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We have been unable to trace the copyright holders of the images of Simon Preston on pages 11 and 13 and therefore ask them to please contact the Development Office.

CCM online…

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Events 2022

Back cover
This term has felt somewhat of a return to normal after the pandemic - students studying and revising for their exams, followed by the Going Down party and Schools dinner to celebrate the achievements of our finalists. We are proud of them all for their resilience and patience during a challenging undergraduate career and wish them well with their next steps. We also look forward to seeing them again next March at the annual Returners’ Dinner, a new ‘tradition’ introduced earlier this year thanks to support from donors.

Since our last Christ Church Matters introduction, resolution was reached with the former Dean and Alumni will be aware that Dominic Grieve QC PC, former Attorney General of England and Wales, will be chairing the independent Governance Review. Work has begun and will be concluded in the first half of 2023.

Trinity Term finished with a bang, literally, with fireworks of the Commemoration Ball. Despite the weather, it was a hugely enjoyable occasion. This and other alumni events are reported in the Events Review.

This edition introduces you to three of our Junior Research Fellows, illustrating the importance of research to the college and the University. We also hear from three young alumni about their journeys ten years from arriving at Christ Church.

The endowment of Christ Church is crucial to enabling the institution to survive and thrive. The Treasurer, James Lawrie, discusses the performance of the endowment since his arrival in 2006, and the Archivist’s contribution focuses on urban estates that were once part of Christ Church’s endowment.

Lastly, among much more besides, we share memories of Simon Preston, former Organist and Honorary Student of Christ Church and update you on progress with the Christ Church Cathedral Music Trust.

We wish you a happy and relaxing summer and look forward to seeing alumni and friends back at Christ Church for events next term.
Usually, when one thinks of landed estates, it is swathes of green grazing land or golden arable fields that come to mind. But Christ Church’s estate, while largely rural, has always had some urban property. Towns like Daventry in Northamptonshire or streets in Oxford’s St Thomas’s parish had properties held by Christ Church from the foundation; others were rural estates which grew into towns. Most significant of the latter was Kentish Town which began as a small farm bequeathed by Canon Robert South in 1714. In 1795, Christ Church’s land agent described the property as an old farmhouse, a large barn with stables, a smaller barn, sheds, and an old slaughter house which had been converted into five small dwellings of two rooms apiece. Less than a decade later, speculative builders were laying out roads, seeing the potential of the nearby metropolis for trade. The farm soon became isolated in a sea of development.

The building boom was relentless and the farm was targeted as an abundant source of gravel, coveted by the trustees of the Archway and Turnpike Road who were working on improving road links out of London to the north. Our tenant, Morgan, was less than happy; his hay meadows, which formed much of his livelihood, were being destroyed by the gravel diggers. Morgan’s frequent appeals for a reduction in his rent were unsuccessful, and he lost hope and interest as the farm buildings became increasingly dilapidated. After 58 years on the farm, he gave up and the estate was advertised for sale in 1831. The new tenant, a London butcher by the appropriate name of Giles Silverside, agreed to a full repairing lease on the condition that the Dean and Chapter brought the premises up to scratch during 1832. Christ Church reserved the right to take in hand the road-side frontage, to allow for building leases in future. The future was not very far away; in 1833, the Dean and Chapter decided that the farm buildings did not warrant much expenditure, and plans appeared for elegant houses on plots 120’ long and 20’ wide, set back 30’ from the road.

Within a decade, competition for building leases was intense. An appeal for a new church was made to accommodate the rising population and to encourage the ‘best’ tenants. The Dean and Chapter were conscious that the Kentish Town property
was a Trust estate and, as such, they could only use the profits from the estate for the purposes laid down in the trust. As trustees, it was their duty to maximise the income – if a church would allow higher rents, then they would contribute.

By 1849, while the old farmhouse was still in place, three-quarters of the land was occupied by new streets – Gaisford Street, Islip Street, Hammond Street, Caversham Road, Aldrich Street, and Wolsey Mews – arranged within the old farm boundary. In just a few years, Christ Church had gone from being landlord of one small farm on the outskirts of London to owner of more than 500 individual properties.

The notion that Christ Church was participating in the gentrification of the area was short-lived; much of the building appears to have been speculative and poor. In 1859, one terrace of houses in Gaisford Street collapsed before it was completed. The arrival of the railway reduced the upmarket potential still further. In 1863, terms were agreed with the Midland Railway Company, whose new line from Bedford into London would chop the Christ Church property nearly in half. By 1871, more than half of the houses were shared with extended families or took in lodgers. Only the properties on Caversham Road were let to respectable ‘solicitors, gentlemen, and large tradesmen’ paying up to £75 per year.

In 1903, work began on the Hampstead Tube line. The railway caused a general hue-and-cry over fears of the damage it might cause to Hampstead Heath, but Christ Church was concerned more about the potential risk to 41 of its houses.

The Governing Body commissioned a set of photographs ‘so that we may have evidence if necessary hereafter of the state the premises were in before the Tube was made’.

After the Second World War, the Governing Body expended some sums in repairing war damage, but also commissioned new building on cleared sites including two blocks of flats (imaginatively called Wolsey House and Peckwater House, on Oseney Crescent), described as ‘architect designed and of superior construction with brick walls, tiled roofs, fire resisting floors and metal window frames, with balconies and a pleasing front elevation’. They had perambulator lock-ups and Marley tiles throughout the interior. However, in 1955, soon after the reversions had fallen in, the Governing Body decided to sell the entire estate. An auction catalogue was compiled consisting of 38 lots, beginning with three public houses, two banks, eighteen main road shops, and over three hundred residential properties. The auction never took place but the residential properties were sold to St Pancras Borough Council. The commercial estate – including the shops, pubs, banks, and cinema, mainly on Kentish Town Road and in Wolsey Mews (now largely back stores and lock-ups for the premises on the main road) – was retained until 1973.

Christ Church had gone from being landlord of one small farm on the outskirts of London to owner of more than 500 individual properties.
My primary research as a Junior Research Fellow at Christ Church has been in writing a monograph uncovering the ancient roots of these modern, Greek-inflected ideas about beauty. The book, *Beauty and the Gods: A History from Homer to Plato*, explores how ideas and experiences of beauty affected Greek relations with the divine in the Archaic and Classical periods (ca. 700-300 BCE). The question of beauty, the book argues, was fundamental to how Greeks conceived of the gods and their relationship with humans. More than that, the aspiration to beauty was at the heart of many forms of divine worship, from singing and dancing in honour of gods, to offering them votive objects like statues, to building them big ornately decorated temples. To clarify its insights into the Greek world, the book draws comparisons with the literature, art, and architecture of the diverse cultures of the ancient Near East. At the same time, these comparisons show that the central theme of the book is integral to many societies past and present. The interconnection between the beautiful and the divine, however, has been largely overlooked in the lively debate about beauty in academia and the art world in the twenty-first century. With a novel contribution to this debate and the history of aesthetics, the book uncovers an aspect of ancient Greek history with an enduring legacy, showing how we still live with the cultural dialogue between beauty and the gods in ancient Greece.
Dr Brigid von Preussen, Junior Research Fellow in the History of Art

‘Neoclassicism, Race, and Empire’

When you see the words ‘classicism’ or ‘neoclassicism’, what are your first thoughts? Perhaps your mind goes to the art and architecture of ancient Greece and Rome and the repeated attempts to revive it across the centuries. You might think of timeless ideals of beauty and proportion, columns and capitals, the Parthenon and the Pantheon and their later imitations, busts of men in togas or the architecture of institutions like banks, universities, libraries, and innumerable English country houses. These sorts of associations feel familiar to many people, and we often don’t look behind the ‘classical’ surfaces because they seem so ubiquitous and self-evident that they fade into the background.

My aim, in a series of events I organised this year on ‘Neoclassicism, Race, and Empire’, was to shine a spotlight on a less familiar side of classicism and neoclassicism. I believe we cannot understand how the idea of the ‘classical’ has been deployed, from the eighteenth century to the present day, without considering its intersections with colonialism, imperialism, globalisation, and the development and solidification of modern ideas about race. This is an urgent topic of study, with important implications for the discipline of Art History and wider relevance for debates about the legacies of imperialism and racism that are currently taking place not only across the University of Oxford, but indeed the nation and the whole world.

‘Neoclassicism, Race, and Empire’ initially took the form of an online seminar series, co-organised with Dr Charles Kang (curator of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century drawings at the Rijksmuseum) and hosted by The Oxford Centre for Research in the Humanities (TORCH). Our three discipline-leading international speakers investigated the relationship between neoclassical style and questions of race, colonisation, empire-building, and national identity, from the portrayal of freed Black men in classicising sculpture in nineteenth-century America to the use of classical architecture as a tool in far-right politics in twenty-first century America. These seminars were well attended by an international audience, and thanks to this success, I have begun to plan a second series on the same theme for the academic year 2022-23.

The seminar series was complemented by an in-person workshop on the same theme, generously funded by a Christ Church Research Centre Grant, which I hosted at the college on 22 April 2022.


© Lincoln Memorial, Washington DC.
Speakers discussed a range of topics, from the deployment of classical iconography in post-revolutionary Haitian coins to the classical imagery used on album covers made by Black American musicians in the 1970s and 1980s. There was generous time for collegial discussion among all 20 participants of the workshop. One of our key goals was to explore how academic research in this area can be applied in different public forums, so participants included several curators working in museums and the heritage sector, including the National Trust.

Together, these events provided a forum within which questions about cultural patrimony, national identity, and the history of the academy itself could be discussed through the lens of a complex stylistic phenomenon. They have also helped to create a network of scholars working on interrelated issues, who can share their research and help to shape future collaborative projects, all thanks to Christ Church’s support. As a result, I hope that classical and neoclassical art and ideas will continue to be understood in ever more nuanced ways, and to be made accessible to ever wider audiences outside the walls of academia.

To watch the talks in our online seminar series, please visit https://torch.ox.ac.uk/neoclassicism-race-and-empire

Dr Andrew Frawley,
Junior Research Fellow in Chemistry

I have been the Junior Research Fellow in Chemistry at Christ Church since Michaelmas Term 2019. Prior to moving to Oxford, I completed my undergraduate and doctoral degrees at Durham University. My research is focused on the development of new fluorescent dyes for super-resolution microscopy.

The ability to study biology in fine detail is crucial to our understanding of many cellular processes, including how cells organise their components and interact with each other, and how cells respond to external stimuli. Fluorescence microscopy is a ubiquitous tool in the study of biological systems. Conventionally, a molecule is incorporated into a cellular sample and is excited by a laser, giving off light (fluorescence). This fluorescence is collected and used to build an image of the sample.

However, conventional fluorescence microscopy suffers from a fundamental limit: as light travels through a medium, it spreads out. This diffraction limits the spatial resolution that can be achieved, which means we cannot distinguish small objects from each other. Unfortunately, many of the sub-cellular objects we’d like to study are much smaller than this diffraction limit.

To get around this, a number of techniques known as super-resolution microscopy (SRM) have been developed (recognised by the 2014 Nobel Prize in Chemistry). However, most SRM techniques require high laser powers or very slow image acquisitions, neither of which is optimal for imaging live cell samples. I am developing fluorescent dyes for an SRM technique called RESOLFT. RESOLFT is relatively...
In RESOLFT microscopy, we use a violet laser shaped like a ring doughnut, which switches off the fluorescent molecules around the outside, leaving the molecules in the central hole active. When we take our microscopy image, only molecules in the central hole emit light, resulting in enhanced spatial resolution and the ability to distinguish smaller objects from each other. Using this system, we have shown that we can achieve more than a three-fold enhancement in image resolution in lipid membranes. I’m currently working on improving the system further to provide more long-term stability, and the ability to label specific biological targets of interest.

gentle compared to other techniques, but requires specially-designed fluorescent dyes that can be reversibly switched on and off using light.

