

LMH NEWS

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IN THIS ISSUE:

A Journey of Self-Discovery

Malala Yousafzai reflects
on her time at LMH

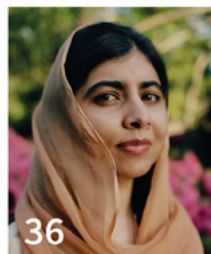
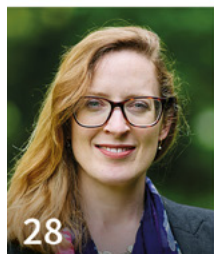
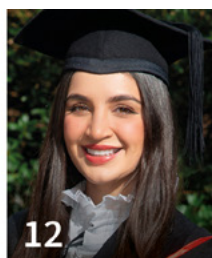
Learning on the Frontline

World Affairs Editor Sam Kiley on
four decades of reporting war

Thinking for the Future

Marking the launch of our 150th
Anniversary fundraising campaign

Contents



Welcome

03 From the Principal

News

- 04 LMH150: Thinking for the Future
- 06 Campaign Launch Day
- 08 LMH Life
- 11 Welcome to our New Academics

Features

- 12 Life After LMH
- 15 A Studio Full of Stories
- 18 Learning on the Frontline
- 22 The Intimacy of Sound
- 24 No Time to Stand Still
- 26 Leading a Research-Backed Model of Outreach
- 28 From Scientific Discovery to Real-World Therapies
- 30 Oxford at the Cutting Edge
- 32 Student Startups
- 33 Unity Through Music
- 36 A Journey of Self-Discovery

Reflections

- 42 Taking the Long View
- 44 Development Events
- 46 Writing Themselves into History
- 48 Turning the Tide on the Isis
- 50 Celebrating the Centenary of LMH's Royal Charter
- 52 Portraits of LMH
- 53 150th Anniversary Book
- 54 It's Never Too Late to Graduate
- 56 Upcoming Events



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▶ LMH Oxford

We welcome your comments and feedback. Please get in touch with the Development Team by email on: development@lmh.ox.ac.uk or by phone on the number below to let us know what you think of this issue.

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This magazine brings together a range of voices and perspectives from across the LMH community. The views and opinions expressed are those of the individual contributors.

From the *Principal*



Trinity term may have ended, but LMH feels busier than ever. In late June we launched our anniversary fundraising campaign, *LMH 150: Thinking for the Future*. Under blazing sunshine, marquees sprang up across the lawns as we welcomed more than 350 alumni, guests and friends, along with our guest speaker The Rt Hon Lord Hague of Richmond, Chancellor of the University of Oxford, to our largest ever Garden Party. I felt immensely proud to lead LMH on such a special occasion, which also marked the culmination of my first year as Principal.

Since the launch, I've been reflecting on what it is that makes LMH so special and so worth supporting. Lord Hague spoke at the Garden Party about the distinctive character of Oxford's colleges, and the vital role they play in providing the 'essential humanity' that can help address rising levels of loneliness among young people in an increasingly virtual world. At LMH, our way of teaching and living together fosters close relationships between students and tutors, while our individualised tutorial and small-group teaching accelerates students' intellectual growth. Here, students develop the confidence and communication skills

they will draw on throughout their lives. The relationships they build with tutors and peers often extend for a lifetime. Nurturing this sense of community is one of my greatest privileges as Principal.

One of the things I have observed over many years at LMH is how strongly we pull together when it matters. It is something of a well-known secret in Oxford that LMH is one of the most effective colleges at delivering ambitious things with relatively modest resources — a reflection, I think, of our pioneering spirit in action. That spirit of collaboration was particularly evident in the extraordinary effort that went into delivering the campaign launch in challenging heatwave conditions, with teams across the College working together to prepare the site and ensure our guests had an enjoyable day. It can also be seen across our student community — from graduate student Heidi Long's leadership of the victorious Oxford Women's Crew in this year's Boat Race, to the success of our first inter-common room Sports Day, and the inaugural Katie Richards Prize for Volunteering Excellence, which attracted so many outstanding student nominations that we were able to award two additional runners-up prizes. It can

also be seen among our Support Staff, who were recently recognised with a rare Platinum Investors in People award — the only Oxford or Cambridge College to achieve this distinction.

I would love you to join our *LMH 150: Thinking for the Future* campaign. At its heart, it is about ensuring that the spirit for which LMH is known can continue for generations to come. We have set an ambitious goal — aiming to raise our endowment from £65 million to £100 million, bringing us closer to the median level for an Oxford college. This would enable us to secure our tutorial teaching provision, strengthen our outreach and student support, and care for our wonderful site and historic buildings.

I'm deeply grateful to the many alumni who have been in touch in recent months offering reflections and support. These have ranged from a recent JCR officer, leaving College with regret that he will not be here to witness the full momentum of the campaign, to an alumna from the late 1960s who recalled a very different experience of LMH, describing it as 'ghastly' in terms of the lack of kindness and support she encountered at the time. Her reflection is a reminder of how far we have come. Today, we have a much deeper understanding of the importance of combining academic challenge with the care and support students need to flourish. It is this balance that we are seeking to sustain.

If we are to do so, we must continue to invest in the College's future. As we approach our 150th anniversary, we have an opportunity to secure LMH for the long term, strengthening our financial foundations and ensuring that generations of students to come can continue to experience the best of LMH. Above all, this campaign is about doing what LMH has always done best: coming together as a community in pursuit of a shared purpose. I hope you will join us in that endeavour.

Professor Christine Gerrard



LMH150: *Thinking for the Future*

From the Director of Development

LMH is special. We are proud to deliver world-class teaching and research, and to foster a community that is not afraid to challenge convention in pursuit of what is right. On our beautiful site, surrounded by our much-loved waterside gardens, we take a personalised approach to supporting our students, responding to their needs and circumstances. We have much to be proud of as we reflect on our 150-year history.

Sustaining this breadth of teaching, support, and opportunity has always depended on the generosity of our wider community. LMH is among the most financially constrained colleges in Oxford, and we are heavily reliant on annual donations to sustain core aspects of College life, including tutorial teaching, outreach, student support, and the upkeep of the buildings in which our students live and learn.

This reliance on annual giving means that much of what we do is funded year by year, rather than secured for the long term. Our *LMH150: Thinking for the Future* campaign focuses on growing the

College's endowment to permanently strengthen our financial security. This will help sustain all that is special about LMH — our excellent teaching and research, the opportunities created through outreach and student support, and our iconic buildings and facilities.

As costs for both students and College continue to rise, and as more students graduate with significant debt, the need for stable, reliable income has never been greater. This moment presents an incredible opportunity to strengthen LMH's foundations in a way that will have a lasting impact for generations to come.

Every gift to the endowment strengthens the College's financial future; every gift to the refurbishment of our buildings helps create a home away from home for our community; and every contribution to the campaign supports the experience of LMH students. If we all give at whatever level we are able, together we can transform LMH's finances for the future. Please join us today.

Anna Bates
Director of Development



To discuss making a larger gift or pledge to the campaign or leaving a legacy, please contact Anna Bates on: development.director@lmh.ox.ac.uk.



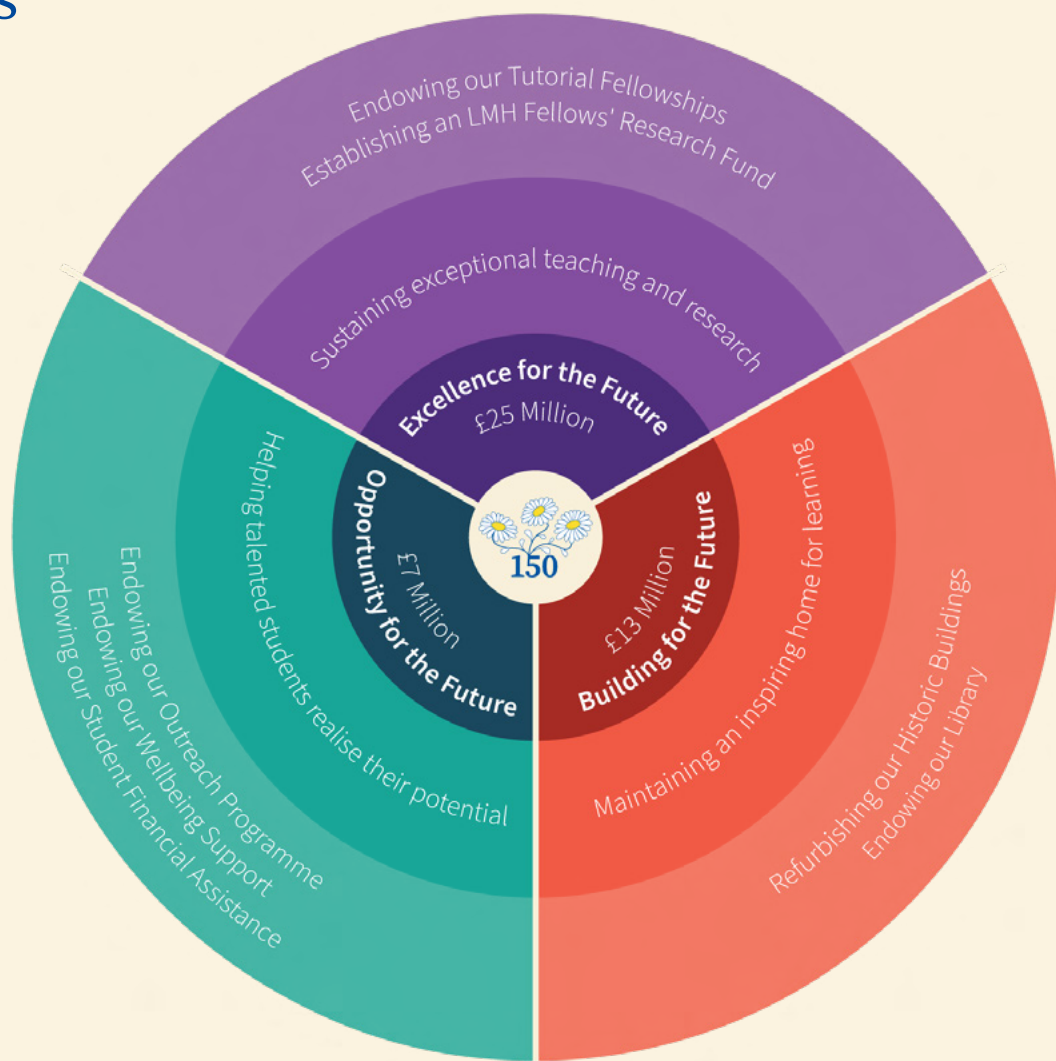
Our Priorities

Since opening the doors to Old Old Hall in 1879, LMH has challenged expectations of what an Oxford education looks like. Join us in securing LMH for the next 150 years and beyond.

Help Secure LMH for the Future

Every contribution, whatever the size, can move us closer to our goal: a £100 Million endowment to put LMH on a secure financial footing for generations to come.

Find out more about *LMH150: Thinking for the Future* at:
www.lmh.ox.ac.uk/150.



Campaign Launch Day

On Saturday 27th June, over 350 guests joined us for our annual Summer Garden Party. The afternoon marked the launch of the College's anniversary fundraising campaign, *LMH150: Thinking for the Future*.

Guests heard from Principal Professor Christine Gerrard and the Chancellor of the University of Oxford, The Rt Hon Lord Hague of Richmond, whose speech formally launched the campaign. The gardens were alive with music, conversation and celebration, as guests enjoyed afternoon tea, explored a special Library exhibition, and took part in a variety of lawn games and children's activities.

Throughout the afternoon, guests were also able to learn more about the campaign and the College's plans for the future, with a screening of our campaign video and opportunities to speak with members of the Development team.

We are very grateful to all those who joined us, and to everyone whose work helped make the event possible.





L-R: Donald Fothergill (UK Campaign Chair), Prof Christine Gerrard (Principal), Lord Hague of Richmond, Dame Ffion Hague, Anna Bates (Director of Development)



LMH Life

News highlights from our community



Heidi Long Leads Oxford to Boat Race Victory

Heidi Long (2024, MSc in Women's and Reproductive Health), President of the Oxford University Women's Boat Club, rowed at Stroke in the Dark Blue boat as Oxford secured a decisive victory over Cambridge in the 80th Oxford and Cambridge Women's Boat Race in April. In choppy conditions, Oxford made a blistering start from the Middlesex station and never let their pace drop, holding off Cambridge to win by 9.4 seconds. The crew delivered a composed and cohesive performance, working together to reclaim the title for the first time in 10 years and secure Oxford's 31st victory overall.



Professor Sophie Ratcliffe Wins E.M. Forster Award

English Fellow Professor Sophie Ratcliffe was named as the 2026 recipient of the E.M. Forster Award by the American Academy of Arts and Letters. The \$20,000 award recognises an outstanding writer from the United Kingdom or Ireland, and previous recipients include Julian Barnes, Carol Ann Duffy, Jeanette Winterson, Kate Atkinson, and Alan Hollinghurst.

