arrived at Worcester a kid from a refinery town in Texas, homesick and listening to Aretha on my record player. Worcester opened my world, and in spite of failures and setbacks, gave me the belief I could make my way in it.

*Bill Broyles is an award-winning writer, editor, and producer. His magazines, TV series and films have won Oscars, Emmys and National Magazine Awards. After Worcester he was drafted and served as a Marine infantry officer in Vietnam. He has five children and lives in New Mexico.*

**“I completely believe in the notion that whilst talent is everywhere in the publishing world, opportunity is not. I wanted to join the publishing industry to help elevate the voices of the underrepresented in our society, and so feel really passionate about my role as Policy and Campaign Consultant on a joint campaign between Penguin Random House and the Runnymede Trust, ‘Lit in Colour’.”**

## **Hannah Chukwu** (2015, English Language and Literature)

In the autumn after I graduated from Worcester, I started working in the publishing industry as part of Penguin Random House’s ‘The Scheme’ (an editorial traineeship scheme for people from backgrounds largely underrepresented in publishing). I was initially placed in the imprint Hamish Hamilton, and am now lucky enough to work with the team as an Editor. I work with a range of collaborators to commission, edit and project manage literary fiction and nonfiction books, as well as being a commissioning editor for our literary magazine, *Five Dials*.

Starting out, I began supporting Publishing Director Simon Prosser on the work of some of my literary heroes – authors like Zadie Smith, Arundhati Roy, Ali Smith, Deborah Levy and Marlon James. I absolutely adored my job from day one. I immediately connected with Bernardine Evaristo in 2018, and this led to me working on Bernardine Evaristo’s *Girl, Woman, Other*. Excitingly, *Girl, Woman, Other* made her the first black woman to win the Booker Prize in 2019. She also became the first woman of colour and black British writer to reach No.1 in the UK paperback fiction chart in 2020. She is a huge source of inspiration for me, and her generous, activist spirit never ceases to astonish me.

Working on *Girl, Woman, Other* led to me launching and commissioning the Black Britain: Writing Back series, which is curated and introduced by Bernardine. The series is dedicated to reissuing backlist titles by black British authors, and aims to correct historic bias by reintroducing vital work which has disappeared from print. I am extremely proud of this project - I’ve published eleven titles into the series so far, and incredibly, the books are starting to be taught by lecturers and teachers across the country. It is a celebration of Black British creativity covering an huge range of genres and themes, with Black British designers designing every cover, and Black actors reading every audiobook.



I completely believe in the notion that whilst talent is everywhere in the publishing world, opportunity is not. I wanted to join the publishing industry to help elevate the voices of the underrepresented in our society, and so feel really passionate about my role as Policy and Campaign Consultant on a joint campaign between Penguin Random House and the Runnymede Trust, ‘Lit in Colour’. In this role, I advise on how we can meaningfully change the English GCSE curriculum throughout the UK to feature more people of colour – I know how much this representation would have meant to me as a child, so it’s a privilege to work towards this aim.

Outside of publishing, I am also a Trustee at the education charity The Brilliant Club, and a Board Member at Creative UK. At The Brilliant Club I have the additional privilege of chairing their youth advisory board, the Experience Experts Panel. I joined both boards in order to extend my work on diversity, inclusion and access to broader areas, and feel so grateful to work with the wonderful people every day.

*Hannah Chukwu is an Editor at Hamish Hamilton, working on literary fiction and non-fiction. Her authors include Nicola Williams and Biyi Bandele, and she is the series editor for Black Britain: Writing Back. At Worcester Hannah was the first black JCR President.*

## Marisa Hordern (1998, Modern History)

When I left university I had no idea what I wanted to do. I went into the corporate world because I thought that was what was expected of me, but my passion had always been design. I used to make jewellery around the kitchen table as a side hobby, and I saw there was a niche in the market for fashion-forward pieces that were high-quality but also affordable. So I set about designing it myself. At first I did it on the side while working at Richemont as an International Media Coordinator, but then I took the leap of faith to quit my day job and set up my own business. Fast forward more than 15 years and Missoma now ships to over 200 countries worldwide, and has built a community who value our unique design, high-quality handcrafted pieces, and responsible production. We're 50% international, and have launched in the U.S. and China, with even more exciting markets to come.

