ORIEL NEWS

ISSUE 23 | SUMMER 2021

ORIEL HALL RENOVATION

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION AT ORIEL

35 YEARS OF WOMEN: LOOKING AT THEN AND NOW

HIDDEN TREASURES: ORIEL’S SILVER
## Contents

### Issue 23 | Summer 2021

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provost’s Welcome</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College News</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some updates from Oriel</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hall Renovation</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JCR Report</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MCR Report</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inside Story</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview with scout, Linda Boswell</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equality, Diversity and Inclusion at Oriel</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview with Dr David Maw, our first Tutor for EDI</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scr Spotlight</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious narratives and the well-lived life</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fellows’ News</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Updates from the Fellows</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 Years of Marshall Scholars at Oriel</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telephone Campaign 2020</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Mellon Longevity Science Programme</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The first scholar, Loren Kell</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35 Years of Women at Oriel</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview with Laura Ashley-Timms (1985) and Catherine King (2020)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Politics of Sex and Gender Equality in Diverse Societies</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The story behind the David N. Lyon Scholarship in Politics</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hidden Treasures</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highlights from the College plate collection</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry Focus: Key Workers</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#NevermoreNeeded</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lorna Barker’s work with the Jinja Educational Trust</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas Harriot: Exploring Heaven and Earth</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From Spires to Inspiring</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An interview with Mwenya Kawesha (2006)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Remarkable Life of Rex Nettleford</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An Oriel Legacy</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alumni News</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book Corner</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your Views</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photographs from Mihnea Dumitrascu (2018)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forthcoming Events</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Front cover image: Stuart Bebb
At the end of this hard academic year, students were encouraged to stay on throughout the 9th and 10th weeks of Trinity as we began to open up College life. This offer was appreciated, especially as the renovated Hall reopened late in the term, giving many the opportunity to live this important Oriel experience for the first time. I’m so grateful to our students for their resilience and continued commitment to College life, as well as their determination to make the best of the tricky hand they have been dealt this year. Fortunately, we had no COVID cases in College during 2021 until right at the end of Trinity, which is a credit to the efforts of our whole community.

Let's start with sport. Students ended the year on a high. The Men’s First Eight retaining their Headship in ‘Summer Torpids’, and the Women’s First Eight ending the week rising to third on the river. The netball team had staggering success, ending the year top of the league following an unbeaten run. Just after the end of term, thanks to our rugby Blues Jasper Dix and Louis Jackson, we were honoured to hold the official Varsity match, perfectly behaved dinner in Hall after a convincing 34-7 win over the other place. A neat symmetry of victory following the Women’s (3-0) and Men’s (2-0) Varsity football victory at the end of June. Oriel’s football legend, Erin Robinson, is the first female President of the OU AFC, and this was a stunning achievement for her and both teams. It has been heartening to see sporting life return, and a boost to College morale.

Although we haven’t been able to welcome any school groups to Oriel for over a year now, our Outreach Officer, India, has carried out well over 200 virtual outreach events, as well as launching a new outreach consortium for the West Midlands in collaboration with a few other colleges to help maximise our impact in that region. India also ran a series of free Virtual Year 12 Study Days on particular subjects, which attracted almost 200 attendees. Priority for these was given to those from disadvantaged or underrepresented backgrounds who could benefit most from the additional coaching from academics and current students. Online open days are happening as I write this, and we have had plenty of volunteers from our current student cohort helping out, eager to inspire and support the next generation.

This chain of support weaves its way across generations of Orielenses, beginning in some cases before a student even submits their application. It can be seen in initiatives like Oriel Connect, which launched last year and has already had great success in providing Orielenses with mentoring and career support. The Oriel Women’s Network is another example of this, and I’m delighted that it has strengthened during lockdown as Oriel women share their life experience and expertise with one another. It’s good to see our community pulling together and helping one another along, and this generosity of spirit is one of the things that characterises Oriel.

There will be plenty more of this community spirit and effort needed in the coming months. Following the delivery of the report from the Independent Commission of Inquiry, and the subsequent actions announced by the College, I’m pleased that the Governing Body has appointed our first Tutor for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI), Dr David Maw. David has a great deal of work ahead of him, but he and the Governing Body are determined to deliver on the many recommendations included in the report, and to further embed EDI into all that we do. As you will read later on, David has already set up a taskforce to work on policy and the implementation of our publicly stated goals, including the contextualisation of the Rhodes memorials. In addition to the taskforce, David has an excellent group of expert advisors from amongst our lecturers, students and alumni. We will have lots of news to share with you as this important work continues.

Our students are at the heart of everything we do here, and I realise I haven’t mentioned their academic endeavours at all so far. Our students have, as ever, been working hard. They have, of course, received exceptional levels of teaching, care and attention from their tutors. We have recently been sent the delayed Norrington Table for the 2019-20 academic year. We ranked an impressive 9th out of 30 colleges following a record number of Firsts (over 50%) and some exceptional individual performances. At this time of year, I always look forward to the first exam results trickling in and to hearing of individual student achievements. Our students are inspirational and talented and I’m looking forward with anticipation to seeing them flourish next year.

Floreat Oriel!
Sean Power Reflects on Ten Years of Leading the Development Office at Oriel

Our Director of Development and Alumni Engagement, Sean Power, will leave Oriel at the end of August to embark on the next phase of his life. Here, he reflects on his time at Oriel and how things have changed during his time here.

‘When I first arrived at Oriel the College was raising about £2 million a year, about half of which came from gifts people had left in their Will. Since 2011 we’ve raised over £40 million, of which £12 million has come from Wills. While the cost of Development has increased and the size of the team has grown, the return on investment has remained at about 15% (i.e. 15p in each pound given supports the cost of the office). These costs don’t just relate to fundraising, but include events, publications, the Oriel Record, Gaudys, etc. We are one of the most cost-effective Development Offices in the University.

‘Events have always been a major part of the alumni work at Oriel. We’ve kept about the same number of events overall, though have worked hard to have events that are attractive to as wide a range of alumni as possible. We carefully monitor attendance, and wherever possible we’ve tried to improve the things we have, rather than replace; having a guest speaker at the annual London Dinner, and a live band at the Garden Party, for example.

‘The college endowment has grown from about £40 million in 2011 to £100 million today, with £25 million being added from philanthropy. It seems like a lot of money, even at a 3% draw down, but this is essential to maintain a balanced budget in the College. This money effectively subsidises the tutorial system at a time when fees are capped at £9,250 a year (of which the College only receives about half). It’s an unsustainable position and either the cap will have to increase or go, philanthropy will have to increase, or the system of tutorials will be replaced with lectures and seminars (as happens in other universities). If you value the tutorial system and want to preserve it for the next generation, please give money to the endowment.

‘Each year we measure the percentage of Orielenses who donate to the College. As the number of alumni increases each year this doesn’t make for a very helpful metric, but generally the number is between 800 and 1000 Orielenses, out of c7,000 total (though to my regret we’ve never hit the 1,000 mark). Some colleges seem to do much better, with over 30% giving year on year, but simply raising money has always been the most important metric at Oriel!

‘It came as a bit of a shock when I was appointed as Development Director, given I was relatively young, and with no prior knowledge of Oxford, though with a strong track record of fundraising for a number of years at King’s College London and other charities. Jeremy Catto once commented to me ‘isn’t it marvellous that they chose someone like *you* to be Development Director’. I took it as a compliment!

‘In my experience, Orielenses are motivated to give to the College because of the transformative effect Oriel has had on their lives. In a different, but no less powerful, way Oriel has transformed my life too. Working and living here has been an immense privilege. I am incredibly grateful for having come to this remarkable place, and will miss it enormously.’
Visiting Fellows in Music 2020–22

Countertenor Andreas Scholl and keyboard player Tamar Halperin are internationally recognised as soloists in their own right. Since 2007, they have worked together as the Scholl/Halperin duo, and Oriel is delighted to welcome them as Visiting Fellows in Music for 2020–22. Andreas and Tamar often teach together, applying a practical approach to questions of music performance and interpretation. Orielenses have had the chance to see them both performing, as well as coaching students and answering questions in a series of wonderful online music events. You can find out more on our website at: www.oriel.ox.ac.uk/oriels-people/visiting-fellows-music

Oriel Matriculation 2020

Oriel officially welcomed the newest members of the College community during three special, socially distanced matriculation ceremonies held in the University Church in First Week. Provost Lord Mendoza presided over the ceremony, assisted by the Dean of Degrees and the Chaplain. The students each signed the Provost's Book, which was laid on the tomb of our first Provost, Adam de Brome, to mark this important occasion in their lives. First-year student Arielle Jasiewicz-Gill reflects on the day:

‘Navigating this academic year as an Oxford Fresher has been strange as well as difficult. Not being able to socialise with other students, unless it is through a screen, has been a test for my social skills, to say the least! However, I was able to meet some fellow Oriel Freshers during matriculation. On a slightly overcast October morning, I and a group of Oriel Freshers gathered (socially distanced, of course) in Third Quad, exchanging conversations muffled by masks. Making our way across the street to University Church, we were soon shown to our places in the pews. I was seated in the gallery so had a panoramic view of the beautiful gothic arches and black and white chequered aisle. The ceremony was short but sweet and I, as a medievalist, enjoyed the Latin. Once my name was called, I made my way down the aisle and briefly stopped at Adam de Brome’s tomb to add my name to the register. Making our way back to the College, we also had the opportunity to have an individual picture taken, capturing a special day during very strange times!’

New Gates

A new gate has been installed in Second Quad adjacent to the Small SCR (see photo, right). The gate leads directly onto Oriel Street and provides step-free access from Second Quad to the Island Site (without the need to use the Tunnel). Furthermore, beautiful new gates have been installed at Oriel’s main entrance in First Quad (top photo). These gates will improve security once tourists and visitors return, while allowing speedy access for College members using their Bod Cards.

Blue Plaque on King Edward Street for Ivy Williams

Ivy Williams (1877–1966), the first woman to be called to the English Bar, has been commemorated with a blue plaque on one of Oriel’s buildings. Born in Devon in 1877, Ivy lived with her family over her father’s office premises at 12 King Edward Street between 1887 and 1904.
Hall Renovation

For centuries, the Hall has nurtured friendships and touched the lives of countless students, academics, staff, and visitors – it is the very heart of Oriel. Last restored 100 years ago by renowned architect Sir Ninian Comper, the Hall needed careful renovation after a century's worth of daily wear and tear.

Last Michaelmas term, this vital refurbishment began. The project started with the addition of new bronze handrails on either side of the stone stairs to Hall in First Quad. Thanks to their impressive craftsmanship, these handrails look like they have always been there, while improving accessibility to the Hall.

Conserving the Hall's historic features, the refurbishment has included roof and stained-glass window repairs, the restoration of wooden panelling, and refurbishment of tables, benches, and chairs. Specialist craftsmen have also created matching furniture to enable a fourth sprig to be set up in the Hall for larger events.

We have also brought the Hall up to 21st-century standards by installing a new fire detection system, public address equipment, hearing loop technology, and improved lighting, as well as replacing electrical circuits and installing underfloor heating.

The renovations were completed in Trinity term. Thank you to all Orielenses and friends of the College who have made gifts in support of this significant restoration project. We hope many of you will have an opportunity to enjoy the Hall at an in-person event soon.

You can also read about the new Rex Nettleford portrait, which was commissioned during the renovation project, on page 51.
The newly refurbished Hall
It has been a challenging year for Oriel students. Many of us have studied online from home, and those living in the College experienced a very different Oriel than in previous years. Yet, as is the Oriel way, the Common Room community prevailed, supported one another, and created a memorable year for ourselves in a difficult time.

October saw the joyous return to the College of old and new Common Room members. For many, it was the first time they had seen one another since March 2020. This made for a very special Freshers’ Week, as most of us felt like we could do with a reintroduction to College life. The week was a great success, despite social distancing. Thanks must be given to our Freshers Rep, Fernando, and the ENTZ Reps, Hannah, Maddie, and Mia, for their endeavours to give the Freshers as normal a university experience as possible in the circumstances. ‘Oriella’, the JCR’s mock festival, finished a wonderful week of meeting the new Orielenses. Even more cause for celebration was the broad absence of coronavirus cases during the first weeks of term – testimony to the healing powers of Oriel’s community spirit perhaps!

Michaelmas term continued and we saw the return of many parts of College life, including some in-person tutorials. Rowers returned to the Isis, including new trainees from the first-year cohort, and the men’s football team began fixtures again, one friendly amassing a swell of Oriel supporters that must be a record for recent years.

The Chapel continued to provide services (featuring the stellar talents of our Chapel Choir), which we were all grateful to attend. A particular highlight was the Christmas Carol Service – the lights and trees put up around the College, and the festivities organised by our Oxmas Reps made for a terrific end to the term.

Hilary term came around and the majority of us were back to online environments. Nevertheless, the JCR was as productive as ever, with open meetings even turning the focus onto UK legislative affairs. Online or socially distanced, JCR members remain eager to help change their wider community for the better, with donation schemes for food banks and women’s charities, and the highly popular annual stash order raising significant sums for our three JCR charities.

Perhaps the Common Room’s most active member on the virtual platform was our Food Rep Ben, who, accompanied by a very handsome entourage, continually entertained us with hilarious videos detailing the latest goings-on in the Tuckshop.

Of course, the year has not been without its difficulties, particularly the strain on mental health that the pandemic has caused. The JCR is very lucky to have had the wonderful support of its Welfare Officers, Abi and Lewis, who, with the peer supporters, provided help to those of us who needed it, both in person and virtually over the year. I was glad to see ‘Tea and Toast’ adapt to the new distancing requirements, and that it remains integral to the JCR’s social calendar.

Throughout masks, lockdowns, and tier systems, the JCR has rallied, and I, like many others, am proud to be a member of such a community. With this pandemic seemingly slowing, I am filled with optimism as I look towards Trinity term and beyond. I am sure we will all be keen to catch up on times missed during this year, and I am excited to see what the future holds for JCR members.

Harry Edwards, JCR President (2020–2021)
‘Unprecedented’ is an oft-overused word, but this year I think it is for once appropriate. It has been an unsettling and stressful year for many members of our Common Room, and yet in these times of adversity it has been heartwarming to see our community come together to support one another.

It is hard to believe that at the start of the year being limited to up to 30 people indoors seemed draconian, but while Freshers’ Week lacked its usual largesse the MCR was still graced with many a new face, and the sounds of conversation and laughter were heard in Staircase 35. There was punting, there was tea and cake, and the famous MCR bar swapped the packed dance club vibe for relaxed jazz, table service, and a cocktail menu (from our bar manager Charles) worthy of the finest 1920s salon.

This continued into Michaelmas term with film nights, Halloween pumpkin carving, and a return of weekly afternoon tea – any way we could safely put the ‘social’ into social distancing! The Manhattan became a new favourite in the MCR bar, though I am sure the G&T will retake its rightful place once again next year. MCR members in the Choir helped ensure the Chapel remained a haven of music and worship for all, with singing on Armistice Day and recording carols for Oxmas too. The second lockdown forced much of our activity online but come December the scent of pine from a real Christmas tree again wafted through the MCR. This was soon to be joined by the smell of mulled wine and warm mince pies, as we hosted a series of tree-trimming evenings to round out the term.

The new year brought with it a new term and a new lockdown, which resulted in the MCR once again going online. However, our fantastic social secretaries were undaunted by the challenge, pulling together 11 Oxford colleges for a virtual bingo night, complete with prizes and some questionable dancing – though our treasurer definitely earned himself a few admirers with his moves! COVID sadly put paid to the sporting calendar, with Torpids once again cancelled. However, I am sure that when sport eventually resumes, from boathouse island to the football pitch and even to the cricket wicket, MCR members will be in the thick of the action.

A special thank you, and our heartiest praise, must go to the medical students in our MCR who have worked tirelessly over the last two terms treating patients, organising testing programmes, and vaccinating the Oxford community. Their selflessness and dedication are exemplary, and for their hard work we are extremely grateful.

As I write this, Trinity term brings hope of a gradual but steady return to normality. We have been put to the test by the last 12 months, but every level of the College has come together and risen to the challenge admirably. I look forward to Trinity and the summer with a deeper appreciation for the immense value of our community, and renewed optimism for the future.

Marcus Williamson, MCR President (2020–2021)
How long have you worked at Oriel?
I started working at Oriel on 27 October 1975, so that makes over 45 years. In that time, I have carried out three different roles, starting with working in the kitchen, then cleaning the bar, and then being a scout in different areas of the College.

What is the biggest change to the College over the last 45 years?
The Island Site has changed a lot. I remember when the Oriel Street houses all had lovely little walled gardens before the gardens were converted into the current space with the addition of the Harris Lecture Theatre and extra accommodation. When I got married in 1970, I stayed in Oriel Street accommodation on my wedding day. Oriel has always been a part of my life.

Is it true that other members of your family worked at Oriel too?
My mum worked at Oriel for over 40 years. My nan, my dad, my aunt, my sister, and my daughter have also worked here. In total, a combined service in excess of a century.

What does a normal day look like for you?
There is no such thing as a normal day. Things can change on a daily basis.

What is your favourite part of being a scout?
I really enjoy meeting people.

What is your favourite place in College?
It has to be the Chapel. I used to clean the Chapel, and enjoyed the serenity of the place.

What is your proudest achievement?
I am proud to have been a small part of Oriel life for 45 years.

What has been your fondest day at Oriel in the last 45 years?
Meeting the Queen in 2000 with three generations of my family who had worked at Oriel (my dad, my mum, my aunt, myself, my daughter, and my niece). My niece was given the honour of presenting a posy to Her Majesty The Queen.

Apart from family, who or what inspires you?
The people who I work with are my inspiration.

Do you have any unusual hobbies?
I like going to Zumba classes. It is a great stress buster.

Do you do any voluntary work or work in the community?
No, but I would love to if I had the time.

What one luxury would you take on a desert island?
Anything containing alcohol would do me a treat.

Family at Queen’s visit in 2000, L-R: Den Berry (my dad), me, Rachel White (my daughter), Melissa Worrall (my niece), Sybil Berry (my mum), and Sheila Luke (my aunt)
INCLUSION AT ORIEL:

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION AT ORIEL:

Interview with Dr David Maw, our first Tutor for EDI

Since the Independent Commission of Inquiry into Cecil Rhodes and related issues delivered its report in May of this year, the College has begun in earnest to implement the actions it announced. The College will seek to contextualise the Rhodes memorials and to focus on improving educational equality, diversity and inclusion amongst its student cohort and the wider academic community.

