

LMH News

Issue 5 | 2022

09 LMH to Tokyo

24 Rowing for
Gold

32 Standards in
Public Life

38 Forbes 30
under 30



COLLEGE UPDATE

It is hard to believe that it is two years since this March since all our lives were changed dramatically by the Covid pandemic. I'm writing this from the USA, attending an LMH fundraising event in New York and then giving a conference paper in Baltimore postponed from two years ago – the first of so many cancellations. Students will soon be starting the final term of their first fully 'normal' year since 2018-19.

These past two years have been particularly difficult and disruptive for students. Last term we held no fewer than six graduation ceremonies (just under one a week!) to catch up on graduating students from 2020 and 2021 who had missed out on this important milestone. All these students have undertaken degrees in exceptional circumstances. I commended them for attaining joint degrees in resilience, perseverance, and ingenuity, overcoming obstacles such as library closures, online tutorials, isolation, Final exams sat alone on laptops in bedrooms and living rooms across the country.

LMH rose to the challenges impressively. Financially we felt the pinch but managed to keep going through prudent and careful management. What has helped us pass through this testing time and emerge the stronger is our inclusive culture and community, cemented by unrivalled levels of staff loyalty and a sense of belonging. LMH's exceptional green spaces have really come into their own during this period. Outside tutorials in gazebos and around



fire pits, social events in the gardens, my personal weekly boot camp, cycling and walking trips organised by Mark Seal the boatman, have continued and expanded beyond lockdowns. Gardening clubs, yoga and other mindful activities, have cohered around plans to do more with the gardens.

Wellbeing in its broadest definition is central to LMH's vision of how it will move forward to sustain its students and to achieve the strongest academic results. We are revising our welfare structures and breaking new ground in appointing a full-time professional Head of Wellbeing who will co-ordinate support and activities to enable our students to thrive and flourish, including study skills,

mentoring opportunities, internship and career advice. Once again LMH is leading the way. During the last week of Hilary term, we shortlisted for our final year of the LMH Foundation Year as the scheme is rolled out across the University in 2023 as Foundation Oxford. During the same week, I held personal mid-career reviews with over 120 penultimate year students. I was struck again by how keen students are to do well, and how they have surmounted difficulties.

On the final Friday of 8th week in Hilary, the Heron-Allen lecture and dinner, packed with students, tutors and guests, made me feel that LMH has really bounced back in force. Armored Heron Allen, a beautiful and brilliant LMH student, was killed in a car crash two weeks after graduating with a First in Zoology in June 1930. Her family created a legacy which has given scholarships and travelling funds to students, who I also interviewed during the last week of term. This year's lecture was given by a home grown LMH former student, the intrepid Professor Amy Dickman of LMH's WildCRU, on lion conservation in Tanzania working with local communities to find ways of protecting lions rather than killing them as predators. She had just flown in from Africa. It epitomized everything that LMH is about – adventure, intellectual and physical challenge, strong women breaking the mould, ethical and environmental concerns, care for communities both at home and abroad.

Without your help, LMH would not be the amazing college that I've been a part

LMH is for life

The Gift of Education

make a lasting impact through your legacy

Please let us know if you would like more information about making a bequest by contacting carrie.scott@lmh.ox.ac.uk



of for more than three decades. During the Covid period, I've been honoured to have been Vice-Principal and then Interim Principal. This dual perspective – as Professor in English, Fellow and Tutor, invested in the academic mission of the college, and then working on a day-to-day operational basis with college officers and support staff – has been enabled me, I hope, to help lead LMH through this difficult time.

This edition of LMH news points backwards and forwards and highlights the power of academic research to solve practical problems. Professor Mike Broers, retiring from LMH after 18 years at the College, unfolds his fascinating research on Napoleon Bonaparte (p. 4). Historians may want to look out

for details of the History reunion in September. Our long-standing and enthusiastic Physics Fellow Professor Todd Huffman offers a wonderfully transparent account of his research at the Large Hadron Collider at CERN in Switzerland (p. 40). Our distinguished alumna Eliza Manningham-Buller (p.12) explores the role that the Wellcome Trust, which she led, has played in supporting research into the pandemic. Two of our leading STEM graduates Sapna Sinha (p.10) and Kris Kaczmarek (p.38) explore their research, Sapna on the application of nanotechnology to neuroscience and Kris on how we can improve the scalability of quantum computers. On the wellbeing front, Jenny Rose Carey explores what the Gardens meant to her

as an undergraduate and how that love became her career (p.18). In a similarly environmental vein, MPhil student Victoria Emanuelle Forest Briand explains how LMH is focusing on our need as a college for greater sustainability. Finally, my successor Professor Stephen Blyth, who joins us in October as the new Principal, sets out his background and interests, and vision for LMH as we move forward into the future (p. 26).

As our horizons once more open, I look forward to meeting you and welcoming you back to LMH. Thank you for all that you have done, and continue to do, to make LMH the great college that it is.

Professor Christine Gerrard, Principal

LMH NEWS 2022 | ISSUE 5

College update	2	Welcoming back visiting students	46
Of Napoleon and Lady Margaret	4	Two LMH Fellows awarded title of full Professor	48
LMHer wins the John Potter Prize in Neurology	8	What would I tell my younger self?	49
LMH to Tokyo	9		
From Nano to Neuro	10		
Wellcome news	12		
Blue Plaque honour for LMH alumna	14		
Changed times	15		
A Gardener's World	18		
Embedding sustainability in our everyday college life	20		
Rowing for gold	24		
Our Principal Elect	26		
Meaningful diversity	28		
In Conversation with LMH	30		
Standards in public life	32		
LMH Changemaker	34		
FreeTrade Museums	36		
Doctor of Medicine	37		
Forbes 30 under 30	38		
Why two Higgs are better than one	40		
Carving my own cultural diplomacy path	42		
From finance to foodie	44		



Lady Margaret Hall
University of Oxford
Norham Gardens
Oxford
OX2 6QA

@LMHOxford

@LMHOxford

@LMHOxford

@LMH:BuildingLinks

LMH Oxford

www.lmh.ox.ac.uk

College Enquiries (Lodge): +44 (0) 1865 274300

Development Office: +44 (0) 1865 274362

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.

Editor: Emma Farrant, Alumni Engagement Officer

Contributor: Tom Hughes, Digital Communications Manager

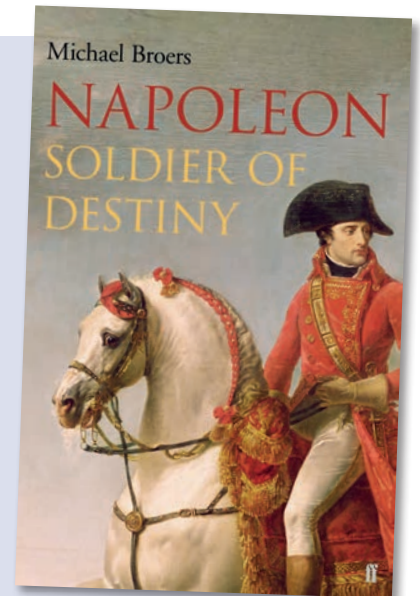


OF NAPOLEON AND LADY MARGARET

Professor Mike Broers will be well known to our almost-1,200 History alumni. After a career in several universities in the UK and USA, he became Fellow and Tutor in History at LMH in 2004. He became Professor of Western European History at Oxford in 2011.



Over the course of Mike's distinguished career, he has built a reputation as one of the world's leading scholars of the Napoleonic era, writing a number of prize-winning books, including *The Napoleonic Empire in Italy, 1796–1814: Cultural Imperialism in a European Context?* (2005). He has spent much of the last decade researching and writing what has become a three-volume biography of Napoleon: *Napoleon: Soldier of Destiny* (2014); *Napoleon: The Spirit of the Age* (2018); and *Napoleon: The Decline and Fall of an Empire: 1811–1821* (forthcoming, 2022). This is the first major biography to benefit from a new edition of Napoleon's personal letters by the *Fondation Napoléon*.



Having spent 18 years at LMH, Professor Broers retires at the end of this academic year. On 3rd September, LMH historians will gather for their subject reunion and have chance to reflect upon Mike's achievements.

I had no thought of writing a biography of Napoleon when I first came to LMH, almost 18 years ago. Goodness knows there are enough of them! My mind was occupied with teaching, with becoming Tutor for Admissions (almost immediately) and, perhaps most important of all for the life of the college, on taking over as chair of the Wine Committee, a post I was swept into with all the undue haste of a military coup, it then seemed. Perhaps the power and influence of that particular remit went to my head and gave me the delusions of grandeur needed to accept the task of composing yet another study of what one reviewer called 'the pestiferous little Corsican'. Being drunk on power may have helped me take the plunge. I certainly found points of unexpected empathy with my subject: a mutual love of red Burgundy, of which I bequeathed a healthy volume to the college cellars, and an indifference to the cost of my enthusiasm – in Napoleon's case, war and palaces; in mine, good French wine, as those of my Fellows who recall their battels from my years at the helm of the bottles will recall. With suitable irony, I had to renounce my college jobs when

I took of a Major Leverhulme Research Fellowship in 2011, to begin the long task of writing the biography, which is only now reaching completion.

I have still ducked the question of why I took it on. The call came when I was well settled in my work as a tutor. I was not at all restless, as a scholar sometimes needs to be. Clive Holmes (Emeritus Fellow in History) and I had worked happily together until his retirement in 2011, and I looked forward – correctly, as it has proved – to my years ahead in harness with Dr Grant Tapsell (Fellow and tutor in History). Indeed, if I have done one thing of real worth in my time here, Napoleon or no Napoleon, it was to have been on the committee that appointed Grant. Unlike Napoleon, I leave an assured regime behind me, as I go to my own

exile. One great thing spurred me to say yes, and by that hangs a tale. Beginning in 2004 – the same year I had the good fortune to come to LMH – the *Fondation Napoléon* in Paris began publishing a wholly new version of Napoleon's correspondence, *Napoléon Bonaparte. Correspondance Générale*. It has been a mammoth undertaking, involving teams of researchers scouring archives, libraries, and many private collections all over the world for letters and documents often never before brought to light. The result is 15 volumes of small, densely packed text, each more than 1,500 pages long. By 2010, nine of the fifteen volumes were in print, and I stood a fair chance of having them all at my disposal for my project. I knew, if I kept my head down and my skates on, mine would be – and

"It is a strange thing to talk about 'firsts' for lives of Napoleon, one of the most written-about figures in the world, but that is the case."

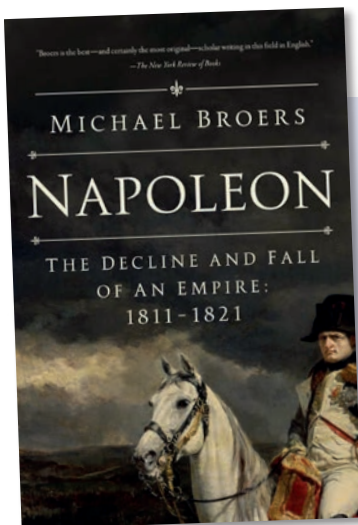
is – the first full-scale biography based on this remarkable resource. Volume one appeared in 2014; volume two, four years later; the third and final volume should arrive this summer, with luck. It has been both a labour of love and something of a race against the clock. The last volume of the new correspondence – which covers the 100 Days and the ever-popular battle of Waterloo – appeared only in the last weeks of 2018. There were moments when I felt a bit like George R. Martin, and not just in terms of my subject matter (which is far more labyrinthine and bloodthirsty than his!)

It is a strange thing to talk about 'firsts' for lives of Napoleon, one of the most written-about figures in the world, but that is the case. The original version of his official correspondence was compiled in Paris, in the late 1850s and early 1860s, another age in terms of research facilities, and has remained unrevised ever since. The team behind it simply did not have the 'reach' of the digital age. More to the point, it was published under the direction and at the behest of his nephew, Napoleon III, who buried family skeletons and much else besides. It was, for we who work in the field, something that was 'there and not there', as it were. How then, did serious people write serious lives of Napoleon? By a circuitous route, is the answer. The best lives of Napoleon are not drawn from his private papers, as is the rule for most biographies of public figures,

but from reliable memoirs – and there is a vast array of the unreliable type to be had, let it be said! What is worse, many people who could have provided important memoirs steadfastly refused to 'spill the beans' on their former boss, itself something of a tribute to him as a leader and friend. There was plenty of demand, and money, after his fall in 1815, for those who did put pen to paper or allow ghost writers to do so, the great novelist Honoré Balzac prominent among them. Nevertheless, most of those closest to Napoleon held out. Taken together, all this made the serious biographer's task anything but straightforward. It was like picking through a minefield of myths, lies and, worst of all, half-truths. On the one side, his propagandists, on the other, his demonisers, but worst of all, the middle ground who simply made up a good tale to tell. His own mother lambasted one of his earliest – and most sympathetic – biographers, for romanticising the circumstances of his birth. No, said the redoubtable Madame Bonaparte, he had not been born on a carpet depicting the siege of Troy on the living room floor. She could not afford such a carpet, and it was summer when he was born – 15 August 1769, yes, they got that right – and no one puts out carpet in summer in Corsica. What's the siege of Troy, anyway? The target of this 'corrective' letter to the press was no less than Henri Beyle, 'Stendhal', the author of *Scarlet*

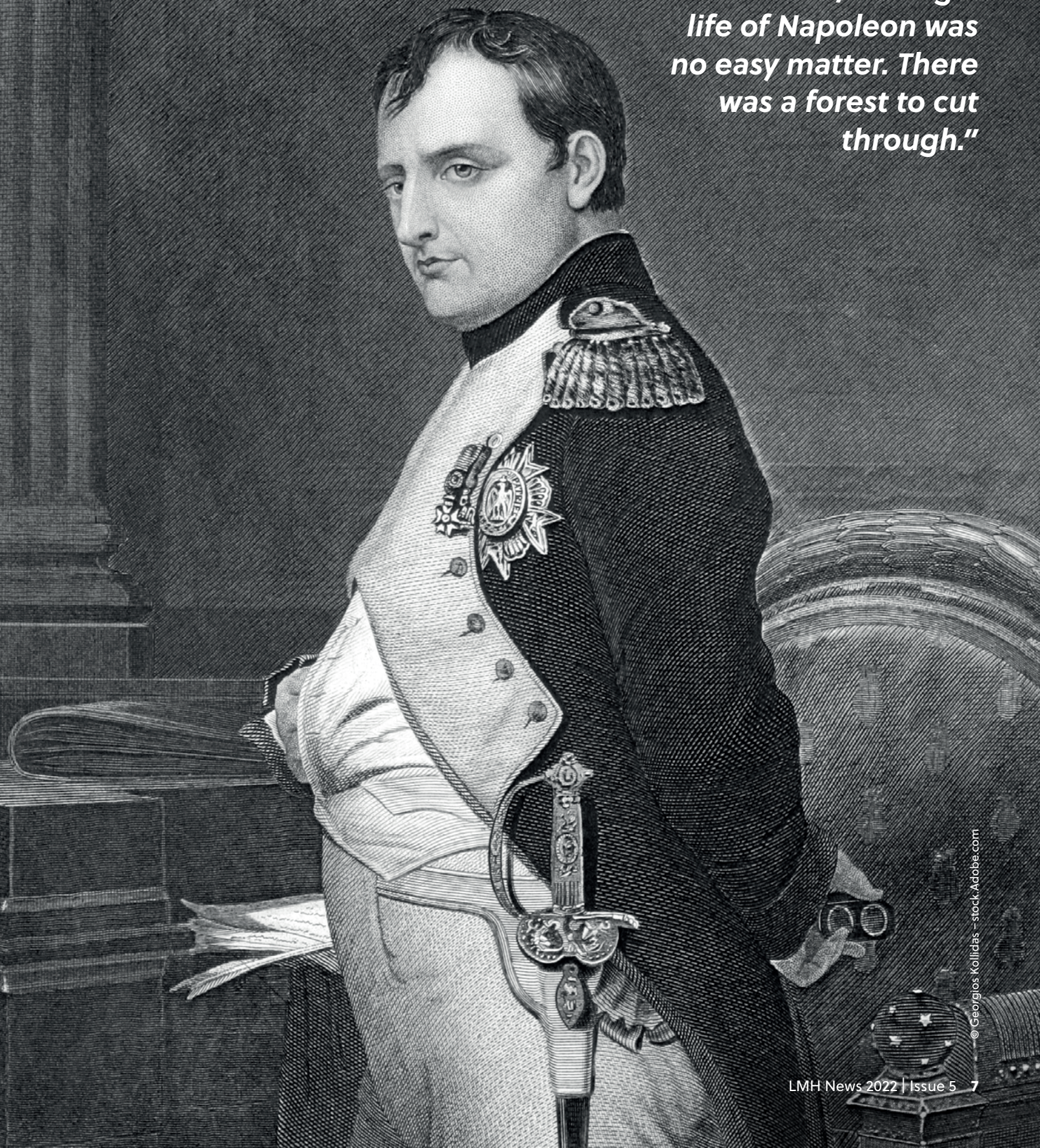
and Black. So it still goes on. Until now, writing a life of Napoleon was no easy matter. There was a forest to cut through.

