



MERTON  
COLLEGE  
OXFORD

# Newsletter

2014

**Uncovering  
Merton's  
history for  
the 750th  
Anniversary**

**Stephen Fry  
and Professor  
Brian Cox  
have a Merton  
Conversation**

**Keep secrets  
safe with  
Professor Artur  
Ekert's quantum  
cryptography**



## CONTENTS

### FROM THE WARDEN 3

### NEWS IN PICTURES 4

### COLLEGE NEWS 6

A round-up of news from Fellows and Mertonians, and an update on recent College events.

### UNCOVERING MERTON'S HISTORY 13

Merton@750 Project Officer, Catherine Farfan, tells the story of the Anniversary Archive Project so far.

### FEATURED FELLOW | QUANTUM OF SOLACE: ENDING THE BATTLE BETWEEN THE CODE-MAKERS AND BREAKERS 15

Merton's Professorial Fellow in Quantum Physics and Cryptography, Artur Ekert, talks us through how his research is helping keep secrets safe.

### HIGHER EDUCATION NEWS | ENGAGING WITH THE EQUALITY CHALLENGE 16

Senior Tutor, Dr Catherine Paxton, explains how Merton is contributing to the equality debate in Higher Education.

### BOOKS | ONCE UPON A TIME 18

Merton Emeritus Professor of English Literature John Carey allows us a sneak peek of his memoir, *An Unexpected Professor*.

### BOOKS | THE MERTON READING LIST 19

Which of our eight shortlisted Merton-themed books have you read?

### SUSTAINING EXCELLENCE | DIGGING DEEP 20

Director of Development, Christine Taylor, talks us through the final stages of the College's £30m *Sustaining Excellence* campaign.

### DEVELOPMENT NEWS 22

Updates on the Annual Fund and NetCommunity for alumni.

### DEVELOPMENT NEWS | CELEBRATING 750 YEARS 23

A look back at Merton's social calendar this academic year so far, from Alumni Relations Manager, Helen Kingsley.

### FORTHCOMING EVENTS 24

Two pages of must-do College events, for the 750th Anniversary Year.

### 60 SECONDS WITH... SENIOR PROCTOR DR KATE BLACKMON 26

We ask Merton Fellow Dr Kate Blackmon some questions about her new role as Senior Proctor for the University.

### FAQs 27

The Development Office answers some frequently asked questions.

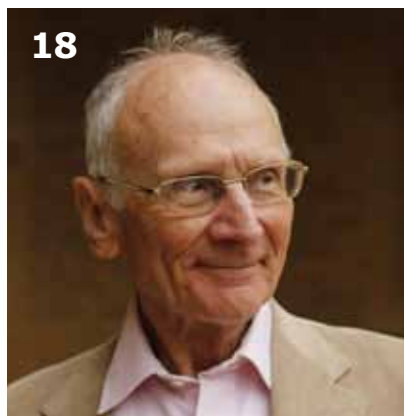


Image: John Cairns

## Newsletter

Suggestions for news items to go in this year's edition of *Postmaster and the Merton Record* should be sent to Merton's Communications Officer, at [publications@merton.ox.ac.uk](mailto:publications@merton.ox.ac.uk)

Download online:  
[www.merton.ox.ac.uk/  
alumni-and-friends/  
publications](http://www.merton.ox.ac.uk/alumni-and-friends/publications)

Cover photo: John Cairns



**MERTON  
COLLEGE**  
O X F O R D

## FROM THE WARDEN

Image: John Cairns



The Warden with Stephen Fry, prior to the fourth Merton Conversation, at the Royal Society in London, this May.

Merton's 750th Anniversary Year is well and truly here! It is hard to believe that we are nearly half way through the special calendar of Celebrations: from reunions with Mertonians in East Asia and New York to a special audience with the Crown Prince; from a wonderful programme of musical events to the Merton Conversation series; from a first Equality Conference to the installation of Merton's first female Senior Proctor – it has all been an absolute joy!

It was particularly special to return on 15 May to the Royal Society, where I was Vice-President for five years, for the star-studded Merton Conversation with Stephen Fry and Professor Brian Cox moderated by former President of the Royal Society, Lord Robert May of Oxford. We now look forward to two remaining Merton Conversations with equally well-known celebrities: with The Rt Hon Sir Brian Leveson (1967) and Shami Chakrabarti on 'Liberty' on 7 October and Sir Alec Jeffreys (1968) and Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe (1988) on 'The Real Science Behind CSI' on 11 November, both in London.

As I write, there is a small number of tickets left for our pinnacle events of the year: the Anniversary Ball on 28 June and the Birthday Weekend from 12 to 14 September (pp24-25). If you haven't booked, please do! It would be wonderful to see as many Mertonians as possible sharing in these once-in-a-lifetime celebrations together.

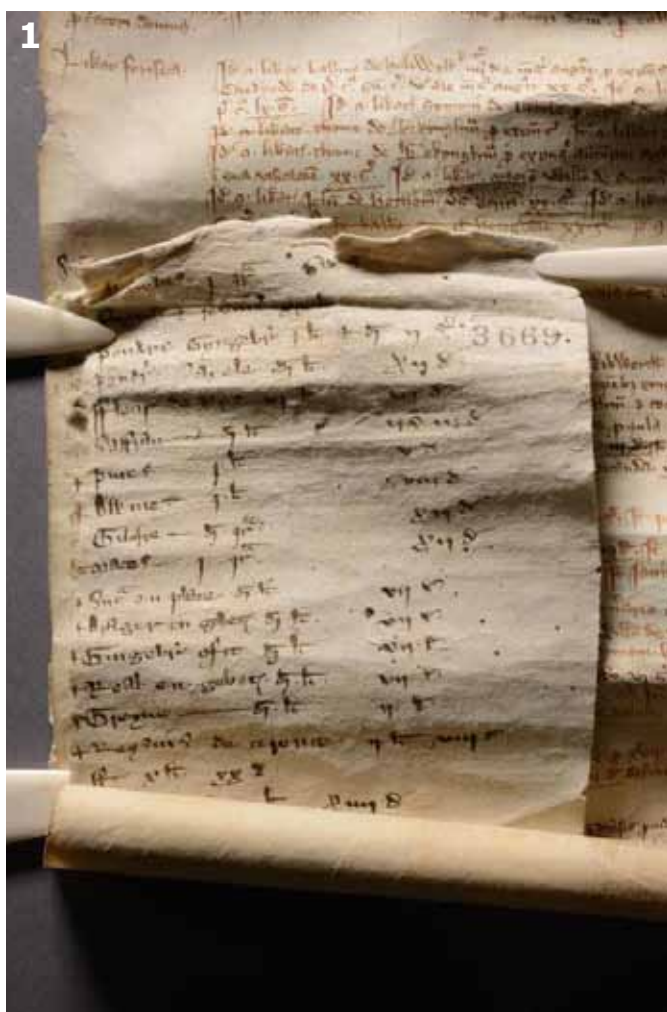
You can read about progress with the College's 750th Anniversary Campaign: *Sustaining Excellence* on p20. Thank you so much for your incredible generosity which has enabled us to complete so many projects thus far. We have just £1 million to go to reach the target of £30 million! I am sure that the Merton Family will get behind this challenge and enable us to reach it comfortably by the end of December. Last year 35% of Mertonians contributed to the College, giving us the second highest participation rate of any Oxford college. This year (August 2013 - July 2014), I have set the new challenge of 40% – a worthy target indeed for Walter de Merton's 750-year-old College!

In this special 750th Anniversary Newsletter you will, of course, be able to read about academic excellence on behalf of both students and Fellows in subjects ranging from international law to retinal gene therapy and from classics to quantum physics. In Merton's 750th Anniversary Year it is fitting that we celebrate the achievements of the College over its long history, but also that we mark some significant beginnings for the future.

**Professor Sir Martin Taylor**



## NEWS IN PICTURES



### 1. THE OLDEST PAPER IN OXFORD

The Library and Archives team was excited to rediscover possibly the oldest piece of paper in Oxford, dating from 1335. Its existence was noted in the nineteenth century but, unfortunately, before the archives were listed in detail. Since it is but one of several thousand medieval documents, its recovery had proved elusive. It was identified by conservators Jane Eagan and Andrew Honey during preparation of items for our spring library exhibition, 'Merton 1264'. It is one of a number of supporting documents attached to the account roll of John de Viliers, Bursar in 1334-5, and comprises a list of luxury foodstuffs, including rice, sugar, spices and dried fruit. Since paper-making was not introduced to northern

Europe until the late fourteenth century, it may have come from Italy, France or Spain, or perhaps even the eastern Mediterranean.

### 2. PIPING IN THE HAGGIS AT MERTON

Mr Ian Knight, Merton's Accommodation and Conferences Porter, welcomed Mertonians to dinner on Burns Night with his bagpipes. In a past life, Ian served in the Black Watch and regularly graced the Edinburgh Tattoo with his piping as part of the regimental band.

### 3. HOW TO BOTTLE SUCCESS: MERTON'S NEW BEER

Our Bar Manager Dave Hedges has taken delivery of the first cases of Merton Ale,



Image: John Cairns

brewed especially to celebrate our 750th Anniversary Year by the White Horse Brewery in Stanford-in-the-Vale. Merton's Ale is a light zesty beer, crisp on the palate with a smooth citrus finish and is now on sale in the bar and at College events, priced at £2.50 a bottle.

### 4. CONVERSATION STARTERS

A packed T S Eliot Theatre enjoyed a wonderful evening of stimulating and varied debate on 'China and the West - Culture and Society' in the first Merton Conversation on home soil. Special thanks go to Professor Dame Jessica Rawson and Lord Patten of Barnes for a most fascinating discussion, expertly moderated by Professor Rana Mitter.



