



THE MARTLET

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OXFORD

ISSUE 14 | 2022

THE HEART OF DINING

Interview with Shamil Thakrar

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

CIRCLE OF LIFE

A Univ Conversation with John Weltman

LEADING QUESTIONS

Emma Woods

THE SECRET OF MY SUCCESS 2

Univ entrepreneurs

From the Editor

Welcome to Issue 14 of *The Martlet*, the annual magazine for all members and friends of University College, Oxford. I would like to thank the Old Members, students, Fellows and staff who contributed to this issue.

Particular thanks to Grant Clelland (1981, History) and to my colleagues Dr Robin Darwall-Smith, Ariane Laurent-Smith and Justin Bowyer. If you have any comments or news, please email communications@univ.ox.ac.uk.

Sara Dewsbery
Communications Officer

Cover photograph of Shamil Thakrar by Matt Grayson

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If you would like to share your view, please email: communications@univ.ox.ac.uk or write to us at the above address.

A large print version of this magazine is available on request.

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Circle of Life

A Univ Conversation with John Weltman
(1979, History)



The Secret of My Success 2

Univ entrepreneurs



All I want now is for Univ in the Arts to continue to grow, in diversity, subject matter and in uniting the very special Univ community."

Amanda Brookfield (1979, English)

“
There is enough evidence that diversity drives growth, as it creates environments where people can bring their whole selves to work.”

Emma Woods (1987, Psychology)

Features

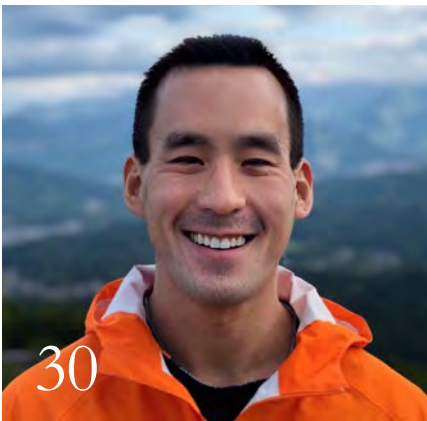
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Light After Lockdown

"I took this photo inside Humayun's Tomb, Delhi in August 2020, shortly after the first lockdown had ended and monuments reopened. India's lockdown had been one of the strictest in the world and this visit to the tomb was one of the first times I had been able to venture out for many months. I was fortunate to capture the late afternoon rays shining through the intricately designed Moghul lattice window on to the stone floor of the tomb. Amid the pandemic, it evokes for me a feeling of hope and appreciating small freedoms whilst facing the reality of continued restrictions, since our view beyond is obscured."

Rhiannon Harries (2003, Oriental Studies), Winner of the Univ Photography Competition 2021

© @roaming_rhi



From the Master

Baroness Amos reflects on a future for Univ with academic excellence, diversity, inclusion and sustainability at its heart



I am writing this on a beautiful spring day in Oxford with the sun shining on the College's buildings. Hilary term ended two weeks ago and one of the indications that the constraints associated with the pandemic had come to an end was being able to welcome our first conference for over two years. On the same day we held the St Cuthbert Feast and hosted the Old Members' Football Day. The staff did an amazing job looking after us and juggling support to different events.

These events occurred against the backdrop of the war in Ukraine. We have been conscious of the impact of the war on our staff and students from Ukraine, Russia and neighbouring countries. As we did most recently in Afghanistan, we are looking at what support we can give to Ukrainian families fleeing the conflict, including academics, through the Council for At Risk Academics (CARA). For years, I personally witnessed the impact of war in many countries. It is devastating and very hard to describe the trauma and helplessness that those caught up in these situations feel. At the moment, we don't know when the conflict will end and peace will be restored. We all hope it will be soon.

Academically, Univ continues to do well. For the coming academic year our total direct applications increased by just over 30% (the University as a whole received a 2.2% decrease in applications). We are particularly pleased with the impact of Opportunity Oxford, which is in its third year. What is now Opportunity Oxford started in 2016 as the Univ Opportunity Programme. Now that we have had two cohorts graduate from the Univ Opportunity Programme many of you have asked about outcomes. I am pleased to report that the results of the graduates on the Univ Opportunity Programme are the same as the average for the College, demonstrating that academic excellence and diversity can go hand in hand. We are delighted that Opportunity Oxford has just made its 500th offer. That is a significant achievement.

“Univ continues to lead the way on access with the Univ Beacon Programme.”

Univ continues to lead the way on access with the Univ Beacon Programme, which is challenging underrepresentation in the undergraduate, graduate and post-doctoral community. We are in the process of deciding on our first undergraduate award holders and will be advertising for the post-doctoral position: the Beacon Junior Research Fellowship. My thanks to our Old Members who have given advice and support to this programme. Building a pipeline of talent will have a major impact on academia.

I am delighted to report that we have signed the agreement for the major funding for Univ North and that our fundraising campaign has been successful. Thank you. Univ North will help the College realise its ambitions for the future, a future with academic excellence, diversity, inclusion and sustainability at its heart.

Valerie Amos

Fellows' news

New appointments



Emeritus Fellows



Dr Keith Dorrington, Dr Lisa Kallet, Mr Frank Marshall and Professor Robin Nicholas were elected Emeritus Fellows of the College in 2021.

Tutorial Fellows



Dr Bartek Klin has been appointed as a Fellow and Praelector in Computer Science (Programming Languages). Dr Klin is

interested in the theoretical foundations of computer science, including coalgebraic, bialgebraic and other categorical methods, operational semantics of programs and processes, computation theory in sets with atoms, and algebraic specifications.

AfOx Senior Visiting Fellowship



Dr Godwin Oghole, a Nigerian neuroradiologist and Visiting Senior Fellow at Univ, is visiting the Nuffield Department of Clinical Neurosciences

as part of the Africa Oxford Initiative. His research interests are Stroke, Dementia, and computational neuroimaging analysis. He is in Oxford to develop collaborative networks for strengthening neuroscience research in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Lecturers



Dr Katherine Backler, Departmental Lecturer in Ancient History. Dr Backler's research focuses

on recovering the perspectives and experiences of ancient women and using them to re-examine larger-scale social structures.



Dr David Dearlove, Senior College Lecturer (Biochemistry). Dr Dearlove's research is interested

in how our lifestyle (diet, exercise etc.) affects our likelihood of developing metabolic diseases such as type II diabetes and cardiovascular disease.



Dr Blake Ewing, Stipendiary Lecturer in Politics. Dr Ewing's DPhil focused on Ideology, Language and the

Politics of Time. Before coming to Oxford he worked at the World Bank and as a journalist, writing mainly for *The Economist*.



Katharina Friege, Departmental Lecturer in Modern European History. Ms Friege's research focuses on German

history in the twentieth century, where her main interests centre on subjectivity, cultural discourse and identity.



Dr Brooke Johnson, Stipendiary Lecturer in Earth Sciences.

Dr Johnson is a geologist researching the co-evolution of early eukaryotic life and Earth surface environments. His work combines classical field geology and petrographic observation.



Dr Martina Rodda, Departmental Lecturer in Classical Languages and Literature.

Dr Rodda's DPhil dissertation project was a synchronic and diachronic analysis of formulaic variation in archaic Greek epic, on both the syntactic and semantic level.

You can read more Fellows' news in the *University College Record* and on the College website.

Expedition Data Recovery

Navigating through the pandemic, a frozen runway and other obstacles, Dr Laura Stevens collects critical data for understanding ice-shelf collapse

From October to December 2021, Dr Laura Stevens, Supernumerary Fellow in Climate and Earth Surface Processes, completed an expedition to Antarctica to retrieve data logged on instruments they helped set out two years ago. The various instruments and sensors Dr Stevens and colleagues installed out on the ice shelf are designed to monitor ice-shelf surface melt and how the ice shelf responds to movement and ponding of this surface meltwater. After a missed field season in November 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Dr Stevens travelled with Professor Ian Willis from St Catharine's College, Cambridge, and Dr Becky Dell, a European Space Agency Climate Change Initiative Fellow



Top: Dr Stevens takes a selfie of herself and a Twin Otter full of GPS equipment, a skidoo, and other useful glaciology kit on their way to Fossil Bluff Field Station (Photo: L. Stevens).

Centre: The team works to recover a buried GPS receiver next to a line of their four parked skidoos (Photo: B. Dell (SPRI)).

Bottom left: Dr Stevens downloads data from a GPS receiver that has been taking continuous measurements of ice-sheet surface position since November 2019 (Photo: M. Chambers (BAS)).

Bottom centre: Dr Dell tightens up the bolts on a time-lapse camera mount after programming the camera – located within the white housing – to take a photo every 30 minutes until it is retrieved in November 2022 (Photo: L. Stevens).

Bottom right: Dr Dell works to catalogue the density and bubble structure of an ice core retrieved with the hot-ring corer (Photo: M. Chambers (BAS)).



and Postdoctoral Research Associate at the Scott Polar Research Institute at Cambridge, to unbury, service and retrieve data from the instruments.

Following a two-week quarantine period with four PCR tests in the Falkland Islands, the expedition faced a further three-week delay waiting for a frozen runway at the British Antarctic Survey's (BAS) Rothera Base to thaw. From Rothera, they travelled by Twin Otter a further 400 km into the icy continent to Fossil Bluff Field Station (BAS) on the edge of the George VI Ice Shelf, where they stayed for around three weeks. At Fossil Bluff and out on the ice shelf, the science team were additionally supported by Mr Mark Chambers, an incredibly helpful mountaineer and field guide employed by the British Antarctic Survey. This team of four commuted daily onto the ice shelf by skidoo to uncover the Global Positioning System (GPS) antennae and receivers, water-level sensors, weather stations, and time-lapse cameras that have been operating continuously since November 2019. This year they also used a novel hot-ring corer to retrieve 10–15 m

deep ice cores from the ice-shelf surface, before servicing and repositioning the GPS and weather-station instruments to collect one more year's worth of observations. The team will return in November 2022 to pack them all up and bring them home.

Working with the project's lead investigator Dr Alison Banwell (University of Colorado Boulder) and colleague Professor Douglas MacAyeal (University of Chicago), the team will use the data to examine in detail how much melting occurs across the ice shelf each summer, how much of that water ponds up in lakes, and how that ponding causes the floating ice shelf to bend and possibly crack under the weight of the meltwater. The team's findings should improve our understanding of how ice shelves fracture and break up. Ice-shelf break up and decreasing ice-shelf stability is predicted to be more likely in the future as melting around Antarctica's periphery increases, ultimately due to rising atmospheric temperatures from global warming.

A recent study using satellite data led by Dr Banwell and co-authored by Dr Stevens and Dr Dell showed that 2019–20 was

an exceptionally high melt summer, with more water ponded on the George VI Ice Shelf than at any time for the past three decades. The team was unable to revisit the sites in the 2020–21 summer because of COVID-19, making the 2021 visit all the more important. "Even with the missed field season in 2020–21, we're really excited to look into the data we retrieved that extends across the exceptionally high melt summer of 2019–20," Stevens said. "This was the most melt the George VI Ice Shelf had seen in at least 32 years, and to have had instruments out on the ice shelf during that summer is a remarkably useful concurrence." With the current 2021–22 melt season looking to finish up as a more moderate melt season, Stevens noted that the final year of data – in combination with the earlier 2019–20 observations – will provide a useful benchmark for how the ice shelf responds across the observable range of melting that the ice shelf experiences at present.

The work is funded by the UK Natural Environment Research Council, the US National Science Foundation and British Antarctic Survey Logistics.





Top right: Dr Stevens and Professor Willis peer into an enclosure containing a GPS receiver, batteries, and a charge controller after digging the enclosure out from beneath two years' worth of snow accumulation on the ice shelf (Photo: M. Chambers (BAS)).

Bottom: Panorama: Returning to Fossil Bluff Field Station after a day out on the ice shelf via linked-skidoo travel, the team pauses to take photos of low clouds forming where the George VI Ice Shelf meets Alexander Island (Photo: L. Stevens).



Univ online

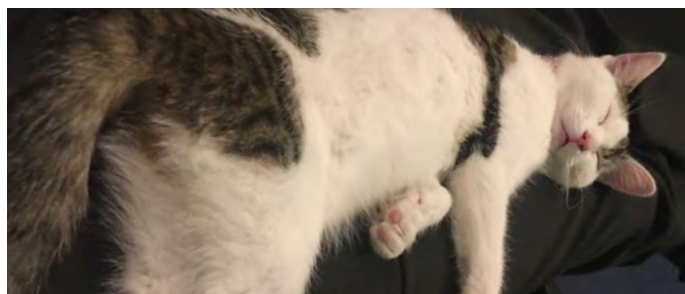
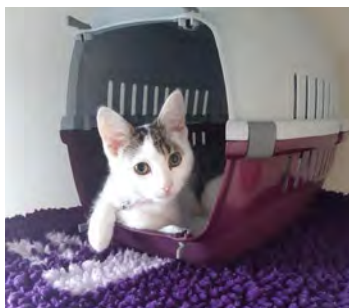
Posts, polls, purrs and podcasts

 8,389+

The number of followers Univ has on Twitter @UnivOxford

 700,000+

The number of page views on the Univ website in 2021



It's been another bumper year for all things digital at Univ.

In 2021 we published 327 news items and features on our staff, academics, students, and alumni, including, back in September, our 100th Profile. With a total, at time of writing, of 123 Profiles on the website, you can explore all of them [here](#) .


We also now publish monthly roundups of our news, and the end of the last calendar year we produced our first ever "A Year in Review" digital publication, bringing everything together in one place. You can read it [here](#) .

With the establishment of Univ's Sustainability Committee we also now report on specific sustainability and biodiversity issues from across College; we'll continue to do so and if you miss anything on the website look out for posts on Twitter and Facebook which highlight them regularly.


On the subject of social media, we posted more than 3,000 items last year and attracted almost 4,000 new followers

including taking our Instagram following well above 10,200.