The new correspondence, together with a mass of good, recent research and other compilations of source materials, at least gives the historian a fighting chance of writing a clear, objective life of Napoleon. Certainly, he spun his own tale often and craftily as he wrote, but no one can hide from minute to minute during the 24-7 life Napoleon lived, and keep up the smoke screen all the time. So copious is his output, it feels like reading someone's texts at times. Long-suppressed family rows – the vitriol hurled at siblings, especially, can shock – come vividly to life, as do his immediate thoughts on battles won and lost to those he trusted most and whose descendants often parted with those secrets hesitantly, when asked by the *Fondation*. Most of all, there was the worry and fear behind the public face that he had been pushed into a corner and may well lose everything, even on the eve of his greatest triumphs. It was truly a 'learning curve' for me, one I would not change for all the hours of hard graft. The worth of my offering is, of course, for others to judge, but as one colleague said to me when I was turning over in my mind whether to take it on, 'Whatever, Mike, good bad or ugly, at least we'll finally have a *normal life* of Napoleon.' As if there could ever be such a thing!



***Napoleon: The Decline and Fall of an Empire* is due to be published in July by Pegasus Books, NYC. It covers Napoleon's last years, his defeat in Russia, the collapse of his empire, and his final defeat at Waterloo. It turns on the great power struggle between Napoleon and Tsar Alexander of Russia, two very different men, both of whom were broken by the conflict. It will be available from all good bookshops.**

“Until now, writing a life of Napoleon was no easy matter. There was a forest to cut through.”





“Recently, a number of biological, technological, and mathematical advances have greatly improved our understanding of how information is represented in the nervous system.”

The National Undergraduate Neuroanatomy Competition is an annual contest open to all medical students in the UK and Ireland. Contestants are tested on their ability to identify structures on anatomical specimens and are questioned on clinical neuroscience knowledge. Owen came in the Top 10 clinical students nationally and was awarded a distinction.

Falling in the middle of his 5th-year exam week, Owen was unsurprisingly very happy with the results! “I’ve been tutoring LMH preclinical students in neuroanatomy for the last two years, so would like to thank them for pushing me with their questions and keeping me on my toes!”, he said.

The John Potter Prize is offered annually and is open to clinical students working in Oxford towards a Bachelor of Medicine. The prize is awarded for an essay on a clinical neurosurgical, neurological or neuropathological topic. Owen’s prize-winning paper was titled ‘Reading and Writing Neural Code: A burgeoning paradigm shift’.

Owen provided a brief insight into what his essay was about: “Recently, a number of biological, technological, and mathematical advances have greatly improved our understanding of how information is represented in the nervous system. I explore how these advances have developed, focussing on Chemogenetics and Brain-Computer Interfaces – devices that allow brain activity to control computers. I explore how these approaches could be applied clinically, offering potentially restorative treatments for conditions that have previously had poor outcomes or few treatment options, including strokes, visual impairments and a range of psychiatric pathologies.”

Owen said: “I’m feeling delighted about both the prize and the competition, and would like to thank the numerous tutors and friends who have supported and pushed me over my time at LMH.”

Alongside his studies, Owen is a keen rower and has previously been President of the LMH Boat Club, initiating a regular newsletter to our boat club alumni.

LMHER WINS THE JOHN POTTER PRIZE IN NEUROLOGY

In summer 2021, medical student **Owen Sweeney** (2016 Preclinical Medicine & 2019 Clinical Medicine) was awarded the John Potter Prize in Neurology and distinguished at the National Competition for Neuroanatomy.

LMH TO TOKYO

During the middle of her degree in summer 2021, **Polly Maton** (2018 History and Politics) was selected to represent Paralympics GB at Tokyo 2020.

Alongside her studies, Polly is part of the para British Athletics squad as a long jumper. She competes in the T47 classification for those who are one handed or have similar impairments. In 2015, she made her senior international debut at the World Championships in Doha and then went on to be selected and compete in the Rio 2016 Paralympics. Polly has also previously served as the JCR Disability Officer for LMH. While doing so, in her own words, she "tried to push the college to think of new ways to make itself more accessible, so more welcoming to those with a disability."

When asked about her achievement in being selected for Tokyo 2020, Polly said:



"On coming to Oxford, I realised the challenges I faced balancing a world-class education and continuing my sport. I threw myself into LMH life and thoroughly enjoyed my studies in the first year but unfortunately became injured by the time I came to sit my prelims. This 'bone bruising' to my jump foot, quite crucial for my sport, was believed by the medical team to have largely come from overexertion. I knew something had to change in order to give my all to both pursuits and with the incredible support of my tutors and Senior Tutor Anne Mullen I managed to secure a split-second year, never before given to someone for sport at Oxford.

After more injury struggles in 2020 which would have ruled me out of the Games, I was lucky to have another year without the pressure of imminent finals to rehabilitate my foot to aim for 2021. I am incredibly excited to say I have been selected to represent Paralympics GB at Tokyo 2020. I genuinely believe this would not have been achieved had I been at a different college, and I am immensely grateful to the LMH community who have continually supported me through the last few years."

Polly placed 7th in the Tokyo 2020 T47 long jump final, with a best distance of 5.19m.

FROM NANO TO NEURO

In the summer of 2021, **Sapna Sinha** (2016 DPhil Materials) joined the latest cohort of Schmidt Science Fellows. Many of our recent alumni and still-current students may recognise Sapna as the Junior Welfare Dean, a position she held from 2017 to 2020 alongside her DPhil. "Supporting the community directly was not only a rewarding and fulfilling experience, but it also had a huge impact in determining the academic path that I have chosen after graduation", Sapna told us. "The direct engagement with the community as a Junior Welfare Dean motivated me to also explore new projects in my own research that can directly benefit society". Here she tells us more about her research and the prestigious Fellowship.



For further information and reading:

Please visit www.schmidtsciencefellows.org/fellow/sapna-sinha/

Growing up, I often accompanied my parents on field trips where they used to design and introduce appropriate energy technologies, such as solar panels and biomass energy, for the development of remote villages in India. My parents had a never-ending drive to support very poor communities around my hometown with very basic science, and this had a huge influence on the development of my own personal interests during my formative years. These early experiences not only propelled me towards science, but also over time made me realise that the challenges faced by the world are complex and cannot be solved by any single discipline of science or engineering. The world is more connected than ever, and if we want to provide solutions to the 'big global challenges', then we need to transcend the boundaries of traditional disciplinary science. On their own, physicists cannot solve the clean energy problem and biologists cannot cure Alzheimer's disease. The current response to COVID-19 itself provides an excellent example of joint collaborative effort and interdisciplinary cooperation across sectors that is being undertaken on a global scale to bring an end to the pandemic.

My own academic journey has touched various fields of science. I completed an undergraduate degree in Chemical and Biological Engineering, before coming to Oxford to undertake a DPhil in Materials Science. As an undergraduate, I was fascinated by nanotechnology and the potential benefits it could have on our lives – foldable phones, printable solar panels and flexible electronics, just to name a few. This motivated me to join a research group during my sophomore year and get introduced to research and different types of techniques employed to study these new nanomaterials. By the end of my DPhil at Oxford, I had developed diverse technical and scientific skills across fields such as chemistry, physics, and materials, which I could employ to conduct a holistic study of a new type of nanomaterial. The ability to discover new materials, synthesise them at will, and explore their unique properties was exciting to me. I could study the unusual physical and chemical properties of these materials and endlessly explore their atomic structure

until it was time to go home. Some of these materials (a particularly famous example is Graphene) are stronger than diamond, stiffer than steel, and more conductive than copper, and yet they are invisible to the human eye. I have found it extremely rewarding to be able to work on cutting-edge technologies that have potential to have a big impact on the world. We are slowly but surely moving towards creating solutions to our existing problems by using such advanced materials.

My academic trajectory was varied, but thus far was still limited to physical sciences. Moreover, it was still mostly confined to fundamental science. After working in this field for such a long time, I was ready and eager to work on things that can directly translate into applications. One of the big impacts of nanoscience that I could see going forward was in healthcare where there is massive scope for improvements in almost every aspect. The understanding of Neuroscience, in particular, was limited for a long time due to the lack of technology to explore the brain on a single neuron level. The advent of nanoscience and improvements in the technology has finally given us the desired tools and the materials to actually start understanding this field in greater depth. The scope and impact of carrying out such studies in Neuroscience using these advanced materials and novel tools are enormous. Just imagine the impact it could have on our understanding of brain degenerative diseases and how to treat them! The availability of new materials also creates an enormous area of impact for implantable bio-electronic interfaces with an opportunity to restore previously lost neuronal functions.

I had already acquired the skillsets and expertise to work with nanomaterials and I was not motivated to carry out the next logical/incremental steps from my DPhil. I had already tried my hand in creating innovative applications in healthcare by co-founding a biomedical entrepreneurial group during my DPhil and later working as a Lead Material Scientist at an Innovate UK-funded start-up focused on intelligent body-adaptable clothing with embedded biometric sensors. Although these experiences were exciting, I felt my general lack of knowledge in the field I wanted to create an impact in. Therefore,



Sapna's last day at LMH, pictured with Junior Dean Vania Pinto

I was elated when I first found out about the Schmidt Science Fellows. It is a post-doctoral fellowship intended for people who want to make a genuine pivot in a discipline different to that of their DPhil. The Fellowship offered a variety of resources and support for carrying out this pivot and it was an excellent platform to conduct world-class research and develop new tools in a rigorously interdisciplinary field.

The opportunity to go anywhere in the world whilst at the same time learn about a new field of science is unparalleled. Moreover, the Fellowship promotes the development of scientific skills towards creating new technology that will have an immediate application in the real world. Using your science to make the world a better place to live in – what else can an academic dream of? Another incredible opportunity presented by the Schmidt Science Fellows is that they offer the Global Meeting Series, tailored training that gives the Fellows the ability to interact with scientists who share similar ambitions of solving global problems. Our first Global Meeting was held virtually, due to the ongoing

pandemic. Although it doesn't compare to in-person meetings, the online format allowed us to meet experts from around the globe during our online sessions in the first few months of the Fellowship. The Global Meeting Series is an impactful platform to meet like-minded peers working at the frontier of a variety of disciplines. We were able to share knowledge across different fields, identifying problems and discussing their solutions. Thus far, we have had trainings and workshops on interdisciplinarity, problem solving, data representation, and science communications. My personal favourite was the Science Policy Workshop organised by the Blavatnik School of Government, which made me ponder the role of scientists in influencing government policies at a higher level. Another highlight of the Global Meeting Series was the discussion on interdisciplinarity with Nobel Laureate Didier Queloz. We got to interact and discuss with the Nobel Laureate directly on not only his research work but also on outreach, science policy, and experience of working between different scientific fields. After these virtual meetings, I felt empowered and better equipped to reach out to a wide audience and communicate my work, engage with policymakers, enhance my network, and start working in a completely new field. These experiences have been extremely rewarding and have contributed to my own personal growth. I cannot wait for the next two Global Meetings this year, hoping that we can finally meet in person!

Dr Megan Kenna, Executive Director of Schmidt Science Fellows, first introduced me to the metaphor of being 'pi-shaped', i.e. developing deep knowledge and expertise in two or more knowledgeable areas, whilst having a broad general knowledge of other areas, like the shape of π . Going forward, I wish to switch from 'T' shape to this ' π ' shape and combine my experience and knowledge of nanotechnology with the training in Neuroscience that I will receive as a Schmidt Science Fellow.

As I write this article in early 2022, I am waiting for my visa documents to get processed so that I can finally get over to MIT to start working in Neuroscience. I have a lot of gratitude and I couldn't have been more thankful for this incredible opportunity.

"It shames me that I spent so many decades paying the minimum attention to science and its developments. I never fully understood how exciting it could be."



WELLCOME NEWS

Eliza Manningham-Buller (1967 English Language and Literature) has led a famously distinguished career, but when a new challenge called in 2015 it wasn't as well-known to her as some of her other ventures. Taking up the Chair of Wellcome Trust, she tells us, was eye-opening for Baroness Manningham-Buller, and she wants more people to understand its reach: *"It deserves to be better known for it is an extraordinary organisation which has had a profound effect on human health"*. Having stepped down last year, she talks us through her time there.

I celebrated leaving MI5 in 2007 by smashing my ankle falling downstairs (and, no, I don't drink alcohol). A year of enforced physiotherapy and boring exercises gave me plenty of time to think about what I might do next. I wasn't convinced that my somewhat arcane skills would be very saleable but job offers started arriving, often to become a security adviser to a company. The thought of relying on my rapidly dwindling knowledge (much unusable anyway because of sensitivity) in roles that would be a shadow of my previous

one did not appeal. I wanted a fresh challenge and lighted on learning something about science. I had given up science at school at the O-level stage. It shames me that I spent so many decades paying the minimum attention to science and its developments. I never fully understood how exciting it could be, how it was often creative and imaginative, and how, by adding all the time to our knowledge, it was meeting challenges and finding answers to intractable problems. At school I mistakenly thought it was all about petri dishes, full of smelly

solutions, plus levers and fulcrums and the amoeba. There is no excuse for my remaining in ignorance. I have tried to make up for it since.

By the autumn of 2008, I had joined both the Council of Imperial College, London and the governing board of the Wellcome Trust. In 2013 I became a member of the House of Lords Select Committee on Science and Technology, on which I am currently serving a second term. I became Chair of Imperial in 2011 until 2015 and Chair of Wellcome in 2015 until 2021.

Further shame: I was only dimly aware of Wellcome for most of my working life. If I had been a research scientist whose work had an application for health or a university leader, I would probably have been more tuned in. It deserves to be better known for it is an extraordinary organisation which has had a profound effect on human health since it was established in 1936 by Henry Wellcome, an early pharmaceutical entrepreneur. Much of the success of British bioscience is rooted in its funding by Wellcome over decades.

So, what is it? Wellcome is an independent charitable foundation funding science to address health challenges. Its endowment, as I write, early in 2022, is worth £38 billion. It plans to spend at least £1.6 billion each year for the next five years. It funds work in over 70 countries. In addition to a number of Wellcome Trust centres in British universities, it funds research centres in Kenya, Malawi, South Africa, Vietnam, and Thailand.

And what does it decide to fund? The core is the financing of research across a range of disciplines with potential discoveries for health, from the basic science of human biology through to drug discovery and therapeutics. In addition, it focuses on three health challenges: infectious disease, mental health, and the health effects of global warming. Apart from providing grants, it works with partners round the world as well as in the UK on campaigns and shared research. It funds the humanities too when they can illuminate and help communicate its focus. Henry Wellcome's Collection and Library have also had their own influence on Wellcome's mission to improve human health.

I cannot begin to list what scientists funded by Wellcome have discovered in the 85 years of its existence, but will mention a few COVID-related achievements:

- The founding in 2017, together with the Gates Foundation, the World Economic Forum, and the Governments of India and Norway, of the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovation (CEPI), formed to fund the development of vaccines against infectious diseases;
- The establishment, again with the Gates Foundation and also with

Mastercard, of a Therapeutics Accelerator in March 2020 to speed up the discovery for treatments of COVID;

- Extensive genome sequencing by the Wellcome Trust Sanger Centre of millions of COVID samples, advancing the recognition of variants (the Omicron variant was first identified by Wellcome-funded researchers in South Africa);
- Working with the WHO, other organisations, and national governments, on a global response to the pandemic; and
- Much more, including researching the effect of the pandemic on mental health.

From this I hope it will be clear what a wonderful privilege it was for me to work in the organisation for over a dozen years. When I left MI5 I did not expect to find another job that was as absorbing or rewarding. But Wellcome proved to be so. And the two organisations turned out not to be as different as those who questioned me on my transition had assumed. Both are staffed by highly committed staff focused on protecting people and saving lives. There is a major difference in scale, of course, and obviously resources. In MI5 we could point to many thousands of lives saved, in Wellcome to millions. Both work with extensive partnerships and have wide global links. I may be stretching the analogy too far, but I also see parallels between the intelligence officer's search for the truth of what might be planned,

trying to find the information that those who have generally wish to keep secret, and the scientist's effort to expand knowledge to address some of the world's most critical problems.

