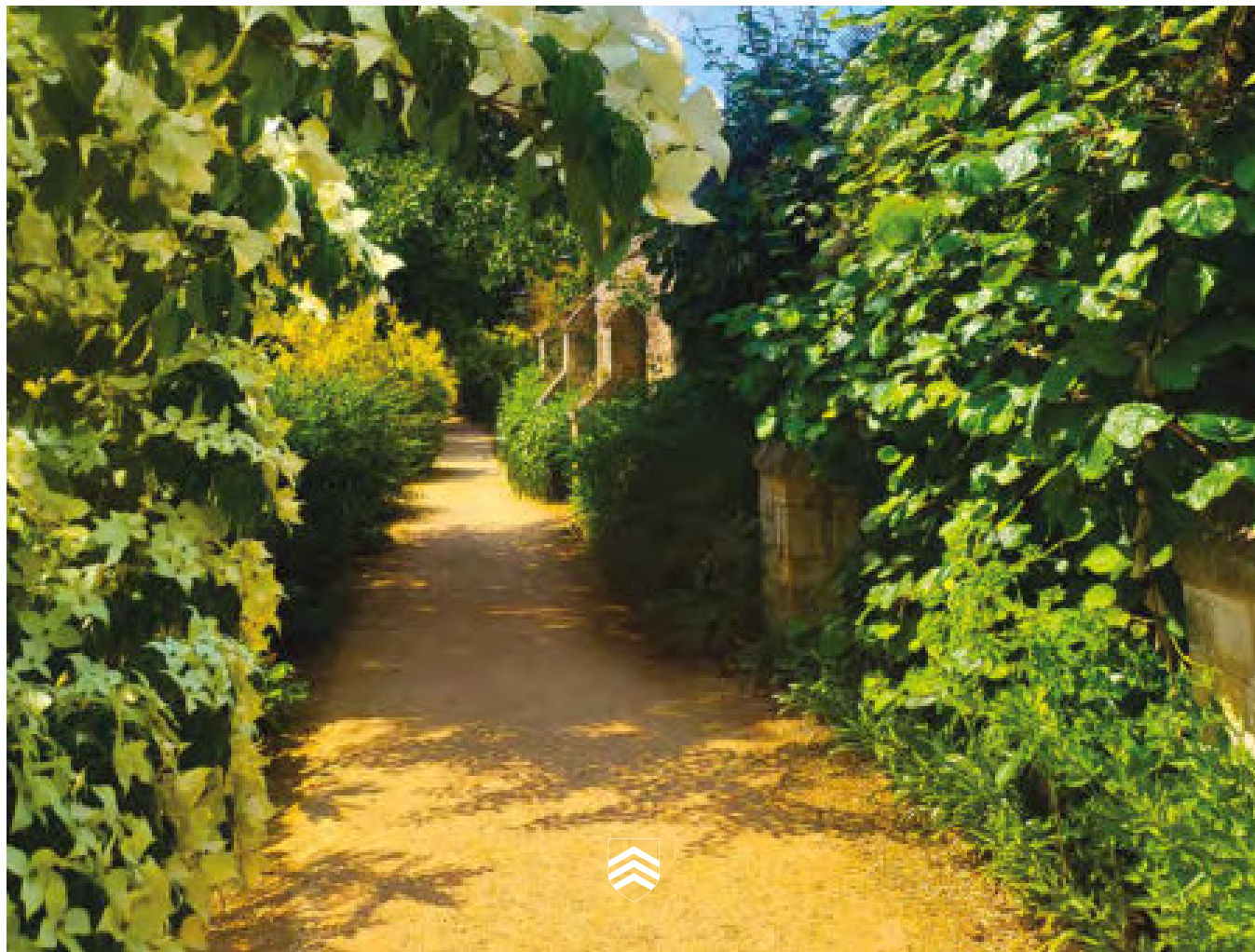


POSTMASTER

AND THE MERTON RECORD



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Front Cover Image

Strolling along the path in Merton's Fellows' Garden, surrounded by nature. Photograph by Maya Chaudhuri

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FROM THE WARDEN

This has been a year of change within the College. We bid farewell to our wonderful former Warden and now Honorary Fellow, Professor Irene Tracey, as she took up the Vice-Chancellorship of the University on 1 January. I took on the role of Acting Warden on the same date and I cannot thank everyone enough for the warm welcome I received and continue to receive. Irene's departure was preceded by a round of farewell events in December including at the Merton Society Christmas drinks in London and the Fellows' Christmas dinner, which was followed by the first ever Fellows' Christmas disco (at which Irene led the dancing).

Irene's admission as Vice-Chancellor was a very Merton-themed event. Many Mertonians, Fellows, staff and alumni, attended. The Merton Choir and Girl Choristers sang so magnificently in the Sheldonian that the compliments flooded in after the event. The fanfare for the occasion was composed by our former Visiting Research Fellow in the Creative Arts, Cheryl Frances-Hoad. Lunch after the admission ceremony took place in the Hall at Merton and our new chef, Simon Crawshaw, who was only one week into the job at the time, did us proud.

We owe Irene an enormous debt of gratitude for her leadership, wisdom and kindness in guiding the College through the past

few years, particularly during the challenges created by the pandemic. Irene was a magnificent Warden and we will miss her very much, but she hasn't gone far and I am very pleased to say that she has returned regularly to the College since then, including for the boat-naming ceremony on Sundial Lawn in Trinity term when our first new women's shell for 23 years was christened the *Irene Tracey* in her honour.

It has been very much business as usual this year in terms of the return to in-person teaching, events and exams. There has been plenty of academic success in the College – as usual – and I want to pass on my thanks in particular to the tutors, and to Jane Gover, the Senior Tutor and her team in the Academic Office, for guiding and supporting the students through their studies. This has not been easy in recent years, particularly with the effects of the pandemic and its restrictions, but it is extraordinarily impressive just how well everyone has pulled together to ensure that students receive the teaching, mentoring and help they need to take them to the next stage of their journey.

We have celebrated plenty of sporting success this year. The Merton/Mansfield team won the Mixed Hockey College Cuppers final and the Merton/Mansfield mixed touch rugby team reached the final of their competition. It was another



At the Merton Society Garden Party in June 2023 (photo © John Cairns)

good year for the rowers, with the Men's first eight finishing 8th on the river at the end of Torpids. We even had Merton students in both the Osiris and Isis boats in the Oxford-Cambridge boat race this year: Anthony Kenny and Phoebe Mountain. The Oxford Town and Gown 10k race was a very enjoyable experience as ever and the Merton team were on fine form.

The Choir and the Girl Choristers have been in spectacular voice this year, under the magnificent leadership of Director of Music Ben Nicholas. It is such a pleasure to listen to them at Evensong each week in term. It is often a highlight of my week, and I know that many other members of the College community feel the same. The Radio 3 audience was able to appreciate the beauty of their voices in an Evensong broadcast live in Trinity term. In addition to their usual Evensong performances, they also sang at a service in the University Church to mark King Charles III's Coronation as well as singing Haydn's *Creation* in the Sheldonian Theatre. They also took part in the spectacular Passiontide Festival in College. In December the Girl Choristers' CD *In the Stillness* was voted Classic FM's CD of the week and the Choir's new CD, *Orchestral Anthems*, released in June, has already gained five-star reviews. In August, the Girl Choristers made their international debut singing at Saint Sulpice, Paris. In

September the choir sang in Trinitatis Church in Copenhagen in a special concert broadcast on Danish Radio and in Lund Cathedral, Sweden.

Our students have been engaged in plenty of other extra-curricular activities, including musical success when Jesse Schelfhout, as a member of the Oxford University Brass Band, won the Shield section of the 2023 University Brass Band Championships of Great Britain and Northern Ireland; and dramatic success, not least in the wonderful Merton Floats performance of *Twelfth Night*.

One of the things I find particularly impressive about our students is that quite apart from working hard and playing hard, in terms of their musical, sporting and other extra-curricular activities, they also find time to give back to their community. Last year the undergraduates raised £5,000 for the Guide Dogs *Name a Puppy* appeal. This was inspired by one of our current students, Ella Caulfield (3rd year Mathematics) who is accompanied at College by her guide dog, Rio. Ella took part this year in a BBC programme, *Britain's Guide Dog Shortage*, as well as appearing on BBC Breakfast, lunchtime and evening news and BBC Radio Oxford in order to raise awareness of the value of a guide dog for a blind or partially sighted person in terms of independence.

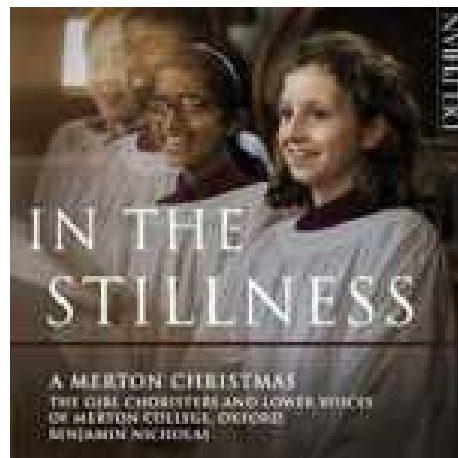


With the triumphant Merton/Mansfield Hockey team

confidence and welfare. It is particularly pleasing therefore that the money raised by the undergraduates this year for the Guide Dogs appeal will support the next generation of guide dogs. The scheme allows students to put forward three names, of which one will be chosen for the puppy when it is born, and they will then be able to follow its progress through to it becoming a fully qualified guide dog. The three names put forward were all Merton-themed: Chestnut, Rosie and Walter. The name eventually chosen was Walter and you can see pictures of him and in the feature on Ella on page 98.

One of the very enjoyable aspects of life at Merton is how well the different Merton communities, staff, students, Fellows and alumni work together. An area in which we are making use of these close relationships is sustainability. A new Sustainability Working Group has been set up in College, with members drawn from all of these communities. We have set sustainability targets for the College, published on the website, and we are in the process of drafting a sustainability plan to ensure that we reach these targets, ideally well ahead of the target dates we have set ourselves. This is a key area for us all to tackle in the years to come and working together will be crucial.

We bid farewell to two long-standing fellows of the College this year. Professor Veronique Gouverneur was appointed to the prestigious Waynflete Professorship of Chemistry, which is



The Girl Choristers' Classic FM CD of the Week

attached to Magdalen College, Oxford. Veronique was a Fellow and Tutor in Chemistry for 24 years. Professor Mindy Chen-Wishart, who was a Fellow and Tutor in Law at the College for 29 years, will take up the Provost's Chair at the National University of Singapore. We thank them both for their years of long and valuable service to the College. They enriched the lives of their students and colleagues in their time with us and we will miss them. Farewells are also due to the early career researchers moving on to pastures new this year: Dr Caspar Jacobs, Dr Xiangyu (Michael) Jie and Dr Brianne Dolce. We wish them well for the next stages of their careers.

We also bid farewell on a more temporary basis to our wonderful Chaplain, the Revd Canon Dr Simon Jones, who has taken up the role of Acting Dean of Lincoln from Passiontide to Christmas. Simon performs so many important roles for us in College that it required a whole network of people to be put in place to cover his leave. We should thank in particular Chris Collingwood, our Acting Chaplain in Trinity term who, together with his wife Sue and the rest of the Chapel team, kept the Chapel functioning beautifully. We were able to visit Simon in situ on the first part of Warden's Progress, when the Merton Choir sang Evensong in Lincoln Cathedral as part of The Byrd 400 Festival, marking 400 years since the musician's death. It was wonderful to catch up with Simon, and we are very much looking forward to having him back in College next year.

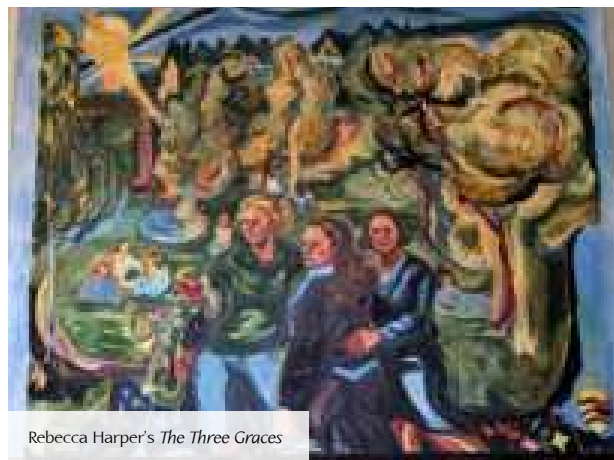


Alumni drinks at Lincoln Cathedral

Sadly, there have also been alumni, Fellows and staff who have passed away during the course of the year. Their names are included in the *In Memoriam* pages. We mark their passing, mourn their loss and thank them for their service to the College.

The Visiting Research Fellowship in the Creative Arts programme has been running for a number of years now and has been a spectacular success, thanks in large part to the guidance and oversight provided by Professor Richard McCabe. We had a reunion of those who have occupied this role to date in March (including composers, painters, poets and artists) at which we were able to reflect on the enormous benefits that this programme has brought to the College and its community. We have been particularly blessed this year with our VRF in the Creative Arts, Ben Haggarty. Ben is one of the UK's foremost performance storytellers and has fully engaged with staff, students, Fellows and alumni, giving us some spectacular and spellbinding performances of epic poems and fairytales. It has been a real pleasure to have him in College and we hope that he will continue to return often.

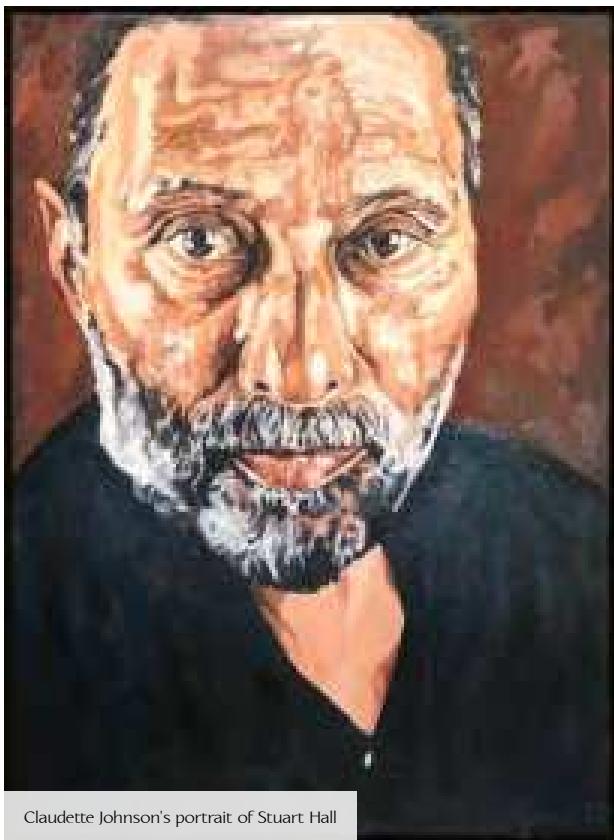
Those visiting Merton may have noticed that there are two new portraits in the Hall this year. The first is of Professor Ulrike Tillmann, by Scottish artist Jennifer Anderson. Professor Tillmann is a Sir Henry Savile Fellow of the College,



Rebecca Harper's *The Three Graces*

and is currently Director of the Isaac Newton Institute for Mathematical Sciences in Cambridge. Professor Tillmann first came to Merton in 1992 and was the first female Sub-Warden of College. When she was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society in 2008, she became the first female Fellow of the College to be awarded this distinction. The second new portrait is of former student and Honorary Fellow, Stuart Hall (1951). This portrait was celebrated in May when we were delighted to be joined by Stuart's family and friends as well as by the artist, Claudette Johnson. There is a close ongoing association between the College and the Stuart Hall Foundation which, in partnership with TORCH (The Oxford Research Centre in the Humanities), funds a Stuart Hall Scholarship.

We also have a new picture hanging in the JCR, entitled 'The Three Graces of Merton College'. It is by young female artist Rebecca Harper and features three Merton women who were selected for their services to the College and the Merton community: Head Gardener Lucille Savin, the first and longest serving female Steward Margo Skalik and Deputy Head Porter Holly Bednarczyk, who ran the Lodge bubble during the pandemic. The painting is intended as an homage to all women who fulfil essential administrative roles around Merton and to celebrate the 40th anniversary of women being admitted to Merton. It is also a fitting reminder of the huge debt of gratitude that we all owe to the staff who kept the College going through the uncertainty of the pandemic.



Claudette Johnson's portrait of Stuart Hall

There were honours for Fellows and alumni this year. While still Warden, Professor Irene Tracey received the Commander of the Order of the British Empire for services to medical research. In the New Year Honours List Professor Fiona Murray (1986) was appointed Dame Commander of the Order of St Michael and St George, Matthew Rycroft (1986) was appointed Knight Commander of Saint Michael and Saint George, Martin Read (1971) was awarded a Knight Bachelor, and Rupert Evenett (1981) was appointed an MBE. In The King's Birthday Honours List, Professor EJ Milner-Gulland (Senior Research Fellow) was made a Dame for services to international conservation, Mark Thompson (1976), an Honorary Fellow of the College, was made Knight Bachelor and Alex Chisholm (1986) was made Knight Commander of the Order of the Bath.

It has also been a year filled with prizes and awards for Fellows and students alike. Professor Irene Tracey was elected as a Fellow of the Royal Society and was made an Honorary Fellow of the Physiological Society. Dr James Newton (Mathematics tutor) was jointly awarded the 2023 AMS Frank Nelson Cole Prize in Number Theory. Dr Gwen Burnyeat, Junior Research Fellow, won the 2023 Public Anthropologist Award for her book *The Face of Peace: Government Pedagogy amid Disinformation in Colombia*. The Dean and Keeper of the Statutes, Fra' John Eidinow, was elected a member of the Sovereign Council of the Sovereign Order of Malta. Professor David Paterson (Tutor in Medicine and Head of the Department of Physiology, Anatomy and Genetics) was awarded a prestigious Leducq International Network of Excellence Program Award to set up a major new transatlantic network linking world leading researchers from the USA and Europe to develop 'Bioelectronics for neurocardiology diagnosis and therapeutics' (in collaboration with Professor Kalyanam Shivkumar). Dr David Hosking (DPhil, Physics) was awarded the International Astronomical Union's Exceptional Inter-Division Prize and the European Physics Society Plasma Physics Division's PhD Research Award for his DPhil thesis in Astrophysics at Merton. Lachlan Hughes (DPhil, Medieval and Modern Languages) was awarded the 2023 Senior Paget Toynbee Prize for his essay 'Dante's Arethusa and the Art of Transition'. Sophia Buck (DPhil, Modern Languages) won the Sylvia Naish Lecture prize and Jade Bentil (DPhil, History) was awarded the 2022 Diversity and Inclusion Fellowship from the North American Conference on British Studies.

It has been a joy as Acting Warden to meet so many alumni at the events we have held in the last two terms. Merton is blessed to have such a warm and engaged alumni community. We had the Merton Society Spring Drinks in London, preceded by Evensong at Westminster Abbey. There were alumni drinks events in Cambridge, in Leeds (where my Yorkshire accent came back to the fore) and in Lincoln. A Returners' Dinner was held in College, supported again this year by the generosity of Mustafa Abbas (1990). The Merton Society Annual Lecture in Trinity term was given by Junior Research Fellow in Law, Dr Chloe Deambrogio, on the important topic of 'Child Abuse, Psychopathy, and the Risk of Future Violence: A Case of Reversed Mitigation in Capital Cases'. We enjoyed a wonderful Gaudy for those who matriculated in 1968-

Mertonians and their guests at the Merton Society Garden Party, 2023 (photo © John Cairns)



72 and a Diamond Jubilee lunch for the 1963 matriculands. The year was concluded with a spectacular Merton Society Garden Party in June, at which the sun shone and we had the largest numbers of attendees for many years, spanning the widest age range. The garden looked stunning and it was a wonderful day.

In short, then, the College is thriving.

I would like to conclude by saying how honoured I am to have been chosen as Merton's 52nd Warden. It has been my privilege to be a Law tutor and Fellow of the College for

the last 25 years and I have loved my time as Acting Warden. I would like to thank you for all your support. This is an extraordinarily special place, characterised in particular by both a sense of excellence and also of community. Staff, students, Fellows and alumni all share a real love of the College and a desire to work together to ensure that it is the very best version of itself that it can be. I am thrilled that I will take on the role of Warden for the next period in Merton's long history.

Professor Jennifer Payne
Warden



JCR NEWS

If I was to commemorate everything that members of the JCR have done this year, I would have to write a dissertation: the following is but a snapshot of the JCR's activities in the past year. I hope that it will demonstrate that the JCR continues to be a vibrant, warm and welcoming community, in which Mertonians continue to thrive.

The past year has truly been a whirlwind, in which the passions and talents of my fellow Mertonians have been on full display. From academics to sports, arts, drama and so much more, Merton students have characteristically got stuck in. The Merton Floats' Garden play saw a talented and outlandishly funny cast perform their rendition of *Twelfth Night*. Meanwhile, Merton's squash team proved victorious on the college circuit, winning both the Oxford league and the Cuppers competition. Alongside a whole host of other achievements (including music recitals, hockey success, Mertonian-written student plays, and choir recitals), it has been another year in which Mertonians have demonstrated their excellence in all fields.

It has also been a year in which JCR members have shown their generosity and kindness through a wide range of charitable activities. Whether it is Hannah Radley shaving her head to raise money for Macmillan Cancer Support, Ella

Caulfield's enduring work to support Guide Dogs UK, or Umut Kaan Önen's fundraising for victims of the earthquake in Turkey, the lengths to which Merton students have gone to support charitable causes have been laudable. I would also like to extend my personal thanks to Jemima Freeman, whose tireless work as JCR Charities Representative, especially in organising an Oxbridge cross-college food bank donation challenge, has facilitated all the above.

A particular highlight for many this year was the Merton Winter Ball, which will surely live long in the memory of all those who attended. Months of meticulous planning and preparation culminated in an evening filled with enchantment and delight. The transformation of the College for one evening was a sight to behold: combined with the delicious food and the excellent entertainment, the ball was an absolute triumph. All credit goes to the Winter Ball Committee, whose attention to detail, imagination and dedication produced a magical night.

One of the highlights of this year was the inauguration of our much-awaited Games Room. The renovation of the MacKeith Room was something I was delighted to take on at the start of my term as JCR President. Providing a recreational space for all junior members of the College, the Games



Merton matriculates 2022. This photograph has been reproduced by kind permission of Gillman & Soame photographers and can be ordered online

Room comes equipped with a pool table, darts, table football and comfortable seating. Having proved popular so far, we hope that the Games Room becomes a hub of activity for Mertonians, and a fun place to relax and unwind.

It has been a pleasure to have been JCR President during a period of such exciting developments and successes, but the story of the JCR is one of teamwork and community. I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to the JCR executive committee. It is thanks to their dedication that the JCR has been able to operate. I would also like to thank the rest of the JCR committee for their commitment to supporting Merton's undergraduate community.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, I would like to thank my fellow Mertonians for your unwavering support. You have shaped our community into the diverse, talented and welcoming community that it is today. It has been an absolute privilege to serve as your president.

As my tenure comes to an end, I would like to wish the best of luck to my successor, Oliver Hobson, and the incoming

committee. May you lead with integrity, empathy and vision, and may your journey be filled with the same sense of fulfilment that I have experienced.

Zakariya Bux (2021)

JCR President 2022-23



MCR NEWS

Things have been monumental for our MCR this year. May saw the completion of the first full revision of our MCR constitution in seven years – a long-needed administrative update to our governance that incorporated vital charitable aims, recent regulations on data protection, and strengthening of our democratic procedures. For the first time in perhaps more than seven years, we had a near-full board of officers on the MCR committee in a term, to put on much-loved and inclusive events for all members across our diverse MCR community. We instituted a Part-Time and Mature Students Officer to cater our events to a growing section in our graduate body; we held an MCR exchange with our sister college, Peterhouse College – the first in almost half a decade – with much enthusiasm, jubilee and academic competition on both sides. Contributing to the building work around College, we are holding conversations on ways to render our historical (13th-century) MCR room more accessible to the mobility-impaired and to everyone in our community, while preserving its charm and venerability. We have succeeded in revitalising old spaces by working with the JCR to renovate the beloved Games Room just below the MCR, so we are on track towards enhancing our welcoming community and taking us forward in this exciting decade.

Perhaps most importantly – and more directly felt by the

300 graduates here at Merton – what really made this year special were the inspiring ways in which our MCR committee and MCR members exceeded expectations to put on an absolutely stellar series of events for our graduate body. It has been truly inspiring to see how much effort each MCR member has put into creating these events, which were very well received: kudos goes to our Social Officers and Welfare Officers for their contagious enthusiasm. This year, the former revitalised our tri-termly MCR exchange dinners with other Oxford colleges, brought back the MCR BBQ and Garden Party in Trinity term, and introduced new events like a fun sword-duel with the JCR – alongside organising the aforementioned Peterhouse-Merton exchange replete with a punting session, Upper Library tour, and breathtaking Formal and Second Desserts. Our Welfare Officers have welcomed more MCR members into our fold through a variety of other events, while keeping our backs and giving us much-appreciated one-on-one support in stressful times. Their hallmark pizza and massage nights, welfare walks in Wytham Woods, and 'brinner' (brunch at dinner) – along with this year's well-attended jewellery-making session – are centrepieces of term, bringing our community together.

And we did all this while keeping a healthy bank budget. Our two MCR Treasurers have been generous and key in



MCR Black Tie Reception, Antechapel

maintaining the nuts and bolts of this great operation, by remunerating events, looking after our MCR's kitchen and tea supply, and dealing with the unenviable task of maintaining the MCR coffee machine. Our Vice-Presidents have been equally key in organising the room ballot for next year, as well as the termly academic colloquia where we present and enrich our top-quality research in the MCR. Other officers have been crucial in consolidating the spirit of our community: the BAME, Gender, and LGBTQ Officers have organised afternoon teas, bowling trips, cultural performances, and drinks to celebrate our diversity, make all feel welcome, and bond our community; our Environment and Ethics Officer – a position long left empty – organised thoughtful events, like low-mile-food cookery sessions and non-food-wastage reuse of pumpkins, and initiatives such as the toilet twinning scheme (toilettwinning.org), which helps give people in the poorest nations access to clean water and a proper toilet.

Much of what makes us such a happy, thriving academic community – as I think the above summary aptly evidences – is the diverse, buzzing life that feeds our hard-working ethos. As change envelops us, our traditional core values of 'what it means to be a Mertonian' become rooted deeper. Perhaps the most fundamental of those values, even above

academic brilliance, is realising and showing our gratitude for the monumental work that our community puts into helping each other. I shall end with some thank-yous.

Special thanks must be given to both MCR committees, for 2022-23 and 2023-24, for making the MCR such a lively and welcoming space. And to the entire MCR body for coming to all our events and embodying that communal spirit. Our vivacious Ordinary General Meetings wouldn't be the same without the attendance of everyone involved, and in particular during the procedure for ratifying the revised MCR Constitution. And finally, of course, a massive thanks must be given to the College – without whose guidance and financial support we would have been far more limited.

This brings me to the end of my first year as President, and the beginning of the committee's organisation of the exciting MCR freshers' termcard, for all the bright-faced students who will join us in October. This positive change, I am confident, will continue, and the MCR community spirit will only grow stronger.

James Hua
MCR President 2022-23

Merton Sport





Men's Football

For the Ms (Merton and Mansfield) this season, things may at first glance look pretty similar to the last season. We once again finished mid table and also again lost to our nemesis St Hugh's in Cuppers. Yet that isn't the full picture of what this team has achieved. We got the season off to a flyer and were very much challenging for the title throughout the first half of the season. Our team looked as strong as any other in the league, only let down by the fact that clearly a lot of the team cares about their degree. This was particularly highlighted in our game against Lincoln where we only fielded 9 players, with two being last minute transfers from elsewhere. The season was filled with ups and downs, some personal highlights were the 1-1 draw against St Hilda's and the 3-0 win against University College. Frustrating as it was only to get a draw, the game would have been a treat to watch with end-to-end action and the whole team dug in and battled together to share the points against eventual league winners, St Hilda's. After losing 2-0 to them at home, going away to University College could have been a tough game but throughout, the Ms dominated and showed the great quality we possess despite having a number of players missing for that game.

It was Cuppers that showcased the true strength of our team, where we turned in two extraordinary performances

against opposition from much higher divisions to advance to the quarter-finals. Firstly, against Exeter who finished 2nd in the top division, and we beat 2-1. Then in the second round we had the 'easier' task of Balliol who play in the second highest division, whom we beat 3-1. Then in the quarter-finals, playing on a pitch comparable to a cabbage patch, against a team that turned out to feature some Hugh's alumni, we narrowly lost 2-1. It was an unfortunate end to what was likely one of the strongest teams we have been able to field these past couple of years.

Honestly, it has been an absolute honour to be able to captain all you lads this year and I would like to thank all the players and everybody else involved with the team. I'd particularly like to thank William Wickstead for running the second team and his service to the Ms across his time at Oxford. For those players for whom this was their last season, best of luck for the future and thank you for your contribution to the Ms. I can't wait to see what the next season has in store for us.

Alex Selby (2021, Mansfield) and Josh Soanes (2021, Mansfield)
Football Co-Presidents 2022-23

Women's Football



This was another great year for the women's M&Ms football team, although not without its difficulties. Building on strong foundations laid by previous captains, we continued to hone our skills (and catch up on some gossip) with popular weekly training

sessions. Bolstered by the addition of some fantastic new blood, the M&Ms started the year strong. However, success came at a price. After helping to lead the team through Michaelmas, Merton captain Bridget had to step down due to injury, while illness and injuries during Hilary also meant the team was forced to pull out of Cuppers. Nevertheless, our players continued to give it their all, both on the pitch and supporting from the sidelines, and we finished the year an admirable fourth out of seven in the inter-college league (Division 1).

We continue to value an atmosphere of positivity, sociability and inclusion, embracing players of all skill levels and hosting socials throughout the year, including a film night and an end-of-term picnic and awards ceremony. This year also saw the introduction of a new Instagram account for the team with brilliant match reports by our very own Eleanor Luxton (2021) in her own inimitable style.

Looking to next year, we are excited to be merging with Wadham women's football and cannot wait to embrace new friends and players.

Thank you to everyone on the team for their support and effort, and best wishes to next year's captains.

Bridget Harrington, Anna Field and Zahra Ahmed (Mansfield) (all 2021)

M&Ms Women's Football Co-Captains 2022-23

Tennis

Having seen some ups and down in the past four years, Merton's tennis fortunes saw a steady rise this academic year. After recruiting a sizeable portion of new team members in Michaelmas term, especially MCR and JCR freshers, we continued to hold weekly tennis practice sessions on the weekends on Merton's three tennis courts. These provided helpful social events to meet each other and get to know each other's skills and tennis style; it also enabled the JCR and MCR to join forces more strongly. The warm weather proved excellent for these games.

We continued with this practice over Hilary term as well, if with less frequency due to the weather. Towards the end of term, we also began planning for our season of Oxford's legendary inter-college Tennis Cuppers. We put together a good team and held strong practice sessions. The fruits came to light when we won our first-round Cuppers tie convincingly (7-2) against Teddy Hall, a strong college with Blues players as well, on Merton's own home turf. Our hopes looked high, and the weather set for a glorious time.

Unfortunately, our luck (and good weather) ran out when we were beaten 6-5 in a close game against second seeds and eventual tournament finalists Lady Margaret Hall on 8 May, in adverse rain and clouds. Our run this year may have come to an end, but we look forward to coming back stronger and faster next year. Many thanks should be given to all the players who represented the College. It is a wonderful social opportunity as well as being good exercise and one path to Oxford's legendary Cuppers games.

We hope to see as many people as possible around on the courts and finally seal our game, sets and matches in Cuppers next year and beyond.

James Hua and Jack Pickering (both 2020)
Merton Tennis Co-Captains 2022-23



Rugby

Between the classic chocolate, the adventurous peanut and the fan-favourite crunch, there are a variety of flavours from which M&Ms lovers can choose. To explore all that the delicious treat has to offer, enthusiasts the world over flock to the M&M's store in the heart of London which proudly holds the title of the world's largest candy store. Our very own M&Ms – based in Oxford rather than Leicester Square – may differ in substance to their confectionery namesake, but the variety of flavours on offer is arguably superior. In the club's decorated history the rugby on display has reached the heights of the crunch and the lows of the peanut. In years past there were enough Ms to fill a family-share packet; in recent years our numbers have been fun-size. That said, there is only one way to package the contents of this season: a 'mixed bag'.

Our first and only competitive rugby game of the season came against Christ Church in Michaelmas term. Having dropped to the plate division of Cuppers, the club amalgamated with Trinity College to field a team of eleven. Although the numbers were more suitable for football, there was no diving on display that afternoon. From try-saving tackles by Fergus Waterhouse (2019) to exquisite playmaking by David Craig (2019), the Ms put on a spectacle. Although falling short 35-14 (having begun with a seven-point penalty), the Ms could rightly leave the pitch with their heads held high. In

the following months the club's main opponent was a lack of players. Unfortunately, this meant that fixtures against Peterhouse and the Ms Old Boys could not go ahead.

Like a phoenix rising from the ashes, Trinity term saw the revival of Ms rugby. The club was able to host weekly tag rugby sessions which grew in popularity as the term went on. In 5th Week, the club competed in Mixed Touch Rugby Cuppers. For the first time in M&M history the team reached the final of this event. Beginning the tournament as underdogs, the Ms gathered momentum as the sunny day dragged on, beating Keble and Balliol in the knockout rounds. Although ultimately falling short to St Catherine's College there was an immense effort displayed by all involved. This puts the club in a promising position to grab some silverware next year.

I would like to extend sincere thanks to Simon Brown who facilitated Ms rugby this season through thick and thin. Thank you to James Lisle, Jonathan Prag and all the powers-that-be in the colleges of Merton and Mansfield. Finally, thank you to everyone who put on an Ms jersey this season. To those moving on – I'll see you when the Old Boys game returns next year. Have your gumshields ready.

Joshua Treacy (Mansfield, 2020)
Rugby Captain 2022-23



Men's Rowing

Warming up for the Summer Eights © Richard Wakefield

And so the men's side concludes their 184th year in action, with the same level of determination and spirit as at our founding. It has been a phenomenal year filled with tough competition, early mornings and great tenacity from the squad. My vice-captain, Marcus Gamble (2021), and I are hugely proud of the squad's development and achievements over our tenure.

Starting in Michaelmas, our focus was on the recruitment drive of new members, supported by the novice captains, Lottie Tellyn (2021) and Maia Pereira (2021). We espoused the benefits of rowing as we moved the freshers into their new rooms, continuing at College lunches and BOPs to anyone who would listen. Blessed with cooperative stream levels (for the moment), the novices took to the water with confidence, culminating in the Michaelmas Novice Regatta at the end of the term.

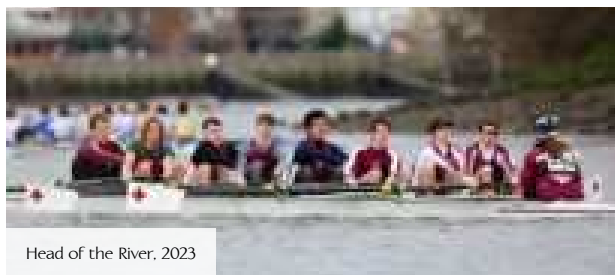
Meanwhile, the seniors started their training on the Port Meadow stretch under the watchful eye of our coach, Adam Donaldson. This training was punctuated by two competitions as we reached the quarter-finals of Autumn Fours but were knocked out in the first round of Nephthys regatta by Keble College. Given that Keble went on to win

the Nephthys tournament overall, we're lodging this as a second-place performance for the squad.

A wet January meant 'Red Flag' (no-rowing) conditions for the first three weeks of Hilary. Our newly formed M2 squad racked up hours in the Iffley rowing tank while M1 prepared for a long stint in the erg room. As the river levels dropped, M1 trailered their boats up to Godstow once again. After three weeks of intense training, both squads were ready to give Torpids their all. M2's chances of qualification were dashed by a stubborn headwind at Rowing On, though this disappointment only provided fuel for their training towards Summer Eights.

After M1's ascension into Division I in Torpids the year before, we sought out a more secure spot from their starting position of eighth on the river. A strong row-over on the first day gave the crew the confidence they needed and M1 secured successive bumps (Teddy Hall, Wadham, St Catz) on the next three days of racing to finish eighth on the river.

Encouraged by this success, our efforts turned toward the Head of the River Race, the largest head race in the country.



Head of the River, 2023



Nephthys crew at Merton Boathouse

which runs from Chiswick to Putney. Four of the M2 crew bravely stepped up to complete the 6.8km race and certainly received a baptism by fire as their first racing experience! It was great to see the whole men's side come together to tackle the distance and receive the alumni's messages of support on the day.

Training took no pause over Easter as we returned to Oxford in -1st Week for a joint training camp with the women. The wettest March since 1981 cut short our rowing prospects, but did not dampen our spirits as we set to work in the erg room once again. We faced a tough erg regime put forward by our coach, Andy Munro, whose son (Finlay Munro, 2018) rowed for the club during his time at Merton.

As soon as the river levels dropped, we resumed Trinity outings as normal, relieved to be back on the water and shocked by the amount of light in the mornings. Four glorious weeks of sunny mornings ensued, as M2 found their stride on the Isis and showed incredible progress from Hilary term. Summer Eights was upon us before we knew it and provided the culmination of our training efforts throughout the year.



Torpids, Day 2

After an impressive qualifying time, M2 started their campaign in a competitive position at the top of Division 5. Their performance featured some stellar row-overs with some impressive evasive coxing by Ty to escape the bow of Queen's M2 on Day 1. Meanwhile, Natasha steered M1 into the stern of Queen's M1 to achieve a bump on their first day of racing. Saturday's atmosphere on Boathouse Island was incredible with familiar faces of alumni and friends supporting from the bank. M1 and M2 finished the week with net results of -1 and -2 respectively. While these results don't reflect our efforts expended in training, we look forward to achieving net gain next year.

Marcus and I end the year incredibly proud of what the squad has accomplished. The novices recruited in Michaelmas now form the backbone of our club and we look forward to seeing what they will accomplish next year. We would like to thank everyone who has supported the squads' efforts, and are honoured to have led the men's side this year.

Theo Duke (2021)

Men's Rowing Captain 2022-23



Women's Rowing

Training at Godstow

Our head coach, Adam Donaldson, stopped us partway down the river on one freezing, misty morning in January, to explain to us the concept of *ubuntu*, an Nguni Bantu term that embodies the concept of togetherness, humanity: 'I am because you are.' If there is one word that can describe the ethos of the women's squad this year, it is *ubuntu*. We are all very proud of the effort, determination, good humour and kindness on display at every level within the squad.

We began the year with about a boat's worth of senior rowers training regularly at Godstow, with two more of our number running the novice programme at the Isis and a few others overcome by work, illness, etc. Michaelmas gave us a great opportunity to get to know our new coach, get back into the swing of training, and set a foundation not only for our rowing but also our attitude, professionalism and focus. The absolute highlight of the term was on the Wednesday of 8th Week, when we went head-to-head with Keble W1 in torrential rain. The most gruelling of Adam's test sessions (6 x 500m pieces from standing starts) became a thrilling, moving opportunity for the underdog. Despite being 20-something

places higher on the river than us, Keble never got close to clear water, and on one piece we held them completely even. Absolutely soaked through, we ended the session (and the term of training) on a high.

Hilary and its weather hit us hard: we only had three weeks on the water in the run-up to Torpids. With only nine sessions at Godstow, we pushed on and made all the progress we could. Having set our W1 crew early on, the closeness and friendship in our Torpids crew was a wonderful thing to experience, and everyone gave it their all. We ended Torpids week with an unlucky -1 overall, but the satisfaction, experience and drive that we gained from the campaign was priceless. For W2, meanwhile, this was the first Bumps campaign for everyone in the boat. Having qualified, which was no mean feat, they took to the week with determination, and experienced the adrenaline of cannons, crashes and appeals at OURC's race desk. Substantial chaos in Divisions 5 and 6 gave them both jumps and falls in the charts, but the whole crew handled it with aplomb, and we ended on a high, back in Division 5.



W2 and coach



W1 racing in Summer Eights (photo © Nikola Boysova)

Torpids was not the only momentous event that week: we also took the delivery of *Irene Tracey*, our new W1 Filippi shell. We didn't row in her for Torpids itself, but one week after the races we reunited our W1 Torpids crew to take her for a paddle on the Isis, in which we took our rate-build higher than we had ever taken it before, and we knew that she would treat us well.

Over Easter, we organised and planned for an action-packed training camp back in Oxford in -1st Week. Unfortunately, the sky gods had other plans, and we had a grand total of one water outing over training camp and 0th Week. The anticipated good weather of Trinity term was slow to appear but when it came, it was glorious. With coaching availability patchy, W1 took their training into their own hands, and welcomed some new faces into the boat in the places of those who had left for exams. We won't soon forget those sessions and the shouts of 'Sit central', 'Sit tall in the wash!', 'Sit on your seat!', 'Sit the boat!' that punctured the 6am Godstow air. Nor will we forget the herd of ponies running alongside us during our race pieces. W2 cracked on with

W1 with the new shell, *Irene Tracey*, in summer 2023 © Richard Wakefield

their new coach, Timea, and settled in very well to Joe Virden, who had been handed down from W1. Especially when some old hands returned to the boat, having finished their exams, the girls put some real grit into their training. Again, it was a short bloc, with weather problems at the start and Eights in 5th Week, but we couldn't wait to give it our best.

Everyone agreed that progress would be the best measure of our success, and both crews made massive progress over Eights Week in settling into the racing rhythm. Although the results aren't demonstrative of all our hard work (~2 for both crews – we do everything together!), the attitudes and progression were very clear. We should be very proud of how we have rebuilt over the last few years since Covid, and go into next year 100% ready to capitalise on the experience gained this year. None of the women's rowers is graduating this year, so we will all be pushing each other on with ambition. The campaign for Torpids 2024 starts now.

Tabby Spindler (2021)

Women's Rowing Captain 2022-23

Netball

The Merton netball team has had a fantastic year, climbing from Division 5 into Division 2. Founded only last year by Vicki Moon and Ellie Owen (both 2020), the team has now more than 20 talented players who train and compete weekly. The team has been fortunate to have such a wide range of students across subjects, genders and abilities this year, from people who asked, 'Isn't that a volleyball?' to very experienced players both returning and new.

The team started Michaelmas in the lowest division: 5. Our start was rocky with a loss to Osler, but we were only warming up. We went on to win the subsequent seven matches and top the division. Some highlights included the matches against Wadham and Lady Margaret Hall, 19-12 and 24-1 respectively. These amazingly high scores are a credit to our terrific shooters Emily Jones (2020), Ellie Owen, Suryansh Mehta (2019), and (in desperate times) Eleanor Bogie (2021). However, the term's soaring success can be massively credited to our returning players from last year who really stepped up, led, and supported the team both in training and at matches. These phenomenal players included the team co-captains Eleanor Clark and Eleanor Bogie, Hajrah Hafeez (all 2021), Emily Jones and Ellie Owen (both 2020).

Having now made our way into Division 4 (which then became Division 3 when, because of the increasing number of teams, five divisions were split into six), the team rallied yet again with some of our brand-new players shining through. Special mentions must go to Megan Harfield (2021) who has been a spectacular goalkeeper all year, even inventing her own marking techniques. James Pepall (2019) brought height and defensive chutzpah this year, not missing a single training session. Another shout-out must go to some of the freshers who joined us this year: Emma Gracey, Antonia Johnson and Jemima Freeman (all 2022), who have been absolutely outstanding. Merton won five matches out of seven over the term and found itself yet again climbing the league into Division 2.

Hilary really saw the team come into its own with some fantastic play and amusing 'Moments of the Match' which we introduced into the games alongside 'Player of the Match'



to have a laugh at some of the spectacular netball on show. 'Players of the Match' were selected at every match but haven't been listed here as we had too many individual team members selected. This is further testament to the talent and dedication of our team. 'Moments of the Match' include slips into the splits, some amazing off-court saves and the team's favourite kind of pass, the 'Square'. Other highlights of the term included our match against Peterhouse, Cambridge: a fabulous game against friendly players. Merton was victorious, redeeming ourselves from our draw last year. Our well-deserving players of the match were Jemima Freeman and Jemima Barnes (2021) who both whizzed around the centre court, untouchable to their defensive players.

Moving into Trinity, although many of the team were studying for exams, we still had a great term. The team took third in our league in Cuppers, narrowly missing out on competing in the quarter-finals. This was a great show by Merton against some Division 1 teams in the tournament, a division we hope to join next year (fingers crossed). Trinity also saw the team hosting our very first tournament at the Merton Sports Day. This was a great success with over 50 Mertonian and Mansfield students coming out to join the netball fun.

Overall, it's been a terrific year for Merton netball and hopefully we'll carry this year's success into Michaelmas 2023, aiming for Division 1. Eleanor Bogie will continue as co-captain, joined by Jemima Freeman. We look forward to seeing our amazing team next year.

Eleanor Bogie and Eleanor Clark (both 2021)
Netball Co-Captains 2022-23



Squash

At the beginning of this season perhaps you could be forgiven for thinking it impossible for the squash team to repeat the successes of last year, let alone do one better. Yet that is precisely what this team has managed to do, and they have done it in style. The statistics speak for themselves. The Ms clinched the league title by a comfortable 13 points, and beat Oriel in the Cuppers final by 5-0 to retain the trophy – a repeat of the scoreline against Balliol last season. This is the Ms' third Cuppers final in as many years (the 2020-21 final was cancelled due to Covid-19). In total, these achievements mean the team has developed into one of the most successful college sports team of recent years.

Of course, it goes without saying that these successes would not be possible without the weekly efforts of every member of the Ms squash club. Especially deserving of commendation are veterans Trajan Halvorsen (2019), Benedict Yorston (2019) and Tim Bennett (2019) who, yet again, stepped up in the Cuppers final and delivered crucial victories with ease. Having played winning squash at the highest level for the College over the past three years, they all leave huge shoes to fill next season. Also deserving of recognition is women's Blues seed Grace Beglan (2022), who delivered instrumental

performances to secure safe passage to the final. In addition, Mansfield players Nicholas Choustikov in the Cuppers final and Alexander Cliffe in the league provided integral contributions throughout the season. League success was only made possible with the help of Charlie Hobbs (2022), Peter Aitken (2022) and Jonathan Utterson (2018), giving the squad much-needed strength and depth. My thanks extend to every player involved in these games.

Moving on to more social squash, it has been pleasing to see the increasing popularity of the sport among members of the College as the new racquets and balls purchased for the year have been well used. Grace Beglan led an excellent session, coaching beginners in Michaelmas that proved popular with members of both the JCR and MCR. This is a sign of things to come as the Squash Club looks to encourage those interested in exploring the game for the first time. I thank my Mansfield co-captain Alexander Cliffe (2019) for his support over the past two years and I wish my successor Grace Beglan (2022) all the best for the coming season.

George Adams (2020)
Squash Captain 2022-23



Mixed Hockey

Merton-Mansfield hockey has had an incredibly successful season in all respects. Highlights included winning Mixed Cuppers 2023 to become college hockey champions for the first time in memory, a fun alumni match welcoming back Ms hockey alumni to battle it out on the astroturf, followed by a post-match pub trip and a generous donation in the form of a new Ms hockey match playing kit. This season has shown that Merton-Mansfield hockey is not only an incredibly successful sports team, but also a close group of friends who love playing together and show sportsmanship both on and off the pitch.

This season consisted of two competitions: the College league competition played throughout Michaelmas and Hilary, and Mixed Cuppers played in Trinity term. We started the season with a friendly and welcoming training session one cold evening in Michaelmas, but despite the dark evening and slightly chilly

temperature, the turnout for this session was amazing. Over 20 people turned up to play some hockey, learn some new skills, and most importantly bond as a team. Right from the start we knew this would be a promising season, with a good balance of more advanced players who have a history of hockey, whether from school or for playing for the University, and those who had not played for a few years, if at all.

The first half of the College league during Michaelmas term saw the Ms off to a solid and encouraging start, with the first match being played against Teddy Hall, resulting in a victory of 3-1 to the Ms. Unfortunately, the Ms did face some very tough competition during this term, including a difficult match against Hertford – our fiercest competition – which resulted in a 1-0 loss. In spite of the unfortunate scorelines, it cannot be said that the Ms did not give their all to every single match.

The second half of the College league played in Hilary saw the rise of the Ms, with win after win, leading us to our last match of the term, which was against Teddy Hall once again. At this point we were top of the league table and would need a win or to draw to secure the league title. However, this sadly was not the case, and after a well-fought match the final score was 1-0 to Teddy Hall. This meant we came second overall in the league. This was a huge achievement for the Ms, and the good spirits despite the final result was heart-warming.

This brought us to Trinity term. Due to our excellent result in the league, we bypassed the first round of the competition and were guaranteed entry into the second round. This match had us play Wadham/Queen's/Trinity and saw the Ms victorious with a 1-0 win. This led us to the next round, the semi-finals, against Hertford. The first half saw a tough battle, but we ended the match 3-1, taking us through to the final. In the final itself, it was 0-0 at half time. But within seconds of the second half, the Ms were leading 1-0. And then 2-0. And then 3-0. But Anne's/Brasenose hadn't given up and fought their way back and put a goal past the keeper to make the score 3-1. Tensions were high, and Anne's/Brasenose were determined to score another, but the Ms were not going to let that happen and instead took the ball themselves and scored another, making the score 4-1. And then the whistle blew. And just like that the Ms became College Cuppers Champions. Celebrations were held, with a post-match pub trip, and the Merton Sports Dinner was a second celebratory dinner for the event.

This team has held a special place in my heart this last year, not just for their talent and their abilities as hockey players, but because of the love and enthusiasm every single one of them has brought to every single match and social. This year we will unfortunately be saying goodbye to many of the team, and to those players I want to say thank you for your contribution. We will see you back soon for the alumni match. And to anyone who is interested in joining, we would love to welcome you and hope to see you next season.

Emily Jones (2020)

M&M Hockey Captain 2022-23



Badminton

The M&Ms badminton club has been provided with feather shuttlecocks and a sports hall for both recreational and competitive players. This year, there were many more people from Merton and Mansfield joining our club. We started the season with a 6-0 triumph over Brasenose and another convincing 4-0 win against New. Unfortunately, despite our strong efforts, Exeter/Queen's beat us. Still, we became joint top of the Division 1 leaderboard, which was an improvement on last year's result.

When Hilary term started, the even tougher competition, Cuppers, was about to begin. We tried our best to go through to the quarter-finals but were defeated by a strong team. The recreational and team training kept going till 2nd Week of Trinity term to prepare for next year's programme.

Worawit Tangamornchaipattana (2020)

M&Ms Badminton Captain 2022-23



Sports Overview

Merton may be one of the smallest colleges in terms of undergraduate numbers, but despite this, we have yet again not failed to leave our mark on Oxford's sporting scene this year (perhaps with a little help from Mansfield). We enjoyed success all round, on University and college levels.

My role as the JCR Sports Rep began a couple of weeks after our returning joint sports day with our sister Cambridge college, Peterhouse. A successful victory in netball was followed by a narrow defeat in football but, similar to last year, we won the day decisively in the rounders match. An enjoyable evening of pizza from the White Rabbit, followed by a trip to the College Bar, rounded off an incredibly entertaining day. Thank you, James (my predecessor).

After shooing Peterhouse back off to Cambridge, we carried our sports day momentum into our annual Merton vs Mansfield sports day. A sunny afternoon filled with Pimms, burgers and ice cream. Some sport was also played, a very inclusive mixed round robin of netball entertained plenty, and a delightful 6-0 victory in the football proved once and for all that Mansfield does not carry the Ms football teams.

On the collegiate level, Merton produced some impressive league and Cuppers runs. Our badminton team have always flown under the radar, but this year toiled away for a first-place finish in the first division. Both the football and cricket teams reached the quarter-finals of their respective Cuppers – remarkable achievements in themselves – and both were very unlucky to exit at that stage.

Two teams deserve a special mention: the hockey team had an unfortunate second-place finish in the league in Hilary, but were even more determined for Trinity Cuppers. With some new recruits fresh out of their varsity games, the M&Ms hockey team absolutely cruised to the final, where they demolished Anne's/Brasenose 4-1 to deservedly win some silverware.

Team of the year award (if such a thing exists) must go to our squash team, however. After winning both the league and Cuppers last year, they set themselves high standards for this year's iterations (couldn't be higher!). Captain George Adams (2020) led a hardy team to another league victory in Hilary, and then matched last year's triumphs by taking apart every team they faced in Cuppers to retain the title.

As ever, Mertonians on the University-level sports scene continue to shine. Ethan Prince is a well-known name around Merton, though most likely for reasons other than his punting Blue and croquet Half Blue. The hockey Varsity was well populated with Mertonians, Euan Dyer (2021) and Rosie Chen (2022) both representing their respective first teams, Euan even grabbing himself a spectacular goal. Grace Beglan (2022) earned herself a squash Blue, always an impressive feat for a fresher, accompanying the veteran Trajan Halvorsen (2019) who also received a squash Blue. Many Mertonians bounced back onto the university sporting scene after previous years: Jack Pickering (2020) receiving a lawn-tennis Blue, Benedict Yorston (2019) not surprising anyone with a real tennis Blue and rackets Half Blue, Phoebe Mountain (2019) with another rowing Half Blue, and Suryansh Mehta (2019) a Half Blue for baseball. Some new and interesting sports appeared in our Blues list: Tosia Lecka (2021) holing herself a golf Blue, and Rebecca Jiaxiu Liu (2020) twirling her way to a dance Half Blue. Merton's athletics numbers are still very strong; ex-sports rep James McCulloch (2021) and Florentin Schroeder (2019) both with athletics Half Blues and Jared Martin (2020) yet again warranting a cross-country Half Blue.

Finally, I must acknowledge all those who make sports at Merton possible and then go above and beyond to create such a successful sporting atmosphere in the College. The AMALGAS committee (Merton and Mansfield's joint sporting body) work behind the scenes and largely without thanks to ensure the continued operation of sport at Merton, and in particular the Domestic Bursar Tim Lightfoot and the chair Professor Jonathan Prag work tirelessly. Our wonderful Warden Professor Irene Tracey unfortunately left us after Michaelmas, but our lovely Acting Warden Professor Jennifer Payne proved to be an equally die-hard fan of Merton sports, supporting any team she can in her free time. Lastly, a man who many never see but who makes everything possible, our groundsman James Lisle works day in, day out every week to ensure the grass is always green and the Pav is always ready for BOPs; a massive thank you to you.

Nathaniel Davey (2023)
JCR Sports Representative 2022-23

Blues and Half Blues

New Full Blues and Half Blues awarded in 2022-23

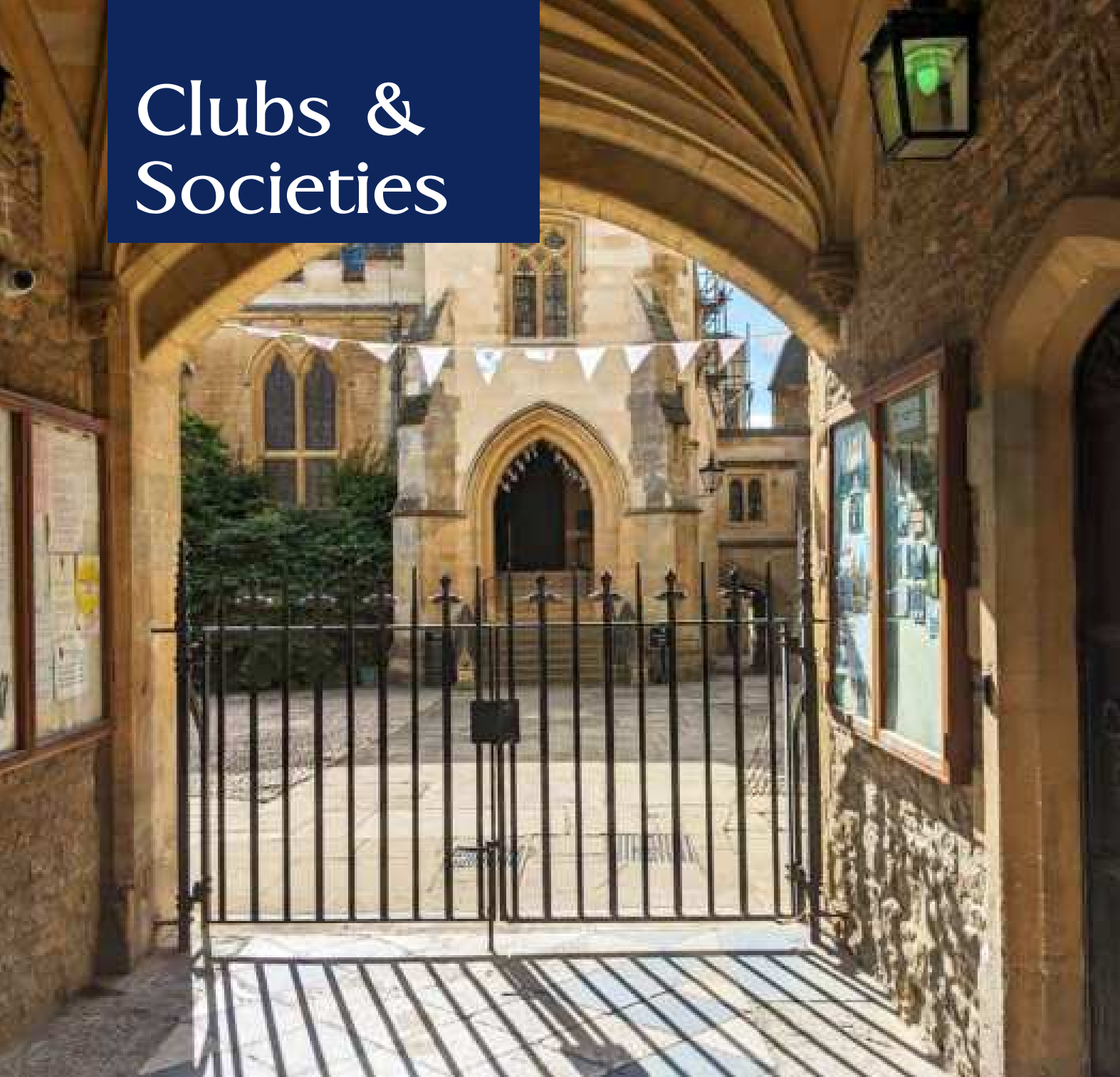
Grace Beglan (2022)	Squash
Rosie Chen (2022)	Hockey
Euan Dyer (2021)	Hockey
Trajan Halvorsen (2019)	Squash
Tosia Lecka (2021)	Golf
Rebecca Jiaxiu Liu (2020)	Dance
Jared Martin (2020)	Cross-country
James McCulloch (2021)	Athletics
Suryansh Mehta (2019)	Baseball
Phoebe Mountain (2019)	Rowing
Jack Pickering (2020)	Tennis
Ethan Prince (2019)	Punting, Croquet
Florentin Schroeder (2019)	Athletics
Benedict Yorston (2019)	Real Tennis, Rackets

Haigh Ties

Awarded in June 2023

Grace Beglan (2022)
Tim Bennett (2019)
Imogen Halliwell (2021)
Eleanor Bogie (2021)
Florentin Schroeder (2019)
Tabitha Spindler (2021)
Theo Duke (2021)
Marcus Gamble (2021)
Charlotte Tellyn (2021)

Clubs & Societies





Halsbury Society

The Halsbury Society has had a spectacular year, offering a variety of events, speakers and opportunities for Merton students.

Before the start of term, a number of second-year law students had the chance to take part in the week-long mock ICC arbitration workshop as part of the Doshisha-Merton Advocacy and Networking Initiative (DOMANI), organised by Professor Anselmo Reyes and hosted at Merton. Students received feedback on mock arbitration pleadings from distinguished legal academics and barristers, and worked in teams with law students from universities in Japan, Hong Kong, the Philippines and Indonesia. This year, the programme incorporated a mediation training workshop for the first time. Overall, it was an incredibly valuable chance for students to develop practical skills in cross-examination, and to receive useful guidance from distinguished tutors across the world.

In Michaelmas term, the Halsbury Society hosted its first subject tea of the year as a friendly welcome for the incoming law freshers. This was one of a series of termly subject teas across the academic year, which gave members of Merton's law community the chance to catch up in an informal setting. This complements the additional external networking events arranged with Merton alumni, attended by law students and those from other disciplines with an interest in law. One such highlight was the Merton Lawyers' Association Annual Meeting, kindly hosted by Slaughter and May in its London office. The event was attended widely by Mertonian legal practitioners, and featured a conversation with The Right Hon Dame Philippa Whipple (1984) and Laurie Rabinowitz KC (1983) about life as a practising lawyer, curated by Philippa Hopkins KC (1989). Another notable event for first- and second-year students was a sponsored dinner with leading law firm Sullivan & Cromwell at Quod restaurant.



Hilary term marked the arrival of the traditional annual Halsbury Society Lecture, this year featuring Law Commissioner Professor Sarah Green. Professor Green gave an engaging talk entitled 'Law and sausages'. She offered students a highly informative insight into the work of the Law Commission; it was particularly interesting to hear about the structure of the Law Commission, and its interactions with Parliament when presenting draft Bills and research. It was also a delight to welcome Professor Green for a drinks reception and traditional lecture dinner afterwards, both kindly sponsored by Slaughter and May. Another headline event of the term was a presentation and conversation by Toby Landau KC (1987) with an intimate group of second- and third-year law students. Mr Landau offered a thoroughly engaging discussion about key challenges in modern arbitration law as well as guidance for those wishing to pursue a career at the Bar.

In Trinity term, we welcomed former Lord Justice of Appeal Sir Jack Beatson as guest of honour at the annual Halsbury Subject Dinner. It was fantastic to hear both discussion on his own areas of legal and academic practice and his thoughts on accessibility at the Bar and in the judiciary. His speech offered helpful guidance for our own future career paths, particularly for those seeking to join the Bar.

Indeed, the Annual First- and Second-Year Moot Competitions in June showcased the ability of all participants to consider a path in advocacy.

The second half of Trinity term included several farewells and new beginnings for members of the Merton law community. At the Trinity term subject tea, we were grateful to host former Merton Tutor in Law and former Dean of the Law Faculty Professor Mindy Chen-Wishart as guest of honour. Her stories of her time at Merton and Oxford, offering compelling advice on how to make the most of our time here as law students, were incredibly poignant. The Halsbury Society wishes her all the best in her future pursuits.

For the departing finalists, the annual Halsbury Garden Party, generously sponsored by O'Melveny & Myers LLP, was a chance for the rest of us to wish them the best of luck with all their future endeavours. Coming together in the sunshine to celebrate the end of a successful year for the society was a perfect way to end the term. We now congratulate Professor Jennifer Payne on becoming Warden Elect of Merton, and look forward to seeing her in the role next year.

It has been an honour to serve as president of the Halsbury Society, and I am grateful to the committee for their unending support over the past year. It is with pleasure that I now hand over to Christopher Houseley as president for next year. I am sure he will bring the society to even greater heights.

Shivanii Arun (2021)

Halsbury Society President 2022-23



Frederick Soddy Society

The Frederick Soddy Society is Merton's community of chemistry students. This year began with the annual subject tea, an opportunity to welcome the new chemistry cohort and answer any questions they may have, and a refresher and catch-up for the existing students. The afternoon refreshments were received in the Mure Room and were followed by a walking tour of the key chemistry locations around Oxford, including the practical labs, lecture theatres, libraries and tutorial rooms. A further chemistry gathering was held to conclude Michaelmas term, providing an opportunity to share tips and tricks among year groups and to relax after the end of term.

In Hilary term the annual dinner was hosted with an inspiring talk by Professor Susan Perkin (Junior Research Fellow, 2005–2008) who talked about her career and her research into electrolytes and interfaces. The talk was well received by all chemists and tutors present. Thank you to Merton's Kitchen

and Hall staff for providing the drinks reception and a superb three-course meal to follow. The event was greatly enjoyed by all and it was wonderful to see so many in attendance.

Sara Borghi (2020) commenced Trinity term as this year's new Frederick Soddy President. The summer picnic celebrating the completion of the academic year was held in Fellows' Quad and provided a warm farewell before the start of the long vacation.

I'm incredibly grateful to all the Merton chemists. The Frederick Soddy Society is a truly lovely community where lifelong friendships form, and it has been a pleasure to organise events throughout the year. I wish Sara and the rest of Merton's chemists every success and happiness next year and in the years to come.

Tara Biddle (2019)

Frederick Soddy President 2022–23



Chalcenterics

What a fantastic year it has been for the Chalcenterics! We started off well with the annual subject tea, which was a fantastic opportunity to welcome not only the new crop of Classics freshers to the College community of undergraduates, graduate students and tutors, but also the students from St Benet's joining our third year. It was equally enjoyable for the freshers and tutors to assemble at the study skills workshop, which proved a valuable experience to dive into the intricacies and quirks of the Classics degree (and its associated joint schools) at Oxford.

Our first talk of the year was in Michaelmas, and was given by Krishnan Ram-Prasad, who had newly joined Merton as a Julia de Lacy Mann Fellow in Classics and Linguistics. Hearing about the 'age' in 'language' and the 'gist' in 'philologist' gave us a fascinating insight into the world of language, linguistics and philology, and into the role of the classicist, and was a fitting testament to Krishnan's dual appointment at the College. The talk was followed by a drinks reception in the TS Eliot Theatre. Michaelmas was home also to the first of our Classics Formals – ironically, a more informal dinner setting for classicists of all degrees, years and appointments to bond in Hall. It has since become a highlight of term for many.

The highlights of Hilary term were numerous. The annual Chalcenterics black-tie dinner, held in the Savile Room, was well attended and the catering was incredible. It was a pleasure for the presidents to give a speech, and above all to wish the Mods students the best for their exams, as

well as have the new tutors and JRFs see the full Classics community assembled. The visit from Simon Pulleyn was a standout event. His talk, 'Talking to the gods in Ancient Greece: Language and tactics', was a broad yet deep survey of a wide range of ancient material, ranging from Plato to magical papyri, which intellectually stretched and intrigued us all. Now emeritus at UCL, Simon was a lecturer in Classics at Merton in the 1990s, which led to much entertaining anecdotal conversation before and after the talk. It was a privilege for us to meet in the flesh the man who had penned two of the most astounding commentaries that had helped us get to grips with Homer over the course of our degrees. Dinner at High Table concluded a wonderful evening.

Trinity's garden party on Sundial Lawn, in all its sun-and-Pimm's drenched glamour, was a delight as we charged steadily on to the end of the year. The 7th Week Classics Formal was another much-needed opportunity to reflect on the year past, and to catch up with tutors and fellow students once more. We three presidents have very much enjoyed organising all the Chalcenterics events this year, and are grateful to our speakers for delivering such engaging talks and to everyone who attended the events. We wish the incoming committee – Gabby Murray (2021), Maia Pereira (2021) and Benjamin Atkinson (2018) – all the best for the success of the Chalcenterics next year.

Kiana Rezakhanlou (2020), Jana Nedelkoska (2020) and Fran Geldard (2019)
Chalcenterics Co-Presidents 2022-23



Roger Bacon Society

It's that time of year again...

As president of the Roger Bacon Society, it is time to write the annual report of events. With a surprise birthday party, a full suite of Occam lectures and a delivery on my promise of brownies, this year has been successful for the society, and I am looking forward to the next one.

No year in Roger Bacon would be complete without the discussion of the Holy Trinity of Physics Society events: Physics Tea, Physics Dinner and Physics Garden Party. Physics Tea happened during Freshers' Week, where, most importantly, College 'parents' got to meet their 'children' in person – something that hasn't happened since 2019.

Physics Dinner was particularly exciting when I received an email from Professor Barr saying it was Professor Schekochihin's birthday on the date I had organised for Physics Dinner (6 March). I liaised with the Hall staff to order a cake. Physics Dinner also coincided with the election of the candidates. Only Agnieszka Wierchucka (2020) ran as a candidate, partly because none of the other third years particularly wanted to do it. However, she made a beautiful Nyan Cat election video (I am obliged to say the editing was done by her girlfriend Sara) which meant she ended up winning the election 3 votes to 0.



After the Physics Dinner

At Physics Dinner, we sang 'Happy Birthday' to Professor Schekochihin, listened to speeches by me, the new president and last year's president Marcell Szakaly, whom I had asked to write a speech in the (admittedly unlikely) event that RON won, as a nod to his history as Returning Officer.

In Trinity term, I made the terrible mistake of putting the Physics Garden Party in the weekend of 5th Week, which meant that virtually everyone was studying at the time. Still, Marcell kept me company the whole time and lots of people showed up, even if not all at once. The weather was clear for once! I also brought brownies for the physicists during exam season, meaning that, unlike most politicians, I follow through on my election promises.

Other physics-related events involved the return of the Occam (or Ockham) lectures, the termly lecture for physics students. This was very exciting as it was the first year that we have had all three Occam lectures since I arrived at College. We also continued the tradition of physics shots at Finalists' Bop, started last year by Marcell. This year was an exciting and successful year for the Roger Bacon Society, and we look forward to another successful year under Agi's leadership.

Megan Evans (2019)

Roger Bacon Society President 2022-23



Mathematics Society

This past year has been a great year for the mathematics community in Merton. With the pandemic completely forgotten we've had plenty of in-person events, both social and mathematical.