Image: Jeremy Moeran

## 5. MERTON RUNS FOR MUSCULAR DYSTROPHY

Congratulations to all the Merton College finishers in the 2014 Oxford Town and Gown 10k run, especially JCR President 2013-14, Christian Ruckteschler (2012), who came in with the best Merton time, of 41:09. A great race for a great cause!

## 6. KATE BLACKMON INSTALLED AS SENIOR PROCTOR

Dr Kate Blackmon was admitted as the University of Oxford's new Senior Proctor on Wednesday 19 March, alongside Junior Proctor, Dr Hubert Ertl of Linacre, and Assessor, Dr Paul Martin of Wadham. Turn to p26 to read our interview with her.

## 7. MATTERS OF GLOBAL IMPORTANCE

Since Dr Julia Amos' return to College from maternity leave, the Global Directions research group has been treated to a packed schedule of lectures from leading experts, dealing with issues of international importance from chemical weapons, to India's nuclear power. Professor Rosemary Hollis of the Olive Tree programme, pictured above with Dr Julia Amos (left), gave a talk on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The Olive Tree programme is an initiative to support young Palestinians and Israelis so that they can become effective leaders and 'change agents' in their communities, to mutual benefit. Global Directions events are public - go to [www.facebook.com/globaldirections](http://www.facebook.com/globaldirections) for more information.

## 8. BARONESS JAMES SPEAKS AT THE BODLEY CLUB

A crowded and hushed MCR assembled to hear Baroness (PD) James of Holland Park, OBE, FRSA, FRSL, deliver her after-dinner talk entitled 'Murder and mystery: the craft of the detective story'. As one of Britain's most cherished authors, Baroness James' notable titles include *Children of Men* (see p19), *Death of an Expert Witness*, and the Adam Dalgliesh series.

Do you have any interesting College photos that you would like to share with us? Send them to [publications@merton.ox.ac.uk](mailto:publications@merton.ox.ac.uk)



## COLLEGE NEWS

### Fellows' Prizes, Awards and Elections

Tutorial Fellow in Management Studies, **Dr Kate Blackmon**, has been elected as the Senior Proctor of the University for 2014-15. Read our interview with her on p26.

Junior Research Fellow, **Dr Abi Adams**, is one of five young Oxford economists selected to attend the fifth Lindau Meeting of the Laureates of the Sveriges Riksbank Prize in Economic Sciences this year. The meeting provides a venue for the open exchange of economic expertise and inspires cross cultural and inter generational encounters among economists from all over the world, including 20 Nobel Laureates.



Professor in Physics, **Professor Simon Hooker** (pictured above), 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.

Merton Supernumerary Fellow **Professor Frances Platt** has been appointed as a Royal Society Wolfson Research Merit Award holder for her work on the understanding of lysosomal disorders.

### Clinical trial gives hope for blindness gene therapy cure



The results are in for the first clinical trial of Bodley Fellow Professor Robert MacLaren's pioneering retinal gene therapy. Nine patients with choroideremia, a rare inherited eye disease, were treated over a period of six months. Prof MacLaren said: 'It is still too early to know if the gene therapy treatment will last indefinitely, but we can say that the vision improvements have been maintained for as long as we have been following up the patients, which is two years in one case... This has huge implications for anyone with a genetic retinal disease - such as age-related macular degeneration or retinitis pigmentosa - because it has for the first time shown that gene therapy can be applied safely before the onset of vision loss'.

### How tomato plants can help us understand law



'A tomato plant moved from one place to another is still a tomato plant, but how it gets on afterwards depends on the soil, temperature, wildlife and so on in its new home,' Mindy Chen-Wishart explains. And so, using this analogy, the Merton Fellow and Tutor in Law goes on to explore the subject of the 'Legal transplant' - the prevalent practice of transplanting law from one legal system into another.

Her paper, 'Legal transplant and undue influence: Lost in translation or a working misunderstanding?', was proclaimed the best paper published in the *International & Comparative Law*

*Quarterly* (ICLQ) in 2013. In Mindy's case study she looks at the transplant of the English doctrine of undue influence into Singaporean law. Comparing Western and Confucian value systems - hierarchy versus equality, the positional versus the personal, and collectivism versus individualism - she emphasises the importance of understanding the deeply entrenched assumptions of one's own legal system, and those of other cultures. She added that with the 'changing of the guard' on the world stage, from the West to the East, this is a particularly important time to engage with the Eastern perspective.

As a result of the paper's success, Mindy was asked to deliver the fourth Annual ICLQ Lecture on 20 May in London.

## The two cultures of Stephen Fry and Professor Brian Cox



Image: John Cairns

On a sunny spring evening, Mertonians made their way from across the UK to the capital for our first London-based Merton Conversation of the year, on 15 May. In this, the fourth in Merton's series of six anniversary lectures, Emeritus Fellow and former President of the Royal Society, Lord May of Oxford, oversaw an engaging, thought-provoking and often entertaining discussion between two of Britain's best-loved television personalities who, as 'Bob' May began, 'truly need no introduction': the broadcaster and comedian Stephen Fry and the physicist and presenter Professor Brian Cox.

The Royal Society, where some of the most fundamental and life-changing discoveries in scientific history have been made, provided a most fitting backdrop for the ensuing conversation, which dealt with British chemist C P Snow's book, *The Two Cultures*, and ruminated on the gulf between scientific and literary circles. Fry, who proclaimed himself 'no kind of a scientist but [someone with] an insatiable curiosity', made a resounding point in that, although Keats is one of the nineteenth century's great historical figures, almost nobody has heard of James Clerk Maxwell, the man who united electricity, light and magnetism. When 'we understand how extraordinarily

**If you try to separate the two cultures then you cut yourself off from significant scientific, observational discoveries that inform very powerfully our view of ourselves – Prof Brian Cox**

more important Maxwell is than Keats... (and the point is, we can have them *both*)' he explained '*then* there really will be... a conversation about the two cultures.' From the communication of scientific work, the 'science' of the human heart, to the question of other intelligent life in the Universe and mankind's responsibility within this model: the conversation was lively and thought-provoking, continuing well into the evening over drinks and canapés. Our greatest thanks to all involved in putting on a wonderful evening of debate.

On 7 October, The Rt Hon Sir Brian Leveson (1967) and Shami Chakrabarti will discuss 'Liberty', at BAFTA in London. If you have missed our Merton Conversations so far, selected recordings are being made public throughout the year.

Browse our videos online or book for forthcoming events at [www.merton.ox.ac.uk/merton-conversations](http://www.merton.ox.ac.uk/merton-conversations).

## Farewell to Fellows

This summer Merton says goodbye to three long standing Fellows who will all retire: Guy Goodwin, who has been Professor of Psychiatry at Merton since 1996; David Norbrook, Merton Professor of English Literature since 2002; and Simon Wren Lewis, Tutor in Economics since 2007. Professor Goodwin and Professor Norbrook shared some of their Merton memories and plans with us:

### What is your favourite Merton memory?

**GG:** Undoubtedly getting off a plane from the USA and, in a sleep deprived fog, getting a double hat trick of Old Mertonian batsmen in a cricket match on the Christ Church ground during a Merton Weekend.

**DN:** Visiting the old Archives room to see the book where new Fellows had entered their names - I was in volume 2 but volume 1 included both John Wycliffe and my predecessor John Carey - an amazing tradition!

### What is next for you?

**GG:** I will continue to run my research group looking at the neurobiology and treatment of bipolar disorder, until I really retire.

**DN:** I shall be moving to Baltimore where my wife, Sharon Achinstein, will be taking up a chair in English at Johns Hopkins University. Our children are aged 10 and 12 and this is a good time for them to move. I shall continue with my work on Lucy Hutchinson and other aspects of early modern literature, and shall return frequently to the UK where so many of my research sources are located, so I hope to keep in good touch with Merton.

## COLLEGE NEWS

### From top reads to table tennis: a typical history reading party



Merton history finalists and their tutors visited Cornwall in March for their annual reading party. The first history reading party was held in Salcombe in 1953; since 1986, its venue has been Treharrock, a Georgian house near Port Isaac.

The reading party helps undergraduates to prepare for finals by reading and discussing recently-published history books. Among this year's picks were Anthony Pagden's *The Enlightenment and Why it Still Matters*, Geoffrey Parker's *Global Crisis: War, Climate Change and Catastrophe in the Seventeenth Century*, and *Why Can the Dead do Such Great Things? Saints and Worshippers from the Martyrs to the Reformation* by Robert Bartlett. Suitably local colour was provided by Guy Halsall's *Worlds of Arthur: Facts and Fictions of the Dark Ages*.

Away from the seminar room, this year's diversions included trips to Arthur's Tintagel and Rick Stein's Padstow, a yomp over Bodmin Moor with retired Merton tutor Philip Waller, and the annual table tennis contest between Dr Steven Gunn's team and the finalists, who chalked up a rare victory over their tutor.

## Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe gives Halsbury Lecture



The Halsbury Society Annual Lecture is a particular highlight of Hilary Term. This year Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe (1988) spoke on 'The challenges of policing London'. After graduating with a degree in Law from Merton College, our speaker embarked on his policing career in the South Yorkshire Police Service working in a variety of areas. By 1997 he had become the Assistant Chief Constable of Merseyside Police and became Assistant Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police Service in 2001.

Sir Bernard once said in a speech to the Police Superintendents' Association of England and Wales that: 'particularly when times are difficult, there's the opportunity for leaders to make a difference.' Bearing in mind these difficult times, Sir Bernard spoke of the numerous challenges that come with being responsible for the safety of the UK's capital and one of the world's largest police services, as well as the way he seeks to make a real difference with his vision of Total Policing.

The lecture was followed by a dinner sponsored by Slaughter and May, which the whole Society attended. It was a great chance to talk with Sir Bernard about his ideas in this informal setting. It was also wonderful to have so many distinguished academics present, many of whom have strong links with Merton through teaching.