I left Wellcome at Easter 2021, after 12 and a half years. I was sad to go as I had found my time there so rewarding. The opportunity to do good, which Wellcome's outstanding investment team makes possible, makes it a most stimulating organisation to be part of. Its valuable independence, both strategic and financial, challenges it to spend effectively, to take the risks it is sometimes harder for governments to do, being accountable to taxpayers. It can point to many past achievements but what I found especially exciting is its long-term vision. Unlike some foundations, its policy is to continue to operate in perpetuity. That encourages both long-term investments but also some necessary patience. Scientific discovery can often take time, with dead ends and frustrations along the way. But COVID has shown what can be done at speed. My hope is that Wellcome, in partnership with others, can help apply that sort of urgency and funding to the many health challenges that the population of the world faces. The staggering number of deaths from COVID, the economic and educational damage, the effect on mental health, the appalling global inequities, with the rich countries hogging the vaccines, should all cause the world to come together to plan a proper global health policy for the future. I expect Wellcome to be a leading advocate for trying to make that happen.



BLUE PLAQUE HONOUR FOR LMH ALUMNA

MI5 has a history with LMH women. A Putney Society blue plaque was unveiled in October 2021 at the former home of **Milicent Bagot CBE** (1925 Lit Hum).

With a folkloric memory for facts, Milicent Bagot became the first woman appointed to a senior rank in MI5, acting as the agency's leading expert on international communism. She is widely believed to be the inspiration for the character Connie Sachs from John le Carré's novels *Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy*, *The Honourable Schoolboy*, and *Smiley's People*.

Milicent was educated at Putney High School before coming up to LMH in 1925 where she read Classics. After her studies she left Oxford and returned to London with a fourth-class degree.

Milicent Bagot had a reputation as a formidable security officer and specialised in international communism throughout her service, advising on the threat posed by the Soviet bloc to Britain during the Cold War.

After the war, she spent some time working with the British authorities in the Middle East, guiding them on how to overcome Soviet subversion. By 1949 she was recognised as a leading expert on the matter and was promoted to Assistant Director of MI5 in 1953.

Although most of the details about her career remain shrouded in secrecy, what is evident is that she had built a strong reputation as a studious and devoted operative, becoming the go-to expert on the affairs of the Comintern.

Briefly loaned to MI6 to advise on countering international communism in the Middle East and the Balkans, she became known for her fierce and robust style of leadership. MI5 Director General Sir Dick White promoted her to the rank of assistant secretary, thereby

making her the most senior woman in the history of the secret service. This appointment soon proved shrewd: Bagot was allegedly the first person to raise the alarm about Harold "Kim" Philby, a double agent for the KGB. Cover blown, he fled to the Soviet Union. After retirement Bagot worked part-time at MI5 for another decade, leafing through pre-war Comintern files to try and identify active spies, researching the influence of Communist front organisations abroad, and investigating the 1924 Zinoviev Affair.

This was the first plaque that the Putney Society has ever awarded to commemorate a woman and recognises the significant impact that Milicent Bagot made to her field whilst living in Putney. Milicent is also featured in the Deneke Corridor Alumni Portrait Exhibition at LMH.

London's famous blue plaques link the people of the past with the buildings of the present. Across the capital over 950 plaques, on buildings humble and grand, honour the notable men and women who have lived or worked in them.

With thanks to the Putney Society for sharing this news story with us.





CHANGED TIMES

Brigid Wells (Haydon, 1946 Modern History) came up to LMH just after WWII. As we kept in touch with our alumni community throughout the pandemic, Brigid found herself thinking back to her own time at LMH and kindly offered to share her memories. Times change, and she mused to us, "The solace of the garden and the marvellous opportunities to meet and chat must be the same, but not much else, I suspect – certainly not the washing facilities!"

When I came up to Oxford in October 1946, the war had not long ended and the scars were still there.

Oxford was not much damaged, but in many big towns a row of terraced houses would be defaced by the empty gash of a bomb site. As clothes were still rationed, some ingenuity was needed to look at all smart. Essential work clothes were off ration, and so was army surplus gear. My best friend therefore had a navy and white skirt made from butcher's aprons and I bicycled around in an adapted Air Raid Warden's tunic, cut short to make a bomber jacket. (It would have been possible to make silk underwear out of parachutes, but we lacked the expertise.) Food was adequate but very boring. To students nowadays, the conditions would

feel like austerity, but after five years of air raids and fractured families, nobody really complained. Most fathers, brothers and sons had been demobbed, blackout was over; the street lights shone again and the permanent cloud of anxiety had lifted a little. People who seemed to be enjoying themselves too lavishly no longer got reproached with 'Don't you know that there's a war on?'

Oxford students post-war were a very mixed bunch: far more men than women, of course, but many of the men were much older than the usual undergraduate. Anyone who had joined the Forces on leaving school, provided they had the entry qualifications, could take up a free place at university once they had been demobbed. This meant that many of the new arrivals were in

their early to mid-twenties, thoroughly grownup, having been through far more gruelling experiences than any of the boys who had come straight from school. The older men presented a bit of a challenge to the 18-year-olds, who had to make a special effort to look impressive. Most of the girls were also only eighteen; at LMH, there were only two or three older ex-service women. I went to a dance at LMH in some excitement with a heavyweight boxing Blue, a gentle, thoughtful giant who had been a Major in the Indian Army, but he soon realised I was not anywhere near his level of maturity and he kindly dropped me. The SCR were determined that the dance should pass off without incident; all individual rooms were out of bounds and the Chapel was firmly cordoned off.



ABOVE View from top of Talbot 1948

LEFT Boathouse around 1948

Oxford city, which had not suffered too much from air raids, had resumed its normal humdrum activities, tolerating the students for half the year but not setting out to attract visitors. There were no tourist buses or guided parties. During the day, anyone could wander in and out of college quads or chapels. Apart from the market and a few cinemas and Indian restaurants, there was not a great deal of entertainment to be found. No undergraduates, male or female, were supposed to visit pubs; Proctors in bowler hats would patrol the various drinking places and throw them out, with disciplinary action to follow. Some girls did occasionally risk it in the hope that, with a bit of lipstick and attitude, they might not be taken for a student, but in general there was no real drinking culture at any of the women's colleges. The men's colleges had their own bars where beer could be consumed, but alcohol was in theory prohibited for students in LMH. My father brought in some gin for my 21st birthday; I was terrified that the Principal, who lived on the other side of swing

doors on the Deneke corridor, would smell it from afar. Alcohol was not really a feature of everyday life for students then; there was no Freshers' week to get you started, and no one I knew would have felt that they had the money to spend on drink. People who lived out of college would sometimes throw a private party, but in general if you wanted to socialise in mixed company, or just meet a boyfriend, it had to be over tea or cocoa in one of your rooms before 07:00 p.m., or at an evening event like a choir rehearsal or Society debate.

Seventy-five years ago, physically speaking, there was a lot less of Lady Margaret Hall. The Norham Gardens road then swept down past Old Hall and Talbot, where the small Porter's Lodge was on the right, near the archway to the garden, and continued around the corner to the left, becoming Fyfield Road, running over the area that is now the Porter's Lodge and across the front of Deneke. There was no separate library, no Pipe Partridge building, just grass sloping down to the road. The main

entrance was through the door under the round stone-pillared canopy at the back of the present library quad, and that was the only one open at night. If you went out in the evening, you had to sign out saying where you were going (most people just wrote 'coffee') and come back by 11.00 p.m. It was possible to get special permission until midnight but climbing in could result in being rusticated or even sent down. The most peculiar regulation was that if you went to a Ball at the end of the summer term, you had to be back at LMH to sign in by 6.00 a.m. the following morning. It was quite embarrassing to leave your party before breakfast in order to bicycle back to college in a long dress.

LMH was of course a women's college in 1946. Men were only allowed to visit before 7.00 p.m. unless you were related or actually engaged to them. In theory, women were not allowed in men's colleges either after Hall, except for a function. A few of us used to sing in a madrigal group whose conductor was at Christ Church, and we had special permission to be in his rooms from 8:00 till 10.00 p.m., escorted by the porter in a bowler hat, as 'Mr Armstrong's young ladies'. (That was Robert, an excellent musician, who later became Private Secretary to Edward Heath and Cabinet Secretary.) We once sang carols in the gallery at a pre-Christmas lunch at LMH.

"My father brought in some gin for my 21st birthday; I was terrified that the Principal, who lived on the other side of swing doors on the Deneke corridor, would smell it from afar."

Student living is not luxurious now, but in 1946 it was probably more Spartan than today. There was no central heating in our rooms. We had coal fires, for which three small buckets of coal and a bit of firewood were provided each week. You had to light the fire and then draw it up, either with a bit of newspaper held over the fireplace to send the draught up the chimney or, more dangerously, a commoner's gown (a scholar's was too floppy to be useful). One bucket of coal would last about 4–5 hours, so on the days when you had no fire, you had to work in the library, then in the central block behind the front door, or go to the Camera, or hope to share with a friend. The washrooms were communal: a row of washbasins along one wall and loo cubicles on the other, with a bathroom at the end. You did your washing by hand and hung it in a downstairs drying room; there were no machines. All meals were taken in Hall. You handed in your ration book at the beginning of term and very seldom ate out. Food was adequate but not very imaginative: the only dish I can remember is vegetable curry. Breakfast was porridge or cereal and toast. We had our own labelled plates of butter for breakfast, about 2 ounces to last the week. Every morning we had to sign a register in Hall to prove that we had spent the night in college, in order to complete the statutory eight-week termly residence. We became quite expert at forgery when a friend was having a lie-in.

Women were not allowed to join the Union, but you could go and listen; it was mostly privileged young men trying to be witty, but it did provide a route into Parliament for some of them. The Oxford University Conservative Association held rather pretentious formal dinners, where the men had to wear dinner jackets. Other Societies were less ambitious and more friendly. My best friends were my two neighbours in Deneke, but other lasting friendships came either through singing in choirs or acting with the Experimental Theatre Club (ETC). This was less prestigious than OUDS but it put on more plays and revues. Kenneth Tynan, later a well-known theatre critic, was its leading light. His face was gaunt, almost skull-like, and he used to wear coloured two-piece suits, green or purple, which marked him out from the run of the mill in their old tweed jackets and grey flannels. I found him terrifying: I once

"Seventy-five years ago, physically speaking, there was a lot less of Lady Margaret Hall."

went for an audition with him, arranged for about 11:00 a.m., and he conducted it lying in bed in pyjamas and yellow bed socks. Most of us were a great deal less sophisticated than students are today. Not many had been to co-ed schools or were used to male company (I always envied the easy sociability of a friend who had been at Bedales). The younger male students were often equally shy. In time, most people learnt how to cope.

As women students were very much a minority (there were five women's colleges compared to over 20 for men) they still had a slight feeling of being at Oxford on sufferance. Certainly, almost all of them worked extremely hard to justify their existence. In Modern History, two essays were required each week, one for each tutorial, each involving a hunt for a dozen books and learned articles which might or might not be available in the Camera or the College library. Essays were hand-written; I think I was the only person who had a typewriter. The SCR kept a beady eye on anyone who appeared to be neglecting their studies. I was horrified to be hauled before a roomful of tutors in my second term, because I had taken a part in 'Uncle Vanya' with the ETC. With exams, then known as 'Sections', at the end of that term, acting was considered a frivolous, if not dangerous, activity. The warning must have had some effect, as I did not disgrace myself in Sections. Only two theatrical performances were allowed over the three years at LMH. In my second year, I played Lucy in the 'Beggars' Opera' in a real theatre; the Operatic Society were allowed to use the Playhouse! That meant that when, in my last year, I was offered the part of Joan in Shaw's 'St Joan', to be performed in New College cloisters, the College did not let me take it. It was a rational ruling on their part, but the effect on my morale was probably as damaging to any degree prospects as acting in the play would have been.

There was very little outside contact then for students in term time. No one went home, or anywhere else, for weekends, and parents very rarely visited. Oxford social life took off on Saturdays and Sundays; the colleges never felt deserted in term time, whereas

nowadays some university campuses seem almost empty at the weekend. As there were no mobile phones then, and only one or two public telephones in the College, it would not have been possible in any case to keep in close touch with friends or family at home. We wrote and posted infrequent letters to our parents. For the eight weeks of term, you were cut off; Oxford had to be your only life, lived with great intensity. I am sure it is very different now. Keeping in touch is so much easier with mobile phones. All young people know how to multi-task and manage devices to help them communicate and study. The amount of information available online saves hours of trawling through libraries. University and College rules are far more relaxed; relationships are more natural. Undergraduates are much freer in many ways than they were in 1946, but the three years at LMH must still be the same intense and rewarding experience that stays with you for the rest of your life.



Talbot Hall 1947



Summer view of one of the sheds at Northview with Rudbeckia, Blue Lobelia, and Daylilies in yellows and blues

A GARDENER'S WORLD

Jenny Rose Carey (1981 PGCE) is a long-standing supporter of the College; some readers may have noticed our feature about her in the 2021 Philanthropy Report. Passionate about gardens both personally and professionally, she has generously pledged to endow the Head Gardener post to ensure that the grounds which so many students and alumni cherish are maintained for future generations. In her own words, she shares why gardens are so important to her and how they feature in her life.

Having grown up as the daughter of a botanist, and studying Biology as an undergraduate, I was lucky enough to study at LMH as a postgraduate. The beautiful gardens at LMH enhanced my time there as they were right outside my door if I needed a place to relax, think quietly, or clear my head before the next assignment. The gardens immensely enhance life at the College. As we walk from building to building, we are automatically connected to the natural world. This daily interaction with nature has been proven to help to reduce stress and lift our moods.

Gardens and gardening have been a major part of my life. I taught Biology; first in Northamptonshire, and later in America. My working life has taken various twists and turns – I earned a degree in Horticulture, was the Director of two public gardens, and have authored three books about gardens and gardening.

Wherever I have lived I have had a garden; at first modest in size and scale and now extensive. Our current garden, Northview, in Pennsylvania, is a four-and-a-half-acre site and sits on a watershed between the Delaware and Schuylkill rivers. My American husband, Gus, and I have lived here for 25 years. During that time, I have designed and developed a series of (what Americans feel are) English gardens. As a garden historian I insist that they are English-inspired and not English. For a start the climate is so different. On a recent winter day, it was 12 degrees Celsius in Oxford and 12 degrees Fahrenheit (minus 11 Celsius!) in my garden. We get heavy snowfalls, blistering hot summer days, and even a tornado that roared through the garden last September knocking down and twisting off huge trees. Gardening here is not for the faint of heart.



“We get heavy snowfalls, blistering hot summer days, and even a tornado that roared through the garden last September knocking down and twisting off huge trees. Gardening here is not for the faint of heart.”

Jenny Rose Carey



The Teapot Fountain in the Moss Garden in spring with bluebells and Redbud trees behind it

I have tried growing most plants that are found in English gardens with varying degrees of success. Sweet peas work if started early and then removed when the heat kicks in. Old-fashioned roses do well if they flower before the dreaded Japanese beetles try to eat them up. I have found techniques to nurture biennials such as foxgloves through the cold months. Hollyhocks are normally covered in a fungus called rust, but they look good if you ignore the foliage. Delphiniums elude me and become expensive annuals. On the plus side, tomatoes and basil grow like weeds.

The general rate of growth of all plants is phenomenal. Trees in Pennsylvania grow to magnificent proportions. I adore the woodland spring ephemerals that grow beneath them. I have a lovely shade garden that is a little more sunny now due to the tornado tree damage. There I grow native east coast American flora such as delightful trilliums, shooting stars, and bloodroot. I mix American bluebells, *Mertensia virginica*, with English bluebells. These plants thrive because we have lovely, rich, deep soil here that I amend each year with compost and leaf mould.

My appreciation for gardens as a place where we can positively impact our local environment grows year by year. It has become such a passion that I use it as a theme when I give gardening lectures around the country. I use no pesticides or herbicides, I use as little additional water as I can, and I try to gather rainfall to use later. I garden for pollinators such as bees, butterflies, and hummingbirds. The birds are a special treat with a wide range of woodpeckers, cardinals, chickadees, blue jays, warblers, a heron, and a red-tailed hawk to name just a few. In the garden we have deer, rabbits, groundhogs, skunk, raccoons, snakes, a snapping turtle, chipmunks, and even once an escaped wallaby! I appreciate the wildlife that uses my garden most of the time, but it does get annoying when your phlox or lilies are

mowed down by a herd of deer. I have enclosed various areas and corral my more delicious plants within these fenced areas. I also use lots of herbs and scented foliage to disguise vulnerable plantings.

The gardens are varied in theme and purpose. I have a dry garden that has not been watered since 2004, a rain garden, several ponds, a herb garden, cutting garden, vegetable garden, a winter walk, a stumpery, moss garden, and sunset and moon gardens. I love to share my gardens and open them up for visitors from around the world.

From the first snowdrops and crocus to the last brown stems of autumn my garden provides me with a place of refuge, a place to find rejuvenation and a source of intellectual stimulation. During the pandemic millions of people around the world have taken up gardening. Whether it is to feed yourself, for exercise, to provide a place of beauty, or as a great life-long hobby, gardens are a fabulous adjunct to our homes and our way of life. Couple that with a chance to make an impact on our environment, one garden at a time, and you have a winning solution.