It will come as little or no surprise that the breakout star of our social channels was Lyra the Univ kitten. She came to us in September 2021 and we ran an online poll to name her; after an initial round of more than 200 suggestions (yes, "Catty McCatface" was amongst them) the votes were cast on the top five suggestions – Clawkins, Martlet, Mary, Shelley and Lyra – with the latter landing the winning 36% of the vote. She makes regular appearances live in the Lodge and via website and social. I'm pretty sure you'll fall in love with her...

Elsewhere on the website – in our Staircase12 Reading Bank to be exact (see [here](#)  – we have added almost 50 new book reviews from our students covering the full range of Univ subjects. Designed as inspiration for those thinking of applying to either Univ or any other top university, I'm sure even those of us longer in the tooth will find this wonderfully diverse selection

of reading recommendations an absolute treasure trove.

If listening rather than reading ticks more boxes for you, we also have a new Univ Podcasts page live [here](#)  with contributors as varied as Nobel Peace Prize winner Professor Muhammad Yunus and writer and satirist Armando Iannucci (1982, English).

Please do keep your news and updates coming in to us so that we can continue to share more of this amazing #Univ_Life with you all.

Justin Bonnyer, Digital Communications Manager

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My view of Univ

“Two years ago, I was standing on the highest level of a choral riser, waiting for the Freshers’ Photograph to be taken. It was the Matriculation Day – the official start of my journey at Oxford. I was excited and nervous at the same time. Everything felt so unreal. I turned around, trying to take a deep breath and calm myself down, then this view took my breath away. Looking out to the Master’s Lodgings, sunlight was gently streaming down upon the earth from the small patches of blue amid the whitish dove grey, saturating the colours of the grass, trees and buildings. These old buildings had welcomed many new faces in the past years, now including mine. Taking a deep breath, I turned around again and faced forward, with my head held up high.”

Gloria Wai Shan Ma (2019, DPhil Experimental Psychology)

College news

Sustainability, wildlife and preservation



Sustainability committee

Univ has established a Sustainability Committee to report on and push forward the College's sustainability efforts.

One of the initial aims of the committee is to capture, in one place, the sustainability work already taking place across the College and publish a sustainability report. The scope of the committee extends from the energy use to the wider impact of College activities in areas such as catering, waste disposal and the College's gardens. The committee also recognises the importance of communication and education to promote sustainable practices amongst both staff and students.

The establishment of Univ's Sustainability Committee comes as the University sets a target of net zero carbon and a net gain in biodiversity by 2035. Therefore, another major aim of the committee is to join in with and progress University-wide efforts to become more sustainable.

Over the coming months we will be reporting on initiatives from across College so please look out for these on our News Hub and social media channels – Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

“It is a real pleasure to chair the College's Sustainability Committee. I have been excited to hear about the various projects already taking place in the College from student-led initiatives to a decarbonisation plan being put together in conjunction with our Univ North development. While there is still a long way for us to go in reducing our environmental impact, Univ is taking a lead in some areas.”

Eleanor Chamings-Manley, Sustainability Committee Chair



Univ joins the Wildlife Trusts

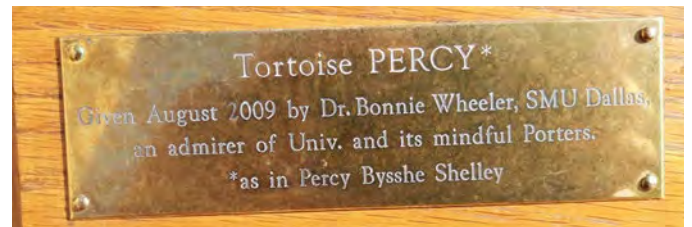
Univ has joined The Wildlife Trusts as a corporate member. Their commercial “arm”, Future Nature, will be working with the College at Univ North on biodiversity net gain, checking the College’s progress against what it said it would achieve over the next five to ten years and providing advice on how to boost that further. We have agreed to aim to achieve their target of 20% increase in biodiversity at Univ North over the next five to ten years.

The project will be monitored for ten years and Future Nature will carry out annual surveys for the first five years.

The Wildlife Trusts is a grassroots movement of people from a wide range of backgrounds, on a mission to restore a third of the UK’s land and seas for nature by 2030. They believe everyone, everywhere, should have access to nature and the joy and health benefits it brings. Each Wildlife Trust is an independent charity formed by people getting together to make a positive difference to wildlife, climate and future generations. Together they have more than 850,000 members, over 42,500 volunteers, 2,000 staff and 600 trustees.

“In joining as members, which is separate from using their commercial services, we are demonstrating our commitment to our local wildlife and recognising our place in sustaining the rich diversity of flora and fauna across the town and county. None of the other colleges or the University are currently members of The Berks, Bucks and Oxon Wildlife Trust. We may be the first but I suspect we will not be the last.”

Angela Unsworth MBE, Domestic Bursar



Oxford Preservation Trust Awards

On 2 November, the Oxford Preservation Trust gave University College an award for our Main Quad re-paving and also commended Percy the College tortoise’s new penthouse.

The Main Quad repaving and addition of the Hall ramp is part of the Lodge refurbishment to ensure level access with level thresholds for the new Lodge and Fellows’ post room off Staircase IV, along with Staircase V and VI. The OPT recognised the contributions of Original Field of Architecture and Landscape, Hickman Brothers Landscaping, Broadleaf Joinery, and the University College Surveyor to the project.

Meanwhile, Percy’s home, The Tortoise House and Enclosure (Percy’s Penthouse), received a “Lettuce of Commendation”. After an eventful 2020, Percy was installed in his new home in early 2021. The judges commented, “The Tortoise House is whimsical and funny. It’s quirky, what Oxford is about.” All the judges were enthralled, not just by the Tortoise House, but with Percy himself, calling him “the most charismatic of tortoises”. They agreed that Percy’s penthouse has set a precedent for animal welfare for all tortoises around the University.

The Oxford Preservation Trust Awards, now in their 44th year, celebrate the contribution that buildings and environmental projects can make to Oxford’s character, its streets and its green spaces.

Event News

Celebrations, virtual gatherings and global conversations

Univ in numbers

1,680+

The number of attendees at our virtual events since May 2020

♥ 52,562

The number of likes, shares and comments on our social media in 2020

A number of events took place in 2021, connecting Univ members around the world. Here are some of the highlights. Follow the links to read more or to download the podcasts.

May

Global Conversations

Baroness Amos chaired a virtual conversation on innovation in a post-COVID world between Aaref Hilaly (1989, PPE) and Kevin Hartz (1992, History) on 6 May: [here](#)

William of Durham Day

A virtual William of Durham Day took place on 22 May. Baroness Amos gave a College update and Angela Unsworth MBE, Domestic Bursar, Giles Underwood, Director of Music and Jonathan Cheesman, Boat Club Coach, discussed recent challenges: [here](#)

June

Univ in the Arts

Prolific performer, writer, director and producer, Armando Iannucci (1982, English) talked Dickens with Jonathan Hourigan (1979, PPE) on 10 June: [here](#)

Univ North Q&A

On 14 June, College held an online Q&A event on Univ North with Angela Unsworth MBE and Dr Andrew Grant, Finance Bursar: [here](#)

September

Oxford Open Doors

On 12 September, Univ welcomed members of the public as part of the Oxford Open Doors weekend, featuring tours, a plant sale and propagation workshop in the Master's Garden, and cream tea and Pimms in the Fellows' Garden: [here](#)

November

Univ North Tour

On 5 November, College staff, Old Members and students came together for the first of our tours of the Univ North site, focusing on the new nursery: [here](#)

USPGA (Golf)

The Autumn Meeting took place at Walton Heath Golf Club on 11 November 2021, kindly hosted by Robin Hollington (1974, Law): [here](#)

Univ in the Arts

Rebecca Mead (1985, English), journalist and author, joined novelist Amanda Brookfield (1979, English) for a conversation about "The Craft of Confession" on 18 November.

Univ Annual Seminar

On 23 November, Univ held its 17th Annual Seminar virtually on how businesses responded to COVID-19 with Antony Jenkins, CBE (1979, PPE), and Emma Woods (1987, Psychology): [here](#)



In Conversation

On 24 November, Univ and Queen's hosted an event with Professor Muhammad Yunus, to celebrate 100 Years of PPE at Oxford and to launch the Centenary Visiting Professorship of PPE: [here](#)

December

Univ North Tour

On 3 December, Dr Andrew Grant and Martha Cass, Senior Development Executive, led a tour of Univ North focusing on project planning and implementation: [here](#)

Advent and Christmas Carols

The services for Advent on 28 November and Christmas Carols on 5 December are available to download from the College website: [here](#)



July

Celebratory weekend

On 24 and 25 July, events took place to thank Sir Ivor and Lady Crewe after 12 years of Mastership of the College. Family, friends and colleagues joined them for drinks in the Fellows' Garden, with music from The Martlet Ensemble, tours of Oxford, Univ and Univ North, and a hog roast and live jazz in the gardens at Stavs - [here](#)



£500,000+

The amount raised by Young Univ
for Univ North

Development News

Young Univ Challenge update

Dates for your diary

Saturday, 21 May

William of Durham Annual
Recognition Day

Sunday, 22 May

Memorial Service for Dr Brian
Loughman, Emeritus Fellow

Wednesday, 25 May

USPGA Spring Meeting

Saturday, 28 May

Summer VIIIs

Major Benefactors Reception and
Luncheon

Friday, 24 June

Univ Ball

Sunday, 18 September

1960, 1961 and 1962 Diamond
Anniversary Luncheon

Saturday, 24 September


1993-1996 Gaudy

Sunday, 25 September

1972 Golden Anniversary
Reunion

Saturday, 1 October

Univ Donor Day

Events may be subject to change
due to COVID-19. Please check
the website for updates: [here](#) 

Following the “quiet phase” of the College’s Univ North development, at the beginning of the 2021/22 academic year, the College entered the “public phase” and appealed to all Old Members for support for this once-in-300-year endeavour. The response by the Univ community was tremendous.

Our Young Univites rose to the challenge of Old Members Annie Tse and Terence Tsang, who pledged £250,000 if our Young Univ cohort (alumni aged 35 and under) could raise a similar amount. The College is pleased to announce that our Old Members have met this challenge.

“Univ means a lot to both of us. The development in North Oxford is a great project to be embarking on and we are incredibly excited by it. We wanted to make a longer-lasting impact with our giving and have supported this project with the Young Univ Matched Giving Scheme.”

Annie Tse (1984, Law) and **Terence Tsang** (1983, Engineering)

Minesh Shah (2004, Physics), former Chair of the Young Univ Committee, proposed that if this challenge could be achieved, the Lodge should be called the “Young Univ Lodge” to mark the achievement. The new Lodge will house the donor roll of honour for all supporters who have donated over £2,000 over five years to the development (over 300 names are now due to be included on this list). A component of the match is that Young Univ donors need only donate £1,000 (or £13.34 a month) to be acknowledged on this wall along with their peers.

The new Chair, **Hugh Moorhead** (2012, Classics), took on the challenge initiated by Minesh and commented: “It has been inspiring to see the whole Univ community come together to fundraise for Univ North. Young Univ has collaborated to fund the new Porters’ Lodge at the Univ North site – we hope that as a consequence this will raise awareness of ‘Young Univ’ for all those who pass in and out of it, and what the programme seeks to offer recently graduated alumni. It will be very exciting to see both the project’s fruition and the doubtless transformative effect that it will have for the College.”

During the July telephone campaign, students spoke to hundreds of young alumni, asking if they would take Young Univ closer to their £250,000 target.

With such strong support for Univ North from Young Univ, a second challenge was raised by the College: for every 15 donors (giving any amount) in a year group, a student room at the new North Oxford development would be forever known by their respective year.

The response to the campaign was incredibly positive, with a staggering 97 Young Univ donors participating with both one-off gifts and others setting up direct debits. Two year groups (matriculation years 2008 and 2014) have almost reached the student room challenge target with 12 and 10 donors respectively.





CIRCLE OF LIFE

An interview with
John Weltman
(1979, History)

John Weltman graduated from Yale in 1979, matriculated at Univ that same year, where he stayed until 1981, leaving for the University of Virginia School of Law. He has his BA, MA (History – thesis on espionage during the Cromwellian Protectorate) and JD. He is a lawyer with over 38 years of commercial litigation (barrister) experience and is the founder of the largest surrogate parenting agency in America, Circle Surrogacy, now in its 28th year. John and his husband of 34 years (together nearly 40), Cliff, were the first gay couple to have children through surrogacy in the United States. Their boys are now 28 (radio frequency engineer at an internet service provider) and 26 (PhD candidate in Paleontology).

Dr William Prescott (2016, History), Executive Researcher at Nurole, interviewed him for *The Martlet* in December 2021.

What brought you to Univ?

I had a wonderful history teacher in high school. We not only watched *Elizabeth R* and *The Six Wives of Henry the VIII*, but we also got an opportunity to litigate the Trial of Edmund Campion (I was the prosecutor). It made the period come alive. At Yale, Jack Hexter, Sterling Professor of History, taught a class called “The writing of history.” He handed us the 105 pages of existing primary source material from the 1st Parliament of King James I, and said, “Go write a paper.” Then, he asked us to pass our paper to the person on our left and edit it. Then he sat us in groups and talked about our edits. Then he had us rewrite the papers. It was more like an Oxford class than anything at Yale. His reference, claiming in an understated way for an American, that I was competent to do the work, was apparently the reason I was accepted at Univ! I thought it would be amazing to study history at Oxford. I began by trying to write a biography of John Thurloe, Secretary of State for Cromwell, though by the end of my first year I decided to focus on his forte, espionage. I ended up writing a 250 page thesis.

I made four of my best friends in the world at Oxford. The people were exciting because they were bright, but also open and warm. You could, especially if you had port, sherry, coffee or tea, sit for hours talking. I never felt judged or competed with. People were open and accepting.