There is great positivity in Oriel about the initiatives announced in May and the path forwards. Fellows and staff are looking forward to making significant and measurable progress towards new scholarships for students who come from backgrounds that are currently underrepresented at Oxford; looking closer at our history and amplifying the voices of those who have not had their story heard; and further embedding equality, diversity and inclusion into all that we do.

As part of this work Dr David Maw, Oriel’s Fellow in Music, has been appointed as Tutor for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI). This new College Officer role has been created to drive forward progress towards the actions announced by the College in May. Here we posed a few questions to him about his new role, the taskforce he is setting up, and what his priorities will be.

What is your new College role and what does it involve?
The Tutor for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) oversees the College’s efforts to ensure that everyone who lives and works in its community can flourish and benefit from the opportunities it presents. In practical terms, this will involve active liaison with the many different parts of the College community and with the various departments of its institutional structure. It will also involve liaison beyond the College, with departments and other colleges of the University as a whole.

The creation of this role may give the misleading impression that equality, diversity and inclusion are new ideas to the College. This is not at all the case. A culture of EDI thrives at Oriel, and has done for a long time. My function is to nurture, promote and develop this culture, not to install something fundamentally new.

What actions will you be taking forward? An important project for the first year is to develop a strategy for further improving EDI within the College. This will involve taking stock of existing provision, assessing targets for the coming years and identifying the means by which these targets can be achieved. I am also setting up and directing a taskforce that will implement the recommendations adopted by Governing Body following the Commission of Inquiry’s report. The taskforce will be made up of various members of College and is strongly focused on delivery. Although it is a small group, many other people from within the College and further afield will be consulted and involved. I have already begun to get in touch with groups and individuals who are willing to assist our work and I am very much aware of the need for input from people of diverse backgrounds and with different areas of interest and expertise in the issues we are addressing.

What will you prioritise first? The issue of the Rhodes memorials has, of course, been highly visible in terms of press coverage over the past year. It is extremely important that we make rapid progress in achieving discernible and thorough contextualisation of these, so that the College’s commitment to a critical reassessment of Rhodes’ legacy is clear to the world at large. Pressing and important as this challenge is, it isn’t our sole point of focus. There are many excellent recommendations in the Commission’s report aimed at improving aspects of the College’s core mission: recommendations for developing educational opportunity and experience for College members, especially for those who come from backgrounds currently underrepresented at Oxford; recommendations for developing the College’s engagement with the world outside it. The Governing Body has already endorsed a number of these, and the task in hand is to make them reality.

What is the College hoping to achieve in the first year? There is a lot to do and the hectic pace of College life won’t obligingly stop to allow it to be done. Nonetheless, we plan three main objectives for the first year: we will draw up a strategy for developing EDI in the College; we will set in place contextualisation of the Rhodes memorials; and we will put in place a number of the specific educational recommendations of the Commission’s report. We are planning a year of intense activity and we will keep everyone updated on our progress.

How can Orielenses get involved with some of these recommendations/actions? The College has already received generous offers of help and support from a number of alumni and one of the most agreeable parts of my role so far has been speaking to these people, learning about them and their work, and hearing of their love for and commitment to the College. We are lucky to enjoy such a rich base of talent and experience to draw on. Of course, we continue to welcome expressions of interest and support from alumni. I should be delighted to hear from anyone who would like to become involved by email at: tedi@oriel.ox.ac.uk.

We will be keeping Orielenses updated on progress through the alumni e-newsletter and website.

Oriel News | Summer 2021 | 11
In all traditional cultures, human beings have lived by stories. Recently I came across an arresting example of this general truth when reading Neil MacGregor’s *Living with the Gods* (2018). MacGregor was formerly Director of the British Museum, and his discussion ranges widely across times and cultures, but the case he examines at the very beginning of the book concerns an artefact that was retrieved from a cave in the south-west of Germany in the late 1930s. It was found in fragments, and reassembled some 30 years later, at which point it became clear that this object, some 30 centimetres tall, and carved in ivory – in mammoth ivory – was in fact the figure of a man, but with the head of a cave lion. Radiocarbon dating suggests that the statue, now commonly known as the Lion Man, derives from about 40,000 years ago, so towards the end of the last Ice Age – and MacGregor notes that this is, therefore, the earliest known instance of human beings producing an image of an entity that cannot have been encountered in sensory experience. Of course, from our vantage point, it is not possible to recover the stories that these early human beings associated with this figure, but as MacGregor frames the point, ‘the best hypothesis is that the people of the Lion Man constructed a narrative linking the natural and supernatural worlds, and enacted that narrative ceremonially with a wider community.’ He continues: ‘This is something that all human societies have done: searching for patterns. And then composing stories and rituals about them, which put us – all of us – in our cosmic place’ (p. 13).

As a philosophical theologian, I am no expert in the archaeology of early human communities, but I agree with MacGregor that the example of the Lion Man points towards a basic tendency of human thought, evident across times and places, to set our localised stories within the framework that is provided by an overarching story, so putting each of us, as MacGregor says, ‘in our cosmic place’. In other contexts, we are all familiar with the ways in which the histories of people and objects and places can in a sense be stored up, so they make a practical and attitudinal claim upon us in the present. Think, for example, of practices such as placing flowers by the roadside at the site of a fatal accident, or in general of how we calibrate our actions and demeanour at places in ways that are intended to give due recognition to their histories. And of course, still more conspicuously, the histories of other people matter to us: if given the choice between spending my future life with my partner of 27 years, or with a perfect psycho-physical replica of her, it would, of course, matter to me that I should live with the first of these individuals, even if the second should be in empirical terms, from my present vantage point, indistinguishable. The narratives offered by religious traditions play, it seems, a similar role: they give people and places a storied identity, often a particularly wide-ranging or encompassing storied identity, and thereby they condition the significance that attaches to the objects that we encounter in the everyday sensory world, so drawing us into new forms of relationship with them.

Similarly, it seems reasonable to suppose that in rehearsing stories about the Lion Man, a figure that was neither simply human nor simply lion, these early human beings were reflecting, in storied terms, upon their own identity, and seeing their human identity as in some fashion continuous with a more than human identity, so enabling them to deal in new and creative ways with the challenges of living in a freezing landscape, populated by, among other things, tusked mammoths and,
Radiocarbon dating suggests that the statue, now commonly known as the Lion Man, derives from about 40,000 years ago, so towards the end of the last Ice Age.

Of course, cave lions. And more generally, it seems plausible to suppose that stories, such as that of the Lion Man, are not about charting the character of what MacGregor calls a ‘supernatural world’ for its own sake, but instead serve to confer a storied identity upon the contents of the sensory world, so giving new structure and colour to our practical, attitudinal, and perceptual relationship to this world – the everyday, physical world.

My own work takes this thought as its starting point, by asking about how religious narratives (I am myself particularly interested in Christian narratives, such as those of the incarnation, resurrection, and the beatific vision) enable a particular quality of attention, and mode of bodily presence, in our relations to the everyday world. These are themes I explore in my most recent book, *Spiritual Traditions and the Virtues: Living Between Heaven and Earth* (Oxford UP, 2020); I am hoping to examine them further via a research project I am just beginning, in 2021, on ‘God concepts and spiritual wellbeing’. With the support of the John Templeton Foundation, this project will involve a DPhil student and a postdoc, and will consider how various ‘God concepts’, and associated theological narratives, can inform practices of spiritual counsel and direction, drawing together work in theology, philosophy and also psychology.

The object of the exercise is, then, to bring into clearer focus the role of religious stories in ordering human beings’ relationships to the everyday world, and their significance, therefore, as resources for living. If you would like to learn more about this work, you could dip into my 2021 Aquinas Lecture, given virtually through Blackfriars in Oxford, on ‘Christian narratives and the well-lived life’, and available here: https://soundcloud.com/aquinainsitute/aquinas-lecture-2021

Of course, there is also a question about what reasons we have for taking the encompassing, identity-conferring narratives that are purveyed by religious traditions to be true. I am interested in that question, too, but for me at least, this issue needs to be approached not simply in an abstractly argumentative mode, but by seeing what is at stake in practical terms in particular religious stories – and the ways in which these stories enable, or perhaps in some cases frustrate, the development of newly productive forms of engagement with the everyday, sensory world.
FELLOWS’ NEWS

Professor Yadvinder Malhi Awarded CBE in Queen’s Birthday Honours

Jackson Senior Research Fellow in Biodiversity and Conservation, Professor Yadvinder Malhi, was awarded a CBE in the Queen’s Birthday Honours List, announced on 10 October 2020, for services to Ecosystem Science. He was also announced as the President-Elect of the British Ecological Society, following an online ballot of members.

Fisher Studios

Wellcome Trust Investigator Award

Dr Sumana Sanyal has been awarded a Wellcome Trust Investigator Award in Science (2021–2025) to investigate mechanisms of the spread and pathogenicity of flaviviruses.

This study will determine how viruses such as Dengue and Zika, which share significant similarities, spread into specific tissues and organs within infected individuals. Dengue and Zika viruses have huge health implications: Dengue alone infects more than 50 million people worldwide annually; Zika is a closely related emerging virus that causes severe neurological damage in new-borns and adults. Vaccines or therapeutic treatments are currently not available for either of them. This study aims to address how virus progeny particles are released from infected cells and transported into neighbouring recipient cells while displaying a preference for certain tissues. The mechanism of transmission of virus particles dictates spread, tissue tropism, and pathogenesis. Understanding this process will therefore add critical information on how to target these steps therapeutically and block disease progression.

Professor Ian Horrocks Awarded BCS Lovelace Medal and KR Test of Time Award in 2020

Fellow in Computer Science Professor Ian Horrocks was awarded the Chartered Institute for IT’s BCS Lovelace Medal 2020 for his work in the area of knowledge representation and reasoning, an important subfield of AI. Professor Horrocks was recognised for his major contributions to the development of modern description logics and reasoning systems, in their adoption as the basis for ontology languages, and in the development and standardisation of the W3C’s OWL ontology language. Though complex in nature, reasoning systems are all around us, powering devices such as Siri and Alexa, and helping Google find the information we search for online.

Professor Horrocks also received a Test of Time Award at the International Conference on Knowledge Representation and Reasoning for a paper that he wrote in 1998 entitled ‘Using an Expressive Description Logic: FaCT or Fiction’.

Oriel Welcomes Professor Tim Elliott and Professor Mark Wynn

Oriel is delighted to welcome Professor Tim Elliott and Professor Mark Wynn into its Fellowship. Tim Elliott is the Kidani Professor of Immuno-Oncology, which is a new post in the University. Mark Wynn is the new Nolloth Professor of the Philosophy of the Christian Religion. We are thrilled that they have both joined Oriel.
Teresa Bejan Announced as Early-Career Prize Winner

Dr Teresa Bejan, Associate Professor of Political Theory and Tutorial Fellow in Politics, has been announced as an Early-Career Prize Winner by the Britain and Ireland Association for Political Thought.

Ben Caldecott Appointed to Newly Endowed Professorship

As part of a new multi-year partnership between Lombard Odier and the University of Oxford, Oriel’s Supernumerary Fellow Dr Ben Caldecott has been appointed as Lombard Odier Associate Professor and Senior Research Fellow of Sustainable Finance at the University of Oxford.

This post is the first endowed senior academic post in sustainable finance at any major global research university. The new professorship is an important element of the partnership announced by Lombard Odier and the University of Oxford, which aims to foster research and teaching on sustainable finance and investment.

Dr Caldecott is an expert in sustainable finance and investment, as well as the founding Director of the Oxford Sustainable Finance Programme and the COP26 Strategy Advisor for Finance at the UK Cabinet Office.

Professor Lynne Cox Contributes to the House of Lords Science and Technology Select Committee Ageing Report

Oriel Fellow and Tutor in Biochemistry Professor Lynne Cox supplied written and oral evidence that contributed to a report into healthy ageing published in January this year. Professor Cox was asked to attend the House of Lords Science and Technology Select Committee in person as an expert witness, based on her research expertise in ageing and cell senescence, and following on from her submission of written evidence to the committee.

Teresa Bejan Announced as Early-Career Prize Winner

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Nick Eyre Appointed as Oxford City Council’s First Scientific Advisor

Supernumerary Research Fellow in Energy, Professor Nick Eyre, has been appointed as Oxford City Council’s first ever Scientific Advisor. He will support the Council and the city, as it continues to tackle the climate emergency.

The Impact of COVID-19 on the Global Energy Transition

Dr David Robinson, a member of Oriel’s SCR, is working on a number of projects and initiatives related to Oxford. He is part of an Oxford University team led by Dr Ben Caldecott, a Supernumerary Fellow at Oriel and Director of the Oxford Sustainable Finance Programme at the Smith School of Enterprise and the Environment. They are working on a UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) project that will advise the Chinese Government on phasing out the use of coal in the Chinese power sector. On a second project financed by the FCDO, as a Senior Research Fellow of Oxford Climate Policy, Dr Robinson is leading a team that will advise on the development of demand-side flexibility in the Chinese power sector to facilitate the penetration of renewable energy. Last year, Dr Robinson co-edited an issue of the Oxford Energy Forum on the impact of COVID-19 on the global energy transition and he is currently preparing a research paper on the same topic. He is the co-author of an Oxford-led briefing paper in Spanish that made the case for a Green Recovery Now from the pandemic; the Oxford team has subsequently begun a campaign in favour of a green recovery. Here is a video on that campaign: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wnby3-4xN4U&t=114s; the website is https://greenrecoverynow.org/#!.
**Being ‘in Christ’ in the Letters of Paul**

Teresa Morgan, Professor of Graeco-Roman History and Tutorial Fellow in Ancient History, has published a book, *Being ‘in Christ’ in the Letters of Paul*. The book is about being ‘in Christ’: an important but notoriously obscure and much debated phrase in the writings of Paul and his followers. The book shows how Paul uses the phrase ‘instrumentally’, to speak of what God has done through Christ, and ‘encheiristically’, to speak of the life the faithful live ‘in Christ’s hands’: in his power, under his authority, and in his care.

These two meanings form part of Paul’s narrative of God’s intervention in the world, the nature of Christ, Christ’s lordship between the resurrection and the end time, and God’s eventual triumph over evil and salvation of the faithful. They also play a large role in Paul’s ethics and thinking about the nature of community. Life in Christ’s hands is imagined as the this-worldly dimension of the new creation: an aspect of eternal life already active in the present time.

Most of the book was written while Professor Morgan was on research leave during the first COVID lockdown of 2020. You can get a lot written when you cannot leave the house!

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**Dr Kathryn Murphy Co-edits Book On Essays**

Tutorial Fellow in English, Dr Kathryn Murphy has edited a book, *On Essays: Montaigne to the Present*, published by Oxford University Press, with Dr Thomas Karshan of the University of East Anglia. It is the most substantial account of the history of the essay as a literary form in English, with 17 essays by established writers and essayists, including Adam Phillips and Michael Wood.

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**Distraction**

Dr Alessandra Aloisi, College lecturer and main organising Tutor in French at Oriel, has recently published her new book, *The Power of Distraction*, in Italian, which has been reviewed in some of the major Italian national newspapers, such as *La Repubblica*. This book explores the paradoxes and potential of distraction, with special attention given to the French 18th and 19th centuries. Distraction has been disparaged by a centuries-long cultural tradition – involving Augustine, Pascal and Heidegger, among others – which has emphasised the importance of reflection and concentration. Yet distraction is a key component of our psychic life. *The Power of Distraction* highlights distraction’s role as a creative and revolutionary approach to life, thought, and writing, but also as a distinctive perspective leading to alternative forms of positive experience.

Earlier in the year, she also organised a conference in collaboration with the École normale supérieure de Lyon in France and the University of Roma Tre in Italy on ‘Maine de Biran and the Afterlives of Biranism: Between Physiology, Psychology, Philosophy, and Literature’. The aim of this one-day conference was to explore the philosophical, psychological and physiological origins and dimensions of Biranism, as well as the stakes of its multifaceted legacy – direct and indirect, philosophical and literary – between the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th.

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**Taxing Profit**

Fellow, Professor of Business Taxation, and Director of the Oxford University Centre for Business Taxation, Professor Michael Devereux has recently launched his latest book, *Taxing Profit in a Global Economy*. The book is the product of a group of economists and lawyers (The Oxford International Tax Group), which Professor Devereux initiated and chairs. Over the last seven years, they have been meeting to discuss the international tax system and to come up with possible reforms. The book is the culmination of this project.

This book undertakes a fundamental review of the existing international system of taxing business profit. It starts from first principles to ask how we should evaluate a tax on business profit – and whether there is any good rationale for such a tax in the first place. It evaluates the existing system and a number of alternatives that have been proposed. It argues that the existing system is fundamentally flawed, and that there is a need for radical reform. The key conclusion is that there would be significant gains from a reform that moved the system towards taxing profit in the country in which a business made its sales to third parties. It has been published by OUP, but is also available for free on the website of the Centre for Business Taxation: [https://oxfordtax.web.ox.ac.uk/taxing-profit-global-economy](https://oxfordtax.web.ox.ac.uk/taxing-profit-global-economy)
Russian Flu

Oriel's Associate Professor of Modern History, Julia Mannherz, can be heard in a University of Oxford podcast on the 1889–1890 flu pandemic, also known as the 'Russian flu'. This global epidemic claimed many lives, yet curiously it did not distress contemporaries very much, and has largely been ignored by historical scholarship. This episode discusses the reasons for this lack of attention and what it tells us about people's experience of infectious disease at the time. The podcast is part of a series on the history of pandemics, and can be found here: https://bit.ly/TheHistoryOfPandemics

'SInfluenza' in the Brokgauz and Efron Encyclopedic Dictionary (1890–1907), which is mentioned in the podcast

Supernumerary Fellow and Orielensis Max Crispin Contributes to COVID Research

Orielensis and Supernumerary Fellow, Professor Max Crispin (1997, Biochemistry) contributed to research to characterise SARS-CoV-2 spikes produced by the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine. Research resulting from a collaboration between teams from the University of Oxford and the University of Southampton, where the team was led by Professor Crispin, has compared images of the protein spikes that develop on the surface of cells exposed to the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine to the protein spike of the SARS-CoV-19 coronavirus.


Shipwreck Bottles

Bob McNulty, a member of the SCR, has been appointed for three years as a postdoctoral research associate in the Institute for Archaeology at the University of Oxford’s Underwater Division. His role is to research glass artefacts found on 17th- and 18th-century shipwrecks in Nordic and Baltic waters to develop a chronology of ‘bottle’ design dating similar to that which exists for English glass bottles of similar periods and his previous dating of Dutch 17th- and 18th-century bottle designs. These artefacts could help to establish previously unknown date ranges for shipwrecks. The pandemic has made travel difficult but successful online contact has been established with the Baltic countries and Poland, Germany, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Finland, and Russia. We look forward to hearing more about his research.