If you ever find yourself on the east coast of America and would like to come and visit me in my garden, I will welcome you with a cup of tea. I am easy to find via Instagram and other social media.

For further information and reading:

You can follow Jenny on Instagram @NorthViewGarden
Visit her website at www.beforeyougarden.com

The Ultimate Flower Gardener's Guide will be released in summer 2022

"As a Masters student in Development Studies at the University of Oxford, it quickly became important to connect my studies to my beliefs and to my lifestyle – in other words, to 'walk the talk!'"

EMBEDDING SUSTAINABILITY IN OUR EVERYDAY COLLEGE LIFE



Victoria Emanuelle Forest Briand (2020 MPhil Development Studies) tells us how LMH students escaped their rooms to create a community food garden during the pandemic.

Many universities are becoming greener than ever. Campuses dedicate increasing resources to reducing their energy and water consumption, introducing formal environmental management systems, divesting from fossil fuels and unethical investments, increasing recycling and composting facilities, and so forth. Yet, according to the British-based student network *People & Planet*, more than half of universities are not on track to meet their emission targets. With the clock ticking, there is very little space for timid and unambitious action plans.

For years, the University of Oxford lagged behind other universities in the *People & Planet* ranking. In 2021, however, the University of Oxford leaped 20 places to 25th place, with a total score of 62.9%. The league table assesses 154 institutions based on 13 categories including carbon management and carbon reduction, environmental policy and strategy, biodiversity and food management, and ethical investment and banking.

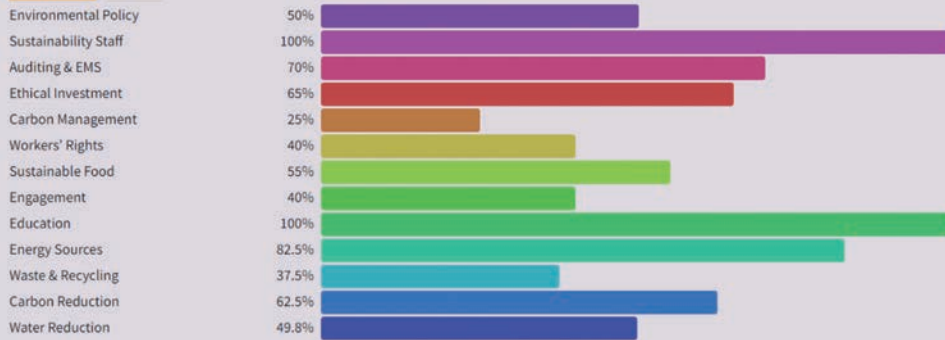
With our climate in crisis, universities and colleges need to embody their research. Sustainability must go beyond teaching and research – into concrete action.

Throughout climate marches, protests, and campaigns, students have and continue to be key players in demanding and hastening this societal transition. As a Masters student in Development Studies at the University of Oxford, it quickly became important to connect my studies to my beliefs and to my lifestyle – in other words, to 'walk the talk'. With a focus on community transition to sustainability, my thesis explores the implementation of alternative food systems and economies, and their related impact on individual beliefs, values, and interpretations. In 2021, my attention was geared towards building a community food growing project at LMH and organising lecture on sustainable development and climate justice.



Total Score: 62.9%

Full Details Close



The University of Oxford scored 100% in both the education component and sustainability but failed in its carbon management (25%) and waste and recycling (37.5%). Source: 2021, "University of Oxford", People & Planet.

A greener LMH

Our college is graced by beautiful grounds, river, trees, and gardens. Its commitment to sustainability is laudable. It was one of the first colleges to take on the Oxford Green Impact Scheme and the first to achieve the Gold Level Plus level for several years. It's an accredited Fairtrade college and offers a wide range of vegan and vegetarian meals. Students and staff can compost and recycle in their dorms and the dining hall. According to its sustainability report, the college has updated its building such as refurbishing sash windows and installing a voltage optimiser and motion sensors in communal areas. It installed four photovoltaic arrays, an array of solar collectors, and a significant ground source heat pump system. These initiatives have all helped reduce its residents' carbon footprint.

Students are also key in helping the college implement and imagine new sustainable projects. During the March 2021 lockdown, I decided to escape the confines of my dorm to the expansive LMH gardens and start a community food growing project. My hope was to increase access to healthy, fair, and sustainable food on campus that benefits the planet as much as the health of the students.

Within a week of advertising it, more than 40 students had joined this organic community gardening project. Most of us had never gardened, and barely knew how to plant seeds. College provided us financial support, equipment and materials, six raised beds, and valuable

tips from the college gardeners and Chaplain Andrew Foreshew-Cain.

Motivations to join the group were diverse, ranging from environmental concerns and desires to save money to the therapeutic and physical benefits. In between breaks for classes and papers, volunteers fertilised the soil on our six raised beds, used organic LMH-sourced compost, planted seeds indoors and outdoors, watered the plants, uprooted weeds, and harvested the mature vegetables. We distributed food to students, volunteers, and the dining hall's kitchen staff.

While vegetables grew, we quickly developed a sense of attachment towards the soil, plants, and others. For one international volunteer, it notably helped her establish roots in the community. For another, it ushered in a new relationship with nature and food, making food alive.

We organised outdoor jam sessions, poetry nights, picnics, and potlucks to strengthen bonds between the gardeners and the broader Oxford community. It quickly became obvious that eating together is just as important as producing the food or what you eat. A sense of community within the college helps generate collective action towards sustainability.

While participation and food distribution to students sometimes dwindled, the group expressed its desire to extend its impact outside the college gates. We hope to distribute fresh produce to food banks and shelters next springtime.



April 2021: The start of the project



September 2021: Our garden at its brightest

“As a home to students, social space and workplace, LMH has a key role in upholding ambitious climate action plans.”

BELOW May 2021: One of our volunteers installs a net tunnel to protect the lettuce, beet, and French climbing beans from birds and other animals

RIGHT September 2021: Celebration of our summer harvest with college students



LEFT August 2021: A fruitful summer of organically grown French climbing beans, sweet peas, squash, courgettes, carrots, beets, lettuce, and spinach

Parallel to our food growing initiatives, we proudly set up an LMH pop-up store, a clothing and item drive where students can swap and/or donate items to the British Heart Foundation both at the start and the end of the school year.

Despite the garden's success, more ambitious efforts are needed to make LMH truly sustainable. Other initiatives may include strengthening student voices in sustainability strategy councils, implementing zero-waste commitments, institutionalising student gardening and allotments, reducing carbon emissions, and so forth.

The curation of sustainability and climate justice-related lectures is also

fundamental to reflect collectively upon the impact that the climate and biodiversity crises are having. With the Oxford Department of International Development, I help curate events for their Climate Change and Development lecture series. Most recently, I moderated and organised a discussion on climate diplomacy and the pernicious challenges posed by colonialism. The webinar offered a personal look into the journey of three indigenous activists, scholars, artists, and lawyers and their fight for climate justice in Canada. By uniting diverse voices, we create a space to reflect critically on the complexities of these transitions towards sustainability.

Moving forward

We are entering a decade in which we must achieve radically different ways of organising ourselves, such as in the ways we consume energy, food, water, and products. We must imagine new futures and utopias whereby we restore nature, avert catastrophic climate change, and ensure equality and inclusivity.

As a home to students, social space and workplace, LMH has a key role in upholding ambitious climate action plans. Colleges and universities must not only embody what their science says but also create an enabling environment for students to make more sustainable decisions. Universities can be a key institution in changing people's behaviour and lifestyle. Our hope is to see LMH continue to be the trailblazer it has been over the last century.

“Our hope is to see LMH continue to be the trailblazer it has been over the last century.”



© master1305 – stock.adobe.com

The UK food system currently faces multiple challenges. As a whole, food systems generate about 35% of total global human-made greenhouse gas emissions. According to a UKRI 2020 report on mapping the UK food system, “diets too rich in fat, sugar, and meat and too low in fruit and vegetables are contributing to obesity and related health problems, especially in deprived households. Unsustainable production methods are driving biodiversity loss, soil degradation, pollution, water scarcity and climate change in both the UK and overseas. Poor working conditions persist, especially for low-skilled labor in the food sector”. Community food growing initiatives can provide a sustainable, resilient alternative to traditional food networks, while empowering and forging a community.

For further information and reading:

www.lmh.ox.ac.uk/about-lmh/further-information/environmental-sustainability-and-fairtrade

www.peopleandplanet.org/university-league

www.qeh.ox.ac.uk/content/climate-change-and-challenges-development



ROWING FOR GOLD

Felix Drinkall (2017 MEng Engineering Science) won gold in the men's eight at the U23 World Rowing Championships in the summer of 2021. No stranger to high-pressure situations, our readers may remember his name from previous *LMH News* features, having taken part in the Oxford Cambridge Boat Race throughout his studies. Felix shares the experience of the Championships in his own words with us here.



“Our coach calmly told us that he thought it looked great and that we were all being a bunch of prima donnas. His only instruction was for us to have fun during the next session and enjoy the experience.”

“On 3 July 2021, the 24 month-long wait since my last race for GB ended and I, alongside my eight other crewmates, arrived in Račice for the U23 World Rowing Championships. At first, I found it strange to think of the other countries as competitors rather than statistics, as had been instilled in me after a year of BBC headlines. Covid-19 was on everyone’s minds: just before flying out half of the team had been pulled due to a close contact testing positive. Indeed, Czechia had only allowed us entry on the condition that we wear an FFP2 mask whenever we were outside of our rooms, with the only exceptions being in the boat and mealtimes. The odd result of this was a tightly bound crew; complete isolation from the rest of the team and the removal of external distractions meant that our preparation was completely internal.

The first row at the course was awful. Just prior to flying out we had refined an effective and comfortable way of rowing and were excited for the competition. However, the distraction of a new course, different surroundings, and the tension that arose every time we saw the Germans, Italians, or Americans resulted in rowing that none of us were proud of. The knowledge that, no matter what, in four days’ time we would be racing to be World Champions meant that there was too much tension in the boat. With ideas bouncing back and forwards as to what was going on, our coach calmly told us that he thought it looked great and that we were all being a bunch of prima

donnas. His only instruction was for us to have fun during the next session and enjoy the experience. This one piece of advice characterised the rest of our races.

Each session we rowed with more and more composure. Every single person in the crew contributed vocally to a sense of a confidence I have never felt in a crew. Sitting on the start line of the final I have never felt so calm and ready for a race. Internally, I was just so excited for the race to start so that we could show the world what we had prepared for them. I was completely convinced that if we had our best race we would win (in hindsight, I might have been a little overconfident). We were internally ready for one of the other crews to take the race on hard and try and lead early, but we weren’t completely ready for three crews to do so.

The Italians, Germans, and Americans went out hard and 500m in we found ourselves in fourth place. Our cox was fairly creative with the truth and told us that they were only one or two metres ahead; however, in fact they were almost 10m ahead at one point. The one thought in my head was how reckless they were being starting so fast. Our rhythm felt good, and I hoped that if we kept up this pace we would start to reel them back in. Unfortunately, this didn’t happen in the second 500m... nor in the third 500m. Entering the final quarter of the race we were tied in third with Italy. The Germans and Americans were out in front fighting for the lead. I was still hopeful, the rhythm felt dynamic and powerful. I remember with absolute clarity the feeling when our cox called the first build towards the

line. I could feel the belief in the boat. The hull started to fly. There were shouts all the way down the boat as we felt the momentum of the race switch. It was at this point when I took my only glance out of the boat to gauge how much ground we had to make up. I was level with the American cox and level with the person sitting in my seat in the German crew. I knew that it would take every bit of energy I had left to get our bow in front of the Americans. My body was already screaming at me to put the handle down and stop. On top of this, we quickly stopped moving on the Americans. As we entered the final 300m, our cox demanded our max power – a call he was only meant to make in the final 150m. It was getting desperate, but we had to try it. The boat lifted again, and we began to move through the Americans. I was counting in strokes of three to stop myself thinking about how many strokes I really had left. In the end, we only gained the lead with seven strokes to go and crossed the line as World Champions.

It was completely euphoric yet eerily silent. With no crowds there were just a couple of shouts from the GB coaches on the bank. Everybody in the crew did their best to let out a short grunt of approval in celebration before collapsing over their handles. I was completely overwhelmed with both joy and also relief that the pain was over and I could just lay down. We all immediately knew we had been a part of something very special. It turned out that no U23 eight in living memory had ever won after having been led for 1950m. We had led when it mattered.”

“I remember with absolute clarity the feeling when our cox called the first build towards the line. I could feel the belief in the boat.”



OUR PRINCIPAL ELECT

At a Governing Body meeting in December 2021, **Professor Stephen Blyth** was formally elected as the next Principal of Lady Margaret Hall. He takes up his tenure in October 2022.

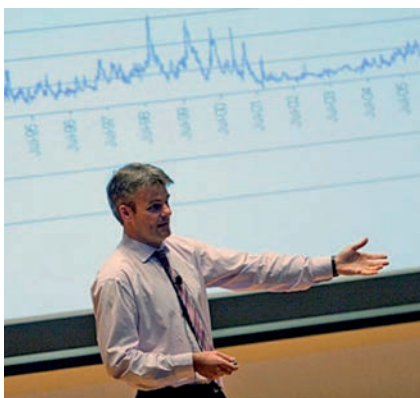
I am thrilled to have been elected the next Principal of Lady Margaret Hall. My wife Fiona and I are excited to be joining the LMH community in October and look forward to meeting you in the months ahead.

I spent my formative undergraduate years at Lady Margaret Beaufort's first Cambridge foundation, Christ's College where, like at LMH, a portrait of Lady Margaret gazes down severely in Hall. Lady Margaret's ground-breaking passion for scholarship and education is emblematic of the Principal's core role: to champion and celebrate the academic mission and aspirations of LMH, namely excellence in teaching, learning and research.

My years at Christ's imbued me with a love of the richness of collegiate life – academic, social, sporting, cultural, musical, pastoral – and an appreciation of the power of a collegiate, tutorial education. I played cricket and football, occasionally wrote bad comedy and made lifelong friends from a range of disciplines. And, like many, I remain in touch with my tutors who enabled me to develop my academic potential.

I obtained a PhD in statistics from Harvard working on nonparametric regression, a field now glamorously rebranded as machine learning. My career, which has encompassed academia, finance and endowment management, has given me an appreciation for both the power and the limitations of mathematical modelling, and of the importance of subjective judgment in decision-making even in quantitative settings.

I returned to Harvard in 2006 to the Harvard Management Company, the subsidiary of the University responsible for managing its endowment, and as a faculty member in the department of statistics. As endowment chief, professor and alumni leader, I've gained different perspectives on the contemporary challenges that face a pre-eminent academic institution. I have also had the privilege of teaching at Harvard and have learnt much from the concerns and ambitions of my students. I enjoy



“LMH is a leader within Oxford in reducing barriers to talented scholars and in creating a supportive and inclusive environment for all.”

remaining a mentor to many as they navigate life after graduation in a range of careers, including academia, government, the arts, finance and start-ups. One of my students was captain of the Harvard cricket club, and I have been able to dust off my bat and play in the team.

LMH is a leader within Oxford in reducing barriers to talented scholars and in creating a supportive and inclusive environment for all. I am delighted to now have the opportunity as Principal to help the College attract and nurture outstanding Fellows, postgraduates and undergraduates, regardless of background; and to help provide the resources and community to enable all members of College – Fellows, students and staff – to thrive academically, personally and professionally.

I recognize that LMH, Oxford University and, more broadly, UK higher education face several challenges. These include uncertainty about the scale and structure of future government funding; the impact on low- and middle-income families of having to take on significant debt to fund higher education; global competition for faculty, for postgraduate students and – increasingly – for undergraduates; a novel regulatory environment under the Office for Students; and the need for improved access, greater diversity and enhanced student welfare.

LMH's singular history and distinctive character provide a powerful long-term platform from which it can continue to tackle these challenges. I appreciate that many other colleges at Oxford have accumulated more extensive financial resources than LMH. However, given that it has often operated at a

relative financial disadvantage, LMH has continued to make remarkable impact, and the College's resources are, of course, far more than the financial. LMH has extraordinary assets: a compelling identity of inclusiveness and bravery; a pioneering history committed to intellectual inquiry and opening up education and career possibilities to the previously excluded; the dedication of its Fellows and staff; the vibrancy of its student body; magnificent buildings and grounds; and the goodwill and support of its engaged and richly varied alumni body.

