

LMH News

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PRINCIPAL'S UPDATE



None of us imagined any of this. I did not imagine, when I thought of a life in Oxford, that I would end up spending two months in a rickety tent in thermal underwear.

I like the start of Michaelmas Term – mainly because it means meeting lots of news faces as they begin an entirely new chapter in their lives. I try to see every single new undergraduate, graduate, visiting student and postgraduate, if only for a few minutes each. That's just about time enough to get a glimpse of the new student – who they are; where they come from; what they're excited about; what they're worried about. What do they do for fun? Why did they choose LMH (if they did)?

The American students are often the best in a situation like this: they have ready-cooked versions of their lives all ready for the telling. A very British

response is to shrug and mumble: "Well, there's not much to say really." Of course, there always is.

But as the start of Michaelmas Term 2020 approached the pandemic news grew grimmer. I was faced with two options. I could see 240+ students across a distant office with windows open and hope for the best. Or we could all retreat to the safe not-quite-reality of Zoom.

And then I had the idea of a tent. On the top shelf of my garden shed were two gazebos bought some years ago as weather insurance for a party, and never used. Once I'd struggled to put them up in the back garden of Number 6 Fyfield road one of them turned out to be enormous – it could seat eight safely spaced, no problem. And the other would work nicely as a waiting room. I was all set

Now for the clothing. My son-in-law pointed me to Uniqlo fur-lined tracksuit bottoms. I researched thermal leggings and settled on something called Under Armour. I had a padded jacket bought last year in Finland which promised to protect its wearer to minus 15 degrees. A beanie and stout walking boots, and I was ready.

Or almost ready. I invested in a fire pit which I lit an hour early each morning. And Dave, the College electrician, rigged me up with some electricity for lighting once the winter nights drew in.

And then I opened the doors. Or, rather, the broken down back gate to the Lodgings. Brodie, the newly-arrived Lancashire heeler, soon settled into

a routine of wildly greeting each new student before flopping into a bed next to the fire pit. The interviewees quickly got the hang of the waiting room routine. And thus it was I spent the best part of six weeks sitting in a tent meeting the most recent generation of LMH-ers.

Most were very happy to be in Oxford, despite everything. Some were lonely, most were settling in fine. Why LMH? The answers were usually: a) the history; b) the gardens; c) the atmosphere when they came on an open day; d) the website made it look cool; e) they particularly wanted to study with Professor X.



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Worries? a) The workload; b) "I wouldn't fit in/make friends." But this year – maybe counter-intuitively – b) turned out to be much less of an issue. Everyone had been pre-assigned a social household or bubble – and nearly everyone said this made Freshers Week much less of an ordeal than having to try and make friends in bars or nightclubs. Only one student said they didn't much like the household they'd been allocated.

The weather started cold, but dry. Then the rain started – and the weatherproof qualities of the gazebo and the firepit were sorely tested. The structure was still – just – standing after

snow. And I very nearly lost it in the middle of an interview with a graduate student, which coincided with a sudden tornado arriving over OX2.

Happily, the student was ex-army and very nearly seven feet tall. He leapt to his feet, mid-interview, and anchored the gazebo as it tugged at its moorings, threatening to float away in the general direction of Keble. The day was saved.

In the evenings we sent out for curry takeaways and small groups of Fellows huddled for small socially-distanced time-limited suppers by candlelight. I managed several classes with the Foundation Year, with a handy flip-board

for company. The gazebo even achieved modest fame being featured on the local early evening BBC news bulletin.

By Hilary Term even gazebo meetings were deemed illegal by the government. But by then my tents had served their purpose of allowing me to meet nearly every new LMH student on arrival.

Life at LMH continued, with students still in residence using the gardens to walk, run, practise yoga and even row on portable rowing machines on the hockey field. As I write fingers are crossed – knotted, even – that life will tiptoe back to something like "normal" by Week 5 of Trinity Term. Here's hoping.

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We are always very pleased to hear your comments and feedback, so please do get in touch with the Development Office on the above telephone number, or by emailing development@lmh.ox.ac.uk, to let us know what you think of this issue.

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HOW MUCH IS YOUR EDUCATION WORTH?

Untangling cause and effect without experiments



Dr Francis Di Traglia, Fellow and Tutor in Economics, presented a webinar for our LMH community in November 2020 based on his research. The recording has since been viewed almost 500 times on our YouTube channel, and here he summarises his presentation.

Will earning a PPE degree from Oxford increase your lifetime earnings? Does eating bacon sandwiches cause cancer? Does watching Fox News make you vote Republican? Will owning a dog increase your lifespan? Each of these questions concerns the causal effect of a treatment on an outcome. In social science, a “treatment” is any factor whose causal effect we hope to learn. As far as I know, there has never been an experiment that compelled people to study a particular subject at university, watch Fox News, or own a dog: nonetheless, papers have been written and published that use data to estimate the causal effects of each of these treatments. Datasets in which the treatment of interest is “naturally occurring”, rather than randomly assigned as part of an experiment, are called observational. Many of the most interesting and important treatments in social science cannot be randomly assigned. Social scientists have therefore developed a set of tools for studying treatment effects using observational data. By introducing you to some of these tools and briefly summarising the ways in which researchers have used them, I’ll shed some light on that age-old question: how much is your education worth?

Alice read PPE at Oxford and currently earns £75,000 a year. Would she have earned as much if she had studied at Oxford Brookes instead? The fundamental problem of causal inference

is that we can never observe a person’s counterfactual outcome. In other words, we can never know what her outcome would have been if her treatment had been different. A counterfactual is fundamentally a “within-person” comparison, asking us to imagine two parallel universes, one in which Alice attends Oxford and another in which she attends Oxford Brookes. The causal question of interest is how much the Alice in our world earns compared to the Alice who resides through the looking glass. Of course, this comparison can never be more than a thought experiment. To learn about treatment effects in the real world, we develop methods and assumptions that allow us to substitute the idealised within-person comparison with a between-person comparison.

“We had the best of educations. In fact, we went to school every day...”

“I’ve been to a day school too,” said Alice. “You needn’t be so proud as all that.”

“With extras?” asked the Mock Turtle a little anxiously.

“Yes,” said Alice, “we learned French and music.”

“And washing?” said the Mock Turtle.

“Certainly not!” said Alice indignantly.

“Ah! then yours wasn’t a really good school,” said the Mock Turtle in a tone of great relief.

According to recent data from the Department for Education, UCAS and the ONS, the median salary of Oxford graduates is nearly £15,000 higher than that of Oxford Brookes graduates. Does this mean that the treatment effect of attending Oxford rather than Brookes is £15,000 a year? Almost certainly not! This is not an apples-to-apples comparison. One of the crucial differences between the two universities is entry requirements: Oxford requires A*AA for Economics and Management applicants, whereas Oxford Brookes asks for BCC for a similar degree. Oxford students on average have higher levels of academic preparation and ability upon entering university: accordingly, it’s possible that attending Oxford has no causal effect on wage, but earning high grades at A level



does. In statistical parlance, we would say that ability “confounds” the relationship between university attended and wage earned.

So how can we solve the problem of confounding in observational datasets? One approach is matching, which compares treated and untreated people with the “same” values for any confounders. For example, we might compare Oxford Economics students with three A-stars at A-level to Oxford Brookes Economics students with the same A-level results. Repeating this for every combination of subject and A-levels and averaging the results gives an estimate of the overall causal effect of attending Oxford. A recent report from the IFS used a closely related approach to estimate the relative returns on different undergraduate degrees. Their findings suggest that confounding is a very serious problem when comparing raw wages of students across universities. For example, women who graduate from LSE earn over 70% more than the average female graduate. After adjusting for differences in student characteristics, however, this wage premium falls dramatically: female graduates of LSE earn only a little over 35% more than similar women who attended different universities. The same applies to other elite UK institutions, such as Oxford, Cambridge, and UCL.

For matching methods to be effective, we need to observe all important confounders. In some settings this is a reasonable assumption, but in others it clearly isn't. For this reason, researchers have developed a number of techniques to address the problem of unobserved confounding. Much of my own research focuses on the use of “instrumental variables.” An instrumental variable, or “instrument” for short, is something that affects the treatment of interest but is unrelated to any unobserved confounders. To understand this idea, we'll examine one of the most famous papers to use the instrumental variables approach: a 1991 article by Josh Angrist and Alan Krueger that studies the impact of compulsory school attendance on later-life earnings. The paper begins with

a striking observation: in the US, people born in the first quarter of the year tend to complete fewer years of education. Why might this be the case? According to Angrist and Krueger, “children born in different months of the year start school at different ages, while compulsory schooling laws generally require students to remain in school until their sixteenth or seventeenth birthday. In effect, the interaction of school-entry requirements and compulsory schooling laws compels students born in certain months to attend school longer than students born in other months.”

Angrist and Krueger use quarter of birth as an instrumental variable to estimate the causal effect of schooling on wage. Quarter of birth is indeed related to the treatment of interest, years of schooling. But there are many unobserved factors that influence both how many years of education a person attains, and his or her later-life outcomes: demographics, family background, etc. Is quarter of birth unrelated to these? Angrist and Krueger argue in the affirmative: “One's birthday is unlikely to be correlated with personal attributes other than age at school entry.” If this is correct, we can estimate the causal effect of education on wages as follows. First we calculate the difference of wages between those born in the first quarter and those born in the rest of the year. Those born in the first quarter earn less on average, so this difference is negative. Next we calculate the corresponding difference in years of education for these two groups. Those born in the first quarter have fewer years of education on average, so this difference is also negative. The “ratio” of the two differences tells us the “fraction” of the observed difference in wages that is caused by differences in education. Since both differences are negative, the ratio is positive. Angrist and Krueger find that an extra year of education causes an increase in wages of between 5% and 15%.

But is it really true that a person's birthday is uncorrelated with “personal attributes other than age at school entry?” About seven years ago, Buckles

and Hungerman revisited this question, examining US data that includes information on both birth dates and family background. In the years since Angrist and Krueger published their original paper, there have been more than 20 other published papers using season of birth as an instrumental variable. Across these studies, US children born in the first quarter – or, more generally, in the winter months – earn less, pursue less education, and have lower measured intelligence on average than those born at other times of the year. At the same time, researchers have found a correlation between season of birth and schizophrenia, autism, dyslexia, extreme shyness, and even suicide risk.

What's going on here? Buckles and Hungerman propose a simple explanation: “Children born in different seasons are not initially similar but rather are conceived by different groups of women.” Mothers who give birth in the winter months are disproportionately likely to be teenagers. They are also less educated, and less likely to be married. In conclusion: “The well-known relationship between season of birth and later outcomes is largely driven by differences in fertility patterns across socioeconomic groups, and not merely natural phenomena or schooling laws that intervene after conception.” In other words, quarter of birth is indeed related to confounders that were unobserved by Angrist and Krueger in their original paper.

So where does all of this leave us? Untangling cause and effect is extremely challenging, and always relies upon assumptions. Social scientists have powerful tools for studying treatment effects in settings where randomized experimentation is impossible, impractical, or unethical. But like any tool, matching, instrumental variables, and related methods depend for their success on the care with which they are used. We can indeed learn about cause-and-effect from observational data, but doing so requires knowledge of the problem we're studying, a willingness to question our assumptions, and some good old-fashioned intellectual humility.

For further information on Dr Di Traglia's research, visit his website for references to further reading, lecture notes and videos: www.treatment-effects.com. His online presentation is also available on the LMH YouTube channel.



Jasmine's novels

“If all the gatekeepers and commissioners are from the same background then how can we possibly produce books that are actually for our whole society?”

STORYMIX:

creating stories where all children get to be the hero

Jasmine Richards (1999 English Language and Literature) is the founder of STORYMIX, a children’s fiction production company with a focus on inclusive representation and fabulous storytelling.



“It’s no surprise I studied English or went into publishing. Books have always been a bit of an obsession. My mum used to have to pat me down for books when I went to parties as a kid or I would just end up reading in the corner.”

Reflecting on her student days and sharing her own story with us, Jasmine admits she almost didn’t apply to Oxford. Coming from a working-class background and being from a minority ethnic group, she was very aware that both of these identities were underrepresented at Oxford: “My top tip to students from a similar background to myself is don’t watch University

Challenge if you’re thinking of applying as it can give you quite a skewed idea of what a student at Oxford is like!”

As one of only two black students in her cohort at LMH, Jasmine found her first couple of terms at Oxford difficult: “I assumed that no one had gone to a school like mine and that I had nothing in common with the people around me,” she says, and recalls returning to London most weekends until a few months into her first year, when her Tutorial partner asked her to stay in College for a weekend, wanting to get to know her and to prove they could indeed have fun at Oxford. “So, I did stay. And we did have fun,” says Jasmine. “And I made a group of friends for life. I wonder what would have happened if that person had not reached out. It’s a favourite memory of mine because it is the foundation of many other happy university memories. Oxford is about the friends you make, as well as the skills you learn.”

Speaking of the skills you learn, her English degree taught Jasmine a lot about analysing fiction and talking about books with confidence: “The idea that I would get to do the same thing as an editor was extremely appealing.”

Considering her career path after leaving LMH, Jasmine explains that she initially started working in outreach and access, visiting inner-city state schools, talking to young people about applying to higher education and encouraging applicants at summer schools. During this time, she “realised how important books

were to raising aspirations, and how they had raised my aspirations as a child. I knew after that I needed to work in books. The fact that I was still reading children's books as an adult was a big clue that I was destined for children's editorial!"

Jasmine soon realised that she herself wanted not just to edit books, but write them too: "I always had done, but needed to give myself permission to think of myself as a writer." She wrote her first novel, *The Book of Wonders*, during evenings and weekends whilst still working fulltime as a children's fiction editor. It was published in 2012 and Jasmine has published 15 books in the past eight years.

Her stories are full of magic and myths: "I loved reading mythology as a kid. It started when I was about 10 and came across a battered collection of Greek myths from Peter Bendoric Books.

"It had beautifully detailed illustrations with creatures and deities that were like nothing I'd ever seen or read about. I was immediately hooked," recalls Jasmine.

"I quickly moved onto Egyptian, Celtic, Norse, African and Chinese mythology, gobbling up origin tales from far and wide. I think even as a child I understood that the different world mythologies were discussing big and difficult questions. The kind of questions that human beings have grappled with from the beginning of time and which children are grappling with earlier than we may think. Questions like: Who am I? Where did I come from? What is the universe? Is there anything else out there? Why am I here? How did it all begin?"

"Mythologies give children the opportunity to explore these questions through a colourful cast of often flawed and certainly larger-than-life characters. They provide stories that are full of peril and sometimes, but not always, a moral.

"Stories undoubtedly shaped me into the person I am today. They raised my aspirations, broadened my horizons and fired my imagination."

To find out more about STORYMIX please visit: www.storymix.co.uk.

"The battle between good and evil rages throughout the world myths and as a reader you are introduced to a realm of moral ambiguity where gods can be heroes, villains and something in-between, depending on the story. As a child this is challenging and exciting stuff.

"I constantly carried around a little notebook when I was younger, where I jotted down ideas and poems." Jasmine still visits schools now and witnessing the imagination of the children often wishes she still had her notebook from her younger days!

Alongside the inspiration from reading mythology as a child, a driving factor for Jasmine to write was her own background. "I longed to see contemporary characters that looked like me as a child, and I wanted to see them in fun stories – stories about going to spy school, flying on broomsticks or vanquishing dragons. In the past, characters who looked like me were almost always in stories about adversity and struggle, which are important, but children need to be able to see themselves as the hero in all kinds of stories."

This is changing now, Jasmine acknowledges – but there is certainly still a way to go. And this is where STORYMIX comes in.

STORYMIX is a children's fiction production company with a focus on inclusive representation and fabulous storytelling. It creates young fiction series for publishers and works with authors and illustrators from BME backgrounds to write those books.

Jasmine founded the initiative in 2019: "I knew I had the skillset to help get more BME writers and stories published and so I founded STORYMIX. I wanted to make an impact and knew series fiction was a unique way of doing that."

Of the 9,115 children's titles published in 2017, only 4% featured Black Asian

Minority Ethnic characters. Only 1% of those books had any BAME lead characters. "Though I was aware of the lack of diversity in publishing, as it was my day-to-day life, it didn't really hit me until I had my son. We were reading together, and I just could not find any books that had main characters that looked like him," Jasmine says.

"I knew publishers wanted to publish more children's fiction that was representative and engaging for young audiences. I also knew that there was a ton of talent out there from underrepresented groups waiting to be discovered. So STORYMIX is about solving this problem and helping writers develop their voice and giving publishers the stories that they are so keen to publish. I also hope that in the future STORYMIX authors will go on to secure their own publishing deals and meaningfully change the makeup of the publishing landscape."

So what next? STORYMIX's first project, *Aziza's Secret Fairy Door* by Lola Morayo, will be published in June, Jasmine explains: "It's such a fun mix of fairies, world mythology and teamwork and the illustrations are gorgeous.



"In the future, I hope to launch a charity arm of STORYMIX that will offer free training for writers from marginalized communities, but also editorial training for young people from underrepresented backgrounds who are keen to break into publishing. There is an urgent need to diversify the backgrounds of those in the publishing industry. At the moment it is white, southern and middle class. If all the gatekeepers and commissioners are from the same background then how can we possibly produce books that are actually for our whole society?"

"Stories undoubtedly shaped me into the person I am today. They raised my aspirations, broadened my horizons and fired my imagination."

RESEARCH DREAMS



Sanja Bogojević, Fellow and Associate Professor of Law, features in the children's book *Research Dreams* (original title: *Forskardrömmar*), which tells the story of 60 leading Swedish (or Sweden-based) academics as children and their path to academia. The book aims to spark children's interest in research and higher education, and it has topped bestseller lists for children's books in Sweden. What follows is a translated and slightly altered version of Sanja's portrait.

Once upon a time, there was a girl named Sanja. She grew up in a country that no longer exists. A terrible war broke out that lasted many years, and many people died. Eventually the whole country was divided.

But Sanja and her family had moved to Sweden, where her grandparents lived and where her mother had grown up, shortly before the war began. Sanja did not speak Swedish and at first, she refused to learn it. "If anyone wants to talk to me, they'll have to learn to speak my language," she proclaimed.

But she liked her teacher, who came from Norway and who, just like Sanja, spoke a little differently. Soon Sanja learned Swedish and she started reading lots of books. Her favorites were the stories that took place in countries far away – in Australia, India and in various corners of Africa. She dreamed of travelling and exploring the world, just like the heroes and heroines in the books she read. She decided that when she grew up, she would explore the world and work for the UN to ensure that there was never a war and that countries were never divided.

One day, the teacher whispered to her that an international school had just opened in the city for people like Sanja, who were interested in the world beyond Sweden. Sanja applied and was accepted. Later, when she was a teenager and it was time to look for a summer job, she found a placement at a law firm. She was introduced to legal disputes that needed resolving; here, too, there were villains and heroes and heroines, which reminded Sanja of the stories she had read in childhood – only these were more complicated, and real!

Sanja decided to become a lawyer, and she wanted to study abroad. A friend of her mother's told her there were scholarships one could apply for to get funding to do so. Sanja visited the local library, where she found a book listing all funding bodies in Sweden. She wrote more than fifty applications, and with the positive outcome of some, Sanja went out into the world. She studied in England, Germany, France, Belgium, and the United States. Along the way, she understood that she could also continue studying and writing about law once she had finished her schooling.

Today, Sanja researches environmental law. She investigates how laws are written to address environmental problems, and her special interests include studying how markets are, or could be, regulated to lead to environmental safeguarding. Sanja is also interested in the way environmental rights are used in courts around the world to push for environmental protection; and how environmental action, in the short term, leads to winners and losers, and how to remedy such inequalities.

Just as Sanja dreamed of when she was little, she now works to save the world – not from war but from environmental destruction.



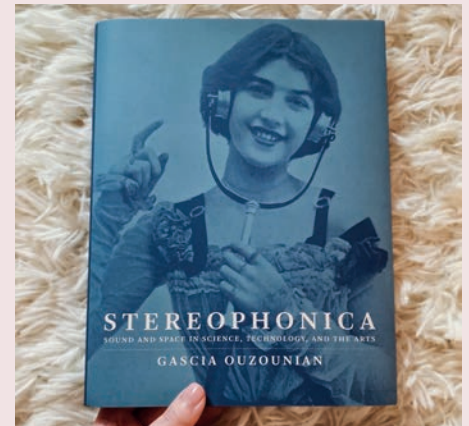
Sanja Bogojević's illustration on the book

STEREOPHONICA:



Sound and Space in Science, Technology, and the Arts

LMH Tutor and Fellow in Music
Professor Gascia Ouzounian
discusses her new book.



Contemporary art is replete with works that explore the relationships between sound and space, with “space” understood in physical, sensorial, geographical, social, and political terms. Today I can plug my headphones into the façade of a building in Berlin called *BUG* to hear how its materiality, made audible through the use of seismic sensors embedded into the building’s infrastructure, changes over time and in response to variations in atmospheric pressure, weather, and other environmental factors. In other words, I can listen to a building as it evolves over time and in relation to its surroundings. In suburban London I can visit *Vex*, a building whose spiralling form is inspired by the music of Erik Satie and the chance methods of John Cage. Electronic music, projected over loudspeakers, is played throughout the building. The music is created from sounds that were recorded during the making of the building itself: the sounds of breaking ground, of pouring concrete. This literal *musique concrète* is lush and surprisingly beautiful. And it is impossible to say where music begins and architecture ends.