The first event of the year was in Freshers' Week, when we held the customary Freshers' Tea. It was a great opportunity to catch up, share our true feelings about algebra and, of course, welcome the freshers.

As happens every year, maths help sessions were held weekly throughout all terms. Moreover, there have been weekly mathematical events organised by tutors. These include both problem-solving sessions and learning new fascinating mathematics from short talks given by the fourth-year students.

In Michaelmas we held a big social event: formal dinner with St Catherine's mathematicians. Organised together with Albert Lopez, the Catz mathematics society president, we had a big Formal in Merton, followed by karaoke in the College Bar. It was a great opportunity to meet people from another college and take a break from work.

In Hilary, jointly with Professor Alex Scott (Dominic Welsh Tutor in Mathematics) and Julia Stadlmann (2016), we organised

a series of talks given by Merton maths graduate students. Ranging from abstract nonsense to the statistics involved in the spread of a pandemic, there were four extremely interesting 30-minute talks over two sessions. After the talks we also had the chance to relax together in the Merton bar.

The 5th Week blues in Hilary term didn't hit hard for the maths students this year as we were all delighted by the one and only Subject Dinner. With a delicious menu, amazingly selected wines and outstanding seating arrangement, the dinner was an absolute success. It was followed by a great speech (of appropriate length) by Dr James Newton reflecting on the history of Merton mathematics. Overall, Hilary was a good term for the Maths Society.

Right before exam season started for third and fourth years in Trinity term, the annual Mathematics Garden Party was held (this time in the garden). Albeit not ideal weather, it was good to see each other, take a break from revision and catch up.

Looking back, the Maths Society has been really active this past year. We are sure the fun will continue next year, with new presidents Ivan Vasenov (2021) and Kieran Dewalt (2021).

Dragos Crisan (2019) and Inés Borchers (2020)
Mathematics Society Co-Presidents 2022-23

Music Society

The Merton College Music Society has continued to thrive this past year, welcoming back returning ensembles and opening the doors to new and exciting opportunities and events. The society has been a reliable and inclusive aspect of Merton's community, with the weekly Fidelio Orchestra and Kodály Choir rehearsals being key social and welfare activities for many. This year the focus has been on expanding its presence within Merton and becoming more inclusive via student-led concerts and events.

Regular lunchtime recitals, held in the TS Eliot Theatre, have been a popular staple this year. The high standard of solo and chamber music performances by members of both the JCR and MCR was truly incredible and included original compositions. These provided performance opportunities for students from a wide range of subjects, while also enabling music students to rehearse before exams. They have been, without a doubt, the most popular feature of the Music Society and we will ensure to continue this tradition next year.

At the beginning of Michaelmas term, the society hosted a freshers' concert. This provided the first-year students with a chance to experience musical life here at Merton. In addition, the annual College Showcase made a return, featuring performances by instrumental award holders from both the JCR and MCR. This term also saw the start of what we hope is a new tradition for the Music Society: film nights. Every other week, the society hosted film nights featuring recordings of operas and ballets from the Royal Opera House. These proved to be very popular and a great success.

Sadly, the term also saw the farewell of our previous Warden, Professor Irene Tracey. The Music Society, with the help of Benjamin Nicholas, our Director of Music, organised a farewell concert, to show our deep appreciation for all that Professor Tracey has done in her time here at Merton to support music. The programme included music by Barbara Strozzi, Handel, Holst, Madeleine Dring, and the first movement of Clara Schumann's *Piano Trio in G minor*. The College Choir closed the concert with Bob Chilcott's arrangement of Billy Joel's *And so it goes*.

In Hilary term, the Fidelio Orchestra performed a concert in Merton's Chapel, featuring works by Mozart and Haydn. This is the second year since the Fidelio Orchestra combined forces with the orchestras of Magdalen and University colleges to form a large inter-college ensemble. It has continued to be a great success by allowing us to perform bigger and more impressive works. Hilary term also saw the return of our annual Musical Soirée, featuring a variety of excellent performances. These included original compositions and improvisations by instrumental award holder Leo Yablans (2022). Towards the end of the term the society held its first ever Early Music concert organised by organ scholar François Cloete (2022), featuring works by Bach, Corelli, Handel and Purcell.

Trinity term saw a particular rise in chamber music performances at Merton. A string quartet, made up of JCR musicians Tejas Krishnan, Ella McLoughlin, Antonia McClintock (all 2022) and Victor Wang, performed both Brahms and an original composition by Wang. The society also hosted a chamber music concert, organised by JCR music students Edward Chesterman (2021) and Lewis Lee (2021), in collaboration with students from St John's College, St Peter's College, and the Royal College of Music. The concert included an outstanding performance of Mendelssohn's *Octet*. The term also saw the Music Society collaborate with Merton Welfare to organise a cake and piano evening, a wonderful way to round off the year.

The Music Society hopes to continue its many traditions, encourage its ensembles, and looks forward to the new opportunities and experiences the coming year will bring.

Megan Harfield (2021)

Merton College Music Society President 2022-23



Tinbergen Society

Starling murmurations at RSPB Otmoor, November 2022. Photo: Henry Grub

It was an unexpected turn of events that saw me become the Tinbergen Society's first postgraduate president last year. I have found it immensely rewarding steering the society in this year of transition, and special thanks to last year's president Max Flagg (2020), who this year took on the one-time role of JCR Biology Subject President to oversee academic affairs for the undergraduates.

In Michaelmas we all decamped for the traditional annual visit to RSPB Otmoor. Last year's experience was a somewhat sodden affair, so the law of averages stated we'd be luckier with the weather this time — indeed, we got a beautiful still winter evening with a stunning sunset. We were treated to a beautifully large murmuration of starlings dancing across the sky, a couple of customary buzzards opportunistically wheeling around, and then a cacophony as the starlings descended into the reedbeds for the night, the rushes coming alive with the bustle of the pre-nighttime chatter of

the birds. Then to the pub for mochas and pints (generally not consumed by the same people).

In Hilary term we hosted our annual lecture and dinner — this year's lectureship was awarded to Professor Dame Linda Partridge. The TS Eliot Theatre was packed out for Dame Linda's talk, which was an authoritative and comprehensive overview of her decades-long work into the science of ageing, and her famous experiments with mice and flies investigating what makes them age — or keeps them young. Her talk was exceptional; society members recalled it as one of the best in many years. After the talk, the undergraduate, postgraduate and tutor biologists were off to dinner, complete with 'squashed fly' biscuits (my attempt at humour), followed by a pretty platter of cheeses in the MCR. Needless to say it was a great time of festivities, and it was fantastic to be back socialising and chatting biology late into the night.



Annual Dinner. From left: Professor Matt Higgins, Henry Grub, Professor Dame Linda Partridge and Professor Dame E J Milner-Gulland



Society members at Otmoor in November 2022



JCR Biology Summer Garden Party

In Trinity term Max Flagg hosted the inaugural JCR Biology Garden Party for the undergraduates, complete with plenty of fruit-laden Pimm's and another gloriously sunny day. How conflicted we feel as organisers: we have certainly struck it lucky with the weather this year for our events, but I suppose we have to thank the foresightedness of our coal-burning predecessors!

The society was also very grateful to receive funding from the College's Governing Body for two further Tinbergen Lectures this year — the first of which was awarded to Professor Rosie Woodroffe, scheduled for June. Unfortunately, temporary illness forced a last-minute cancellation — but we are very much looking forward to welcoming Rosie, and our other recipient Dr Robin Freeman, to College in Michaelmas 2023.

Congratulations to Merton's Biodiversity Fellow E J Milner-Gulland, who was made a Dame in the King's Birthday Honours in June. Many of us students in the Society have been taught by E.J., and know this is a hugely deserved honour. And it was fantastic to see Merton undergraduates back on field trips abroad again: Éilish Farrelly (2021) and Bridget Harrington (2021) examined the incredible plantlife of Tenerife in May.

This was the first year where we have had no serious restrictions post-Covid, and the society was able to transition back to its pre-Covid schedule of activities — it was my absolute pleasure to be able to deliver a full programme for the society's students and tutors. I am very pleased to pass the baton to incoming third-year James McCulloch, and Éilish who will serve as his VP, who I am sure will deliver yet another fantastic year to celebrate all things biology.

Henry Grub (2016)

Tinbergen Society President 2022-23



1980 Society

I feel very privileged to have been President of the 1980 this year, following in the footsteps of so many fantastic women, and helping to raise the profile of the 1980 society both within College and the wider Merton community.

2023 has been a great year for the 1980 Society, keeping up many of the society's traditional events as well as expanding into some new ones. 'Wine and Whine,' the biweekly discussion group, has continued to flourish, with discussions on everything from celebrity feminist activism to the future of the family, and I have left every week having learned so much from my fellow students and their experiences. The 1980 Society has also continued to host collaborative events with other college societies and JCR members, such as a film night with the Merton Film Society. We have also teamed with welfare for the 'Cake and Compliments' event, which has become truly a collaborative event this year, with the JCR Gender Rep and the JCR Welfare Reps jointly responsible for it. Witnessing the friendship the students of Merton have for each other has been extremely rewarding.

The 1980 Society also worked closely with the JCR Gender Rep, Lottie Tellyn (2021), on another event this year, the prosecco reception following the International Women's Day Formal in Hilary, which was a lovely moment for the women* of Merton to celebrate International Women's Day. Acting Warden Jenny Payne was also in attendance, and the continuation of female leadership at Merton, and the impact that this has on women* students, is something that the 1980 Society is keen to support and foster. I am very grateful to Lottie Tellyn for being such a lovely colleague this past

year, and I hope that the 1980 Society and the JCR Gender Rep for next year can continue to work together.

The highlight of the year for the 1980 Society was undoubtedly the 1980 Alumni Dinner, hosted in Michaelmas of this year. This is something that has been in the works since last year, and I was so fortunate to work with several of the previous 1980 presidents, both alumni and students, as well as the College staff, to host this unique event. Students, staff, and alumni were invited to a drinks reception in the MCR and a dinner in Hall. There were 64 attendees; 37 alumni and 27 students, which was a great turnout for the first event of its kind. This was a truly fantastic opportunity to meet and talk with women* alumni of all ages, including some from the first cohort of women admitted in 1980, and hear stories about how the female experience at Merton has changed over the years. Seeing the Hall filled with women*, as 1980 Founder Emily Capstick (2017) noted in her speech, was truly representative of how far Merton has come in terms of gender equality.

I have had an amazing year as President of the 1980 Society, and cannot wait to see where it goes in the future, starting with what next year's President has in store. We have upcoming plans for a Panel Event featuring prominent female alumni of Merton, to take place in Michaelmas next year, and to which both alumni and students are invited. The 1980 Society has been a very important part of my time at Merton and I really hope that it has made a difference to the wider Merton community.

Jemima Barnes (2021)
1980 Society President 2022-23



Poetry Society

The year has been punctuated by some standout events. Particularly well loved was the Dungeons and Dragons session, as well as the Halloween meeting, both of which provided escapist experiences of poetic composition. Other staples were the collaborations with the Welfare Reps Shivanii Arun and Kieran DeWalt (both 2021), which offered relaxing evenings of poetry-themed arts and crafts. The third of these Welfare crossovers marked the first session hosted by the new leaders of the society, and was attended not only by Merton students but also by poetry enthusiasts from New and Pembroke colleges.

We have also produced more editions of the society pamphlet *Pekes and Pollicles*, which have been much appreciated.

As of Trinity 2023, we have handed over custody of the society to Florence Wolter, Joshua Carn and Hannah Radley (all 2022). We know that exciting collaborations are set to continue, not only with the fan-favourite Welfare arts and crafts evenings, but with the new LGBTQ+ reps Grace Beglan and Emma Gracey (both 2022), and a poetry in translation night hosted collaboratively with the new Modern Languages subject president Dexter Angell (2022). That's not to mention all the fresh new ideas to keep your poetic appetite satiated!

Hollie Goodwin and Nayah Thu (both 2020)
Poetry Society Co-Presidents 2022-23

Interdisciplinary Groups



Ockham Lectures

The Ockham (or Occam) lectures have been a termly event for more than ten years. This year marks a milestone in that it is the first year since 2019 that all three lectures have happened in one academic year. Lectures have ranged from researchers on the frontiers of physics to introductions to other areas of sciences to discussions on the philosophy of physics. Lecturers have ranged from visiting professors to research professors to our very own former Warden, Professor Irene Tracey.

This year's lecturers were very diverse. The Michaelmas lecture was delivered by Professor Peter Davidson from the Department of Engineering in Cambridge. The topic of his lecture was how the Earth generates its magnetic field, an open problem that has been illuminated by recent simulations, which suggests the importance of field line twisting. The Hilary lecture was given by Ravin Jain (2012), a Merton physics alum who later became a race strategy engineer for Ferrari. He described what that entails, and then went into more detail about the strategising that goes behind choosing tyres for the race. The Trinity lecture was delivered by Professor Steven Kivelson, a visiting professor from Stanford University. Like most Trinity lectures, this was more of a philosophical lecture, with the lecturer discussing what it means to understand something and what makes a good physical model, before he talked about his specialism of semiconductor physics as an example of a complex phenomenon where true understanding can be difficult and at times fallacious.

As is customary, after the lecture finished, we had a formal dinner in Hall and then an evening in the MCR or JCR, where the debate continued to create conversations and connections between professors and students well into the night.

Megan Evans (2019)

Roger Bacon Society President



Formal Dinner after the Trinity Ockham Lecture



Biomedical and Life Sciences Network

The Merton College Biomedical and Life Sciences Network brings together past and present Mertonians who are involved in the biomedical and life sciences sector. One of the aims of the network is to provide an easy way for current students to find alumni to contact for advice or help, for example when looking for internships, jobs or academic posts. As an additional benefit, the network enables Mertonians engaged in research or work in similar fields to find out about and get in touch with each other. The network was created in March 2020 and is hosted on LinkedIn. It continues to grow and now comprises 176 members covering a range of occupations and geographical locations.

The organising committee for the network has also expanded and now consists of myself and Stephanie Cadoux-Hudson (2009) from the alumni, and Ethan Prince (2019), David Bernstein (2019) and Salmana Nadeem (2020) from the current student body.

The most exciting recent development was the first in-person event organised by the network. This took place on 22 February 2023 and was held in the T S Eliot Theatre at College. The event was organised largely by Salmana Nadeem and Jonathan Kwok (2019) with help from Chelsea Chisholm of the Development Office.

About 40 students from Merton and other colleges attended. First, I spoke about the founding of the network, and then my working life in a contract research organisation (exemplified by Charles River, my employer) and my specialist discipline

of computer-aided drug design. Jonathan Kwok then took to the floor and gave an overview of the exciting developments at Infinitopes, a spin-out company from the University of which he is CEO. Jonathan brought along several of his young staff who spoke enthusiastically about their roles. Questions were taken from the audience and discussions continued over drinks kindly provided by the College. The presence of the Acting Warden (now Warden Elect), Jennifer Payne, and the Vice-Chancellor, Irene Tracey, was greatly appreciated. We hope that this will be the first of many such events and are grateful to all who made it possible.

An excellent online event took place in Michaelmas Term on the topic of data science, at which four alumni spoke about their daily work and career paths in this field. Many thanks to William Brandler (2009), Michael Adamer (2011), David Gregory (1988) and Kirsty Fielding (2017) for their contributions.

I'm very grateful to all the alumni who have willingly given their time to take part in such events and also to those who've responded to students seeking internship opportunities and careers advice.

If you are interested in joining the network, please either find the group on LinkedIn at www.linkedin.com/groups/8913881 or email me directly at: david.clark@merton.oxon.org. I look forward to hearing from you.

David Clark (1984)



Portion of a pane in the Upper Library at Merton, depicting the life of Walter Raleigh, an English scholar who was a Fellow of Merton and a Professor of English Literature from 1885 to 1887 at the Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College in Aligarh, India, which later became Aligarh Muslim University

Merton South Asia Network

After its inception in Trinity 2022, the Merton South Asia Network (MSAN) made steady progress towards its aim of providing a platform to connect Mertonians of South Asian origin and those with interest in the region. An initial membership drive was kicked off in 2023, with an interest survey circulated to alumni through the Development Office. A fledgling network has started to form!

We launched a project to create a repository that highlights the achievements of Merton alumni of South Asian descent or those who had created impact in the region. This initiative had its roots in us stumbling across a snippet about Asok Mitra (1939), a Mertonian from the 1930s, who went on to do exemplary work in the Indian Civil Service and the United Nations. Once completed, this resource could go a long way towards our goal of highlighting the contribution of the region to Merton as well as the influence of Merton alumni in events that shaped and continue to shape the region.

If you are interested in joining the network, dear reader, all that is required is to complete our survey at tinyurl.com/yck82nfw or to join our new LinkedIn group, 'Merton South Asia Network'.

We will update you on next steps in Michaelmas 2023 as we plan the calendar for the year ahead.

Surbhi Karwa (2021) and Nagadarsan Suresh (2021)

Merton South Asia Network Co-Founders

History of the Book Group

The History of the Book Group met three times this year.

At the Michaelmas term meeting (on 23 November 2022) Merton alumna Dr Sian Witherden (2011) talked informally about her current work in two areas of the book history world. In a conversation with the Fellow Librarian that soon became a relaxed discussion with the entire group, Sian talked first about her work as Resource Description Librarian at St John's College, Oxford. This involves creating electronic records for medieval manuscripts that are being digitised – work that requires knowledge of manuscripts, familiarity with previous descriptions of the manuscripts and knowledge of how to encode the information to make it available to researchers via digital platforms. For part of her working week, Sian also works for Leo Cadogan Rare Books. Sian explained about her experience with the mentoring programme run by the International League of Antiquarian Booksellers. Working with her mentor, Leo Cadogan, Sian learned to catalogue rare books, writing descriptions for sale catalogues and having the opportunity to work at rare book fairs. Sian spoke engagingly of her experiences in these two related but different environments and illustrated her comments with images of some of the manuscripts and books she had encountered.

Two meetings were held in Trinity term. On 4 May 2023 the Merton group was joined by members of the Oxford Bibliographical Society for a co-sponsored talk by Dr Hazel Wilkinson (University of Birmingham) who spoke on “‘The grammar of ornament’: Alexander Pope and the art of the page”. The ornaments in question are decorative woodcut initials and non-textual compositions known as headpieces and tailpieces often found at the beginning of texts or marking the end of a chapter or book. These were provided by printers, but there is also evidence that some writers were aware of and involved in the choice of these woodcut or engraved ornaments. A particular decorative woodcut could be used in several books, creating a ‘visual identity’ for the works of a given writer, such as Alexander Pope.



An elaborate engraved headpiece marks the opening of Alexander Pope's *The Dunciad* (1729)

Dr Wilkinson challenged the audience to think about the semantic function of these decorative elements.

Just a week later, the group met to hear Professor Liza Blake (University of Toronto and Bodleian Library) talk about ‘Margaret Cavendish and her books in Merton College: Oxford and feminist book histories’. Professor Blake gave a lively account of the literary activity of Margaret Cavendish, Duchess of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, a 17th-century poet, philosopher and playwright who was born 400 years ago this year. Cavendish ensured the survival of her works in academic libraries by donating inscribed copies to almost every Oxbridge college library, including Merton's. Having examined these copies in the course of editing Cavendish's works, Professor Blake has been able to demonstrate that these copies differ one from another. The author at times made corrections in her own hand and evidently gave consideration as to how the books were bound. Traditional bibliographic study often aims to reconstruct an ‘ideal copy’ of a work, but Professor Blake has shown that this concept is not helpful when studying a writer like Cavendish. As a bit of added Merton trivia, Margaret Cavendish would have known Merton while she was a maid of honour to Queen Henrietta Maria when she stayed in the College in 1643. Following the talk, the group had a chance to examine the Merton copies of works by Cavendish.

Dr Julia Walworth
Fellow Librarian



Net Zero Group

It's always interesting to catch up with those who studied the same subject while at Merton to share memories and to see where our paths have branched out. And it's also fascinating to meet Mertonians from different cohorts and disciplines who now find themselves bringing different perspectives to some of the biggest challenges we all face. It was this sense that led Ria Miller (2008), Naga Suresh (2021) and myself to put together the Net Zero Group. Climate change and the need to transform our economic, industrial, political and social frameworks to anticipate and respond is one of the most far-reaching themes of this century presenting stark risks and significant opportunities. There is much to discuss and debate. Even the term 'net zero' isn't neutral.

We held our first event online on 7 February 2023 with a conversation and questions with Juliet Davenport (1986), the

founder of Good Energy, one of the first challenger renewable energy suppliers in the UK. Juliet had recently launched her book *The Green Start-Up*, and the discussion covered the energy transition, leadership, purpose and entrepreneurship. More than 30 Mertonians attended and a LinkedIn Group (Merton College Net Zero Group) was set up. Our next event is on 6 February 2023 and features Chris Stark, CEO of the Climate Change Committee, giving a talk titled, 'Is the UK on track for Net Zero by 2050?'

The group currently has 26 members. If you are interested in joining, please connect through the LinkedIn group or email me at mvickers@ombudsman-services.org

Matt Vickers (1990)

Departments





The Chapel

Early in the New Year, I received an email from the Chaplain, the Revd Canon Dr Simon Jones, asking if I might be interested in being Acting Chaplain at Merton while he was on secondment to Lincoln Cathedral as Interim Dean. The decision required little thought. Arriving in time for the Passiontide Festival, it was immediately clear that the life of the Chapel was thriving, vibrant and full of energy. From our very first contact with the College, my wife, Sue, and I have been met with nothing but kindness, welcome and care. I have come to see that this is characteristic of the whole College, and although its ethos is nurtured and sustained by a large number of people, I have not the slightest doubt that, with the Chapel at the heart of its life, Simon has played a huge part in shaping the culture of the College in recent years. Without in any way apologising for its Christian tradition – or perhaps because of it – Merton embraces all people, regardless of their background or religious perspective. Long may it continue!

In his report last year, Simon looked forward particularly to two things happening this year. The first was the confirmation of 11 people in Michaelmas term, which took place with the Bishop of Reading on 16 October 2022. The large number of confirmands was of such interest that the *Church Times* featured a news story about it on 3 November 2022.

The second was the arrival of the Revd Lyndon Webb as Associate Chaplain, licensed in the Chapel by the Bishop of Oxford on 28 September 2022. Lyndon has made an astonishing contribution this year to the life of the Chapel and College. He is an extremely gifted priest, who brings creativity, flair, intelligence, enthusiasm, care and fun to everything. He has enhanced the liturgical life of the Chapel in various ways, is deeply pastoral, has encouraged theological exploration and has raised our collective ecological awareness, as well as pursued his doctoral research. He has been a joy to work with.

The contribution of music to the life of the Chapel cannot be overestimated. Ben Nicholas is a musician of outstanding quality, whose vision, energy, expertise and dedication are quite extraordinary. The standard and sheer quality of the Choir surely rank it among the best in the country. At the end of a brief concert of pieces from the Merton Choirbook given in Chapel to members of the Cathedral Organists Association in the Trinity term, the president of the association spoke of the 'emotional, spiritual and musical journey' they had been taken on by the College Choir and commented that the Choir had given a performance 'of the very highest level of excellence'. This was high praise indeed and thoroughly well deserved.

something supported by the rave reviews given to the recording of *Orchestral Anthems*, released at the end of June this year. We have been extremely fortunate, too, in our two organ scholars this year, Owen Chan and François Cloete, whose musicianship, expertise and reliability have been so important, as have those of the saxophonist, Leo Yablans (2022), on those occasions when he and Owen have performed together.

Behind and underneath all this lies the indispensable work of Lizzie Casey, the Chapel Office and Choir Manager, and Jen Crompton, the Verger, covering the role for Leah Collins on maternity leave. Both bring utter competence, efficiency and reliability to their work. So much of what we all take for granted is down to them: the nitty-gritty preparation of everything that goes on behind the scenes, whether that be producing orders of service or setting up the Chapel for a service. Both play a vital role in the care of the girl choristers and in assisting with Lyndon's catechesis sessions. In all this and much more they are both treasures!

In their role as Chapel Officers, students have played a hugely significant role as readers, welcomers, servers – superbly trained by Dr Tristan Franklins – and as livestream technicians. We are especially grateful to those who left us at the end of the year: Ebube Akojie, Hollie Goodwin, Jared Martin, Michael Zajac, Rachel Jung, Susie Barrows, Roheena Buckland, Elisabeth Ilgner and Francesca Lovell-Read (leaving in Michaelmas 2023) and we wish them well.

As far as highlights in the liturgical calendar are concerned, it feels as if there is a highlight every week. In Michaelmas term, Mozart's *Requiem* performed as part of the All Souls' Service attracted record numbers, as did the Advent and Christmas Carol Services. The Epiphany Carol Service at the beginning of Hilary term was extremely well attended and a large number of people crammed into the Chapel to hear Lord Williams, the former Archbishop of Canterbury, preach. The Passiontide Festival at the end of Hilary term was uplifting musically, liturgically and spiritually, and climaxed in a wonderful performance of Bach's *St John Passion*.

Trinity term began with a live broadcast of Choral Evensong on BBC Radio 3, quickly followed by celebrations surrounding the Coronation, including a marvellous service at the

University Church, at which the College Choir sang, and which was also memorable for a superb sermon given by Lord Patten, the Chancellor of the University. The Choral Eucharist in Chapel on the day after the Coronation was exhilarating, not least because of a superb rendition of Parry's *I Was Glad*, with the *vivats* for the new King and Queen. A celebration of a different kind took place on Ascension Day, when the choir and clergy ascended the Chapel Tower for a service at midday.

In addition to sermons given by the home team – Simon, Lyndon and me – preachers during the year have included the Rt Revd Olivia Graham (Bishop of Reading), Professor Irene Tracey CBE (Warden), the Revd Canon Matthew Vernon (Canon Pastor at St Edmundsbury Cathedral), the Revd Canon Dr Rachel Mann (Area Dean of Bury and Rossendale), the Revd Dr Thomas Sharp (Succentor, Southwark Cathedral and Minister-in-Charge, St Hugh's, Bermondsey), the Revd Canon Dr Victoria Johnson (Canon Precentor, York Minster), the Rt Hon Ben Bradshaw MP (Member of Parliament for Exeter), the Rt Revd and Rt Hon the Lord Williams of Oystermouth (Honorary Fellow, formerly Archbishop of Canterbury and Visitor of the College), the Revd Jarel Robinson-Brown (Assistant Curate, St Botolph without Aldgate, London), Rebecca Abrams (author, teacher and journalist), the Most Revd John McDowell (Archbishop of Armagh), the Very Revd Dr Jonathan Draper (Dean Emeritus of Exeter), the Rt Revd Christopher Lowson (formerly Bishop of Lincoln), the Revd Professor Jane Shaw (Principal of Harris Manchester College), the Rt Revd Michael Marshall (formerly Bishop of Woolwich) and the Revd Ruth Wells (Senior Chaplain for Bournemouth Arts University).

It has been a joy and a privilege to be part of the College, coming into contact with so many interesting and stimulating people. I know that the Revd Canon Dr Vicky Johnson, Precentor of York Minster and thus a former colleague of mine there until I retired in August 2020, will enjoy spending the Michaelmas term here as much as Sue and I have. Nor do I doubt that when Simon returns in the Hilary term 2024, he will be welcomed home with open and loving arms.

The Revd Canon Dr Christopher Collingwood
Acting Chaplain



Welfare and Student Support

The Welfare team has had several changes in personnel over the past year. Jasmine Smith joined us for Michaelmas term as our Student Support Administrator. Frances Raimo re-joined us for Hilary term to provide some interim administrative support, and in Trinity term, we were supported by Elizabeth Irving in the Academic Office. I am very grateful to Jasmine, Frances and Elizabeth for their support across this year. We will shortly be welcoming Nichola Griffiths into the team as our new Welfare and Disability Administrator. Nichola is joining us from Oxford City Council.

We have also welcomed two new Junior Deans for Welfare to the team this year: Pippa Warman joined us at the start of Michaelmas Term from Lincoln College, and Olivia Simpson joined us for the start of Trinity Term from Linacre College. I am grateful to them both, along with Alex Brown (our returning Junior Dean for Welfare) and Tess Johnson (the Deputy Principal of Postmasters) for ensuring we're able to respond to urgent welfare concerns at any time of the day or night. I am also very grateful to Sarah Sobó, who has been our College Nurse throughout the academic year.

Our Chaplain and Head of Welfare, Simon Jones, began a nine-month secondment to Lincoln Cathedral at the end of Hilary term. I have taken on the role of Acting Head of Welfare until Simon's return at the start of the new calendar year.

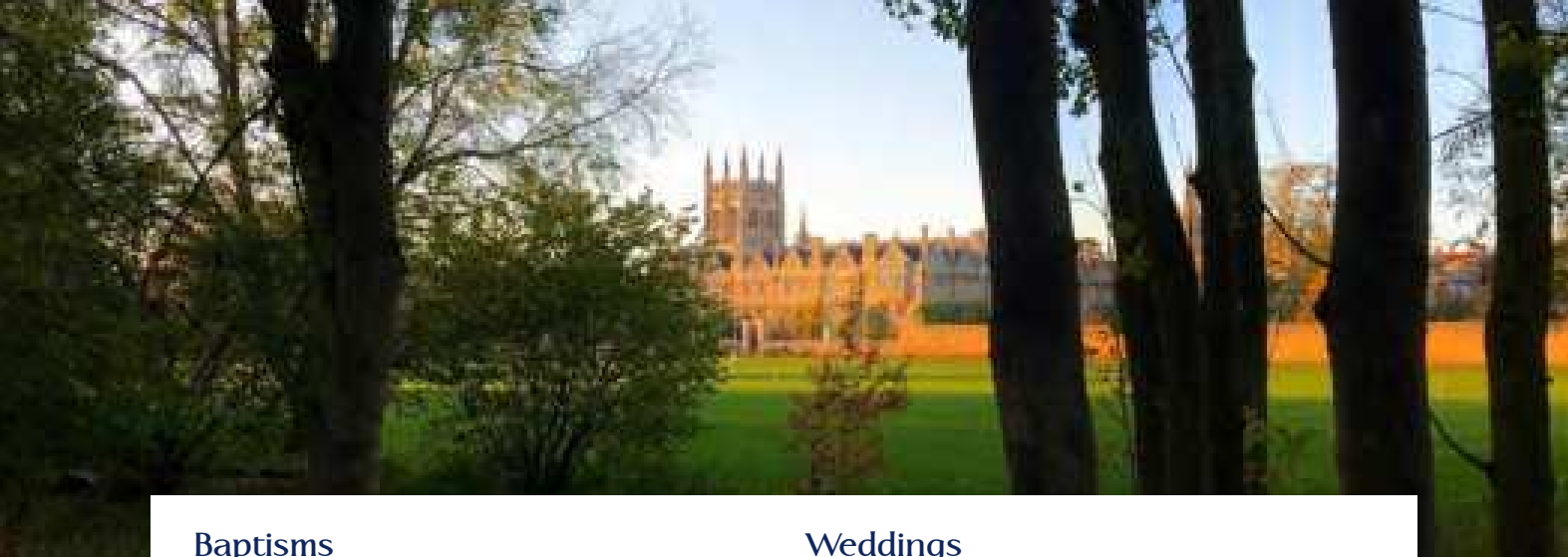
One-to-one student support is at the core of welfare provision at Merton, and this has continued to form a central part of our work. We are fortunate to have support from our local GP practice (Dr Leaver and Partners), from central University Services (the Counselling Service, the Disability

Advisory Services, and the Sexual Violence and Harassment Support Service), and from a range of private therapists. This enables students at Merton to be supported in a range of different ways.

We have continued to organise a range of welfare activities, many of which are enjoyed by staff and fellows as well as by students. This year, our activities have included dog walks with Geoffrey Biscuit and with Rio, as well as with Ava, our Warden Elect's dog. We have held several weekly activities – including Thursday doughnuts, yoga classes, a book group and a gardening club (both run by Lyndon Webb our Associate Chaplain) and – in Trinity Term – weekly meditation sessions run by our Acting Chaplain, Chris Collingwood. In addition, we've held a range of ad hoc events – including a board games night, a College-wide bake off, stargazing, salsa dancing, a ceilidh, and a storytelling and illustration workshop with our Visiting Research Fellow in the Creative Arts, Ben Haggarty.

Merton continues to fund private ASD and ADHD assessments, as well as CBT and other forms of talking therapy. Each year, we see the significant and transformative impact that this support has in enabling students to flourish in their academic study and in their lives at Merton. Private assessments and treatment continue to be a significant proportion of the College's spend on student support, and it would not be possible without the generosity of our alumni. I am always very happy to speak with alumni about the impact that this money makes to welfare provision and to the student experience at Merton.

Jennifer Barrett
Acting Head of Welfare



Baptisms

Kaisha Smith was baptised on 3 September 2022
Roheena Buckland was baptised on 16 October 2022
Hollie Goodwin was baptised on 16 October 2022
Camilo Mosquera was baptised on 16 October 2022
Lucienne Pullen was baptised on 16 October 2022
Thomas Allen was baptised on 16 October 2022
Iona Thomas-Wright was baptised on 16 October 2022
William, son of Jack Collins and Leah Collins, was baptised on 14 January 2023
Arabella, daughter of Edward Waddingham and Vanessa Chow, was baptised on 6 May 2023
Poppy, daughter of William Vaneveld and Katherine Hewitt, was baptised on 28 May 2023
Madeline, daughter of Poppy Clark and Christopher Clark, was baptised on 9 July 2023
Theodora, daughter of Daniel Starza Smith and Emily Guerry, was baptised on 12 July 2023

Ordinations

Sarah Cotterill was ordained deacon by the Bishop of Oxford on 1 July 2023 in Christ Church Cathedral. Sarah is serving her title at St Mary's in Banbury.

Naomi Gardom was ordained deacon by the Bishop of Oxford on 1 July 2023 in Christ Church Cathedral. Naomi is serving her title at St Mary the Virgin with St Cross with St Peter-in-the-East, the University Church, in Oxford.

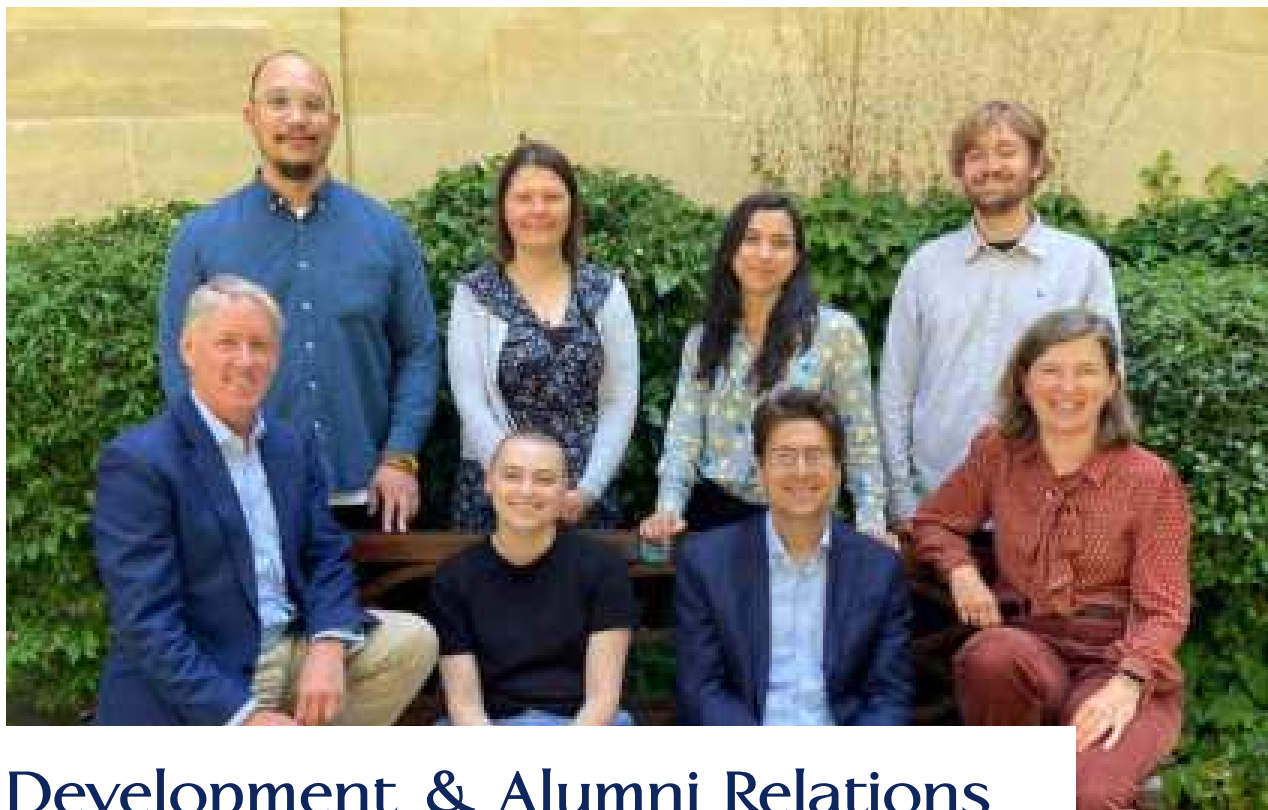
Weddings

Edward Waddingham to Vanessa Chow on 6 May 2023
Stephen Thatcher to Amanda Thomas on 3 June 2023
Tristan Cummings to Michelle Sokol on 17 June 2023
Krishnan Ram-Prasad to Imogen Russell on 1 July 2023
Jan Rejeski and Lena Song on 8 July 2023 (Blessing)
Jack Searle to Katie Hopgoode on 29 July 2023
Edmund Wrigley to Rebecca Wilkin on 12 August 2023
James Bowling and Rani Noakes on 19 August 2023 (Blessing)

Confirmations

The following were confirmed by the Bishop of Reading on 16 October 2022:

Roheena Buckland
Hollie Goodwin
Camilo Mosquera
Lucienne Pullen
Thomas Allen
Iona Thomas-Wright
Olivia Jenkins
Henry Grub
Phoebe Hutt
Hannah Rowe
Kaisha Smith



Development & Alumni Relations

The past year has been both energetic and inspiring. We met with Mertonians on three continents, the College received a record-breaking level of philanthropic support, and we engaged with alumni in new ways through a number of Merton Society initiatives.

In September 2022, Warden Irene Tracey accompanied Development colleagues to the United States, in support of a College Choir tour. Alumni events and concerts were held in several locations on the East Coast, and the visit culminated with a reception in Washington, DC, warmly hosted by MC3 President Nick Allard (1974, Bodley Fellow) and his wife Marla. All the other events were enabled by MC3 and several volunteer hosts, to whom we offer considerable thanks: former Fellow Suzannah Clark in Boston, Charles Scudder

(1971) in New Haven, Charles Tolkien-Gillett (2019) in New York, and Nick and Marla Allard in Princeton.

Michaelmas began with a Gaudy for alumni who matriculated up to and including 1968. This was followed by a 1972 Golden Jubilee reunion, and alumni gatherings in Manchester and in Zurich, where we were kindly hosted by Guy Spier (1984, Brasenose) and his family, Howard Rosen (1974, Exeter), and the Swiss Friends of Oxford University. Alongside the annual Michaelmas Drinks and Merton Society Carol Service in London, we were delighted that the Merton Lawyers' Association held its first in-person meeting since 2019 at the offices of Slaughter & May in London. Thanks to Dan Schaffer (1986) and Matthew Tobin (1991) for hosting so well. A full report is available elsewhere in *Postmaster*.



Merton in Leeds, May 2023

January 2023 saw Irene Tracey admitted as Oxford's 273rd Vice-Chancellor with Professor Jennifer Payne taking the helm as Acting Warden. In early March, a Merton Society 'Meet the Acting Warden' drinks reception was held at Westminster School. Jenny has since travelled with the Development team to attend events in Cambridge, Lincoln and Leeds. Grateful thanks go to Emma Cayley (1993) for hosting the latter gathering at the University of Leeds. The Development Office also held an alumni event in Hong Kong — our first in Asia since the pandemic — and represented the College at an MC3 Dinner in New York, generously arranged by MC3 Trustees Marina McCloskey (2003) and Charles Scudder (1971).

Closer to home, a Gaudy was held at the end of Hilary for 1969-1972 matriculates, followed by a series of spring and early summer events. The annual Merton Society Lecture, featuring Junior Research Fellow Dr. Chloé Deambroglio, was again generously hosted by Patrick Long (1995) at Lazard in Mayfair. 2022 leavers came back for a Returners' Dinner, members of the Founder's Society met for a convivial lunch, and Trinity was rounded off with three events in College: a 1963 Diamond Jubilee Lunch, a Merton Society Garden Party (with more than 300 attendees of all ages), and a Rhodes reunion, celebrating 120 years of the Rhodes Scholarships.

It really has been an active and fulfilling year, enabled by the support of so many volunteers and hosts within our global community. At the time of writing, we are in Paris holding an alumni event and supporting concerts by the Merton Girl Choristers. More on this, and our September visit to Copenhagen, in the next edition of *Postmaster*.

This flurry of events activity was matched on the fundraising front. We are delighted to report that more than £8 million in new gifts and pledges was raised for Merton between 1st August 2022 and 31st July 2023 — the highest annual result ever recorded. This is testament to the belief our alumni and friends have in the College. The amount raised includes principal donations for the new library and graduate scholarships, for which we would like to warmly thank Andrew Robertson (1988) and an anonymous donor. We are particularly grateful to Avirup Chakraverty (1986) for a generous donation in honour of his parents, which will establish a new College bursary programme for undergraduates from lower-income backgrounds.

We are also pleased to report the completion of graduate scholarships in Chemistry, Archaeology and History during the year, alongside good progress on a DPhil scholarship in Law and an Academic Futures scholarship, addressing

underrepresentation of Black British graduates at Oxford. The College remains committed to supporting Ukrainian students and scholars: we concluded a campaign to fund a Master's scholarship for a refugee student and support an at-risk academic from the country. Fundraising is ongoing towards a full scholarship for a Ukrainian doctoral student.

The collective generosity of Mertonians has been key to the success of these campaigns. Other highlights include the Upper Library medieval stained-glass window appeal (almost complete), the funding of a new women's eight boat (named the *Irene Tracey* by students and launched by the Vice-Chancellor herself), the Girl Choristers' Instrumental Bursaries (first two years funded), and a successful campaign to help graduate James Kempton (2011) undertake a scientific and conservation-themed 'Centenary Expedition' to the Cyclops Mountains in Indonesia (see page 102).

We have held two Telethons this year, ably curated by an excellent team of student callers. These resulted in a combined total of over £200,000 raised, matching the consistent results of recent years. And the annual fundraising 'menu', launched with MC3 in November 2022 and continued elsewhere in the summer of 2023, has attracted considerable support. We owe particular gratitude to Nick Allard (1974), Bob McKelvey (1959), Amna Naseer (1997) and MC3 Administrator Thom Yu for their leadership of the Mertonian community in the Americas.

95% of our 2023 undergraduate leavers opted to support the third leavers' gift with a donation of £12.64 each towards student welfare, and once again the total sum has been kindly match-funded by Mustafa Abbas (1990). A similar initiative called the posterity gift was successfully piloted among graduate students, and we would like to thank Sven Kirkerup (2014) for matching the support of 100% of the MCR freshers.

We look forward to recognising all the donors who made this such a fantastic year in the next edition of the Development Office Annual Report, which will be published in early 2024. We will keep everyone updated regarding the progress of the ongoing appeals mentioned above, and on the nascent campaign to build a new library on the College site – our first in 650 years – under the leadership of our new Warden.

The past year has also seen a considerable expansion of alumni engagement activities, curated in close collaboration with the Merton Society. We are grateful to Philippa Whipple (1984, Honorary Fellow), Mark Davison (1978), Greg Lim (2006), and all other members of the Merton Society Council, for their consistent support and creativity. Mertonians now have more ways than ever before of connecting with the College and each other.

Led by Philippa and her husband Sam Whipple (1984), we have piloted a first-class mentoring programme. The pilot involved 43 mentees, all recent undergraduate leavers, who were matched to alumni mentors. Following positive feedback from mentors and mentees alike, the plan is to roll out an expanded version of the programme later this year. Details on how to participate will be shared with all alumni in due course – watch this space!

We have also assisted the Merton Society with an expansion of the subject-based discussion groups, bringing together students, alumni, Fellows and staff to network and exchange ideas. Using LinkedIn as a base, these now include a Mathematics Network and a Net Zero Discussion Group. The Net Zero Group held its inaugural event online in February 2023, featuring Juliet Davenport (1986) as the speaker. We are grateful to Matt Vickers (1990), Ria Miller (2008) and Nagardasan Suresh (2021) for founding the group, and we look forward to its next event in the coming academic year. For more on alumni groups and networks, see: www.merton.ox.ac.uk/alumni-and-friends/societies.

May we finish by expressing gratitude to all colleagues in the Development Office – Chelsea, Gaby, Inigo, Julia, Krista and Mark – who have maintained such energy, positivity and commitment through what has been a busy and rewarding year.

Thank you again to everyone for supporting Merton and helping secure the future of this precious academic community. It is remarkable what can be achieved when Mertonians come together.

Mark Coote, Director of Development & Fellow
Milos Martinov, Deputy Director of Development



The Choirs

Merton College Choir and the Merton College Girl Choristers at the Vice-Chancellor's admission ceremony

Our Choristers began their year early, enjoying a three day 'residential' at the end of August. Based at Dean Close School, Cheltenham, they sang services at Gloucester Cathedral and Tewkesbury Abbey, and gave a concert at one of the College livings: St Matthew's Church, Rushall. This time together provided a wonderful impetus for the new academic year, which started with a concert in the Oxford International Song Festival (the new name for Oxford Lieder). The Choristers, with lower voices and orchestra, gave a performance of Fauré's *Requiem* and *Cantique de Jean Racine* to a capacity audience.

The news that the Choristers' recording of Christmas music was selected as 'Disc of the Week' by both Classic FM and Scala Radio was a boost before the run of Christmas services and concerts. In March and May, the Choristers enjoyed combining with Frideswide Voices for joint services at Christ Church Cathedral, and the Choristers now look forward to their first overseas visit – two concerts in Paris in August. I am enormously grateful to David Harvey for his generous financial support of the Choristers.

The Choristers and the College Choir rarely sing together, but the admission ceremony for Professor Irene Tracey as Vice-Chancellor of the University provided a wonderful opportunity for both choirs to sing to the University and the wider community in a splendid ceremony in the Sheldonian Theatre.

Professor Tracey was able to join the College Choir in September for a week-long tour of the east coast of the USA.

Professor Suzie Clarke was our host at Harvard, where the choir started the tour with a joint service with the Harvard University Choir and a concert the following day at Memorial Church. Performances followed at Trinity on the Green, New Haven and St Ignatius, Park Avenue, New York, with a memorable final concert at Princeton University chapel. It was good to meet many alumni at these concerts, and my thanks to all those who supported the tour financially, not least Reed Rubin and the Reed Foundation.

The day before leaving for the USA, the choir sang a service in Chapel on the day following the death of Her Majesty The Queen. On landing in Boston, I learnt that the Choir would be singing for Oxford University's Service of Thanksgiving and Remembrance for Her Majesty The Queen on 18 September at the University Church, the day that we were due to land at Heathrow. The choirmaster at Harvard very kindly prepared copies of the music for this important event, and we rehearsed for the service throughout the tour.

During 2022 we celebrated the 150th anniversary of the birth of Ralph Vaughan Williams and in November the College hosted a short festival: 'Vaughan Williams in Oxford'. Many of the University choirs participated, with Merton College Choir giving a performance of the *Oxford Elegy*, narrated by Petroc Trelawny. The Choristers joined the Philharmonia Orchestra and the Oxford Bach Choir for a performance of *Sancta Civitas* in the Sheldonian Theatre, the very building in which the work was premiered in 1926.



Merton College Choir with the Britten Sinfonia performing at the Barbican Centre © David Till

The College Choir was invited to give a performance of Bach's *St John Passion* with the Britten Sinfonia at London's Barbican Centre on Good Friday. The reviews of this concert testify to the energy of the performance which was enjoyed by an audience of 2,000. *St John Passion* featured in the Passiontide Festival, which also brought the King's Singers, Bojan Cicic and Matthew Owens to the College. The *Church Times* review stated: 'The Passiontide Festival... remains one of the treasures among musical events heralding Easter. Its choir is now rightly famed as one of the best in Oxford and Cambridge.'

Trinity term began with a broadcast of Choral Evensong on BBC Radio 3, one of the first services for which we were joined by the Revd Canon Christopher Collingwood, Acting Chaplain during Simon Jones's secondment to Lincoln Cathedral as Interim Dean. On 29 April, the College Choir joined the Oxford Philharmonic Orchestra for Haydn's *Creation*, again at the Sheldonian Theatre, and on 5 May sang at the Service of Thanksgiving for the Coronation of His Majesty King Charles III at the University Church.

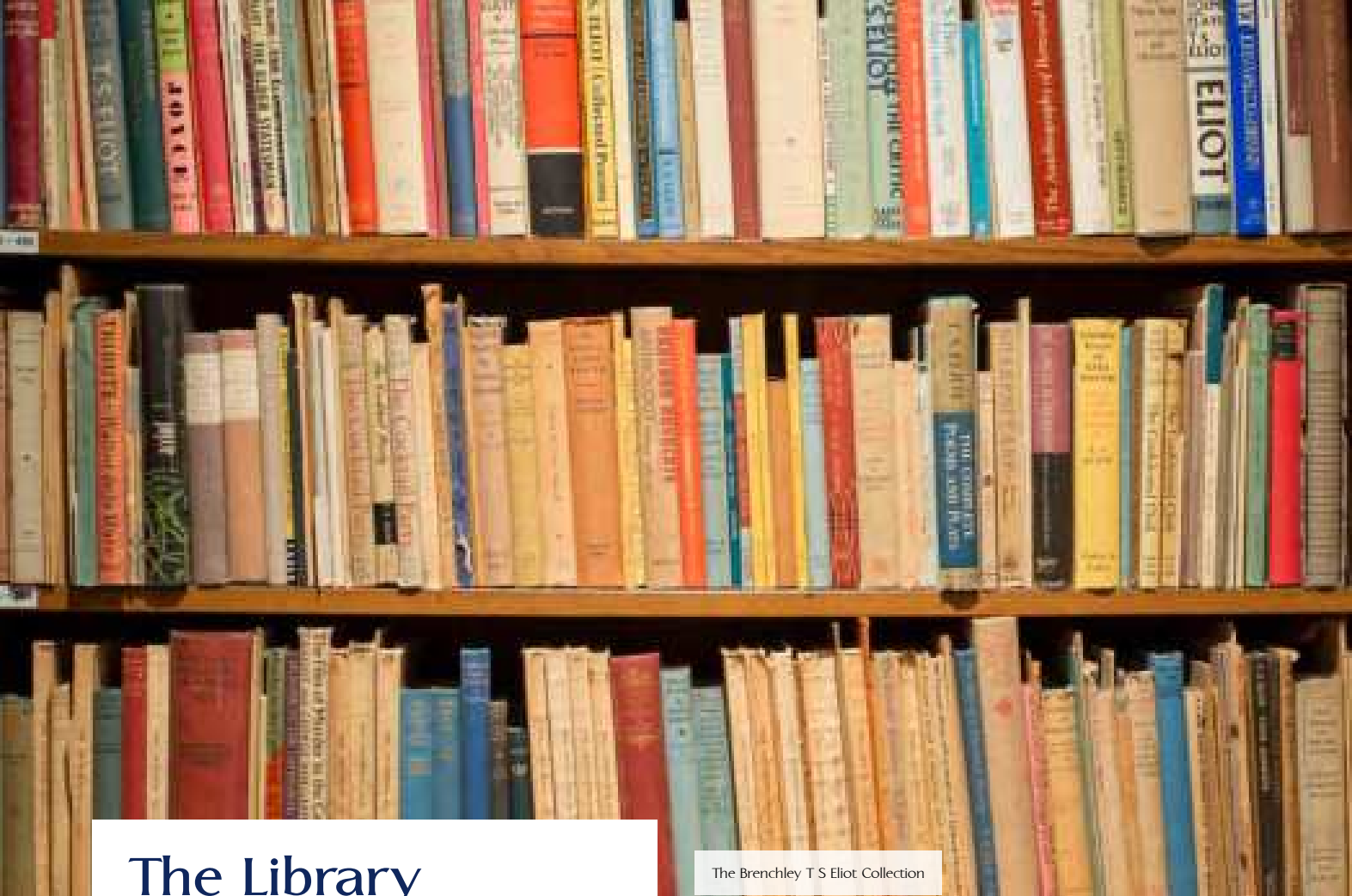
After the end of term, the choir went into the usual recording sessions, in which we recorded music by Roxanna Panufnik, Dobrinka Tabakova and Cheryl Frances-Hoad. Dame Sarah Connolly, Neal Davies and Nick Pritchard joined the choir to record Bob Chilcott's *Christmas Oratorio*, to be released by Delphian Records this autumn. In June, *Orchestral Anthems* was released to great acclaim in all the nationals, with *The Times* ending its review: 'For as long as the recording lasted, all was right with the world.'

The last week of the choir's year was as busy as the first, with the choir singing the opening item in a concert in the Waterloo Chamber, Windsor Castle before the next night singing at the Animal Ball at Lancaster House, in the presence of Their Majesties, The King and The Queen. Having given a concert to mark the anniversary of the Rhodes Trust, we headed to Salle Church in the beautiful Norfolk countryside where we gave a concert to a large audience before enjoying a trip to the beach at Holkham. The final days of the year were spent at Lincoln Cathedral, where we were able to join our Chaplain, to mark the 400th anniversary of the death of one of England's greatest composers, William Byrd.

Our organ scholars, Owen Chan and François Cloete, have performed outstandingly in both services and concerts, and the singing teachers – Giles Underwood, Carys Lane and William Purefoy – have been a great support. Elizabeth Casey, the Chapel Office & Choir Manager, has masterminded the logistics of these tours, concerts and special events brilliantly and, along with Jennifer Crompton, has provided pastoral oversight and care of our Choristers. In Simon Jones's absence, Lyndon Webb and Christopher Collingwood have enabled Chapel life to continue to thrive, and I am very grateful to them both for their support of the Chapel music.

Benjamin Nicholas

Reed Rubin Organist and Director of Music



The Library

The Brenchley T S Eliot Collection

Anniversaries relating to two literary Mertonians inspired exhibitions and displays in the library this year, tying in with events in College.

T S Eliot's poem *The Waste Land* was first published in October 1922. Merton marked the centenary year with an Upper Library exhibition entitled 'The Waste Land: the test of time'. Drawing on the wealth of material in the Frank Brenchley T S Eliot Collection¹, librarians Cathy Lewis and Verity Parkinson created a display that included scarce copies of the poem as it first appeared in the pages of the literary journal *The*

Criterion and in its first separate edition, published the same year in New York. Other items represented the reception of the poem in subsequent decades, ranging from the facsimile of the original manuscript edited by Valerie Eliot in 1971 to essays analysing the poem from the perspective of 50 years following its publication. A splash of colour was added by three hand-illustrated booklets containing excerpts from *The Waste Land* privately produced by the enigmatic American writer Frederic Prokosch (1908–89). The exhibition coincided with the public lecture at Merton on 'T S Eliot and biography' by Professor Robert Crawford.

¹Frank Brenchley (1918–2011; Merton 1936) donated his collection of first editions, periodicals and ephemera by or about T S Eliot to the College in 1986.



Illustration from *The Orange Fairy Book* by Andrew Lang

The other anniversary marked shortly before the beginning of Michaelmas term 2023 was the 50th anniversary of the death of J R R Tolkien (on 2 September 1973). Tolkien is probably the best known of the Merton writers of the 20th century, but he was not the only Mertonian whose literary career involved the telling or re-telling of tales. Andrew Lang (1844–1912; Fellow, 1868–76) and

Roger Lancelyn Green (1918–87; Merton, 1937) were chosen as subjects for a collaborative event organised by performance storyteller Ben Haggarty, the Visiting Research Fellow in the Creative Arts, with the combined skills and imaginations of the Library and Archives team. 'Fairytale Tellers of Merton' on 27 May 2023 began with two talks: Professor Andrew Teverson exploring the role of Lang's wife Nora in collecting the many folktales and fairytales in his 'colour' fairy books (so called because each had a different colour binding); and Professor Diane Purkiss (1984) on interactions between Lancelyn Green and C S Lewis.

An extensive display of books from the College's Lancelyn Green collection (donated by Scirard Lancelyn Green (1968), works by Lang, and books from Ben Haggarty's personal collection as well as artwork by Merton students provided plenty to look at during the break. Rarely does a library exhibition encourage viewers to handle the items, but an exception was called for on this occasion so that attendees could enjoy the variety of illustrations. On top of all this food for thought (and real cakes), a Russian fairytale performed by Ben kept the audience of all ages enthralled. The success of the day was due to the energy and creativity of the team (including student helpers) led by Ben.

Tolkien himself was not forgotten, and visits to a special library exhibition were part of an Oxford symposium on 2–3 September 2023.

Between these two special events, other library activities continued to make progress. Many meetings were devoted to the new library project. The conservation work on the Upper Library stained glass, featured in *Postmaster* last year, carried on as planned, thanks to generous support from Mertonians. An investigation of the wooden wall panelling adjacent to several of the library windows led to the suggestion that a project to date some of the structural beams in the roof and the floor of the Upper Library might be a suitable exercise for some of the MSc students in Archaeology. An account of this study is overleaf.

Special groups visiting the Upper Library this year included over 100 members of the International League of Antiquarian Booksellers, who were meeting in Oxford, and attendees from the Christ Church conference on '500 Years of Hebrew Teaching, Hebrew Studies and Hebrew Collecting in Oxford', as well as Merton students and their tutors.

The success of these events is due to the hard work of a skilled team. The library staff continue to serve the College community, making print and electronic resources available for those writing essays and dissertations and preparing for tutorials; and answering questions and calming exam nerves. Deputy Librarian Harriet Campbell Longley spent much of the year preparing Merton's Library for the Oxford-wide shift to the new library management system this summer. Jen Crompton continues to look after the collection care aspects of the Upper Library. At the start of the academic year, Rosslyn Johnston moved to a position in the library at St John's College, and we were soon joined by Anastasia Yapp as Library Assistant.

Many of the Library activities and projects would not be possible without the work of the Oxford Conservation Consortium, and it is a pleasure to pay tribute to Jane Eagan, Head Conservator, who is retiring at the end of July. Jane has provided expertise and advice to me (and to my predecessor Dr Sarah Bendall); she has also built the Consortium into a unique service for libraries and archives in Oxford and helped train many of today's conservators. It has been a privilege to work with and learn from her over the years.

Dr Julia Walworth
Fellow Librarian



Drilling to extract timber core samples



Timber cores from library beams, showing the patterns of tree-rings

The tree-ring dating of the Upper Library

In February of this year, my Archaeological Science classmates and I had the pleasure of conducting a practical in the context of our dendrochronology class in the Merton Library. Dendrochronology is the science of dating historical sites, artefacts, and buildings using the natural annual resolution of tree rings. While somewhat specific in application, this was the perfect technique to achieve precise dating for the construction of the Merton Upper Library, the frame of which is mainly composed of large, mostly unprocessed, timbers. Using coring drills, we were able to take thin cores from exposed rafters, beams, and posts throughout the building, and compose a timeline for the felling of the trees. The data

shows most of the timbers were cut down in the winter of 1376, which agrees with the recorded completion of structural construction of the library in 1379. It is not surprising to see stockpiling of resources prior to large construction projects. The wood was sourced from woodland near Oxford, and most of the trees used for the construction predate the founding of the College, one of the oldest samples displaying rings going back as far as 1214. It was incredibly rewarding to elucidate yet more of the history of this remarkable building.

Sabine Plummer (2022)

MSc student in Archaeological Science

Donations to the Library and Archives 2022-23

It is a pleasure to record the following particularly noteworthy donations to library and archive collections:

Cheryl Frances-Hoad—manuscripts and printed editions of recent compositions (during her tenure as Visiting Research Fellow in the Creative Arts 2021-2022).

Isabel Raphael, daughter of F H Lawson (1897-1983, JRF 1925; Tutor in Law, 1930-1948)—a silver teapot inscribed by the College to her father on the occasion of his wedding in 1933; with several photographs and prints.

George Ratcliffe (1971; JRF 1978-1981)—a copy of *Gas Chromatography* (London: Butterworths, 1956) by Courtenay Phillips (1924-2022; Merton 1942) inscribed by the author to his former Merton tutor, Bertram Lambert (1900).

A copy of *Le Livre D'Or de J.-F. Millet* [1891] with a unique fine binding, specially bound by Rosamund Philpott in 1924. The notes and design for this binding are held in one of Philpott's albums, now in the Merton Library. This purchase was supported by Dr **Paul Saenger** and the Dyson Fund.

Wilfred Webber (1953)—a collection of the verse and prose publications by Mertonian John Adlard (1929-1993, Merton 1949).

Alan Bott (1953)—a copy of *A Hand-book for Visitors to Oxford* (Oxford: Parkers, 1858); a copy of *An Attempt to Discriminate the Styles of Architecture in England*, Thomas Rickman (London: Parkers, 1848); *The Life of Anthony Wood in His Own Words*, edited by N K Kiessling (Oxford: Bodleian Library, 2009); and files of notes, drafts, offprints and correspondence on aspects of College history.

Michael Garton-Sprenger (1969)—a letter from Bertram Lambert to Dudley Garton-Sprenger (1940) regarding his *viva*.

Martin Fletcher and **Anthony Fletcher** (1959)—a copy of the 1907 Torpid photograph, and another of the Myrmidons, c.1907, formerly the property of their grandfather Reginald Chenevix Trench (1906).

Estate of **Zbigniew Pelczyński**—minutes of the Brodrick Club, Nov. 1957-Apr. 1960. Received via Antonia Pelczynski.

Richard England (1961)—student and alumnus ephemera, including Church Society and chapel term cards, orders of service, and menus.

Peter Hay (1963)—memorabilia of student life, including an annotated album of letters, photographs, term card, programmes, etc.; editions of *Isis* magazine 1965; programmes of professional and amateur dramatic productions attended; University pocket diary 1963/4; and the Violet Morgan Prize Medal 1965.

Dr **Michael Taylor** (1976)—programmes of Merton Floats productions of *Phaedra* and *The Winter's Tale*, 1977, and copies of *Postmaster*, 1952-66.

Liz Cairncross—papers regarding the first Merton smoking concert, 1895, and autograph musical scores: personal papers of Edward Francis Glynn (1892), received from his granddaughter.

Jeremy Hawthorn—framed copy of matriculation photograph 1964.

Timothy Baker—copy of *Evelyn Waugh Studies*, Vol. 53, No. 3, Winter 2022, containing note 'Brideshead Revisited: Evelyn Waugh's Merton Street House Identified', T M M Baker.



Le Livre d'Or, bound by Rosamund Philpott in 1924

Grateful thanks for gifts and support are extended to:

Rhiannon Ash (Fellow), Pieter Beullens, Bodleian Library Publishing, Nick Caiati, Shane Carmody, Joshua Carn (2022), Amal Clooney, Corpus Christi College Library, Daniel Crouch, Sebastian Dows-Miller (2016), the Faculty of Law (University of Oxford), the Foundation for Law, Justice and Society, John Hennessy, the Historic Towns Trust, Jesus College Library, the Music Faculty Library (University of Oxford), The Revd Canon Paul Noble, the Oxford University Archives, Adrian Papahagi, Jennifer Payne (Fellow and Acting Warden), Robert Peberdy (1975), the family of the late C.S.G. Phillips (1924-2022; Merton 1942; Fellow), Jessica Rawson (Warden 1994-2010), Rita Ricketts, Cressida Ryan (former Schools Liaison Officer), Dr Paul Saenger, Benjamin Schneider (2014), Philip Stewart, the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Ralph C.S. Walker (JRF 1968-71), Julia Walworth (Fellow Librarian), Philippa Webb, Wilfred Webber (1953).

We also thank Mertonians who have given the college copies of their publications:

Allen, RH (1967). *Barton Stacey/Stacey Barton: Missing* (independently published, 2022)

_____. *Murder at Barebone's Parliament* (independently published, 2022)

_____. *Murder at the Battle of Worcester* (independently published, 2023)

_____. *For All We Know* (independently published, 2023)

_____. *The Magic of Heka* (independently published, 2023)

Altehenger, J (Fellow). *Legal Lessons: Popularizing Laws in the People's Republic of China, 1949-1989* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Asia Center, 2018)

____ and DY Ho (eds). *Material Contradictions in Mao's China* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2022)

Andrew, R (1949). *A Civil Servant Remembers* (London: LifeBook, 2019)

Barr, A (Fellow) (contributor), In B Rattigan, D Noble and A Hatta (eds) *The Language of Symmetry* (Boca Raton: CRC Press, 2023).

Boyle, M (2011) (ed.). *Violent Victorian Medievalism* (Oxford: Taylor Institution Library, 2022)

Burnyeat, G (JRF 2020-2024). *The Face of Peace: Government Pedagogy amid Disinformation in Colombia* (University of Chicago Press, 2022)

Crago, H (1969). *All We Need to Know: A Family in Time* (Port Adelaide: Ginninderra Press, 2019)

_____. *Self and Story in Early Childhood: Children's Developing Minds Revealed by Parent-led Research* (London: Routledge, 2023)

De Wolfe Pettit, ES (2004) (ed.). *Charlie*

Sheard: The Music of Pure Abstraction (Peking Art Associates, 2022)

Dickey, E (JRF 1992, VRF 2006). *Latin Loanwords in Ancient Greek: A Lexicon and Analysis* (Cambridge University Press, 2023)

Fine, G (Emeritus Fellow) (ed.). *The Oxford Handbook of Plato*, 2nd edn (New York: Oxford University Press, 2023)

Frances-Hoad, C (VRF in the Creative Arts 2021-2022). A group of 23 scores (London: Chester Music, various dates)

Howes, D (1979). *The Sensory Studies Manifesto: Tracking the Sensorial Revolution in the Arts and Human Sciences* (University of Toronto Press, 2022)

Kadish, A (VRF 2000). *The British Army in Palestine and the 1948 War: Containment, Withdrawal and Evacuation* (London: Routledge, 2021)

Kelsall, F (1961) and T Walker. *Nicholas Barbon: Developing London, 1667-1698* (London: Topographical Society, 2022)

Kershaw, I (1966; Honorary Fellow). *Personality and Power: Builders and Destroyers of Modern Europe* (New York: Penguin Press, 2022)

Keyser, SJ (1956). *I Married a Travel Junkie* (Boston: GemmaMedia, 2012)

_____. *Turning Turtle: A Memoir of a Man Who Would "Never Walk Again"* (independently published, 2020)

Lemos, IS (Fellow) (contributor). In S von Reden (ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to the Ancient Greek Economy* (Cambridge University Press, 2022)

Mutambara, AGO (1991). *In Search of the*

Elusive Zimbabwean Dream: An Autobiography of Thought Leadership, Vol. 3, *Ideas & Solutions. Deputy Prime Minister and Beyond*, 2009-2023 (Harare: SAPES Books, 2023)

Needham, T (1976). *Visual Complex Analysis*, 25th anniversary edn (Oxford University Press, 2023)

Rastall, P (1970). *Synthetic Syntax, Meaning, and Philosophical Questions* (Brno: Masaryk University Press, 2022)

Atkins, P, G Ratcliffe (1971; JRF 1978-1981), M Wormald and J de Paula. *Physical Chemistry for the Life Sciences*, 3rd edn (Oxford University Press, 2023)

Scattergood, J (VRF 2008). *Time's Subjects: Horology and Literature in the Later Middle Ages and Renaissance* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2022)

Tobin, R (1999). *Privilege and Prophecy: Social Activism in the Post-War Episcopal Church* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2022)

Walker, RCS (JRF 1968-71). *Objective Imperatives: An Exploration of Kant's Moral Philosophy* (Oxford University Press, 2022)

Cooper, D and B Williamson (1988) (eds). *Late Medieval Italian Art and its Contexts: Essays in Honour of Professor Joanna Cannon* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2022)

Zamet, J (1965). *Other Plans: A Personal Memoir* (independently published, 2022)

We would also like to thank those who anonymously returned missing books to the library—we always welcome such returns!



Speakers at the Fairytale Tellers of Merton event

The Archives

The year started by welcoming various generations of Mertonians to a variety of events: Diamond and Golden Anniversary lunches for the matriculation years 1962 and 1972, and a Gaudy for those who matriculated before or in 1968. It is always a pleasure to meet Mertonians of earlier generations as they re-encounter early sporting triumphs, concerts and plays performed, or verbal parries in the suggestion books and JCR minutes, preserved in the archives. Such encounters with the past sometimes result in recollection of student memorabilia carefully put away in a cupboard or drawer, and we are most grateful to Mertonians who either bring such items with them to College events or subsequently forward them, as they enrich our record of student life and activity beyond the official record. Gifts received this year are recorded in the Donations to the Library and Archives that follow the Fellow Librarian's Report.

