



A MERRY CHRISTMAS FROM MERTON!

With 2015 drawing to a close, the Warden's annual Christmas letter is now available to read online. As Sir Martin explains, this year we learnt that Merton follows a landmark anniversary year with energy and enthusiasm:

"After only the briefest of hiatuses, College life in Merton's 751st year returned to its usual pace in no time at all. And Merton's pace is, as it has

always been, brisk and energetic – for the Fellowship, our students and alumni."

So, to round up 2015, and as a small Christmas 'thank you' gift for all the Mertonians and friends of the College who have given Merton its unceasing energy, the College has released a new Christmas video, produced in collaboration with Nice Tree Films.

A Merton version of a Christmas classic,

students, staff and Fellows all jumped right into the festive spirit. Look out for appearances from the Warden, Senior Tutor, Chaplain, Domestic Bursar and Librarian, as well as some other faces that will be familiar to Mertonians, old and new. ♥

[READ THE WARDEN'S LETTER &](#)

[WATCH THE CHRISTMAS VIDEO](#)



**COLLEGE NEWS:
MERTON GARDENS WIN
GOLD PRIZE**

[Page 2](#)



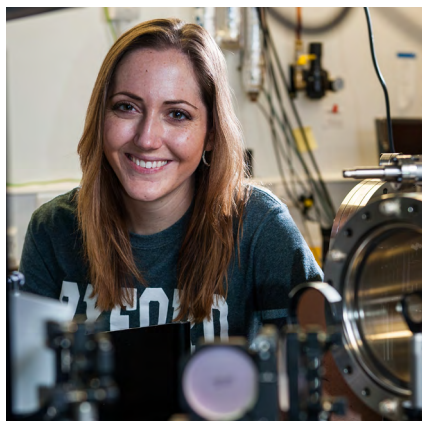
**OLD MERTONIAN NEWS:
SINGING TO SAVE
THE FORESTS OF THE
COMOROS**

[Page 4](#)



**DEVELOPMENT NEWS:
REACH OXFORD SCHOLAR
ARRIVES AT MERTON**

[Page 5](#)



Jena Meinecke. Photograph © John Cairns
(www.johncairns.co.uk)

STUDENT WINS INSTITUTE OF PHYSICS PRIZE

Jena Meinecke (2011) – currently a fifth year candidate for a DPhil in Atomic and Laser Physics – was awarded the Institute of Physics' Very Early Career Female Physicist award in December. The award, given by the IOP's Women in Physics Group, recognises both research and outreach work.

Jena's team's work with plasmas and magnetic fields placed them in *Physics World* magazine's top 10 breakthroughs of 2014. Jena also works on outreach projects, helping to found the Oxford Women in Physics Society which supports women in the field with mentoring, informal events and a conference. 🏆

[READ MORE](#)



The Merton garden team with their award
(From left: David, Gwyn, Lucille and Mike)

MERTON GARDENS ARE GOLDEN IN BLOOM

Merton's gardeners took home the Gold in the 2015 Oxford in Bloom competition this year, for an outstanding display by the universities and colleges.

Their success also helped Oxford win Gold in the national City in Bloom competition, meaning that Oxford and Merton will now represent the Thames and Chiltern region in the national Britain in Bloom competition.

Congratulations to the whole team! 🏆

[READ MORE](#)

STRING OF PRIZES FOR MERTON CHEMISTS

Merton chemists have been bringing home a string of prizes and awards this term. Junior Research Fellow Dr Michael Booth won the Biochemistry, Genetics and Molecular Biology category at the Scopus Young Researcher Awards in November for his work developing synthetic light-sensitive cells and tissues.

In addition, Tutor in Organic Chemistry Professor Véronique Gouverneur was awarded the 2016 Tetrahedron Chair and will deliver a one-day course at the 15th Belgian Organic Synthesis Symposium (BOSS XV).

[READ MORE](#)

Chemistry undergraduate Yining Yang (2013) was also a winner, taking home the University's SAB Miller prize in October for achieving first place in her second-year Part IA exams. 🏆

[READ MORE](#)



Professor Zitzmann receives her Ebola Medal.
Photograph courtesy of The Department of Biochemistry, University of Oxford.

EBOLA MEDAL FOR PROFESSOR NICOLE ZITZMANN

Professor Nicole Zitzmann, Research Fellow and Lecturer in Biochemistry, was awarded the Ebola Medal for Service in West Africa in October. The medal was presented by the University's Vice Chancellor, Professor Andrew Hamilton, during a ceremony at the Department of Biochemistry.