Bobby Seagull Awarded MBE for Services to Public Libraries

Broadcaster, author and maths teacher Bobby Seagull (2003, MSc Mathematics) is a national advocate for libraries, literacy and numeracy. He was appointed a Member of the Order of the British Empire (MBE) in the King's New Year Honours list, in recognition of his services to public libraries.





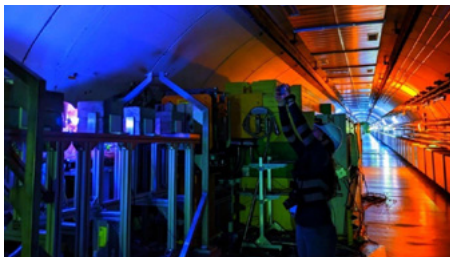
Onyeka Igwe Receives 2025 Film London Jarman Award

Fellow and Tutor in Fine Art Onyeka Igwe was awarded the 2025 Film London Jarman Award, a mark of achievement for artists working with film and video in the UK. For the first time in its history, the award was shared between two artists — Onyeka was jointly recognised alongside Morgan Quaintance for what the jury described as their “significant bodies of work at the forefront of artists’ moving image practice.” The Jarman Award jury highlighted the breadth of Onyeka’s work, which moves between documentary approaches, scripted narrative and sculptural installation.



Baroness Manningham-Buller Appointed Fellow of the Royal Society

Baroness Manningham-Buller (1967, English Language and Literature) has been elected a Fellow of the Royal Society. This Fellowship recognises her significant contributions across science, health, and public life.



LMH Physicists Recreate Cosmic “fireballs” to Probe Mystery of Missing Gamma Rays

Fellow and Tutor in Physics Professor Gianluca Gregori, Gould Watson Fellow in Physics Professor Todd Huffman, Leverhulme-Peierls Fellow in Theoretical Physics Dr Pablo Bilbao, and LMH alumnus Dr Charles Arrowsmith (2019, DPhil Physics) contributed to a world-first experiment that recreated plasma “fireballs” at CERN to study the stability of plasma jets emanating from blazars. The results of their experiment could offer new insight into the long-standing mystery of the Universe’s hidden magnetic fields and missing gamma rays.



Professor Ana Domingos Joins \$125m Global Effort to Transform Cancer Research

Fellow and Tutor in Medicine Professor Ana Domingos is part of a major new international research programme supported by Cancer Grand Challenges, which has announced \$125 million in funding to tackle some of the most pressing questions in cancer science. Professor Domingos’ InteroCANCEption team will explore how interoception — the body’s ability to sense and regulate the state of the body through the nervous system — may enable the brain to detect tumours and influence how they develop.

Professor Peter Thonemann Elected Fellow of the British Academy

Professor Peter Thonemann (1997, Literae Humaniores) has been elected as a Fellow of the British Academy. The election



reflects Professor Thonemann's sustained work in ancient history, with particular expertise in the history of Asia Minor (modern Turkey).



Dr Margaret Coombe Elected Fellow of Leading Academic Societies

Foundation Fellow, alumna and former Oxford Study Skills Director Dr Margaret Coombe (1971, History and Modern Languages) has been elected a Fellow of both the Royal Historical Society and the Society of Antiquaries of London. These Fellowships recognise her contribution as a distinguished historian and scholar of medieval Northumbria.



Elleanna Chapman Exhibits at Saatchi Gallery

Elleanna Chapman (2021, Fine Art), who graduated from the Ruskin School of Art in 2024, participated in Good Eye Projects' Summer 2025 residency at the Saatchi Gallery. The exhibition brought together artists from the programme's Autumn 2024, Spring 2025 and Summer 2025 residencies.

Dr Grace Mallon Wins American Society for Legal History Article Prize

Clive Holmes Fellow in History Dr Grace Mallon was joint winner of the William Nelson Cromwell Article Prize, awarded by the American Society for Legal History, which supports research and teaching in the field of legal history. Dr Mallon



was recognised for her article, *Negotiated Federalism: Intergovernmental Relations on the Maritime Frontier, 1789- 1815*, which examines the American federal government's efforts to enforce its new authority after the Founding.

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 Lady Margaret Hall

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Sign up to receive regular College updates via email by updating your communications preferences on your Oxford Alumni account. Alternatively, you can complete our opt-in form via the QR code or at: www.tinyurl.com/LMH-eNews.



Want to share your news?

We regularly publish news items on our website (www.lmh.ox.ac.uk) and via our social media channels. If you have news that you would like to share with the wider College community — including updates for *The Brown Book* — please contact our Head of Communications, Katie Brown, at communications@lmh.ox.ac.uk.

Welcome to our New Academics



Dr Stracy will deliver our annual Wordsworth Lecture on Sunday 14th March 2027.

Dr Mathew Stracy

Tutor and Fellow in Medicine, Group Leader at the Sir William Dunn School of Pathology

Dr Stracy joined LMH as Tutor and Fellow in Medicine last autumn. He leads the Stracy Lab at the Sir William Dunn School of Pathology, where his research explores how bacteria respond to antibiotics from multiple perspectives, ranging from molecular biology to infection epidemiology.

His group takes an interdisciplinary approach, combining molecular microbiology and advanced microscopy with evolution studies, pathogen genomics, and the analysis of clinical records. A key focus of the lab is understanding how antibiotic

resistance spreads within patients during treatment, and developing new methods to reduce this unwanted collateral damage.

Antibiotics are a double-edged sword: while they help clear an ongoing infection, they also select for resistant pathogens within the patient's microbiota, making future infections harder to treat. Dr Stracy's research examines why antibiotic treatment can fail even when bacteria are not resistant, for example when they transiently enter a dormant state that is highly tolerant to conventional drugs.

Through this work, Dr Stracy aims to achieve a deeper mechanistic understanding of bacterial responses to treatment, with the ultimate goal of developing better ways to treat infections and new strategies to reduce the spread of antibiotic resistance.



Dr Makena Micheni

Levin Junior Research Fellow in Peace Studies

Dr Micheni took up the donor-funded Levin Junior Research Fellowship in Peace Studies at the start of the academic year. A Kenyan-British scholar of international relations, Dr Micheni's research focuses on the dynamics of conflict and extremism, with particular attention to identity, ethnicity, and violence in sub-Saharan Africa.

Her work explores how armed groups operate in multi-ethnic environments, examining how factors such as allegiance and group identity shape recruitment, leadership, and behaviour. She is especially interested in the limits of cohesion within such organisations, and in understanding why efforts to create unified identities can

break down, allowing underlying social divisions to re-emerge.

Dr Micheni's recent book, *Combatant Experiences in Multi-Ethnic Extremist Groups: Identity and Allegiance in Boko Haram*, develops a framework for analysing these dynamics through a key regional case study. Drawing on first-hand interviews with ex-fighters and a detailed study of recruitment, indoctrination, combat leadership and unit behaviour, Dr Micheni highlights moments when, despite Boko Haram's efforts to transcend ethnic boundaries, ethnicity re-emerges as a defining factor within particular combatant units.

Dr Micheni previously taught at the University of St Andrews and completed her PhD at the London School of Economics. She has also worked with the Royal United Services Institute (RUSI) in Nairobi on programmes addressing violent extremism.



Life After *LMH*

As graduation season gets underway, our newest graduands are beginning to imagine what life after LMH might hold. We spoke to recent alumni about where life has taken them since leaving Oxford — how their careers have unfolded, how working life has compared with their expectations, and what they have learned along the way.



Kris Kaczmarek
 2013, DPhil in Atomic
 and Laser Physics
 Partner, Ground State Ventures

When you arrived at LMH, did you have a career path in mind, and how has that evolved?

I arrived at Oxford and LMH to start a

DPhil in Ian Walmsley's research group, with the aim of pursuing a career in quantum physics. After finishing my DPhil I stayed in academia, undertaking postdoctoral research in Switzerland. While I was there, Ian's group spun out a company based on my research and asked me to join the leadership team of this new quantum computing company. I helped develop the company over the next few years, building and leading teams in engineering, product and business development, before moving into early-stage venture capital to support other academic spin-outs.

What are you doing now, and what does a typical day look like for you?

I am a first check investor into quantum technology companies. I get to speak to many brilliant scientists around the world, helping them think through how to commercialise their groundbreaking research in quantum physics. Once they're ready to launch a company, we provide the necessary

capital and actively support our founders as they build their businesses.

What's been the most rewarding or challenging part of your journey so far?

As a science and technology person, it wasn't easy to accept at first that sometimes the best tech doesn't necessarily win in the real world! Building a successful company is really about the team and their drive to succeed, more than the technology they launch with.

“Despite what many say, serendipity is and has always been a big component of success.”

What did you value most about LMH, and what do you still draw on today?

The community at LMH was one of a kind, even among other Oxford colleges (and as Social Secretary, I saw many of them!). Contributing to creating and nurturing a cohesive group across such a wide range of backgrounds and interests has made me better at my job, which involves interacting with a myriad of people, and has continued to give me hope that, ultimately, we as people can get along.

What advice would you give to current LMH students who are worried about what the future might hold?

We live in very interesting times, both politically and technologically, which can create anxiety about the future, but also presents huge opportunities. My advice is to be patient and stay open to these opportunities, but be ready to act quickly when they arise. Despite what many say, serendipity is and has always been a big component of success, but it is also a combination of both luck and action.



Paradis Farahati

2018, Music

Corporate Partnerships
Coordinator, Sadler's Wells

When you arrived at LMH, did you have a career path in mind, and how has that evolved?

I thought I might become a copyright lawyer, ideally working in music. As time went on, I realised I wanted a career that allowed for more creative expression. I still liked the idea of a structured professional environment, but one that welcomed people who think in their own

way. That combination naturally drew me towards a role behind the scenes in the arts.

What are you doing now, and what does a typical day look like for you?

I work in Corporate Partnerships at Sadler's Wells, a dance theatre I have loved since I was seven years old, so it feels very special to be part of it. Sadler's Wells creates and shares more new work than any other dance organisation in the world and, as a charity, it runs remarkable programmes to bring dance to as many people as possible. My role is to help make that happen through fundraising, and by finding, nurturing and delivering corporate partnerships.

Our partners are thoughtful, curious and genuinely engaged. A typical day might involve checking in with partners, shaping a new sponsorship proposal, planning events to build new relationships, hosting a pre-show reception, and then ending the evening watching a world-class performance. The culture is everything I hoped for, and I still feel excited walking into the building each morning.

What's been the most rewarding or challenging part of your journey so far?

The most rewarding part has been finding a workplace where I feel completely at home. This stands in contrast to my first postgraduate role, where I struggled to feel like myself, professionally or personally. It was a difficult period, and I worried that perhaps that was simply what working life felt like. Sadler's Wells has shown me the opposite. The right environment can make you feel secure, energised and valued. It has taught me that there are workplaces where you can grow, contribute and be taken seriously without having to shrink yourself.

What did you value most about LMH, and what do you still draw on today?

LMH gave me the confidence to trust my own direction. Before arriving, I put a lot of pressure on myself to follow the 'correct' route, but LMH showed me that there is no single correct path, only the one that aligns with who you are. That mindset ultimately led me back to the arts, where I belong.

I was incredibly fortunate to be taught by the sensational Gascia Ouzounian and Joe Davies, who encouraged independent

thinking and taught me to question what we assume to be fact and what is subjective. I still draw on that every day.

“The right environment can make you feel secure, energised and valued.”

What advice would you give to current LMH students who are worried about what the future might hold?

Follow what you love. Work becomes the majority of your life, and you deserve to spend that time doing something that feels meaningful. Success is not only measured in titles or salaries. Feeling excited to start your day is one of the most fulfilling achievements you can have. You may stumble, sometimes quite badly, before you reach that point, but it is an incredible feeling when you finally find a place where you feel at home.



Josh Tulloch

2016, PPE

Co-Founder, Plugged
Founders & The Generalist
Company

When you arrived at LMH, did you have a career path in mind, and how has that evolved?

I came from a completely different

world. Growing up on a council estate in Peckham, I couldn't have imagined what life at Oxford would look like. In that sense, I arrived as something of a blank slate.

I knew Oxford could open doors, and I hoped PPE would help me understand the world and, eventually, my place within it. Almost everything has philosophical, political, and economic dimensions, so studying all three felt like the most effective attempt I could make at mapping the world in full. Once I had that map, I thought, I could figure out where I fit.

I had always had an entrepreneurial instinct, but in my final year I got caught up in travelling and missed every consulting graduate scheme deadline. Forced to look elsewhere, the only door still open was startups. So, I walked through it and fell in love.

What I found were some of the most highly agentic, clear-eyed, and determined thinkers in the country: people committed to solving very hard problems and willing to sacrifice almost everything to do so. That world captured me immediately, and I haven't looked back.

What are you doing now, and what does a typical day look like for you?

At its most basic, I help people build startups. More functionally, I run one of only a handful of coworking spaces in London designed specifically for early-stage startup founders.

Plugged actually started as a house party for founders at my place in Peckham. I kept showing up to boring, stilted tech events and eventually thought: founders deserve better than this. These are people sacrificing their social lives, their financial stability, and often their mental health to push the world forward — and the events being delivered for them were subpar.