Since 2008, we've been the pioneers of the 'demi-fine' category, designing all of our iconic pieces in-house at our London studio. The factories we work with in Thailand and India have all been carefully handpicked by me for their highly-skilled artisanship, having travelled to Jaipur, Bangkok and Hong Kong to find them. In 2012 we were very early to move from being a largely wholesale business to a 95% online one, focusing on our social media strategy and later digital marketing. In 2015, we also began collaborating with the fashion influencer and Missoma muse, Lucy Williams, on three sell-out collections – the first-ever jewellery collaboration to harness the power of the influencer. In 2018, Missoma was named fourth (and first female led) on the Sunday Times' Fast Track 100 list, cementing it as one of the UK's fastest-growing SME companies. In 2022, we were awarded the Queen's Award for Enterprise in International Trade for "outstanding short-term growth" in overseas sales over the last three years.

**"I'm proud of what we've achieved to date, but most of all of our company culture, community values and the beautiful designs we create. And I'm also excited about the future category developments in the works, international expansion and so, so much more to come."**

**"I have so many fond memories of my time at Worcester, and just wish I could do it over again. I made friends for life there who have been my biggest cheerleaders and support both in my professional career and personal life!"**



We've built up a loyal and cult following over the years, and have seen our jewellery worn by icons such as The Duchess of Cambridge, Adele, Kendall Jenner, Gigi and Bella Hadid, Billie Eilish and Kaia Gerber, to name but a few. But the most exciting thing to me is when I see people I walk past wearing our pieces, be that in London, New York or LA.

We don't believe in fast fashion, instead designing considered pieces that our customers will want to wear again and again. As of October 2021, all of our new collections are crafted from 100% recycled gold and sterling silver, and all of our factories are Responsible Jewellery Council certified and audited. Our packaging is 100% recyclable, with 100% carbon-neutral deliveries and returns you can track in real time – the first jewellery brand ever to offer this, in partnership with climate tech brand Vayuu. We've also planted over 300,000 trees with the female-founded charity TreeSisters. Our goal is to fund the planting of one million trees by 2026.

*Marisa Hordern is the Founder & Creative Director of Missoma, the UK's leading demi-fine jewellery brand, known for its iconic designs, wearability and affordability. Marisa was awarded the Entrepreneur Award by Barclaycard Everywoman in Retail 2019, and the Queen's Award for Enterprise in 2022, for international trade and the outstanding growth of her business.*



## Launching the Worcester Young Alumni Group (WYAG) and introducing the Group's Leader, Andy Mowll (2012, Mathematics and Computer Sciences)

In recent years Andy Mowll (2012, Mathematic and Computer Sciences) had been arranging informal get togethers of recent graduates from Worcester. The numbers of attendees have been growing, peaking at almost 200 last Christmas. Andy got in touch with College to let us know about these wonderful events. We have been delighted to work with Andy to help to formalise these socials into a Young Alumni Group which College can help to support. In our 2020 Old Member Questionnaire, lots of Old Members who had graduated recently expressed interest in attending events that had a focus on recent graduates, whether they be informal socials, or careers networking events.

The aim of the group is to organise at least two events per year for Old Members in the first ten years after graduation.

Andy said: "I'm very much looking forward to my role as Young Alumni Group Leader and am excited to advertise our first official social event, a summer party at Piano Works Farringdon on Saturday 30th July. College has kindly subsidised the event in recognition of the group, so I look forward to seeing great

numbers there! We'll also be sure to have another large reunion event this Christmas so there's plenty to look forward to.

I loved my time as a Worcester undergraduate having attended the College from 2012-16, and believe it's important to keep these connections going. At the end of my second year, I was lucky enough to attend the spectacular Tercentenary Ball in 2014 and was inspired by the level of student involvement in making the event a reality. Other highlights of my undergraduate experience include playing sports, often in the corridors of staircase 24(!), touring other college bars in my service to the mighty College darts team, and heading back to the warm glow of Branos after a night at Wahoo (RIP). Before my time in Oxford, I grew up in West Sussex and I'm now based in Dulwich where I enjoy teaching Maths to secondary and Sixth Form students.

I believe that amongst our recent alumni there is a wealth of talent and experience across a diverse range of career paths. I'm excited for this expertise to be more closely shared with our current students and I think the Young Alumni Group will be a perfect facilitator of this. Grateful thanks must be given to Kate Foley and Mollie Ashley in the Development Office for forming this group and new role. I look forward to our summer party and many more events to come!"

**Andy Mowll** (2012, Mathematics and Computer Science)

"I loved my time as a Worcester undergraduate, having attended the College from 2012-16, and believe it's important to keep these connections going."