The medal was created by the UK Government for military and civilian personnel who worked during the Ebola crisis on behalf of the UK in West Africa. It has been awarded to over 3,000 people who risked their lives in the outbreak. Professor Zitzmann volunteered in a diagnostic lab in Sierra Leone in March and April this year (more about which can be read in *The Merton Record and Postmaster* 2015). 🏆

[READ MORE](#)

PROFESSOR JAMES BINNEY AWARDED 2015 OCCHIALINI MEDAL

Merton's Professorial Fellow in Physics James Binney FRS was presented with the Occhialini Medal and Prize for 2015 by the Società Italiana di Fisica (Italian Physical Society) in Rome in September for his work on galaxy dynamics.

The SIF, along with the Institute of Physics in the UK, award the medal every year in honour of Giuseppe Occhialini. 🏆

[READ MORE](#)



**MERTON
COLLEGE
OXFORD**

Merton College
Oxford
OX1 4JD

Telephone +44 (0)1865 276310
www.merton.ox.ac.uk

Edited by
Catherine Farfan, Christine
Taylor, Helen Kingsley and
Philippa Logan



Photograph © Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew

MICHAEL FARADAY PRIZE FOR PROFESSOR KATHY WILLIS

Supernumerary Fellow Professor Kathy Willis was awarded the 2015 Michael Faraday Prize and Lecture by the Royal Society in July this year, for her excellent work in science communication. As winner of the prize, she will deliver a lecture at the Society in January. Previous winners include Richard Dawkins, Robert Winston, Brian Cox and David Attenborough.

Kathy is currently on secondment as Director of Science at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew. She was interviewed by Jim Al-Khalili for BBC Radio 4's 'The Life Scientific' on 10 November. 🍷

[READ MORE](#)



The UK team in Indonesia, with Sandor Kruk far right.

MERTONIAN LEADS UK TEAM TO SUCCESS AT ASTRONOMY OLYMPIAD

Astrophysics DPhil student Sandor Kruk (2014) helped lead the UK team that won two silver medals at the International Olympiad on Astronomy and Astrophysics in August.

The UK team made its debut this year at the annual competition for secondary school pupils from around the world, held in Central Java in Indonesia. 210 students from 41 countries competed in the 2015 Olympiad, and the UK team (coached by Sandor and Charles Barclay of Marlborough College) came tenth in the medal table and second in the Team Competition after India. 🍷

[READ MORE](#)



Photograph: Neil Palmer, CCAFS

STUDENTS TAKE WATER SCARCITY FILM TO VENICE

Graduate students Cayenna Ponchione (2011), Jessica Thorn (2010) and Benedict Morrison (1999) took their film on water scarcity solutions – *Art, Science & the Thirsty World* – to *AQUAE Venezia 2015*, where it featured as a video installation in the exhibition 'Visualising Water Worlds'.

The film brings together arts and sciences academics with practitioners to explore creative, innovative and trans-disciplinary solutions to water scarcity. Cayenna, a Music DPhil student, co-directed the film; Benedict, who is studying for a DPhil in English, is the film's narrator; and Jessica, a DPhil Zoology student, provided many of the field recordings and still images. 🍷

[READ MORE](#)

PROFESSOR APPOINTED MEMBER OF EUROPEAN WORKING GROUP

Jennifer Payne, Professor of Corporate Finance Law, has been appointed a member of the Consultative Working Group of the European Securities and Markets Authority (ESMA)'s Corporate Finance Standing Committee. ESMA is one of three European supervisory authorities established in the wake of the financial crisis, and its remit is to improve the functioning of financial markets in Europe, strengthen investor protection and support cooperation across the EU. 🍷

[READ MORE](#)



Professor Zilber (second left) with fellow 2015 LMS prizewinners.
Photograph © London Mathematical Society

PROFESSOR BORIS ZILBER RECEIVES PÓLYA PRIZE

At November's Annual General Meeting of the London Mathematical Society, Professor of Mathematical Logic Boris Zilber was presented with the 2015 Pólya Prize for his 'visionary contribution to model theory and its applications'. The prize is awarded 'in recognition of outstanding creativity in, imaginative exposition of, or distinguished contribution to, mathematics'. 🍷

[READ MORE](#)

MERTON HOSTS CARA ACADEMIC FROM WAR-TORN SYRIA

Merton hit the headlines in the summer when it welcomed an academic from Syria through CARA (Council for At-Risk Academics). CARA arranges for promising academics displaced through war or oppression to be placed in a host university in the UK. The College has taken in several academics through its history, including the biochemist Professor Sir George Radda who fled Hungary in the 1950s. 🍷

[FIND OUT MORE ABOUT CARA](#)

MERTON FELLOW SETS UP GEORGIAN PERIODICALS FOR THE DIGITAL AGE

Ever fancied reading your 18th- and 19th-century periodicals as they were originally published? Merton Junior Research Fellow in English Dr Will Bowers has set up a free online service that allows readers to take in classics in regular installments.