We have developed a system in which we can switch off dye fluorescence by attaching a quencher, which becomes strongly coloured when exposed to UV/blue light (rather like reactive lenses in sunglasses). This has the effect of absorbing the light from the fluorescent dye so that it does not reach the microscope detector. Imagine putting a pair of reactive sunglasses in front of a light bulb!

In RESOLFT microscopy, we use a violet laser shaped like a ring doughnut, which switches off the fluorescent molecules around the outside, leaving the molecules in the central hole active. When we take our microscopy image, only molecules in the central hole emit light, resulting in enhanced spatial resolution and the ability to distinguish smaller objects from each other. Using this system, we have shown that we can achieve more than a three-fold enhancement in image resolution in lipid membranes. I’m currently working on improving the system further to provide more long-term stability, and the ability to label specific biological targets of interest.
Much of this academic year was framed as a comeback year. The year’s saying was less “an unprecedented time”, more a “return to normal”.

A return to normal involved partaking in traditions I vaguely recalled from my first year, returning in full force in my final year. Highlights included: the long line snaking across Tom Quad for the picture rental scheme, lighting the Christmas Tree on Oxmas night, everyone outside Hall in suits and dresses for Guest Dinner pre-drinks, and even sitting in the JCR with a pizza slice in hand, listening to the termly debate on the merits of Hall’s meat-free Mondays.

I hope that this year also brought the creation of new traditions, of which my library-stuck finalist self is perhaps less privy to. At least on the JCR Executive Committee’s part, we sought to implement new initiatives: a bike rental scheme, redecorating the JCR with rugs, beanbags and pictures, and more serious practices of formalizing an anti-Semitism workshop in Freshers’ Week.

So much could not have been done without the JCR Committee Reps. Notably, the Picture Gallery was officially reopened, accompanied with a beautiful reception organized by our Arts Rep. Our termly Entertainment Reps planned many theme-filled BOPs back in the sweaty, crammed but wholesome JCR. And in sports: our rowing teams did amazingly well in Summer Eights, with M1 and W1 in second place, ready to win Head of the River next year. We won three Cepers Tournaments: Mens GCR Football (featuring JCR members), Table Tennis Doubles and (!) Octopush (underwater hockey if you didn’t know!).

These quick summaries are snapshots of many things that could be highlighted from this year showing our return to normal. I hope to find these traditions and celebrations, old and new, still present when reading the next JCR summary of the academic year.

As a finalist, the Ball was the most dramatic end to a degree I could ask for. And for alumni, I thought the long-awaited Ball was the sweetest of any kind of reunion event one could ask for – friends, former tutorial partners and college families catching up under umbrellas in Tom Quad or even reviving some underlying tensions (?) in the bumper cars.

But, putting aside the dramatics of the Ball, I think the memory that I will hold most dear is entering Tom Quad on the Friday of Week 8, Trinity Term, to join the sprawled out groups of students laughing, resting, chatting on Tom Quad’s holy grass, celebrating the official last night of our degrees.

So thank you Christ Church for being a home for the past three years – I will miss it.
As we find our feet in the post-pandemic era and emerge from the constraints of Covid-19, students are once again stepping out into the great unknown to study and socialise. During these times, as Christ Church Graduate Common Room (GCR) President, I am eternally thankful and deeply indebted to all Christ Church graduate students for endowing me with the responsibility - as well as the opportunity - to impact our bloom into the wider University of Oxford community. I have thoroughly enjoyed the beginnings of my presidency, with the highlight being the reinstatement of long-standing traditions that were temporarily paused during the pandemic; these include organising a two-part exchange with our sister college Trinity, Cambridge.

As Christ Church GCR President, I have the honour of representing Christ Church graduate students on a range of different committees within College. Alongside voicing students’ needs, concerns or queries, I am also able to express my own views and initiatives on matters that shape students’ life at the House. And I am not alone in my ability to positively impact Christ Church graduate students’ lives; thankfully, I have an excellent committee that has also worked hard to enrich the lives of fellow graduates. This includes Master’s Garden tours from the Head Gardener, organised by the GCR’s Environment and Ethics Officer, and a GCR Garden Party in the Cathedral Garden organised by the GCR’s Social Secretaries.

Standing on the shoulders of giants and building upon work by my fantastic predecessors, this electoral term saw the creation of an additional committee position to represent the Black, Asian and Ethnic Minorities (BAME) community; since election, the GCR’s BAME representative played a defining role in organising the Four College Rose.

For many, Summer Eights is the highlight of the social calendar, and this year was no exception. Each of the GCR executive committee is proud to represent Christ Church as both rowers and coxswains. This Summer Eights campaign saw W1 and M1 narrowly finish second on the river behind University College and Oriel College respectively, and in prime position for next year’s double headship. However, it’s in the lower boats where the GCR executive committee play a defining role; together the GCR President (coxswain) and GCR Treasurer (7-seat) ended the Christ Church M4 campaign with a +4 differential and a division promotion; meanwhile, the GCR Vice-President (coxswain) ended the Christ Church W3 campaign with a fantastic +3 differential. However, it wasn’t all plain sailing, as the GCR President (2-seat) ended the Christ Church M3 campaign with a -2 differential.

I consider myself immensely privileged to be a member of this glorious House and I am certain that 2022 - 2023 will be another remarkable year for the GCR. I look forward to the challenges that lie ahead, and working to ensure that each and every Christ Church graduate student continues to flourish.
Admissions and Access

Dr Ana Hastoy, Admissions and Access Manager

The Admissions and Access team started the year with excellent news from the most recent admissions round: Christ Church has a record number of offer holders from our link regions (the regions where we do most of our Access work) - seven from the North East of England and seven from the London borough of Barnet.

Christ Church applicants from Barnet and the North East had a remarkable offer rate: over 33% of applicants were successful, compared to the Oxford average of 19% for UK applicants. We were particularly delighted for the students who had attended our ‘Christ Church Horizons’ sustained contact programme in Barnet: 20 applied to Oxford and 10 gained offers (including four at Christ Church). This was an extraordinary offer rate and we could not be more pleased for the students, their schools, and their families.

Beyond our link regions, Christ Church was also one of the colleges with the highest proportion of offer holders from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds. The most recent ethnicity data (from the 2021 UCAS cycle) also show that Christ Church was the Oxford college with the highest proportion of offer holders from Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic Groups.

While there is still a lot of work to be done and we are fully committed to continue supporting students from disadvantaged backgrounds and under-represented groups, we are pleased to report that there is progress in their representation at the College.

If Michaelmas Term is the busiest term for Admissions every year, Hilary Term is the most intense for Access. As well as meeting our new cohorts of students who take part in ‘Christ Church Horizons’ in Barnet and the ‘Aim for Oxford’ programme in the North East, we started a new programme for students from Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic Groups who are interested in studying sciences at university: ‘All About Mars’. The programme was run by our Access Fellow, Dr Ben Fernando, and included ‘flash talks’, a guest lecture on the Perseverance Mars Rover, an essay writing workshop, tutorial-like sessions in small groups, as well as admissions advice.

Our Access Officer, Joel Butler, has also been keeping very busy: as well as visiting schools in the North East of England, Joel organised three residential visits to Christ Church over the Easter break, including a new collaboration with ‘The Brilliant Club’ in the North East.

Beyond our annual ‘Women in PPE’ event, we have also set up two new subject-specific initiatives, together with Dr Rosalie Warnock, Stipendiary Lecturer in Geography: an essay project called ‘The Biodiversity Crisis’, where year 12s came to Christ Church for a study day including tutorials, and a video competition called ‘This is Geography’ for younger pupils.

We are certainly excited about and making the most of being able to hold access events in person again and, as always, would like to thank our alumni for their support with outreach initiatives at Christ Church.

© Christ Church Horizons students on their graduation day.
There was no shortage of remarkable enigmatic figures in Christ Church when Simon arrived in 1970, but his brilliance added immeasurably to the community. His sparkling energy was unforgettable for all those who experienced it, whether colleagues, undergraduates or graduates. A former Organ Scholar at King's College Cambridge, Assistant Organist at Westminster Abbey, and Acting Master of the Music at St Albans Abbey, Simon came with a strong pedigree and a steely determination to stamp his personality on Music in Christ Church. I was his first Organ Scholar and witnessed the meteoric rise in standards, which resulted in daily performances of electrifying quality in the Cathedral, and ultimately a series of ground-breaking recordings. This legacy lives on, as does the magnificent Rieger organ which was installed in 1979. It would be true to say that Simon was ruthless in pursuing his goal and uncompromising in demanding excellence from all of us, but his love of the music was so palpable that it was easy to identify with his aspirations. These, and his magnetic charm and enthusiasm, combined to make him an outstanding tutor.

After he left to become Organist and Master of the Choristers at Westminster Abbey in 1981, he often told me that he regarded his Christ Church years as the best of his professional life. There was no shortage of drama of course: it did not take much to light the fuse and there was always something about institutions which made him
rebellious. Perhaps this is why he left Westminster Abbey after only six years to pursue his full-time career as organist and conductor. In later life he was profoundly touched to be elected an Honorary Student of Christ Church, a recognition by the College of his extraordinary impact on the wider musical world. It was also a huge personal delight to have his step-son, Tristan, as a chorister in the choir, after Simon’s marriage to Elizabeth and move to Oxford.

I have countless memories of Simon as my mentor, tutor and friend. My first encounter with him was in 1970 when he interviewed me for the organ scholarship. To say it was a challenging experience would be an understatement: he already had a reputation as the most brilliant organist of his generation, and here I was, performing Bach and Dupré in front of him. Yet, somehow, he instilled great confidence in me and that was always my experience of him. His musical tastes were eclectic, and under his influence I experienced the glories of continental polyphony, the tone poems of Strauss, the music of William Walton and much in between. Most of all I remember his generosity of spirit, lively debate over meals at the Saraceno restaurant, eating boeuf stroganoff on our laps in my wife’s rooms at St. Anne’s, playing croquet matches or racing punts – he always won! In short, he was a force of nature, certainly uncompromising in his life-long devotion to music, but also uniquely gifted in being able to communicate this to world-wide audiences, who remain in awe of his prodigious talent to this day.

In 1972, after I had played the organ on his first commercial recording with Christ Church choir (Walton’s Choral Music), he gave me a full score of Mahler’s Das Lied von der Erde, a present I will always treasure. It seems fitting to end these reflections with the final stanza of the last movement, Der Abschied (The farewell), not just because of its personal resonance for me, but because it encapsulates the passion, intensity and optimism which were combined in this remarkable man.

Die liebe Erde allüberall
Blüht auf im Lenz und grünt aufs neu!
Allüberall und ewig blauen licht die Fernen!
Ewig... ewig...

(Wherever the dear earth
Blossoms in spring and grows green again!
Everywhere and forever the distance shines bright and blue!
Forever… forever…)

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A Memorial Evensong will be held for Simon Preston in Westminster Abbey on Monday 21 November, following which his ashes will be buried there.