Sometimes gifts relating to old members are not prompted by a reunion or direct renewal of contact. Some appear almost 'out of the blue', from a descendant or other family member who is looking for a permanent home for papers that turn up during a domestic sort-out. Such are the papers of Edward Francis Glyn (1892) given to the College last autumn by his granddaughter. Glyn was a keen amateur musician and, disappointed to find that, unlike some other colleges, Merton did not have a thriving musical life, approached the College

authorities for permission to organise a Smoking Concert. The papers give an idea of what was involved, from the hiring of musicians to securing performance rights. Glyn's ambitions may have been a little on the grand side as, in his reply of January 1895, Warden Brodrick commented dryly: 'I hardly expect that a stage will be thought necessary or desirable for the purposes of a smoking concert.' The papers also include several manuscripts of Glyn's own compositions, including a duet of the Jacobean lyric 'Why so pale and wan?', and a four-part setting of William Watson's (1858–1935) 'Well he slumbers, greatly slain'. Providing a flavour of some of the content of a college 'smoker' of the 1890s.

The stand-out event of Trinity term was the 'Fairytale Tellers of Merton' event at the end of May organised by Visiting Research Fellow in the Creative Arts Ben Haggarty, reported in more detail by the Fellow Librarian. In addition to preparing the advertising and programmes, and meeting and greeting on the day, Library and Archive staff prepared a display of fairytale books (widely interpreted) for the break, drawn from the library's collections; in particular the Lancelyn Green Collection. Not only does the collection include editions of familiar stories as told by the brothers Grimm and Hans Andersen, but also 'modern' tales by such late 19th and early 20th century writers as Lewis Carroll, Oscar Wilde, Kenneth Grahame and E Nesbitt. Green himself



was responsible for the retelling of myths and legends from ancient Egypt, Greece and Troy, legends of King Arthur and the knights of the round table, Robin Hood, and myths of the Norsemen. No self-respecting display of Merton fairytale tellers would be complete without J R R Tolkien, who was represented by his lecture 'On Fairy-stories', originally given as one of the Andrew Lang Lectures, and an edition of *Pictures by J R R Tolkien*, open at Bilbo's interview with Smaug, with the latter gloating over his hoard, every bit the dragon of folk tradition.

Complementing the theme of the event, there is in preparation a new exhibition in the Beerbohm Room on the 'Story Tellers of Merton', in which examples of the work of Andrew Lang and Lancelyn Green are joined by those of Tolkien and Nevill Coghill. Tolkien's earliest published work was the poem 'Goblin Feet', which appeared in *Oxford Poetry*, published by another Mertonian, Basil Blackwell, in 1915. This will be accompanied by a copy of *The Road Goes Ever On*: a selection of Tolkien's verses set as a song cycle by Donald Swann. The book is characterised by Tolkien's distinctive calligraphy. The song cycle has a personal association with Merton

since, although Tolkien had retired from his professorship by 1966, it was here that he chose to celebrate his golden wedding anniversary in March that year. After lunch, guests were entertained to a performance of the cycle, two months before it received its public premiere. Nevill Coghill was Merton Professor of English Literature from 1957, having previously been a Fellow of Exeter. His wider reputation was based on his productions of Shakespeare with the Oxford University Dramatic Society (OUDS) and his translations of Chaucer and Langland. Coghill is to be represented by an illustrated edition of his translation of the *Canterbury Tales*, and *The Masque of Hope*: a dramatic masque written for the visit of the then Princess Elizabeth to Oxford in 1948 and performed by OUDS in the Radcliffe Quad of University College.

Although archives are popularly perceived as simply having 'heritage' value, recording and celebrating the past, they still play a vital role in legal and institutional memory. This has been demonstrated this year by two enquiries, one internal and the other external. The College has been registering some of its property with the Land Registry and the solicitors wanted proof of how and when the College acquired the property. The evidence turned out to be a deed dating from October 1270, whereby Walter de Merton granted the manors of Cheddington and Ibstone 'to the House of Scholars of Merton ... lately founded at Malden in the county of Surrey'; so, even before the College migrated to its later home in Oxford. The external enquiry came from the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB) which this year has finished an extensive project to restore the windmill at Kibworth Harcourt in Leicestershire. Merton had given the mill to the SPAB in 1934 after it had ceased to be functional and was in danger of falling into terminal decay, at the same time contributing half the cost of putting the mill into a state of repair. Questions had arisen as to the quantity of land transferred with the gift of the building, which the wording of the original deed was unable to clarify. The location of two contemporary files among the records of the Estates Bursary, one of correspondence with SPAB, and the other with the then solicitors, resolved the question in time for the official re-opening of the mill on 14 May.

Julian Reid
Archivist



Schools Liaison and Outreach

Merton's programme of access and outreach work with schools and colleges continues to evolve, and aims to inspire young people to consider higher education as an achievable and exciting option for their futures. Through a mix of online and in-person events, this academic year we have engaged with thousands of students from across the UK, with a particular focus on our link regions of the London Borough of Merton and the South West.

We work closely in partnership with Exeter College and Lady Margaret Hall in a South-West Consortium, that aims to create and sustain collaborative access and outreach projects in the region, which includes Cornwall, Dorset, Devon, Gloucestershire, Somerset and Wiltshire. In Hilary term we planned and delivered a mix of inbound, outbound, and online events, and in April we jointly undertook a week-long tour of schools in Bristol. We worked with students aged 11-18 and visited eleven schools across the city. We successfully forged connections with schools who had not previously collaborated with the University of Oxford and look forward to continuing to work with them during the upcoming academic year.

We have continued to work closely with our colleagues at Robinson, Trinity Hall, and Downing Colleges in Cambridge this year to provide a range of virtual and in-person outreach Oxbridge events. We collaborated to deliver our

annual online Oxford and Cambridge Information Days, with sessions tailored to potential applicants, their teachers, and supporters. This series is now established as a key part of our outreach offering, allowing us to engage virtually with hundreds of students, parents, and teachers at a crucial point in the annual application cycle.

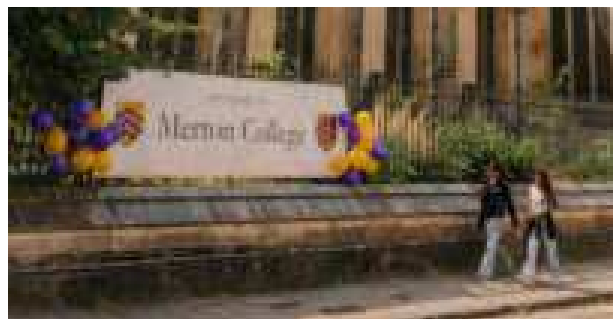
During the spring months our outbound visits continued. We participated in a conference for schools in Bath and represented the University at the UCAS Exhibition in Bournemouth. We enjoyed speaking to hundreds of potential applicants from across the South West at both events and provided information about the University and advice about the Oxford application process.

School visits to Merton resumed at the beginning of the calendar year and we were pleased to host groups weekly during full term in Hilary and Trinity. We welcomed hundreds of students in Years 8-12 from schools across our link counties, and beyond. A student from the London Borough of Merton said that it had been an 'amazing trip. I enjoyed exploring and learning about Oxford University for my future'. We are grateful to our team of fantastic Student Ambassadors for giving up their time to offer insights into their experiences of applying to and attending Oxford, and sharing advice about the transition to university.



Our partnership with The Social Mobility Foundation (SMF) continued to develop this year and we ran a mix of online and in-person events. The SMF is a UK-wide charity that aims to make practical improvements to the social mobility of young people by providing opportunities and networks to Sixth Form students who aren't able to access these elsewhere. In Autumn 2022 we delivered Humanities and STEM interview workshops, which aimed to equip participants with the skills needed to succeed at interview. One participant said that the session had helped them to develop self-confidence when talking about their subject area, and they appreciated the personalised support and guidance provided by tutors and Student Ambassadors during the session.

In June we ran our second Social Mobility Foundation residential, kindly supported by Merton alumnus Dan Seymour. This year we were pleased to welcome 36 students and four staff members from cities across the UK, our largest SMF residential cohort to date. In addition to enjoying an insight into College life, the students received support in developing



a competitive university application through sessions on personal statements, interviews, and writing skills. They took part in a confidence-building workshop with Visiting Research Fellow in the Creative Arts, Ben Haggarty, and discovered more about career options following a degree with talks from the Careers Service. Mini lectures about research currently being undertaken were kindly provided by members of Merton's MCR.

We are proud to share Merton's friendly and inclusive College community with prospective applicants, and we are very grateful to our team of Student Ambassadors, academic staff, and teams across the College, including the Events and the Catering teams, without whom our varied programme of access and outreach work would not be possible. We are looking forward to engaging with many more students both in College and at outbound and virtual events during the forthcoming academic year.

Laura Cox
Schools Liaison and Outreach Officer

Domestic Bursary

Avid readers of *Postmaster* will recall mention in the last edition that the Head Chef was due to retire after 23 years with the College. As Mertonians well know, food is an important and much enjoyed part of College life, therefore the recruitment process associated with finding a new Head Chef attracted great interest from the Fellowship and resembled something from an episode of *Masterchef*.

It was pleasing to learn that leading the kitchen at Merton remains a highly coveted job, with more than 100 applications received from an industry-wide recruitment campaign. Shortlisted candidates were set the task of preparing and presenting a signature three-course menu for a College dinner, including vegetarian options. Additionally, each candidate was asked to list their ingredients and the associated cost per course.

At the completion of the interview round, two candidates remained and were invited back to cook their menu for a select panel of College members consisting of Fellows, staff, student presidents, an Emeritus Fellow and an external advisor. Assisted by Sous Chef Pete Macallister, the two finalists were allocated three hours to produce their menu, for which they were each asked to select accompanying wines.

After two very challenging nights in the SCR, the panel were unanimous in their appointment of Simon Crawshaw to the position of Head Chef. Simon was formerly Executive Head Chef at St Mary's School in Ascot and previously enjoyed a distinguished career working in London for establishments such as the Sloane Club in Chelsea, the Connaught Hotel in Mayfair, J. Sheekey in Covent Garden, Chez Nico in Park Lane, and Le Gavroche (2 Star Michelin). He has also owned and run his own Michelin-rated restaurant and worked as Head Chef for the Caterham Formula 1 Team.

Simon started at Merton in January and two weeks later had a baptism of fire in producing a lunch to celebrate the admission of the Vice-Chancellor. Since joining, Simon has restructured the kitchen team, maintained the College's 5* food hygiene and led a project to renew a 25-year-old

servery counter in Hall and other ageing catering facilities in the SCR. He has been a great addition to the staff team.

In other departments, changes have taken place in the Events and Conference Office, with the recruitment of Rebecca Stewart as our new Head of Events and Conferencing. The team play a central role in organising over 2,000 bookings from College members and external guests per year. Rebecca joined us from Worcester College where she was managing its Conference and Events team; her experience of successfully organising and delivering high-quality conferences, dinners and events in both collegiate and commercial settings will be invaluable to the College. As part of the reorganisation, Kelly Calvert has been promoted to the role of Deputy Events and Conference Manager. This move further strengthens the team and is in recognition of the personal development and contribution Kelly has made since joining the College.

The changes in the Events Team have enabled Sally Hague to return to the role of Head of Accommodation, where she is working on the accommodation aspects of a major refurbishment of College buildings, for which her knowledge and expertise will be essential.

I would like to take this opportunity to express our thanks and appreciation to Sally for her work in leading the Conference Team over the past five years, including through the challenges of a global pandemic.

The major refurbishment of College buildings and accommodation is now being planned in the expectation that works will probably commence in the autumn of 2025 and are likely to continue over the next 15 years or more.

Readers of *Postmaster* will also recall that a College-wide condition survey of buildings on the main precinct, Holywell Street, Manor Road and Manor Place, was taking place last summer involving a team of specialist building surveyors. Over a period of four months the team have inspected and catalogued the condition of each building. While we continue planning, Clerk of Works Jane Reid and the maintenance

team are busy carrying out various repairs around College and to Fellows' houses.

Feeding into the building condition survey will be the findings of a sustainability audit that is being carried out across the College's Oxford estate. A team from building services engineers Max Fordham are reviewing the energy use in each building before making recommendations to help reduce consumption and support the aim for Merton to be aligned with the University's sustainability goals. Sustainability is something we consider daily within the various support teams and over the summer has resulted in replacement double glazing being fitted to graduate accommodation in Manor Place and showers being added to baths in the Holywell blocks.

While the condition and maintenance of College buildings is highly visible, the business activity of the College has become highly dependent on a complex network of fibre cables, server units and switches upon which digital systems operate.

In recent years, Merton has invested significantly in developing and deploying its IT resources and equipment. Much of the work carried out by the team is unseen, but is no less essential in ensuring that critical online systems and services remain available, especially with the increased threat of cyber-attack. I would like to close by acknowledging the work of Head of IT Steve Bowdery and our brilliant IT team, consisting of Ahrum Pilendiram, Prince Bashir and Laszlo Fekete.

Tim Lightfoot
Domestic Bursar



Senior Common Room Dinner

Seared Scallops with Crispy Serrano Ham

Pea Veloute

Or

Gruyere Fritters with Black Garlic Mayonnaise (V)

X-X-X

Roasted Rump of Lamb with Truffle and Parmesan Risotto

Sautéed Woodland Mushrooms.

Or

Roasted Spiced Cauliflower with Dal Makhani (V)

X-X-X

Baked Apple Sponge with Toffee Sauce

Homemade Cinnamon Ice Cream

The menu produced by Simon Crawshaw for his interview



The three most recent Senior Tutors, Jane Gover, Fra' John Eidinow and Dr Rachel Buxton, taken August 2023

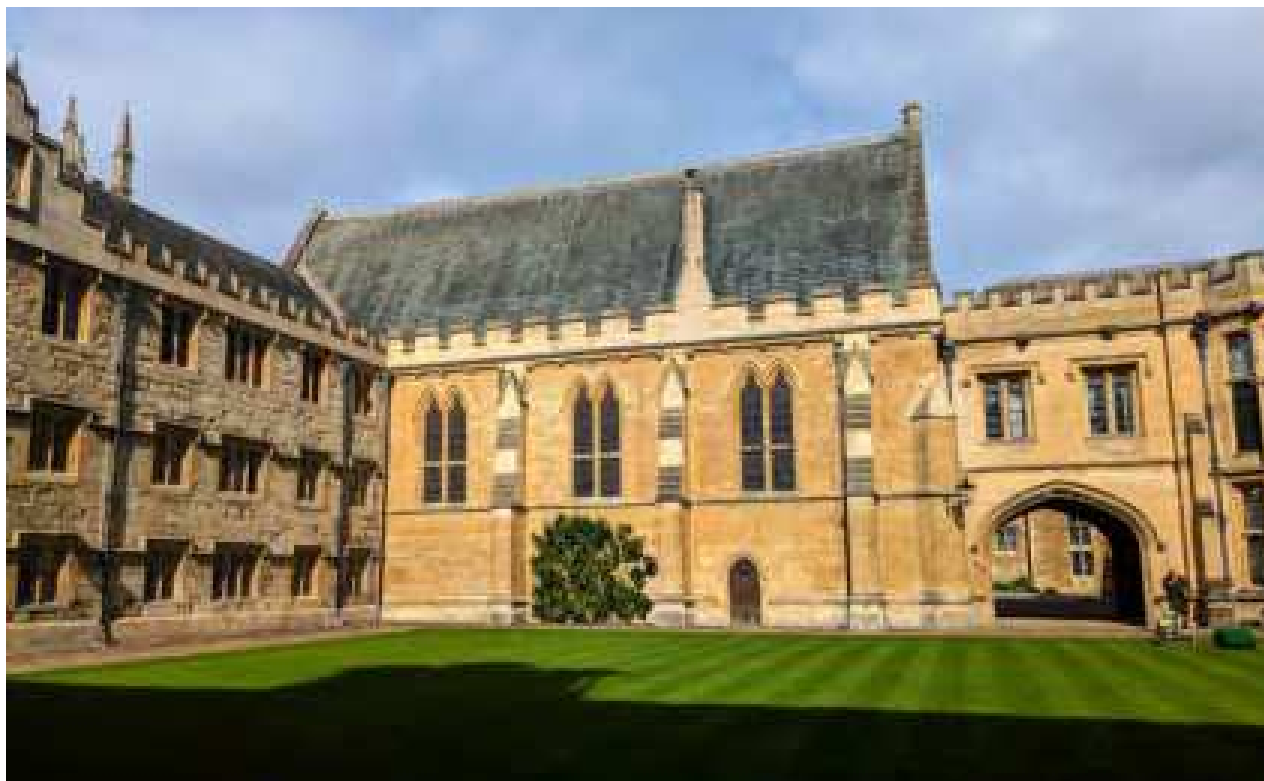
Academic Office

The news in Michaelmas term that Professor Irene Tracey had accepted the role of Vice-Chancellor of the University, was met with both huge pride and sadness for Merton in equal measure. The students wondered who would replace her and, of course, whether it would be possible to fill the shoes (paws?) left by the departure of her dog Geoffrey Biscuit. Professor Jennifer Payne stepped seamlessly into the role of Acting Warden and the announcement of her subsequent appointment as Warden (and her dog Ava's availability for welfare walks) was met with great enthusiasm. Professor Payne's experiences as a Tutor in Law and her knowledge of the collegiate University will undoubtedly be hugely beneficial to Merton's place within the institution and beyond.

The year was a period of change in other ways too. Professor Mindy Chen-Wishart, who had been a Tutor in Law since 1994 and Dean of the Faculty of Law since Michaelmas term 2020, retired in the summer. The College will therefore be seeking to replace both of its Law tutors over the course of the coming year. Between them, Professor Chen-Wishart and Professor Payne have contributed over 50 years of service as Fellows and Tutors and I know that those who they taught will remember warmly the role they played in developing their academic and wider interests.

Over the course of the academic year, we appointed a new Tutor in the Philosophy of Physics, who will join the College in October 2024, in addition to two new tutors who we will welcome this Autumn. Professor Naomi Waltham-Smith (Music), whose research interests cover music theory and analysis, sound studies, continental philosophy and digital and environmental humanities, will be joining us from the University of Warwick. She will be replacing Professor Daniel Grimley, following his appointment as Head of the Humanities Division. Dr Lindsay Baker, whose Oxford laboratory is exploring biomolecular function in the context of cellular communities, will become the new Tutor in Biochemistry, replacing Professor Matthew Higgins. We look forward to welcoming these new academic colleagues into the College community. Other recruitment exercises are already in hand for the 2023–24 academic year. Throughout the changes arising from departures and periods of Fellows' sabbatical leave, we have continued to be extremely fortunate in having an amazing group of committed, enthusiastic and conscientious lecturers and Fitzjames Research Fellows to very ably support our undergraduates. We are grateful to them all for their role in contributing to our students' educational journey as part of the College's teaching teams.

Not only have we seen changes in academic staff, but also in the Academic Office team, which has continued its work to support the full range of academic-related activities. These range from outreach and admissions, through on-course support, to degree days marking the culmination of students' hard work. Not all of what the team does, or how collaboratively it works together through periods of pressure, will be evident. However, behind individual stories are a dedicated team working to support and enhance the



College's strong academic traditions. It is always a delight to see our students' hard work, combined with the guidance and dedication of our academics, translate into strong performance in public examinations. However, success can be measured in many different ways and for Merton students who find themselves in challenging circumstances (whether financial, personal or disability or health related), the work of the Academic Office undoubtedly plays a key part in supporting them to reach their potential.

In last year's report, I indicated my intension not to mention the word 'pandemic' in 2023. However, that promise will, I'm afraid, need to be delayed for one further year. In August, as we stood at the intersection of the 2022-23 academic year and the year ahead, we were delighted to welcome the former Senior Tutor, Dr Rachel Buxton, back for a brief visit

to the College from Australia. It was a wonderful opportunity to hear her news about the move and to reflect on her experiences in the role at Merton. The three individuals who had successively held the post of Senior Tutor immediately before, during and after Covid, reflected on the challenges it had presented and on the marvels of how the community had adapted and taken steps to resume normality. We are aware that the impact of the pandemic on the education of our undergraduates and postgraduates may be evident for some time yet. However, I am confident that the College is well placed, as it has been historically, to adapt and to look to the future with optimism.

Jane Gover
Senior Tutor



The Gardens

The summer display of succulent plants

It is always nice to spend time with like-minded folk talking plants and a recent visit to Wisley RHS garden provided just that opportunity. Every corner you turned the planting had been so well thought out, and nothing was repeated – something we also do our best to do at Merton.

We had private tours with three of the heads of department and learnt about compost mixes, irrigation systems and organic slow-release fertilisers for potted plants. They even offered Merton a new plant — *Staphylea colchica* 'Grandiflora', a criminally undergrown and unavailable plant in my opinion!

In November Oxford got its first frost, telling species that winter was on its way, and to reduce the water content in their leaves. Still, -8°C is extreme for us and Australasian species such as *Callistemon* got cut to the ground.

Mexican barrel cacti, protected from winter wet with mini cloches, luckily came through unscathed and we did a

summer display of succulent plants, including deer skulls for effect. The whistles of 'The Good, the Bad and the Ugly' theme tune kept me amused for days.

Biodiversity at the meadows continues to enthrall the students and we gave them a tour in 8th Week. They loved learning that bees get a warm fuzzy feeling when visiting buttercups, the flowers' reflective surface magnifying the sun's rays; think shining them under your chin to show that you like butter! A small footbridge now makes a circular path along the River Cherwell possible, coming back along the edge of the sports ground and meadow to where you started.

Engaging with students in Freshers' Week will begin with a garden tour of '80 Plants from around the World'. A chart of continents is on the wall, which we are filling in as we think of species' origins and interesting facts to pass on. *Pseudopanax crassifolius*, an example of a New Zealand species commonly called Lancewood, has two stages to its



foliage. Beginning with jagged-edged, downward-pointing leaves, the leaves in the mature plant change to be short, broad and perpendicular to the sun at a height thought to be consistent with the grazing height of the now-extinct moa bird.

Winter bedding this year will have a Japanese theme after a conversation I had when I bumped into Masa Kotasaka, whom I used to sail with in the University Sailing Club. So, channelling my inner Zen, bamboo, raked gravel and slanting trees will feature prominently.

Plant identification apps open people's imagination to the world of plants and horticulture continues to be popular.

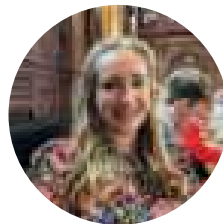
A new word for us is marcescence, used to describe plant foliage that persists instead of being shed. It often refers to the way young beech and oak trees retain leaves on their twigs over winter.

Ciaran O'Connell and Imran Khan joined us in spring as Gardeners, and it is wonderful to see the garden through a fresh set of eyes. We are looking forward to new glasshouse facilities down the pipeline to bring us up to date. Knowing that plants are safely over 5°C will give me peace of mind in winter but also allow us to be public-facing rather than tucked away.

Sunshine and showers make for happy plants. This is my kind of summer!

Lucille Savin
Head Gardener

Hail to New Fellows



Dr Lucy Brookes
Early Career Researcher in Medieval English
Language and Literature

I joined Merton in October 2022 after a year working as a stipendiary lecturer for various Oxford colleges. Before this, I was at Worcester College for my BA and DPhil in English.

I am a literary scholar, specialising in the secular literature produced in England during the high to late Middle Ages. I work primarily on medieval romance, but other interests include Arthurian literature, medieval drama, medievalism, and TV soap operas and westerns. This year I have mainly been working on the preparation of my monograph: a study of character and individuality in the medieval English romances. There I argue that romance deserves a more central position in the history of literary subjectivity, and demonstrate the artistic merit and utility of various poetic and generic conventions. My next project over the course of the fellowship will be a new book (tentatively titled 'The truthiness of Middle English literature'). I think that there are compelling parallels to be drawn between the semantic slipperiness of 'trouthe' in the later Middle Ages, and our own 'post-truth' moment.

At Merton I am responsible for teaching the medieval papers, the English Language paper, and I serve as Director of Studies for students taking Course II English. This means I work with undergraduates in every year of their degree. They are remarkable: it is such a pleasure to play a part in their experience of this supportive and energetic community. Merton is a beautiful place to teach and write, and I am grateful for this opportunity in my early career.



Dr Alexander Lipp

Early Career Researcher in Geochemistry

I joined Merton College as a Junior Research Fellow in Geology in October 2022. Before this I had completed an undergraduate degree in Natural Sciences at Cambridge and a PhD at Imperial College London.

My research focuses on the evolution of the Earth's surface over billions of years, as well as the ongoing processes shaping it today. I study various aspects of the Earth's surface dynamics, investigating the formation and erosion of mountains, the influence of rock weathering on climate, and the movement of pollutants through river systems. To get new insights into these processes, I employ and develop novel numerical techniques and models. For instance, I have developed statistical methods that allow me to recover the composition of Earth's ancient continents using sedimentary rocks, shedding light on the early stages of plate tectonics. Additionally, I have worked on techniques to analyse the chemical composition of river sands, aiding in the identification of pollution sources such as heavy metals, and even contributing to the mapping of mineral deposits in Australia. Lately, I have become interested in developing methods to track sewage pollution in UK rivers, a pressing environmental issue that has garnered significant attention recently.

The warm and inclusive community at Merton has made my transition to Oxford incredibly enjoyable. As the only geologist here, it's nice that everyone is genuinely interested in learning about my research (or they're just very polite). Interacting with brilliant individuals from diverse disciplines is a unique and fantastic aspect of being at Merton. As a nature enthusiast, I have also relished the opportunity to explore the beautiful gardens at Merton.



Dr Krishnan Ram-Prasad

Early Career Researcher in Classics and Linguistics

I first came to Merton in October 2022, as a Junior Research Fellow in Classics and Linguistics. Before that I worked as a Postdoctoral Research Associate in Linguistics at the University of Cambridge, where I had studied for a BA in Linguistics and an MPhil and PhD in Classics.

My research sits at the intersection of Classics and linguistics, in the interdisciplinary field of comparative philology. One of the primary goals of comparative philology, and the one that I am pursuing in my research, is to reconstruct a language called Proto-Indo-European. Proto-Indo-European is unattested – it was never written down – and was likely to have been spoken somewhere between 4000 and 2500 BCE. It is the ancestor of more than 500 Indo-European languages, of which English happens to be one. By studying the most ancient Indo-European languages, such as Latin, Ancient Greek and Sanskrit, we are able to reconstruct what Proto-Indo-European would have looked like. That's where the connection to Classics comes in; an intense focus on the language of Classical texts.

Within the broad field of comparative philology, I work specifically on reconstructing the syntax of Proto-Indo-European. The syntax of a language can be conceptualised as the set of structure-building processes present in speakers' minds; syntactic reconstruction is thus a form of psychological archaeology. In understanding how sentences were built in Proto-Indo-European, we gain an insight into the minds of people whose material remnants are all but non-existent.

It is a privilege to work at Merton, and I have been made to feel most welcome during my first year here. I am very grateful to be part of such a vibrant community of researchers.



Dr David Nadlinger

Early Career Researcher in Physics

I joined Merton in October 2022 as a Julia de Lacy Mann Fellow in Physics, having moved across the High Street from Balliol College where I completed a DPhil degree.

My research interests are in the area of quantum physics. Quantum mechanics describes the laws of Nature on the microscopic scale, and is replete with effects foreign to our macroscopic conception of reality, such as entanglement and superposition. Exploiting these effects for information processing, one can access computational capabilities that can be exponentially more powerful than that of conventional computers. Similarly, a network of multiple quantum devices enables conventionally-impossible communication protocols e.g. for provably secure encryption. However, these quantum effects are exquisitely fragile; manipulating a piece of quantum information without disturbing its quantum nature is a formidable challenge – in fact, merely holding on to it already is. Hybrid approaches combining the advantages of different physical carriers of quantum information – some well-suited for storage and logic operations, others for long-distance communication – offer a potential solution.

During my doctorate, I demonstrated such a hybrid platform consisting of single atomic ions entangled using an optical fibre link. My current aims are to achieve a further leap in link quality, which is necessary for large, fault-tolerant computations, and to investigate novel distributed computation modalities that are unique to the quantum setting.

Merton has been a wonderful home. I really appreciate the academic freedom that JRFs afford, and the vibrant and congenial intellectual community of the Merton Fellows.



Dr Martina Astrid Rodda

Julia de Lacy Mann Fellow and Leventis Early Career Researcher in Ancient Greek

I joined Merton in October 2022 as an Early Career Researcher, after one year as a Departmental Lecturer in Classics affiliated to University College, just across the road. My DPhil is also from Oxford Classics; I have taught at Jesus, Corpus Christi, and most importantly Regent's Park, where I was Lecturer in Classical Languages between 2020 and 2022. My BA and MA are from the University of Pisa/Scuola Normale Superiore.

My main area of research is disability and gender in Greek literature. My postdoctoral project focuses on the representation of disabled mythical characters in the works of Lucian of Samosata, an author from the second century CE: how these depictions reflect changes in the ancient world's view of disabled people, and how disability intersects with gender, class and ethnic identity. I am currently thinking a lot about queer masculinity and how disability can be used to open up spaces to reflect on non-normative gender, a topic that is highly relevant to my own identity as a disabled non-binary/trans-masculine researcher.

My doctoral thesis (which I'm currently revising for publication) was a study of formulaic variation in early Greek hexameter poetry, conducted using quantitative methods and drawing on contemporary linguistic approaches such as construction grammar and distributional semantics. I used these approaches to identify patterns of variation that are unique to early Greek epic formulae and do not occur in later hexameter poetry. Beyond the book preparation process, I still have an active interest in the dialogue between current linguistics approaches (especially discourse/conversation analysis and construction grammar) and traditional philology.

This year at Merton has been intense and productive, with contact with my students providing the most enriching experiences. I get to keep up some of my side interests (Hellenistic poetry, early Greek epic, Greek tragedy) through teaching, and not one week has gone by without a tutorial or informal conversation bringing new ideas. My plan is to start writing my second book here at Merton, and my brain is positively fizzing with excitement and thoughts. Now on to a summer of writing, ideally under some nice shade in the Fellows' Garden.

The College was also pleased to welcome Dr Caspar Jacobs, Early Career Researcher in Philosophy, this academic year.

Features





A view from here: my first 100 days as Vice-Chancellor

The Vice-Chancellor in regalia © Cyrus Mower

A conversation with Professor Irene Tracey

Merton's former Warden and now Vice-Chancellor of the University of Oxford, Professor Irene Tracey CBE, FRS, FMedSci (1985) talked with Postmaster about her first 100 days in the role of Vice-Chancellor. Rather than meeting at her regular office in Wellington Square, we met at her offices in the Clarendon Building, where the spacious, airy office was filled with lighting rigs in preparation for a TV interview later in the day, a visual indication of the busy and public working life of this high-profile role. Irene was smiling, energetic, and keen to make time for this conversation.

Throughout your career, you've made phenomenal achievements, leading a very busy life, and you seem to have vast amounts of energy and good cheer. What's your secret?

I've just been very lucky that I've always had masses of energy and a positive attitude to life. My parents were the same. Maybe it's connected to being the youngest of six children: you have to be 'on it' to be heard. I also find meeting lots of people and being with people energising, which helps

in this kind of role. I'm fortunate that I've had roles and jobs that I love and that I think of as incredible privileges, and so that keeps me motivated and life interesting. And I probably drink too much coffee...

It's also about setting boundaries. In these jobs as an academic, you never get to the end of your 'to do' list, so you have to work out where you draw that line each day. For me, it was having kids that first helped me learn the importance of demarcating work from home, because with young children, the moment you open the front door, that's it: you switch modes. As my scientific career took off I was just starting a family, and my husband Myles and I built our careers around the fact that we had other responsibilities — for my children and for elderly parents before they passed away — so we became expert at setting boundaries. Also, as academics, we have always been able to work from home, which was not possible in all jobs prior to the pandemic, so you can use that flexibility to catch up at odd hours. I have also had incredible support over the years from Myles and family members with childcare, and without that help I could not have taken on the various leadership roles.



Entering Merton for the lunch following the admission ceremony

The difference that I have been observing with the role of Vice-Chancellor is that there is less headspace to think about things outside work: there is always something to do with this job that I'm mulling over. I love it though, and I was aware that the role of Vice-Chancellor would be like this, as other Vice-Chancellors had forewarned. There's a lot you're juggling – but it's so varied and so interesting that I have no complaints!

Until the end of December, you were Warden at Merton. What have you taken from your role as Warden to the role of Vice-Chancellor?

Running a college gives you exposure to experiences that you don't get from running a department or a research institute, and that was a noticeable step change from running a department. It was far more challenging, not just because of the pandemic but also because of the breadth of things to deal with. You have the outward-facing part, engaging with all our amazing and varied alumni, the press, regulatory agencies, and then you have the inward-facing part: all the things – good and bad – that can happen with students at this stage of their lives. Though I must say Merton students are exemplary, of course. And you go between these worlds at the flip of a dime. This was really broadening compared with running a department.

In a college you also deal with academics from the various faculties: there are people from the humanities, social sciences, maths and physical sciences, and the medical sciences. To work with these different people is quite something. These are powerful, amazing intellects and important people running departments and divisions. That's your governing body: it's a fantastic but intellectually robust group. Learning how to make decisions with them, to understand the variance that they bring to solving problems, and how to galvanise that into a consensus was stretching but something I was seeking and very much embraced.

In addition, I hadn't appreciated how much you are under the microscope of the media as head of a college. As scientists, when we encounter the media we're in control of the space, sharing stories about science discoveries. However, as head of a college, the media are constantly watching and, it feels, waiting for a scoop.



The Vice-Chancellor delivering her admission speech

Being a former college Warden has definitely given me an advantage in being able to get on with the role of Vice-Chancellor immediately and not to be mystified by Oxford and its collegiate structure. I love the fact that you have these extraordinary people willing to step up and run a college or run a department, and the fact that they have a lot of autonomy. I think that's a great model for us because then you get really devoted people doing the best they can to look after those parts of the university. How can that be anything other than a fantastic thing?

In your admission speech, you talk about Oxford University's collegiate structure being a strength, as this devolved model enables new ideas and thinking to prosper. Can you expand on this?

The devolved model is what keeps this place fresh, and it retains really good people. As an academic, you are very free to operate at Oxford: you really can take your ideas and ambitions forward without being held back by lots of top-down, heavily centralised rules and regulations. The devolved model is also innovative: no institution stays at the top of its game for this long in the way that Oxford has unless it is able to evolve. When changes are made, they have been carefully thought through and are likely to be successful and lasting.

I think this devolved structure is Oxford's 'secret sauce'. We could probably be a bit more 'out there' with our 'brand', projecting what Oxford stands for. We share core values and we have a shared mission, which is that we want to give the best possible educational experience we can to the brightest students who want to learn – wherever they are from; to attract the brightest students and the best people to teach them; and to do great research that impacts society for the better. That's what we do, and at one level, it's very simple. And that's why people still want to come here: they know that we stand for excellence, that we strive for excellence in what we do, and that we're proud of that fact. Of course, we inculcate these values in the students. I think some students appreciate it when they're here and others take a bit of time to reflect on this – but at some point, all students understand that they've had a very special and privileged experience. They appreciate that they are very lucky to have been here and that Oxford has stretched them, made an indelible mark on them in some way, and has changed them for life in terms of where they go and what they do.

In a world where there's so much short-termism, I think to have a period of life in which there is a completely different value system is important. Students are going to spend all their life being bombarded with disinformation and other types of messages about what is important but at least for a few years we can provide an environment which is focused on academic excellence and finding truth, and our students get the chance to think about what they can do for the world.

Let's focus specifically on your first 100 days of being Vice-Chancellor. Have you settled in well? How is progress on your goals as Vice-Chancellor?

I was lucky that I was already known within the University

and I am familiar with the institution, so I could hit the ground running. I was, however, very mindful in those first few months not to be complacent about what I *think* I know. I'm making sure I meet university members at all levels, for example doing lots of 'meet and greets' beyond the regular meetings with the heads of colleges and the heads of divisions; and doing deep dives into every single department, where I spend an afternoon meeting senior faculty, early-career researchers and students, and hear about what's going on, with the opportunity to ask – and answer – questions. I go to conferences and divisional board meetings and I meet students, often informally: I've been doing dog walks with students who've signed up for them. I've just started some student breakfasts and I'm visiting all the colleges for Evensong and dinner. This way, within the first few years I will have reached every single part of the University, seen it and heard for myself what's going on. I want to really make sure I'm up to speed on some of the departments and divisions that are not familiar to me, and for departments and colleges to develop a sense of who I am – to know that I am an approachable Vice-Chancellor who will listen.

The other part of the picture is the role of Central and what we can deliver as an institution that cannot be done at the departmental level. We are a very high-profile university and we can do things on a large scale to support and serve, such as raising funds or capital for big projects. Working out how that central role works and how it connects with the devolved structure at the divisional, departmental and college levels, is new to me but I'm getting up to speed quickly. I'm also inheriting lots of projects that need to be completed, some of which are large and quite challenging and so my focus is to ensure we deliver these well.

As Vice-Chancellor of Oxford, you have an incredible voice and a platform. You are able to champion the core mission of a university – education and research – at the highest level. This feature of the role was very attractive to me, and was what ultimately persuaded me to make the difficult decision to leave my beloved Merton and to give up running a laboratory. I have learned very quickly that people are definitely expecting me to speak out on issues, and I'm ready for that and I am increasingly confident about using

that voice and that platform. Obviously, I need to be really mindful of the responsibility that comes with the role, and consider carefully what I should be championing for the university sector. I'm pleased that quite quickly I've become involved in some significant projects; for example, I'm co-chairing a report for the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Jeremy Hunt, on the role of universities and spin-outs to drive economic growth in Britain. And, like many academic leaders and scientists, I have been heavily involved in making the case to re-join Horizon Europe – and what great news it was to hear in September that we will re-join as an associated country.

As I said in my inauguration speech, my role is to be a great advocate for the University. But I also want to use this role to support British academia and all our great universities around the country. I'm already doing some things on this outward-facing side which are hopefully making an impact, and I can see that this is something I'll get more involved with.

Oxford also has an important role to play locally. I've now got my Local and Global Engagement Officer in post to enhance and coordinate our local efforts to impact the city of Oxford and the county, as well as make sure we're making the global impact one expects of a world-leading institution. I am taking an active role in working with local partners as I firmly believe we need to be more involved with shaping the Oxfordshire ecosystem so that it delivers for the region and also ensures we're positioned in an ecosystem that keeps us world-leading and attractive.

Since becoming Vice-Chancellor, you've launched a podcast series, *Fire and Wire*. In the first episode you talk with two Oxford academics about Women in STEM, and touch on the importance of mentoring and support networks. What challenges have you overcome as a female leader in STEM and what do you think needs to be in place to support women at Oxford in STEM?

The *Fire and Wire* series (now three episodes – do listen and watch) is an opportunity to showcase some of our amazing staff and the work they do across the collegiate university. In the first episode we flagged the challenges that some women face in STEM subjects. I hope that as a woman with a STEM background and in my now highly visible role, this might be



Geoffrey: 'forever Merton's biscuit'

inspiring to younger girls and women. I have valued over the years at various pinch-points in my career the mentorship and support of other senior women in Oxford. We should not underestimate the positive influence of visible and accessible role models when it comes to helping women navigate some of the challenges still present. I will continue to highlight and talk openly about where we fall short and will do all I can to put measures in place to address the present gaps.

You mentioned in your admission ceremony that as a scientist you value humanities for the depth of human understanding that they bring. Do you have a favourite artist or writer who you find inspiring?

I'm always mindful when asked such questions not to select one single individual. I find it impossible to choose between my favourites within the fields of music, drama, literature and art. With my limited time outside work, it's going to be more difficult to enjoy my passion for concerts, art galleries and going to plays. But I am an avid reader, and on my bedside cabinet there are always at least four books that I'm reading. Depending on how tired I am at night, I'll dip into one or the other. I love a good 'whodunnit', even a totally mindless one. I really enjoy autobiographies too as I find people's lives

often more extraordinary than fiction. I'm reading a science book by Jon Gertner at the moment called *The Idea Factory*, which is about Bell Laboratories, and I've just discovered the marvellous Clare Keegan. She writes stunningly perceptive stories with such beauty of language. I always read before I go to bed, even if it's just a few pages. It helps me to switch off.

And in terms of art, I do like sculptures because of their three dimensionality and the fact one can touch them – the tactile aspect. I appreciate the arts even though, as a scientist, I'm a bit clueless. One day when I'm retired, maybe I'll take a course to learn more.

Last but not least, how is Geoffrey Biscuit? Is he thriving in his new role as Vice-Chancellor's Dog?

He is well and thank you for asking! He's obviously missing everyone at Merton as well as the beautiful walks around Christ Church Meadow down to the river. Having said that, he is making lots of new two- and four-legged friends at the University Parks and he enjoys the student walks we've started. He has a very large garden to enjoy in our new lodgings, but has various garden nemeses in the form of squirrels who he enjoys giving a good chase to but never quite catches!

Many miles from Merton

Postmaster spoke to three different Mertonians who live their lives in places far removed from Merton – in terms of both geography and lifestyle.



Tim in the local landscape

Timothy Saunders (1992)

Tim is an associate professor of English literature and culture at Volda University College in Norway. He has a BA in Literae Humaniores from Merton and an MA and PhD in Classics and Ancient History from the University of Bristol. He has lived and worked in Norway since 2006.

Volda is a small settlement in the western fjords of Norway about halfway between Bergen and Trondheim. The terrain is mountainous, the roads winding, and you often have to cross stretches of water by ferry, so few journeys proceed

as directly or swiftly as the proverbial crow flies. My own route here, both geographically and careerwise, was of this undulating kind too, and this is perhaps one of the reasons it took me little time to adapt to the local lifestyle.

I moved to Volda in 2011, having spent the previous four years working at Norway's Arctic University in Tromsø, the northernmost university in the world. Tromsø is an exceptional place. Its two months of unbroken night in winter are illuminated by spectacular northern-light displays and an array of cultural festivals and they are counterbalanced by two corresponding months of continual day and yet more festivals in the summer. It can, however, be a tough existence if you are not used to it, particularly in those years when summer transitions immediately into winter, snow and ice greet every footfall.

Much as I enjoyed living in Tromsø, I eventually grew weary of viewing the starry sky flat on my back and in a state of mild concussion, so I began to look for jobs in places with a more temperate climate. Even though Volda lies about 400 miles north of Aberdeen, there is still sufficient sunlight even in winter to ensure there is colour in the natural environment the whole year round. The climate is relatively mild, it enjoys a regular and generous application of the meteorological watering can, and its patchwork of fjords and fjells has brought the area increasingly to international attention through its role in the recent *James Bond*, *Mission Impossible* and *Black Widow* movies. (My workplace features at the start of the 2010 comedy *Troll Hunter*, where the main characters are students.)

Along with its climate and topography, there are two features of the local culture I particularly appreciate. The first is its independence of spirit. This too is related in part to its location. At the turn of the 20th century, for instance, Volda was a place where anarchists would hide out when things were becoming a bit too hot for them in Oslo and Bergen. In 1980, its local

Volda from the top of its landmark mountain (Rotsethornet)



cinema is said to have been the only one in the country to defy the ban on *Monty Python's Life of Brian* (a ban imposed, according to the Swedes, on the grounds it was too funny for their Norwegian neighbours). More recently, and despite the presence of some vocal fundamentalist communities, Volda became the first place in Norway outside the cities to introduce an annual and well-supported Pride parade.

This independent spirit has benefited my working life too. University colleges like mine were created when Norway pursued a rigorous policy of decentralisation. This is why Volda, as small and secluded as it is, has traditionally trained many of the country's leading journalists. The previous government wished to row back on this policy and force many of its higher-education institutions to merge, no matter how far apart in geography or character. Volda was one of the few that refused.



Tim at home

The other quality that makes Volda special is the language. Like the rest of Norway, most people are comfortable using English, but the area can also claim to have established an alternative version of the nation's written language. The majority of Norwegians write Bokmål ('book language'), which is an adaptation of Danish, whereas in the 19th century a local man, Ivar Aasen, travelled around the country

learning several of the local dialects and synthesised them into what he promoted as a more authentic Norwegian, Nynorsk ('new Norwegian'). It is this form that is used primarily at my workplace, which has a national responsibility for researching, developing and promoting it. This makes working at the Department of Language and Literature especially stimulating, since there cannot be many other places where the comparison and intersection of Nynorsk and English is lived out so pervasively on a daily basis.

I cannot claim to have adapted to life in Volda in every respect. I continue to puff asthmatically rather than pound breathlessly up the mountains; I still prefer tea to coffee and smuggle in Marmite for my sandwiches (this was actually banned for a few years because of its high salt content). And I cannot answer what is said to be one of Norway's most-asked questions, about the 1982 cross-country skiing world championships: 'Where were you when Oddvar Brå broke his ski pole?'

But whenever I mess up, I try to do what the Norwegians recommend and keep *is i magen* – that is, keep ice in my stomach, or, as we would say in English, keep a cool head.

Espen Ronneberg (1986)



Espen is Senior Adviser, Climate Change Multilateral Agreements, for the Pacific Community, and has worked on climate change and sustainable development issues in small island countries since 1992. Originally from Norway, he is based in Samoa, with a view to moving to New Caledonia later this year.

After working for the Republic of the Marshall Islands and the United Nations, when I was offered a job in Samoa I accepted eagerly. In 2006 I started working for the Secretariat of the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) as a Climate Change Adviser. In 2021 I moved to the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) doing similar work – providing technical advice and support to Pacific island countries in the climate change negotiations, assisting in preparing climate change projects and managing them, and providing policy advice to our members and fellow regional agencies. In addition, I am now loosely engaged with mainstreaming and integrating climate change across the technical divisions of SPC, so that important information from, for example, public health can be shared with climate change officials discussing loss and damage from climate change. Although I am still based at the Pacific Climate Change Centre at SPREP in Samoa, the intention is to relocate to New Caledonia in the South Pacific where SPC is headquartered.

Moving to Samoa was not without its challenges. I had been working in New York with the UN, so processes and procedures were familiar, but the tropical setting was not so familiar. I had been to Samoa for work on many occasions and had many friends in government or community jobs. But although that perhaps made it easier for me to settle in, I still had to learn the hard way that there would always be shortages of some things (recently potatoes, then onions, then toothpaste, then beer!) and some things you simply

could not buy. A bookshop only opened in 2014 – unless you count the religious outlets. I was fortunate to travel quite a bit for work, and always ensured that I had extra space in my luggage for what I now considered luxuries, like books, good razorblades, rare spices and DVDs.

Another aspect of living in Samoa was my unfamiliarity with the sounds. When I had come here previously I stayed in hotels, but I now rented a two-bedroom bungalow up the hill from Apia (the capital of Samoa), not far from the office, near the foot of Mount Vaea where Robert Louis Stevenson is buried. All the windows in the house were open, covered with mosquito netting, as there was no air conditioning, nor did I really want it. Birds, insects, pigs, chickens and fruit bats made a whole new cacophony of sounds that I quickly had to get used to. Things here tend to be slow, in that cars generally crawl (poor roads), and people take more time to chat even if there is a long line behind them, so you just have to be patient. My work colleagues have been a mixture of locals, other Pacific islanders, and some foreigners like myself who are called *palagi* by locals. No insult intended – it's just a catch-all for 'foreigner'.

Things altered in 2010 when I married a local girl, Talaesea. I was now part of an enormous extended family, full of love, caring and complicated relations. At one family reunion there were over 300 family members present. But it is an extremely helpful social network for me, so I reciprocate as best as I can with family obligations.

We now have two children – Amalia Penina and Nicholai Taulelei – which has greatly improved my life, but has added new headaches around school transport, uniforms, holidays and friends coming over. At least they love going to the beach as much as I do – usually on Sundays after church. I am fortunate to live in a beautiful part of the world, with work that I find rewarding and meaningful. I started travelling for work after the worst of Covid and met up with Edward Field (1986) and Alex Chisholm (1986) in Glasgow while there for the Climate Change Conference in 2021.

Tamara Fernandez (2013)



Tamara is an assistant professor at the Faculty of Engineering and Science at Adolfo Ibáñez University in Santiago. She studied for her BSc and MSc degrees in Chile, and then came to Oxford in 2013 to do a DPhil in Statistics, as a member of Merton College.

After completing my DPhil in Oxford and then my postdoctoral position at University College London, I returned to Chile in 2020 as required by my DPhil scholarship. The scholarship mandated that I work and reside in Chile for at least the same duration as I spent abroad obtaining my DPhil degree. Given that Chile is a highly centralised country, with the majority of its population concentrated in the capital city of Santiago, I deliberately chose to relocate to the region of Valparaíso, where I could contribute more.

The region of Valparaíso is on the central coast of Chile, about 120 kilometres (75 miles) northwest of the capital, Santiago. It has 38 administrative divisions (called *comunas*, which are similar to district councils in the UK), the two most prominent being Valparaíso, which shares its name with the region, and Viña del Mar, known as the Garden City.

Valparaíso is a well-known tourist destination and has been recognised as a UNESCO World Heritage site. It is characterised by its unique geography, built on a series of steep hills overlooking the Pacific Ocean. The historic quarter of Valparaíso is a maze of narrow streets, staircases and funiculars, all situated on several hills that overlook the sea. The city has a rich history as a major port, attracting immigrants from around the world who have left their mark on the city's architecture, cuisine and cultural traditions. It showcases a broad mix of architectural styles ranging from colourful Victorian houses to modern high-rises, creating a visually captivating landscape. Valparaíso is celebrated for its vibrant, colourful hillside neighbourhoods, bohemian

atmosphere and significant cultural heritage.

The town of Viña del Mar, where I live, is often referred to as the 'Garden City'. It is renowned for its beaches, expansive parks and gardens. Although Viña del Mar started as a popular resort town, it has evolved into much more and now stands as a cultural and educational centre, home to several prestigious universities. Viña del Mar enjoys international recognition, particularly in Latin America, thanks to its role as the host of the prestigious Viña del Mar International Song Festival, one of the largest music events in the region. The town is renowned for its beautiful gardens, with the Quinta Vergara being one of the most notable. This park is home to a stunning amphitheatre and hosts various concerts and festivals throughout the year. Additionally, the town boasts a thriving casino, several hotels and a vibrant nightlife.

My life in Viña del Mar revolves around teaching and supervising students, doing research in statistics and probability, coffee, and travelling along the coastline that connects the towns of Viña del Mar and Valparaíso. I work in Viña del Mar (at Adolfo Ibáñez University), but most of my Chilean collaborators are based in Valparaíso. Therefore, whenever I am not teaching, I take a bus (known as a *micro* here in Chile) to commute between Viña del Mar and Valparaíso. I thoroughly enjoy the vibrant cultural scene, the stunning coastline and the charming atmosphere of both towns.

After spending four years in Oxford, it was not easy for me to decide where to live. Oxford is such a magical place that it is hard to imagine living somewhere else. I think that the city of Valparaíso offers several things that are like Oxford: it hosts some of the best universities in the country, creating a challenging and exciting academic environment. The city is full of music, art and good coffee, making a simple walk around a hill a very interesting and enjoyable experience. Although I miss Oxford a lot, there is a lot of Oxford here, and I do not regret my decision. Also, our weather is fantastic (something I do not miss from Oxford) and we can walk to the beach to enjoy the sun and the ocean.

Mertonians... working with animals



Stephen's photo of a tigress killing a male sambar

Stephen Mills (1971)

Stephen has made 40-odd wildlife films for television. He is the author of Nature in its Place (Bodley Head) and Tiger (BBC) and is currently completing his autobiography. In retirement he leads occasional specialist wildlife tours focusing mainly on tigers, Svalbard and the Serengeti.

One of the snags about being a wildlife film-maker is that your subjects sometimes try to kill you. I made a one-hour special for Discovery about Asian rhinos in Assam and they turned out to be particularly prickly. One day, being typically lazy, I was sitting in the open on my big metal camera case with just a camouflage net thrown over me. My idea was to pick up a few close-ups of equally lazy old male rhinos as they plodded between wallows. But the first to appear

was an extremely aggressive female with a calf. She weighed around two and a half tonnes, accelerated from nought to fifty in under a second and knocked the case out from under me. During the two and a half years I was visiting Assam, I was chased every other week.

While filming the opening sequences for the BBC series *Land of the Tiger*, I was attacked by a lioness — yes, there are lions in India. Actually, I ended up attacking her. She had crept up behind me while I was crouched low, filming her adult cubs. I turned, sensing something odd, and caught her in mid spring. I was so scared I lost my temper. I roared and charged and somehow her spring became a somersault and she was gone.



Stephen on the other side of the camera, with owls



Tigress in Ranthambhore in India

During that year, I was struck by lightning and caught in a massive earthquake. I've hung out of a helicopter over Everest, I've been herded by elephants and I've called a wild tiger almost into my jeep. To film the first-ever full mating sequence of the swamp deer, I had to push my equipment in an oil drum for a kilometre through a leech-infested marsh. But the truth is, I don't really like adventures. I always travel with a soft pillow and my slippers. What I really like is being alone in my hide for days and days with no telephones or harassment while everyone thinks I'm working.

I come from a nature-loving family. My earliest memory is of finding a linnet's nest in the garden when I was three. I spent hundreds of solitary childhood hours hiding up trees at dusk to study foxes and badgers emerging from their dens below. The first film I remember seeing was Disney's Oscar-winning documentary *The Living Desert*. I must have been five or six and I bought the book written by Jack Couffer, one of the cameramen. It was called *Song of Wild Laughter*. I still have it. Years later, after some joyous years at Merton, I won a Harkness Fellowship and went to the California Institute of Arts to do a Master's in Film. CalArts was part-funded by Disney and the camera with which I was issued to complete my Master's project was the very same old Arriflex ST that Jack Couffer had used.

For some years I was chairman of the International Association of Wildlife Film-makers and I knew most of the

leading cameramen and women around the world. We all valued our role as influencers. We believed that television, with its privileged access to people's hearts and homes, was a powerful campaigning tool. One reason that the environment is now politically centre-stage is that consciousness has been raised by 30 years of well-made television programmes. I am proud to have been part of this and proud that my own films, like *Tiger Crisis* and *Wolf Saga*, contributed to improving the conservation status of their subjects.

Yes, I have worked with David Attenborough and, yes, he is as nice as he seems. For *The Private Life of Plants* we were together in Nepal. I was sent out early to film the wildlife sequences, which included a piece on elephant grass. It was a fabulous season, with white-topped, feathery house-high flowering grass in all directions, so I took my elephant and went into the middle to film some panoramics just in case. When David arrived, it started to rain. For a whole week he entertained me and Dicky Bird, the soundman, with hilarious, self-deprecating anecdotes. When the rain finally stopped, however, the glorious grass was all flat. The original plan had been for David to hold some grass heads while he talked about how many species there were and how some grasses grow very tall. At that point I would zoom out to reveal that he actually was sitting on an elephant and the grass was as tall as him. We found a sad, tiny relict clump and shot the scene as best we could. Once my earlier panoramics were stitched in, no one would notice we had filmed in a waste ground. The magic of television.



Peter Cowdy, his wife Penny and their three daughters in the marquee at their horse trials

Peter Cowdy (1972)

Peter studied biochemistry at Merton, specialising in brain and mood. He then studied Farm Animal Nutrition at Reading, worked at Unilever in product development, and as a chartered accountant specialising in historic agricultural estates. He was a governor at Harper Adams University in Shropshire. He now has trusteeships and a special interest in paleo-anthropology – especially the biochemical aspects – as well as the day job on the farm.

You've got to love horses to work with them, but that's easy to do. Enchanting, solid dependable, loyal creatures – excitable and fun. Man's stolid companion for maybe 7,000 years. It's not surprising that it's Boxer, the horse in *Animal Farm*, that represents what is reputable, honest and good.

And what better place to work with horses than in green, beautiful south Shropshire, with its rolling hills and bridleways, in the county reputed to have the highest concentration of horses per capita in the UK?

We started the equestrian business at Berriewood in 1980 on my wife Penny's family farm. There have always been many horses at Berriewood since the family moved there in the 1870s. My father's family were Irish hunting, so we had some common ground when we met as students in Oxford.

Penny's family accountant warned ominously that horses would only ever lose money, so we had a principle from the start that we must show a profit, and we have stuck to that. This means that we have had to adapt to steady changes in the marketplace and the way people enjoy equestrian activity.

We started out running lessons for children. We had 70 horses at one point. In the late 1980s we ran a government scheme which trained hundreds of potential equestrian professionals. Our students came from all backgrounds and walks of life. Many wanted to work outdoors. Most developed the confidence, working with horses, which enabled them to go on to all sorts of careers.

Amazingly, the sheer number of our students and riding clients means that we often run into contacts we know or who know of us. There is a certain magic about the horse which brings people of all sorts together throughout British society.

Running annual horse trials (dressage, show jumping and cross-country) has been a rewarding challenge. When we started this, it was all quite amateur. Nowadays it is much more regulated, protected and expensive. However, competitors are still able to enjoy the adrenaline thrill of being 'close to the edge' (along with their horse) – riding at speed, jumping with precision and demonstrating perfect harmony and control in the dressage. This and the enthusiasm of the volunteers (who are a vital part of the undertaking) make it all worthwhile.

We have also been involved with Riding for the Disabled (RDA), which is an independently run charity supporting disabled children and adults through riding. The devoted volunteers who run it help the riders and support them in staying on the horse, walking gently or doing something more adventurous if possible. Horses seem to have an innate understanding of the situation the riders are in, and the relationship is enormously beneficial to all concerned, as well as enjoyable.

Our activities have brought us into contact with celebrities over the years, Princess Anne and Lady Diana to name but two. Other high points have included appearances by our horses in the filming of *Precious Bane* (directed by Christopher Menaul, 1989) and *A Christmas Carol* (directed by Clive Donner, 1984).

Nowadays, the riding population is declining for a whole host of reasons, and we have to be agile (I think that's the word). A lot of our time is spent creating a fun environment for our livery clients and working to keep our facilities – indoor school, outdoor arenas, courses etc. – up to standard. We have barbecues and Easter Egg hunts and have developed a farm ride. Our children are involved too. We have three daughters and really enjoy having a family venture.

At the moment we're in the middle of a huge exercise. One of our daughters has moved into the farmhouse, another is in the middle of a barn conversion in the yard, and we have bought a house nearby in the village. Who knows what the future may have in store?

Henry Grub (2016)

Henry read the old BA Biological Sciences course at Merton, specialising in ecology and conservation. After two years post-graduation working as a research coordinator in sustainability, he is now undertaking a PhD looking at badger and cattle management in relation to bovine TB here in the UK. He is co-supervised by the Institute of Zoology, which is based at ZSL London Zoo.

For my PhD, I have been working with the Cornwall Wildlife Trust on its badger vaccination project in the county. My project is looking at the management of badgers and cattle to try and reduce cases of bovine TB disease – which is particularly bad in the South-West. My co-supervisor,

Henry with an anaesthetised badger, prior to testing





Cows near the badger testing sites in Cornwall

Professor Rosie Woodroffe, is a Cornwall-native and a long-time advocate for science-based policy making. I knew this would be the perfect PhD project if I was to guarantee myself some close-up sightings of Britain's badgers – I otherwise seem to have rotten luck with wildlife sightings!

Badgers and cattle can both get infected with TB, and they can pass it between each other, although many other animals – from sheep to llamas, deer and alpacas – can also get infected. Since 2013, the government has, somewhat notoriously, licensed privatised culls of badgers in England, in a bid to reduce TB infections in cattle, although the results from this have been varied.

Recently, the government has announced that badger culling will be replaced with badger vaccination (many details still to come), and we as scientists need some evidence as to whether this will work or not – which is where Cornwall comes in.

First, we use humane cage traps to trap the badgers out in the wild, and usually use peanuts as bait. But it's far from as simple as setting out a cage and leaving out some peanuts – the badgers are smart and wary of the cages. You have to go through several nights of 'pre-baiting' – laying out peanuts

around cages that are not 'set' to get the badgers used to them. Then, night by night, moving the pile of peanuts further and further into the cage so the badgers become accustomed to walking into the cages. When the badgers are taking the bait and have become desensitised to the cages, it's time to strike.

On a 'trap night' you bait the cages and set the trap (please bear in mind you need a government-issued licence to trap badgers for any reason). Then, it's up at the crack of dawn to see what you've caught – it's imperative not to leave the badgers in the cages for too long.

If you've played your cards right you shouldn't need too much luck to get to see the badgers – which was excellent news for me. For most vaccination programmes, badgers can be given the injection while still awake in the cage, but the Cornwall project is the only one in the country that carries out TB testing on the badgers.

This takes us to the final stage. A qualified vaccinator anaesthetises the trapped badger and then we can get to work: drawing a sample of blood, microchipping, taking measurements and recordings, and checking the badger's health. Once we have all the data, we reverse the anaesthetic and place the badger back in the cage, check that it wakes up all okay, and then release it back into the wild. All the bloods are stored and sent for laboratory testing at the end of the year, so we can track year by year if the number of TB-infected badgers is going down. So far, it has been.

Occasionally you do get the odd interloper. Foxes and rabbits are the most common, plus once a rabbit and a badger in the same cage – they looked very confused! And currently the record is for three badger cubs in the same trap at the same time – quite a lot of work for the vaccinators.

I often think what a privilege it is to be able to come down to Cornwall and take part in this myself: it's a special insight into some impressive conservation work. But we have to give credit to the pioneer farmers in Cornwall who have donated their land for this project, to gather the data that can help inform policy decisions for the whole country.

© John Aron



An interview with Visiting Research Fellow in the Creative Arts, Ben Haggarty

Introducing Merton to the art of performance storytelling

Ben Haggarty, Visiting Research Fellow in the Creative Arts for 2022-23, is one of the UK's foremost performance storytellers. For over 40 years he has pioneered the retelling of traditional oral narratives (international folk tales, fairy tales, epics and myths) in performance on contemporary stages. His repertoire spans Indo-European fairytales for grown-ups, Greek and Irish mythology, the Epic of Gilgamesh, and contemporary myths.

During his year at Merton, Ben has introduced performance storytelling to the community with performances and workshops, challenging preconceptions and building new approaches to narrative. Here, Ben talks to Postmaster about the art of performance storytelling and his year in the Merton community.



Performing Marya Morevna at the Merton Society Summer Garden Party 2023 © John Cairns

Your year as Visiting Research Fellow in the Creative Arts at Merton is drawing to a close. Has it been as you expected?

I went to drama school, so, not having gone to university, I wasn't sure what I would find at Merton. My biggest surprise and pleasure was to find myself sitting down with scientists at mealtimes. Remarkable conversations have ensued exploring the intersection of the sciences with the humanities. For example, in talking with physicists we have found meeting points in discussing creation myths and the challenges offered by the limitations of our anthropocentric imagination.

Can you define performance storytelling, explain what it means to you, and tell us how you came to it?

I coined the phrase 'performance storyteller' in the 1980s. It sits in relation to prose narrative as performance poetry does to written poetry – in other words, it is about an embodied, live performance by the creator of the narrative and its language. I work specifically with the repertoire of folk tales, fairytales, epics and myth – the vast, global ocean of traditional ancestral narratives, whose authors are largely

anonymous but whose works have shaped and continue to shape our imagination and sense of drama. These stories provide the raw material for the performances I create. I originally trained as a theatre director and in my early career found myself trying to turn fairytales into plays with no great success. However one day it dawned on me that these narratives might be best served by the medium in which they were born. And so I began, with colleagues, to rediscover an oral performance paradigm. This ultimately proposes a solo performance, often up to two hours long, designed to entertain a large audience of strangers. This, if you pause to think about it, demands a massive skill set.

I am not a writer and my work is unscripted. However, my job is to research, shape and know the plots of my stories very well, and my skill, in performance, is to find the communicative language (verbal and physical) to convey a story 'in the moment', very much in response to the audience. This improvisation allows insight and revelation, particularly given the biochemical releases obtained through performing to large audiences. The form allows me a great deal of freedom to self express, yet my work is also 'mantic'.

During your year here, the Merton community has seen you perform *Fairytales for Grown-ups*; the epic *Gilgamesh*; *Orpheus and Dionysus*; and the family fairytale *Marya Morevna*; and you have run collaborative events in College such as the Fairytale Tellers conference and the workshops which were part of your Mythlabs project at Merton. How would you say the Merton community has taken to performance storytelling?

As soon as I'd presented my first performance at Merton, my conversations with both staff and students changed radically, as people had experienced, enjoyed and understood what I actually do!

I have been well supported by both students and staff at Merton – and by the wider University community, who have invited me to teach and perform in several other colleges. I have also undertaken community projects with the Botanic Gardens, the Bodleian Library, the Arboretum and the Warneford Hospital.

What have been your favourite moments at Merton?

Walking onto a stage to tell *Gilgamesh* and finding more or less the entire SCR sitting in a row in front of me was quite something! I was honoured that they had come to hear me.

Sharing ideas with various Classics students about the nature of orality and Greek epic performance has been thrilling. By pooling our varied knowledge we have been able to venture into various fascinating and fresh areas of speculation.

On three separate occasions I found myself in the Old Library standing in front of randomly chosen bookshelves, and reaching out, blindly, found myself touching books so pertinent to my research and life that it was spooky!

In terms of Merton's cultural offer I particularly enjoyed listening to Zimbabwean singer, musician, storyteller and orator John Pfumojena give a passionate address to the MCR BAME group. I'm also grateful to have participated in Acting Chaplain Chris Collingwood's Zen meditation group. And it was a thrill to work with the College librarians and the Archivist to host an extremely successful collaborative event on the Fairytale Tellers of Merton.



At an event in the Botanical Gardens © John Aron Photography

In terms of my own research re-examining the narrative arc that surrounds the Irish hero Fionn MacCumhaill, I was utterly thrilled to be able to see a central 14th-century manuscript in the Bodleian Library.

Where will you go now, after Merton?

I return to the haphazard world of being a freelance artist in Britain. Luckily my charitable organisation the Crick Crack Club (www.crickcrackclub.com) is always dreaming up new ventures and I'm hoping to return to a project which explored telling stories in conditions of zero light – and it's in that context of absolute darkness that I may very well premier some of the work on Fionn MacCumhaill that I've been researching as VRF. I'm also hoping to undertake new ventures in health and wellbeing (for example, in storytelling and ADHD) which have grown from a project undertaken during my time in Merton.

Student life at Merton as a guide-dog owner: an interview with Ella Caulfield

Ella Caulfield (2019) is a third-year maths student at Merton and a guide-dog owner. She is known at Merton for leading the JCR in an effort to raise £5,000 for the Name a Puppy Guide Dogs scheme. Postmaster interviewed Ella to ask about her life at Merton.

When did you first think about coming to Oxford?

I dreamed of coming to Oxford from around the age of 12, and when I lost my sight at the age of 15, I wondered if it would be possible. But Merton has supported me from when I first applied through till now, and I'm really glad to be here.

How long have you had a guide dog?

Rio is my first guide dog and I've had her since I was 18. I finished my A levels on the Friday and she arrived on the Monday. I'd got the call during the first week of my A-level exams to say that the match had been confirmed, so that was something to look forward to!

Did it take long to learn how to work with Rio?

I had five weeks training with Guide Dogs at home: somebody came every day, they taught me the commands, and we'd go out on practice walks together so that I'd get used to Rio guiding me. It helped with building up that trust in Rio. She's highly trained, but she is a dog and for anyone, being guided takes some getting used to. I'd been guided around by people for years, but the great thing about having Rio is that, with her, I'm independent. I don't need to take up anyone else's time to get out and about: Rio is there when I'm ready. This is the great freedom that having a guide dog gives you. Of course, she needs time off sometimes, but this is structured



Ella and Rio in Ella's rooms at College, after her last exam this year

into our week, with walks with friends where she's off the lead and can run around.

What support has Merton provided to enable you to live in at College and enjoy College life?

Support for life at Merton started before I arrived at College. I had a year at home after my A levels, in which I worked with a DPhil mathematician to learn to read and write LaTeX, a formatting language used in maths. Merton gave me support with this, as well as providing me with bridging material to study during that year, so that I could hit the ground running when I came up to Oxford. I also came and stayed at Merton a few times during that year, once for three days, meeting members of College staff, such as the Academic Registrar, the Senior Tutor and Lodge staff, so that I knew some people before I arrived. I also came with a Guide Dog

team habilitation officer to learn routes around College and in the city, as well as other practical skills for living away from home.

Merton made some practical accommodations for me and Rio, providing me with a large access room in College on Grove which backs onto a small garden, in which a ‘spending pen’ (toilet area) for Rio was installed. The gardeners clear it every few days. I have support in my daily life in College; for example, Hall staff help me with getting my food in Hall, and my scout Christine, who has recently retired, was great. Christine was not a dog person but came to love Rio. Christine hoovered my room more often because of the dog hair, and she also helped with messages to other offices in College and sorting things out – for example, when the carpet in my room was starting to come up, she flagged it with Maintenance to ensure it was repaired before it became a trip hazard.

What support has been provided for your studies?

The Disability Advisory Service has been a useful advocate, providing me with note-takers for my tutorials. I have two note-takers, both PhD students in a related subject. Merton provides my reader-scribe for exams, and in my case it’s a DPhil mathematician, so that’s great. In the maths cohort at Merton we run weekly maths help sessions, where the first years are helped by the second, third and fourth years. I met my reader-scribe there: she was a fourth-year student when I was a first-year. She’s scribed my exams, doing this over Zoom during Covid, and as we had worked together in the maths help sessions, it was easy for us to work together.

How do you find College life?

The Merton community has been really welcoming. I’m active in the JCR: I ran for JCR Disabled Students representative and got that post in my second year and again this year, and I’ve enjoyed this role, advocating for disabled students. Having been peer-support trained, I ran for Suspended Students Rep in my third year and was voted in. These roles have kept me involved in the JCR and connected with students in all year groups. I also enjoy taking opportunities for volunteering and working as a student helper at College, for example at Open Days and recently at the Summer Garden Party.



