



Dr Kate Blackmon, Oxford's new Senior Proctor, takes a photograph before the procession to the Sheldonian for the Ceremony of Admitting the Proctors and Assessor

MERTON'S OXFORD'S DR KATE BLACKMON IS NEW SENIOR PROCTOR

At the end of Hilary Term, Oxford University's Senior and Junior Proctors and the Assessor were appointed. All colleges take it in turns to elect their candidate in rotation and, this year, it is Merton College's turn. Following Professor Tim Softley's admission as

Senior Proctor in 2002, the admission of the College's first ever female Proctor – Dr Kate Blackmon – coincides with the College's 750th Anniversary Year.

Kate takes her place as Senior Proctor alongside Junior Proctor, Dr Hubert Ertl of Linacre, and Assessor, Dr Paul Martin

of Wadham. "It is not very often you get to take on such an ancient and unique position in a world-famous institution," Kate said. "Being Senior Proctor is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity".

[READ THE FULL INTERVIEW](#)



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PAVING THE WAY WITH
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CONVERSATION

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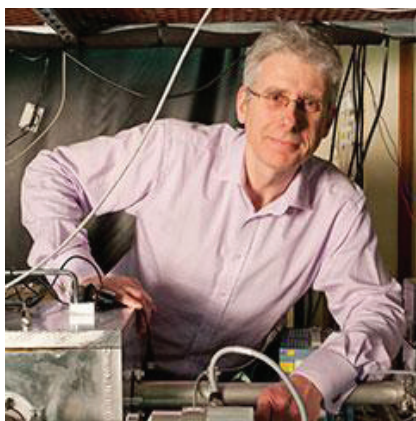


DEVELOPMENT NEWS:
A LITTLE BIT OF GIVE &
TAKE - HOW TO GIVE
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Prof Dame Athene Donald with the Warden



Prof Simon Hooker



Prof Robert MacLaren

MERTON'S INAUGURAL EQUALITY CONVERSATION

Hilary Term saw the inaugural annual Equality Conversation. An audience from across the University, including many Heads of House, enjoyed a thought-provoking talk by Professor Dame Athene Donald FRS, the University of Cambridge's gender equality champion and Master-elect of Churchill College, on the topic 'Stemming the leakage of women from academia: why do they leave?'. This introduction was followed by a discussion with panel members from Merton, including Professor Judy Armitage, Professor Jenny Payne, Dr Rhianon Ash and Ms Abigail Adams. 🍷

[LISTEN TO THE PODCAST OF PROF DAME DONALD'S TALK](#)

PROFESSOR SIMON HOOKER IS MADE FELLOW OF THE OPTICAL SOCIETY OF AMERICA

Professor in Physics Simon Hooker has been made a 2014 Fellow of The Optical Society of America. The Award was given in recognition of Simon's research into short-pulse laser interactions with matter and, in particular, the development and applications of plasma waveguides for high-intensity laser pulses. 🍷

[READ PROF HOOKER'S PROFILE](#)

PROFESSOR DAME JESSICA RAWSON DELIVERS PRESTIGIOUS SLADE LECTURES

Merton's former Warden, Professor Dame Jessica Rawson, covered a staggering 2,500 years of history and interaction between China and the West in her Slade Lectures on 'Warfare, Beauty and Belief: Innovations from the West that Changed China's Art and Culture'. In this eight-part lecture series Professor Rawson considered the ways in which China's art and culture were transformed through contact across the steppe and along the Silk Road.

Set up in 1869, the Slade Lectures form a central plank in the intellectual life of Cambridge's Department of Art, and the Slade Professorship of Fine Art has been held by many of the most distinguished historians of art and architecture from around the world. 🍷

BREAKTHROUGH IN SEARCH FOR BLINDNESS GENE THERAPY CURE

Clinical trials of a retinal gene therapy developed by Bodley Fellow and Mertonian Professor Robert MacLaren (1992) have surpassed expectations. After six months of this pioneering treatment for the inherited disease choroideremia, patients showed improvements in their vision without experiencing any damage to the retina. "This has huge implications for anyone with a genetic retinal disease," Robert commented, "it has for the first time shown that gene therapy can be applied safely before the onset of vision loss".