**Tristan Cummings (2012),  
President of the Halsbury Society  
2013-14**

## Fellows far and wide

**Many Merton Fellows have been invited to speak and share their research both at home and also at world class institutions outside Oxford. Here are a few examples of recent lectures, given by our prominent Fellows.**

**Professor James Binney** has delivered the 10th Dennis Sciamia Memorial Lecture this year; both in Oxford and at SISSA (Scuola Internazionale Superiore di Studi Avanzati) in Italy. His lecture, titled 'Galaxies and the intergalactic medium' is available to download at [www.podcasts.ox.ac.uk/people/james-binney](http://www.podcasts.ox.ac.uk/people/james-binney). Senior Research Fellow in

Philosophy, **Professor Gail Fine**, gave both the J.L. Ackrill Memorial Lecture in Oxford, as well as the Keeling Lecture at UCL, in March. Former Warden and Honorary Fellow, **Professor Dame Jessica Rawson**, was this year's Slade Lecturer at Cambridge University's Department of History of Art. As well as delivering this series of eight lectures in Hilary Term, entitled 'Warfare, beauty and belief: Innovations from the West that changed China's art and culture, 1500 BC - 1000 AD', Professor Rawson spoke on 'The Terracotta Warriors in the context of Eurasia: Origins and inspiration' for the 45th William Cohn Memorial Lecture, at the Ashmolean Museum in May.



## Students sustain excellence and are recognised by the University and beyond...

**The Merton Newsletter is delighted to announce the following prizes awarded to Merton undergraduates and graduates for their work:**

First year Jurisprudence undergraduate **Ian Simester** (2013) has been awarded the Slaughter and May Prize for Criminal Law, which recognises the best paper submitted in Law Moderations within the University of Oxford's Faculty of Law. **Daniel Schwennicke** (2012), a second year undergraduate reading Classics at Merton, has been awarded the 2014 Chancellor's Latin Prizes for both prose and verse, as well as this year's Classics Faculty's Latin reading competition. 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. MBA student **Daniel Drucker** (2013) was presented with the BNY Mellon MBA Achievement Award by the Saïd Business School in February 2014. **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 was unanimous in the view that Sarah's essay was 'outstanding'. Former DPhil student **Dr Edmund Highcock** (2009) 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. Dr Highcock is now a Junior Research Fellow at Magdalen College and has also recently won the EUROfusion Research Fellowship.

## View from the top



Students, Fellows and members of staff clambered the two spiral staircases to reach the top of the Chapel's tower on Ascension Day, 29 May. The Chapel service at the top of the tower is held to mark the day that the resurrected Jesus was taken up to Heaven. In recent years it has become so popular that two separate services have had to be held.

## Top picks from the Merton Messenger

Professorial Fellow in Mathematics, **Sir Andrew Wiles KBE FRS**, who became famous for proving Fermat's Last Theorem, was honoured last year with the naming of the Mathematical Institute's new centre, situated between Woodstock Road and Walton Street. The centre opened formally on 3 October. The Andrew Wiles Building provides workspace for more than 500 mathematical researchers and support staff, including faculty, research fellows and postgraduate students, and is a centre for the academic life of about 900 undergraduates.

This year the University of Oxford celebrates **40 years of co education**. As part of this anniversary, Brasenose, Hertford, Jesus, St Catherine's and Wadham colleges will be commemorating the impact that women have made on collegiate and university life with a series of alumni events and online resources. Go to [www.alumni.ox.ac.uk](http://www.alumni.ox.ac.uk) for more information

## Did you miss your termly installment of the Merton Messenger?

Make sure that you never miss another e bulletin just fill in the Update Form with your email address and return it to Merton's Development Office. You can catch up with back copies of Merton's e bulletin online at [www.merton.ox.ac.uk/alumni-and-friends/publications](http://www.merton.ox.ac.uk/alumni-and-friends/publications)

## COLLEGE NEWS

### Merton pilgrimage to Rome



A group of 11 members of Chapel community went on a pilgrimage to Rome at the end of last term. We stayed at the Monasterio San Gregorio, near the Colosseum. It was from this monastery's church that Pope Gregory the Great sent Augustine to England, and in which several Popes and Archbishops of Canterbury have prayed together.

As well as visiting some of the holy sites, the group met a number of Anglicans and Roman Catholics involved in ecumenical dialogue, and also attended a Papal audience. We are enormously grateful to those who welcomed us so warmly and offered generous hospitality. Among our hosts was Mertonian Mgr Philip Whitmore (1983), the Rector of the English College, who has accepted an invitation to preach at Merton next Hilary Term.

Above, Merton pilgrims are photographed outside the Monasterio San Gregorio and below, at the Colosseum in Rome.



### News from the Choir



Elgar's *Dream of Gerontius* was our first major musical event in the 750th celebrations, and was a sell-out in the Sheldonian Theatre. It was

an excellent opportunity for the Kodaly Choir to join forces with the College Choir, members of the Oxford Bach Choir and the Oxford Philomusica. An outstanding team of soloists, including Sarah Connolly, made this a memorable event.

The final concert of the Passiontide at Merton festival was Bach's *St Matthew Passion*, which provided an opportunity to invite back Dame Emma Kirkby to the Chapel she sang in as a student. A capacity crowd came to hear Dame Emma, James Oxley (the brilliant Evangelist), the College Choir and Oxford Baroque in this performance of Bach's masterpiece. Just three days

later, the College Choir flew to the USA for a tour of the East Coast. The Choir sang at the MC3 event in New York City, and then gave the US premiere of Gabriel Jackson's *Passion* jointly with the Choir of Trinity Wall Street and Novus NY, which was webcast live on the Trinity Church website. Further concerts followed in Philadelphia, and in Virginia at Williamsburg and Gloucester. We are grateful to Reed Rubin (1957) for making this tour possible.

Coming up this summer, there will be a charity performance of Tallis' *Spem in Alium* by the College Choir and the Choir of Jesus College, Cambridge, in Chapel on **Saturday 5 July** (book via [www.oxfordplayhouse.com/ticketsoxford](http://www.oxfordplayhouse.com/ticketsoxford)). You can catch the Choir singing Duruflé's *Requiem* on **Tuesday 8 July** at Gloucester Cathedral as part of the Cheltenham Music Festival (book via [www.cheltenhamfestivals.com](http://www.cheltenhamfestivals.com)).

**Benjamin Nicholas, Reed Rubin**  
Organist and Director of Music

### Early Merton relics on show



The exhibition 'Merton 1264' is in the Upper Library until the end of term. The items on display focus on aspects of early College history: the Founder, benefactors and others who made the foundation possible; the type of subjects studied by the early Fellows; the estates that supported the College and the ways in which the College administered its estates and its records; and a couple of rarely seen decorative artefacts from College buildings. Following on from this will be the exhibition 'Treasures and More', inspired by the recent publication of *Treasures of Merton College*. It will open throughout the summer for College tours, from 21 July, and will remain open during the Birthday Weekend and until the end of September.

## A 'doom flag', fundraising and (eventually!) some fun on the river for Merton's rowers



The rowers have again faced unexpected challenges from the elements this year, but kept up good spirits nonetheless. In Michaelmas we were pleased to welcome lots of new faces to the club, who quickly began developing a good technical basis for racing. We had some success at the Christ Church Regatta, entering a men's crew, a women's crew, and a mixed crew. Of these three, the women met with the most success, and should be congratulated for making it to the fourth round of racing. The other two crews also deserve credit for their commendable efforts in unfavourable conditions.

Unfortunately, much worse conditions persisted throughout Hilary Term, with the Isis remaining closed until eighth week, meaning that Torpids, along with all our planned water training, was cancelled. Those who spent the many weeks of rowing deprivation compulsively checking the OURCs' website were intrigued to learn that the highest level of flooding gets a 'doom flag' rating, black with a lightning bolt, one step higher than the dreaded 'red flag'. Both the men's squad, captained by Dominik Fischer (2012), and the



Images: John Cairns

women's squad, captained by Caitlin Armstrong (2012), took the opportunity to concentrate on land training, building our strength and stamina in anticipation of future competition. In Hilary Term we completed a 24-hour ergathon, organised by Tom Buckley (2011), the Boat Club's PR and Alumni Officer, with great success, raising around £1,500 for Alzheimer's Research UK and the Cheney Falcon Junior Rowing Club. At the time of writing, we are keen to put our fitness work into use at Summer Eights, together with the technical finesse we have been developing both in tank sessions during Hilary Term, and on the water in Trinity Term.

Looking further ahead, plans for extending the boathouse are proceeding rapidly. The Junior Committee was pleased to be shown the architects' plans by the Development Office, which certainly raised our enthusiasm for the project. We are very much looking forward to the plans being realised, and hope to see the Boat Club growing in strength in the years to come.

**Amanda Thomas (2012), Boat Club Secretary**

## The SCR takes part in Summer Eights

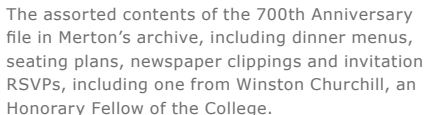


This year, the SCR entered its first boat in Summer Eights since 1971. In it were (above, from left): Supernumerary Fellow, Dr Simon Draper; Bodley Fellow, Dr Robert MacLaren; Associate Professor in Particle Physics, Alan Barr; Professor in Physics, Simon Hooker; cox Sara Wehlin (2010); Finance Bursar, Charles Alexander; Deputy Principal of Postmasters, David Llewellyn; Tutor in Ancient History, Dr Jonathan Prag; and Tutorial Fellow in Philosophy, Dr Ralf Bader.