So, I started hosting my own. People loved it, things spiralled, and what began as a gathering of frustrated founders grew into a core community of 70 members and a wider ecosystem of over 6,000. Our people have collectively raised \$153 million, and we now run some of the best tech events in London.

No two days look the same, but most weeks involve organising and running events, mentoring members,

managing the community, and answering an ungodly number of emails. It is an intensely generalist role, which, as a PPE graduate, feels about right.

What's been the most rewarding or challenging part of your journey so far?

The most rewarding part is that I get to live in the future. Being surrounded by people who are building the world as it is going to be means I get a glimpse of what is coming — these people are solving real problems.

Beyond that, they are wonderful: kind, brilliant, and driven by a desire to make things better.

The most challenging part is that building a commercially viable community is insanely difficult. It has taken two years to get to this point, and we are finally there — but the journey has been really, really tough.

“Oxford turned out to be a startup boot camp disguised as an education — I didn't realise it then, but very little could have prepared me better.”

What did you value most about LMH, and what do you still draw on today?

My time at Oxford was a tale of two crash courses. The first was the tutorial system itself. It is something I didn't appreciate at the time and, honestly, quite hated. Hundreds of pages of reading a week, delivering commentary on some of the hardest philosophical, political, and economic questions of all time, while balancing everything else, and then defending my positions in front of experts every week (often slightly hungover).

Oxford turned out to be a startup boot camp disguised as an education.

Taking in information quickly, managing your time, thinking clearly, delivering consistently under pressure — I didn't realise it then, but very little could have prepared me better.

The second was becoming JCR President. Managing a team of 70+, answering to a governing body not unlike a board of investors, handling budgets of tens of thousands, navigating politics, elections, and stakeholder management — and dealing with everything from PR situations to deciding where bops would be held.

It was a crash course in how to run an organisation: how to keep people happy, maintain culture, manage competing interests, and drive people forward.

What advice would you give to current LMH students who are worried about what the future might hold?

Treat the period immediately after graduation as an opportunity to map the field. There will be enormous pressure to know exactly what you want and to get into your career straight away. Resist that temptation at all costs. You do not have enough information yet.

Oxford is a big world, but it is tiny compared to the sum of what is out there. After my finals, I left for the US for three months, then China for two months. It completely changed my perspective on what was available, what was possible, and what I actually wanted.

Don't let the Careers Service define the boundaries of your ambition. It offers a very narrow set of possibilities. Your job is to expand that set. Go and see the world. Say yes to things. Try things. Treat university, and the period immediately after it, as information gathering: what do I like, what don't I like, what kind of people do I want to be around, and what problems do I want to solve?

Don't worry too much about the future. Worry about the present. Feed yourself enough information to make good decisions, and the future will start to become clear.

You can connect with other alumni and build your network by joining our LMH Links community on LinkedIn.



'Game of Migration' by Maliha Abidi

A Studio Full of *Stories*

Graduate student **Maliha Abidi** (2025, Master of Fine Art) has spent her year at LMH developing her practice at the Ruskin School of Art, embracing artistic storytelling while balancing family life and building a sense of community.

One wall of Maliha's Oxford studio is lined with Polaroids — a mosaic of visitors, collaborators and conversations from a year of study. Each photograph marks a moment shaped not only by academic work, but also by growth, family responsibilities, and the experience of building a life in Oxford.

Together, they form a visual record of a year defined as much by exchange and collaboration as by formal study.

Utilising bold colours and a strong graphic style, Maliha's work explores social and cultural narratives, often highlighting underrepresented voices. While her earlier projects focused on individual stories, there has been a shift in her work. "Most of my recent work no

longer focuses on an individual story, but rather on the collective," Maliha explains. She brings together a range of perspectives so that, "as many people as possible can find a piece of themselves within them."

"It is important for me to show the diversity of these stories," she adds, "so that as many people as possible can connect with them." For Maliha, this



approach is also about uncovering stories that are not always widely told, and presenting them in ways that resonate with different audiences.

Alongside the demands of pursuing her Master of Fine Art, Maliha is also navigating life as a parent. “I do experience a lot of internal ‘mom-guilt,’” she reflects. “I cannot take this opportunity for granted, not just for myself, but for my entire family. They packed up everything and moved to Oxford for my dream.”

This determination extends beyond her studies and family life. Maliha has published three books, but her first project began with a series of rejections. “One person even said, ‘We don’t want to publish books about Pakistanis because they don’t like to read,’” she reflects sadly. Rather than letting this deter her, Maliha turned to crowdfunding to bring her project to life. “It was because of incredible support from the community

that the book was successfully published,” she explains. “I wouldn’t have reached traditional publishing if it weren’t for the self-publication of *Pakistan for Women*.”

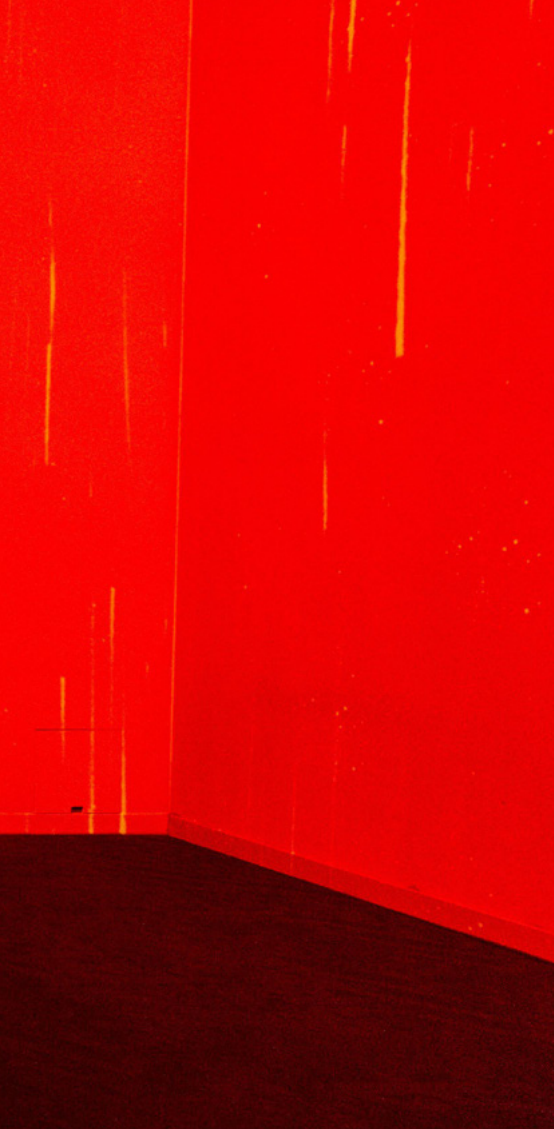
Describing the past year as both

“As for what comes next, I feel like there may still be a lesson or two waiting for me in my final term.”

intense and transformative, Maliha reflects on the pressures of navigating a demanding one-year programme alongside the challenge of adapting to an

entirely new environment. “I have never felt this kind of pressure, hecticness and even culture shock before,” she says. “It was all energy, and it all fed into my art,” she adds. “I kept reminding myself why I wanted to come here and why I wanted to study here.” Working through that intensity, she became more focused, learning to navigate new challenges in ways that continue to shape both her work and perspective. The experience, she suggests, has pushed her to think more critically about both her practice and her priorities. “It has taught me to work through difficult situations, lessons that will stay with me forever.”

The people around her have played an equally important role. Maliha regularly invited others into her studio, hosting back-to-back visits that now form the polaroid-covered wall she has titled ‘Studio Visits’. Each photograph captures a moment of exchange, creating a collage of the vastly different groups that have



come to define her time in Oxford. “I have met some incredible people, and I know I will remain friends with them for life,” she explains. “Every time someone visits, I take a photo of them in the space to preserve that memory.”

Maliha’s development has been shaped by close mentorship, both at LMH and at the Ruskin. At LMH, she found support through Dr Jacob Kingsbury Downs, noting that, “we always had great conversations, and I felt very supported.” At the Ruskin, she worked with filmmaker and artist Maryam Tafakory, whose guidance encouraged her to explore new ideas. “I learned so much from Maryam and always looked forward to our tutorials,” she says. Through this, Maliha has begun to incorporate performance more fully into her work, reflecting her growing interest in filmmaking.

Her creative process varies from project to project. “Each time I make something, the process changes,” Maliha



Main (left): ‘Shifting Shadows’ by Maliha Abidi

Above (top): ‘Kinara’ by Maliha Abidi

Above (bottom): Maliha Abidi alongside her artwork, ‘Seen’

says. “I need to see part of the vision in my head, and part of it develops on the canvas.” In her animations, this involves detailed storyboarding and refining ideas through sketches and writing. Colour plays a central role, with a focus on creating harmony and rhythm. This balance between planning and spontaneity allows her ideas to evolve organically.

As Maliha begins her final term, she reflects on her time at LMH. “One key takeaway might be learning to give myself

time to process difficult emotions, even when everything feels urgent and high-stakes. Oxford has taught me that. As for what comes next, I feel like there may still be a lesson or two waiting for me in my final term.”

Find out more about Maliha’s work on her website:
www.malihaabidi.com



LEARNING ON THE FRONTLINE

As an international journalist in print and on television, **Sam Kiley** (1984, PPE) has spent four decades reporting on pivotal events including the Rwandan genocide, the 2003 invasion of Iraq and, more recently, the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Currently World Affairs Editor of *The Independent*, Sam has held senior roles at *CNN*, *Sky News*, and *The Times* where he and Boris Johnson were trainees together. When we spoke to Sam in the spring, we discussed what he has learned while witnessing history first-hand.

What did you learn at LMH that has stayed with you?

I think I learned the joy of difference and the thrill of being wrong. I learned what it means not to be dogmatic but to be intellectually open to new facts and better arguments. That tone was set by, among others, Professor Gillian

Peele, who was my PPE and moral philosophy tutor.

The principal thing about LMH in those days was that while the emphasis was on academic excellence, there was also a strong philosophical belief in the broader experience of university life. So my indifferent academic performance was

tolerated because I think the tutors saw I was most certainly not wasting my time [Sam was President of the Oxford University Drama Society and says he did “a vast amount of probably rather poor theatre”].

And what I learned from PPE, and all of the drama, got wrapped up in my career as a journalist. I built an understanding



“For me, the first principle is you are not the story and you are supposed to be scarred by this process — or you’re a psychopath.”

of storytelling, of how to assemble an argument and, from drama, of how not to be the centre of attention and how to fade from people’s consciousness as quickly as possible. Ultimately, that helps me know how to behave in environments in which you might get killed.

Can you explain more about learning not to be the centre of attention?

An important part of any theatrical skill is being able to project attention elsewhere, away from yourself. And if you look like me, and you’re in a militarised environment and people are tense, drunk, and have guns at a roadblock, you need to get attention away from yourself and onto someone else as quickly as possible.

I look suspicious, I look like I’m in the military, so I’d say I’ve used what I learned about melting into the upholstery and not attracting attention at every single roadblock during my career. It involves breathing techniques, what you do with your body, eye contact, your musculature. These are basic theatrical techniques, and they work.

What have you learned about putting people at ease when you are interviewing during crises and conflicts?

A lot of this flows from basic human good manners. If you are talking to someone who is smaller than you or is bedridden, for example, don’t loom over them. That isn’t something I’ve learned, that’s basic humanity.

But being conscious of how one is perceived means that one can be a lot more sensitive with people who are very frequently, in my case, talking about the most painful and horrific experiences that any human could possibly endure. I’m very conscious of not making the intensity of that experience any worse, and perhaps making it slightly easier to bear. The simplest thing is to listen and not ask too many questions.

What have you learned about fear through your role?

Broadly that it’s more corrosive than battery acid, and personally that you have to try and control it and suppress it. Occasionally, I’ve been shocked and amazed by the number of people who come in to cover conflicts who have not

given a second's thought to the idea that this is a real environment and that fear is a real condition and you really have to control it.

For me, the first principle is you are not the story and you are supposed to be scarred by this process — or you're a psychopath. It's not about you and you don't matter. If you start from that principle, then you only have to manage the biology, and you can try and manage fear by breathing and remaining calm.

Some people have seen me in very extreme circumstances and I appear to be very, very cold and very clinical and mechanical. If people see me in that condition, they should worry, because that means things have gone very badly wrong. That's how I've learned to manage adrenaline and cortisol in circumstances that are equivalent to a major train crash.

“I look suspicious, I look like I’m in the military, so I’d say I’ve used what I learned about melting into the upholstery and not attracting attention at every single roadblock during my career.”

What have you learned from the experiences that have stayed with you?

The most graphic and formative experience was the 1994 Rwandan genocide, and some readers of this interview won't even know who killed whom, and they should go and study it, because a million people were killed in three months. I witnessed that at the side of the killers and at the side of the victims.

The civil war in Somalia was so mad and so complex that it served as the most extraordinary conflict environment to learn in, because no conflict has been so complicated to me since.