Don't miss Robert's talk at the Birthday Weekend later this year. 🍷

[READ MORE](#)

MERTON MEDICS RECEIVE UNIVERSITY RECOGNITION

Congratulations are due to medical students, Nicholas Black (2010) and Catrin Lloyd (2010), who have been awarded joint winner and joint runner-up prizes respectively, in the University of Oxford Medical School's General Practice Essay Competition 2013. 🍷

MAJOR PRIZE AWARDED TO MERTON GRADUATE

Sarah Hickmott (2012) has won the 2014 RH Gapper Postgraduate Essay Prize, the major prize for graduate work in French studies in the UK. The judging panel were unanimous in the view that Sarah's essay was "outstanding". 🍷



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FROM EAST TO WEST: MERTON'S ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS CROSS CONTINENTS



L-R: Lord Patten of Barnes, Professor Rana Mitter and Professor Dame Jessica Rawson

MERTON'S 750TH ANNIVERSARY YEAR BEGINS... IN EAST ASIA!

Almost as soon as the College's landmark 750th year was heralded in (with a record peal of 7,500 bells!) the Warden flew to Hong Kong to begin a year of special Anniversary celebrations, with the core aim of connecting with and bringing together Mertonians around the globe. Accompanied by Director of Development, Christine Taylor, and Alumni Relations Manager, Helen Kingsley, the celebrations in East Asia began with a [Dinner in Hong Kong](#) at the China Club. It was marvellous to see so many Mertonians enjoy a wonderful evening together.

The Warden's visit to Hong Kong was made even more memorable by the first Merton Conversation of the year, ['The Challenges of Global Finance'](#) at the Asia Society. Merton is incredibly grateful to Sir Callum McCarthy (1962), Charles Li and Liu Mingkang, as well as moderator for the evening, Professor Alejandro Reyes, for such an impressive

and in-depth discussion. If you'd like to listen to the discussion, an edited recording of the Conversation is now available online. 📺

[WATCH HONG KONG CONVERSATION](#)

THE WARDEN'S FIRST VISIT TO JAPAN

Following a delightful week in Hong Kong, the Warden travelled on to Japan, where he joined Mertonians to celebrate this special year. Merton hosted a [Dinner in Tokyo](#) at Sens et Saveurs on 21st January. The Warden was especially privileged to be granted an audience with HH Crown Prince Naruhito of Japan (1982) – an original 20 minute appointment which was extended to 2 hours!

The Warden thoroughly enjoyed his trip and was glad to meet so many new faces whilst in East Asia. He is grateful to everyone who attended the dinners and the Merton Conversation – a trip that he will long remember. 📺

BACK IN OXFORD: THE MERTON CONVERSATION WHERE EAST MEETS WEST

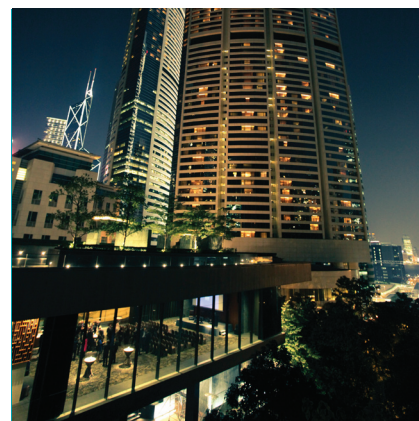
A packed TS Eliot Theatre enjoyed a wonderful evening of stimulating and varied debate on ['China and the West – Culture and Society'](#) in the second Merton Conversation of the Anniversary Year, but the first on home soil. Professor Dame Jessica Rawson and Lord Patten of Barnes covered topics as wide-ranging as ethnicity and education, China's demographics and economics, politics and culture, as well as its rich history and the question of its future, in a discussion expertly moderated by Professor Rana Mitter.

The evening concluded with a reception with wine and canapés, where guests mingled with the speakers and lively debate ensued. Our deepest thanks go out to our speakers for a wonderful evening. 📺

[WATCH OXFORD CONVERSATION](#)



L-R: Sir Callum McCarthy (1962), Liu Mingkang, Charles Li and Professor Alejandro Reyes



The Asia Society in Hong Kong

DEVELOPMENT NEWS



Our March Telethon team

“Our deepest thanks to all of you who donated in this, the first telethon of the 750th Anniversary Year”

MARCH TELETHON KICKSTARTS THE 750TH ANNIVERSARY YEAR & THE CAMPAIGN COUNTDOWN BEGINS...