## 60th anniversary of the Miracle Mile

On 6 May 1954, a 25-year old medical student, Roger Bannister (1950), made history by being the first man to run a sub four minute mile. Remembering the moment that he crossed the finish line, Sir Roger recounted: 'Everybody rushed on to the track... Then a couple of minutes later the announcement came... "As a result of Event Four, the One Mile, was the winner R.G. Bannister of Exeter and Merton Colleges... [in] a time of three minutes..." Then the whole of the track exploded and nobody heard the rest of the announcement.' Sir Roger published his autobiography *Twin Tracks* earlier this year.





# Are you coming to the Birthday Weekend (12-14 September)?

We will be holding drop-in and bookable sessions where you can bring in your contributions to be scanned and added to the Merton@750 Collection. There will also be the option to talk to our Archivist, Julian Reid, or Merton's Librarian, Dr Julia Walworth, about your items and your memories. Keep an eye out for more information in the Birthday Weekend programme, which will be sent out by email in advance.

Visit the Merton@750 Collection at [share.merton.ox.ac.uk](http://share.merton.ox.ac.uk) to upload your stories.

# Uncovering Merton's history



Photo of the 700th Anniversary Ball in 1964  
© Gillman & Soame [www.gsimagebank.co.uk/merton](http://www.gsimagebank.co.uk/merton)  
Login token merton2014



**Merton@750  
Project Officer,  
Catherine  
Farfan,  
tells the  
story of the  
Anniversary**

**Project - from dusty manila envelope to slick online operation - and retells some of the stories that the project has uncovered so far...**

When plans were starting to come together for this year's 750th Anniversary, College Archivist, Julian Reid, went searching for information on the last round of celebrations in 1964.

Neatly filed away in a thin manila folder was a small selection of 700th Anniversary programmes and a few official-looking photographs. These offered a tantalising glimpse into Merton's 1964 celebrations. Among other things, a scrap of paper, on it a rough sketch of a sheep-herding

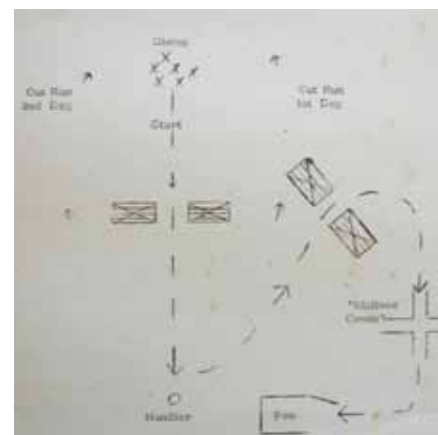
course (pictured right), was the only clue that Merton had hosted a dog trial demonstration by the College's tenant farmer on Merton Farm in Barkby, Leicestershire.

Sadly, this seemed to be a symptom of a wider dearth of material about College life in the archives from the past 50-60 years. Having met many Mertonians during their combined 25 years of service at Merton, both Julian and Merton's Librarian Dr Julia Walworth knew that there are a multitude of stories just waiting to be captured. And so the concept of the Anniversary Collection was born.

In 2012, a student competition was held to name this ambitious archive project. It was particularly fitting that 'Merton@750' was the winning entry, considering the College's ongoing development of its new website and presence on social media platforms such as Twitter and Facebook. Indeed, one of the main elements of the Merton@750 project has been and will continue to be how we tap into the endless

opportunities presented by the web and social media, using these new platforms to help us collect and share Merton stories all around the world.

The next chapter in the story of the Merton@750 project began when I joined the College as Project Officer in December 2013. Since the beginning of 2014, when the 750th Anniversary Year was welcomed in in style with an historic peal of 7,500 changes, I've been sharing some of Merton's stories, past







### Bumps and Baked Alaska, 1978

In February we were inspired by Mertonian Tucker Murphy's (2005) appearance in the Sochi Winter Olympics and decided to use the Merton Facebook page to explore other Mertonian Olympians. When we posted an image of the 1978 Merton 1st Eight, featuring John Bland (1976) who went on to row in Great Britain's coxless four in the 1984 Olympics, we weren't quite expecting the wonderful response we received. Chris Madell (1974), old Mertonian and cox of the 1st Eight, remembers very clearly the moment the photograph was taken: 'This was the last time Merton had four bumps in Division I. Obviously we were delighted. We had bumped before (or in) the Gut on the first three nights. And we knew that we could catch Lincoln, if they didn't get Balliol first. As we came out onto the Green Bank Balliol bumped out two in front. I remember saying to John "We've got them". Stroke by stroke we ground them down, and finally bumped between Merton's and Lincoln's boathouses. The Bump Supper was spectacular. Cheffie produced a magnificent meal, the *pièce de résistance* Baked Alaska, with pastry oars.'

and present, over the College's social media accounts. From pancakes (280 of them to be precise!) to Burns Night pipes, beautiful spring flowers in Merton's gardens to our landmark series of Merton Conversations, cake sales to Collections, we are recording every detail of College life this year. If you haven't already, I would definitely urge you to go online and 'like' Merton College's Facebook page and make sure you get a glimpse of this special Anniversary Year from behind the scenes.

As well as documenting this historic year for the College, Julian and I have been scouring the archives for interesting photos to share online. The response to these posts has surpassed expectations (you can read Mertonian Chris Madell's recollections of winning Summer Eights in 1978, above) and has prompted us to include an oral history recording element in the project, using student volunteers to interview old

Mertonians for our archives. This is already proving to be a fascinating exercise, giving us an insight into some of the more nuanced and subjective details of life at Merton over the past 50-60 years.

The main fruits of our labour, however, will be the Merton@750 Anniversary Collection, an online collection of memories and stories about Merton, collected and shared under the guidance of the University's RunCoCo (Running a Community Collection) team. Here, Mertonians - alumni, current students, staff and fellows - can donate their stories, images, documents and other items to the digital archive virtually, to be stored in perpetuity in the Merton archives.

Online collecting using sites such as Merton@750 is a relatively new movement in the world of archives, and allows Mertonians from far and wide to contribute to the collection, whilst simplifying the

collecting process. A digital collection allows contributors to have the best of both worlds - sharing their stories with future generations whilst also holding on to their treasured mementoes. Visitors to the collection can browse the items we've gathered through your contributions alongside existing pieces from the College archives, through a series of topical online exhibitions curated by the Merton@750 team.

The online Merton@750 Collection can be found at [share.merton.ox.ac.uk](http://share.merton.ox.ac.uk). As well as going online, Merton@750 will be at some of this year's 750th Anniversary events, including a collection station at the Birthday Weekend in September. There will be (and already are!) entertaining stories of Merton traditions, daily life and mischief to gather and share, and now that the website is live and Merton@750 really begins to take off, I look forward to uncovering more tales of Merton's colourful and hitherto undocumented past...



## FEATURED FELLOW

# Quantum of solace:

## Ending the battle between the code-makers and breakers

**Merton's Professorial Fellow in Quantum Physics and Cryptography Artur Ekert, pictured below, talks us through how his research is helping keep secrets safe.**

Every day we share information about ourselves over telephone calls, email messages and internet transactions. Our lives are increasingly digitised and our social connections literally networked. Thanks to government documents leaked last year, we know how little of this data traffic is private. Even our encrypted data is vulnerable. In the documents disclosed by Edward Snowden, the US National Security Agency was revealed to have a program called 'Penetrating hard targets' with a goal of cracking strong encryption. One element was 'to determine if, and how, a cryptologically useful quantum computer can be built'. It is well known that a quantum computer, which uses physics inaccessible to conventional computers to speed up calculations, could crack RSA, one of the most widely used encryption systems today. News of the Heartbleed bug in the implementation of supposedly secure internet protocols reminds us that even well-meant attempts to protect us can go wrong.

So what can individuals, organisations and governments concerned about keeping our secrets secret do? What are the ultimate limits of privacy?

Researchers here in Oxford and elsewhere are developing a form of cryptography that could end the long-running battle between code-makers and code-breakers. It promises that we can communicate secretly even when we don't trust our devices. What's more, the scheme is resistant to enemies having superior technology. When technical buzzwords are stripped away, all we need to communicate secretly is a sequence of

random bits, just 1s and 0s. These bits make a cryptographic key. To encrypt your message, you convert your message into 1s and 0s too, like the codes inside computers. Then, bit by bit, you add the key to your message. The random bits scramble the bits of the message. The result is easily deciphered by someone having the same cryptographic key, but cannot be cracked by anyone else.

For this technique to be secure, it is vital that the key bits are truly random, never reused, and securely delivered. So, the problem becomes, how do we make and share such keys? In 1991, I proposed a way to use quantum physics to distribute



a cryptographic key. Unlike encryption techniques that get their security from being computationally hard to hack, quantum cryptography relies on the laws of physics for protection.

Quantum physics is our best description of how the world operates at its most fundamental level. It describes how the individual particles of matter and light, atoms and photons, behave and interact. The scheme I invented shares a key between two people, let's call them Alice and Bob, using pairs of quantum entangled photons. A source of entangled photons can be placed anywhere with Alice, with Bob, with adversarial Eve, on

a satellite, any location whatsoever as long as Alice and Bob are able to receive photons from the source. These photons might be beamed through open air or, like the light signals that carry internet traffic, be sent through optical fibre.

Alice and Bob measure the polarisation of each photon (polarisation is light pointing in a particular direction, like the polarised glare that sunglasses block) as being 1 or 0. Quantum physics tells us that the result for an individual photon is random, but that Alice and Bob's results for each pair must be correlated – they will match thanks to their entanglement. With a few extra steps, this is how Alice and Bob end up with matching cryptographic keys. Any eavesdropping attempt introduces a mismatch into the keys, which Alice and Bob can detect by openly comparing a portion, discarding the key if it's insecure.