Dutch bottles from 1650 to 1750
The Marshall Scholarship was founded in Britain in the 1950s to help retain and strengthen the relationship with its wartime ally the USA. Having considered a number of proposals (including gifting an original copy of the Magna Carta to the USA), a scholarship programme for American students was settled upon by the Foreign Office. At the suggestion of the then Deputy Undersecretary of State, Sir Roger Mellor Makins, the scholarship was named after General George C. Marshall, a nod to the gratitude felt by the UK for the help given by Marshall Aid.

Following numerous debates within Winston Churchill’s cabinet, the Marshall Aid Commemoration Act became British Law. In 1954, the first Marshall Scholars arrived in the UK aboard the Queen Elizabeth and commenced their studies at a variety of British universities, including Oxford, Cambridge, the London School of Economics, and Glasgow.

While Marshall Scholars studied at Oxford from the very beginning of the programme, it was not until 1960 that Oriel was able to welcome its first scholar, Harrell Smith:

‘(My) first impressions of Oriel were the beauty of the College, the extraordinary University, Oxford City, the Cotswolds, but particularly the congeniality of the Oriel students and the openness of the dons.

‘I read Modern History, had not studied English history before, had to scramble, and was headed for law school in America. Writing tutorial essays at Oriel revealed, from the outset, how much one brings one’s own views to the assigned subject.

‘Shortly after arriving at Oriel, the Captain of Boats called and asked if I would like to try crew. Our utterly amateur crew prospered with cox Peter Gibbs-Kennet shrewdly navigating the river and competition. We were given a boat burning and bump dinner for bumping Worcester, Lincoln, and Queens and rowing over into the first division in 1961 Torpids. The Captain of the OUBC toasted Oriel at dinner, walking among the plates on the High Table (an Oriel tradition he had been told), the Provost’s face still vivid in my memory. Success pulled the undergraduates pleasantly together, and we surely were part of the beginning.’
Because of my experience as a Marshall Scholar, I was invited back to the UK to speak with members of the House of Lords about the future of the UK’s foreign policy as part of a group of early-career experts.

Mailyn Fidler (2014, MPhil International Relations)

Noam Kantor (2017), a recent Marshall Scholar who studied Maths while at Oriel, is in no doubt that the Marshall Scholarship is just as beneficial now as it was 60 years ago:

‘The Marshall Scholarship has been an absolutely formative academic and personal experience for me. Not only did I have the opportunity to spend three years studying Maths with my academic heroes, but the Marshall also allowed me to step off the treadmill at times – giving me the space and flexibility to radically re-imagine my career.

‘I am grateful to Oriel for supporting my scholarship and allowing me to take the time at Oxford to understand how I can best bring about a just world. I only hope that I can help spread the professional and educational privilege that has been heaped upon me at Oxford.’

From its early and relatively modest beginnings, the Marshall Scholarship continues to thrive, both at Oriel and across the UK. Each year, up to 50 American scholars are selected to study at graduate level. The scholars can attend any university and focus on any discipline, providing a unique opportunity to pursue wide-ranging interests, from entrepreneurship and the performing arts to education and law. Oriel’s Marshall Scholars have studied subjects as varied as Physics, PPE, Oncology, and US History.

We hope that Oriel will continue to welcome Marshall Scholars for many years to come. To find out more about the Marshall Scholarship, please visit: https://www.marshallscholarship.org/.

Mailyn Fidler, a recent Marshall Scholar

#### TELEPHONE CAMPAIGN 2020

Our annual Telephone Campaign took place over the course of a week last December and saw the team of ten student callers phoning from their student rooms to speak with over 300 Orielenses. The students thoroughly enjoyed their interesting and inspiring conversations with alumni, and working in the team certainly added a bit of excitement to the monotony of ‘pandemic life’.

Every year we are amazed by the generosity of Orielenses, whose donations ensure we are able to continue to offer a first-class education to all students, fund cutting-edge research, and help the College community thrive.

The students are delighted to have raised £74,000 in new gifts and pledges from 132 Orielenses and friends. We are particularly grateful for this much-needed support during these difficult times. Thank you very much!

Our next telethon will take place this September and October, and if we did not manage to reach you during the 2020 campaign, we hope to be able to speak with you then.
The Mellon Longevity Graduate Scholarship at Oriel was established through a generous gift to the College from Orielensis Jim Mellon (1975, PPE). This gift is dedicated to supporting and advancing the study of longevity science at Oxford, and is the largest of its kind to a UK university. Excitingly, it makes Oriel College and Oxford a national focal point for research into improving the health of ageing populations. My project is supervised by professors Lynne Cox and Katja Simon, and investigates immune system ageing.

**Why study ageing?**
Ageing is the biggest risk factor for developing chronic diseases. It is associated with a range of diseases, such as cancers, heart disease, and cognitive decline, with many older people suffering multiple different diseases simultaneously. Altogether, this means that older people experience a massive gap, of around 9–15 years, between their healthspan (the period of life in good health) and their lifespan. Historically, these age-related diseases have been investigated individually, but more and more research implicates the ageing process itself as causal in their development. The aim of research into the biology of ageing is to understand how ageing leads to bodily decline and to identify biological targets for drug development to improve the healthspan, quality of life, and independence of older people.

**What happens during ageing?**
Ageing is a multifaceted and complex process, but it can be broadly attributed to the accumulation of damage in our bodies’ cells. Over time, these cells experience many forms of stress, such as radiation, infection, or undergoing many rounds of cell division. These stressors cause damage which can lead to cancer. To protect against this, cells have two inbuilt alternatives. One option is to be a martyr and die; the other is to stop dividing and enter a zombie-like state, termed senescence. Senescent cells release inflammatory factors (which act like red flags) that attract patrolling immune cells to the site of damage and clear them.Senescent cell burden increases during ageing. This leads to a general increase in low-level, systemic inflammation during ageing, and is now so well documented that it has earned its own portmanteau term, ‘inflammageing’. Inflammageing is a strong predictor of frailty and mortality in the elderly. It has been directly implicated in causing many age-related diseases, such as heart disease and diabetes.
The aim of research into the biology of ageing is to understand how ageing leads to bodily decline and to identify biological targets for drug development to improve the healthspan, quality of life, and independence of older people.

A major question in ageing research centres around why senescent cell burden and inflammation increases during ageing, and why senescent cells are not simply cleared away by the immune system. One reason is because immune system function also declines as we age. This is apparent in older people, who have an increased susceptibility to severe infections (such as COVID-19), and poorer vaccine responses. This age-related immune phenomenon is called immunosenescence.

Why does the immune system age?
There are several factors that contribute to immunosenescence. Intrinsically, immune cells become worn out and less effective. One cause is ‘replicative exhaustion’ following the massive cell proliferation that immune cells undergo to rally the troops every time the body detects a new infection. The cell processes involved in energy metabolism are also disrupted during ageing. General cell housekeeping, including the removal of damaged and worn-out parts through a process of autophagy (literally, ‘self-eating’) is also diminished in old cells, leading to an accumulation of debris. These intrinsic deficits in immune cells makes them unable to deal effectively with infection or remove senescent cells, leading to a vicious cycle of ongoing inflammageing that further impairs immune responses.

Interventions to improve lifespan and healthspan
Major advances are currently being made towards improving health in later life. Deleting senescent cells (the ‘senolytic’ approach) has been shown to extend both lifespan and healthspan in mice. Senolytic approaches are currently in human clinical trials to tackle age-related diseases such as lung fibrosis, Alzheimer’s disease, and frailty. Furthermore, ongoing studies are assessing whether the removal of senescent cells can improve COVID-19 outcomes in at-risk patients.

Other approaches target a master regulator of senescence, a molecule called mTOR, to modulate senescent cell function. Inhibiting mTOR has been shown to extend the lifespan of every animal tested to date. Importantly, inhibiting mTOR in humans has been demonstrated to improve significantly flu vaccine responses and reduce respiratory infections in old people. This means that tackling senescence can rejuvenate immune responses during ageing. Clinical trials are now testing whether mTOR inhibitors can prevent severe COVID-19 infection. Excitingly, studies by Professor Simon’s lab have shown that stimulating autophagy in older people with drug treatment can improve their immune responses, and this is now being rolled out into clinical trials to improve COVID-19 vaccine responses.

We can learn from diseases of accelerated ageing
One way of studying ageing is by investigating diseases of accelerated ageing, such as Werner Syndrome (WS). People with WS display many features of ageing, such as hair greying and cataracts, and a high incidence of age-related diseases and inflammageing that lead to short lifespans. This condition is caused by a mutation in a protein called Werner protein, or WRN.

WRN has a very important role in protecting DNA. If it is mutated, as seen in WS patients, cells accumulate damage and undergo premature senescence. We can mimic WS in the lab using microscopic worms carrying mutated forms of the WRN gene. As with WS patients, mutating WRN in worms dramatically reduces their lifespan. However, the Cox lab recently discovered that they could considerably increase healthy worm lifespan if worms had especially high levels of WRN. This indicates that WRN levels are limiting for longevity, and that higher levels may be beneficial. This hypothesis forms the basis of my project.

Managing DNA damage is important for immune cell function. We know that when immune cells encounter a new pathogen, they undergo many rounds of cell division, replicating their DNA over and over. As we get older, this leads to DNA damage and immune cell dysfunction. My project therefore investigates whether WRN levels change in immune cells during ageing. If this is the case, I will explore whether experimentally increasing WRN levels can restore immune cell function and reverse immunosenescence.

Interventions that target biological ageing have the potential to prevent a huge range of diseases. Targeting immunosenescence has become particularly relevant due to the COVID-19 pandemic. By understanding basic damage-control mechanisms in immune cells, I hope to elucidate further mechanisms by which we can restore immune function during ageing.
35 YEARS OF WOMEN AT ORIEL

This year marks the centenary of women’s formal admission to the University of Oxford. On 14 October, the Oxford Suffrage Flag was flown at Oriel and across the city in recognition of women being awarded their Oxford degrees for the first time 100 years beforehand. We are proud that women have been an important and valued part of the Oriel community for 35 years.

To mark both the University’s centenary and the 35th anniversary of women studying at Oriel, we spoke to one of our first female students, Laura Ashley-Timms, and current first-year student Catherine King, to talk about their experiences at Oriel.

Laura matriculated at Oriel in 1985, where she read Geography with the first mixed cohort. She is now the Director of Coaching at Notion, a consultancy that works across all sectors to improve management performance. Catherine King is a 1st year reading English.

What made you apply to Oriel in the first place? What was your first impression of Oriel?

Catherine – The main reason I applied to Oriel was that it was beautiful with its three Quads. I liked that it was small and very ‘Oxford’ without being ostentatious like Christ Church.

Laura – I didn’t technically apply to Oriel but Christ Church! I hadn’t considered applying to Oxbridge, but I drove a friend up to Oxford, who wanted to apply to study Medicine, for a day trip here. I thought it would be a good idea to speak to a Geography Fellow whilst I was here, and the tutor who looked after Oriel, Christ Church and St Anne’s very kindly showed me around that afternoon. He told me to apply and on Christmas Eve he called me to offer me a place at Oriel. I initially chose Christ Church, because Oriel was still an all-male college so it hadn’t crossed my mind to apply there. That was probably true of several of the ‘first year girls’ – many won’t have applied directly. Like Catherine, I remember First Quad being classically beautiful and quintessentially ‘Oxford’.

I love tradition and I thought it was great that it had so much history whilst also being friendly and accessible.

How would you describe Oriel in one word?

Laura – Stunning

Catherine – Friendly. I just remember at my interview that the tutor was reassuring, saying ‘even if you don’t get in to Oriel, it isn’t the end of the world’. It was so helpful because coming to these colleges is quite daunting. Also, the organising tutor is female and it was really encouraging to see women in these leading roles here. It made me feel at ease immediately and even though I was there for an interview I didn’t feel terrified.

Laura, what was it like to be one of the first female students at Oriel?

Laura – My year had fantastic, confident, often outspoken girls in it. Sporty too! Of course, in that first year there were only 19 girls and hundreds of men across all the year groups, so it felt somewhat unique to be a girl at Oriel. As Catherine has already said though, Oriel has always been incredibly friendly.
Just before we came up as Freshers, there was a documentary on the television by Russell Harty about the College going mixed. It was quite challenging watching it because they had interviewed several men who were not keen on women joining the College. I worried that we wouldn’t be welcomed or wanted at Oriel and coming up would be uncomfortable. The reality was the complete opposite, everyone was ridiculously friendly! It was fun feeling like we were all trailblazers. Everything we were doing was a first, and it was exciting to be breaking new ground all the time. The publicity had its high and lows, but I think everyone handled it really well.

With this being Oriel of course we all rowed whether we had ever been in or wanted to be in a boat. We formed two crews in that first term and had a lot of fun on the river. My sport before Oriel was table tennis, which is mixed anyway, and I got very involved with that at College and University level. Apart from rowing, at that time there weren’t really many other girls’ sports teams in College.

I was the only girl reading Geography in the combined Oriel/St Anne’s cohort in my year, which was quite unusual but it was fine as I had a chance to mix with female geographers from other colleges at the School of Geography.

Catherine, what is it like to be a student at Oriel now? What societies are you involved in?

Catherine – I can definitely agree with what you were saying about rowing, because on the day we arrived the Provost gave a speech and joked that everyone needs to get involved in rowing. I managed to do one session on the river before COVID-19 restrictions became tighter and stopped further activities. I have never done it before but I loved it, and it was great that we had that impetus to try it in the first place. I have also been involved with College’s mixed netball team. My impression of the societies on offer at Oriel has been very different because a lot have not been running during the pandemic.

Before I came up to Oriel, I had heard that it was very traditional amongst other things, but a friend of mine who was already at Oxford reassured me that these ‘college stereotypes’ are always exaggerated. I found the reality to be very different as Oriel is inclusive and friendly.

What words of advice would you give to potential female applicants?

Catherine – At interview, I found that some of the boys were a lot more confident about their achievements than the girls, which can be daunting, but don’t let your gender or these stereotypes get in the way. Remain focussed on yourself and remember that you can achieve just as much. Don’t let ‘imposter syndrome’ get the better of you.

Laura – I would definitely have been one of those people who felt like they slipped through the net, but everyone is thinking the same. The reality is that everyone should try their best and apply, and whether you get in or not it’s a great experience to go through the process. If you don’t get in then there will be another university that is right for you. Don’t wait to be tapped on the shoulder by your school or make assumptions that you aren’t good enough – just give it a go, you’ve got nothing to lose.
What do these anniversaries mean to you?

Catherine – 35 years of women at Oriel always really surprises me because it’s such a short space of time and it is so well mixed now that I would never have guessed that it was the last College to admit women. It is so encouraging to see the progress made by the College in this time.

Laura – 100 years of women at Oxford is what I find shocking. It’s frightening to think that women have only been able to be awarded a degree in the last 100 years. 35 years of women at Oriel just makes me feel old! It feels like yesterday when I joined, so it seems very recent history. The fact that we were the last College to go mixed is completely irrelevant now because it has been 50:50 for so long.

Can you name a woman who inspires you and why?

Laura – It is tricky to pinpoint one individual. I have worked with a couple of incredible, determined and strong female clients. However, I would particularly mention a lady I worked for, Anne Wood – best known as the writer and creator of the Teletubbies, Roland Rat, In the Night Garden, and Rosie and Jim. She really went against the grain, and didn’t care what others thought. She followed her passion for children’s education, created these characters and became Business Woman of the Year, won a special BAFTA, and was awarded a CBE. Her determination to inspire and delight children was always her driving force, and everything else was secondary. She was a fantastic, authentic female leader.

Another inspiration is Jillian McLean who owns 23 bars and restaurants around the UK. She began her business because she felt that bars in the city were very male-orientated environments, that weren’t especially welcoming to women. She created a range of bars that were more feminine and accessible, and became very popular with both men and women. Her leadership skills are fantastic, and very inclusive. Interestingly, both women became hugely successful further along in their careers, which is inspiring as women’s careers often don’t follow a linear trajectory.

Catherine – Teletubbies was interestingly one of the few childhood TV programmes where the characters didn’t have specific genders, it was irrelevant so there weren’t the usual stereotypes. I am not conscious of gender in my everyday life but when I look back at my childhood a lot of the media I absorbed, such as Disney, you are made aware of gender stereotypes. When I think about people who inspire me, I think about their actions and don’t distinguish or think about their gender. I think you will always find examples of people having gender bias but I think it is a case of ignoring that and continuing to move forward.

What does gender equality mean to you?

Catherine – Everyone should have equal access to opportunities, and have the same starting point regardless of gender.

Laura – In my industry, this is a hot topic. Part of me, as a female, can’t wait for it not to be a conversation that needs to happen. Surely by now we can accept that we are all equal. I have three teenage children and they would think this a bizarre question because in their eyes whatever gender you are, everyone is equal. Within this next generation I am hopeful that it will become a non-conversation, because we have come so far and gender equality has improved so much.

Are there any changes you would like to see at Oriel over the next few years?

Catherine – it would be nice to see more women in leadership roles within the College because many of the senior roles seem to be filled by male Fellows.

Laura – The previous Provost, Moira Wallace, arriving as Oriel’s first female Provost was a really inspiring moment in the College’s history. When I first started coming back for alumni events, they had a bit more of an ‘old boys’ network’ feel to them. This is why introducing a greater diversity of events and encouraging women to attend, as well as creating groups like the Oriel Women’s Network (OWN), is important.

For more information about joining Oriel Women’s Network (OWN), please email oriel.college@oriel.ox.ac.uk
The David N. Lyon Scholarship

THE POLITICS OF SEX AND GENDER EQUALITY IN DIVERSE SOCIETIES

Following a generous benefaction from Orielensis David N. Lyon (1980, Modern History), Oriel is offering a new scholarship to support one postgraduate student to undertake research into the politics of sex and gender equality in diverse societies. We are incredibly grateful for David’s generosity and vision. Here David tells his story and outlines his vision for the Scholarship.

Vision
To undertake new, distinctive, action orientated research dedicated to the underexplored intersection between law, cultural traditions and religion. I’m interested in investigating the accommodation or transformation of different, often competing, interests between society’s members.