Left to right: Claire Robins,  
Dr Scott Scullion, Provost,  
David Isaac and Professor  
Ravindra Gupta

# Worcester College Presents Two New Honorary Fellows

**O**n Sunday 12th June Worcester College was privileged to induct as Honorary Fellows two extremely distinguished Old Members: Claire Robins OBE (1985, Classics) and Professor Ravindra Gupta (1997, Medicine).

The two new Honorary Fellows were presented in the Chapel by Provost David Isaac and Dean of Degrees Dr Scott Scullion. The Chapel ceremony was accompanied by the harmonious voices of Worcester's choir, organised by our interim Chaplain Matthew Cheung Salisbury. After the induction the Provost hosted a delicious lunch in the Linbury Building.

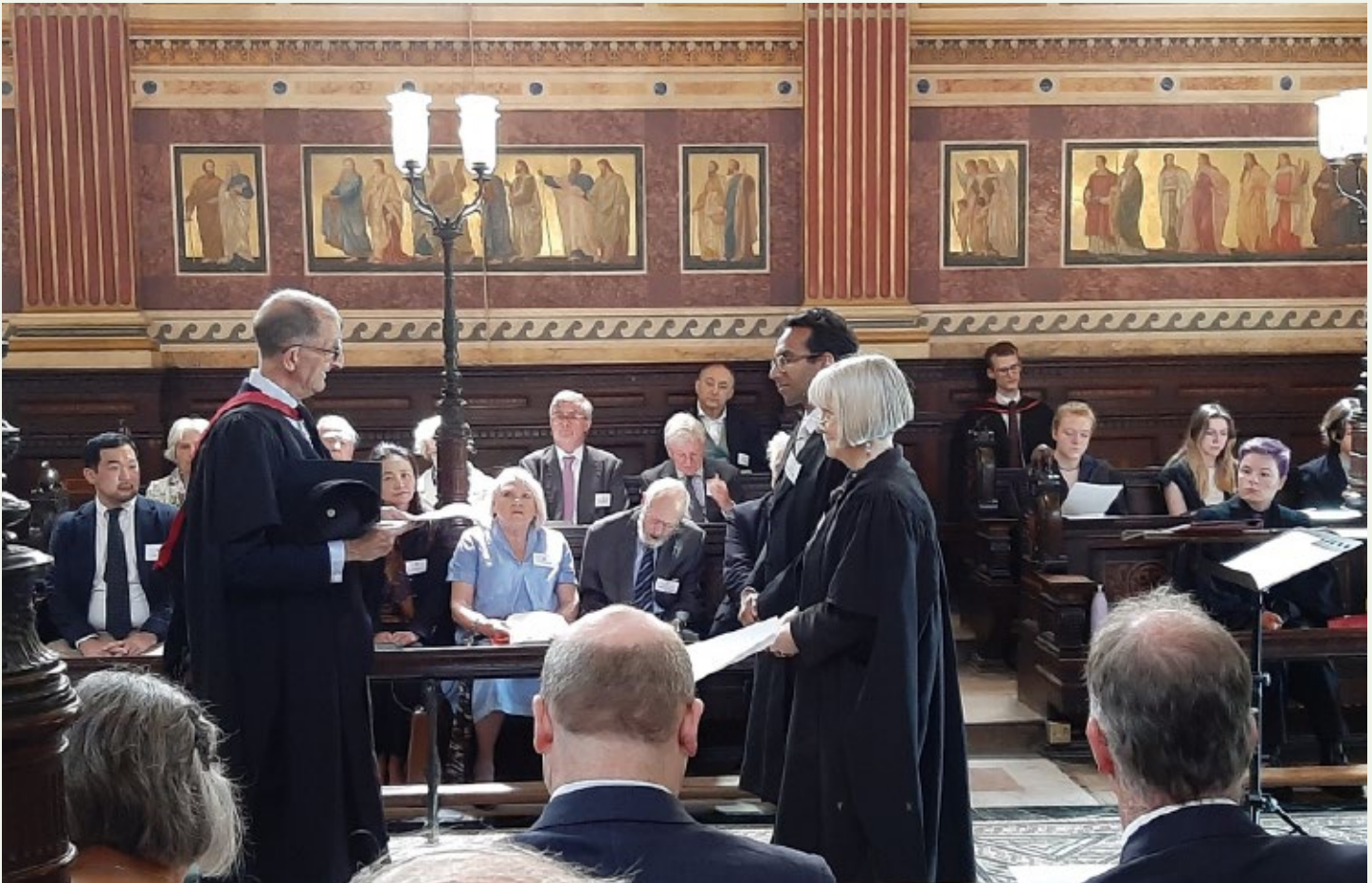
**Claire Robins was awarded an OBE for services to education in 2018. In 2020 she was recognised for her significant contribution to the teaching profession and as such has been admitted as a Fellow of the Chartered College of Teaching.**