While these particular projects are formed at the intersection of music, art, architecture, and urban design, many others take the form of sound recordings, compositions, performances, films, installations, sculptures, radio works, websites, and much more. Today I can take a listening tour of Bonn, following a map of unique acoustic features of the city created by Bonn’s “City Sound Artist” in 2010. Or I can take an “electrical walk” in any number of cities while wearing specially

designed headphones that make audible normally inaudible elements of the urban infrastructure. During my walk, what were formerly silent objects, such as surveillance cameras, ATMs, and transport infrastructures, beat and resonate with the pulses and tones of electromagnetic energy.

Despite this striking profusion of work that takes place at the intersection of sound and space, our historical understanding of how sound came to be understood as spatial nevertheless remains lacking. Today we take for granted that sound is spatial, and that hearing is spatial, too: that it is possible to hear where sounds come from and how far away or close they are. However, as recently as 1900, a popular scientific view held that sound itself could not relay “spatial attributes”, and that the human ear had physiological limitations that prevented it from receiving spatial information. In order to explore such striking shifts in perspective, my book *Stereophonica: Sound and Space in Science, Technology, and the Arts* (MIT Press) traces a history of thought and practice related to acoustic and auditory spatiality as they emerge in connection to such fields as philosophy, physics, physiology, psychology, music, architecture, and urban studies. I track evolving ideas of acoustic and auditory spatiality (the spatiality of sound and hearing); and, equally, ideas that emerged in connection to particular *kinds* of spaces, acoustic and auditory technologies, musical and sonic cultures, experiences of hearing, and practices of listening.

Rather than trace a linear trajectory through any one historical route,

however, I revisit a series of historical episodes in which the understanding of sound and space were distinctly transformed: the advent of stereo and binaural technologies in the nineteenth century; the birth of acoustic defence during the First World War; the creation of stereo recording and reproduction systems in the 1930s; sonic warfare during the Second World War; the development of “spatial music” and sound installation art in the 1950s and 1960s; innovations in noise mapping and sound mapping; and emergent modes of sonic urbanism (ways of understanding and engaging the city in relation to sound).

In contrast to discourses that understand “space” as a void to be filled with sounds, my discussion shows that acoustic and auditory spaces have never been empty or neutral, but instead have always been replete with social, cultural, and political meanings. *Stereophonica* reveals how different concepts of acoustic and auditory space were invented and embraced by scientific and artistic communities, and how the spaces of sound and hearing themselves were increasingly measured and rationalized, surveilled and scanned, militarized and weaponized, mapped and planned, controlled and commercialized—in short, modernized.

Find *Stereophonica* here:
<https://mitpress.mit.edu/books/stereophonica>

LEAVING LMH IN A PANDEMIC

Adapting from life as a full-time student and thinking about life after College is always daunting. Add in a global pandemic and “daunting” doesn’t quite do the reality justice: Finals sat at home; no closure of the traditional and sought-after graduation experience; job hunting in one of the most difficult climates of recent times; restrictions on travel; being unable to meet people “in person”; the list goes on.

We asked four final year students from 2020 to share their experiences with us: the outcomes are perhaps surprisingly optimistic, and expectedly resilient.



Finn Provan (2016 Modern Languages)

Last February, which is a year ago at the time of writing this, I was sitting in a yoga class in Jericho on a Wednesday night. The yoga instructor began the class by suggesting a theme to connect to and think about as we moved through our downward facing dogs and sun salutations. The theme of the evening was *transition*; she encouraged us to enjoy the time between “poses”, to be mindful of the journey from A to B — not as a means to an end, but as an opportunity for discovery. While this may all seem pretty cheesy, it’s remained quite a poignant memory of my last weeks in Oxford before leaving and entering into a sense of the unknown.

Last year, as Covid became more and more of a talking point in conversations yet still felt distant and intangible, I was enjoying my penultimate term of my degree in German and Linguistics. While I didn’t know exactly what I’d be doing after Finals were over in the summer, I was going through the motions of applying for jobs and beginning to fathom a world outside of Oxford and academia. Though I was conscious even then of trying to relish every single moment of my degree, the cogs of the exam and recruitment machines definitely created a clear fixation on an endpoint — when exams were over and I had job to go into.

And then came Covid. Certainty went out the window. At the end of Hilary, I packed all my things up, took as many potentially relevant books out of the library as I could and went home to Cardiff not knowing when/if I’d ever be going back to Oxford as a student or even how exams were going to take place remotely. There was no longer a clear

“Once I got into the groove of it, I found preparing for exams in lockdown fairly cathartic.”

endpoint or destination to aim for (I mean, there still isn't...). After a couple of weeks of stressing out over the logistics of everything (where was I going to study? – I didn't even have a desk at home... how would I ever be able to keep my family quiet during one four-hour exam, let alone seven of them?), ruing experiences to be missed (sunny Trinity afternoons on Port Meadow, a summer internship in Moscow), I resorted to following the advice of that yoga instructor and focusing on the points of transition and the journey in between.

Once I got into the groove of it, I found preparing for exams in lockdown fairly cathartic. I was lucky to have a home space that was reasonably conducive to study in and family around me who I got on with. I actually quite enjoyed the marginal isolation away from everything/everyone else. For the first few months of lockdown, I lived and breathed my studies. I rediscovered areas of my degree which I'd never taken much time to fully engage in beforehand. In particular, I fully realised why I had wanted to devote four years to my particular subjects. I think often it is easy to dissociate the content which we are being tasked to write an exam on with its greater external context. For example, I used to find when I'd read literature that a piece of writing may have evoked certain feelings within me but it was often filtered through

an understanding of distance. Now suddenly we were immersed in a world that resembled more that of fiction than reality. Perhaps it was a kind of turning point, but I found that everything going on in the world could really inform my understanding of what I was studying more than ever before. And so at the end of it, maybe I didn't get a proper Oxford trashing or school's dinner or graduation, but I did get a reignited passion for literature and linguistics, a kiss from my dogs and nice home-cooked meals.

When exams were over and that structure disappeared, it definitely took more perseverance to stay sane and not fall into a pit of slovenliness. I still didn't really have much of a clue about what I wanted to do; I had enjoyed my revision more than I had expected, so started to consider whether I should apply for a last-minute masters, but then there were also so many other things I wanted to explore. So I applied for many, many jobs – got countless rejections, wandered into multiple dead ends, but all in all started to get a sense of what I wanted to do and what I *really* didn't want to do. And then one job which I had applied to pretty much by chance amongst a pile of others started looking like a real contender. The job was in asset management, an industry I honestly knew very little about and had no direct experience of when I applied – I had seen the word 'global' in the job description and that caught

my attention. During the recruitment process, I noticed a marked difference to other interviews I had had with other companies; those interviewing me seemed genuinely interested in my viewpoints – the fact that my degree was not in any way related to economics or finance didn't seem to be viewed as a detriment but as an exciting opportunity to approach the role with a slightly different perspective. I was eventually offered the job and gladly accepted, starting remotely last November from my childhood bedroom. I had no clue whether it was the right move for me, but I had decided to trust my instincts and enjoy the journey. Three months in and I've moved to London with some friends and am really enjoying my job; I get to engage with top company executives from all around the world on a regular basis and learn more about the way the world works every day. I don't know where I'll be in five years' time, or even in one year's time, but I'm enjoying the process, trying not to get too impatient for things to “go back to normal”, and reflecting on the many ups and many downs of the past year.

“[I was encouraged] to be mindful of the journey from A to B – not as a means to an end, but as an opportunity for discovery.”

Freddie Gent (2017 English Language and Literature)



My job search had already begun by the time I returned for Third Year. I had decided to apply for a number of graduate schemes and so the seemingly never-ending cycle of CV uploads, aptitude tests and video interviews was in full swing. The process soon got tedious, but a stroke of luck saw me take a 36-hour hiatus from Michaelmas Term and journey to Edinburgh for an assessment. I fell at the final hurdle but this brief success had rejuvenated my job-searching efforts.

In the months which followed I received some rejections. However, I largely heard nothing. The latter occurrences were the most frustrating and felt extremely rude; a year on and I still haven't heard back from some businesses. With coursework deadlines and exams upcoming, I refused to start any new applications after the fourth week of Hilary Term. This decision paid dividends, allowing me to fully focus on my studies but spare more time to relax in the evenings.

Circumstances had started to change by the end of February 2020. Exam Schools had closed its doors as the threat of COVID-19 increased, so I submitted my dissertation through an online portal while sat in LMH library. The online

revision, virtual tutorials and open-book exams that followed have been well-documented, but it was disconcerting to see graduate opportunities disappear as companies adapted to restrictions and struggling markets. When I eventually returned to applications in Trinity Term, the hope of securing a job by summer has dissipated.

As a result, I began to consider an internship. Some organisations found the prospect of offering an online internship quite lucrative and the Careers Service did an excellent job to source so many opportunities for Oxford students. I had been pursuing roles in Human Resources, but the lack of success pushed me to diversify my search. This led me to discover a 12-week Student Experience Internship scheme run by the University's Centre for Teaching and Learning. Following a successful interview, I was delighted to join a six-strong team of Oxford graduates working to improve the experiences of those teaching and studying at Oxford during the COVID-19 pandemic. As students, we had our own views on the difficulties of completing a degree from home, but our priorities had to be balanced with those of academic, teaching, professional services and administrative staff. There was no simple or quick fix to some of the problems that we tackled, but I relished the need for innovative solutions.

The remote nature of the internship had its challenges. On several occasions my WiFi failed as I was presenting to large groups and motivation was difficult to come by without colleagues being present. This, however, brought the group of interns closer together. Honesty was a great coping policy—if you were fed up or frustrated, you just had to say and the others would be there to offer support. Three months was a long time

to work with a small team and never actually meet them, but I hold out hope that we can arrange something once the pandemic is over.

Securing 12 weeks of employment afforded me a brief break from job applications, but come the final month I spent my evenings scouring job sites. I quickly refamiliarised myself with writing cover letters and rediscovered the stamina to complete arduous application processes. But this time I had altered the range of my search. Having thoroughly enjoyed my time at the Centre for Teaching and Learning, I began to look for professional services roles in Higher Education. Despite the invaluable experience and wisdom that I had garnered from my internship, I acknowledged that the Oxbridge system was unique and so I was eager that my next move took me to another institution. With the uncertainty of the pandemic, I wished to stay close to home and—a few months later—was lucky to find myself taking up a post at the University of Manchester.

Since teaching went online in Trinity Term 2020, I have used the phrase “plodding along” quite a lot. This generally means that I'm coping: no more, no less. As much as I savoured my final term of studying medieval literature and have thrived in my employment since, I don't expect to maintain a constant positive outlook. It's okay to accept that things are just a bit rubbish at the moment and better times lie ahead. Sometimes I will video call friends and we will sit together (virtually) as we work. We'll keep the call running as we take tea breaks and, when we finish for the day, encourage each other to take a break from staring at screens. I'm lucky to have this support network, but we all have moments when we find lockdown life tough.

“Honesty was a great coping policy—if you were fed up or frustrated, you just had to say and the others would be there to offer support.”

Laura Neuhaus (2017 English Language and Literature)

Being a graduate of the class of 2020 was, for me, marked by absences, intimidating odds, and small victories.

Absences

After finishing my exams, I felt the absence of our free month in Oxford. My friends and I had compiled a list of things we still wanted to do in the city. It featured a Port Meadow picnic, breakfast at The Breakfast Club, and a white tie ball – we had our eye on St John's. We had three blissfully free weeks left at LMH after our last exam, and these had kept us going, a motivation for a time after revision. But, of course, we ended up sitting our exams online at home, and never went back to LMH.

Another absence was graduation. We had our tickets, my dad had booked a flight from Germany, and my boyfriend was under strict instructions to act as a buffer between my divorced parents. Very rarely do I have all of my family in one place. First delayed, then cancelled until further notice, these plans fell through too. My stepsister's graduation and my stepdad's passing out parade from the MET police were two further casualties. Our priorities had changed, and Covid came the top of everyone's list.

Intimidating odds

I missed the sense of closure I needed, the final ritual that sends graduates on their way into the job-hunting wilderness. Instead, we were welcomed there by daunting odds and haunting stories.

A friend, who is an accountant-to-be at Ernst and Young, reported that the firm had, by December, received as many applications as they normally do by July. Rejection emails swiftly popped into my inbox, citing "higher volumes of applications than usual" as their A-lister cause. I had decided that I wanted to become a solicitor at a City firm but, as a first-generation lawyer and non-law student, I was overwhelmingly underprepared for the fight I had chosen.

My friends and family sought to encourage me; someone in law recruitment somewhere had even told them that, upon accidentally deleting "a good one", they only laughed

at their own folly and moved on to the next application. Not exactly the encouragement that I was after!

Small victories

Instead, small victories have kept me going. I secured a paralegal job at a law firm. I was proud to achieve this mid-pandemic, as the only person to have done so at the firm without any legal qualifications. Although I am not at my dream City firm, I have gained invaluable trainee-level experience that has kept me sane during the second and third lockdowns. A good distraction from not seeing my boyfriend and my German family.

Another small victory was the success of my mentee. As a UNIQ ambassador, I worked on an access and outreach summer school at Oxford, held virtually this year. One of the A-level students in my group had gone to the same school as me, and I coincidentally bumped into her in town recently. She has secured a place at Exeter College, following her experience at the summer school. I was very pleased for her, even if she hadn't chosen the best of the colleges!

Finally, I have some exciting internships coming up. I am going to work for a legal-tech start-up, Libryo, a company that has created an online legal register of international regulations. I enjoy programming in my free time, so the company unites my interest in technology and law. I secured a mini-pupillage at One Hare court too, to experience life at a family law chambers, perhaps an alternative to law in the City. Lastly, I am designing a new commercial awareness competition for STRIVE, an access initiative for aspiring solicitors.

A sense of humour

I have learnt that it is important to have a sense of opportunity and of personal development, two qualities that the pandemic has stalled. A talk by Miles Young, an Oxford alumnus, also reminded me that a sense of humour is invaluable. I am an Oxford graduate, poised and ready to conquer the world... by sitting in her pyjamas in front of her laptop, tea in hand, hoping to discover a magic formula that will make the recruitment algorithm favour my application.



“All it takes is one connection, and that contact can put you in touch with one or two other people.”

Jillian Gedeon (2019 MBA)



Andrew MacFarlane

The career centres at the University of Oxford, and in particular, the Saïd Business School, emphasize the importance of networking in order to find your next career path. A one-year degree goes by very quickly, and shortly after you start, the reality of “what is next” starts to sink in. Informational interviews, understanding hiring processes, and creating genuine relationships with people in the industry of your choice are but a few of the objectives when networking with others. Though this task can be nerve-wracking and awkward in itself, events with coffee breaks, group Q&As, and refreshment tables can break the ice and let you organically run into people and drum up conversation.

Ergo, when the pandemic stripped away all in-person gatherings, I, along with my fellow colleagues in their final year at the University of Oxford, was all but cornered into the difficult task of networking from behind a screen.

At the time of the pandemic, I was exploring a few options for my next career move, from finance, to venture capitalism in health technology, to the world of health consulting. When I received an email from Emma, the LMH Alumni Engagement Officer, making herself available to connect me with the decades’ worth of amazing LMH alumni, I took advantage of the inauspicious situation that was the quarantine life, and

asked her to comb through the database for people who matched my profile.

All it takes is one connection, and that contact can put you in touch with one or two other people. With Emma’s help, I ended up speaking with 60 different people in the span of 7 months, all of whom enlightened me about their careers and helped me decide how to steer my own.

Job hunting already requires tenacity and determination, but job hunting in a pandemic requires all of that and more. With so much uncertainty looming in people’s lives and companies, along with the screen fatigue that everyone is continuously experiencing, I found the following techniques to work in my favour:

- 1) I sent contacts a very short email/note on LinkedIn asking for 15-20 minutes of their time. I felt that asking for anything more would overwhelm people and delay a response.
- 2) I created a two-page, visually appealing PowerPoint summarizing my experiences and motivations. This got people’s attention and drastically increased my rate of response and referrals.
- 3) I kept track of every single person I spoke with, which helped me target my networking, while keeping me in touch with my newfound connections.

Networking is the single most important activity when job hunting, and the drawbacks of doing everything online in a pandemic are outweighed by the increased amount of time and access we have to people in this period.

In late November 2020, I attended a *Women in Consulting* event hosted by my department, and serendipitously connected with a firm partner during the “speed networking” part of the event. The genuine connection led to an interview, which ultimately resulted in a job offer. My experience taught me that:

Opportunity x Preparation x A little bit of luck = Success

I was ready to share my story when the opportunity presented itself, and I was prepared to clearly communicate why I would be a good match for the firm.

I am happy to share that I am now working as a Strategy and Insights Planning Consultant at ZS Associates in London, where I contribute to systems, operations, and strategies in the healthcare and life sciences industry.



Harnessing
the power
of our LMH
Network



LMH: Building Links

The LMH Network is made up of over 10,000 members. That's 10,000 people, each with their own network of professional connections. We now want to open this incredible network up to you.

The LMH Network provides the most amazing opportunity for LMHers to help each other. Our alumni are our strength; whilst the Development Office currently offers a small-scale mentoring and networking service, you hold the keys to unlocking the true available potential to current students and other alumni.

This is an opportunity to get involved in College life indirectly. You may remember the daunting feelings of looking for internships and placements during your studies, or preparing to graduate after three or four years, without a job to go to. Or, several years into your career, you may have thought that you would like to change direction but had no idea where to start.

If this was you, you were not alone. The beauty of our LMH Network is that it will enable you to come across people who have had similar thoughts and feelings, and faced the same challenges... This is not to be underestimated in the ability you now have to help someone else.

We invite all LMH alumni and students to join a LMH LinkedIn group and actively use the space to network with your peers.

Within our wider online network, there are also sector-specific groups to help hone the advice you need, or opportunities you have to share. We strongly encourage you to connect with fellow LMH members and use this space to reach out to each other.

Our alumni database indicates that 75% are of "working age", with over 60% in full- or part-time employment; 5% are pursuing careers in academia; 3% are taking a career break; and 2% are full-time parents or caregivers.

There is someone in almost every sector you can imagine, with job titles ranging from what you might consider mainstream to the extraordinary. From a 2019 survey, about 45% of our alumni classed themselves as "very experienced" or are at "senior executive level" in their chosen field, and around 25% are at a more "junior" to "mid-level" stage.

However, the data we hold only scratches the surface of what alumni really do, and so does not paint the full picture of our LMH Network. That's where LMH: Building Links comes in.

Research shows that the top way people discover a new job is through referrals from their network; it is

estimated that 60% of jobs are never advertised, and exist within "the hidden job market". So cultivating contacts with professionals in sectors of interest is extremely useful when searching for jobs.

75% of those who recently secured a new job used LinkedIn to help inform their decision in some way. So it makes sense to use double the power of LinkedIn as a platform and the network of LMH alumni to bring our members together to help each other in so many possibilities.

One connection can have an endless ripple effect and with this programme we aim to harness the power of LMH as a community.

For any questions, or if you would benefit from a more personalised introduction to alumni in a particular sector, please do reach out to Emma Farrant, Alumni Engagement Officer, who will be pleased to assist you.

"One connection can have an endless ripple effect and with this programme we aim to harness the power of LMH as a community."

Please join the LMH LinkedIn group by visiting:
www.linkedin.com/groups/1211637/

GROUNDHOG DAY AND THE IN-BETWEEN SPACES



A socially-distanced Welfare Team

Writing in February, **Rev'd Andrew Foreshow-Cain**, Acting Head of Welfare and Chaplin, reflects on a challenging year for the College community.



"We couldn't have coped without the help of a wonderful team of student volunteer runners who delivered meals, collected takeaways, and washed clothes."

When I heard the news of the start of another national lockdown, I thought for a moment that I was Bill Murray in the 1993 film *Groundhog Day*, in which the main character is caught in a never-ending loop repeating the same day endlessly. Thankfully he escapes, and so shall we. The vaccine is being rolled out as I write and by the time you read this it looks as if a good number of those most at risk will be finally safe. My 87-year-old mother had hers in early January and it was such an emotional relief.

I became Acting Head of Welfare at the start of Michaelmas, just before the beginning of term in the middle of a global health crisis and as the college was about to fill up with 400-odd students, excited at being back at

university and seeing and mixing with their friends. It has been challenging. In Michaelmas we had to learn and adapt quickly, refining our responses to the presence of Covid-19 and working hard to care for those infected, their households and the wider community. As a small residential community, we had an advantage over many more dispersed universities. We were able to ensure that those in isolation received all the food they needed and got their laundry done. But we couldn't have coped without the help of a wonderful team of student volunteer runners, who delivered meals, collected takeaways, and washed clothes. I'm incredibly grateful to them for their cheerful hard work and the support offered by the JCR and MCR Welfare Reps.

We did have a good number of students infected, inevitable in a small community of young people. But as the term passed the students realised that being in isolation wasn't much fun and that when they went for a test their households didn't appreciate being made to lock down with them, so they seemed to learn to take the rules a little more seriously. Thankfully none of our students were very ill, though long Covid is very real and some of them are still living with the impact of it.

The second national lockdown was difficult and it was very odd being in college and knowing that there were over 400 people on site and not seeing anyone. I am used to seeing the library full, the hall buzzing and passing the time of day with the students as we move around the campus. For the most part, the students seemed to have stayed in their rooms, and with formal halls cancelled and students eating on their own or taking meals to their rooms the social heart of the college seemed to have stopped. I long for the day when we can sit down and take a meal together again.