Issue
Modern liberal democracies like the United Kingdom face many challenges in achieving full equality and inclusion for all their members. Coexistence under conditions of deep diversity has never been easy; equality is even harder. In particular, tensions can and do arise when equal recognition of, for example, sexual orientation or gender identities confront the corresponding claims of religious or cultural traditions. The constructive analysis of competing claims of members in society, with the objective of reconciliation and potentially transformation, is an essential purpose of practical politics.

Context
In considering the competing claims of members I approach this from an LGBT+ perspective.

Story
In the 1970s, as an adolescent and from a conservative background in Argyll, I was affronted to realise that the laws of my country, Scotland, criminalised my sexual acts.

The conjunction of discriminatory laws and prejudiced cultural traditions, often justified by arguable interpretations of religious texts, is a nexus of interlocking tensions affecting the lives of millions.

This scholarship is about the role of politics in working to understand, challenge and resolve the legal, cultural and religious contexts that underpin, create or inflame tensions amongst different minority or marginalised groups within all of society.

I was outraged to be so criminalised by laws underpinning the cultural traditions of a prejudiced society partly justified by religious orthodoxy; none of which represented me.

I have come to understand that sexuality is a spectrum; from earliest memory I was emphatically at the male homosexual end. No matter what law, society, or religion dictated there was never an option for me to be anything other than a cis-male homosexual.

The 1967 reform in England and Wales partially decriminalising homosexual acts for consenting adults over 21 was enacted into Scots law only in 1981. The ongoing environmental obloquy of that time was bad enough but the realisation that my country criminalised me as a teenager and widely stigmatised me for the person I am, when I could be nothing other, profoundly shocked me.

Whilst decriminalisation was a critical legal reform in the Scotland of 1981, age related discrimination versus heterosexual sex acts continued until 2000 when the Blair government equalised the age of consent in England, Wales and Scotland (with the age of consent in Northern Ireland equalised only in 2008!).
Modern liberal democracies like the United Kingdom face many challenges in achieving full equality and inclusion for all their members. Coexistence under conditions of deep diversity has never been easy; equality is even harder.

My sex acts were thus still criminalised in Scotland until 1983, the year I went down from Oriel, with legal discrimination of sex acts between homosexuals (age of consent 21) and heterosexuals (age of consent 16) continuing until 2000. This legal discrimination had a pernicious feedback loop via widespread societal stigma which religious interpretations bolstered further.

The arguments against the key homosexuality equality reforms (Equalisation of the Age of Consent 2000; repeal of Section 28, 2001; Civil Partnership Act, 2005) are the ones we hear now in respect to the Trans community (e.g.: safety and protection of children, against nature, risk to social cohesion, et al); those arguments were wrong then and are wrong now.

Although partially decriminalised in Scotland in 1981 legal discrimination continued with the passing across the UK of Section 28 of the 1988 Local Government Act ‘...prohibiting the promotion of homosexuality by local authorities...’.

This was an iniquitous law with a chilling effect especially across the education system which instantly entrenched prejudice and discrimination. There are worrying echoes of this today in similar laws being passed in Russia, Hungary and elsewhere.

At the time of the HIV/AIDS epidemic the enactment of Section 28 across the UK fatally suppressed discussion of homosexuality in education when precisely the opposite public health policy approach was warranted. At the same time HIV/AIDS was explained in the ferociously anti-homosexual media of the time as, inter-alia, God’s revenge on unnatural sex, thereby justifying continuation of laws to protect society against the supposed threats the homosexual community represented.

The brilliant Russell T. Davies series *It's a Sin* describes this period with the experience of the HIV/AIDS epidemic and its malign effects on everything from the attitude of the medical profession, to getting a mortgage, and most profoundly the fracturing of families who experienced many, many heartbreaking premature deaths. His drama is an accurate historical record.

The courage of the Blair government’s legal reforms, strongly opposed by the Conservative party policy of the time, showed that with political leadership advocating equality, legal reform, alongside societal transformation, is possible, notwithstanding religiously based objections.

I think it unarguable that UK society is now vastly richer for these equality reforms with the emancipation of literally millions of previously legally discriminated individuals. The world has not fallen in and after centuries of criminalisation, discrimination and prejudice, the position of LGBT+ people in the UK has been transformed by political action, evidentially based and focused on equality between members of society.

Homosexuals for most of my life, certainly until the Blair reforms, were legal, societal and religious outsiders, with final legal equality achieved only with a Civil Partnership Act of 2005 when property rights were equalised. I was 43. Whilst progress has been made on legal equality, there is still a long way to go on the other components of equality and acceptance in the UK, and internationally, even further still.

Out of 195 countries in the world, 69 continue to criminalise homosexuality, in six of which the death penalty applies.

Of 53 Commonwealth countries, 36 retain laws that criminalise homosexuality; this a long tail effect of British colonialism, a further factor meriting investigation.

Aside from its impact on sex acts, acceptance and individual lives, it is striking that in much of the British colonial Caribbean where homosexuality remains criminalised today the incidence of HIV/AIDS is significantly higher than in the former French and Dutch Caribbean colonies where it never was. This is just one illustration of the widespread malignant effect of homosexual criminalisation seeping into many other areas of public policy.

I am highly motivated by the injustice of this. In reflecting further on the interaction of legal, societal and religiously justified discrimination, not just as regards the LGBT+ community, such injustices also apply to the equality and rights of other minority communities.

In respect to the religious based objections to homosexuality, I am clearly no authority but I’m unpersuaded by dogmatic hostile religiously based positions where I understand other interpretations can be argued from a number of perspectives: linguistically, culturally, contextually (although I would say that wouldn’t it!). For my part I have always focussed on the love and acceptance message of Jesus, who never mentioned homosexuality.

All of which brings me to endowing the ‘Politics of Sex and Gender Equality in Diverse Societies Scholarship’, which more catchily I think of as ‘The No Going Back Equality Scholarship’, for which, in these uncivil times, I have further ambitions.

This is the story we tell our son, pinching ourselves in wonder at our privilege at his existence, now 21 and of whom we are immensely proud.
Oriel and me

Growing up in Scotland in the 1970s, being called ‘poof’, ‘queer’, ‘nancy’ at school by the boys and some of the teachers, I was thought of as a ‘late developer’; certainly not a straight ‘A’ student but I absolutely knew that I was in the wrong place and had to get out. My route to doing so, was study.

At school I was good at only one subject, history, and particularly interested in the psychological, societal and religious contexts in which political history occurred.

I was thus highly motivated and fortunate enough to be accepted at Oriel by the brilliant History academics and tutors, Robert Beddard, Jeremy Catto, Michael Howard and (briefly) Hugh Trevor-Roper. I was instantly smitten, feeling for the first time that I could be free to be myself.

I don’t remember many fellow Scots at Oxford and so was culturally in at the deep end, building my life there from scratch. My friends in the history faculty at Oriel and other colleges were close and wonderful and the relationship with tutors, especially Robert and Jeremy, inspirational. I realised that I could be the homosexual I am and the world would not fall in upon me.

I attended Chapel, though became increasingly puzzled by religious teachings and the intrusion of potentially other interpretations. I enjoyed Formal Hall and its traditions and opportunities for engagement.

I acted in a number of the storied Matthew Sturgis productions of the time with the never forgotten notice ‘David Lyon, fresh from his triumph as Mary, Queen of Scots, clearly much enjoyed trying his hand at the role of King Phillip of France (King John)’.

After Oriel

On going down, the intellectual and personal freedoms of College and Oxford were suddenly replaced by the vicious prejudices of the time. I unavoidably hurtled back into the closet as I started my, perhaps counterintuitively, chosen career in the City of London; though admittedly, the closet door had been badly charred on leaving it in Oxford.

The 1980s with the burgeoning HIV/AIDS epidemic was a dark time made more sombre by the economic changes wrought by the Thatcher governments. Its passing of Section 28, in the midst of the HIV/AIDS epidemic, politicised me profoundly and in 1988 I also met Michael, my Canadian partner, now of 33+ years standing. Exiting then, definitively incinerated what remained of my closet. The experience of the relative freedoms of my time at Oriel were a foundational spur in that hostile time to bring ‘myself’ to all situations, notwithstanding widespread discrimination and stigma.

Philanthropic focus

Our charitable work centres on LGBT+ equality, with a focus on decriminalisation; HIV/AIDS; homelessness and Oriel.

By the early 2000s I was the only (out) gay MD at Barclays and led the Barclays Capital Spectrum LGBT+ group as Executive Sponsor and was part of the early initiatives promoting diversity and inclusion across the institution.

Personally, and corporately, we supported Stonewall equality and the Terrence Higgins Trust HIV/AIDS organisations, and Michael and I are now Ambassadors for both.

Given the relatively high proportion of LGBT+ homeless, especially young people rejected by their families, often on religious grounds, Barclays Capital was persuaded that the Albert Kennedy Trust become a supported charity and we organised their most productive fundraising ever at that point.

Recently we funded a multi-year LGBT+ inclusion and awareness initiative at St. Mungo’s, the homelessness charity, where support for the LGBT+ homeless remains disproportionately under-resourced in that woefully under-resourced sector.

In the last few years, aside from LGBT+ rights, HIV/AIDS, homelessness and Oriel, I have also become active with the excellent research-led advocacy charity, Prostate Cancer UK, the disease that, sadly, much too early took Jeremy Catto from us.
Oriel College has some of the earliest and most important collections of historic silver and silver-gilt – together traditionally known as ‘plate’ – of all the Oxford colleges. Although some pieces will be known to readers through their appearance at College dinners, many will be less familiar.

Oriel is fortunate to have a group of late medieval silver that managed to escape the melting pot during the 1640s, when many colleges were forced to hand over much of their plate to Charles I for the Royalist cause. This group comprises the so-called ‘Founder’s Cup’, a mazer, and a coconut cup.

The Founder’s Cup (Piece 1) is unquestionably the most important single item in the entire collection, with true international significance. There has been much debate about its origin, but it has now been conclusively identified as the work of a Paris goldsmith, made around 1350. College records show that it was purchased second-hand by Oriel in 1493 and so cannot have had any connection with the foundation of the College in the 1320s. The crowns and Es that decorate the body and cover were long believed to represent Edward II, under whose patronage the College was founded, but they are now thought to belong to an unknown French patron. Due to the impact of war and revolution, French medieval plate is exceptionally rare, making the Founder’s Cup even more of a remarkable survival. In Oxford, only the Queen’s College drinking horn is older, and then only by a decade or so.

The Oriel Mazer (Piece 5) is another rare survival. Mazers were popular medieval drinking vessels made from turned burr wood, often maple. All Oxford’s early colleges would have had them, but now the only examples survive at All Souls and Oriel. Oriel’s dates from around 1470 and is said to have been presented by John Carpenter (1399–1476), Provost of Oriel from 1430, Bishop of Worcester 1443–76. As at Oriel, some mazers were given beautiful silver or silver-gilt mounts to increase their status. They fell out of fashion in the 16th century. Oriel’s mazer is inscribed ‘Vir racione bibas non quod petit atra voluptas sic caro casta datur lis lingue suppeditatur’ which has been translated as:

Man, in thy draughts let reason be thy guide,
And not the craving of perverted lust
So honest nourishment will be supplied
And strife of tongue be trampled in the dust

Provost John Carpenter is also said to have presented Oriel’s coconut cup (Piece 3). Originally from the Pacific Ocean, coconuts were imported into Europe by the Portuguese from their colonies in India, Ceylon, and the Seychelles, or by Venetian merchants via Arab traders. Known as India nuts, they were greatly prized as exotic rarities. Their size and shape made them ideal drinking vessels and they were widely believed to have aphrodisiac and medicinal qualities, including the ability to absorb or detect poisons. They were carved or polished and given elaborate silver mounts that emphasised and enhanced their value. Oriel’s cup has a beautiful silver-gilt lobed stem and flared lip and foot. They lost their status in the 17th century, when coconuts began to be imported in ever-increasing quantities. Oxford is remarkable for the number that have been preserved in its colleges.

No 16th-century plate survives in College, but there are many important and beautiful pieces from the following two centuries. These include a group of Chapel plate given by Henry Box (d. 1662) of Witney in 1641, made just prior to the turmoil of the English Civil War, and fine alms dishes and altar candlesticks made following the Restoration in 1660. The College has two large 17th-century Grace Cups, which continued the medieval tradition of communal drinking from a shared vessel in Hall. The Grace Cup given by Martin Sanford of Ninehead Florey (matric. 1654) is a rare example of College plate made during the Commonwealth (Piece 6). The Great Lion Tankard (Piece 9) holds a gallon and has the distinction of being the largest tankard in all the Oxford colleges. It was the gift of Richard Wenman in 1679 and is so named because of the splendid cast silver lion on its thumbpiece.

Highlights from the 18th century include an elaborate rococo two-handled cup and cover (Piece 7), by renowned goldsmith Charles Frederick Kandler, and a beautiful pierced bread basket (Piece 4) made by Paul...
Due to the impact of war and revolution, French medieval plate is exceptionally rare, making the Founder’s Cup even more of a remarkable survival.

Matthew Winterbottom, Curator of Sculpture and Decorative Arts at the Ashmolean Museum

1 Cup and cover ‘Founder’s Cup’, silver-gilt, Paris, about 1350.
2 Four candlesticks, silver, London, Thomas Heming, 1771/2.
3 Coconut cup, silver-gilt mounts, unmarked, English, about 1480.
4 Bread basket, silver, London, Paul de Lamerie, 1744/5.
5 Mazer, maple wood with enamelled silver-gilt mounts, unmarked, English, about 1470, with later foot.
6 Grace Cup, silver, London, maker’s mark RF, with mullet below, in a heart, 1654/5.
7 Two-handled cup and cover, silver, London, Charles Frederick Kandler, 1742/3.
8 Four decanter stands, silver-gilt, London, Paul Storr for Rundell, Bridge, and Rundell, 1818/19.
9 Great Lion Tankard, silver, London, maker’s mark TC with dolphin above and trefoil below, 1678/9.

de Lamerie (1688–1751) and given by Paul Methuen (1723–95) in 1745. De Lamerie was the greatest silversmith working in England in the 18th century and the most celebrated of the Huguenot goldsmiths who transformed British silver in the late 17th and 18th centuries with their sophisticated French techniques and styles. The College also has a fine set of neoclassical candlesticks (Piece 2) made by Thomas Heming (1722–1801), Royal Goldsmith to George III, which were the gift of Sir Watkin Williams-Wynn, 4th Baronet (1748–1789) in 1772. It is also fortunate to have a set of superb Regency decanter stands (Piece 8) made by Paul Storr for Rundell, Bridge, and Rundell, and presented by Thomas Greene (d. 1827) in 1819. Rundell, Bridge, and Rundell supplied most of the magnificent plate to George IV that is still in use at Buckingham Palace and Windsor Castle today.

As an obvious store of wealth – but also a store of memory, history, and tradition – plate has always been an important element of College life. This has changed more recently, but I hope this brief overview will encourage readers to appreciate and cherish this extraordinary collection built up over the past 700 years.

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Victoria Jenkin (1986, PPE) is a Domestic Abuse Outreach Worker working in an independent team within a multi-agency framework in Surrey to help ensure the safety of survivors of domestic abuse.
Domestic abuse work was never on my radar as a job. Like many career paths, mine has been meandering: temping took me to working at Jazz FM through its launch; then three years’ public relations consultancy at Ogilvy Adams & Rhinehart, before redundancy took me to strategy consulting at Gemini Consulting. The birth of my second of four children prompted a two-decade stint as a stay-at-home mother, before I stepped back into the paid workplace last year.

I was familiar with the Outreach team and had been involved in some volunteering for them, helping train medical professionals in domestic abuse safeguarding and supporting victims at drop-in coffee mornings. When a job opportunity came up, I knew it was a good fit with my values, strengths, and skills as I thrive in people-centred roles and am strongly motivated by a sense of fairness.

A huge amount of my role has been offering moral and emotional support, providing a safe space to be heard and believed, simply reflecting back some self-worth and validation of survivor experiences. I have found that, whatever else has occurred, psychological and emotional abuse are often cited by survivors as being the worst elements of the abuse. Practical help and advocacy always start and end with client safety and might include: sourcing refuge; supporting a survivor through the court process; liaising with other agencies, such as the police, housing, or social services; or referring and signposting to counselling, legal, or other specialist support.

I have been involved in running the Freedom Programme, a national programme educating survivors on the mindsets and behaviours of perpetrators and what mutually respectful relationships might look like. I also run drop-in support groups which provide a safe space, connection, empathy, and free legal support, as well as wellbeing groups which share evidence-based interventions to improve wellbeing, self-esteem, and happiness.

COVID has meant that our team saw a 30% increase in referrals from April to September 2020 compared to the same period the previous year. The largest increase related to police referrals; self-referrals remained fairly similar, but we are anticipating a surge in these once restrictions are lifted and more survivors have a safe and private opportunity to contact our service.

While some of our clients have benefited from restrictions, which make it harder for a non-resident perpetrator to harass a victim, for many victims, COVID has exacerbated the abuse and isolation they experience.

Lockdowns, homeworking, or shielding have meant an inability to get any respite from abuse or access any existing support networks of friends, family, or colleagues. While the rest of us may use technology to facilitate connections and make the best of a bad situation, even a simple telephone or video call is not an option if your abuser is listening, watching, or monitoring everything that goes on in the home. Job losses and financial hardship are further having an impact on household tensions, choices, and economic abuse.

For those not co-habiting any longer, co-parenting may now mean contact with a perpetrator when handing over children, where previously relatives or school may have provided a safe intermediary. My colleagues who work with children have noticed a dip in referrals at times and while schools have been as accommodating as they can in facilitating working with children, this has presented numerous problems, from burst ‘bubbles’ to having to screen those who are clinically vulnerable.

Like everyone else, our team has had to adapt to working in different ways this last year. As I write (during the third lockdown, March 2021) the range of support we can offer clients, while still personal, is very much compromised. Although I do run in-person support groups, we cannot work face to face on an individual basis with clients who are dealing with substantial trauma. We cannot accompany those clients to court, cannot be present at Clare’s Law disclosures (when police disclose to an individual details of their partners’ abusive pasts), we cannot be the safe and friendly face offering empathy over a coffee in a café. It is harder to nurture rapport and trust with a client remotely over the telephone than it is in person; learning how to trust in people again – simply being believed and being able to accept support and advocacy as genuine and deserved – can be a crucial part of healing for clients.

Within our team, as well as the sheer increase in caseload, we have faced similar technological, logistical, administrative, and safety challenges to many other workers. It is an emotional and practical challenge, in dealing with the work we do, not having all the team physically around if working at home or with limited numbers in the office.