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His musicianship was a miraculous gift that I knew I was incredibly lucky to be observing and sharing in.

Howard Goodall (1976, Music)

When I was eleven years old the two favourite records in my admittedly modest record collection were The Beatles’ Hello, Goodbye and Messiaen’s La Nativité du Seigneur, played by Simon Preston on the organ of Westminster Abbey. I have come to realise in the decades since that whilst I may not have been the only person to have those two legendary vinyl pressings in their record carousel, I almost certainly was the only 11-year-old schoolboy for whom they were joint no. 1s, and I can now see that it was a bit – shall we say – non-mainstream.

Imagine my excitement, then, when a year later Preston himself came to give an organ recital at New College, where I was a chorister, and I might, if I volunteered to do the weekly library chore on Friday after evensong, actually get to meet the great man in person. The long-awaited evensong arrived and Simon duly appeared in the choir room afterwards to practise for his recital the next day on Grant, Degens & Bradbeer’s shining metal and glass organic masterpiece, then only one year old. He signed my autograph book and was friendly, a bit mischievous, and seemingly possessed of a kind of electric charge of nervous energy that sparked off him as if he were a human Van der Graff generator. At that moment I decided, with generous lashings of unmerited chorister presumption and
entitlement, that if I ever were to return to Oxford as an undergraduate, this was the man I wanted to be my tutor. Which is exactly what happened.

It turns out that for the boy who equally loved McCartney and Messiaen, Simon was not only the perfect mentor for my particular musical journey but I think the only music tutor at Oxford, or anywhere perhaps, in 1976, who could possibly have played that role with such flair, such dynamism, such instinctive understanding. The thing was, I wasn’t drawn to composing, or being in a rock band, or musically directing student revues because they seemed fun, or easy, or a cop-out. I wanted to do those things with the kind of driven, single-minded focus and professionalism that I saw in Simon’s music-making. Above all, it seemed to me, he demanded total, unwavering concentration on the musical task in hand.

Details were important. There was no such thing in his musical firmament that could be casual, or half-done, or dashed off. To see him conduct the choir was a bit scary, no doubt about it. But the results were so often electrifying. His recording with Christ Church of the Stravinsky Symphony of Psalms, released shortly before I came here, was then — and is now — one of the most exciting things I had ever heard. It was a choral sound that reconfigured the Anglican cathedral norm: powerful, edgy, continental, rhythmic, urgent — there wasn’t a wishy-washy, Edwardian Anglo-Latin diphthong in sight. It was as if choir-

stalls that once dreamily served up Stanford in C, Watson in E and Darke in F, had unexpectedly awoken, at volume, with that full-throated opening counter-tenor invocation, Exaudi orationem meam. Preston, the magician, unveiled Stravinsky in an English cathedral, as he did Poulenc or Lassus, and our collective choral sound was never quite the same again.

He came along to the musicals I was already writing as a student and to the comedy shows I did with Rowan Atkinson & Richard Curtis and he was either a fantastic actor or he appeared to enjoy them enormously. He let me travel up to London more or less every night of my first term to record a pop album. He never once suggested to me that my priorities were wrong, though I got the trademark hyperactive eyebrows a couple of times. He was good-humoured and encouraging but because he had a reputation for occasional ferocity I was careful, I think, not to push my luck. His musicianship was a miraculous gift that I knew I was incredibly lucky to be observing and sharing in. His approval meant everything to me. He even tried to persuade me in my final year to ask out a first year music student from LMH that I was keen on but too shy to beseech. He persisted. He was adamant that we should be together. I now know he said the same to her about me. So at his prompting I did indeed ask her out, and she turned me down. 21 years later that LMH student, Val Fancourt and I got married, and Simon didn’t waste the opportunity to remind us, quite justifiably, that he had been right all along. My boyhood hero, directing me to the love of my life.

If you measured Simon’s character in musical dynamics, there’d be plenty of fortissimos and pianissimos, plenty of con fuoco and molto espressivo, and very little mp or mf. In fact Simon didn’t really do mezzo anything. He had an enviable, child-like enthusiasm for the adventure of life. He could be as excited about a new coffee grinder he’d installed in his kitchen as he was about Christ Church’s new Rieger organ. What I took away from being his student was that you might not get to be a great musician without also being passionate about other stuff — people, places, ideas, art, books, love, laughter.

As his life drew on, my sense is that this side of Simon became more important to him, and Elizabeth tells of the enormous fun they had together. He was immensely fortunate to have had her at his side both then and as his health began to fail. Love-of-life Simon is how we will all remember him.

The Symphony of Psalms ends in brilliant exultation. Laudate eum in tympano et choro; laudate eum in chordis et organo. Praise him with drums and choir, praise him with strings and organ. How apt.

We have been unable to trace the copyright holders of the images of Simon Preston on pages 11 and 13 and therefore ask them to please contact the Development Office.
The Music Trust has sprung back to life after the pandemic, with a series of enjoyable events, and the aim to support the choristers, and a number of new musical instruments.

**Joint Choral Evensong with the Chapel Royal, Hampton Court**

On 3 May we welcomed the Choir of HM Chapel Royal, Hampton Court Palace, to celebrate our shared history with Hampton Court, with a joint Evensong. We were also delighted to showcase the very best of our joint foundation with an exhibition of rare Tudor treasures in the college’s Upper Library, and finish the evensong with dinner in the Freind room.

To mark the historic occasion of bringing together these two Royal foundations, our Librarians brought out of store Tudor musical part books and manuscript scores, Elizabeth I’s personal Bible and Psalter, and Cardinal Wolsey’s Epistle Lectionary. In addition to the rare books, the guests were also able to see a pair of fifteenth-century cornetts and Cardinal Wolsey’s galero in the impressive surrounds of the Upper Library.

The music at Evensong included John Taverner’s monumental Easter motet, *Dum Transisset Sabbatum* as the Introit in a nod to the college’s first Organist. The choirs sang the Bernard Rose setting of the Preces and Responses. The canticles were Stanford in C, and the anthem was his *Ye Choirs of New Jerusalem*. The full recording of the service is available on the Cathedral’s YouTube channel.

**Cathedral Choir Tour of Sweden**

Christ Church Cathedral Choir undertook a successful tour of Sweden from 21 to 27 May. Following two postponements because of the Covid-19 pandemic, the tour was a much-anticipated return to international travel for the Choir. Along the way, we were very glad to be reunited with alumni of the House as well as friends and supporters of the Music Trust.

The tour included four concert engagements highlighting the Cathedral Choir’s versatile breadth of repertoire and style. In addition to the concerts, the Choir was pleased to join in some special events in Stockholm as well as collaborate with our Swedish counterparts in Uppsala to sing in liturgical context.

The tour began with a few days in Stockholm – the cultural, political, and economic heart of Sweden. The choir had lovely accommodation aboard the M/S *Mälardrottningen*. The first concert was an invited programme of English choral masterworks at Stockholm’s *Storkyrkan* (Stockholm Cathedral), the city’s oldest church and the seat of Church of Sweden Diocese of Stockholm.
The next day, the choir accompanied a group of alumni and Music Trust friends on a wonderful dinner cruise around the archipelago aboard the MS Waxholm III from its permanent berth at Nybrokajen Quay in central Stockholm. During dinner, the choir sang a light programme of close harmony arrangements.

In addition to their musical engagements, the choristers and clerks enjoyed exclusive guided tours of the Moderna Museet’s collections. Thanks to the generous hospitality of our local alumni, the museum’s curatorial staff agreed to open specially for us on a day the galleries would normally be closed. The final event in Stockholm was at the offices of Mannheimer Swartling, where James Vaux (1983, Law) gave an engaging talk about Weapons of Mass Production: How interior design became a Cold War tool and the surprising role of ’Swedish Modern’ drawing on his wide-ranging research and experience in law, finance, and design.

Meanwhile, the Choir travelled to Uppsala, the ecclesiastical and academic centre of Sweden. Our choristers and clerks were very well looked after in homestays arranged by our choral counterparts at Uppsala domkyrka with families from their gosskör.

The Cathedral itself remains the spiritual and visual focal point of the city. The Choir were pleased to sing a concert programme of choral masterworks (receiving a standing ovation warranting an encore) as well as the Ascension Day High Mass with the Domkyrkas gosskör in such an historic setting.

Our local alumni also took the time to introduce us to the ’Swedish Oxford’, Uppsala universitet. The tour of some of the most iconic and historic academic buildings was punctuated by deafening degree day cannon fire for every newly minted doctor of the university. The choristers were delighted.

The final leg of the tour brought the Choir to Stiftsgården, on the eastern shore of Lake Siljan, near Rättvik. The Choir were the featured guest artists at the Rättvik Festival, a summer choir intensive for Church of Sweden boychoirs. The Choir sang two programmes of diverse styles in the historic Rättvik Church: one featuring secular close harmony and madrigals and the other showcasing the rich English sacred choral tradition.

Christ Church Organist, Steven Grahl, also led several workshops on a variety of topics, including the training of church musicians, the structure and repertoire of a boys choir, and issues and opportunities for recruitment of choristers and clerks in a post-pandemic world. He remained on after the Choir returned home for half term as the invited guest director of the festival’s combined choirs.

The Christ Church Music Trust is grateful to the many people who made this tour possible, and especially André Andersson (1986, Law) for their generous underwriting, hospitality, and steadfast support on the ground.

Harpichord Concert

On 31 May the Christ Church Music Trust presented a special dedicatory harpsichord recital in the Chapter House, given by former Christ Church Cathedral Organ Scholar, Laurence Cummings (1986, Music) on the newly acquired two-manual Flemish style harpsichord recently featured in the Three Choirs Concert at the Sheldonian and St John Passion. We are most grateful to alumna Fiona Hollands (1985, Biology) and her husband Ethan Berman for both enabling the purchase of the harpsichord and underwriting a series of concerts over the next few years.

The Christ Church Cathedral Choir sing the opening concert of their Sweden tour at Stockholm’s Storkyrkan.
I was talking to a former pupil recently who told me that his lifelong commitment to Republicanism began in the 60s when he was at the School. Along with all his fellow pupils, he gathered in Tom Quad to see the arrival of Her Majesty The Queen at Christ Church to take part in the traditional service of distributing the Maundy Money. As The Queen arrived it began to pour with rain. As instructed, the young boy doffed his cap to the passing monarch. As he did so, the cold rain dribbled out of the cap and ran down the length of his arm. He decided then that he did not wish to doff his cap to anyone, ever again. I suspect this reaction was unusual. I have spoken to many former pupils who remember the occasion with great affection and this is very much the case with the boys who met The Queen when she came back again to distribute the money in 2013 and for those who went, in 2014, to St James's Palace to sing for her when the Cathedral Music Trust was launched. Certainly my experience of our present pupils is that they have nothing but admiration for The Queen and are proud to be members of a Royal Foundation. This was evident in the alacrity with which they all sang the songs that had been chosen for our annual inter-house Music Competition, namely, Rule Britannia, Land of Hope and Glory, and Jerusalem. Indeed one of the boys arrived at school yesterday saying that he could not get the songs out of his head! Furthermore, in our recent Art Exhibition, all the pupils contributed their handprints towards a huge mural of the Union flag festooned with bunting.