And while I prefer not to reflect on the horrors I have seen, the bits that make me cry are the incredibly frequent examples of generosity and human dignity, and grace, that occur amid the mayhem. I've



seen that everywhere from the interior of the Democratic Republic of Congo to Rafah and Helmand.

There was a teacher I met in the DRC who had taught himself English by pedalling a bicycle dynamo to power a radio so he could listen to the BBC World Service. He then passed his learning on to his pupils, and these children all spoke really very good English at the age of 12, as a direct consequence of him. But, less than a day away when I was there, the Hutu Inturahamwe were approaching through the forests and everyone in that village was likely to be overrun and murdered. But he came out with his pupils to chat in English. He saw only a bright future for his kids.

There are many, many examples like that. One family in Baghdad laid on a kind of Iftar-scale spread for us as a visiting television crew, when we were in their home in order to talk about the murder of their adult children by trigger-happy American soldiers a few days earlier.

What have you learned about the causes of conflict?

Intellectually, the one aspect of international relations and politics that never, ever, ever comes up in anybody's course or curriculum is the influence of stupidity — and the Iran war is the perfect example of this. When you look at the American leadership, PPE-ists will be looking for the subtle nuance behind what they are saying, and for the 'big I' and 'small i' intelligence that is inspiring an apparently moronic series of statements and attitudes. But I would argue that if you look at their arguments defending the war in Iran, that intelligence just isn't there. If people like Pete Hegseth and Donald Trump appear to be stupid, that is because they are. It's not their ideas that are stupid, it is the people themselves.

In my experience of 35 years of working in international affairs, I'd say 75 per cent of all consequences in conflicts flow from this outright, bone-headed, old-school truth that a lot of world leaders are just plain thick.

It makes me feel angry to the point of violence, and I am lucky enough to be able to turn that anger into words in *The Independent*. I really do think that, in terms of discourse from undergraduate level upwards, when we're talking about



“I really do think, that in terms of discourse from undergraduate level upwards [...] bone-headed stupidity should be top of the list of explanations as to why stuff goes wrong.”

history, politics, international relations, development studies — anything that involves human beings — bone-headed stupidity should be top of the list of explanations as to why stuff goes wrong.

What have you learned writing for publications across the political spectrum?

That you have to stand by your own principles, even though it can seriously derail your career. I resigned from *The Times* over their attempts to censor my coverage of the second intifada in Palestine, and after that I was very much a marked man in Fleet Street. It took me a long time to recover my standing over what I thought was the adoption of principle.

One of the things the mainstream media really hates — on the left or the right — is somebody who is not dogmatic

but genuinely independent. They don't like a troublemaker. But I was always going to take a stand. My father was a journalist and went into exile from South Africa after he exposed political concentration camps under apartheid. If you come from that kind of tradition, the thought of staying quiet doesn't occur. I never had any problems at *Sky News*, nor do I have any at *The Independent*.

Finally, what have you learned about relaxing to care for your own wellbeing?

I have no idea how to do it. I'm not capable of relaxing. I try not to carry all of what I have seen around with me, and I think the most important thing is to remain decent company. If you can make your friends and family laugh, then you're probably doing OK.



The Intimacy of *Sound*

Sound has always shaped how we relate to one another, but as our habits change, so too does the audio around us. Lecturer in Music **Dr Jacob Kingsbury Downs** explores how behaviours that are often seen as isolating can instead create a sense of closeness, reshaping expectations around communication, privacy, and connection.

Today, people fall asleep to the sounds of strangers whispering through their earbuds, send intimate voice messages across continents to maintain relationships, and form attachments to AI voice companions that speak but cannot listen. Others go out in public to play music and social media videos aloud from their mobile devices, or to take calls on speakerphone while riding the bus. The ways we listen, interact, and structure our daily lives are increasingly shaped by the media technologies we carry with us, and are shifting faster than we might realise. What do they say about us as social beings — and how might we best understand the roles these technologies play in our everyday lives?

My research begins with the claim that sound has become one of the primary media through which experiences of intimacy — and other dimensions of social interaction — are maintained and contested in contemporary digital life. This idea first took shape a decade ago during my doctoral work, where I set out to understand something that seemed, at the time, underexplored: why so many people were using headphones in their daily lives, and what headphone listening actually felt like from the inside. The existing scholarly literature painted a bleak picture of the isolating or antisocial effects of wearing headphones in public — the sense that listeners were withdrawing from the world around them.

But when I started talking to people about their headphone-listening experiences, a more interesting picture emerged. It was less concerned with social isolation than with something

harder to name: the peculiar intimacy of hearing someone else's voice inside your head, and the way headphones draw a kind of permeable acoustic boundary around the body, carving out a private sense of the 'homely' in a public space. What drew me in was that these were experiences people rarely examined or talked about: the quiet, private, 'just for me' moments that often don't feel worth mentioning. (One interviewee called me a 'headphone counsellor', though I suspect others simply thought I was nosy.)

*“Our ways
of relating to
one another
are constantly
evolving.”*

It was this interest in how people talk about their listening lives that led me to apply to become one of the BBC's New Generation Thinkers. The scheme has involved media training, collaboration with radio and television producers, and the opportunity to write and present original programmes for the BBC. I now receive regular calls from radio editors to speak live on air about all kinds of musical and sonic topics. My programmes tend to be a little unusual — this summer, for instance, I somehow convinced the BBC to air a *Sunday Feature* on Radio 3 about whispering — but they share a common purpose: to convey something of the idiosyncrasy

of human life, and to explore how our media consumption shapes experiences of loneliness and connection.

All of this is to say that I am not, admittedly, a conventional music scholar. But the scholarly landscape is constantly shifting, and I see this in stark relief here at Oxford. I am consistently bowled over by the brilliance of the students I teach; tutorials regularly lead me to question my own assumptions, and I learn something new every day. Even when students are introducing me to the more baffling corners of the internet, it remains an education — and a useful reminder not to take myself too seriously. I have even begun co-writing academic work with students, whose insight and creativity never fail to surprise me.

In a (perhaps futile) attempt to stay relevant to my undergraduates, my more recent work has turned to contemporary practices such as 'voice-noting' (sending audio messages rather than texts) and 'loudcasting' (relaying the tinny sounds of mobile phone speakers in public spaces, often to the delight of very few). These habits, however strange they may seem, are part of what makes us human. They remind us that our ways of relating to one another are constantly evolving. This is why the humanities feel so vital at this particular moment — not as a refuge from technology, but as a way of *understanding* it. At a time when many worry that new technologies threaten to erode our creative and social capacities, I find myself thinking the opposite: that they offer one of the most revealing lenses we have for understanding how human beings actually live, feel, and connect. That's why I do the work that I do.



NO TIME TO STAND STILL

Jane Richardson's (1995, English Language & Literature) career path might best be described as unpredictable. Now Chief Executive of Amgueddfa Cymru (National Museum Wales), she has held senior roles in broadcast journalism, infrastructure development, historic property management and the civil service. But there is one theme that connects them all — and it stems back to Jane's time at LMH...

Jane Richardson has never had a plan. “I remember taking my finals at LMH and thinking, ‘I don’t know what’s coming next at all,’” she smiles. “The challenge of an English degree is that the next step isn’t obvious; but the benefit of an English degree at somewhere like LMH is that you’ve got choices. It gives you the skills to go in a number of different directions and gives you an equipped brain that you can apply to different contexts, situations and careers.”

That peripatetic approach has run throughout Jane’s career. After landing an early role in BBC radio with a little help from 1980s Radio 1 and TV presenters Bruno Brookes and Keith Chegwin (of which more later), Jane went on to manage properties for the National Trust, helped develop the Welsh government’s international tourism strategy, and took responsibility for everything from housing to heritage at Conwy County Council. Currently she leads National Museum Wales, overseeing a portfolio that runs from the National Slate Museum in Llanberis to the National Roman Legion Museum near Newport.

“I think what I am is a professional storyteller... and it all comes back to an English degree at LMH.”

Jokingly, she suggests that, “one theme of my career is that I have always been completely unqualified in the formal sense.” But when pushed to suggest the thread that actually weaves together such apparently disparate roles, Jane’s thinking immediately comes back to LMH.

“Although the transitions and the overall route look random,” she says, “I think what I am is a professional storyteller. I think that’s what my English degree gave me.

“I told stories in news. I then went and told stories for years in the National Trust about heritage and culture. Then I went into local government and told stories about how we use public service to make lives better. And now I’m in a museum telling stories about the history and people of Wales, but also about the need to invest in that and the importance of the museum sector. That’s the theme — and it all comes back to an English degree at LMH.”

Taking to the airwaves

If the first stories Jane told were on the radio, that was the result of her being one of several LMH students to set up *Oxygen 107.9fm*, the UK’s first full-time student radio station. Jane presented the afternoon show, and this led to the unexpected influence of Bruno Brookes and Keith Chegwin on her early career.

Word of *Oxygen*’s success had reached the two presenters and, when they wanted to set up a similar station, they got in touch with the *Oxygen* team. Jane was one of four students who gave up a summer to decamp to a house in Newbury and work for free — but with the promise of a professional-standard demo tape — on the pilot shows for the station.

“All I can remember is we stayed in this low attic room with a big ceramic tiger as you came through the door,” Jane laughs. “We didn’t have access to a kitchen or anywhere to prepare food. I introduced the idea of a restaurant review to enable us to go out and eat! But I had a ball. And the outcome was I got the demo tape of all demo tapes.”

That tape led to a job at BBC Radio York, where Jane’s storytelling continued as part of the news team. “I’ve always collected pearls of wisdom that I hold in my mental treasure box,” Jane says, “and I remember one from my mentor at the BBC in York, Martin Montague. He said to me that the key to telling a good story is knowing what to leave out, not what to put in.”

This lesson came in particularly handy as she moved on to work for the National Trust. “At times the difficulty would be that people wanted to tell the whole history of a property, with everybody who’s lived there and so on. But that’s not a story, that’s a record,” Jane says. “The question should be, ‘How can you make a powerful emotional connection between

the story you want to tell and the person who is reading or experiencing it?”

When the imposing Tredegar House, and the beautiful Dyffryn Gardens in South Wales came into the National Trust, Jane was asked to help shape how the stories of these two historic places would be shared with the public. And when she moved again to the National Museum Wales role, thoughtful, honest, intentional storytelling was the priority once again, for example, in the presentation of a portrait of Thomas Picton.

“The key to a good story is knowing what to leave out, not what to put in.”

“He’s sometimes still referred to as the ‘Hero of Waterloo’, but he was a horrendous man who tortured and maimed and killed people under his care when he was governor of Trinidad. We had to decide what we would do with this portrait, so we engaged with young black people whose heritage goes back to Picton’s time, and they started with the vibrant lives of three girls who had been killed by this man. Through their stories, they gave them life.”

Today, Jane says her role is to “bring all that storytelling experience to this country that means so much to me.” She is leading the transformation of the Slate Museum — “to bring to life this global story in the heart of Wales” — and the National Museum Cardiff — “to make it a distinctively Welsh national museum: one you could never see or experience anywhere else in the world.”

“For me,” she concludes, “my career has always been about the need to be interested and engaged with what I’m doing. I want it to set me alight in the morning and I want to feel like I’m making a difference. I love to learn, and I would hate to be stale.” Whichever direction Jane’s own story takes from here, you get the sense there is very little chance of that ever coming to fruition.



LEADING A RESEARCH-BACKED MODEL OF OUTREACH

This coming academic year, in partnership with the University's Department of Economics, LMH will launch *The Wayfinder Programme*, to assess whether sustained contact with individual prospective students is a more effective model of outreach than the one currently pursued by many higher educational institutions.

LMH has always proudly led the way in our access work. As is the case in most other colleges, much of LMH's outreach has centred on traditional one-off interactions with high-potential students from schools in our link regions, designed to demystify Oxford

and provide application support.

Vast effort, and indeed funding, is invested in this endeavour across the higher education sector, without significant empirical evidence to link input to outcome. Continuing our leadership in this sphere, LMH and the Department of Economics recently

launched the Centre for Research on Outreach and Access (CROA). CROA is focused on advancing rigorous, data-driven understanding of access to higher education and of how outreach initiatives and financial support can shape the lives of students from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Sparse research to date indicates that engaging with students over a sustained period could influence young people's higher education pathways more successfully than traditional 'one-off' interventions.

Enabled by generous donor funding, LMH and CROA have recently completed trials as to the efficacy of online mentoring, and specifically whether it is possible to build rapport and trust between mentors and mentees entirely online. Twelve Year 10 students from link schools in Gloucestershire and Haringey were paired with LMH undergraduate mentors via an online mentoring platform, Brightside. It was observed that students returned to their sessions with growing confidence, while mentors described relationships that felt meaningful.

Reflecting on the programme's impact, one teacher noted a clear change in a student's outlook, "He mentioned to me how much he is enjoying the mentoring. It has actually changed his mind about going to university. He did not consider

it before and now he is looking forward to it."