My personal way of getting through the last year has been prioritising the age-old wisdoms of finding joy and gratitude in and for the small things; connecting with others as best I can; and finding purpose in life. These practices do make a difference.

If offering ‘life advice’ to current students – and it is hard to pick just one piece – I would say to invest your time and energy in relationships that nurture and nourish you; divest yourself of those that drain and detract from you.

To anyone considering working in the field of domestic abuse, be honest with yourself about your motivations, strengths, and your ability to be psychologically resilient; you’re not going to be able to rescue or fix others and many cases will be harrowing. Know that you’ll be overworked, underpaid and come across many clients you will not be able to help in all the ways you might wish. But there is nothing more gratifying than being in a role which is potentially life changing – even life-saving – for many survivors, and seeing them being able to stand just that little bit taller.
Chris Brown
1982, Modern History

Key Worker Role:
Staff Nurse, Care-of-the-Elderly

Where has life taken you since you left Oriel?
After Oriel I studied and worked at the Urban Theology Unit in Sheffield for three years, where I grappled with the question of what a hyper-educated young man could best do to make himself useful. This led to my applying for nurse training and I qualified as a registered nurse in 1992. Since then I have worked in many different care-of-the-elderly settings in Yorkshire and London.

What drew you to the medical sector?
I wanted a role that involved using my hands and my heart, as well as my head. Nurses need the widest possible human skillset – analytical, practical, and empathetic – to care holistically for people in need.

What do you most enjoy about working as a nurse on a care-of-the-elderly ward?
I have always respected and enjoyed the company of older people. During my three decades in nursing, I have had the honour of caring for veterans of each of the world wars, both in the military and on the home fronts, and have heard many stories, some of which are printable.

What have been the challenges you have faced in this role and at the hospital more generally during the COVID-19 pandemic?
Imagine a hard day at work. Now imagine doing the same shift in a suit of armour. PPE is vital and has always been available, in my own setting, but wearing it is exhausting and makes even the briefest task more difficult.

How do you think the pandemic has affected your sector?
One of the few good things to have come out of this year’s experiences has been a greater recognition of our interdependence as a society. We need care-givers and home-helps, shop workers and bin collectors, ‘poor bloody infantry’ as well as generals.

What one thing most helped you to get through each lockdown? When we all faced such an uncertain time, how did you cope with the stress of the situation?
I have been scared. I have been exhausted.

What has been your greatest personal/professional triumph?
Endurance! As the descendant of Northumbrian miners, who never flinched, I am proud of the length of time I have spent at my own (wholly different) coalface.

Do you have any unusual hobbies?
No, just reading and hiking. I decompress when walking, especially on the longer footpaths that cross watersheds or follow ancient tracks. There is something special about that combination of landscape, history, and movement.

What is the one piece of ‘life’ advice you would give to a current student?
We had a saying at the Urban Theology Unit: ‘Where you are is who you are.’ When thinking how you will spend your future life, look for the spaces where you can be used and useful.

What advice would you give to a student wishing to join your industry?
A nurse’s life is a life with purpose.

Testament of Youth by Vera Brittain. The combination of Oxford and nursing in a great national crisis. My great-aunt was a nurse in London in 1918, during the flu pandemic. We walk in the footsteps of those who have gone before us.

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Derek Peaple
1983, Modern History

Key Worker Role:
Secondary School Headteacher

Where has life taken you since you left Oriel?
Through the most rewarding of learning journeys, initially as a teacher of History and Physical Education to spending the last 20 years of my career as a headteacher in two large state secondary schools. In September 2020, I took ‘early retirement’ to set up my own education consultancy business. I now work variously as a school improvement adviser in a Local Education Authority, as the Head of Education at a leading cyber-security company, supporting the safeguarding of young people when learning online, and as the Director of an Ed Tech company developing teacher training on blended learning. The last two both involve dealing directly with the challenges of schooling in the COVID context. Lastly, I am designing and delivering school leadership development programmes for university education departments and a number of national education networks.

What drew you to the education sector?
The desire to share my combined love of history and sport, first developed at school and then further deepened at Oriel, with young people in order to excite and inspire them to find their own passion and fulfil their potential. It only takes one spark to ignite a lifelong love of learning!

What do you most enjoy about working in the education sector?
With a surname like Peaple, it has to be the interaction with other people! Obviously at first, developing the talent and potential of young people as individuals when you teach in the classroom, but also then the work involved in building staff teams. Ultimately, as a headteacher, helping to shape the shared vision and values of a whole school community of teachers, parents, and students around a common purpose.

What were the challenges you faced as a headmaster during the COVID-19 pandemic?
They were both specific and general. Specifically, two stand out. Firstly, needing to ‘scramble’ – virtually overnight – existing platforms for remote learning to ensure that we were rapidly able to offer continuity of high-quality education to all students at home. Secondly, to equally rapidly generate teacher-assessed grades for GCSE and A Level, based on rigorous internal moderation and checking, which ultimately formed the basis of the results achieved by our young people following the summer’s initial grading debacle. And generally, endeavouring to act as a source of stability and reassurance to inevitably anxious members of the whole school community – parents, young people, and staff.

What have you learnt from this experience?
The strength of communities working together and their resilience. If anything, the experience has refocused the school on its core purpose and the wider role that it plays in promoting social cohesion and ensuring that all members of a community are cared for and supported.

Is there anything you would do differently in a future crisis of this nature?

I think schools are now far better prepared in terms of remote learning, and therefore also better informed about how to effectively communicate expectations about the flow, pace, and nature of that learning to families as part of a planned and extended overall education programme.

How do you think the pandemic has affected your sector?
After the obvious initial disruption, there is a genuine opportunity now to build on the best of lockdown practice to develop creative approaches to ‘blended learning’ which harness new technology alongside the best of traditional practice to motivate and engage young people. It has also transformed approaches to professional development and means that, moving forward, I think we will be far more agile and collaborative in the way teacher training is developed and best practice shared. As an extension to this, I believe that we will see schools and other providers working more closely together to offer new courses. COVID has demonstrated that we do not need to be confined by school gates or timetables to provide great learning that reaches across previous boundaries and perceived constraints.

What one thing most helped you to get through each lockdown? When we all faced such an uncertain time, how did you cope with the stress of the situation?
As schools were still open full-time for vulnerable and key worker children, it was actually very much ‘business as unusually usual’ for me! I was in school every day, supported by a fantastic team of staff on a rota basis. Staying focused and providing one point of continuity and certainty for the community in the midst of so much uncertainty meant that there was not much time for reflection – you just got on with it! Daily communication with that community, and responding to rapidly changing government guidelines, kept me pretty occupied!

What motivates you?
Wanting to make a positive difference to young peoples’ lives.

What was/is one of the greatest challenges in your job?
I think that it is probably the constantly growing expectation, further highlighted by COVID, of what schools do and provide. Teaching and learning are now only two of many priorities, alongside social welfare and healthcare support, to name but a few.

Who or what inspired you during your time at Oriel?
The intellectual freedom and growing confidence nurtured by some brilliant tutors. Perhaps notably Jeremy Catto, who was an
inspiration to generations of Oriel historians. His continued and genuine interest in my post-College career in education was also very special.

What has been your greatest personal/professional triumph?
Professionally, probably acknowledgement from Ofsted that a ‘values-driven ambition for students’ was at the heart of my approach to school leadership. Given my professional interests, it was also a fantastic – and unique – experience to contribute to the education programmes for both the 2012 and now 2021 Olympic and Paralympic Games. Personally, it is simply the strength I draw every day from the stability of my family life with my wife and son.

Do you have any unusual hobbies?
Not sure it is unusual (!), but I now have the pleasure of being commissioned to develop education materials around my twin passions of history and sport as Sporting Heritage’s UK Education Ambassador. This involves indulging myself writing themed assemblies or classroom materials designed to engage, inspire, and excite around wider learning from the sporting past.

Do you do any voluntary work or work in the community?
Yes, quite extensively. I am a governor at a primary and secondary school and an FE college, and I am also the trustee of a number of local charities, including Sport in Mind, which seeks to address mental health issues through sport and physical activity.

What is the one piece of ‘life’ advice you would give to a current student?
Trust your instincts and embrace every opportunity for learning that this completely unique university experience – and those in life and work which will follow – offers you. And in whatever you do, never underestimate the impact that an act of kindness can have on those around you.

What advice would you give to a student wishing to join your industry?
Teaching is a genuine vocation and passion. The rewards of inspiring young people every day to be the best that they can be, based on your own academic passion and personal convictions, are immeasurable. Go with that passion and commitment. Whatever the challenges, you will never regret your decision.

The Reverend Philippa Sargent
1986, Mathematics

Key Worker Role:
Funeral worker

Where has life taken you since you left Oriel?
After two years of trying to convince myself that I enjoyed management consultancy, I finally did something I had always wanted to do and joined the Navy. I ended up completing nine years as a Warfare Officer (mostly navigating) and 13 years as a Training Manager. Then, in 2013, I was called to ordained ministry in the Church of England.

How did you start your ministerial journey?
Back in my Oriel days, I could not have imagined doing this; it was only some years after graduating that the Church of England priesthood was opened to women and, by then, I had committed to a very different way of life in the Navy. My faith took some time to re-establish itself, and I must be pretty slow on the uptake, but it eventually dawned on me that determination was not going to get me there. Quite simply, my heart was not really in it anymore and I was not prepared to become the person that I would need to be to make that happen. And, around that time, someone I respected hugely finally sat me down, looked me in the eye, told me to stop deflecting those questions with a joke and actually think and pray about where God was calling me.

What do you most enjoy about working as a vicar?
It is a long list, but top of it is definitely working with children. I love the straightforward way they approach faith and their fearlessness in asking the tough questions that adults often avoid. And I love an excuse to be silly – working with kids allows me to indulge that side of my character to the full!

What have been the challenges you have faced as a vicar during the COVID-19 pandemic?
A lot of the challenges have been the same as everyone else’s: how to cope with the isolation; how much or little of what you do can be transferred online; how to keep the things going that cannot go digital. A good deal of the challenge has been compounded by ministering in a rural benefice, where broadband can be patchy and where the great majority of the congregations are
firmly in the vulnerable groups by virtue of age. We went online with recorded services of Compline and Morning Prayer from the very first week, but we also needed to back that up with paper to reach those who can’t or won’t engage with the internet. But the biggest challenge has, without a doubt, been the relentlessness of it all. Rural Dorset has been spared the worst; I have been fortunate only to have officiated at one funeral where COVID was the cause of death. We still need to abide by all the restrictions and we need to keep going with the changes we have made, but it seems that almost every week I am asked a version of the question, ‘Why can’t we get back to normal now?’ Finding compassionate and loving ways to explain the answer again and again can be very draining!

What have you learnt from this experience?
My video and audio editing skills have improved beyond measure. And I have relearnt a lot of things that I once took for granted: that a written letter is always appreciated; that a smile and a wave across the street means a huge amount when you are lonely; that a phone call can be the highlight of the day. I have learnt that I can say everything necessary in a sermon in five minutes, if I really put my mind to it. And I have learnt that two hours on Zoom is far too much!

Is there anything you would do differently in a future crisis of this nature?
I actually don’t think there is. Ministry is always so very much about responding to the need in front of you with the resources available to you and that is what we have tried to do for the last year. It is what we will continue to do as we come out of this pandemic, and I have no doubt that it is exactly what we will do when the next crisis comes around.

How do you think the pandemic has affected your role and your congregation?
It has been fascinating to see who has been most resilient. It has often been some of the oldest folk, who already know what it means to be confined to their homes and reliant on the telephone and the television, who have risen to the challenge to reach out and stay in touch with others. There are three elderly ladies in my churches who regularly call me and open with the words, ‘Now, how are YOU, dear?’ When the first lockdown started, I had been here for about 18 months – that time had been quite turbulent, in part as I was very ill for a couple of months. But the
enforced distance from each other seems, almost counter-intuitively, to have brought me closer to my congregations. I hope that the closeness will long outlast the restrictions. If nothing else, I will always be the vicar who ‘saw them through the pandemic’!

What one thing most helped you to get through each lockdown? When we all faced such an uncertain time, how did you cope with the stress of the situation?
Initially, I coped by being busy. Trying to keep the usual routines going when everything required so much more thought and creativity and sheer effort meant there was not much time to dwell on how I felt about it. But as the new routines became familiar, the isolation of living alone in a great barn of a vicarage became oppressive. So, I was grateful beyond measure when ‘bubbles’ became possible. The stress has been so much less since I have been able to spend time with my parents, who have supported me hugely in ministry. The day I could hug my mum and dad was like Christmas, Easter, and my birthday rolled into one.

What motivates you?
Without doubt, it is the joy of finding God’s image in everyone I meet. Sometimes that can be a challenge, but finding that spark of divinity in the people I talk to each day and responding to it is what keeps me going – pandemic or not.

What was/is one of the greatest challenges in your job?
Apathy! It is why I love working with children – they are not shy about being enthusiastic. But so often the adults I minister seem not to care enough to get fired up. That is such a shame, when I believe that we have such amazing stories to tell and so much joy to share with the world.

Who or what inspired you during your time at Oriel?
Arriving at Oriel just one year after women were first admitted, I was really inspired by the collective attitude of all those women. We were starting so much from scratch, especially sports teams. I was the least sporty schoolgirl in the world, but I came to Oriel and tried everything: rowing, squash, cricket, football, hockey, korfball, pool, even an occasional game of rugby. Just being willing to give it a go was enough and I loved that.

What has been your greatest personal/professional triumph?
Ask me that when I retire!

Do you have any unusual hobbies?
I am proud to say that I have been playing Pokémon Go since it was released while I was a curate. It gets me out of the house and I share my enthusiasm with at least one member of my congregations!

Do you do any voluntary work or work in the community?
I am a trustee of our local foodbank, a cause that I am passionate about. And, during the first lockdown, I got involved with our local COVID Action Group. It was great to be able to tie the work I do with the foodbank up with the passion of other volunteers to reach out to those struggling to meet the early challenges. During the first lockdown and throughout the summer, we saw something like a doubling in demand in our town (although the increase across the whole district we serve was less dramatic). In many cities, in particular, the Trussell Trust have needed to meet an even more concerning rise in need for their help. I am really thrilled that the visibility of the demand here helped to inspire the setting up locally of a ‘Local Pantry’, where anyone on a low income can subscribe for a weekly family shop at a fraction of the supermarket cost – and it helps to reduce food waste as well. We are hoping that, in the long term, the two organisations will increasingly be able to work together to meet different kinds and levels of need and provide some really effective signposting of individuals towards agencies who can help with the Trussell Trust’s ultimate aim to eliminate food poverty in our country within five years.

What is the one piece of ‘life’ advice you would give to a current student?
Try anything and everything. But stick with the things that bring you joy. Joy is a gift of God and if we forget to go looking for it we become so much less than He intended us to be.

What advice would you give to a student wishing to join the clergy?
Listen to others, as well as trying to decide for yourself. Left to my own devices, I would never have become a priest. Someone else will almost certainly see it in you before you see it in yourself.
Dr Beth Harrison
1985, Medicine (BA Physiological Sciences 1988; BM BCh 1991; DM 2001)

Key Worker Role:
Consultant Haematologist

Where has life taken you since you left Oriel?
After qualifying as a doctor in 1991, I completed my general professional training in Stoke-on-Trent, Oxford, and Slough, and then commenced specialist training in haematology in 1994 with posts in Oxford, Sheffield, and a two-year research post in Manchester. Since 2002, I have been working as a Consultant Haematologist at University Hospitals Coventry and Warwickshire NHS Trust, based at the University Hospital in Coventry.

What drew you to the medical sector?
I had wanted to be a doctor since I was young, and so medicine was always the degree I was going to read at university.

What do you most enjoy about working as a doctor?
Patient contact. In my specialty, we have the privilege of looking after many of our patients over a very long period of time, and so haematology combines those long-term relationships with patients with a fascinating scientific basis to everything we do.

What has it been like to work in other roles during the COVID-19 pandemic?
In late March 2020, the numbers of patients presenting unwell to A&E increased very rapidly and there was a risk that there would not be enough senior doctors to assess them. I developed a rota of my consultant colleagues who are physicians but do not do general medicine, and we did shift work in A&E alongside the emergency doctors, helping to assess and admit sick patients with COVID-19. I was also involved in setting up community phlebotomy clinics for shielding patients, so they could have blood tests in a completely safe environment, away from hospitals or GP surgeries. In the second wave, I have assisted in the COVID vaccination clinic as a prescriber (Coventry was the first site worldwide to administer a COVID vaccine outside a clinical trial) and when the number of patients in the ICU was at its height, I worked in a clinical support role assisting the ICU nurses.

What have been the challenges you have faced in these roles and at the hospital more generally during the COVID-19 pandemic?
All these additional roles have been in addition to my core clinical duties. The workload has increased because it has been more complicated to deliver safe care for my patient group, many of whom are clinically extremely vulnerable. Overall, the biggest challenge has been exhaustion, both for me and for my colleagues from all professional groups, and this has been both physical and emotional.

What have you learnt from this experience?
I have seen colleagues working together to overcome these challenges and putting patient care first. I have been overwhelmed by the compassion that I have seen shown to patients, families, and each other. I have been part of rapid changes to the ways we work – sometimes implementing changes over only one or two days – and sometimes that has worked well but sometimes it has not!

Is there anything you would do differently in a future crisis of this nature?
I am not sure. The urgency of the situation certainly meant that some decisions made with the best intentions early in the pandemic were probably not the best. However, the teams that I work in tried very hard to involve everyone who could bring their expertise to decision making, and when we kept the patients at the centre of our thinking we made the best decisions.

How do you think the pandemic has affected the NHS?
It has been a disruptor. Some of this will be good; some people who do not usually get a voice have been able to contribute to change, and changes that were occurring very slowly, including flexible delivery of care, have been accelerated. For example, before last year we were told that we could either do a clinic with all patients attending face to face or with all patients being telephoned, not a mixture. Now all my clinics are a mixture of both types of appointments, and we can decide which is better for each patient. This is better for everyone.

What one thing most helped you to get through each lockdown? When we all faced such an uncertain time, how did you cope with the stress of the situation?
For me, as a hospital doctor, my life has been less disrupted than most of my friends and family. Every day I have gone out to work as I usually do and worked with the same teams of colleagues. The workload has increased, but the workplace has felt familiar and this has been hugely reassuring. However, it has been stressful. At work, I have been supported by wonderful colleagues always ready to talk things through. At home, my husband and daughters have been towers of strength and love.