As for all Oxford colleges, the list of income sources for LMH is limited, and philanthropy will play an increasingly important role in providing foundational security and flexibility. The philanthropic endeavour is an energizing partnership, centred around the articulation of academic achievement and impact: how cutting-edge research changes the world around us; how LMH Fellows create knowledge and increase the understanding of the human experience; how a LMH tutorial education transforms lives; and how our students go on to become citizen leaders and impact our society.

I am relishing the opportunity to get involved with our alumni community and have been delighted to have already met several of you informally in the US. It's inspiring to hear how LMH has influenced the lives of so many, and how our alumni are keen to stay engaged with the College. As an involved alumnus myself at my former institutions, I appreciate that supporters commit their resources and invest in the future of the College when they understand the impact that LMH – its

people, its research, its tutorial teaching, its outreach – has on its students and the world around us; and the impact that their own leadership can have on LMH.

LMH is a vibrant community of scholars, whose Principal builds consensus and leads a shared endeavour in which we are all vested. During my visits to LMH last year, I could feel the palpable sense of community. I was especially struck by a comment made by a member of staff: “I know Oxford. I would not want to work at any other College than LMH.” As Principal I hope to embrace that sentiment and to celebrate all parts of College life, bringing empathy for the academic endeavour and its teaching and research demands; passion for teaching and mentoring students; a commitment to diversity, reducing inequality and providing access; and the desire to engage with our alumni community. Together, we can chart an exciting course for the future.

James McCarthy, a former faculty colleague, who was one of the first scientists to warn of warming oceans, was also head of an undergraduate house at Harvard modelled on Oxford colleges. An expert on the pace of climate change, he was often asked whether he was hopeful for the future. He would reply: “I live with 400 students. They inspire me. I am always optimistic.” I agree with Jim. Students inspire me. And I am optimistic for the future of LMH.

I am honoured to serve the College as your next Principal. Fiona and I look forward to meeting you and welcoming you all back to your College, Lady Margaret Hall.



MEANINGFUL DIVERSITY

Talent is everywhere, but opportunity is not. In the UK, access to the most selective 'top third' universities, and onwards into top professions, is significantly determined by the school you attend.

57% of private school pupils access 'top third' universities, while 23% of non-selective state school pupils do, but just 5% of 'disadvantaged' pupils enter these institutions.* We speak to **Éireann Attridge** (2018 MSc Education), whose passion for access shines through.

"There are exciting changes afoot within the field of Higher Education", Éireann tells us as she takes a moment to reflect upon her career in Education thus far. She is a self-confessed education enthusiast who, from a young age, has been committed to working in the Higher Education sector to improve and enhance access and outcomes for disadvantaged students.

"I was born and grew up in South London. Whilst benefiting from a range of access programmes run by local universities and studying Sociology A level, I decided I was interested in exploring and addressing educational inequality".

Keen to better understand and address educational inequality, she applied to study Education at degree level and, after slogging over an intense application, read for a BA in Education and English at Homerton College, University of Cambridge in 2013. Éireann herself is one of the 5% of 'disadvantaged' students who go on to attend a top university.

“My academic research and that of others emphasises the need for changes in institutional practises rather than the polishing of students.”

“Whilst doing my undergraduate degree, there were plenty of opportunities to engage with access work for both my College and the University”, Éireann recalls. “This experience led me to being elected Access and Funding Officer for the students’ union after graduation. During my year as a sabbatical officer at the students’ union, I knew I was interested in studying at postgraduate level. My ideas about access and Higher Education began to develop as I sat on a number of university committees and began to support current, rather than prospective, students.” It was this work that influenced her postgraduate study proposal.

“Over the next year, I worked in an access role within a school whilst preparing my application to study an MSc Education (Higher Education) at Oxford. I applied to my MSc with a research proposal that sought to explore the experiences of working-class students at elite institutions.”

Considering which College to attend, Éireann noted she chose LMH as her preferred College: “The Foundation Year demonstrated to me that (LMH) had a clear commitment to access and I know that I wanted to live in a space where I felt there might be students from similar backgrounds to my own”.

She wrote her dissertation on the experience of working-class students within the University and achieved a Distinction for both her dissertation and the course overall. Éireann published the findings of this study in the *Journal of Further and Higher Education*. She received an offer to continue this project as part of a DPhil but unfortunately did not receive enough funding to take this up.

“After moving back to South London, I began working for The Elephant Group after the summer of 2020”. The Elephant Group was formed in 2018 by a group of headteachers committed to increasing access to ‘top third’ universities for their ‘top third’ students. The first meeting was held in Elephant & Castle – hence the name – and since then the group has grown to include more state schools and many of the country’s leading universities. “The charity seeks to address the underrepresentation of students from non-selective state schools at top universities, as well as ensure that schools are given a voice in conversations about access and Higher Education policy”, tells Éireann. “It is relatively young, so it was exciting to join as the second full-time member of staff at the time. As a Programme Manager I support the running of a two-year programme that supports students to apply and attain the grades to attend top universities.”

The passion Éireann has for access is abundantly clear; she recognised this potential career trajectory as a result of her extensive voluntary and student ambassador work: “I feel really privileged to have gained access to these opportunities early on and have essentially worked in the field of access since graduating from my BA in 2016”.



Alongside her role at The Elephant Group, Éireann also works for Homerton College, where she was an undergraduate, serving as a Pastoral Tutor and College Discrimination and Harassment Contact. After Cambridge announced their own Foundation Year, she says “we’re really excited to be welcoming students on the Cambridge Foundation Year. I think more interesting and innovative routes to Higher Education will continue to be established.”

“My academic research and that of others emphasises the need for changes in institutional practises rather than the polishing of students. I think that, to some degree, there are wider shifts in policy towards this, which is extremely positive. If institutions want to be appealing and inclusive to students from a variety of backgrounds, we have to move away from ideas of ‘fit’.”

**The Elephant Group. DfE National Public Database and HESA data that were matched by TEG staff. ‘Disadvantaged’ is defined by Free School Meal status.*

For further information and reading:

Please visit Éireann’s website, www.eireannattridge.com.

Recommendations for further reading include:

<https://www.timeshighereducation.com>

www.suttontrust.com/our-research

Miseducation by Diane Reay

The Class Ceiling by Sam Freidman and Daniel Laurison

IN CONVERSATION WITH LMH

After spending so much time interacting through screens, it was a great pleasure from Michaelmas term 2021 for LMH to be able to host several fantastic guest speakers to take part in our *In Conversation* series in person. The events were also broadcast in a hybrid manner, and guests have joined us in the Simpkins Lee Theatre as well as online.

Our first guest was LMH alumna Jasmine Richards (1999 English Language and Literature), who came in following her feature in last year's *LMH News*. Jasmine was interviewed by our Principal Christine Gerrard – her former Tutor – and two LMH students, Aneela Shah and Amy Evans. Jasmine is an author and founder of Storymix, an inclusive fiction studio with a social purpose. Storymix creates children's stories with diverse casts of characters in an organic, joyful, and authentic way. Jasmine discussed her time at LMH as a student before going on to discuss the importance of diversity in children's books and literature as a whole. She also gave some great tips to our student writers in the audience Q&A at the end.

Next, we hosted our Visiting Fellow Keeley Foster, who is Deputy Assistant Commissioner at the London Fire Brigade. She is also Head of Cultural Change & Talent Management. She spoke about the importance of diversity within the fire service and the barriers we need to overcome in order to achieve that. She discussed how you can make decisions in high-pressure situations and also touched upon the response the Grenfell Tower fire in 2017. She was interviewed by our Principal alongside two LMH students, Amelia Tharme and Celine McCready.

Three days later, alumnus Alex Christofi (2005 English Language and Literature) joined us to speak with his former Tutor as well, the Principal, and two LMH students, Ivan Harjehausen and Patrick Dybell. Alex is a prize-winning author and Editorial Director at Transworld Publishers. He has also recently written a reconstructed memoir on Fyodor Dostoevsky, *Dostoevsky in Love*, which received rave reviews. He spoke about Dostoevsky and blurring the lines between autobiographical work and fiction. He also gave some fantastic advice for those looking to become a successful writer.

The following event was with TV executive Danny Cohen, who is also an LMH alumnus (1992 English Language and Literature). Danny, President of Access Entertainment and the former Director of BBC Television, was also taught by Professor Christine Gerrard. They spoke about LMH and how he ended up going into the TV industry. They also touched on several influential programmes he has been involved in, such as *Big Brother*. Many of our students were particularly keen to hear

about *Skins*, a unique British TV series he commissioned in 2007 that is still very popular today.

Next we had an In Conversation with Sir George Hollingbery (1982 Human Sciences), a politician who has been appointed as Her Majesty's Ambassador to Cuba for 2022. George has been a Member of Parliament for Meon Valley, Minister of State for Trade Policy, and Parliamentary Private Secretary to the Prime Minister. He has also founded and operated several businesses including a renewable design company called Rendesco. George spoke about the differences between politics and business, as well as what it takes to be a successful politician. He also touched upon his decision to become the Ambassador to Cuba, why the role appealed to him, and what challenges the country faces.

The final In Conversation of the term was with Visiting Fellow Stephen Hough, who was interviewed by our Emeritus Fellow Vincent Gillespie. Stephen is a classical pianist, composer, and writer. Since taking first prize at the 1983 Naumburg Competition in New York, Stephen has performed with many of the world's major orchestras and has given recitals at the most prestigious concert halls. The discussion covered Stephen's musical development, the importance of live performances, and the link between music and other art forms such as poetry.

Hilary Term 2022 began with Manny Botwe, who is in his seventh year as Headteacher at Tytherington School in Macclesfield. Prior to this, he served as a Deputy Headteacher in South Oxfordshire. Before teaching, he worked at LMH as a Schools' Outreach Officer. Manny was born and raised in South London and was the first member of his family to go to university, where he achieved a First-Class degree in PPE at Oxford. He has a genuine belief that fantastic schools have the power to transform people's lives and their circumstances. He is a passionate advocate of the view that all youngsters, irrespective of their background, should have the opportunity to enjoy a rich and broad education. Manny is also an elected member of the National Council of the Association of School and College Leaders, representing the North West, and is the Chair of the Leadership and Governance Committee.



Jasmine Richards



Alex Christofi



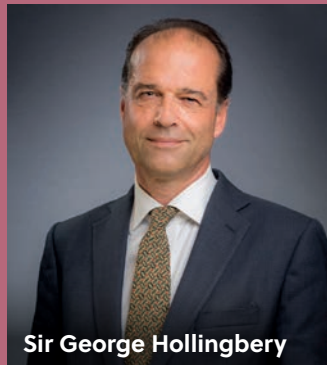
Manny Botwe



Stephen Hough



Danny Cohen



Sir George Hollingbery



Keeley Foster

LMH would like to thank all our guest speakers, interviewers, and support staff who made these events possible. All of these events are now available to watch on the LMH Oxford YouTube Channel.



© IRStone – stock.Adobe.com

STANDARDS IN PUBLIC LIFE



In the summer of 2021, **Professor Gillian Peele**, Emeritus Fellow in Politics, was appointed by the Prime Minister as one of the two new independent members of the Committee on Standards in Public Life. She is now undertaking a five-year term on the Committee, which advises the Prime Minister on arrangements for upholding ethical standards of conduct across public life in England.

2022 has seen a tsunami of integrity issues dominating the news. The funding of the Downing Street flat redecoration, the acceptability of second jobs for MPs, the rules governing lobbying by MPs, and of course “Partygate” have all focused attention on the ethical standards of people in British public life. Just before retiring

from LMH in 2016 I published (with David Hine) an academic study of the British system for regulating standards, *The Regulation of Standards in British Public Life: Doing the Right Thing?* The study explores the history of efforts to ensure probity in the governmental system and analyses how, following the cash for questions scandal of the early

1990s, John Major set up a small non-departmental advisory committee – the Committee on Standards in Public Life (CSPL) – to clarify the principles and institutional arrangements regulating key relationships across the public sector. As a result, a range of new institutions to maintain standards were brought into being. By expounding the seven

principles of public life – selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty, and leadership – the CSPL transformed the regulatory landscape, making the protection of high standards more coherent and systematic. Now, as an independent member of that Committee, I have been able to view some aspects of the system from the inside and contribute to the debates about the adequacy of the mechanisms we have in place to prevent potentially corrupt or sleazy behaviour.

Earlier, some observers thought the role of the CSPL would be of limited duration. Such a view is clearly erroneous. Not only are some features of political life such as lobbying, appointments, and party fundraising always likely to present problems but new issues arise and need to be addressed. Thus, the CSPL has recently reported on two issues – the intimidation of parliamentary candidates and artificial intelligence – which are relatively novel items of public concern. Above all, a failure to remain attentive to standards issues can undermine the culture of an institution if episodes of improper dealings are overlooked or condoned. Once that happens it is likely that trust in that institution will crumble. It is the role of the CSPL to ensure that the importance of standards issues in the quality of democracy is kept high on the agenda despite the pressure of other claims on our politicians' attention.

The CSPL is not itself a regulatory body; nor does it hear individual cases. Rather, it keeps under review



© highwaystarz – stock.adobe.com

the principles and procedures for regulating the diverse sectors of public life, including Parliament and government, the civil service, and local government. It is not intended to promote abstract or ideal solutions but to make realistic proposals that work with the grain of British constitutional practice. It is an advisory body, meaning it is dependent on others to implement any recommendations it makes. Thus, for example in relation to the recent controversy over the Code of Conduct for MPs following the Owen Paterson affair, the CSPL gave evidence (drawing on its 2018 report) to the House of Commons Standards Committee about how MPs' second jobs might be limited. But it is for the House of Commons itself to change the Code of Conduct. In the CSPL's latest (2021) review of the whole standards landscape, the Committee made a number of significant recommendations about strengthening the machinery governing the revolving door between the public and private sectors, the public

appointments process, and the role of the Special Advisor on Ministerial Interests. This strengthening the CSPL has suggested can best be done by building more independence and transparency into the workings of the relevant regulatory bodies and, in some cases, by strengthening the sanctions available to them.

Dependence on other bodies to implement recommendations may be seen as a weakness. Governments frequently take a long time to respond to reports as other priorities often take precedence and governments may find the reforming recommendations of a CSPL report inconvenient or unacceptable. Although the government has not yet responded properly to the CSPL's comprehensive review of the standards machinery, there is perhaps sufficient current concern about standards of conduct in different arenas of public life to encourage the acceptance of many of the CSPL's recommendations. Such acceptance would signal a clear commitment to re-establishing the centrality of the Nolan principles and to rooting out sleaze in public life. The approach adopted by the CSPL since its inception has relied on governments recognising that the maintenance of integrity throughout the public sector is essential to their own moral authority as well as to their efficient functioning. It is to be hoped that recognition continues despite the inevitable distractions of short-term political calculations.

“A failure to remain attentive to standards issues can undermine the culture of an institution if episodes of improper dealings are overlooked or condoned. Once that happens it is likely that trust in that institution will crumble.”

LMH CHANGEMAKER

Shantel Marekera (2019 Law) may have started the Little Dreamers Foundation but her dreams are anything but little. Bumping into her in College on a November evening recording for the United Nations in the Simpkins Lee Theatre, we wanted to learn more.

It turned out Shantel was recording for the United Nations Official Commemoration, for a conference on the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women. Since the outbreak of COVID-19, emerging data has shown that all types of violence against women and girls, particularly domestic violence, have intensified and that the world was unprepared to

respond to this rapid escalation. A UN Women report, based on survey data from 13 countries, shows that COVID-19 has eroded women's feelings of safety, both at home and in public spaces, with significant negative impacts on their mental and emotional well-being.

Speakers for the conference included the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the President of the United

Nations General Assembly. Shantel was hosting this in her role as a Generation Equality Youth Taskforce Member at UN Women.

Shantel is currently in her final year of the Senior Status BA Jurisprudence as a Rhodes Scholar. Alongside her studies, she also serves as the BAME Officer for the MCR and volunteers as one of the LMH Student Ambassadors for the college's outreach and access work.

So, how did Shantel become involved in the UN Women's Generation Equality Youth Taskforce?

"In August 2019, UN Women selected 30 young leaders (between the ages of 14 and 30) who would comprise its Youth Taskforce", she tells us. The Youth Taskforce is made up of young leaders with diverse areas of expertise and from all regions of the world, representing young people in all their diversity and across intersectional complexities including marital status, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, indigenous and ethnic identities, and refugee or migrant status. The selected youth leaders all have a track record of driving change in their own communities and mobilising young people for the empowerment of young women and girls all over the world.

"The Taskforce members are divided into four different committees: the Policy and Drafting Committee, the Outreach and Communication Committee, the Capacity Building Committee, and the Logistics Committee. The mandate of the Youth Taskforce is to ensure that young people are in the driving seat of gender equality and contribute to all stages of the global review process,

The fact that you started is what matters most. Start small. Think about what cause you are passionate about. Start in your community! [...] There is no excuse for inaction.