Claire has been Head of Sir John Lawes School since 2006, having previously taught at a number of Hertfordshire Secondary Schools. In 2009, she was made a National Leader of Education with a remit for supporting

other school leaders, particularly those working in schools in challenging circumstances. In 2012, she led the establishment of the Scholars' Education Trust, when Sir John Lawes was asked to support Francis Bacon (now the Samuel Ryder Academy) in St Albans. She sits on the executive committee of the Universities' Council for the Education of Teachers and is also part of the group working to open the new Katherine Warrington School in Harpenden.

**“Many of my happiest recreational memories of Worcester stem from my membership of the boat club and time spent on the river. My time at Worcester College gave me opportunities I would never have had otherwise, the confidence to succeed in my chosen field, and lasting friendships that I treasure to this day. I couldn't be more grateful!”**

Claire Robins OBE (1985, Classics)



The second Old Member that was presented was Professor Ravindra Gupta:

Professor Ravindra (Ravi) Gupta is an immunologist now based in Cambridge, who read Medicine at Worcester in 1997.

Having completed his medical undergraduate studies at Cambridge and Oxford Universities, Ravi pursued a Masters in Public Health at Harvard as a Fulbright Scholar. Upon his return he trained in infectious diseases in Oxford and London (UCLH, Hospital for Tropical Diseases) and completed his PhD at UCL on Lentiviral evasion of antiretrovirals and innate immune responses. He established his research group at UCL in 2011, working on genetics and biology of HIV resistance and reservoirs, and was promoted to full professor in 2016. Ravi has been Professor of Clinical Microbiology at the Cambridge Institute for Therapeutic Immunology and Infectious Diseases since 2019.

**In 2020, Professor Ravindra Gupta was named as one of the 100 Most Influential People by TIME for his role in demonstrating the world's second recorded HIV cure, the 'London Patient' published in Nature 2019 and Lancet HIV 2020 and in 2021, he was elected to Fellowship of the Academy of Medical Sciences UK.**

In Spring 2020, Ravi and his team validated and introduced the SAMBA II point of care test into clinical practice at Addenbrookes for rapid diagnosis of COVID-19. During the latter half of 2020 the lab started

to study evolution of the virus within patients in response to antibody based therapies, as a paradigm of how new variants with multiple mutations have arisen. The team is also characterising the virology of key spike protein mutations in new variants and their impact on natural and vaccine induced immunity.

Ravi is a co-opted member of NERVTAG, The New and Emerging Respiratory Virus Threats Advisory Group which advises the government on the threat posed by new and emerging respiratory viruses.

**“I fondly remember taking the long route around the lake during summer, the outdoor Buskins theatre, playing tennis for the first team and of course the parties in the MCR where I was occasionally seen as DJ.”**

Professor Ravindra Gupta (1997, Medicine)

# CampbellFest

Celebrating the life of the late Professor James Campbell



On 28 May 2022 the College welcomed 45 Old Members and guests to an event celebrating the life and work of James Campbell, Fellow and Tutor in History from 1957 to 2002 (from 1992 Lightbody Fellow and Tutor), who died in 2016. ‘CampbellFest’ was prompted by former students of James, led by Roger Ashley (1958, History), and after several postponements due to the pandemic, was finally able to take place in the Linbury Room on a sunny Saturday.

After a welcome from Professor Conrad Leyser, the current Lightbody Fellow and Tutor in History, who was uniquely qualified to introduce the day as his father taught James Campbell and his mother was taught by him, the guests were treated to three talks. The first, by Dr Paul Hyams (1960, Modern History), was a paper taken from his current research on the Domesday Inquest and its use in the history of English law. This was a highly appropriate subject as it chimed with James Campbell’s own research interests in Domesday. This talk was followed by a presentation from Meredith Cutrer (2021, History), the first holder of the Michael Biggs Graduate Scholarship, endowed in memory of James Campbell. Appropriately, Meredith described how her love of Anglo-Saxon history had been

prompted by reading *The Anglo-Saxons* (1982), edited by James Campbell, before giving an interesting summary of her research into the desert fathers and their depiction on Irish high crosses.