Dr Bowers' research focuses on Romantic English literature from the late-18th and early-19th centuries. He says about the project:

"Journal•Lists is designed to rediscover the practice of reading in installments. We think authors like Boswell, Addison and Lamb are undeservedly forgotten and are much more likely to be read if taken in small doses."

Journal•Lists sends subscribers installments of classic Georgian periodicals such as *The Tatler* and Boswell's tour of the Hebrides straight into their inboxes, recreating the original experience of their first readers. 🍷

[FIND OUT MORE ABOUT JOURNAL•LISTS](#)

OLD MERTONIAN NEWS



Sir Andrew John Wiles by Rupert Alexander, 2015
© National Portrait Gallery, London

NEW PORTRAIT OF PROFESSOR SIR ANDREW WILES (1971) UNVEILED

A new portrait of the mathematician Professor Sir Andrew Wiles (1971) – best known for solving Fermat's Last Theorem in 1993 and for whom Oxford University's new Mathematics building was named in 2013 – was unveiled at the National Portrait Gallery in July.

The portrait was specially commissioned from the London artist Rupert Alexander, who has also painted portraits of the Royal Family. One of the five sittings for the portrait took place here at Merton, and it is currently on display in Room 38 of the National Portrait Gallery in London. 🍷

[FIND OUT MORE](#)



Hugh Doulton (far right) explains the work of NGO Dahari to the Governor of the Comoro island of Anjouan. Photograph © Dahari

SINGING TO SAVE THE FORESTS OF THE COMOROS

A new crowdfunding campaign to save the forests of the Comoros has just been launched under the guiding eye of Hugh Doulton (2003). The campaign brings together well-known Comorian musicians to help the local NGO Dahari to conserve the Comoros' forests, which saw the world's highest rate of deforestation between 2000 and 2010.

Hugh first went out to the Comoros in his second year at Merton, leading a team of five students to investigate the causes and consequences of deforestation on the islands. The project – part-funded by Merton – won two international and national prizes. After graduating he returned to the islands. 🍷

[FIND OUT MORE](#)

MICHAEL JARY (1982) NAMED AMONG TOP 100 LGBT EXECUTIVES

Michael Jary (1982) was named as one of the OUTstanding/*Financial Times* leading 100 LGBT executives 2015 in October.

Michael is a Senior Partner in OC&C Strategy Consultants, which has 600 consultants across 14 countries, and a Non-Executive Director of Nationwide Building Society. He is also a board level sponsor of SOLCATS, Nationwide's LGBT network, for whom he speaks regularly at networking events. 🍷

[FIND OUT MORE](#)

JULIET DAVENPORT (1986) TALKS PHYSICS AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Juliet Davenport OBE (1986) spoke to the University's Alumni Office for their eNewsletter *Oxford Today* in June about renewable energy and how her studies in physics at Merton shaped her career today. Juliet is the CEO and founder of the leading renewable electricity supplier Good Energy. During the interview Juliet also described how she balanced her love of lacrosse with her studies while at Oxford. 🍷

[LISTEN TO THE INTERVIEW](#)

DEVELOPMENT NEWS

“When I heard that I had been selected as Reach Oxford Scholar, it felt like my dreams had come true.”

Uros Ristivojevic
(2015, BA Physics)
Reach Oxford Scholar

REACH OXFORD SCHOLAR ARRIVES AT MERTON COLLEGE

Merton welcomed its first Reach Oxford Scholar this Michaelmas Term. Uros Ristivojevic arrived from Serbia with his fellow first years in October to take his BA in Physics.

The Reach Scholarship was created by the Oxford University Student Union in 1990 to give highly able students from low-income countries the opportunity to benefit from a world-class Oxford education, and has been a life-changing experience for its scholars since its creation. It is made possible through the collaboration of the University, the colleges and JCRs.