Ella and other student helpers and Rio taking a well-deserved break after working at the 2023 Garden Party

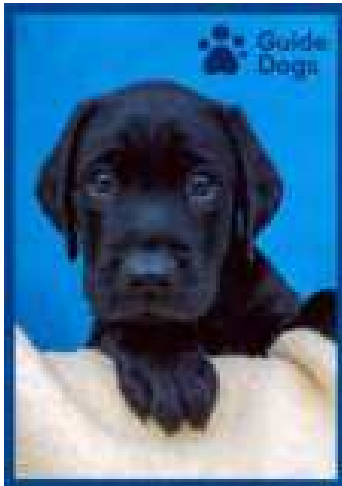
In Oxford I’ve also been able to continue a pastime I’ve had since the age of 14: bellringing. I joined the Oxford University Society of Change Ringers as soon as I got here, and since January 2023 I’ve been Master of the Society. This meant that I was responsible for organising some ringing for the Coronation. I had the opportunity to swing Great Tom at Christ Church, which is only rung on special occasions.

Have you had any funny moments round College?

Occasionally I’ve literally bumped into people in College – either because they weren’t looking or because Rio has guided me into them. Sometimes when I’ve been chatting in Front Quad, Rio has seen someone whom she associates with going on a run, and has lurched towards them – but on the whole, it runs smoothly. And Rio is popular with other students who have had to leave their own dogs at home: for them, it’s really nice to have time with Rio. There’s a list of people for taking her for walks!

Can you tell us about the Name a Puppy scheme for the Guide Dogs charity?

I’ve known about Guide Dogs and its charitable schemes for years. My grandparents did puppy-raising from when I was about 10. I was born with some sight but I was already visually impaired, so my parents knew that having a guide dog would be really good for me and they started to think about this early on in my life, so I’ve grown up knowing about Guide Dogs.



Walter the Guide Dog puppy,
named by Merton JCR

The JCR has two nominated charities per year. In 2020, I nominated Guide Dogs as one of the charities and it was voted in. I knew that we'd be close to the first level for Name a Puppy, which is £2,500, which would enable us to pick a name for a puppy. Then Covid hit and so we had to think hard about how to fundraise. Once we were back in Trinity term I worked with the welfare team and the catering team to make one of the Thursday welfare teas into a charitable event where people could donate, and we had a raffle too. For prizes, I went round local businesses – the shops and cafes that I frequent – and many were pleased to donate, and it was really motivating to have that support.

We set up a JustGiving page so that people could donate what they wanted for their cream teas and to buy raffle tickets, which raised over £500, so that took us to our £2,500 goal. Guide Dogs got voted as the JCR charity the following year, and in Welfare Week in Michaelmas 2021 we had a 'Meet the Guide Dogs' session, where guide dogs and their owners, and guide dog puppies and their trainers, visited. This event raised awareness of the work of Guide Dogs as well as allowing people to spend time cuddling the puppies.

We reached the £5,000 required for the second level of the Name a Puppy scheme, which would enable us to meet the puppy one day. The names we put forward were Walter (after

Walter's birth certificate

Guide Dogs | Name a Puppy

Birth certificate

Puppy name:
Walter

Named by:
Merton College JCR

Born: 14/04/2023 Gender: Male

Colour: Black

Breed: Labrador

Mum: Sparkle Dad: Henry

Siblings: Forest, Grant, Lister, Hunter, Cherry, Ross, Jamie

Thank you for being part of my story.

Guide Dogs
PUPPY REGULATOR

Walter de Merton), Rosie (after Rose Lane), and Chestnut (after Chestnut Lawn). In June 2023, we were contacted by Guide Dogs with the news that 'our puppy' had been chosen, so we have named a Guide Dog puppy Walter. We have photos of him and look forward to hearing more about him soon. It's nice to have put our own mark on Guide Dogs.

We wish Ella every success with the completion of her studies and her future steps.

As for Walter the Guide Dog puppy – look out for pupdates in the termly newsletters in 2023-23!

Touchstones in Time

Lynne Wycherley, poet and former Assistant Librarian, shares memories of Dr Roger Highfield

During the years I worked in Merton College Library (2003–2011), principally in the Old Warden’s Lodgings, the late Dr Roger Highfield, Merton’s much-loved veteran historian, gradually became a friend. I was a quietly spoken poet, moved by his indefinable spirit. Sometimes, within the soul, movements of time seem elusive, mysterious, for it was only relatively recently, as a mature poet living in Devon, that I was visited by exceptionally intense memories of the College, including its libraries and gardens, and most particularly – and poignantly – dear Dr Highfield. *Touchstones in Time*, a 24-poem sequence reflecting this, rose like a lit stream.

A College Carried

*Fox-flecks and must;
feel the cloth, new buckram,
a frontispiece, thumb-browned;
lignin, aromatic, sparse
phenols breaking down.*

~

Then here you are,
J.R.L.H., unique.¹
That dip of your
head, ‘good morning’.
Smile kindles smile:
unspoken kindness speaks.

Grey eyes, blue-grey,
astute: how carbon tints
in manuscripts give depth.
A hint of mirth
rarely far away, the Effra’s
play in Dulwich.²

Acumen: how bees
organise so beautifully,
how thoughts; nectar
tested, tethered,
knowledge grown to
honeycombs, Oise–amber.

Sharp heels,
staccato walking stick.
No need for crimson,
formal. Warmth in your wake,
a college carried,
vellum; gall-ink; Latin.

How could it be? Your
labours unimaginable,
space-time curved through you,
Merton’s rolls.³
Just this, you imply, *just this*:
I was a not-quite-soldier
*and I served.*⁴

¹ John Roger Loxdale Highfield, historian 1922–2017, Merton Fellow from 1948 and long-serving tutor, my dedicatee

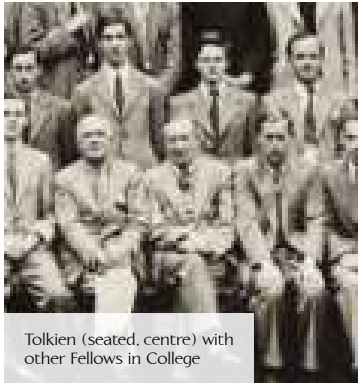
² Subterranean river Effra by the school Roger Highfield attended in his teens

³ Merton College has an exceptional collection of 13th-century account rolls. Roger Highfield’s monumental *The Early Rolls of Merton College* (Clarendon Press, Oxford) was published in 1964, the College’s septcentenary year, dedicated to the memory of his parents – poignantly lost during his childhood – and a sister, d.1958

⁴ Philip Waller, Emeritus Fellow and former Magdalen Prize Fellow, Tutor 1979–2006, relates that Dr Highfield was diffident about the years he served in the army during the Second World War

Memories of JRR Tolkien

To commemorate 50 years since J R R Tolkien died, Merton Development Office asked Mertonians who had been at College at the same time as Tolkien to share their memories of him. The response was remarkable, with many different memories of Tolkien, together with photos from the time, which build up a picture of Tolkien and his life at Merton. The following is an extract from the resulting poster exhibition that the Development Office made for exhibition in College.



Tolkien (seated, centre) with other Fellows in College

An emphatic translation of *Beowulf*

Christopher Ball (1956)

I was at Merton as an undergraduate, graduate, and College lecturer from 1956 to 1961. I remember attending Tolkien's lectures on *Beowulf* in the Examination Schools in 1958. The large lecture hall was packed as he began: 'Gentlemen,' (though, of course, there were several ladies present) 'the first word of this great poem is *hwaet*, which is not easy to translate. I will show you how to do it.' He lifted up his fist and crashed it down on the lectern, scattering his papers on the floor, and electrifying his audience. He continued, '...but the examiners will not be impressed.' The word, 'what' in modern English, was used as a sort of call to attention at the beginning of a poetic recitation in Old English times.

Memories of Tolkien's lectures – best in a small group

Nicholas Menon (1958)

My first year at Merton coincided with Tolkien's last. He was a great hero of mine and I chose to specialise in Old and Middle English (then known as Course 2) for Schools.

In my second term Tolkien gave his lectures on *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* and although I was yet to take Prelims I went to these. The first lecture was in the great East School and was packed. I was lucky enough to be in the front row and was able to hear; but the great man spoke quietly and at breakneck speed. The following week the lecture was moved to a small room on the ground floor of the Examination Schools. About a dozen of us were there and Tolkien began by saying, 'That's better'.

For the rest of term, he spoke clearly, audibly and rivetingly, frequently to this smaller audience. He frequently referred to the edition of Tolkien and Gordon as though it had not been his, suggesting small improvements that he said they might incorporate if the publishers were to invite them to make a revised edition!

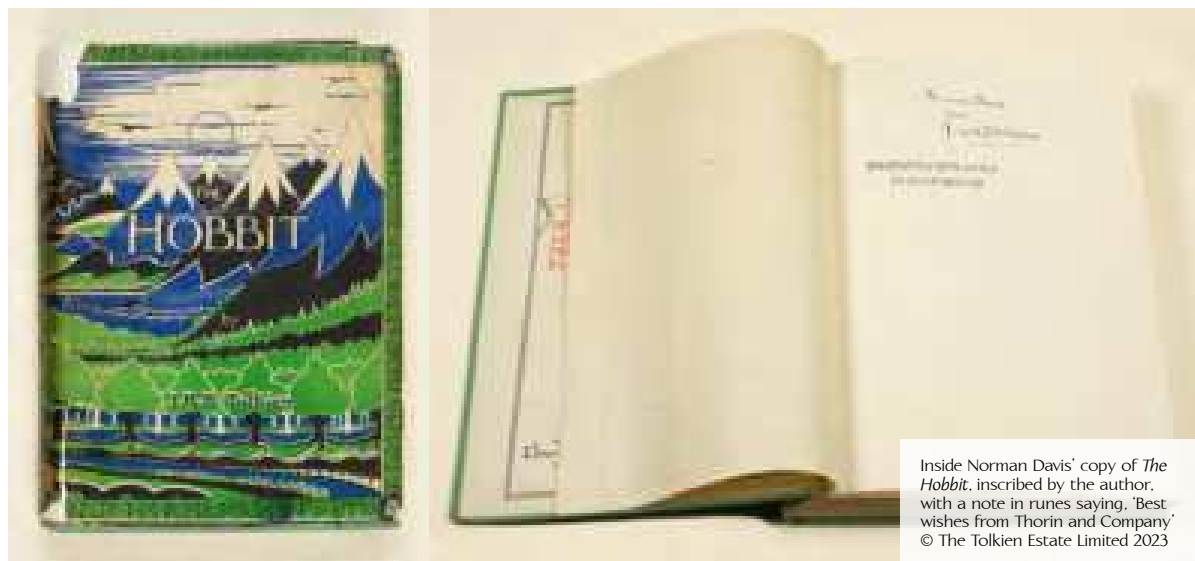
I was fortunate enough to attend his inspirational valedictory lecture in Merton Hall in Trinity term 1959.

A great lecture by a philological genius

Jay Keyser (1956)

I remember Tolkien with great fondness. I had the privilege of attending two lectures of his at Schools. One was on the Anglo-Saxon poem *The Exodus*, in which his translation showed him to be as good as if not better than the original poet. The second lecture was on the Middle English manual for nuns, *The Ancrene Wisse*. Tolkien showed how it was possible to make dishwater taste like champagne.

This is the side of Tolkien never talked about, his philological genius.



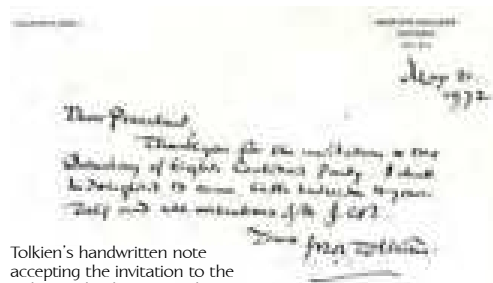
Fan mail

Philip Waller (Emeritus Fellow)

I enjoyed talking to Tolkien on the occasions we sat next to each other on High Table, and I was glad the College gave him sanctuary. Because he had long lived under virtual siege from fans, and this afforded him some protection. I alluded to that period, the early '70s, in my memorial of Sir Rex Richards (*Postmaster*, 2020, p.101): 'Two large sacks of mail arrived each morning addressed to Fellows. Our village joke was that one sack was for Tolkien, whom we harboured in 21 Merton Street, the other sack for the rest of us.' Americans led the fan club, and stories were legion of how, when living in Headington and Bournemouth, he'd be picketed by autograph hunters and get phone calls in the middle of the night from callers oblivious of the time difference. It's not hard to imagine his relief that, while he could never again pass as an ordinary don in the street, colleagues at Merton did not make an intolerable nuisance and fuss over him in his final years.

Tolkien as neighbour in Merton Street

Revd Geoff Ellis (1970)



Tolkien's handwritten note accepting the invitation to the Eights cocktail party. © The Tolkien Estate Limited 2023

We soon became aware of Tolkien when he moved into rooms in 21 Merton Street. I lived on the top floor of 22 Merton Street in my first year as an undergraduate from 1970. If you crossed his path, he would readily share a greeting.

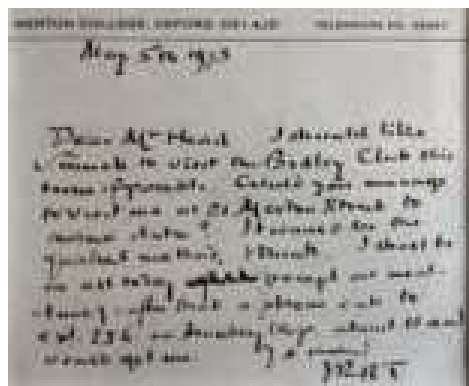
Later, as JCR President I invited him to the 1972 Eights Week Cocktail Party held in the JCR Common Room. Other Fellows were invited, and undergraduates could buy tickets for themselves and family.

I have found the letter that he sent me accepting the invitation to the Eights Week Cocktail Party.

Fond memories and an invitation to the Bodley Club

Philip Head (1971)

In Summer 1973 I was the Secretary of the Bodley Club. My duties were principally to find speakers for the meetings and then emcee the meetings. I decided to see whether Tolkien might come to speak. I was then in 20 Merton Street and he had rooms in 21. I wrote him a very tentative note and put it in his pigeon-hole in the Lodge.



Tolkien's note accepting the Bodley Club invitation.
© The Tolkien Estate Limited 2023

To my delight, his reply appeared very swiftly. He would be delighted. Would I call round to his rooms to discuss a suitable date? Of course I would, and rapidly did. He received me with warmth and kindness and we settled a date. He told me that he was working on something called *The Silmarillion*, and perhaps he might talk about that. Not a lecture, but a gentle stroll and an exchange with the members.

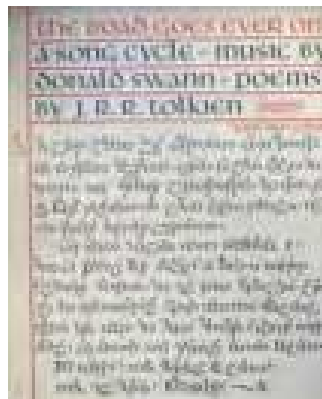
The evening was a joy. Tolkien engaged us gently and compellingly, and the whisky was acceptable. I have no detailed memory of what he told us, but simply the warm glow of an evening spent with a charming and kind man.

Decades later, my wife told me that she had heard a talk on Radio 4 by Rick Gekoski, who had just published his excellent collection *Tolkien's Gown*. It seemed that signed copies were of considerable value. She thought we had one. Our fortunes were made. I had to let her down

gently. No, all I had were unsigned paperback copies of *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Hobbit*. To prove the point, I went to my bookshelves and took down the copies. Out of *The Hobbit* dropped J R R Tolkien's note to me, dated May 5th 1973 in his inimitable handwriting, inviting me to call and discuss a date for the Bodley Club.

Pre-dinner drinks conversation

Tony Wood (1957)



Tolkien's poems set to music. Here, we see Song No. 5: Namárië, written in Tengwar script.

In February 1958 I was an undergraduate in my first year of reading History at Merton College, Oxford. I had made friends with a fellow student, David Smith, who was reading Law, and we found that we had both read and very much enjoyed *The Lord of the Rings* by Tolkien.

I then found out that Professor Tolkien was resident

in College. So, I wrote to him expressing our admiration of his work and inviting him to join us for tea. He replied politely declining our invitation as he visited his wife in hospital in the afternoons, but inviting us to join him for a drink before dinner. I replied accepting his invitation. We met him as arranged and I remember that Tolkien told us that the whole background of *The Lord of the Rings* came from his work in philology, in that he had played around with the original stems of words and had then begun to think of the people who might have used such languages and from these had created elves, dwarves and orcs.

He recalled going to receive an academic honour for his work in philology from a French university. When his name was announced, there was a huge burst of applause and he then asked why, as the award was for obscure work. The reply was 'Ah, but Professor Tolkien, here, here you are a set book!'

A chance encounter

Brian Witherden (1971)

Lime Tree Walk in Fellows' Garden, 1980. (Photo from the College Estates Archives)



One of my most happy and fortunate memories of my time studying at Merton College was meeting Professor Tolkien. After his wife died in 1971, Merton offered him college accommodation for the rest of

his life. He paid a visit to College to choose rooms, during which he stayed in the Fellows' Guestroom, on the ground floor of Fellows 4. It should be noted that Fellows Quad provided accommodation for only three or four students, and the rest of the rooms were College Offices and Tutors' rooms for study and tutorials (not accommodation). The winter of 1971-72 was one of much industrial action, including regular power cuts (each lasting three hours I believe). One evening the power went off at 21:00, so I left my room on the top floor of Fellows 4 to go to the JCR bar. As I bounded down the last of the stairs in total darkness, secure in the knowledge that no one could be at the bottom of my staircase in the evening, I quite literally bumped into an old gentleman. After dusting ourselves down and making apologies I ended up walking around College with the Professor for the next three hours, absolutely captivated by how friendly he was. One of my main recollections was of him referring to himself as an Emeritus Fellow from the Latin 'e' meaning 'out of it' and 'meritus' meaning 'deservedly so'. Later, after he moved into his chosen rooms in 21 Merton Street, I visited him to have a copy of his books signed (bought with my College Book prize awarded for a First in Finals in 1972, and thus with a College Crest stamped on the cover of each volume). I recall Professor Tolkien as very College oriented and always happy to sign any books for Mertonians.

Expedition Cyclops

On the centenary of the Merton College Arctic Expedition, DPhil graduate James Kempton (2011) reports on *Expedition Cyclops*, a Merton research expedition to the Cyclops Mountains of New Guinea to search for Attenborough's long-beaked echidna.



Sandy Irvine and Geoffrey Milling on the 1923 Merton College Arctic Expedition

On the 22nd of July 1923, George Binney set sail from Tromsø, in northern Norway, aboard the *Terningen*, a sealing yacht captained by Isak Isaksen. The boat was bound for Spitsbergen, the largest island of the Svalbard Archipelago. With sixteen crew aboard, the mission was to circumnavigate the island, explore its interior, and study its ecology. Among the sixteen were four Mertonians – George

Binney (expedition leader), G Milling (sledging party), A T Wilder (biologist), and A C Irvine (sledging party). This was the 1923 Merton College Arctic Expedition. The following year, Andrew Comyn 'Sandy' Irvine joined George Mallory in an even more ambitious expedition to conquer the slopes of Everest, attempting to be the first to reach the summit. This heroic mission ended in tragedy when, within 400 metres of the peak, the pair died. In the centenary year of the Merton College Arctic Expedition, I departed to lead a 21st century Merton College expedition to the Cyclops Mountains in New Guinea.

Some 6,800 miles from Spitsbergen, the Cyclops Mountains stretch along 30 miles of New Guinea's northern coast. The range first entered Western consciousness in 1768 when, sailing past what is now Indonesia's Papua Province, French explorer Baron Louis de Bougainville recorded, 'a high, mountainous land' containing '*les deux cyclopes*'. He approached no closer than ten leagues from the shore, but even at that distance, the gigantic twin peaks of Mount Dafonsoro and Mount Rara dominate the view. The 20th-century explorer-scientist Evelyn Cheesman later explained Bougainville's reticence to draw

nearer when she wrote of the jagged rocks and razor reefs that obstruct access to the Pacific coastline. Pristine rainforest rises almost vertically from the shore, vaulting up into the perpetual mists that obscure the peaks of the mountains. Cheesman's contemporary Ernst Mayr said, 'the slopes drop precipitously into the sea on their northern side and are quite inaccessible there', and both explorers made biological collections on southern ascents of the range. Of the two, only Mayr reached the 1970m summit, after ten days of toil to find a passable route.

Unlike Mayr, Cheesman also surveyed the geology of the mountains. Her results led to a striking discovery: the Cyclops had once been islands in the middle of the Pacific. This insight suggested a compelling explanation for the origins of the unique and diverse fauna found on New Guinea's northern coast: perhaps these animals' ancestors were once 'immigrants', evolving independently on islands that ultimately collided with New Guinea. But was Cheesman correct about the island origins of these animals? Little is known about the true diversity of fauna that lives in this remote part of New Guinea. This enigma is what drew me to the Mountains to lead *Expedition Cyclops*: an expedition to conduct an unprecedented survey of the fauna and geology of the range. I assembled an international team. Equipped with thousands of sampling tubes, 70 litres of preservative chemicals, a field microscope, and a generator, among a host of other kit, I set out with four other scientists: entomologist Leonidas-Romanos Davranoglou (Oxford), entomologist Attila Balázs (Mendel University, Brno), geologist Max Webb (Royal Holloway), and mammologist Andrew Tilker (Leibniz Institute for Zoo and Wildlife Research). Alongside students from Uncen (Papua's main university), whom we would teach the survey skills they would need for further future exploration of New Guinea's ecology, we set out to test Cheesman's hypothesis. We were also pursuing another enigma, the source of which is found in a storeroom of Leiden's natural history museum.

Possessing the quills of a porcupine, the snout of an anteater, and the feet of a mole, the echidna is as much a chimera as its mythological namesake. Like the duck-billed platypus, they are monotremes – egg-laying mammals that have evolved independently of other mammals for over 200 million years. Only five species of monotreme are known to have survived to the modern era. And one of these, Attenborough's long-



Expedition leader James Kempton deploying a camera trap

beaked echidna, named after the celebrated naturalist Sir David Attenborough, has not been seen since its discovery in 1961 by botanist Pieter van Royen. Van Royen found the echidna in the Cyclops Mountains, and the specimen that he captured — now kept under lock and key in the Dutch city of Leiden — remains the sole preserved example of this species. In the 62 years since van Royen, others searched in vain for Attenborough's echidna, but van Royen's specimen remained the only ever scientific sighting. If this species was still alive, our expedition wanted to find it.

In this search, we had two advantages over earlier scientists. The first were camera traps: devices triggered by motion that acted as remote sentinels in the forest, watching for animals around the clock. Our second advantage was the strong relationship we had with the people living at the base of the Cyclops themselves. In March 2020, two weeks before the first Covid lockdown, I had a serendipitous encounter,

without which *Expedition Cyclops* might never have happened. I attended a lecture at The Queen's College, Oxford, where I met Pascal Norotouw, who was in Oxford studying for an MBA at Oxford Brookes University. Talking to him, I learned that he is from Papua, from a village on the north coast of the Cyclops Mountains called Yongsu Sapari. Pascal and his family belong to one of seven clans who live in this village. They have existed there on the Cyclops' northern slopes for centuries, in terrain that Mayr and Cheesman had once judged inaccessible. Pascal was enthusiastic about the idea of a Cyclops Expedition. With the knowledge and support of this community, I hoped that a new expedition could access areas never before explored by science. The expedition was further bolstered by the assistance of Iain and Malcolm Kobak — brothers born in the Papuan Highlands to British missionary parents, who lead a fantastic development NGO in Papua called Yappenda. Without all this support from within Papua, the expedition would not have been possible.



The Cyclops Mountains

Above 900 metres in altitude, the northern Cyclops are untouched even by those who live there. We soon discovered why. Ascending the Cyclops is like climbing ladders whose rails are clad in spines and thorns, with rungs of rotting wood, and frames enshrouded by snapping vines and falling rocks. The pristine environment owes much to the reverence that the clans have for the Cyclops. Many areas are held as sacred, and kept off-limits to all but the initiated. To our great honour, the expedition team received special permission to walk on these lands, some of which had never before felt the tread of human feet. On the sixth day of the expedition, we approached the boundary of a sacred peak, and our guide Zacharias Sorondanya turned to us with gravity. He explained that from this point forward, we must not speak the names of places, plants, or animals that we saw, lest we invoke the ire of the mountain's spirit guardian. She controls the fate of those passing through, it is said. Some travel without incident. Others have returned vomiting blood, after encountering a realm in which lives a leviathan-on-land – a serpent so big that the giant *Araucaria* tree grows from its back. As we walked in silence among the towering moss-clad trees, led not by human trails but those of animals, we felt our fates to be in another's hand.

We spent three weeks living in the rainforest. The search for water was unrelenting. We spent endless hours to find it,

to carry it, to filter it. We ate nothing besides rice, noodles, and canned tuna. We slept on fern leaves under tarpaulins. And, high in the mountains, as the cold nights drew in, we warmed ourselves with fire and swapped stories that bridged the many different lives and experiences of the team. That we survived the hardships of the forest is thanks to our Papuan guides from Yappenda: Ruben, Meli, John, and Sili. We depended heavily on their skills as navigators, builders, translators, and diplomats. Together we bore the exigencies of expedition life – malaria, broken bones, staphylococcal skin infections, and the interminable assault of leeches. Of all the leeches we endured, one left Jeff Wonda (a student from Uncen) with a story he will never forget. A leech fell into his eyeball, where it remained lodged for 33 hours, rebuffing attacks from tweezers, salt water, and medical saline. Only after being doused in ethanol did it finally succumb – and so nearly did Jeff.



The self-made Camp Dua: our home and research station in the Cyclops

In total, over both northern and southern slopes, we climbed in excess of 12,000m. We deployed eighty camera traps across the entire elevational gradient of the range. And it is thanks to these traps that we made a very special discovery. In the very last sequence of camera trap footage, from the final SD card collected on the final day of our final mountain ascent, we recorded three photos and one video of Attenborough's long-beaked echidna. This is the first footage ever recorded of the species. It verifies that this fascinating creature, last seen in 1961, still lives in these remote mountains: a precious remnant of 200 million years of evolutionary history.



Mountain guide Zacharias Sorondanya perched above an unexplored cave system

This incredible discovery can be held up alongside a vast array of other data, that together mark the scientific value of our expedition. We collected hundreds of thousands of arthropod specimens, 75kg of rock from 70 locations, more than seventy specimens of reptile and amphibian, and over 8,000 camera images (and counting). Also on the expedition's final day, we rediscovered Mayr's honeyeater (*Ptiloprora mayri*), a rare species of bird that had not been seen for 16 years. We visited an unexplored cave system, where we found new species of blind spider, cave cricket, and whip scorpion, never before known to science. Perhaps most surprising of all, we even discovered an entirely new genus of shrimp that survives on land, so moist is the rainforest.

The expedition, and the discoveries so far made, are only the beginning of our scientific mission. Max is starting geochemical and dating analysis on the rock samples to elucidate the Cyclops' origins. Leo and Attila are working to sequence the genes of our insect specimens to trace their evolutionary history. With time, our treasure trove of data will lead to more taxonomic discoveries and, in combination with our geological data, we will gain unprecedented insight into the history of the life of the Cyclops Mountains – from disparate islands in the Pacific, to the vast and diverse mountain range that exists today.

We hope that one legacy of *Expedition Cyclops* will be greater protection of the mountains' biodiversity, which is threatened by immigration and urban expansion on their southern side.

With the likes of Jeff, Ruben, John, Meli, Sili, Iain, and Malcolm, there is great energy within Papua to protect these special ecosystems. But support from outside will be essential, and this is something I am actively trying to cultivate. One way to assist conservation in the area would be a dedicated research centre at the base of the Cyclops. There is great willingness from the people in Yongsu Sapari to support much-needed further research. There is also a rich oral history in the village that is in danger of being lost as younger generations move away. This loss is something of great concern to village elders, and they hope that a research station could twin as a centre of cultural heritage, to house their collective memory. As I look towards this future, I wonder how *Expedition Cyclops* will enter this memory.



The first ever image of Attenborough's long-beaked echidna

Expedition Cyclops was supported by the generosity of donations made to Merton College, with assistance from the Development Office. Also supporting the expedition were the Royal Geographical Society, the Scientific Exploration Society, Re:wild, the University of Oxford's Expeditions Council, Royal Holloway University, Reconyx, Derek Williams, Chris Peri, and other generous individual donations. The expedition would not have been possible without the support and assistance of Yappenda, Indonesia's Research and Development Agency (BRIN), Papua BBKSDA, and Universitas Cenderawasih (Uncen).

Lost, Little Known and Unbuilt Merton

Views of Merton College through the ages

Seventy years ago, in 1953, on the *second* Saturday of my *first* term at Merton, I was inspired by my tutor, Dr Roger Highfield, to help him display some manuscripts on the history of the College.

Ever since, I have collected some 130 prints and some historic drawings of the College and the dozen 'Spy' cartoons of distinguished alumni. I have used many of these in my

publication *Merton College, a longer History of the Buildings and Furnishings*. In due course, all of these pictures are destined for the College Library. In the meantime, I am delighted to offer a selection.

Alan Bott (1953)
Bodley Fellow



1. *Collegium Mertonense*. The earliest representation of the College, it is part of a series of prints by John Bereblock celebrating Queen Elizabeth's visit to Oxford in 1566. She was to return in 1592 as the guest of Warden Sir Henry Savile, her tutor in Greek, and to dine in Merton hall.

2. North front of the College, Thomas Rowlandson, c.1810-15, based on Oxford *Almanack* of 1772.



3. Mob Quad, 'The Undergraduates Quadrangle'. (*Illustrated London News*, 1864). 14th century, tower 1450. The name 'Mob' first appears in 1797 and probably derives from the Latin *mobile vulgus* defined by the OED as 'the disorderly and riotous part of the population'. Thus, it is a facetious contrast with 'Fellows Quad' and other parts of the College.





4. Front Quad, during a funeral, Thomas Rowlandson 1810-15. It is an imaginary scene based on the *Oxford Almanack* of 1788.



6. Library, c.1370 with fittings in wood 1588-9, M Jackson (*Illustrated London News*, 1864).



5. Chapel crossing, looking north, 14th century. Hanslip Fletcher, 1911. Note William Butterfield's 'low garden wall' screen at the entrance to the choir. It was removed in 1939.



7. The Grove, c.1885, an unsigned water colour; The south transept of the Chapel and west side of the Library.



8. Merton College from the Fields, J Malchair, *Oxford Almanack*, 1768.

Records



Merton College 2022-23

The Visitor

The Most Reverend and Right Honourable
the Lord Archbishop of Canterbury

Warden

Irene Tracey, CBE, MA, DPhil, FRCA, FMedSci,
MAE (until 31 December 2022)

Acting Warden

Jennifer Payne, MA, (MA Camb) (from 1
January 2023)

Fellows

Steven John Gunn, MA, DPhil, FRHistS
Professor of Early Modern History & Tutor in History

Richard Anthony McCabe, MA, (MA Dublin;
MA, PhD Camb) FBA *Professor of English Language & Literature & Tutor in English*

David James Paterson, MA, DPhil, (MSc, DSc
Western Australia) FRSB, FPhysiol, FAPS,
MAE, Hon FRSNZ, *Professor of Cardiovascular Physiology & Tutor in Pre-Clinical Medicine*

Mindy Chen-Wishart, MA, (BA (Hons) LLB,
LLM, Otago) *Professor of the Law of Contract & Tutor in Law*

Timothy Charles Guilford, MA, DPhil
Professor of Animal Behaviour & Tutor in Zoology, Garden Master

Jennifer Payne, MA, (MA Camb) *Professor of Corporate Finance Law & Tutor in Law*

Artur Konrad Ekert, MA, DPhil, (MSc Cracow)
FRS *Professor of Physics*

Alan David Morrison, MA, DPhil, (MSc Lond)
Professor of Law & Finance, Sub-Warden

John Stuart Giers Gloag, MA, MRICS *Land Agent & Estates Bursar*

Julia Caroline Walworth, MA (BA
Swarthmore; MA, PhD Yale) FSA *Librarian*

The Revd Canon Simon Matthew Jones, MA,
DPhil, (BA, MA Durh; PhD Camb) *Chaplain*

Peter William Harold Holland, MA, (PhD
Lond; DSc Rdg) FRS *Linacre Professor of Zoology*

Kathryn Lee Blackmon, MA, (BS Clemson;
MBA, PhD North Carolina) Associate
Professor of Operations Management & Tutor in Management Studies

Simon Martin Hooker, MA, DPhil *Professor of Atomic & Laser Physics & Michael Baker Tutor in Physics*

Irene Stavros Lemos, MA, DPhil, FSA *Professor of Classical Archaeology*

Alexander David Scott, (BA, PhD Camb)
Professor of Mathematics & Dominic Welsh Fellow, Tutor in Mathematics

Jonathan Ralph Warburg Prag, MA, (PhD
Lond) *Professor of Ancient History & Tutor in Ancient History, Senior Treasurer of the Amalgamated Clubs*

Michael Hilton Whitworth, MA, DPhil,
Professor of English Literature & Culture & Tutor in English

Ian Maclachlan, MA, DPhil *Professor of French Literature & Tutor in French, Dean of Graduates*

Béla Novák, MA, (MSc, PhD, Dr Habil, TU
Budapest; CSc DSc Hungarian Academy of Science) *Professor of Integrative Systems Biology*

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Camb) *Professor of Particle Physics & Tutor in Physics*

Rhiannon Ash, MA, DPhil, (MA Toronto)
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Washington; PhD Berkeley) Associate
Professor of Chinese Politics & Tutor in Politics, Equality Adviser

Matthew Grimley, MA, DPhil Associate
Professor of Modern History, Mark Reynolds Fellow & Tutor in History

Alexander Schekochihin, MA, (BSci MIPT;
MA, PhD Princeton) *Professor of Theoretical Physics, Tutor in Physics, Steward of Common Room*

Daniel Grimley, MA, DPhil, (BA, MPhil, PhD
Camb) *Professor of Music and Head of Humanities*

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FRS *Royal Society Research Professor of Mathematics*

Charles Alan Heathcote Alexander, BA, (MBA
Harvard) *Finance Bursar*

Andrew Mackie, MA *Professorial Fellow, Director of Legal Services & General Counsel, University of Oxford*

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FRCP, *Professor of Genomic Medicine & Tutor in Medicine*

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HM Emperor Naruhito of Japan, Hon DCL

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Anastasios Leventis, CBE, OFR

Dame Jessica Mary Rawson, DBE, MA, DLitt
(MA, LittD Camb) FBA

The Rt Hon Lord Hogan-Howe, Kt, QPM, MA
(MBA Sheff)

Lyndal Roper, (BA Melbourne, PhD Lond)
FBA, FRHistS

Dana Scott, (PhD Princeton) FBA

The Rt Revd and Rt Hon Lord Williams of
Oystermouth, PC, DD, Hon DCL, FBA, FRSL,
FLSW

Erich Gruen, (BA Columbia; PhD Harvard)

The Rt Hon Dame Philippa Whipple, DBE, MA

The Rt Hon Lord Grimstone of Boscobel, Kt,
MA, MSc

Martin Ney, MA

Lady Hollick, (BA Sussex) OBE

Sir Martin Taylor, MA, (PhD Lond) FRS

Dinah Birch, CBE, MA, DPhil, FRSA, FEA

Alison Blake, MA, CMG

The Hon Dame Kelyn Bacon, MA, DBE

The Most Revd Michael Lewis, BA, MA

The Hon Sir Andrew Baker, MA (MA Lond)

Irene Tracey, CBE, MA, DPhil, FRCA, FMedSci,
MAE

Katherine Willis, Baroness Willis of
Summertown, CBE, FGS

Bodley Fellows

Richard Bellerby Allan, MA, FCA

Alan John Bott, OBE, MA, FSA

Robert Gould McKelvey, MA, (BA Wesleyan)

David Harvey, MA, DPhil

Reed Rubin, BA

Robert MacLaren, MB, ChB, DPhil, DipLATHE,
FRCOphth, FRCS, FMedSci

Adrian Vickers, MA

Peter Phillips

Christopher Ramsey, MA, DPhil

David Ure, MA

Benjamin Nicholas, MA

Nick Allard MA, (JD Yale)

Catherine Paxton MA, DPhil

Sir Henry Savile Fellows

Dame Eleanor-Jane Milner-Gulland, DBE, MA,
BA (PhD ICL)

Ulrike Luise Tillmann, MA, (BA Brandeis, PhD
Stanford, Habil Bonn) FRS, FIMA, FAMS, Mem
Leopoldina

Andrew John King, MA Status, (BSc, PhD
Lond) FMedSci, FPHYSIOL, FRS

Francis Platt, MA Status, (BSc Lond; PhD
Bath) FMedSci, FRS

Sir Peter Horby, (Bsc, Lond; MSc PhD LSHTM)
FMedSci, FRCP

Julia de Lacy Mann Fellows

Caspar Andreas Jacobs, BPhil, MPhysPhil
(from 1 September 2022) *Early Career
Researcher in Philosophy*

Martina Astrid Rodda, DPhil, (BA, MA Pisa)
Leventis Early Career Researcher in Ancient Greek

Lucy Brookes, BA, DPhil, (MA York) *Fitzjames Early Career Researcher in Medieval English Language & Literature*

David Philipp Nadlinger, DPhil, (BSc, MSc ETH)
Early Career Researcher in Physics

Alexander George Lipp, (MA, MSci Camb, PhD Imperial) *Early Career Researcher in Geochemistry*

Krishnan Jesse Ram-Prasad, (BA, MPhil, PhD Camb) *Early Career Researcher in Classics*

Supernumerary Fellows

Andrew John King, MA Status, (BSc, PhD Lond) FMedSci, FPhysiol, FRS (until 31 December 2022)

Francis Platt, MA Status, (BSc Lond; PhD Bath) FMedSci, FRS (until 31 December 2022)

Simon Draper, MBioch, DPhil (until 31 December 2022)

Michael Keith, BA, DPhil (until 31 December 2022)

Sunetra Gupta, MA, (AB Princeton; PhD Lond) (until 30 April 2023)

Andrea Cavalleri, (Laurea, PhD Pavia) (until 31 May 2023)

Anant Parekh, MA, DPhil, FMedSci, FRS (until 30 September 2023)

Nicole Zitzmann, MA, (MSc, PhD Dundee) FSB

Hilary Greaves, MA, (PhD Rutgers)

Susannah Katherine Orkin, MA, MPhil, DPhil, (BSocSc Cape Town)

Helen Barron, (MA Camb)

Michael Booth, (MChem S'ton; PhD Camb)

Craig MacLean, MA, (BSc, PhD McGill)

Wylliot Fellows

Charles Manby, MA, (MBA Insead)

John Booth, MA

Peter Braam, MA, DPhil, (BSc, MSc Utrecht)

John Moussouris, MSc, D Phil, (AB Harvard)

Visiting Research Fellows

Ben Haggarty October 2022 to August 2023
(Creative Arts, Performing Arts)

Antonios Rokas *Michaelmas term 2022*

Mihyun Kang *Hilary term 2023*

Athena Tsingarida *Hilary term 2023*

Jonas-Sébastien Beaudry *Trinity term 2023*

Yijie Zhuang *Trinity term 2023*

Christopher Skinner *Trinity term 2023*

Elections

To a Professorial Fellowship with effect from 1 October 2022

Daniel Grimley, MA, DPhil, (BA, MPhil, PhD Camb) *Professor of Music and Head of Humanities*

To a Professorial Fellowship with effect from 13 March 2023

Matthew Kenneth Higgins, (BA (Hons) PhD Camb) *E.P. Abraham Professor of Structural Biology*

To an Emeritus Fellowship with effect from 2 November 2022

Simon Saunders, BA, MA, (M Math Camb; PhD Lond)

To an Emeritus Fellowship with effect from 1 October 2023

Mindy Chen-Wishart, MA, (BA (Hons) LLB, LL.M. Otago)

To an Honorary Fellowship with effect from 1 January 2023

Irene Tracey, CBE, MA, DPhil, FRCA, FMedSci, MAE

Katherine Willis, Baroness Willis of Summertown, CBE, FGS

To a Sir Henry Savile Fellowship with effect from 1 January 2023

Andrew John King, MA Status, (BSc, PhD Lond) FMedSci, FPhysiol, FRS

Francis Platt, MA Status, (BSc Lond; PhD Bath) FMedSci, FRS

Sir Peter Horby, (BSc, Lond; MSc PhD LSHTM) FMedSci, FRCP

To a Leventis Research Fellowship with effect from 1 October 2023

Martina Astrid Rodda, DPhil, (BA, MA Pisa)
Leventis Early Career Researcher in Ancient Greek

To a Fitzjames Research Fellowship with effect from 1 October 2023

Lucy Brookes, BA, DPhil, (MA York) *Fitzjames Early Career Researcher in Medieval English Language & Literature*

To a Junior Research Fellowship with effect from 1 October 2023

David Philipp Nadlinger, DPhil, (BSc, MSc ETH)
Early Career Researcher in Physics

Alexander George Lipp, (MA, MSci Camb, PhD Imperial) *Early Career Researcher in Geochemistry*

Krishnan Jesse Ram-Prasad, (BA, MPhil, PhD Camb) *Early Career Researcher in Classics*

To a Visiting Research Fellowship in the Creative Arts (Film) with effect from 1 October 2023

Bevis Bowden



The following Fellows resigned

Chih-Hao Luke Ong, MA, (MA Camb; PhD Lond) *Professor of Computer Science & Tutor in Computer Science*

Henry Spelman, DPhil, MSt, (BA North Carolina) *Leventis Research Fellow in Ancient Greek*

Emily Margaret Rutherford, MPhil (BA Princeton, MA MPhil PhD Columbia) *Junior Research Fellow in History*

Véronique Gouverneur, MA, (Licence en Sciences Chimiques, PhD Louvain) FRS *Professor of Chemistry & Tutor in Organic Chemistry*

Irene Tracey, CBE, MA, DPhil, FRCA, FMedSci, MAE, *Warden*

Caspar Andreas Jacobs, BPhil, MPhil, MPhil, *Early Career Researcher in Philosophy*

Brianne Kathleen Dolce, (BM Michigan; MMus KC, MPhil PhD Yale) *Fitzjames Research Fellow in Music*

Fellows' Honours and Appointments

Professor Judith Armitage was 2023 recipient of the F. Marion Hulett Award for

a distinguished woman biologist whose research involves microorganisms. She was also re-appointed as chair of the Science and Impact Advisory Board for the John Innes Centre and a member of its Governing Council.

Dr Gwen Burnyeat was awarded the 2023 Public Anthropologist Award for her book *The Face of Peace: Government Pedagogy amid Disinformation in Colombia*. She won a European Research Council (ERC) Starting Grant, to fund her five-year project 'Stories of Divided Politics: Polarisation and Bridge-Building in Colombia and Britain', and has been appointed a permanent lecturer (assistant professor) in Social Anthropology at the University of Edinburgh, starting in January 2024.

Fra John Eidinow was elected a member of the Sovereign Council of the Sovereign Military Hospitaller Order of St John of Jerusalem, of Rhodes and of Malta (January 2023); previously appointed ad interim by papal decree (September 2022).

Professor John Geddes was made a Member of the Academia Europaea in 2023.

Professor Daniel Grimley was a Scholar-

in-Residence at the Bard Music Festival, Bard College, New York, in August 2023.

Professor Matt Higgins was appointed to the E P Abraham Chair of Structural Biology at the University of Oxford. He is delighted to remain at Merton as a Professorial Fellow.

Professor Dame EJ Milner-Gulland was made a Dame in the King's Birthday Honours for services to international conservation.

Professor David Paterson was awarded a Leducq Transatlantic Network of Excellence award of \$8.6 million for 2024–29, and is European Lead on the project to develop bioelectronics for neurocardiology diagnosis and therapeutics. He also received an Honorary Doctorate (Medical Sciences) from the University of Western Australia (December 2023).

Sir Martin Read (1971) received a Knighthood in the King's New Year Honours for services to industry and for public and voluntary service.

Professor Irene Tracey CBE was elected as Fellow of the Royal Society, appointed Honorary Fellowship of the Physiological Society, and made an Honorary Fellow.

Undergraduate Results, Awards and Prizes 2022-23

All academic results, awards and prizes are correct as of 4 October 2023

	Entry	Distinction/1st	2.1	2.2	3rd	Incomplete	Declared to have Deserved Honours
Final Honours School	90	38	41	3	0	1	7*

	Entry	Distinction/1st	Pass
First Public Exam	88	21	67

*Students with a substantial number of missing marks due to industrial action were awarded provisional degrees called 'Declared to Deserve Honours': their degree will be updated to a classified degree when all marks become available.

Undergraduate College prizes

Miss S Ahmed, joint second place in the FE Smith Memorial Mooting Prize

Mr P Aitken, Phillips Prize in Chemistry for the best performance in the Preliminary Examination

Miss A Ahlberg, joint winner of the Wilder Penfield Prize awarded to an undergraduate in Medical and or Biological Sciences

Mr C Armstrong, joint second place in the FE Smith Memorial Mooting Prize

Mr C Armstrong, joint winner of the Norton Rose Fulbright Prize for best performance in Law Moderations

Miss S Arun, joint winner of the Allen & Overy prize for most promising second-year Law student

Miss M Gee Olmedilla, joint winner of the Wilder Penfield Prize awarded to an undergraduate in Medical and or Biological Sciences

Mr C Houseley, winner of the FE Smith Memorial Mooting Prize

Mr C Houseley, joint winner of the Norton Rose Fulbright prize for best performance in Law Moderations

Miss A Lecka, joint winner of the Allen & Overy prize for most promising second-year Law student

Mr J Martin, Conrad Russell Prize for the best undergraduate History thesis

Mr J Pickering, Phillips Prize in Chemistry for the best performance in Finals (Parts IA & IB).

Mr H Smith, William Harvey Prize to an undergraduate for the best performance in Principles of Clinical Anatomy

Mr Y Yeo, the Sam McNaughton Prize for the best performance in Philosophy in the PPE Preliminary Examination

Undergraduate University Prizes

Mr C Aberle, The Gibbs Prize for Computer Science and Philosophy 2023 for Parts A and B, paying particular regard to Computer Science papers

Mr C Aberle, The Gibbs Prize for Computer Science and Philosophy 2023 for Parts A and B, paying particular regard to Philosophy paper

Mr C Aberle, The Gibbs Prize for best overall performance in Computer Science and Philosophy Part B 2023

Mr A Aggarwal, Examiners' Prize for the highest mark in the General Management paper

Mr A Aggarwal, Examiners' Prize for the highest mark in the Introductory Economics paper

Mr A Aggarwal, Said Foundation Prize for the best performance overall in the Preliminary Examination for Economics and Management
Miss A Ahlberg, Gibbs Proxime Prize in Biology

Mr P Aitken, A first-year prize in Practical Chemistry

Miss X Birkinshaw, Said Foundation Prize for the best performance in the Global Business History Paper

Mr N Chan, Gibbs Prize in Mathematics and Philosophy for the Philosophy papers in the Part B examinations

Mr K Dewalt, Gibbs Prize in Mathematics and Philosophy for the Mathematics papers in the Part A examinations

Miss M Gee Olmedilla, Wronker Research Project prize

Mr S Moore, Junior Mathematical Prize in the Mathematics Part B Examination

Mr W Tangamornchaipattana, second place in the best performances in the Chemistry Part IA Examination

Mr S Wang, Elizabeth Anscombe Prize for the best undergraduate thesis in Philosophy (joint winner)

Mr F Waterhouse, Gibbs Prize for the highest performance in this year's Greats by a Course II student

Miss B Watkins, runner-up for prize for best performance in Physical & Theoretical Chemistry Part II Examination

Graduate Results, Awards and Prizes 2022-23

All academic results, awards and prizes are correct as of 4 October 2023

	Entry	Distinction	Pass	Declared to have Deserved Masters
Taught Course Results	40*	7	21	2**

*10 results outstanding, as at 04/10/2023

** Students with a substantial number of missing marks due to industrial action were awarded provisional degrees called 'Declared to Deserve Masters': their degree will be updated to a classified degree when all marks become available.

Graduate University Prize

Miss N Li, Peter Beaconsfield Prize

College Staff

Name	Appointment	First appointed	Name	Appointment	First appointed
Mr R J Wiggins	Decorator	16/3/1987	Mr S Bowdery	Head of IT	1/4/2011
Mr J S Lisle	Groundsman	17/10/1988	Mr T Cortes Rodrigues	Cleaner	31/10/2011
Mrs J Gerhardi	Graduate Officer	2/1/1991	Mrs S Rai	Cleaner	31/10/2011
Mrs S A Allen	Hall Assistant	7/7/1998	Mrs J Rusaitiene	Cleaner	16/1/2012
Mrs N S Mahmood	Cleaner	23/4/2001	Mrs L E Collins	Verger	23/9/2013
Miss S L Bird	Chef de Partie	8/10/2001	Miss J I Dziadosz	Hall Steward	22/05/2013
Miss L Reveley	Bursary Clerk	11/2/2002	Mrs G Pal	Cleaner	3/11/2014
Mrs C Lewis	Resource Description Project Librarian	7/5/2002	Mrs F Lawrence	Head of HR	2/12/2014
Mr C D Joyce	Kitchen Porter	29/7/2002	Miss N Lane	Lodge Porter	19/8/2015
Miss L Savin	Head Gardener	7/10/2002	Mr N Hall	Bar Manager	21/9/2015
Mr J A Reid	Archivist	2/12/2002	Miss I Siwczak	SCR & Hall Supervisor	27/10/2015
Ms L Lawrence	Warden's Executive Assistant	1/9/2003	Mrs M Serhej	Linen Room Assistant	6/6/2016
Mr C Bridgman	Sous Chef	29/9/2003	Mrs S Camino Carrera	Cleaner	03/10/2016
Miss J Baker	Cleaner	2/1/2004	Mrs D Balcyte	Cleaner	05/12/2016
Mrs M Skalik	Head Steward	10/8/2005	Miss C Chisholm	Alumni Relations Officer	9/1/2017
Mr J Pawlowski	Lodge Porter	24/10/2005	Ms M Clarke	Housekeeping Operations & Accommodation Manager	20/3/2017
Mr M Furse	Senior Gardener	2/1/2007	Mr K Watts	Maintenance Manager	3/7/2017
Miss N Harrison	Estates Administrator	23/7/2007	Miss J Wingrove	Senior Chef de Partie	31/07/2017
Mr P Macallister	Sous Chef	22/10/2007	Miss P Martin Montalvo	SCR & Hall Supervisor	28/09/2017
Mrs K Adamczyk	Senior Housekeeping Supervisor	1/11/2007	Mrs J Cullen	Estates Secretary	30/10/2017
Ms S T Hague	Head of Accommodation	2/2/2009	Mr E Tesfalem	Servery Assistant	16/11/2017
Mr I Knight	Accommodation & Conference Porter	13/7/2009	Mr P O'Keefe	Servery Assistant	27/11/2017
Miss H Bednarczyk	Deputy Head Porter	4/1/2011	Ms V Parkinson	Resource Services & Support Librarian	03/1/2018

Name	Appointment	First appointed	Name	Appointment	First appointed
Mr C Soares Godinho	Cleaner	05/02/2018	Mrs S Storey	Payroll Administrator	08/03/2021
Mr M Martinov	Deputy Development Director	19/2/2018	Miss K Calvert	Deputy Head of Events & Conferences	16/08/2021
Ms H Campbell Longley	Deputy Librarian	26/2/2018	Mrs M Horanyi	Housekeeping Supervisor	16/08/2021
Miss M Dziadosz	SCR & Hall Supervisor	28/09/2017	Miss K Karppinen	Alumni Relations & Events Officer	09/09/2021
Mrs A Ostoja-Starzewska	Butler	16/4/2018	Mr J Madeley	Lodge Porter	20/09/2021
Mr M Carroll	Senior Chef de Partie	08/5/2018	Mr M Randolph	Database and Operations Manager	08/11/2021
Mr K Lau	Lodge Porter	08/10/2018	Mr A Pilendiram	Deputy Head of IT	13/12/2021
Mr H James	Head Porter	07/1/2019	Mr D Lay	Cleaner	13/12/2021
Mrs R Wilkins	Academic Officer	25/2/2019	Ms A Szymanska	Cleaner	13/12/2021
Mr S Saprykin	Lodge Porter	08/4/2019	Ms S Hines	Cleaner	13/12/2021
Mr L Fekete	IT Officer	09/4/2019	Miss V Varosi	Events & Conferences Coordinator	17/01/2022
Miss K Leach	Assistant College Accountant	27/08/2019	Mrs S Sobo	College Nurse	24/01/2022
Ms J Barrett	Acting Head of Welfare	01/10/2019	Ms G Arroyo Payan	SCR & Hall Assistant	8/02/2022
Ms E Casey	Chapel Officer & Choir Manager	21/10/2019	Mr J Clark-Johnson	Chef de Partie	7/03/2022
Miss E Ochiela	Bursary Clerk	27/01/2020	Mrs J Cable	Executive Assistant	16/05/2022
Miss A Forrai	HR Officer	3/02/2020	Mr A Pereira Da Silva	Cleaner	2/04/2022
Mr T Jeffrey	Lodge Porter	2/03/2020	Mrs A Ponting-West	Bursary Clerk	5/04/2022
Mrs E Ortega Palazon	Cleaner	13/07/2020	Mr P Wiczorek	Bar & Catering Assistant	8/02/2022
Mrs S Meldere	Cleaner	6/08/2020	Ms P S Yordanova	Cleaner	0/06/2022
Miss S Ximenes	Cleaner	6/08/2020	Mr P G Freitas	Weekend Cleaner	3/07/2022
Mrs J Reid	Clerk of Works	01/10/2020	Mr P Bashir	IT Officer	2/08/2022
Ms H Kimmett	Governance Officer	05/10/2020			
Miss B Sarkozi	SCR & Hall Assistant	07/12/2020			

Name	Appointment	First appointed	Name	Appointment	First appointed
Mx J A Crompton	Verger	6/09/2022	Mrs S Wiggins	Cleaner	6/06/2023
Mr S T Jones	Maintenance Technician	12/09/2022	Ms R L Stewart	Head of Events & Conferences	10/07/2023
Ms J Fung	Administrative Assistant	19/09/2022	Ms N J Griffiths	Welfare & Disability Administrator	14/08/2023
Mr O S Barratt	Lodge Porter	6/09/2022	Miss R A Wilson	Web & Media Officer	14/08/2023
Ms S Makino	SCR & Hall Assistant	24/10/2022	Miss G Morey-Picking	Graduate Associate – Development	14/08/2023
Ms J Bell	Alumni Communications Officer	25/10/2022			
Miss A R Yapp	Library Assistant	31/10/2022			
Ms M K Latos	Cleaner	05/12/2022			
Mrs P Bracher	HR Officer	03/01/2023			
Mrs E J Irving	Academic Officer	03/01/2023			
Miss L M Cox	Schools Liaison & Access Officer	03/01/2023			
Mr S N Crawshaw	Head Chef	03/01/2023			
Mr C A O'Connell	Gardener	16/01/2023			
Ms J Simanova	Lodge Porter	16/01/2023			
Ms E De Alencar Silva	SCR & Hall Assistant	24/10/2023			
Mr S I Chira	SCR, Hall & Bar Supervisor	12/02/2023			
Ms N Cristea	Chef De Partie	01/03/2023			
Ms I Lewis	Housekeeping Supervisor	9/03/2023			
Mr D Janciauskas	SCR, Hall & Bar Assistant	13/03/2023			
Mr I Rivero Humanes	Chef De Partie	17/04/2023			
Mr B J Tobin	Lodge Porter	01/05/2023			
Mr S Gurung	Chef de Partie	9/05/2023			
Ms A Ockwell	Cleaner	15/05/2023			
Miss L M Madeira	Cleaner	2/05/2023			
Mrs O Vaz	Cleaner	2/05/2023			
Miss C Cosa Burca	Events & Conferences Coordinator	7/06/2023			

Publications

Selected Fellows' Publications 2022–23

Altehenger, J and DY Ho (eds) (2022). *Material Contradictions in Mao's China* (University of Washington Press)

Altehenger, J (2022). 'Bamboo objects and socialist construction' and (with DY Ho) 'Making Revolution material', in **Altehenger J** and DY Ho (eds), *Material Contradictions in Mao's China*, pp. 1–39

Ash, R (2022). 'Burn baby burn (*disco* in Furneaux): Tacitean Authority, Innovation, and the Neronian Fire (*Annals* 15.38–39)', in G Monti et al. (eds), *The Authoritative Historian: Tradition and Innovation in Ancient Historiography* (Cambridge University Press), pp. 353–72

Ash, R (2022). 'Un-parallel lives? The younger Quintus and Marcus Cicero in Cicero's letters', *Hermathena* 202: 71–104.

Ash, R (2023). 'Tiberius in space: proxemics and the portrayal of a princeps' in S Malik and C Davenport (eds), *Representing Rome's Emperors: Historical and Cultural Perspectives through Time* (Oxford University Press)

Barr, AJ, P Caban and J Rembielinski (2023). 'Bell-type inequalities for systems of relativistic vector bosons', arXiv:2204.11063, *Quantum* 7: 1070

Ashby-Pickering, R, **AJ Barr** and A Wierzychucka (2023). 'Quantum state tomography, entanglement detection and Bell violation prospects in weak decays of massive particles', arXiv:2209.13990, *J High Energy Phys* 5: 20

Feng, JL, et al. including **AJ Barr** (2023). 'The Forward Physics Facility at the High-Luminosity LHC', *J Phys G: Nucl Part Phys* 50(3): 030501

Burnyeat, G (2022). *The Face of Peace: Government Pedagogy amid Disinformation in Colombia* (University of Chicago Press)

Burnyeat, G (2022). *Chocolate, política y construcción de paz: Una etnografía de la Comunidad de Paz de San José de Apartadó, Colombia* (trans. Santiago Paredes) (Bogotá: Editorial del Rosario)

Burnyeat, G (2023). 'Las relaciones Estado-sociedad para la paz y el trabajo en red con aliados de la Comisión de la Verdad' in M Pardo and S Peters (eds) *Educación política: Debates de una historia por construir* (Bogotá: CINEP), pp. 73–82

Burnyeat, G and M Sheild Johansson (2022). 'An anthropology of the social contract: the political power of an idea', *Crit Anthropol* 42(3): 221–37. doi.org/10.1177/0308275X221120168

Burnyeat, G (2022). '"We were not emotional enough": cultural liberalism and social contract imaginaries in the Colombian peace process', *Crit Anthropol* 42(3): 286–303. doi.org/10.1177/0308275X221120166

Eidinow, JSC (2022). 'The critic and the farmer: Horace, Maecenas, and Virgil in Horace *Carm.* 1.1', *Harvard Stud Class Philology* 112: 313–41

Gildea, R (2023). *Backbone of the Nation: Mining Communities and the Great Strike of 1984–85* (Yale University Press)

McCabe, R (2022). 'The Faerie Queene' in C Bates and P Cheney (eds) *The Oxford History of Poetry in English. Volume 4: Sixteenth-Century British Poetry* (Oxford University Press), pp. 477–94

McCabe, R (2022). 'Tragedy, or the fall of middle-class men', in N Kenny (ed.) *Literature, Learning and Social Hierarchy in Early Modern Europe* (Oxford University Press/British Academy), pp. 219–38

McCabe, R (2023). '"Sovereign place": Spenser with Henri Lefebvre', in N Rao, J Moshenska and D Hillman (eds) *Companionable Thinking: Spenser with Spenser Studies* 37: 427–45

McCabe, R (2022). 'Patronage', in A Hadfield (ed.) *Oxford Bibliographies. British and Irish Literature* (New York: Oxford University Press)

Erban, R and H-W Kang (2023). 'Chemical systems with limit cycles', *Bull Math Biol* 85(76)

Floyd, C, et al. including **R Erban** (2022). 'On stretching, bending, shearing and twisting of actin filaments. I: Variational models', *J Chem Theory Comput* 18(8): 4865–78

Utterson, J and **R Erban** (2022). 'On standardised moments of force distribution in simple liquids', *Phys Chem Chem Phys* 9(24): 5646–57



Utterson, J and **R Erban** (2023). 'Symmetries of many-body systems imply distance-dependent potentials', *Phys Rev E* 108(1): 014122

Adams, B and **DM Grimley** (eds) (2023). *Vaughan Williams and His World* (University of Chicago)

Behjatian, A. and **M Krishnan** (2022). 'Electrostatic free energies carry structural information on nucleic acid molecules in solution', *J Chem Phys* 156: 134201

Behjatian, A. R Walker-Gibbons, **AA Schekochihin** and **M Krishnan** (2022). 'Nonmonotonic pair potentials in the interaction of like-charged objects in solution', *Langmuir* 38(2): 786–800

Bespalova, M. et al. and **M Krishnan** (2022). 'Single-molecule trapping and measurement in a nanostructured lipid bilayer system', *Langmuir* 38(45): 13923–34

Bespalova, M. et al. and **M Krishnan** (2022). 'Opto-electrostatic determination of nucleic-acid double-helix dimensions and the structure of the molecule-solvent interface', *Macromolecules* 55(14): 6200–10

Kloes, G. et al. and **M Krishnan** (2022). 'Far-field electrostatic signatures of macromolecular 3D conformation', *Nano Lett* 22(19): 7834–40

Mahanta, S. et al. and **M Krishnan** (2022). 'Wide-field optical imaging of electrical charge and chemical reactions at the solid-liquid interface', *PNAS* 119(49): e220995511

Walker-Gibbons, R. et al. and **M Krishnan** (2022). 'The role of surface chemistry in the orientational behavior of water at an interface', *J Phys Chem B* 126(25): 4697–710

Gunn, S and T Gromelski (2022). 'Coroners' inquest juries in sixteenth-century England', *Continuity Change* 37(3): 365–88

Kewes, P, **S Gunn** et al. (2023). 'Early modern

parliamentary studies: overview and new perspectives', *History Compass* 21(1): e12757. doi.org/10.1111/hic3.12757

Ko, K-T et al. and **MK Higgins** (2022). 'Structure of the malaria vaccine candidate Pf548/45 and its recognition by transmission blocking antibodies', *Nature Commun* 13(1): 5603

Macleod, OJ, et al. including **MK Higgins** (2022). 'Invariant surface glycoprotein 65 of *Trypanosoma brucei* is a complement C3 receptor', *Nature Commun* 13: 5085

Cook, AD, M Carrington and **MK Higgins** (2023). 'Molecular mechanism of complement inhibition by the trypanosome receptor ISG65', *eLife* 12: RP88960

Moskovitz, R. et al. and **MK Higgins** (2023). 'Structural basis for DARC binding in reticulocyte invasion by *Plasmodium vivax*', *Nature Commun* 14(1): 3627

Lewin, TD, AA Fouladi-Nashta and **PWH Holland** (2022). 'PRD-class homeobox genes in bovine early embryos: function, evolution, and overlapping roles', *Mol Biol Evol* 39(5): msac098

Crowley, L. et al. including **PWH Holland** (2023). 'A sampling strategy for genome sequencing the British terrestrial arthropod fauna', *Wellcome Open Res* 8: 123

Lewin, TD, JR Blagrove and **PWH Holland** (2023). 'Rapid evolution of the embryonically expressed homeobox gene *LEUTX* within primates', *Genome Biol Evol* 15(6): evad097

Mulhair, PO, et al. and **PWH Holland** (2023). 'Diversity, duplication and genomic organisation of homeobox genes in Lepidoptera', *Genome Res* 33(1): 32–44

Mewes, SM, et al. including **SM Hooker** (2023). 'Demonstration of tunability of HOFl waveguides via start-to-end simulations', *Phys Rev Research* 5: 033112

- von Boetticher, A, R Walczak and **SM Hooker** (2023). 'Modulational instability in large-amplitude linear laser wakefields', *Phys Rev E*, 107: L023201
- van de Wetering, JJ, **SM Hooker** and R Walczak (2023). 'Stability of the modulator in a plasma-modulated plasma accelerator', *Phys Rev E* 108(1–2): 015204
- Kershaw, I** (2023). *Personality and Power: Builders and Destroyers of Modern Europe* (London, Penguin), paperback edn
- Kershaw, I** (2023). 'What was an Augustinian grange? The evidence from Bolton Priory's estates', *Yorkshire Archaeological J* 95(1): 124–41
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- Schekochihin, AA** (2022). 'MHD turbulence: a biased review', *J Plasma Phys* 88(5): 155880501
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- Ewart, RJ, et al. and **AA Schekochihin** (2022). 'Collisionless relaxation of a Lynden-Bell plasma,' *J Plasma Phys* 88: 925880501
- Galishnikova, AK, MW Kunz and **AA Schekochihin** (2022). 'Tearing instability and current-sheet disruption in the turbulent dynamo', *Phys Rev X* 12: 041027
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Graduate Publications 2022-23

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Hughes, L (2023). 'Vita nova XV [8]', in ZG Barański and H Webb (eds) *Dante's 'Vita Nova': A Collaborative Reading* (Notre Dame University Press), pp. 132–8

Jukes, D (2022). 'Case analysis: Dexia Crediop SPA v Provincia Di Pesaro E Urbino', *JIBFL* 37(11): 770–1

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Kempton JA et al. (2023). 'Visual versus visual-inertial guidance in hawks pursuing terrestrial targets', *J Roy Soc Interface* 20(203): 20230071

Brighton, C, **JA Kempton** et al. (2023). 'Obstacle avoidance in aerial pursuit', *Current Biology* 33(15): 3192–3202.e3

Lovell-Read, FA et al. (2023). 'Using 'sentinel' plants to improve early detection of invasive plant pathogens'. *PLoS Comput Biol* 19(2): e101088. doi. 10.1371/journal.pcbi.1010884

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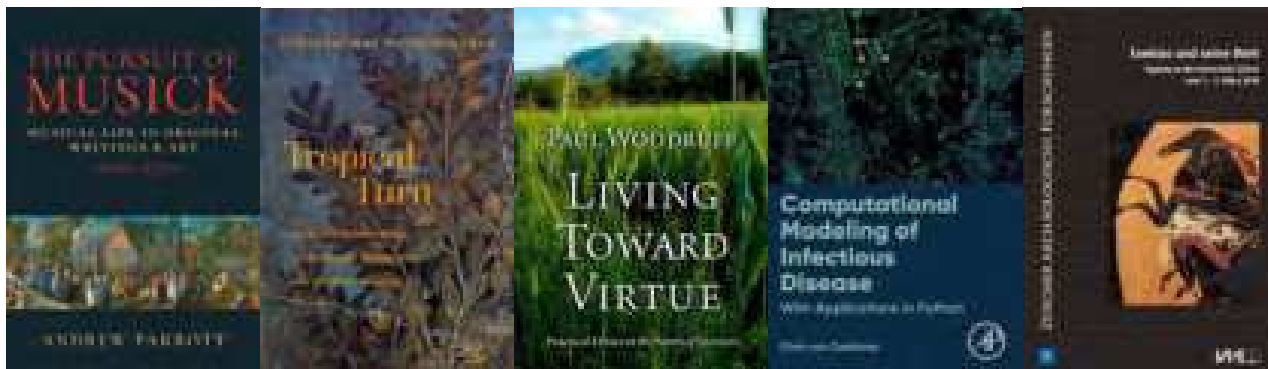
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Patel, C et al. (2023). 'Fluorochemicals from fluorspar via a phosphate-enabled mechanochemical process that bypasses HF'. *Science* 381(6655): 302–6. doi/10.1126/science.ad11557

Saroldi, A (2023). 'Translation and mountaineering, a first case study. Nea Morin and Janet Adam Smith between collaborative translation and *cordée féminine*'. *Translation in Society* 2(2): 235 –52. doi.org/10.1075/tris.22016.sar

Saroldi, A (2022). 'Il Sereni perduto. Rileggere *Up at La Serra* di Charles Tomlinson a partire da una traduzione inedita di Vittorio Sereni', *Ticontre. Teoria Testo Traduzione*, XVIII

Zhang, J (forthcoming, 2023). 'Seventh preference: the Chinese students left behind in education and immigration' *Chinese America: History & Perspectives*



Selected Alumni Publications 2022-23

Below is a list of publications by alumni in the 2022-23 academic year that we have been made aware of. If you have a book or book chapter due to be published in the 2023-24 academic year and would like it featured in the next edition of Postmaster, please get in touch at development@merton.ox.ac.uk.