To this day, Univ was probably the two best years of my life because of the friendships, the travelling, and the education.

Were you out at the time you were at Univ and was there a gay Univ? These days you've got an LGBTQ+ society and there's the LGBTQ+ formal.

I hadn't really told any friends that I was gay. It didn't mean that I didn't have men in my life, but I was primarily with women, both at Yale and at Oxford. I felt that Yale was an extraordinarily homophobic environment. That wasn't true at Oxford. I didn't feel uncomfortable. There were people who knew that I had had experiences and was interested in guys. It wasn't an issue. But there certainly weren't any gay societies or formals.

How did you get into surrogacy and how did you end up setting up the business?

I had been the eldest of four kids and I always wanted to have kids. Very early on, I told Cliff that this was a dream of mine. About seven years later, we'd gotten married in a Unitarian Church and lost three of our closest friends. It felt like the right time, realising how short life can be. We decided on surrogacy because I wanted a biological child and he wanted to avoid the uncertainty of genetics with adoption. After having kids I have found that genetics is sort of meaningless and that in many respects – we both love our children equally – but my husband is closer to my biological son, and I'm closer to his biological son. My genetic son looks like me and has interests like Cliff and his biological son looks like him and has characteristics more like me. So, I truly believe in nature and nurture. We ended up being the very first American gay couple to each have a child by the same surrogate mom. We're still in touch with her, over 30 years later.

I started the surrogate parenting agency unintentionally. I helped the surrogacy agency we used with contracts and later when they got sued for malpractice in a lawsuit, I represented them, and we won the jury trial and appeal. Suddenly, people started asking me to find them a surrogate. I told them I was not an agency but I could write contracts. One female physician I was doing contracts for found as potential surrogates a friend and a nurse in her practice, both of whom passed screening. When she picked the friend, the nurse sent me her medical records and testing asking to be matched. I was going to advise her that I didn't do

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I'm not sure that I feel that anything changed my life more, or has such a special place in my heart, as Univ does.”



matching. But after a cousin's brunch telling what had happened, my cousin's ex-husband called me to say they'd been working with an agency that had been a disaster, matching them with surrogates who cheated on the celibacy requirement and they wanted to use the surrogate who had written me. I said I don't do that. They said, "You know how it goes well, and we know how it goes badly." They offered me \$5,000 to do the legal work and use the surrogate and I agreed.

After their son was born 25 years ago, they did a circumcision and asked me to hold the baby as a way to say thank you. I found myself welling up with tears. I had helped major corporations trade money through litigation but had never helped people create a family. I wanted to do this again. But I had no idea how to find or screen another surrogate. From their bathroom, I called a social worker I knew. She wanted to help. We created a business plan and one baby turned into four, and four turned into 12 and 12 turned into 25. We just welcomed our 2,500th baby in 26 years. We're welcoming 200 to 250 babies a year. Circle Surrogacy now has 125 employees and clients from 74 different countries.

Did you ever encounter any challenges? Are you seeing a lot of increasing demand given changing attitudes towards the LGBTQ+ community?

In the early years, it was more about heterosexual couples. The first gay couple that we worked with was working at the Brigham and Women's hospital, one of the finest Harvard teaching hospitals, specializing in women's medical issues. You'd think Harvard would be very open-minded but it took them about three months to okay the surrogacy for a gay couple. People started talking about the "gayby" boom in 2005, when my kids were already 10 and 11. Lesbians had been having children for some time by the time I had kids. But Circle and four of our clients were on the front page of *The New York Times* in May of that year because very few others were doing this. People started looking at whether surrogacy or having gay parents was going to have a negative psychological impact on children. Researchers at Cambridge have done a multi-year study recently and determined that neither do. Over time there has been a huge change nationally, and the gayby boom grew. Now



gay men and women feel it is something they can do, when at the time I did it, most of my friends thought that being gay meant never being able to have children.

I faced the greatest challenges outside the US. I found myself in France facing criminal charges for what I was doing although the court dismissed the charges, saying what I was doing in the US where it was legal could not be illegal in France.

Even England was a nightmare for years and brought back laws from the 1850s to try to prohibit US surrogacy. We would visit England and even had an employee there but it wasn't until this April that we were able to open an office in London, with permission from the highest authorities.

Are there any stories that you have found particularly inspiring?

There are so many wonderful stories. There were a couple of guys, one a teacher, the other a lawyer, but they really didn't have any money. They helped take care of a much older woman who lived down the hall from them. She left them with enough money to have a baby. One of them has been the Chairman of the Board of Men Having Babies (a non-profit that helps indigent gay people afford to have kids) and a member of Circle staff. I love stories like

that. And many people send me pictures every holiday of their children. I think it's the most wonderful thing I've ever done.

I'm on the board of SEEDS, which sets the ethical standards for surrogate agencies. I really care about this being done ethically, thinking first and foremost about the child, making sure that this is going to be a loving home and, secondly, that the surrogate is going to be respected and appreciated for her extraordinary gift. And thirdly, I consider the couple (or single), our clients, themselves – are they on the same page and how are they going to do this successfully?

You starred as Truman Capote in *Tru* in August. What drew you to the play?

Truman Capote was a highly respected writer in the US, but a complicated man, who drew the wrath of his friends when he wrote a *Vanity Fair* (Thackeray) like novel satirizing wealthy New York society. He was an out gay man at a time when most of society condemned homosexuality but he had been welcomed into the highest echelons of New York's elite. I had done the part that Nathan Lane played in *The Bird Cage* in the musical version called *La Cage Aux Folles*. A director who was known as one of the finest on the Cape asked, "Would you like to do *Tru*?" And I said,

"Well, yes, I've seen it. It's phenomenal. But I'm really trying not to get pigeonholed as extremely gay characters. And I'd like to build to it." So, the first thing we did together was *Breaking the Code*, based on the life of Alan Turing. Then, I built to *Tru*, and just as we were about to perform it, COVID-19 hit, and I had to keep it in my head for another year. *The Cape Cod Times* very kindly said that it was the best show on the Cape Cod stage when it was performed.

Why do you support Univ, and why would you encourage others to do the same?

I love Univ. My experience gave me an extraordinary education, a deep set of friendships and the experience of international travel. I was surprised at the level of cultural differences between the United States and England, and the appreciation people had for someone who was different – not gay necessarily, just American – and the beauty of Oxford, the opportunity to live abroad, the quality of the professors – the personal touch.


I ran into Leslie Mitchell when I was last at Univ. He had been one of the dons I had known when at Univ and he's still there. It had been 42 years since my matriculation, 40 years since I left, and he said "John Weltman, what are you doing here? Why didn't you tell me you were coming?" I did the next time. But it was just a lovely feeling to be remembered and cared about. I was also friendly with my scout and I went out for drinks with her, and other scouts, and everyone was so warm and lovely and it felt so intimate. I'm not sure that I feel that anything changed my life more, or has such a special place in my heart, than Univ.

I'm excited about supporting Univ North because I think it is very important that undergraduates and graduates mix. It is going to be a very different kind of place from how it was when I was there. This is a living, breathing College that's been around for over 700 years, and it changes every day. I want to give back because I can, and lucky me.

Lucky all of us who've been there.

Describe Univ in three words.

Home. Heart. Mind.

John was guest speaker at last year's LGBTQ+ History Month event. You can download his talk [here](#) 



THE SECRET OF MY. SUCCESS

PART TWO: UNIV ENTREPRENEURS

In the second of a new series for *The Martlet*, we invite entrepreneurs to talk about what inspires them and how they got started on their entrepreneurial journey.

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For me perhaps the ultimate entrepreneurial superpower is not taking it all too personally, because you are more than your work.”



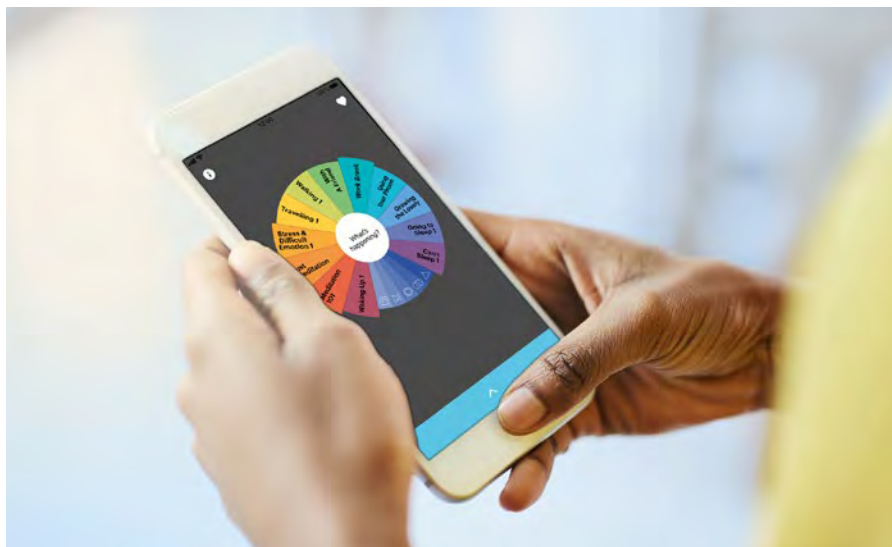
Rohan Gunatillake (1999, MChem Chemistry), wellbeing entrepreneur and NHS design leader.

Following a conventional post-Univ career start in management consulting, I became a specialist in digital innovation in the arts. It was during my time as Innovation Lead for the Edinburgh Festivals that I applied my work experience with my personal background in meditation to make the popular mindfulness app Buddhify, and related products through my values-led company Mindfulness Everywhere. In 2019, I moved to work for

NHS Scotland as Head of Product for a new unit making software for clinicians and citizens, spent six months on secondment to Scottish Government as product lead on key public-facing COVID-19 vaccination digital services and I am now Head of Service Design at NHS 24. I spent six years on the board of the British Council and I am the host of the surprisingly good podcast Meditative Story.

Looking back, the thing that perhaps most enabled me to become an entrepreneur was when I decided to go to a four day week when I was 27 while in my corporate job. It was a risk but meant I had

time to explore what else was out there and most importantly explore exciting ideas. My time at Univ taught me a lot about how to deliver high quality work in tight time constraints without over-extending myself and also how important it is to do things because the ideas behind them energise you. In a world where large-scale individual success can often be at the expense of others, really being clear on how much is enough can be a real blessing. But for me perhaps the ultimate entrepreneurial superpower – though others may disagree – is not taking it all too personally because you are more than your work.



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Harry Briggs (1995, BA Psychology), co-founder and director of Firefly Tonics.

Three years after I left Univ, after a spell at McKinsey, I realised that if I didn't take the plunge and start my own business now, at 24, I probably never would. I teamed up with a school-friend, Marcus Waley-Cohen, to develop a "natural energy drink" – we wanted it to be as effective as an energy drink, but without the sugar and chemicals. We researched every type of natural medicine, doing lots of mini-experiments to test fanciful claims, and ended up working with the UK's two leading medical herbalists. It took nearly a year to finalise the formulae, design the bottles, source the ingredients and persuade a bottler to make our first batch. And we called it Firefly – a generous London brewer gave us the trademark.

Our big break was getting listed in Harvey Nichols' Food Hall – in 2003 it was the trend-setter establishment in high-end food and drink – and when the drinks sold well there, other stockists quickly followed. Before long we were getting requests from France, Denmark, Sweden, even Japan, to distribute Firefly across the world. In hindsight, we probably should have held off expanding internationally before we'd really cracked the UK (the foreign label regulations were a huge headache and hampered our

ability to innovate) but it was exciting being sold in all these places we'd never visited.

By 2007 we were selling millions of bottles in 35 countries and starting to get interest from beverage giants interested in buying the company. (We said thank you but no.) Then the 2008 financial crisis hit. Suddenly people were in money-saving mode and many of our stockists didn't survive, or trimmed their drinks range to a few mainstream (cheaper) brands. We had to trim costs fast, so we halved the team and I stepped away from the business. My business partner nursed Firefly back to growth, before selling the business to Private Equity in 2011. I had a lucky break and got a job in venture capital.

I still feel those first couple of years of building the business were the most alive I've ever felt in my career. I realised that the corporate ladder hypnotises you into thinking there's only one path to success – and that you're in a race against your peers; but when you step off it, you realise that true happiness and fulfilment come from defining your own life goals. It's probably no coincidence that I came out the same year we launched Firefly.

So, if you can't get a business idea out of your head, the timing feels right and you have a co-founder to work on it with (being a solo founder is hard), I always say, take the plunge...

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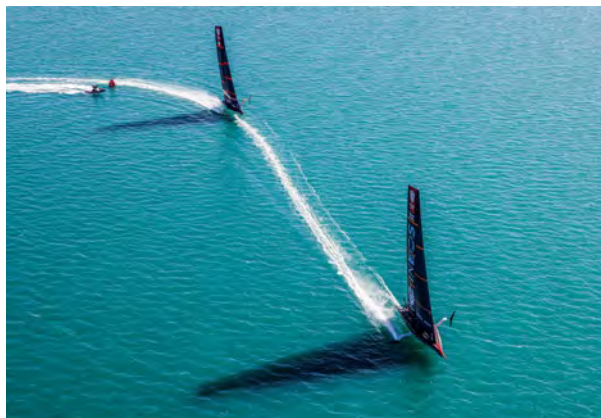
True happiness and fulfilment come from defining your own life goals.”

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We have a roster of customers that we are really proud of, with everyone from F1 to major OEMs.”



Dr Mark Catherall (2003, MEng & DPhil Engineering), Canopy Simulations.

I was an undergrad studying Engineering at Univ from 2003 to 2007. I also rowed a lot and tried my hand at various other things with varying degrees of success/failure. After Univ I went sailing all summer, then went skiing for six months in Canada. Finally, I came home and landed myself a job at McLaren Racing, the F1 team. That job was advertised on the Oxford Careers Service website; it was several months out of date, but I thought it was worth a shot anyway. I spent two-and-a-bit years at McLaren, then resigned to come back to Oxford, and to Univ, to do a DPhil in Biomedical Engineering, which I thought would be a lot more useful, and thus more fulfilling, than making millionaires go around in circles slightly faster. I turned up at Univ for grad freshers' week and then relocated to Canada again for another ski-season whilst working on my (simulation based) DPhil.