The 750th Anniversary Year is here! Now, at the end of March and Hilary Term, with one telethon down and 275 days to go until the end of the our £30m capital campaign, *Sustaining Excellence*, we have £2m left to raise.

It goes without saying that we are incredibly grateful to everyone who has given to the campaign so far. From Mertonians making gifts of £1m+ to the recent Leavers who have chosen to become new members of the 1264 Society with a gift of £12.64, we wouldn't have reached the amazing total of £28m without all of your support. Thank you.

It is fantastic that so many of you have made a gift to Merton and we were absolutely delighted to reach a participation rate of 35% last year. Our participation rate resets every year and for our 750th Anniversary Year we have set ourselves (and you!) the ambitious target of a 40% participation rate. This would be the highest rate in Oxford – Exeter currently leads – and it would be wonderful if everyone felt they wanted to join us in getting there this year.

We are incredibly happy to report that, thanks to your generosity, during our March Telethon a fantastic £87,810 was raised. Over the last two weeks eight students have dialled 3,860 numbers and spoken to 376 of you. They enjoyed every minute of it! Thank you for sharing your Merton stories and memories with us as well your gifts of money.

If you didn't receive a call and would like to play your part in this year's Annual Fund – which includes all monies under £25,000 raised between 1st August 2013 and 31st July 2014 – then it is not too late. Please email Merton's Annual Fund Officer, [Peter O'Connor](#).

If you would like to speak about a specific project or to discuss supporting Merton with a legacy or in any other way please contact Merton's Campaign Officer, [Lauren Kendall](#). 🍷

[DONATE NOW](#)

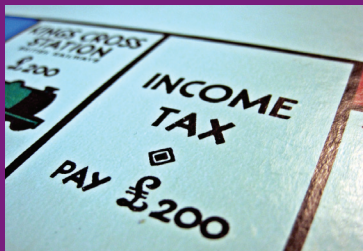


Image from taxfix.co.uk

REMEMBER – GIVE BEFORE THE END OF THE TAX YEAR!

As we approach the end of the UK tax year on 5th April, please take a moment to consider supporting Merton's 2013-14 Annual Fund (instead of the tax man).

All gifts to the Annual Fund help to support students, protect the tutorial system and preserve and restore our historic buildings. All gifts count towards our 750th Anniversary Campaign, *Sustaining Excellence*, and will help Merton win the collegiate race for alumni Annual Fund participation.

Merton College is a charity (Registered No. 1139022) and therefore there are a number of tax incentives for donors to make a gift. 🍷

[READ MORE](#)



Photo by John Cairns

MERTON'S NETCOMMUNITY: WHAT'S IN IT FOR ME?

20% of Mertonians have already signed up to the College's new NetCommunity. Here are two reasons why the remaining 80% of you should log on:

[GO GREEN – UPDATE YOUR COMMUNICATION PREFERENCES](#)

Now, as well as providing a quick way of updating your details online, the NetCommunity allows you to [choose your preferred method of contact](#) – for instance, you can request that our Donor Report is emailed to you rather than posted.

[NETWORK – CONTACT AND BE CONTACTED!](#)

The NetCommunity is an exclusive online space, which only Mertonians and Friends of the College can access. Once logged in, you can [search for old friends](#), [update your NetCommunity profile](#) and [share this information](#) with your fellow Mertonians. 🍷

[GET REGISTERED](#)

OLD MERTONIAN NEWS



Dr Edmund Highcock (2009)

DR EDMUND HIGHCOCK (2009) WINS TOP PHYSICS THESIS AWARD

Former DPhil student, Dr Edmund Highcock, has been awarded this year's European Physical Society Plasma Physics Division's PhD Research Award for his thesis, which focused on eliminating turbulence created from the fusion of hydrogen plasma into helium. The judging panel deemed him a worthy recipient, his thesis having "made an impact in the field of turbulence". Dr Highcock is now a Junior Research Fellow at Magdalen College and has also recently won the EUROfusion Research Fellowship. 🏆

[READ MORE](#)



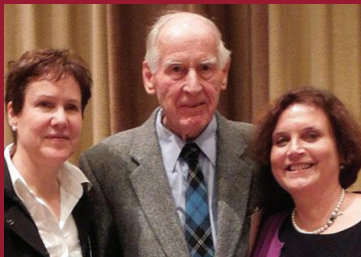
Professor Stuart Hall (1951), circled above

THE LIFE OF CULTURAL THEORIST, STUART HALL

Merton College was saddened to hear of the death of Mertonian Stuart Hall (1951) earlier this year, aged 82. Hall was Editor of the *New Left Review*, and was Professor of Sociology for the Open University until his retirement in 1979. "[He] was not simply a leading light in cultural studies in Britain," Dr Michael Whitworth, Merton Tutor in English Literature comments, "he was crucial to the establishment of the subject in Britain."