After a buffet lunch there was time to view an exhibition of original records relating to James Campbell’s life and work, which had been prepared by the College Archivist. These included a selection from James’ own personal papers, transferred to the Archives in 2016, and interesting items that James himself had collected during his time as the first Keeper of the Archives. James took over responsibility for the Archives from the Bursary in 1960 and, in addition to preserving the administrative records of the College, he expanded its remit to include the personal papers of individuals and more ephemeral items that truly illustrate the student experience. On display were early photographs of the College and of undergraduates, programmes of student events, and a selection of items relating to the intelligence work of Provost Masterman during the Second World War. James’ role in preserving the Archives, and the use of part of his legacy to adapt a building for their storage to archival standards (also supported by the Wilkinson Trust, of which James had been the longest-serving

Trustee), is appropriately recognised in its name: the James Campbell College Archives Building.

One section of the records from James Campbell’s personal papers related to a series of drafts for a book on Anglo-Saxon England, which James intended to publish with OUP. The contract was signed in 1984 but, despite going through several drafts and being in an almost complete form from 1999, James never submitted a manuscript to the publisher due to his perfectionism. Dr Alan Thacker (1967, Modern History) announced that there were several other unpublished manuscripts in James’ papers, including the text of his Ford Lectures on ‘The Origins of the English State’ given in 1996, which would shortly be published in two or three volumes.

The final talk of the day was given by Dr John Maddicott (1961, Modern History), who spoke movingly about James Campbell’s youth and the challenges he had overcome to lead such a successful career. He also talked about the experiences James had had as Senior Proctor during the unrest of 1973-4, and the changes in his political allegiances over time. The day ended with a general discussion of the experience of attending tutorials with Professor Campbell over the 40 years represented by attendees.

# OPERATION MINCEMEAT & PROVOST MASTERMAN



Last month I went to see *Operation Mincemeat*, a new film based on the book by Ben Macintyre, which tells the story of a plot to deceive the Nazi High Command over the location of the planned invasion of Italy in 1943. The ruse involved the planting of the body of a fictitious marine, Major Martin, along with falsified documents, off the coast of supposedly neutral Spain. This may be of particular interest to Worcester alumni as one of your number, Sir John Masterman (1909, and later Provost from 1946 to 1961) features briefly in the film, played by Alex Jennings.

It is well known that during the Second World War, Masterman was the Chair of the Twenty Committee, running turned double-agents feeding disinformation back

to Germany (the committee was so named because twenty in Roman numerals is XX, or 'double-cross'). It was at a meeting of the Twenty Committee that Ewen Montagu and Charles Cholmondeley first proposed the idea that became Mincemeat, to direct German forces away from the intended target of Sicily, although the idea was not a new one and was prompted by a report which may have been written by the novelist Ian Fleming. Sir John Masterman transferred all his personal papers, including those from his war service, to the College Archives shortly before his death in 1977, and I therefore returned from the cinema eager to delve into these primary sources for evidence of Masterman's part in this important operation.

However, on the whole I was to be disappointed. Sir John Masterman was a conscientious spy master and kept very little relating to his secret war work, beyond a very brief diary kept as a practical aide-mémoire. It also appears that there may not have been much to keep as Masterman admitted in his autobiography, published in 1975, that he had "nothing whatever to do with the planning of major deception". His role as chair of the Twenty Committee was as a facilitator, to "harmonize the interests and demands of different services and departments...to make the machine work". There are a small number of mentions of Operation Mincemeat in Masterman's almost illegible handwriting in his diary, but nothing that provides additional information to that known from other sources. Although Masterman wrote in his autobiography of the thrill of

excitement in seeing the large tin container used to transport the body of 'Major Martin', so distanced from the operation was he that he was on leave when the body left the country on a submarine, and in Oxford for the weekend when it was found in Spain. He makes no mention of either event in his matter-of-fact diary.

Masterman's diary also does not record the small way in which he did contribute to the success of Mincemeat. In order to fully kit out Major Martin it was necessary to obtain some underwear, but as this was rationed it was difficult to persuade anyone to give up their stamps to the cause. Sir John Masterman used his Oxford connections to arrange the "gift" of underwear from the late Warden of New College, H. A. L. Fisher, with whom Masterman had had a fierce academic rivalry in the 1930s. Ben Macintyre speculates that pressing Fisher's underwear into military service in this way would have appealed to Masterman's "odd sense of humour".

One interesting item I did discover during this research, which I don't think has been seen before, is this photograph (above) of a Twenty Committee dinner. Sir John Masterman can be seen seated in the centre, laughing and in his element. Standing behind, second and third from the left respectively, are Charles Cholmondeley and Ewen Montagu, whose Operation Mincemeat did so much to ensure the success of the invasion of Sicily, and marked a turning point in the course of the war.