What motivates you?
Two things – trying to give the best possible care I can to the patients I look after and trying to help others to develop their services to improve the care they give.

What was/is one of the greatest challenges in your job?
Fitting everything in.

Who or what inspired you during your time at Oriel?
I remember several inspirational teachers – academics or doctors who inspired me to apply rigour and a questioning mind to everything I was taught. As a doctor, it is important to question the information you have in front of you and to keep asking...
yourself ‘Am I right here?’. I started to learn how to do that at Oriel.

What has been your greatest personal/professional triumph?
Balancing a busy and fulfilling career with bringing up two wonderful daughters with my husband, Martin.

Do you have any unusual hobbies?
No – to relax I run, garden, and spend time with my family.

Do you do any voluntary work or work in the community?
I am a qualified swimming official, as is my husband, and before COVID we spent several weekends each year volunteering at swimming galas, helping to ensure they were run safely and fairly. We hope we can return to this in the future!

What is the one piece of ‘life’ advice you would give to a current student?
A career choice is never irrevocable – make sure you really enjoy whatever you choose to do, and if you stop enjoying it, or are not fulfilled, consider a change of direction.

What advice would you give to a student wishing to join your industry?
Medicine is not like other undergraduate degrees; everyone reading medicine wants to qualify as a doctor. However, there are thousands of different paths you can take after you have qualified; it is important to take time to work out which one is right for you, and where you will be able to enjoy yourself, and be challenged and fulfilled.

Jason Dorsett

Key Worker Role:
Chief Finance Officer, Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

Where has life taken you since you left Oriel?
I trained as an accountant after my DPhil. In 2006 I joined Monitor, an NHS regulator. I enjoy making things happen more than criticising others and so I moved into hospital management. I was lucky that the CFO job in Oxford opened up just when I was ready in 2016.

What do you most enjoy about working as the Chief Finance Officer of Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust?
Oxford is probably the most inspiring place to be on the planet right now. More patients survive COVID-19 here than almost anywhere else. We launched a randomised controlled trial into COVID-19 treatments, saving tens of thousands of lives worldwide. We validated the testing technologies being used in the UK. Our University colleagues developed one of the first vaccines, with hundreds of our staff among the brave volunteers in the early-stage trials. These things do not happen in other hospitals.

What have been the challenges you have faced in this role and as a Hospital Trust during the COVID-19 pandemic?
Four of my colleagues died during the spring from COVID, even though we moved to universal PPE ahead of government guidance. In our hospital COVID-19 takes as many lives each day as a major car crash – every day, for weeks on end. It is relentless and heartbreaking. These are lonely deaths, distanced by PPE, and without family. Our people are exhausted and many are traumatised.

What have you learnt from this experience?
Not to forget what we have been through. We are putting up a new ICU building at the moment in just 10 months, rather than the years an NHS project normally takes. Thanks to incredibly generous donors, the whole of the top floor is going to be a wellbeing facility for our ICU staff. We would like to replicate this across the hospital if we can attract more donors.

Is there anything you would do differently in a future crisis of this nature?
Nothing unusual – from the start I would eat better, exercise more, drink less, spend more time reflecting with colleagues, and more time relaxing with my family. These are pretty much the ingredients of a good life in ‘peacetime’. In a prolonged crisis, they are what keeps you functioning. Plus, I should not have waited until June to shave off most of my hair.

How do you think the pandemic has affected your sector?
Large parts of the NHS have been broken by COVID. We are wrapping our arms around our people and bringing in teams of psychologists and support from the military for PTSD. It will be a long time before the NHS recovers, but waiting times for non-urgent operations are so high that we need to make a start as soon as possible.

What one thing most helped you to get through each lockdown? When we all faced such an uncertain time, how did you cope with the stress of the situation?
I started to use a Park and Ride in the first lockdown and then cycle the last couple of miles to my office in Headington. Getting a little bit of exercise in twice a day and clearing my head outside has made a huge difference.

What motivates you?
Protecting the promise of free healthcare at the point of delivery. We spend less on healthcare in the UK as a percentage of GDP than most advanced industrialised economies, but we spend it more efficiently. I do not take any of this for granted. My job is to safeguard the financial sustainability of free NHS care in Oxford (about 1% of the total NHS).

What was/is one of the greatest challenges in your job?
I am an introvert who has put myself forward into a very public leadership position. Everything I do is potentially scrutinised. When I took this job, I deleted photos on my Facebook profile where I was enjoying myself just in case they were ever fodder for a tabloid hatchet job.
Who or what inspired you during your time at Oriel?
My friends and my tutors, who included Mark Whittow. I remember the night Mark died. The news reached the hospital executives of a car accident near Banbury and then as the details came through there was the awful realisation that it was Mark, and that Oriel and his family had lost someone special.

What has been your greatest personal/professional triumph?
The NHS has been through a prolonged financial crisis since 2014. Most hospital trusts have made significant losses and many have required bailouts from the Department of Health. The last few years in Oxford have not been easy, but we came through that crisis with a net surplus and without taking a penny of bailout cash.

Do you have any unusual hobbies?
I have a busy job, three children, and a dog. There is not time in my life for many hobbies, but I have taken up open water swimming and we play an extremely wide range of board games at home.

Do you do any voluntary work or work in the community?
Not at the moment. I was a school governor and involved in the local Labour Party before family and career put a stop to that. I would like to do more when my children are a little older.

What is the one piece of ‘life’ advice you would give to a current student?
You are privileged to enjoy the education you are receiving and the friendships you are making at Oriel. Do something special with that privilege after you have left.

What advice would you give to a student wishing to join your industry?
Start wherever you can get the best technical training you can in your chosen profession before moving into the industry in which you want to work. Then do something that will make your children proud of you.

Large parts of the NHS have been broken by COVID. We are wrapping our arms around our people and bringing in teams of psychologists and support from the military for PTSD.
Ana (née Ignjatovic) Wilson
1996, BA BMBCh

Key Worker Role:
Consultant Gastroenterologist and Specialist Endoscopist

Where has life taken you since you left Oriel?
After I left Oriel, I spent years specialising in gastroenterology, first in Oxford and later on in London – I work at St Mark’s Hospital (National Bowel Hospital) and Royal Marsden. I met my husband through work and now have two delightful step-children and a daughter.

What drew you to the medical sector?
I have always enjoyed analysing things and the ‘detective’ part of medical work – investigating a patient’s symptoms – has always appealed to me. The large variety of opportunities within the medical field was also a large attraction.

What do you most enjoy about working as a doctor?
Definitely working with patients. Looking after patients with chronic conditions such as inflammatory bowel disease (Crohn’s and colitis) is particularly rewarding as you spend years working with them, often trying to see them through major life changes (weddings, children, etc.), while trying to help control their disease. I also really enjoy the practical aspects of my job (endoscopy and colonoscopy), which means it is never boring!

What is it like to work on a COVID-19 ward?
Bewildering and emotionally exhausting, both for the patients and staff. Particularly during the first wave, many patients admitted to hospital were expecting to die so, as well as managing very sick patients who were eventually admitted to intensive care, we were trying to reassure the less sick patients that they would leave the hospital feeling better. The difficulty with COVID was that it was not always easy to predict who would get better and who would not – I sent a 30-year-old man to intensive care unit on the same day as discharging a 105-year-old home.

What have been the challenges you have faced in this role and at the hospital more generally during the COVID-19 pandemic?
In the first wave there was not enough protective equipment and there was a general sense of anxiety. This was augmented by increasing numbers of colleagues falling sick with the virus, leaving fewer of us on the wards. There was a limited amount we could do for the patients and behind each patient there was a story, often psychologically traumatising. By the second wave, although staff were exhausted, we were much better prepared and equipped, and actually had some treatment options for patients. Seeing many more patients leave the hospital during the second wave was incredibly gratifying. Going back on the wards, having not done ward work for 12 years, was definitely challenging!

What have you learnt from this experience?
I think it has emphasised the importance of human interaction and that I would not swap my job for any other!

Is there anything you would do differently in a future crisis of this nature?
I am not sure I would do anything differently personally, but there is a plenty of scope for improvement with regards to how staff are re-deployed and routine care paused, as well as the general organisation of the NHS.

How do you think the pandemic has affected the NHS?
I think it has exposed some of the weaknesses that have been obvious for years – a low number of all medical beds, particularly in intensive care, per head of the population and a lack of qualified staff, both medical and nursing. I think the staff are generally exhausted with low morale and, in my opinion, planned time off should have been incorporated into rotas as the number of COVID cases decreased.
Every day is a new challenge, which is great. Council?
Development for Hampshire County
the Head of Commissioning and Service
What do you most enjoy about working as
Commissioner.
provider organisation and as a local authority
Operations Director for a Learning Disability
sectors. More recently, I have worked as an
various roles in the voluntary and statutory
in another University before undertaking
six years of my own studies, I went to work
I really enjoyed life at University, so after
Where has life taken you since you left Oriel?
Hampshire County Council
Development, Children’s Services,
Head of Commissioning and Service
Key Worker Role:
2000, MSc Applied Social Studies and Diploma in Social Work (DipSW)
Laura Timms
2000, MSc Applied Social Studies and Diploma in Social Work (DipSW)

What one thing most helped you to get
through each lockdown? When we all faced
such an uncertain time, how did you cope
with the stress of the situation?
Our children! On a serious note, I think we
were lucky in a way as both my husband and
I were going to work and our kids were going
to key worker classes, so it helped maintain
the illusion of reality. The kids very quickly
got used to not kissing or hugging us after
work until we got changed out of our clothes
and had a shower! We started Joe Wicks’
PE sessions with them back in March. My
husband and I have continued them on a
nearly daily basis long after the kids have
stopped doing them and they have definitely
helped with the stress. I particularly like the
ones from sunny locations. I am sure it helps
lift my mood.

What motivates you?
Seeing patients get better and the self-
satisfaction of doing my job well.

What was/is one of the greatest challenges
in your job?
I struggle with some of the bureaucracy in
the NHS and the lack of capacity to see all
my patients on time. The demand continues
to increase and the capacity has not kept up
the same pace. I find it frustrating dealing
with managers, many of whom are transient,
do not seem to share the same clinical
priorities as medical professionals, and are
only interested in meeting targets regardless
of the quality of care provided.

Who or what inspired you during your time
at Oriel?
Before I came up to Oriel, I visited Oxford
for the weekend to have a look around
colleges and met Susan Greenfield, who I
thought was incredibly inspiring. Lynne Cox
was my biochemistry tutor and I was (and
still am!) in awe of her. I am sure I can still
draw my Krebs cycle thanks to her.

What has been your greatest personal/
professional triumph?
My greatest personal triumph is definitely my
(blended) family. Professionally, probably
getting my research thesis – I had a viva
during a very busy clinical job and thought
it would be impossible to pass it. Luckily, it
was not.

Do you have any unusual hobbies?
Nothing unusual, I am afraid, and little time
for the ones that I really enjoy, like reading
and tennis. My six-year-old daughter really
wants a sewing machine, though, so I may
venture into sewing dolls’ clothes!

Do you do any voluntary work or work in
the community?
I am really passionate about education,
particularly for under-privileged children.
I mentor and give career advice for a local
Academy of Excellence in Tottenham. I am
currently volunteering with lateral flow
testing in my step-son’s school to allow the
schools to return back to class in March
2021.

What is the one piece of ‘life’ advice you
would give to a current student?
Take all the opportunities that present
themselves at Oriel – the time passes far too
quickly.

What advice would you give to a student
wishing to join the medical profession?
Never underestimate the importance of
kindness and a human touch because in their
most difficult times that is what our patients
will remember and get comfort from.

Laura Timms

Key Worker Role:
Head of Commissioning and Service
Development, Children’s Services,
Hampshire County Council

Where has life taken you since you left Oriel?
I really enjoyed life at University, so after
six years of my own studies, I went to work
in another University before undertaking
various roles in the voluntary and statutory
sectors. More recently, I have worked as an
Operations Director for a Learning Disability
provider organisation and as a local authority
Commissioner.

What do you most enjoy about working as
the Head of Commissioning and Service
Development for Hampshire County
Council?
Every day is a new challenge, which is great
as I love to learn. Hampshire is lucky to have
some very skilled and experienced staff.
Working as part of the team and seeing the
outcomes of the work we do on the lives
of people who need social care support is
incredibly rewarding.

What have been the challenges you have
faced in this role and as a County Council
during the COVID-19 pandemic?
Part of the service I oversee is the Council’s
placements team for children who need
accommodation. Balancing the challenges
of young people struggling with the
restrictions and potentially absconding,
alongside providers managing COVID-19
risks, or foster carers needing to shield has
been one of the greatest challenges. At a
County Council level, the challenges have
been wide, ranging from managing and
implementing evolving guidance, overseeing
school attendance, supporting providers
with continuity planning, distributing
PPE, allocating winter grants, coordinating
the public health response, through to
operating a welfare response for those
most vulnerable. This list does not do the
County Council justice – it has been a huge
effort which has touched all aspects of the
organisation.

What have you learnt from this experience?
That foster carers really are amazing.

Is there anything you would do differently
in a future crisis of this nature?
I probably would not have chosen to start a
new job in February!
How do you think the pandemic has affected your sector?
Unfortunately, lockdown will have potentially resulted in some abuse going unnoticed for longer. In addition, we are already seeing an increase in mental health issues across the board, and for frontline staff there will be the impact of trauma to unpick over the coming months and years. For some families, where routine is key, the impact of this pandemic could take years to undo (e.g., for those with an autism diagnosis). On a more positive note, there are more people willing to consider a career in care and taking the opportunity to re-evaluate their work-life balance and priorities. The response mechanisms for emergency situations has been put through its longest test ever and has been really effective.

What one thing most helped you to get through each lockdown? When we all faced such an uncertain time, how did you cope with the stress of the situation?
My partner's PhD investigated how avian coronavirus replicates. Having someone in the house who could cut through all the misinformation was so helpful and reassuring. I also have twin two-year-olds, who clearly have no idea what is going on and are great for taking your mind off a long day at work.

What motivates you?
Seeing that the work I do has a positive impact in people’s front room.

What is one of the greatest challenges in your job?
Balancing increasing demand with decreasing budgets.

Who or what inspired you during your time at Oriel?
At one point I was working with unaccompanied asylum-seeking minors in Cowley during the day and returning to Oriel in time for formal hall. That contrast of lives just made me more motivated to see change.

What has been your greatest personal/professional triumph?
I established an outreach programme in Uganda supporting families of young people who had learning and/or physical disabilities. Probably the greatest day was when I visited ‘E’ who was for the first time in months not tied by her ankle to a tree, unable to move more than two metres. We had supported the family to teach her how to use the toilet effectively, meaning when she ate inedible berries and got diarrhoea, there was no longer a concerning infection risk for the outdoor kitchen.

Do you do any voluntary work or work in the community?
Prior to having children, I had always been an active volunteer – a charity trustee, school governor, scout leader, inclusion advisor, etc. My voluntary work has enabled me to retain a very practical role while my professional career has become more strategic.

What is the one piece of ‘life’ advice you would give to a current student?
Choose a path you are passionate about – that spark will keep you going when things get tough.

What advice would you give to a student wishing to join your industry?
Go for it. It really is rewarding and no two days are the same. If you want to chat through some options, feel free to contact me.

We are already seeing an increase in mental health issues across the board, and for frontline staff there will be the impact of trauma to unpick over the coming months and years.
Mike Roddy
2000, Jurisprudence

Key Worker Role:
Detective Inspector, Thames Valley Police
Major Crime Unit

Where has life taken you since you left Oriel?
After leaving Oriel, I spent some time travelling around Eastern Europe, India, and SE Asia before settling in Oxfordshire and joining Thames Valley Police in 2005. I have worked in a variety of roles at different ranks but mainly focused on investigation. Four years ago, I landed my dream job on our Major Crime team leading homicide investigations, and I have not looked back since.

What drew you to the police force?
A desire to help people. I wanted a career that I could look back on and think I had made a difference – whether I have will be for others to judge!

What do you most enjoy about working as a Detective Inspector?
Taking that first call when little is known about what has happened, it is my job to lead the team and provide structure and direction to get the right result. I enjoy that pressure and responsibility. I am proud to lead great people all working towards the same outcome.

What have you learnt from this experience?
That we can be really innovative, take advantage of technology, and find new ways of working. Despite the challenges that the pandemic has presented, we have continued to provide a high level of service to the public.

Is there anything you would do differently in a future crisis of this nature?
Of course, there is always learning that will come from something of this nature. That learning is ongoing, given we are still policing in a pandemic. I have no doubt that this will help positively shape policing in the future.

How do you think the pandemic has affected your sector?
We have continued to work closely with our communities to ensure everyone is abiding by the guidelines, so we can stop the spread of the virus and start to do the things we love, such as socialising with friends and family.

What one thing most helped you to get through each lockdown? When we all faced such an uncertain time, how did you cope with the stress of the situation?
With so many people being isolated from their friends and family, I am grateful that I have someone to come home to. Wellbeing is so important. I see and read about the very worst things that happen in peoples' lives. Having my partner, Sam, keeps me grounded and helps me see the good in people. She has faced her own challenges during COVID-19 as a serving Staff Sergeant in the Army.

What motivates you?
Doing a good job. I meet families who are dealing with the most unimaginable event. To be able to be part of a team who can help bring justice is a privilege. It will never replace their loss but it may help them to find some closure.

What was/is one of the greatest challenges in your job?
To remain detached. As cold as that might sound, I try to avoid becoming emotionally involved.

Who or what inspired you during your time at Oriel?
It was genuinely one of the most fun, enjoyable, and challenging times in my life. I feel privileged to have studied and socialised with so many good people. Ultimately, I am very grateful to Professor Richard Tur for taking a chance on a spotty 17-year-old kid who had no clue what he was doing or what he was up against (some might say I am still that 17-year-old!). Oriel is a huge part of what I have achieved and who I have become.

What has been your greatest personal/professional triumph?
On a personal level, it is meeting Sam. I am so thankful for having met her. We are expecting our first child in September. Professionally, my first investigation on the Major Crime Unit was a gang-related murder in Blackbird Leys, Oxford in June 2017. The investigation involved witness anonymity, piecing together hours of CCTV, forensic examinations across an extensive area, and a large number of arrests. A six-month trial led to the conviction of nine individuals, who received over 100 years in sentences.

Do you have any unusual hobbies?
Most of my free time has been spent renovating my house!

Do you do any voluntary work or work in the community?
Does policing count?!

What is the one piece of ‘life’ advice you would give to a current student?
It is a real cliché but take advantage of every opportunity that comes your way and enjoy every moment. I cannot believe it is over 20 years since I made my first trip to the College.