The Jubilee and the focus that it has cast on The Queen's life of service to both the nation and to her people, has caused many people to examine their own lives. For most of us, The Queen's 70 years on the throne is a remarkable feat; for our pupils, the oldest of whom is 13, 70 years is an almost inconceivable sweep of time. Almost all of our pupils have grandparents who are younger than 70, and the Second World War, in which The Queen served, is as historical to them as the Battle of Waterloo. Nonetheless, like so many of us, they feel real affection for The Queen, who has been an important figure throughout their lives.

But there is more to it than this. In the same way that The Queen represents an unbroken tradition of service, stretching back towards the origins of the institution in which they function, so our Choristers have been serving the Cathedral at Christ Church since its creation in 1546. For the boys concerned, and for their families, this is a matter of real commitment. The boys sing 18 hours each week, taking part in six services (three during the course of the weekend) and twelve additional hours spent practising. They stay in school over Holy Week and on the days leading up to Christmas while their contemporaries rest at home. The benefits of this routine are numerous, both for the boys and for the thousands of people who hear them during the course of the year but, in essence, it is an act of extraordinary commitment of which Christ Church is rightly proud.

On Friday 3 June, the School celebrated the Platinum Jubilee by enjoying a whole school lunch in our playground. Everyone wore red, white and blue and the atmosphere resembled one of the street parties which have always been a mark of Jubilee celebrations. It was an occasion that the boys will always remember – Platinum Jubilees don't occur very frequently – and thankfully the rain kept away, though none of the pupils now wear caps!

Richard Murray, Headmaster

The Cathedral School

Richard Murray, Headmaster
I was appointed Treasurer in January 2006 and it is interesting, for me at least, to look back over the last 16 years and see how the endowment has changed over that time.

At 31 January 2006, we estimated that the endowment was valued at £227m and in the previous year we had taken £8m for spending on the college’s day-to-day activities. By 31 January 2022, the endowment was estimated to be worth £666m and we spent £18m in the previous year: the endowment now supports well over half of our annual expenditure (see Figure 1).

Perhaps even more significant has been the change in the asset allocation. From an endowment which was basically a combination of historic property and public equities, with a heavy emphasis on the latter, it now embraces a considerable exposure to private equity, and there has been a substantial increase in our property weighting.

How has this been achieved? When I arrived, Governing Body had already decided to seek to emulate the asset allocation model of our transatlantic peers by diversification into a range of additional asset classes. It was, however, quite clear that the Treasury did not have the skill or capacity to do this, particularly to identify, access, or monitor a portfolio of top quartile private equity managers. Christ Church was not about to build its own fund management team.

Figure 1

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**Christ Church’s endowment on my watch**

James Lawrie, Treasurer

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Working with a number of other colleges, we backed Oxford Investment Partners to assemble a diversified portfolio of investments with lower volatility than public equities, and a long-term return objective of inflation plus 5%. This approach was extended when the University established a centralised fund management team to emulate the success of US endowments. We invested £100m in the Oxford Endowment Fund (“OEF”) managed by Oxford University Endowment Management, partly with the proceeds of a generous gift from Harriet Heyman and Sir Michael Moritz. As at the end of 2022, a little over a third of the portfolio was invested in OEF.

A small element of our long-only equity exposure has been managed directly to provide, some additional alpha. We have focused our firepower where we believe that active management of investment trusts can be most rewarding: UK smaller companies, global smaller companies, emerging market equities, and technology. We have recently taken a long-term position in two specialist Vietnam trusts, for example.

Whilst Christ Church has long been comfortable in investing in strategic land (mainly farms with long-term development potential), we found identifying and choosing commercial and residential opportunities more difficult. To assist us, we have backed a group of specialist, often quite small and young property fund management firms where our size of investment still gives us some influence. This has seen us make UK commercial property investments in logistics and small South East-based industrial estates through Clipstone, office property through First Property, and secondary retail and commercial through OLIM Property. We have also gained exposure to a range of UK residential opportunities including build-to-let, buy-to-let, and allocated residential land development via an association with Long Harbour.

This expansion of our property interests has been partially financed by £90m in 50-year fixed interest debt at a cost a little north of 2.3% per annum, as well as profitable sales of residential land in Carterton, for example. We are currently seeking to take advantage of favourable prices in the Oxford market to realise some hidden value in the portfolio. Assuming these sales go through, we anticipate that our property exposure will look something like Figure 2.

We anticipate that much, if not all, of the strategic portfolio will be realised over the next 30 years, so the challenge now is to re-stock the property larder with opportunities for strategic gains for future generations. Whilst we are not alone in seeking such opportunities, the list of competitors with a similar time horizon is largely limited to the Church of England, the Crown and (increasingly) family offices, as well as some other Oxbridge colleges. This time horizon excludes traditional property funds.

We are very aware that we do not generally command special attention by virtue of our size. Our competitive advantages are instead: our long-term time horizon, our willingness to work through complex property situations, and speedy investment decision-taking. I have been very well assisted by expert old members and others on our Investment Group, now chaired by Karl Sternberg, who meet formally twice a year, but who have managed to reach decisive conclusions within a few days of a new opportunity arising.

‘So what of performance?’ I hear you ask. My predecessor, Hugh Richardson, wisely persuaded Governing Body to adopt a ‘total return’ approach to management allowing us to be broadly indifferent to returns whether they be income or capital. Over the 15 years to June 2021, the average US endowment tracked by NACUBO-TIAA made a total return of 7.3% per annum, whilst Christ Church’s was 8.6%, admittedly in a slightly more inflationary environment (UK RPI 2.9%; US HEPI 2.2%). Over a comparable 10-year period, Christ Church returned 10.2%, whilst the average US endowment returned 8.5% and the US$1 billion+ funds, perhaps the most demanding comparator, delivered 9.4%. Comparisons are odious and in our case occasionally flattered by one-off gains from property sales, but I think we can be reassured by this long-term performance, which has seen a satisfactory increase in the purchasing power of the endowment ahead of the inflationary pressures we now expect to be embedded for some years.

The endowment now contributes about 60% of our annual income. Given our inability to increase student fees and the fragile nature of our diversification into hospitality (conferences and visitors), the continued health of the endowment is vital to the college’s ability to maintain the quality of the student experience at the House and generously to support students from less advantaged backgrounds.

Figure 2

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Property allocations (%)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Commercial</td>
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<td>Residential</td>
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<td>Agriculture</td>
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<td>Strategic land</td>
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<td>OEF</td>
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0 10 20 30 40
It is looking like 2022 should be another good year for our work reintroducing lost flower species to the Meadow. The spring has started off with great displays of native daffodils – *Narcissus obvallaris* (Tenby Daffodil) and *N. lobularis* (the Lent Lily) on the Dean’s Ham and along the banks of the River Cherwell.

As these begin to fade, their place is taken by Wild Tulips (*Tulipa sylvestris*), which became naturalised in Great Britain in the 1700s, as well as Cowslips and Snake’s Head Fritillaries. The Cowslips (above) do very well in the damp conditions of the Meadow field and particularly in the area to the west of Broad Walk towards the river. They mainly originate from a general wild flower sowing we did about eight years ago and have been spreading by seed ever since. It is interesting to see Cowslips appearing in other areas where we have not sown them; proving seed distribution by various means around the Meadow is active.

**Christ Church Meadow**

*John James, Head Gardener*

ültips (*Tulipa sylvestris*) naturalised in the north west corner of the Meadow.

*Narcissus obvallaris*, the Tenby Daffodil

*Narcissus lobularis*, the Lent Lily
The Snake’s Head Fritillaries are the county flower of Oxfordshire and again are thriving in the cool damp conditions around the Meadow. Every year we plant around 3,000 bulbs in the autumn, so the quantities are slowly increasing and will continue to do so at an increased rate, as they are now beginning to self-seed.

In order to increase the diversity of species in the Meadow field, and in addition to the green hay spreading carried out in August 2020, we are now planting out plug plants grown from seed donated by Catriona Bass, the founder of the Thames Valley Wildflower Meadow Restoration Project, from her ancient floodplain meadow Long Mead near Eynsham. Species include Great Burnet, Devil’s Bit Scabious, Black Knapweed and Quaking Grass. We have just received another donation of seed from Catriona’s meadow, which have now been sown, and once they have germinated will be grown on in small pots to be planted out when big enough to survive in the Meadow.

Another reintroduction which appears to be successful was the planting of Greater Water Parsnip plants, donated to us by the Oxford Botanic Gardens. Greater Water Parsnip is an endangered species due to land drainage projects and is classified as Nationally Scarce on the Vascular Plant Red Data List for Great Britain, so it is a good sign that it seems to be establishing well so far.

Overall it looks like our work re-establishing lost meadow species and increasing biodiversity is going well, and there will be much to look forward to over the summer as other plants come into bloom such as Red Campion, Ox-Eye Daisies, Wild Carrot, Field Geranium and Knapweed. I very much hope that we will see signs of our native orchids soon and that we should see some Great Burnet in flower for the first time.
2022 Tower Poetry Competition

Almost 800 entries were received for this year’s Tower Poetry Competition. The theme for the 2022 was ‘Dream’, and the competition was judged by Jane Griffiths, John Clegg and Professor Mishtooni Bose.

The prizegiving took place on 20 April 2022 with prizes awarded to:

**Leo Kang Beevers** – First Prize, ‘As a Moment Glimpsed Only Through Migration’

**Erin Hateley** – Second Prize, ‘Most people forget their dreams but I know them so I wrote them all down for you’

**Livvy Owen** – Third Prize, ‘Dreambird’

**Reona Halili** – Commended, ‘THE WAITER AT THE EQUIDISTANT CAFE WEARS A NAME TAG THAT READS MORPHEUS’

**Seohyun (Amy) Shin** – Commended, ‘Hanbok’

**Tallula Haynes** – Commended, ‘Alleyway Farmer’.

**LEO KANG BEEVERS**

First Prize

**As a Moment Glimpsed Only Through Migration**

As a Moment Glimpsed Only Through Migration
Not knowing how to order their lives if not
by burning, they moved from room
to room. If there was something more than that
taking hold, deep where the dreamer can’t touch,
I couldn’t say. Outside, as usual, little resistance
at the flesh. Having reaped the lightning, they bound it
steadily and with tenderness, endless, rain
frailing the afterthought. Then winter, already. Then dew
along the windows. A still-flowering maple branch,
which is to say an artform, of their survival. The wild geese
have escaped from their paintings—feel the wound. As if
painting is nothing more than the sound the sky makes
in hunger. Paletteless. As if even that was enough
to live in. The hands you fell into were the colour
of cut stems. Or the raw, unbiten blue
their wings turn to, before they heal.

**ERIN HATELEY**

Second Prize

**Most people forget their dreams but I know them so I wrote them all down for you**

dreams should be scrawled on the underside of tears //
dreams should kiss the children goodnight when their
ears are cold // dreams should be the raw palms of father’s
applause // dreams should be that dusty guitar // dreams
should be that look a boy steals at another boy that is short
enough to pass unnoticed but long enough to last the entire
day plus the walk home // dreams should be the space
between a fish and the glass // dreams should be nail varnish
in a paper cut // dreams should be the echo of an echo of
your name that was never really there // dreams should set
an ice lolly on fire // dreams should be the rotting lemon in
the back of the fridge from a long forgotten pancake day //
dreams should be the thorns in your throat after you planted
it without thinking // dreams should be the soft, smooth
curve of a dead pigeon’s chest // dreams should be as angry
as the sound of the word Worcestershire // dreams should
be orange or blackcurrant, dear? // dreams should be a sticky
petticoat // dreams should be the old photographs sporting
dusted dust // dreams should be a forehead stained with
boxed black hair dye // dreams should be graffiti on the sun
// dreams should be shorn hair in a halo around your feet
// dreams should be the liquid eyes in Hiroshima // dreams
should be the cold silence of Uranium-235 // dreams should
be a butterfly landing on a nose // dreams should be a sneeze
so loud it wakes up grandad // dreams should be a goodbye
that wasn’t good enough or bye enough // dreams should be
giggled swear words in a quiet classroom // dreams should
be the ee between dr- and -m // dreams should be a burned
love letter // dreams should be a head that you never see the
face of // dreams should be queued up in your subconscious,
waiting to be forgotten.