You can read Merton's short recollection of Professor Hall's life and achievements online, as well as find links to extended obituaries in the national newspapers 📰

[READ MORE](#)



L-R: AIA President Elizabeth Bartman, Hugh Sackett (1949), and Professor Irene Lemos at the awards ceremony in Chicago

MERTONIAN IS FIRST BRITON TO RECEIVE AMERICAN ARCHAEOLOGICAL AWARD

Mertonian Hugh Sackett (1949) has been awarded the Gold Medal for Distinguished Archaeological Achievement by the Archaeological Institute of America – the first British archaeologist to receive this award.

Since his time at Merton in the early 1950s, Hugh Sackett has divided his time between teaching classics and classical archaeology at Groton School in Massachusetts, USA, and both fieldwork and study at the British School at Athens, where he has been Honorary Vice-President since 2008. An international authority on Bronze Age Greece, he has performed excavations throughout Greece and Crete, including Mycenae and Sparta. He is perhaps best known for his work at Lefkandi and Palaikastro, having published landmark articles and monographs for both of these sites. 🏆

[READ MORE](#)



JRR Tolkien

TOLKIEN'S BEOWULF TO BE PUBLISHED POSTHUMOUSLY

It has been announced that JRR Tolkien's translation of *Beowulf*, the famous tale of the great hero Beowulf's battles against the monster Grendel and a dragon, will be released by HarperCollins in May, almost 90 years after it was originally translated.

In addition to Tolkien's translation of this, the oldest surviving epic poem in Old English, the forthcoming title will include selected notes on the text, taken from his lectures given during his career at Oxford, and will be edited by his son, Christopher. 🏆

[READ MORE](#)



Professor Brian Cox

OUR MAY MERTON CONVERSATIONS WILL TRAVEL TO LONDON FOR STAR-STUDED LINE-UP

In the fourth in our series of six Merton Conversations around the world, we bring together two of Britain's best-loved television personalities, Stephen Fry and Professor Brian Cox, and Merton's Emeritus Fellow, Lord May of Oxford, at the Royal Society in London. On 15th May this panel of distinguished discussants will come together to deliberate over the chemist CP Snow's most famous book, *The Two Cultures* – a lament on the gulf between scientific and literary circles.

A packed house is anticipated for this star-studded event, after which all those attending will be invited to continue the stimulating conversation in the foyer, over a canapé reception. Email [Helen Kinglsey](#) for more information about our corporate packages. ♥

[BOOK NOW](#)



Composer Gabriel Jackson

PASSIONTIDE AT MERTON HERALDED AS AN “UNMISSABLE EVENT” BY THE PRESS AND PROMISES TO BE OUR BEST YET

Heralded as an “unmissable event” by the BBC's *Music* magazine, this year's three-day long Passiontide Festival at Merton, Friday 4th to Sunday 6th April, is packed full of engaging talks and impressive performances from a host of visiting musicians as well as, of course, the Choir of Merton College.

The weekend will open with the première performance of Gabriel Jackson's *The Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ*, composed to a libretto by The Revd Dr Simon Jones and specially commissioned as part of the *Merton Choirbook* project for the 750th Anniversary year. The festival will close with a performance of Bach's *St Matthew Passion*, featuring former member of the Chapel Choir, Dame Emma Kirkby, as soprano soloist. Weekend packages, including accommodation, are available, as well as some individual event tickets. ♥

[BOOK NOW](#)