What advice would you give to a student wishing to join your industry?
Prepare yourself for everything the job can throw at you. It is an incredibly demanding but rewarding profession. There are so many routes in – do your research and look at what is right for you.

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Of course, there is always learning that will come from something of this nature. That learning is ongoing, given we are still policing in a pandemic. I have no doubt that this will help positively shape policing in the future.

Taking that first call when little is known about what has happened, it is my job to lead the team and provide structure and direction to get the right result. I enjoy that pressure and responsibility. I am proud to lead great people all working towards the same outcome.
When Uganda’s President Museveni ordered the shutdown of all schools on 20 March last year, none of us had any idea that children would be out of class for a full seven months. One year later, the vast majority of them are still not allowed to return. With election disruption and an internet blackout added to the mix, we at Jinja Educational Trust (JET) have done way more than ‘pivot’ and provide an emergency response. Even during a ban on public and private transport, we delivered food to over 70 teachers and their families stranded by lockdown, and talked to at least 50 representatives at our partner schools to inform the way we adapted our daily work and reshaped JET’s strategic objectives. The economic and social impact of the pandemic has been more than devastating – in many cases, it has been lethal. Millions across the world can now relate to isolation and financial hardship.

I am talking to you about this region of Eastern Uganda because I moved here from Zambia in July 2019 to grow and develop the organisation as its new Country Manager. I am rarely in the office – I switch between operations and strategy, managing the team and strengthening our presence in the local community. My move from Europe to Africa was the result of a conscious decision to leave the energy industry and work in education and development. Simply put, it was the right thing to do: I was heeding a call to action and allowing a passion to flourish.

So, who and what is JET? It is a small yet dynamic, high-impact NGO. We partner with schools and train teachers to improve the quality of education, starting where it takes root at pre-primary level. We exist to equip today’s generation with the skills they need for them to make lasting changes within their communities in the future. Costs are covered by a private donor, meaning 100% of funds goes directly to our projects, which I personally oversee.

The last year has emphasised how important it is to focus on flexibility and

#NeverMoreNeeded

A glance at the work of Lorna Barker (1988, Modern Languages) with the Jinja Educational Trust
resilience. We moved from delivering food to supplying seeds and training school staff on financial management plus income generation initiatives. We have had to completely adapt our Education Programme so it is tailored to those classes which are permitted, and will reintroduce Critical Thinking training at upper primary level. Children are traumatised and stressed; some girls have been married off or have become pregnant. As a result, we have extended our Health Programme to include an element of counselling and are bringing a social worker on board.

2020 unleashed huge kindness and generosity, as well as tremendous creativity. Perhaps more people than before would now consider working in international or local community development. I would encourage anyone interested in joining the sector to explore how their skills and qualities can enhance a programme, fill a gap, strengthen that change they would like to see. Follow curiosity, not fear. As William Faulkner said: ‘You cannot swim for new horizons until you have the courage to lose sight of the shore.’

I am not a strong swimmer but I have never looked back.

If you would like to know more about our work in Uganda, you can find us on Facebook, at jinjaedtrust on Instagram or at www.jinjaedtrust.com.

You can also reach out to me at lorna@jinjaedtrust or on +256 704 847545 (WhatsApp). You will find me too at www.linkedin.com/in/lornajbarker and on Twitter @LornaBarkerUK.
One of the smaller portraits in Hall, low down adjacent to the High Table, too easily passes unnoticed. It is a copy, by the distinguished artist Diccon Swan, of an original in Trinity College, Oxford (Figure 1). The portrait, of an Elizabethan man, is thought to be of Thomas Harriot, who went on from St Mary Hall, on the site of today’s Third Quad, to become one of the most original minds and greatest polymaths of the English Renaissance (Figure 2).

Harriot was a man of many gifts. In the words of a memorial plaque on his tomb in the Church of St Christopher le Stocks (subsequently lost in the Great Fire of London), he ‘excelled in all things mathematical, philosophical, theological’. The words, attributed to his former patron Henry Percy, ninth Earl of Northumberland, are no overstatement. Harriot was unquestionably the foremost English mathematician of his generation and arguably the greatest before Isaac Newton. In his Commemoration of Benefactors sermon in 2012, then-Vice Provost Dr Michael Spivey referred to the extraordinary range of his innovations across algebra, map projections, and mathematical notation, including our ‘less than’ and ‘greater than’ signs, which he was the first to use. In philosophy, he engaged with some of the most advanced doctrines of his day, including the revived atomism of Democritus, an important foundation for materialist thinking, which he rejected. In theology, he is less easy to pin down. He seems to have been an orthodox Protestant, though with an interest in freethinking currents of thought that exposed him to accusations of atheism.

With thought, and in equal measure, went action. After leaving Oxford, he moved to London. There he entered the household of Walter Raleigh (who had been briefly at Oriel as a gentleman commoner in 1572). Building, in all probability, on the geographical lectures by Richard Hakluyt that he had heard in Oxford, Harriot taught Raleigh’s captains and seamen navigational techniques, ready for a 15-month expedition to what is now North Carolina in 1585–86. As navigator, cartographer, and interlocutor with the Algonquin people, Harriot left his mark on many aspects of the venture, and almost all we know about it we owe to him. The 48-page Briefe and true report of the new found land of Virginia that he published two years after his return was a minor masterpiece, the first account of America to appear in the English language.

In this, as in everything he did, Harriot was a breaker of bounds. Hearing of a new ‘eye glass’ recently invented in the Netherlands, he observed the heavens, including sunspots, Jupiter’s four largest satellites, and the lunar surface, all several months before Galileo (Figure 3). His observations removed any reservations he may still have had about the truth of the Copernican system and the errors of...
Aristotelian cosmology. Everything about Harriot, in fact, marked him as someone open to the principles of the new philosophy that were to achieve their full flowering later in the century in the age of Hooke, Boyle, and Newton. Yet we might easily have known little of his achievements. The *Briefe and true report* was his only book, and it was left for his executors to salvage what they could of his scientific reputation, mainly from the more than 7,000 pages of disordered notes and calculations that he left in his home on the grounds of Northumberland’s Syon House at Isleworth.

The challenge that Harriot bequeathed to posterity was formidable. The slender volume on algebra, *Artis analyticae praxis*, that two of his friends managed to get published under his name in 1631 bore the marks of the chaotic state of the notes from which they worked. And the surviving passages from ‘Arcticom’, a treatise on navigation that Harriot drafted for private circulation about the time of the voyage to America, were too scrappy to allow any prospect of reconstruction as a book. Over the next three centuries, Harriot was not forgotten: Oxford’s Savilian Professor of Geometry, John Wallis, wrote glowingly about his algebra in 1685, and the rediscovery of a large cache of Harriot manuscripts at Petworth House a century later caused a flurry of interest, especially in the astronomical observations. But serious appraisal only began with the tide of scholarly interest that has gathered since the 1950s. Seminar series in Oxford, Durham, and London did much to foster early interest; a major biography by the American historian John Shirley followed in 1983; and Oriel has played its part since 1990, when it launched the College’s annual Thomas Harriot lecture.

The man we now know is an even more intriguing figure than the one that pioneering Harrioteers had to deal with more than half a century ago. The long-awaited ordering and publication of his papers, which defeated two earlier attempts, have at last been made possible by an international programme of digitisation; the fruits are publicly available at http://echo.mpiwg-berlin.mpg.de/content/scientific_revolution/harriot. More conventional scholarly activities, including a recent biography by Robyn Arianrhod, have played their part too. And, as we prepare to mark the 400th anniversary of Harriot’s death (from a smoking-induced cancer of the nose) in 1621, we look forward to the next of our Thomas Harriot lectures, to be given by Professor Larry E. Tise of East Carolina University on Thursday 11 November. It will be a special occasion and Oriel’s contribution permitting, will focus attention on Harriot this autumn in both Europe and the USA.

Figure 2: Entry recording Thomas Harriot’s matriculation as a ‘plebeian’ student at St Mary Hall on 20 December 1577. Harriot went on to take his BA degree in Easter term 1580.

Figure 3: Harriot’s map of the moon, drawn in late 1610 from observations made by him since July 1609. The patches of light and dark correspond to what Harriot saw as lands and oceans. Source: Petworth House Collection, HMC 241/5, ff. 26-30. Courtesy of Lord Egremont and Leconfield.
Mwenya Kawesha (2006, Modern History) talks to us about her fascinating career, from White House telephone calls to working in Artificial Intelligence.

I came up to Oriel in 2006 and, while I was interviewed by Dr Catto, I was in Dr Forrest’s first cohort of Modern History students. While Oriel was 100% my first-choice college, I still believe the adage I heard at the time, that your college picks you. What I most enjoyed about Oriel was being surrounded by so many people, from a range of different backgrounds, who were excited and motivated by life and on a quest to pursue the things they felt they wanted from the world.

Oriel helped shape my identity
Oriel helped to deepen my sense of conviction about my identity and the things I wanted to achieve. I had grown up loving the theatre and music. At 15, I was lucky enough to perform with the City of Birmingham Symphony Youth Chorus at the Royal Albert Hall as part of the BBC Proms. It was a surreal experience but one I still cherish. I was also a member of the National Youth Theatre until I was 21. When I arrived at Oriel, I supported the theatre by inviting everyone on Facebook to all the Oxford Playhouse plays.

I never went rowing. Not once. Oriel had such strong personalities and such a strong identity, I felt that I could have mine and stay firm.
Oriel had such strong personalities and such a strong identity, I felt that I could have mine and stay firm to the things I specifically wanted to do. And everyone seemed comfortable with that and even to embrace it.

My career after Oriel: an unexpected path
Before coming to Oriel, I thought I would become a lawyer. A fellow student at one of Dr Whittow’s summer garden parties convinced me otherwise. I had done so much research on this by my second year, I was left in a quandary about what to do. In my final year, after some frantic googling I found an opportunity in New York, working with President Clinton’s foundation and I went to do that the following year after graduation.

The Clinton Global Initiative was founded by President W. J. Clinton to turn ideas into action. It focused on areas such as climate change, women and girls, education, peace building, and economic empowerment in 180 countries around the world. Its flagship conference brought together philanthropists, Nobel Laureates, heads of state, NGOs, and business leaders, who committed to working on measurable projects that could bring about social change. I went to four flagship conferences in New York between 2010 until the final year in 2016. Working as Team Captain was a great experience. The conference was massive, so, in my case, I was focused on leading a team that would help heads of state on site and also on broadcasts held for major news networks such as CNN. The days were incredibly full, ensuring all sorts of guests, including well-known actors, fashion designers, and politicians, had all the help and information they needed throughout the event.

2015 proved to be a year of new starts for me. I joined Accenture’s strategy team and worked with a mix of clients from consumer businesses to foreign governments, the World Economic Forum, and the World Bank. I also became a Young Leader at the US Embassy in London. This was set up by former US Ambassador to the UK Matthew Barzun, who also happened to be Finance Chair for President Obama’s 2012 election campaign. It was a great experience and involved mainly going to events, predominantly at the US Ambassador’s residence at Winfield House, focused on supporting UK-US relations. There was no connection here with my work at the Clinton Global Initiative. I had the opportunity to meet people such as Jimmy Wales, the founder of Wikipedia, and Randolph Churchill.

As a Young Leader in April 2016, I got a call from the US Embassy team asking me to speak to the White House about the upcoming Obama Youth Townhall event, at which Barack Obama spoke to young leaders of the UK. The call with the Obama White House itself lasted around an hour, though it felt like a few minutes. A few days before going to the Townhall, I got an email from the US Embassy asking me to meet with a journalist from The Guardian to provide them with my perspective on the event. The comments eventually appeared on page 3 of The Observer in 2016. It was also wonderful to do filming for the US Embassy for a Channel 4 documentary called Inside the US Embassy, while at the 2016 Fourth of July Party at Winfield House.

From American Presidents to British Royalty
In 2017, I took the opportunity to volunteer as the Local Partnerships lead for Pitch@Palace. This was a unique initiative that...
was set up by a great entrepreneur and a former head of state. My role was to find entrepreneurial start-ups in Africa. Winning companies received investment and presented at Pitch@Palace in front of Oriel’s Visitor, Her Majesty The Queen.

I joined a steering committee that included entrepreneurs, venture capitalists, and leaders of start-up accelerators. Time was incredibly short, so my role, which was strategic as well as operational, involved developing a pitch and identifying entrepreneurs in Africa who had businesses that could scale to European markets. It involved many hours of cold pitching to find entrepreneurs and local partners, mainly in Brussels, South Africa, and Nigeria. The start-ups that were presented performed incredibly well and actually attracted more investment than initially hoped for.

What I am doing now
Since 2020, I have worked for an artificial intelligence start-up called Faculty, who are around six years old, backed by venture capital, and based in London. We are focused on helping organisations across the public and private sectors solve major problems with artificial intelligence solutions. I am a member of the commercial team and have worked on strategy for the organisation and do a lot of client work too. I have worked on several projects focused on building technology that makes the internet safer for the general public and vulnerable groups, most often by finding ways to block harmful content online.

A continued passion for the arts
Since leaving Oriel, my love for the arts and theatre has never wavered. I led a strategic relaunch for a theatre charity set up by the late Alan Rickman, to support artists in conflict regions around the world. I am currently on the board of the Royal Court Theatre, where I once performed myself with the National Youth Theatre.

The arts sector, which is incredibly varied and filled with people of all ages and backgrounds, has experienced a hugely challenging time. I am sad to see that some organisations have not survived the effects of the pandemic.

There are, however, exciting longer-term opportunities, three of which I will highlight. Firstly, there is a huge opportunity to find models for digital performance that are well conceived, well executed, and enduring so audiences still have a unique experience. Secondly, it is important for the arts to become more fully embedded into education, helping people develop incredible skills they can use for life. Thirdly, it will also be important to look at ensuring that commercial models help sustain creatives, so they can focus on creative work.

What I would say to Oriel’s current students
The pandemic has definitely shown us that time is of the essence. It is important to gain as much self-knowledge as possible so you can set up a life that will motivate you and be suitable for the level of ambition you have, your personality, and your risk tolerance. There are many opportunities that will come your way. These can be incredibly hard work and typically require you to fit into a particular working culture. It is much easier to thrive if you are passionate about the life choices you make and know why you have made them. Having people all over the world recognise your academic credentials is a huge asset that can never be taken away from you and something that many people with a lot of talent wish for. This can give you an opportunity to be really strategic about the things you choose to do with your life. If you end up on a path that you do not feel fits you, do not settle for it. Always seek out people and experiences who can help you achieve your potential, as you define it.

It is much easier to thrive if you are passionate about the life choices you make and know why you have made them.
R alston Milton Nettleford, more commonly known as Rex, was a Jamaican academic, choreographer, and activist. Having won a Rhodes Scholarship, he came to Oriel in 1953 to study for an MPhil in political science. While at Oxford, he developed his involvement with contemporary dance by choreographing for the Oxford University Drama Society and becoming President of the Ballet Club.

After completing his degree, Nettleford returned to Jamaica and took up a position at the University of the West Indies, where he would work for more than 40 years. He quickly established himself as a formidable historian and social critic with numerous essays, articles, and books. Many international organisations – including UNESCO, the World Bank, and the International Research Council – benefited from his advice.

In 1962, he co-founded Jamaica's National Dance Theatre Company, through which he inspired and trained many dancers and choreographers. Through his choreography, pursued alongside his academic career, Nettleford explored questions of identity, dance theatre in the Caribbean, and the particular issues and experiences faced by Jamaican people. In 1975, he was given the Order of Merit, Jamaica’s highest non-political honour.

Rex Nettleford was made an Honorary Fellow of Oriel in 1998 in recognition of all that he had achieved during his life and career. He died in 2010, a day before his 77th birthday. The College commissioned this portrait for the Hall renovation, and it was finished in time for the re-opening of the Hall in Trinity term. It is our hope that this portrait will celebrate and honour his remarkable life.

This portrait was painted by Jamie Coreth, one of Britain’s leading portrait artists.

‘One of the challenges of painting Rex Nettleford’s portrait posthumously was to capture a sense of his character which resonated authentically with those who knew him. I was very lucky to speak with Dr David Rampersad, who knew Nettleford for many years. He was described as a brilliant man; considerate and highly eloquent. Dignified and always with a spark of good humour, such qualities no doubt contributed to his ability to inspire and capture the attention of an audience. Starting life in the Jamaican countryside, he succeeded through sheer tenacity and vision.

‘My approach to Portraiture is to try and convey elements of someone’s character with subtlety, so that it might resonate as true to the experience of being with them. Posthumous portraiture is limited in scope for capturing that experience, for obvious reasons, but I hope that the painting nevertheless communicates some of Nettleford’s admirable characteristics.’
Throughout Oriel’s nearly 700-year history, we have been fortunate to benefit from many legacy gifts from alumni and friends following their passing. Each and every one has helped the College to sustain exceptional teaching, pursue academic excellence, and preserve this very special educational environment for generations to come.

The impact of legacies is seen and felt across all areas of the College, whether by providing financial assistance to our students to support them in realising their full potential, strengthening our teaching and research by enabling us to attract world-class researchers, or maintaining and restoring our historic buildings and future-proofing these spaces for the students of tomorrow.

Currently 267 Orielenses and friends have pledged to leave a legacy, with a significant number of these supporters also choosing to support the College during their lifetime. We are extremely grateful to those who have currently left a provision for Oriel in their Will and thank those who have helped keep our doors open to all.

A few of our current legators have kindly shared with us some of their motivations for remembering the College in their Will and their hopes for what Oriel will be able to achieve with their bequests.

**John Cook (1965, Modern History)**

*Why have you chosen to remember Oriel in your Will?*
My close family all live in America, where lifelong giving to one’s college is part of the national culture. Increasingly, this has become true in England too. Giving in a Will is really the logical extension of that thinking.

*Is there any area of College life you have specially chosen to support and why?*
Having been involved with the Oriel endowment in recent years, I would like to think that my legacy would go into the endowment. However, the College has multiple needs and I would want the legacy to go where it is most needed. So, I have not included a specific instruction in the Will.

*What do you hope to achieve with your legacy gift?*
Due to a combination of fundraising, legacy giving, and investment performance, the Oriel endowment has tripled in value in the past 15 years. It is, though, only mid-table in terms of Oxford endowments, so we need to nudge it up the table. Most college endowments, however, are tiny compared to American endowments, which have been built up over the generations.