— SHANTEL MAREKERA, FOUNDER, LITTLE DREAMERS FOUNDATION

SDG ACTION ZONE

including Beijing+25 processes, the Commission on the Status of Women, the UN General Assembly, and the Generation Equality Forum". The Taskforce was formerly known as the Beijing+25 Youth Taskforce, as it was brought together to mark the 25th anniversary of the 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action – the most progressive global blueprint for advancing women's rights.

"I was fortunate enough to be selected as a member of the Policy and Drafting Committee, as well as the Southern African representative of the Youth Taskforce", Shantel says. "The selection came after I submitted my letter of interest followed by a recommendation from the Millennium Campus Network, a global civil society organisation that focuses on training the next generation of social impact leaders."

"As a member of the Policy and Drafting Committee, I helped to produce concept notes, policy papers, position papers, zero draft, and outcome documents, including the concepts for the 64th session of the Commission on the Status of Women and the 75th session of the General Assembly. I also served as one of the Youth Representatives for the Action Coalition Working Group."

Alongside her role and commitments with the UN, Shantel is passionate about advocacy, policy, and international human rights law, with a special focus on women's rights in African countries. Her research is focused on examining the dynamic ways in which power manifests itself through customary law to perpetuate violence against women in Zimbabwe. She also serves as the Global Peace Chain Country Director for Zimbabwe as well as a Global Peace Ambassador for Zimbabwe. In South Africa, she examines the relationship between sexual consent and democratic citizenship.

Before coming to Oxford, Shantel completed her undergraduate and Masters degrees in Justice Studies from the Barrett Honors College at Arizona State University as a MasterCard Foundation scholar.

She is the founder of Little Dreamers Foundation, a subsidised preschool for orphaned and vulnerable children. It gives young girls access to education despite their economic status and helps them discover their potential at a tender age.

In recognition of Shantel's advocacy efforts with UN Women, as well as her work with girls and women in Zimbabwe through the Little Dreamers Foundation, Shantel received the 4th Annual Changemaker Award presented by Gucci and Chime for Change at the global Make Equality Reality Gala in October 2021. The Changemaker Award celebrates the next generation of activists who are championing gender equality and inspiring positive change through self-expression and active citizenship.

Asked on her hopes for the future, Shantel says: "Wherever my career takes me, I hope to create a culture of transparency and accountability to the law, as well as challenge existing practices against women and girls."



TOP Shantel is the Global Peace Ambassador for Zimbabwe

ABOVE Shantel speaking as part of the UN Women's Generation Equality Youth Taskforce

LEFT Shantel received the 4th annual Changemaker Award, presented in October 2021 at the global Make Equality Reality Gala

For further information and reading:

www.mastercardfdn.org/little-dreamers-foundation-unlocks-potential-for-girls-education-in-zimbabwe/

www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2019/8/announcer-beijing25-youth-task-force

www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qzb3po8vGZU

FREETRADE MUSEUMS

Vishnupriya Rajgarhia (2018 Masters in Fine Art) is an artist, researcher, and academic. Her artistic practice looks are 'interventions' and 'interactive art', and her latest endeavour, FreeTrade Museums, brings those practices together.



Paved pathways, perfectly clean glass windows and an aura of mysticism that envelope museums, these are semiotics of museumization. Among these, lies accepting the mandated silence in hallways as etiquette and succumbing to the whitewashed labels that accompany each object. While museum visits were an integral part of my childhood, it was always within the familiarity of historical periods native to me. I only understood the importance of *context* when I pieced together cultures from around the globe, in a land that wasn't their own, and in a manner that wasn't true to their own.

It was my first trip to the Ashmolean, within my first few weeks at Oxford where I peered at the large Egyptian tablets, I searched but the label told me nothing about where this tablet was from. Was it a discovery? Was it a gift? Which part of Egypt did this belong to, what were the engraved annotations representative of? The careful sanitization of the space had included a conscious erasure of its history, a colonial past that was extremely relevant to the present.

I founded the FreeTrade Museums (patent filed), the world's first alive museum shortly after. I intended to restructure Museums and engagement,

to repair our understanding of nations as well as building cultural bridges. This ambitious idea found its roots in the belief that our enmities as nations needn't percolate to the interpersonal. FreeTrade Museums, a peripatetic museum functioned in 5 states simultaneously, connecting individuals unknown to each other. These states were New Delhi, Pakistan, China, Jammu and Kashmir and Oxford. They constructed the Museum spaces using the instructions shared with them in advance and placed it in public and private spaces as per the legal norms. When the participants switched on the video camera, each person at the end of the 5-way call saw art, culture and heritage through the lens of a local. They became discussants of shared customs.

The Museum grew with every call, and every attempt. This project was being developed as my country India was preparing for surgical strikes with Pakistan, an act that could lead to prolonged unrest and war. While I distanced myself from the paranoia of unrest, I filtered through potential participants for every Museum 'event', connecting people from both sides of the border. In doing so, I never once saw the *enemy*, was it a mythical creature? The participants never spoke about war, nor to me nor to each other. The impossible happened when two participants, one from Pakistan and one from Kashmir, in India broke their iftar fast together. They observed the same custom, for the same God at an interval of 30 minutes and in doing so, made us a part of the most intricate fold of their lives.

As a Museum, this initiative has permitted hundreds of individuals from across the globe to view art, culture and heritage through the lens of someone who has lived it, with context and perspective. It has cultivated empathy, and brought people closer in spite of borders. I recognized that the project came from a place of care, and it was all heart. FreeTrade Museums were constructed by hosts using cardboard, and they disappeared after the call came to an end. The instruction based participatory peripatetic work left behind an essence, and no object. It was the perfect museum. Our events keep growing slowly but surely, and FreeTrade Museums are open to citizens of every country. We hope you will visit us.



For further information and reading:

Please write to director.ftmuseums@gmail.com

Website: www.vishnupriyarajgarhia.com



DOCTOR OF MEDICINE

Tasneem Khatib (2004 Preclinical Medicine & 2007 Clinical Medicine) has been awarded the prestigious Degree of Doctor of Medicine, a higher degree undertaken by clinically qualified staff normally during their postgraduate medical training.

My Doctor of Medicine studies focused on the development of new tools to diagnose, repair, and regenerate the optic nerve in glaucoma, which is the leading cause of irreversible blindness worldwide. Having first experienced translational medicine at the Nuffield Laboratory of Ophthalmology during my undergraduate time at Oxford, I was able to combine clinical and lab-based research alongside my surgical ophthalmic training. I experienced the forefront of translational medicine and therapeutics and how pre-clinical treatments can be taken forward to clinical trial testing through collaboration with industry. I have also been invited to join the international Retinal Ganglion Cell Repopulation, Stem Cell Transplantation, and Optic Nerve Regeneration Consortium and I'm very excited to see what's next!

I was fortunate to be able to publish and present my work internationally, discuss early findings with leaders in the field, and engage and debate about how best to take new ideas forward, which was incredibly stimulating and inspiring. I was awarded prizes for my doctoral work from the American Academy of Ophthalmology, the Association for Research in Vision and Ophthalmology (ARVO), and the European Association for Vision and Eye Research.

I also used the time during my Doctor of Medicine studies to lead the development of a national award to promote vision research to sixth-form students while collaborating with AstraZeneca in the US and UK, and the National Eye Institute, National Institutes of Health, and successfully advocated for investment in vision research at Capitol Hill with ARVO. I was selected to join the ARVO Board of Trustees and have recently completed my two-year term representing Members-in-Training around the world.

One of the strengths of the Doctor of Medicine is the flexibility around surgical training and I was also able to undertake the Healthcare Leadership and Management Programme at Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust and the Judge Business School, while also acting as the Royal College of Ophthalmologists Simulation Champion for Cambridge to help us safely get up to speed again surgically once elective surgery resumed during the pandemic.

My studies have been a brilliant and formative experience and I've achieved things that I did not think would ever be possible. I'm so grateful to have been able to pursue this opportunity and to have had such a strong network of supportive mentors, peers, friends, and family, as it hasn't always been easy! It has also been such a privilege to try out new ideas, innovate, discover, and be able to contribute to the scientific body of knowledge and step closer towards understanding and treating intractable glaucoma. I very much hope that I will be able to give others the same chance and provide the same opportunities that I have been fortunate enough to experience.

I'm so glad that I didn't listen to those who told me I wouldn't get into Medicine, that I wouldn't fit in at Oxford, and that I wouldn't succeed as an academic or an ophthalmologist or a surgeon despite having a good track record. For every person that has said no, many more have said yes and been inclusive, so please keep dreaming!



"Coming from a family of biologists, I was somewhat pre-determined to be a scientist but never intended to study physics."

FORBES 30 UNDER 30

Kris Kaczmarek (2013 DPhil in Atomic and Laser Physics) was named in last year's Forbes 30 under 30 list in Science and Healthcare following the success of his start-up company, ORCA Computing. It is improving the scalability of quantum computers using lower cost core memory technology he invented during his PhD research.

At the end of the third year of my DPhil, I was sitting in a dark optics lab with my post-doc, looking for a spike on the screen that would mean the idea I had a year earlier (when I scrambled for a topic that would give me enough material to write my thesis) actually worked. The idea was a new type of quantum memory – a device that allows you to reliably capture and release single particles of light. Turns out that having a quantum memory would allow us to build a quantum computer out of light.

Quantum computers exploit the strange properties of quantum particles, such as single atoms or photons (the single particles of light), to solve computationally difficult problems much faster than a machine that obeys the classical laws of physics. One common misconception about quantum theory is that it's inherently random, whereas, in fact, quantum particles are driven by completely deterministic, predictable mechanics. It's just when you take a look

at them in a particular instance, they might seem like they don't know where they are or where they're going. Maybe that's why I found quantum so relatable!

Coming from a family of biologists, I was somewhat pre-determined to be a scientist but never intended to study physics. In fact, I remember leaving my final high school physics exam thinking "Yes, I never have to study this again!" After high school, I applied to the College of Inter-Faculty Individual Studies in Mathematics and Natural Sciences in Warsaw – a degree that allows you to take any module from any science department at the university (one summer, I got credits for taking part in paleontological digs!). I only stumbled back into physics when I took Maths modules at the Physics Department, where I met an experimental physicist who later became my university supervisor.

My supervisor worked in photonics, the science of light. As early as my second term of university, he offered

me the opportunity to work in his lab and build lasers. However, in order to understand how lasers work, one has to understand quantum theory. So I took a module on quantum information that determined the course of my career. The module opened my eyes to the weird and magical world of quantum physics – I immediately knew this was what I wanted to work on.

The following summer I did a research internship at the Institute of Photonic Sciences in Barcelona, where I got the chance to work in a world-class quantum photonics lab. Later that year, I reached out to Prof. Ian Walmsley's quantum photonics group at Oxford. Through a stroke of luck, I was offered funding from an old grant, at a time the UK no longer funded non-UK students, allowing me to pursue a DPhil in Ian's labs.

Not knowing about the college system, I opted for an open application and was extremely lucky to end up at LMH. There I discovered the most amazing and welcoming community, whom I'm still in touch with, almost a decade after matriculation. Through MCR Committee work, I got to know several generations of LMHers, all of whom were brilliant yet humble and down to earth. With its gardens and peaceful setting, LMH offered respite from academic work, while also nourishing my academic progression through opportunities to share my research and the Santander Graduate Scholarship I was granted.

My academic work focused on harnessing the interactions of light and matter for quantum computing. In my first year, we came up with a new way to link quantum computers together (of the type that Google and IBM are building), and we pitched the idea at a start-up competition organised by the Nature Publishing Group and Entrepreneur First (a global start-up incubator). We ended up licensing our patent for the idea to a start-up in Paris.

However, my main focus was quantum memories. Ian's group had been working on these devices for almost a decade, and around the time I joined the approach had hit a bit of a roadblock. Using concepts from my earlier work on linking quantum computers, I came up with what we later dubbed the ORCA memory – a

new type of quantum memory that wouldn't suffer from previous ones' limitations. I convinced Ian and the team to try this new idea out in the lab. This allowed us to demonstrate (for the first time) that it is indeed possible to reliably capture and release single photons at room temperature.

It was a very exciting time to do quantum research in Oxford, as Ian and others were setting up the Quantum Computing Hub as part of the National Quantum Technologies Programme. The Hub later spun-out a number of companies in quantum computing and related tech.

After patenting the ORCA memory and finishing my DPhil, I went to Switzerland to study more fundamental aspects of quantum theory, but it wasn't long before I received an email from my old DPhil supervisor, telling me they were founding their own start-up, specifically around the ORCA memory! So I came back to the UK and joined ORCA Computing full time, setting up a lab in London to take the memory tech beyond the proof-of-principle experiments done in Oxford.

As is often the case in start-ups, you

end up getting involved in other parts of the company – in my case, on the business side. As Head of Product, it's my job to translate the state-of-the-art tech we're developing into practical customer solutions. Moving from blue-sky research to sales, where customers expect their practical problems to be solved within set timeframes, required a bit of an adjustment! However, our approach of offering business solutions now – which is quite unique in the quantum computing hardware space – has been paying off, and I was over the moon to find out that Forbes included me in their 2021 30 Under 30 list.

I'm very excited about the future of ORCA and quantum computing in general. This technology is set to dramatically enhance the scale of problems we can solve, from faster drug discovery to more accurate weather pattern predictions. The field has seen an incredible acceleration and expansion over the last few years (driven in large part by significant public and private investment), and our team is working hard to make sure our company makes its mark.

“The field has seen an incredible acceleration and expansion over the last few years and our team is working hard to make sure our company makes its mark.”



For further information and reading:
www.orcacomputing.com

WHY TWO HIGGS ARE BETTER THAN ONE



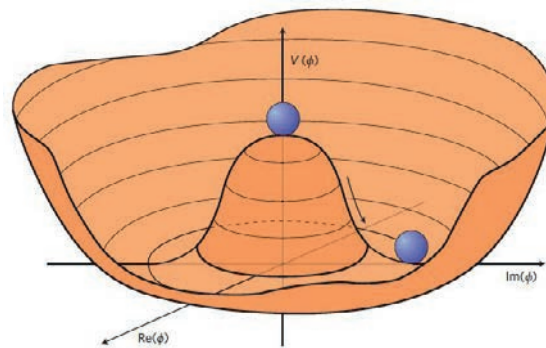
Professor Todd Huffman, Tutor and Fellow in Physics, headlined one of our *LMH Online* events at the height of the pandemic, talking about his research and teaching in Particle Physics. Todd's main area of research focuses on data collected by the ATLAS experiment located 100 metres underground at the Large Hadron Collider at CERN just outside of Geneva, Switzerland.

When you are driving a car down a straight road at a constant speed, you might wish to slow down and stop at some point. To do this you almost unconsciously apply the "brake".

This is a simple fact of life. Why is it necessary?

Physicists invented a word to describe the property of matter that requires the use of friction to change the forward speed of anything and that word is "inertia". It can be measured; things with higher levels of "inertia" are harder to get moving and, once moving, are harder to bring to a stop. A particular quantity of "inertia" for a given thing is called an object's "mass". However, simply labelling a property and being able to quantify it does not mean we really understand its origin.

Indeed, we have a very effective theory of how all matter that you can see around you interacts with all other matter, you, and with particles of light (photons) of any energy. It is called a "Quantum Gauge Theory" and uses a mathematical trick and a few known symmetries (like the fact that it doesn't matter if you perform an experiment, then move that experiment to the left by 10 metres and re-do it... you will get the same result, or if you repeat it at some later time... again you will get the same result) to explain and accommodate all of these interactions.



The Higgs potential

It has a flaw though... this theory requires everything in the universe to have no mass at all. Zero mass.

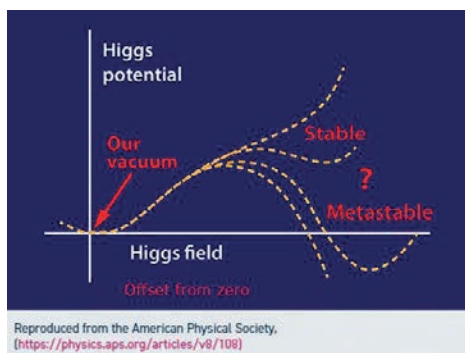
As an experimental scientist who is ever conscious of the measurements of my waistline, I would argue that this requirement would call the theory's veracity into question.

The sub-atomic particle called the Higgs boson is part of an extension to this Gauge Theory that comes to the rescue. The presence of the Higgs potential breaks the symmetry that requires all things to have zero mass in a manner that keeps the original theory self-consistent and consistent with all the other symmetries that must be respected (like being able to repeat the same experiment at a different time and get the same outcome).

Consequently, the study of the properties of this particle occupies a great deal of my time.