Recently, my Singapore colleague Valerio Scarani and others showed this idea to be more powerful than I originally thought, pioneering the concept of 'device-independent cryptography'. As long as our devices pass the test, we can confidently use equipment bought from any source, including an adversary. More recently still, we've discovered that we don't even need to completely trust ourselves. Key distribution requires Alice and Bob to make random choices in the measurements they perform. Thanks to the discovery of a quantum trick to perform 'randomness amplification', we can communicate secretly. The days we stop worrying about untrustworthy providers of cryptographic services may be not that far away...

**Artur Ekert will be speaking at the Birthday Weekend on Saturday 13 September. You can also read more in 'The Ultimate Physical Limits of Privacy' by Artur Ekert and Renato Renner, published in *Nature*, 27 March 2014, pp. 443-7. [www.nature.com](http://www.nature.com)**

## HIGHER EDUCATION NEWS

# Engaging with the Equality Challenge



**Senior Tutor,  
Dr Catherine  
Paxton,  
explains how  
Merton is  
making its  
contribution**

**to the debate on equality in  
Higher Education.**

We were keen that our 750th year should mark some new beginnings as well as celebrating the many achievements of the College over its long history: the extraordinary Dobson Organ transforms the Ante-Chapel; Merton@750 is an innovative institutional archive in digital form; the *Merton Choirbook* makes a lasting contribution to choral music. We hope we have also inaugurated a tradition, in the form of the annual Merton Equality Conversation.

The Equality Conversation is intended to be a visible manifestation of our commitment to fulfilling our responsibilities under the 2010 Equality Act, specifically the requirements to tackle prejudice and promote understanding. Each year in Hilary Term the College will invite a high-profile external speaker to address a topic related to equality. This could be a detailed exploration of the equality challenges associated with a single protected characteristic, such as race or disability, or a teasing out of the tensions when protected characteristics come into

conflict, as with sexuality and belief. The format may vary year by year - lecture, round table, debate - but the aspiration will remain constant: to promote a conversation, among as diverse a group of participants as possible. The event will be open to Merton's junior members, staff, Fellows and old members, and to colleagues in the wider University.

We owe an enormous debt of thanks to Professor Dame Athene Donald DBE FRS, the Cambridge University Gender Equality Champion, for providing the perfect launch to the Equality Conversation on 20 February 2014. Her newspaper columns and blog ([occamstypewriter.org/athenedonald](http://occamstypewriter.org/athenedonald)) have attracted quite a following and booking for the Conversation was brisk. Her talk, entitled 'Stemming the leakage of women from academia: why do they leave?', was fuelled by a passion for change, afforded by evidence, and laced with humour and good sense.

Even if we have not heard the term 'impostor syndrome' - the nagging fear that one's success is based on fraud or fluke and liable to exposure at any point - many of us will recognise the phenomenon. The possibly less familiar theories of unconscious bias and stereotype threat to which Dame Athene introduced us should certainly be better known. Unconscious bias means that our responses can be conditioned by a set of implicit assumptions so that,

for example, selection panels evaluated identical CVs differently, depending on whether they were attributed to a male or female candidate. Stereotype threat comes into play when anxiety about negative expectations of a social group affects the performance of individuals from that group. Its impact has been documented in studies covering subjects as diverse as white sprinters, female maths test candidates, and older people undertaking memory assessments.

Professor Jenny Payne chaired the session and after Dame Athene's talk she invited a panel of female Fellows of Merton to share their experiences as women who had successfully stayed inside what is known as the leaky pipeline. Professor Judy Armitage, Dr Rhiannon Ash and Dr Abigail Adams represented both a range of disciplines and stages in the academic career. This led into a lively question and answer session. If we could have changed one thing it would have been the gender make-up of the audience. The obvious female majority in the T S Eliot Theatre did not escape our speaker who urged that a more diverse academy be seen as a challenge for everyone.

Dame Athene's talk can be listened to on the College website ([www.merton.ox.ac.uk/event/merton-equality-conversation](http://www.merton.ox.ac.uk/event/merton-equality-conversation)) and we plan to make all future Equality Conversations available digitally. Twitter provides another mechanism for joining in without being physically present. The



**Left:** Dr Cressida Ryan, Schools Liaison and Access Officer  
**Below:** Attendees at Merton's inaugural Equality Conversation

Equality Conversations proudly boast their own hashtag (#MertonEquality) which can help sustain discussion over the years.

Within Merton, the Equality Committee (which has representation from Governing Body, the MCR, JCR and College staff) is the forum for monitoring, policy, and objective setting. Over the three years of its existence it has tried to focus on practical measures, often prompted by feedback from members of the College. Baby-changing facilities, an online access guide for anyone coming to Merton and provision of halal and kosher food in Hall have recently been in the spotlight. The Committee is now thinking hard about the actions which can be taken in light of Dame Athene's clarion call. Already, one has Governing Body approval: an extension of the definition of legitimate research expense for Fellows to cover childcare costs to enable conference attendance. It may be a modest step, but it is emphatically in the right direction.

**Our 750th year should mark some new beginnings as well as celebrate the many achievements of the College over its long history - Dr Catherine Paxton**



## FIND OUT MORE

Go to [www.merton.ox.ac.uk/fellows](http://www.merton.ox.ac.uk/fellows) to read more about the work our Fellows carry out. You can follow us on Facebook (Merton College, Oxford) or Twitter (@MertonCollege).



Professor Dame Athene (far right) with Merton Fellows (from left) Professor Judy Armitage, Dr Abigail Adams, Professor Jenny Payne, Dr Rhiannon Ash.



## BOOKS

# Once upon a time...



**Merton Emeritus Professor of English Literature and chief book reviewer for *The Sunday Times*, John Carey, recounts the unlikely setting in which a life-long love of literature was sparked.**

After a year in the care of the Augustinians I followed [my sister] Rosemary to West Bridgford Grammar School. She did well there, came top in her class and played the flute in the school orchestra. I idled. The staff were bright and well-meaning, but I had no interest in the things they wanted to teach – history, geography, mathematics – which seemed abstruse and far removed from any concern of mine. Naturally this annoyed them, and I was put on Daily Report. This meant that at the start of each week I collected a card – a white sheet with a black grid of little boxes, like a cage – and at the end of each lesson I had to walk up to the front of the class and ask the teacher to fill the appropriate box, reporting on my scholarly progress, or lack of it. It was shaming and, I suppose, meant to be. I coped by retreating into a sort of

numbness, sealing myself off, so far as I could, from everyone around. I was helped by a book that I got from the school library, which I think a sympathetic teacher must have chosen for me. It was Henry Williamson's *Tarka the Otter*, and I liked it because there were no people in it, or only incidentally, as enemies. With the very first sentence I was far away from West Bridgford: 'Twilight over meadow and water, the eve-star shining above the hill, and Old Nog the heron crying kra-a-ark! as his slow dark wings carried him down to the estuary.' I read it and reread it, not wanting to try any other book. Its fierce, cruel action made me feel secluded from everyday realities, and I realised that everything I had read before was trivial by comparison. I knew nothing about politics so I had no idea how lucky I was that Williamson's books had not been banned

from the school library because of his membership, before the war, of Oswald Mosley's British Union of Fascists. It was many years before I found anything to match Williamson's masterpiece – not, in fact, until I read the poetry of his great admirer, Ted Hughes.



This extract was taken from Professor John Carey's memoir, *The Unexpected Professor, An Oxford Life in Books*, in which he charts his journey from an ordinary background to the heart of the academic establishment. The book is available at all good bookshops, RRP £18.99 hardback.



# The Merton Reading List

**Earlier this year, for World Book Day and in honour of all things book-related, Merton@750 Project Officer Catherine Farfan put together a Merton Reading List, the only criteria being that the book either was written by a Mertonian or featured Merton within its pages:**

## 1. Sunetra Gupta *A Sin of Colour* (1999)

We're kicking off this list with a brilliant novel of unrequited love and obsession from one-time Merton Junior Research Fellow and current Professor of Theoretical Epidemiology at the University of Oxford, Sunetra Gupta. Billed as the 'true heir to Virginia Woolf', we could have chosen any one of Professor Gupta's novels for our list, but we've (possibly arbitrarily) settled on this one as it takes place partly in Oxford. When Debendranath Roy is presumed drowned in the Cherwell, it sparks off his niece's search for the truth, involving three generations of one family and a house in Calcutta called Mandalay...

## 2. Roger Lancelyn Green *Myths of the Norsemen* (1958)

No mention of Merton and literature would be complete without reference to perhaps the most famous of our literary figures – J.R.R. Tolkien. We're going to presume though that, seeing as *The Lord of the Rings* is the third best-selling novel of all time, you've probably exhausted the Tolkien canon already. If so, you may be interested in another Mertonian author and Inkling, Roger Lancelyn Green (1937). We're suggesting *Myths of the Norsemen* for its obvious connections to fellow Mertonian Tolkien's body of work, but any of Green's children's books make for an enjoyable read.

## 3. P.D. James *The Children of Men* (1992)

If you're not yet familiar with P.D. James' novels and are looking for a good read, *The Children of Men* is a great place to start. Set in Oxford, Merton Fellow Theodore Faron is the protagonist of this dystopian novel in which the human race can no longer reproduce. It was adapted into a film of the same name in 2006.

## 4. R.J. Heald *27* (2012)

Ruth Heald (2001) is the youngest of our authors – she graduated from Merton in 2004 and published her first novel *27* two years ago. This one's a great holiday read, depicting one year in the life of six friends as they reunite in London in the year they all turn 27. Touching on the challenges of life in a social media-driven, recession-ravaged world, Heald's relatable characters may seem to be successful on the surface, but are nevertheless struggling to reconcile their lives with the lives they planned to lead when they left university.

## 5. Edmund Blunden *Undertones of War* (1928)

Who could fail to notice that 2014 sees in the 100th anniversary of the First World War? It is interesting to note that Merton has played host to two twentieth century war poets: First World War poet and former Merton Fellow Edmund Blunden and his later student and Second World War poet, Keith Douglas (1938). Both poets' bodies of work are well worth delving into, but we've singled out Blunden's 1928 memoirs of his First World War experience. His memories of the front line are a compelling read and an insight into his often traumatic experience of life in the trenches.