The impact of this on the mental health of our students, and on our staff, can in part be imagined – because every one of us feels it: the sense of dislocation, of confusion, of being cut off and the loneliness and sense of loss. Across Michaelmas Term I tried to be in college at least three days a week and to

“Thankfully none of our students were very ill, though long Covid is very real and some of them are still living with the impact of it.”

see individual students for walks in the University Parks. I’ve walked around the perimeter path so many times this year! The whole Welfare Team has also been busy supporting students via Teams or Zoom meetings, which means we have been able to be in touch both with those on site and at home. Across the term I’ve become acutely aware of the quiet work done by the personal tutors and the support and encouragement that they have been offering. It’s been exhausting for them too, as they have adapted to teaching online and are constantly having to readjust expectations and plans. The work they do is the foundation of the pastoral care offered by the college and it’s often unacknowledged.

There are many fewer of us in college this Hilary Term: most students are still at home and learning is online. Chapel worship is once again suspended and our work continues via Teams and Zoom. We try to keep in touch with the students via email and with individual meetings when requested. At the end of term, we ran a Covid-secure, socially-distanced welfare tea for college households. We had about 110 students take part, with around 80 in the hall and the rest collecting afternoon tea goodies from the kitchen to eat back in their households. It was a lovely event run jointly by the College Welfare team and the JCR/MCR Welfare Reps. After

a whole term of not really seeing each other, it was good to see the Hall full of students, and to hear the chatter and banter of a social event, even if it was only possible with social distancing and each group sitting in their households and not mixing with each other.

It felt like a promise of a return to more normal times when we can gather together and enjoy each other’s company again. We are looking forwards to Wellbeing Week in week four of Trinity Term when we are able to gather in groups of up to 30 outside, and we are planning some covid-secure activities and group meetings to gently ease the students back into being able to mix more freely with each other.

My sense is that everyone’s mental and emotional resilience is much lower than before. I have already had far more serious conversations with students than previously and for many of them the prospect of another term at home, working on their laptops and in their bedrooms, isolated from friends, is hard to bear. The impact of this year on their lives, on all our lives, is going to be measured in far more than days and weeks lost in isolation and boredom.

When I write to the students I try to include a poem and this is one that sums up my mood at the start of this year and Hilary Term. It was up on the

Underground in London recently and I was moved by it:

Quarantine

I didn’t know I’d miss waiting at traffic lights, waiting for a burst of colour, a static of sound. I didn’t know I’d miss noise, crowds, the breathe of rain as it hits parched tarmac, being near enough to hear people’s breath. I didn’t realise I was only exactly alone when I was walking home from school, or to the shops. I didn’t realise it was the in-between times that held me together

Linnet (17)

As I have been telling students, it is darkest before the dawn and we are heading towards the end of this and as every day gets lighter with the coming spring, so every day brings closer the end to this pandemic. For now, there is no alternative but to keep our masks on, wash our hands, and look forward to the day when we can enjoy those in-between times together again.



A socially-distanced Carol Service, with students split into their household groups, and filming from afar to share with our community



An end-of-Term Welfare Tea with students sat in household groups

THE STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS

This strange pandemic year has not been good for mental health – and the student population has been particularly affected. **Samara Shackle** (2005 English Language and Literature) delves further in.

In December, a survey by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) found that 57% of students said that their mental health and wellbeing had worsened during the Autumn Term. More than one in five said that their mental health was much worse, while 63% felt that Covid-19 posed a big or significant risk to their mental or physical health. The findings were mirrored in another survey, by the National Union of Students (NUS), in which 52% of students reported that their mental health had deteriorated due to Covid-19. Steve West, vice-chancellor of the University of the West of England, and chair of Universities UK's mental health in higher education working group, said there had been a "doubling and quadrupling" of demand for support from students this year.

All of this is, perhaps, unsurprising, after a year in which we have all spent prolonged periods confined to our homes and deprived of our usual social lives. This is compounded for students, who are accruing significant debt for a now deeply disrupted few years at university. At a time of life when interpersonal relationships and connections are so important, they are restricted. But it's also worth remembering that the pandemic is only exacerbating an existing problem: for years now, British universities have

been home to a surge in student anxiety, mental breakdowns, and depression.

There has been a sharp rise in students dropping out – of the 2015 intake, 26,000 left in their first year, an increase for the third year running – and in the number of suicides. In the 12 months ending July 2017, the rate of suicide for university students in England and Wales was 4.7 deaths per 100,000 students, which equates to 95 suicides in the year, or about one death every four days. The crisis in student mental health hit the news in 2017 after a high number of suicides at Bristol University. Over 18 months, starting in October 2016, 12 students are believed to have killed themselves. While the university tried to tackle the crisis, it struggled to keep up with the rising demand for help. In November 2018, a group of students gathered on a chilly Bristol street holding placards demanding better access to psychological support services. The students told reporters that despite promises of more investment in student wellbeing, services were still badly overstretched. They were not alone; students around the country feel their universities are failing them. On World Mental Health Day in October 2018, students at University College London disrupted an open day with a

demonstration about waiting times for counselling. In March 2019, Goldsmiths students occupied Deptford town hall, calling for better access to counselling for BAME students. Student protests and demands for better mental health services are frequently dismissed in the press. "We just can't cope with essay deadlines, and tests stress us out, moan 'snowflake' students," read a headline in the *Daily Mail* in November 2017. But this is a problem that should be taken seriously.

Given that about half of young people in the UK now go to university, the number of students seeking help inevitably reflects a wider crisis in young people's mental health. One study found that six times more young people in England (aged four to 24) have psychological problems today than a generation ago, in 1995. In the decade after the financial crash, day-to-day spending on public services as a share of GDP was at its lowest since the late 1930s. Figures released in November 2017 showed that two-thirds of under-18s referred for specialist mental healthcare in England were not receiving treatment. Budget cuts to social work, youth services, the NHS, and state schools over this period mean that many young people experiencing problems do not get any help at all before they reach university, where they meet a new set of challenges.

In search of a cause for the dramatic increase in mental health problems among young people, studies have looked at the impact of social media, or lack of sleep caused by electronic devices, as well as the effects of an

"The pressures of the labour market, rising student debt and a target-driven culture [are contributing] to steep increases in anxiety and depression among young people."

uncertain job market, personal debt and constricted public services. In his 2017 book *Kids These Days: The Making of Millennials*, Malcolm Harris argues that the stereotype of young people as entitled and narcissistic is far from the truth: millennials are harder working but poorer than their parents' generation. Harris identifies the pressures of the labour market, rising student debt, and a target-driven culture as contributing to steep increases in anxiety and depression among young people. "Young people feel – reasonably accurately – less in control of their lives than ever before," he writes.

In the drive to make universities profitable, there is a fundamental confusion about what they are for. As a result, there has been a shift from prizing learning as an end in itself to equipping graduates for the job market. Successive prime ministers have urged more young people to go to university, with the promise of a better job at the end of it. But given the sluggish state of the economy since the 2008 crash, and the scarcity of graduate-level jobs, the connection is hardly clear. Again, this issue is further compounded by the economic disruption of the pandemic.

Student mental health is certainly high on the agenda for universities around the country, which is a welcome change. When I was at LMH in 2005-08, I don't recall ever hearing about a counselling or other support service, though I'm sure they must have existed. Friends seeking help for anxiety or depression were usually offered medication by the GP, or told to defer the year, with little mention of other assistance. Things are changing, and that is welcome. Over the last two

years, many universities have taken steps to increase the number of counsellors and reduce waiting times, launched courses on managing stress and anxiety, made support services easier to access, and tried to make students more aware of what is available – although Universities UK acknowledges efforts are "variable".

Yet deeper questions remain. Counselling may be helpful for many people, but it can't address the stresses built into university life, which can compound mental health problems or create new ones. The cost of going to university has steadily risen; in 2017, the cap for annual fees went up to £9,250, and is expected to keep rising. The average student now leaves university with about £50,000 of debt. According to a 2014 report, a significant number of students (45%) do paid part-time work alongside their studies, with 13 per cent doing a 35-hour week. Inevitably, this has an impact not only on academic performance but on students' ability to fully participate in university life.

It might seem like an intractable situation, but investment in student mental health services remains a vital line of defence – and particularly in light of the social isolation and general climate of anxiety that this last year has fostered. When I was reporting on this issue for the *Guardian* a few years ago, I spoke to Mark Crawford, who had been a student activist during his time at UCL: "The way universities currently operate is manufacturing conditions that create poor mental health," he said. "So at the very least, they should invest some resources so that everyone can be seen and supported."

LMH is passionate about nurturing a supportive and healthy environment for our whole community. We have welfare structures on both College-led and student-led levels, including a team of health professionals, tutors, support staff, and students dedicated to provide help and advice.

As well as student welfare officers, the College also takes part in the Peer Support Programme, a scheme run across the University by the Counselling Service. A team of students from the JCR and MCR, across a range of years and subjects, have been trained in active listening support. They are trained to help with welfare concerns and work to strict confidentiality rules. They have access to a range of resources they can refer students to, or can spend some time with those in need to support them through hard times.

Peer supporters abide by a Code of Practice, attend regular supervisions to consolidate their training and develop their skills, and are available to be contacted for any difficulty big or small you might encounter during term. They are available to talk to any student confidentially.

The College prides itself on being a place where students can always seek support. For more information, visit: www.lmh.ox.ac.uk/wellbeing



Samira Shackle (2005 English Language and Literature) is a freelance British journalist, writer, and editor. She is editor of the *New Humanist* magazine and regular contributor to the *Guardian's* Long Read and Opinion sections. Her reporting has been shortlisted for numerous awards.

In February 2021, her first book, *Karachi*, was published, and featured on BBC Radio 4's Book of the Week programme.

Karachi is Pakistan's largest city, a sprawling metropolis of 20 million people. It is a place of political turbulence in which those who have power wield it with brutal and partisan force, a place in which it pays to have friends in the right places and to avoid making deadly enemies. It is a society where lavish wealth and absolute poverty live side by side, and where the lines between idealism and corruption can quickly blur. It takes an insider to know where is safe, who to trust, and what makes Karachi tick, and in this book, Samira explores the city in the company of a handful of Karachiites.

WHO IS GOING TO LAW SCHOOL?

The Future of Diversity in the Legal Profession

Goodwin Liu (1991 Psychology, Philosophy and Physiology) was the first of his family to earn a Law degree. Since graduating in 1998 his career has rapidly progressed and he is now an Associate Justice of the California Supreme Court.

His expertise and passion lie in diversity in the legal profession, and in May 2020, with his colleagues Miranda Li and Phillip Yi (both Yale, 2019), Goodwin published an American Bar Foundation-sponsored study examining the changing diversity of law students.

The study provides a fresh and thorough empirical foundation for discussions of diversity in law school and the legal profession in the US. Analysing data from the American Bar Association (ABA) and the Law School Admission Council (LSAC), the paper takes an in-depth look at gender, race, and nationality in law school admissions since the Great Recession a decade ago.

Their findings for discussion are summarised here, republished from their paper with kind permission from Justice Liu.

Over the past two decades, the number of students attending law school has been in nearly constant flux. Enrolment increased significantly during the decade before the Great Recession and has decreased even more significantly during the decade since. Today there are nearly 25% fewer law students than there were at the peak in 2010 and 10% fewer than there were 20 years ago. Although law school applicants have increased by nearly 11% since 2016, new matriculants have increased by only 3%. After 20 years of dynamic growth and decline, it is possible that law school enrolment is now entering a period of relative constancy. It remains to be seen how industry developments or changes in social, economic, or political conditions, such as the outcome of the 2020 U.S. election and the global pandemic, will affect enrolment going forward.

Our analysis reveals several demographic trends that merit further inquiry. First, women have outnumbered men in law school since 2016. Male enrolment peaked in 2010 and has declined every year since, while female enrolment has risen gradually since its nadir in 2016. The recent uptick in overall enrolment is entirely attributable

to increasing numbers of women attending law school. And the current majority status of women in law school is almost wholly due to the substantial predominance of women among Asian, Black, and Hispanic students.

Given the historic predominance of men in law school and the legal profession, the implications of this current trend for legal education and the profession deserve careful study. Women have closed the gender gap at the top-ranked schools as a whole, and there are signs that women are leveraging these opportunities for further success. In the fall of 2019, the editors-in-chief of the principal law reviews at the top 16 schools were all women; indeed, women have held half or more of those editor-in-chief positions for each of the past five years. In the 2018 Term of the U.S. Supreme Court, more than half the law clerks were women for the first time. And consistent with the changing gender makeup of the student population, a record number of women are now serving as law school deans.

Nevertheless, significant gender gaps remain at the top ranks of the profession. Women comprise one-third of active federal judges and only 20% of equity partners at the 200 largest law

firms. In addition, although the number of women attending law school now exceeds the number of men, the impact of this development on the profession is unclear in light of the disproportionate enrolment of women in schools with relatively low bar passage and post-graduation employment rates. It is far too soon to suggest that current enrolment trends portend the feminisation of the legal profession. More detailed analysis is necessary to answer basic questions, such as how many women who attend law school eventually graduate, pass the bar exam, and practice law.

Second, as law school enrolment has declined over the past decade, its racial and ethnic diversity has changed. Since the Great Recession, Asian and White enrolments have decreased significantly, Black enrolment has declined modestly, and Hispanic enrolment has increased. At first glance, the rising percentages of Black students and Hispanic students in the law school population may appear to be a salutary trend. But it is a sobering fact that Black students and Hispanic students are disproportionately enrolled in lower-ranked schools. As with women, further analysis is needed to determine how many Black or Hispanic students

“The demographics of law students have changed significantly over the past decade, and understanding these changes is essential to building a more diverse and inclusive legal profession. We may see more big changes over the next decade, depending on the depth and duration of the economic slowdown due to the coronavirus pandemic.”

go on to graduate, pass the bar, and practice law. Given the substantial indebtedness and opportunity costs that students incur by attending law school, the changing racial and ethnic makeup of recent enrolments should be interpreted cautiously.

Third, over the past decade, Asian American law school enrolment has fallen more steeply than the enrolment of any other racial or ethnic group. As a result of this decline, the number of Asian American lawyers is expected to stagnate around the year 2030 after several decades of robust growth. The reasons for the differential decline of Asian Americans attending law school warrant further study. It is possible that Asian American enrolment declined more than for other groups in response to the Great Recession because Asian Americans have greater concern about financial security in choosing a career or because they disproportionately lack exposure to or encouragement toward law in the face of growing pressure to choose a career path before completing college.

In order to reverse or mitigate current trends, civic organizations, bar associations, and law student groups, such as the National Asian Pacific American Bar Association and

the National Asian Pacific American Law Students Association, may wish to consider collaborating with guidance counsellors and faculty at the undergraduate and even high school levels to develop outreach strategies that inform students earlier in the educational pipeline about careers in the legal profession.

Fourth, the number of foreign nationals enrolled in JD programs has increased significantly in recent years. Among them, Asian foreign nationals comprise the largest group, and the experiences and career paths of these students deserve additional study. The increasing presence of foreign nationals in law schools also underscores the importance of distinguishing between Asians and Asian Americans in reporting enrolment data. It is notable that the ABA, the most widely cited resource on enrolment data, reports non-resident aliens separately from U.S. citizens and permanent residents.

Finally, the number of law students who identify as multiracial is increasing. We expect this number to continue to grow, consistent with broader demographic trends, and this presents significant challenges for data collection and reporting. The ABA reports

multiracial students as a separate category, resulting in an undercount of non-Hispanic students who partly identify as Asian, Black, White, or another race. For example, the ABA’s count of Asian students (properly understood as Asian Americans since non-resident aliens are reported separately) does not include multiracial students. Moreover, although the LSAC counts students in every race or ethnicity category they select, we are not aware of any data collection that reports multiracial students based on the particular combination of races or ethnicities with which each student identifies. Going forward, accurate understanding of enrolment trends will require greater attention to these complexities, as the number and percentage of multiracial individuals within the student population continue to grow.

“The demographics of law students have changed significantly over the past decade, and understanding these changes is essential to building a more diverse and inclusive legal profession,” said Liu. “We may see more big changes over the next decade, depending on the depth and duration of the economic slowdown due to the coronavirus pandemic.”

To read the paper in full please visit: https://lawreview.law.ucdavis.edu/issues/54/2/articles/li_yao_liu.html

About Goodwin Liu



Goodwin Liu is an Associate Justice of the California Supreme Court, sworn into office in 2011. Before joining the state’s highest court, Justice Liu was Professor of Law and Associate Dean at the UC Berkeley School of Law. His primary areas of expertise are constitutional law, education law and policy, and diversity in the legal profession.

The son of Taiwanese immigrants, Justice Liu grew up in California, where he attended public schools. He went to Stanford University and earned a bachelor’s degree in biology in 1991. He came to Oxford and LMH on a Rhodes Scholarship

immediately afterwards. Upon returning to the United States, he went to Washington D.C. to help launch the AmeriCorps national service program and worked for two years as a senior program officer at the Corporation for National Service.

Justice Liu graduated from Yale Law School in 1998, becoming the first in his family to earn a law degree.

Justice Liu is an elected member of the the American Philosophical Society, American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and the American Law Institute. He serves on the Council of the American Law Institute, on the Board of Directors of the James Irvine Foundation, and on the Yale University Council.



Sam Dalrymple (2016 Oriental Studies) tells us how he has made a career out of a small project that started in his final year at LMH, and the difference three years later that a small amount of JCR seed funding has made to many lives.



In my final year at LMH, my friends and I timidly approached the JCR for a bit of funding for a refugee project we were starting. The idea was simple: to reconnect refugees of the 1947 Partition of India and Pakistan with their childhood homes and communities. We wanted to use Virtual Reality to show these people their pasts, what life was like since they had fled home. The JCR agreed to give me £500 of seed funding. Little did I know that two years later, this project would still be my job.

In the aftermath of the Second World War, clumsily improvised borders were hastily branded onto the Indian Subcontinent as the British hastily left their most important colony, and immediately there began the largest mass migration in human history. This Partition of India and Pakistan was one

of the most traumatic and important events of the twentieth century. It created one of the biggest refugee crises seen in human history, and precipitated the end of the British Empire. 14 million people migrated, and between one and three million tragically perished.

Growing up in India's capital Delhi, Partition was everywhere. Most of the older generation has never really recovered from this ordeal. They still miss and talk about their old homes on the other side of the border, but 73 years since, they have never gone back. Due to the conflict over Kashmir, India and Pakistan still do not operate a tourist agreement, and their border is today one of the most heavily fortified and contested regions of the world. It spans entire forests, urban centres, and inhospitable deserts. The 3,000km

LEFT Participants watching the VR video tours

of border wall is lit up by over 150,000 floodlights, fitted with thermal-imaging sensors and guarded by drones via a satellite-signal command system. The countries on either side of this border both have nuclear weapons, and have been at war over this wall many, many times.

Today, the world continues to face the fallout. If you want to understand the insurgencies in Kashmir, Baluchistan and North East India, the nuclear arms race in Asia, the Rohingya refugee crisis, and even the rise of the Taliban – it all begins in 1947, with this wall.

For many of the Indians, Pakistanis, and Bangladeshis in Oxford, university abroad is the first time they meet someone from across the wall. One hungover morning, in the aftermath of mods, my friends Sparsh (Indian) and Ameena (Pakistani), both at St Hilda's, sat down over a coffee and exchanged their grandparents' stories of Partition. They realised that their grandparents had travelled on almost identical journeys, but in opposite directions. Both their grandparents yearned to return home but due to wars, old age, and trauma, there were still too many barriers. We wanted to take them back.

We came up with a crazy plan, which we called Project Dastaan (Story). We would interview survivors of the Partition, and create bespoke mini-documentaries on their stories, alongside 360-degree VR "video tours" for the survivors so they could virtually revisit their childhood homes. After LMH gave us seed funding, we built a website and began applying for grants online, reaching out to scholars and advisors. And then one day we won a large grant. Our dream had finally become possible.

One of the first survivors we interviewed was a Pakistani man called Iqbal-ud-din Ahmed, who lives in London today. In 1947, Iqbal lived in a part of Punjab called Roopnagar in India. He was eight years old at the time. He lost his home in attacks and fires, hid with his community in Koh-e-Shahiwal hills near Shimla, and ended up in the Korali Refugee Camp, where he lost his mother. He remembered seeing bodies on the side of the street.

Luckily, Iqbal and his family were able to escape the killings – they made it to a camp in Lahore, and were able to start a new life. Yet Iqbal deeply missed Ropar. He told us about the village mosque he helped build with bricks and mortar. He told us about his childhood friend, a Sikh boy called Narender Singh, and the games he would play with his primary school teacher, Master Polo Ram. With tears in his eyes, he told us that he would see the same hills again in his eyes when he took his last breaths.

In December 2019, Sparsh and I set out to retrace Iqbal's steps and bring him back a small token from his past. We didn't have much to go on, apart from our interview with him – and a lot has changed in these areas in the last 70 years, with industrialisation transforming these rural landscapes. We weren't really sure if we would be able to find anything at all. But we had one clue. Before we left, Iqbal handed us a photo of a mosque, which Narender Singh had sent him after the Partition

When we arrived in Ropar, it was 6am – and pitch black. We managed to find the only Uber in the town – driven by a bubbly, bearded, boisterous man called Ranjodh. Ranjodh was puzzled why two kids from Delhi, armed with GoPros, would turn up in his village in the middle of the Punjab winter asking for the abandoned brick mosque, and not delicious dhaba food. But the moment we mentioned it was for a family in Pakistan, he was all smiles. In the space of five minutes we had found our guide.