These early indicators from the trial are being fed into the design of *The Wayfinder Programme*, which will launch later this year and seeks to further investigate the effectiveness of pursuing a targeted sustained contact programme. The Programme has been designed in conjunction with researchers from the Department of Economics through CROA. It aims to effectively support high-attaining students at the important decision-making stage of Key Stage 4, helping to build confidence, develop their familiarity with Oxford, and provide key information and guidance. A proportion of places will be reserved for those from the least advantaged backgrounds.

Programme participants will begin with a visit to LMH, before continuing their journey through a series of videos designed to maintain engagement and build understanding of studying at Oxford. The year-long programme will conclude with a celebratory event in College for students and their supporters.

One third of participants will also take part in online mentoring with an Oxford undergraduate student to investigate the impact of partnering current students with prospective students and providing sustained opportunities to reflect, ask questions, and build a meaningful relationship with a positive role model.

In the Programme's first year, it will work with around eight schools and 40-50 students, with the aim of growing to over 100 students across approximately 20 schools in the subsequent two years.

CROA will monitor *The Wayfinder Programme* to assess whether it is having a real and positive impact. Results will feed into research output that seeks to provide evidence-based best practice for outreach interventions which could influence not only LMH's approach to access, but the sector more broadly.

For more information, please contact Eleanor Chamings-Manley, Head of Access and Admissions Support, on: headofaccess@lmh.ox.ac.uk.

A Snapshot from the Sustained Contact Pilot

"I have had four sessions with my mentee so far, and they have been very enjoyable. Working with her to support her specific academic goals has been some of the most rewarding and invigorating outreach work I have done at LMH.

She has told me that she has found the programme very useful, particularly the one-to-one sessions. She has mentioned that having these personalised sessions has improved both her revision tactics and, as a naturally shy person, her communication skills.

I was drawn to participating in the sustained contact programme pilot because, in my two years as an LMH Student Ambassador, I have most enjoyed speaking with prospective students and hearing about their interests. So I was very excited by

the opportunity to have sustained engagement with students and to support them in cultivating their passions over time.

What stood out most for me was seeing my mentee grow in her confidence in voicing opinions and engaging in academic conversation. In earlier sessions she was hesitant to offer her thoughts, but by the time of our mock tutorial she was offering articulate answers to difficult psychological questions like "what is 'normal' for humans?" and was not afraid to respectfully challenge my own suggestions.

Helping her strengthen her voice has been incredibly fulfilling."

Anna Ramsden (2024, English Language and Literature)





From Scientific Discovery *to Real-World Therapies*

What does it take to turn scientific research into treatments that reach patients? **Professor Rachael Bashford-Rogers**, Fellow and Tutor in Biochemistry, is working at the intersection of immunology, data science, and entrepreneurship to better understand how the immune system shapes human health and disease, and to explore new pathways for treatment.

At its core, Professor Rachael Bashford-Rogers' research asks a fundamental question: how can the same immune system that protects us also drive disease? "My research focuses on understanding how the immune system changes over time," she explains, "and how these changes contribute to diseases such as cancer, autoimmune conditions, and infection."

Her work combines experimental biology with advanced computational approaches, drawing on large-scale human datasets that include genetic, clinical, and single-cell information. This allows her team to study immune cells in unprecedented detail, revealing how they behave in different contexts. "It enables us to ask questions that simply weren't possible before, and to map the biology of the immune system from entirely new perspectives," she says.

From observation to innovation

This drive to uncover new biological insights has led Professor Bashford-Rogers beyond traditional academic research. She is co-founder of Alchemab Therapeutics, a biotechnology company that uses human data to discover new therapeutic targets. "The idea originated from a simple but powerful observation: some individuals respond exceptionally well to disease, whether that's surviving cancer or resisting infection," she says. "By studying these individuals in detail, we can identify protective biological mechanisms that could be translated into treatments for others." Alchemab was founded to take this concept beyond research into drug development, and has since grown into a collaborative effort between academia and industry, including a major partnership with Eli Lilly.

More recently, Professor Bashford-Rogers has co-founded a second company, Theraimmune, which focuses on how menopause reshapes the immune system and influences disease risk. This is an area that has historically received limited attention, but by investigating these changes, the team hopes to identify opportunities for earlier and more targeted interventions.

Science with impact

Underlying this move into industry is a clear motivation: impact. "I have a

passion for helping patients," Professor Bashford-Rogers says. "Academic research allows us to uncover important biological insights, but translating those discoveries into therapies that reach patients often requires a different framework."

This perspective has shaped how she approaches her work. Scientific curiosity remains central, but it is accompanied by a focus on real-world relevance. "When designing experiments or analysing data," she explains, "I think not only about whether a result is interesting, but whether it could meaningfully change how we diagnose or treat disease."

"Ultimately, I hope our work contributes to moving from treating conditions after they arise to understanding and intervening earlier in the underlying biology."

Broadening horizons

Professor Bashford-Rogers' experience across academia and industry also influences how she works with students. She encourages them to think broadly about where their studies might lead, and to remain open to paths beyond traditional academic careers. "I emphasise the importance of curiosity and resilience," she says. "Both research and entrepreneurship involve uncertainty, and progress often comes from exploring ideas that don't work before finding those that do."

Just as importantly, she highlights to students that there is no single way to

make an impact in science. "Whether it's through academia, industry, or starting something new, there are multiple routes to contributing meaningfully," she notes.

An ecosystem for innovation

Oxford, Professor Bashford-Rogers suggests, provides a uniquely supportive environment for this work. The combination of world-class research, a collaborative culture, and growing support for innovation has created fertile ground for new ideas. "Within the collegiate system, there's a real sense of community," she says. "Colleges like LMH provide spaces where ideas can be discussed across disciplines and at different stages, which often leads to unexpected collaborations."

She also points to Oxford's connections to industry as a central way of supporting the next generation of innovators. "There is a growing ecosystem, from funding initiatives to mentoring networks, that supports people who want to take their ideas further," she explains. "In particular, there are an increasing number of opportunities for both undergraduate and postgraduate students to explore entrepreneurship in low-risk settings, such as internships during their courses and university-organised entrepreneurship societies."

Looking ahead

For Professor Bashford-Rogers, her long-term goal is ambitious but clear: to shift how we approach disease itself. "Ultimately, I hope our work contributes to moving from treating conditions after they arise to understanding and intervening earlier in the underlying biology," she says. By identifying the mechanisms that drive disease progression and targeting them more precisely, there is potential not only to extend lifespan, but to improve healthspan.

More broadly, she hopes her work demonstrates the value of combining deep scientific understanding with a commitment to translation. "If we can bring those together," she reflects, "we can make a tangible difference."

Find out more about Professor Bashford-Rogers' work at:
<https://bashfordrogers.web.ox.ac.uk>



Oxford at the *Cutting Edge*

Dr Irwin Zaid (2008, DPhil Physics) is Director of Studies in Computer Science at Christ Church and leads Oxford Edge, a new centre for entrepreneurship and innovation open to all University of Oxford students. We spoke to him about the vision behind Oxford Edge and the work it is doing to support the innovators of the future.

How did the idea for Oxford Edge come about, and how did you take it from concept to reality?

Oxford Edge grew out of seeing how much interest and engagement in entrepreneurship already existed among students, despite limited opportunities to pursue their ideas seriously alongside academic work. What was missing was not creativity or drive — Oxford students already have plenty of that — but a setting that brought together time, structure, and a sense of shared effort. From there, the

focus was on building something practical — programmes, space, and support — that students would use and through which their ideas could build momentum.

Just like the student ventures we see, Oxford Edge began as an idea. Turning it into something real meant working across the University and beyond to bring together a broad consortium of partners — colleges, departments, industry, and philanthropy — each contributing something different. Christ Church then kickstarted it by repurposing one of their

historic buildings at 37 St Giles to be its home. The response was immediate. Within the first year, students from nearly half of Oxford's colleges and every academic division were walking through the door.

What does Oxford Edge offer budding entrepreneurs?

Oxford Edge offers a range of entry points, from short, focused formats like sprints and hackathons through to longer programmes where students can spend serious time developing

their own idea. Alongside this, there is ongoing mentorship, peer collaboration, and a dedicated space where students can work together. The aim is to help students move from early curiosity to something more concrete, without requiring them to have everything figured out in advance.

Why is a centre like Oxford Edge important?

What matters is giving students a way to take their ideas beyond discussion. Oxford is full of people thinking seriously about difficult problems, but there are relatively few settings where those ideas can be tested, shaped, and iterated on with practical feedback. A centre like Oxford Edge creates that environment, where students can explore what their ideas might become and learn by doing. We have seen this works best when students are working across disciplines, where ideas are strengthened through being tested from multiple perspectives.

How has Oxford Edge developed since its launch?

Since our launch last year, Oxford Edge has worked across the collegiate University, bringing together student societies, colleges, departments, and industry partners to design and run activities collaboratively. We had over 30 students from 18 colleges take part in our student entrepreneurship programme (StEP) that we run with Oxford University Innovation, working intensively on their own ideas for ventures spanning everything from music production to quantum computing. In Michaelmas, we saw over 170 applications to OX1, a student-run incubator that we work very closely with. We also ran a series of sprints and challenges with over 120 participants, creating shorter, high-intensity entry points across areas such as climate, finance, life sciences, and education.

“What matters is giving students a way to take their ideas beyond discussion.”



Some teams have gone on to secure funding and further opportunities. We have found that a shared space, a regular community, and accessible support play an important role in how ideas develop. With those in place, students move more quickly in refining their ideas.

“LMH is a college founded on innovation and I had no doubt it would be one of the first to support its own students in this way!”

What do you hope to achieve in the coming years?

The focus is on making it easier for students to get started and to stay with their ideas over time. That means clearer entry points for those who are curious, alongside more opportunities to carry forward momentum. We want to build a more connected community, with regular points of interaction that bring together students, researchers, and practitioners across Oxford and beyond. Ultimately, we want this approach to feel more embedded within Oxford, with developing ideas alongside academic

work becoming a natural part of the student experience.

More personally, I'm delighted by the opportunity to work with LMH to help achieve this. This year, the College is sponsoring two funded bursaries for LMH students to work full-time on their own venture ideas at Oxford Edge during the summer vacation. These bursaries form part of a broader intercollegiate effort to ensure student entrepreneurs at Oxford are given the time and support to explore their ideas seriously and develop them into ventures with real impact. LMH is a college founded on innovation and I had no doubt it would be one of the first to support its own students in this way!



You can find out more about Oxford Edge on their website: www.chch.ox.ac.uk/oxford-edge.

Student *Startups*

Undergraduate **Vivian Dong** (2022, Physics) is part of a growing wave of student entrepreneurs at Oxford, exploring how ideas move from concept to real-world impact. She spoke to us about the challenges and rewards of balancing academic study and innovation during her time at LMH.

In the summer of her first year, Vivian joined the Oxford Student Entrepreneurs Programme (StEP). With a team of five, she co-founded *SoulChord*, an early venture exploring AI-generated music and its potential in music therapy.

“This was right after ChatGPT 4 had come out, before the explosion of generative AI startups, when the space still felt wide open and undefined,” Vivian says. “We went from market research to building, testing, and pitching in a few weeks.”

SoulChord went on to win the Programme that year, taking the team to Berlin to compete in the European Stage II start-up pitch competition — which Vivian describes as “a first real glimpse into the global startup ecosystem.”

In March this year, as part of her work with the Oxford University Physics Society, Vivian founded the Oxford Science Innovation Summit (OSIS), with the aim of encouraging greater entrepreneurship within the science community. Bringing together founders, operators, and investors, the event was a huge success.

“At its core, OSIS was about helping scientists, engineers, and tech people recognise their potential as builders,” she says. For Vivian, the response to the Summit suggested a growing appetite for innovation across the University. “OSIS is becoming an early signal of a more connected, emerging deep tech ecosystem at Oxford.”

Vivian credits Oxford’s student founder network and University-backed programmes as central to her development. Last summer, her team

pitched at the OX1 Incubator, placing second overall, an experience that helped validate her ideas under investor scrutiny and build relationships with mentors and early-stage investors.

Balancing academic study with startup work has been a defining part of Vivian’s time at Oxford. “To be frank, studying Physics and building startups rarely overlap,” she says. “I’ve learned to treat both as full-time commitments, and that intensity is exactly what entrepreneurship demands.”

For Vivian, however, the two paths have become mutually reinforcing. Startups have trained her to move quickly, take risks, and operate with intent, while Physics has grounded her in analytical thinking and first principles. Looking ahead, she plans to remain at the intersection of science and entrepreneurship. “I prefer to leave my future career open-ended,” she says, “but if I had to sketch it out: deep-tech founder, condensed matter researcher, early-stage investor, startup mentor and, always, a musician.”

“At its core, OSIS was about helping scientists, engineers, and tech people recognise their potential as builders.”



Vivian speaking at the Oxford Science Innovation Summit (OSIS)



Unity Through *Music*

Paweł Kotla (1996, MSt Music (Musicology)) has conducted Ukraine's National Symphony Orchestra in Kyiv during the present Russian conflict and brought together musicians from diverse cultures throughout his career. He explains why, in an increasingly fractured world, we ignore the role of cultural diplomacy at our peril.