On my return from Canada I started doing some consultancy work for Ferrari F1 team, who had been in touch. This culminated in me running an office that Ferrari opened in the Begbroke Science Park for about 18 months, pretty much full time. My DPhil supervisor wasn't exactly delighted about this but I assured him that I would hand in my thesis within the four-year time limit, so he was happy enough. I finished working in the Ferrari Oxford office and spent six months writing up my thesis just in time to hand it in before the deadline, at the end of 2014.

After a bit more Ferrari consulting, I met up with two former colleagues from McLaren and we decided that between us we had the skills necessary to build our own motorsports simulation platform, and that we could build it as a web app, with all the simulations running in the cloud, so it would be very powerful compared to other tools on the market. We incorporated Canopy Simulations Ltd on 5 December 2015 (six years ago tomorrow, as I write this). We created our platform and found motorsports teams, initially in F1 and Formula E, willing to take a risk on our newly formed company in return for access to the transformative technology we were offering. Since then we have added a lot of functionality to the platform and have a roster of customers that we are really proud of, with everyone from F1 to major OEMs (Original Equipment Manufacturers), to the majority of Formula E teams using our platform. We've even worked with Ben Ainslie's America's Cup team for two seasons.

If I were to offer any advice to proto-entrepreneurs at Univ (which I am only doing under duress), I would say two things:

1. It's not hard to start a company, you don't need anyone's permission to do it, and you don't need any particular qualifications either – just do it.
2. Starting a business doesn't have to involve VC money and elevator pitches and the whole “startup” circus, you can just make stuff that people want to buy and sell it to them.



itgetsbrighter.org
 (coming soon)
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[@itgetsbrighter](https://www.instagram.com/itgetsbrighter)



“

My time at Univ remains immeasurably precious to me.”

Dr Emma Lawrance (2013, DPhil Clinical Neuroscience - Old Members' Australian Scholarship), Founder of It Gets Brighter, a platform for people experiencing mental health issues.

My time at Univ remains immeasurably precious to me – it was a truly one-of-a-kind experience, to be immersed in a community where curiosity and the desire to make a difference was the norm. The environment nurtured supportive and yet constantly challenging (in a good way!) discussions and friendships that are one of the greatest gifts I've been given. It Gets Brighter also benefited from many a meeting hosted in the Univ WCR! Since leaving Oxford I find those friendships to be an enduring source of comfort and joy.

“

Univ is a real incubator for ideas.”

Marko von der Leyen (2017, DPhil Physics), Co-founder, Quantum Dice.

When balloting for a college room at Stavs, I was one of the very few people that – against all odds – were not allocated a room in the draw. This was when I realised that the world needed true unbiased and certifiably random numbers produced by quantum processes (the necessity for securing data using post-quantum encryption may have also played a role). Quantum Dice was founded with my co-founders from other colleges after winning the University's Student Entrepreneurship Programme in 2019. Since then, the company has secured £2m in pre-seed funding from three VCs and has won several awards. Founding a start-up can be rather stressful and support from people that motivate and inspire each other is essential. Univ, and especially the WCR is full of students with interests so diverse it is difficult to not have an interesting conversation when there. While excelling at their academic studies, some manage to take care of a dependent in need while others represent their country at major sports events. Univ is a real incubator for ideas.



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**QUANTUM
DICE**



Your Legacy

Why Leave A Legacy To Univ?

Legacies are an enormously important source of funds for the College, one that is increasingly popular among Old Members.

The William Of Durham Club

The William of Durham Club recognises the generosity of those Old Members and friends who have made a future provision for Univ in their will. The Club is named after William of Durham who in 1249 bequeathed a portion of his estate to support scholars in Oxford, resulting in the foundation of University College.

Members Of The William Of Durham Club Receive:

- Special recognition in the annual Roll of Donors
- An invitation to an annual special recognition day
- A commemorative William of Durham Club pin
- Inheritance Tax benefits

For further information on remembering Univ in your will, please contact: Martha Cass on +44 (0) 1865 276958, email: Martha.Cass@univ.ox.ac.uk or visit here 

“Univ is an extraordinary college. The range of characters and interests found there, and the interdisciplinary exchange, creates a wonderful atmosphere. It is this diverse and exciting community that I hope to support by remembering Univ in my will.”

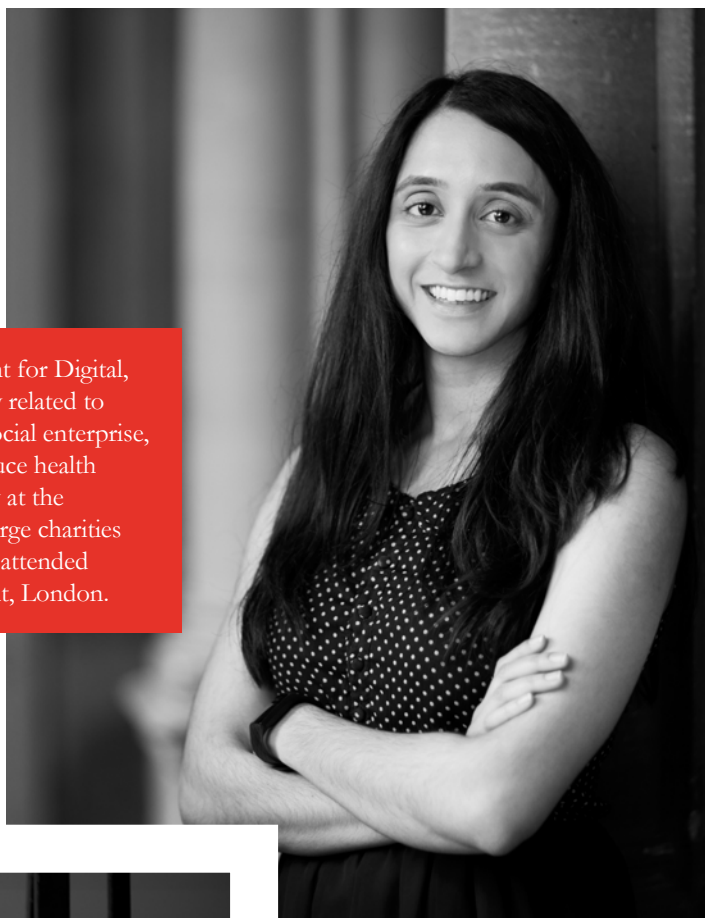
Jessica Lazar (2009, English)

Young Univ Gallery

In 2017, the College launched The Young Univ Gallery – an ongoing physical exhibition and multimedia project of Old Members aged 35 and under, which aims to demonstrate the breadth of achievements of some of Univ’s young alumni to our current and prospective students – and to all who visit the College or website. Some of the latest additions to the Gallery are highlighted on these pages. View the full Gallery [here](#) 🔗

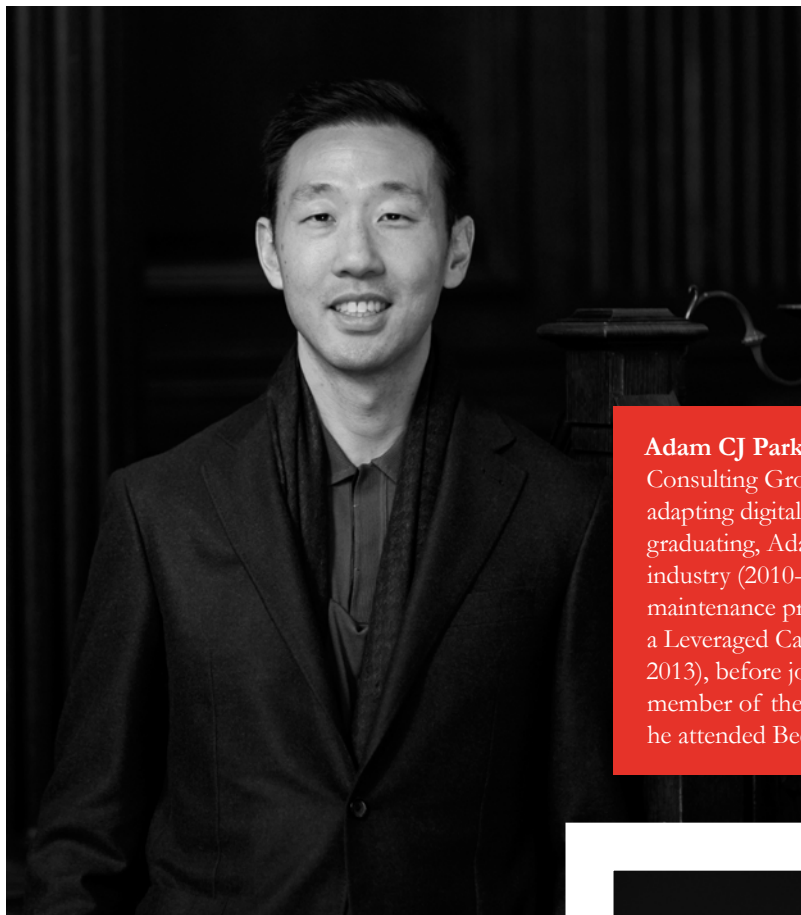
Hetal Jani (2013, BA PPE) is a Policy Advisor at the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport where she works on government policy related to charities and social enterprises. She is also a director of a small social enterprise, Life After Hummus which does amazing work in London to reduce health inequalities, food wastage and social isolation. She was previously at the EIRIS Foundation, where she did advocacy work to encourage large charities and foundations to invest their money ethically. Before Univ, she attended Claremont High School secondary school and sixth form in Brent, London.

“The Young Univ Gallery project is important to show that Univ welcomes diversity. It is important to recognise talented women and people of colour where traditionally only white men have been displayed in halls around Oxford.”



“It was certainly an intellectual challenge and a fantastic educational experience. It was also a really happy time where I made fantastic life-long friends. It also became a sort of ‘home’, which was something I would never have expected at the outset.”

Dr Helena Mills (2008, BA, MSt and DPhil History) is the Head of Policy for the Research Excellence Framework (the national exercise assessing research quality in universities) at UK Research and Innovation. Helena received an Old Members’ Trust Bursary, a Senior Scholarship and the Burns Scholarship at Univ. Her DPhil was funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council. She was also a Student Ambassador. Before Univ, Helena attended Bicester Community College.



“I was most inspired by my peers. They were incredibly intelligent and full of exciting ideas about how they could make an impact in the world. Just being around them broadened my own perspectives on how I could make an impact. Fast forward to today, it’s exciting and motivating to see them on their journeys to pursue their dreams and becoming leaders in their fields. We still exchange ideas, and they inspire me every day.”

Adam CJ Park (2005, MChem Chemistry) is a Partner at Boston Consulting Group (BCG), where he helps companies transform by adapting digital technologies and new ways-of-working at scale. After graduating, Adam went on to work as a consultant in the energy industry (2010-2011) where he worked on improving sensitive maintenance processes at nuclear power plants; he then went on to be a Leveraged Capital Markets analyst at UBS Investment Bank (2011-2013), before joining Boston Consulting Group. At Univ he was a member of the Boat Club and rowed with the First Eight. Prior to Univ, he attended Bedford School in the UK.

“The sense of community and collaboration was a strong part of my experience and something that remains important to me. From chanting ‘Uuuniiiiv’ whilst using your forefinger and little finger to make the shape of a U at Summer Eights to waiting for friends after finals, balloons and glitter in hand, the sense of belonging meant a lot.

“I have found that getting a diversity of perspectives and seeing how people approach and think about things in different ways contributes to better outcomes. Seeing what a wide range of things that people have gone on to do really helps to show the options we all have.”



Anne Ross (2007, BA PPE) is an Executive Director in the EMEA Equity Syndicate team at J.P. Morgan. She started her career in the UK and Sub Saharan Africa Equity Capital Markets team after graduating. Before Univ, she attended Lady Margaret School in London.

UNIV IN THE ARTS

THE STORY SO FAR

The College website records that “Univ in the Arts burst into life on Thursday 22 March (2018) with a wonderful opening event featuring a fascinating conversation between distinguished Historian Old Members Simon Winder (1981, History) and Alex von Tunzelmann (1996, History).” That event, “Writing the Past”, was the product of many months of discussion and plotting, based on an ambitious plan to raise the profile of the humanities, both within the College and across the swathes of Old Members involved in and passionate about the Arts.

The seed of Univ in the Arts had its genesis back in 2017, when Caroline Marriage (1991, English) voiced a hope to Sir Ivor Crewe that there might be a way of bringing together alumni who shared an interest in writing. After brain-storming the idea with the Development Office, a bigger project of tapping the rich talents among OMs to give the Humanities a wider platform came into being. The Master conceived the notion of appointing an annual Visitor in the Creative Arts at the same time, offering the post for 2018 to Amanda Brookfield (1979, English) to which she readily agreed.

Gradually, a structure was hammered out: “Univ in the Arts” was settled on as the umbrella name for three events a year: two following a traditional, conversational format with guest speakers and an audience Q&A, while the third was christened a “Salon” – a smaller gathering, designed to workshop and discuss different aspects



“I had a novel to write, a new puppy to train and a deep abhorrence of committees.”

of the creative process. Crucially, all events shared the goals of enabling important, illuminating exchanges to take place, while also giving Univ-ites a wonderful time through reconnecting with old friends and making new ones.

With structure and objectives agreed, Amanda Brookfield set about establishing the first Univ in the Arts Committee and accepted the role of Chair. “I had a novel to write, a new puppy to train and a deep abhorrence of committees,” she confesses, “but the cause was too exciting and worthwhile to resist. I was also given complete freedom. There were no rules, other than mining the rich seam of Old Members to find people and ways of making it work.”