Pictured here is the 'Higgs potential',

which is a field rather like an electric field but one that affects our entire universe. Our universe is represented by the blue ball and when our universe was sitting at the apex at the centre of the real and imaginary axes of the potential field, all of the particles of the universe were massless. Our universe could sit there, on that apex, because it was in a high energy state at its first formation. But as the universe expanded and cooled, it dropped into the trough of the Higgs potential as shown. This had the effect of giving inertia to all of the matter in the universe, but in particular it gave mass to the particles that carry the weak nuclear force (the W and Z bosons). What we are describing here is our current theory. Using this potential, this theory predicted the existence of a massive scalar (spin zero) boson that we called the 'Higgs boson' and this was indeed discovered in 2012 at the Large Hadron Collider.



The ground state of the Universe depends on the potential of the Higgs field. This image was reproduced from the American Physical Society.

Additional minima?

However, just finding the Higgs boson doesn't actually tell us the shape shown above is in any way correct. All we actually know is that the potential is offset from the origin, and right at the bottom of the offset the shape of the Higgs potential is parabolic. So actually, we don't know very much about the Higgs potential at all – and thus, not very much about how particles acquire mass, or even if the minimum that we currently are in is the *only* minimum. Perhaps, as illustrated here, we are only in a local minimum and there are additional minima that would be more stable should the universe occupy them.

To learn more about the true shape of this potential we need to uncover more than one Higgs boson produced in a single collision of protons at the Large Hadron Collider. We would need to find two, three, even four Higgs bosons flying out as a result of the collisions and measure the rates at which they are produced. Producing these sets of multiple Higgs bosons is predicted to be a very rare process, so groups of physicists on the ATLAS experiment are currently focused on detecting 'just' two Higgs bosons.

Looking for new states of matter

Physicists at Oxford are deeply involved in such searches in the ATLAS experiment and recently a team of physicists, including members from Oxford, released new results of such a search. However, because we can predict, in the Standard Model, how often we can make Higgs bosons, the Oxford group has started this search by looking instead for new states of matter that might like to predominately decay into pairs of Higgs bosons.

Alongside myself, the Oxford group involved in this research are former Oxford students Dr Beojan Stanislaus (BNL) and Dr Santiago Parades (Brussels Univ) and current Oxford student James Grundy, Dr William Balunas (now the Walter Scott Fellow at Trinity Hall, Cambridge), and Professor Cigdem Issever (Visiting Professor at Oxford from Humboldt University, Berlin). Because this search is seeking to find a real particle that then decays, the signature for it would appear as a bump in a plot of the mass of the pair of Higgs, and we call such bumps 'resonances'. So, this is the 'resonant search'. The search was conducted 'blind', meaning that the analysis team was not allowed to look at any data that could come close to the masses of pairs of individual Higgs bosons.

Hunting for pairs

Since the Higgs boson decays very quickly, long before it can get to one of our detectors, we hunt for these pairs of Higgs particles through their decay to b-hadrons. We do this because the Higgs boson decays into b-quarks 57% of the time, so the decay chain that would produce four b-hadrons is the one most likely to happen. Once we identify likely groups of particles that might contain a b-hadron, we require four such groupings and we form the total mass of the 'thing' that created the four b-quarks.

Meanwhile, the ATLAS groups are all working to increase the sensitivity of analyses like this one so that, one day, we may actually detect the production of pairs of Higgs bosons for real. And we will start learning more about the Higgs potential and its true shape when that day finally comes.

What is ATLAS?

ATLAS is a general-purpose particle physics experiment at the Large Hadron Collider (LHC) at CERN. It is designed to exploit the full discovery potential of the LHC, pushing the frontiers of scientific knowledge. ATLAS's exploration uses precision measurement to push the frontiers of knowledge by seeking answers to fundamental questions such as: What are the basic building blocks of matter? What are the fundamental forces of nature? What is dark matter made of?

ATLAS is a collaboration of physicists, engineers, technicians, students, and support staff from around the world. It is one of the largest collaborative efforts ever attempted in science, with over 5,500 members.

ATLAS is the largest detector ever constructed for a particle collider: 46 metres long and 25 metres in diameter. Its construction pushed the limits of existing technology. ATLAS physicists are studying the fundamental constituents of matter to better understand the rules behind their interactions. Their research has led to ground-breaking discoveries, such as that of the Higgs boson. The years ahead will be exciting as ATLAS takes experimental physics into unexplored territories – searching for new processes and particles that could change our understanding of energy and matter.

For further information and reading:

Please visit Todd's website at www.lmh.ox.ac.uk/our-academics/fellows/prof-todd-huffman



CARVING MY OWN CULTURAL DIPLOMACY PATH



Sharifah Muhammad Talib Alhinai (2019 MSc Migration Studies) is on a mission to provide an authentic insight into her region. Connecting her neighbourhood with the world, she tells us the story of her magazine, *Sekka*.

In 2017, when I was 23 years old, I co-founded, with my sister Manar Alhinai, an independent magazine and integrated creative platform that is dedicated to art, culture, literature, and opinions from the Arab world, with a focus on the Arab Gulf States. The mission behind our then-new venture was to provide curious and inquisitive international readers with authentic insights into one of the most misrepresented and misunderstood regions in the world by giving the people of the region, or those who have a close relationship to it, a platform to provide these insights themselves and to represent themselves by themselves. It was our attempt to reclaim our narrative, after it had been, to a large extent at least, hijacked by the international media. Media has often not only contributed to the perpetuation of false stereotypes and misconceptions about the people of the Arab world, but also to the neglect of the rich artistic and cultural stories that the region has to offer as a result of an overwhelming focus on political and religious matters. We named our publication *Sekka*, which is Arabic for a path that connects neighbourhoods together, in the hope of being the 'sekka' that brings people from all over the world together to engage in fruitful cross-cultural dialogues to further understandings.

Four years and hundreds of published stories on a variety of topics later, our then-entirely online magazine and platform had been visited by readers from over 90 countries, a feat that we were –and remain – proud of given the international dimension of our mission. But, as we entered our fifth year, we wanted to take things to the next level to ensure that our work would reach an even wider pool of readers with different tastes. Thus, we decided to establish an additional presence in print to cater to those who enjoy consuming knowledge in a more tangible format. With the onset of 2022, we published our first ever print issue of *Sekka*.

We dedicated our first print issue, titled 'The Creative Giants', to Oman's creative scene. Bordering Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Yemen, this Arab Gulf State is birthing a new wave of artists, photographers, designers, writers, poets, and more, who are on their way to leaving an indelible

Alia Al Farsi



Singular Art 3 by Omani artist Alia Al Farsi is featured in *Sekka's* new issue

mark on the world and that are worthy of more international recognition. The issue is the first international publication to spotlight Oman's creative scene, and provides readers with a chance to meet the creatives who are collectively making their global debut in our pages and hear what they have to say. We made sure to make our new issue available in as many locations around the world as possible. Today, print copies are available for purchase at New York's most iconic magazine store Casa Magazines, as well as through British magazine retailers Newsstand UK and Dutch retailers Bruil and Vaan de Staaij. We are also pleased that a copy of the issue is also available for readers in the Lady Margaret Hall Library, a place that I made precious memories in during my studies at Oxford. Staying true to our digital roots, an online version of the issue is also accessible through our website.

Sekka's presence in print marks a new chapter for the publication and for me as its managing storyteller (editor), a role I frequently get asked about. Over the years, numerous individuals, including my colleagues at the University of Oxford, have come up to me and said words to the following effect: "Sharifah, you studied law, then got a masters in international politics and after that a masters in migration studies, but now you run an arts and culture magazine? I don't understand." But my path has always made sense to me.

I come from a family that has been in diplomacy for nearly 2,000 years. My

ancestors served as presidents, governors, government ministers, ambassadors, and diplomats over the centuries. Thus, when it came to my university studies, it felt natural for me to pursue an undergraduate degree in law coupled with a master's in international politics, both of which I was awarded by The School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London in 2015 and 2016, respectively. But, unlike my ancestors, I decided to carve my own independent diplomatic path after graduation. I consider my work at *Sekka* to be a form of cultural diplomacy, which has perhaps become more significant than ever in our day and age, especially when it comes to my region. At *Sekka*, we are telling our region's stories, and fostering understanding between different peoples around the world and building strong cultural bridges as we do so.

At the core of my MSc in Migration Studies, a multidisciplinary programme that I pursued from 2019 to 2020 at the University of Oxford, was, likewise, understanding; an understanding of why we, as humans, move and how that movement is experienced by migrants, received by others, and the reasons behind that. Though predating it, the programme surged in popularity amongst students and scholars following what has been dubbed the 'Refugee Crisis' or 'Migrant Crisis,' and one of the first facts that we learned in the programme was that the scale of migration today is not historically unprecedented, as some have

Mujahid Al Malki



Untitled by Omani artist Mujahid Al Malki is featured in *The Creative Giants* Issue

presented it. What has changed are the geographies that migrants have migrated from and to. Thus, it is the 'mysterious', 'different', or 'threatening' other that has caused alarm to many in various parts of Europe, such as those migrants with a different ethnic or cultural background, or religious belief. Thus, at the bottom of it, in many respects, is a lack of a proper understanding of our fellow humans, our brothers and sisters, and the fear and hatred that can breed.

I am a firm believer in the power of understanding in changing perspectives and its role in creating a better world for us all. This belief is what powers me every morning when I wake up to work on *Sekka*, and what pushes my co-founder and I to continually search for additional new and innovative ways to build bridges of understanding. In May of 2020, in the midst of the COVID-19 crisis, we collaborated yet again, this time to establish and direct the Khaleeji Art Museum, which is the first digital museum dedicated to exhibiting art from the Arab Gulf States to a global audience. Its mission, like *Sekka's*, is to encourage cross-cultural dialogues, this time through art.

For further information and reading:

www.sekkamag.com

www.khaleejiartmuseum.com



FROM FINANCE TO FOODIE



Aadit Shankar (2013 PPE) was following a more traditional career path soon after leaving LMH, but he had a hunger for more and has now turned his entrepreneurial dream into reality.

When I left LMH in the summer of 2016 and started my graduate job in finance soon after, I did not foresee that in 15 months I would have quit to start my own food business. In fact, I loved my job, admired my team, and leaving the corporate world was one of the most difficult decisions of my life.

Today, I run a company called Atcha and we are on a mission to be the home of healthy Indian food. We are a team of 16 working across three kitchens in London, serving customers beautiful, fresh, and delicious Indian-inspired food via delivery apps and our ready meals, which we supply to independent retailers.

The journey to founding Atcha was a series of experiences that cumulatively and eventually compelled me to take the leap. After family trips to Delhi and

Bangalore, I would return to the UK to become frustrated by the homogeneity of fancy Indian restaurants and the dominance of curry houses, which had so successfully popularised a British take on North Indian food. I felt there was something wrong with the cuisine of a billion people being lumped together as “curry”.

At Oxford I attended a talk by the then-Chairman of Pret a Manger, and his insights into what made Pret good enough to justify two stores on Cornmarket captured my imagination. And when I started work in London, grab-and-go lunches became dull, and plentiful late-night Deliveroos at my desk led me to continually ask: “surely I could create something better?”

India is home to thousands of regional cuisines. Countless dishes, which are light, nutrient-rich, plant-

“The power of the LMH Network connected me, as an undergraduate, with LMH alumni who remain mentors today.”

based, and packed with good-for-you spices, have never made it into the world of Britain’s curry addiction. I had – and still have – a hunch that Indian food could be explosively popular in the premium healthy food space.

And so, in 2018 I began work on Atcha, partly fired up about the idea of being a 24-year-old entrepreneur, partly questioning whether starting a food business and not knowing how to cook was a good idea. But I managed to find the right chef to help me to turn dozens of family recipes into the first Atcha menu, and the response to a series of pop-ups at Spitalfields Market was overwhelming and enough to make me carry on.

In 2019 we launched Atcha as an online brand operating out of a “dark kitchen” in east London. This was a year before the pandemic, but food delivery was already experiencing double-digit growth. We managed to grow consistently and organically, particularly in the corporate market, which was pleasing. The idea of Indian food for lunch in an office might sound problematic, but with our range of salads, sandwiches, and rice bowls, we soon became one of the top-rated brands on apps like Seamless, Feedr, and City Pantry – supplying lunches to my friends’ offices and even to my old bosses.

Of course, coronavirus decimated the lunchtime market, but home delivery did boom, and we expanded by opening two further dark kitchens (in Islington and Mayfair) and launching a heat-at-home range. Our objective today is the same: to become a leader in the healthy food-to-go space, inspired by the nation’s favourite cuisine.

The wonderful thing about taking some time out to write this article is that I have been able to reflect on the significance of experiences like LMH. The world-class teaching, getting elected to the best JCR Executive in Oxford, and the friendships I made were all life changing. Perhaps most important for Atcha has been the support I continue to receive from the Development Office. Indeed, the power of the LMH Network connected me, as an undergraduate, with LMH alumni who remain mentors today.

I remember so clearly the nerves I felt on the day I quit my job. The fact that I was able to get advice from so many inspirational people gave me confidence and perspective. For now, we have huge plans for this year, and I am very glad about the decision I made.

For further information and reading:

Visit Aadit’s website at www.atcha.co.uk



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, providing an 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. 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.

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

WELCOMING BACK VISITING STUDENTS

As Head of Short Academic Programmes, **Dr Christopher Adamson** works closely with colleagues in the Conference Team and with academics, planning and running a series of short academic programmes for visiting students to LMH.

I joined LMH as Head of Short Academic Programmes in September 2021 with the task of re-launching the College's summer programmes and other short courses after the challenge of the Covid-19 pandemic. LMH held its first residential summer programmes in 2018, when 69 students came to study short courses in science, humanities, and social sciences. Further programmes followed in 2019 when 126 students attended residential summer courses, but this momentum was halted in 2020 and 2021 when the strictures of the pandemic limited us to online programmes. With Covid-19 restrictions steadily lifting, I am delighted to be here to oversee the return of LMH's short academic programmes in 2022 and beyond, and to have the opportunity again to share a taste of the Oxford experience with students from around the world.

I first came to Oxford to undertake an MPhil in Classical Archaeology at our North Oxford neighbours Wolfson College, and then went on to complete my DPhil in the archaeology of prehistoric and early Greece at St Cross College. In my years as a graduate student I became increasingly involved in international education and vacation study courses, spending several summers at sea in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea leading history and archaeology programmes for lifelong learners, and several more as a Course Director on summer schools taking place at Somerville College. At the



end of my DPhil I went full time with short courses, organising summer schools held at more than a dozen Oxford colleges, including several here at LMH. As such, when I arrived at LMH in September it was a return to a familiar setting, but in a new role and relishing the challenge of bringing short academic programmes back after the disruption of the pandemic.

I am pleased to report therefore that we are busy planning for the 2022 LMH Summer Programmes, with courses in a range of academic disciplines. The *Diseases of the 21st Century* series, led by Prof David Harris, will explore cutting-edge research in medicine and healthcare, including the life-saving Covid-19 vaccine developed here in Oxford, while Dr Naeemullah Khan will lead future-focused courses on artificial intelligence, machine learning, and computer programming in video games.

Other exciting courses will examine varied modern interpretations of the works of William Shakespeare, the role of identity in global politics, and the economic impacts of climate change.

These topics have been carefully selected to offer summer students the opportunity to study something new or different in a way that they may not be able to at their home universities, expanding their knowledge and exploring ideas and concepts among peers with diverse international perspectives and academic backgrounds. Oxford's teaching system is a key part of this experience, with the personalised intellectual discussions that take place in tutorials so effective at developing the use of critical reasoning and logical arguments. A co-curricular programme of study skills sessions and fascinating guest speakers will provide a particularly enriching experience alongside the classes in their chosen subject.

The academic courses are at the heart of the LMH Summer Programmes, but I'm also really looking forward to the students getting an authentic taste of the social and cultural life both of the College and of the wider University and city – a summer's evening punting along the Cherwell, a quiz night at the Turf Tavern, or an afternoon amongst the wonders of the Ashmolean or the Pitt Rivers are all part of what makes the student experience here so special.

We know, however, that ongoing pandemic-related restrictions may prevent some of those who wish to

“These topics have been carefully selected to offer summer students the opportunity to study something new or different in a way that they may not be able to at their home universities, expanding their knowledge and exploring ideas and concepts among peers with diverse international perspectives and academic backgrounds.”

spend the summer studying at LMH from doing so. We are therefore offering all of the summer courses online as well, and working hard to ensure the full integration of the residential and remote participants. This has been enabled by the considerable development of the remote-teaching technology at LMH, allowing, for example, high-quality multi-camera livestreaming of lectures from the Simpkins Lee Theatre. Such steps forward in technology open up exciting possibilities for the future of international education.