## 6. T.S. Eliot *Collected Poems* (1963)

While we're on the subject of poets, we should probably remind you all to get your hands on a copy of T.S. Eliot's collected works. Eliot arrived at Merton in 1914 as a graduate student on a travelling scholarship from Harvard, and although his relationship with Oxford was a complicated one, he has certainly left his mark here. It's impossible to spend time

at Merton without encountering his name: his *Journey of the Magi* has been used in Merton Chapel's Epiphany Service, and his bust graces the entrance to the College's new T.S. Eliot Theatre, opened in 2010.

## 7. Mark Haddon *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* (2003)

We're guessing it's unlikely that you haven't already read Mark Haddon's (1981) celebrated story of a teenager struggling with Aspergers, but we didn't feel we could miss off this well-received piece of fiction from a Merton alumnus, just in case. *The Curious Incident* won the 2003 Whitbread Book of the Year award and is now an award-winning stage production at the National Theatre – if that's not a reason to get reading it, we're not sure what is...

## 8. Angus Wilson *Anglo-Saxon Attitudes* (1956)

And last but not least, we come to Angus Wilson (1932), one of Merton's more colourful past characters and also one of the most unsung. Renowned for his brightly coloured bow ties, Wilson first worked as a librarian on the British Museum's General Catalogue before joining Bletchley Park during the Second World War to decode Italian naval codes, which he left, after a stress-induced breakdown. *Anglo-Saxon Attitudes* is perhaps his best known work. An enjoyably satirical novel, the plot revolves around a scandalous archaeological hoax and a host of sharply rendered characters...

**We're keen to hear from you about your favourite Merton books. If you feel we've missed out anything particularly interesting, let us know at [publications@merton.ox.ac.uk](mailto:publications@merton.ox.ac.uk).**

## SUSTAINING EXCELLENCE

# Digging deep

Mertonians and Friends seek out hidden reserves



Christine Taylor speaking to Mertonians at the Merton Conversation in Hong Kong

Image: Inga Beckmann

**Christine Taylor, Fellow and Director of Development, reports on the generosity of Mertonians and Friends of the College, as we move to complete the 750th Anniversary Campaign *Sustaining Excellence* by the end of 2014.**

Christmas arrived late at Merton College this year. Well, philanthropically speaking! As the decorations came down, the *Sustaining Excellence* Campaign total shot up! At a time of year often characterised by short days and 'post-Christmas blues,' many Mertonians extended their generosity to ensure that the 750th Anniversary Year started with a flurry of generous gifts. This has given the Campaign tremendous momentum as we enter its final stages, and we are indebted to so many Mertonians for supporting us

at this time. Indeed this made a fantastic impact on our total in the first few months of the Anniversary Year, bringing us to within almost £1 million of the rapidly approaching £30 million target deadline which will all help to endow the College's core priorities for the next generation of Mertonians.

I am particularly delighted to announce the completed fundraising of £1.2 million for Merton's principal Philosophy Fellowship and the nearly completed fundraising of the same for English. This is just in time to attract £800,000 of matching money from the University's Teaching Fund for each position. Last October I would have told you a completely different story, when both Philosophy and English Fellowship 'pots' looked decidedly half full. My sincere thanks go to a number of extraordinarily generous donors for Philosophy. Particular thanks are due to the two Chairs of the Philosophy Appeal, Richard Burns (1964)

and David Ure (1965), who have led the College's efforts to secure this vital post, as well as to a 1990's Mertonian, whose generous gift and challenge have ensured that the fundraising was completed. For the English Fellowship, only £67,000 is needed to complete the fund, so we hope that others will be able to give generously to help us finish this core post.

We still have more outstanding priorities to complete, however! At the time of writing, we are excited to announce that the Courtenay Phillips Chemistry Appeal is almost complete, with less than £25,000 left to be raised, and that fundraising for one of the two core Tutorial Fellowships in Law, begun only recently, is picking up pace. Over £313,000 is now raised and pledged towards the target of £850,000.

More fantastic progress has been made with Undergraduate Student Support. The fund now stands at £2.1 million



towards the £2.6 million that is needed to endow the College's share of the Merton-Oxford Undergraduate Bursaries. Gifts for Graduate Scholarships are beginning to pick up pace too, with pledges for a Graduate Scholarship in History, money received to fund a Graduate Scholarship in Mathematical Physics for the next few years and to endow a Graduate Scholarship in Mathematics. Finally, I must mention the urgent need for your help in raising funds for the renovation of the College's boathouse. We appeal to all who have used the facility to help with its renovation and extension, but the inadequate space for our increased number of crews, and the poor condition of the building which hasn't been refurbished since 1949, are plain for all to see!

As such, we urge you to dig deep, to help us complete this fantastic 750th Anniversary Campaign! What is more, if you donate to one of these funds before 31 July, you will be making an impact now towards our 40% participation target for the 2013-14 year (which you can read more about overleaf on p22). We are already in the 30s! So whether through a gift for English that will unlock matched Humanities Funding, or a contribution to our Annual Fund that will help us reach the £1 million target for our Annual Fund (gifts under £25,000) for the 2013-14 year and cement our position as one of the top fundraising colleges in Oxford, we urge you to join the many Mertonians who are supporting the College at this vital time! We shall only finish the *Sustaining Excellence* Campaign with the support of very many Mertonians and it will take gifts of all sizes to enable us to reach the £30 million goal.

Sometimes it takes the impending deadline of an essay or a problem sheet to encourage us towards last-minute action. I sincerely hope that, if you have not already found the moment to donate to Merton College's 750th Anniversary



Campaign, that you do so now. Please do not put off for tomorrow what you can do today! Make a gift and in so doing follow Walter de Merton's example for his *Domus Scholarium*. Thank you for enabling us to finish the College's 750th Anniversary Year with a sense of achievement, knowing that we are helping to ensure that Merton College will continue to flourish in its Anniversary Year and beyond, and that financial need is never a barrier to qualified candidates.

## Welcome to the NetCommunity!

Since we launched the Merton NetCommunity last year, more than 900 Mertonians have registered to use the site. We now have a total of 1,200 Mertonians with active NetCommunity accounts. NetCommunity members can update their contact details, review their privacy settings, and choose how they would like to be contacted by Merton. Since the launch, we have developed the site further to allow:

### Mertonian directory search:

registered users can search on criteria such as class year or company name and identify Mertonians who have allowed us to share their information.

### Communication preferences:

a registrant can choose how they would like to receive specific communications. For example, they may wish to receive the *Donor Report* via email but they prefer a printed copy of *Postmaster*.

## Explore...

If you haven't already done so, sign up today! Already a member? Go to [www.alumniweb.ox.ac.uk/merton](http://www.alumniweb.ox.ac.uk/merton) to set your communications preferences and explore the NetCommunity.

## DEVELOPMENT NEWS

## ANNIVERSARY ANNUAL FUND UPDATE



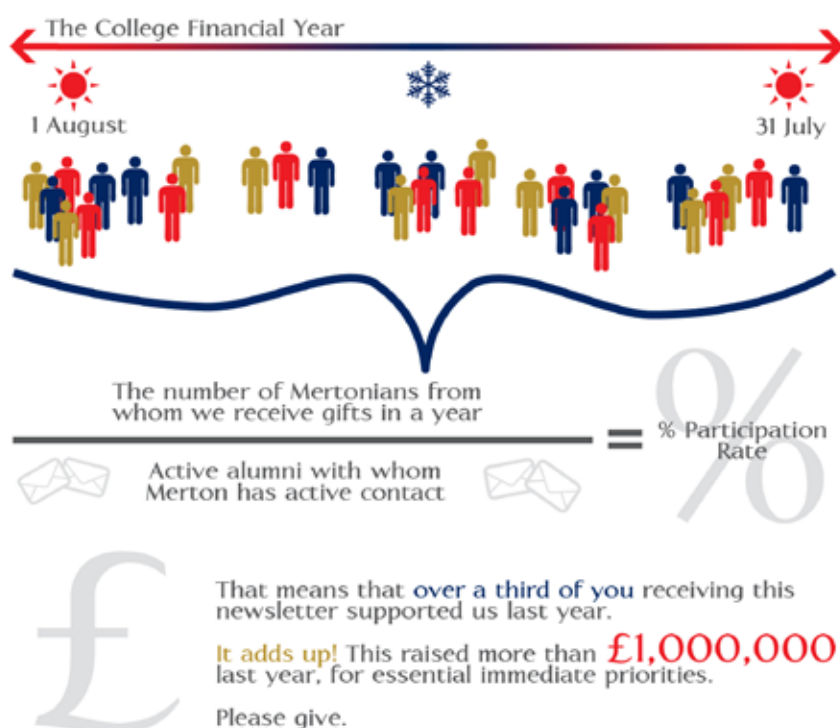
The team behind this year's March Telethon

Last year 35% of you made a gift, participation increased by 10.7%, and we raised £145,000 more than in the previous year. It is a pleasure to report that so far in 2013-14, 1,750 Mertonians have given to the College. That is around 31% of you all. Thank you! Whilst this is an impressive achievement, reaching the Warden's **target of 40% participation** for the end of the financial year will be tricky, as we need around 500 new donors to contribute – so please do make a gift by 31 July if you haven't already done so! Even £10 is enormously appreciated.

We have updated the College's online donation pages, and are delighted to confirm this year's 1264 Society event on p25. We are also sending more email communications and less paper, wherever possible, to reduce our environmental impact.

Any questions or queries, advice or suggestions? Please contact the Annual Fund Officer, Peter O'Connor, on [peter.oconnor@merton.ox.ac.uk](mailto:peter.oconnor@merton.ox.ac.uk), who will be more than happy to help you.