Experience has taught Paweł Kotla that a conductor must always prepare for the unexpected. "The performance was going to be broadcast worldwide, so we decided to record two dress rehearsals," he recalls of the contingency plans in place when he conducted the National Symphony Orchestra of Ukraine in a poignant 'Concert of Freedom and Solidarity' in Kyiv in 2025. "We wanted to have a

backup recording, just in case something happened. But actually, we were extremely lucky. Often on Friday evenings Russia sends attacks to Kyiv because that is the time when everyone wants to meet friends and relax, but that night we were lucky."

Even so, Paweł recalls a moment during the performance as he was conducting Górecki's *Symphony of Sorrowful Songs* and suddenly sensed a particular tension in the orchestra. "Afterwards I realised — and people had

access to air raid alerts on their phones — that there was a drone attack going towards Kyiv at that time. In the end, that attack went towards Odessa, but I can tell you that the adrenaline levels that evening were extremely high. The dedication of the Ukrainian musicians, the Polish singer Justyna Khil, and production teams from Ukraine, France and Poland was recognised last February when the recording won a prestigious Global Music Award Gold Medal."



Paweł conducting the National Symphony Orchestra of Ukraine in their 'Concert of Freedom and Solidarity'. Photo credit: Anna Kłosek

It is impossible, Paweł says, to separate music from politics, and the Ukraine concert reflects his long-held belief in the potential of music to show solidarity and espouse shared values. Though well aware of the risks of staging this performance, he wanted to demonstrate that “we have to have some personal courage and fight for certain values, because democracy and peace demand for us to be alert.” He pauses, before adding: “They are not something that is natural; they always need our commitment.”

Music as a tool of protest

The relationship between culture and politics has informed Paweł’s thinking, study and practice for decades. As a postgraduate at LMH, his dissertation was on Johann Sebastian Bach’s *Trauerode*. That piece was written as a tribute to Christiane Eberhardine, who held firm to her Protestant religion even as her husband, Augustus the Strong, converted to Catholicism to become King of Poland. “The focus around music was a political event even at that time,” Paweł says.

For his doctorate in Warsaw two decades later, he focused on the

Polish-born composer Sir Andrzej Panufnik, who escaped his homeland during communism and became celebrated around the world while being “completely deleted,” as Paweł describes it, in Poland. “He was writing music that would lead a discourse with the communist propaganda in Poland.”

“Culture is a very potent propaganda tool. So it is through culture that we should also build our long-term resilience to false narratives.”

And, as Paweł has travelled the world conducting numerous orchestras

including the Polish National Radio Symphony Orchestra, St Petersburg Philharmonic, the London Symphony Orchestra and the European Union Youth Orchestra in the EU Parliament in Strasbourg for the 50th anniversary of the Treaty of Rome, his sense of music and culture as a force to both unite and challenge has only grown. He refers with obvious pride to the time in 2011 when he brought together young musicians to form the I, Culture Orchestra as part of the Polish Cultural Programme during the country’s EU Presidency. It was founded to promote cross-cultural understanding between Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Poland and Ukraine, and to help their voices be heard more prominently in the West, at a time when these countries were shaping their national identities in the post-Soviet era.

“You need to remember that Azerbaijan and Armenia were already in conflict [over Nagorno-Karabakh],” Paweł says. “These were seven very different countries, politically and economically, but one thing that could pull them together was culture.” He ran auditions across the countries and recalls a simple

moment in the early stages when he saw musicians from Poland and Belarus — “two countries which also had a strained relationship” — and Armenia and Azerbaijan sitting together and sharing a beer. “It was beautiful,” he beams.

The orchestra toured the continent from London’s Royal Festival Hall and Berlin’s Philharmonie to Berwaldhallen in Stockholm. The musicians’ shared influences and contrasting styles created a unique intensity, and this was deepened by their personal connections to the musical programme. “We played Shostakovich’s *Fifth Symphony*, which some people believe was a protest against Stalinism,” Paweł says. “Performing this with young musicians who still remember — and whose families still remember — military conflicts in Caucasus and Moldova was very special. We saw audiences crying because of the passion they brought to this.”

Nurturing values through culture

What role then can cultural diplomacy deliver at this time when traditional diplomacy is often said to be undervalued and undermined? It can foster solidarity and collaboration, Paweł says, and it can also shift how we perceive the world.

“Culture and cultural diplomacy bring us back to the shared values that are essential to our humanity. They build emotions around them. And that, in turn, can inspire our actions. This is why I find it so disappointing that somehow in democratic and Western societies we absolutely sideline the role of culture. It’s lamentable that musical education and cultural education is declining in schools. Teaching these subjects develops an inner landscape which can make us more immune to manipulation and misinformation. Culture is a very potent propaganda tool. So it is through culture that we should also build our long-term resilience to false narratives. The conductor Leonard Bernstein once said that art cannot change events. But it can change people who can change the course of events by the way they vote, and the way they think.”

He credits his time at LMH with giving him “the courage to think more strategically”, “the ability to put things in broader context” and “the strength to sometimes take choices which are

not easy,” and argues that at this time when “knowledge is being diluted and degraded,” cultural diplomacy can do the same. He also believes that leading

“It’s lamentable that musical education and cultural education is declining in schools.”

academic institutions need to play a particularly active and visible public role in upholding the values of knowledge, rational debate and genuine experience.

He is now based in Bielsko-Biała, the Polish Capital of Culture this year, in the Beskid Mountains near where the Polish,

Czech and Slovak borders meet. There, he runs his Beskid Classics Festival, bringing together international artists and fostering cross-border collaboration.

His latest initiative, the Beskid Youth Orchestra, sees young musicians from Poland, the Czech Republic and Slovakia working under the supervision of leading professionals from top European orchestras. He also leads the cultural working group of the Advisory Council on Resilience to International Disinformation at the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, currently headed by fellow Oxford graduate and Foreign Minister, Radosław Sikorski.

“At LMH I met wonderful people and I was encouraged to be independent and see a much broader picture in everything I did,” Paweł says, drawing a direct line from Oxford to the concert hall in Kyiv where music became a powerful symbol of both hope and resistance. “My time at LMH, which has always been a very forward-looking college, and the whole Oxford University experience, continue to inspire me on many levels to this day.”





A Journey of *Self-Discovery*

In her recent book, *Finding My Way*, **Malala Yousafzai** (2017, PPE), recalls arriving at LMH with little sense of who she was or wanted to be — despite already being famous worldwide for her fearless campaigning for girls' education. As Malala's new portrait is unveiled at the College, she reflects on how Oxford gave her a precious chance to finally learn about herself.

Many elements of Malala Yousafzai's LMH experience were somewhat unusual. It was seen as a security risk, for example, for Malala to have her own name on her Bod card. So she spent three years seeing the confused looks on people's faces when they checked her card and saw that it belonged to 'Jane Lewis'.

"I wanted to go with Jane Austen as my fake name, but that was a bit too obvious," Malala smiles. "So we thought about Jane Smith, but there are so many Smiths. And then I thought, John Lewis... Jane Lewis, and somehow we ended up there. It would surprise people, because they would see my name on a list and think 'Who's Jane Lewis?' And then I would show up. 'Oh, *this* is Jane Lewis!'"

Malala also spent her time at LMH being tailed by security guards. With the Taliban in Pakistan regularly restating their determination to take her life, Malala was guarded by two members of the Metropolitan Police's Specialist Protection Unit. They would walk her to classes and drive her in bulletproof cars. If she went to study in a café, they would go as well, sitting close by wearing suits and earpieces. Initially this caused both confusion and concern among Malala's friends.

"People would say to me, 'I think there are some people following you. I keep seeing the same guy behind you, looking suspicious,'" she laughs. "I would explain,

'No, it's OK! They're looking after me. They're not chasing me!'"

These, and many other, strange situations stemmed from the events that first led to Malala becoming celebrated around the world. While living in Pakistan's Swat Valley under Taliban rule, she had begun blogging for the BBC aged just 11, speaking out fiercely for girls' right to learn. In 2012, when Malala was 15, a masked Taliban

gunman boarded the bus she was taking home from school and asked 'Who is Malala?' On finding out, he shot her in the head.

Malala awoke ten days later in a hospital in Birmingham. She has continued to fight for girls' education ever since, refusing to be intimidated into silence. Aged 17, Malala won the Nobel Peace Prize, becoming the youngest-ever Nobel laureate.





The girl with the wildest dreams

That is the story for which Malala became famous. It's a story of fortitude, fearlessness and activism. But, Malala says, it is also incomplete. As much as her experiences were very different from those of her contemporaries at LMH, she also came up to Oxford with the same questions about identity and belonging that many students face. Malala was not solely an education campaigner or a Nobel laureate; she was a teenager, unsure about exactly who she was. In Oxford, at last, she had the chance to find out.

"Being at LMH helped me grow as a person and be at peace with myself," Malala says. "It was a transition for me from being a girl to being a young woman. It sounds very simple, but when I say that I changed, I actually changed. I

started to feel closer to the Malala that I had always been at heart, growing up in Pakistan: a girl with the wildest dreams who just wanted to roam around the world doing things on her own.

"Being at LMH helped me grow as a person and be at peace with myself."

"After I was attacked, that girl had sort of disappeared, because I had become a person who was supposed to do what was expected of her. So from age 15 onwards, I thought, 'Oh, so my role is

to change the world.' I didn't know how to do that, but everybody was telling me, 'Oh, you are so inspiring and you are going to change the future of girls' education.' And when you are young, you hear these things and think, 'OK, I have to live up to all these expectations. Everyone is watching me. I have to represent my culture, my religion, my country, and I can't get anything wrong.'"

She pauses and smiles again. "But in College, I just found my safe exit. I thought, 'OK, this is a safe space. I might keep some things as they are. I might change some things.' It's about allowing yourself the time and space to try things and not be worried."

Finding friendship — and a full English

Malala says she "fell in love" with LMH the first time she walked through the gates. "I remember noticing the



Malala speaking at LMH's Founders and Benefactors Dinner in February 2026

“Girls’ education is a basic human right, but the benefits are not limited to the girls themselves. Everyone benefits.”

wildflower meadows,” she says. “I remember feeling that the gardens were so big and I could walk here all the time. In the Swat Valley, we have mountains and rivers. I couldn’t find mountains in Oxford, but the river always made me feel closer to home. There was something about this place that made me want to study here. I made my decision that day.”

Her face lights up again and again as she discusses different aspects of LMH life. She loved the breakfasts — “full English, eggs, beans, hash browns — that’s my go-to” — but admits she was a picky eater — “so I would just go for French fries with everything.” She loved giving prospective students tours of the College, and the Library in particular: “I would always tell people that women did not always have easy access to education or books, so the LMH Library was a very

special place because it was collecting books for female students.” She joined every society she could, darting around the Freshers’ Fair with a newfound sense of freedom, signing up for philosophy groups and film clubs, and the South Asia and Pakistan societies.

But Malala becomes most animated when she talks about the friendships she formed at LMH. Her high school experience in Birmingham had been disappointingly lonely. “I only made one friend, and that’s because she fell out with her other best friend,” she says. Arriving in Oxford, she was determined life would be different — and it was. She found friends who encouraged her to be herself — a teenager who loved dancing and adventure and not taking life too seriously.

“Of course I wanted to study and

graduate,” Malala explains, “but when I saw these incredible people similar to my age who wanted to learn and get to know people, get to know themselves and make friends, that’s when my focus changed completely. I wanted to make friends more than anything.”

A tricky balancing act

Her success at building friendships — combined with the fact that she continued to travel worldwide to advocate for education — meant Malala struggled at times to keep up with her studies. At one point during her first Hilary term, she flew to Lebanon to give Apple CEO Tim Cook a tour of a Malala Fund programme for Syrian girls, flew back to Oxford for one night, then flew to Switzerland to speak alongside Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and (successfully) press him to prioritise girls’ education.

“After that I got called in by one of my tutors who said she was not happy with my performance,” Malala says. “I was not doing well with my essays, missing deadlines, missing tutorials.” It was the reality check she needed, and though balancing academic life with advocacy and socialising was an ongoing challenge, she became more determined to stop her studies suffering.

“I learned about the academic support that LMH offered,” Malala says, reflecting on her reluctance to ask for help. “I was hesitant initially because I thought I might be the only one and you start thinking maybe you don’t deserve to be here. But actually it helped a lot. I would never want to go back and look at my first few essays, though,” she adds. “They weren’t too good.”

Reminders of Pakistan

As Malala settled into the unique rhythm of her Oxford life, one address between the Woodstock Road and Walton Street in Jericho came to hold particular significance. At Number 24 Observatory Street, she was introduced to a vivacious group of students from Pakistan. “They were dancing to Punjabi

songs, there was Pakistani food, and there were these amazing people who made me feel like I was back with my old friends,” she grins.

It felt as though another part of her identity was falling into place, and then one of the students — Haroon Zaman (2016, Jurisprudence) — mentioned an idea about launching a scheme for Oxford scholarships for Pakistani students. That idea became the Oxford Pakistan Programme, which has brought dozens of talented students to the University — including through the Malala Yousafzai Scholarship for Pakistani Women.