Since I joined LMH in Michaelmas Term, my primary objective has been to get summer courses back in action – mapping out which subjects to offer, making plans with the tutors and lecturers who will teach them, and getting the word out to students around the world who may be interested in taking part. However, alongside planning for 2022 I have been looking at the longer-term future of short academic programmes at LMH. This has meant rekindling relationships with partner universities in the United States and

China whose students have attended our courses in the past, and building new relationships with universities across the world. It has also involved thinking about what other kinds of short academic programmes LMH can offer. Winter and spring vacation programmes, expanded online provision, and short courses aimed at mature students are all exciting possibilities. For now, we have the exciting prospect of a college buzzing with visiting summer students again, sorely missed in the last couple of years – it’s great to be back!



LMH invites ambitious and intellectually curious undergraduate students to join an LMH Summer Programme to experience

Oxford University’s world-renowned tutorial teaching system, explore fascinating subjects with experts in the field, and gain new skills to take you further in your future academic or professional career. LMH is delighted to offer an ‘Alumni Friends and Family’ discount, with £250 off a residential programme and £100 off an online programme. To explore our range of courses find LMH Summer Programmes on the LMH website or get in touch with Dr Christopher Adamson at vacation.programmes@lmh.ox.ac.uk

TWO LMH FELLOWS AWARDED TITLE OF FULL PROFESSOR

Congratulations to **Sanja Bogojević** (Fellow and Tutor in Law) and **Sophie Ratcliffe** (Fellow and Tutor in English), who have both been awarded the title of full Professor in the University of Oxford Recognition of Distinction Awards 2021. This process involves giving an account of one's career to date, and a panel of assessors both within Oxford and from other universities worldwide.

When asked about her achievement Professor Bogojević said: "It feels like Santa came early this year! I'm obviously absolutely thrilled about the award, and progression to full professorship. I am grateful to work in an academic environment that encourages curiosity-led research. This has meant that I have been able to work in a broad range of legal fields, and, as an environmental law scholar, examine the construction and application of environmental rights, markets (including carbon markets, and 'greening' of public procurement), environmental aspects of large-scale infrastructure, such as airports, and the Belt and Road Initiative, as well as greenhouse gas removal technologies used to reach net zero obligations. Both the College and the University place emphasis on teaching, and this too has enriched both my everyday work life and my research. My latest monograph, *Great Debates in EU Law*, co-authored with Jeremias Adams-Prassl, takes inspiration from many years of EU law tutorial teaching."

Professor Ratcliffe was also overjoyed with her achievement and said: "I am delighted and honoured to have been awarded the title of full Professor. The award looks for those who have achieved distinction in all the aspects of what it means to be an academic at Oxford – research, teaching and administration – and I am thrilled that my contributions in these fields have been



Sanja Bogojević

recognised. In administrative terms, I was proud to lead the English Faculty through a rigorous assessment in relation to gender equality, resulting in the external Athena SWAN award. I am also extremely pleased that the significance of my particular kind of research, which often takes risks in terms of approach, has been formally recognised in this way. My most recent book *The Lost Properties of Love* was autocritical and creative, offering a slantwise exploration of histories of reading, of emotion, motherhood, and grief. Other recent work has included collaborations with NHS doctors, considerations of feeling and sculpture, thinking about 1980s pop, and reflections on the idea of the self as an edited being. I will look forward to continuing to explore new ways of writing and thinking in my forthcoming book about childhood, nineteenth-century literature, and the idea of the libraries – and I am glad to have my approach to research



Sophie Ratcliffe

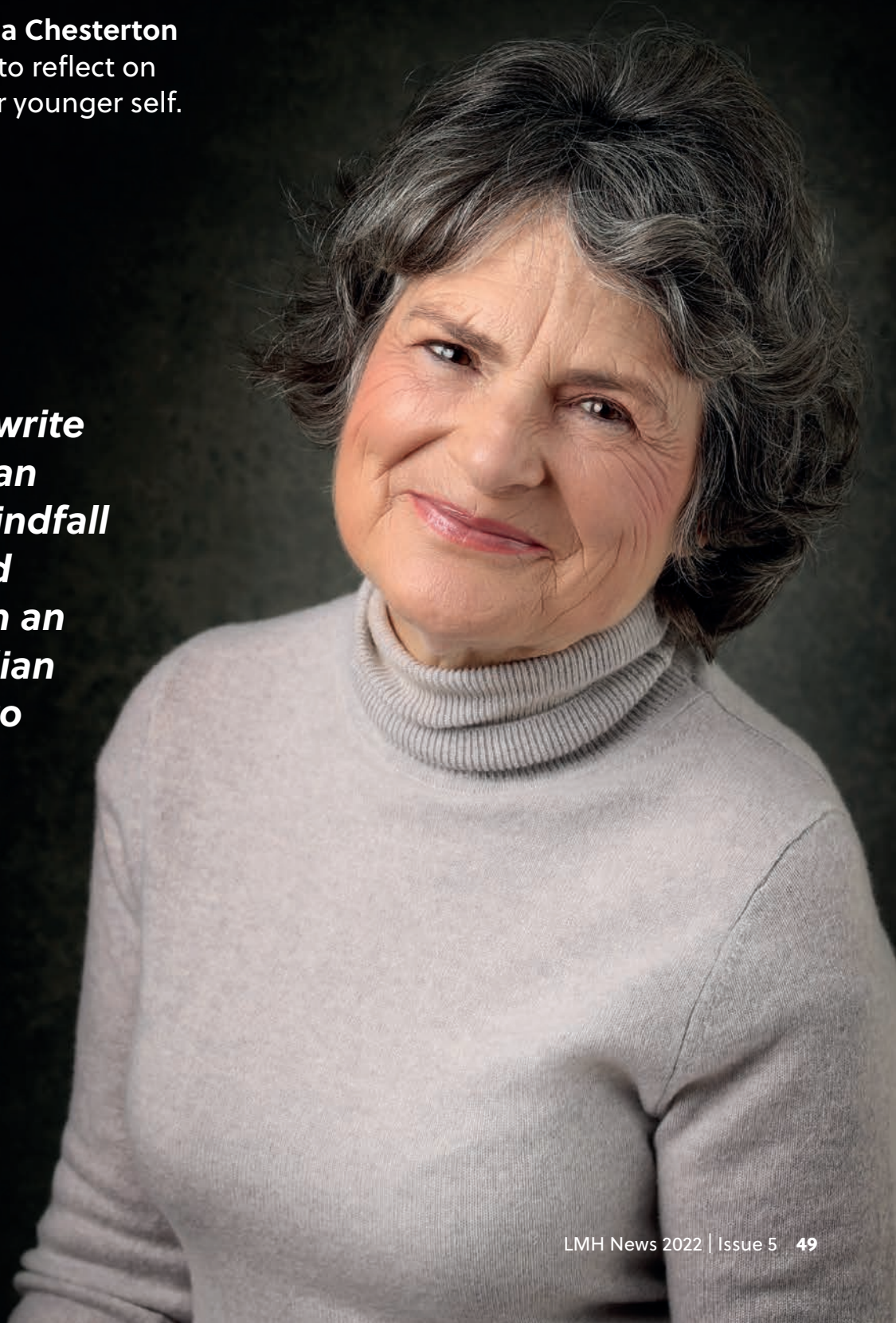
noted in my chosen title, Professor of Literature and Creative Criticism.

None of my research would be possible without teaching. Not a day goes by when I don't find myself thinking through new ideas with my students – and I am extremely grateful for the privilege of thinking with our brilliant undergraduates and graduates. I would not have felt confident enough to apply for the Professorial title without the enabling atmosphere of LMH as a research and teaching community, or the many colleagues who have offered an encouraging word, or an interesting insight, to help me do my best work. I hope, in my turn, to continue to encourage others. It's a rare thing to get to do, every day, something that is so genuinely pleasurable and interesting, and that feels like it matters so much. Every time I walk through the LMH Lodge, or the Bodleian, I can't quite believe my good fortune."

WHAT WOULD I TELL MY YOUNGER SELF?

We asked alumna **Fiona Chesterton** (1970 Modern History) to reflect on what she might tell her younger self.

“My impulse to write was sparked by an extraordinary windfall – an unexpected inheritance from an unknown Canadian man. I decided to find out the full story behind it.”



“Even when I went up to Oxford, some of my early experiences like sherry parties, with glasses of straw-coloured liquid served on silver platters, seemed like something from another world. The only time I had seen sherry before was in trifles at Christmas.”

I've been talking to my younger self a lot lately. No, this isn't a sign of lockdown stress, although as someone who lives alone these days I have missed company during the past couple of years.

Maybe, partly, it's because last September I celebrated with my fellow members of the Class of '70 fifty years since we went up to LMH (a celebration sadly delayed by more than a year due to the pandemic). It is remarkable that even with women I had not met since I had left Oxford and who are now either turned seventy or rapidly approaching that milestone, I could still recognise – especially in the eyes and the expression – the young woman and the spirit within.

But the main reason I have been communing with my teenage self recently is that I have written – and now had published – a book in which I reflect on my strange childhood years and crystallise on the printed page my most vivid memories of the years leading up to my arrival in Oxford. My impulse to write was sparked by an extraordinary windfall – an unexpected inheritance

from an unknown Canadian man. I decided to find out the full story behind it and so came across a tale of a distant cousin, born in England in Victorian times, who in her mid-thirties emigrated on her own from Cambridge to the far shores of British Columbia. She – and her son from whose estate I received the inheritance – were both born out of wedlock, and so was I. The book, called *Secrets Never To Be Told*, is also a coming-to-terms with my realisation – only made when a huge family secret was finally disclosed to me long after I had graduated – that how I presented myself to the world I first encountered in Oxford at the start of the 1970s was not the real me at all.

I was told recently by an LMH contemporary that she remembered my great self-confidence and assuredness when she first met me. Another old schoolfriend told me that she assumed that I was from quite a posh or at least middle-class background, as I spoke so well – and, yes, again, because of my self-confidence. I remember too an Oxford history don (a tutor at another college where I was sent for a term to study Political Thought) who assumed that with my surname I was related to the writer G.K. Chesterton. He went into paroxysms of delight that my tutorial partner bore the name of Wells – and she was indeed related to H.G. We only lacked a third young woman called Belloc, he said. I laughed, nervously.

Little did he know that my background was quite different from that of the literary elite; indeed, my bedroom bookcase was the only one in my family home. How I presented in Oxford was quite different from the inner me. Yes, I worked hard. Yes, I went to a good grammar school. And yes, I was able to make the best use of my natural talent that my genes had gifted me. But I was not what I seemed. At the age of 18, I was



blithely unaware of just how different my life could have been.

The secret, well part of it, which I discovered a full 25 years after my student days was this: my Mum and Dad were not married when I was born, nor indeed throughout my childhood, and they did everything they could to keep from me what was then seen to be a dark secret that affected both parents, the mother especially, and their child.

I grew up next to the Working Men's Club in Leicester, where my Dad worked as the manager. Mum, who'd left school at 14, didn't work. Indeed, she made few trips out, except to see one of her sisters or to go to the shops. She kept herself to herself and she kept me away from the company of local children or out-of-school activities – except for one. I had elocution lessons from a very early age to deal with a speech impediment but this had the coincidental effect of making me speak proper English rather than with the unmelodious East Midlands accent that I would otherwise have developed.

Even when I went to grammar school, I was kept most of the time at home and was driven to school by car, rather than risk the bus. I knew when I was a child that something wasn't right, that others were allowed to play with local friends at the weekends, but it was many years before I realised why. As one of my aunts put it apparently, my mum's chronic depression and isolation was due to the 'shame' of her unmarried circumstances.



“So, what I tell my younger self is appreciate just how much your education is the most valuable asset you have.”

That may seem a baffling thing to understand for those LMH readers born since the 1980s, but believe me the oppression of thousands of women due to these outdated attitudes was real and had huge impact on their lives – and so on their children’s lives too. At least my mum was not forced to give me away as a baby – unlike the fate of my distant Canadian cousin.

So why does this matter now, do you say? For one thing, I wanted to tell my story as a warning against complacency. There are always new ways to keep women in their box, I believe. For another, back in 1970 when I took my Oxford entrance exams, people like me, from a Midlands city, with virtually no experience

of the world (I did not go abroad till I was 19 years old), with zero contacts with people who had been to university, let alone Oxford or Cambridge, who did not even have an opportunity to see around these places before we sat the exams, had some of the same disadvantages that many young people do today. These are the women – and men – that Oxbridge has until recently struggled to reach out to. This is why I so wholeheartedly support schemes like the LMH Foundation Year – as I understand some of the barriers which persist and know just how remote and forbidding the old universities can seem.

Even when I went up to Oxford, some of my early experiences like sherry

parties, with glasses of straw-coloured liquid served on silver platters, seemed like something from another world. The only time I had seen sherry before was in trifles at Christmas. I trust LMH has better ways to welcome its new students now.

So, what I tell my younger self is, yes, be confident, believe in yourself, and believe you can do anything and go anywhere. But thank your good fortune to have loving parents, like I did, who sacrificed so much to give me a better life, and appreciate just how much your education is the most valuable asset you have. Moreover, remember to stretch out a helping hand to those who don’t have the same advantages.

Fiona Chesterton went on to join the BBC and had a long career in television journalism, production, programme commissioning, and editorial management there and at Channel 4.

SECRETS NEVER TO BE TOLD

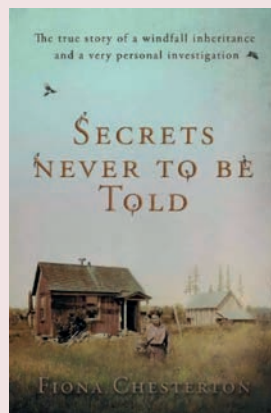
An extract from Secrets Never To Be Told, published in 2021 by the Conrad Press and available to order from bookshops as well as on online platforms.

I am off to Oxford and by the train. Summer holiday steam trains aside, this is the first time I have travelled this way and, at the age of seventeen and a half, the first time I have gone anywhere on my own. So the trip to Oxford takes on a rather more exciting dimension long before I get to my destination. After changing trains at Birmingham, I get into conversation with a young woman called Mary who is also on her way to Oxford and to the same college as me.

She goes to boarding school somewhere in the Home Counties and she wants to study English. She speaks impeccably and I realise my elocuted vowels don’t quite match her genuine accent.

She is also effortlessly well-dressed. I feel for the first time that my coat and dress ensemble isn’t quite right. She is wearing a neat little jumper, with a scarf tied just so around her neck, along with a kilt-type of skirt, which is about two inches shorter than mine. How I think those two inches improve the look!

We arrive at the college together and wish each other good luck. I can’t remember for the life of me anything I am asked at the interview. What impressed me was seeing women with more bookshelves in their rooms than I have ever seen before.



Books to the ceiling indeed! Whether they inquired about my newspaper reading habits or what my father did for a living escapes my memory.

All I recall was the final meeting I had with an elderly woman with a twinkle in her eye, who was called Dame Lucy Sutherland. I have never met a dame before, but the college principal seemed friendly enough and her questions weren’t too taxing.

Oh, and I remember walking through the garden to see the River Cherwell, with flat-bottomed boats I had never seen before moored by the river’s edge. Afterwards, I have time to walk through the Parks from the college into the

centre of the city. The streets are lined with old stone buildings, quirky looking shops, pubs and cafes. Although this city is very different from Leicester, I feel I can get used to living in a place like this.

A few days later, and just a week before Christmas, I get a telegram. That’s a first too. It’s not like a letter – there’s no space for detail – so its message is brief, to the point and thrilling.

LMH is offering me a scholarship, named after someone called Alice.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Dates for your Diary

We are so happy to be in a position to have a full programme of events on offer again. We hope to see many of you over the course of the year; full details on all our events can be found on the website: www.lmh.ox.ac.uk/alumni/events. New dates for events are added often so please do check back from time to time.

An Event to Celebrate Professor Helen Barr

Saturday 28th May, LMH

A special event to celebrate Professor Helen Barr and to mark her retirement. This is an event for friends, colleagues, former and current students to gather, share memories and to celebrate the contribution that Helen has made to our lives at LMH and beyond, and to the fields of literature and student wellbeing.

Garden Party

Saturday 25th June, LMH

A new event to thank our supporters and volunteers.

History Subject Reunion

Saturday 3rd September, LMH

History Fellows Grant Tapsell and Michael Broers will host this subject reunion event. The day will be a great opportunity to meet with contemporaries and other fellow History alumni across the years. The reunion has special significance since Professor Broers will be retiring after eighteen years as a Fellow of the college.

Gaudy

Saturday 17th September, LMH

An opportunity for matriculands from 1962 to come together to celebrate their 60th anniversary, and 1972 matriculants to celebrate their 50th anniversary. The evening will be for matriculands from 1991, 1992 and 1993.

Beaufort Circle

Saturday 15th October, LMH

Our annual event to thank members who have pledged a legacy to LMH.