## How participation works and why it matters:



# Celebrating 750 years:

## Alumni events around the world in the Anniversary Year



**Alumni Relations Manager, Helen Kingsley, gives a round-up of 2014 so far, masterminding Merton's**

### Anniversary Alumni Events.

When the College was founded in 1264, a common view was that the world was flat! 750 years on, along with the expansion of scientific knowledge and understanding, so has our Merton family grown, in both size and its geographical spread around the (spherical!) world. It has been our ambition to connect with as many Mertonians as possible this year and to organise a world-class series of Celebrations - the envy of other Oxford colleges! We were glad to welcome Theo Lester to the Development team in November, to help us deliver on these ambitious plans in this busy year.

It was quite apt that 2014 began by my accompanying the Warden, Lady Taylor and Christine Taylor, Merton's Director of Development, to Hong Kong and Japan. Having never travelled to East Asia before, it was a wonderful opportunity and a great privilege to visit two such breathtakingly beautiful locations, and to meet many Mertonians I had not previously met. I would like to send my grateful thanks to everyone who welcomed us so warmly and, in particular, to Jamie Barr (1979) who, once again, kindly hosted the Hong Kong dinner at the China Club. The first in our series of six Merton Conversations was held in The Asia Society between Sir Callum McCarthy (1962), Charles Li and Liu Mingkan. The Conversation was moderated by Professor Alejandro Reyes.

In Japan, the Warden was incredibly honoured to enjoy a private audience with HIH Crown Prince Naruhito of Japan (1983), and was thrilled when his original

20-minute appointment was extended to two hours! It was a personal highlight for the Warden, whose trip to Japan had already been filled with many wonderful meetings with Mertonians based in Japan. Thanks are due to our guest of honour at the Tokyo dinner, British Ambassador to Japan, Tim Hitchens, and to the Oxford University Japan Office for helping make our trip such a success.

Following our East Asia experience we flew to New York to attend the Annual MC3 Weekend in April. MC3 marked its 750th Anniversary Celebrations with a New York dinner cruise up the Hudson



Guests at the Merton Conversation in Hong Kong

River on the Friday night. This was followed by a thoroughly entertaining and thought-provoking Merton Conversation between Sir Howard Stringer (1961) and Mark Thompson (1976), moderated by John Kirby (1962), on Saturday afternoon and a dinner in the Library at The Century Association in the evening. Grateful thanks to Bob McKelvey (1959), Ed Ranallo (1967), and Sue Stukane in the MC3 office for organising such a splendid weekend. Thanks are also due to John Kirby and Sue Cullman, who kindly opened their doors once again to host a delicious brunch - the perfect spring morning and the perfect end to a very special weekend.

One of the greatest feats - and, indeed, wonderful feasts of knowledge - this year is the Merton Conversation series. We are just over half way through our year's programme of talks and it has been wonderful to hear experts debate subjects as wide-ranging as the challenges of global finance, China and the West, the media revolution and C P Snow's book *The Two Cultures*. We have all been delighted by how well received the Merton Conversations have been. My greatest thanks to all of our superb speakers and moderators for making the talks such a success.

It was a particularly proud moment when it came to be Merton's turn to host a Merton Conversation in February, featuring former Warden, Professor Dame Jessica Rawson and Chancellor of the University, Lord Patten of Barnes. Professor Rana Mitter moderated a most excellent discussion on China and the West.

I anticipated a wonderful rollercoaster of a year and, so far, the 750th Anniversary celebrations have not disappointed! Still to come are some of the biggest events of the year. The 750th Anniversary Ball at the end of June will bring more than 1,000 Mertonians, past and present, back to the College for a spectacular night of dinner and dancing under summer skies. In the autumn the Birthday Weekend, coinciding with the actual Anniversary of the College's foundation on 14 September, promises to bring a similar number of Mertonians and their families through our gatehouse. The schedule of talks and titles, recently announced (see overleaf) is tantalising. There are still a few tickets left for some of these events.

Go online to [www.merton.ox.ac.uk/750](http://www.merton.ox.ac.uk/750) to book your place.



# Forthcoming Events

## ANNIVERSARY SUMMER BALL

28 JUNE

On the balmy summer evening of Saturday 28 June, Merton College will open its doors to more than 1,000 Mertonians and their guests for the spectacular 750th Anniversary Ball – in celebration of the rich history of our College.

For one night only, the entire College grounds will be transformed and you

will be entertained and indulged with an extravagance of food stalls, drinks, musical acts, fairground entertainment... and the highlight of the evening, a fantastic fireworks display in celebration of 750 years of Merton excellence.

All Mertonians and their guests are welcome. Go to [www.mertonball.com](http://www.mertonball.com) for more information.

## NEW CONFERENCE ON SCHOLARSHIP, SCIENCE AND RELIGION IN THE AGE OF ISAAC CASAUBON (1559-1614) AND HENRY SAVILE (1549-1622) 1 - 3 JULY

2014 is the 400th anniversary of Casaubon's death and the 750th anniversary of the foundation of Merton College, the institution that Savile shaped. The conference brings together, for the first time, a group of leading scholars from around the world and across disciplines to explore the lives and works of Casaubon and Savile, showing how they help us to answer vital questions about the world of late humanist erudition and science.

Booking: Tickets cost £100 for the three-day conference, or £50 per day. Graduate discounts and bursaries are available upon application. Final conference registration closes on 24 June 2014.

To find out more and to register please go to [www.cems-oxford.org/scholarship-science-religion](http://www.cems-oxford.org/scholarship-science-religion)



## NEW SYMBIOSIS THROUGH TIME: MERTON AND ITS JEWISH NEIGHBOURS 6 JULY

As part of Merton's 750th Anniversary Year, the College and the Heritage Committee of the Oxford Jewish Congregation invite you to celebrate Merton's special relationship with Jewish Oxford over the centuries.

The symposium will include speakers Pam Manix, medievalist from Oxford Jewish Heritage Committee; Professor Peter Pormann, Professor of Classics and Graeco-Arabic Studies at the University of Manchester; and Professor Anthony Grafton, Henry Putnam University Professor of History at Princeton University.

Booking: Tickets are £5 (including tea). Email [info@oxfordjewishheritage.co.uk](mailto:info@oxfordjewishheritage.co.uk) to book.

## 'TREASURES AND MORE' EXHIBITION

21 JULY - 30 SEPTEMBER

See some of Merton's favourite treasures in person, in the Upper Library and Beerbohm Room exhibition spaces.

## 'MERTON COLLEGE 1264-2014' 9 SEPTEMBER - 2 NOVEMBER

In the Proscholium of the Old Bodleian Library, a selection of historic treasures relating to Merton will be on display.

## BIRTHDAY WEEKEND

12-14 SEPTEMBER

The 750th Anniversary Weekend will give Mertonians and their guests the opportunity to participate in and enjoy the intellectual activity for which the College is renowned. (See opposite for more info.)

## '50 YEARS ON' LUNCH OCTOBER

For Mertonians who matriculated in 1964.

## MERTON CONVERSATION: 'LIBERTY' 7 OCTOBER

With the Rt Hon Sir Brian Leveson (1967), Shami Chakrabarti, and Moderator Philippa Whipple (1984) at BAFTA in London.

## ORGAN CONCERT BY DANIEL HYDE 11 OCTOBER

The Organist of Magdalen College, Oxford, plays a varied programme of music.

## MERTON IN MANHATTAN 23 OCTOBER

Peter Wilson CMG, Ambassador and Deputy Permanent Representative, UK Mission to the UN, will speak at Latham & Watkins LLP.

## ALL SOULS' REQUIEM 2 NOVEMBER

The College Choir will sing Mozart's



Requiem as the College commemorates all recently departed Mertonians and loved ones.

### REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY SERVICE 9 NOVEMBER

### MERTON CONVERSATION: 'THE REAL SCIENCE BEHIND CSI' 11 NOVEMBER

With Sir Alec Jeffreys (1968), Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe (1988) and moderator author Michael Ridpath (1979) at The Royal Institution in London.

### ORGAN CONCERT BY CLIVE DRISKILL-SMITH 15 NOVEMBER

Organist at Christ Church, Oxford, plays a programme of Bach, Harries and Vierne's Sixth Symphony.

### TOLKIEN IN OXFORD: A SYMPOSIUM 18 NOVEMBER

### MEETING OF THE 1264 SOCIETY 18 NOVEMBER

The Annual Meeting for all current and previous 1264 Society members will be held at Gallery Different (W1T 1DR) in London – with a lecture by Guy Portelli, the Vice President of the Royal Society of British Arts.

### COLLEGE CHOIR CONCERT 22 NOVEMBER

The World Première of a major new choral work by Sir Harrison Birtwistle, composed to the text of Geoffrey Hill.

### 'FROM EDWARDIAN MERTON TO THE WESTERN FRONT: 1906-1918' 24 NOVEMBER

Professor Anthony Fletcher (1959) will give a talk in the T S Eliot Theatre, to mark the centenary of the First World War.



### BIRTHDAY WEEKEND TALKS TITLES ANNOUNCED

We are proud to announce the titles of our Birthday Weekend talks – a varied menu of ambrosia for the mind, we are sure that you will agree!

#### SATURDAY 13 SEPTEMBER AM

Artur Ekert - 'The ultimate physical limits of privacy' Dr Janina Dill - 'The twenty-first century belligerent's trilemma' Dan Grimley - 'Merton resounding: New sounds for Merton Chapel Choir' Mark Haddon and John Mitchinson - 'Getting it down right' Adam Hart-Davis - 'Heroes welcome' Robert MacLaren - 'Developing new treatments for blindness using gene therapy, stem cells and the bionic eye' Richard McCabe - 'Shakespeare's fall guys' Pippa Shirley - 'From ox-eyes to caudle cups - Merton's silver explained!' Sir Howard Stringer - 'The challenges of a global media career in the 21st century'

#### SATURDAY 13 SEPTEMBER PM

Professor Kieran Clarke - 'A novel metabolic state: How a dietary ketone ester improves performance' Emily Guerry - 'Medieval kings and forgotten paintings: Recent discoveries at Westminster Abbey and the Sainte-Chapelle' Julie Summers - 'Everest needs you, Mr Irvine' Sir Andrew

Wiles - 'The story of equations' Kathy Willis - 'Where can we damage? Biodiversity conservation and challenges for the future.'