Initially, it seemed like we were in the wrong town altogether. There was indeed a mosque but it looked nothing like the one in Iqbal's photo. This one was whitewashed and bare, without the bright frescoes that Iqbal remembered. But the closer we looked, the more we realised this was indeed the same structure. Seventy-three years of monsoon rain have left it plainer than before. The elaborate decorations had vanished, but we could still make out the similarities. Across both sides of the Punjab, structures like this dot the landscape, neglected memories of a time now lost.

Finding the mosque was just the first step. We wanted to find out more about



TOP Iqbal-ud-din Ahmed

ABOVE Iqbal's mosque

“Project Dastaan has grown a lot since that first £500 from LMH. We were invited to participate in the Venice International Film Festival in September 2020, and are currently working on an animated series and an interactive VR learning experience with the BFI Doc Society and National Geographic.”



ABOVE Watching the VR video tours

RIGHT Reconnecting old friends in Phambra



the man in the photo: Iqbal's childhood friend Narender Singh. In a small motorway restaurant with plastic chairs and oily breakfast fry-ups, we learned that Narender Singh had passed away 20 years before, but there were rumours his wife – now in her 90s – still lived in nearby Chandigarh with her grandchildren. One villager had a phone number and an address and so off we went.

When we arrived at the house, a frail elderly lady came out to greet us. Immediately we called up Iqbal, and got one of the most tearful and heartfelt exchanges I've ever seen. Iqbal and his family immediately invited Kuldeep – now in her mid 90s – to come on holiday to London. Any animosity about the “other side of the border” vanished within seconds.

Weeks later, we arrived at his house in London with the virtual tour we had filmed. Family members gathered round as Iqbal put on a VR headset and stood face to face with the home he had fled 73 years earlier. Tears filled his eyes as he looked around the home where he grew up. It has been 73 years since Iqbal and his family left India. The wall has shaped his life ever since, and he will likely never cross that line in the sand ever again. Yet Sparsh and I found out that deep inside, tucked away beneath the aging folds of his memory – beneath the trauma of Partition, his life in Pakistan, his children,

grandchildren, and a second migration to the United Kingdom – there was a small piece of India still within him. A fragment of life before the border. A fragment that would likely have been hidden away and lost to history, had he not been given a chance to see it replayed in front of his eyes, one last time.

Project Dastaan has grown a lot since that first £500 from LMH. We were invited to participate in the Venice International Film Festival in September 2020, and are currently working on an animated series and an interactive VR learning experience with the BFI Doc Society and National Geographic. As part of the NSAHM, we have spoken to the British Parliament twice on integrating South Asian heritage and history into the UK curriculum. I recently signed a book contract to write about Partition history.

For years after 1947, a traumatised generation suppressed their dark memories of the Partition deep within them. Both countries were developing at breakneck pace. And after centuries of colonial shame, politicians on either side of the border rushed to create feelings of national unity and pride. But you can't bury trauma simply by running towards progress. It seeps out in the next generation, who hear the stories about the destruction and violence their parents survived, but rarely those of the harmony and humanity before the

border was created.

Historian Anam Zakaria writes in her interviews with Partition survivors that it is often youth that are most hostile to the “other side”, even more so than the survivors themselves. It is the children, who have never experienced what it was like to live side by side with their neighbours, that harbour resentment: this intergenerational trauma is at the heart of so many of South Asia's problems today. Seventy-three years after the Partition, these countries continue to fight over their borders and persecute their minorities – those who never migrated, and whose loyalty to the state is constantly in question. India's Muslims, and Pakistan's non-Muslims remain bound to the wall, even though they chose not to migrate to the other side.

Yet unlike their children, the older generation knew exactly what it was like to live together with the other side. Some of them even had their lives saved by the other community. And it is in preserving and sharing these fragmented memories – the bonds between the many Iqbals and Kuldeeps – that the key to future peace in South Asia lies.

The border between India and Pakistan, frozen by four wars and a nuclear deadlock, will probably be visible from space for the rest of our lives. It's time to break it down, one conversation at a time.

To find out more about Project Dastaan, visit their website: www.projectdastaan.org/.



Professor David Macdonald

“The biodiversity crisis threatens the moving parts of nature that sustain ecosystems and support humanity.”

THE WORLD’S FIRST CONSERVATION VENTURE STUDIO

The world’s First Conservation Venture Studio was launched on 9 February, with a mission to bring innovative solutions to the world’s most pressing environmental problems. OXGAV, as it will be known, is a partnership between the University of Oxford, Global Accelerated Ventures, and Oxford University Innovation.

OXGAV will support the research and development of cutting-edge innovations by interdisciplinary scientists across departments at Oxford, and will enable the outputs of this research to be commercialised and scaled around the world. Technologies coming from OXGAV will combat global warming, biodiversity loss, Covid-19, food security, ocean plastics, the energy crisis, and more. The Studio will also serve as a think-tank for thought leadership in conservation innovation.

LMH Fellow Professor David Macdonald, Founder and Director of the Wildlife Conservation Research Unit (WildCRU), will be the inaugural Chairman of OXGAV’s Joint Steering Committee. LMH took a global lead in establishing the first university-based Research Fellowship in Wildlife Conservation, taken by Professor Macdonald in 1986. LMH has been the Oxford college dedicated to wildlife conservation research ever since.

Professor Macdonald says, “The biodiversity crisis threatens the moving parts of nature that sustain ecosystems and support humanity. Novel technologies expand human capacity beyond previous imagining. What more potent, then, than

to combine the greatest problem on earth with the greatest source of solutions, for the shared wellbeing of nature and people? At the WildCRU we’ve been developing technologies to serve conservation since the early days of radio-tracking – most recently, we’ve been using individual voice recognition to count lions, and monitoring elephants from space.”

Dr Robert Montgomery, Professor of Conservation Science at Michigan State University, has accepted the position of the Managing Director of OXGAV. He will also be taking up an academic appointment as a Senior Research Fellow at LMH and a position in WildCRU at the Department of Zoology.

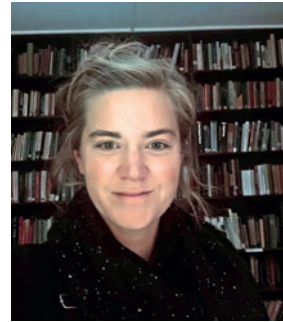
Dr Montgomery says, “Addressing the world’s conservation challenges requires immediate action. I am extremely excited to join OXGAV where Oxford University, GAV, and Oxford University Innovation have demonstrated their commitment to engineering a more prosperous and sustainable future for people, wildlife, and the environment via the commercialisation of technological and entrepreneurial solutions.”

LMH Principal Alan Rusbridger says, “LMH is proud of its long association with the WildCRU and the special involvement it gives the College in conservation: the brilliant idea of the Conservation Venture Studio adds another jewel to this already glittering crown, and should galvanize inter-departmental research to the great benefit of wildlife, the wider environment and Oxford.”

SPOTTING ELEPHANTS FROM SPACE

A Satellite Revolution

A team of researchers led by LMH student **Isla Duporge** (DPhil Zoology 2017) have been using new technology to detect elephants from space.



The team, based at The Wildlife Conservation Research Unit (WildCRU) in Oxford, have been using the highest resolution satellite imagery currently available – Worldview 3 – from Maxar Technologies and deep learning (TensorFlow API, Google Brain) to detect elephants from space with comparable accuracy to human detection capabilities.

If finding a needle in a haystack is a challenge, counting elephants from space sounds like science fiction, but that is exactly what a team led by Isla has achieved.

The population of African elephants (*Loxodonta Africana*) has plummeted

over the last century due to poaching, retaliatory killing from crop raiding, and habitat fragmentation. To conserve them requires knowledge of where they are and how many there are: accurate monitoring is vital.

Existing methods are prone to error. Inaccurate counts lead to misallocation of scarce conservation resources and misunderstanding population trends.

Currently the most common survey technique for elephant populations in savannah environments is aerial counts from manned aircraft. Observers on aerial surveys can get exhausted, be hindered by poor visibility, and otherwise succumb to bias, and aerial surveys can

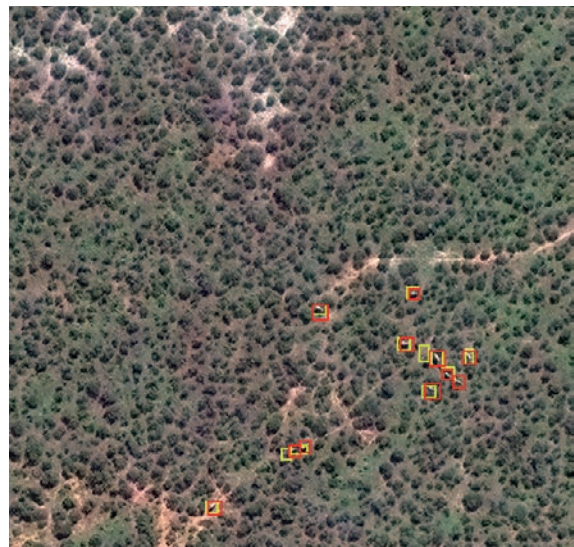
be costly and logistically challenging.

A team from the University of Oxford (WildCRU: Department of Zoology and the Machine Learning Research Group: Department of Engineering) in collaboration with Dr Olga Isupova, University of Bath, and Dr Tiejun Wang, University of Twente, set out to solve these problems.

Remotely sensing elephants using satellite imagery and automating detection via deep learning provides a new method for surveying elephants and also solves various existing challenges. Satellites can collect upwards of 5000 km² imagery in one pass in a matter of minutes, eliminating the risk of double

RIGHT Elephants just visible from the satellite

FAR RIGHT Confirmation of elephants detected



“Finding a needle in a haystack is a challenge, but counting elephants from space sounds like science fiction, but that is exactly what a team led by Isla has achieved.”

counting. Repeat surveys are also possible at short intervals.

Satellite monitoring is an unobtrusive technique requiring no ground presence, thus eliminating the risk of disturbing species, or human safety concerns during data collection. Previously inaccessible areas are rendered accessible, and cross-border areas – often crucial to conservation planning – can be surveyed without the time-consuming requirements of terrestrial permits.

One of the challenges of using satellite monitoring is processing the enormous quantity of imagery generated. However, automating detection means that a process that would formally have taken months can be completed in a matter of hours. Furthermore, machines are less prone to error, false negatives, and false positives. Deep learning algorithms are consistent and can be rectified by systematically improving models: the same cannot be said for humans.

Of her project Isla said, “Conservation science needs to keep pace with technological development, it’s now possible to use high resolution satellite imagery to monitor species but we need to develop the techniques to use this new technology more effectively using the state of the art in machine learning.”

To develop this new method, the team created a customised training dataset of more than 1,000 elephants in South Africa, which was fed into a Convolutional Neural Network (CNN), and the results were compared to human performance. Elephants, it turns out, can be detected in satellite imagery with accuracy as high as human detection capabilities. The results (known



Isla with a drone used for surveying

as the F2 score) of the CNN models was 0.78 in heterogeneous areas and 0.73 in homogenous areas, compared with an averaged human detection capability F2 score of 0.77 in heterogeneous areas and 0.80 in homogenous areas. The model could even detect elephants in places far from the training data site, showing the generalisability of the model. Having trained the machine only on adults, it was then able to identify calves.

The researchers believe that this demonstrates the power of technology to serve conservation: satellite remote sensing and deep learning technologies offer promise for the conservation of these majestic mammals. Conservation technologies open a new world of possibilities, to be embraced with the urgency necessitated by the sixth mass extinction and the global plight of biodiversity.

To find out more about Isla’s research and the project, please visit: www.wildcru.org/members/isla-duporge/

BELOW Some of the talks offered by the centre in Michaelmas Term

MICHAELMAS '20 TALK SERIES
OXFORD STUDY SKILLS CENTRE
OSSC

From Oxford to Formula 1 and beyond: an engineer's tale
Dr Mark Catherall
Week 3:
October 28

Cycling the limits of the Roman Empire
Penny Coombe
Week 7:
November 25

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- DROP-INS COMING SOON!

BOOK ONLINE

STUDY SKILLS IN A PANDEMIC



Margaret Coombe (Mallaband, 1971 History and Modern Languages) is Director of the Oxford Study Skills Centre. Since its opening at LMH in summer 2018, countless students have been welcomed through the doors – and most recently on screen – and benefited from the services Margaret and her team offer.

The first to achieve an Oxbridge place from my Derbyshire comprehensive school, I arrived at LMH in the 1970s worried that I would not fit in. I loved it. After professional qualifications, management, and business experience, I was lucky to return to fulfil a lifelong ambition. The DPhil was a revelation but, given a library full of manuscripts and all the time in the world, why could I not settle to it? I adjusted and once again loved every minute. Now “Doctor Coombe” and after a post-doctoral place at LMH, I was offered a post at Harris Manchester College to teach medieval history. My experience there ranged from outreach to admissions, Anglo-Saxons to mental health, including spells as acting Senior Tutor and helping some students transition from work to study as mature

students. Word spread about my work with study skills and I soon had more than I could reasonably manage. This demand reflected a hidden need, which I thought deserved a dedicated Centre for Study Skills.

When I came to speak to the Principal in March 2018 to propose such a centre based at LMH, he saw its potential to supplement the other academic innovations which LMH was pioneering. The LMH Development Office identified alumni who provided seed capital, and the doors of the Oxford Study Skills Centre @ LMH (OSSC) opened three months later.

Oxford's tutorial system has enabled and shaped the futures of world-class scholars and leaders. Students must develop a range of skills to succeed and,

whatever their background and previous education, many find the transition to this system challenging. This is where the Study Skills Centre comes in, to support tutors and students to make best use of their time, especially in the current pandemic, which has disrupted their last years of school and launched them into a remote university environment.

The ultimate vision is for a university-wide study skills hub for all Oxford students so that they can succeed at Finals and start their careers with the skills necessary for a full and successful working life. The university has committed in its Access and Participation Plan 2020-21 to 2024-25 to strengthen study skills support and deliver an inclusive teaching and learning programme, but inevitably the establishment of any university-wide

“Many say that excellence is incompatible with diversity and inclusion, but that is not the view at LMH, nor at OSSC.”

function like this will take time. Through OSSC we have not only been supporting students at LMH but in our short life have been approached to work with 14 other colleges. The very warm welcome and encouragement for this project at LMH, the support of its Principal and Governing Body, and above all the generosity of its alumni, have been overwhelming. I am most grateful to the many who have supported OSSC.

Many say that excellence is incompatible with diversity and inclusion, but that is not the view at LMH, nor at OSSC. Some from the most privileged academic backgrounds may never have been stretched at school. Some have scarcely had to manage their own time. Some are resourceful but have gaps in their knowledge or techniques. One tutor trained by OSSC and now working at another college comments: “A few of my students are creative, critical thinkers and have trouble learning how to fit their novel reflections into tutorial essays ... I have yet to come across another programme in Oxford that can both identify and fill this gap for students at the point where their personal perceptions and work habits demand a clear explanation of the requirements of Oxford study.”

But what are study skills? Yes, we teach time management, revision and exam skills, reading, writing, and listening. These can be accessed on demand by all LMH students thanks to donations from our alumni. On the same basis, we also offer tailored sessions for Foundation Year students. Other colleges pay a small fee to engage OSSC; their students are referred by their Senior Tutors.

But there is more to it than that. We work with each individual to uncover their best way to work and rest, listen to their ambitions for themselves, and prepare them for future study or the world of work. We encourage reflective learning and help each to identify what kind of learner they are and what tools they can develop to make more of their

talents, adapt to positive thinking and gain intellectual growth. Each year we reach hundreds of students at all stages and across all disciplines. Our staff have grown to seven. Of the fifteen LMH students who approached us for help in the run-up to Finals in 2020, nine took Firsts and the remainder achieved a 2:1.

A feature of the Oxford teaching system is that many early-career graduate researchers receive few opportunities to learn how to teach. We therefore train current postgraduates in techniques and methodologies and they receive teaching experience with regular support, encouragement, and guidance. One such researcher, who had been teaching at a public school before entering Oxford, said that although he knew how to teach OSSC provided new insights.

When the pandemic struck, our new challenges were nothing compared to those which faced the students. OSSC responded quickly and over a single weekend in March 2020 devised new systems, and added materials and guidance notes to our website. Not everyone had, or still has, good internet coverage at home. While Zoom and Teams now reach most students, we also offer sessions by phone, Skype, and email, making sure that everyone who needs support receives it. We have developed interactive online puzzles, quizzes, and pre-meeting tests for students to try out, and internally published fact sheets and guides to help with online working and exams. For at least another five years, colleges will be admitting students whose schooling has been disrupted, so OSSC is reaching out to offer-holders and potential candidates and, in conjunction with the wonderful LMH Comms Office, are branching out into social media.

Tutors have noticed huge improvements in their students' work, and students have risen to the challenges of the year with added confidence. The feedback we receive demonstrates the value of our work:

I left each session with a huge sense of calm. The sessions helped me develop some invaluable skills and get into the right mindset to use them.

I am amazed at how far I've progressed. I never would have been able to do so without you. I've really enjoyed our sessions and found every minute beneficial.

I really like how each session is tailored specifically to my needs and that there is a very friendly environment with no pressure or judgement.

We also regularly hear from former students who continue to find these skills useful in their work or further study. One wrote:

I've come a long way from the days back when I was thinking about not even continuing on to do a masters, when I really didn't know how to structure an essay, and I just wanted to say again: thank you so much for your support during my undergraduate years. I don't know where my career will take me after the PhD, but I do know that I wouldn't have achieved this today without you believing in me when I really didn't. I feel quite emotional thinking about the fact that I may well not have been living this life that seems to suit me so well, had you not taken the time to care! I remember this lesson regularly with my own students and strive always to help them know that I believe that they have value and that they are capable, no matter what is going on in their lives or what the rest of the world might have taught them.

Thank you to all LMH alumni who have supported OSSC financially and in other ways. I hope that you will agree that you have contributed to a great initiative which is changing the lives and future prospects of hundreds of students, in Oxford and elsewhere.

To find out more about the Oxford Study Skills Centre, visit: www.oxfordstudyskillscentre.co.uk.



BECAUSE WE CAN



Over seven years ago **Josh Tulloch** (2016 PPE) founded an inspiring project to help fight food poverty, based on his own experiences in his early teens. After graduating in 2019, Josh kept his links with LMH and added an Oxbridge twist.



Since 2015, food bank usage in the UK has increased by 74%. More than 7.1 million emergency food parcels have been distributed since then, with millions going to children. Much as with other social problems, the pandemic has exacerbated food poverty in the UK, making bad situations much worse. At least 100,000 people used a food bank for the first time during the first month of lockdown. The Trussel Trust estimates that the pandemic, and subsequent economic fallout, could increase food bank usage by 61%.

The fact that this crisis has been building in recent years is troubling enough, but Covid is now devastating the already devastated, and pulling millions more onto the breadline. It's especially heartbreaking to see how many of those parcels are needed for children, because I know what it's like to be one of those kids.

I was homeless for a period of time in my early teens, and faced situations where my family didn't know where the next meal would come from. Fortunately, we had the support of friends, charities, and local councils. But many others are less fortunate.

In 2014, I founded "Because We Can", a community of advocates, organizers, and creatives focused on fighting food poverty. Our aim is to help those who have fallen through the now gaping holes in our social safety net. The fundamental principle behind the



Donation points in college Lodges, JCRs, and teaching spaces

organization is: if it's possible to help, why not help? If you can, then do.

Our first project began in my secondary school, where the annual food drive we established has now collected 11 tonnes of donations for food banks in London. At the end of 2020, we brought the concept to Oxbridge, pitting the two ancient rivals against each other for "The Great Oxbridge BOGOF". It was a collaborative, inter-collegiate contest encouraging students to donate as many items as possible to their local food banks in weeks six to eight of Michaelmas Term, under the maxim 'Buy One Give One Free!' The basic idea was that if students were buying items that their local food bank was also in need of, then they should buy a few extra to donate.

The competition got off to a strong start with 600+ items donated within the first 2 days! Clare of Cambridge and Keble of Oxford immediately cemented,

"I founded 'Because We Can', a community of advocates, organizers, and creatives focused on fighting food poverty. Our aim is to help those who have fallen through the now gaping holes in our social safety net."

and then defended their first place position until the very end. Cambridge dominated the contest, until Oxford managed to snatch victory with a last-minute surge. Together, the universities donated a staggering 10,000+ items. LMH came third in the Oxford competition,

having collected nearly 500 items!

Although the competition was fun, the reality of what it was addressing is anything but. I know this from personal experience. We want to take this contest to universities across the UK (lockdown permitting!) to encourage others to do their bit for their local community, simply because they can.

The generosity showed by the students was astounding, and it's something we've seen reflected across this country. From the response to Marcus Rashford's campaign to the thousands of mutual aid groups which were created in response to the crisis, people are showing that even while they are facing their own personal difficulties, when they are confronted by the struggle of others, they find the space to give. Coronavirus has disrupted our daily lives, and cut off our social contact. But society exists beyond the social. We are isolated, but we are not alone.

To find out more about Because We Can, follow the project on social media: <https://www.facebook.com/pg/becausewecanuk/>

QUIZ CORNER

Bobby Seagull (MSc(Res) Mathematics, 2003) is a regular contributor to BBC Radio Four's Puzzle for Today feature. He is also ambassador for the charity National Numeracy, a presenter for an Open University course on personal finance for young adults and a columnist for the *Financial Times*, and even coaches the LMH team for their annual University Challenge application rounds – all alongside his "day job" as a school maths teacher!