Chris von Csefalvay (2010). *Computational Modeling of Infectious Disease* (Elsevier, 2023)

Jasper Gaunt (1982). 'Exekias and the volute-krater: new evidence', in C. Reusser and M. Bürge (eds), *Exekias und seine Welt. Tagung und der Universität Zürich vom 1-2 März 2019* (Leidorf, 2022), pp. 119-25

Jasper Gaunt (1982). 'Between Lydos, Amasis and Exekias: the Chalcidian Inscription Painter's potter and the Athenian Kerameikos', in B. Arheid, et al. (eds), *Ho pais kalos. Scritti di archeologia offerti a Mario Iozzo per il suo sessantacinquesimo compleanno* (Espera, 2022), pp. 133-52

Stephen Oppenheimer (1975). *A Bone to Pick*. (Published independently, 2023)

Suresh Muthukumaran (2011). *The Tropical Turn: Agricultural Innovation in the Ancient Middle East and the Mediterranean* (University of California Press, 2023)

Andrew Parrott (1996). *The Pursuit of Musick* (Clink Street Publishing, 2022)

John CQ Roberts (1953). *Just Before The Dawn: Tales of Late Colonial Africa*. (Austin Macauley Publishers Ltd, 2022)

Bob Scott (1963). *Win a Few. Lose a Few* (Book Guild Ltd, 2022)

Paul Woodruffe (1965). *Living Toward Virtue: Practical Ethics in the Spirit of Socrates* (Oxford University Press, 2022)

Mertonians



The Merton Society

I am delighted to report that the Merton Society is thriving, with many activities and initiatives for Mertonians.

The Society exists to further the interests of Merton College and its members, past and present, by fostering contacts between Merton alumni, all of whom are members, and encouraging them to maintain contact with the College. Working closely with the Warden and the Development Office, we are governed by the Council, and its core team comprises myself as Chair and Dr Gregory Lim (2006) as Secretary. Dame Philippa Whipple (1984) is President and has given incredible support to the Society over the last year, for which we are very grateful.

In the past academic year, we have had a fantastic calendar of events. We kicked off with informal pub drinks in London in November, which proved popular, especially with recent graduates. In December we had the annual Carol Service in London, held this time at All Saints Margaret Street, which was a sell-out. The College Choir sang beautifully. After the service the President made a presentation to the departing Warden, Professor Irene Tracey (1985), which included a special gift from the Society.

In early March, Evensong and a private tour of Westminster Abbey (organised by Gregory Lim) were followed by drinks in Dean's Yard, Westminster School, where we welcomed Professor Jennifer Payne as Acting Warden. In May, our annual lecture was held at Lazard, for which thanks go to Patrick Long (1995). In an extract from her forthcoming book Dr Chloé Deambrogio, Junior Research Fellow in Law, spoke about 'Child abuse, psychopathy, and the risk of future violence: a case of reversed mitigation in capital cases' (There is a report on her talk on page 133).

We held the Merton Society Weekend in College on 24 June. Once again, the sun shone on the gardens and the rain stayed away. It was a wonderful opportunity to make new friends and catch up with old ones. There was a high turnout among younger Mertonians, and many alumni brought their partners and children along to enjoy the fun, which included a

storytelling performance from Ben Haggarty, Visiting Research Fellow in the Creative Arts for 2022-23. Highlights for me included the magnificently sung Evensong in Chapel, preceded by a climb up Chapel Tower to admire the view. Before the garden party we held the official Society AGM in the TS Eliot Theatre, with the President in the Chair. She started by congratulating Professor Payne on her election as Warden. We were pleased to elect four new members to the Council and thank those who have retired for all their contributions.

Last year I reported on our new initiative – a pilot mentoring programme for the leavers of 2020 and 2021. It was felt that the time and expertise of Merton alumni could be used to good effect to mentor those who studied and graduated during the difficult Covid years, and this has proved to be the case. This initiative has been judged by participants, both mentors and mentees, as a great success and I am delighted that it will be extended to cover a broader number of Mertonians (Dame Philippa's report on Merton Mentoring is on page 128).

Another important initiative bearing fruit is the discussion groups which have recently been started under the Society's auspices, intended to encourage collaboration between undergraduates and graduates in specific areas. Following the successful establishment of a group covering Biomedical and Life Sciences, the Society had started groups for Maths, History and Net Zero. A South Asian Network has also been inaugurated for Mertonians from that part of the world.

The team at the Development Office, headed by Mark Coote, has provided consistent support to me and the Council, for which many thanks.

At the Merton Society we are always looking to engage with as many alumni as we can, of different ages, interests and backgrounds. If you would like to become involved, please do get in touch with me via the Development Office.

Mark Davison (1978)
Chair of the Merton Society



MC3: Merton College Charitable Corporation

Events

The vibrance of our North American Merton community is best witnessed through our social events. Following on the heels of the successful December 2021 in-person reception in Manhattan for Warden Tracey hosted by Amna Naseer (1997) at her beautiful home, we have been able to return gradually to in-person gatherings several times in 2022 and 2023. In September 2022 MC3 supported a spectacular week-long tour of the Northeast by the College Choir

made possible by the generosity of Reed Rubin (1957) and Jane Rubin. The Choir delivered extraordinary 'whistlestop' performances at Harvard, Yale, Princeton and New York City. Warden Tracey and key members of her team accompanied the Choir. Highlights of the Choir tour included a reception organized by Harvard Professor, Suzannah Clark; a dinner in Cambridge hosted by Ed and Renata Selig; a pre-concert reception in New Haven organized by Charles Scudder (1971); a reception organized by the College at St Ignatius; a post-

MC3 New York Dinner

concert dinner in Manhattan hosted by Susan Cullman; and a pre-concert reception in Princeton hosted by Marla Allard. After the Choir left the country, MC3 hosted a concluding garden party in honor of the Warden in Washington, DC.

On 12 April 2023, a large contingent of Mertonians attended the reception honoring Vice-Chancellor Tracey in the University Club of New York. The new VC warmly acknowledged the large contingent of her fellow Mertonians who returned the compliment with boisterous cheers. Later, VC Tracey stopped by and greeted each of the three dozen Mertonians who remained onsite for an MC3 dinner. The arrangements at the University Club were organized thanks to the efforts of Marina McCloskey (2003), Susan Cullman (wife of the late John Kirby, 1962) and Charles Scudder.

The 120th anniversary celebration of the Rhodes Scholarships in Oxford ran from 28 June to 1 July. This coincided with many other unrelated major programs, conferences, and visiting days for applicants and their families at Oxford colleges. Somehow Merton managed to make its Rhodes alumni welcome and treat them to a choir concert in chapel and a lawn party which Dave Hamer (1974) and Jane Hamer, Paul Blustein (1973), the Allards and their guests enjoyed. MC3 administrator Thom Yu enjoyed his first visit to Merton and was delighted to have a special VIP tour of the Old Library graciously led by Fellow Librarian Julia Wallworth. Thom was able to see and size up the globes, astrolabes and other MC3-supported iconic features of the College Library that Bob McKelvey (1959) has been bragging about for many years.

Financials

MC3 raised a total of \$545,327 during 2022. We are proud that despite the dismal performance of the markets and persistent inflationary pressures, our dedicated MC3 alumni came through for its alma mater and kept alive its tradition of generous giving. Highlights of the fundraising program include \$170,000 for the Merton Choir, \$51,375 for the Ukrainian Doctoral Scholarship, \$50,350 for the Library Medieval Stained Glass Windows, and \$21,000 for the new library.

Supporting Merton Society initiatives

In addition to enthusiastically attending and participating in Merton Society events and programs, over the past year MC3

was involved in the organization and launch of the Merton Society's impressive mentorship program. MC3 member Charles Tolkien-Gillett has agreed to serve as liaison between MC3 and the Merton Society on this important project to assist with mentoring activities involving North Americans.

Future plans

At the time of writing, planning is underway to congratulate Warden Elect Professor Jennifer Payne after her installation if her schedule permits her to travel to the United States in December 2023 and possibly also in spring 2024. We would be remiss not to note that the growth, success and pleasure of the work of the MC3 board and staff to support the College through both fundraising and friend-raising is enhanced immeasurably by the able work of the entire Merton Development Office. Heartfelt thanks to our friends Mark, Milos, Krista, Julia, Chelsea and Mark. We send a special note of appreciation and best wishes to Gaby Beckley as she moves on to the large responsibility of serving as Senior Development Officer at St Hugh's. We miss her already.

As reported in this space last year, back home Thom Yu has stepped in ably to take over the administrative duties that Sue Stukane performed so well for many years. We are also grateful to Millie Amodio who works with Bob McKelvey at his firm on behalf of MC3 amid her other substantial duties. Millie's contributions have been critically important. This past year both Thom and Millie earned a special shout-out for juggling many projects and deadlines at an unusually busy time including processing financial and new regulatory filings.

Finally, we know first-hand how welcoming and helpful Huw James and all the Lodge porters are, as are all the dedicated College staff, especially to returning alumni. We encourage our MC3 members to take advantage of future opportunities to visit Merton to enjoy the hospitality for themselves.

Nick Allard (1974), Bodley Fellow
MC3 President



Merton College Mentoring

Merton College Mentoring (MCM) is a new mentoring programme being offered by the Merton Society in collaboration with the Merton College Development Office, after the successful completion of a pilot mentoring programme.

The Merton Society ran the pilot mentoring programme just after the pandemic. Our concern then was that students in the pandemic years had been particularly disadvantaged; we thought they could do with a bit of help. Within that pilot, we matched 43 pairs. We asked all the participants for their views at the end of the pilot. Their feedback is summarised in a report, which can be viewed online at: tinyurl.com/ycx5264v. The feedback was overwhelmingly positive and our participants had good suggestions for improvement, and we have taken account of those suggestions in the design of MCM. The pilot showed us that many younger Mertonians wanted the opportunity to be mentored by another Mertonian. Some wanted to talk through career options; others wanted help navigating their working environment or dealing with confidence issues.

With MCM, we aim to recruit the widest possible range of Merton mentors of different ages, geographical spread, backgrounds and experiences. No experience of mentoring is needed: mentors need only be willing to set aside a few hours over a



six-month period to meet up with their mentee, alongside an enthusiasm to help that mentee solve their personal challenges through a process of discussion and reflection. Based on what we learnt from the pilot, the Merton Society decided to make mentoring an ongoing part of its work. The offer of mentoring by Mertonians to Mertonians aligns completely with the Society's aims of fostering contact between Mertonians and promoting a wider sense of Merton community. MCM is one way in which Mertonians can support each other. We very much hope that our Merton mentees of today will become our Merton mentors of tomorrow.

At first, we will offer mentoring to the most recent leavers. This means the first invitations will go to the year groups who completed their undergraduate degrees in 2022 and 2023. Over time, and depending on our capacity for expansion, we want to extend the offer.

How will MCM work?

Matching: The profiles of Merton mentors will be held on a password-protected area of the Merton website. A prospective mentee will be able to search that area to identify a suitable match. If they are not sure who to approach, they can ask MCM to suggest a suitable match for them. Either way, the two will be put in touch with each other so that they can have an initial meeting to test the 'chemistry', and if that chemistry is right, progress to mentoring discussions over the next six months or so. Those discussions can be in person or remote, as the pair wish. If the chemistry is not right, the matching process can simply start again with another mentor. But in our experience, once training is in place and as long as care is taken over the match, it is very likely that the chemistry will be right from the outset.

Training: We will provide training for all Merton mentors and mentees. It is important that both parties know what to expect, and that both understand how the mentoring discussions should be conducted.

Mentors: We will encourage Merton mentors to adopt a coaching style – of listening, reflecting, and encouraging the mentee to reach their own solutions.

Mentees: We will encourage Merton mentees to be honest and frank in their discussions. Those discussions will be confidential to the pair (except in exceptional circumstances, for example where the mentor has concerns about the mentee's wellbeing). We also ask mentees to make proper time to focus on the mentoring discussions so that they get the maximum benefit from their contact with their Merton mentor.

Code of Conduct: We will ask Merton mentors and mentees to commit to our Code of Conduct, which is based on standard principles; this will establish the framework for the discussions. At the heart of this Code is the confidentiality of the discussions. MCM provides a safe space for the mentee to address personal challenges.

Mentor and Mentee experiences

With permission, we have included below a few stories from some of the mentors and mentees who took part in the pilot.



Susanna Curtis (1982)

Mentor: Susanna Curtis (Modern Languages, 1982)

My mentee was just about to embark on a full-time drama course in London the first time we met online, after spending the year between leaving Merton and the new course earning money to finance this. Having worked over 35 years in the theatre world myself, as a choreographer, director and

performer, I felt that we were instantly able to set up a rapport.

Over the next eight months we settled into an easy pattern of conversation and exchange, while keeping a healthy respect for each other's private sphere. This meant we could talk about issues in general, but also on a more personal level. Dealing with success and rejection in the business, abuse of power, audition technique, how to deal with the intimacy some purely 'on stage' partnerships require, how to juggle professional and private life, the drivenness and obsession connected with the profession, the importance of keeping grounded – these were just some of the many topics we dealt with.

We started each session catching up with what was going on in our lives, then talked about particular situations that had turned up or were on my mentee's initial form, sometimes discussing experiences, actions and options, sometimes finding solutions to specific problems. Sometimes I would encourage my mentee to find a solution to an issue herself, sometimes I would consider how I might now face a predicament with my years of experience.

Being a mentor certainly made me reflect a lot more on my career so far and how much I have learned over the years. It also made me realise how helpful it would have been to have had a mentor myself, back when I was starting out, or even mid-career.

Meanwhile, my mentee seemed very appreciative of our sessions and I trust it was a positive and fruitful experience for her. Maybe it was the uniqueness of two women from completely different generations being able to find common ground and appreciate just having time to talk without

pressure and without having an employer/employee status. After this positive experience I truly hope that the mentoring scheme becomes a permanent Merton fixture.

Mentor: Mustafa Abbas (PPE, 1990)

Mentors are commonly understood as elder statesmen, sharing their worldly knowledge and experience to foster and promote their mentees' development and growth. Having recently completed Merton's mentoring programme, I would rather suggest another paradigm. In addition to being very enjoyable, mentoring is a journey of mutual learning, as rewarding for the mentor as for the mentee.

At its core, mentoring tends to be about active listening by the mentor and then collaborative analysis. Active listening was simply a given with my mentee because of his fascinating intellectual and vocational interests.



Mustafa Abbas (1990) meeting online with his mentee, Mario Stepanik (Economics and Management, 2018)

There were no predetermined conclusions. We simply explored possible futures. I resisted any temptation to offer my opinion unless specifically asked to do so. Sometimes, I offered a model to help map the world. There was investigation, discovery and learning.

Crucially, there was trust. And it helped that the chemistry was right. I had a sincere commitment to help my mentee, and my mentee was open and honest in self-appraisal. We both acknowledged and respected the guidelines of the programme, and we had attended the training given by Sam Whipple (1983), who has tremendous expertise in this field of mentoring and coaching.

It felt so very rewarding to help a fellow Mertonian, even in some small way, through mentoring; and I would argue

that mentoring is a mutually beneficial process. Merton's Mentorship allows for a wonderful journey of mutual learning, discovery and growth.

Mentee: Jessica Searle (PPE, 2018)

I have found the Merton Society Mentoring Programme to be an absolutely invaluable experience, and something which has hugely shaped my entry into the workplace. The pilot programme coincided with my training period last summer before starting as a financial analyst with an investment bank.

Over the course of this year, my mentor has acted as a guide for all the uncertainties around working life; a sounding board for the important decisions; and a voice of encouragement helping me to go the extra mile and accelerate my professional development. My mentor drew on his experiences as well as listening to my own in order to give pertinent advice, and I feel very fortunate to have had dedicated time and attention from someone with so many insights to share.



Jessica Searle (centre) and fellow mentees Jessy Jindal and Adrian Burbie

I even featured on an episode of our HR team's podcast at work to discuss mentorship, as it had proved so helpful to me that I wanted to try and motivate others to seek out a similar experience. Overall, I am hugely grateful to have built this relationship with my mentor and for all the hours

he has put into mentoring sessions with me. This program is a real testament to the generosity of the Merton alumni community, who have given their time and expertise, as well as the organisational talent of the brains behind the operation. As the program expands, do seize the opportunity with both hands if you have the chance to do so!

Mentee: Jessy Jindal (Medicine, 2018)

I was lucky enough to be assigned a mentor I admired greatly – both in terms of her career path and general approach to life. I really looked forward to every call with her, and felt motivated and excited after each one.

The matching was done beautifully – as a medical student, I was thrilled to have a mentor who worked in international aid (a field I hope to enter one day!). She broadened my perspective on my future aspirations, and had an anecdote for every one of my questions.

It was wonderful to finally meet her in person at the Garden Party after months of Zoom calls – it made Merton feel like such a tight-knit community when we realised we had stayed in the same first year accommodation over 20 years apart!

Mentee: Simon van Teutem (PPE, 2018)

My mentor's guidance and support truly exceeded my expectations. The programme was very well organised and the pairing process ensured that I was matched with a mentor who was perfectly suited to my needs.

Being a part of the mentoring scheme gave me the opportunity to gain fresh perspectives and learn from the rich experience of my mentor. The insights I have gained are invaluable and have enabled me to make more informed decisions regarding my career path.

Moreover, the mentoring scheme not only helped me professionally but also boosted my confidence and encouraged me to step out of my comfort zone. I now have a clearer vision for my future and a renewed enthusiasm for my chosen field.

I wholeheartedly recommend the mentoring scheme to anyone seeking guidance and support in their professional

development. The experience is incredibly rewarding and the benefits are immeasurable.



Simon van Teutem (right) with his mentee, Julian Drinkall

Any questions?

MCM is supported by the Development and Alumni Relations Office. If you have any questions, please contact Chelsea Chisholm at mentoring@merton.ac.ox.uk. There is more information about MCM on the College website under 'Alumni and Friends'.

I take this opportunity to thank all of those who have contributed to the development of this programme, to all of the participants in the pilot, and in advance to all those who will participate as Merton mentors.

Dame Philippa Whipple (1984)

President, Merton Society



From left: Patrick Wolrige Gordon, John Cook (St Peter's College), Chris Mercer, Nigel Haigh

Merton Golf Society

In May 2023, members of the society were invited to take part in an Oxford v Cambridge Alumni Golf Match hosted by Fitzwilliam Golf Society at Berkhamsted Golf Club. This was the second running of this 18-hole 4 ball, better ball Stableford competition. It was won by the combined Oxford team. Merton was one of six Oxford colleges represented: Nigel Haigh (1971) and Patrick Wolrige Gordon (1985) played as one team, while Chris Mercer (1969) joined with John Payne Cook of St Peter's College to make up another team. Congratulations to Chris and John for winning the individual competition with an excellent 49 points. The Keble and Christ Church teams came second with 47 points. Unfortunately, Cantabrians won the longest drive and all of the nearest the pin contests, so Oxford couldn't quite manage the clean sweep.

Merton have been invited back to next year's event, which will be 26 June at Berkhamsted Golf Club, and we have been

asked to field two teams.

2024 also sees the return of our own Golf Society's Spring Meeting on 27 March, while our Autumn Meeting will be in September.

The Merton Golf Society meets one of the objectives of the main Merton Society – to provide an opportunity for like-minded alumni to get together and enjoy each other's company. If you would like to join us, or just be kept informed of events, please contact me through play@mertongolfsoc.org.uk.

Nigel Haigh (1971)
Merton Golf Society Chair

Merton Society Annual Lecture

The Merton Society has for many years sponsored an annual lecture given by a Merton academic. These have always proved interesting and informative, with an added element of intellectual challenge which is the core essence of Merton College. In recent years, subjects have ranged widely and eclectically from understanding the cosmos to how humans experience pain, and from public health in the USA to peace-making in Columbia.

This year found us back in the States, in Texas. In a fascinating and disturbing talk Dr Chloé Deambrogio, Junior Research Fellow in Law, covered the topic of *Child Abuse, Psychopathy, and the Risk of Future Violence: A Case of Reversed Mitigation in Capital Cases*.

During the lecture she discussed at length an extract from her forthcoming book, *Judging Insanity, Punishing Difference: A History of Mental Illness in the Criminal Court*. Drawing on unpublished trial records, the book explores how developments in the field of forensic psychiatry shaped Texas courts' assessments of defendants' mental health and criminal responsibility in death penalty cases spanning the 20th century. She focuses on cases tried in the 1980s and 1990s, a period characterised by a growing attention to the potential links between child abuse and future violence and by a regular use of the diagnosis of antisocial personality disorder to label capital defendants in Texas courts.

In cases involving histories of child abuse and neglect, Texas prosecutors exploited diagnoses traditionally associated with criminal tendencies, such as psychopathy or antisocial personality disorder, to discredit defendants' painful life histories, blame them for the abuse they suffered at the hands of their carers, and depict them as irredeemable subjects deserving of severe penal condemnation.

It was an absolute revelation to me that in Texas criminal cases, if the defendant is found guilty, the sentence, which could well include the death sentence, is decided by the jury and not by the judge. Dr Deambrogio argued that by asking jurors to establish defendants' death worthiness based on

a future dangerousness prediction rather than on a holistic assessment of their character and background, the statute discouraged defence attorneys from investigating defendants' family histories, while forcing them to concentrate their strategy on rebutting the state's aggravating evidence. Given popular beliefs and stereotypes associating 'madness' with violence, the future dangerousness question prompted jurors to consider a history of mental illness and child abuse as an aggravating, rather than a mitigating, factor.

She drew broader implications from this: the insanity test illustrates the law's tendency to base evaluations of criminal responsibility on endogenous causes, in this case the defendant's cognitive capacities. Psychiatry has consistently pushed for the expansion of the narrow notion of irresponsibility embraced by the criminal law, by proposing more holistic criteria which consider the totality of the individual defendant. When conducted according to professional guidelines, mental health assessments can cover a wide range of functions, including the defendant's thinking patterns, emotional reactions, and capacity to function in his or her environment. Psychiatric testimonies therefore have the potential to offer a more comprehensive and complex picture of the individual on trial than the one which would emerge if one limited the evaluation to an assessment of the defendant's reasoning abilities, as required by the criminal law in insanity cases.

Chloé's talk was followed by an informative Q&A, including questions from eminent lawyers in the audience. Drinks were then served which provided an opportunity for further discussions on the topic.

Particular thanks go to Chloé for giving an excellent talk and (once again) to Patrick Long (1995) for hosting the event at the Lazard offices in London. The Merton Society remains indebted to the staff of the Development Office for their expert organisation of all alumni events.

Mark Davison (1978)
Chair, The Merton Society



Merton Lawyers' Association

2022 MLA event © Bertie Beor-Roberts

Merton Lawyers' Association (MLA) is open to all alumni who read Law, who practise law – and who simply have an interest in Law. These annual MLA events draw a large gathering, including undergraduates and postgraduate students, who coach down to London from Oxford. Traditionally the MLA has held an annual lecture in London. In November 2019 it changed to a conversational format, and we were treated to an extraordinarily entertaining exchange between barrister and now President of Magdalen, Dinah Rose KC, and BBC journalist and presenter Mishal Husain: both doyennes of the art of cross-examination. It was fascinating to listen to each ask brilliant questions to elicit answers equally impressive in their wit, raconteurial richness and insight. The audience was wowed.

In November 2022 we repeated this format with Philippa Hopkins KC (1989) curating a fireside chat between Court of Appeal judge Dame Philippa Whipple (1984) and leading commercial advocate at the English Bar Laurie Rabinowitz KC (1983). The stories of how their professional lives had developed and how formative their undergraduate experience had been in their success held the audience rapt. The 2022 evening commenced with valedictory address from outgoing Warden and now Oxford Vice-Chancellor, Professor Irene Tracey, and an update on College life from our Warden Elect, Professor Jennifer Payne.

This year's event, on Thursday 16 November 2023, will be hosted at the offices of Slaughter and May: 'The psychology of persuasion in Law – an English and American perspective' will be a conversation between leading advocate and Reith Lecturer Lord Pannick KC and the Dean of the Jacksonville University Law School Florida, alumnus Nick Allard (1974). It will be facilitated by Katie Ratcliffe (2014), barrister at Essex Court Chambers. The Warden will then give an update on College life.

A refreshed MLA committee (Naomi Horton (1985), Dan Schaffer (1986), Charles Wynn-Evans (1989), Philippa Hopkins (1989), Ben Perry (1992), Susie Daykin (1994), Toby Grimstone (1994), Steven Elliott (1997), Jessica Kemp (2000) and Katie Ratcliffe (2014) would like to thank members of the previous committee and its Chair Greg Campbell (1993). The new committee is looking at broadening its activity beyond the annual event to include ways in which the alumni community can help further current law students and also assist with law-focused fundraising, including the building of a new law library – and it is open to ideas and involvement from fellow alumni.

Dan Schaffer (1986)
Chair



2019 MLA Event © Dan Schaffer



Town and Gown

I was delighted to be part of Team Merton at the 2023 Town and Gown 10k, which took place on Sunday 14 May in Oxford city centre. This year's race was the first carbon neutral Oxford Town and Gown event, and raised an impressive £200,000 for Muscular Dystrophy UK (MDUK). This charity funds research into treatments for muscle-wasting conditions and supports 110,000 people across the UK affected by these conditions.

It looked as though it would be an overcast morning when I first left my house on the morning of the race, and it was still cloudy and grey by the time I had reached the University Parks, where runners were congregating before the start of the race at 10:00am. However, just as the 4,500 runners made their way to the start line on South Parks Road, the sun came out in full force, and the clouds drifted away entirely. It had turned into the perfect spring morning, although not perhaps the most ideal conditions for a gruelling 10k race!

I made sure I was close to the front when the race began. It was a bit of a scrum at the start, but thankfully the first leg of the route took us down the main road, so there was space for people to move apart and avoid any sort of collision! The majority of the route was very scenic indeed, taking in Broad Street, the Bridge of Sighs, and the High Street, all of which were basking in the morning sunshine.

I was pushing myself quite a bit, and the second half of the race was more of a physical strain than the first had been. The warm and sunny conditions had adversely affected the hydration levels of all the runners, so we were grateful for a water break shortly after the halfway point, although this would have been appreciated sooner! The last stretch was the worst part; the route narrowed again as we came back into the Parks, approaching from the river side, following the path up towards Parks Road, and my fellow runners were



The post-race brunch in Hall

closing in all sides. With the finish line in sight, everyone picked up the pace and I made a dash for (personal) victory. I was pleased to obtain my fastest time of 40 minutes and 48 seconds, finishing in 209th place overall.

In spite of the physical and emotional exertion involved with such an event, the race had a lovely atmosphere. Runners were flying the flag for various colleges, clubs and charities, and the traditional Town and Gown divide felt truly unified. Team Merton put on a solid show, with fifteen runners involved, including our then Acting Warden Professor Jenny Payne, pictured above with Team Merton. Our organ scholar Francois Cloete was pipped at the post by Director of Music and Reed Rubin Organist Ben Nicholas, who had been tracking him for the entire race, waiting for the right moment! Ben has form in craftily overtaking his organ scholars at the finish line. Both runners nonetheless made excellent time.

A free brunch in Hall following the race felt like a worthy reward for finishing the run. To our surprise and delight we were joined by our very own Irene Tracey, former Warden and current Vice-Chancellor of the University. She had also completed the 10k, and there were congratulations all round.

Our running team owed our great experience on the day to the brilliant organisation of my colleague in the Development Office, Krista Karppinen. Krista had organised Merton-branded T-shirts, and had kindly arranged for us to have brunch in Hall after the race. She also took some great photos, including some of the team members in action during the race!

Inigo Jones

Graduate Associate in Development 2022-23

News of Members

Up to 1948

Year Representative: Michael Millard

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There are few of us left now: at the latest count we numbered 29 men. I have had only three replies to my letter of last May but each of them was, to me, full of interest so I will pass on some of the names which may generate interest.

The first comes from Harry Corben (1944). He describes, briefly, how Merton lit a bonfire in the High on VE night (those were the days!). On Harry's birthday Clive Richardson (1967), at a Charity Ball, let it be known that Harry would be 96 at midnight – so 200 people sang 'Happy Birthday' for him.

The second was from Anthony Williams (1946). He gives a list of names whom many of us would remember; one of those was David Lane, who is still alive. He also mentions names of dons who taught him; Maidment, Levens, and Walsh (you could not forget Robert Levens, could you?). After retirement, Anthony went on to take an Open University degree. But now those characteristics of age with which many of us are familiar, such as house work and diminished walking ability are in the ascendancy. And he can still read.

My third reply was from Claver Toalster (1948) who sometimes seems to me to be Merton's answer to the problem of perpetual motion. Unfortunately, this year he has had two spells in hospital: the second, I think to his surprise for no one had told him, was with Covid 19. Otherwise, with the companionship of a lady friend, he seems up to his usual activity of enjoying various parts of Europe. Apart from

stiffness of knee he is well able to cope with cooking, reading, and playing bridge.

I also have become an old man but am well looked after by my second son Andrew (1975), and with weekly visits from my daughter Ruth and my elder son John (1972).

1949–1955

There is currently no Year Representative for the years 1949–55. Sadly, Michael (Donald) Rines (1954), the Year Representative for 1952–54, passed away on 15 February 2023, aged 89. John Mitchell (1955) has stepped down from his role of Year Representative for 1955. Please contact development@merton.ox.ac.uk if you are interested in the position.

Hugh Podger (1949) writes: 'This has been a year of universities for grandchildren (regrettably, none at Merton): Edinburgh, Exeter, Sheffield, Sussex and York, with two more awaiting admissions and two still at secondary school. Two others in employment after university. Life seems well filled with entertainment provided by operas and choral (including singing in a choir) and chamber music. Still on the diocesan finance committee and assisting with some parish accounts (accounting is often not a PCC's area of expertise!). My deficiencies in almost every domestic task are fortunately overcome by a live-in carer.'

John Mays (1951) shares his personal recollections of three Coronations:

I've been fortunate enough now to be around for three Coronations, in 1937, 1953 and 2023.

The first, on 12 May 1937, when George VI was crowned, was the most dramatic. He had never expected to be King, but his older brother, David, who became King Edward VIII in January 1936, had never married but had numerous affairs. The last of these was with Wallis Simpson, an American divorcee, whom he met in 1935 and refused to give up when he became King, despite the firmly entrenched attitude of both Church and State against divorce.

This constitutional crisis persisted throughout 1936 involving the Prime Minister, Stanley Baldwin, and the Archbishop of Canterbury, Cosmo Lang. The government was determined that the King could not marry Mrs Simpson and remain on the throne. The King was equally determined that he could do both. Eventually he was forced to abdicate, on 11 December 1936. Impossible as it is to believe these days, the British public at large knew nothing of these events until about 10 days before the abdication; the British press published nothing despite the fact that it made the headlines in the American and continental newspapers.

The date of 12 May had been chosen for Edward VIII's aborted coronation and despite being less than six months after the new King's accession, it was retained. The weather was cool and rainy through the day and into the evening. Needless to say, the resolution of the most serious constitutional crisis since the Glorious Revolution in the 17th century was greeted with enormous enthusiasm and delight. I was five at the time and, although knowing nothing of the implications, I remember the local procession in St Albans passing our house, with acrobats, jugglers, clowns and the overall colour which made a deep impression on me. Most people were monarchists and Edward VIII had been extremely popular, so the abdication came as a huge shock. However, George VI was very well supported and people were sympathetic to his situation.

The next coronation was on 2 June 1953 and was completely different. It was only eight years after the end of WWII and austerity was still the byword in Britain. With shortages of consumer goods and still some rationing, the event was a welcome distraction. Moreover, it was the first time that a Coronation had been televised. In contrast to 1937, there was ample time for proper planning.

Also, in contrast to 1937, the weather was terrible, it poured with rain all day. I was a student and allowed to come to London, where I stood in The Mall with thousands of others. Despite the weather, it was a glorious, colourful occasion and a great celebration of the country and what remained of our Empire. Most people took food, as nothing was provided, and toilet facilities were also somewhat limited! To get a decent place one had to arrive at about 7.30am, some four hours before the outward procession passed by. After the returning procession the crowd was allowed down The Mall to Buckingham Palace

for the balcony appearances. Because of the weather, the RAF flypast took place on another occasion at an RAF base. Despite this the whole atmosphere was wonderfully euphoric.

The third Coronation, of course, took place 6 May 2023. Although the centuries-old heart of the service was still firmly in place, King Charles' influence was clear in the many personal, diverse touches added to the occasion. There was, however, one extraordinary difference – both the new King and Queen are divorced. This has hardly merited a comment, from Church, State or populace. Within less than a century our moral climate has changed utterly, and what was impossible in the 1930s – and even in the 1950s for Princess Margaret and Group Captain Townsend – is now entirely acceptable.

John Turvey (1952) writes: 'I thought I might just let it be known that despite my age I am alive and well and not much more demented than I have ever been. The Great Mediterranean Heatwave has, however, pushed many of us close to the edge. Only the daily swim makes life tolerable, even though the water temperature is approaching that of warm soup. What, at the age of 91 does one find to do in a torrid Cyprus village? I think it is the ethnically and chronologically mixed social life that carries one through. One just has to make friends with people decades younger. Decades older don't exist. Also, the older one gets the more friends one needs: for that fall, that operation, that computer breakdown, that lift to the airport.

Another thing. A true Oxonian still reads – and may even write, in my case the usual unpublished and perhaps unpublishable poem: even the odd love poem. Yeats would support me in this.'

Charles Dodd (1953) reports: 'Jenny and I celebrated our 65th wedding anniversary this year. We continue to live in Cyprus, with occasional trips to England. Our son's family has settled in West Cork, and we went there after several attempts foiled by lockdown in Ireland or England and a few flight cancellations. Our visit to Ireland included the weekend of the coronation, which we watched at a friend's house in the castle grounds at Bandon (feeling a little guilty because of the location and the glorious sunshine).

In his email, Charles says *Postmaster* is 'a truly splendid publication, so very different from the paltry version I edited for a year in the nineteen-fifties'.

Reg Hall (1954) reports: 'Trawling through the calendar reveals that the annual travelogue has degenerated to a tale of two towns: Greensboro and Woodbridge. We like both towns though we are in the UK less than four months of the year. Our roots are very much in the US even if the family is mostly in the UK.'

'I can't wait for the accounts of what went wrong in handling Covid in the US, UK and elsewhere. Far too little attention was paid to the impact of lockdowns on other diseases, employment, education and the economy. Politicians and epidemiologists share the blame.'

The bright spot of the UK visit was the celebration of our diamond wedding in the very nice seaside town of Southwold in Suffolk attended by most of the family: good food, lovely weather and excellent company.'

John Mitchell (1955) reports, 'Physical ailments are limiting what I can now do, but this year we did open a new pavilion for our village sports clubs, costing some £900K, which I raised, obviously with the help of others. But unfortunately, we have not been able to play any golf for about nine months now.'

1956

Year Representative: Richard Kenyon

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This *Postmaster* year began with our much Covid-postponed Gaudy. A small party of seven, we recorded our celebration by signing my copy of **Richard Thomas's** memoir, *Lucky Dip, A Diplomat's Tale* which, in due course, will find its way to the College archives. In company with Richard and myself were **Mike Edwards**, **Peter Heap**, **John Isherwood**, **Mike Renton** and **Brian Roberts-Wray**. As you may imagine, there was a great deal of reminiscing and then, for the first time, we raised our glasses to The King.

This year, the prompt-response gold medal went to **Mike Edwards**, who commented that he had nothing much to report. He and Alison have successfully downsized and moved into town: 'a sensible move as we get nearer 90 than 80 (as Alison tells our friends)'. He enjoys developing the new garden and also his recreation on the golf course, though he says that whether what he does there constitutes 'playing golf' is perhaps open to question. He keeps the grey cells active by preparing a paper for the literary and theatre conference they attend every summer, and will also direct a short play. Having 'done' Proust, he is now working through all the Inspector Maigret novels by Simenon in the order in which they were written. No doubt he will improve his own detection skills.

Jay Keyser tells us that since suffering a catastrophic spinal cord injury in 2014, he has published two books and one forthcoming from MIT Press in 2024. He has performed as a jazz trombonist in twenty some concerts and a selection of his poems is being set to music by the American composer now living in Paris, Peter Stevens.

David Bethell had the sad news that his wife Carol died in March of this year, after 63 years of happy marriage.

Physical impairments affect several of our contemporaries, including ex-Occasionals hockey players **Tony Wynn-Evans** and **David Bethell**. David had painful knees leading to two months in hospital, although he quite enjoyed 'working' his legs up and down long corridors on his frame. I find that even 18 months after receiving a new hip, my mobility still improves a little each month.

On the musical front, **Richard Thomas** attended 'a stupendous Merton Passiontide Festival in the chapel. The choir was on fantastic form, culminating in the best St John Passion I've ever heard.' Music of course brings **Laszlo Heltay** (1957) to the fore. Our June Rhine/Danube cruise ended in Budapest where our city guide was amazed to learn of the Kodály choir at Merton, and more so when I told him I had been a co-signatory of our letter asking if we might use the composer's name. **Ian Hodson** has mixed memories of Budapest though he had once enjoyed watching an old lady thumping an inefficient young pickpocket! More recently

he enjoyed a stay in Llanberis, especially the narrow-gauge railway journeys, when oddly all three men at their randomly allocated table were Oxford graduates. Returning the mobility theme, he plans to buy a rollator, but must first learn to pronounce it ('I say tomato ...').

This has most probably been our last year of extensive overseas travel. We spent Christmas in Tuscany with our daughter and January/February in New Zealand with our son. The Japanese student staying in their spare room was a delightful 16-year-old, who was most interested to learn that her Emperor, **Naruhito** (1983) had been at Merton. This led to my discovery of his memoir, *The Thames and I: A Memoir of Two Years at Oxford*, which I purchased on my return home and have very much enjoyed.

1957

Year Representative: **Graham Byrne Hill**

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1958

Year Representatives: **Bryan Lewis**

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and **Peter Parsons**

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A letter in the *Times* recently from a correspondent said she'd forgotten most of the Swedish she'd picked up when resident in Sweden. One word that stuck though was the verb *pyssla* which used to mean 'been very busy all day, doing nothing and achieving nothing'. She added 'I still find it useful and have become an expert practitioner.' That struck a chord with more than one respondent to my letter asking for contributions to this year's *Postmaster*.

David Greene said, though, he still has a driving licence and a car bought new 15 years ago but cannot predict how much longer it will be of use to him. Likewise a new passport won't be used. **Richard Salkeld**, whose maritime wanderings have featured in past editions says: 'All quiet on the Mediterranean

front. Thanks to Covid our boat has been marooned in Valletta for three seasons. By the time the immune status in the Adriatic on the route to Venice seemed acceptable last summer, the temperature was reported as 40°C so cruising was limited to a brief visit to the boatyard in November to sweep the Sahara sand off the deck. I did though visit the baroque style Manoel Theatre, the oldest functional theatre in Europe.'

John Bradshaw, having 'amended' the pre-dinner grace recorded in the 2022 *Postmaster*, confesses to another prank with a contemporary friend. 'My father, a fitter and turner by trade, was inordinately proud of his Postmaster son and, thinking that I was likely to do much travelling in due course which would entail luggage where loss or mislaying of keys might be disastrous, taught me the elements of lock-picking. I became a person of resort when folk had indeed mislaid their keys. Perhaps the only occasion when I misused this skill, though not with felonious intent, was when with my friend I picked the door-lock to the Beerbohm Room, situated on the staircase in Fellows adjacent to mine, to view his reputed artwork said to adorn the walls. There were indeed a few sketches of "cute" kittens and puppies. My friend, by no means amateur himself, said he could produce pictures every bit as good as and generally indistinguishable from the Master's. My father had also taught me how to frame pictures so we went into business together, hanging three or four examples alongside MB's originals. I have on good authority some years later that they were still there. Are they now, I wonder, some 60 years on? The relative crudeness of the framing should be the evidential give away.' Presumably the statute of limitations and the cost of extraditing him from Australia preclude an appearance before the Warden and Fellows.

The 2022 Gaudy was an opportunity for reunion and reminiscence. After a dinner in Hall on the Saturday (at which the Vice-Chancellor designate, Warden Professor Irene Tracey CBE was the only woman present), a pub-lunch gathering at Old Marston on the banks of the Cherwell the following day was an opportunity for wives and partners to join us, 1958ers and 1959ers: **Andrew** and **Jacqui Adam** and family, **John Watson** and **Averil**, **John Oliver** and **Margaret**, **Adrian Vickers** and **Emma**, **Michael Parry**, **Bryan Lewis**, **Richard** and **Diana Allan**.

David Waterhouse's arthritic knees have cut down his walking: 'no more strolls up Snowdon. I'll have to take the railway.' He keeps himself busy with the Shropshire Music Trust and 'various domestic duties'. In June, **Bryan Lewis** stayed with **Andrew** and **Jacqui Adam** in Trull, near Taunton and were joined for a *Last of the Summer Wine* lunch by **David Joseph**. Those who recall the television series might like to speculate on which of them was Foggy, Clegg or Compo.

Adrian Vickers records 'a first for me. The Warden organised a disco in the SCR to follow the Fellows' Christmas dinner. Emma and I took to the floor rather hesitantly but soon found ourselves whirling around with the soon-to-be Vice Chancellor.' What a player! **Oliver Ford Davies's** memoir *An Actor's Life in 12 Productions* published by the Book Guild won the Society for Theatre Research 2023 Book of the Year. There is much to entertain as well as learn. Albeit Merton and Oxford feature in it, *Arden of Feversham* (the Floats Production in the Garden in 1960) alas didn't make the cut.

Sadly, the death of **John Trott** was recorded in March. His obituary is in the *In Memoriam* section.

1959

Year Representatives: David Shipp

Email: david@shipp.org

and **Roger Gould**

Email: jrbgould@btinternet.com

We had a good turnout from our year for the Gaudy in September 2022. It was good to catch up in person with **Richard Allan**, **Alan Drinkwater**, **Antony Ellman**, **David Forsyth**, **Roger Gould**, **Peter Hayward**, **John Latham**, **Joe McDonald**, **John Oliver**, **David Shipp** and **Jim White**.

Richard Allan confirms he is still here. **David Shipp** caught up with him in Melrose in October 2022 when they were both in the Borders on walking trips: Richard with some former colleagues, and David with his walking group.

Graham Boulton still lives in Osbaston, Monmouth.

John Dance reports that he and Doris are still here.

Michael Diamond is, as we know, an avid collector and has an interesting tale to tell.

'This story is about the only book I have ever bought knowing that I would never read it — *Animal Farm* in Ukrainian. I bought it on a whim so long ago I cannot remember when, and for so little I cannot remember for how much. I think I was attracted by the cover picture of the pig. Over the years I have seen the price go up and up in booksellers' catalogues, perhaps because Orwell wrote a preface to be sold with the book free of charge for Ukrainian refugees from the USSR in camps after the Second World War. His English text has been lost so what we have is translated back from the Ukrainian.



'It occurred to me that the book could be sold to help Ukrainian refugees. I contacted an antiquarian bookseller I have dealt with for many years, and they agreed to put it in a catalogue and to say that the money would go to a Ukrainian refugee charity. I had to say which one and that stumped me. However, by a piece of luck, I was invited to a party where I met a woman who had taken two refugees into her home. Through her I was put in touch with two delightful ladies who were running a charity in my area. I visited a school where they had meetings once a week and was greatly impressed. Meanwhile the book sold immediately

to a daughter of the translator, a brilliant man who had contacted Orwell and translated the book at the age of 25, emigrated to the USA and become Professor of Byzantine Studies at Harvard. His daughter lives on the East Coast and was going to show the book to her daughters, who had never known their grandfather, and then donate it to a library in the Ukraine. Where better could it have ended up? The booksellers asked me for the charity's bank details, so that they could pay in the money, but I said I wanted the pleasure of handing the two ladies a cheque, which I did, for £1,850! What is more, the booksellers found another on which they made £450 and donated that to the charity.'

Antony Elman has sent us his latest news. 'Last year I wrote, somewhat mournfully, about my experience of quadruple heart bypass surgery. I have been lucky to recover well from that, and my health is now almost back to where it was before the operation. With the lifting of Covid restrictions, Constance and I made enjoyable visits to Paris in September 2022, and to Amsterdam in March 2023 for the wonderful Vermeer exhibition. We spent an evening, after a gap of over 70 years, with a remarkable Dutchman, Frank Diamand, with whom my brother Michael (1956) and I had exchanged visits in 1948 when I was 9 and Michael 11 years old. Frank and his parents were Holocaust survivors from Germany, and Frank became a radical film-maker, making highly regarded films in El Salvador, Nicaragua and Chile. We made a second visit to Holland in April, staying at an upmarket campsite in the pretty town of Delft, and spending an afternoon at the amazing show of tulips in Keukenhof Garden. We met up with the children of a Dutch agronomist with whom I had worked on a UN Food and Agriculture Organisation team in Sri Lanka between 1972 and 1976. Back home in Barnes, the two beehives that I keep in my garden, unaffected by Covid, produced a bumper crop of wonderful honey which won the prize for Best Tasting Honey at the Twickenham & Thames Valley Beekeepers' Association Honey Show.

'Meanwhile St Margaret's Elastic Band, the wind band in which I have played tenor saxophone since 2001, was much in demand for concerts over the Coronation period at street parties in Richmond, Whitton and St Margaret's, as well as at later events in Kew Gardens, Marble Hill House and Barnes Green. In my extended family household in

Barnes, the average age of residents has fallen dramatically this year, from 81 when Constance and I lived here alone, to 51 with the arrival of my two teenage granddaughters, who live with us while their parents (my older son and his wife) work in southern Africa with the medical charity Doctors Without Borders. The older granddaughter is in the first year of a degree at Glasgow University, while her younger sister works as a trainee barista at the local branch of Café Nero, pending starting university next year. The two girls provide welcome distraction from the tragedies of Brexit, Boris, Ukraine and (more intractably) climate change. We hope that their generation may create better prospects for the world, in 2030 and beyond, than seem achievable at the moment.'

Hume Hargreave writes: 'We are both still going, albeit with a change of plan. Having been phoned by my consultant in the week before Christmas to say that she wanted me in hospital within the hour because she had found a blood infection which required immediate treatment – fortunately it was successful – we decided we could not live in the Kirkby Lonsdale and Lune Valley area as we intended and had begun to do. It was too far away. We compromised on Wetheral. It is just over an hour away from Newcastle and the same from the Lune Valley. And there is an offshoot, 20 minutes away in Carlisle, of the Northern Centre for Cancer Care in Newcastle. It is linked electronically and managed by my consultant, so she can see what is going on and continue to look after me. The NHS at its best – we are so lucky to have it there for me. We are living temporarily in a new rented house in the next village to Wetheral and hope to have something suitable there sorted out soon.

'Mary Ann remains pretty well, all things considered. She recently had a hugely successful Zoom reunion with fellow student nurses at the Radcliffe, to celebrate the 60th anniversary of their arriving to train – a logistical triumph of collating time zones, with six in the UK, one in Australia, one in Canada, one in Philadelphia and one in Seattle. Mary Ann has had to accept that she cannot drive for long periods, as have I. We have come to terms with the reality that we are less able to get about, but we stay optimistic. Our motto, borrowed from Alan Bennett, is "Keep on keeping on". We commend it to everyone who reads this.'

Martin Hawkins sends good wishes to fellow Mertonians, and reports that he and Julia are well. They have been overrun this summer by incoming family visits and are still leaving undone the things they ought to have done. He is trying to wind down community and trustee involvements so that he might be properly retired by his 85th year.

Peter Hayward writes: 'I have nothing much to report this year except that I am still alive and kicking which as I am rising 84 is something, especially as I and Ann, my long-suffering wife, are still pretty mobile, a blessing as we both love walking. Now that Covid seems a thing of the past we have managed trips to Italy and Spain but nowhere beyond Europe. And we are just back from a trip to Liverpool, Glasgow and Northumberland, mostly by train, luckily picking a strike-free period. A notable achievement was for the whole family, children and grandchildren, completing the Common Walk in Laugharne, a 16-mile hike. The event comes round every three years. For the first time the old were young enough and the young old enough to finish the course.'

John Latham writes: 'I enjoyed the Gaudy last September very much and look forward to the next one. Not much to report this year, but we did manage to get away to Athens and Delphi for a few days at Easter. My first trip abroad since Covid!'

Joe McDonald waxes lyrical about u3a. 'Most of you reading these notes will know, and even in many cases be members of, the u3a. It has given me so much pleasure since I retired and affords opportunities for German conversation, Italian chat, wine appreciation, rambling in the Surrey Hills, choral music and my (not always very harmonious) ukulele band. The particular thing that my Merton education provided was the Lit Hum course, the benefits of which survive in my local u3a to enable me to offer Advanced (so-called) Latin. I started this 13 years ago and retain 12 of the original class members, most of them still declining but not too many conjugating. The combined age is a little over 900 years. When I began in 2010 and asked why on earth they wanted to study Latin, they opined that it might help to keep Alzheimer's at bay and for those still in the class it has. Much praise then to Cicero and Ovid, to Juvenal and Pliny; latterly even to Suetonius and Bede, whom I didn't encounter at Merton. We have just started our summer break as I write and by the time

Postmaster prints this, my sparkling silver-haired flock will have Virgil and Horace to while away cold autumn evenings. Whether I'll still be doing more of the same this time next year remains to be seen, but one of my young members, a sprightly 75, has said she hopes I can continue till 90 – her age not mine. Now there's a stretch!

Richard Nelson reports laconically: 'Not dead yet. Taking the family to Crete in early July to celebrate Helen's 80th.'

Bill Woods used to wonder what caused civilisations to collapse and what it was like for the typical bod who experienced it. He thinks he now has a pretty good idea of the answers. Less caustically, he reports that currently he is trying to discourage the local magpies, grey squirrels and other vermin, which bourgeois cliques like the RSPB think should decide which fledgling songbirds, if any, should be allowed to survive in their garden. He is considering investing in a catapult – with environmentally friendly mud pellets of course.

Another source of interest is what could be a two-pipe mystery even for that doyen of logical investigation of 221b Baker Street. Some time back a bottle of the shampoo that Bill uses arrived unexpectedly with no indication of who sent it or why. Since then, a bottle arrives every month or so and is added to his growing collection. As far as he can make out, he is not being charged. Despite correspondence with a company in Northern Ireland which sold the stuff (and promptly went out of business) and lengthy phone conversations with Amazon representatives in India (as it comes in their packaging), he has made no progress in solving this little mystery. Fortunately, his phone bill is at its usual modest level. Apart from this sort of thing life trundles on as usual and it is now some years since he has been more than ten miles from Hereford – which he finds somewhat strange!

And as to your indefatigable Year Reps:

Roger Gould has settled in at his new base in Nottinghamshire, with close involvement in the local Methodist church, membership of the u3a and Probus groups and a certain amount of now totally uncompetitive golf. He says: 'The major family event has been the arrival of a fifth granddaughter 26 years after the first, not altogether

surprising given that there was a 28-year gap between the marriages of our daughter and our son, although there have been other arrivals in between!

David Shipp had an interesting exchange with **Hume Hargreave** about Merton's interests in Northumberland. 'We have recently returned from your part of the country, walking five days on the Northumberland Coastal Path. We stayed in Warkworth and then in Embleton. The latter has an interesting Merton connection. Merton was given the advowson as long ago as 1274. However, the locals (and the Earls of Lancaster) took some exception to a far-away college having the right to appoint their rector, and Merton had to involve the King, the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Pope in order to get its rights fully established. The vicars of Embleton (as they became) were Merton fellows for the next few hundred years, a good perk as there were valuable rents and tithes attached to the living, and they could also marry! Some of the Merton vicars were a bit disreputable and were accused of drunkenness and getting into debt. The best one, however, was Mandell Creighton who did a lot for the village, wrote six volumes of *A History of the Papacy* while there, and ended up as Bishop of London. Merton has a portrait of him which used to hang in the Hall, I think.'

To which Hume replied: 'Thanks for your interesting news of the advowson of Embleton. Merton also has the advowson of Ponteland and owns the village hall, called the Merton Hall, and a farm called Click-em-in on the edge of the village, which is strategically placed next to the golf course and likely to be the next piece of land where new houses are permitted – yet another opportunity for enhancement of the college funds.'

So far in 2023, as well as Northumberland, David and his wife Phillida have visited their eldest son and his family in Brussels, done a recce of walks around Irvine in Ayrshire in preparation for their walking group holiday in October, and enjoyed a u3a birdwatchers' week in north Norfolk, where some claim to have spotted the elusive Dartford warbler. They were in Oxford recently with their younger son and his family. Highlights were the Merton Borders in the Botanic Gardens, the transformation of the New Bod into the Weston Library, and the improvements to The Broad, no longer a car park.

1960

Year Representative: Keith Pickering

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George Darroch, Andrew Devine, John Hartnett, Roger Laughton and Nick Silk are happily reporting for duty, but with nothing of note to record for *Postmaster*.

Keith Aspinall and Rosemary moved successfully last year and are now lodged comfortably in Somerset in a converted barn in the grounds of the modernised farmhouse in which Rosemary's daughter and family live: a mutual support system of considerable benefit to both households. He became the last member of the 1960 cohort to reach 80 – in January 2023 – and is still celebrating the fact that he has never spent a night in hospital, though this record looks as if it might founder in the summer, as his left knee is increasingly indicating that it will need to be replaced sooner rather than later. The move to the country has enabled him to take up bell ringing in the 12th-century village church. Apart from the actual logistics of the ringing, which are not easy to master, it is very hard work, given his knee, to negotiate both the climbing and the descent of 49 steps of a quixotically structured spiral staircase.

Stuart Blume celebrated his 80th birthday last year with family in Bologna; enjoyed drinking *canelazo* in Cuenca with his Ecuadorian friends, and, with the aid of an interpreter participated in a discussion of vaccine politics on Romanian radio. His *Immunization* book, recommended by **Keith Pickering** in 2022, has appeared in a Chinese translation and, together with Vesna Trifunovic in Belgrade, he is editing a book on related issues.

Gerald Cadogan is in good form and is happy to report the bestowal of an honour, in that he has been elected a Corresponding Member of the Archaeological Institute of America.

Geoffrey Copland is troubled by arthritis, which has led to his undergoing MRI scans. Ever the physicist he noted that the basic operating principle behind these machines is close

in nature to his DPhil research, so it gives him pleasure to see, even if in a minor way, that it has turned out to have practical applications. He has reduced his trustee responsibilities, partly because good practice rules limit the length of time such positions can be held. He will finish imminently as Chair and trustee at Trinity Laban Conservatoire, having relinquished his similar roles at Trinity College London late last year. Though his movements are restricted he hopes he will be sufficiently mobile to meet up for lunch once again with **Keith Pickering**, the latter wishing to return GC's generous hospitality of 2022.

John Cotton has just returned from an extended visit to the Brahmaputra and Assam. He is proud to say that when he and Martine arrived in Guwahati, capital of Assam, they were royally received at Cotton University, founded in 1901 by John's great-grandfather, Sir Henry Cotton, a man still revered in Assam as inter alia having introduced secondary education at a time when devolution was not on the cards. Their hosts were further delighted to tell them that some years ago the higher authorities suggested that consideration be given to changing the name, whereupon both the faculty and the students successfully united to insist that it remain as Cotton. As a final note of resonance, the charming lady Head of the English faculty informed them that she had carried out part of her DPhil course at Merton.

John Crossley has been as active as ever. A Festschrift Colloquium [sic] was given for him in June 2022, where dear colleagues from The Netherlands, Germany, New Zealand, USA and England all gave talks and more than fifty people from around the world, quite apart from his friends, participated by Zoom (sites.google.com/view/crossley-logic-colloquium/schedule?authuser=0). In addition to working with colleagues on a Bruges manuscript on music theory from about 1300, he has been plodding away on two books, one planned to come out this year and another in 2024; finally, there is a third book in the pipeline, like that of the novel written by **Keith Pickering's** mother, but in no other way similar, covering the activities of a single day. Outside of academe he and Sara are both well and the first of his grandchildren has married.

John Davies is fully occupied as co-editor in a new series for Bloomsbury that is to comprise *A Cultural History of Business*.

he and his colleagues at work creating *Vol I. Classical Antiquity 600 BCE – 800 CE*, which has caused him to struggle mightily with the last 400 years of that whopping great slab of time in order to finish a respectable Introduction. Otherwise, he hopes he has been a helpful Consort for his wife in her role as the first female Master of her London Livery Company (Armourers and Brasiers). He continues to write and publish academically and to sing chorally and has in general resumed a normal post-Covid life.

Leslie Epstein has escaped Covid so far but in so doing exposes himself to such minimal worldly interface that he questions if he is alive at all. He has published a new book, *The Goldkorn Variations: A Triloggy* (not a typo), an 800-page volume of all three of his previous Leib Goldkorn books, with an afterword and an essay. Merton College, of course, plays a large role. He has had a few short stories in Tablet Magazine, not the Catholic one, the American Jewish one online. He has just remembered that he plays tennis with his grandson and poker with some old fogies online, so maybe he is alive after all.

Peter Fattorini is still cycling but at 80 is discovering slower and shorter rides than of old. He and Vicky have just returned from seven weeks in Australia visiting their son and family in Sydney, a splendid escape from the North Yorkshire winter weather.

David Fletcher recalls **Peter Fattorini** quoting an old friend. 'You know Peter, the other Peter is calling in his sheep one by one.' David would like it to be known that Peter has not called him as yet in 2023. More than that he cannot say, though like Peter (not the sheep caller), he regrets having to miss their planned reunion last year, perforce called off at the last moment when Peter F and Vicky were struck down by Covid.

Bruce Gilbert very much enjoyed attending Courtenay Phillips's memorial service, though he had an appallingly crowded journey back to Yorkshire, from which he contracted a dose of Covid, enabling him to pass it on to the rest of his family, for which they were understandably grateful. He and Dot are presently trying to choose between Bamburgh and Uzbekistan, much the same thing, for their next holiday.

Francis Glassborow gave up playing Bridge last spring as he found himself unconsciously muttering about his partner's play. He also renounced his allotment membership in the autumn. He has added meditation to his pre-breakfast routine and serious reading post-breakfast whilst on an exercise bike. Gwyneth left Merton to start a new job as head gardener at The Queen's College at the beginning of December, which he feels is a loss to Merton. As predicted in last year's *Postmaster* he has had an air source heat pump installed at the end of May, all power now electric, and he expects his energy supplier to be paying him in the summer months ahead.

Philip Hawkes and Patricia, his amanuensis, are flourishing in Château Missery, and remember what great fun they had with **Francis Finlay**, who kindly invited them to spend this past Christmas and New Year with him up the Hudson River.

Arthur Hepher commanded the unalloyed admiration of his Best Man, **Keith Pickering**, in July 1963, when he forfeited his Postmastership, and relinquished his status as the Senior Postmaster of our year, in order to marry his sweetheart. That he was wise beyond his years is clear in that Arthur and Barbara, accompanied by close family and friends, will be celebrating their Diamond Anniversary in 2023. Respect, Arthur.

Alan Heppenstall has three Ukrainian guests staying with him: two ladies, not related but business colleagues, one accompanied by her daughter aged 12, who work remotely for a company based in Dubai, which unfortunately means they have to work Dubai hours, the four-hour time difference leading to somewhat early starts in the Heppenstall household.

Mike Hind is looking forward to some brief travel opportunities to Crete in April and Montenegro in June, and to their annual lunch in The Great Wen with **Richard Thompson** and **Keith Pickering**.

Alan Keat has renewed his earlier pleasure of following the National Hunt jumping season, maintaining a fairly consistent stream of losers at The Tote.

Richard Mulgan can report survival and reasonable health, but nothing else of note, though this news in itself carries greater import as each year passes.

Keith Pickering would like to welcome Julia Bell as Alumni Communications Officer and to thank her for patiently listening to his outbursts. Thank you also to all correspondents for so kindly taking the time to reply to his annual email – another 100% response from those extant 1960 Mertonians who are happy to stay in touch. He and Sandy were delighted, as forecast last year, to meet up with **David Fletcher** and Bonnie, across from their Québécois hideaway; just a short break of 59 years since he and David last met. He would also like to thank his several 1960 luncheon companions, whose company he relishes, and hopes they won't mind repeating the experience in 2023.



David and Bonnie Fletcher; and Sandy and Keith Pickering meeting up in 2022

Tim Phillips, after years of maintaining a low profile, feels he should justify this by noting that taking the dogs for a walk is about as noteworthy an activity as he can muster for submission to *Postmaster*.

David Price and Sue were set upon relocating to Exeter, and instigated the usual house moving procedure, only to become embroiled in England's conveyancing system, that which permits full rein for the development of gazumping as an art form, and after months of warfare have ended up in the same house they started with. Loins will be girded for a later attempt to escape unscathed when their blood pressure has died down to normal. He and Sue were invited to an 'Oxford University Society of Cornwall' lunch, the event, resulting from his degree taken at New College, being supported by Rick Stein, and held at his eponymous restaurant in Padstow, and a very fine lunch it was.

Glynne Stackhouse continues as Organist and Choir Director at Streatley Church, on the Thames opposite Goring. He enjoys being back on the organ bench again, working with a small, but keen and growing, ladies' choir. Their enthusiasm has stimulated him to compose some simple anthems for them, ideal for the church organ which, small as it is, does not tempt him to assail the grander works of the organ repertoire, which would be beyond his technique nowadays. He receives kindly applause after Sunday morning service and this activity, coupled with weddings and funerals both in Streatley and elsewhere, keeps him busy. Last summer he and Patricia took what might well be their last overseas holiday – a delightful cruise up the Danube from Budapest to Passau, passing places he had first visited in his gap year before going up to Merton. This year they will be concentrating on the delights of home: Wells just visited, with Cheltenham and Llandrindod Wells coming up.

Richard Thompson and Jane have stayed twice in their French property but are finding the maintenance overly onerous and after a wonderful 30 years may well put it up for sale later in the year, returning to the village only as renting guests. They have booked their annual jaunt to Sicily in October with the family: same village, same house, no doubt the same restaurants and ice-cream parlours; something reassuring about repetition. He, Jane and daughter Eleanor are off to Madrid to renew their acquaintance with its magnificent art galleries and to visit one they don't know – Joaquin Sorolla, the Spanish impressionist.

Michael Thorn is ageing like the rest of us and the only noticeable change in his life has been the arrival of the gift of a Rhodesian Ridgeback, a very uncommon breed of dog.

Jim Trefil is still professing but now has the time to enjoy the kids. He continues to write and came across a great quote: 'The future looks a lot more like the present than we thought it would.' Take a look at the future as seen in the 1920s if you don't agree. Where are the flying cars?

Bruce Walter has had another brush with the medicos, but thanks to the rapid reaction of the Greek national health service, to which he takes off his hat, and the subsequent speedy implantation of a defibrillator, he is still soldiering on,

in the ring and neither down nor out. He is looking forward in May to a visit from **Jasper Holmes'** widow Kate, who will be coming over with a friend from her schooldays and the three of them have rented a house near the sea for a week in the southern Peloponnese. Have a great time, Bruce.

Philip Webb (Toronto) continues to enjoy one of the world's best cities and what is currently its most successful country. He exchanged news at Christmas with all three of his scattered cousins, who report various challenges facing their own ageing families. He himself continues to avoid the medical profession and has just finished building a new computer (his sixth, starting in 2000). He has been sending out regular news mails to his friends about the war in Ukraine. He has also recently finished *Sense and Sensibility*, the last of Ms Austen's novels he hadn't read. Rather than the crinolines and beaux of TV costume drama, he sees her as an earlier and better social commentator than Dickens, a lady whose premature death robbed us all. He is all too well aware that life can change suddenly at any age.

John Wood and Kate are healthy and in good form, and look forward to celebrating the marriage of their eldest grandchild, Annie, in August this year.

Nick Woodward is slightly ahead of Richard Thompson in that after many years of enjoying their French property he and Oli have reluctantly but successfully just recently sold it.

Jonathan Wright says that life is treating him well and that he continues to write. He was touched to receive an appreciative note from Diana Roberts following his *In Memoriam* of Martin which appeared in last year's *Postmaster*.

1961

There is currently no Year Representative for 1961. Please contact development@merton.ox.ac.uk if you are interested.

1962

Year Representative: Martyn Hurst

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Michael Roberts is based in Adelaide and runs the Thuppahi website which is full of fascinating articles about Sri Lanka.

Callum McCarthy divides his time between Uzes, Paris, Berlin and the UK. He is now the proud possessor of a *carte de séjour*, obviating the post-Brexit travel restrictions. A farewell trip to China during the summer will finally signal his retirement.

Jim Doty reports that the spring weather in Washington has been fine despite the foul political climate. He celebrates his golden wedding anniversary this year. Visits to the American West to ski and fish will be interrupted by a family reunion in the UK during the summer.

Andrew Morton is looking forward to the Round the Island race this year, once again in the good ship *Balerno*. The average age of the crew should probably be concealed from the organisers.

David Ambrose has another of his novels being turned into an opera in Germany. He is currently writing a collection of short stories and says his recently fitted pacemaker has given him a new lease of life.

Chris Rogers enjoyed the Gaudy and the Passiontide at Merton festival with the wide range and quality of its music. He has visited his Royal Marine son in Jordan on a posting at the British Embassy. His next family event will be his son's wedding (at Magdalen!).

Charles Webb was on parade for the Queen's funeral but was excluded from the TV coverage. He was not involved in the Coronation but was the recipient of a medal (for services not rendered, presumably). His forecast of rain for the Windsor Concert was a day early.

Martyn Hurst had a successful fishing trip to Alaska last year for king salmon. This year it is the jungles of Bolivia for golden

dorado. He is a major contributor to the average age of the *Balerno* crew. Between times his classic cars keep him amused.

Keith Shuttleworth enjoyed the Diamond Jubilee Lunch and is eagerly awaiting the Platinum one.

Paddy Millard's campaign for the rectification of the Net Pay pensions anomaly has finally reached a successful conclusion.

Alan Eastwood and **Dan Hodson** made a pilgrimage to Beckenham to visit **Roy Stevens** who has been rather fragile. They report that Roy's ability to entertain his audience remains undiminished.

Michael Goodman reports that his daughter Anna (1994) has become Professor of Infectious Diseases at UCL and St Thomas' Hospital (she may be too modest to mention this to the 1994 rep). He keeps busy with his u3a walking group and leads another for French speakers.

John Keane is enjoying retirement and plans to visit Oxford during the summer – train strikes permitting.

1963

Year Representative: Guy English

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Considering 13 of our contingent, plus partners old and new, made it to a Diamond Lunch this June, warmly welcomed by a brand-new Warden-in-waiting, this year's input is thin. As were we: all looked in remarkably good shape for the vintage. Furthest travelled: Michael Taylor from Sao Paulo. So what was *your* excuse?

Stephen Ralls writes: 'Reminiscence is an unavoidable occupation as one approaches a Mertonian Diamond Jubilee. Flecks of memory spring up in the mind's eye, engendered by forgotten objects. One of these surfaced recently in the form of a beautifully coloured menu from Restaurant Elizabeth, the cover showing its venerable building on St Aldate's on a starry night. A group of us wended our way there several times

to celebrate each other's 21st birthdays. Warmly welcomed, we soon became accustomed to hitherto unknown (at least to me) exotic foods: stracciatella, moussaka, syllabub, etc. and the wonderful, retort-like Cona coffee machines with their spirit lamps, which would occasionally malfunction with noisy, possibly disastrous results (as did, just as infrequently, those glass candle-holders in Chapel). I seem to remember a 30/- prix fixe.

'I wonder, are present-day Merton undergraduates able, like us, without financial worry, to mark their celebrations in such luxurious style? I do hope so.'



Gordon Whatley sitting next to Mark Twain

Gordon Whatley reports: 'I have nothing to report of note, and most of my recent photos are of kids and grandkids, but while shopping in nearby Fairfield for a St Valentine's gift for my wife Mary, I ran into an old literary acquaintance, who

has a house up in Hartford. I took an inexpert selfie while we sat together in the sun on a bench next to the Post Road. Some of you may recognise him, if not me.'

As for me, **Guy English**, I've been pushing my boundaries, encouraged into much earlier music than I knew I liked, with a magical concert series in Venice (by train, too) — more theorbos and crumhorns than one could shake a baton at; and physically, visiting Orkney for its early monuments — where I was regaled nightly by a fellow guest with folk music on a traditional small harp.

Meanwhile, when a book my wife and I had assembled astonishingly won a prize, I was encouraged to complete another once-shared project, on Cornwall's holy wells. Tiresomely, I keep finding or being told of even more, previously undocumented. Perhaps there *should* always be one more? In a nod to age, I've downsized my already modest yacht, while continuing to compete in six-oared pilot gigs. Additionally, the book on Elizabeth Warren, botanist and algologist, which my late wife and I produced, won the Charles Thomas Prize from the Royal Institute of Cornwall, for Cornish Historical Research.

1964

Year Representative: Richard Burns

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Rather thin pickings this year, I'm afraid, as we seem to be passing increasingly less eventful lives. However, for a dozen of us (**John Borgars**, **Eric Colvin**, **Mike Goold**, **Steve James**, **Paul Mahoney**, **Mark Price**, **Les Pritchard**, **Bob Spears**, **Mike Stepan**, **Keith Thomas**, **Colin Tyrell** and myself), attending the Gaudy in September last year was a memorable way to say goodbye to Covid and all its disruptions and inconveniences. Well done to the lawyers with a very full turnout of four; not so well done by the historians, whose sole representative was me.

Meeting Steve at Merton and discovering that we would both be in South Africa in January led to a very pleasant evening for Catherine and myself with Steve and Anne at

their daughter's house in Franschhoek in the heart of the Cape winelands. Steve and his wife continue to be very active travellers, having recently returned from a holiday in Vietnam and Cambodia shared with **Eric and Julia Colvin**, who had travelled up from Vanuatu.