Emma Goodrum, College Archivist







# The Pursuit of Instrumental Perfection:

## Dudley Perfect (1915, Mathematics)

In the early 14th century Richard of Wallingford, possibly an alumnus of Worcester's predecessor Gloucester College, made astronomical instruments of wonderful precision, including a mechanical clock at St Albans Abbey whose detailed description includes possibly the earliest known precise mechanical drawings.

At the National Physical Laboratory (NPL) and Royal Greenwich Observatory, Worcester alumnus Dudley Perfect (1896-1964), my grandfather, meticulously improved the accuracy of a range of physical measures, at the cutting edge of the early 20th century's rapid improvements in instrumentation and technology.

Perfect matriculated in 1915. Unfit for active service, in 1917 he was conscripted as a schoolmaster. Returning to Worcester in 1918, he took a war degree in Mathematics, and then an Honours Degree in Physics.

Obtaining one of the first DPhils, he moved to the NPL. He invented ingenious devices to increase precision and reduce error, particularly using photoelectric cells. He may have worked on substituting the wavelength of light for metal bars to determine standards of length, and on refining standards of time, and hence radio frequency, important for radar as war loomed. In 1942 he moved to Greenwich, to improve the accuracy of the Shortt clocks which the Observatory used to measure time: the most accurate mechanical clocks ever made, accurate to 1 second per year. Perfect proposed to use photoelectric cells to improve accuracy even further by synchronising the clocks' 'master' and 'slave' pendulums every second.

Instead the Observatory moved from pendulum to vastly more accurate quartz clocks, setting the stage for the next phase of Perfect's career refining the measurement of time.

Clocks beat at a regular rate. But tiny wobbles cause minute variations in the Earth's rotation. Clock time needed to be adjusted so that it remained synchronised with astronomical time. More accurate quartz clocks necessitated more accurate corrections. Perfect designed a 'Photographic Zenith Tube' (PZT), a telescope pointed rigidly at the zenith. Light from transiting stars, reflected from a perfectly level mercury mirror, was brought to a focus on a photographic plate. Automatic reversal four times during the transit, driven by the clock being tested, produced a quadrangle of images, from whose geometry could be computed whether the transit had been at the 'right' clock time, or whether an adjustment was needed for the movement of the heavens. The PZT needed to be accurate to 1/360000 of a degree. Perfect systematically brought each element of its mechanical operation within the required tolerance.

Grubb Parsons made the instrument. Their Chief Engineer, George Sisson, recollected: 'Dr Perfect was well named because he took infinite pains over every last detail of the instrument so that the design stage extended itself over a very long period'. Sisson recalled his rejection of Perfect's suggestion for an automated artificial hand to place and remove the photographic plate. This would have been in the early 1950s, at the very outset of robotics research.

PZTs were installed in the mid-1950s at Herstmonceux, Canberra, and Neuchatel. The Herstmonceux PZT was used: to measure the 'mean solar day', then the fundamental unit of time, until 1958; for astronomical determination of Universal Time until 1971; and for 'leap second' corrections to bring Universal Time into line with the movement of the heavens, until 1976. Perfect's obituarist Bernard Wellgate recalled 'his uncompromising and perhaps not always comfortable scientific honesty', his 'encouragement and helpfulness' and 'his unfailing courtesy and boyish sense of humour and fun'. The last quality is evident in meticulously crafted humorous verses which he composed on all sorts of occasions, and in Sisson's recollection of Perfect's fondness for 'all the most hectic machines' in the Newcastle fairground, and for an umbrella with an ivory horse's head handle which he took to a dentist for repair.

Perfect continued to value his connections with Worcester. He bequeathed his collection of rare antiquarian books to the College library. He attended the annual College Weekend whenever he could, always asking to stay in his old first-year room, Staircase 8.3 in the medieval cottages, which he fondly recalled as the only undergraduate room that overlooked the Provost's Garden. Who knows whether in times long past it might not have housed Richard of Wallingford, the pioneer of Oxford mechanical timekeeping?