You might also know Bobby from his BBC Two series, Monkman & Seagull's Genius Guide to Britain. In the coming months Bobby will also feature in a new Channel Four quiz show, The Answer Trap, where he is the resident expert quizzier on the show, which is to be hosted by Anita Rani.

He challenges us to some teasers in this issue. Answers can be found on page 60.

1. What one-word concept links a United Nations day celebrated annually on 20 March, the title of the most recent book by former Booker prize winner Arundhati Roy, an index first used to measure collective national welfare in Bhutan, and a well-known phrase in the 1776 United States Declaration of Independence?
2. What connects Guayaquil in Ecuador, Karachi in Pakistan, Colombo in Sri Lanka, Casablanca in Morocco, and Dubai in the UAE?
3. What links the following films at the Oscars: *The Turning Point* in 1977, *The Colour Purple* in 1985, *Gangs of New York* in 2002, *True Grit* in 2010 and *American Hustle* in 2013?



IS THIS OBJECT OURS

The Debate on Repatriation

Some of alumna **A. Poh's** (2010 MSc Contemporary Chinese Studies) latest research looks at the international debate on art repatriation. Should museums represent the acquisition of all their collections in a clear and transparent manner?



Kshitigarbha with the Ten Kings of Hell. From China's Dunhuang. Late 9th–early 10th century AD, British Museum



Tang Jo-hung / Ashmolean Museum. Source: The Guardian

Sculpture of a 15th-century bronze idol housed in the Ashmolean Museum that was allegedly stolen from an Indian temple in the 1960s

In 2003, the directors of eighteen major museums – the Art Institute of Chicago, the Cleveland Museum of Art, the J. Paul Getty Museum in Los Angeles, the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, the Museum of Modern Art in New York, the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York, the Philadelphia Museum of Art, the State Museums in Berlin, the Louvre Museum in Paris, the Opificio delle Pietre Dure in Florence, the Bavarian State Museum in Munich, the Prado Museum in Madrid, the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam, the Thyssen-Bornemisza Museum in Madrid, and the State Hermitage Museum in St Petersburg – signed a “Declaration on the Importance and Value of Universal Museums”. The document declared the following:

The objects and monumental works that were installed decades and even centuries ago in museums throughout Europe and America were acquired under conditions that are not comparable with current ones. Over time, objects so acquired – whether by purchase, gift, or partage – have become part of the museums that have cared for them, and by extension part of the heritage of the nations which house them. Today we are especially sensitive to the subject of a work's original context, but we should not lose sight of the fact that museums too provide a valid and valuable context for objects that were long ago displaced from their original source.

This declaration prompted significant global attention and debate, with prominent museums and museum professionals around the world claiming that the Declaration was signed by a group of large Western museums to guard against having to repatriate contested objects in their collections. Two schools of thought have emerged. Cultural nationalists believe that cultural objects relate to national identity and should belong to the source country (i.e. where the object was first created), while internationalists believe that human beings have a common heritage and cultural objects should be appreciated by all regardless of where they are located.

The British Museum, as well as other museums around the United Kingdom, house many cultural objects with contentious ownership. These include the Elgin Marbles, claimed by Greece, the Benin Bronzes, claimed by Nigeria, the Ethiopian Tabots, claimed by Ethiopia, gold and silver artefacts from the Oxus Treasure, claimed by Tajikistan, the Rosetta Stone claimed by Egypt, and Dunhuang manuscripts, claimed by China, as well as human remains. The British Museum has said that it is unique precisely because it offers a diverse collection representing many countries and across different time periods. It is supposed to be a museum of the world, a “universal museum”, which holds no place for nationalism. Repatriation would only empty the British Museum and other great museums around the world. The museums in Oxford, including the Ashmolean Museum and the Pitts River Museum, have had similar experiences. For example, the Indian government

“Debates are likely to continue as to whether cultural objects should necessarily belong to the source country, or to countries that have housed these objects for decades and centuries.”

asked the Ashmolean Museum to return a 15th-century bronze idol that was allegedly stolen from an Indian temple in the 1960s. Specific to human remains and artefacts, Oxford University has issued a statement recognising that some human remains are regarded as of “especial cultural sensitivity [and] were undoubtedly obtained in circumstances that today would be regarded as unacceptable”. The University has also agreed to consider on a case-by-case basis repatriation requests for human remains that are less than 100 years old and claimed by a genealogical descendant, or less than 300 years old and claimed by “a source community which displays a cultural continuity with the remains in question [or] through a national government, national agency, or equivalent”. In 2017, the Vice-Chancellor of Oxford University handed over to representatives of the National Museum of New Zealand’s Karanga Repatriation Programme the Māori ancestral remains previously cared for by Oxford’s Pitt Rivers Museum. More formal requests for repatriation are bound to happen, and what would be the impact on the museums in Britain and around the world?

Scholars such as Louise Tythacott have pointed out that today, as countries become increasingly vocal in articulating their desire for repatriation, and as looted treasures based in Western museums have become a more politicised topic, museums have started to avoid clearly stating the origins and provenance (e.g. phrases such as “From the ‘Summer Palace of the Emperor of China’”) of the potentially controversial objects in their collection. Some newer museums in the United Kingdom, such as the Museum of Liverpool, established in 2011, have on the other hand adopted bolder moves,

for example by describing the Burmese statues in their collection that were taken by the British in 1885 as “looted” on the label.¹ Another key question then arises – should museums represent the acquisition of all their collections in a clear and transparent manner?

Issues surrounding plunder and repatriation are fundamentally contentious, and will continue to pose significant challenges to museums and museum professionals. Countries such as China have increased their efforts to repatriate objects from overseas. Within a six-year span from 2014 to 2020, China repatriated more than 1,300 sets of objects from the United Kingdom, Switzerland, France, the US, Canada, Egypt, Australia, and Italy. Several African nations have also requested the repatriation of objects from various French national collections. The French President Emmanuel Macron in 2017 declared during a speech in the African city of Ouagadougou his commitment to rebuild France’s relationship with Africa, and to facilitate the repatriation of African heritage:

I cannot accept that a large part of cultural heritage from several African countries is in France. There are historical explanations for that, but there are no valid justifications that are durable and unconditional. African heritage can't just be in European private collections and museums. African heritage must be highlighted in Paris, but also in Dakar, in Lagos, in Cotonou. In the next five years, I want the conditions to be met for the temporary or permanent restitution of African heritage to Africa. This will be one of my priorities.

Despite Macron’s commitment, which took French museums by surprise, there

have been several legal challenges to repatriation, including laws that consider national collections in museums to be the “inalienable” property of the state; as such, this property cannot easily be returned to the source country. In the United Kingdom, particularly in non-national museums such as the regional and university museums, there are many fewer statutory restrictions on repatriation. Nonetheless, national institutions such as the British Museum and the Victoria & Albert Museum have also cited insurmountable legal challenges to repatriating objects acquired under British imperial rule. In other European countries such as Germany, the government has invested significant amounts of funds in provenance research, and has created a centralised authority to process information requests about objects in German museums that originated from the colonial period, but it remains to be seen how the repatriation and restitution movement will evolve.

We can expect more countries to call for the repatriation of cultural objects scattered across museums from around the world. The museums in the United Kingdom – ranging from national institutions such as the British Museum to those housed in universities such as Oxford – are likely to face similar pressures for transparency, provenance research, and repatriation. Debates are likely to continue as to whether cultural objects should necessarily belong to the source country, or to countries that have housed these objects for decades and centuries, and possess the commitment and ability to care for and preserve them. It also remains to be seen what the fates of many established museums would be if their collections are reduced over time as a result of repatriation.

¹ Louise Tythacott, “Problems, Practices, and Politics of Provenancing Objects from China’s Yuanmingyuan,” in J. Milosch and N. Pearce (eds.), *Collecting and Provenance: A Multi-Disciplinary Approach* (Lanham; Boulder; New York; London: Rowman & Littlefield, 2009), pp. 359-370.



RECOVERING LOST ART

Lynn Nicholas (Holman, 1961 Modern Languages) spent her career interviewing the Monument Men and helping to recover lost art, and memories, from the Second World War. Here she tells her side of the story and shares some incredible images from her research.

My arrival at LMH in 1961, looking back at it now, was total serendipity. Actually, when I look back at my whole career, it was all pretty much serendipity.

During my second year at Radcliffe (Harvard) in 1959, my father announced that he had been posted to Madrid, and that he thought I should take a year off to study in Spain, which I did at the University of Madrid. It was a glorious year and included an encounter with a group of rather chauvinist men from New College, who, after casting

aspersions on American education and consuming considerable brandy, bet me I could not get accepted at Oxford. I took the bet, and later sat the entrance exams, all alone, at the British Institute in Madrid. Given the fact that I had already completed three years of university, it is not entirely surprising that I was given a place at LMH, but no academic credit.

Like most Americans I came up to read PPE. The New College men were correct in some of their aspersions: the teaching of Latin in the United States, was, by the late 1950's, simply not up to British standards.

PPE had no Latin requirement for entry, and thus became the American favorite. Even less up to standard was my own mathematical ability, and it soon became clear that Economics was not a subject at which I would succeed. I therefore was given the unheard-of opportunity to change to Modern Language (Spanish and French), which actually fit very well with my Radcliffe major of the History and Literature of France, Germany, and Russia in the Modern Period (19th and 20th Centuries). There followed three years of perfect training for what I

LEFT Polish Monuments Men with repatriated Leonardo

would eventually do: research in many languages, analysis, and writing.

My first job after I returned home was serendipitous too. I had gone for an interview with the director of the National Gallery of Art in Washington. After a very pleasant time, we agreed that I was not qualified to work there as I did not have a degree in art history. Three days later he called me and asked if I could come down immediately: they needed someone to translate a catalogue for an exhibition of Peruvian gold and, amazing to think of today, there was no one at the National Gallery who knew Spanish. Art historians traditionally were required to be literate in German and French. So began my career.

Of course, the National Gallery continued to have “emergencies” of this nature and I had the good fortune of being sent from one department to another and, in the process, receiving a hands-on education in the complexities of the art world. I did not know at the time that I was surrounded at the Gallery by what we now call “Monuments Men” or that in the Gallery files and in those in the National Archives building across the street were miles of documents and millions of photographs which would later be the sources for my book *The Rape of Europa: The Fate of Europe’s Treasures in the Third Reich and the Second World War* (NY 1994).

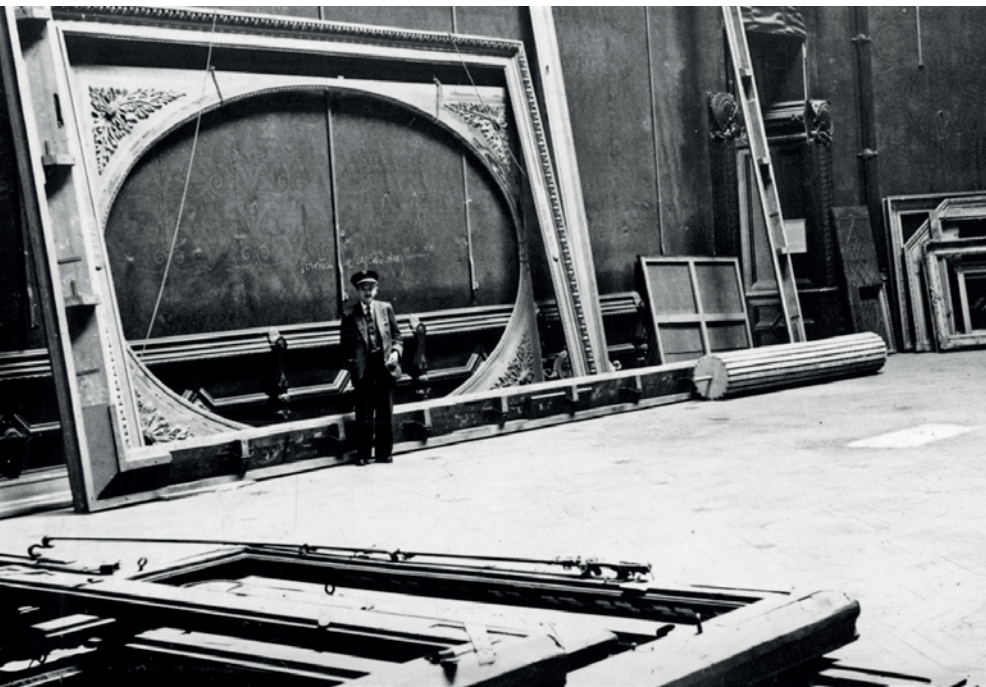
Serendipity would intervene again before then. In 1979 I moved to Brussels with my husband and children, and, the following year, happened to read the obituary of Rose Valland, the legendary heroine of the French Resistance, who, it said, had been instrumental in recovering some 60,000 works of art looted from France by the Nazis. I had worked in a museum long enough to know that was a lot of art. The National Gallery in those days had perhaps 3,000 items, depending on what was included. When I asked museum people in Belgium about Valland, they told me that, of course, the looting had been huge and the restitution equally so, and mentioned the names of many museum people I had come to know.



TOP Looted sculptures waiting to go home from a Munich collecting point

ABOVE British Monuments Men at Grasleben

RIGHT Looted bells in Hamburg



ABOVE The Louvre, Paris awaits return of its treasures

RIGHT British and US Monuments Men with recovered holy Roman regalia



“While some of the Monuments Men had written memoirs immediately after the war, their full story had never been told. The diaries, ‘back channel’ letters, and photographs they had been required to produce, lay in multiple archives and private hands. No one had interviewed them.”

As was true of most Second World War veterans, the Allied Monuments Men, after basically saving the entire patrimony of Europe from damage or destruction, had returned to their art world careers and moved on. I do not remember any of them ever mentioning the subject during my years working with them. Their achievements, by the mid 1960's, overshadowed by events such as the Cold War and Vietnam, were largely forgotten, the general belief being that what could be done to save and reconstitute art, had been done, and that the issue was closed. As for what lay behind the Iron Curtain in 1980, no one knew.

While some of the Monuments Men had written memoirs immediately after the war, their full story had never been told. The diaries, “back channel” letters, and photographs they had been required to produce, lay in multiple archives and private hands. No one had interviewed them. It would be my great pleasure to do so. After they had overcome their fears that I was a foreign journalist, many became great friends and produced all sorts of documents and wartime artifacts, including the German Army sheepskin greatcoats they had used to wrap up things such as van Eyck's great *Ghent Altarpiece* for its shipment from the salt mine at Alt Aussee, where it had been stored by the Nazis, back to Munich and then Belgium.

Even less known was the extensive prewar preparation that had taken place both in Axis and Allied countries for the salvage and protection of monuments and works of art in the looming conflict. Major Allied art libraries, joining with dealers, collectors, and art historians, fielded teams that created lists of vulnerable buildings and created bombing maps for the air forces. Axis specialists made long wish lists of items previously taken by Napoleon and works created by “Aryan” artists that had been sold or dispersed in various ways to collectors outside the Reich since the 15th century that they felt should be returned to the Fatherland.

Once the war had started, liaison of academe with the Allied military would be more difficult. The draft had led to the presence of many archeologists and art historians in the Allied forces but in the early days, no formal organization. The British in North Africa felt they could “muddle through” and the Americans

gave the issue low priority. It was not until the invasion of Italy that the propaganda aspect of the protection of national treasures became a serious factor. The bombing of the monastery of Monte Cassino not only caused a huge uproar in Parliament over the morality of sacrificing young bodies to save old buildings: it was exploited to the utmost by the Axis press – the Italians even printed a commemorative stamp – and became the catalyst for the declaration of stricter Allied guidelines for the protection of monuments and movable art for the rest of the war.

While the story of the Monuments Men and their Indiana Jones-like adventures was fascinating, it sometimes paled in comparison to the activities of the Nazis, both in Germany and the occupied lands. Until the advent of Hitler, Napoleon had held the world record for looting. This would be eclipsed by the industrial level of theft and purchases on the encapsulated European art market by the Nazis. But their looting was not just material: it was an essential aspect of the genocidal policies of the Nazis, who not only planned to rid the earth of human non-Aryans (including Jews, Slavs, Blacks, and others) but of their artifacts and cultural production. Eastern Europe and the USSR, cleansed of all unsuitable racial populations and all memory of them, would then be colonized by carefully chosen Aryans. This massive undertaking was staffed by a number of Nazi bureaucracies, who confiscated and bought millions of items, ranging from whole libraries, paintings and sculptures to butterflies and coins. Both Hitler and Göring, widely imitated by lesser Nazis, would end the war with huge collections.

The records of these Nazi depredations, sequestered by the Allies, I would discover, were available, not always easily, in the public and private archives of many nations, but had not been consulted for years. So began ten years of research that culminated in my first book, *The Rape of Europa*. The publication of my book coincided with a number of other, far more major events. The Berlin Wall had fallen, and the USSR had imploded, revealing that many works, long thought to be lost, were, in fact, in Russia, and might be claimable. The 50th anniversary of the end of the Second World War, and the

publication of many new histories of the conflict and the Holocaust, would combine to create a great revival of interest in the events of the time and in the reparations and restitutions that had, or had not, been undertaken. Claims of all varieties were forthcoming. There were international conferences on looted art, stolen gold reserves, nationalized real estate, refugees, and compensation for slave labor.

After writing another book about the history of families and the uses of human beings as commodities in the Nazi era (*Cruel World*, New York, 2005), which, to my surprise, evoked little interest, I reverted to what is euphemistically called the “displacement” of art and the resulting litigations and attempts at international regulation. It is always good to be an expert on a relatively obscure subject and my career, serendipitous as it was, has been tremendously rewarding. Over the years I have testified before Congress, been a delegate to two major international conferences on Holocaust-era assets, represented both claimants and owners of works of art in court cases, and done innumerable lectures and symposia. Best of all, I have seen the field emerge from obscurity to create the new discipline of provenance research which requires knowledge of languages, history, history of art, the social history of an era, and the ability to forage in old archives – a truly serendipitous combination.

“It is always good to be an expert on a relatively obscure subject and my career, serendipitous as it was, has been tremendously rewarding.”



ABOVE A salvage operation in France

BELOW Florentine treasures return home





First entry of a nervous Dante into Hell

HELL IN LMH

The Dante illustrations of John Dickson Batten



Emeritus Fellow Professor Peter Hainsworth gives us a preview of his forthcoming publication to commemorate the 700th anniversary of Dante's death. The book, *John Dickson Batten: Illustrations for Dante's Inferno*, is due for publication this spring.

Everyone associated with LMH knows Hell Passage, the ground floor corridor in the Deneke Building with noticeboards along its walls, but probably few people nowadays will know where the name comes from. Its origin lies in the series of illustrations of scenes from Dante's *Inferno* that hung there for many years. The name survived after they were taken down, but the illustrations themselves were stored away out of sight in the Library, where they have remained, unseen by members of the college and almost entirely unknown to the world at large, even to experts in the field of Dante illustrations. Only recently, thanks to Allan Doig, former Chaplain, and Ben Pritchard, former Head Gardener and local artist, has some enlightenment been offered to members of the college, with three of the series being displayed at the south end of the corridor with an explanatory caption.

The full range of pictures constitutes one of LMH's hidden treasures, and this year seems a good moment to bring them all back into the light. Dante died in September 1321, and the 700th anniversary year of his death is seeing a host of conferences, concerts, exhibitions, and much else. Our illustrations are to play their part in the celebrations. They are all included in *John Dickson Batten: Illustrations for Dante's Inferno*, with an introduction and commentaries by myself, which is scheduled to appear in the spring. An exhibition in the Library will follow.

The name of John Dickson Batten (1860-1932) is nowadays almost as unfamiliar as his work. He took a degree in law at Cambridge, but immediately decided that law was not for him and trained as an artist at the Slade School. By the early 1890s he had a considerable reputation as a painter and also as an illustrator, particularly of collections of folk and fairy tales. One of those most impressed by his work was another lawyer, George Musgrave (1855-1932), who was also a translator of Dante and published a first edition of his version of the *Inferno* in 1893. There were many translations being produced in these years and Musgrave's was one of the oddest, being in the idiom and verse-form of the *Faery Queen* by Edmund Spenser of 300 years previously. The translation was not a success, and Musgrave embarked on a second version, though one in which he resolutely kept to the manner of the first. He also now commissioned Batten to provide a set of illustrations. Batten worked energetically and enthusiastically at them and by the end of the decade they were finished and ready.

But Musgrave never finished revising the translation to his satisfaction. There was an exhibition of the illustrations at the Grosvenor gallery in London. Otherwise they languished out of sight during Batten's lifetime, much as they were destined to do later. Perhaps partly out of disappointment, Batten now turned away from book illustration and dedicated himself mostly to tempera painting, again with considerable public success. Finally, in 1933, a year after the deaths of both men, the second edition of Musgrave's translation, with Batten's illustrations, was published. It was as unsuccessful as the first and quickly vanished from sight, taking with it what Batten rightly considered to be his greatest achievements as an illustrator.

For reasons that are unclear, George Musgrave bequeathed his collection of Dante books and all the other Dante material he owned to Lady Margaret Hall. That included the plates for the Batten illustrations and the various large format sets of copies on paper or card that are now in the Library and from which come the reproductions in the forthcoming book. These collotype copies (collotype being a form of image-reproduction much used in the later



A petrified Dante supported by Virgil being transported down into lower Hell

"His recreations of Dante's infernal landscape evoke the vast and barren darkness of Hell with impressive force and what we might call realism."