Mike Stepan's work as a family mediator is now down to two days a week, leaving time for the annual holiday to Turkey and the adjacent (unnamed) Greek island where his daughter has a house. **Colin Tyrrell** reports that he and his wife are members of the independent advisory panel which oversees the training and welfare of army recruits at his local barracks. He has also had two daughters married in the last 12 months. **Mark Price**, having survived a brush with cancer a few years ago, suffered a serious stroke in November but has achieved 'a remarkable recovery'. Less positively, his attempts to get the College to resume its teaching of Engineering, abandoned since the retiral of Dr **David Witt**, have proved unavailing.

Surprisingly, some of us still have intellectual energy to spare. **David Rogers** has completed his part-time DPhil in the Oxford History faculty, first mentioned in this report in 2018, so can call himself a doctor twice over, having left his medical career behind. **Robert Irwin's** tenth novel, *Tom's Version*, is to be published in November, with a sequel to follow. In further recognition of his academic prowess he was awarded a medal by the Royal Asiatic Society for 'outstanding services to Asiatic studies'.

As well as the South African visit mentioned above, my wife and I have been catching up on travel after having been held back by Covid and my (apparently successful) treatment for prostate cancer. We managed trips to Morocco, Italy and France. I also fitted in a week touring First World War battlefields in Slovenia and Northern Italy (unsurprisingly, Catherine did not join me on this trip and I had to go with a school friend who had read History at Magdalen). It was sobering to think that men fought for years in such challenging terrain – the foothills of the Julian Alps are a very different proposition to the muddy fields of Flanders.

Looking forward to reporting again in the next edition of *Postmaster*.

1965

Year Representative: Peter Robinson

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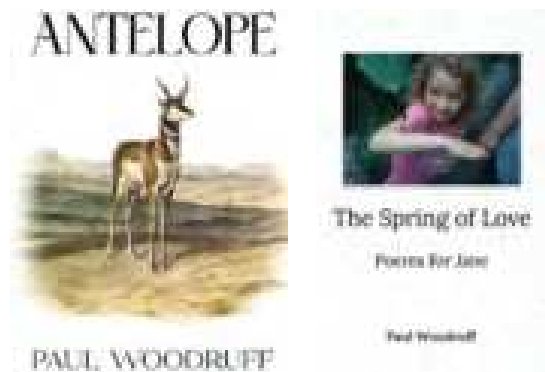
Paul Everson writes, reminding me that in last year's *Postmaster* he looked forward to two substantial academic publications – suitable as gifts to Merton College library. Typically of academic publications, both are still 'forthcoming', but not despaired of. The library will just have to wait for those treasures. Meanwhile, a string of spin-off and ancillary articles have gone into academic journals, lightening the wordage of the forthcoming British Academy volume especially. But that 'normal business' has been overshadowed this winter by the unexpected and unnecessary death of Paul and Elizabeth's youngest son, David. He died, alone and without underlying symptoms, of acute Covid pneumonia; and so they shared, unexpectedly and helplessly, the sadness of so many families as a result of the pandemic. The loss cut deep and put their lives out of joint. As usual, Shakespeare had the words to capture that dull and ever-present feeling, when one's own cannot:

Grief fills the room up of my absent child,
Lies in his bed, walks up and down with me,
Puts on his pretty looks, repeats his words,
Remembers me of all his gracious parts,
Stuffs out his vacant garments with his form;

As for me, **Peter Robinson**, we delayed the onset of winter weather by taking a cruise in early November to the Mediterranean and Adriatic. This year we enjoyed good weather with trips out from Stresa on Lake Maggiore into the Italian and Swiss Alps. We plan to repeat the enjoyment of our cruise last year by visiting southern Italy, some Greek islands and mainland Turkey, including Istanbul, and ending in Athens, this time in late summer. We visit our children and grandchildren regularly in Nottingham and in Tunbridge Wells, stopping over in St Albans with our son Christopher. In U3A Biblical Hebrew we alternate reading a psalm with prose writings, such as Esther and Ruth, and, as at present, reading Genesis from the beginning. Piano playing is still enjoyable, with even some moderate progress!

Adrian Scheps wrote with greetings and to say that his book *Musical Notes* was published in June and is available on Amazon. It is a collection of various musical blogs written over a number of years with an introduction explaining how and why he became involved with classical music.

I am sure that you would all like me to thank **Paul Woodruff** for writing in, despite suffering from very poor health. His lungs are declining and he is on oxygen day and night. I have also offered Paul, on your behalf, our condolences for the death of his granddaughter Jane, who died of leukaemia a month before her 17th birthday. Paul says that the good news is that he has been very productive lately. His latest book in philosophy, *Living toward Virtue: Practical Ethics in the Spirit of Socrates* (Oxford University Press, 2022), has been selected by the press for special attention. He also has two books of poetry that other Mertonians might like to read, which he considers to be better than his poems that were printed in *Postmaster* of 1968: *The Spring of Love: Poems for Jane* (Kindle Direct Publishing, 2023) expresses the beauty we can remember from an extraordinary life; and *Antelope* (Kindle Direct Publishing, 2023) is a Stoic approach to ageing and dying, expressed through the point of view of animals who 'flow into their world'.



Jonathan Zamet writes that he and his wife have just come back from a couple of weeks in England which included a visit to Merton. He continues to make pottery which serendipitously caused him to catch Covid last November. Fortunately, he recovered quickly. The other bug which

seems to have infected him is writing. Last year he completed an autobiography and now has two projects on the burner. One is a book on pottery; he completed a draft only to decide that he wanted to change the theme. The other is editing and annotating a small collection of letters between his father and his parents when he was imprisoned as a conscientious objector in the First World War.

David Mumford writes to say that he is still being asked to do locums in the Netherlands – he will be away for a few weeks in August and September helping out the Anglican chaplaincy in Arnhem/Nijmegen. David is still in Scotland, living near Dunbar and appreciating being near the sea. The children and grandchildren continue to flourish. His eyesight is deteriorating and he is due for cataract operations in a few months, so will be using a larger font on his computer and a magnifying glass for reading newspapers.

1966

Year Representative: David Holmes

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Jonathan Clarke writes, 'After retiring from the Diplomatic Service, last post in the Embassy in Washington, Jonathan Clarke now lives in Manhattan, still dabbling in some political consultancy. Merton visitors, including the choir, are regularly here, so he has kept in touch with Irene Tracey, both as Warden and in her new capacity as Vice-Chancellor. He has somewhat lost touch with his contemporaries although he recently had the pleasure of having lunch at the Garrick with **Robert Venables**. Any visitors to Manhattan, please get in touch.'

Jack Frazier writes, 'Finally, in February 2023, after years of delay, "*Tortugas marinas como especie bandera*" was published by Abya Yala, Quito, Ecuador - <https://abyayala.org.ec/producto/tortugas-marinas-como-especie-bandera/>. The volume, with 12 chapters and 22 authors from 6 countries, is the Spanish-language version of the 2005 publication by the University of Amsterdam *Marine Turtles as Flagships* - <https://www.marecentre.nl/mast/ContentsMarineTurtlesasFlagships.html>. The Spanish version (with a few chapter updates) is

being distributed, free of charge, to some 500 specialists and organisations from some 23 countries, in South America, Central America, Mexico, Spanish-speaking Caribbean, Spain, Angola, and Cabo Verde. The “flagship species” concept is used widely in biological conservation; it relates to species that acquire a disproportionate amount of attraction and importance for promoting species and habitat conservation.’

David Holmes retired as chair of Merton’s Stipends and Allowances Committee (REMCO) in December 2022, after 13 years of service.

Denis MacShane continues to patrol Europe reporting on political developments in different capitals. He is a regular on French TV and radio stations on Brexit and the Royal Household sagas which endlessly fascinate the French. He is currently trying to edit down more than 2 million words of daily contemporary diaries he kept as MP and Minister during the three Labour governments between 1997 and 2010.

1967

Year Representative: Rory Khilkoff-Boulding

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1968

Year Representative: Ian McBrayne

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First, the sad news that **Peter Bibby** finally lost his battle with lung cancer on 20 February 2023. **George Daly** writes: ‘Peter was a highly memorable character who had a most unusual experience of Merton. His friends will remember him in connection with moles, grub screws, acid tests, deer, getting into trouble and being arrested. He did not complete his degree, but he retained a great affection for Merton.

‘After Merton, Peter had a wonderfully varied and productive life. He was part of a hippie commune called Absolutely Anything; he made furniture; he engaged in battles for a better transport system in London; for years he was chair

of governors at a primary school; and as a barrister he represented autistic children before the Special Educational Needs Tribunal. He had a long and happy marriage with Anne and always provided entertainment for any children who crossed his path. Peter died peacefully at home with Anne after saying farewell to his local friends.’ A full obituary appears in this issue.

Travel is a blessing which many indulge in at our stage of life. **Alan Harland** reports that travelling in their campervan has become one of the most enjoyable aspects of retirement for him and Jude. Much smaller and nimbler than many vans, it can negotiate remote locations with ease. With their dog Remy, they have made multiple trips around the United States, visiting friends and family, making pilgrimages to sacred musical sites from Muscle Shoals to the Mormon Tabernacle, and hiking in national parks from the oldest, Yellowstone, to the latest addition, New River Gorge.



Alan and Jude Harland on their Newfoundland trip

Their most recent trip was to New England and north-eastern Canada, spending most time in Newfoundland, a geological, historical and scenic wonderland, where they experienced spectacular coastlines, lighthouses galore, Viking settlements, glacial lakes and a freshwater fjord, icebergs, moose, caribou, puffins, whales and the loveliest, most welcoming and funny locals. Alan says his highlight was a nightly single malt with ice fragments from a 10,000-year-old glacier.

Alastair Henderson is another traveller. He lives in Melbourne, near one daughter, but regularly visits the other daughter in Roma, Queensland. Roma is in the outback 500 kilometres west of Brisbane, where their son-in-law is an ecologist keeping an eye on gas mining and farming depredations on the environment. The town of about 7,000 inhabitants has a surprisingly active music life: a town band, string ensemble and even a string quartet. The great event of the year is the Roma Agricultural Show, with the usual animal showing events, sheepdog competition, show jumping and so on, plus art exhibitions, dancing and music.

They enjoy the bucolic quiet and the winter sun, which is in short supply in Melbourne. But the city has its state library, art gallery, excellent symphony orchestra and much chamber music, so they enjoy a balance of pleasures. Covid continues but seems to have become as normal as flu; those who still wear masks in supermarkets are a dwindling minority.

Chris Simmons has been travelling too. When he wrote, he and Dorothy were just back from a splendid visit to Lewis, where their daughter is living as a crofter's mate. There was continuous sunshine during the long daylight hours for over a week. The personal highlight for Chris was a visit to St Moluag's church, just south of the Butt of Lewis, the most north-westerly outpost of the Scottish Episcopal Church: tiny, remote, one of those places where the gap between heaven and earth is very thin, a place of pilgrimage from the sixth century onwards, good for the cure of madness and sores (but not, Chris found, insect bites).

Richard Hofton is among several correspondents who mention walking as a continuing pastime. He has resumed his preferred pace of four miles an hour, not as a fitness regime but because his spaniel is no more and, unlike her, he has no need for frequent pauses to sample the smells of their semi-rural setting. He has dodged the bane of arthritis, and suggests this may be partly because he shunned vigorous sporting endeavour from an early age and can't pinpoint the location of Merton's sports ground. Covid caught up with him, but he escaped more or less unscathed. Since his return two years ago to what used to be Warwickshire, Richard's life has revolved more and more around the Symphony Hall and Villa Park. He reports that both teams are in good form,

the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra as usual, Aston Villa not.

Alan Taylor says his year has been fairly uneventful, but enjoyable. He modestly claims to be keeping reasonably active with plenty of walking, then reveals that he recently completed the Yorkshire Three Peaks Challenge in just over nine hours. He admits this was his second attempt, having got disastrously lost in the rain and mist the first time and made a memo to improve his navigation skills. Alan has since had a very pleasant day with **Bill Hart**, **Paul Zadik** and a mutual friend from St Catz at the Yorkshire Sculpture Park.

Walking naturally features in **Steve Drinkwater's** report too: Dartmoor, the South Devon Coast Path, the South Downs, the New Forest and the Chilterns all get a mention. He finally received his MBE from the Prince of Wales at an investiture at Windsor Castle in February: congratulations again, Steve! He says he is as busy as ever, still supervising and assessing Duke of Edinburgh expeditions, still chairing the Friends of the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park. He also loves living in Narberth, a bustling and vibrant little town with five or six pubs, nine takeaways, a clutch of restaurants, antique shops and many independent businesses. He has become a trustee of the local community and sports centre and continues to study French on Duolingo.

Alan Sked mentions walking too. After years of severe arthritis, he can walk without pain and without crutches after two knee replacement operations. The first replacement became infected, with what sound like horrible repercussions and two weeks of strong intravenous antibiotics, but the second one went well. Meanwhile, he has written a very short but very critical history of Scotland from a unionist perspective, slaying numerous sacred cows. At the time of writing, Alan had yet to discover whether the publisher who had the manuscript would accept it; he would be grateful to hear from anyone who knows a good literary agent. His other news is an extremely pleasant visit from **David Pelteret**, who looked well and hadn't changed much since they last met at Merton 50 years ago.

David Bell reports that his eldest grandchild has just got his driving licence, and suggests avoiding driving in the Boston

area for a while. His tenth and youngest grandchild is about to turn two. He too has been meeting other Mertonians, having had dinner in Belmont with **Julian Leslie** and **Peter Palmer**.

Alastair Northedge reported last year that he had been given a Special Recognition Award for contributions to Middle Eastern architecture by Tamayouz Awards, despite not being an architect. Delayed by Covid, the award was finally presented at a ceremony in Oman in January. It recognises his discoveries in early mediaeval architecture and urbanism in Iraq under the Abbasid Caliphate. Congratulations, Alastair! Sadly, he says he has spent the past year mainly running between the UK and France on family and other matters, following the death of his ex-wife.

Peter Warry reports having joined the grandparents' club in May and looking forward to all that brings. Earlier this year, he belatedly published his lockdown memoir *Fifty Years of Industry*, and has started work on a second, extended edition of his book on Roman tiles. This summer he was heading for a second season of excavation of an unusual and important Roman tile kiln near Swindon.

Tim Cole told us last year that he had been appointed to the Home Office Age Estimation Scientific Advisory Committee, to advise on methods to improve age assessment of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children. The committee's report was published online in January (search 'AESAC report') and Tim made an appearance on *Newsnight* to talk about it.

Another man still working is **Simon Orebi Gann**, who remains as a senior independent director and a consultant. For relaxation, he continues to race his rare 1961 Morgan SLR on Formula 1 circuits in Europe. A historic first was an invitation to race the car at the Le Mans Classic 24 at the beginning of July, 70 years after the car was built to race there and now the only one to have done so. He considers it a potential symptom of senility that he accepted the invitation so rapidly.

The concert in Toledo which kept **Scirard Lancelyn Green** from attending last year's Gaudy was reportedly a great

success, and this year's ice dance and skiing weeks have been unencumbered by Covid rules. He and Caroline decided to take their Bishop's Chorister awards, but missed the opportunity to have them presented by **Peter Forster** (1969), who had recently retired as Bishop of Chester. Scirard says they had forgotten how stressful exams can be.

Amid these activities, Scirard is also looking after an ever-changing and ever-demanding estate, with seven weddings, six public garden openings and three Winter Wonderland walks in the gardens currently scheduled. One project at present is to get a range of buildings with 16 business units listed, so that they become exempt from the probable tightening of energy performance rules. He plans to pray in aid the fact that the buildings were opened by Virginia Bottomley, then Secretary of State for Heritage, about 30 years ago. Elsewhere, Scirard has installed six solar photovoltaic systems in the past year, including one in Witney for Henley Theatre Services. At home, he has installed a hybrid 16-kilowatt inverter system in a 300-year-old cellar, reducing his electricity bill by 70%.

Stephen Powell was planning a nil return to my request for news, but at the last minute was obliged to report that he and Jill had finally succumbed to Covid and were feeling pretty dreadful. Sympathy to them and to others who are still getting the virus. Stephen is expecting that the court case about patenting the inventions of artificial intelligence which he mentioned last year will be decided in September; watch this space next year!

What of the rest of the 1968 contingent? I am sure that **Danny Lawrence** speaks for many at our stage of life when he says: 'I've thought long and hard in an effort to come up with some news worth sharing with you, to no avail, sadly. Life goes on, a blessing in itself, but in a fairly routine way.' It's still good to hear from you, Danny, and I hope to hear from more people next year, whether their lives have been exciting or mundane in the interim.

Meanwhile, a final thought. This is the second year running that my report has included a reference to moles. Could this be a new Merton tradition in the making?

1969

Year Representative: John Symes

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We were fortunate to be invited to a Gaudy in March this year and it was a great pleasure to meet many old friends and also to renew acquaintance with those we did not know so well 50 years ago. If there are not so many and somewhat shorter entries in this year's report, I put it down to the face-to-face exchanges which are of course much more rewarding than remote correspondence. We enjoyed a splendid meal courtesy of the college kitchen – no reduction in quality there – and plenty of pleasant reminiscences in the bar afterwards. In between we were entertained by speeches from the Acting Warden, now Warden Elect, and from Howard Davies who managed to incorporate an appropriate encomium to our first and only Prime Ministerial alumna. *Floreat Mertona*.

In my now customary section of 'no news is good news' I can record **Will Barton** (who celebrated his ruby wedding anniversary with Helen), **Jonty Boyce**, **Jeremy Cooke** (who has a new granddaughter Matilda Robinson), **Peter Forster**, **Mike Garton Sprenger**, **Bill Hedley**, **Tony Millns** and **Bob Walker** (who has a new daughter, Hanna, sister to Ray). With help from my Mediterranean correspondent, I can add sightings of Merton alumni afloat including **Will Pedder** fresh from touching every country on that sea, and **Howard Davies** skippering the *Prudence Mary* around the Ionian Islands, with occasional crew **Duncan Campbell Smith** and **Martin McNeill**.

Michael Collins has retired to the seaside town of Kyrenia/Girne in North Cyprus, where his British pensions reach him via a local bank. So calm and normal is life that he has little reason to cross the border to the Republic of Cyprus, although he does make occasional expeditions to Marks & Spencer. He reports that the culture is a relaxed Muslim one, although Christian worship is permitted and well attended. Notable is the friendly, helpful attitude of local people, who speak enough English for people who do not speak Turkish to conduct their lives.

Martin Cooper published a novel *Cold Hillside* back in 2008. It's now available as a free download from getfreebooks.com, along with his collection of five short stories.

Gareth Glyn (Gareth Glynne Davies)'s second opera, *Un Nos Ola Leuad* ('One Moonlit Night') was commissioned as a television production for Channel 4 and S4C; it was expected to be transmitted in 2022, and is now likely to be broadcast at the end of this year. In the meantime, Gareth is working on a chamber opera for OPRA Cymru, based on the mediaeval Welsh legend 'Culhwch and Olwen'.

Tony Hansen spent the winter remodelling a room at the rear of his house; and coined the term 'xylectomy' to represent serious assault on wood framing using powerful reciprocating saws. He then underwent benign thyroidectomy on his own frame, resulting in temporary loss of voice just in time to whisper his way through the Gaudy. Both house and voice are now fully recovered, painted over and healed, ready for the next adventure.

Martin McNeill lives in Exmoor with wife Anne. He is retiring in the autumn from Morley College London, where he has been clerk and company secretary for the last eight years, but is continuing his governance consultancy work and supervising the audit of local councils.

Paul Pillar's newest book is being published this October by Columbia University Press. Titled *Beyond the Water's Edge: How Partisanship Corrupts U.S. Foreign Policy*, it examines how putting party before country has had baneful effects at times throughout US history and analyses why that form of political corruption has become especially pronounced in more recent years.

As for me, **John Symes**, life in retirement continues to be busy with holidays (Revelstoke and Tuscany), hobbies (pottery, theatre and walking), and community (church and heritage projects, and now mentoring at a local sixth-form college). Ann and I welcomed a new grandson, Rory, cousin to Iris and Edith.

Richard Underwood will retire fully at the end of August 2023 (Emeritus Professor of Cardiac Imaging, Imperial

College London). His plans thereafter are unclear: maybe more motorcycle touring, maybe getting back in the cockpit having been grounded by Covid, or maybe just enjoying life's pleasures in sunny Yorkshire.

1970

Year Representative: Nick Skinner

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It was good to catch up with many of you at our Gaudy in March, a somewhat special one as the years invited (1969–72) included nearly all of our contemporaries.

John Crabtree published his latest book this year, co-authored with Francisco Durand and Jonas Wolff, *Business and the State in the Central Andes*, which looks at how business groups manage politics in this unstable part of the world. It is published by Pittsburgh University Press, if you are at a loss for Christmas presents! 2023 was his last year teaching at Oxford's Latin American Centre at St Antony's College where he has run a course on Andean Politics for many years.

Les Hewitt writes that he 'was privileged to attend one of the most enjoyable Gaudies so far' in March. The following weekend, he made a first-ever visit to Twickenham for a very enjoyable afternoon at the Varsity rugby union matches. Les continues to enjoy cycling, walking in the hills and the occasional run. He is also making slow but steady progress learning to play the piano, which he only started aged 68. He enjoys regular visits to the excellent Cineworld cinema in Warrington. Les accompanied wife Anne to the World Masters Mountain Running Championships in the Republic of Ireland in September 2022, where Anne won the team gold medal and individual bronze medal in her age category. Les is still a season ticket holder at the local non-league football club Warrington Town, which in 2022/23 achieved promotion to National League North, the highest position in the club's history.

Edward Lambert writes: 'These days I'm busier than ever writing new small-scale operas and mounting performances with The Music Troupe, a charity which gives valuable

experience to performers and flies the flag for new and contemporary opera rather than the old and historic.' (musictroupe.co.uk)

Peter Moizer met up with **Laurence Campbell** (and Margaret his wife) at a meeting of Mertonians at the University of Leeds attended by the acting Warden on 31 May. Planning to be there but frustrated by flight delays was **Geoff Ellis** who writes: 'Life continues to be busy and rewarding and I have yet to officially "retire". I am still active in my church ministry in Leeds. Last year we formed the Leeds United Reformed Church Partnership of eight churches. I am a member of its Ministry team with special oversight for West Park church. I continue in my role as Chaplain at Assisi Place, one of the Methodist homes in Leeds. I am also a trustee of a couple of charities in Leeds. Whilst I retired from the role of Technical Director of a man-made fibre company back in 2008, I only finally stepped back from a technical consultancy role there in the last two years. I am still a trustee of the company's pension fund. During lockdown I spent more time on watercolour painting and I then started painting landscapes and seascapes using acrylics on canvas. Lockdown was also an opportunity to make progress with learning classical guitar. After ten years of tuition and practice I finally was able to pass the Grade 8 exam.'

Tony Sharp writes that he has become a Jubilee Fellow of the Historical Association, after more than 50 years' continuous membership. 'Otherwise, I'm still guiding tours to the Western Front, Normandy, Berlin and now Krakow, and even umpiring quite serious league hockey again, testament to the wonders of modern hip and knee replacement surgery. Catherine continues at UCL and we have a new kitten after Kaz, our Russian blue, died just before Christmas. Still in Otford, still pottering around!'

It was very pleasing to get a detailed catch-up from **Greg Petsko**, across the Pond. 'Whoever said life is what happens to you while you are making other plans probably had me in mind. As I approach my 75th birthday, I find myself not only still working full time, but working as a Professor at Harvard Medical School in Neurology and Neuroscience, two fields in which I have never taken so much as a single course. In 2002, at the age of 54, I was Professor of Biochemistry

and Chemistry at Brandeis University, where I had gone to head the Rosenstiel Basic Medical Sciences Research Centre in 1990 after 14 years as Professor of Chemistry at MIT. That birthday, I reread Tennyson's poem 'Ulysses' (which I first read at Merton, actually, in 1972), in which he describes the Greek adventurer as an old man, longing for one last adventure before the end. These lines moved me greatly:

How dull it is to pause, to make an end,
To rust unburnish'd, not to shine in use!
As tho' to breathe were life! Life piled on life
Were all too little, and of one to me
Little remains: but every hour is saved
From that eternal silence, something more,
A bringer of new things; and vile it were
For some three suns to store and hoard myself,
And this gray spirit yearning in desire
To follow knowledge like a sinking star,
Beyond the utmost bound of human thought.
Death closes all, but something ere the end,
Some work of noble note, may yet be done.

I decided then and there to abandon the fundamental structural biology research I had done for 30 years, and that had brought me some acclaim, including election to the National Academy of Sciences and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and I looked around for the toughest, most important unsolved problem I could find. That problem turned out to be finding cures for Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease, and ALS [amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, a type of motor neuron disease]. So, knowing nothing about any of them, I rolled the dice. Twenty years later, how much I've won or lost I'm still not sure, but I have a gene therapy for ALS that with luck will be in human clinical trials in 18 months, and gene therapies for Alzheimer's and Parkinson's that will follow along in a year or so after that. They may fail. They probably will fail. But I can live with that. What I decided I couldn't live with was not trying. So I press on, with two companies I started to take the therapies into the clinic, and my small lab at Harvard Medical School is still working on back-up therapies if those fail.

'Personally, life is good. I did the most important thing you can do: I married well. My wife is Dr Laurie Glimcher, the President

and CEO of the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute and herself one of the world's great physician-scientists. Her daughter, Kalah Auchincloss, is an attorney with a Master's in Public Health and is Executive VP and Deputy General Counsel at Greenleaf Health. Her older son, Dr Hugh Auchincloss, is a thoracic surgeon at Massachusetts General Hospital, and her younger son, Jake Auchincloss, is the Democratic US Congressman for the 4th district of Massachusetts. Our nephew, Nick Nehamas, is a Pulitzer Prize-winning investigative reporter who now writes for the *New York Times*. That's right: I am the least accomplished member of my own family! We have seven grandchildren and a Wheaten Terrier named Lilly; none of them are completely housebroken.

'As I find myself much closer to the final curtain than to the intermission, I try to reflect on the people and things that have brought me to where I am. Very high on that list would be my three years at Merton, where I was able for the first time to step outside my own country and culture and look at it with some objectivity from a comfortable distance. I have been fortunate beyond anything I might have deserved, and my overwhelming feeling as I write this is one of humility and gratitude. I wish all of you health and happiness. Both are vastly underrated.'

1971

Year Representative: Allin Cottrell

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1972

Year Representative: Mark Signy

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We have had a fairly momentous year as a group, having had a wonderful 50th anniversary (Golden Jubilee) lunch in October, and a terrific Gaudy in March. It was a wonderful to see so many old friends at both events.

The anniversary dinner was particularly important and gave us a chance to say farewell to Professor Irene Tracey immediately

before she took up her post as Vice-Chancellor. She and **John Heaton** (our year's JCR president) both spoke very wittily and warmly about Merton and some momentous old Mertonian achievements happening the day before the lunch (!). A highlight was **Stephen Cole**'s Grace in perfect Latin: we had suggested he did it as we recalled he was the senior Postmaster of the year, but had forgotten we had present the President Bishop and Anglican Archbishop of the Episcopal Church in Jerusalem and the Middle East (who is also an Honorary Fellow of the College). Fortunately **Michael Lewis** was delighted for someone else to read the Grace for a change.

I imagine the two recent gatherings have been the reason for my less than full postbag this year, for which I forgive you all (but for this year only). Here are some highlights.

Alan Giles writes: 'I am on the glide path to retirement, having stood down from the board of Foxtons last month. No longer being an estate agent has marginally improved my standing in society. I am still on a couple of boards, and involved with Saïd Business School, and I have taken over from David Holmes as Chair of the Stipends & Allowances Committee, which is a wonderful excuse to come back to Merton at least once a year. Outside work, Gill and I watched our football team get relegated last month, so are now planning an itinerary around lower league grounds, hoping to find some Michelin-rated restaurants en route to ease the pain.'

Paul Weindling continues to contribute to the Max Planck Society funded research on Second World War brains. German neuropathologists extracted brains from about 220 Poles; at least 169 can be identified as Jews, and brains were taken for neuropathological research from about 60 prisoners of war including British and French POWs. Paul traces the postwar history of the brain tissues, some specimens still being held by the Max Planck Society. This research adds significantly to his database of currently 29,885 research victims under National Socialism; the data being held at the German National Academy of Sciences, of which he is a member. He retains his Research Chair at Oxford Brookes University.

Paul's latest book is *Victims and Survivors of Nazi Human Experiments: Science and Suffering in the Holocaust* (Bloomsbury, 2014).

John Davidson (in response to Julia Bell's circular about the 50th anniversary of J R R Tolkien's death) replied: 'I'm still a Tolkien addict and have been blown away for years by his son Christopher's editing and publication of his father's papers – stuff that, apart from the appendices to *Lord of the Rings*, addicts could only guess at 50 years ago. I'm not sure what I can add to the current College request for recollections apart from that one magical Sunday afternoon meeting in February 1973 in Tolkien's study in No 21 under my garret in the eaves. He told stories of which his son's work now make sense. I heard Anglo-Saxon read aloud for the first time, as well as the tongues in the trilogy; JRRT reciting Elvish was a bit of a moment; all in front of Charlie Carr's wonderfully laid fire. And the pipe smoke – all in all, almost a scene from Bag End.

John Millard (energised after attending both the lunch and the Gaudy and apologising as he hasn't studied Philosophy for 50 years) muses philosophically: 'I always enjoy revisiting Oxford and especially Merton. The place exudes some sort of magic, and I usually return home feeling energised and positive, better able to face anything that life throws at me.

'The two events of the last year (the Jubilee Lunch and the Gaudy) gave me this, and more. I've been trying to work out why. I think it's the people. The physical location brings back many memories, but they take on an extra dimension when you meet the people of those memories. This autumn and spring it was great to catch up ("What have you been doing these last 50 years?"), to renew acquaintances, and to make new ones. To re-live experiences and conversations. To be reminded of things we did together (mostly pleasurable!).

'Such events as these remind me how privileged I was to go to Merton and to be given so many opportunities, without which my life would have been so much the poorer. I feel humbled to have been given this privilege.

'Above all, I feel thankful. But thankful to whom? In some senses, it's an easy question. Thankful to those who work hard to keep in touch with Mertonians, to those who put on events for us to enjoy. Thankful to those we knew at College and who we meet from time to time. Thankful to God, the giver and preserver of all life. But here's the difficult

bit — something that's difficult to explain. I feel profoundly thankful to Merton College. That sounds so irrational: it implies that there is a "thing" that is called Merton College to which I can say "thank you". Greater minds than mine will have engaged with this conundrum: the nature of existence of an institution. But the only way I can come to terms with this is to think of Merton as people: people past, people present and people future, and I am profoundly grateful FOR them, whether I know them or not.'

Andy Trotter and **Dave Riddiford** are representing us at the autumn Merton Golf Society meeting. Several others of us have expressed our appreciation at **Nigel Haigh's** resuscitation of these events and are hoping to attend the next session in March: the more of us the merrier.

Have a great, happy and healthy year, and keep on sending in your news. Any time is good.

1973

Year Representative: Gary Backler

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This year marks the 50th anniversary of matriculation for 1973 Mertonians. Coinciding with publication of this edition of *Postmaster*, the College is holding a Golden Jubilee Lunch in October 2023, which will enable a number of Mertonians and their partners to meet again in person. Thanks to the Development Office for making this possible.

The prospect of the Golden Jubilee Lunch provided the motivation for a subset of the 1973 historians to meet up for dinner in London. **Peter Ghosh**, **Ned Holt**, **Ted Powell**, **Denis Thorn** — from Australia — and **Gary Backler** enjoyed a partial re-staging of the dinner at The Elizabeth in Oxford at which they had celebrated finishing Finals in June 1973. It is to be hoped that this may become an annual event, including more of the 1973 historians as available.

The Maths & Medics group provides the model for subject-based reunions. **Graham Andrews** reports that this last year has been pleasantly uneventful. The members of the group

are still working — perhaps making up for how little time they spent actually working when at College, instead of spending their time playing chess, bridge, poker and bar football.

Bill Souster is working as an actuary in London several days a week and **Roger Urwin** is also working actuarially with pension funds and sovereign wealth funds. **Rob Lewis** continues to collaborate with colleagues at the Open University mathematics department, exploring aspects of graph theory. Graham himself is still busy as a director of nine companies, plus several of their subsidiaries. **David Melville** is still working part time in the NHS and has been researching William Harvey's connections with Merton, where Harvey was Warden in 1645, and St Bartholomew's Hospital (celebrating its 900th birthday this year) where he famously described the circulation of the blood. It is sad to note that Harvey was only appointed as Warden when the Merton College visitor had been beheaded and shortly before his principal patient, Charles I, met a similar fate.

Grandchildren feature in many of the Maths & Medics' lives, with the total now 17. The Urwins are the major contributor with 11, the Melvilles have two, the Myatts have two and Rob Lewis and Graham Andrews are pleased to report that they have now entered the grandparent league with one each. The four mathematicians are aiming to attend the Golden Jubilee Lunch.

John Bowers reminds us that this year also marks the 50th anniversary of his Rhodes Scholar class. Some classmates went to Oxford to celebrate, but since John spent June 2022 as a Merton Research Scholar, he skipped this year's drinks and dinners. The year 2023 is also the 50th anniversary of the death of J R R Tolkien, Merton Professor of Language and Literature from 1945 until 1959 and still an Honorary Fellow at the time of his death, with his final address being 21 Merton Street. To mark this anniversary, John has a new book *Tolkien on Chaucer, 1913–1959* in production at Oxford University Press. John also published his new novel *Legion of the Daggerstone* which has as its hero a 21st-century J R R Tolkien. Like the author of *The Lord of the Rings*, J R Tolkien is an English professor specialising in ancient languages — only at the University of Virginia instead of Oxford. Like Tolkien, he was an officer thrown into combat — only with the Virginia

National Guard in Iraq instead of the trenches of the First World War. And like Tolkien, he remedies his PTSD by writing a bestselling trilogy of fantasy novels – based on myths of ancient Mesopotamia instead of northern Europe. This campus novel is a hybrid of literary fiction/fantasy novel/Iraq War memoir.

Phil Hudson reports that retirement continues to afford a good degree of relaxation, with ample opportunity to annoy the children. He and his wife have been delighted to both see their youngest son leave home for his own place, and to welcome their second granddaughter to the family – she is a joy (most of the time). With Phil's eighth decade looming, they decided to do a bit of first-hand family history research in May, recreating his dad's 1944 Royal Navy journey from disembarking in Halifax (NS) then by marathon train journey to Boston, via Quebec, Montreal and Albany, and finally to Bermuda – the rather nice location for 'working up' that many of the convoy escort ships built in the USA enjoyed. Phil awaits his invitation from the BBC to appear on *Who Do You Think You Are?* Somewhat in anticipation of the Golden Jubilee Lunch, he attended a reunion of a small band of schoolfriends who had not been in the same pub as each other for 51 years. This time it was in Richmond (NY) – North Yorkshire.

Julian Thurston sent a very brave and open email concerning his long battle with prostate cancer. This has involved a number of treatments and operations which continue to take their toll on his physical and mental wellbeing. Julian is 'grateful to be a survivor' and generously offers to talk to any other man who is diagnosed with early-stage prostate cancer about some of the issues, and about how he himself has managed to retain his sense of wellbeing despite very real challenges and everyday side-effects. He has written a memoir of his experiences, and seeks a publisher who can raise awareness, particularly among men.

Gary Backler is in his final year as Chair and Planning Lead for Friends of the River Crane Environment, a local environmental charity of which he has been a trustee for 13 years. It has been hugely rewarding to see the physical and ecological improvements effected in the hitherto neglected Crane valley over those years; and to see the environmental agenda mainstreamed. Now it's time to work on a number

of personal creative and research projects which he's put off for far too long.

Positive nil-returns were very welcome from **Peter Ghosh** and **Simon Pallett**; and always will be, from any 1973 Mertonian who feels they have no specific news to share.

1974

Year Representative: Mike Hawkins

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Now in our third year since returning from the United States, Sara and I can finally feel that we have arrived with a house and roots planted in Derbyshire. We are able to walk to local amenities, a primary consideration, and the wonderful countryside and local history allow us ample opportunity to pursue our interests in photography. This summer we have been able to meet a number of Mertonians and Professor Jenny Payne as both Acting Warden and Warden Elect at receptions held in Leeds University and Lincoln Cathedral. It was a delight to meet the members of the Merton College Choir at the cathedral, an all-new cast compared with the last occasion at an MC3 weekend in Washington, DC.

Nick Allard assures me that no Chatbot was used to compose this contribution to *Postmaster*. However he adds: 'I did try, but Chat GPT dismissively replied, "You must be kidding. There is no algorithm for what Allard might say about himself and no self-respecting bot would even try."'

'As the pandemic became more distant in the rear-view mirror, it has been a year of more regular visits to the College including the exhaustingly lively and thankfully warm December dinner observing Warden Tracey's appointment as Vice-Chancellor and attending the beautiful memorial service the next morning for former Warden Rawson's late husband John. Both coincided with the coldest imaginable days and nights in accommodations where it was warmer outside, and the toilets transformed into horrors rivalling medieval torture devices. In the new year there were other various good reasons to be back in College in February, March for the Bodley Dinner, and April. We also attended

the Merton Society Garden Party in June followed a week later by College events related to the 120th anniversary of the Rhodes Scholarships. Throughout it all Marla and I enjoyed connecting with many Merton friends, while saying *au revoir* to one Warden and hello to another. We especially enjoyed a reception for Warden Tracey and local alumni in our Washington DC home last September at the conclusion of the Merton Choir Northeastern US tour and visits there by the Rt Honourable Judge Brian and Lynne Leveson as well as Dan and Marianne Shaffer. All our Merton-related hi-jinks were cheerfully and ably facilitated by Mark Coote's entire team, all the College porters and amazing staff.

'Oh, I almost forgot to mention my new day job. Since last summer I have had the exhilarating privilege of serving as the Founding Dean of Jacksonville University's new College of Law in Northeast Florida's "First Coast". Marla and I, two native New Yorkers, may not stick out quite as much as Vinny Gambini and Mona Lisa Vito did in the film *My Cousin Vinny*. Even so, we are often asked by those who know of our political and cultural DNA, "What in the world are you doing there?" I simply say that missionaries do not go to church to find converts. In truth, it is legal not political work in a wonderful, vibrant and growing city. And in these fraught times it is critically important to equip people to use the most powerful tool humans have ever known: a legally trained mind.'

John Davies writes that in early March he 'very much enjoyed the Merton Society visit to Westminster Abbey and drinks' and that 'it was good to meet the new Acting Warden. Another highlight was chatting with Dame **Philippa Whipple** (1984) who arrived hotfoot from the Old Bailey. Under her steely gaze I immediately confessed that an MP she had sent down for a stretch a few years ago had been a neighbour of mine, but luckily she didn't send me down too.'

Neil Downie and his wife Dianne 'are enjoying being in Hexham, making lots of new friends up in the far north, and love waving to the icebergs. And', he continues, 'I've been working with school students and their teachers, getting kids in small groups to brainstorm and invent their own science projects, then make them, test them, and present their results. They often come up with great ideas!'

David Hamer reports that he 'continues to spend much time in low level federal and provincial politics on behalf of the centre left Liberal parties of Canada and Ontario'. Wife Jane and David are looking forward, at the time of writing, to the Rhodes Trust 120th anniversary event in Oxford. In addition to this trip, 'Retirement travel is finally resuming, with long-delayed trips to New Brunswick, Budapest, Vienna, Prague and Bermuda, and a circumnavigation of Newfoundland all booked for the next 12 months.'

Guy Johnson writes: 'Very much enjoyed meeting Professor Tracey and a select group of Scottish Mertonians at Riddles Court near Edinburgh Castle about a couple of winters ago. I'm particularly glad to have had that opportunity now that she is no longer our Warden. I keep doing my little bit for the Edinburgh Green Party, which seems all the more needed as the nature and climate emergencies become increasingly real and challenging. For the first time ever the joyful sound of screaming swifts is absent from the skies above Edinburgh: I hope Oxford has not suffered the same fate. I'm very pleased that April's and my daughter, Laura, is now working in animal conservation. I find myself becoming increasingly involved with Old St Paul's church, currently on the vestry, which has an active eco-group and a standard of choral singing that rivals Merton itself! Nearly 50 years after joining the Kodály Choir I have at last discovered just what an inspiring and imaginative composer Kodály was, thanks to performing three of his choral masterpieces with the Edinburgh Bach Choir: *Esti Dal*, the *Missa Brevis* and the extravagant *Laudes Organi*. The last piece would provide a splendid showcase for the Chapel organ. I'm looking forward to seeing many friends again in College next year.'

Graham Kemp says: 'I plan to retire at the end of the year from the University of Liverpool, where I've worked since leaving Professor Sir George Radda's MRC unit in 1996. However, I have taken on one last role: Faculty of Health and Life Sciences Associate Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Postgraduate Affairs and International Partnerships, which doesn't exactly trip off the tongue.'

Peter Lutzeier reports: 'Six years after retirement, our grandchildren firmly believe that we have transformed into farmers by now. Certainly 13 acres in rural Herefordshire

around our Queen Anne house, which in itself requires regular attention for maintenance, keep us busy all year round. I tend to focus on the orchard, currants, gooseberries and mulberries, producing over 200 bottles of apple juice annually, and try to look after my bees. I make weekly contributions to Ledbury Country Market on Friday morning with lemon meringue pies as my speciality. I also accepted the role of chair of the voluntary steering group for our project of a community shop, post office and café in Much Marcle. We are organised as a community benefit society with by now over 250 shareholders as members of the society, which demonstrates sound support for the project. Several ways of fundraising are needed to make the vision a reality in hopefully a year's time. For instance, in May I successfully ran the Dymock Half Marathon in order to raise some money. It was a tough course in hilly terrain, but cows and sheep as contented spectators made up for it.'

After losing contact with **Chris Madell** for many years, we have shared several phone calls and messages in recent weeks. He writes: 'We were fellow chemists matriculating in 1974. There was also a vague rowing connection. Whilst I coxed the 1st Eight that got four bumps in division I in 1978, better lucky than smart, Mike stroked the 4th Eight in 1977, and rowed bow in the Holywell Eight in 1976. I am still in frequent touch with **Giles Maskell**, less regularly with **Simon Tross Youle** since he's been in Japan for 12 years and **John Davies**. As Giles commented in a recent email, regrettably the more frequent are the obituaries one reads.' With luck we will all manage to meet at one or other of the Gaudy or Golden Jubilee Lunch in 2024.

I had heard on the grapevine that **Giles Maskell** has been made an OBE and was happy to have that confirmed when he contacted me saying that it was 'in the King's Birthday Honours for services to diagnostic radiology'. Thankfully an uncontroversial award, having nothing to do with our erstwhile Prime Minister.

Rob Mitchell is 'excited at the news of the Golden Jubilee Lunch and Gaudy next year' and hopes to be able to attend at least one of these events, 'as it has been ten years since we were last in Oxford. Grayce and I would welcome any from our group who happen to be visiting Seattle. Our daughters,

Carrie and Emily, live very close to us, and we have room for visitors. I am still practising law full time but have started thinking about scaling back.'

David Moskowitz is 'happy to report publications, including case reports, for the following: avoiding dialysis in acute and chronic kidney failure, delaying progression of emphysema, Covid, and preventing sickle cell crises. I've found that healthcare, however, is quite anti-innovative. The status quo appears to be too lucrative to change even for single-payer systems like Medicare and the NHS. For the past two decades I've been working on bringing a cancer prediction test to market. My last funding, unfortunately, was in 2004. The many dozens of tumorigenesis genes we've found, including olfactory receptors (yes, cancer cells have noses!) may transform so-called "differentiation therapy", especially for metastatic cancer. Our collection of genomic variants, SNPnet™, should be useful for solving any disease, including finding modifier genes for single-gene, Mendelian disorders. I'd love to collaborate with anybody trying, for example, to solve a rare disease.'

Jeremy Pemberton tells us that 'This last year has seen me taking up new interests having fully retired. My last paid employment was the 15 years I did as a lay clerk at Southwell Minster, which ended last July. I still sing at the minster and also at other cathedrals round about. I am a trustee of the Notts LGBT+ Network, a help and support service for the LGBT+ community in the county and beyond, which is entirely volunteer led and staffed and has been running for 47 years. I have largely managed the change of the charity from unincorporated status to that of a charitable incorporated organisation, which has taken a fair amount of time. I also volunteer at the minster as part of the Needlework Guild and as a server. My doctoral studies continue steadily and remain a principal source of interest and engagement for me and, with my husband Laurence, spend a good deal of time visiting our many children and grandchildren.

'This year I have decided to walk the Camino to Santiago da Compostela. I have long wanted to do this, inspired by **Philip Endean** doing it years and years ago. Now that I am retired I can do it. I decided to walk in stages beginning at Vezelay in Burgundy and made a start last month. I got as

far as Châteauroux and will pick up there for another week in the autumn. Thus far the experience has been absolutely wonderful. No other pilgrims, just undisturbed walking through the French countryside on my own. That won't last but I am relishing it while I can! I remain unable to offer any kind of active ministry because of my marriage to Laurence, but after the vote in General Synod in February there does seem a possibility that at some point I might have permission to officiate restored to me. We await developments in the forthcoming General Synod. If it were to happen, and I don't dare hope for it, it would be something that would make me very, very happy.

1975

Year Representative: Robert Peberdy

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Life can sometimes throw up remarkable coincidences. At least one has occurred in the history of 1975 Mertonians. The story originates almost 80 years ago, in 1945, during the latter part of the Second World War. Two young men who were serving in the Royal Navy in waters around southern Italy, namely Peter Gerhold and Eric Poyser, got to know each other. After the war and demobilisation, they lived far apart – respectively in London and Nottinghamshire – but kept in touch through Christmas cards. About 30 years later, in October 1975, Eric Poyser's wife Pamela drove their teenage son Crispin down to Oxford, where he had won a place at Merton. They discovered that Crispin had been allocated a room in the Old Warden's Lodging. In time-honoured way, they collected the key and went to find the accommodation. On arrival Mrs Poyser noticed that an adjacent room had been allocated to someone called Dorian Gerhold, and wondered if he was related to Peter Gerhold. A little later, Peter Gerhold and his son Dorian arrived at Dorian's room and noticed the name Poyser on the adjacent door. Wondering if the occupant was related to Eric Poyser, Peter Gerhold knocked and discovered his old comrade's son. It also turned out that Crispin Poyser and Dorian Gerhold had both come to read Modern History.

This unexpected conjunction started a second generation

of friendship and also sometimes parallel lives. The first parallel, i.e. choice of subject, soon ceased when Crispin changed to Law. But in 1978, and following the example of **Andre Gren** (1974), Dorian Gerhold and Crispin Poyser both joined the Clerk's Department of the House of Commons. (Other Mertonians soon followed – see *Postmaster*, 2005, pp. 115–16.) They both remained there until their retirements (in respectively 2012 and 2022), though curiously they never served together in a particular office. Peter Gerhold died in 2008, Eric Poyser in 2022 aged 98.

After this article was drafted, the sad news arrived of the death of **Nick Hitchon**. He was, in **Ed Myers'** words, 'highly talented', and 'had an outstanding career in both research (in theoretical plasma physics) and teaching at the University of Wisconsin-Madison'. He was also internationally famous as a participant in the *Up* series of television programmes which examined the lives of a group of children and adults at seven-year intervals, starting in 1964. (Nick was filmed in Merton, belatedly, for *56 Up*.)

Cardiac surgeon **Arif Ahsan**, based in Nottingham, was due to cease surgical work in September 2023, though he planned to continue seeing outpatients. He recently re-established contact with a Mertonian former teacher from the City of London School, **Richard England** (1961), the result of a chance meeting of Mr England with **Robert Peberdy** at the Merton Society Carol Service in London in December 2022. In 2022, as the Covid pandemic faded, **Simon Babbs** and his wife Sue (St Hilda's) resumed travelling, with expeditions from their home in Illinois to Wisconsin and the Pacific Northwest. Simon has also attended courses at Loyola University on Catholicism, medieval ideas on free will, medieval Islamic philosophy, and Platonism – an assortment that would surely have delighted the late **John Lucas**. In Arizona, **Glenn Bacal** continues to enjoy his practice in intellectual property law, and cannot foresee retirement 'anytime soon'. He observes that 'this area of law is always changing with the ever-changing technology', which keeps his mind active and alert. His work includes cases in China 'which doesn't play by the same rules as other countries and that can be a source of much frustration'. In summer 2023 he and his wife Amy escaped for a cruise on the Danube from Germany to Hungary – a part of the world where their ancestors once lived.

On 13 June 2023 *The Times* published a brief letter which had a wide impact (e.g., stimulating discussions on radio programmes). Its author admitted that while he was a master at Eton College (1984–2001) he had failed to save pupils from perpetuating a ‘sense of privilege, entitlement and omniscience’ as had been evident in the behaviour of Boris Johnson and other politicians. The writer was none other than **John Cloughton**. In the case of Johnson, Eton has no reason to berate itself. As readers of Sonia Purnell’s *Just Boris: A Tale of Blond Ambition* (2012) will know, the essential features of Johnson’s character go deep and are beyond redemption by any educator. John Cloughton has also revealed that he attempted the last-minute conversion in the 1977 rugby Cuppers semi-final, but asserts that the ball flew quite wide (cf. *Postmaster*, 2022, p. 164).

Professor **Oliver Davies**, formerly of King’s College London, has been working on an international project to examine the human individual from various perspectives (neurological, cultural, etc.). A paper on the subject was due for completion in September 2023. He also recently enjoyed meeting up with **David Mitchell**. In summer 2022 **Alan Dolton** visited Finland where he explored areas around the inland city of Tampere, though an unusual heatwave constrained his activities. **Ian Doolittle** (Harmsworth Senior Scholar 1975–77) continues work on the history of the City of London, currently focusing on the Corporation, Bridge House estates, and Fire Court. He is also a trustee of the Crown and Manor Club for boys in Hackney.

Stephen Gardiner retired in 2022 from transcribing music into braille. But soon afterwards he discovered that little music of the Classical period has been transcribed, and so resumed work, concentrating on chamber music because ‘it was so vital in shaping the Classical style’. He has now produced transcriptions of works by Haydn and Mozart and looks forward to tackling those of Beethoven and Schubert. This burst of activity has caused him to remember with gratitude the wisdom and insights of his former Merton tutor **Edward Olleson** (died 2013) who was one of the leading musicologists of the Classical period.

On 24 June 2023 **John Harrison** enjoyed attendance with the ‘great and good’ at the Oxford Union Bicentenary Dinner

at Oxford Town Hall (he served as President of the Union in Trinity term 1978). He was especially pleased to chat with our Oxford near-contemporary Theresa May. A few weeks later he encountered yet more extraordinary figures when he visited Autun in central-eastern France – this time on the tympana and capitals of the city’s cathedral (carved in the 12th century). The eminent Mertonian actor **Chris Mann**, who recently appeared in the smash-hit television series *Happy Valley*, has continued his illustrious career with filming for the next series of the BBC ‘prison drama’ *Time*. Professor **Nicholas Mays** continues to research a wide range of policy issues related to the health and social-care systems of the UK. He recently published on the identity and motivations of users and non-users of the NHS Covid-19 smartphone app with a view to guiding the use of apps in future pandemics. He is due to step down as Director of the National Institute for Health Research’s Policy Innovation and Evaluation Research Unit at the end of 2023 but will remain active in research and teaching at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine.

In June–July 2023 Professor **Stephen Oppenheimer**, based in Baltimore, made another visitation to Old Europe. Highlights included three days at Merton, where he led an invasion of 1975 Mertonians onto High Table: his little platoon comprised **Gordon Jeanes**, **Robert Peberdy** and **Robert Pitkethly**. Sadly, their presence was little noticed by other diners. Professor Oppenheimer has also inaugurated a promising new career as a writer of fiction. His newly published work *A Bone to Pick* features a strong period atmosphere, vivid characters, dramatic dialogue and lots of surprises. All Mertonians should acquire and read this book because its final part involves an Oxford college of 13th-century origin with a Front Quad and Queen’s Room, and a steward with large feet. Future Merton professors will no doubt undertake profound analyses of the work’s non-binary genre.

In West London **Crispin Poyser** continues to make weekly inspections of the Paddington Arm of the Grand Union Canal as a Canal Ranger. Local observers of wildlife may have noticed an unusual presence of 1975 Mertonians on the canal bank, namely **Clive Bennett**, **Dorian Gerhold**, **Gordon Jeanes** and **Robert Peberdy**. **Malcolm Price** recently met up with **Frank Dabell** in Rome, where the latter flourishes as

an art historian. Somehow their reunion proved immune to entrancement by the Eternal City: instead of contemplating its glories, they preferred to reminisce about Merton days and contemporaries.

Professor **Chris Wickham**, FBA (Lecturer in Medieval History 1975–76), has published yet another magnificent historical ‘blockbuster’, *The Donkey and the Boat: Reinterpreting the Mediterranean Economy, 950–1180* (OUP). It runs to almost 840 pages. And finally, it can at last be revealed that **Peter Wickstead** is almost certainly the only 1975 Mertonian who has begotten a Mertonian: his son William has just finished reading History at the college.

It is astonishing that 20 years have now passed since the death of the former Fellow and Warden **John Roberts**, a man whose relentless vitality suggested an expectation of immortality rather than expiry. Now that a seemingly period has elapsed since his decease, it seems fair to recount an incident in which he was discussed. In spring 1978 the famous Cambridge historian Professor G R (Geoffrey) Elton visited Oxford to speak to the OU Past and Present History Society. Before the lecture, a group of undergraduates, including some 1975 Mertonians, took Professor Elton to the Randolph Hotel for dinner. During the meal, he inquired about the identities of the undergraduates’ tutors. The 1975 Mertonians mentioned Dr Roberts, which prompted the professor to recall that he had visited his home, Postmasters’ Hall, for sherry after delivering one of his Ford Lectures in 1972. At this a Mertonian commented: ‘He hasn’t asked us round.’ To which Professor Elton retorted, in his husky Central European accent: ‘Well! What do you want me to do? Send him a note?’

1976

Year Representative: John Gardner

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Merton film buffs were divided this year on the best movie location. *Barbie* enthusiasts **Ken Neil Craggs** and **Ken Rod Dear** (they can identify as they like, get over it) voted for Malibu, but *Oppenheimer* fan **Andrew Bradbury** knows his setting even better after 17 years leading antibody research

at Los Alamos National Laboratory. His more recent business start-up, Specifica, has been acquired by clinical trials company Q2 Solutions. ‘I’m adapting to working in a larger organisation, changing from 20 employees to 80,000.’

Some of us admit to retiring as soon as we could. But salute those who pay the tax to fund our pensions. So hats off to **Peter Bernie**, likely taking an even bigger role after the acquisition of his marine insurance company, Standard Club, by North P&I. **David Humphrey** (submarine captain, corporate finance wallah, energy consultant) in Johannesburg is ‘studying for my next career, in counselling, part way through my diploma at the South African College of Applied Psychology and hoping to practise in the UK and SA by the end of 2024’. Serial regulator (some might say addict) **Antony Townsend** has taken yet more roles, including Chairman of Entrust, which ensures that tax credits claimed by landfill operators for donations to community projects are properly spent. ‘Another job which I try to avoid having to explain at dinner parties.’

There’s also gas in the tank in academe. **Jonathan Flint**, Professor of Genetics and Psychiatry at UCLA, is now additionally funded by the US National Institutes of Health to lead a team researching the causes of depression. **Dan Raff** at the University of Pennsylvania’s business school, Wharton, teaches economic history and is currently writing about the early years of venture capital and the history of organisations. **Adrian Schweitzer**, classics and maths teacher at Tonbridge School, leads Duke of Edinburgh gold trips to the Lake District when not in charge of 40 pupils taking Latin and Greek A levels. And it was good to hear from **Tim Phillips** who, after Merton, did research for NASA in Langley, then taught at Aberystwyth University before settling at Cardiff University, where as Professor of Mathematics he has also held several visiting fellowship and management posts.

Tim’s four grandchildren make him an early (joint) lead for the official ‘Merton 1976 grandchild count’ competition. At the moment Tim and **Charles Manby** lead with four (separately, not together). Then some of us on three. Arithmetic says we should average four each (apologies to those better qualified with numbers if I’ve got that wrong). Entries on a postcard, please. Closing date and prize-giving at next year’s Gaudy.

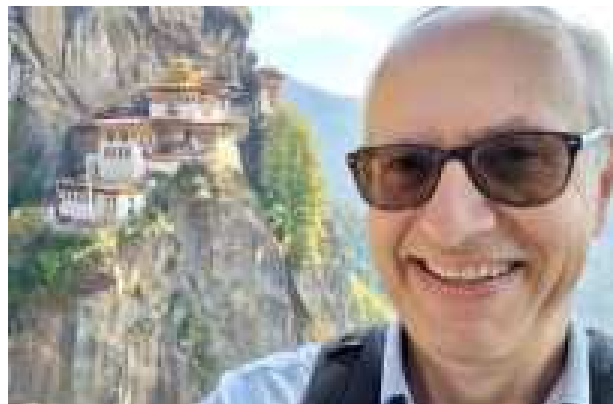
Others are winding down, but haven't fully let go. **Alister McGrath** has retired as Andreas Idreos Professor of Science and Religion at Oxford University, but continues as a Senior Research Fellow in the Faculty of Theology & Religion. Forensic scientist **Craig Adam** will retire when he finishes his honorary fellowship at Keele University later this year. **Jeremy Richardson** at the Reserve Bank in New Zealand is 'still busy, but shifting to four days a week'. **Charles Wookey** is 'doing some consulting and business school teaching now, having handed over the charity (A Blueprint for Better Business) to a new CEO last year. I'm also doing a fair bit of music, having committed myself to playing a piano concerto to raise funds for a hospice in Eastbourne where my wife works as a councillor.' Pathologist **Ken Fleming**'s report recommending a global diagnostics alliance has been adopted by the World Health Assembly. The creation of its implementation arm around the end of 2023 will trigger him 'riding into the sunset to the house we bought in Scotland in Fife, in the village my wife comes from'. **Nigel Metcalfe**, physics professor at Durham University, is 'taking flexible retirement and reducing my hours to one day a week. Leaving more time for cricket.'



Charles Wookey at the piano

Writing from nearby Alnwick, a *Sunday Times* 'top 10 place to live', **Ralph Ashton** is 'using the freedom of my newly acquired bus pass to enjoy Northumberland's countryside and coastline'. With catholic taste in sport he watches Rugby League in Newcastle, including last year's World Cup games,

football at St James' Park and county cricket (Durham) at Chester-le-Street. He met **Robin Barraclough** recently, now retired as a district judge in Huddersfield and looking forward to doing time at his house in Spain.



Anthony Levy (visitor, not resident) at the Tiger's Nest Monastery, Bhutan

There were other reunions. **Peter Bernie** and **Christopher Coombe** at **Tony Brown**'s son's wedding. **John Bland** and **Laurence Ormerod** climbing in the Lake District. **Anthony Levy**, back in London from a holiday in Bhutan, hosting **Tristan Needham**, Professor of Mathematics at the University of San Francisco. Tristan's best seller, *Visual Complex Analysis*, has been reissued as a 25th anniversary edition. Now a standard text, his publisher wonders whether the next edition 'should have captions to make it like a comic book'. His visit also took him to Oxford to see Sir Roger Penrose and **Michael Bowler**.

Some of the historians meet every year, for a busman's holiday. **Ian Mcveigh** writes: 'Just back with Peter Truesdale and Andrew Pettegree from a trip that Andrew organised to Antwerp, Leiden and Amsterdam. Unique access to treasures from the early days of printing and publishing, glorious weather, food and beer plentiful, Leiden beyond gorgeous and curators enthusiastic to show their collections.' They plan a trip to Belfast next year to investigate 'the troubles'. To be organised by **Peter Truesdale**, one of the few employees of 'British' Petroleum willing to travel regularly to the province in

the 1980s. Camo paint, flak jackets and helmets are optional. *The Book at War* by **Andrew Pettegree**, history professor at St Andrews University, was published this year.

‘Isn’t it nice when one of your books sells out?’ says **Mike Taylor**, who has also been proofreading, this time a new edition of his biography of 19th-century Scottish geologist Hugh Miller. A newbie to Twitter, he was pleasantly surprised when one of his papers on palaeontology trended at the mention of Mary Anning of Lyme Regis, whose new statue there had just been unveiled. ‘I’ve learned a lesson for my next paper.’ Twitchers beware.

Dan Rickman at BAE Systems is a finalist for the Management Consultancies Association technology consultant of the year award. Fingers crossed. In the meantime, congratulations to **John Booth**, elected a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences; Sir **Mark Thompson**, knighted for services to media; and **Tim Matthews** KC, chairman of three foundations in Nova Scotia (the Festival of Music, the Symphony and the Talent Trust), awarded the Queen Elizabeth II Platinum Jubilee Medal for services to law and volunteerism. ‘Unexpectedly, my golf game is improving as I get older, no doubt as a result of working less and playing more.’ Also in Nova Scotia **Rob Hain** has returned to enjoy retirement there. But not just yet, in the meantime remaining busy running research and strategy firm Sound Diplomacy.



Laurence Ormerod and John Bland at Dow Crag, Lake District

The athletes continue to, well, continue. **Jeremy Horton** rode his bike around Mallorca to limber up for the biathlon (run–bike–run) which he then did around Kielder Water ‘at a leisurely pace’. These things are relative. A LEJoG bike ride

is next on his list (Land’s End to John o’Groats. Please keep up). **Laurence Ormerod** is running (hardcore: Lake District fells), sailing his boat in Spain with the Yachtmaster offshore qualification he obtained this year, climbing, cycling and skiing. ‘I’m definitely at the stage of “glad it still works” rather than “could I go faster?”’ Amen to that, brother.

1977

Year Representative: Edmund Wright

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Colin James writes that, after spending many years in teaching and then in various aspects of school improvement and resourcing, he achieved a Bowie-like career transformation to lead on capital and asset management before becoming Director of Planning and Place in West Sussex. He is now cultivating his garden (technically assistant to head gardener and wife Rosie), travelling in the spirit of *Candide*, wildlife watching and serving as a trustee for a successful and inclusive multi-academy trust sponsored by the University of Chichester.

Simon Saville has completed another Bike for Butterflies cycle ride to raise money for Butterfly Conservation, helping to save endangered and declining butterflies and moths. Two years ago, his Bike for Butterflies ride was from Land’s End to John O’Groats (see *Postmaster* 2021); this year it was 700 miles in northwest Scotland, from Glasgow to Inverness via Oban and the Great Glen with detours to the isles of Mull, Coll and Tiree. Great scenery, great wildlife and, thankfully, good weather.

And finally for this year, **Ashley Knowles** has been working on another book of cryptic crossword puzzles. *Boatman – The Second 50: More Crosswords from the Guardian and the Stories Behind Them* was published at the start of September 2023.

1978

Year Representative: Paul Curtis Hayward

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News from your Year Rep, **Paul Curtis Hayward**. My news is that our first grandchild arrived on time a year ago and since then I have been building barriers all around the farm to prevent him injuring himself. So far, only one trip to A&E. Otherwise I still chair a couple of boutique investment businesses in the city, maintain a small flock of sheep and walk and cycle the tracks of Hampshire and a little further afield.

Paul Harrison is retiring on 1 July 2023 after 34 years as a faculty member in chemistry at McMaster University in Hamilton, Canada. After teaching over 13,000 students and teaching online classes of over 800 during the pandemic, he is returning to a focus on research and is working in the lab of a colleague on novel anti-cancer approaches, as well as working in the Origins Institute at McMaster on prebiotic chemistry. He is enjoying substantially reduced administrative activities, and is looking forward to having more time to travel.

Phil Taylor writes: 'I have now retired after 30 years as a GP in Axminster in Devon. We used to run our own hospital and dispensary and it was an interesting and varied life. I also worked as a GP educationalist and as a board member for one of the many iterations of GP involvement in NHS management.

'Trish and I have been married for 33 years and have three children: Thomas who sold out by going to Exeter College and is now two years into training to become an eye surgeon in Wessex; Rosie and Mattie who are both civil servants, in DEFRA and the Government Office for Science respectively.

'Since retirement I learned to play the piano badly and have taught myself to make birds and animals from chicken wire! I keep fit by cycling the many lanes and tracks in the area and have walked the Wessex and South Dorset Ridgeways in stages with a friend and Betty our black lab. Any Mertonians who would like a guide to walks in East Devon or West Dorset are welcome to contact me on pjr.taylor@btinternet.com.

'While we were at Merton, **Fernando Cervantes** introduced me to what became a long-standing interest – wine – so it was fitting that we met in the early summer for a vertical tasting of Château de Beaucastel which I used to collect before prices prevented it. It was great that Annabelle was well enough to come too.

Robert Waller contributed the chapter on King Stephen to *Kings and Queens: 1200 Years of English and British Monarchs*, edited by Iain Dale (Hodder & Stoughton, September 2023).

1979

Year Representative: Noel Privett

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'I'm not sure that I can actually remember any of last year at all.'

For some of us at least, that might have been written back in 1980, 81 or 82, but in fact it refers to the period between June 2022 and June 2023. It seems to reflect an increasingly gentle approach, shall we say, to life from our cohort; so gentle in fact that we have dwindled to nine contributors this year. I'm assuming that's because either other people's memories have faded or their brains weren't sufficiently stimulated over the period to make any memories. Or indeed both.

It was **Roger Pearse** who provided the inspirational quotation above. If Athena were still running, as it was back when we began our Merton careers, I'm sure it would be selling posters bearing his motivational legend.



Mark McBride also continues to live life in the fast lane. 'I am now retired after 30 odd years in the classroom,' he says. 'By any measure, I lead a quiet life. Above is an entirely

unsuitable picture which will give you a good idea of how I spend my time!' I hope the *Postmaster* editor finds space for it, because otherwise speculation will be rife. But, just in case, it's a photograph of Mark's dog.

However, from quiet life to double life, **David Howes** snaps us out of our ennui. He reports that he does indeed 'lead a double life, as a Professor in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at Concordia University (since 2001), and as an Adjunct Professor in the Faculty of Law at McGill University (since 2012), Montreal.' (For some reason, that reminds me of the Bonzo Dog Band song *Mr Apollo*: 'Five years ago I was a four-stone apology ... Today I am two separate gorillas.' Nothing personal, David; it's just one of my favourite songs. For my punishment, it's turned into an ear worm.)

David continues (after I so rudely interrupted him): 'In the last six months I have published two books, both of which seek to bring the academy to its senses.' These are *The Sensory Studies Manifesto: Tracking the Sensorial Revolution in the Arts and Human Sciences* and *Sensorial Investigations: A History of the Senses in Anthropology, Psychology, and Law*.

Speaking of publishing books, **Jeremy Black** has once again been wonderfully prolific, producing: *Britain's Naval Route to Greatness, 1688–1815*; *Global Military Transformations: Changes and Continuity, 1450–1800*; *A History of Artillery*; *Cavalry: A Global History*; *A Brief History of America*; *Why the Industrial Revolution Happened in Britain*; *A Brief History of the Pacific*; *A World History of Rail: From the Steam Regime to Today*; and *A History of Britain in 100 Maps*.

I particularly fancy this last one, which was featured in *BBC History Magazine's* Books of the Year 2022, and described as 'a beautifully produced and very well-written exposition of what the gems of the British Library's hugely extensive map collection can tell us about our history over the past thousand years. The range of charts covered goes from before the Mappa Mundi ... all the way up to the ... Covid-19 pandemic. Black takes us through scores of maps, all sumptuously illustrated, showing how useful they are in helping us understand the past.'

More publishing (maybe I was a bit hasty about ennui):

Schuyler Foerster reports that 'trying to keep up with global politics is a never-ending challenge', going on to say that he teamed up with a British colleague and former British diplomat to publish, in late May, an essay on 'Principles for statecraft in a dangerous world' for the Carnegie Council for Ethics and International Affairs. Schuyler also contributed a chapter on 'Deterrence and strategic stability' for a book entitled *Arms Control at a Crossroads: Renewal or Demise?*, to be published by Lynne Rienner Publishers at the end of this year. Otherwise, he continues to teach as a visiting professor at Masaryk University in Brno, Czech Republic, and to lecture on the occasional cruise line. [At least that doesn't sound too pacy.] Schuyler is also active in a number of local civic organisations. He comments: 'Notice that little of this produces any revenue, but I guess that's the definition of "retirement".'

As for me, **Noel Privett**, as I write this, I enter my final week as Head of Communications (maternity cover) at the University of Winchester and so will be on the lookout for something else to pay the bills until I can retire.

What I'd *really* like to do is something arty, something like our own **Paul Farmiloe** is up to. Paul is now in his second year studying for a BA in Historic Carving at City & Guilds of London Art School. 'I'm actually learning to carve stone,' he says, 'as well as all the associated processes, such as clay modelling, casting, life drawing, objective drawing, letter carving, plus History of Architecture and Decorative Style, with essays and presentations.' His third-year thesis will be on the Greek carving revolution, which he's researching at present.



And finally, **Edward Paine** has furnished us with an image of something arty, saying: 'If you need a picture, here I am playing my flugelhorn with my quintet Winchendon Brass, at an event we supported recently in aid of Buckinghamshire charity BACO (the Bucks Association for the Care of Offenders).'

I'll leave you with another of Roger's motivational sayings, this time one I first quoted in last year's *Postmaster*: 'That's really quite enough of that sort of thing.'

1980

Year Representative: Laurence Reed

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1981

Year Representative: Graham Dwyer

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Many thanks to all those who contacted me this year to give updates or simply to express appreciation. It feels with each passing year that information is harder to come by. Perhaps we are all reaching that age where retirement is either looming or for some has passed.