**Timothy M M Baker**  
(1979, Corpus Christi College)

# Quiz

## The Foundation of Worcester College

### Question 1

**Who was the Founder of Worcester College?**

- a George Clarke
- b Richard Blechinden
- c Thomas Cookes



### Question 2

**Worcester College was founded on 29 July 1714, during the reign of which monarch?**

- a King James II
- b Queen Anne
- c King George I

### Question 3

**What was the value of the founding benefaction?**

- a £10,000
- b £110,000
- c £10 million

### Question 4



**Which Oxford college sold the site of the Main Quad and Pump Quad to enable Worcester to be founded?**

- a Christ Church
- b Jesus College
- c St John's College

### Question 5

**The original College statutes listed four servants the College was required to employ: a cook, a porter, a steward and...**

- a A barber
- b A laundry woman
- c A brewer

## Answers

1 Sir Thomas Cookes, a childless Worcestershire baronet, established several schools (including Bromsgrove) and also Worcester College, Oxford, to perpetuate his memory. He died in 1701, but it took 13 years of legal wrangling before the University decided where to establish the new college.

2 Worcester College was founded during the reign of Queen Anne, and is the only surviving Oxford foundation of the eighteenth century (a version of Hertford College was also founded in the eighteenth century but was dissolved in 1818; it was refounded in the late-nineteenth century).

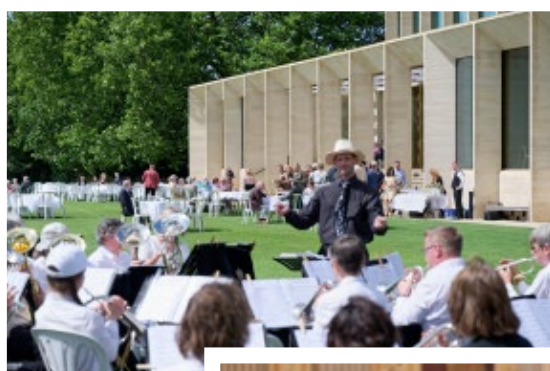
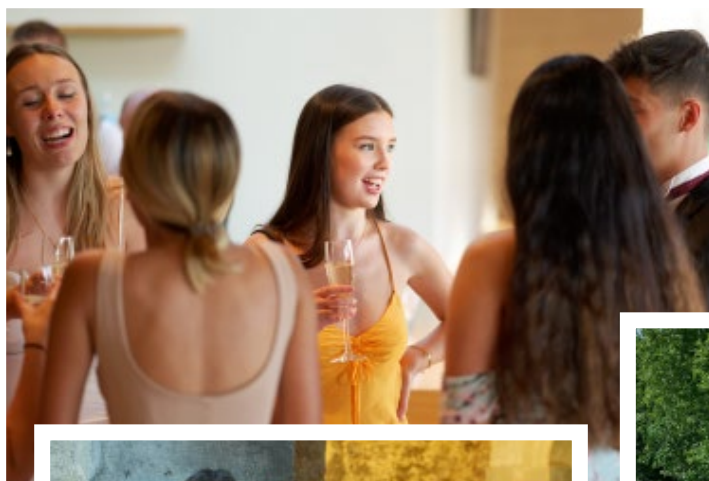
3 Sir Thomas Cookes' original benefaction was just £10,000. Even in 1714 this was insufficient to provide for the salaries of the Provost and Fellows, and to build a college from scratch. Worcester was therefore established on the site of Gloucester Hall so that its medieval buildings could provide accommodation. Although some were later demolished to build the Library, Hall, Chapel and Terrace, the surviving medieval buildings of Gloucester College continue to be used to this day.

4 St John's College owned Gloucester Hall in 1714 and sold the property to Worcester College. St John's also owned land to the north and west (now the playing fields and the orchard), and sold this to Worcester in 1744.

5 The 1714 College statutes stipulate that the College should employ a barber (tonson). This was necessary in the eighteenth century when the wearing of wigs or the curling of hair into a wig-like style for dinner was fashionable.

## A Warm Welcome Back to College!

Trinity Term finally saw a return to a busy schedule of Old Member events. It was wonderful to see so many Old Members return to College with friends and family and enjoy meeting each other and being in this special place once again.



Clockwise from top:  
 Dr Kotaro Ono & former Provost and Honorary Fellow, Dick Smethurst at Honorary Fellows Lunch, June 22.  
 Emeritus Fellow in Law, Francis Reynolds, at the Law Society Dinner May 22.  
 Inaugural Donor's Dinner April 22.  
 The Oxford Silver Band, Benefactors' Garden Party June 22.  
 Choir Master, Daniel Mathieson at Carols and Canapes Dec 21.  
 Eleanor Brooks & Clare Boothroyd Brooks, Benefactors' Garden Party, June 22.  
 Christmas Carols and Canapés, December 21.  
 Current students at the Law Society Dinner, May 22.