#### SUNDAY 14 SEPTEMBER AM

Kinda Al-Houani - 'Adventures in antiviral defences' Jason Allan - 'The theatre of Derek Walcott and Aimé Césaire and the forging of a Caribbean modernism' Julia Amos - 'Narratives of peace and conflict: Reconceptualising widespread communal violence' Alan Barr and Alexander Karlberg - 'A universe of particles' Simon Draper - 'Towards the development of a malaria vaccine' Alan Giles and Michael Jary - 'Consuming passions' Cayenna Pouchione - 'Off the conductor's podium: Tracking the creative process in orchestral performance'

**Already have your Birthday Weekend ticket?** Go to [www.merton.ox.ac.uk/BWrequest-form](http://www.merton.ox.ac.uk/BWrequest-form) to choose which talks you would like to attend. **Want to join us?** Go to [www.merton.ox.ac.uk/750](http://www.merton.ox.ac.uk/750) to book.

### ADVENT CAROL SERVICES 29 AND 30 NOVEMBER

### FINAL 750TH ANNIVERSARY AND CAMPAIGN LONDON DINNER 5 DECEMBER

As the Anniversary Year draws to a

close, we bring together Mertonians and their guests for a final 750th celebratory dinner, with speaker Bill Bryson, in The Middle Temple Hall, Temple, London. All Mertonians and their guests are welcome. Booking details will be available in August.



# 60 seconds with...

Merton Fellow,  
Dr Kate Blackmon

Dr Blackmon (pictured opposite) teaches on research methods at the Saïd Business School and is currently Chair of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Ethics Committee. She was admitted as Senior Proctor of the University of Oxford on Wednesday 19 March 2014. We interviewed her before the ceremony to find out more.



Image: Jeremy Moeran

## **So, Kate, how did you come to be elected as Senior Proctor?**

The responsibility to elect Proctors rotates around the colleges through a cycle of about 14 years, so this year was Merton's turn, alongside Linacre and Wadham.

## **What attracted you to the role?**

It's not very often you get to take on such an ancient and unique position in a world-famous institution!

Being Senior Proctor at Oxford is an opportunity to get properly involved in the governance of the University. We not only deal with student welfare and discipline, which I have experience of from being Principal of the Postmasters at Merton for four years, but we also attend University committees and ceremonies.

As one of my main interests is in postgraduate research studies, being Senior Proctor particularly suits me – the Senior Proctor takes care of all research students, whereas the Junior Proctor looks after all students in taught degrees, that is undergraduates and taught postgraduates. It's something of an arbitrary distinction though – we're allocated 'Senior' or 'Junior' depending on who matriculated into Oxford first. I became a member of the University a mere two months before Dr Ertl, this year's Junior Proctor, so if I'd been admitted a few months later I'd be taking on the Junior Proctor role instead.

## **What do you think the biggest challenge of being the Senior Proctor will be?**

Definitely time management! There's so much going on – there are more than 200 committees in the University that we can attend, and we split some of them up between the three of us. That leaves me with 75 committees to attend over the next year (and more if there are others I'd like to go along to), combined with all the ceremonial duties (we attend all the University ceremonies, and there are 32 degree ceremonies alone in a year) and the day-to-day caseload that comes with the role. I'm very pleased to be able to be Proctor during the College's 750th year so I want to go along to as many of Merton's 750th celebrations as possible too!

## **It sounds as if you're going to be incredibly busy – is there anything that you're particularly looking forward to?**

Of all the committees I'll be attending, I think I'm most looking forward to attending the Ashmolean Museum's Board of Visitors. As part of the Vice-Chancellor's Court, we also get to take part in some quite literally unique ceremonies, for example on May Day we climb Magdalen tower, which has a vertical ladder. I'll be keeping a diary of all the interesting things that happen for the demitting speech this time next year, as it's apparently easy to forget as there is so much going on.

## **How have you prepared for your year as Proctor?**

We were elected last year, and since then we've been shadowing this year's Proctors to see what the workload is like. They've been able to give us all sorts of tips we wouldn't have thought of. We have to do so many ceremonies and visits, that I've had to go out and buy myself a new pair of wellies and a special mortar board, as well as all the white shirts I'm going to need, as I'll have to wear sub fusc for the next year, almost solidly. We also have an annual bowls match against the Cambridge Proctors in July, so we'll be training for that soon.

## **I'm sure there are many stories about the Proctors over the centuries. Do you have a favourite you'd like to share?**

There are all the obligatory stories of Proctors in speedboats in full dress for various visits or ceremonies, but I think my favourite Proctor story is a more recent one, with the Proctors' Office taking full advantage of Facebook when it was first launched. The students were surprised, as they didn't think the Proctors could use Facebook and it resulted in a lot of people being caught trashing who had then put pictures of themselves on Facebook 'in the act'. It was interesting to see how quickly the Proctors are able to pick up on new technology for such an old – practically medieval! – institution. They have to keep on the leading edge.



# FAQs

## The Development Office answers some frequently asked questions.

### How do I obtain a copy of my degree/attend a degree ceremony?

If, for any reason, you did not receive your certificate or your current certificate is lost or damaged, then degree certificates can be obtained by completing the Degree Certificate Order Form which can be found on the *Coming Back to College* page on the Merton website. This form should be submitted to the Examination Schools.

To attend a degree ceremony, you need to complete the Degree Day Procedure form, which can also be found on the *Coming Back to College* page on the Merton website. This should be returned to Ruth Bryant, Domestic Bursar's secretary, by email or by post. If you have any questions about your degree ceremony, please contact Ruth Bryant on 01865 276336 or at [ruth.bryant@merton.ox.ac.uk](mailto:ruth.bryant@merton.ox.ac.uk).

### When and how can I dine at College?

Merton MAs and Mertonian holders of any higher Oxford degree are warmly invited to dine up to six times a year at their own expense at High Table in Hall (but may not invite guests). On guest nights (Sundays, Tuesdays and Thursdays during Full Term) they may attend dessert free of charge. Dinner begins at

7.15pm and those dining gather in the Queen's Room (or the Upper Bursary outside term) from 7pm.

Please notify Natalia Harris (01865 276288 or [natalia.harris@merton.ox.ac.uk](mailto:natalia.harris@merton.ox.ac.uk)) before 10am on the day you are dining, or before 10am on Friday if you are dining on a Sunday. Gowns are worn in Hall during Full Term. Gentlemen wear black tie when dining on Sunday evenings during Full Term.

### Can I stay at the College?

The College does not currently have provision for accommodating alumni except when advertised in conjunction with some of our events. We recommend you go to the *Coming Back to College* page on the Merton website where details of accommodation in Oxford and other colleges can be found.

### How can I make a donation to the College?

Full details on how to give to the College can be accessed via the *Supporting Merton* page on the website at [www.merton.ox.ac.uk/alumni-and-friends/supporting-merton](http://www.merton.ox.ac.uk/alumni-and-friends/supporting-merton). If you wish to discuss your donation requirements directly with the Development Office, please contact Christine Taylor, Director of Development.

### Can I get married in the Chapel?

Those wishing to explore the possibility of being married in Merton Chapel should, in the first instance, contact the College Chaplain, The Revd Dr Simon Jones (01865 276365 or [simon.jones@merton.ox.ac.uk](mailto:simon.jones@merton.ox.ac.uk)).

The Chaplain will usually arrange to meet the couple. If he is satisfied that they are eligible to be married in the Chapel and a suitable date can be agreed, they should then write to the Warden requesting the permission of the Governing Body.

Merton College Chapel is not licensed for weddings. Therefore, if a marriage is to be solemnised by Special Licence, it will be necessary for the Chaplain (or officiating minister) to check the availability of parish marriage registers before a date can be confirmed.

### When is my next Gaudy?

Gaudies up to 2016 are as follows:

2014 | No gaudies because of the 750th Anniversary Celebrations  
 2015 Spring | 2003, 2004 and 2005  
 2015 Autumn | 1992, 1993, 1994, 1995 and 1996  
 2016 Spring | 1982, 1983, 1984, 1985 and 1986  
 2016 Autumn | Up to and including 1961

**Development Office:** Front row (left to right): Lauren Kendall, Campaign Officer; Helen Morley, Communications Officer; Christine Taylor, Director of Development; Leah McLaren, Development Assistant. Back row (left to right): Peter O'Connor, Annual Fund Officer; Helen Kingsley, Alumni Relations Manager; Theo Lester, Anniversary Events Assistant.

### Contact us:

[Development@merton.ox.ac.uk](mailto:Development@merton.ox.ac.uk)  
 +44 (0)1865 276316





# Merton 750<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Ball

SATURDAY, 28 JUNE 2014



On the balmy summer evening of Saturday 28 June, Merton College will open its doors to Mertonians and their guests for the spectacular 750th Anniversary Ball – in celebration of the rich history of Merton College.

For one night only, the entire College grounds will be transformed and, as you step from Front Quad to the Croquet Lawn, St Albans Quad to Fellows' Garden, you will be entertained and indulged with an extravagance of food stalls, drinks selections, musical acts, fairground entertainment... and the highlight of the evening, a fantastic fireworks display in celebration of 750 years of Merton excellence.



BOOK NOW AT  
[WWW.MERTONBALL.COM](http://WWW.MERTONBALL.COM)