You can read all the poems from the 2022 finalists here:
https://www.chch.ox.ac.uk/research-and-academia/previous-competitions
Former Lord Mayor of Oxford, Mark Lygo, talks with Tower Poetry friends.

Tower Poetry Prizegiving reception.

Back row (judges): Mishtooni Bose, Jane Griffiths, John Clegg
Front row (winners): Tallula Haynes, Livvy Owen, Leo Kang Beevers, Erin Hateley, Seohyun (Amy) Shin

Professor Mishtooni Bose at the Prizegiving.

John Clegg at the Prizegiving.
Food plants and their origins

Professor Stephen A Harris, Druce Curator of the Oxford University Herbaria

We are dependent on plant health and diversity for our food, our fuel, and our medicines; for the very air we breathe. Ten thousand years ago, as the ice sheet that encased the northern hemisphere for ten millennia melted, humans began to cultivate the soil and domesticate plants. Domestication is a dynamic process. As we selected individuals within wild species, plants that were the tallest, the hardiest, the most prolific – whatever characteristic we perceived as useful – we transformed them into crop plants. Eventually, these crops could no longer compete outside cultivation; domesticated plants had become as dependent on us as we are on them.

Discovering the botanical origins of the plants that we eat is an exercise in intellectual curiosity, strongly associated with the practical issue of food security. Knowing about crop plants and their relatives, the ranges of morphological, physiological and genetic diversities within them, and their abilities to adapt to changing environmental conditions, helps increase the resilience of global food supplies. Moreover, investigation of crop origins also tells us about ourselves and the societies in which we live.

The challenges of discovering the origins of the crops with which our cultures evolved is not to be underestimated. In 1868, Charles Darwin admitted that, compared to domesticated animals, fundamental data were unavailable for crops since ‘botanists have generally neglected cultivated varieties, as beneath their notice’. However, during the nineteenth century, narrow views of what was respectable for botanists to study were being challenged. French-Swiss botanist Alphonse de Candolle recognised the need to synthesise data from disciplines as diverse as morphology, biogeography, history, philology, and archaeology. However, his ambitions were hampered by technologies of the time.

In the early twentieth century, Soviet geneticist Nikolai Vavilov took a genetic approach. He reasoned that local crop variability would be greatest in areas where crops were domesticated and in contact with their wild relatives. Furthermore, local crop cultivars would be highly adapted to the places in which they grew and the conditions under which they were managed, and contain a reservoir of genes, some of which would be similar to those of the wild relatives. Vavilov identified eight ‘centres of plant domestication’ across the globe including Central America, South America, the Mediterranean Basin, western Asia, northeast Africa and China. Vavilov and his colleagues went on to establish seed banks to preserve crop diversity. Vavilov died in prison in 1943 after publicly criticising the pseudoscientific views of Stalin’s favourite plant breeder, Trofim Lysenko. Vavilov’s ideas are now central to many modern seed banks and global plant conservation programmes.

Over the last century, developments in archaeology, physics, philosophy of science, computing, and genetics have removed many impediments to modern investigators of crop origins. Refinements in archaeological field techniques mean leaf fragments, small seeds and pollen grains are readily recovered from sites. Using modern dating technologies, minuscule samples of individual plant fragments can be dated, whilst rigorous species relationships are reconstructed using powerful computing and vast amounts of genetic data recovered for DNA sequences.

Natural plant distributions mean few species are found everywhere. So, as people explored the world, they discovered and adopted new plants. Cultures absorbed staples domesticated across globe: wheat from the Middle East; rice from China; sugar cane and bananas from south and south-east Asia; coconuts from Polynesia; oil palm from Africa and maize, chillies, potatoes, tomatoes and pineapples from South and Central America.

Specimen of sunflower collected before 1720; probably from a specimen cultivated in a garden in the UK.
Oxford University Herbaria, Department of Plant Sciences
Corona solis annua, flore aureo, nupere semper observata.  
Corona solis maxima, flore pleno, aureo, semper nigro.  
Boehl. Ind. Att. Pl. 112. 11. 5.
Our interactions with plants change over time, and diverse cultures exploit them in different ways. One such plant is the sunflower, the highly adaptable oil of which accounts for most of the crop’s commercial worth. The edible oil has little taste, a light colour, high levels of unsaturated fatty acids and is perceived as a healthy alternative to saturated animal fats. Sunflower oil is particularly popular in Europe and Russian Federation where it is a substitute for olive oil, and is used for cooking, margarine production and even biodiesel manufacture. Seed residues that remain following oil extraction are used as high protein animal feed, often as substitutes for soya.

The native distribution of the sunflower is North America, where indigenous people used it as a multipurpose species, for food, medicine and dyes. Current evidence shows the sunflower was domesticated once, about five millennia ago, in eastern North America, and is one of the few major crops to have been domesticated in North America.

However, in Europe, following their introduction from the Americas in the sixteenth century, sunflowers were little more than garden novelties. In 1597, John Gerard appeared disappointed sunflowers in his Holborn garden were only 4.3 metres tall, whilst those of his European rivals reached 7.3 metres. In the 1620s, apothecary John Parkinson thought the sunflower was ‘too strong’ a food for his taste, whilst John Goodyear was of the opinion that the sunflower relative, the Jerusalem artichoke was ‘meate more fit for swine, than men’.

The massive flower heads of sunflowers, balanced on a single stem, demand attention. Sunflower heads comprise hundreds of tiny flowers, ‘set as though a cunning workman had of purpose placed them in very good order’. Those around the outside of the head are sterile, whilst those on the inside are fertile – each producing one dry, zebra-striped fruit, containing an oil-rich seed. Outside of North America, interest in sunflower oil is strongly associated with nineteenth-century Russia. The reason for this is unclear but one suggestion is that the oil was not prohibited by the Russian Orthodox Church during Lent. By 1830, there were hundreds of thousands of hectares of sunflowers in commercial production. Furthermore, Russian plant breeders had selected sunflowers with seeds that were...
suitable for oil production and direct consumption. By the late nineteenth century, sunflower seeds were being returned to North America, probably in the baggage of Russian immigrants, not as low-yielding, botanical novelties but as highly productive sunflower cultivars, e.g., ‘Mammoth Russian’. During the early twentieth century, Soviet plant breeders raised the levels of oil in sunflower seeds dramatically. Furthermore, sunflowers became associated with Cold War industrial espionage and biopiracy as Soviet seed became part of today’s global sunflower oil industry.

Seed oil yield was identified as an early goal of sunflower breeders. For competitive horticulturalists, large, brightly coloured heads on tall plants may be premium features but for commercial farmers, tall plants with large heads are likely to fall over and reduce yield. Consequently, different users have different requirements of the sunflowers they are growing, which can be met by the careful application of breeding to natural sunflower variability.

Since the 1950s, sunflowers have become an international commodity with multiple uses in our everyday lives. A North American species, bred in nineteenth-century Russia and reimported to North America before becoming part of Cold War politics in the twentieth century. Today, the sunflower has once more become part of a military and politic struggle. Over the past few months, as the war in Ukraine has unfolded, the sunflower – the national flower of Ukraine – has become symbolic of the country’s battle to defend itself. Sunflowers are also important business for Ukraine. In 2020, approximately 50 million tonnes of sunflower seeds were produced globally; approximately one quarter of this came from Ukraine. As a major global exporter of sunflower seeds, the war in Ukraine also emphasises global economic connections and the fragility of our dependency on just a few food plants.
One hundred years ago, the first expedition to attempt the ascent of Mount Everest set out from England. Its members included Lt-Col Edward Strutt, deputy leader, and Dr Tom Longstaff, chief medical officer, who had been contemporaries at Christ Church, matriculating in 1893.

In his autobiography, Longstaff recalled his interview with his tutor, John Barclay Thompson, Dr Lee’s reader in anatomy:

‘… he began by asking me where I had been at school. I told him. He replied: “I would not send my dog to Eton.” He then asked why I wanted to read for an honours degree in physiology. I replied that it would help me towards a medical degree. After looking me carefully over he remarked in chilling tones: “But I perceive, Mr Longstaff, that you have neither the brains nor the physique for such a career. I advise you to take a pass degree.”

Longstaff went on to take a third. Strutt arrived at the House from Beaumont College, Windsor – Eton for Catholics – and a spell at the University of Innsbruck; he took no degree. After Oxford, enjoying independent means – both were scions of wealthy industrial families – neither had financial need of an occupation but Strutt took up part-time soldiering, obtaining a commission in the 3rd battalion (militia) Royal Scots, and Longstaff proceeded to St Thomas’s Hospital, qualifying in medicine in 1903, but he never practised.

Strutt had commenced climbing in the Alps as a schoolboy and had qualified for admission to the prestigious Alpine Club well before his election in 1895, having reached the minimum age of 21. During the decade leading up to the outbreak of the First World War, he visited the Alps regularly, summer and winter. His usual base was St Moritz, fashionable, expensive and frequented by royalty. It was
A pioneer exponent of ‘travelling light’, unencumbered with strings of porters and baggage trains, [Longstaff’s] expeditions were organized with simplicity and at relatively small cost.

here that he became acquainted with the Austro-Hungarian imperial family, to whom he would later render loyal service. Longstaff’s first significant season in the Alps was after schools in the summer of 1897. In 1905 he made his first trip to the Himalaya and two years later climbed Trisul (23,360ft) in the Garhwal Himalaya, which for twenty three years remained the highest summit reached. In 1909 he explored the Karakoram region and discovered the Siachen glacier, the largest on earth outside polar regions. A pioneer exponent of ‘travelling light’, unencumbered with strings of porters and baggage trains, his expeditions were organized with simplicity and at relatively small cost.

On the outbreak of the First World War Longstaff volunteered immediately and was commissioned into the seventh (territorial) Hampshire Regiment which was despatched to India. Here, Longstaff wangled a secondment as assistant commandant of the Gilgit Scouts. His mainly political duties provided a golden opportunity for travel in the Hindu Kush on the North West Frontier. Somewhat ignominiously and to his undoubted chagrin he was invalided home having been struck on the temple by a polo ball. Strutt went to France with his regiment and was wounded, blown up by a ‘bouquet of six shells,’ in October 1914. In 1916 he was posted to Salonika as principal liaison officer with the French commander of the allied forces in the Balkans, and was rewarded with the DSO and Legion d’Honneur. In February 1919, whilst on leave in Venice, he received new orders:

‘You will proceed at once to Eckartsau and give Emperor and Empress moral support of British Government. They are stated to be in danger of their lives, to be suffering great hardships and to lack medical attendance. Endeavour by every possible means to ameliorate their condition.’
Commenting on these orders, Strutt wrote in his diary: ‘We all concluded that the Emperor must mean the Emperor of Austria but disagreed as to interpretation of ‘moral support’. None of us had any idea where Eckartsau was.’ The next day, the British military mission to secure the safety of the imperial family – Lieutenant-Colonel Strutt and his batman - set out for Vienna, arriving three days later, leaving in its wake a host of grovelling petty-officials. A haughty demeanour, bluster and bluff would characterise Strutt’s dealings with Austrian officialdom at every level – from railway guard to Chancellor - and a month later he escorted the imperial couple safely into Switzerland.