“The image has an immediate effect but then on being looked at more closely turns out to have complexities we might not have expected – as of course is the case with Dante’s poem.”

19th century) were declared valueless by Musgrave’s executor, E.A.Parker, in a letter he wrote to LMH Governing Body. He also valued the original drawings (marred by Batten’s corrections for the printer and now not in good condition) at just £80 4s 10d.

The low valuation is understandable. The drawings are in black and white, and the collotype copies are readily and effectively reproducible (as the new book will show). More importantly, Batten’s late 19th century manner was quite out of fashion. What perhaps also did not help is that his work in general has obvious points of contact with the Pre-Raphaelites (such as Rossetti), and with the Decadentists (such as Aubrey Beardsley), as well as with other Victorian artists, but is not assimilable into any specific movement or group, much as Batten does not appear to have been in life. In the Dante drawings, even more than elsewhere, he is pursuing his own path. At this distance in time it is something we can appreciate and value.

First there is the project as a whole: 45 drawings of different infernal scenes and events. There had been many Dante paintings and drawings before Batten, but the only sequences of any size by British artists were those by John Flaxman and William Blake. So far as the British public was concerned, it was the illustrations of the French artist Gustave Doré of the whole *Divine Comedy* that were reproduced again and again in translations, particularly in Henry Cary’s *Vision of Dante*, which became effectively the standard version for generations of British readers. So Batten’s project was by no means run of the mill. Neither was his approach. Doré was a good deal more attentive to the details of

Dante’s actual descriptions than Flaxman and Blake, but he emphasised the spectacular and romantic elements, especially in his *Inferno* illustrations, which much outnumber the ones he did for *Purgatorio* and *Paradiso*. Batten’s illustrations show a remarkably careful study of Dante’s text, the geography of Hell in particular, with accurate depictions of the various circles and their subdivisions in relation to each other, as well as of the reactions of Dante and his guide, the poet Virgil, to the sinners they see and meet. In that sense his works do really illustrate the text in the way they create impressive pictorial correlatives for Dante’s intensely visual poetry.

That may suggest that Batten himself is unimaginative. He is anything but. Unlike Doré, but like Dante himself, Batten holds the horrors of hell at a distance. His recreations of Dante’s infernal landscape evoke the vast and barren darkness of Hell with impressive force and what we might call realism. But his figures (especially Dante and Virgil) are often drawn in a late 19th-century classicising manner, or else in quite a few places (specially when it comes to Dante’s devils) there is a controlled, almost comic grotesqueness that owes a lot to the earlier illustrations of fairy stories and folktales. Whichever direction Batten goes in, he also manages often to achieve a certain stillness, and in many drawings a surprisingly strong emotional complexity, even mystery.

I chose one of the most telling illustrations as the book’s cover. It shows an understandably petrified Dante supported by Virgil being transported down into lower Hell by the monster Geryon, a figure with scaly, serpent-like body and the face of a just and kindly

man. He represents fraud, and he will land Dante and Virgil at the start of the eighth circle, in which fraudulent sinners are punished. The ten subdivisions of the circle, with the battered bridges across them, are visible below, the whole landscape giving an impression of the size and structured nature of Hell which corresponds perfectly with what Dante says in his poem. But Batten also suggests the fearful barrenness of the place, the terror it evokes, and the strange fascination of the figure of Geryon. Altogether the image has an immediate effect, but then on being looked at more closely turns out to have complexities we might not have expected – as of course is the case with Dante’s poem.

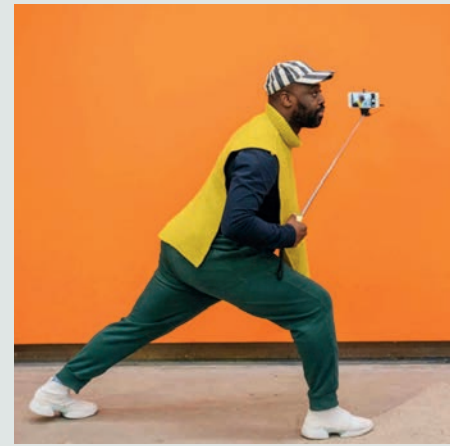
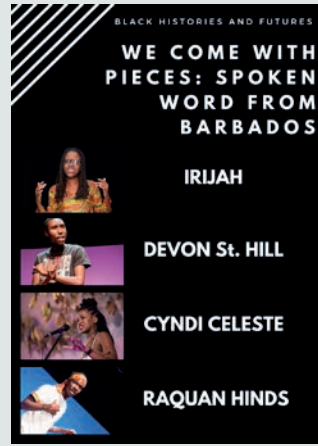
The drawings contain much to be seen and enjoyed, from the first entry of a nervous Dante into Hell through the doorway with its famous inscription (*‘Lasciate ogne speranza, voi ch’intrate’* – ‘Abandon hope all you who enter here’) to the monstrous three-headed Satan at very bottom of Hell, with in between all the varieties of sinners and punishments Dante sees in the course of the journey. To help readers who might feel at a loss, my commentaries give short explanations of what is going on in each drawing and translations of the lines of Dante which we know Batten had in mind. I hope members of LMH, past and present, will take this opportunity to acquaint themselves with the work of an artist whose work has a special connection with the College and which has remained unknown for far too long. If they do not know him already, they might also find themselves drawn into making a first, none too strenuous acquaintance with Dante himself. Any proceeds from sales will go to the College.

For more information, please visit www.lmh.ox.ac.uk/news/lmh-exhibit-illustrations-dantes-inferno-autumn-2021.

John Dickson Batten, Illustrations for Dante’s Inferno, Introduction and Commentaries by Peter Hainsworth (Panarc International, 2021) is obtainable via Amazon (RRP £20), or, for LMH alumni, at a special price of £16 via the College. All profits from sales will go to LMH. If you would like to purchase a copy please contact the Development Office.

RIGHT Three-headed Satan at very bottom of Hell





BLACK HISTORIES AND FUTURES

LEFT TO RIGHT
Adrian Green,
alongside the other
performers at the
Barbadian spoken
word event; Dexnell
Peters; Samantha
Ege; Harold Offah

Black Histories and Futures is a year-long series of events curated by College students and staff, featuring presentations and performances from a range of scholars, activists, and artists whose work focuses on Black histories and cultures.

The series is organised by Dilar Dirik (Joyce Pearce Junior Research Fellow), Nadine Elzein (Lecturer in Philosophy), Justin Holder (DPhil Philosophy 2019), Gascia Ouzounian (Fellow in Music), and Katrina Palmer (Fellow in Fine Art).

The series was developed amidst the resurgent Black Lives Matter movement in 2020 to increase familiarity with Black academia and arts, both in LMH and the wider university. All speakers invited to take part are paid for their work. The first event of the series was partnered with Worcester College, and saw over 100 participants come together for a showcase of Barbadian spoken word poetry.

The event was headlined by Adrian Green, a spoken word performer, actor, and visual artist from Barbados. The recipient of various awards, he is also a two-time Gold Award winner at Barbados' National Festival of Creative Arts and has received the Prime Minister's Award in the performing arts. He has also

taught visual art at the secondary school level. He was joined by up-and-coming performers Irijah, Cyndi Celeste, Devon St. Hill, and Raquan Hinds.

Shortly after, Oxford's Dexnell Peters, who is the Bennett Boskey Fellow in Atlantic History at Exeter College, delivered a lecture entitled "Race and Politics in the Greater Caribbean during the Revolutionary Era". It is available to watch on the LMH YouTube channel.

Harold Offah, a visiting tutor at the Royal College of Art and the Ruskin School of Art, also hosted a workshop looking at his research in the space created by the inhabiting or embodying of histories. The session was interspersed with a series of performative and playful exercises, tasks and prompts that invited participants to employ sound, gesture, and text. Harold Offah has exhibited widely in the UK and internationally, including at Tate Britain and Tate Modern, Studio Museum Harlem, New York, and Art Tower Mito, Japan.

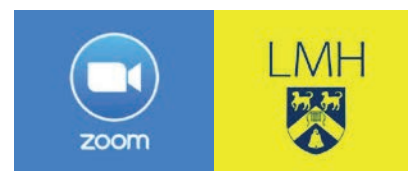
In April, Samantha Ege took part in a concert and conversation with the College community. Samantha is a leading interpreter and scholar of the African American composer Florence B. Price; her performances and publications shed important light on composers from under-represented backgrounds. She is the Lord Crewe Junior Research Fellow in Music at Lincoln College, Oxford.

The organisers of the series say: "We recognise the marginalisation that Black histories and achievements have faced in academia in the UK and elsewhere. Furthermore, the violence that Black people have experienced under European imperialism is insufficiently understood, taught, and discussed in white-majority academic spaces.

"The Black Histories and Futures series is one step LMH is taking towards increasing familiarity with these topics within our academic cultures and beyond."

IN CONVERSATION

Our series of In Conversation events have continued throughout lockdown, bringing our community together online and often attracting LMH members in their hundreds.



In October, Richard Ovenden, Bodley's Librarian since 2014, spoke about his new publication, *Burning the Books*. It looks at the shift in the way knowledge is now organised and shared. He explained that with the digitisation of libraries and archives, the preservation of knowledge has become almost sidelined; as a global society, we've become fixated on short term, immediate return on investment and tend to focus on short-term thinking, whereas libraries, like the Bodleian, think in much longer terms. "There is a social value to preserving knowledge", says Richard, as he delves in to some case studies examining instances where libraries have been targeted or are dying through neglect.

Andrew Haldane, Chief Economist at the Bank of England, spoke in January about his career with the Bank and the financial ups and downs he has faced throughout his 31 years there. Andrew read Economics at Sheffield and Warwick (despite not having an A-Level in Maths – he meets the reminder with a slight chuckle during his introduction) and is also a member of the Bank's Monetary Policy Committee and Chair of the Government's Industrial Strategy Council. The conversation headed straight into comparisons between the global financial crisis of 2008 and that of the pandemic starting in March 2020. Andrew noted that the scale, political response, and collateral damage are likely to be larger in this current crisis; but in living up to his nickname in some media – "Mr Boom" – tried to focus on the positives and suggested that whilst the global crisis of 2008 lasted for the better part of a decade, there are signs that the current crisis will have a much shorter and sharper "shock" than back then. At root, 2008 was a balance-sheet crisis; the source of our current crisis is very different and gives him hope the "bounce back" will be much stronger.

February saw Brenda Stevenson, an internationally recognized scholar of race, slavery, gender, family, and racial conflict, speak about how she first became interested in History through to her current academic career. She grew up in Virginia, "so you couldn't grow up ignoring history", she explained, "Everywhere you went you were part of some historical narrative." Brenda is now the Nickoll Family Endowed Professor of History at UCLA, and in October 2021 will join Oxford as the inaugural Hillary Rodham Clinton Chair of Women's History.

Most recently Baroness Valerie Amos, Master of University College, Oxford, spoke about her first term and a half at the university, and her career before then. She was appointed a

Labour life peer in 1997 and was the first black woman to serve in a British Cabinet as Secretary of State for International Development. She went on to become Leader of the House of Lords. Baroness Amos has consistently had an interest in, and commitment to, issues of equality and diversity. She talked of her hopes that Oxford will continue to demonstrate that excellence and diversity can go hand-in-hand: "there is nothing to be afraid of in watching the culture of a place change for the better, and it is incredibly exciting."

For future dates of speaking events, please keep an eye on the website. The series of In Conversation videos can be found on the LMH YouTube channel: www.youtube.com/lmhoxford.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT
Baroness Valerie Amos, Andrew Haldane,
Brenda Stevenson, Richard Ovenden

THE FUTURE OF NEWS

Alan Rusbridger steps down as Principal at the end of this academic year, after six years at LMH. The Quiet Life will not be for him though; he is seeking to address the acute crisis of information and democracy which is afflicting so many societies and is devoting more of his time to the question of trust in media and society. Alan explains all here.

The January 6 assault on the US Capitol was a crisis in democracy that had roots in an even deeper crisis in information.

A country with a long and comparatively stable relationship between reliable news and a good democracy was adrift in a sea of information chaos. Many towns were now without a newspaper – the result of a disintegration of the business model which had once paid for professional journalists to do their work. The new tech giants had scooped up the revenues without any obligation to bear the costs of news gathering.

The explosion of social media meant that the old reliance on gatekeepers – the people who owned the scarce printing presses and broadcasting studios – was being swept away by billions of horizontal connections between peers.

And then there was the President, who had spent the previous half a dozen years delegitimising the notion of truth itself. To Donald Trump and millions of his supporters, there was no truth, no facts. Good news was fake, fake news was good. No wonder that two thirds of people polled in 2019 said they could no longer tell a reliable source from an unreliable one.

A hundred years ago two political scientists, John Dewey and Walter Lippmann, had indulged in a



“Maybe it took a pandemic to wake people up to the realisation that a society stops working if there is no commonly agreed basis of fact or evidence.”

prolonged exchange of views about the relationship between an informed public and a healthy democracy. How quaint that debate now seems, with the very survival of professional journalism now in question.

It's not that decent, important, challenging journalism has disappeared altogether: the *Washington Post*, *New York Times*, *New Yorker*, *Wall Street Journal*, and others are weathering the storm in some style. But few people are today prepared to pay for news, relying instead on whatever washes up in their social media feeds, or tuning into ever more polarised shows on cable TV or talk radio.

Maybe it took a pandemic to wake people up to the realisation that a society stops working if there is no commonly agreed basis of fact or evidence. Government can't work, law can't work, health systems can't work. Information chaos is frightening – and can be deadly.

For 40-odd years I worked as a professional journalist, the last 20 as editor of the *Guardian*. My book *Breaking News* was an attempt to chart what it felt like to be at the centre of the global revolution in how societies informed themselves as print gave way to digital. I have just followed it with another book, *News and How to Use It*. This explores why people remain so distrustful of mainstream news – and

how journalists will have to discover new techniques to convince sceptical citizens why the craft of journalism, at its best, is essential to stabilising democracies.

Nearly two years ago I was asked if I might consider taking up a part-time role on a new Oversight Board Facebook was considering setting up to help it make decisions about the moderation of its content.

There were lots of reasons to hesitate. Facebook has numerous simultaneous crises of accountability – including its monopolistic tendencies; its failure to pay fair amounts of tax; its opaque algorithm; its uses of personal data; its exploitation by bad political players, and so on.

On the other hand, I would like “social media” to work. I’m one of those internet Utopians who loved the idea of giving millions – billions – of people a voice. Of enabling collaboration, conversation, challenging power, unleashing creativity, empowering the powerless... and much more. I remain a Utopian, but completely acknowledge that this still-new medium has also become an engine of hatred, disinformation, ignorance, and division. It’s all of the above.

I put inverted commas around “social media” because one of the things we still can’t quite work out is what it is, or what to call it. It would be neat to categorise the big tech giants as “publishers”, and to some extent they are. But what they do is – in large part – patently different from what traditional “publishers” do. They are to some extent “platforms” or “the public square”. But is it destined to be one platform, or multiple platforms, depending on how repressive a particular state is? Can the highest standards of free speech and human rights be grafted onto this new entity?

These seem to be fantastically important questions for our age. And there seems to have come a moment when the amazingly talented engineers who built these entities suddenly realised they were struggling with some very big problems around ethics, human rights, privacy, free expression, legality, moderation, context, and so on.

The Facebook Oversight Board is one recognition of the problem one major



“I feel that the crisis of information chaos is one of the most crucial problems which multiple societies are facing.”

player faces. It’s, if you like, a cry for help.

Mainstream journalists and editors have, themselves, been wrestling with this issue in the US for years. Now it’s the turn of the Big Tech giants as well. In referring the question to the Oversight Board, Mark Zuckerberg is, in effect, saying, “I shouldn’t be the guy who decides this – either alone, or perhaps at all.” I think he’s right.

In the first few months of taking cases we have dealt with cases involving harm, offence, Covid misinformation, racism, incitement to violence, adult nudity, and much more. I am working with a global board of academics, human rights thinkers, lawyers, editors, and former politicians. In time that board will grow to 40 members, overseen by an independent trust.

Of course, the thought had occurred to me that this new Oversight Board could be used as a kind of fig leaf by the mother ship. I think, if I were creating a

fig leaf, I would have begun by choosing a different set of Board members. This, believe me, is not a Board for a quiet life. Secondly, though the Board’s initial powers are quite circumscribed, it will, through its judgments and policy guidance, begin to accrue energy, power, and attention. In other words, having created an independent mechanism for oversight, Facebook will, I think, struggle to ignore or sideline this Board. The sceptics will need some persuasion, I get that, but the truth of how effective we will prove will only emerge over time.

At the same time a number of struggling “old” media companies and new media start-ups were getting in touch to seek advice on how to navigate through the rapids of this revolution, which still feels as if it is only just starting. A parallel: if Gutenberg invented movable type around 1450, it feels as if we’re only a few years into the turmoil that followed.

I chair the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism just up the road from LMH, with its brilliant fellowships which bring working journalists from around the world to think, collaborate – and sometimes recover – in Norham Gardens. I also sit on the New York-based Board of the Committee to Protect Journalists, which does its best to support and shield reporters and editors from the growing threats to their livelihoods and even their lives.

I turned 67 last December – the sort of age when you wrestle with how to parcel up your remaining energy, gifts, focus, and time. Increasingly, I feel that the crisis of information chaos is one of the most crucial problems which multiple societies are facing.

There’s no question that staying on at LMH would have been comfortable, fascinating, and collegiate, in the best sense. Trying to get to grips with some aspects of the future of information will certainly be fascinating, but certainly not comfortable. This is not the Quiet Life option. But people who want quiet lives tend not to end up as newspaper editors.

Buckle up, seat belts on. Here’s to the future of news...



LIBRARIES IN A TIME OF CORONA

Librarian **James Fishwick** shares the story of the LMH Library from the past year.



This has been a year of unprecedented challenges for everyone, including at LMH Library. Many of our normal activities have had to be suspended or modified, so I thought I would use this as an opportunity to look back at how we have managed the whole situation.

At the start of the Easter vacation 2020, the country started closing down. The Bodleian closed instantly, trying to pivot to just providing scanning of articles for students, whilst we stayed open as long as we could. Finally, after the week of increasing restrictions, there was the announcement of full lockdown – including a law that said all libraries must close to readers. We closed and moved to mostly working from home, and the Bodleian closed their scanning service. Although at the time we thought it was for three weeks, we still had a sudden rush on that last day of students clamouring to borrow books

Eglantyne Jebb demonstrating that facemasks must be worn in the library

for the vacation. Of course, the lockdown was then extended and extended and extended! Three weeks became three months, and we moved into a role that was more about buying e-books rather than physical books, providing support on using e-resources, and dealing with some of our projects backlog. We did manage to provide some doorstep deliveries to students inside Oxford, and do some scans, but Trinity as a whole was a very strange term.

The rise of e-books has been one of the most dramatic parts of the pandemic. Until recently, the Bodleian did all e-resource purchasing, with no system for the colleges to do anything or to steer purchases (although the Bodleian collected an annual pool of money from the colleges to pay for e-journals that we had cancelled our print subscriptions to). However, several years ago, a trial was run where colleges pay some money into a central pool, which we can then request the Bodleian use to make purchases. Over the past year this scheme has blossomed, fully coming into its own as the fastest and best way for students to request e-books.

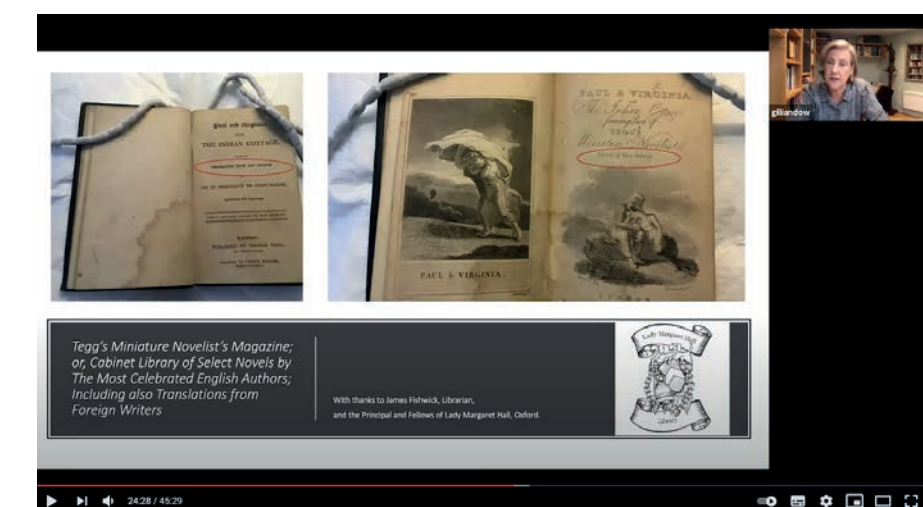
However, academic e-books can be ferociously expensive. The licences we are buying are set up for universities, so they are integrated into the library catalogue: once we buy an e-book, any Oxford student can use it, from anywhere in the world. This means that, whilst buying an e-book for a Kindle might be cheaper than a regular book, academic e-books are more expensive than their physical counterparts, often dramatically so. The very most expensive things are those which publishers designate as “textbooks”, which are normally only sold as bundles with a year’s subscription for an astronomical cost – this year LMH contributed £1,500 towards the university getting access to the LawTrove bundle for a year, which cost almost £70,000 in total!