Still keeping very active is **Jon Cooper**, who reported sadly that he has been busy with domestic matters since his mother passed away last August at the age of 97. Elsewhere, he started as editor of *Crystallography News*, published by the British Crystallographic Association. 'It is proving to be an amusing exercise as I can, for the first time really, write about things in my speciality that are a bit off-beam, but hopefully still interesting,' he writes.

Much of the rest of his time is spent working on six 'old bangers' as a self-confessed 'old car nut'. He was featured in the *Sunday Telegraph* in his 1958 Morris Minor joining protesters against the expansion of the ultra-low emission zone in Greater London, which would put four of his cars off the road.



Jon Cooper in protesting mode in London

David Llewellyn Dodds reports that after various delays, he is working with his Magyar-speaking co-author, Viktória Marác, on the launch of their series for the *Beyond Bree* newsletter about Tolkien and his Hungarian connections. Meanwhile, he is also working on a chapter on Tolkien and Cynewulf for Jane Beal's *Tolkien and Medieval Poets*.

There was also an update from **Mike Guyote**, who retired from Boeing a few years back, went to MITRE (a federally funded research and development outfit in the USA), worked for three additional years on radar projects, then decided to head for permanent retirement. This did not last long, however, since he was soon asked to join a drone research project as a Research Fellow for the Oak Ridge Institute for Science and Education. Following that, he once more declared permanent retirement. He has taken up working with the Pikes Peak Area Theatre Organ Society, giving performances and helping to restore the old theatre organs still extant in his area.

It was great to hear this year from **Jackie Martin** who has also recently taken early retirement from EDF Energy, joining her husband, who retired the year before. 'So life is very different now,' she reports, 'doing a lot of gardening and walking and picking up several hobbies that have languished for many years.' Although it is the end of her work in nuclear energy, she still meets up with friends from that industry to catch up on the latest developments.

Graham Tebb reports that the ending of travel restrictions has meant a return to what he considers life as normal. This includes bouts of intense work interspersed with lengthy absences to track down weird and wonderful birds (since the last update, in far-flung corners of Indonesia and west Africa, with a relaxing trip to the Caribbean and a far from relaxing one to Indonesia – again – and one to Papua New Guinea pending). He also has made less lengthy trips to visit various European opera houses. A highlight was a weekend in London with **Peter Phillips** and his family, including the new production of Dvořák's *Rusalka* at Covent Garden.



Tira celebrates winning the TEPCOT 14 academic cup

I am always delighted to hear from my Southeast Asian neighbour **Tira Wannamethee** in Thailand, where he recently completed the TEPCOT senior executive course and his 'ship' or team won the TEPCOT 14 academic cup. Meanwhile, congratulations also go to his father who celebrated his 100th birthday in January. Tira's family was granted an audience with

HRH Princess Sirindhon who, in a special ceremony, anointed Tira's father with sacred oil to celebrate continued longevity and good health. In December 2022, Tira was also inducted into the Confrérie des Chevaliers du Tastevin, a society which promotes international appreciation of Burgundy fine wines and foods. It was the first induction in the society's history to take place outside France.

My former tutor **Andrew Wathey** (JRF 1982-85) reports he has now more or less settled in London. He will be a Visiting Fellow at All Souls College for the academic year 2023-24 and has recently joined the Council of the University of Cambridge (its trustee body) as an External Member.

Too late for last year's *Postmaster*, I heard for the first time from **John Wrathall**, who was my first-year neighbour in the rather dingy basement of the Old Warden's Lodgings. An obsession with film music during his youth sparked a career as a screenwriter, with such film credits to his name as *Good* (2008) starring Viggo Mortensen, Jason Issacs and Jodie Whittaker; and *Liability* (2012), with Tim Roth and Peter Mullan. In 2013 he had a serious stroke that landed him in hospital for 14 weeks, leaving him then unable to walk or talk, and with the prospect of forced retirement at 49. He now lives five minutes away from his family in an 18th-century cottage in Essex. His oldest son is studying at Emmanuel College, Cambridge, and has appeared on *University Challenge* no less than seven times. His middle child is reading music at Trinity Hall, Cambridge, and recently made his Proms debut in a huge choir. His youngest is completing his studies at Colchester Grammar School and is also a musician.

As for me, I am still working at the Asian Development Bank from Manila, Philippines, where travel resumed following the lockdown with our annual meeting held this time in Incheon, South Korea, in May (next year's will be in Tbilisi, Georgia). Meanwhile, musical activities have picked up again in Manila. In December, I made a guest appearance on harpsichord in a Philippine Philharmonic Orchestra (almost) complete performance of Handel's *Messiah* at the Cultural Center of the Philippines (my third performance with the country's national orchestra), and played with a new group in an all-Vivaldi programme in June. I am hoping this year yields more opportunities.



Graham Dwyer playing in a performance of Handel's *Messiah* with the Philippine Philharmonic Orchestra

Please do keep the news rolling in. I'm always pleased to hear from you, even if not for publication.

1982

Year Representative: Nick Weller
Email: nickweller7@aol.com

A number of us have celebrated our 60th birthdays this year. Reaching the landmark doesn't seem, however, to have prompted a rush to retire; instead new responsibilities have been accepted.

Edward Collier's son, Emmanuel, was baptised on 4 June, a wonderful occasion. Edward has found parenthood to be a deeper, richer and more life-changing delight than he had ever imagined. Emmanuel has been coming to Edward's church every week since he was a week old and enjoys his fan-club there, two dads and 25 mums. He is most definitely a happy chappy!

Andrew Corrie is still enjoying tutoring and is loving watching his family grow up, particularly his grandson who is more fun to be with every time he sees him. Andrew keeps fit by participating in a local park run and weights twice a week, and has also been on long bike rides with **Stephen Walsh**. Andrew was recently moved by a visit to the grave of **Leonard Cheshire** (1936) and his wife, Sue Ryder.

Congratulations to **Rupert Evenett** on his MBE for services to education.

Jasper Gaunt participated in the Beazley Archive's 50th anniversary symposium celebration, 'Beazley for the 21st century' and contributed a paper, 'Potter and bronze-smith in Classical Athens: Beazley's potter and painter revisited'. Jasper has also written a couple of articles, which are listed in the Selected Alumni Publications Publications section.

John Holland has finished his Maths MSc and achieved a distinction for his dissertation, which he is hoping to publish. John is planning to move on to a PhD in quantum computing after a year off studying. John has seen a number of Merton friends over the summer, at reunions, festivals and concerts: **Richard Ryder**, **James Thickett**, **Stephen Walsh**, **David Holbrook** and **Martin Giles**. John still has a number of years' service remaining at the Home Office.

Peter Kessler has been running Magdalen Monday Movies at Magdalen College, featuring a different film theme each term and open to anyone at the University. Peter has also been creating a film studies network, allowing those interested to meet up, learn from each other and generate academic study of film.

Andrzej Kmiecik is still living in Brussels and working as a law firm partner practising EU and UK competition law.

Virginia Knight's daughter Naomi is now also an Oxonian, having spent a year doing an MST in Modern Languages at St Peter's. Virginia was fortunate enough to take part in a performance of Elgar's *Dream of Gerontius* in Rome in April and bumped into **Julian Marland** at the post-concert party. Virginia is on the committee of the Bath & Bristol Oxford University Society. The committee would welcome any local Mertonians who would like to get involved.

Randall Martin is an Adjunct Research Professor at the University of Western Ontario and an Emeritus Professor at the University of New Brunswick. Randall's project *Cymbeline in the Anthropocene* was successfully completed last year (cymbeline-anthropocene.com). Randall hopes to be making a research trip to England in the autumn, including seeing Merton.

Peter Moger has been appointed as Sub Dean of Christ Church, Oxford from 1 October. Peter will be involved in the forthcoming review of Christ Church's governance, alongside the day-to-day running of the cathedral on behalf of the Dean. Peter and his family are very much looking forward to the move, to the challenges it will bring, to living in Tom Quad and to being next door but one to Merton.

Simon Noonan and his wife Catherine won the Nashville Women's Suburban Golf Association 2023 tournament with a 9 hole score of 37 in a foursomes (alternate shot) format. They have been travelling to see their sons in Chicago and Miami and were grateful to whoever invented air conditioning during a hot summer in Nashville. Simon has published a book, *The Accidental CEO*, about the tribulations of a newly appointed Chief Executive Officer of a public company in trouble.

Mark Shuttleworth has been appointed as department head at the Department of Translation, Interpreting and Intercultural Studies at Hong Kong Baptist University.

Warren Smith has published a collection of poems, *Desperate Measures*, which are described as short, sharp tales of trouble and great big pictures of woe.

Laura Thompson has edited the letters of Edith Thompson (the Bywaters-Thompson murder case) in her book *Au Revoir Now Darlint*. The letters follow Laura's book about the case: *A Tale of Two Murders: Guilt, Innocence and the Execution of Edith Thompson*.

Chris Villiers has been working full time as senior partner at Tile House Surgery, Brentwood. In February he marked 30 years at the practice. Chris has been spending time passing on what he knows to an expanding team of staff including clinical pharmacists, primary care physiotherapists, GP registrars, physician associates, paramedics and medical students. Chris will be cutting his hours down in October, when he's 60, freeing up more time for travel, cycling and guitar playing.

Andrew Wickens is Team Rector of Stoke-on-Trent Minster.

And I am still working more or less full-time, no immediate plans to wind down significantly.

1983

Year Representative: Meriel Cowan

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Thanks to all of you who have got in touch this year. I have been lucky to spend time with several Mertonians in person as well so my social life seems to form the basis of my report!

I caught up with **Ian Andrews** and Helen when he invited Simon and me for Sunday lunch last autumn, and **Chris Edwards** and Rachel joined us too. Ian spends time between Greece and London now he is no longer working for Linklaters, and relishes his role as a non-executive director of Athens Airport. We all enjoyed a damp but atmospheric walk round Hampstead. Chris wrote to me recently: 'My "semi-retired" life has me as Senior Advisor (International) for the RSAcademics organisation, a job which has seen me delivering talks from Bangkok to Sao Paulo and working with international schools around the world. More importantly, I sang my first ever solo with a choir only a month ago and didn't get canned off.'

Last summer we shared a wonderful walk on Exmoor with **Paul Chavasse** and Sonia and their dog Digby, and also met in Jersey for their wedding anniversary celebration which involved glorious sunshine and sea-bathing in November. Paul continues to be based in Exeter at the Met Office.

Clive Marsland is based near Winchester, and has been to Oxford a few times to see **Sarah Crofts** and **Michael Everett** and their daughters Honor and Belinda. Clive writes: 'I have been doing some mentoring for the Oxford Society scheme which is trying to get more students from less advantaged backgrounds to apply to Oxbridge. I'm attached to a further education college in Basingstoke and it has been interesting, with nicely engaged students. Trying to keep up with them and to remember the plot of *A Streetcar Named Desire* or *The Great Gatsby* is a bit tricky these days, but there are worse dilemmas to have.'

Susan and **Michael Roller** invited **Andrew** and **Philippa Baker** and Simon and myself to join them at the Chalke

Valley History Festival near Salisbury last month; the talks were intriguing and the weather kind. Philippa has returned to teaching at primary school since May and is very much enjoying it, as well as her responsibilities as a lay minister in her local church, while Andrew continues as a High Court Judge, working in London but also frequently travelling around the country trying a variety of criminal cases. Susan is making the most of retirement, recently doing a fine art course at the Courtauld as well as tending her very productive vegetable garden. Michael continues as CFO of Niox group, which specialises in asthma diagnosis technology. He also mentors local young people and supports their applications to higher education.

Daniel Seymour has been in touch from Connecticut. He has married his fiancée Adria who is a paediatric ophthalmologist, and is very happy. They have accumulated four dogs between them. Dan continues to work in finance in New York. Many congratulations both!

Rupert Vessey has retired from his role as President of Research and Early Development at Bristol Myers Squibb after eight years in the position. He and Laura have moved to Michigan and live between Kalamazoo and South Haven. Rupert will start a new part-time position with a Boston-based venture capital firm in August and will continue to serve on the boards of BioTechnne, the Lupus Research Alliance and the International Biomedical Research Alliance which funds DPhil/PhD students at the NIH, Oxford and Cambridge.

Sam Whipple has been working with the Merton Society to set up Merton College Mentoring (MCM) and deliver training for the mentors and mentees. This follows a successful pilot last year supporting Mertonians whose time at Merton was affected by the Covid pandemic. Sam writes: 'Please consider putting yourself forward as a mentor once the scheme is up and running. There will be full details on the Merton website and in future communications from the College.'

Simon and I have both volunteered for the mentoring scheme and have enjoyed the experience very much. At this point, I'd like to recommend the Merton Society to you all. Under Philippa Whipple's leadership it is becoming a vibrant organisation, providing support for the College by alumni

and a conduit for information exchange. As much is done remotely, living abroad is no barrier. I've now been involved for about four years, and have very much enjoyed closer contact with the college development.

I've retired from my GP partnership in Oxford after 23 years. I am still working half time in other roles in safeguarding, some locum sessions at Luther St Medical Centre providing care for homeless people, and medical examinations for children in care. The change is very welcome. Simon continues as Economics Tutor at Worcester with a fairly heavy administrative commitment. Now our children are all self-funding and off the premises, we are welcoming a Labrador puppy called Gioia into our household which may be an incentive for our boys to come back and visit

1984

Year Representative: David Clark

Email: david.clark@merton.oxon.org

As always, it's been great to hear from some of you with your news. Amazingly, this is now my 20th report since I took up the Year Rep role in 2004!



Professor Stephen Ashworth set up and ready for Kitchen Chemistry in a Ho Chi Minh City primary school

The highlight of the last year for **Stephen Ashworth** was an extended trip to New Zealand on an Erskine Fellowship to the University of Canterbury, Christchurch. Corinna, his wife,

was able to join him so while he was busy teaching and doing Kitchen Chemistry science shows, she was able to explore the city and learn some Maori. They had the use of a car, so weekends were spent exploring the country. Back in the UK, the Kitchen Chemistry science shows and workshops keep Stephen occupied in the local area and have enabled him to be involved in other projects which have taken him to Brunei and Vietnam. The project in Brunei is to help primary school teachers gain the confidence to do practical demonstrations and experiments in the classroom. In Vietnam, he was working with universities to introduce academics to different teaching strategies, and along the way he was able to visit schools and do some science shows too. Stephen reports that his family is well: one of his children is doing a PhD and the other is a detector scientist at the Rutherford Appleton Laboratory.

Andrew Phillips has stepped up to be Finance Director at the Duchy of Cornwall, and he and **Amanda** (née **Braddock**, 1985) are living between Somerset and London (Amanda is now teaching Latin and Greek at Cambridge University). They are enjoying getting to know London better. Their eldest daughter was married in 2022 and the other two are doing well. Andrew and Amanda enjoyed meeting Mertonians at the London Christmas Carol Service and having the chance to congratulate **Irene Tracey** (1985) on her new job.

Andrew Davis reports that his retirement plans have again been postponed and he is still gainfully employed at TSB in Edinburgh, where he lives, and London, where it sometimes feels like he does. He also continues on the board of Historic Environment Scotland, which has become much more interesting as more sites have reopened after Covid. His youngest son, Aidan, has accepted an offer to study Maths at Merton and is currently awaiting his grades. His application to Merton followed a concerted campaign of encouragement by Andrew's alumni friends, spearheaded by Aidan's godfather, **Pete Mabbs** (1987), and **Marie Smith** (1988). It remains to be seen whether allowing him to visit the College with former bar stewards was a wise move.

Philippa Whipple (née **Edwards**) continues as President of the Merton Society. She notes that the Merton Society has a number of projects underway, some of which you can read about elsewhere in *Postmaster*. Her current 'pet project' is

setting up Merton College Mentoring (MCM). She would be grateful if you would think about putting yourself forward as a mentor once the scheme is up and running. Mentors who left Merton in the 1980s are likely to have huge experience of life and work to draw on. This is just one way you can give back to the College and help another Mertonian who is just starting out.

I'm not sure if it's a coincidence, but the past year has given me the chance to meet all of my correspondents. My wife, Barbara, and I thoroughly enjoyed our first Merton Christmas Carol Service and were able to meet Philippa, and Andrew and Amanda there. The Memorial Service for **Courtenay Phillips** in November provided an excellent opportunity to reconnect with Stephen and Andrew. We enjoyed lunch with our organic chemistry tutor **Laurence Harwood** before the fitting tribute to Courtenay. After the service, there was the chance to meet other Merton chemists of our era over tea in Hall. In other news, we passed a happy family milestone in July 2022 with the wedding of our son, Theo, to his fiancée, Sami, which took place in Guernsey.

Please do keep in touch and send any items of news for *Postmaster* at any time – it's always a pleasure to hear from you.

1985

Year Representative: Madeleine Barrows (née **Fontana**)

Email: MadeleineFontana@outlook.com

I have to open our year group's report with the biggest news – our very own Irene Tracey has become Vice-Chancellor of the University. There is more about her elsewhere in *Postmaster*, so I'll say no more here.

Mark Medish (postgraduate student in politics and philosophy, Fulbright Scholar, 1985–86) speaks for us all, I expect, when he comments: 'It's hard to believe the 40th anniversary of my time at Merton approaches.' He adds: 'I do not have big changes to report. I remain vice chair of Project Associates Ltd, a strategic consultancy headquartered in London. We advise governments and corporates around

the world. My residence remains in Washington, DC, where I also have a boutique law practice called Mosaic Law Group that specializes in regulatory compliance and complex cross-border investment matters. Together with a number of former Members of Congress, a few years ago I co-founded a non-profit civic engagement organization called Keep Our Republic. The name comes from a quote attributed to Benjamin Franklin. When asked by fellow citizens at the end of the American constitutional convention what form of government had been decided, Franklin said “a Republic – if you can keep it.” His admonition is particularly apt in the context of the upcoming 2024 election cycle.’

Jonathan Boff has been teaching history at University of Birmingham since 2011, and was recently appointed Professor of Military History there. He is working on a book about money and war in the modern world, to be published by Oxford University Press in 2025.

Chris Aston sends everyone an update from the Staffordshire Moorlands, writing that this has been ‘another year of changes, but with many things staying the same. I continue to work supporting the European companies of a global construction materials business improve their commercial performance, and Marion continues in her primary teaching though she has taken the absolutely right decision to go part time from September this year. Since the last update another of our three sons, Thomas, has got married, to the delightful Caroline. They are now settled in Wimbledon working for an engineering business and the BBC respectively. Joseph got married last year to the delightful Abby and they are living near Nottingham working in the food industry and being a vet respectively. Our other son Peter is living in Herne Hill with his partner, the delightful Lauren, doing accountancy and exhibitions management respectively. The Morris Minor count remains at two but they have now been joined by a VW campervan, so we’ve been pootling about the country whenever time allows parking up in a variety of fields and going to festivals and events or just chilling. So much easier and drier than a tent! All the best to everyone.

Simon Steel (PGCE) writes that he is still at the SETI Institute in California, but may have more to report next year, as some potential collaborations are being developed.

For me, I’m still CEO at the British Academy of Management, the learned society for scholars of business and management. Bringing the organisation safely through Covid has been a challenging experience, but interesting, and I’m fortunate to be able to work with a great set of trustees. Our two youngest children both graduated this summer: Becca in Economics at Bath and Susie in English Lang & Lit at Oxford (Merton). Their older siblings are living in London: Tess is a Norland nanny and Florian (previously Felicity) is a fundraiser for a charity. With the children becoming more independent, Gary and I are enjoying being able to go away on holiday by ourselves. I’m also back to my choir, now that Covid is no longer a major threat, and very much enjoying singing Renaissance and Baroque music once again.

With best wishes to you all and I look forward to hearing from you next year.

1986

Year Representatives: Simon Male (undergraduates)

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and **Daniel Schaffer (graduates)**

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Undergraduates

Tom Willett moved back to London recently after nearly nine years in Singapore and continues in his role leading the Global M&A Advisory business of Standard Chartered Bank. **Simon Portman** is still living in Cambridgeshire and working as a lawyer advising clients in areas as diverse as AI, VR, animation and biotech. He spoke at various events this year on the legal and ethical implications of generative AI and attended GamesCon in Cologne in August.

To his work in financial law (to earn money) and immigration policy (to seem important), **Jonathan Thomas** is now trying to add teaching chess in state primary schools (to have fun). One of the greatest joys of his roles is, in respect of immigration policy, having the chance to regularly catch up with Matthew Rycroft, in his role as Permanent Secretary to the Home Office.

Jeremy Cooper is now working as Head of Planning (Bus) with the Go-Ahead Group. Now that all of his children are going to be working (with his youngest having been accepted in the Corps of Army Music on trombone) he hopes to have time to catch up with some Mertonians! **Simon Male** began a new role at Bloomberg last year, and is enjoying running and cycling as much as ever. Sadly, he can no longer keep up with his son William, who just set his Freshman school mile record, and is showing enormous promise as a middle-distance runner.

Graduates

Ben Alpers is Associate Professor of American Intellectual and Cultural History at Honors College, University of Oklahoma (balpers@ao.edu). He lives in Norman. Ben posts regularly on Facebook, normally featuring his dog carrying a stick.

Ricardo Bianconi is a maths professor at São Paulo University in Brazil, where he works on mathematical logic: o-minimal structures and continuous logic

Gbolahan Elias, a partner at GElias (www.gelias.com), writes: 'On the purely personal front, the past year has been largely uneventful for us. There has been no significant news, no additions or subtractions to either my immediate family or those of my siblings – no deaths, births, weddings or divorces.

'To be fully accurate, my niece (my sister's daughter) has been admitted to a leading Cambridge college to study towards what seems to me to be a degree in political science. The admission is conditional on her getting the right minimum number of A+ and A marks in her A-level examinations this summer. Her mother is a Somerville College law alumna, but we are proud of her and will try hard not to hold her Cambridge pivot against her.

'Two less purely personal developments have been interesting. More than a decade ago, my wife started a Lagos Island soccer charity tournament in my late father's memory. It is for boys and girls under-17, and has been growing very nicely by virtually every metric. Three of its alumnae and three of its alumni have now gone on to play for Nigerian national under-21 soccer teams. All six played for teams that got to the semi-finals of the tournament.

'I have now stepped back from general management functions in the eponymous law firm where I work. We have a new managing partner and deputy managing partner. However, I remain active in advising and representing our clients. As one of my medical friends has put it, I am still a full-time consultant physician, but I am no longer the medical director of the hospital. The change has been more liberating than I had hoped.'

Lionel Hogg, partner at Gadens in Brisbane, reports: 'If I had been sitting next to Jack Beatson at the 2023 Halsbury Society dinner I would have told him all about an important restitution case we are running in the High Court in Australia: Redland City Council v Kozik & Others.'

Jerry and Julee Kaye on Wainwright's Coast to Coast walk



Julee Kaye (née **Greenough**) reports: 'My husband Jerry and I were excited to return to travelling in 2022. We spent May walking the Cami de Ronda in Spain, and then proudly completed all 192 miles of Wainwright's Coast to Coast route across England – a walk which treated us to a procession of gorgeous landscapes in unexpectedly perfect weather. It was reassuring to find Merton just as I had left it over 30 years ago, but a little sad to see how the town of Oxford has changed: a lot fewer Indian restaurants and an astounding number of new Harry Potter souvenir shops. I hope that everyone from my time in the MCR will look me up if they are coming to Vancouver.'

Daniel Promislow, Professor of Pathology and Biology at the University of Washington, USA, has produced a podcast about what we can learn from aging dogs – a conversation which is part of an inquiry into the health benefits of human–animal relationships, which Daniel explored further at ‘Creature Comforts’, the 4th annual AGM in June 2023 in San Francisco.



Dan Schaffer, partner in Slaughter and May, writes: ‘This has been my busiest year professionally of my entire career in the City of London. A monster nine-month deal signed to allow me to attend the College’s Halsbury Lecture and the dinner which my firm sponsors, teach a Trusts class and the tutorials to the undergrads, and write and judge the second-year mooting competition in June 2023. I was also delighted to attend a Halsbury talk dinner where the address was given by Sir Jack Beatson (Law Fellow in 1980s when I was there). I have also just taken over as Chair of the Merton Lawyers’ Association. The highlight of the last year was attending with my wife Marianne our middle son’s Vincent’s graduation at Yale. He gave up his place at Exeter College to read philosophy and went “west”. They really know how to put on an event – there were ceremonies over three days with a choir and bands! With his BSc in Computer Science, Vincent now works for Palantir Technologies in Manhattan. After Yale we headed to Washington, DC where we met up with Nick Allard (1974) and his wife Marla at their wonderful home in Georgetown before going out for dinner.

‘We are looking forward to the next year at UChicago where our youngest Louis graduates in Political Science and Linguistics. With two sons in the USA we are very pleased that our eldest, Antoine, lives not far from us and we see him very regularly.’

Luc Tremblay is a professor in the Law Faculty at the University of Montreal (luc.tremblay@umontreal.ca).

David Wright is a contributing reporter to WSBE Rhode Island PBS Weekly.

1987

Year Representative: Simon Male

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Ben Hutchison’s youngest son Bear has just finished A levels and Rosie, his eldest, is now a doctor. Ben remarried a few years ago but still lives in Somerset near to Glastonbury Festival. He runs a consultancy advising on large, publicly subsidised infrastructure projects like rail and Project Gigabit but would prefer to be a chef, rock star or anything that people not working on his specific projects can understand.

Peter Wilson returned from being UK Ambassador to Brazil to London in March 2022 to work in 10 Downing Street until September, then in the Cabinet Office on the UK/France Summit held in March 2023, at which point he moved back to the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office to become Director General for Europe.

In the absence of a career plan, **Jim Egan** continues to work in the journalism sector, and is now at Financial Times Strategies (the media consulting arm of the FT), based in central London. Work travel offers the occasional opportunity to catch up with Mertonians around the world, but he increasingly prefers a slower life at home in Blackheath with wife Karen and four children (now aged between 16 and 20).

James Cross has taken up home brewing and recently won a silver medal for his Marzen, and a gold in the Session Porter & Stout category at the Great British Beer Festival

Homebrew Competition. He is also in training for his BJCP beer judging exams.

Jeffrey Zink has been hired as the Director of Culture & Wellness at Trace3.



Siew Chua and fellow Mertonians in Singapore

Siew Chua is in touch with several Mertonians in Singapore.

1988

Year Representative: Tim Gardener

c/o Development Office, Merton College, Oxford, OX1 4JD

Email: publications@merton.ox.ac.uk

Katy Boulton was proud to be part of the team that won the BAFTA special award at the 2022 TV craft awards in recognition of disabled-led arts and media company TripleC's contribution to access and inclusion. Katy has been the Strategy and Operations Lead at TripleC since 2020, following on from a career in broadcasting and the arts.

Beth Williamson was promoted, in summer 2022, to Chair in the History of Art at the University of Bristol. She was appointed to the Westminster Abbey Fabric Commission, the body that advises the Dean and Chapter on matters relating to the care and conservation of the Abbey building and precincts. She continues on the Bristol Cathedral Fabric Advisory Committee, and in 2022 she was appointed its chair.

Peter Howe writes: 'After 24 years at Syngenta, I have moved to AstraZeneca in Cambridge where I'm part of a team working to discover new cancer treatments.'

Jenny Condron has asked me to give special mention to **Anne Keast-Butler** who, for understandable professionally clandestine reasons, has not provided much news over the years. Now emerging from the shadows, Anne's appointment this year as Director of GCHQ was on the front pages of the broadsheets and was mentioned in the Acting Warden's newsletter of June 2023.

1989

Year Representative: Matthew Grimley

Merton College, Oxford, OX1 4JD

Email: matthew.grimley@merton.ox.ac.uk

1990

Year Representative: Christine Barrie

Email: christine.barrie@btinternet.com

Azeem Azhar continues to produce 'Exponential View', his research on the broad impacts of AI. This has proved to be a very busy year. His first TV series, *Exponentially with Azeem Azhar*, launched on Bloomberg TV in July 2023, and he is working on a new book. He recently reconnected with Oxford, becoming a Visiting Fellow at the Oxford Martin School, and is up in the city about once a week. Happy to catch up for lunch!

In December 2022, EPSRC awarded a £17 million grant to **Steven Brown**, Professor of Physics at the University of

Warwick, as Principal Investigator to procure the UK's highest magnetic field nuclear magnetic resonance spectrometer at 1.2 GHz, with installation expected in 2025. For more details, see the University of Warwick website.

Jayne Joyce has stepped down as project lead for Oxfordshire Breastfeeding Support to become part of an international team of four, working on the ninth edition of the world's bestselling book on breastfeeding, to be published by La Leche League International in 2024. Her eldest daughter graduated from Cambridge last summer and is now doing a chemistry DPhil in Oxford at Merton, and Jayne is enjoying connecting with a new generation of Mertonians.

David Duncan is now Director Consulting Delivery, Public Finance at CGI.com and anticipates being even busier than normal.

Mark Cockroft has finally moved to Australia, having been thwarted twice because of Covid. His family is based on the Gold Coast in south-eastern Queensland and loving the year-round sunshine. He is about to start a new job at QBE, managing the group's understanding of and strategic use of its capital.

1991

Year Representative: Anna Smith (Chair of the Year Representatives)
c/o Development Office, Merton College, Oxford, OX1 4JD
Email: publications@merton.ox.ac.uk

1992

Year Representatives: Andrew Davison
Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, CB2 1RH
Email: apd31@cam.ac.uk
and **Steve Maxwell**
Email: stevemaxwell99@gmail.com

Kelyn Bacon Darwin's household is feeling a bit bereft after their daughter has flown the nest to York University. Their

son is also away a lot during holidays, playing violin with NYO. So they acquired a lovely Ukrainian lawyer for almost a year, and when she moved out they decided to house an asylum seeker from Africa, who is still with them. They would be delighted to share their experiences with anyone interested in doing something similar.

Rachael Maunder (née **Ball**) lives in Miami with her two children, William (11) and Harriet (9), and travels frequently to the Bahamas. She currently works for the Bahamas Telecommunications Company as Head of Customer Experience.

Rebecca Eastmond (née **Shaw**) moved to Rutland in 2018 (if anyone is passing, please call in) where she lives with Matthew, Arthur (16), Isabel (13) and assorted animals. After working in and around philanthropy since leaving Merton, she founded Greenwood Place – which provides advice and implementation support to families and individuals who want their giving to be effective and impactful – in 2017. Outside work, she is generally to be found gardening, baking or debating current affairs around the kitchen table (the joy of having teenagers is that they can join in).



Andrew Davison is in the middle of two years as a visiting fellow at the Centre of Theological Inquiry, in Princeton, NJ. In the summer of 2024, he will return to Cambridge, where he will be promoted to professor in October 2023. His new book, *Astrobiology and Christian Doctrine*, was published this year by Cambridge University Press. He is particularly pleased with the cover.

Professor **Raymond Jagessar** continues to lecture and pursue research at the University of Guyana, South America. His research interests are broad, covering the spectrum of pure and applied chemistry. He recently won an Innovation Prize for the development of a selected medicine. He has published more than 100 research articles and is currently the President of the Caribbean Academy of Sciences. He continues to be a cricket and football fan. He wishes all enduring health and a Covid-free world.

1993

Year Representative: Joanna Cooke

Email: jvicooke@hotmail.com

For the class of 1993 it is exactly 30 years since we all first met. To mark this auspicious anniversary, I have been (almost) inundated with news, with some notable absences.

I have done little this year apart from repeatedly explain to my children that, despite having been at college together, I do not have Liz Truss's mobile number and so we cannot invite her round for tea and questions.

Richard Barlow is back in the UK after '5 countries and 4 children'. He returned from India and is working at the Foreign Office in Whitehall. His eldest is at Sussex University, his second is doing A levels this year and the two youngest are at primary school in Northamptonshire where Richard now lives. His next project is to establish a bricks and mortar foothold in Mexico where his wife Diana is from – in the Yucatan Peninsula.

Henry Braun says the most Mertonian thing he did this year was walk a ridiculous 55km around the Black Mountains with **Guy Towlson** (1993) from what was (ex-Dean) Tom Braun's cottage, formerly used for Classics reading parties. He is still working on buildings' decarbonisation modelling for the Department for Energy Security & Net Zero. This year's project with Janice (2001) has brought work home as they are renovating their house to a near-Passivhaus standard.

Kabir Miah was in *Postmaster* a couple of years ago for an education piece and from January 2024 he will be the Head of School (aka the Headteacher) at Swanlea School in Tower Hamlets, London.

Alan Renwick was delighted to see lots of Mertonians at his inaugural lecture as Professor of Democratic Politics at UCL, including **Henry Braun**, **Emily Hammond**, **Kerensa Heffron**, **Jamie Inman** and **Malcolm Millar**. The subject of the lecture was 'How can we fix our democracy?' Readers who are keen to know the answer may find the recording online.

Sarah Boon still lives on a little farm in Wiltshire with husband Richard Smith (Mansfield) and their whippet, Hera. Sarah has built some quite fancy equine facilities over the past few years and now has two international event riders based there so she can indulge her love of horses every day. She qualified as an equine sports massage therapist a few years ago and specialises in treating event horses. Sarah says: 'It's exciting to be behind the scenes at the big events like Bramham and Blenheim – it's a high octane sport ... that brings a deep sense of community.'

Jim Ratzer has now been at New Street Research for 20 years. He lives in London and spends school holidays in Herefordshire. Amazingly he has been married to Tanya for 17 years (all the points to her), and has two children, Hugo (15) and Sophie (13). Jim's mid-life crisis has been to become a MAMIL (a not entirely unexpected move).

Thanks to **Charley Smith** (née **Haines**) and **Jim Freeman** who got in touch albeit offering no news. I can report that they are both alive and happy. As is, I hope, everyone else.

1994

Year Representative: Nick Quinn

Email: nickaquin@yahoo.co.uk

In August, a quarter-century on from submitting our Part II theses, the '94 chemists met in Oxford to reminisce. We were reminded of an earlier chemists' dinner where we all came together as elements and sparkled, glowed and interacted, absorbing large quantities of liquids over time. While this year we were a couple short of a full shell of electrons, we nonetheless reacted together in similar ways, just a little slower at T+25.

Professor **Tim Softley** joined us rather like Xenon, noble and useful with lasers; **Jamie** regaled us with stories of exploding Sodium when his outer layer is exposed; and **Mike** was his redoubtable iridescent Vanadium-self, often highly charged and to be found in various colour states when excited. **James** has quelled strikes within his department – in the absence of reactions, perhaps Argon. **Shervin** (Californium, not

naturally present but exciting to hear about and giving out lots of positive energy) and **Colin** (Krypton, discovered in Scotland; rarely isolated but forming long bonds with all of us) were unable to join us and were missed. **Vic** and **Sarah** meanwhile remain Precious Metals, and glittered untarnished by the passage of time.



1994 Chemists Dinner, 2023

In other year group news, **Anthony Costella** (Carbon – solid and dependable) announces his recent engagement to Audrey in Iceland. Diamond!

Wishing the entire year group a successful year as we approach 30 years since matriculation, and that, if you reunite, your bonds remain as strong and your reactions warm and effervescent.

Nickel (a bit dull and inert but useful for catalysing and bringing different elements together).

1995

Year Representative: Tom Brown

Cloisters, 1 Pump Court, Temple, London EC4Y 7AA
Tel: 0207 827 4008

1996

Year Representative: Maria Pretzler

Email: m.pretzler@swansea.ac.uk

Not much news has come in from 1996 Mertonians this year: let's hope that we can make up for it next year.

Anna and **James Hatt** have been in touch – they have been meeting up with a number of Mertonians during the year, and they are particularly happy that James's godson is currently a choral scholar at Merton: another reason to stay in touch with the College on a regular basis to hear him perform with the Choir.

Maria Pretzler has been the 'Subject Lead' of Classics, Ancient History and Egyptology at Swansea University for a year now. This is the kind of role academics aren't keen to take on, but Maria is finding that she enjoys looking after a wonderful team of colleagues and fighting the corner of the Ancient World subjects within the wider institution.

1997

Year Representatives: Catherine Sangster

Oxford University Press, Oxford, OX2 6DP

Email: catherine.sangster@oup.com

and **Jill Davies**

Email: jilldavies1997@yahoo.co.uk

1998

Year Representative: Alex Edmans

Email: aedmans@london.edu

Jane Rawson-Jones wrote to say that she and her husband Hal welcomed their son Matthew on 31st October. Alex Edmans was elected a Fellow of the Academy of Social Sciences. Alex was a speaker at the 2023 Oxford Reputation Symposium, where the accommodation and conference dinner were at Merton, and stayed in his old room in Rose Lane.

1999

Year Representative: Andrew Tustian

Email: andrewtustian@hotmail.com

Thomas Ableman reports that he has been working at Transport for London as Director of Strategy & Innovation since September 2022. I am told he is willing to accept polite suggestions regarding transport from all the 1999 Mertonians who live in London at the current time.

After several years as a project manager at the International Atomic Energy Agency, **Erin Daugherty** (née **Mark**) currently works as a strategic planner for a US government contractor performing environmental remediation at nuclear sites that were once part of the Manhattan Project.

Robert Hollas and his wife, Senela, are happy to share news of the birth of their second daughter, Georgina Joanna Hollas, in Westminster, London, on 12 April 2023. Robert also has a new job at the Public Investment Fund, the sovereign wealth fund of Saudi Arabia. He works in the Investment Strategy Division as VP, Strategic Investments Lead. Thus, he lives in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. I'm unable to confirm if he is currently known as Rob of Arabia or not.

Anna Wetherell and **Benedict Morrison** took over the London Comedy Film Festival (LOCO), which took place over four days in May 2023. This involved resurrecting the festival from pre-pandemic times.

They secured funding from BFI Film Hub London, formed an association with Picturehouse, built a programme which included a UK premiere by Oscar-nominated young British/Palestinian director Basil Khalil, and got a team in place to produce and market the events and coordinate volunteers.

Focusing on a central theme of 'comedy in the face of adversity', they screened a comedy about a pandemic, plus *The Lavender Hill Mob*, two films by pioneering 20th-century female director Wendy XToye, the directorial debut of comedy actor Neill Maskell, and an outstanding afternoon of 30 short films by up-and-coming filmmakers.

Every screening had a Q&A, all directors attended, two screenings sold out and they engaged with the international comedy filmmaking community, as well as reaching out to local young filmmakers close to the venue of Hackney Picturehouse.

Several Mertonians attended *The Lavender Hill Mob* screening! All armed with the most insightful questions (what else?) to ask Paul Merton, who was introducing the film. Anna says: 'Anyone interested can email hello@locofilmfestival.com to join the mailing list.'

2000

Year Representative: Alex Perry

Email: alexpperry@gmail.com

2001

Year Representative: Katherine Millard

Email: katherine.l.millard@gmail.com

2002

Year Representative: Ben Zurawel

Tel: 0207 832 0500 Email: ben.zurawel@gmail.com

2003

Year Representatives: Andrew Godfrey-Collins and Helen Nicholas

c/o Development Office, Merton College, Oxford, OX1 4JD

Email: publications@merton.ox.ac.uk

Twenty years (!) on from our matriculation, you can find 2003 Mertonians in all corners of the globe. **Tom Newton-Lewis** moved to Washington, DC in 2022 with his wife Aparna and daughter Nitara, who (Tom reports) 'simultaneously keeps us young and ages us'. Tom is working for a non-profit. **Rami Chowdhury** is also still based in Washington with his wife Kathleen and son Miki.

Also stateside, **Harry Thomas** is practising gastroenterology in Austin, Texas, where he lives with his wife and two sons. Outside work, he serves on the boards of several non-profit organisations and enjoys watching the city's new Major League Soccer team, Austin FC.

Johannes Ströbel, now David S Loeb Professor of Finance at New York University Stern School of Business, was awarded the prestigious 2023 Fischer Black Prize – the latest of several accolades for his finance research.

On this side of the Atlantic, **Brian Melican** will have been living in Hamburg for 15 years as of this autumn, ten of them with his partner Nicole. 'Brian Melican Industries' (as he jokingly refers to his sole-trader status) has also completed its 15th year in business, including three books, hundreds of clients and many millions of words. Fellow Germanist and Mertonian **Caroline Taylor** is also based in Hamburg. She and her husband Randy welcomed their second son, Michael, on Valentine's Day this year. Caroline and Brian are in regular touch, and she befriended Brian's mother Joyce, who spent her final years in a Hamburg nursing home, and was an invaluable source of help and support.

Brian also shared updates on several other Mertonians. He had the honour of being best man to **Alex Long**, who got married to Bramble in July 2023. Singapore-based **Tom Furlong** was also in attendance at Alex's stag weekend and wedding. Finally, Brian had the pleasure of seeing **Tom Jeffreys** on a recent visit to Edinburgh, where the twice-published author has been living with his wife Crystal for around five years.

Kirsten Rulf has spent the last 20 years hopping between careers and continents. Having started off as a television reporter, covering news and current affairs from Brussels, Beijing, London and Cologne, she is now a partner and associate director at the Boston Consulting Group in Berlin. Four years heading the German Chancellery's AI, data and digital policy department were sandwiched between spells in the US – firstly for a master's in public policy at Harvard Kennedy School, and latterly for six months as a World Fellow at Yale University. She still likes to spend time rowing on rivers, playing tennis and organising social events – just like during her time as MCR social secretary.

Fleur Willson is still with the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office, currently based in Madrid as Consul-General Spain and Consular Regional Director for Southern Europe. She would love to catch up with any fellow Mertonians living in or visiting the region. **Camen Lei** moved to Dublin with her wife Liz last year. Those who know Camen will be unsurprised to hear she has joined a cycling club. **Mike Lightfoot** is still (mostly) in Amsterdam, currently enjoying a sabbatical. **Mike Riddle** and his wife Jenny are continuing to thrive in Abu Dhabi.

Back in the UK, **Alan Strickland** has been announced as the Labour candidate for Sedgefield – a seat notably once held by Tony Blair. If Alan wins, might we one day see a second Mertonian PM? Watch this space.

John Williams worked as a theatre producer and in arts policy for 15 years after graduation, taking shows over the world from London to the Sydney Opera House. He now works in NHS management and lives in North Wales with his husband David and three otterhounds.

In Oxford itself, **Nat Merry** is, in her own words, working in heritage 9–5 (specifically, the Oxford Heritage Partnership, co-founded with **Kirsten Claiden-Yardley**) and sports 6–10 and at the weekends. **Emily Fildes** and **Steve Buckley** are also living in Oxford with daughter Iris, and **Chris** and **Sze-Ann Causer** with their daughter Naomi and son Rowan.

Naomi Pollock, **Ellen Clarke**, **Emily Spence**, **Susannah Street** and **Eleanor Weber** recently enjoyed a nostalgic weekend of brunch, punting, tea at The Rose and conversation at the stone table in Merton gardens. A few weeks later Naomi and Morten's daughter Anna-Lisbeth was born on a rainy July morning and welcomed home with a beautiful postal afternoon tea courtesy of **Charlotte** and **Tom Ravenscroft** (2004). Naomi reports 'feeling very grateful for the enduring bonds of family, friends and cake'.

Several others from our year group have welcomed new arrivals since our last update: **Adam Bryan** and wife Christina's new baby boy, Cai, was born in June 2022. He is growing fast and already fighting for territory with his sisters Electra and Noémie. **Francis Grady** and Eleanor

also welcomed their son James, **Ollie Hill** and Shelley their daughter Elara, and **Olivia von Wulffen** and Rupert their son Peregrine (aka Pip).

It has also been a busy year for the authors among us. **Guy Shrubsole's** *The Lost Rainforests of Britain* (William Collins, 2022) was named the *Sunday Times* Science and Environment Book of the Year 2022. **Veronika Dapunt's** novel *Death and Her Life* (forthcoming) won the 2023 Comedy Women in Print Prize Runner-Up. She has always had a love of the darkly comic and the absurd, quite possibly the reason why her first career was in law. She now works as a writer and education consultant and lives in London. **S J Beard** is currently editing two forthcoming volumes (*The Era of Global Risk: An introduction to Existential Risk Studies* and *An Anthology of Global Risk*, both Open Book Publishers) and finalising a proposal for another: *Human Futures: A Little Book of Existential Hope* (Polity Press).

Not too much to report from us as your year group reps: **Andrew Godfrey-Collins** is still working as a translator and editor in Southampton and has become more involved in environmental campaigning over the past 12 months. By the time you read this, **Helen Nicholas** will have two school-age children — she's looking forward to them both going to the same place each weekday morning, but dreading having to navigate two sets of birthday parties at weekends!

2004

Year Representatives: Natasha Beth, Nicola Davis and Gavin Freeguard

Email: merton2004@gmail.com

We start with this from **Carl Anglim**: 'Tiffany and I left London last July to spend 12 months travelling while working, to reconnect with friends and family abroad. We have so far spent time exploring North America, Europe, India and South East Asia. We are enjoying it so much that we have decided to extend the duration to 18 months. It was on the coast in Spain in November, while enjoying a beautiful sunset walk on the beach, that we decided to get married this year rather than wait for 2024. Tiffany and I are delighted to share that

we are getting married on Sunday 15 October at St James's Piccadilly in London.'



Carl Anglim and Tiffany in India

James Biggin-Lamming has been promoted to Director of Strategy and Transformation at London North West University Healthcare NHS Trust. His wife Eleanor is now working as a children's social worker. Their daughter Olive (9) came along to a recent recording of *Any Questions?* at Northwick Park Hospital (where James works) and got to ask a question. Her declaration in the discussion with the host that she would like to be Prime Minister ended up with her on the front page of the local newspaper and then being interviewed on BBC Radio London. James and Eleanor are still living happily in Harpenden, and have been hosting two Ukrainian guests for just over a year.

Jenna Ide was made up to a Partner (Employment Law) in September 2022. She also gave birth in February this year to Liam Ide. Fiona (5) is a super big sister.

Last June, **James Shaw** married Blaeke Downie in a ceremony at the Houses of Parliament in London with a number of Mertonians in attendance. James and Blaeke Downie-Shaw live in south-east London.



James and Blaeke at the Houses of Parliament

And as for your Year Reps ...

Tash Beth and her husband Ian recently moved in to the house they've been renovating for the last year. Tash can't quite decide whether managing a renovation or moving with a 1- and a 3-year-old was the more stressful life experience, but is very glad both are behind her. She is hoping to have a bit more time to catch up with friends and generally re-engage with the world once the boxes are unpacked/the kids leave home, whichever happens sooner.

Nicola Davis and her husband Nick are settling into their new home in Leamington Spa with their flat-coated retriever, Tosca. Aside from house renovations Nicola is working hard as science correspondent at the *Guardian* and, in her spare (!) time, teaching the Japanese art of Temari. She recently passed her level 3 (Shihan) certification with the Japanese Temari Association in Tokyo, which she's very chuffed about.

And **Gavin Freeguard** is still freelancing from north London – this year, it's been mainly trying to stop the government doing anything too stupid with data protection reform, and getting the Labour Party to think that having some policies on data and tech might be a good idea. Outside work, he's still singing with the New Tottenham Singers (highlights of their summer concert are on YouTube) and has somehow been roped into a barbershop quartet.

2005

There is currently no Year Representative for 2005. Please contact development@merton.ox.ac.uk if you are interested.

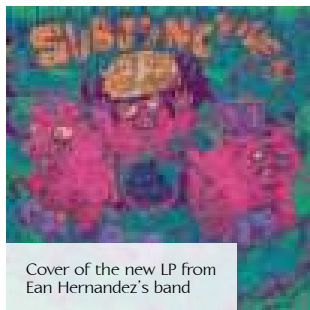
2006

Year Representatives: James Dobias (undergraduates)
c/o Development Office, Merton College, Oxford, OX1 4JD
Email: publications@merton.ox.ac.uk
and Gregory Lim (graduates)
Email: gbslim@gmail.com

Graduates



Hendrik Coldenstrodt and Verena Heise (2008) are thrilled to announce an 'MCR baby': their first child, Jonathan Charlie, was born in April 2023. He is (of course) incredibly cute and keeps them rather busy. They are still getting used to living with a small boy in the city of Oldenburg in northern Germany.



Ean Hernandez is still working at Google as a project manager helping a machine-learning team to make optimisation and

cost-saving recommendations to Google Cloud customers. He managed to help a Ukrainian war refugee to update his resumé to work in Pacific Northwest tech circles, and he landed a job! Ean's band The Subjunctives (www.thesubjunctives.com) will release a second LP in September 2023 called 'Let's Try This Again'. There will be 14 new songs and one cover, all mixed by Matt Allison at Electrical Audio Chicago.

Yulia Savikovskaya graduated with an MA in Creative Writing from the Higher School of Economics, Moscow, in June 2023. She wrote a new play *The Snails* (2022), which was shortlisted for the Remarka Drama Festival 2023, and translated Michael Frayn's comedy *Donkeys' Years* into Russian. Yulia also wrote a research paper on the libretti of the Finnish composer Kaija Saariaho (1952–2023) based on interviews with Saariaho's close collaborators and librettists of her operas.

Sandeep Sengupta is based in Switzerland, where he works as the Global Policy Lead on Climate Change at the International Union for Conservation of Nature. He is also a visiting lecturer at the Geneva Graduate Institute, where he teaches a course on Climate Change Politics and Governance. This year, Sandeep also wrote an article on 'Climate change, international justice and global order', which was published in *International Affairs*.

Claire Wilkinson and her husband, Nathan, had a daughter, Charlotte Ava, a little sister to Theo. Charlotte was born on 9 February 2023.

2007

Year Representative: Alistair Haggerty
Tel: 07809 357351 Email: alistairjhaggerty@gmail.com

Thank you to all who responded to my request for updates; it was wonderful to hear from you and to find out a bit about what you have been doing over the last year.

During an historic week in September last year, which included the passing of Queen Elizabeth II, Warren Stables married Emma Bradley at the Merton Chapel in a service conducted by Simon Jones. As Liz Truss was Prime Minister at the time,

Warren has pointed out that he is the first former Mertonian to be married at Merton whilst a Mertonian is occupying Number 10. Given the fleeting nature of her residency in Downing Street, he might well be the first and last (at least for some time) person to have this distinction. Several of our year group attended the wedding, including **Jim Armshaw**, **Charlotte Raymonde-Parker**, **Kohi Gananandan** and **Will Kane**.

Warren and Emma Stables with Kohi Gananandan (second left) and Will Kane (far right)



In that same week in September, **Janina Dill** was awarded Recognition of Distinction and is now a Professor of US Foreign Policy, based at Nuffield College. Since completing her DPhil at Merton in 2012, Janina has moved less than a stone's throw from the college to the other side of Magdalen Bridge. She lives there with her husband, who is also an Oxford academic (albeit in Physics rather than Politics), and their three-year-old daughter.

It has been an exciting year for **Harry Beeson** who, together with his partner Claire, celebrated the arrival of their daughter, Sylvie, in October. Harry has been working as an agricultural policy advisor at the Australian Embassy in Paris and recently bought a family home in the nearby town of Compiègne.

In January, **Simon** and Nicole **Kerry** had their second daughter, Eloise Junli. As I write this, they have just returned from a six-week trip to Malaysia to introduce her to their extended family.

Congratulations are also due to **Vicki Ormerod** who, after getting married last year, began her post as a Consultant Anaesthetist in Gloucestershire this month. She is also due to have her first child in November, so it seems that next year will be every bit as busy as this one.



Aidan and Michael Haggerty

Sticking with the subject of babies, Rachael and I have continued to acquire experience of the joys and challenges of parenthood following the birth of Aidan Christopher Haggerty at the end of March. We took the boys to the Merton Garden Party in June. It was fantastic to catch up with some of our cohort and the event left a big impression on Michael, who recently turned three. On the way home, he excitedly announced that he wanted to go to 'Daddy's university' when he is older to study 'jumping'.

2008

Year Representative: Alice Salvage

Email: alice.salvage@gmail.com

2009

Year Representative: Stephanie Cadoux-Hudson

Email: scadouxhudson@gmail.com

Ryan Samaroo and Ariella Binik welcomed their son Daniel James Binik, who is taking his mother's good name. He was born in June 2023 in Toronto.



Max Kleiman-Weiner and Natasha Jaques welcomed Nathan Phillip Jaques Kleiman on 15 February 2023. This fall, the whole family is moving to Seattle where Max and Natasha are joining the faculty of the University of Washington. Max

continues to work at the intersection of cognitive science and artificial intelligence. After his time at Oxford, he finished a PhD at MIT, was a fellow at Harvard and founded two companies, Common Sense Machines and Diffeo (acquired by Salesforce). His most recent work explores computational features of social intelligence with the aim of building cooperative AI systems. He'd love to host any Mertonians who happen to come through the Pacific Northwest!



After many Covid delays and after testing the waters for a decade, **Anna Hoffmann** and **Lukas Wallrich** got married in September 2021. They met at Merton in a memorable politics tutorial. Anna read History & Politics and Lukas PPE. They live in London where Lukas lectures at Birkbeck (organisational psychology) and Anna practises as a barrister (commercial and climate law).

Finally, this year has brought a change of job for your year rep, Stephanie. I am now Head of Method Development at the CDMO Lonza but I am still holding up the fort living in Oxford and would be delighted to catch up with any Mertonians who happen to find themselves in the city of dreaming spires!

2010

Year Representative: Martin Schmidbaur (undergraduates)

Email: martin.schmidbaur@gmail.com

There is no graduate Year Representative for 2010. Please email the Development Office if you are interested in volunteering: development@merton.ox.ac.uk

Undergraduates

This year, I'm going to start off not with babies or engagements, but instead with those of us who have moved (back) to the other side of the pond since we graduated.

Wesley Wilson, working in New York City, and I just bumped into each other on the subway in Manhattan's Upper West Side in the early summer 2023 — a true 'small world' moment!



George, Owen, Laurie, Chas and Martin at Michael and Lucia's wedding in Menorca, Spain

Also on the Upper West Side is **Michael Geeson**, working in a chemistry lab after stints at MIT and Cambridge in the UK. While they're based in New York, Michael got married to his wife Lucia in Menorca, Spain earlier this year — in a beautiful setting and ceremony that had the attending Mertonians impressed with Michael's toasts in polished Spanish. See

what I did there, I snuck a wedding in the 'America' section.

That's not all from the land of the free: **Will Bennett** is breaking into Hollywood — a 'face for hire' in LA (or London), as he says. If you check out Will's professional actor profile on a site called Backstage, you'll read him saying: 'I have a BA in Philosophy, Master's in Physics, was a bond trader and a choral scholar. These experiences help me create rich and diverse characters, and I look forward to my next production.' Can't argue with that.

Danielle Ward (née King) wrote in from Fort Ruckler in Alabama, where her other half Alec has been stationed as an Apache instructor. Together with her daughter (just turned one) and their dog, they've been trying to do as much exploring in the U.S. of A. as possible. She is working in the (red hot) climate space, managing the environmental aspects of designing large construction projects like solar farms, for example.

OK, back to the UK. **Andrew O'Flaherty** wrote in to us that he moved to a sustainable credit fund, doing his bit for the environment and the planet as well. He and his partner are expecting a baby early in 2024. Congratulations on starting a family, and wishing you all the best for a healthy baby. Andrew has an eye on moving out of London into the countryside next year, and then possibly moving to France eventually, where his partner is from.

Cat Bucknall welcomed daughter Freya into the world last year — she'll be turning one by the time you read this. Her eldest, Lily (3), is excited to have a little sister. Cat and her family live in Cardiff, and she will be starting a new job as a Genetics Registrar when she goes back from maternity leave.

We'll stay with the Merton-medics-with-toddlers. **Ruth Mitchell** and her family are in Manchester, where she just bought a house (congratulations!) and is making her way through pediatric training while looking after a toddler of her own.

Staying with homeowners, **Emma and Dan Crowe** are busy renovating a house in anticipation of their second baby later this year. Congratulations to the Crowes!

Jonny Carver and his wife Nicola welcomed their second son, Fraser Carver, to this world in early 2023, and yours truly got to spend a day at Legoland Windsor with the Carvers and their two boys. It was a blast.

Laura Burnett is still in South London, still working in tech, obsessed with her cat, and doing her bit to welcome refugees in the country. Together with **Richard Hill**, she was particularly excited for **Sara Wehlin**'s hen do, despite the strict instructions of 'no fancy dress' which seemed out of character for anyone who remembers Sara's and Laura's competitive spirit around fancy dress at Merton BOPs. We hope to get a readout on the hen do and wedding next year.

We get to say congratulations to **George Lockett** and his fiancée Charlotte on their engagement in Vienna last Christmas – as well as a special shoutout to one of our most loyal *Postmaster* readers: George's mum. We hear George Lockett is loving every moment of wedding planning.

Chas Lake and his partner Sarah will have welcomed their first – a baby girl – by the time you read this, and are planning to get married next year. Chas wasn't sure whether I could be trusted with making jokes, so I'm just going to leave that be and say how thrilled we are for their family!

Lots to unpack in a fantastic update from **Emma Moyse**, who is nearing completion of her PhD (in marine biology) with a paper currently in peer review. She's spending her time 'out on various rocky shores counting snails (sounds odd, but it beats being stuck in an office imho)'. Going back to her 'token metalhead/goth' (her words, not mine) roots at Merton, she's been going to the German heavy metal festival Wacken (which we heard was very muddy this year). Aside from that, she's been burying herself in French literature and 'spending a silly amount of time attempting to learn French'. *Bonne chance!*

We'll end on an update from **Sara Wehlin** who is still in Brussels with son Theo (2) and her partner Ludovic. Sara left out that they'll have a wedding later this year (according to sources) but told of a visit from Laura and her husband back in February. With her family, Sara also took a trip to the Faroe Islands earlier this year, which she described as 'truly amazing' with the photos to prove it.



As ever, this update is such a joy to put together. If you're following along and haven't been in touch, please do drop me a note as I'd love to hear from you.

2011

Year Representative: Timothy Foot

Email: tim.foot@gmail.com

It was wonderful to hear from a number of 2011-ers this year. Every time that the due date for this report rolls round (which seems to get faster and faster – I blame turning 30), I am astounded at the variety of avenues that our cohort has chosen to pursue, right around the globe.

Among the globe-trotters is **John Dean**, who writes that he is leaving Singapore and moving to Seattle, USA. He is particularly looking forward to becoming reacquainted with the concept of seasons, after some six years on the Equator. **Kresho Vukovic** wrote in from Venice, where he is researching the relationship between land and water in

the longue durée. His career is headed fast upstream, with news that he has been awarded a Primus grant by Charles University in Prague to be principal investigator on a four-year project on ancient rivers, which he will start in January 2024. Finally, after two years working with the UK Trade Mission in Brussels, **Georges Rouillon** returns to London in the autumn, where he will continue to work for the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office.

On the world stage in quite a different form, **Mark van Loon** continues his sporting prowess on the croquet lawn, competing for England in the 2023 Association Croquet World Championships and making it through to the Bowl Knockout. The fact that the tournament was held in London (on this occasion) made it all the merrier, as fellow Mertonians were able to cheer him on from the sidelines (or, at least, provide silent and respectful support).

But perhaps most joyful were the updates about family developments. Just too late for last year's issue of *Postmaster*, **Rob Price** and **Jeanette Smith** announced their engagement in August 2022. Many congratulations to them both!

Tao Min shared the happy news that he and his wife have just welcomed a baby boy to their growing family, as a younger brother to their four-year-old daughter. Tao is now working for ByteDance (the parent company of TikTok) and recently enjoyed a trip back to Merton in July.

Two-fold congratulations to two of our cohort's multi-tasking women in academia. **Mary Boyle** had a busy start to the year: the arrival of Rosemary Elizabeth (Rosa) in January, and the publication of an edited volume, *International Medievalisms: From Nationalism to Activism*, in February. **Katee Woods** has been awarded a full scholarship by the Northern Bridge Consortium to pursue a PhD in Fine Art (Digital Media), having written the proposal during maternity leave with a newborn in arms!

Finally, if you will allow me a personal coda to this report, my own news is that Philip and I are now engaged and intend to be married in 2024. Needless to say, I am rather excited. I hope to see many of you over the next year but, until then, à bientôt!

2012

Year Representative: Stephanie Cadoux-Hudson

Email: scadouxhudson@gmail.com



Amanda Thomas and **Stephen Thatcher** (also 2012) had the joy of celebrating their wedding at Merton on 3 June. Plenty of Mertonians attended, including Amanda's brother **Edward Thomas** (2014). The 2012 cohort was well represented, with **Matt Raybould** as best man, and **Andrew Macarthur**, **Alistair Macaulay**, and **Alex Weate** as groomsmen, as well as **Liz** (née Milne) and **Phil Madgwick**. **Helen Craske**, **Isobel**

Fray, Tom Mattinson, Ellie Sanger, and Sophie Terrett. Richard Mathers (2011) was also there, and Bertie Beor-Roberts (2014) was photographer.



Julia Wang welcomed her second son Valentin born on 13 February this year, missing his own holiday by a mere 24 hours. Julia and her husband David have been teaching maths and Latin at the École Normale Supérieure for a number of years. They live, work and take the children (Felix their first son is two years older than Valentin) to daycare within a 500-metre radius!

2013

There is currently no Year Representative for 2013. Please contact development@merton.ox.ac.uk if you are interested.



Megan with her children at the Merton Society Garden Party, June 2023

Megan Engel is now (as of February 2023) an Assistant Professor of Biophysics at the University of Calgary in Canada. She is expecting her third baby in November.

2014

Year Representative: Sarah Bosworth

Tel: 07540 079711 Email: sarahlbosworth@gmail.com

This last year has found those of us who matriculated in 2014 spread ever-wider globally, as our time among the dreaming spires continues to fade. For a few who had called Merton home for the longest, their stays came to an end this year. **Eammon O'Keefe** finished his DPhil at Merton in late 2022, and is now at Queens' College at the other place as a Junior Research Fellow, living onsite with a view across the college's Old Court. He'll spend the next three years there in a position sponsored by the National Army Museum, allowing him to turn his thesis on British military music into a book. Meanwhile, **India Morris**

also left Merton after finishing her DPhil, having since got engaged to fellow Mertonian **Daniel Hughes**, bought a flat and completed her law conversion course.

For some of us, London remains a draw. **Adam Way** finds himself in the capital working as a management consultant specialising in pricing. **Bertie Beor-Roberts** has boomeranged back after a year away, now finishing his first year as a barrister (and often seeing familiar Mertonian faces as he leaves the office). His recent Merton-related highlights included visiting Christ Church to watch **Naomi Gardom** be ordained as deacon, as well as dusting off his camera to photograph a Mertonian wedding between **Amanda Thomas** and **Stephen Thatcher**. As for myself, I too am still working in London in public affairs, alongside Mertonian **Kuba Stawiski**. However, I decided to leave the daily hustle and bustle to move to Norwich this year with my partner where we've bought our first home together.

Beyond that though, our year have really begun to stretch their wings. **Sam Banks** has happily relocated to Edinburgh. **Sophie He** has found the confidence to start making meatspace friends. **Ilya Lapan** has moved to Portugal to take up a role with Revolut and **Henry Drummond** is starting a new role as an FWO senior postdoc at KU Leuven (his first book is forthcoming with OUP, in the New Oxford History of Music).

On more exotic shores, **Anna Schnupp** is currently experiencing typhoon season in Manila, where she is based for the next few months on a project for the WHO Western Pacific Regional Office. While the flooding, traffic, humidity and occasional earthquake have taken some getting used to, she is very happy for the new experience. **Marion Muller** has been in Dakar, Senegal with the UNHCR doing resettlement of vulnerable refugees from West and Central Africa to Europe, the USA and Canada. Her recent marriage provided a chance to reconnect with some fellow Mertonians at her wedding, alongside her 19-month-old son.

Mytro Oikonomou is now working as an economist at the International Monetary Fund in Washington, DC, travelling with work frequently to Kinshasa in the Democratic Republic of Congo where she tries to apply the real-life learnings from her Oxford DPhil. She also got married this year, and to a fellow Mertonian. Finally, **Arpita Sinha** is now based in India,

leading strategy at RTI International and working on energy efficiency, sanitation technologies and climate resilience, while establishing and growing the subsidiary in India. She and her husband (Akshay Verma, Oriel) welcomed their first son last year. They hope to bring him back to Merton next year, as Arpita is still yet to officially graduate from Merton!

This autumn many of us will return to Merton for our first Gaudy, a chance to reconnect with familiar faces and memories of our time among the dreaming spires.

2015

There is currently no Year Representative for 2015. Please contact development@merton.ox.ac.uk if you are interested.

Cuong Quang (MSc) has moved his family from Perth to Brisbane to start Octant AI, a software tool he invented to help megaprojects forecast cost and time schedules better.

Baruch Gilinsky has begun a DPhil in US History at LMH. His wife (Rabbi Yael Jaffe) has just received rabbinic ordination and will be starting work at the New North London Synagogue in September 2023.



'Coniferae': Kailin Sun's watercolour

Kailin Sun is doing a PhD in Botany at the Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich. Her husband **Felix Weitkaemper**

(DPhil in Mathematics, 2015) is a lecturer in Computer Science, also at LMU Munich. Kailin's artwork 'Coniferae' (an A2 watercolour) has reached the shortlist of the Young Botanical Artist Competition 2022/23 run by the Shirley Sherwood Collection at Kew Gardens (shirleysherwood.com/YoungBotanicalArtist), and Kailin has recently learnt that it will be exhibited at Kew Gardens from October 2023.

Take a look at her Instagram [@kailin_sun_botanical_artist](https://www.instagram.com/kailin_sun_botanical_artist)

2016

Year Representative: Henry Grub

Email: henrygrub@outlook.com

Jonathan Tot has been travelling: after receiving a Mitacs Globalink Research Award he spend three months in early 2023 at the Indian Institute of Technology, in Tirupati, Andhra Pradesh, working on perturbation theory of the orbits of Jupiter and Saturn with Prof P.C. Deshmukh. Good luck to Jonathan preparing the first paper from this visit later this year!



Charlotte Green and Anuja Jaiswal met up

Charlotte Green and **Anuja Jaiswal** have also been travelling – and have sent us a postcard photo from their reunion in Turin – four years since they last saw each other! Time has flown!

Andrew Doyle married in July 2022 – where else but at Merton Chapel of course! **Divya Sridhar** and **Edwin Lock** followed up their Merton wedding with an Indian ceremony in Bangalore, which I'm very pleased to report was followed by the birth of their son in September 2022 – I'm even more pleased to report they have named him Henry! Divya is currently working with Oxford Biomedica, whilst Edwin is a postdoc at Nuffield College.



Divya Sridhar and Edwin Lock's baby son, Henry, practises smiling for the camera!

In the music world, **Tom Fetherstonhaugh** started an appointment as Assistant Conductor at the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra in September 2022, and they have extended his appointment for the 2023/24 season. There are musical reasons to celebrate for **Athena Hawksley-Walker** as well, as her formed-whilst-at-Oxford indie-folk band 'Iris and Steel' released their debut EP in November 2022, and

George Ezra chose them for his curated line-up at 2023's Latitude Festival. Take a look at their Instagram @irisandsteel.

Andrew Frampton this year graduated from UCL with an MA in Library and Information Studies – where he scooped the Mary Piggott Prize, and his dissertation was awarded the E.T. Bryant Memorial Prize by the International Association of Music Libraries. I look forward to his appointment one day as the Bodley's Librarian...!

Laura Tárkányi reports she has now taken up professional daydreaming – and splits her time between Berlin and Budapest, the latter of which she is now a regular on the stand-up comedy circuit – having performed over 100 shows! Over the past year, she has been to two Red Hot Chili Peppers concerts, deleted Bumble after a month, and quit smoking 30 times – there's always next year Laura!

Abdi Ige capitalised on a moment of serendipity when he quit his job to pursue a startup dream in April 2023 – **Dafydd Foster Davies** had come to the same conclusion and they have started MeetMore.AI together, a product which helps to automate marketing for real estate. They are looking forward to what the future holds!



Henry Grub, Francesco Dernie and Lucienne Pullen on the House of Commons riverside terrace.

Finally, from April to July 2023 I was excitingly seconded from my PhD to the Parliamentary Office for Science and

Technology. It was great fun to spend some time in the corridors of power in the Palace of Westminster! Between spending time in the infamous bars and grandiose dining rooms, I managed to take **Francesco Dernie** and **Lucienne Pullen** on a tour – the two of them having completed their first year as junior doctors in the NHS.

2017

Year Representative: Adrian Burbie

Email: adrian.burbie@outlook.com

Another year, another update, as we hurtle forward yet further still, burdened by the troubling realisation that our matriculation was six years ago – and that even the medics are now finally let loose in an A&E department near you.

Cyara Buchuck Wilsenach managed to pass her national security vetting and get a job at the Department for the Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA) as a civil servant, after graduating from her MA in gender and international development at Sussex.

Meanwhile, **Lucy Gibbs** has been pursuing international development of a very different kind. She moves to Belgium in September to continue her operatic training, having successfully completed her master's at the Royal College of Music.

Wick Willett writes to report that he continues to do what he always did best: vex **Conor Ó Síocháin**. His latest wheeze is to pass out from Sandhurst and join the Irish Guards. Conor, meanwhile, continues to excel in his PhD at Yale.