At the end of March 1922 the Everest expedition trundled out of Darjeeling. Before setting out, Longstaff had announced to the party:

‘I want to make one thing clear. I am the expedition’s official medical officer. I am, as a matter of fact, a qualified doctor, but I feel it my duty now to remind you that I have never practised in my life. I beg you in no circumstances to seek my professional advice, since it would almost certainly turn out to be wrong. I am however willing if necessary to sign a certificate of death.’

Their route lay first through the steamy jungle of Sikkim and then across the arid Tibetan plateau. Longstaff, the traveller, delighted in the journey; Strutt, on the other hand, did not, as George Mallory observed:

‘A usual and by now a welcome sound in each new place is Strutt’s voice cursing Tibet – this march for being more dreary and repulsive than even the one before, and this village for being more filthy than any other. Not that Strutt is precisely a grouser; but he likes to ease his feelings with maledictions and, I hope feels better for it.’

On 1 May, the expedition arrived at the site of their base camp, at an altitude of 16,800ft, just below the snout of the Rongbuk glacier. By 19 May, camp IV had been established on the North Col, a saddle of snow and ice at 23,000ft and the key to the upper reaches of Everest. Mallory, Howard Somervell, Edward Norton and Henry Morshead were in occupation ready for an attempt on the summit. Their

© Lt Col EL Strutt. (Reproduced from The Last Habsburg by Gordon Brook-Shepherd, published by Wiedenfeld and Nicolson, now part of Orion, which is unable to trace a copyright holder.)

© Members of the 1922 Everest expedition at base camp. Longstaff (3rd from left) and Strutt (2nd from right) are in the front row. (RGS with IBG)
The plan was simple. The four climbers and nine porters would place a camp at 26,000ft, the porters returning to the North Col, and the climbers making a rush for the summit the next day. In the event, camp V was placed at 25,000ft and the summit attempt was thwarted by the wind, cold and lack of oxygen making progress painfully slow. They turned back at 26,700ft, surviving a near fatal fall on their descent to the North Col. A week later George Finch accompanied by Geoffrey Bruce, made a second attempt assisted by oxygen. Finch had been a vocal advocate of the use of oxygen, a subject that had divided opinion: it was unclear that the benefit would outweigh the effort of carrying the cumbersome equipment and some felt its use was unsporting, only 'rotters' would do so. They reached 27,300ft, seventeen hundred feet below and half a mile from the summit. At the end of May the expedition re-gathered at base camp where, resurrecting his clinical skills, Longstaff examined them all; everyone except Somervell was pronounced unfit for a further attempt. Nevertheless a third and final assault was launched and ended disastrously when an avalanche engulfed the party, killing seven Sherpas.

There would be four more expeditions to try to climb Everest before the Second World War and Longstaff was closely involved with the organization of them all, even offering to underwrite the costs of the 1938 expedition. Strutt and Longstaff were influential figures in British mountaineering between the wars and both were elected President of the Alpine Club, a distinction their Oxford contemporary, Leo Amery, politician and Secretary of State for India (1940-5) who was also a club president, considered, along with the premiership, to be 'the two highest honours attainable.'
The heraldic arms of Cardinal Wolsey, adopted by his Oxford College, tell a fascinating story about the man himself: his origins, his allegiances, even the cause of his fall from grace. It’s a tale that begins with a curious event following the martyrdom of Thomas Becket in 1170. According to legend a crow flew into Canterbury Cathedral moments after Becket’s death.

Alighting beside Becket’s dead body, the crow began pecking about in the holy martyr’s blood, and so acquired a startling new red beak and two red feet. Thus, a common crow was miraculously transformed into a beautiful chough!

Choughs (pronounced chuffs, and more usually called Cornish Choughs), were once well-known in Kent, but are now among the rarest birds in the country, found only in the extreme western parts of Britain. They possess a glossy black plumage and those distinctive red legs and beaks.

Whether or not the Cornish Chough gained its distinctive colouring in this way, there’s no doubt that for medieval pilgrims Becket’s blood had real transformative powers, and ampullae containing what was called the ‘water of St Thomas’ were sold in huge quantities at his shrine.

Over time the blood was watered down so much that only the merest trace of it was actually given. Nonetheless, it was still believed to retain miraculous powers. (The drinking of water associated with saints was a common practice in medieval times. In Reading, for example, people drank water into which the Hand of St James had been dipped).

The water of St Thomas was regarded as especially potent, however, due to its connotation with the Mass, there being a striking similarity between the mixture of Becket’s blood and water, and the Eucharistic wine, with its mixture of Christ’s blood and water.

In time, three Cornish Choughs appeared on the coat of arms of the City of Canterbury.

It was also claimed, retrospectively, that Becket had choughs on his own coat of arms, and it became the practice for men called Thomas, particularly among the new grandees of the Tudor era, to adopt choughs on their own recently acquired coats of arms. The arms of Thomas Cromwell, for example, show two choughs either side of a Tudor Rose:

The curious tale of Wolsey’s arms

Jim Godfrey, Cathedral Verger
It is telling that both Wolsey and Cromwell required new coats of arms to be devised for them. Unlike other members of the royal court, neither of them was of noble birth. In Wolsey’s case his modest beginnings, as a native of the small Suffolk coastal town of Ipswich, were often seized upon by his detractors who referred to him as the ‘Butcher’s Cur’.

This was a little unfair on Wolsey. His father, Robert, was not a gentleman, but neither was he a humble tradesman. He was in fact a small landowner who reared cattle and sheep. This may have required him to do some butchery, but it certainly wasn’t his primary occupation. Wolsey’s mother, Joan, came from a slightly wealthier family, and it was probably a relation of hers who paid for Wolsey to attend Magdalen College School, Oxford.

Neither was Ipswich such an insignificant place. Since the 14th century it had been a ‘kontor’, or foreign trading post of the Hanseatic League, a confederation of guilds and market towns in northern Europe importing and exporting goods to the Baltic. England’s other two kontors were London and King’s Lynn.
Indeed, far from being ashamed of his place of birth, Wolsey made a point of referencing it in his arms, whose lower half is made up of a cross, with a leopard's head in each of its arms.

This arrangement is a combination of two older coats of arms; those of the Ufford and the de la Pole families. The Ufford arms is a simple cross with concave curves along its length (the technical term for which is engrailed). The de la Pole arms feature three golden leopard's heads.

Both families were prominent Suffolk dynasties (between them they produced all the Earls and Dukes of Suffolk between 1337 and 1525). By adopting elements of these arms as his own, Wolsey was signalling both his Suffolk heritage and that fact that a new power had arisen in the county.

Wolsey's rise to power had been impressive. Ordained in 1498, he became chaplain to the Archbishop of Canterbury and later to Henry VII, who employed him on diplomatic missions. He quickly made a name for himself as an efficient administrator, and when Henry VIII became king in 1509, aged just 17, Wolsey was perfectly positioned to take advantage of the young king's disinterest in the tedious work of running the country. From 1515 to 1529, Wolsey's rule was undisputed, Henry delegating more and more state business to him. Indeed, his standing was so lofty that he was often referred to as an alter rex, or 'other king', an idea he made clear in his many building schemes, which included his 'royal' palace of Hampton Court.

At the height of his powers Wolsey founded a grammar school in Ipswich, which he named Cardinal College (the foundation stone for which is now in the Chapter House at Christ Church). It was intended as a feeder school for his Oxford College, being built at the same time, but it did not survive his death. Today only a gateway, known as Wolsey's Gate, survives, on which his coat of arms can still be seen.

The final element of Wolsey's coat of arms, the red lion, tells of another powerful force in his life, one to which he owed much of the status that allowed him to be granted his own arms. The red lion is not, as might be supposed, the lion of England. Rather, it was the chosen emblem of Pope Leo X.

Leo X (best known in England for conferring on Henry VIII the title Fidei Defensor) made Wolsey bishop of Lincoln in February 1514, then archbishop of York in September 1514, and finally a cardinal in 1515 (the same year he became lord
chancellor of England). Three years later Leo appointed Wolsey papal legate (or special papal representative in England).

It meant that Wolsey now out-ranked all other clergy in the country, including the Archbishop of Canterbury. The presence of a red lion on his arms then clearly states Wolsey’s dependence on, and attachment to, his Catholic master, an association that would ultimately prove his undoing.

The immediate cause of Wolsey’s fall was his failure to arrange the annulment of Henry’s marriage to his Spanish wife, Catherine of Aragon.

All his efforts had been blocked by Catherine’s nephew, the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V of Spain, whose army had sacked Rome in 1527 and who would not permit the Pope to disgrace his aunt. Instead, it was Wolsey who would be disgraced.

When Wolsey’s final attempt at obtaining the annulment failed in July 1529, his enemies quickly turned Henry against him. In October 1529 Wolsey was indicted on a charge of praemunire (asserting the authority of a foreign jurisdiction, i.e. the Pope). As a result, he was stripped of all his offices and preferments, except that of archbishop of York. Retreating to York he was arrested there on 4 November 1530 on charges of treason, Henry believing that he was conspiring to recover his position.

Having offended his aristocratic rivals on his ascent, and having no high-born family to support him as he fell, Wolsey’s end was swift. He died on 29 November 1530, whilst travelling south from York to face the King. He had been lodging with the Abbot of Leicester Abbey when he died of natural causes but under immense psychological strain.
He was buried in a simple grave in the Abbey's Lady Chapel, a far cry from the elaborate tomb that he had had made for himself many years earlier. Eventually Wolsey's tomb was put to use, and now contains the body of Horatio Nelson in the crypt of St Paul's Cathedral.

All that survived Wolsey were the great buildings he raised, and, of course, the arms which still adorn them. When he founded his Oxford college he gave his arms to it, as was often the way with founders of Oxford and Cambridge colleges. William Waynflete, another leading churchman, had done precisely this when he founded Magdalen College, Oxford, in 1458.

In founding colleges that bore their arms, high-ranking English Catholic priests (who had no children to continue their family line) were creating another sort of ‘family’. Indeed, the dining halls of Oxbridge colleges, with their galleries of former college members, are direct equivalents of the baronial halls in which English aristocracy exhibit portraits of their own former family members.

Christ Church, then, bears the arms of a cardinal of the Roman Catholic Church, and when originally founded in 1525 was called ‘Cardinal College’. However, it came into being just as the old Catholic certainties were being threatened, a danger Wolsey was well aware of. One of the reasons for founding Cardinal College was to improve Catholic theological education in order to prevent dangerous new protestant ideas from the continent infiltrating England.

It was not to be. Wolsey would be one of the last English clerics to play a dominant role in the political life of the nation, and his college was the last in Oxford to be established in pre-Reformation Catholic England. Having only recently acquired his coat of arms he no doubt hoped that the college which bore them would be a lasting, public memorial to his memory and to his place in the Church which had facilitated his rise.

In fact, his College was quickly re-named twice after his death, first as King Henry VIII's College in 1532 and then as Christ Church in 1546. It means that Wolsey's presence in the college has, to a certain extent, disappeared, in much the same way as Catholic England would disappear shortly after his death.