“I have always been very frustrated with inaction — I do not see it as an option,” Malala says, when asked how those early conversations evolved into such an effective programme. “Whenever

*“I have always
been very
frustrated with
inaction — I do not
see it as an option.”*



Malala at the unveiling of her portrait at LMH in February 2026



Malala with artist Isabella Watling at the LMH Founders and Benefactors Dinner



a friend has come to me with an idea, I always encourage them and I want to be part of it. I tell them I have absolutely no clue how we will make this happen, but I think we will be able to figure it out in the end.”

A fire undimmed

Today, this same refusal to accept inaction is central to Malala’s ambitions for Malala Fund, which works to break through barriers to girls’ education in Afghanistan, Brazil, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Pakistan and Tanzania. Malala works relentlessly to support the “resilience of local activists, because they are the ones who understand the solutions needed.” And she speaks furiously on issues from the “gender apartheid” in Afghanistan to the widespread recent cuts to development aid budgets, including in the UK.

“If we invest in education,” she says, “we’re more climate resilient, we can reduce poverty, we can improve economies. Girls’ education is a basic human right, but the benefits are not limited to the girls themselves. Everyone benefits.”

It is clear that Malala’s time at LMH only increased her resolve. She changed and grew in Oxford, but the experience clarified her sense of purpose, rather than altering it. And now, following the

“I will always love LMH and keep visiting, but I feel like I’m always there in spirit now.”

unveiling of artist Isabella Watling’s portrait of Malala at LMH earlier this year, visitors to the College will be able to join in celebrating Malala’s vision and her achievements for generations to come.

“I never thought that my portrait would be hanging on a wall at LMH, but this is my connection with the College,” she says. “I am always there in my heart and now I am there as a portrait. It is an honour. I will always love LMH and keep visiting, but I feel like I’m always there in spirit now.”

Seeing the painting reminded her, she says, of how she felt on her first visit to LMH, standing before our portrait of Benazir Bhutto (1973, PPE), the first Asian woman elected as President of the Oxford Union. “When I saw Benazir Bhutto’s painting at LMH,” Malala remembers, “I felt that I could be here as well, so I hope my portrait will do the same. I hope it sends a message to many more students — to say you also deserve to be here.”



Malala’s memoir, *Finding My Way*, was published by Simon & Schuster in October 2025.



Taking the *Long View*

After 22 years as Domestic Bursar, **Bart Ashton** left LMH last December to become Partnership Manager at the Zero Carbon Oxfordshire Partnership, a collaboration of major organisations working to achieve net zero emissions across Oxfordshire by 2040. He reflects on his time at LMH, memorable moments, and lessons learned.

I'm afraid my first impressions of LMH are now lost in the mists of time, although I do remember my interview with the Bursar, Treasurer and Wine Fellow, who were looking to bring the LMH food provision into the 21st century!

It was quite a relaxed and friendly team I joined, but looking after and supporting the staff had not been such a priority in the preceding years. I recall the then-Treasurer, Col. Dent, who was in post for under a year, making the effort to ensure everyone had an up-to-date job description and contract, and holding the first staff meeting in the Hall. When I announced I was leaving last summer, Dame Frances Lannon reminded me that when she offered me the Bursar role, it was on the condition that I made people happier! Which I tried to do...

During my 22 years as Domestic Bursar, both the College and the role changed considerably. We not only altered the built environment quite dramatically — expanding it by over 25% — but also increased staff numbers (I suspect by more than 30%) and grew our commercial business from around £400,000 to £3 million per annum. Alongside this, we significantly improved the quality of buildings and services, the happiness of the support staff (who, I now hear, hold Investors in People Platinum!) and the College's reputation among its peers. So my days in the 2000's were certainly not the same as my days in the 2020s.

“I learned a lot, but I hope I was also able to help others learn.”

Common themes in my job across the years though were the large levels of interactions by phone call, in person and by email (sometimes close to 100 emails and notifications a day); it was lovely but sometimes challenging to be constantly meeting or bumping into Fellows, staff,

students and visitors around College, as they often had a question for me. There was also the constant need to pivot perspective: peering down a drain with Dan and Drag one minute and then updating Finance Committee on a multi-million pound project the next.

I knew before I arrived at the College the importance of working effectively with the staff teams, but the transition of the organisation — from that original slightly unloved group who were somewhat lacking purpose to the committed, focussed and high-performing set of teams in 2025 — was both one of the hardest and most rewarding elements of my time at LMH. I learned a lot, but I hope I was also able to help others learn.

When I think about the students I met at LMH (I estimate over 5,000 altogether), there are many happy — and strange — memories. They range from student complaints about their neighbours cooking fish in a rice cooker, to student teachers asking to keep their class stick insect in their room over the vac; from a scout's surprise on finding a pet snake in a room, to a student who had to move out because a noise that no one else could hear was too loud for them. Then there was the student who kept her harp in Talbot Hall so she could pay her way through university playing at weddings, and the grad student who sat in a tree all day revising... It's a long list, but all of them were accommodated one way or another.

What always struck me was the endless creativity of the student community: the first joint Islamic Society (ISOC) and Jewish Society (JSOC) dinner in the Jerwood Room, the first Iftar in Hall, and some amazing art installations in the gardens. I'll always remember fondly the College Balls I was involved with, from the 2004 Ball (coinciding with the College's 125th anniversary celebrations), to last year's production. All eight were different, but each was the result of hard work from a dedicated core of students and showcased the College's beautiful grounds and buildings, creating a lot of joy and excitement.

Looking back at the huge variety of work I was involved in during this chapter

“I was able to influence the working environment and culture of the support staff, and to see the positive effect an empowering, respectful, and open structure can have.”

of my career, I think I learned most from the unusual opportunity to play a central role in an evolving community over such a long period (the average tenure for support staff at LMH is around 5 years, so 22 years represents several generations). I was able to influence the working environment and culture of the support staff, and to see the positive effect an empowering, respectful, and open structure can have. I had so many laughs with so many great colleagues that it was genuinely a difficult decision to move on.

On the other hand, moving into a different sector, with a new employer and colleagues, has so far been stimulating. Not having to worry about what might have broken when receiving a call in the evening or at the weekend is quite liberating too! I'm enjoying connecting with more people beyond the 'Oxford bubble', and it's certainly instructive sitting in the Town Hall alongside City Council teams, supporting Oxford residents in very different circumstances. All in all, a change appears to be at least as good as a rest, and I'm looking forward to supporting different teams, colleagues and partners in the future.

Development Events

Our Year in Review

During the last year, we have hosted 38 events in College, in London and overseas, welcoming over 2,000 alumni and guests. Thank you to everyone who has joined us, and we look forward to seeing you all again soon.



LMH in Hong Kong, March 2026



Founders & Benefactors, February 2026



Summer Garden Party, June 2026



City Drinks, February 2026



1984 - 1988 Gaudy, September 2025



Beaufort Circle Lunch, October 2025



1969 Gaudy, April 2026



Alumni Carols, December 2025



2018 MA Reunion, March 2026

Dates for your diary

If you would like to join us at a future event, take a look at the events listing on the back cover of this publication, or visit our website:
www.lmh.ox.ac.uk/alumni/events.

Writing Themselves *into History*

What can a short-lived student magazine tell us about the early generations of women at LMH? **Isaac Lethbridge** (2022, History) explores how *The Daisy* (1890-1891) enabled students to share ideas, fostered a sense of community between past and present members of the College, and ensured that LMH's earliest student voices would endure in the historical record.

The following words opened the first issue of *The Daisy*, LMH's short-lived student magazine from the early 1890s:

"In offering to the public the opening number of 'The Daisy', a new move has been made in the annals of Lady Margaret Hall." Some 130 years later, and as we approach the College's 150th anniversary in 2028, what can we learn by returning to *The Daisy*? Although only nine issues survive in the Library's special collections today, the magazine offers a fascinating glimpse into student culture in the students' own words. When understood in its historical context, the magazine becomes more than simply an early example of student journalism. Rather, *The Daisy* was one tool through which a community of early women students could assert their academic credentials, as well as their place in the history of their pioneering college at the end of Norham Gardens.

The Daisy frequently reported on social life and opportunities within LMH. It is interesting just how often these events were directly related to academic development and discussion.

For example, in 1891 the magazine reported the establishment of a new "Literary Society" with the explicit aim of encouraging students to read beyond

*"The Daisy
was one tool
through which
a community
of early women
students could
assert their
academic
credentials."*

their own subject interests. The first meeting of the society featured a talk from M. Macaulay, almost certainly Mary Frances Macaulay (1888), on "The Early Days of Plato". The write-up in *The*

Daisy commended Macaulay's deep knowledge of the subject, but worried that she wrongly assumed her audience to already be familiar with the details. Certainly not the first nor last instance of a particularly enthusiastic Oxford student forgetting that not everyone is an expert on their subject — some things really don't change! It is not only important that these societies were established, but also that the effort was taken to report on their activities. The comments on Macaulay's speech, for example, show that *The Daisy* facilitated a back-and-forth between students pursuing their academic interests and their college peers providing feedback. It is clear that these women delighted not only in their own learning, but also in the opportunity to share it with others.

Efforts to foster an academic community extended beyond current students. In *The Daisy*'s opening issue, the editors were explicit in their hope that the magazine would act as a link between current and former students. In this way, the magazine was not simply a passion project for a specific friend group, but rather envisioned as a way for past students to "keep up their connection



Copies of *The Daisy* and *The Fritillary* are held in the LMH Library

with the Hall." Alumnae not only read *The Daisy*, but were also encouraged to contribute articles and pass on their wisdom to current students. One such contribution was a letter published in 1890, whose anonymous author was "proud to sign [herself], an old student of LMH." The letter shared some updates about her life in Eastbourne after graduation and closed by wishing current students good luck with their exam preparations. The author assured readers that the local alumnae community would follow the news of exam results with great interest, and would hope for success for the new "victims of the coming Schools." A common fear of final exams seemed to transcend generations and acted as a point of solidarity between current and former students — yet again, some things never change!

The Daisy unfortunately appears to have ceased publication in 1891, with the final extant issue dating from

December of that year. The penultimate issue referenced the financial pressures of publishing a student magazine and warned that missed subscription payments, as well as dwindling enthusiasm for submitting articles, may make it unsustainable. Although the final issue spoke more positively about the magazine's financial position, it appears that the pressures of publication became too great to manage alongside a demanding academic course.

The budding journalists of LMH were not, however, lost for long. *The Fritillary* began in 1894 as a student magazine representing all of Oxford's women's colleges and was often edited by LMH students throughout its several decades of publication. When read together, these two magazines present a unique source body for reconstructing the changing place of women at Oxford as the nineteenth century gave way to the twentieth. If the editors of *The Daisy*

wished to make a move in the annals of LMH, the fact that we continue to read their words over a century later surely defines that move as a dramatic success.

I too, am proud to sign myself:

**Isaac Lethbridge,
an old student of LMH**





TURNING THE TIDE ON THE ISIS

To mark the 50th anniversary of Oxford University Boat Club (OUBC) creating the Women's division in Torpids and Summer Eights, **Carol de Lusignan** (1975, Biochemistry) shares her recollections of a defining moment for women's rowing at Oxford.

We were a strange bunch, down by the Isis on a chilly October afternoon in 1975, girls in what was then definitely a “boys” realm. By and large, women at that time did not participate in sports that required any serious degree of physical fitness or training — “sporty” types played hockey or tennis, depending on the season; no-one went running or used the sort of equipment every gym chain today provides. “Games kit”, as most of us understood

it, consisted of an aertex polo shirt and a very short kilted skirt, so we were not exactly dressed for rowing (the skirts were removed before we even tried!); finding suitable garments for our lower halves was tricky (shorts were not on sale in October) and leggings or tracky bottoms were not part of the average wardrobe — Lycra was a new thing, far too expensive for students. And our everyday trousers were very tight, as was the fashion. We were standing by a contraption called a “bank tub”, which consisted of a square hull moored to the bank,

with rails in the middle and a rowlock on the outer edge. After bailing out the rainwater, a rowing slide was placed on the rails and one by one we went through the basic movements. No chance of trying out the body movements on a Concept 2 — the Dreissigacker brothers were just setting up in Vermont and their first machine wouldn't be sold for another six years.

Although LMH women had done some rowing for years, this was going to be the first season when OUBC would permit them to properly compete in Torpids and Eights, thanks to the creation of a new



LMH rowing in the first ever Women's division in Summer Eights, May 1976

“We learned to work as a crew, sometimes realising we’d had a whole outing without someone catching a crab or crashing into the bank.”

Women's division. We were keen to get our crews together, and after that first static initiation were soon on the water in tub fours (heavy, coxed clinker-built boats built for training) before progressing to clinker-built eights and eventually, with luck, to fine wooden racing shells. We had no equipment of our own so were borrowing absolutely everything (including coaches) from Christ Church. This meant that as well as it mostly being designed for chaps considerably larger and heavier than us, we tended to be given the oldest, leakiest boats (all wooden boats leak, but some of ours were more like colanders), mismatched old “teaspoon shaped” blades, and a changing area we had to take turns to use as it wouldn't accommodate a full crew. No showers, of course.