# Worcester Old Member Events 2022 – 23

Please see below 'Save the Date Information' for Old Member events for the year ahead. You must book your place online to attend an event. Some events are by invitation only. Booking for events will go live at different times throughout the year and the events programme may change or be updated – so please do keep checking the website for the latest information on: [www.worc.ox.ac.uk/alumni/events](http://www.worc.ox.ac.uk/alumni/events), or contact us on: + 44 (0) 1865 278374

## October

- 17 Worcester College Society Drinks Reception: House of Lords, London.** All Old Members are invited to meet the Provost, David Isaac, CBE, at a drinks reception at the House of Lords, 6:15-8pm. Tickets £40. OTA.
- 20 Online Academic Lecture Series,** Dr Katharina Ulmschneider: 'The Camel that fled the Nazis - The Story of a T'ang Dynasty Camel', 5-5:45pm. (BST). Online event. OTA.

## November

- 30 Christmas Carols and Canapés** in the Chapel and Cloisters, 4-5:30pm. OTA (restricted numbers). Tickets: adults £18, children (under 18) free.

## December

- 3 Young Alumni Group Christmas Reunion, London.** 7:30pm (open to Old Members who graduated after 2011), further details tbc. By invitation only.
- 8 Online Academic Lecture Series,** Meredith Cutrer, The Michael Biggs Scholar in memory of James Campbell: 'Egypt and the Insular High Crosses', 5-5:45pm. (BST). Online event. OTA.
- 10 Gaudy (2008, 2009, 2010)** for those who matriculated in 2008, 2009, 2010. Tickets £50. By invitation only.

## January 2023

- 18 Online 1714 Society Lecture,** Professor Patricia Clavin hosted by the Provost: 'Turbulence and Human Security, 1900-1950', 5-5:45pm (BST). Online event. By invitation only.

## February

- 4 Walking Snowdrop Tour** in College, 10:30-2pm: £20, ticket price includes: refreshments on arrival, talk from a snowdrop expert, garden tour and a light lunch. OTA.
- 23 Online Academic Lecture Series,** Professor David Steinsaltz: 'Ageing: What is it? Why is it? Where is it going?' 5-5:45pm (BST). Online event. OTA.

## March

- 8 Online Academic Lecture Series,** Professor Andrew Stephen: 'More of a Friend, Less of a Foe: Overcoming Public Concerns of Artificial Intelligence', 5-5:45 pm. (BST). Online event. OTA.
- 11 Law Society Dinner** in College. Open to all who read or are practising Law. By invitation only.

- 18 Gaudy (2011, 2012, 2013)** For those who matriculated in 2011, 2012, 2013. By invitation only.

## April

- TBC Oxford North American Reunion.**
- 22 Donors' Dinner** in College, 6pm. Pre-dinner drinks and dinner in the Hall. By invitation only.
- 29 Gardens Day** in College, 11am-2pm. Tours of the gardens by Head Gardener and lunch in Hall. Tickets £30. OTA.

## May

- 11 Online Academic Lecture Series,** Dr Michael Drolet: 'Environmental Sustainability and Political Economy in Nineteen Century France', 5-5:45pm. (BST). Online event. OTA.

- 27 Boat Club Alumni Dinner,** open to all current and former members of the Boat Club. Details TBC. By invitation only.

## June

- 10 Benefactors' Garden Party** in College, 2-5pm. By invitation only.
- 23 Commemoration Ball** in College. Priority booking for current students, then recent leavers (2020-22 graduates), then remaining tickets open to all Old Members. Further details to follow.
- 25 Biology Reunion** in College with Emeritus Fellow, Dr Peter Darrah. Family-friendly garden party. 11-3pm. By invitation only.
- 29 Worcester Rhodes Scholars 120th Anniversary Dinner** in College, 6pm. By invitation only.

## July

- 1 Leavers' High Tea** in the Sultan Nazrin Shah Centre, 3-5:30pm. A celebratory high tea with fizz, for all those who graduated in 2020 and 2021. By invitation only.

## September

- 22 University of Oxford Alumni weekend**
- 22 50th and 60th Golden and Diamond Reunion Lunch** for those who matriculated in 1963 and 1973, hosted by the Provost, 12-2pm. By invitation only.
- 23 Gaudy (1983, 1984, 1985, 1962 and earlier)** in College. For those who matriculated in 1983, 1984, 1985, 1962 or earlier. Tickets £50. By invitation only.

**NB** OTA = Open to all