The last de la Pole Duke of Suffolk died in 1525. Nine years later Parliament passed the Act of Supremacy, severing ecclesiastical ties with Rome, and four years after that Becket's shrine was completely destroyed. Wolsey's coat of arms then is really a glimpse into a lost world; one of miracle-working saints, great medieval dynasties and the remarkable power and reach of the medieval Catholic Church.
Association News

Jacob Ward (2008, History)

In this edition of CCM we feature pieces from three alumni a decade on from their graduation, reflecting on their time at the House and the impact it has had on their lives since. Another important anniversary is marked in an article recounting the heroic efforts of nine undergraduates who, fifty-one years ago, punt all the way from Oxford to Cambridge.

We are also treated, in amongst photos from recent events, to an account of the 2022 Commemoration Ball, which had been delayed from 2020 for obvious reasons. It is heartening to see that so many revellers made it to the closely-packed survivors’ photo – a spectacle that for far too long has been almost unimaginable.

Boat Club President Anna Betteridge once again provides an account of goings-on on the river, and Jon Carley has written a touching obituary for John Wade, who served the Boat Club as Boatman for over a decade.

As always, our book reviews cover a wide variety of topics, taking in the Royal Irish Artillery in Martinique at the end of the eighteenth century; the memoirs of both an Anglican priest and a distinguished diplomat; and a narrative on the development of the English church over the course of 1,820 years.

After five years at the helm I am stepping down as Editor of Association News. It has been a pleasure to have been involved in some small way with the production of this publication, and to have got to know a range of alumni who have shared articles over the years, but all good things must come to an end. I have not been forced from office after participating in multiple illegal parties, but I am employing the more conventional politician’s trope, in that – having become a father earlier this year and finding myself with somewhat less time on my hands – I am resigning to spend more time with my family. The Development Office would no doubt be delighted to hear from any alumni who would be interested in taking this particular baby (CCM, not my son) off my hands. Farewell!

Louise Rayner
(1829-1924)
Christ Church from St Aldate’s, c.1860, watercolor and gouache on paper.
Ten Years On

A decade after leaving Christ Church, three Members reflect on their time at the House.

Tom Whitelaw (2009) read Psychology, Physiology and Philosophy.

Tom now works as a Management Consultant, mainly in Aerospace & Defence and remembers his Christ Church journey with fondness:

It was special to live with, and learn from, such a bright group of people – including my now wife, Chloe Whitelaw, née Wellings, (2009) with whom I now have a baby. We first met on the stand of the matriculation photo (above).

Then, by incredible coincidence, we had our last exam in the same small room in Exam Schools on the same day and – eventually – graduated together.

I have stayed very close to almost all my good friends from Christ Church. That environment of beautiful buildings, fascinating people, and advanced teaching was a brilliant education – and to have the tutorial system where one had to actively defend one’s work in a live debate.

Marie Eliadze (2011) studied for an MSc in Russian and East European Studies at the House.

After working at the State Minister’s Office for a period, Marie (together with an Oxonian friend), set up a think-tank: The Margaret Thatcher Centre of Georgia in 2020. She serves as CEO of the Centre and, since 2022, has also been pursuing a PhD in Political Science at Ilia Chavchavadze State University in Tbilisi, Georgia.

She recalls her earliest memories of Christ Church in 2011:

‘Flashbacks of 2011 – me, arriving in Oxford and starting my journey for a lifelong experience of learning and sharing. The atmosphere is amicable. The Christ Church porters are quite helpful in clearing my mind after a long trip from Tbilisi. My first impressions of Christ Church spark a mixed feeling – I share joy and excitement, and I feel a strong sense of responsibility to become a member of the House.'
A week has passed. Already managed to get acquainted with my peers. Tips and suggestions for pursuing my Masters are incredibly useful. Dinners in Hall create ever more opportunities for networking and exploring life at Christ Church. I met Dr Christopher Lewis, Dean of Christ Church in 2003-2014, sharing stories from Tbilisi.

Time to embark on learning process. Christ Church Library looks tailored to the needs of graduate students, enabling me to get known to Geoffrey Hosking, Czesław Miłosz, Robert Service and other incredibly famous writers. So, I am reading, reading endlessly and trying to transfer the knowledge on paper.

Whenever I have a free time for socialisation, I rush to the Christ Church GCR (Graduate Common Room) and reflect on a range of topics, from politics to culture, literature to cinematography. Feeling increasingly sad when I realise that I am going to miss this place too much.

Years later, while writing my autobiographic book, I have reflected on my memories at Christ Church. I was trying to think of a common feature, that would be universal for all students at the House. And guess what? That was liberty. Indeed, our differences made no difference when it came to our quest for freedom.

Robert Opoku (2009) joined the Cathedral Choir as a choral scholar whilst studying music at Christ Church.

He now works in accounting and finance capability at the Department for International Trade as a qualified ICAEW Chartered Accountant. Robert has fond recollections of his time in the Choir:

‘The first is a wonderful memory of James Trickey, a fellow Christ Church alumnus and former choral scholar who tragically passed away. The choir was on tour in China in the summer of 2012, and on one occasion we were preparing for scheduled group downtime activities for the day. James and I decided that the organised activities were far too sensible for us, and so we decided that an impromptu trip to the Great Wall of China was needed. We broke away from the main group, hired a taxi, and headed off. One of the things which struck me most is that, in some places, the Wall is not as high as I had imagined although, of course, we only had a chance to see, and walk on, a small section of it. We took pictures, explored, and had an excellent time.

Another memory, and one which still makes me laugh, was during the 2011 choir tour to the US and Canada. Choir members were staying with host families, and on this particular day we had a morning broadcast on one of the American radio stations. Such an important broadcast naturally required the full choir to be present. But as it transpired, one or two of the host families were unable to bring their choir member guests to the venue in time. The broadcast went ahead regardless! What then ensued was a most intriguing experience where choir members still enroute to the broadcast were listening to their fellow choir members on the radio! Good times had; lessons learned; lifelong friendships formed.

Good times had; lessons learned; lifelong friendships formed.
Ron Holding (1969, Physics) was one of the group of nine House undergraduates who punt ed from Oxford to Cambridge in 1971. Last year was the fiftieth anniversary of the occasion and, in June 2022, Ron organised a reunion for those involved.

Of the original nine punters only one, Mike Breese, who now lives in New Zealand, was unable to attend. The group convened at Magdalene Bridge (Cambridge) and took a chauffeured tour in two punts along the Cam to view the backs of the colleges. (The original journey starting point was Magdalen bridge, Oxford.) They then went along the river bank to Midsummer Common where they had been greeted by the Lady Mayor of Cambridge at the end of our original journey in 1971. Ron describes how it was an emotional moment to all be together at that place fifty-one years on.

The original team (all matriculated in 1969) were:

**Physics:** Ron Holding; Derek Bodey; Nick Tanton; Colin Maltby; Mike Breese; Norman Winter

**Chemistry:** Andrew Williams

**Engineering:** Mike Bell; Martin Lings

On 5 March 1971, The Oxford Mail reported on the original story.
Arrival at Cambridge, 5 July 1971.

The intrepid punters at Midsummer Common, 27 June 2022.

Reception by the Mayor of Cambridge, Midsummer Common, 5 July 1971.

Punting along the Backs, 27 June 2022.
Events review 2022

CHARLES STUART LECTURE – 16 February. Professor Brian Young, Professor of Intellectual History at the University of Oxford, and the first Charles Stuart Student and Tutor in Modern History at Christ Church, spoke as eloquently and wittily as ever in launching the Charles Stuart lecture series at the Oxford and Cambridge Club.

REUNION DINNER – 25 March. Alumni from the years 1962, 72, 82, 92, and 02, were invited to enjoy dinner in Hall with their spouses and partners, as part of the reunion series of dinners to augment the gaudy cycle.

REUNION DINNER – 19 March. Alumni from the years 1960, 61, 70, 71, 80, 81, 90, and 91, returned with spouses and partners to enjoy dinner in Hall and put Covid-19 behind them.
RETURNERS’ DINNER – 26 March. We are delighted to be able to hold an annual returners’ dinner in future on the Saturday of 10th Week of Hilary.

RUGBY VARSITY MATCHES AND THE BOAT RACE – 2/3 April. Alumni gathered on a cold but bright weekend to roar on the Dark Blues at Twickenham and on the Thames. Below, the winning moment.

MORTON HALL & WHITE COTTAGE GARDENS VISIT – 26 April. This return visit to Morton Hall (below left) and the first visit to White Cottage (below right) did not disappoint. The tulips were magnificent.
**DAVID WILLETTS** – 9 May. Lord Willetts challenged us with a talk entitled: ‘Can politics deliver fairness between the generations?’ which produced much debate afterwards.

**HEREFORD & HERGEST GARDENS VISIT** – 14/15 May. A tremendous weekend at Hereford Cathedral, with a visit to the Palace and gardens thanks to the Bishop and his wife, and at Hergest gardens, thanks to the Banks family. The rhododendrons were spectacular!

**GAUDY** – 24 June. The year groups 1981-85 gathered to mark their time at the House. The afternoon lecture by Professor Chris Breward, Tutor in Mathematics, on ‘Intrigue, Insight, and Income: the Influence of Industrial Mathematics’, was much enjoyed.
Saturday, 18 June, saw thousands of guests, made up of current students, alumni, and staff, attend this year’s Commemoration Ball. Originally intended to be held in 2020, the Ball had been twice postponed due to the coronavirus pandemic, and so the last Saturday of this Trinity Term was long awaited by all guests. The triennial white tie Ball was titled ‘La Durée’, and saw history’s greatest periods of partying brought back to life across the college grounds. Despite the difficult weather conditions at the beginning of the night, turning our champagne reception into a battle against the elements for our guests in Tom Quad, the night was a roaring success, with Master’s Garden still busy at 6am as the sun rose.

Tom Quad was transformed into a Venetian Carnival for the opening hours of the Ball, before guests moved onto Broadwalk, to find a Roaring Twenties space, complete with casino tables and a stage for music performances, a maze inspired by Versailles’s short-lived labyrinth, with a secret bar and vodka luge hidden in its depths, and a Funfair of the Ages, including dodgems and a carousel for guests to enjoy. The Master’s Garden became a recreation of New York’s famous Studio 54, with a main stage for performers like Horse Meat Disco, Haute Mess, and Mafalda, and Pococke Garden transported guests back to the gardens of Idrisid Morocco, for a quieter, more relaxed area.

Guests could arrive by punt down the River Cherwell, or on foot through Peckwater Quad, and the Hall put on an incredible banquet for some of our guests to enjoy before the night’s proceedings began. There was a wide range of food options across the Ball, and drinks were flowing all night long from the various themed bars in each of the spaces.

The weather had cleared up entirely by midnight, and as the sun rose above the college, blue skies made for an impressive sight for those guests still dancing at 4am. The traditional survivors’ photo was taken at 6am, just after guests were served breakfast and cocktails, and the Ball then came to a fitting end.

Thanks must go to all of the teams who worked hard to put on the Ball, including the Ball Committee (and their 2020 predecessors), the various staff at Christ Church, and Story Events. The night’s successes were all testament to their ambition and dedication. Photos from the night can be found on the Ball’s Facebook page and on page 46.
CHRIST CHURCH COMMEMORATION BALL 2022 - 18 June.
As you might have already seen in e-Matters, Christ Church Connections is now live! Hosted by ToucanTech, a company founded by Kate Jillings (1998), this new and long-anticipated community networking site has been purposefully designed for current members, alumni, family, and friends of Christ Church alike.