In late summer 2020 we were finally able to re-open, at first just allowing students based in Oxford to use us like a shop (coming in to collect books, but not to study). In time for Michaelmas we set the library up to be COVID-secure

for studying as well, trying to minimise any chance of face-to-face interactions between readers or between readers and staff. Masks were compulsory for everyone who could wear them; the group study desks, and any desks within 2m of other desks, were closed; a separate entrance and exit were established; and library tours for freshers were replaced by YouTube videos. We also tried to combat the virus spreading via contaminated surfaces: providing hand sanitiser at the entrance and all shared machines; desk sanitiser for students to use alongside increased cleaning by scouts; and quarantining used books. LMH library was fortuitously designed for this pandemic, with its focus on individual desks, large spaces providing ventilation, and a recently purchased self-service system. We were able to have 70 of our 110 spaces open, whilst some other college libraries have still not managed to re-open, or had to close during the second lockdown in Hilary 2021, or only had a few dozen seats.

Of course, the Hilary 2021 lockdown did involve some changes. The library staff visited College less, and once again stepped up our e-books purchasing to support the majority of students, who were stuck at home unable to return after Christmas. During this lockdown, LMH kept the postal service going, so unlike in Trinity 2020 we posted packages of books out to students who need them. The Bodleian also stayed at least partly open, with a few hub libraries in the city centre open for seat bookings; they also kept their scanning service running.

Despite the huge changes that the pandemic has brought, we have managed to do some other projects. We worked closely with Peter Hainsworth to get images of all of the Batten Dante illustrations available for his book, and were able to support a few other researchers by sending them pictures of our rare books. One of the (few) upsides of the pandemic has been the move of all sorts of academic seminars online, meaning it is easy to see lectures from across the country or world. A translation of Bernardin de St. Pierre's *Paul et Virginie* held at LMH featured in a talk by Gillian Dow at the IES on women translators. Gillian argued that our book, an anonymous translation published as part of a series edited by "Miss Burney" was almost certainly translated by



ABOVE Gillian Dow discussing our rare translation of *Paul et Virginie*



LEFT Almost 300 volumes of books published before 1800, from the library of Patricia Kean and Elizabeth Mackenzie at Latchford House

her as well, and that Miss Burney was probably Sarah Harriet Burney not her half-sister Francis Burney. You can watch the talk at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1tZdQ22SRi0> with the segment about our book beginning at around 22 minutes in.

We have also been busy with donations. By far the largest donation was the books belonging to Patricia Kean and Elizabeth Mackenzie at Latchford House. Helen Barr accompanied us to Latchford House to select the modern books that would be most useful for our collection, and we also retrieved almost 300 volumes published before 1800, a major expansion of our rare books collection. Lockdown has meant we have not been able to process the donation yet, but we are keen to get going on them when we can. Other large donations included books on history from Lady Antonia Fraser, law from Ewan McKendrick, the pre-Raphaelites from David Smith, and

art and architecture from Allan Doig. We also received a posthumous donation from Margery Ord, including first editions of several of Tolkien's works.

It has been a fascinating year, but we are definitely looking forward to a time when we will all be back in college full-time. Lots of people have said that the pandemic could act as an accelerant for changes that had already begun beforehand – it remains to be seen how much that will be true in the library world with a shift towards e-books, or if students will still want to use physical books preferentially. Currently one of the key reasons why students say they want to return to college is in order to use the library and access our books, which suggests that print books are not completely dead. However, only time will tell, and this term's experiences with purchasing e-books and supporting students in using e-resources will definitely be useful in the years ahead.

FROM THE ARCHIVES

Cataloguing the obscure and fascinating in strange times

Archivist **Olly Mahony** shares some of his favourite finds over the past year from the Archives.



Atreat during these unnerving times are the occasional visits to the office to scan material for researchers and make notes in preparation for cataloguing. It is comforting to walk down the Deneke corridor and catch up with (at a safe distance) the few on-site teams who work so hard to ensure the College runs smoothly and the students are supported during the lockdown.

This third national lockdown has given me space to enjoy some of the more obscure and fascinating historical material we hold. This has been aided by a new public online catalogue that will be going live shortly on our website and for which I have been inputting descriptions of material. Here are some of my personal favourites.

Pandemic Journal c.1919

This item is one of the most moving in the collection. These vivid and touching poems and essays were penned and illustrated by students for the SCR members who nursed them through the 1918 influenza pandemic. It was presented to the SCR in January 1919, and was featured in the 2020 issue of *LMH News*.

Letter home by Dorothy Isabella Bowden (1911-1914) c.1911

I love this small detail in the main body of the letter. It shows the early Hall site as is carefully labelled. Dorothy concedes to her aunt Jo that: "I'm afraid that it is a very rough plan, but perhaps it gives you a slight idea." The plan not only notes the buildings but also features such as the hockey grounds, garden, and stables. She is also keen to point out that Numbers 1, 2, and 3 Fyfield Road are "Nothing to do with us". Of course, that would change as the Hall expanded.

Sketch by Eglantyne Jebb c.1896

Eglantyne Jebb (1895-1898) was a social reformer who founded the Save the Children organisation. Amongst the papers we hold are a series of delightful sketches she made as a student of LMH contemporaries. This one is of her friend Dorothy Kemp.

Newspaper cutting from the papers of Mary Coate c.1944

A recent collection we have been listing are the papers of LMH historian Mary Coate (1886-1972). Coate taught Elizabeth de Gaulle (1941), daughter of Charles de Gaulle. Elisabeth and Coate would become lifelong friends and we

hold correspondence between Coate and the de Gaulle family along with the wider Free French movement. A strength of the collection is a series of newspaper cuttings relating to occupied France.

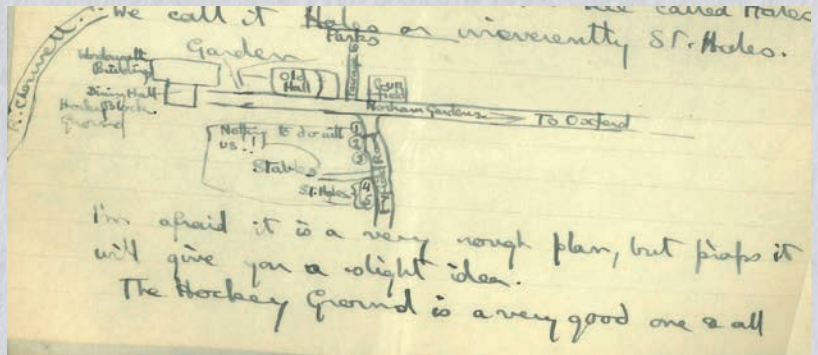
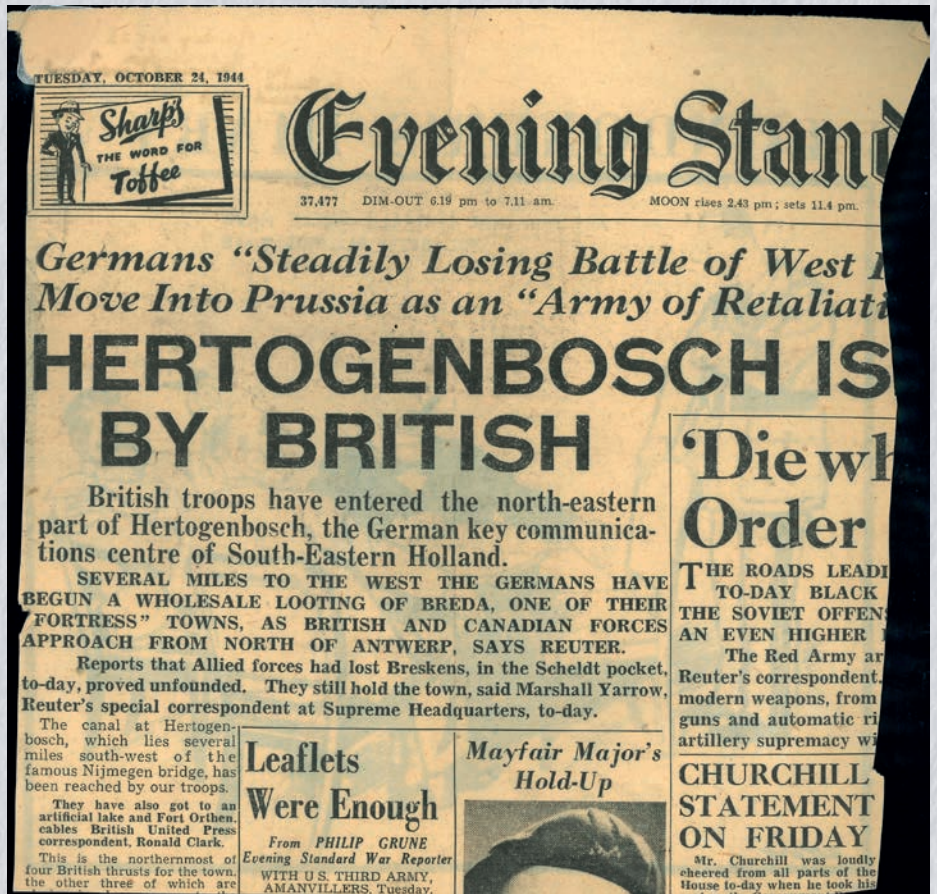
On the back of a cutting of a political cartoon is this fascinating and incomplete dispatch from the *Evening Standard* about the Allied advance in the Netherlands.

This just shows that it is worth looking on both sides...

Audio recording by a student c.2020

During the first lockdown I received an MP3 file: an electronic musical piece by an undergraduate, documenting their feelings about the lockdown. With its feedback, synthesizer, and snippets of audio, this is a record of student life during this pandemic just as important and arresting as the 1919 journal the JCR produced. I hope to upload it, along with our audio interviews onto the new catalogue website.

Once the catalogue is hosted on the website then I hope more of this wonderful material will be available for students and researchers to enjoy and explore. As ever, I am very happy to hear from LMH members past and present and if you hold any LMH material or recollections you wish to put down and pass onto me for safekeeping then please do get in touch. Wishing you all a more hopeful Spring and stay safe.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT

- A drawing by Eglantyne Jebb of Dorothy Kemp
- A newspaper clipping from Mary Coate's collection, circa 1944
- The Bowden site map, circa 1911
- A pandemic poem, circa 1919

BUT FIRST, SOME HOUSEKEEPING



The pandemic has arguably changed the way every department works within College, but perhaps none more so than our Housekeeping Team. **Jaqueline de Oliveira Fiorelli** is the LMH Housekeeping Manager and she reflects on the past year.



I have been the LMH Housekeeping Manager for two and a half years now. With a hotel background, I can say that starting work for LMH was a grateful surprise; I can have a balance of calm and most of the time predicted term time – with very busy and challenging vacation periods, full of conference and alumni events. Of course, all this changed at the beginning of 2020, but before I start with that, I'd like to tell you a bit about our department and amazing team.

The Housekeeping department is one of the biggest and most multicultural teams in College; it is composed of 31 scouts, 4 supervisors, and myself. Housekeeping does not provide a static work nor does it have a static team. Between our staff members, we have colleagues that have been with us for just one year right up to the long serving members that joined LMH more than 12 years ago. They've seen countless changes during their years here, with a growing conference business, and a changing team and structure in the department, and they have experienced stories and situations that I have only heard about. However, the contact and care regarding the students has always been present.

LEFT In our PPE at work

RIGHT The Housekeeping Team – pre-pandemic!

“We are looking forward to one of the best parts of our role returning soon – simple staff-student interaction and saying hello to those we bump into around College.”



The team has passed through difficult and challenging times over the years, but none of them compare with living through a pandemic and the changes it has caused in people's lives.

Until the announcement of the first case in the UK everyone was worried, but living College life as normally as possible. Although we knew Oxford would be inevitably hit by it, we kept hoping that things wouldn't be as bad as they became. Changes within the department had actually started a few weeks before the first national lockdown announcement back in March; overseas conference events booked for the Easter break were already cancelling, hand sanitiser dispensers started to be installed all over college, and talks about how to continue supporting our students without putting them and us at risk were happening daily. As the situation progressed, so did our thoughts, ideas, and plans, as we continuously adapted our working days. Our priority was always keeping everyone as safe as possible.

During the first lockdown, we decided to provide minimum support to the students that stayed in residency. We worked fewer days per week, with only a third of our team on-site and the

other two-thirds furloughed. With a rotating schedule, by the end of the first lockdown, everyone in the team had had at least one period of furlough.

Conference and alumni events have been non-existent during vacation periods, and for the past twelve months the usual rush of turning over the bedrooms at the end of term hasn't been needed. But it's only outside of term time that has been quiet; with most of the support staff working from home and bedrooms at nowhere near 100% occupancy due to the COVID guidelines, the flux of people walking the corridors has almost disappeared. For the Housekeeping team, who were used to walking all over the College and greeting people in the corridors, this has been the strangest change of all. Sometimes the usually vibrant and buzzing College has felt like a ghost town.

With the end of the lockdown and the student's return for Michaelmas Term 2020, we started a new cleaning regime with new health and safety protocols that were planned to guarantee the maximum protection possible to students and staff.

Tasks considered basic stopped happening as scouts are not accessing student's bedrooms and students are

now responsible for cleaning their own rooms. Communal spaces shared by more than one household are cleaned up to four times a day and we have adopted extra PPE on a daily basis.

All of our efforts and changes have been worth it; thankfully, not one of our team members has caught Covid at work so far.

Now, once again though we are in lockdown and as the vast majority of students haven't returned to College, some of the team is back on furlough.

I know I speak on behalf of the entire Housekeeping team when I say that we are looking forward to one of the best parts of our role returning soon – simple staff-student interaction and saying hello to those we bump into around College. It will happen again soon!

A PASSION FOR POETRY

OPENING WORDS

A screaming comes across the sky
Stately, plump in the beginning when
The sun had not yet risen.
The shadow of the waxwing slain
Shyly expectant, gazing tenderly
Runs deep and green in the woods
Smooth in the dark. Let us go then,
Voices out of the shade that cried.

Mother died today. Gone.
The snow in the mountains was melting.
We started dying before the snow
There was no possibility. The curfew tolls
The brawling of the sparrows in the eaves
While my hair was still cut straight across my forehead.
All children, except one, grow up
I stand on tip-toe; feel in her pockets.

Because I could not stop for death
All night I wrestled, broken, bewildered
Pretending nothing had happened.
Death devours all lovely things:
Each small gleam unhappy in its own way
When icicles startled hang by the wall,
Wasting embers redden the chimney-breast
The mouthless dead across your dreams.

All this happened, more or less.
Between the curling flower spaces
In a place whose name I do not care to remember
Cardboard in all of its windows
Each time it was a different story.
Endless collection of scattered thoughts
A desert of living sand. O do not pity me
I don't feel like going into it, if you want to know.

For a long time I went to bed early.
No beginning no end; huddled
In the dark womb where I began.
Last night I heard your voice, mother
Sown to dust muffled syllables
Over the dim edge of sleep.
Many things I might have said today
Over again, and yet once over again.



This summer we say au revoir to Helen Barr (1979 English Language and Literature), who is stepping down after an attachment to LMH dating back more than four decades. During that time, she has been an undergraduate, Tutorial Fellow and Vice Principal – as well as many other roles, official and unofficial. Countless students over the years can speak to

her scholarship, devotion and care in teaching. She helped transform the welfare arrangements of the College: again, many students came to rely on her dedication and sensitivity. It fell to her to organise the 2015 election for Principal – a complex and not always appreciated task! Helen is now retraining as a CBT therapist – and we hope to stay very much in touch with her and Fergus the pug, who has his own circle of admirers in College. A fuller appreciation of Helen's full contribution to LMH will appear in the Brown Book.

Those who know Helen well, will also know she is an avid and talented poet. Here she has chosen to share two with us; one is made up of the opening lines of famous literary works; the other from the closing words.

CLOSING WORDS

The strains of the piano rose up weakly from below
Lost in darkness and distance
The whisper of wind voices
Where the first primroses were beginning to bloom
In tears in the door of my cottage
And the ashes blew towards us a little cloud of dust
With the salt wind from the sea
All gathering towards this one
Small, but perfect piece of our forever.
I saw no shadow of another parting
For there she was.

Lauren Hollingsworth-Smith, first year English and French student at LMH, is an avid poet whose talents led to her winning the 2020 National New Poet's Prize.

Lauren has performed poetry at various events and festivals, including the Off the Shelf Festival of Words, the Sheaf Poetry Festival, and the Ledbury Poetry Festival, and in February this year she performed at the (online) Kendal Poetry Festival.

Her work has been published in several anthologies, including *She Will Soar* (Pan Macmillan 2020). In 2019, she was highly commended in the Young Northern Writers awards, and won the Foyle Young Poet of the year competition later that year with the poem "I want to stand naked in the school hall".

In 2020, Lauren was accepted into The Writing Squad – a development agency for writers based in the north of England, and won the National New Poet's Prize with her short collection *Ugly Bird*, which will be published by The Poetry Business in June.

Lauren said this about her passion for poetry – "I love putting different words and ideas together and seeing what images you can create, what emotions you can evoke – words are endlessly versatile and you can create anything from them. I also find that writing is an excellent method of catharsis. I like writing about human relationships and the natural world, but also wider issues such like mental health, sexism and classism."



I want to stand naked in the school hall

on the podium, mid assembly,
so my presence will be so overbearing no one can look away.
I want their eyes to burn into my skin, examine
its ripples and folds and the scar that digs it up
like a trench in Ypres.

I'd watch a few hundred jaws slowly unhinge,
drop down into a mass of O's, all directed
at my body, lopsided like the projector, its florescent beams
bouncing on my raw flesh, so each goosebump
would have its own time in the spotlight.

I want to raise my arms, outstretch my fingertips,
so everyone can see my hairy armpits and wonky tits,
my nipples erect with the cold of a hundred stark looks,
so they'd know, so they'd see, I'm not perfect
and in no way do I want to be. Then,

when I've got their attention, I want to read them a poem
through the head teacher's microphone, full blast
so that each naked syllable in each naked word,
spat from my naked throat, near bursts their eardrums.
Before they stand, frozen and agape, and file out.





“Though women remain a minority in most STEM careers, I have only let this motivate me

Jewel Bennett
Undergraduate Medical Student
& President of the Alison Brading Circle

LMH STUDENT IN ‘100 WOMEN OF OXFORD MEDICAL SCIENCES’



Jewel Bennett

This year marked the centenary of admitting women as full members of the University of Oxford. As part of the celebrations, the Medical Sciences Division launched an initiative entitled ‘100 women of Oxford Medical Sciences’ to showcase the diversity of roles and achievements held by inspirational women across the prestigious department.

Jewel Bennett, a 2nd-year Medicine undergraduate at LMH, was one of the women selected to speak about her journey so far and her vision for the future. Alongside having her profile featured on the website, she was one of the five undergraduates chosen as ‘Leaders of Tomorrow’.

Jewel said “I am delighted to be involved in the initiative! I know how encouraging it is to hear other women’s experiences and advice; to celebrate them and be empowered myself. So, to be one of the profiles inspiring other young women is marvellous!”

Jewel holds several positions relating to Medical Sciences across the University of Oxford. This includes being a Pre-clinical Representative for the *Primary Care Education Committee* and President of the *Alison Brading Circle*: a gathering birthed within LMH that hosts medical students, tutors, associates, and influential academics.

Jewel is interested in Artificial intelligence within Medicine and has recently secured a related research project working with Professor Charalambos Antoniades. Professor Antoniades is Director of the Acute Vascular Imaging Centre and Senior Clinical Fellow of the British Heart Foundation. Under his supervision, Jewel will contribute to training a novel AI algorithm to help identify people at risk of developing diabetes or cardiovascular complications through the analysis of Computerised Tomography scans. If successful, the automation will be distributed to all NHS hospitals in the near future, enabling earlier prevention measures to be taken and better patient outcomes.

IF YOU COULD HAVE IT ALL AGAIN

The Debut Album by Low Island



Low Island, with Jacob pictured second from right

Jacob Lively (2013 Music) has established a career doing what he loves and, in April this year, released a debut album with his band, Low Island.

After a couple of years of post-university soul-searching following graduation, I decided to form the musical group Low Island with three of my best friends (and fellow music graduates). In the years that followed we cut our teeth in what is a rather treacherous industry; honing our skills as performers and writers, whilst learning how to deal with the extreme highs and lows the industry insists upon. To date, we've amassed over 6.5 million streams, won the PRS Momentum Fund, toured extensively in Europe and the US (including a truly bucket-list-ticking Glastonbury Festival performance), and recently had a song featured in the FIFA 21 game. On April 16, our debut album *If You Could Have It All Again* was released. It is the culmination of these four years' worth of work and a very proud moment for all of us.

This album is a love letter to a wasted 20s, to botched attempts at love and careers. It is set around a character trying to get to grips with life. Think Watanabe from *Norwegian Wood*; Malcolm from *A Little Life*; Emma from *People, Places and Things*; Holden from *The Catcher in the Rye*. They are all characters full of contradictions and conflict: they feel

"This album is a love letter to a wasted 20s; of botched attempts at love and careers."

contempt for convention but want to have it for themselves; they believe in love, more than anything else, but spend their lives running away from it; they have delusions of grandeur whilst simultaneously believing that nothing they have done, or ever will do, is any good; they are egotistical, but hate talking about themselves. They don't believe in absolutes but crave certainty. They love their friends and their family; they feel their happiness and their pain. They are fearful: that when pursuing their ambitions was once considered brave, it is now foolish; that they're running on the spot whilst everybody else is running forwards. They feel like they only have themselves to blame. They think the "strong man" is a thing for the past, but they long for some kind of emotional strength. They get nostalgic, quickly, and feel like their best days are constantly behind them. They are drowning in memories. They see life as a

kaleidoscopic series of moments stitched together, justified and made sense of only in retrospect. They are sceptical of everything and everyone, but still see human interaction, books, music, art, films, as potential energy, filling them up with enough vitality to keep moving until the next hit comes along.