On Wednesday 6 December 2017, the Univ in the Arts committee met for the first time, to the accompaniment of many rounds of sandwiches (and a quantity of chocolate) kindly provided by



Left: Amanda Brookfield

Above left: the Univ in the Arts Committee – Amanda Brookfield, Chris Birkett, Philly Malicka, Jonathan Hourigan and Jonathan Earl

Above right: Sophie Solomon at Univ in the Arts, at Killik & Co.

Right: A Univ in the Arts event



“All I want now is for Univ in the Arts to continue to grow, in diversity, subject matter and in uniting the very special Univ community.”

the Development Office. Those in attendance were Chris Birkett (1979, PPE), Jon Earl (1977, English), Jonathan Hourigan (1979, PPE) and Philly Malicka (2007, English), a group chosen for their spread of experience and skill-sets in the worlds of publishing, media, journalism, film and creative writing. The atmosphere was relaxed and the ideas plentiful, the main challenge being the broadness of the brief. “I mean, the *Humanities?*” Amanda laughs, remembering that first gathering. “I had to check how many subjects that encompassed and make a list. It was daunting, but also reassuring that this was a project that never could – and never should – run out of steam.”

The subsequent four years have demonstrated instead, a movement gathering momentum. Events have covered a panoply of subjects, including history, music, Putin’s Russia, medical writing, journalism, fiction, and the battlefields of “truth”. The extraordinary talents of numerous Old Members have been harnessed, from virtuoso klezmer violinist, Sophie Solomon (1995, History and Modern Languages), to brain surgeon and bestselling author, Professor Henry Marsh CBE FRCS

(1969, PPE), BBC world news presenter, Philippa Thomas (1984, PPE), foreign correspondent and Russia expert, Luke Harding (1987, English), and screenwriter, film director and comedian, Armando Iannucci (1982, English). Two salons, both held in the convivial atmosphere of the Groucho Club, explored “Inspiration and the Blank Page” and the equally thorny issue of “Who Owns the News?”

The pandemic temporarily halted the salons, but not Univ in the Arts. Embracing technology, events were live-streamed to a virtual audience, with hundreds tuning in to Luke Harding on Russia and Armando Iannucci “Talking Dickens”. Wine and canapés may have been less in evidence but the appetite for intelligent conversation and good companionship was undimmed. On the back of these successes, Univ in the Arts hopes to continue to organise a mixture of virtual and hybrid events, to broaden the audience still further.

The first of these took place on 18 November, when Amanda Brookfield conversed with Rebecca Mead, (1985, English), acclaimed journalist and memoirist, about her career, sources of inspiration and the alchemy of creating art out of “fact”. A live audience sat alongside a virtual one, from the sumptuous Music Room at Killik & Co, a ground-breaking “hybrid” occasion.

Four years after helping to launch Univ in the Arts, Amanda Brookfield recently decided to step down as Chair. “It’s a perfect example of what brilliant teamwork can achieve. I have loved every moment and am proud of every single event. All I want now is for Univ in the Arts to continue to grow, in diversity, subject-matter and in uniting the very special Univ community.”

If you are interested in being a part of the Univ in the Arts team, either with ideas, or as a presenter or potential committee member, the Development Office would love to hear from you. Please email development@univ.ox.ac.uk

Virtuous Ventures

An interview with Patrick S Chung (MSc Geography)

Patrick S Chung is Managing General Partner of Xfund (xfund.com), the early-stage venture capital firm dedicated to finding and supporting technically-gifted entrepreneurs with a liberal arts mindset. Since 2012, the firm has raised more than \$225 million, including a third, oversubscribed \$120-million fund in 2020. It has invested in numerous start-ups, including the artificial-intelligence-driven search and data-analysis firm Kensho; the world's largest online residential real-estate rental platform, Zumper (founded by Oxford classicist Anthemos Georgiades); America's fastest-growing provider of pension plans Guideline; the genomics-based personal-health company 23andMe; and Vaccitech, the company spun out of Oxford's Jenner Institute that commercialised the Oxford AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine.

Patrick received a joint JD-MBA degree from Harvard Law School and Harvard Business School, where he served as an Editor of the *Harvard Law Review*. Patrick was a Commonwealth Scholar at Univ, where he earned a Master of Science degree. He earned his AB degree at Harvard College in Environmental Science.





“

My time at Univ gave me so much: one of the things I treasure most – some first-class training in verbal sparring.”

What brought you to Univ?

When I graduated from Harvard College, I was fortunate enough to win a Commonwealth Scholarship which allows students from Commonwealth nations (I am a Canadian citizen) to study in the United Kingdom, similar to the way the Marshall Scholarship allows American citizens to study in the UK. I was thrilled to have been admitted to Oxford but I was clueless about choosing a college: I was advised that I should choose older colleges and to choose a central college. How could anyone do better than 1249, and the High Street?

How would you describe yourself at the moment?

I would describe myself as a person named Patrick who is delighted to meet you! I don't believe in the American obsession with defining oneself by one's profession. Most of us are more than our jobs. As a profession, I am a venture capitalist.

How did your experience at Univ influence your direction?

My time at Univ gave me so much: the opportunity to spend time with some of the cleverest, most cosmopolitan people I had met; the opportunity to live and “go native” in a foreign land that wasn't in the American cultural vortex; and – honestly one of the things I treasure most – some first-class training in verbal sparring.

Your initial investment was in a venture started by a 19 year-old at Stanford. What did you learn from that first investment?

That was a company called Loopt, co-founded by a brilliant sophomore named Sam Altman. I learned so much for that first investment: in the early stages of a company there is nothing more important than having an incredible team; being CEO can be lonely, and a good board member has got to be a steadfast support; it's the relationships we form that are the most meaningful, persistent, and valuable – quite beyond any single company or experience.

Professors often refer potential student entrepreneurs to Xfund – how do you brief them on what to look for?

We don't brief them – we trust them. One of our faculty advisors, Harvard Professor Harry Lewis, taught Bill Gates and Mark Zuckerberg. When Harry says, “You've got to meet this founder: she is in the top 5% of everyone I've ever encountered in 40 years,” it's a signal born of vast experience that we are honoured to receive. Even if we don't end up investing in them, it is a privilege to meet them, to help them, and to experience their brilliance first-hand.



Images: top - Patrick at the Oxford Union, bottom - Xfund

“

In the early stages of a company there is nothing more important than having an incredible team.”

Xfund is well-known for backing people from a more diverse range of backgrounds than other funds, which may just focus on people from a software or engineering background. What is the thinking behind this approach?

The practice stems from two beliefs: first, that the abstraction of technology has made powerful tools more accessible than ever. When those technical skills are no longer a true competitive advantage – what’s left? It’s the distilled creativity of the founder to bring something to life. And that creativity resides everywhere. Second, many venture firms are staffed with computer scientists and engineers who seem to have an aversion to backing people who have read English, or Theology, or PPE. That’s good news for us because we adore those kinds of “liberal arts founders.”

How does the Xfund support students to take the risks necessary to fulfil their dreams?

If you’re the first person in your family to attend college, especially to have been admitted to a place like Oxford or Harvard, there is tremendous pressure on you to study something “useful” and to take a high-paying job. One of Xfund’s missions is to save some of these talented people from this “default” fate. Our goal is that, on the day you graduate, you have an actual choice. You can take that offer from Google or Goldman Sachs – or, you can become the venture-backed founder and CEO of a funded start-up.

Can you talk about measuring success beyond profits, and your experience of this as a venture capitalist?

Xfund is a unique venture capital firm. We were founded in collaboration with some of the world’s best centres of learning. As a result, we have a double bottom-line mission. In addition to being for-profit, we have an educative mission: to teach and support talented prospective founders.

On a broader scale, practicing venture capital is a great privilege: we help to bring new things into existence, and we get to choose what to support. In the decisions we make – we have invested in the company that commercialized the Oxford COVID-19 vaccine, a nappy company whose goal is

to dramatically reduce commercial landfill volumes, and 23andMe, which is literally discovering cures to horrible diseases – we have impact well beyond any profit.

Can you tell us about any current projects you are engaged in?

One of the most recent investments we made is in BoldVoice, which was founded by two immigrants to America, from Albania and Russia. Although they were both very well-educated (Harvard, Yale, and NYU), their accents were career-limiting. They built an AI-powered app with Hollywood accent coaches to help non-native speakers be clearly understood. It’s this “last mile” to being fully understood that is so powerful to a person’s self-esteem and potential.

What advice would you give to Univ students with entrepreneurial ambitions?

Pursue the ambition! The single greatest correlate to your success is getting started in the first place. In the end, thinking and doing are two very different things. Doing means: finding great co-founder(s); working with them to develop an idea; testing the idea; and building something that is real. You may choose in the end not to take the entrepreneurial route – but at least it will have been an active choice.

Describe Univ in three words.

Citizen-minded, unpretentious, open-armed.

“

Practicing venture capital is a great privilege: we help to bring new things into existence, and we get to choose what to support.”



Image: Patrick at the O2 Stadium, London

FROM ROCK N' ROLL TO ROYALTY

THE STORY OF NIGEL TULLY & THE FOURBEATS

Nigel Tully MBE (1961, Physics) is co-founder, bandleader & singer/guitarist with The Dark Blues, one of Britain's most popular party bands. Their career highlights include Royal Family private parties at Buckingham Palace and Windsor Castle, and working with Phil Collins – who played alongside the band at HRH Prince Charles' 40th birthday and then asked them to play for his wife's party in Geneva on Millennium Night. Nigel formed the band (originally known as The Fourbeats) while a student at Univ in the 1960s. He has made over 5,000 appearances, and played at, among other venues, the Savoy Hotel, Claridge's, Blenheim Palace and Hampton Court Palace. Nigel is also Chair of NYJO (the National Youth Jazz Orchestra of the UK), Pastmaster of The Worshipful Company of Musicians and Chair of Jazzlife Alliance (NI).

We invited Nigel to tell us about his adventures in music.

I turned up at Oxford in 1961. I'd got an electric guitar and I read the *NME* (*New Musical Express*) and would check who was number one in the charts, which was what you did in those days. Nobody in Oxford had the slightest interest at that time. Oxford was completely jazz oriented. It was seen as rather low to take an interest in popular music.

Before I got here, I had been doing three gigs a week in Birmingham, all pop music. I was playing the British musical influences of the time who were the American rock and rollers – people like Chuck Berry, Little Richard, Jerry Lee Lewis, Elvis, even James Brown. Those were my heroes.

We practiced mainly in the Univ Music Room by Shelley (which had a piano) and occasionally in my rooms. In my first year, I was in 83 High Street and in my second year in lovely rooms on the first floor in Radcliffe Quad. John Albery, who at the time was just a don but later became Master, was on the next floor down but said he didn't mind me playing.

We played a lot at college balls. We were playing with people like The Who. I also remember playing with Cream and stepping over Ginger Baker's prone body on a Merton staircase. We were not in the same league as these people – these were big international names, but we all loved the same American rhythm and blues.

Eventually I'd got a fixed band. I'd got Ray Blazdell (1961, Classics) on piano, Ross Treliving (Pembroke) on bass guitar and a drummer called Pete Morgan from Trinity. So that was the band, along with Doug Fisher on rhythm guitar and occasionally Annabel Leventon. That became set personnel for quite a while.

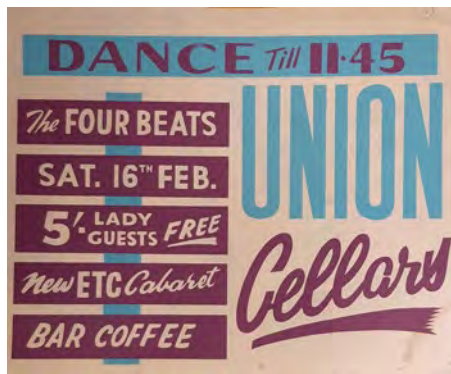
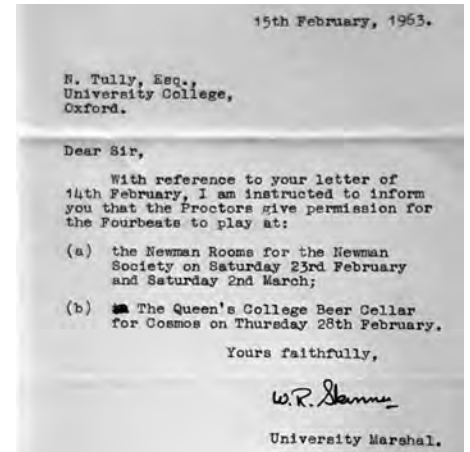
I suggested we change our name to The Dark Blues. People will ask why we're called The Dark Blues and you tell them that we're all from Oxford. In those days people booking my sort of band expected you to turn up late, get drunk and swear over the microphone. But we wanted to convince them that we wouldn't do that at their lovely daughter's 18th birthday party.

We got some very good publicity out of it.

I was introduced to someone who turned out to be the Queen's Equerry. He said, "you sound as if you know what you're talking about and I'm going to book you." That was for Princess Anne's 18th birthday party at Windsor Castle. We also played at Prince Charles's 21st. People ask how we got that gig and I say, it's easy, his sister recommended us.

We did about seven gigs altogether for the Royal Family. Once, we were in the music room and The Queen and Prince Philip appeared to watch the fireworks from behind the curtains. Prince Philip came and stood next to me and started talking – he'd got the common touch. He said: "The Dark Blues? Which college were you at?" and I said, "Univ Sir. Aren't you an Honorary Fellow?" And he called out to The Queen – "Nigel's a Univ man." At another event The Queen walked in and turned to Prince Philip and said something like, "Oh look darling, it's The Dark Blues, how good," and she came up and asked if we could play a Charleston. There wasn't a minute to say "um, er." I might have been beheaded!