If you have not already created your online profile on Christ Church Connections, we encourage you to do so. Once you have created your profile, you will be able to search and connect with your (possibly long-lost) contemporaries, publish and share your news and stories, network with fellow alumni on the other side of the world, and offer mentoring support to our Junior Members and recent leavers. The site will also allow you to book events and view photo galleries, and to engage in discussions in our various community groups, from the Boat Club to American Friends of Christ Church, Poets of the House to the Warrigals.

Signing up is an easy process, and can be done within minutes. To sign up, visit http://chchconnections.org. Once you have filled in your personal information (don’t forget to add a picture of yourself!), we will verify and approve your online profile within two business days. You will then be able to explore all the exciting features on Christ Church Connections.

Newsletters will be sent via this platform, with a monthly round up of highlights in the news section. In the coming months we will also be launching an Alumni Engagement Questionnaire through Christ Church Connections. Please make sure to add development.office@chchconnections.org to your safe sender list, so that all our emails – including your Gaudy invitation – won’t end up in your junk box!

Christ Church Connections will bring the entire College community closer, ensuring a lifelong connection to both the House and each other. We hope you will be part of the online community.
As the 2021-22 season began and ended with boat-naming celebrations, it seems fitting to begin our year’s round-up by saying thank you to our friends and alumni who have supported us throughout this season. Special thanks must, of course, go out to those who contributed towards the two men’s Empachers which have joined our fleet, namely Hammers and Mike Rosewell, commemorating a former Men’s Captain and Head Coach respectively. But aside from these obvious contributions, the student members of Christ Church Boat Club (ChChBC) have felt the support of our wider community in a general sense of House pride which continues to go above and beyond what many other college boat clubs can claim to hold.

It is with this in mind that our crews prepared for Summer Eights, the culmination of our hard work this season. The club ran two training camps at the start of Trinity Term, one at our Sandford Base and the other at a training centre in Spain. The Spanish camp was the key to the success of our first boat performances Summer Eights; these crews were able to complete the equivalent of seven full weeks of at-home training in just one week. The changes were transformational; most of our rowers had never experienced a proper work-focused training camp, and the progress achieved is testament to the foundation work we put in over the Torpids campaign, alongside the resilience of our rowers to meet the gruelling training demands of back-to-back sessions with relentless mileage.

We entered Eights week full of anticipation, and our crews certainly did us proud. M3 and M5 held their own against other college Third VIIIs, while M4 had an excellent final result of +4 across the week, with a row-over on Day 1 sadly denying them blades. W3 had an equally impressive performance and finished the week +3. W2 put in a valiant fight against some quick college First and Second VIIIs, finishing Saturday’s racing at the top of Division 4. Our M2 bumped up twice, placing them as the second highest Second VIII on the river, an achievement to add to their ‘Second Torpid Headship’ earlier this year. And, for the second year in a row, ChChBC fielded the fastest First VIIIs of any college at Summer VIIIs. Both crews had an incredible week, bumping up to 2nd on the River (M1 +2, W1 +3).

I’ll conclude this report by thanking those who came down to the river to support the club during Torpids and Summer Eights, and joined the Club dinners on the Saturday evenings. It is wonderful to be able to celebrate our successes with you, and to feel your support in the moments when we need it. On a personal level, this Summer Eights was my third bumps, and indeed Headship, campaign with the club; though all of them have had their challenges, what has been consistent is the love and support we’ve received from the ChChBC community. The knowledge that our friends, family and alumni are behind us is what motivates our crews in the more trying moments of our training, and keeps heads held high when racing doesn’t go our way.

Looking ahead to 2023, our squads are stronger than ever, and the club is looking forward to consolidating its dominance across the Bumps charts. Our First VIIIs are poised to chase down Double Headship, a feat which would be the first in the club’s history. It’s an incredible time to be part of ChChBC, and we look forward to seeing many of you down at the river next summer to share in the excitement.
John Wade: an obituary

Jon Carley (1980, History)

A great many past members of the Christ Church Boat Club (ChChBC) will will be saddened to learn that John the Boatman died peacefully on 10 June after a short illness. John served the Club with great loyalty, dedication – and patience – for almost 13 years, retiring in November 2008, when the Boat Club Society dined John and Jennifer to celebrate his service. The event, at which Archdeacon Julian Hubbard presided, was well-attended by old and current members and John was surprised – and touched – to be awarded 1st VIII Colours, along with his blazer, cap and sweater, as a gesture of the gratitude and affection of all.

However, this was not John’s first retirement; indeed, he was already sixty years of age when he embarked upon this new career with the House. And, of course, there was nothing ‘new’ about it: John’s association with the Isis had begun back in the post-war 1940s with coxing, first for Hannington RC (a precursor to City of Oxford) and even on occasion for the Christ Church Servants’ Boat Club, which took part in Town Bumps and inter-collegiate races with like institutions. Given that one of the duties which John took upon himself during his tenure was to coach “Henry’s VIII”, a crew made up of college staff, then the wheel had truly come full-circle. It was this aspect of John’s lifelong attachment to Oxford rowing that made him, in effect, the very last of a long series of Isis watermen, with a collective memory and fund of tales stretching back – so it seemed – to Noah. He was a rich repository of such knowledge, with an anecdote for each analogous occasion, and was a treasury of sage and measured advice which both bolstered the nervous new novice cox and curbed the overweening confidence of the most hubristic Blue (and coach…). And this all delivered in a calm and friendly manner which rarely failed to earn him the respect it deserved. In the face of handwringing disaster in the form of damaged boats, he remained unflappable: John had seen it all before. During Torpids and Eights he was often down at the Boathouse well gone midnight, effecting repairs to keep the fleet competitive, drying out recalcitrant filler with a heat-gun (aka ‘John’s Hairdryer.’) The college boatmen as a breed do not give their respect lightly – yet John was their doyen, as indeed Dick had been before him.

Edgar ‘Dick’ Dickins had died suddenly while bank-steering the House 1st IV- after long service as Boatman. There followed a succession of short-lived temporary replacements which left the Boathouse and its contents in a very poor state. John quietly, calmly – and with his usual determination – set about amending that: *ab chao ordo*. The Senior Member and Clerk of Works soon learned to trust his judgement and act accordingly, and John was never content with ‘just good enough’, which soon had the Boathouse again the envy of lesser clubs.

During Torpids and Eights he was often down at the Boathouse well gone midnight, effecting repairs to keep the fleet competitive.

At the age of 72, and suffering from back problems which were never fully resolved, John retired for the second time. He remained, needless to say, keen to follow the fortunes of the ChChBC, and along with Jennifer was always welcoming to visitors and eager to hear the news. The Eight regaining the Headship in 2009 was a great pleasure to him, and he would very much have liked to attend the bicentenary celebrations – and another Headship – in 2017, but felt too hampered by mobility issues, and so reluctantly declined.

John is on record as saying that his years with the ChChBC were some of the happiest of his long life. I am sure that all the many past members of the Club who knew John, and his service, will wish to join in remembering him, and in sending condolences to the ever-supportive Jennifer. He is a man who will be missed.

John Wade, July 1936 – June 2022
Boatman to the ChChBC 1996 – 2008

By clear water, John – always.
The Royal Irish Artillery was subsumed in the Royal Artillery following the Act of Union, 1800. The book describes and puts into context the first war experience in the long history of the artillery battery (once company) in which the author served in Korea in 1952; and, because the fatalities in Martinique and the West Indies generally were so staggering, conducts a post-mortem into why the company was ever put there in the first place.

Published by Brown Dog Books. r.r.p. £30 each, available by order through bookshops or Amazon.

Mauresque: A novel of Morocco
Anthony Gladstone-Thompson (1962, English)

What sanctions our taking up residence in another country and involving ourselves in its inhabitants’ affairs? Jeremy Ashland, an idealistic and headstrong English teacher, comes to Morocco in the early 1970s, determined to be accepted as an enlightened foreigner at a time when its people, traditionally obsessed by memories of their own once Fortunate Empire, are emerging from the trauma of colonialism. As invaders, settlers or orientalists, Europeans had for generations made Morocco their plaything; underlying Jeremy’s progress and the story of his forbidden love for a Moroccan girl is the tension between such interlopers and Moroccans themselves, whose conflicting championship of their country’s nationhood he becomes tragically embroiled in.

With its evocative descriptions of Morocco and Moroccan life and times, Mauresque is a love letter to the country as well as immersing the reader in a world of clandestine relationships, political intrigue, drug smuggling and sorcery.

Published by Ashgrove Publishing Ltd. r.r.p. £14.99, available by order through bookshops or Amazon.
**EYE ON THE WORLD: A Life in International Service**  
Anthony C. E. Quainton (1955, History)

_Eye on the World_ is the autobiography of diplomat Anthony C. E. Quainton, the story of a long and varied life lived in eleven countries on six continents. Rather than a formal history, this is Quainton’s reflection on his interactions with the events of those times, beginning with George VI’s historic visit to North America in 1939, through the years of the Cold War, the efforts to contain and then defeat the Soviet Union, and finally the two decades of uneasy peace that came after the fall of the Berlin Wall. To some of these events Quainton was merely a spectator. In other areas – India, Nicaragua, Kuwait, and Peru – he was actively involved either as a participant in the policy process in Washington or as the senior representative of the United States in those countries. Spanning his upbringing and education through two decades after his retirement, Quainton describes the expanding horizons of a middle-class boy from the northwest corner of North America as he encountered the complexity of the world in which he spent his professional life. Quainton served in seven different presidential appointments under presidents Gerald Ford, Jimmy Carter, Ronald Reagan, George H. W. Bush, and Bill Clinton. These included four ambassadorships in distinct parts of the world and three assistant secretary-level posts in Washington. This range of geographic and functional assignments was unique in his generation of Foreign Service officers.

Published by Potomac Books, Inc. r.r.p. £25.00, available by order through bookshops or Amazon.

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**AND DID THOSE FEET: The History and Character of the English Church 200AD–2020**  
Patrick Whitworth (1969, History)

Not for forty years has there been a narrative of the development of the English Church in all its parts from earliest times in the Roman Empire and the Anglo-Saxon Kingdoms until the present day. It is not possible to understand English History without knowing the story of the English Church. Dividing the Church’s history into six parts, Whitworth tells the vivid story from age to age, taking into account the political, social, economic and philosophical changes over the centuries. Perhaps the most fascinating periods, after the Reformation of the Medieval Church, are the church’s struggle to come to terms with industrial England and the urban working class, and the sharp fall off of Christian faith in the nation, described in the final section as, “A Nation slips its moorings”. The book has many memorable descriptions of great English Christians from Bede and Cuthbert to Tyndale and Temple, with adroit use of quotations. In her review for the _Church Times_, Professor G.R. Evans, Emeritus Professor of Medieval Theology and Intellectual History in Cambridge, concludes: “The whole makes a superb guidebook of nearly two millennia of the Church in an England that has certainly changed.”

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30 September:
Gaudy 1986-89

2 October:
Family Programme Tea

11 October:
Board of Benefactors House of Lords event

17 October:
Washington dinner

19 October:
New York dinner

12 November:
Lawyers’ Lunch

17 November:
MBA/Scholars dinner

22 November:
Music Trust Event at Hampton Court

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