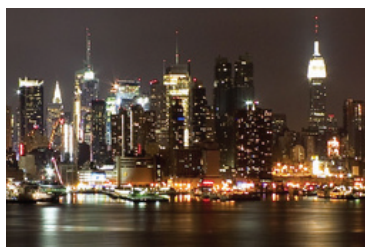


COMING SOON: BIRTHDAY WEEKEND TIMETABLE AND EVENT REGISTRATION WILL OPEN IN LATER THIS MONTH

Plans for the pinnacle of the 750th Anniversary Year, our Birthday Weekend, are coming together and, in the next few weeks we will be announcing our full timetable of lectures, workshops and tours for the Birthday Weekend. Featuring an assortment of acclaimed alumni, Fellows and Friends of the College, speaking on subjects as diverse as Quantum Physics and Poetry, Maths and the mountaineer Sandy Irvine (1921), the cure for blindness and the science behind branding, we are confident that our menu of lectures will cater for all tastes.

The final schedule will initially be shared with those who have already booked their tickets for the weekend so, if you want to ensure your place at your chosen lectures, we would recommend booking your day ticket/s for the Weekend now. ♥

[BOOK NOW](#)



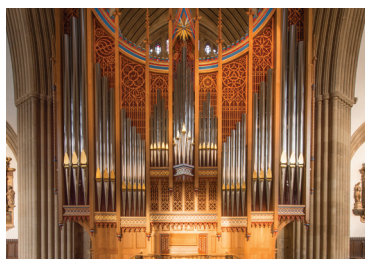
A SPECIAL MC3 WEEKEND FOR THE ANNIVERSARY YEAR

Stateside Mertonians will celebrate 750 years of Merton in style, starting their MC3 Weekend on Friday 11th April on the river, with a boat trip to view the NYC skyline by night and a performance from the Choir of Merton College (sponsored by Reed (1957) and Jane Rubin). The following day we will hold our third Merton Conversation of the year, with former Chairman and President of Sony Corporation and former President of CBS, Sir Howard Stringer (1961), and President and CEO of *The New York Times*, Mark Thompson (1976), talking on 'The Global Media Revolution' at The Century Association. Following the Conversation will be a special reception and dinner for MC3 members. The Weekend will conclude with brunch in Park Avenue, at the rooftop apartment of John Kirby (1962) and Susan Cullman. We look forward to seeing many of you there. ♥

[CONTACT THE MC3 OFFICE TO RSVP](#)

EVENTS NEWS

ALUMNI EVENTS CALENDAR: TRINITY 2014



APRIL

4th – 6th April | Passiontide at Merton | Venue: Chapel

[MORE INFO](#)

9th – 21st April | College Choir USA Tour

[MORE INFO](#)

11th – 13th April | MC3 Weekend in New York

Featuring the third in the series of Merton Conversations, 'The Global Media Revolution', with Sir Howard Stringer (1961) and Mark Thompson (1976) at The Century Association in New York

[MORE INFO](#)

26th April | Inaugural Organ Concert | Venue: Chapel
The College's new Dobson Organ will be played by John Scott (Organist of St Thomas Church, Fifth Avenue, New York)

[MORE INFO](#)

27th April | Dedication of the new Organ at Choral Evensong | Venue: Chapel

[MORE INFO](#)

MAY

15th May | Merton Conversation: The Two Cultures of CP Snow
Venue: The Royal Society

With Stephen Fry and Professor Brian Cox, and moderated by Merton's Emeritus Fellow, Robert, Lord May of Oxford

[MORE INFO](#)

24th May | Organ Concert by James O'Donnell (Organist of Westminster Abbey)
Venue: Chapel

[MORE INFO](#)

31st May | Summer Eights Dinner in Hall | Venue: Merton College
Dinner will follow the conclusion of Men's and Women's Summer Viii's and will be preceded by a drinks reception from 6:45pm on the Sundial Lawn.

All Mertonians and their guests are welcome.

[MORE INFO](#)

JUNE

6th June | Founder's Society meeting | Venue: Merton College
For Old Members who have indicated a legacy pledge to the College.

7th June | Organ Concert by the Reed Rubin Director of Music and Organist Benjamin Nicholas (Merton College) | Venue: Chapel

[MORE INFO](#)

8th June | Pentecost Eucharist and Dinner | Venue: Merton College

[MORE INFO](#)

28th June | 750th Anniversary Summer Ball | Venue: Merton College
All Mertonians and their guests are welcome to join us for the spectacular Anniversary Ball, in celebration of the rich history of Merton College. Dining and non-dining tickets are available.

[MORE INFO](#)