We made our first recording as The Dark Blues in 1983 and we called it *Overdue* because it took us that long. We did an album in 1988 called *25 and Going for Gold* for our 25th anniversary, and I wrote a song called *25 Years* and it's the only piece of original composition I've ever done. I thought, I need a song that talks about this band that's 25 years old. I woke up at 4 in the morning and I said to my wife, "I'm just going downstairs to write a song dear." I came back an hour later and I'd written it. It's the story of The Dark Blues.



To hear The Dark Blues
visit darkblues.co.uk or
soundcloud.com/darkbluesband

Read the full interview here [👉](#)

Images (clockwise from top left): The Fourbeats EP cover; the original line-up; a letter from the University Marshal, 1963; Nigel Tully in the archives with a Univ Ball poster; A St Anne's poster; a Univ Ball poster featuring The Dark Blues; a Union Cellar poster.



THE HEART OF DINING

An interview with Shamil Thakrar (1990, PPE)

Shamil Thakrar co-founded Dishoom, one of the UK's most successful Indian restaurant groups, in 2010. He runs the business with his cousin, Kavi Thakrar. Dishoom was ranked fourth in the "100 Best Companies To Work For" list in 2021, ranking first in Hospitality and Leisure. This interview took place at Dishoom Shoreditch in September 2021.

You've talked in the past about businesses needing to have a big heart. What does that mean?

I was new to the restaurant business when we started Dishoom, so I came to it quite fresh. My background was fairly commercial. Like many people out of Univ, I'd gone into consulting – most recently at Bain & Company. I had also been to Harvard Business School, and at Univ I'd read PPE, so my whole inclination was to be very analytical about everything. As you approach a business, you probably have a template in your head about how to run it, which might include revenue, sales, cost, profit, the capital you spend and the return you generate. On one level that's exactly how business runs, but a year or two in we had an insight that the best way to make the business work was not to focus just on profit but to also think about awesome food and drink, great service and a happy team. If you control the costs at the same time, then the revenue and the profit that comes after that is like the applause for doing a good job.

We developed a philosophy which we called Seva, the Hindi word for selfless service. We felt that all of us came into hospitality for a reason, which was that we like serving people. It's part of human nature, we're happiest when we're giving of ourselves. At the same time, you've obviously also got to do it to the best of your ability. We work extremely hard to make sure that we're giving the best possible experience to our customers, and our team. If we do that properly and sensibly, then I think we're entitled to a good return on the bottom line.

What advice would you give to our Young Univ entrepreneurs?

I'd like to think that really great businesses start with a feeling of generosity, wanting to give or do something for the world. If you're motivated beyond the financial, if you're motivated to give the world something – whether to your customers or to the team that you build up around you, or to the community via a charity – then you'll have enough passion to help you succeed.

As an example, the way we work is that we write a narrative for each

restaurant we build. You're probably not going to do something like that if you're only motivated by the profit. For each restaurant we create a kind of founding myth which guides every single detail of each space. In the story for this restaurant we're sitting in now, in Shoreditch, we dreamt of an old Irani Café from Bombay that shuffles across the ocean and settles itself in a dirty corner of Shoreditch. By contrast, in the story of our Soho restaurant, we invented the character of an Irani from Bombay who comes to London in the 1960s. He comes to study something like accounting or law, but because it's the 1960s we find him becoming a songwriter, tripping at sunrise on Primrose Hill, or dancing at the Ad Lib with David Bailey and Jean Shrimpton. We also however find him with a telegram in his pocket from his sister and mother asking him to come back to India because his father is dead. We imagine that our restaurant in Soho, on Kingly Street, is the one that he builds when he goes back.

In the Dishoom book there's a theme of finding ways to make new places feel like home. When you first moved to Oxford, did you have any cosy corners that felt like home?

When you go to a new city, the things that makes it work for you and feel familiar are the places of comfort, the places you retreat to. I think the Chapel at Univ is a place like that. I used to sneak into the Chapel every now and again for some peace and quiet. And to hear a service or Evensong on a Sunday night was brilliant. Everyone else was in the beer cellar at that time of the day, so sneaking off to the Chapel was something that was quite special.

It was a real dream, an aspiration to get to Oxford, so I was really happy to be there. I think I probably settled in reasonably quickly. However, I did find the pace of the first couple of terms quite difficult, and I didn't find PPE all that easy to begin with. But then you settle into the rhythm of essays, twice a week, 16 a term. You learn quickly that if you turn up for a tutorial and you haven't prepared, then you're in deep trouble. You can't hide.

“

Univ is a great education, our tutors were brilliant and PPE is a great discipline, but I think the pastoral and moral education was as important.”

Are you still in touch with people from Univ?

Some of my most enduring friendships are from my Univ days. I'm in regular, daily touch with some of them, which is really nice. Univ was enormously bonding.

It's interesting that the charities Dishoom supports are concerned with giving children food, and breakfast in particular. How did that come about?

Something else we really care about is bringing people together over food and breaking down barriers between different sorts of people. One year we were sitting around a table full of food, and asked our chef Naved, who is Muslim, what Ramadan was about, and he said that it was about depriving yourself, so you



know what it is to have little, and it's about the contributions you make. During Ramadan, you give a Zakat, which is your gift to somebody else. So, we decided to donate two meals that year, for every meal that we served in the restaurants for Ramadan, and then at Diwali that same year we made that permanent. For every breakfast, we donate a meal to Magic Breakfast, which provides healthy school breakfasts to children at risk of hunger in disadvantaged areas of the UK. For every dinner, we donate a meal to The Akshaya Patra Foundation, a non-profit organisation which tackles hunger and malnutrition among children in India and the UK. We've donated 11 million meals so far. I'm really very proud that we're able to serve in that way.

In your book you say, "When people break bread together, barriers break down."

I think that when you break bread together, you're less likely to hate each other. When partition happened, and the British left India, there was considerable violence as a result of the redrawing of boundaries and the creation of Pakistan and India. In Delhi and Calcutta, there was enormous bloodshed. Bombay was much more peaceful. Part of that is geographical, but it's also because of the cosmopolitan nature of Bombay, which is partly due to shared spaces like the Irani cafés. If you break bread together, you're with each other shoulder to shoulder, and you're less likely to be violent the next day.

Over the past eighteen months you've had to adapt, and I read on your blog that you hadn't planned to be cycling people's food to them.

We have twelve delivery kitchens – and deliver in London, Brighton and Cambridge. I didn't want to do it at first because I felt that what we did was about the restaurant experience, but in a business sense the delivery is working really well. We then managed to get to a point where we were very happy with the quality – we worked really hard on getting the dishes out of the menu that weren't travelling well, and making sure that the dishes that are left are really good. We also have a meal kit business – you can make a Dishoom Bacon Naan Roll at home – and we cracked a way of getting you to make naan which puffs up under the grill. It's something that came out of lockdown – it wasn't something we were intending to do before.

Is there anything or anyone else you'd like to mention from your Univ days?

I've got to put a word in for Mrs Crawford, she was amazing. Some may remember her as tough, but she had a heart of gold. And Bill Sykes was a massive influence: I did his reflections for three years – Friday mornings at 9am I think – with a friend of mine, Will. It was one of the most important parts of my College experience. It gave me a real grounding. Univ is a great education, our tutors were brilliant and PPE is a great discipline, but I think the pastoral and moral education was as important. Bill would challenge you, and mould you gently. I think he was interested in Univ turning out fine young people who could contribute to the world. I am enormously grateful to him.

[Read the full interview here](#) 

Turn to page 55 to find out how to prepare Kejriwal, courtesy of Shamil and Naved Nasir, Executive Chef at Dishoom.

In Memory of Bob Hawke


**A magnificent gift
of paintings by
Tommy Yannima
Pikarli Watson**

The three paintings illustrated on these pages form a magnificent gift to the College from the Revd Dr Arthur Bridge AM (1976) to commemorate the life of the Hon. Robert Hawke (1953), Rhodes Scholar and Honorary Fellow of the College, and Prime Minister of Australia, of whom he wrote to Sir Ivor Crewe,

“Hawke did much to recognise the plight of our Indigenous Aboriginal People (who were not even citizens until 1967 but had lived in our land for over 60,000 years) and specifically to restore their rights through better health, education and housing.”

In such commemoration, Arthur wrote that he would like to give the College some indigenous art, of which he himself has long been a collector and supporter. The largest painting, entitled *Ngayuku Ngura*

– *My Country* had been a gift to him from the artist; the two smaller paintings given together with a friend fall under the same generic title.

These paintings are the work of Tommy Yannima Pikarli Watson. He was born around 1935 and for much of his life lived in Western Australia, close to the borders with South Australia and the Northern Territories. He began painting only in 2001 and soon became widely recognised for the distinctive style in which he portrayed images of the landscapes and oral and ceremonial traditions of his people going back, it is said, for over 50,000 years. He became extremely prolific; a book on his work published in 2011 makes comparisons with Kandinsky, Klee, Matisse, Mondrian and Rothko, amongst others. He died in 2017. There is an extensive Wikipedia article on him [here](#) 

Opposite: *Ngayuku Ngura – My Country* (2014) 214 cm x 122cm
Below left: *Ngayuku Ngura – My Country* 112 cm x 102cm
Below right: *Ngayuku Ngura – My Country* 112 cm x 102cm





These paintings need not necessarily be viewed as presented here. Tommy Watson worked with his canvas flat on the ground and one is left free to choose the orientation – the paintings arrived strung to be hung either in portrait or landscape mode. My choice of a landscape presentation owes as much, if not more, to where they have been hung in the Butler Room. I leave it to the individual viewer to decide whether the images represent simply landscapes, or whether there are people or animals depicted.

Their arrival at Univ was itself a saga, punctuated by the pandemic. Initially, we were due to receive just the two smaller paintings. By the time they were packed and dispatched early in 2020, the world was closing down, and the shipment was held up for 48 hours in Singapore. They arrived mid-March, just as the College was preparing to close and, to my horror, I discovered when I came to unpack them that they had been packed face to face and had adhered slightly due to the heat during that stop in Singapore. But, with the imminent lockdown, they had to be left as they had arrived.

We must therefore profoundly thank Arthur Bridge for his immediate offer to replace them; he sent *Ngayuku Ngura* directly from his home, this time to arrive safely at the beginning of 2021. Most generously, too, he invited us to keep the other two paintings if it proved possible to separate them.

Happily, modern technology, including the use of a hair dryer, came to the rescue as part of their successful separation, and nothing remains of their ordeal thanks to the skills of Georgina Dennis, the art restorer who has done much other recent work for the College.

Old Members thinking just of the Hall may be forgiven for thinking that the College's art collection consists solely of portraits. We do have other works, most notably a set of four watercolours by William Turner ("of Oxford", not J.M.W.) that hang in the Lodgings, and the three John Piper watercolours of the College in the Payne Room. There are also paintings that were purchased by the JCR in the 1960s which I have had restored and intend to hang in suitable spaces – a topic for a future article. Sadly, the Fellows

of the 1930s declined the offer of Sir Michael Sadler to give the College part of his collection of Impressionist paintings, deeming them "modern rubbish". It is fitting, therefore, to record that a review of an exhibition of Tommy Watson's work in Sydney in 2021 identified his work as being in the tradition of the Impressionists.

Apart from his pastoral work and support for Indigenous art, Arthur Bridge is best known in Australia for his significant role in the life of Australian music as the founder and CEO of the charitable foundation, *Ars Musica Australis*, which has commissioned many pieces of music, and sponsored many young Australian artists.

Longer standing Old Members will appreciate Arthur's recollection of his arrival at Univ when he was greeted at the Lodge with the exchange,

"Do you know Robert Hawke?" – "Yes I do." – "Well then Sir, we are enquiring, do you drink as much as he does?"

Ivor Crewe did not recognise the other participant. I did immediately since I was then already a Fellow!

Professor Michael Collins, Curator of Pictures

Sports & societies

UCBC

UCBC started off the term with pre-season training before 0th week, featuring socials and training opportunities for our returning



seniors. Seniors of all abilities could get stuck into our weights and land training programmes, as well as being able to give coxing a go and get out in small boats, alongside some very rainy battle paddling. Not to be outdone by the actual rowing, our social secretaries started the term with cocktails for the women and a pub trip for the men, meaning we were geared up and ready to recruit lots of keen novices.

Novice recruitment and training this term has been a success, with several crews racing in Nephthys and Christ Church Regattas. The top women's novice boat were finalists in Nephthys and 4th place runners up in Christ Church, with the top men's novice boat winning Nephthys before being pipped to the title in the final of Christ Church, finishing 2nd overall. The close-knit and friendly nature of the club has been central to our novices' success this term, and we look forward to seeing them on the river again after the vacation. Faced with unprecedented interest in Michaelmas rowing, our senior crews raced at Scullers Head, Fours Head, Wallingford Head, Fairbairns and Monmouth Head, as well as racing on the Isis at the IWLs, Autumn Fours, Nephthys Regatta and Isis Sculls. Not only were we entering these events, but we were also performing well. We would not have been able to achieve this without the ongoing support of the Friends, our senior members, and head coach Jono Cheesman, who continues to be a transformative support to the club.

*Hannah Farley (2012, DPhil Medicine),
President 2021-2022*



BEYOND THE SEA

Andrew Ward (2006, PPE) is a Lieutenant Commander in the Royal Navy. He joined in 2012 and has completed seagoing tours in destroyers. He is now working at the Ministry of Defence in London. Andrew hosted a podcast as part of the MoD's "Fancy a Brew" series, available here: apple.co/34yNFyc

How was your interest in a career in the Royal Navy inspired?

I considered the military because my younger brother joined the army. After Univ, I worked as a management consultant in London, the result of the scramble for internships in the summer of second year. It was a good job, but I was not convinced by the consultancy business model; I had no experience to impart to the firm's paying clients. Without credible experience, I could not see prospects for a full career. Also, at eye level out of the office window at More London Place billowed the massive white ensign of HMS Belfast!

Has your role taken you to any places that you particularly enjoyed?