The Merton JCR first discussed providing a Merton Reach Scholarship in 2011, and in 2013 they began to fundraise in earnest. The Scholarship is funded jointly by the University, the College (which pays 40% of the scholar's tuition fees and 50% of their living costs) and the Merton JCR. To date the Merton JCR have raised four fifths of their target through voluntary battle contributions, and the College has £49,000 of its £56,300 target still to raise.

Without the Merton Reach Scholarship, as Uros explains, his aspiration to come to Oxford and study Physics would have been an impossible dream:

“Even before I received an offer to study physics at Oxford, I had known that, even with the financial resources of my whole family, I would not be able to pay even 1% of the tuition fees. I have wanted to study physics since primary school, but at home there isn't the equipment or the resources for me to study to my full potential.”

“When I heard that I had been selected as Reach Oxford Scholar, it felt like my dreams had come true. It is enabling me to study the subject that I love at one of the best universities in the world at the highest possible level.”

Your support can really make a difference. For more information about the Scholarship, please contact Sarah Jones, Development Officer at sarah.jones2@merton.ox.ac.uk. ♥

[FIND OUT MORE](#)



THE ANNUAL FUND, 2015-16

The College launched the 2015-16 Annual Fund Appeal in October this year. Merton is committed to providing outstanding teaching and resources for the most able undergraduate and graduate students, regardless of their background. Its graduate students are involved in world-class research, the undergraduate population achieve above and beyond in their studies, and the Merton Fellowship continues to win prizes both for superb teaching and for ground-breaking research.

Each year the Annual Fund provides a vital source of regular income to Merton, which is used directly to support the work of the Merton community. So far, almost £40,000 has been raised in response to the Annual Fund brochure, and we'd like to say thank you to everyone who has been involved! We hope that many more of you will consider joining in to support the College this year.

This year's priorities include:

- **Undergraduate Student Support** (the Merton-Oxford Bursaries)
- **Graduate Scholarships**
- **General Student Support**, including hardship grants
- **The Tutorial System**, in particular, endowing a Law Fellowship
- **Buildings and Facilities**, including renovating and updating the Boat House

We hope that many of you will enjoy hearing more about this year's Annual Fund during the annual Merton Telephone Campaign, which is taking place in April 2016. More information about this will be sent in the New Year. ♥

[DOWNLOAD THE 2015-16 ANNUAL FUND BROCHURE](#)

EVENTS CALENDAR

ALUMNI EVENTS CALENDAR: JANUARY TO APRIL 2016



JANUARY 2016

17 January | Epiphany Carol Service | Venue: Merton College Chapel

[MORE INFO](#)

FEBRUARY

2 February | Merton in the City Association Meeting 2016
Speaker: Roger Bootle (1970) | Venue: Natixis Banking, 25 Dowgate Hill, London

[MORE INFO](#)

20 February | Memorial service for Dr Nigel Veitch (1984)
Venue: Merton College Chapel

[MORE INFO](#)

23 February | Choir Concert | Venue: Temple Church, London
followed by a private drinks reception for Mertonians

[MORE INFO](#)

MARCH

8 March | The Merton Equality Conversation 2016
Speaker: Peter Tatchell on 'Legal equality is important - but not enough'
Venue: TS Eliot Theatre, Merton College

[MORE INFO](#)

18 - 20 March | Passiontide at Merton | Venue: Merton College

[MORE INFO](#)

24 & 25 March | Concert: Mozart's *Requiem*
Venue: Auditorium St-Pierre-des-Cuisines, Toulouse, France

[MORE INFO](#)

31 March | Spring Golf Meeting | Venue: Newbury & Crookham Golf Club

APRIL

8 - 10 April | MC3 Weekend and Annual General Meeting in Washington, DC
The Saturday evening dinner will be held in The Cosmos Club

[MORE INFO](#)

15 April | Inter-Collegiate Alumni Golf Tournament
Venue: Frilford Heath Golf Club

[MORE INFO](#)

16 April | Gaudy for the years 1982 to 1986 | Venue: Merton College

[MORE INFO](#)

MERTONIANS IN ASIA GET TOGETHER

The Development Office were delighted to host several get-togethers for Mertonians in East Asia this term to coincide with Development Director Christine Taylor's trip to the region. Dinners were held in Singapore, Hong Kong, Shanghai and Beijing, and they proved to be a wonderful opportunity to catch up with old friends and make new ones. 🍷