The music industry, like many other creative industries, is in a really tough spot at the moment. Emerging acts such as ours face a triple threat: the pandemic's decimation of the live sector, the future restrictions on European touring as a result of Brexit, and the economics of music streaming are stacked against artists. Now is the time to support the arts in whatever way we can. It is important to add that even in these difficult times for the arts, I feel extraordinarily lucky to have had the opportunity to establish a career doing what I love, an opportunity that undoubtedly has its genesis in my unforgettable experience studying music at Lady Margaret Hall.

To find out more about Low Island and listen to their music visit their website: www.store.lowislandmusic.com/. The album is available on Spotify.

LEARNING FROM THE ART

Dr Sophie Ratcliffe, Keeper of Pictures and Tutor and Fellow in English, shares news on the College's artwork.

When the Principal asked me if I would become the next Keeper of Pictures at LMH, I was both honoured and excited. I clearly remember waiting for my interview for my Fellowship in English, some years earlier, gazing at one of the College's paintings by Christopher Wood. I was willing the selection panel to give me the job because, all other things aside, I simply *had* to have the opportunity of seeing the image again

Fortunately, the decision went my way, and I have been happily admiring 'Red Sails' since 2012. But as I discovered, being the Keeper of the Pictures requires as much action as admiration. We are immensely lucky to find ourselves teaching, and researching among what is (I think) the most interesting and unusual collection of 20th century British and Canadian Art owned by any Oxford College. The core of the collection was donated to the college by former principal Lynda Grier, a pioneering female collector, acquiring contemporary British art with an unusually astute eye, and at a time when women were rarely included in the art world. Generous donations from former members have enlarged and expanded its range. Art at LMH is eclectic and unusual, including works from Stanley Spencer to Singer Sargent, Bridget Riley to Sandra Blow.

Our own Fine Artists bring exciting work within and beyond the College. Dr Katrina Palmer, our Fellow in Fine Art, has won both critical praise and prestigious awards for her groundbreaking installations, while former English graduate, Nancy Campbell, has been using art and bookmaking to raise awareness of climate change. We have seen undergraduate Rhian Harris-Mussi scoop the University art prize for human anatomy with a textile deathmask, and LMH alum Conrad Shawcross headlining 'Art in the Age of Now', a post-Covid exhibition in London's newest exhibition space.

I look upon the world of practitioners with awe, respect, and a touch of nostalgia for my teenage years spent wrapped in wire, glue, and dreams of Alexander Calder. But I'm conscious that that all curation is act of creation. As Keeper of the Pictures, a crucial part of my role is ensuring that all our tutors, staff and students can draw on our art collection as a resource for teaching, inspiration, and research – whatever their subject. I want, in short, for our art to be for everyone.

To this end, our picture team is working on making our collection as accessible as possible for all at LMH, and beyond, so that the paintings and artefacts are enjoyed, and used, as an



educational, creative, and teaching resource. I know from my own research and teaching (I work on literature and sculpture, and literature and medicine) how thinking can be enlarged when one moves out of a single discipline. Interdisciplinary work is also where our undergraduates and graduates may find new areas and fields to explore, and our collection can give them a unique opportunity to do this.

Drawing on the incredible work done by Mary Haines (Martineau, 1958 Zoology) to catalogue our collection, the picture team set themselves the challenge of finding works of art at LMH that might enlarge and intersect with the study of law – with the view that other subjects might, in the future, appreciate a subject-specific 'take' on our collection. In doing so, we were well aware that we were encroaching on a field about which we knew almost nothing (and that, what's more, one of the world's experts on art and law was a former LMH Tutor Professor Sionaidh Douglas-Scott!) Despite our lack of legal knowledge – we hugely enjoyed the exercise of thinking through the art collection with a 'law' lens, and wanted to share a few of the paintings which made the list, below, with accompanying notes.



Christopher Wood, *Red Sails*, 1925,
oil on canvas. 38 x 46.4cm

"We are immensely lucky to find ourselves teaching, and researching among what is (I think) the most interesting and unusual collection of 20th century British and Canadian Art owned by any Oxford College."

THOUGHTS ON LAW IN ART



Fred Uhlman, *Industrial Landscape*, 1959, oil on canvas. 44.5 x 60cm.

This cityscape by Fred Uhlman was chosen partly because Uhlman was a lawyer by training, but also because his personal biography raises numerous questions about the legality of citizenship and the rights of asylum seekers. Uhlman fled Germany in 1933 as Hitler rose to power. Arriving in France, he found himself unable to work as foreigners weren't permitted to take paid employment. He later had his passport stolen, rendering him 'stateless'. He moved to London, nine months after the beginning of the Second World War, but dubbed an 'enemy alien', he was interned in Hutchinson Camp on the Isle of Man. Uhlman collected as well as painted, founded the Free League of German Culture, and he also became an acclaimed writer – his novella *Reunion* (1971) – is an often-overlooked piece of prose perfection.

Oliver Croker

While the legal link with this painting feels tenuous, Laura Knight fascinates our team in relation to her career more broadly. A pioneering self-taught artist, Knight was skilled at both the kind of landscape pictured here – 'Sennen Cove' – as well as in radical representations of the female nude, but also as documentary war painter. Knight holds a particularly interesting place in the history of international law. During the Nuremberg Trials, she wrote to the War Art Committee and requested that she be allowed to paint the trial room. She spent three months in Germany in 1946 and produced an extraordinary mixture of realist and abstraction in response – a mode of approach which begs the question of what a trial 'looks like'. The painting, owned by the Imperial War Museum, is rarely on show, but images can be seen online.

Sophie Ratcliffe



Laura Knight, *Sennen Cove*, circa 1922, oil on canvas. 59.5 x 74.5cm.



Internationally, whaling for profit was banned in 1986. However, three nations, Iceland, Norway and Japan continue to whale in various ways – Norway objects to the international ban, Iceland hunts for ‘conservation reasons’, and Japan commercially. In this way, this painting (artist unknown) might offer a starting point for conversations about environment law, the role of oceans and seas in law and trade, international law.

Oliver Croker

Whaling Boat, artist unknown

Nevinson was a tricky character, and commonly hated in the British art scene. His famous painting ‘Paths of Glory’ depicting rotting corpses now in the IWM was to be included in a 1918 exhibition at the Leicester Galleries of his war art. The painting was however censored by the official censor of paintings and drawings in France, Lieutenant-Colonel A N Lee, because of the particularly harrowing nature of the painting. Nevinson, never one to bow to public pressure, decided to include the painting in the exhibition despite the censorship, including a brown paper strip across the canvas with the word ‘censored’ boldly written. Nevinson was then reprimanded by the authorities not only for including a censored painting but also for the unauthorised use of the word ‘censored’ in public. This painting is clearly not so controversial, but its use of semi- abstraction might, perhaps, provide a starting point for thinking about the visualization of multiple and contingent perspectives in law, or in any discipline – what Sionaidh Douglas-Murray describes as ‘the richness of law, its historical embeddedness and its cultural contingencies, rather than a vision of law as singular, autonomous, and systematic’.

Oliver Croker

Christopher Nevinson, *On seeing the Swallow for the first Time in Summer*, year of production unknown, oil on canvas. 49.5 x 39.5cm.



We are now in the final stages of creating an searchable catalogue of the College Art, so that subject tutors, lecturers, staff and students can find their own interests, thematic, or in terms of artist – approaching the collection through their own lens. The collection can be used by tutors preparing for classes, or by students writing dissertations. And we are already working with our Outreach Team to create ways in which our collection can be used for school visits. We don’t know of any other Picture Teams undertaking a similar project, and we’re excited to see what the College art inspires.

We’d like to think that our Physicists might want to think about Bridget Riley’s wave formations – that Theologians will reflect on Maggie Hambling, Mathematicians and computer scientists will be inspired by the alternative visualizations of algorithms by Manfred Mohr and that our music students will think about the acoustic qualities of Conrad

We’ve all missed so many human interactions and relationships over this time – but I know so many of us have also missed, and continue to miss encounters with the arts of all kinds. Our work with the pictures is part of our

commitment to the work of rebuilding, valuing and nurturing the arts – and their importance – in the face of Covid. Over the last year, I’ve been ably assisted, and cheered, by the brilliant Ollie Croker (current DPhil in Classical Archaeology), who has contributed to this article, and the equally brilliant Mi Park (2019m Masters in Fine Art). We’ve been working onsite where necessary, but each week we’ve also met virtually, to discuss conserving, labelling, researching, finding, imagining, and seeing things differently – our plans and work shaping just one small part of the ongoing story and vision of Lady Margaret Hall.



LMH CONTINUES TO PIONEER:

Tackling educational disadvantage at Oxford

Dr Jo Begbie, Foundation Year Co-Ordinator



Some of the UK's most intellectually gifted young people will never reach their potential because they don't know that a world-class education is available to them. Those who do dream of Oxford may face huge obstacles, from secondary schools that are unable to prepare them adequately, to the financial and social pressures they

experience both at home and when they arrive at university. These challenges require flexible solutions, and at LMH we are striving to provide multi-level support to ensure that we are open and inclusive to all students who have the potential to study here.

Back in 2016 we established the pioneering Foundation Year programme, targeted at students from some of the most disadvantaged household in the UK. Recognising that disadvantage can affect GCSE and A Level grades, our Foundation Year accepts students onto the course with lower grades than would typically be required of an Oxford undergraduate. Once a student starts the course, we provide a combination of personal and academic support with the aim of preparing our students to progress and excel, either at Oxford or at other highly-selective universities.

Since the first cohort started in 2016,

we have welcomed 52 Foundation Year students to LMH. Most continue through to undergraduate study with us and we were delighted that when members of our first cohort – matriculating as LMH undergraduates in 2017 – sat their Finals in summer 2020 they all achieved a First or 2:1. Their success is testament to the fact that top school grades are not the only measure of academic potential, particularly for disadvantaged students, and we are thrilled that both Cambridge and Oxford Universities have recognised the value of this programme and will be launching university-wide programmes in 2022 and 2023 respectively.

Since embarking on the Foundation Year programme, LMH has developed considerable understanding of widening participation, access and inclusivity – in particular, we have developed a keen awareness of our own strengths and weakness and where we need to improve.

LEFT The 2018-19 Foundation Year cohort with Dr Jo Begbie, Foundation Year Co-Ordinator (back row, far right), and Esther Fisher, Foundation Year Administrator (centre)

“Our goal is to be able to identify and support exceptional students from every background, so that they can come to LMH and thrive at Oxford.”

Find, Admit and Thrive: we share our next steps

At undergraduate level, LMH – and indeed Oxford more broadly – is uncompromising on the need for exceptional exam results. Our goal is to be able to identify and support exceptional students from every background, so that they can come to LMH and thrive at Oxford.

Finding the brightest from under-represented groups. Highly talented students from non-traditional Oxford backgrounds or schools often think Oxford is not for them. We are poorer for their decision not to apply.

Alongside our outreach programme, we will launch *LMH Pioneers*, an online-based study programme for Year 10, 11 and 12 for students from disadvantaged or under-represented backgrounds. This will be designed to help students develop relevant academic skills and interests and provide information to help participants make informed decisions about their future. The programme will ultimately attract applications to LMH and will also equip these students with the necessary academic skills to make a competitive application.

Empowering tutors to make informed admissions decisions. The aim at admissions is to find those applicants most likely to thrive academically within the LMH community. Our tutors have a strong arsenal of skills already in

place to select the best candidates, however we know from Foundation Year admissions data and wider research that the information currently provided to tutors through the central University application system is not sufficient to enable tutors to make an accurate assessment of an applicant’s relative academic performance. Over the past three years, LMH’s Foundation Year office has provided tutors with a limited amount of additional information to support contextualisation of applicant performance yet there is scope for us to do more.

Going forward, we will build on all that we have learnt through the Foundation Year and aim to make available better data for tutors to be able to put a student’s performance into context during general admissions. This will mean that our tutors can use the latest evidence-based contextual information to identify more accurately those from non-traditional Oxford backgrounds who will thrive at LMH. In addition, LMH will continue to use its position as a forward-thinking Oxford college to effect institutional change in the use of contextual indicators across the University. Ultimately we would like to drive institutional change at a higher level and aim to work in partnership with organisations to impact the wider Higher Education community.

Ensuring all students are equipped to thrive. With the drive to widen participation across all Higher Education institutions, there has been an increased focus on, and evaluation of, the impact made by the many and varied support strategies upon the academic success of students. The resulting best-practice approaches recognise that all students transitioning to university will benefit from a level of academic and study skills support, with some students requiring bespoke interventions.

LMH has a well-developed academic support system, thanks to our pioneering study skills work – another pilot scheme we take pride in (for more information, see our article ‘Study Skills in a Pandemic’ on p28).

However, as the diversity of the LMH student body increases, we recognise the need to offer a greater variety of resources and also to develop mechanisms to tailor our provision to meet individual students’ specific needs. We will, therefore, be strengthening the future work of our study skills team. We will broaden and deepen our system to make sure that we are providing individualised academic and personal support to those who need it most, and to ensure that every student has the fundamental building blocks required to reach their potential.

To support this work, please contact the Development Office on development@lmh.ox.ac.uk.



WHAT WOULD I TELL MY YOUNGER SELF?

We asked alumna **Maggy Pigott** (Toohey, 1969 Jurisprudence) to reflect on what she might tell her younger self. She shares her thoughts here.

I celebrate reaching 70 this year. Here I speak to my 20-year-old self at LMH – via Zoom of course! I hope I've learned a useful thing or two to pass on: as we know, hindsight is a wonderful thing. However, we also know, not everyone learns from it, myself included. So, it's fortunate that there's little I would change, if I had my time over again.

On Work

After graduating in 1972, I would still recommend becoming a barrister and leaving after pupillage. The practising Bar was none too welcoming to its small cohort of women 50 years ago. I would have found it tough to combine a career with motherhood and I admire those of my vintage who succeeded. Instead, I entered the Government Legal Service, joining the Lord Chancellor's Department, a decision I've never regretted.

I followed in the footsteps of my working mother – the first civil servant to keep her job after the ban on married women working was lifted in 1946. Like her, I was ambitious but, unlike her, I never wanted to work full-time with children. In the early 1980s, part-time working for lawyers was rare and I knew no one who had done it.

“Although it is necessary to pick your battles, you must fight for what you really want.”

So, I congratulate my younger self for having the prescience and courage to ask for six months' maternity leave, and then return for only three days a week. I made this uncharacteristically brave request emboldened by the most supportive, empowering, and forward-looking Head of the Criminal Appeal Office. He agreed instantly; I suspect most would have refused.

That taught me two lessons. First, although it is necessary to pick your battles, you must fight for what you really want. Working flexibly was life-changing, both for my family and me. Second, a boss can have a significant, perhaps disproportionate, impact on your career and wellbeing. Over my next 30 years in the Department, having a good boss became a priority. On the rare occasions s/he didn't materialise, I

moved on. In turn, as my responsibilities slowly increased, I did my best to be a good manager and leader. *Do as you would be done by* is a good maxim for work and life.

I never returned to full-time work. In 1988, after five years working part-time, I agreed to share a legal/management job with another part-timer in order to fill a vacant full-time post. In common with almost everybody else, no one had a clue what job-sharing involved, so we just made it up as we went along. Luckily, we had the support of our managers, teams, and incredibly tolerant Court of Appeal judges. On our part, soon discovering job-sharing's advantages, we were committed to making it work. Slightly to our surprise, it did.

As they say, the rest is history. Our job-share lasted 23 years, gaining a promotion or two along the way, and after seven jobs our final post was Joint CEO of the judicial training organisation.

Job-sharing enabled us to cover full-time, high-profile posts, as well as enjoying four days a week each with our children. Once the children were older, I found time for other pursuits. In return, I did all I could to promote flexible working (inside and outside the public sector)

“What would I have done differently that I could pass on to my younger self? A long list, including being less of a perfectionist, more confident, starting dancing, being creative and keeping fit ASAP.”

and to help others to achieve it. Job-sharing with a great “other half” for so long and at a senior level, was a privilege for which I remain ever grateful. I had a fulfilling, exciting career. Receiving a CBE was an unexpected, amazing conclusion to my 37-year career. A very big cherry on an “exceedingly good” cake!

If children and work/life balance were priorities, I would recommend choosing a family-friendly employer, the right culture and enlightened bosses. But, above all, to make sure you love what you do. Life’s too short to waste it being unhappy at work, or to sacrifice the present for an unpredictable future.

On Parenthood

I will certainly tell my younger self (as it was on her mind) that, in roughly three years’ time, she will meet a lawyer and, after both deliberating for far too long, in her late 20s they will marry and 42 happy years together (so far) will follow.

All parents can provide endless advice on child rearing. I doubt words can prepare someone for the reality. But however hard I found life at times combining a career, children, an ageing mother, and periods of ill health, those difficulties were far out-weighted by the all-consuming love, joy, and huge pride in our, obviously uniquely wonderful, children.

So, on balance, I’d tell my younger self to enjoy their childhood, as the years will pass quickly, and to worry less – your impact is less than you think, and they are likely to turn out OK, with, without, or despite, your efforts. But I still worry about our children, now in their 30s, and far more sensible and capable than me.

On Ageing

At 20, I thought 50 was old, 70 very old and getting older was an inevitable physical, mental, and social decline. Happily, longevity has increased in the last half century and I’d tell her that decline is far from inevitable and most of us, with a bit of luck, can greatly improve our health and wellbeing. With a positive attitude to ageing, research shows we can live an extra seven and a half years!

I will reassure her that the best years are yet to come. Since retirement and my mid-60s, I’ve enjoyed life more than ever. At 69, I have “good enough” health and more freedom, time, and confidence to do what I want: to learn, make new friends, and volunteer, which I find hugely rewarding. I’ve also discovered new passions, including Twitter, blogging, dancing Argentine tango and ballet, and, in my late 60s, unbelievably writing and getting my first book published. I doubt my 20-year-old self would believe it!

On Life

What would I have done differently that I could pass on to my younger self? A long list, including being less of a perfectionist, more confident, starting dancing, being creative and keeping fit ASAP, to read and travel more and more widely, to have discovered more about our family history from the older generation, to have learned to touch type, taken more videos of the kids, and put every penny I had on Mon Mome to win the 2009 Grand National (at 100/1). But there’s nothing fundamental.

It’s hard to sum up half a century and what I’ve learned. The suggestions below may be unoriginal or clichéd, but they enabled me (despite my fair share of challenges) to lead a usually happy, full life and one which, I hope, is far from over. I’d say:

1. Your attitude to life and what it throws at you is crucial. Choose to be optimistic, passionate, persistent, and grateful. In the bad times, get help and remember “This too shall pass.”
2. Work hard, but remember your best is good enough. Believe in yourself.
3. Strong relationships are key to a happy life: create and cherish them.
3. We need a purpose in life, at 19 or 90. I’m still attempting to make a positive difference, however small.
4. Find what, and who, make you happy and include joy in every day. Self-care is not selfish. Eat cake!
5. And give, grow, adapt, and plan for your future, whilst living fully in the present.

After our Zoom meeting, I’d send my younger self an advance copy of my book *How to Age Joyfully: Eight Steps to a Happier, Fuller Life* or she’ll have to wait until 2019 to see it! It might help her to “live better longer” over the next 50 years, although she managed reasonably well without it. LMH helped to achieve that, providing the best possible foundation for the future, and close, enduring friendships, in three unforgettable years.

You can follow Maggy on social media via @AgeingBetter; @MaggyPigott, and find her book at www.howtoagejoyfully.com.

Would you like to consider sharing your thoughts for next year’s feature? Get in touch with the Development Office if so.



Dance performances in my 60s, from the Banqueting House and Trafalgar Square to Westfield Shopping Centre!

FUTURE PLANS

We hope to be in a position to tentatively confirm some dates for in-person events when circumstances fully allow. Our programme of online events will continue for the foreseeable future to reunite audiences unable to make events in person. Please bear with us as we look to reschedule celebrations missed due to the pandemic. We look forward to seeing many of you at College events soon!

As always please ensure you keep up to date via the website where further details and booking information can be found on all events: www.lmh.ox.ac.uk/alumni/events.



Images by Clare Borg & M Katsilis



Quiz Corner Answers

1. Happiness (20 March is the UN International Day of Happiness. *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* published in June 2017 twenty years after Roy's debut *The God of Small Things*. Gross National Happiness was first coined by the king of Bhutan in 1979 when he said: "We do not believe in Gross National Product. Gross National Happiness is more important." "Life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness" (though happiness in 1776 had the more common meaning of prosperity, thriving, and wellbeing, as opposed to the modern usage of pleasant, positive emotions).

2. These are the largest cities by population in their respective countries despite not being capital cities (Quito is the capital of Ecuador, Islamabad is the capital of Pakistan, Sri Jayawardenepura Kotte is the capital of Sri Lanka, Rabat is the capital of Morocco, and Abu Dhabi is the capital of the UAE)

3. These are films which had multiple (at least 10) Oscar nominations yet did not collect a single award.