It is a recruiting cliché, but "join the Navy, see the world" holds true. I have spent lots of time in the Middle East, with Muscat, Oman and Wadi Rum, Jordan standing out and there are lots of opportunities to work with NATO allies, especially the United States Navy. Just being at sea is special – the sunsets are unforgettable. The best one is still probably mid-summer in Scapa Flow, Orkney.

Can you tell us about a particular moment or operation that you enjoyed or were proud of?

After a gruelling nine-month Gulf deployment, HMS Duncan was given the honour of commemorating the centenary of the Battle of Jutland in 2016. Holding the remembrance service on our flight deck over the wreck sites of British battlecruisers in the North Sea was very moving.

What advice would you give to a current Univ student considering a career in the armed forces?

I get a kick out of a sense of service. For me this is a fulfilling and worthwhile career. The job variety and travel opportunities are outstanding – no-one can beat a sailor at "how many countries have you been to?" The quantity and quality of training is outstanding compared with "civvy street". There is no "type" the Services are looking for. I do not come from a military family, nor did I go to a public school. The diversity of people you work with in the Navy is one of the most attractive and enduring features of this job.



How did your involvement in the "Fancy a brew?" podcast come about?

As preparation for that Jutland voyage, I completed media officer training. It has come in handy over my career, including during my most recent deployment to Bahrain. As with the other episodes in the "Fancy a brew?" series, I hope we communicated something of what being in the Forces is like day-to-day. My only complaint with the podcast series is its title: in naval slang a cup of tea is not a "brew" but a "hot wet"!

What is your fondest memory of your time at Univ?

A very specific moment in Trinity Term of second year. I'd sorted out my summer internship; my PPE Finals were still a year away; Summer Viii was over. I settled into the easy chair in my rooms in Main Quad, Staircase IX reading an interesting politics book. I finally felt comfortable in my own skin at Oxford. I had never thought I would.

Was there anything you learnt or experienced at Univ that still resonates for you today?

The first time I went to the Chalet I thought I'd arrived in heaven. It combined my boy scout's love of organised fun, studious reading and climbing mountains. I have been back to the Chalet as "an adult" on alumni parties. It remains a very special place. Sometimes if the sea is very rough or I'm in some particularly stressful training scenario, I think of my happy place – a wicker armchair on the lawn with the Alpine sun warming my back.

Why do you give to Univ, and why would you encourage others to do so?

I was a caller for the Univ telethon in my second and third years. Giving back is a way of staying connected with the current generation of students, like the annual Old Boys' rugby match or attending one of the excellent online Book Clubs. Univ gave me a first-class education, my best friends, the Chalet and my wife! Regular donations are a way to say thank you for everything, to ensure the next generation are afforded the opportunities we had.

Describe Univ in three words.

Happy, learned, special.

Music at Univ

Stirred emotions and a sense of community

Michaelmas 2021 saw the first return to normal of music at Univ since the pandemic began. Being able to have a congregation back at Chapel Choir services, host live concerts including Open Mics and Masters' Lodgings, and to rehearse larger ensembles such as our orchestra have been an incredible step forwards for the arts, and a huge morale boost to the students. The pandemic has certainly proved the importance of the intra-personal elements of music-making, and I think that as musicians, and in the arts more broadly, we must retain sight of how devastating its loss has been, and how much this rests at the heart of what we do.

Firstly, it is worth congratulating our musicians on the success they have outside of College – our singers and instrumentalists are members of most major University and City ensembles, including and certainly not limited to: OUO, OUPhil, the Oxford Philharmonic, OUWO, The Oxford Belles, and Out of the Blue, to name but a few. I am so grateful to say that these talented performers bring their experiences and success back to Univ, and invest it in our rapidly expanding musical community.

It has been especially rewarding to resume our more informal musical events in an in-person format. The Master has been a wonderful host to the “Masters' Lodgings” concerts, where students can enjoy refreshments and music by our talented students, and the chance to socialise with both staff and students. In a similar vein, the Open Mic nights, hosted in the marquees by the College bar, present another space for students to share their music in a relaxed, supportive environment.

The College's Chapel Choir has been continuing in full swing, producing the weekly Sunday services, both for the live congregation and the continued online audience, as well as additional events

such as the carol and advent services, and the “Carols in the Quad” event. The Community Choir has also been a huge success – creating a space for those who want to sing without the intensity of the Chapel Choir's tri-weekly rehearsal schedule, or who want to be involved in music-making but have never learned to read music. Both choirs performed at the “Carols in the Quad” – it was an incredible experience to throw open the College doors and welcome families and

schools into the College to share music (and mince pies, of course!). The event was certainly a reminder of why we do what we do as musicians – these moments of intra-personal sharing, mutual support, teaching and encouraging are incredibly rewarding, and drive home the significance of returning to communal music-making after such a challenging few years.

Hannah Capstick (2019, Music), President of UCMS



Univ Players

Gender, identity, and liberty explored in George Sand's adventurous play

Even if you didn't see the whole performance, you might have glimpsed a sword fight in Main Quad or a love song in Helen's Court when Univ Players staged a promenade performance of extracts from George Sand's *Gabriel* on Thursday 24 and Friday 25 June 2021. Adapted by Clare Bayley, Univ's Visitor in the Creative Arts, and directed by Nina Lewis (2019, English) with an all-student cast, the performance took the College buildings and gardens as the inspirational backdrop.

Set in a Shakespearean world of cross-dressing confusion, Sand's 1839 play challenges rigid gender roles, and was never professionally performed in her lifetime.

The full play will be performed as this year's Garden Play on 26, 27 and 28 May 2022, with additional support from Oxford Playhouse and the Cameron Macintosh Foundation. A professional creative team will work with and mentor student counterparts for a mixed student and professional production in the Master's Garden.

"The pandemic has hit students hard, preventing them from participating in and experiencing theatre arts as they normally would," says Clare Bayley. "I wanted to give them an opportunity to work with professionals to make up for some of the missed opportunities of the past two years. I hope it will enable them to gain a valuable and inspiring insight into working in the creative arts. And I'm sure it will result in an exciting, ground-breaking theatrical production."

Director Ellie Warr (Oxford Playhouse, RSC) will work with Nina Lewis and Ishmael Levy (2020, Classics); dramaturgs Amy Terry and Jessi Clayton will work with Amy Nichols (2019, History) and designer EM Parry (Shakespeare's Globe, Northern Broadsides) will work with a student design team from the Ruskin School of Art.

The dramaturgs, designer and writer will run free masterclasses open to all students and young people (aged 16-24) on 6, 13 and

30 May from 4-6pm at Oxford Playhouse.

There will be a post-show discussion on Friday 27 May with Dr Jack Parlett, Junior Research Fellow in English, Jessi Clayton and

Amy Terry talking about Queer narratives.

Tickets for *Gabriel* will be available through the Oxford Playhouse website.



Enjoy extracts on the College website [here](#)

Leading questions



Emma Woods studied Experimental Psychology, which is where she became fascinated by consumer behaviour patterns, and how they change, before embarking on a marketing career with Unilever.

Until recently, Emma was the Chief Executive Officer at wagamama, a business she navigated through the challenge of maintaining momentum through the COVID-19 pandemic, despite her team being furloughed and restaurants shut. She also sits on the board of The GymGroup PLC, a national chain of low cost gyms, which also faced the challenge of closure during the pandemic, but which has emerged strongly since reopening.

Emma is now developing her Chair and Non-executive portfolio, alongside which she works with the charity Young Minds championing the mental health support needed for young people.

Emma was named Retailers' Retailer of the Year 2021 by the Management Consultancies Association (MCA).

She joined Baroness Amos and Anthony Jenkins for the Univ Annual Seminar this year discussing how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected business leadership.

What brought you to Univ?

I remember Univ standing out for its humility (compared to some of its flashier counterparts...mentioning no names...) and a sense of psychological safety when you entered those big wooden doors at the Porter's Lodge from the High Street.

What are your most treasured memories of Univ?

It has to be the friendships, the sense of belonging. I was lucky enough to be able to end my Univ experience by visiting the Chalet which allowed me time to reflect on an incredible three years.

What was the highlight of rowing in the Women's First Eight?

I was never sporty before Univ but I was rowing with some incredible female athletes (including Roz Savage, Rachel and Ria Oxburgh and Gilla Carstairs) and I think it was the first time I appreciated women can be serious competitors too if they push themselves. I have been passionate about promoting the benefit of fitness for all since then.

How has the pandemic affected business leaders?

The pandemic has been a time of extraordinary business turmoil and consumer change but it has also brought opportunity and I discovered three positive things:

1. We could pivot and innovate – doing bold, new things, much faster than we would have thought possible.
2. We could engage differently and more directly with both customers and teams – weekly huddles and zoom check-ins replaced set-piece monthly Board meetings.

3. A new sense of partnership with all stakeholders (suppliers, landlords, shareholders) has emerged and helped get many businesses, like mine, through some hairy moments.

The challenge for leaders now is to continue to embrace these ways of working, even when we are beyond the crisis.

How can companies and organisations champion diversity and inclusion – including female representation – in the workplace, and in leadership positions in particular?

There is enough evidence that diversity (both gender and ethnicity) drives growth, as it creates environments where people can bring their whole selves to work. Leaders need to be advocates and ensure it's top of the people agenda. The good news is companies are starting to embrace this, but it's the ones that do this wholeheartedly where the talent of the future will want to work. For any young Univ alumni out there – I would just encourage you to be demanding of prospective employers and ensure they properly care about diversity and also your own personal development.

Are there any leaders or mentors who have inspired you?

From my Univ days, Professor Nick Rawlins and Revd Bill Sykes were incredibly kind but inspiring people whose belief in me allowed me to believe in myself.

Describe Univ in three words.

Friendship. Fearless. Fantastic fun... (sorry that's four!)

“

There is enough evidence that diversity (both gender and ethnicity) drives growth, as it creates environments where people can bring their whole selves to work.”

Announcements

If you have news you would like to submit for the next issue, please email communications@univ.ox.ac.uk by Friday, 25 November 2022.

1960s

Adil Jusawalla (1960, English) was the 2021 recipient of the Tata Literature Live! Poet Laureate Award in India.

Peter Cockburn (1964, Plant Sciences) was elected President of the Royal Philatelic Society London.

Professor Dan Coquillette (1966, Law) was appointed the Charles Warren Visiting Professor of American Legal History at Harvard Law School.

Fr Robert Barringer CSB (1967, Theology) was appointed President of St Augustine's Seminary, Toronto.

Professor Nicholas Rawlins (1968, PPP) was appointed Pro-Vice-Chancellor at the Chinese University of Hong Kong.

Robin Allen QC (1969, PPE) was shortlisted for the CogX Global Leadership Award 2021.

Professor Peter Singer (1969, Philosophy) won the 2021 Berggruen Prize for Philosophy and Culture.

1970s

Professor Sukanta Chaudhuri (1970, English) was elected a Corresponding Fellow of the British Academy.

Professor Ares J Rosakis (1975, Engineering) was awarded the 2020/2021 Horace Mann Medal.

Martin Smith (1978, Engineering) was elected Wiltshire Councillor for the Sherston Division.

Pavan Sukhdev (1978, Physics) was awarded the 2020 Tyler Prize for Environmental Achievement.

Professor Sir Simon Wessely FMedSci (1978, Medicine), Honorary Fellow, was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society (FRS).

Mark Foster (1979, Classics) took on the roles of global Chairman of IBM Consulting and Chair of the Chichester Festival Theatre.

1980s

Joanne Shaw (1981, PPE) was appointed Chair of the Board of Trustees of The Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health.

Dr Stephen Byrne (1983, Philosophy) restored the heraldic windows of Pugin's lost masterpiece at Alton Towers.

Alex Kershaw (1984, PPE) was named William E Colby selection committee chair at Norwich University, Vermont.

1990s

Alison Pindar (née Mercer) (1991, English) contributed to *Letters from Lockdown*.

Chris Mammen (1993, Law) recorded a podcast on innovation and intellectual property in the Opportunity Economy.

Andy Saltzman (1993, Classics) commenced a live UK tour: *Satirist for hire*.

Claire van den Bosch (1993, PPP) was a guest on Channel 4's *Steph's Packed Lunch* discussing EMDR.

Ros Hathorn (1994, PPP) was elected Councillor for Histon and Impington.

Calum Miller (1996, PPE) was elected Councillor for Otmoor.

Skúli Magnússon (1997, Law) was elected Parliamentary Ombudsman of Iceland.

Jennifer Wong (1998, English) was appointed as a visiting fellow at TORCH Oxford for 2022-23.

Can Yeginsu (1999, English and BCL) was appointed Deputy Chair of The High Level Panel of Legal Experts on Media Freedom.

2000s

Simon Clarke (2003, History) was named Chief Secretary to the Treasury in the UK Government in September 2021.

Skye McAlpine (2003, Classics) has created her own line of tableware: Skye McAlpine Tavola.

Jeff McLean (2004, PPE) was appointed President at ghSMART, Chicago.

2010s


Isla Ratcliff (2014, Music) released her debut album, *The Castalia*.

Freddie Waxman (2014, Experimental Psychology) launched Figure historical performance ensemble.

Memoona Ahmed (2018, Experimental Psychology) completed a sponsored skydive for TIC+ youth counselling service.

2020s

Dr Ammar Sabouri (2020, MPP) started a data for development consultancy, syriadev.com.

Read the stories in full on the College website [here](#) 



Images (clockwise from top left): Peter Singer, Can Yegenisu, Joanne Shaw, Pavan Sukhdev

Books



Dr Graeme Baber (1987, Medicine), jurist and legal researcher, published a new monograph, *The British Judges of the International Court of Justice: Overview, McNair and Lauterpacht and Collected Papers: Financial Regulation in Estonia, Poland and Latvia within the Context of European Union Membership* in 2021.

An expanded Chinese language edition of **Professor W Richard Bowen's**, **FREng** (1971, Chemistry) *Engineering Ethics: Challenges and Opportunities* has been published by Zhejiang University Press.