*What is your fondest memory of Oriel?*
I regret to say that this comes down to a contest between pubs. The Bear has to take first prize, followed closely by the Victoria Arms, The Barley Mow at Clifton Hampden, and The Lamb and Flag at Kingston Bagpuize.

**Marilyn Yurdan (1995, MSt History)**

*Why have you chosen to remember Oriel in your Will?*
On a practical level, I have left a residual legacy to Oriel because I have no immediate family, but the main reason is because as a middle-aged, grammar school-educated woman, I was accepted unconditionally into the Oriel community and given an unprecedented sense of my own worth and I want to acknowledge this.

*Is there any area of College life you have specifically chosen to support?*
Yes, I have stipulated that it is to be used specifically to fund a postgraduate medical student.

*What do you hope to achieve with your legacy gift?*
I want to contribute to two institutions that I admire, Oriel and the National Health Service.

*What is your fondest memory of Oriel?*
In 2014, a group of Oxford University pensioners went to Stoneleigh Abbey in Warwickshire. We heard the distressing story of Edward, 5th Baron Leigh (1742–1786), an Orielensis who was declared ‘a Lunatick of unsound mind’ in 1774.

When Leigh died unmarried and without heirs, he left his scientific instruments and library of about a thousand books to Oriel, which necessitated the construction of a new building, today’s Senior Library, into which the books were moved in 1795.

David, our guide, was very proud that the Stoneleigh books form a prominent part of the College’s collection, and when I suggested that he might like to visit Oriel to see them, he accepted with alacrity.

We arranged with the Librarian at the time, Mrs Marjory Szurko, for three members of the Stoneleigh staff to be given a tour of the College, see the books, and have lunch. None of them had previously been to Oxford and before even reaching Oriel they were impressed by the city’s architecture.

Because one of the girls had been almost silent throughout, I asked her if she was bored, to which she replied that quite the opposite was true and she was overawed. Although all three visitors had become aware of the similarity between the Oxbridge colleges and historic houses, they found it hard to comprehend that there were so many such foundations in Oxford alone.

It was a great privilege to be able to show Oriel to such appreciative visitors and also see our lovely and historic college as others see it.

*If you have remembered Oriel in your Will, please do let us know as we would like to recognise and celebrate your support during your lifetime. Alternatively, if you would like more information on leaving a legacy to Oriel, please contact Philippa Wadsworth, Development Officer, at philippa.wadsworth@oriel.ox.ac.uk or 01865 286 541.*
The Story of Cyril and Lulu

It is a fact. I am an Orielensis. But my connection with Oriel was limited. As my field of study – Chinese – was not in my day represented in the College SCR, most of my life as an undergraduate took place outside the College. Hence, most of my friendships lay outside as well. That is, apart from two.

Cyril Phillips had been the Steward of Oriel for some years before I arrived. He lived in a small College house in Oriel Street with his wife, Lulu, and they had one child, a quiet son who was very dear to them. There were rooms on the top floors of the house that were available to undergraduates, one set of which I was allowed to use in my second year. In these rooms, you were in the care of Lulu.

Lulu was a godmother from Central Casting. Small but not slight, she was ever-smiling, kind, understanding, and forgiving; she would listen, and feed, and nurse with the generosity of a spirit that was both loving and unconditional. As if any further benefice needed conferring beyond all this, those of us in Lulu’s care had a free entry into the good books of Bob the College Chef. Thence, to private game pies and such, whenever suitable items came our way.

After a third year in the Far East, I returned as a stranger to a college populated with new and unfamiliar faces, and with my Finals barely nine months away. At the Porters’ Lodge, I was told Mr Phillips wished to see me. Over tea in Oriel Street, we talked about my year away, then about my future. He asked me where in the city I planned to be staying. I explained I had not yet had time to sort any of that. ‘That’s settled then’, he said, offering me back my old rooms in his house, ‘Lulu will be delighted’. She was, as was I. We kept them for you, she told me later. It is well said that it is the staff that make a college.

From Oriel, I was offered and accepted a place at St Antony’s, where, after a few months in College, I chose to live out of Oxford in Hampton Gay. My dwelling was a small farm cottage with a long garden that sloped gently down into a neglected mill race, branching discretely off the Cherwell. The water had long ceased to race, but it was dark and fresh, and its banks and the underwood behind were colonised by wildlife of all sorts.

Cyril and Lulu were welcome visitors and when weather permitted, we would sit outside watching the river and all its busyness. The world we joined there lay round the gentle curve of the mill race, stopped at one end by the ruins of the mill and darkness, and at the other by a thick lattice of fallen willow and such light as trembled through it. Beyond was out of reach.

The Phillips’ boy came often enough too. His hobby was making things with his hands. He was good at woodworking and his parents encouraged him and eventually secured him an apprenticeship in that trade.

One day at their suggestion they drove out to see us. The boy was with them. Secured to the roof rack of their car was a long coffin-shaped mass, wrapped in fluttering oilskin. The boy attended carefully to its unloading. Unwrapped, it became a boat he had built for us; its hull was designed like a small punt, yet it had rowlocks with oars and an easily unstepped mast fitted with sails and rigging. A centreboard and rudder completed these fittings. On her stern was her name in aluminium letters, ‘Lulu’. We launched her with noisy ceremony.

In her, over the months and years that followed, we explored the mill race and beyond. In spring we moored her to our shore. In winter, we pulled her up, turned her over and returned her to her oilskin. She met a need we had ourselves not recognised. She became one of us, as we were one with Cyril and Lulu and their boy.

Completing my degree, we left Hampton Gay and not long after went abroad for several years. Lulu went into storage, and with her went much of my memory of my Oxford days. We heard little of Cyril. We heard that he and Lulu had left the College and moved to near Cowley. Then, that they had moved again. That the boy was ill. Then the parents too. They fell on hard times financially. The boy died. Then the parents. But by then, I had lost contact with them all, together with all that life.

If I am an infrequent reader of Oriel News, the same can be said with even more honesty of Vogue. That the focus of its October headline was Emma Corinn and her role as Diana, Princess of Wales, in The Crown would under normal circumstances have passed me by entirely. But an irresistible lockdown wish to be truly idle drew me to the piece. Also, I had met Diana. I was curious to see what there was to be said about her lookalike.

There was little there to hold my attention but for one photograph. Nothing special, but it caught my eye in the way a human eye can see something its owner has failed to register. Against a background…

On the battered cobalt paint of her stern, difficult to see for the oblique angle of the photograph, were four aluminium letters: ‘Lulu’, they read.

Which reminds me. It is a fact: I do owe Oriel, especially the staff, and Cyril and Lulu and the boy.

Fred Hohler, 1962, Oriental Studies
Oriel Connect was launched in late 2020, and is an online networking and mentoring service for Orielenses and current students. Organised by sectors, the 34 alumni who have volunteered so far are all happy to offer careers advice and support, and can be contacted via their LinkedIn profiles or the Development and Alumni Engagement Office.

We hope that this service will benefit all Orielenses, particularly those just entering the job market or changing careers. Our community is strong, supportive, and varied, and we hope Oriel Connect will be useful and beneficial for alumni, especially as we continue to navigate challenging times.

We welcome new volunteers to help grow the network. If you are interested, please contact development.office@oriel.ox.ac.uk.

Oriel’s Online Events

We were extremely hopeful for 2020 in the Development and Alumni Engagement Office, with a full calendar of exciting events planned for alumni. As with the rest of the world, this came crashing down in March, our whole calendar turning into cancellation after cancellation.

It is not all doom and gloom, however, as we have had the chance to try new things with our growing understanding of online events and to engage with Orielenses across the globe. While we all now crave human contact more than ever as we continue to distance ourselves, it is apparent that online events are here to stay and do hold an important place in our work moving forward.

From news from College to music concerts, networking to academic lectures, the world of online events offers many possibilities. Our first foray was in September, when we took our annual alumni weekend online. With updates from the Provost, academic content, and a virtual Gaudy, we saw more than 100 Orielenses join us to reconnect with the College. It was heartwarming to share a toast of ‘Floreat Oriel’ with a group of 1990–1992 matriculants all kitted out in their finest black tie in their own homes, and to hear such interesting and engaging questions for our Provost and academics throughout the sessions.

Following on from the Virtual Alumni Weekend, we have experimented with a variety of events and still have more ideas to come. We have been treated to a performance from our new Visiting Fellows in Music – Andreas Scholl and Tamar Halperin, shared tea and updates with our benefactors during a special tea with the Provost, networked with the Oriel Women’s Network, watched two of our students complete a Music Masterclass in our beautiful Senior Library, heard fascinating research updates from our MCR students, and connected alumni and students through insightful career panels. It has been wonderful to once again speak with Orielenses and to see both well-known and new faces. We hope that you have enjoyed our efforts so far!

We are planning more online events to keep you connected to your Oriel community. We always welcome ideas, so please do contact us on events@oriel.ox.ac.uk.

An Oriel Engagement

Congratulations to Orielenses, Jamie Wallis (2015, DPhil Synthetic Biology) and Rebecca Leigh (2013, Classics and Italian), who got engaged in September 2020!
Professor Rab Appointed to the UK Regulators Network Panel

Professor Suzanne Rab (1990, Law) has been appointed as a panel member to the UK Regulators Network (UKRN). The UKRN brings together regulators from the UK’s utility, financial, and transport sectors for the benefit of consumers and the economy. The UKRN Expert Panel consists of four independent advisors who have expertise in different fields. The Expert Panel advises the CEOs groups and also provides feedback and challenge to the project teams. Professor Rab is a barrister at Serle Court Chambers. She has two decades of experience in regulation, EU, and competition law matters, combining trade, cartel regulation, commercial practices, IP exploitation, merger control, public procurement, and subsidy control. Suzanne is a non-executive director of the Legal Aid Agency, a board member of and senior research associate at the Regulatory Policy Institute, and a member of the advisory pool of experts of the Bar Standards Board.

Daniel Hannan Conferred with a Life Peerage

Orielsis and former Member of the European Parliament for South East England, Daniel Hannan (1990, Modern History) was conferred with a Life Peerage by Her Majesty The Queen. He was introduced to the House of Lords as Lord Hannan of Kingsclere.

CBE for Martin Gordon

Martin Gordon (1959, Literae Humaniores) has been awarded a CBE for services to people living with HIV/AIDS in China. Martin founded a charity, Barry & Martin's Trust, in 1996 in memory of his partner, Barry Chan. The Foreign Office announcement recognised Martin’s exceptional contributions to supporting people living with HIV and Aids in China, and the positive impact that his work has had on UK–China relations.

Professor Michael Wood Awarded OBE

Congratulations to Professor Michael Wood (1966, History), who has been awarded an OBE in the 2021 New Year Honours List for services to Public History and to Broadcasting. Renowned for his historical television programmes and books, including The Story of China, The Story of England, and In Search of Shakespeare, he received the British Academy President’s Medal for his work in history and outreach, and has been the Professor of Public History at the University of Manchester since 2013.
Professor of Civil Law

Congratulations to Vanessa Mak (2001, DPhil Law) who has been appointed Professor of Civil Law at Leiden University as of October 2020. Vanessa’s research focuses on the formation of European private law, particularly in the area of contract law. Before this move she was Vice-Dean for Research and Professor of Dutch and European Contract Law at Tilburg Law School.

OBE Awarded to John Petrie

John Petrie (2013, MSc English Local History) has been awarded an OBE in the 2021 New Year Honours List for services to Antigua and Barbuda. John is Windsor Herald at the College of Arms, which is the official heraldic and genealogical authority for most of the Commonwealth realms.

Orielensis Elected to Junior Fellowship in Cambridge

Last Michaelmas, Orielensis Dr Kate Herrity (2014, MSc Criminology and Criminal Justice) was elected to the Andrew W. Mellon and King’s College Cambridge Junior Fellowship in Punishment. We look forward to hearing about her work.

Wild Animal Initiative

Michelle Graham (2010, Physics and Philosophy) is now the Executive Director of a non-profit organisation called Wild Animal Initiative, which has a mission to understand and improve the lives of wild animals. The Initiative supports scientific research into improving the welfare of wild animals, as distinct from conserving their species or habitat. Michelle was previously a researcher at Wild Animal Initiative, and in that capacity she worked on research prioritisation, and developed a framework for classifying animal welfare interventions. She is delighted to announce that the charity has recently been named a Top Charity by Animal Charity Evaluators. Michelle is also currently working towards a PhD in Engineering Mechanics at Virginia Tech, and her dissertation concerns the movement behaviours of jumping and gliding snakes.

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**BOOK CORNER**

**Sensory Penalties**

Dr Kate Herrity (2014, MSc Criminology and Criminal Justice) is currently Junior Research Fellow in Punishment at King’s College, Cambridge. Along with her colleagues Dr Bethany Schmidt and Dr Jason Warr, she has recently published a book, *Sensory Penalties: Exploring the Senses in Spaces of Punishment and Social Control*. It aims to reinvigorate a conversation about the role of sensory experience in empirical investigation. It explores the visceral, personal reflections buried within forgotten criminological field notes, to ask what privileging these sensorial experiences does for how we understand and research spaces of punishment and social control.

**Pandora’s Oracle**

Calum Chace (1978, PPE) has released his latest book, *Pandora’s Oracle*, which is a high-concept techno-thriller that describes our future after the arrival on earth of the first artificial super-intelligence. It is the sequel to *Pandora’s Brain*. ‘The mind of a student named Matt has been uploaded into a supercomputer, but before he can achieve a fraction of his potential, his uploaded mind is captured and effectively frozen by a group within the US intelligence services. A couple of years later, this group needs Matt’s help to tackle an existential threat to humanity. The risks are terrifying, but Matt agrees to help – after all, he has his own plans for the future...’

**A Passion for Places**

The Venerable David Meara (1966, Classics) is set to have his book, *A Passion for Places: England Through the Eyes of John Betjeman*, published this September. The book focuses on Sir John Betjeman CBE, who was an accomplished writer and campaigner, and also Poet Laureate from 1972 until his death. All his life he loved churches, which were woven into his poetic work. This book picks out some of the buildings, especially churches, of which Betjeman was particularly fond, and celebrates Betjeman’s poetic, parochial, and personal response to the built environment.

**The Creative Nudge**


**William III**

This biography of William III by William Pull (1961, Philosophy) was published in July. Taking a new approach, it tells the story of William of Orange before he became King of England. It deals in detail with the clan, family, patron and client relationships across Europe on which the Prince’s political and diplomatic influences rested and which enabled him to rise to power first in the Dutch Republic and then to the throne of England.

**Eberhard Jüngel and Existence**

Deborah Casewell (2010, Theology) has released her first book in Philosophy and Theology, *Eberhard Jüngel and Existence: Being Before the Cross*. This book explores how thought and philosophical inheritance of a particular German thinker can be of use to debates in 20th century theology.
YOUR VIEWS

In every issue we like to feature a few photographs from student days gone by. This issue features photographs from Orielensis Mihnea Dumitrascu, who was a postgraduate at Oriel in 2018. If you have photos of your time here that you would like to see included in a future edition, then do let us know.

One of Oriel’s many benefits is its MCR, which organises so many events, such as Oriel Talks. Spoiler: robots will not replace lawyers.

Eating? Drinking? Talking? Or maybe everything altogether in Oriel’s beautiful Hall.

I cannot help but remember walking in First Quad, under the sun, rain, or snow.

Rowing was definitely a part of my College life and I dream of going back on the water.

Finding Oriel on my travels: ‘Once an Orielensis, always an Orielensis’
Please be aware that due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, all our future events are under constant review. If we do have to cancel, we will inform all registrants as quickly as possible.

September 2021
Monday 13 to Tuesday 14 September  Meeting Minds Global Virtual Events
Friday 17 September  Alumni Weekend Dinner
Saturday 18 September  Alumni Weekend Lecture and Lunch
Saturday 18 September  2005–2007 Gaudy
Wednesday 22 September  1960–1965 Gaudy
Saturday 25 September  1990–1992 Gaudy

October 2021
Tuesday 5 October 2021  Oriel Women’s Network Conversations – Confidence & Imposter Syndrome (online)
Friday 22 October  Champagne Concert

November 2021
Friday 5 November  Returners’ Dinner (2020)
Saturday 20 November  Raleigh Society Dinner

February 2022
Friday 4 February  Returners’ Dinner (2021)

March 2022
Friday 18 March  1993-1995 Gaudy
Saturday 19 March  Adam de Brome Society Lunch

April 2022
Tuesday 5 April  London Walking Tour

May 2022
Tuesday 10 May  Oriel London Dinner
Saturday 28 May (TBC)  Oriel Garden Party

June 2022
Saturday 4 June  Oriel Midlands Bursary Group Lunch

For more information about alumni events or to book, please visit alumni.oriel.ox.ac.uk/events/, email events@oriel.ox.ac.uk, or call 01865 276 585.

Diary for 2021–22

Terms

Michaelmas Term 2021
Sunday 10 October–Saturday 4 December

Hilary Term 2022
Sunday 16 January–Saturday 12 March

Trinity Term 2022
Sunday 24 April–Saturday 18 June

Development and Alumni Engagement Office

Sean Power
Fellow and Director of Development and Alumni Engagement
01865 276 964, sean.power@oriel.ox.ac.uk
Sean is responsible for the work of the Development and Alumni Engagement Office, which covers both fundraising and alumni relations for the College.

Lorraine Hare
Head of Development
01865 276 560, lorraine.hare@oriel.ox.ac.uk
Lorraine oversees fundraising and would be delighted to speak with you about making a philanthropic gift to Oriel or the impact of donations.

Bobby Higson
Head of Alumni Engagement and Operations
01865 276 585, bobby.higson@oriel.ox.ac.uk
Bobby is responsible for overseeing alumni events and the communications functions of the Development and Alumni Engagement Office.

Verity Armstrong
Alumni Communications Officer
01865 613 528, verity.armstrong@oriel.ox.ac.uk
Verity is the Editor of Oriel News and other brochures, e-newsletters, website, and social media for alumni.

Philippa Wadsworth
Development Officer (Regular Giving and Legacies)
01865 286 541, philippa.wadsworth@oriel.ox.ac.uk
Philippa manages the Telephone Campaign and can help alumni and friends who would like to make a regular gift or leave a legacy to Oriel.

Kathryn Ferguson
Alumni Relations and Events Officer
01865 276 599, kathryn.ferguson@oriel.ox.ac.uk
Kathryn organises our alumni events and looks after alumni needs.

Louisa Chandler
Researcher/PA to the Director of Development
01865 276 596, louisa.chandler@oriel.ox.ac.uk
Louisa is the researcher for the Development Office and PA to the Director of Development.