And we had fun! We learned to work

as a crew, sometimes realising we'd had a whole outing without someone catching a crab or crashing into the bank or another boat, or that we'd been able to row the whole 1800m course without having to stop for breath. Finally, we made it to the start of Summer Eights in 1976, the first year with a Women's division. It was also, co-incidentally, the first year in which women rowed in the Summer Olympics, but only over 1000m, as they were perceived then as too frail to row a full 2000m like the men. Oxford got equality sooner — from the outset the Women's division rowed exactly the same course as the Men's. LMH mustered two crews — as a first year I was in the second boat, but I still remember a lot of cheering as we came past the boathouses, well towards the bottom of the field.

Even during my time rowing at LMH we became more serious, if not professional, starting to do land training (but not ergo, as I have observed) and running. We acquired our first boat thanks to one rather brilliant classicist kindly donating their University Challenge prize money to us. I'm pleased to see that the rowing tradition of the College continues — here's to the next fifty years!

Share Your Memories

The LMH Boat Club are updating their website with archival photographs and reminiscences from members past and present. Find out more and submit your own memories at: www.lmhbc.org.



*University Registry,
Oxford.*

13 May 1925.

Dear Miss Grier,

LADY MARGARET HALL STATUTES.

The points I mentioned in my letter of 11th May, were the only points about which Council had any doubt at all, so that with their settlement you may regard your Charter and Statutes as having the approval of Council.

I am,

Yours sincerely,

The Principal,
Lady Margaret Hall,
O X F O R D.

Letter from the University Registry stating approval for LMH's Charter and Statutes by the University Council

Celebrating the Centenary *of LMH's Royal Charter*

On 17th March 1926, Lady Margaret Hall received its Royal Charter from King George V. What did it mean? What did it change for the then 'Hall' and its members? Archivist **Oliver Mahony** and Chaplain and Keeper of Pictures **Revd Dr Stephanie Burette** explore the significance of this moment for the College.

The establishment of Lady Margaret Hall in 1878 was a turning point in the life of Oxford University: the doors to an Oxford

education were slowly opening up to women. Yet, their full inclusion as undergraduate students, Tutors and Fellows, materialised by full access to University lectures, degrees, academic opportunities and higher offices within the University, would require several more decades of advocacy and activism. [1] The Royal Charter was one of the significant milestones that enabled this long process to unfold.

The name says it all: Lady Margaret Hall was not initially a *College*. It was not a single legal entity whose government was vested in a Governing Body and it could not elect its own Fellows. Its first nine students were not allowed to matriculate or attend University lectures, instead attending ‘Lectures for Ladies’. From 1894, women were allowed to take examinations but still could not receive a degree.

Whilst some progress was gradually made, a fundamental shift took place with the passing of the Sex Disqualification (Removal) Act of 1919. Since women had been excluded solely on the basis of their gender, this unlocked many new possibilities. Oxford University adopted a new statute in 1920, admitting women to full membership, and women who had previously passed examinations and gained honours were able to return to matriculate and receive their due degree.

Six years later, in 1926, LMH received its Royal Charter: it became ‘one Body Politic and Corporate.’ Now a *College*, LMH formed its first Governing Body as defined by its Statutes. This had four major consequences: the incorporation of former students in recognition of their dedication to the Hall, the creation of Fellowships and Honorary Fellowships, the election of the Visitor, and the adoption of a coat of arms.

The Annual Reports of 1925-26 highlighted that LMH was anxious that present and future students should remain invested in the Hall. The incorporation of the Charter was therefore “unique in incorporating not only the Principal and Council but



Linda Grier (LMH Principal, 1921-1945) in her study

the students of the Hall, past, present and future, as members of the body corporate.” [2]

The same spirit was expressed in the creation of Honorary Fellowships: to recognise distinguished members and those who had rendered exceptional service to the College.

***“LMH had Tutors
but no Fellows;
under the new
Constitution, all
Tutors of LMH
became Official
Fellows.”***

The Charter also created Fellowships and allowed for the election of Officers to serve on the Council. LMH had Tutors but no Fellows; under the new Constitution, all Tutors of LMH became Official Fellows, and, as such, members of the Council on reappointment after three years of service.

Having been incorporated by Royal Charter, LMH could now adopt a coat of arms: two talbots in chief (in memory of Edward and Lavinia Talbot), the bell from the Wordsworth coat, and the portcullis on a chevron as well as the motto of the College’s namesake, Lady Margaret Beaufort. [5]

To be granted its Royal Charter meant that LMH had evidenced its financial stability. Considering how little LMH had when it was founded, this marked a significant achievement within fifty years and meant that members could now enjoy the privileges and responsibilities conferred to college members of this glorious University. The Charter continues to honour the memory of those who strived towards such an achievement and keeps alive that same spirit, the flame, which had animated them in the first place. As the Beaufort family motto declares: *souvent me souviens*.

[1] It is only in 1959 that the five women’s colleges received the ‘full status’ given to men’s colleges. Their heads were finally eligible to become Vice-Chancellor of the University.

[2] The Annual Report of 1925-26, p.4.

[3] The Annual Report of 1925-26, p.5.

[4] The Annual Report of 1925-26, p.5.

[5] The Annual Report of 1926-27, p.4.



PORTRAITS OF LMH

Who will you nominate?

The portraits installed in 2016 in our Deneke Corridor celebrate people who have helped shape the life of the College or made their mark in the wider world. As we approach our 150th Anniversary, we're expanding the exhibition, and we'd like your help.

We're inviting nominations for people (individuals or groups) who should be considered for inclusion in 'Portraits of LMH'. Alumni, students, staff, Fellows, and others connected to the College may all be nominated. We welcome suggestions for people whose contributions, whether large or more modest, have made a lasting difference in LMH and beyond.

All nominations will be reviewed by a curatorial panel drawn from across the College community.



HELP CELEBRATE THE PEOPLE OF LMH

To find out more and submit your nomination, scan the QR code or visit: www.lmh.ox.ac.uk/portraits-lmh.

**Nominations close
at 5pm on Friday
23rd October 2026.**





DO YOU HAVE PHOTOS FROM YOUR LMH DAYS?

Please send photos (1MB or larger) to development@lmh.ox.ac.uk and remember to include a caption. If others appear in your photo, please ensure they are happy for their image to be shared with us. If you would prefer to send a printed copy, please address it to: Carrie Scott, Deputy Development Director, Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford, OX2 6QA.

It's Never Too Late *to Graduate*

In November 2025, **Ron Mathison** (1980, Literae Humaniores) and **Jeremy Cook** (1980, Engineering) returned to Oxford to collect their degrees — 45 years after they came up to LMH. They reflect on the experience.

Jeremy:

"We arrived at LMH in the early 1980s, only the second year that the College admitted men, and felt it our duty to throw ourselves into College life in every way we could. Between us, we played a fair amount of sport — sometimes together (hockey), sometimes not (rugby, rowing, boxing) — and were enthusiastic contributors to the social life. The LMH Wine Society and our private dinners in the (now vanished) LMH dining room were particular highlights, as were the summer garden parties — one memorably titled by the host: "Goodbye Galtieri!"



Jeremy (L) and Ron (R) on their graduation day

We always intended to graduate, but for decades life had other plans. Both of us spent most of our careers overseas, for me Asia, Latin America, Europe and the USA. Hong Kong was the only place our paths crossed geographically, though we somehow managed to stay in touch — sporadically but reliably — along with several other LMH friends. About a decade ago we began looking into the graduation process, and more recently we finally found a date that worked for us both.

Returning to LMH remains a joy. The College still feels instantly familiar, now complemented by impressive new buildings and facilities. We are grateful to everyone at LMH who made it possible for us to return, graduate, and enjoy such a well-organised day — complete with unexpected November sunshine.

For anyone else who hasn't yet graduated: the welcome is warm, the process is straightforward, and truly, it's never too late."

Ron:

"Apart from anything else, graduation was a wonderful trip down memory lane. Most of our favourite haunts were still going strong: the Turf Tavern, the Bear Inn, Blackwell's, Walters, and Shepherd & Woodward (where we rented our sub fusc). Jericho was still as bohemian and buzzing as ever, though sadly the Mud Club disco venue looked very much as though it had closed down.

After finishing our respective Finals exams in 1984, we enjoyed a couple of glorious weeks: attending graduation



balls (crashing some), punting to the Victoria Arms for a few beers, and playing tennis and croquet. Oh, and it goes without saying that we have deliciously hazy but fond memories of Pimm's and Bollinger-fuelled parties in the beautiful gardens of LMH; it was a wonderful time.

Then it was off to Hong Kong and Asia for me. Our careers took both Jeremy and me overseas, in my case almost immediately, which is why we didn't formally graduate until November last year. We have been friends ever since we both joined LMH in October 1980, and some time ago we agreed to graduate together once we had retired.

It was a very special feeling to formally graduate together after all these years, and rather flattering to be mistaken for a don; our LMH graduation cohort had difficulty comprehending that we were only collecting our undergraduate degrees! It even made me feel like doing another degree!"

If you missed out on a graduation ceremony, find out how to book via the College website:
www.lmh.ox.ac.uk/alumni/graduation-information.



LMH IS FOR LIFE

"I feel my debt to LMH is huge and cannot be repaid adequately, but giving back is a start. Legacies are a pledge to the future as well as thanks for past generosity, often by people unknown to us personally. Like education itself, legacies offer opportunity, without guarantees, to move forward and to pass something on. My gift may be small, but it pleases me to think that it is a contribution to balancing funds for LMH with those of wealthier colleges, as well as demonstrating gratitude for everything I gained there."

Ruth Turnbull (1970, English)

What will your legacy be?

By leaving a legacy to LMH, you shape a future far beyond your own lifetime. A gift in your Will costs nothing now, but is a powerful way to leave a lasting mark on a community of learning, securing the College's ability to thrive, innovate and support excellence for generations to come.

To find out more about leaving a legacy to LMH, please contact Carrie Scott at:
carrie.scott@lmh.ox.ac.uk or
by calling: **+44 (0)1865 611024**.

Events Calendar 2026-27

Please find below our programme of events for the next year. Additional events are being planned all the time and the most up-to-date list can be found on the website, along with more information and details on how to book (www.lmh.ox.ac.uk/alumni/events). You will be notified of events by email, so please ensure your contact details are up to date.

September 2026

LMH in Malibu, California

Saturday 12th September

Drinks and canapés for alumni and friends.

LMH in Oakland, California

Tuesday 15th September

Drinks and canapés for alumni and friends.

1966 - 60th Anniversary Reunion Lunch

Saturday 19th September

Reception, lunch and afternoon tea in the Gardens. From 11am to 5pm.

1976 - 50th Anniversary Reunion Lunch

Saturday 19th September

Reception, lunch and afternoon tea in the Gardens. From 11am to 5pm.

1997-2001 Gaudy Dinner

Saturday 19th September

Tea in the gardens; drinks reception; dinner in Hall; 90s disco. B&B available. Gardens open from 3pm; ends 11.30pm.

October 2026

Beaufort Circle Lunch (by invitation)

Saturday 17th October

Thanking legators of the College.

November 2026

Principal's Michaelmas Round Table (by invitation)

Sunday 15th November

Online event for Principal's Circle members.

Chemistry Subject Dinner

Saturday 21st November

Reunion dinner for current and former students and Chemistry Tutors.

Engineering Society Dinner

Friday 27th November

Reunion dinner for current and former students and Engineering Tutors.

December 2026

Alumni Christmas Carols

Friday 4th December

Carol concert in the Chapel.

January 2027

London Alumni City Networking Event

Thursday 21st January 2027

Informal drinks at Freshfields LLP.

February 2027

Founders & Benefactors Dinner (by invitation)

Friday 5th February

A celebration of the College and its benefactors.

March 2027

History Reunion Event

Saturday 6th March

Reunion lunch for current and former students and History Tutors.

Wordsworth Lecture (hybrid)

Sunday 14th March

In collaboration with the Sir William Dunn School of Pathology, to mark their Centenary, and LMH's connection to the development of penicillin. Dr Mathew Stracy will speak on antibiotic resistance.

2019 MA & Reunion Dinner

Saturday 20th March

MA Graduation Presentation Ceremony and reunion dinner for those who matriculated in 2019.

June 2027

Principal's Summer Lunch

Saturday 26th June

For members of our Wordsworth, Talbot and Principal's Circles and Volunteer Network.

Summer Garden Party

Saturday 26th June

Save the date for our annual garden party.

When is your Gaudy?

Saturday 18th September 2027

- 1967- 60th Anniversary Reunion Lunch
- 1977- 50th Anniversary Reunion Lunch
- Gaudy for 2002-2006 (Dinner)

Saturday 16th September 2028

- 1968 - 60th Anniversary Gaudy Lunch
- 1978 - 50th Anniversary Gaudy Lunch
- Gaudy for 1989 -1993 (Dinner)

For more information and bookings, please contact us by email: development@lmh.ox.ac.uk or by telephone: +44 (0) 1865 274362.



LMH
Lady Margaret Hall

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