Speaking of PhDs, **Samuel F Gérard** and **Céline Zheng-Gérard** write to share that they have successfully defended their DPhil theses this year – many congratulations to them. This comes shortly after they both tied the knot and had a baby boy, Elian, in 2021. Since then, they have been looking/applying for postdoc positions, and are now moving to Heidelberg: Sam will be starting a contract at the European Molecular Biology Laboratory; Céline at the University of Heidelberg.

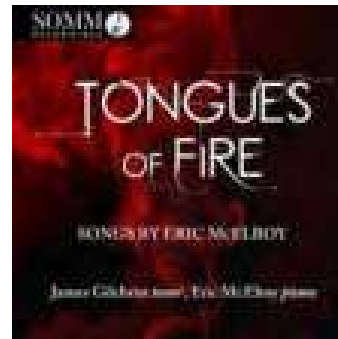


And, finally, another knot was tied recently: congratulations to **Beth McCullagh**, my college wife, who successfully committed bigamy and married her Oxford sweetheart, Dan Taylor, at a wedding attended by many familiar Merton faces. Who will be next, I wonder?

2018

There is currently no Year Representative for 2018. Please contact development@merton.ox.ac.uk if you are interested.

Eric McElroy, composer and pianist, informs us that in 2023 he released his debut CD, *Tongues of Fire*. This features Eric performing his own song-cycles with the English tenor James Gilchrist. The song-cycles set poetry by Alice Oswald, Robert Graves, W. S. Merwin, Grevel Lindop and Gregory Leadbetter.



Reviews have appeared in Opera Today, Music Web International, and BBC Music Magazine. The CD can be bought from Somm Recordings and is also available on all major streaming platforms.

2019

There is currently no Year Representative for 2019. Please contact development@merton.ox.ac.uk if you are interested.



After the degree ceremony for 2019 matriculands. From left: Thomas Heywood (2019; MCR Vice-President, 2020–21), Georgia Acton (2015; MCR Welfare Rep, 2021–22), Mathias Jackermaier (2020), Francesca Lovell-Read (2015; MCR President, 2021–22), Charles Tolkien-Gillett, Antonia Anstatt (2019; MCR Social, 2020–22) and Lucas Didrik Haugeberg (2019; MCR President, 2020–21)

Charles Tolkien-Gillett reports that a number of the 2019 graduate matriculands were reunited for a degree ceremony on 13 May. Though the event had been postponed because of the post-2020 ceremony backlog, he says: 'The occasion provided a lovely opportunity to revisit the College and the day panned out perfectly, not least due to the College's degree ceremonies team. Most fortunately of all, the Vice-Chancellor and former Warden were present to preside over the ceremony, and we were joined afterwards by fellow MCR committee members.'

2020

There is currently no Year Representative for 2020. Please contact development@merton.ox.ac.uk if you are interested.

2021

There is currently no Year Representative for 2021. Please contact development@merton.ox.ac.uk if you are interested.

In Memoriam



Deaths Notified

We have sadly been made aware of the following deaths:

Emeritus Fellow David Witt*	1953 Roy Peacock	1968 Peter Bibby*
Honorary Fellow Peter Cooke* Francis Finlay	1954 Pablo Eisenberg* Peter Johnson* David King Michael (Donald) Rines	1969 Leonard Field* 1970 Leonard Lipman 1971 Ronald Graham*
Former Staff Member David Giles	1955 Michael Cooke* Andrzej Maczek	1972 Bernard Fogarty*
1943 Peter Gravenall	1957 Patrick Arning* George Drake* Geoffrey Herbert Bernard Jubb Roger Pickering	1974 Philip Endean 1975 Nicholas Hitchon Michael Nicholas
1944 Leonard Allinson* Michael Woods*	1949 Robert Andrew Geoffrey Clarke Alastair Porter* Stanley Richardson*	1978 Yock Lin Tan 1982 Sara Hall
1948 Michael Yates	1950 Michael Kauffmann* Derek Malcolm Joseph Wilson	1991 Nicholas Leigh-Hunt Christian Smethurst
1950 Michael Kauffmann* Derek Malcolm Joseph Wilson	1953 Ken 'DK' Jones* Robin Lenman*	2008 James Moxness
1951 Joseph 'Jim' Murray		
1952 Roger Medill*		

* denotes full obituary

Emeritus Fellow



David Witt sadly passed away on 3 October 2022 after a short illness. He was 90 years old.

David was a member of Magdalen from the early 1950s where he first studied Classics, and then returned later to study Engineering Science. He went on to teach Engineering at the University, at Merton College (from 1959) as Tutor in Engineering and at the Engineering Department, until he retired in 1999.

His passion was teaching practical engineering, and he instigated several projects that lasted for many years – for example, building radios from scratch, and supervising groups of students designing and building pedal boats that were often seen on the Thames in the 1980s and 90s. He was also instrumental in awarding MEng status to the Engineering Science degree at Oxford, which included extending it to a four-year course with more project work.

As well as tutoring at Merton he was Sub-Warden of the College from 1980 to 1982 and played an active role in College life.

After David retired, he continued with his love of many subjects, including helping to run the alumni association the Society of Oxford University Engineers, and spending considerable amounts of time travelling the length and breadth of the country doing family history research. David and his late wife Roseanne were frequent attendees at College events, especially the much looked-forward-to Christmas parties.

His family, three daughters (Catherine, Sarah and Emma), and three granddaughters (Tamsin, Natasha and Emily) were very grateful for the beautiful funeral service that Merton hosted in late October and the support of College Chaplain Simon Jones.

By his daughter, Catherine Witt

Honorary Fellow



(William) Peter Cooke, Fellow of Merton College, passed away peacefully in his sleep on 5 August 2022, at the age of 90.

Brought up in his beloved Buckinghamshire, with a spell in Colwyn Bay during the war, Peter initially went to the Royal Grammar School in High Wycombe before joining Kingswood School in 1945. After his schooling, he completed National Service and a gap year in France before he joined Merton as an undergraduate in 1952. 'Returning to academic work was a shock and a great effort after two years without touching anything resembling a textbook,' he explained in his memoirs.

The Warden was Geoffrey Mure and there were just over 200 undergraduates. Time was spent playing hockey, rugby and cricket, debating in the Fanatics with evenings in the College bar as well as the Eastgate Hotel, punctuated by occasional golf at Frilford Heath, with golf clubs precariously balanced as he rode pillion on his friend William Simpson's motorcycle. Brought up a Methodist, he gradually moved towards Anglicanism and attended Christ Church Cathedral on a regular basis, later opting to be confirmed. Peter, however, said he had 'a rather simplistic faith'. As C S Lewis put it, 'I believe in God as I believe

in the sun, because without it I can't see anything else.'

Having spent time in Mob Quad and Stubbins, in his third year he moved into digs in Bardwell Road, sharing the top floor with three friends from Worcester College. That year he met a girl studying History at Lady Margaret Hall – Maureen Haslam-Fox. They met at 'The Trout' pub at a 21st birthday party: he caught up with her in the library the next day and they were inseparable thereafter. Days were spent in the Radcliffe Camera with breaks for coffee in the Tackley.

Thinking about life after university, Peter was drawn to the Bank of England and its potential for international work. Sir George Bolton, one of the interviewing directors, said to him, 'Young man, remember when you join the Bank you take a vow of poverty (relatively speaking), chastity (financially speaking) and anonymity.' The first was true, the second he hoped he observed, but in the third he was not always successful.

In September 1955 he joined the Bank of England on a salary of £510 a year and Maureen started work at ICI. Peter spent 33 years at the Bank of England, serving as Head of Banking Supervision from 1979 to 1986, and retiring as Associate Director (a member of the Court of the Bank) in 1988. From 1979 to 1988, Peter Cooke was chairman of the so-called Cooke Committee at the Bank for International Settlements in Basel, Switzerland, more formally known as the Basel Committee on Banking Supervision. The Committee was responsible for the formulation and introduction of the first risk-weighted capital rules for major international banks.

One of his additional roles was Chairman (and subsequently President) of the Committee of the Merton Society during the 1980s. His later appointment as Honorary Fellow in 1997, he said in his memoirs, 'gave me more pleasure than any gong'. Another feature of his plural life was membership (later serving as Deputy Chairman) of the Council of the Royal Institute of International Affairs (Chatham House). He also had an enduring relationship with the Salzburg Seminar (now the Salzburg Global Seminar). Peter was appointed CBE in the 1997 Birthday Honours List for services to Housing, having worked with Church Army Housing Association, the Church Housing Trust and then the Board of the Housing

Corporation from the 1970s to the 1990s, finally serving as Chairman of the latter.

Following his retirement from the Bank in 1988, Peter was, for a decade, Chairman of the Global Regulatory Advisory Practice of PricewaterhouseCoopers in London. He was also an advisor and non-executive director to a range of banks and other financial organisations and spent many a happy year travelling the world.

Peter and Maureen raised four children – Nicholas, Caroline, Andrew and Stephanie. They were together for 41 years until Maureen's death in 1999. He remarried at 75 years young to Julia Bain, who survives him. Peter was a wonderful father, husband and friend to many. He is sorely missed by his family, including ten grandchildren and one great-grandchild, spread across the UK, Spain and Australia.

By his daughter, Stephanie Hunter

1944



Sir (Walter) Leonard Allinson KCVO, CMG

Leonard Allinson died on 28 December 2022, aged 96, in Pangbourne, Berkshire. Born in London, he went up to Oxford in 1944 from Friern Barnet Grammar School to read History at Merton. He graduated with a first class degree, going on to join the Civil Service in the Ministry of Fuel & Power, then Education, before transferring to the Commonwealth Office, later the FCO, where he had a successful career in the diplomatic service serving in Pakistan, India, Kenya (twice), Zambia, where he was heavily involved

in the 1979 Commonwealth Conference and the state visit of Queen Elizabeth II, with his last post being as British High Commissioner to Kenya.



Leonard with Queen Elizabeth II, in Lusaka, Zambia, 1979

He remembered his time at Merton with gratitude and fondness for the many friends, the education and opportunities it gave him. He shared many a good story over the years: being served disgusting whale meat, about the freezing cold winter of 1946–47, searching for loose coal near the railway lines, the Warden requesting him to play his bagpipes to get rid of some undesirables outside the College, and making up quotes from a fictitious historian in his finals. He rowed for the College, and was a keen Oxford University Rover Scout, making lifelong friends with fellow Oxford scouts and those from abroad met through International scout camps, including the 1947 Peace Jamboree in France.

His Merton friends included John Owens, who he had also been at school with, Michael Hinton, and Bill Gilmer from the USA. Mike's son David Hinton, Paul Engeham (1968), and Jonathan Madden (1971) attended Dad's funeral, as did Damian Pethica (1971) virtually from New Zealand.

Leonard married Margaret (Peggy) Watts in 1951. They had three daughters Katharine Syfret, Margaret Harding and Felicity Pethica (plus nine grandchildren and five great-grandchildren), who arranged for them to celebrate their Golden Wedding anniversary with friends and family with a splendid lunch at Merton College in 2001.

They retired to live in West Cornwall where, as well as being a school governor and treasurer to the parish council, Leonard enjoyed 'rough gardening' and planted hundreds of trees and shrubs including a Lime Walk. A nod, as I recall, to one that used to be at Merton College. They loved their life in Cornwall but eventually moved closer to their children.

Dad last visited Merton to attend Evensong in the winter of 2019 in a visit arranged by Paul Engeham which was a wonderful trip down memory lane and a chance to engage with some more recent students.

By his daughters



(George) Michael Woods, 1926–2022.

Michael Woods (Mike) was born in Preston, Lancashire in 1926. His family moved to the Oldham area in the early 1930s, where he attended Hulme Grammar School with his brother Peter. In 1943, Michael left school to join the British Army. The Second World War was in full swing and he was just 17 years old.

Michael was first sent to Wales to do basic training in surveying and cartography. He then passed the Oxford entrance exam and the following autumn went up to Merton College, joining the Officer Cadet Training Unit (OCTU). At Oxford, Michael spent his mornings studying maths, physics and engineering and his afternoons training in warfare with the other officer cadets.

Michael thoroughly enjoyed Oxford life, especially having his own room, where each day someone would clean up,

make his bed and bring him a bowl of hot water for shaving. He played football, drank in the bars, cycled round the city, dressed in gowns for the formal dinners complete with Latin grace, messed about in boats, and gobbled crumpets and cakes in the High Street tea shops. A very different existence from life in wartime Oldham.

But his student life soon came to an end and in 1946, now a fully fledged officer in the Royal Artillery, he sailed across the Channel to France as part of the British Army of Occupation – a peacekeeping force designed to restore order in Europe after six years of brutal war. He boarded a train bound for Vienna, where the British officers were housed in a luxury hotel, and was shocked to find that, despite the Austrians having officially lost the war, their food was far better than the English war rations he'd been used to for the past few years. He fondly recalled the large slabs of chocolate cake crowned with luscious peaches and the deliciously strong coffee.

After a short spell in Vienna, the next stop was a barracks in Treviso in northern Italy, built by Mussolini, where Michael spent several months as assistant to the Adjutant. One of his jobs was to make sure the Officers' Mess was stocked up with fine wines, whisky, gorgonzola, mozzarella and prosciutto. When he informed the Adjutant that they were overspending and needed to cut back, the Adjutant replied: 'Increase the budget – our men will not go without!'

Michael has always been a charming man, and at 20 years old he was very popular with the Italian girls who tried to entice him with the promise of dance halls and romantic outings to Venice. And yes, the story about him drinking too much, throwing up in the Grand Canal and losing his beret is true. Michael had his own army motorbike and each day would ride from Mestre along the Venice causeway to check the soldiers were at their posts. He tells tales of exchanging cigarette rations for chocolate underneath the bridges in Venice – clearly a dangerous mission!

After his adventures in Italy, Michael's unit sailed south from Trieste across the Mediterranean and landed in Port Said in Egypt. He remembers seeing huge ships sailing through the Suez Canal. A short time later the soldiers were transferred to Palestine in what is now the Gaza Strip.

By this time Michael had been promoted to lieutenant, but with the luxuries of Venice and Treviso now a fading memory, he drove tanks across the sand dunes and slept in the desert in a large canvas tent shared with other soldiers. Despite the hardships of desert life, Michael, being an officer, still had people making his bed and bringing him hot water for shaving. He recalled spending his 21st birthday celebrating in the NAAFI and eating bacon and eggs in the desert. He also fondly talked about a trip to the ancient city of Petra in Jordan, now a World Heritage site, where instead of wandering round the fabulous rock-cut ruins, he accepted the invitation of a local Arab to join him in his tent for coffee and cake.

The British Army left Palestine in mid-1948 and Lieutenant Woods was demobbed from the army after five years of service. He decided to train to become a teacher at Chester College where he captained the football team and was a regular visitor to the Kardomah Coffee Shop in Eastgate for afternoon tea and crumpets. In 1950 he graduated, proposed to his sweetheart Nancy, and settled down in Delph, where he spent the rest of his life.

Michael had a successful career in education, teaching at several schools, including Durmston Secondary School, Delph Primary and Denshaw Primary. He was the headmaster at Friezland Primary for 17 years until retirement in 1986. As a keen sportsman, he enjoyed playing football and cricket with the lads right up to age 60. His knowledge of warfare, engineering and physics coupled with a creative mind kept the class entertained during maths lessons, showing them how to besiege a medieval city using the correct angle of elevation and weight of missile. And why a parrot was the perfect example of a cantilever.

Alongside sport, Michael also loved music and was a talented 'play by ear' pianist. He could often be heard whistling and singing with a smile on his face. His mind was quick and agile — he loved puns and clever jokes, wrote witty poems and parodies and tackled the *Telegraph* crossword each evening. He had a happy, kind-hearted, warm and generous nature and always looked on the bright side of life. Over the years, he taught more than a thousand children, many of whom still remember him fondly, saying he was always fair and wanted everyone to do well.

Michael enjoyed a long retirement — gardening and relaxing with friends, visiting his daughter Stella in Australia, and spending time with his son Simon, daughter-in-law Jill and grandchildren, Isabella and Alex.

His final trip to Merton was in 2017 for his 91st birthday where he and his wife and daughter were treated to a tour of the College dining room and grounds. He excitedly pointed out his old room and reminisced about days gone by. Being that daughter, one of my happiest memories is seeing my father's face light up as we entered the College and strolled round the gardens. Followed by an even bigger smile when we had afternoon tea on a river boat trip. A proud Mertonian to the end.

Michael passed away at the grand old age of 96 on 6 December 2022. He will be greatly missed by all who knew him.

By his daughter, Stella Woods

1949



Alastair Robert Wilson Porter, CBE, 1928–2023.

Alastair Porter died peacefully on 12 July 2023, after a brief illness, aged 94.

'Jock', as he was known as a student, read Law, condensing his degree into two years, as many did after military service, and played football for the University. He met his wife-to-be, Jennifer, at Oxford, where she studied history at St Hilda's. After being called to the Bar in 1952, and marrying in 1954, Alastair joined the Colonial Service, and set sail to Northern

Rhodesia, to take up a position as a Resident Magistrate. There, the couple enjoyed 11 happy years, and had three children, all of whom let the family down some years later by studying at Cambridge! Alastair ended his time in Africa as Zambia's Permanent Secretary to the Ministry of Justice.

Returning to the UK in 1965, Alastair was appointed as Secretary and Registrar of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons, a role he held until retirement in 1991, and during which time he was appointed CBE for services to the veterinary profession. After retirement, Alastair was President of Blue Cross pet charity until 2005, and he remained an active member of the Methodist Church until his death.

By his son, Angus Porter



Dr **Stanley Robert Richardson**, 10 July 1928 – 4 November 2022.

Stanley Richardson was born in Dyserth, near Prestatyn in North Wales, in 1928. He was educated at Ruthin School before arriving at Merton College to read Medicine in 1949, having first completed his National Service. While at Merton, he quickly established himself as an athlete, breaking the freshman's record for the 100-yard sprint in his first term. He went on to run for the Achilles Club and was awarded his Blue in 1953, competing in teams with Roger Bannister, Chris Chataway and Chris Brasher. He also played rugby for the OU Greyhounds. Both sports continued to be integral to his life as a young man and as an interested and enthusiastic observer in his later years.

Following completion of his preliminary studies and exams at

Merton he joined St Mary's Hospital Medical School to begin his clinical studies, qualifying in 1956. He spent a further five years completing his junior hospital appointments in London and arrived in Bideford, North Devon in 1961 to do three months' locum in general practice – and stayed there for rest of his life. He went on to combine his work as a GP with work in ENT and obstetrics, simultaneously interweaving his love of the many outdoor activities and sports available to him living by the sea.

He married his wife Annette in 1962 and had two children, Louise and Tim. As well as being a great lover of literature, music, philately and a good joke over a pint of beer, he remained a devoted and loyal Mertonian throughout his long life.

By his daughter, Louise Fearon

1950



C M (Michael) Kauffmann, 5 February 1931 – 30 June 2023

My father's route to Merton was a roundabout one. He was born in 1931 in Frankfurt, where his father worked as an art auctioneer. The family was Jewish, and in March 1938 Michael was sent to England to stay with relatives who had arrived the previous year and opened a factory in Lancashire. His parents soon followed, and the family became proud British citizens. He went to school first in Burnley and then in Clitheroe before moving to St Paul's School.

After National Service Michael arrived at Merton in 1950 to read Modern History. At Oxford he discovered four things. The first was a group of friends including Taddy Effendowicz,

John Garrod, Alan Brownjohn and Donald Matthew. The second was Dorothea Hill, who was studying Lit Hum at LMH: they were married in 1954. She shared his background, though he liked to point out that his Berlin in-laws were much posher than his own family. They had two sons, Francis and Martin.

The third discovery was the Socialist Club – as distinct from the Communist Club and the Labour Club, though some joint meetings were held. The meetings focused on post-war international concerns: rearmament/disarmament, the Soviet Union and eastern Europe, China and Korea. There were also discussion groups, Sunday tea parties, a journal called *Oxford Left* (edited by Alan Brownjohn), book sales, gramophone recitals, a jazz club, and socials at the Arlosh Hall in Manchester College.

The senior treasurer of the Socialist Club was the medieval historian Beryl Smalley, and the Middle Ages were Michael's fourth discovery at Oxford. Meanwhile he was developing his art historical interests, both within the curriculum (he took the Italian Renaissance special subject) and beyond it (attending classes given by two refugee scholars, William Cohn on Chinese art and Otto Pächt on medieval illuminated manuscripts). In the Easter vacation of 1953 he went on the first historians' reading party, initiated by Roger Highfield and held at the Salcombe Hotel in Devon.

Merton also provided a moral education. Michael lived at one point in Fellows' Quad, on the same staircase as J R R Tolkien. Each morning they would race to the single bathroom on the staircase. On one such occasion Michael noticed that the Professor's false teeth had fallen out of his dressing-gown pocket. There arose a dilemma: should the undergraduate a) stop to pick up the Professor's teeth; b) retreat to his own room; or c) seize the advantage, rush past the Professor as he bent down to retrieve the teeth, and reach the bathroom first ...

On graduating Michael left to pursue his doctoral studies at the Warburg Institute in London. Rather than teaching in a university, or following his father into the art trade, he set out to become a museum curator. His first job was at the City Art Gallery in Manchester; but soon he moved to

the Victoria & Albert Museum as curator of paintings (and subsequently Keeper of the Department of Prints, Drawings, Paintings and Photographs) while continuing to publish on Romanesque manuscripts. Somewhat to his surprise in 1985 he was appointed Director of the Courtauld Institute, a new challenge which involved moving the Institute from the Robert Adam house (which had been Samuel Courtauld's own) in Portman Square to Somerset House in The Strand.

In retirement Michael nursed Dorothy until her death in 2009 and went on writing and teaching until well into his eighties. His packed funeral ended with the strains of 'Please Don't Talk About Me When I'm Gone' by the Mills Brothers, whose trumpeting Michael had always imitated while doing the washing-up.

By his son, Martin Kauffmann

1952



Roger Mount Alexander Medill, 6 January 1927 – 24 May 2023.

Roger was a role model, a teacher, a leader, who embodied so much of what has made England and English values so envied around the world over the centuries.

The son of a missionary, Roger was born in Johannesburg, South Africa, appropriately (given his love of Shakespeare) on Twelfth Night: 6 January 1927.

He attended Haileybury before duty called and he joined the Royal Navy during the last year of the Second World War.

After a stint at Ashfold prep school, he went up to Oxford, where he entered (in his own words) 'a state of bliss'.

At Merton, Roger's love of all things beautiful – the arts, the classics and architecture – were all nurtured and flourished. He was very much involved in College life, from co-organising the Merton Ball with Patrick Wright, to singing with the choir and, a keen squash player, was awarded his squirrel. But above all, it was at Merton that teaching his passion for literature and for the English language became his life's purpose.

After going down from Oxford, he was English master at Shrewsbury and housemaster at King's School, Canterbury, before being appointed headmaster at Rendcomb College in Gloucestershire, which he led from 1971 to 1987. During his tenure, pupil numbers grew from 170 to 237. He taught English to O and A level. Roger implemented with great gusto the plan to go co-educational in the sixth form.

Roger was one of the world's natural gentlemen, providing the right image of the school in all circles. This enabled him to raise new resources, whether it be equipment, finance, publicity or goodwill.

What kept Roger so young was his unrelenting enthusiasm for all aspects of school life, from the formality of Founder's Day to the politics of the General Meeting. Although it was a small school, Roger was proud of its reputation of 'punching above its weight', with a strong representation of old boys and girls at Cambridge and his beloved Oxford.

Rendcomb has also always been a practical school with emphasis on non-academic as well as academic pursuits. Roger personified this with his enthusiastic sponsorship of rugby, cricket, hockey, tennis and squash alongside other activities such as theatre, the debating society, bridge, golf and, latterly, computers.

Roger saw the world through a filter of all things beautiful in general, and language, literature, music, art, poetry and nature in particular. Not a day would pass without his reflecting upon what was being discussed with a classical quotation or allusion, normally from Shakespeare.

Roger's legacy, after spending 96 years on this earth, leaves its mark. The lessons he learned about life and the things he loved, he passed on every day. It was clear at his funeral that this legacy reaches far beyond his immediate family to all those whom he taught or came to know.

During his last days, he was asked by his son if he would prefer to be known as an Oxford man – or a Merton man.

His response: 'Am I allowed both? If not, Merton comes first.'

Oliver Medill

1954



Pablo Eisenberg, 1932 – 2022

Pablo Eisenberg, who died on 18 October 2022 in Rockville, Maryland, at the age of 90, was a distinguished and influential figure in US philanthropy, with a lifelong dedication to improving the lot of disadvantaged people and communities. He spent two years at Merton in 1954–58, studying for a BLitt in Social Studies.

He was born in Paris in 1932 into a musical family; his father Maurice was a distinguished cellist, and his godfather, a close friend of his father's, was the great Spanish cellist Pablo Casals. The family moved to the United States in 1939, just before the German invasion of France, and Pablo grew up in New Jersey. He was educated at Princeton and then at Merton.

As a young man he was an outstanding tennis player. In 1953

he won a gold medal at the Maccabiah Games in Israel. At Oxford he was a leading member of the University team, and he played five times at Wimbledon during the 1950s. Together with another Oxford-based American, John Ager, he reached the quarter-final of the men's doubles in 1955.

After leaving Oxford he served for two years in the US Army before joining the US Information Service, serving in Senegal. He then worked for two years as programme director for Operation Crossroads Africa, a progenitor of the Peace Corps.

After returning to the United States he became active in the non-profit sector, serving as deputy director of field operations for the National Urban Coalition, before being appointed executive director of a Washington-based charity, the Centre for Community Change; he held that post from 1975 to 1998.

During this period, and in the years following his retirement from Community Change, Eisenberg was a tireless and persuasive advocate for the role of philanthropy in tackling social problems. He urged foundations, charities and individual donors to be more socially responsible, transparent, accountable and equitable in deciding who to support.

He set up a non-profit consultancy to provide technical help to grass-roots neighbourhood organisations seeking philanthropic assistance. He joined with other philanthropists in establishing the National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy, a watchdog group. In 2004, his speeches and articles were published in the book *Challenges for Nonprofits and Philanthropy: The Courage to Change*.

Among many tributes to Eisenberg after his death was one from William Josephson, who had run the Charities Bureau in the New York State Department of Law. Josephson told the *New York Times* that Pablo Eisenberg 'was a stalwart defender of civil rights across the board. He nurtured civil rights and poverty leaders and provided homes for fragile organisations.' A former colleague said: 'He wanted to make change in the world; he had a passion for improving the lives of everyday people.'

Pablo's wife of 62 years, Helen (Ciernak) Eisenberg, died earlier in 2022. The couple had one daughter, Marina, who

survives them.

Sir Geoffrey Owen



Peter George Johnson died at home on 13 May 2023, aged 90.

Peter Johnson was born in 1932 in Silverdale, a mining village in Staffordshire, where his father was a local GP. He was educated locally, and went up to Oxford to join Merton College. From Oxford he went on to St Thomas' Hospital Medical School and graduated MA, BM BCh in 1957.

After graduation he entered National Service and spent much of the next two years in Germany, as Medical Officer to 29 Field Artillery Company. This period left him with a keen interest in German history, language and culture. The military aspect also had an effect, and in later years he was never seen in a professional setting unless smartly turned out and with newly polished shoes.

Drawn to surgery, he gained FRCS England in 1967 and soon began training in orthopaedic surgery on the St Thomas's rotation. This led to his coming across an orthopaedic ward sister, Ann Williams, whom he married in her home town, Dolgellau, in 1973. By then, Peter had embarked upon a year's attachment to the Albert Einstein Hospital in the Bronx, New York, where Ann joined him. At the end of the year, they returned to London for Peter to complete his training. Over the next year or so, he published work on the management of spinal injuries, the management of the critically ill and, jointly, an account of fractures of the spine. In 1977 he was appointed Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon to Frimley Park Hospital, Surrey.

Although appointed as a general orthopaedic surgeon, Peter always had a special interest in knee surgery and attended training fellowships in Toronto and elsewhere. He was an early advocate of knee arthroscopy and was intrigued by adolescent knee pain and the mechanics of the patella-femoral joint.

Retiring from Frimley in 1997, Peter volunteered in his local community by working in the Oxfam Book Shop and as a hospital driver. With Ann, he supported Guide Dogs for the Blind, with annual charity events. He became a guide at the Hunterian Museum at the Royal College of Surgeons. He recalled his time at Merton College with pleasure and gave a donation to support scholars in medicine for a decade as well as contributing to the College support fund.

For leisure, Peter was an avid reader. He resumed piano lessons after a gap of almost 50 years, achieving Grade V, and enjoyed painting, producing work of a high standard. Peter and Ann split their time between homes in Farnham and the house they maintained in Dolgellau; Peter was a member of art societies in both areas.

Acknowledging his great affection for Wales, Peter spent time learning about Welsh culture, and made a great attempt to become proficient in the language.

In the last few years Peter's physical health declined and he became less mobile and more frail. He died peacefully in his bedroom in Farnham in May, and was buried near his own and Ann's parents in Dolgellau after a bilingual service in the chapel in which they had been married, 50 years earlier.

David Dempster

1955



(William) Michael Cooke passed away peacefully at home on 25 March 2022, aged 84.

My father was born on 16 June 1937 in Derby City Hospital, where his father, Gordon, became the youngest Medical Superintendent. His mother, Dorothy, obtained the rare distinction of qualifying as both an anaesthetist and a dentist. During the war he was sent to Roxburghshire to avoid the bombing. As the war progressed Michael was sent to stay closer to Derby, in a farm just outside the city. It was during the war that his younger sister Lynda was born. After the war the family lived in the grounds of the city hospital.

Michael first attended Foremark Hall, before later boarding at Kingswood School in Bath. He arrived at Merton in 1955, where his cousin (Peter Cooke, 1952) had been before him. He read Animal Physiology, and represented the College in tennis. His time at Oxford was a very happy one. He then moved to London, where he qualified in 1962 in general medicine at St Mary's Hospital Medical School with a Harmsworth Scholarship. He was proud to have served as the last 'surgical dresser' as a student to Sir Arthur Dickson Wright. He passed his FRCS exam in 1966. He held various positions including house surgeon at the Radcliffe Infirmary, Oxford, with Mr A S Till, surgical registrar at St Charles' Hospital W10 with Mr J I Burn, and senior registrar at the Hammersmith with Professor R B Welbourn. It was during his time in London that his first children, Emma and Helen, were born to his first wife Katherine.

He married my mother, Helen, in 1974, and in 1975 he

accepted a position at Middlesbrough General Hospital as a consultant surgeon in gastrointestinal surgery. It was here that his other children, Sarah and I, were born. Here he created the first endoscopy unit in the town, initially mainly from charitable sources, ran a busy gastric clinic and, following the gradual demise of surgery for peptic ulcer, developed a unit specialising in oesophageal cancer, although he remained a general surgeon of the old school to the end. He was instrumental in appointing the first medical gastroenterologists to the hospital. He was an Honorary Associate Clinical Lecturer at Newcastle University, Honorary Clinical Tutor to Charing Cross and Westminster Medical School, University of London and Honorary Tutor, Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry, University of Dundee.

He had a strong personality but beneath the carapace of a brisk and somewhat stern attitude that brooked no nonsense was a cheerful man with a gentle sense of humour, whose loyalty to his long-standing nursing staff was returned in spades. His strong work ethic and sense of duty always extended to a ward round on Christmas morning. In 1995 he moved from the old Middlesbrough General to the South Cleveland Hospital, and ended his career as Chief of Service of the Division of Surgery.

In 1982 my parents bought a small cottage under the Cleveland Hills, and built it into Parklands, which was to be the family home for 40 years. Over the years many animals were added: ponies, donkeys, goats, sheep, chickens, cats and dogs. My father was a keen Derby County fan. His other passion was the sheep, as well as his two Border Collies, Tess and Meg. He travelled extensively with Mum to Antarctica, China and Russia among other places. He enjoyed the rest of his years with his children and seven grandchildren, watching sport and drinking his favourite Black Sheep beer.

By his son, Richard Cooke (Pembroke, 1997)

1957



(Edward) Patrick Arning died on 24 June 2023, aged 86.

Patrick Arning was born in Manchester on 2 March 1937, the son of Charles Arning, a British diplomat, and Sheila (Blake) Arning, a schoolteacher. Patrick spent his first years with his parents in South America, during the war, and returned to be educated at Gilling, the prep school for Ampleforth College, the Catholic boarding school in Yorkshire which he then attended until he was 18. He excelled at music and his academic studies, as well as 'beagling'. He was thrilled to win a scholarship to Merton. He once told his son that hearing the news was 'amongst my happiest memories'. (His father had attended Queen's College, Oxford, and his mother was among those women who were (newly) awarded 'degrees' in 1921/22.)

After university and military service in Cyprus, he pursued his legal studies as an articled clerk and on qualification as a solicitor became busy with his legal career in the City of London. He worked for 20 years at Magic Circle firm Clifford Chance specialising in commercial conveyancing, ending his tenure there as a Senior Associate. He later worked in a freelance capacity where he was looked upon as somewhat of a sage by his younger colleagues due to his immense technical knowledge and his easy, open demeanour.

Patrick was a committed walker. He had spent his early years in the Lake District so, as a father, made sure that it became a 'go to' place for walking for his family. His father was a diplomatic envoy to the United States in the 1960s, and while visiting him Patrick climbed in the Grand Teton

Range of mountains in Wyoming. He had also climbed in the Dolomites and in Switzerland. Over the years we spent summers walking in the Alps. When he moved to France after his retirement, he was very excited at the prospect of exploring another terrain: the Pyrenees.

What most engrossed Patrick, however, was his love of music. As a child he spent much of his life in a musical environment. He took music lessons at Gilling, and later when he transferred to the senior school at Ampleforth he played the piano and then the viola in the school orchestra. During his teenage years he spent many school holidays in the Lake District with his aunt, Roona, who was married to the son of famous composer Sir Arthur Somervell and that house was full of music. Patrick was an accomplished pianist devoted to his Bechstein piano in France and his Steinway in London. He played everything from Schumann to Scarlatti, experimented with jazz and Brazilian music and was very knowledgeable about composition. He relished musical evenings with friends, played chamber music, especially with Rachael his daughter and accompanying his wife Sondra who sang *lieder*. He was a keen concert goer; to the BBC Proms, Glyndebourne, and particularly to his beloved Wigmore Hall. He was attending a concert of Scarlatti sonatas there in June when, during the interval, he collapsed.

Patrick never forgot his attachment to Merton and legacy there. He was an attender of gaudies and was volubly proud to have attended what he considered to be (without any bias!) 'by far the best Oxford college'. He treasured his classical education and it lived on in his adult life. He belonged to and attended the Horatian Society. He said his favourite texts were Homer's *Odyssey* and *Iliad*, Herodotus' *History*, Euripides' play *The Bacchae*, Plato's dialogues *The Symposium* and *The Republic*, Lucretius' philosophical poem *De Rerum Natura*, Catullus' shorter poems, Tacitus' *Histories*, *Annals* and Juvenal's *Satires*. Being a lover of contemporary literature, he also read novels like Pat Barker's *Iliad* reimagining, *The Silence of the Girls*.

Patrick is survived by his wife Sondra, son Christopher, daughter Rachael and grandson Milo.

By his son, Christopher Arning

George Albert Drake died peacefully at home on 15 October 2022 at the age of 88.

Merton College Charitable Corporation (MC3), the College's principal organisation of alumni in North America, mourns the passing of Professor George Drake late last year.

Professor Drake played an important role in the formation of MC3 following its establishment in 1994, including serving on its Board of Directors, where he lent wisdom, experience and credibility as a long-time higher education leader. A standout student athlete at Grinnell College in Iowa, where he would later serve as president, Drake won a Fulbright Scholarship in Paris followed quickly by a Rhodes Scholarship which he held at Merton from 1957 to 1959.

On returning to the United States, Drake earned a degree in seminary and a doctorate in Church History at the University of Chicago. Following his tenure as President of Grinnell, in 1991 Drake joined the Peace Corps with his wife Sue, serving in Lesotho. Two years later, Drake, an educator through and through, returned to Grinnell where he taught history for a decade. He retired aged 70 but continued to teach a tutorial class in Grinnell's Liberal Arts in Prison Program at Newton Correctional Facility until the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Scott Moore (2009)

with contributions from Nick Allard (1974) and Bob McKelvey (1959)

1958

Colin McEachran (1940–2022), MBE, QC, died suddenly in May 2022.

Born in Glasgow in 1940, Colin was described as a 'trail blazer at the Scottish Bar' with a deep sense of justice and a strong moral compass. He was, for example, noted for his readiness to take on cases pro bono. He read Jurisprudence at Merton 1958–61 and then Law at the University of Glasgow 1961–64 followed by a year at the University of Chicago studying International Law 1964–65. He was an Advocate Depute

(Crown Prosecutor) in Scotland 1976–79 and President of the Pensions Appeal Tribunal 1990–98.

He had learned rifle shooting at his school, Glenalmond, competed at Bisley for 40 years and shot regularly for Scotland. He won a silver medal in full bore shooting at the Commonwealth Games in Christchurch, New Zealand in 1974. For his contribution as legal advisor and chairman of Commonwealth Games Scotland, he was awarded an MBE.

At his memorial service in Edinburgh he was described as ‘a man who lived 20 lives in one’. He was gregarious, charming, optimistic and tenacious. In retirement he played golf, mountain walked and travelled widely. By his own admission he was, he said, probably too young when he came up to Merton. He is remembered with affection as a most likeable, companionable, warm friend whose geniality shone.

He leaves a wife, Charlotte, to whom he was married for 58 years, two daughters and four grandchildren.

Bryan Lewis (1958)

1959

Richard William Wakefield Pollock, 7 May 1935 – 1 October 2022

Professor Richard Pollock was a Russian language expert and highly successful university lecturer, translator and interpreter, who contributed to one of the most significant chapters in world history. He reached the pinnacle of his professional career when he was appointed personal interpreter and specialist adviser to Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher.

Born on 7 May 1935 in Nottingham to Jean and Baptist minister Frederick Pollock, Richard excelled at Bristol Grammar School and Mill Hill (north London), academically and at cricket.

A 1956 Classics graduate from Peterhouse College, Cambridge, he then joined the Royal Navy where he was selected for intensive Russian and interpreter training.

1958 brought him to Merton College where his postgraduate Diploma in Education lay the foundations for an illustrious career as a senior academic whose passion for language teaching inspired so many. (He always remained neutral during annual university boat races!)

His distinguished teaching career began at Marlborough College where his pupils of Russian included translator-poet, Richard McKane. Pollock’s inspiration was Petr – a displaced Russian-speaking caretaker from Crimea.

In December 1959, a teachers’ delegation embarked on a trip by train to Moscow. An offering from Richard’s silver cigarette case began a friendship with fellow teacher Catherine Janette Miller. Back in London – on a coin toss – he accompanied Miss Miller home to Scotland. She became his wife in August 1961 and colleague at Marlborough, later developing the Russian department at Manchester High School for Girls.

In 1964, Frank Knowles, another Oxford alumnus and Navy peer, Russian lecturer at Salford University, offered Richard a double break: a Russian post at Salford *and* a house in Brooklands – near Frank’s. This golden opportunity was accepted. When invited up from Marlborough, Petr proclaimed in Russian: ‘Richard, this is your eternity!’

In 1969, he gained a Master of Science (MSc) at Manchester University during the lifetime of his childhood mentor and grandfather, Cyril Knott, a fellow Manchester MSc graduate and Quaker missionary in China, who invented the ‘majector’, an early-style overhead projector used by Whitehall ministries during the First World War. Richard became integral to UK-USSR technological groups – and to HM Government.

In 1972 as Senior Lecturer in Russian at Bradford University, he pioneered courses focused on the spoken use of language. While there, Home Secretary William Whitelaw invited him to interpret on a trip to the Soviet Union. Thoroughly impressed, Whitelaw recommended him to the Prime Minister.

Richard’s remarkable skill in conveying mood and tone of voice won him the respect and trust of Margaret Thatcher and Mikhail Gorbachev, leading to the thawing of the Cold War.

Thatcher recalled, '[Richard] would listen very carefully to what I was saying, he would follow the precise intonation I had used. That was marvellous! Mr Gorbachev would get the meaning of the words [and] the emphasis I placed upon them...'

On her first state visit to Moscow in April 1987, Thatcher and Gorbachev discussed arms reduction during the interval of *Swan Lake* performed at the Bolshoi Theatre, forcing a lengthy delay in the ballet's resumption.

When Thatcher received Gorbachev at Downing Street in April 1989, *Professor* Richard Pollock's role was crucial in their East-West talks, which Thatcher described as 'deep, very wide ranging and very friendly'. On 9 November 1989, the historic fall of the Berlin Wall was witnessed worldwide.

In 1990, at the Buckingham Palace garden party he was asked by The Queen: 'I wonder if you could interpret for the Archbishop of Canterbury? But do finish your coffee first!' To which he replied: 'But Ma'am, your need is greater than mine.'

Richard retired from Manchester University in 1992 but continued interpreting for UK companies, and as specialist adviser to House of Commons Select Committees. He was awarded a silver medal by the Rytvin Foundation for services in Berlin and Moscow.

'Languages are fun!', he'd often say. His study houses literature on over 40 languages – ranging from his paternal Welsh to his grandparents' Chinese after their children Jean (Richard's mother) and her playwright brother Frederick Knott (*Dial M for Murder*, *Wait Until Dark*) had grown up in Hankow, China.

Richard's strong Christian faith incorporated numerous proverbs: amongst them, *Qui timet Deum faciet bona*.

Professor Pollock was an extraordinary scholar, teacher and father, greatly loved and admired by all who met him. His four offspring are keen linguists and have also pursued careers in education in UK and abroad. His brother is répétiteur Michael Pollock (Magdalen College alumnus) in Cardiff.

Remarkable for his contribution to world history, he always

referred to it as his life's greatest privilege. Without question, his time at Merton College was a key factor in the pathway to his achievements.

By his daughter Ellie

John Trott (1938–2023) died in March 2023 after a long illness.

Born just before the outbreak of the Second World War, John, like so many children who lived in the Home Counties, was evacuated, first to Scotland and later to the West Country. He came up to Merton in 1958 from Whitgift where he was a classicist and notable sportsman to read Jurisprudence. Before that he did National Service as a 2nd Lieutenant serving in Germany. On graduation he joined Kleinwort Benson as a graduate trainee and rose to be Chairman of the Investment Management Division. He was also a non-executive director and chaired a number of companies, including Standard Life.

In the address at his thanksgiving service it was said 'his loyalty to his principles of clear, sound financial advice balancing risks and returns, not being greedy or seeking to take advantage' was conspicuous. These principles led many tributes to refer to him as 'a gentleman'. He was a dedicated and loyal member of his Church, 'a man of firm but quiet faith which ran like a strand throughout his life.'

At Merton he captained the cricket XI, was a competitive squash player and for the University he won a Blue for rugby fives in 1961. He also played cricket for the Authentics. He is remembered as a courteous, modest, indeed self-effacing man. I recall meeting him in Front Quad after an innings with the Authentics. I asked him if he'd had a good game. He replied 'I scored a few.' The few turned out to be 71. In retirement he was a frequent participant in the Merton Society Golf Team.

He leaves a widow, Averil, to whom he was married for 58 years, three children and seven grandchildren.

Bryan Lewis (1958)

1961

Robert Anthony Spray, died on 4 September, at the age of 80, after a long battle with pancreatic cancer.

By Oxford standards, Rob was not famous but perhaps he should be. He was top history scholar on arrival at Merton after being head boy and standout schoolboy athlete at Nottingham High School. He became captain of both cricket and soccer at Merton. He was always committed to public service, which is why he joined the National Coal Board after graduation. In 1966 a coal slag heap collapsed onto a primary school in Aberfan, South Wales, killing 116 children and 28 adults. It was a major industrial disaster and Rob was sent to help with the investigation.

Later he helped to establish the British Coal Enterprise to create new development in ex-mining areas. By this time, he had worked in mines with his own mining card. He was headhunted by the European Union to set up a Centre for Industrial Restructuring to advise countries where major industries were being closed around Europe. For five years he lived in and travelled all over Europe and spent considerable time in the Donbas region of Ukraine, lending expertise there. He was also in Kyiv during the Orange Revolution of 2004-05 and was invited to a miners' camp in the city's main street as a fellow miner.

After the Russian invasion of Ukraine, Rob lent his support to fund raising for the defence of Ukraine and support of local communities he knew so well.

Rob was married for some 60 years to Jo Spray who was later ordained into the Anglican Church and at the time of Rob's death was priest-in-charge of Turvey parish church, Bedfordshire, making Rob (as he liked to point out) 'the vicar's wife'. He had two brilliant sons and spent his retirement in amateur dramatics and local sport, involving his whole family including grandchildren in everything.

Sir Howard Stringer (1961), Honorary Fellow

1963



Ken 'DK' Jones, died on 24 August 2022, aged 81

Ken 'DK' Jones was a Mertonian known for his illustrious rugby career. He earned his first Welsh trial within three months of entering senior rugby, and debuted for Wales as centre against England in 1962. He later went on to represent Wales and the British & Irish Lions.

Ken was born in Carmarthen and lived in Cross Hands, where he attended Gwendraeth Grammar School. During his time there, he made his debut for Llanelli RFC. He won 11 caps at U15 and U19, marking the start of a highly successful rugby career. While at Cardiff University, he joined Llanelli full time.

At Merton he read for a PGDip in Education. During his studies, he played for the Oxford University rugby team and won a Varsity Blue in the 1963 Varsity Match, and he played for the Dark Blues while the All Blacks were touring in 1963. One of his contemporaries, Sir Howard Stringer (1961), recalls asking Ken and English international player Nick Silk, to join Merton College rugby team for a couple of matches:

'Because he was very active in the University rugby team I didn't see all that much of him until the Easter term, when the Varsity game and international matches were over. I was captain of our small College rugby team so I asked him and Nick Silk, the captain of Oxford and an English international, if they would join our team to play Southampton University 1st team and then Reading University. We would not otherwise expect to beat them.

'On the day, I did not tell them that Ken and Nick would be playing. So, we began the game – and it was hilarious! Ken scored three times in the first half. I played inside centre and my job was simply to pass the ball as quickly as possible to Ken. He was unstoppable. At half time, their captain came up to me and said, 'Who is that guy?' I told him, 'Oh that's Welsh international and British Lion, Ken Jones'. Of course, their attitude then changed. They were thrilled and honoured to play against him and later honoured to drink with him. It was the most fun I ever had on a rugby field and remains a treasured memory. By the way, we beat both universities handily!'

Ken was known amongst his peers not only for his rugby talent, but also for his warmth and good humour. He is remembered by Sir Howard Stringer as both a rugby star and a 'very genial, unassuming graduate student'.

After graduating at Merton, Ken went on to play for Cardiff in 1965. Here, he won over five seasons, and also won 14 Wales caps: 10 from Llanelli and four from Cardiff, and won six Test caps as he was selected on two Lions tours.

He retired from rugby at the age of 27, with his last match being against Oxford in November 1970. He then began working for the Confederation of British Industry in Wales. His team there was instrumental in attracting Takiron, one of Japan's biggest trading companies, to Wales; it was the first Japanese company to come to Wales and the second to start manufacturing in Britain. He later went on to become Takiron's Managing Director and Chairman. He was also on the board of governors of Cardiff University and the University of Wales, as well as chairman of governors of the Museum of Welsh Life at St Fagan's and a council member of the National Museum of Wales.

By the Merton Development Office



Robin Lenman, died on 11 April 2022, aged 76.

Robin Lenman, a Postmaster in Modern History and a friend from our undergraduate days, who went on to become a much-loved lecturer in History at Warwick University and a great authority on Germany politics and culture, died in hospital in Cornwall after a series of heart problems in April 2022. He is survived by his wife, Anita Ballin, his daughter by his first marriage, Sophie Wallace, her husband Gordon, and their three children.

As an undergraduate, Robin was widely regarded as the brightest historian of our year and was the only one of us to achieve a straight First in Finals. He was a handsome young man, with his distinctive fair hair and blue eyes, and came to Merton from St Edward's School in Oxford with well-developed interests, particularly in French and German culture. He and his younger brother Jamie had been brought up by their mother and grandmother and Robin's sense of responsibility towards others and his kindness and sensitivity undoubtedly sprang from that upbringing. He was unfailingly courteous and good-humoured and a delightful conversationalist. But he was also quite a private person, who was happier pursuing his own interests than taking part in sports or social gatherings. Even as an undergraduate he had his own distinctive sense of style. With his favourite black corduroy jacket and his Merton scarf, he was a familiar figure in Magpie Lane or Merton Street on his way to the libraries. He was also well known for his loyalty to the fountain pen and his preference for purple ink for correspondence and for essays.

During his undergraduate days, Robin developed a keen

interest in Germany between the wars and after taking his degree he moved to St Antony's College, where he undertook pre-doctoral research on Julius Streicher, a leading Nazi anti-Jewish propagandist in Nuremberg, and wrote his doctorate on censorship and society in Munich before the First World War. In 1971, he was appointed Lecturer in German History at Warwick University, where he worked for the following 30 years. According to one of his students, his lectures were 'full of humour and wry observation' and his 'open, friendly and polite manner' made him someone students felt they could go to for help and advice. He was also something of a pioneer at Warwick, and a teacher of the faculty, in his use of technical resources and visual material, which in those days was rare but has now become the norm in historical research.

After some years, the focus of Robin's interest moved from inter-war politics to German artists and the art market in the late 19th century. This resulted in a book, *Artists and Society in Germany 1850–1914* (1997), which was well received in Germany as well as in the UK. Indeed, a series of his essays on related themes had been translated into German and published in Germany a few years earlier. His colleague Jim Obelkevich describes the book as 'admirably researched, enviably well-written, refreshingly free of trendy academic jargon ... a model of its kind'.

Robin's colleagues at Warwick have shared their very positive memories of him on the department website. They speak of the esteem in which he was held, his 'over-subscribed modules on German history', his 'unflagging good nature and unflappability', his 'admirable conviviality' and 'almost puckish sense of fun'. But they also point out that he was 'something of an outlier' in a 'strongly Marxist-oriented department, still in the shadow of its heady days under the influence of E P Thompson'. As his colleague Chris Read has written: 'In a left-leaning world, he was a traditional, pure liberal of the old school ... In the best sense, Robin was an old-school don. He was first and foremost a passionate scholar, wrapped up in ideas and arguments and had wide interests which took him in many directions.'

In the final phase of his time at Warwick, Robin turned to his love of photography, offering an MA course in its history and beginning work on an ambitious commission from

Oxford University Press. This resulted after some years of intense editorial and writing activity in the publication of the magnificent *Oxford Companion to the Photograph* (2005), a 750-page volume which testifies to Robin's extraordinary knowledge of the medium and his ability to bring together the work of so many advisory editors and over 140 contributors in such a remarkably clear and concise way. It was a gargantuan task which took some toll on his health and required him to take on additional help. But it has been widely acclaimed as one of the best books ever produced on the history of photography.

Robin took early retirement in 2004 and he and Anita set up home in Penzance, close to their beloved Isles of Scilly where they holidayed every year. In Penzance, he became an inspiration to many in his local photographic society, which has established a Robin Lenman Prize in his memory.

David Page (1963)

1968



Peter Bibby 1950–2023

Merton in 1968 was a magical place to be. Revolution was in the air. The generation which had grown up after two world wars in the shadow of nuclear weapons and the Vietnam war was looking to change the world. Peter played his part in that revolution.

It is hard to know how much of the colourful truth should be included in the respectable context of a College obituary. I think Peter would have wanted much of the less law-abiding side of his life included.

From Oundle Peter came to Oxford for an interview with Dr Parsons and was offered an unconditional place to read Medicine. Even in his first year in Rose Lane he was a memorable and unmissable character. He threw many good parties, made many lifelong friends and often severely exercised the patience of the College authorities.

Having acquired keys to parts of Merton that other undergraduates cannot reach, Peter occasionally liberated unused food from our excellent kitchens. I remember him arriving at midnight between Liz's birthday and mine (23 and 24 May) with Coquilles St Jacques and a bottle of sparkling wine.

Peter was arrested and convicted for his part in a demonstration against Enoch Powell. Several dons helped pay the fines of the convicted students.

He changed from Medicine to Zoology, having become disillusioned with the medical profession when working in a hospital. His childhood fascination with the love life of moles meant that he had the makings of a good zoologist, like his eminent ornithologist brother.

Peter did not complete his degree at Merton and there are numerous narratives about why. The best thing that happened to Peter at Oxford was meeting Anne. She complemented him in so many ways and became his wife.

After Merton Peter led a productive and variegated life. He made furniture, starred as a political activist, especially campaigning about transport in London, and he was a long-serving legendary Chairman of Governors of Dog Kennel Hill Primary School. Memorably he told the Ofsted inspector that his school did not intend to raise standards – it did intend to raise children. He also practised as a barrister working for autistic children before the Special Needs Educational Tribunal.

When diagnosed with cancer, Peter responded in a typically unpredictable way. He did not suffer in silence, but he kept his friends fully informed of every detail of his symptoms and treatment – or mistreatment. After years of courageous struggling, on 20 February 2023 Peter died at home having said farewell to his friends. Anne was with him as he died and saw him slip quietly away.

In 1968 many of us, including Peter, thought that the world needed more peace and love. Now Peter is at peace, all that matters is that we remember him with love.

George Daly (1968)

1969



Leonard Francis Field, 1950–2017

Leonard (Lenny) Francis Field was born on 11 April 1950 in Sussex, the son of Barbara Savage and Leonard Wriggley. In 1955 Barbara married Robert Field, who adopted Lenny. In 1957 Barbara and Robert had a daughter, Lenny's sister Jennifer. Relations between Lenny and Robert were strained; as a result, Lenny often escaped to London where he lived rough with other runaway kids and began his interest in music and social justice. In primary and secondary school Lenny was a brilliant pupil (although his teachers complained that he didn't apply himself) and, despite his working-class background, he won a place at Merton College at Oxford University, where he studied English literature. In his second year at Oxford he visited Greece, where he met an American philosophy student, Catherine Forbes, whom he married in 1970.

After college he worked as a farm labourer in Oxford and then as a milkman in London where his first child, Sarah (Sally), was born in 1975. Shortly after Sally's birth, Lenny and Cathy moved to a small village in Scotland where Lenny worked as a fisherman. Lenny was employed as the cook, and was almost thrown overboard on the first day for bringing garlic aboard, which his captain considered a poison. The work was hard and badly paid, but Lenny remembered it fondly for the storms, the northern lights and the puffins. In 1976 the young family embarked on an entirely new adventure; they decided to try to live in South America. They found a job with the Catholic Institute for International Relations, which was planning to send 24 pregnant cows to a Jesuit farm on Cayambe in Ecuador and advertised for a 'cattle

expert'. Having grown up on a dairy farm, Lenny went for an interview and was accepted. They spent two weeks in Guatemala learning Spanish, before arriving in a country the like of which they had never imagined.

As soon as Lenny arrived in Ecuador, he fell in love. He told Cathy that it was the first place in the world where he had felt at home. He threw himself into the work on the farm and quickly made enemies of the managers by making friends of the indigenous workers, taking his family to their parties, and demanding better working conditions for them. He was fired from the farm in less than a year. But luckily by then he had met Francisco (Paco) Ron, the head of the Centro Andino de Acción Popular (CAAP). His relationship with Paco and CAAP was to last more than 20 turbulent years. Lenny and Paco shared a vision of development in Ecuador that was socialist, egalitarian and free from racial prejudice. He was repeatedly fired, and repeatedly quit, but always the shared passion drew them back together. The goal of the organisation was to give the *campesinos* a voice in their own government, and to channel international aid into the communities in the way that gave them most power and agency. To this end Lenny travelled all over the highlands, meeting people, making dear friends and becoming ever closer to the communities.

In 1978 Lenny's second daughter Margaret (Meg) was born, and in 1980 Lenny and Cathy bought a piece of land in Pujili and started to build a house. The barrio where they lived in Pujili was called Sinchahwasin, and it embraced them warmly. With the help of their neighbours they slowly built their house over seven years, during which time they also home-schooled their two daughters. Lenny served as barrio president in 1982–83 and it was due to his efforts that the barrio was connected to a supply of potable water. During this time Lenny completed a master's degree in economics by correspondence with Oxford University, and wrote a book, *Agricultura Andina: Propuesta de Investigación*, with his great friend Manuel Chiriboga. Sadly, as the years went by, Lenny's work took him more and more often from home and his marriage deteriorated. In 1989 Lenny was working primarily in Cayambe, Sally went to school in the USA, and Cathy and Meg sold the house in Pujili and moved to Cayambe with Lenny. In 1990 Lenny's father suffered a stroke and Cathy and Meg went to England to help care for him. It was then that the decision was taken to separate.

Alone in Cayambe, Lenny fell in love with his dear friend Paulina Landeta Mesa. They lived together and were married in 1993. Paulina had three children by a previous marriage: Paola, Carolina and Francisco (Paco), whom Lenny quickly grew to love as his own. They lived in Quito very happily until 1998 when the combination of economic collapse in Ecuador and Barbara's failing health forced the family to move to England, leaving behind, with great regret, Paola who was about to have Lenny's first grandchild, the lovely Camilla, to whom Lenny was extremely close in his last years.

The move to England was very sad, and the time was a dark one for them. Work was hard to find and badly paid. Lenny found himself a foreigner in the land of his birth, and bitterly regretted the circumstances that had driven him from Ecuador. However, with courage and determination they made the best of it, eventually settling in Plymouth from where they explored and took joy in the beautiful scenery of Cornwall and Devon. Both Lenny and Paulina discovered, unexpectedly, that they had a gift for photography and spent many happy hours capturing the landscape.

Around 2013 Lenny's health became so bad that he was forced to take early retirement. This proved something of a blessing, as his mother's health also deteriorated and he was able to spend the last year of her life caring for her. He was grateful for this, as it allowed him to heal his relationship with her. On Barbara's death in 2015, Lenny and Paulina were able to accomplish their dearest wish, to move back to Ecuador. This was not easy; Lenny (who had smoked since the age of 11) had emphysema, and moving to the Andes meant living permanently on oxygen machines. Paulina worked heroically to care for him and to make their dream a reality: a beautiful house in Guallabamba.

Lenny was not an easy man to live with, but he was an easy man to love. Intelligent, humorous, passionate, often foolish, occasionally wise, he provoked affection and infuriation in equal measure. We who loved him can only be profoundly grateful to God, to luck, and to Paulina, that, at the end, he was able to die among the mountains and people of Ecuador, who were the greatest love of his life.

by his daughter Sally Field

1971



Ronald Henry Joseph Graham died on 17 May 2023 in an accident in the Georgian Caucasus, walking with his partner, Dr Eileen Rees OBE, and Philip Head. He was 71.

Educated at Kendal Grammar School, after one year at Birmingham University Ronald migrated to Merton in 1971. His was the select fraternity tutored by John Barton ('JLB'), an experience that all who underwent it never forgot. He had the good fortune to be tutored in second year by Robert Venables KC and in his third year by (Lord Justice) Jack Beatson and thus achieved a good Second. Once, vigorously and vocally chasing round the Law Library table, a fellow lawyer guilty of deliberately misplacing a textbook to preserve it for his own use, the hunt was interrupted by the majestic entry of the Chichele Professor of Modern History, J M Wallace Hadrill, whose studies in the room below were being severely disrupted. Scholarly calm speedily returned. Proud son of Westmorland, Ronald relieved his feelings about that county's abolition in 1971 by shouting abuse, some of it colourful, from the Library window towards the Univ Master's Lodgings; Lord Redcliffe-Maud was then in occupation. Ronald lived to see his county reinstated.

Graduating in 1974, he decamped to Corpus Christi Cambridge, taking a Dip Crim. To his dismay, Cambridge steadfastly refused to convert it to its modern equivalent, an MPhil. Ron's Law Society studies were interrupted by family illness and he then spent several years at Sir Peter Scott's Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust in Slimbridge. He acquired there an encyclopaedic ornithological knowledge and his lifetime's partner, Eileen. He was also awarded a Churchill Fellowship

to study aviculture in the United States. He demonstrated his innate financial astuteness by personally taking on the contract to clean the Trust's lavatories; his views on the relative cleanliness of the Ladies and Gents were recently aired in a letter to the *Times*. Travel on six continents (ideally by train), ornithology, music and Radio Four were among his passions.

Eventually returning to the Law, Ron became a partner at Eversheds, Manchester in 1990, from 2005 heading its northern Pensions Department (and, temporarily, its Employment team). He regarded Robert Maxwell more benignly than most; Maxwell's cosmic pensions defalcations triggered an explosion in legal pensions work. Ron's acumen on pensions law was very highly rated in various legal guides, including (latterly, to his amusement) as a 'senior statesman'. 'Retiring' in 2019, Ron took on pension fund trusteeships, company secretaryship of the Northern Chamber Orchestra and several voluntary functions.

He settled outside Chapel-en-le-Frith with Eileen; the house was already named Holywell House, an entirely coincidental reference to tutorials with JLB. He was Eileen's bagman on various ornithological trips, several in Russia involving heroic vodka consumption. A gritty swan-ringing expedition to the Icelandic marshes was something he declined to repeat. A memorable 2018 trip to Iran caused considerable difficulties for travel to a 2022 US Swan Convention, requiring attendance at the US Embassy to confirm that his aim was not to subvert its constitution.

So much for the mere, dry facts. Ron was an immensely entertaining companion, blessed with a wry, dry, mischievous sense of humour and a world view trenchantly and entertainingly expressed. All time spent with him was a delight. His Eversheds team clearly adored him; he zealously promoted their welfare. The award of an OBE to Eileen for services to research and waterbird conservation gave him huge joy. He leaves a very large hole in the lives of Eileen, his sister Wendy and all his friends. He is buried in St Mungo's Church, Bromfield, Cumberland.

Philip Head (1971)

1972

Bernard Fogarty died on 22 June 2022.

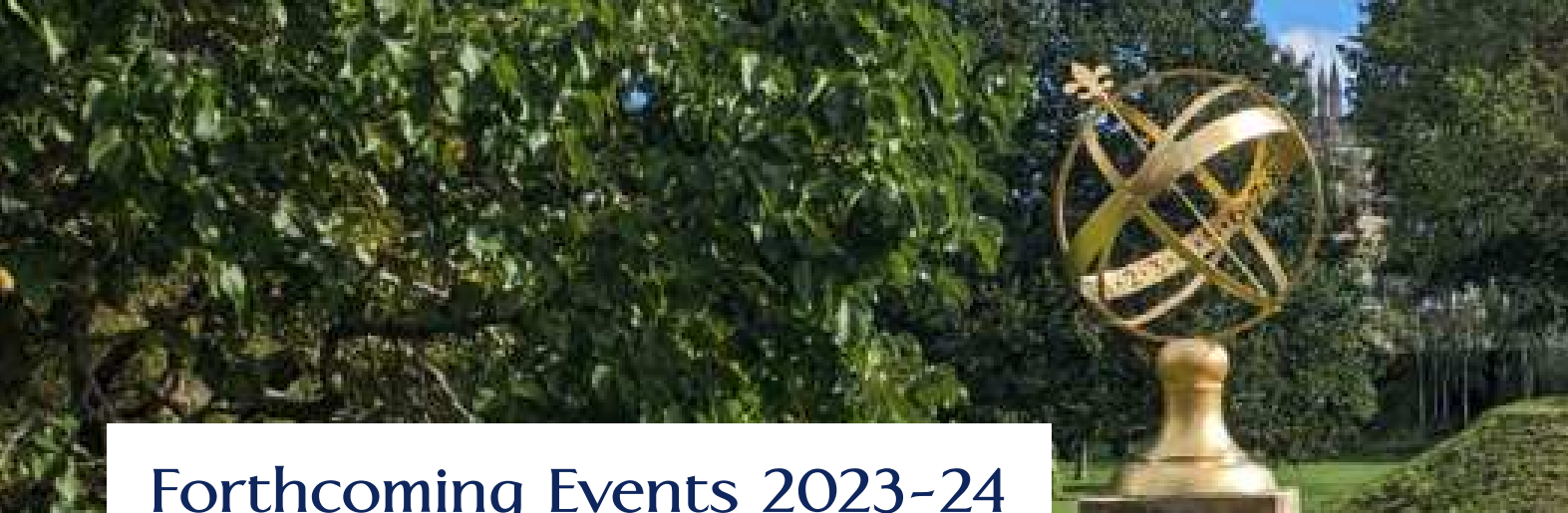
Bernard and I were English undergraduates of the same vintage at Merton and kept in touch for a couple of years after graduation. We lost touch in 1978. Forty years later I received a letter from Bernard joyfully re-establishing contact (Mark Signy gave him my address). The joy was made bittersweet by the fact that Bernard now had a terminal diagnosis of a blood cancer. Thankfully, we had four years of lovely, regular correspondence with much humour, social comment and literary appreciation before the leukaemia took him.

I cannot give much detail of the 40 missing years but it seems Bernard had earned his corn by teaching English in schools, for all or most of that time. By 2018, he was living in Leeds with his beloved partner, Diane. Much to my surprise, they were both keen followers of Leeds Rhinos rugby league team (Bernard had never been what you would call 'athletic'). I was able to meet up with him in the company of **Chris Martin** (a medic in our year), twice at Headingley Cricket Ground in Leeds. The second time was that exhilarating and unbelievable England victory over Australia in the 2019 Test Match, engineered almost single-handedly by Ben Stokes. That, wonderfully and poignantly, was the last time that Chris and I saw Bernard.

Bernard was a brilliant and original student of English literature. In his first-year exams at Merton, he was given a mark of Alpha/Gamma for his Old English paper. On enquiring how such an extraordinary mark came about, Bernard informed us, as an example of his originality, that he had likened the Anglo-Saxon warrior Byrhtnoth, at the Battle of Maldon, to John Wayne's character in the film *Sands of Iwo Jima*. Two examiners marked our papers at that time; one had loved Bernard's approach and one had abhorred it – hence the Alpha/Gamma.

Memories of Bernard will last: happy times in our rooms, the Eastgate Hotel, the Merton Bar and beyond. His life and his last years were characterised by humour, courage and great generosity of spirit. Ever the best of friends. What larks!

Allan Clark (1972)



Forthcoming Events 2023-24

Further details of all events are available from the Development Office. We add events to the schedule throughout the year and regularly update the Merton website with information as it becomes available. Chapel and Choir events are also available on the College website.

November

- 16 **Merton Lawyers' Association Meeting**
'The psychology of persuasion in Law – an English and American perspective'. A conversation between Lord Pannick KC and the Dean of the Jacksonville Law School Florida, Nick Allard (1974), moderated by Katie Ratcliffe (2014), Barrister at Essex Court Chambers.
Venue: Slaughter and May, 1 Bunhill Row, London EC1Y 8YY
- 25-26 **Advent Carol Services**
Venue: Merton College Chapel
- 30 **Christmas Carol Service**
Venue: Merton College Chapel
- 29 **Merton Michaelmas Drinks**
Venue: The Antelope, 22 Eaton Terrace, London, SW1W 8EZ

December

- 2 **Merton in Manhattan**
A chance for Mertonians to meet the newly elected Warden, Professor Jennifer Payne, over cocktails in one of New York's most iconic locations.
Venue: Greenwich Village, New York City, New York

- 9 **Merton Society Christmas Concert**
The world premiere of Gabriel Jackson's *The Christmas Story*, sung by the Merton College Choir and the Girl Choristers, and conducted by Director of Music, Benjamin Nicholas
Venue: St John's Smith Square, London, SW1P 3HA

January

- 11-20 **Merton in Asia**
Locations: Hong Kong and Singapore
- 14 **Epiphany Carol Service**
Sung by the College Choir and the Girls' Choir, preceded by a tea party for Friends of the Choir
Venue: Merton College Chapel
- 20 **Merton Biomedical and Life Sciences Reunion Day**
Venue: TS Eliot Theatre, Merton College

February

- 6 **Merton College Net Zero Group meeting**
'Is the UK on track for Net Zero by 2050?'
Speaker: Chris Stark, CEO of the Climate Change Committee
Venue: TS Eliot Theatre, Merton College



March

- 16 Gaudy for the years 1973, 1974, 1975, 1976, 1977
- 22-24 **Passiontide at Merton**
Venue: Merton College Chapel
- 27 **Merton Golf Society Spring Meeting**
Venue: Newbury & Crookham Golf Club, Thatcham RG19 8BZ

April

- 18 2023 Returners' Dinner for Undergraduate Leavers
- 10 **10th Anniversary Gala Organ Concert**
Organ concert, performed by Olivier Latri, in celebration of the 10th Anniversary of the Dobson Organ at Merton College.
Venue: Merton College Chapel
- 25 **Merton Society Annual Lecture**
Leader of the Merton College Centenary Expedition, James Kempton (2011), talks about his expedition to the Cyclops Mountains, New Guinea, in search of Attenborough's long-beaked echidna and the enigmatic origins of the Cyclops and their fauna.
Venue: Lazard, 50 Stratton Street, London, W1J 8LL

- 28 Founder's Society Lunch

May

- 9 **Merton in Cambridge**
Reception at our sister college, Peterhouse
- 12 **Merton Team at Bidwells UK Town and Gown 10K Run**
Followed by brunch in College
- 25 **Merton College Boat Club Dinner**

June

- 22-23 **Merton Society Weekend**
- 23 **1964 Diamond Jubilee Lunch**

September

- 28 Gaudy for the years 2004, 2005, 2006 and 2007

October

- 26 **1974 Golden Jubilee Lunch**



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COLLEGE
OXFORD