Dr Lise Butler (2010, History), Lecturer in Modern History at City University, published *Michael Young, Social Science, and the British Left, 1945-1970* in September 2020.

James Canning (2015, Physics) is co-author with his mother, Mel Lane, a teacher, and Olly Pike, a children's author and illustrator, of *What Does LGBT+ mean?*, an educational book for Key Stage 2 children.

Professor Mark Doel (1969, PPE), Emeritus Professor at Sheffield Hallam University, published *In Soviet Times People Knew Where to Cross the Road*, a novel set in turbulent post-Soviet Armenia.

Retired consultant physician and nephrologist **Dr Simon Gibson** (1972, Chemistry and Medicine) published a memoir: *Tales of a Meandering Medic*.

Sir Max Hastings FRSL FRHistS (1964, History), British journalist and military historian, published *Operation Pedestal: The Fleet that Battled to Malta 1942*, in May 2021.

When COVID-19 stalled his film work, **Armando Iannucci** (1982, English) took revenge on the virus in the form of an epic mock-heroic poem about Britain, Brexit and the pandemic: *Pandemonium*.

Professor Mark Jones (1971, Law), Professor of Law at Mercer University Law School, Georgia, published *Professions and Politics in Crisis*.

Dr Claas Kirchhelle (2012, History), Lecturer, in the History of Medicine at University College Dublin, published two books, *Pyrrhic Progress* – which won several prizes in 2021 – and *Bearing Witness*.

Dr Nicolas Kyriakides (2011, Law), head of both the Banking & Finance and Insurance & Personal Injury Departments at Cyprus firm Harris Kyriakides, published *Cyprus Banking Law*, a complete guide to the functioning of the Cypriot public and private banking system.

Dr Antone Martinho-Truswell (2015, Zoology), former Junior Dean, has written a book based on his DPhil research, *The Parrot in the Mirror*, which was published in March.

Dr Victoria Miyandazi (2013, Law), Law Lecturer and Advocate of the High Court of Kenya, published a new monograph, *Equality in Kenya's 2010 Constitution: Understanding the Competing and Interrelated Conceptions*, in February 2021.

Dr Kathleen Neal (2001, History), Lecturer in History at Monash University, published *The Letters of Edward I: Political Communication in the Thirteenth Century* in January 2021.

Sir Timothy Noble, Bt (1962, Law) published his debut novel, crime thriller *The First Shadows of Morning*, in April 2021.

Writing as Ali Mercer, **Alison Pindar's** (1991, English) sixth novel, *The Marriage Lie*, was published in May 2021.

Tim Strickland, MBE (1967, Geography), archaeologist and historian, published *Strick: Tank Hero of Arras*, a biography of his father Major-General Eugene Vincent Michael Strickland CMG, DSO, OBE, MM, CStJ, Star of Jordan.



Professor Raymond Wacks (1971, Law), Emeritus Professor of Law and Legal Theory at the University of Hong Kong, published *National Security in the New World Order: Government and the Technology of Information* and *The Rule of Law Under Fire?* in 2021.

Dr Hugh Watson (1973, Education) published his second novel, *The Silo*, in July 2021, a compelling thriller set in the brutal world of country politics. Hugh Watson has had a varied career as a teacher,

academic, political advisor, public servant, consultant, Olympics executive, song writer, musician and author.

Dr Nina Yancy (2015, Politics), a consultant at McKinsey & Company, published *How the Color Line Bends: The Geography of White Prejudice in Modern America*.

Dr Anne Carter (2009, Law), Senior Lecturer at Deakin Law School, Australia, published her first book, *Proportionality and Facts in Constitutional Adjudication*, in January.

Honourable Mentions



Baroness Amos was made a Lady Companion to the Noble Order of the Garter. This is Britain's highest order of chivalry, restricted to a maximum of 24 individuals at any one time, and is in the personal gift of the monarch. Baroness Amos joins former Univ Master Lord Butler of Brockwell (1957, Classics) as a member of this exclusive group.



Avin Rabheru (2001, PPE), Housekeep founder and CEO, was awarded an MBE in the Queen's New Year Honours in 2021 for services to entrepreneurship and digital innovation.

In the 2021 Queen's Birthday Honours:



Antony Jenkins (PPE, 1979), Chair of the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education, was made a CBE for services to business.



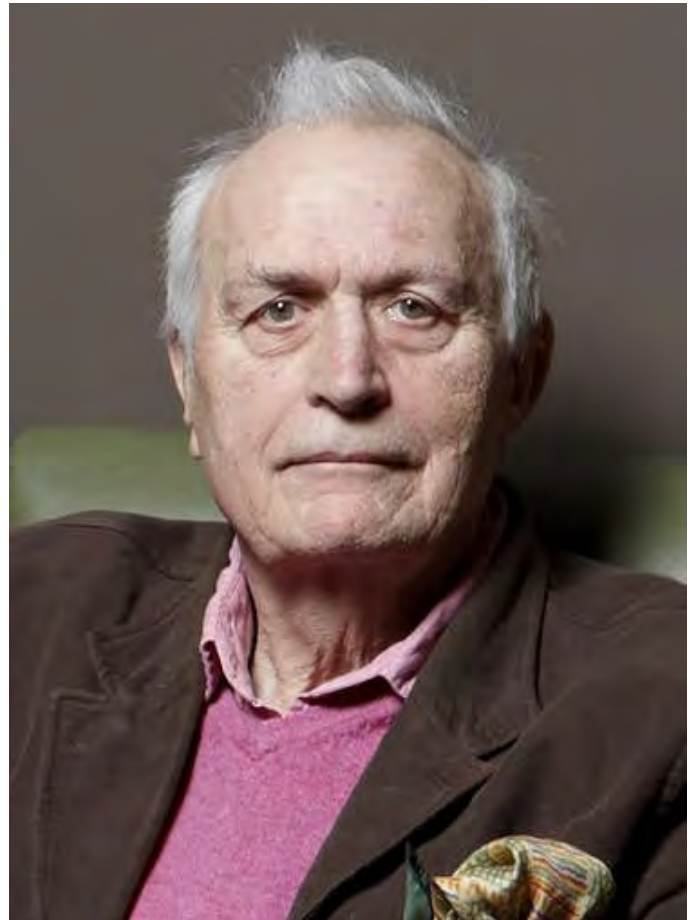
Dr Andrew McCormick (1975, Geology) was awarded the CB. Dr McCormick retired from the Northern Ireland Civil Service in August 2021 after almost 41 years' service, of which the last 19 were at Permanent Secretary level (equivalent to Director General level in Whitehall). His final role before retirement was as the lead official on Brexit for the devolved Northern Ireland Executive.



Desmond Shawe-Taylor (English, 1974), lately Chief Surveyor and Surveyor of The Queen's Pictures, Royal Collection, was made a CVO.



Katie Waldegrave (History, 2000), Founder of First Story and Co-founder of Now Teach, was made an MBE for services to Education and Charity.



Images (clockwise from top left): Michael Vivian Carey, Nigel Pickering, Peter Zarovtief, James Crawford

In memoriam

Honorary Fellows

HRH Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh (elected Honorary Fellow 1953) died on 9 April 2021 aged 99.

Former Fellows

Roy Butler (Supernumerary Fellow 1980-4) died on 23 July 2021.

1940s

Michael Hansen (1941, PPE) died on 18 March 2021 aged 98.

Robert Cooper Gibson (1943, Modern Languages) died on 18 February 2019 aged 93.

John Cecil Wurr (1943, Physics) died on 22 November 2021 aged 96.

David Hamilton Catlin (1948, Law) died on 31 October 2021 aged 93.

William John Cowler (1948, Modern Languages) died in May 2021 aged 95.

1950s

Michael Vivian Carey (1950, Philosophy) died in November 2020 aged 93.

Kenneth West (1950, Chemistry) died on 17 July 2021 aged 90.

George Frederick Dole (1952, Oriental Studies) died on 29 June 2021 aged 89.

Christopher John Fryer (1952, Physics and then PPE) was reported in 2021 as having died; he would have been aged 90.

Pran Nath Mehta (1952, DipEd) died on 5 December 2019 aged 91.

Peter Zinovieff (1952, Geology) died on 23 June 2021 aged 88.

Michael John Pickering (1953, English then PPE) died on 13 November 2021 aged 86.

Elliott Charles Langford (1954, PPE) died on 2 February 2021 aged 86.

Mr Justice Fergus Craig Blackie (1955, Law) died on 24 April 2021 aged 83.

Nathaniel Hamilton Harris (1956, History) died on 13 June 2021 aged 83.

Douglas James Carman (1957, Mathematics) died on 10 June 2021 aged 82.

Graham Hunt Rose (1957, Law) died on 21 November 2020 aged 83.

Roy Anthony “Tony” Crofts (1958, PPE, and then 1969, Agriculture) died on 3 February 2021 aged 81.

Simon Robert Dawson Hall (1958, Modern Languages) died on 22 January 2021 aged 83.

Barnaby Hubert David Osborne (1958, Engineering) died on 14 March 2021 aged 83.

Kwasi Johnson Emmanuel Wiredu (1958, Philosophy) died in January 2022, aged 90.

Thomas Victor Cullen (1959, Classics) died on 31 May 2021 aged 81.

Richard Hale Prosl (1959, Mathematics) died on 14 February 2021 aged 83.

1960s

Nigel Charles Haygarth (1961, Classics) died on 23 June 2021 aged 77.

Alexander Thomas Stephen Prickett (1961, DipEd) died on 12 October 2020 aged 81.

William Henry Christian Waterfield (1961, Botany) died on 21 January 2021 aged 78.

Stephen Benjamin Abraham (1964, Maths) died on 27 August 2021 aged 74.

Richard “Dick” Julian Holdsworth (1964, Modern Languages – French) died on 29 September 2020 aged 74.

Richard Clark (1965, History) died on 11 March 2021 aged 74.

Michael James Colbert (1966, History) died on 25 November 2021 aged 74.

William Alfred Mitchell Nash (1966, Law) died on 27 December 2021 aged 73.

Rameschand Seereekissoon (1966, History) died on 5 April 1987 aged 45.

Andrew George White (1968, Law) died on 4 March 2021 aged 71.

Andrew John Fairclough (1969, Law) died on 17 November 1996 aged 45.

Philip Maurice Wolmuth (1969, PPP) died on 21 February 2021 aged 70.

1970s

Patrick Christopher “Paddy” Mahony (1971, Biochemistry) died on 2 September 2020 aged 67.

James Richard Crawford (1972, Law) died on 31 May 2021 aged 71.

Stephen Samuel McDonnell (1973, postgraduate in English) died on 10 April 2021 aged 69.

Nigel John Pickering (1976, Medicine) died on 14 January 2021 aged 63.

Alexander Francis Donald Letts (1978, Classics) died in July 2021 aged 62.

2000s

James Dalton (2000, Maths) died in 2020.

2010s

Alexander Temple McCune (2017, Psychology) died on 13 August 2021 aged 26.

Members of Staff

Gerald Nix, who was a member of the Works Department from 1953 to 2001, rising to become Clerk of Works, died on 20 May 2021 aged 84.

Gwynne Ovenstone, Assistant College Secretary from 1947-50 and College Secretary from 1950-87, died on 19 June 2021 aged 97.



The Kejriwal

Shamil Thakrar (1990, PPE), interviewed on page 36 of *The Martlet* has kindly shared the following recipe from the Dishoom cookery book with us.

This simple and delicious dish was invented at the well-to-do Willingdon Club, the first Bombay club to admit Indians. It is reputedly named after the member (not to be confused with the Indian politician Arvind Kejriwal) who, not allowed by his wife to eat eggs at home, kept asking for the dish in his club.

At home in London I make this for breakfast, but in Bombay I like to drop into the Willingdon for an afternoon or early evening snack, if I can persuade a member to let me in! Kejriwal is still a popular dish there today – they serve theirs with lots of fresh green chilli on top, giving it a really fiery kick – a good excuse to wash it down with a cold Kingfisher or two.

Ingredients

80g mature Cheddar, grated
1 or 2 thick slices of white bloomer, sourdough or brioche (depending on size and level of hunger)
2 spring onions, chopped
1 green chilli, very finely chopped
1 tsp vegetable oil (optional)
1 or 2 large eggs (one per slice of toast)
Coarsely ground black pepper


To serve

Tomato ketchup

Method

1. Let the grated cheese come up to room temperature; it needs to be quite soft and workable.
2. Heat the oven to 240°C/Fan 220°C/Gas 9. Place a baking tray inside to warm up.
3. Toast the bread until very lightly browned on both sides. Set aside to cool slightly while you prepare the topping.
4. Put a small handful of the grated cheese (roughly 10g), 1 tsp chopped spring onion and a pinch of green chilli to one side, to be used when you fry the egg(s).
5. Crack the egg(s) into a cup or small bowl, being careful to keep the yolk(s) intact.
6. Put the remaining cheese, spring onions and green chilli into a bowl, add plenty of black pepper and mix well. Using the back of a spoon (or your fingers), work the cheese mixture into a paste by pressing it firmly into the side of the bowl.
7. Spread the cheese mix evenly over the toast and press it in, using the back of the spoon, to create a firm, even layer that goes all the way to the edges of the toast. Place on the tray in the oven and cook for 6–8 minutes, until deep golden and bubbling.
8. While the chilli cheese toast is cooking, warm a frying pan over a high heat and, if using, add the oil. Gently tip the egg(s) into the hot pan and add some black pepper. Top with the reserved grated cheese, spring onion and green chilli. Place the frying pan in the oven and cook for 2 minutes, or until the cheese is melted and the egg white(s) are cooked but the yolk(s) are still runny.
9. Carefully slide the egg(s) onto the cheese on toast and serve right away, with plenty of tomato ketchup.

Dishoom: From Bombay with Love (Bloomsbury, 2019)



“I’m not sure that I feel that anything
changed my life more, or has such a
special place in my heart, than Univ.”

John Weltman (1979, History)