Welcome...

to the latest edition of Exeter Matters, the electronic newsletter for Exonians.

RECTOR’S NEWS

Probably Oxford’s ‘dreaming spires’ have never been immune to major public events elsewhere; certainly any such insulation has long since disappeared. In particular, the recent terrorist attacks in Manchester and in London, combined with the Grenfell Tower tragedy, upset many current members of the College, as no doubt they did many of our alumni. Special services in the College Chapel channelled some of these emotions.

These shocking events inevitably affected perceptions in the College of the recent UK general election. But the screening in Hall of the BBC’s coverage of the results on 8 June went ahead. The largely undergraduate audience reacted strongly when the striking exit poll was announced. The political neutrality of the Rectorship precludes my revealing the balance of expressed opinion, but I can say that it did not contradict the reported national trend for the age group in question! Those students, Fellows and alumni who attended Exeter Politics Tutor Michael Hart’s seminar on 30 April – ‘The Forthcoming General Election: What to Expect’ – would have been less surprised than were many commentators by the outcome of the election. 2017 marked the third consecutive year in which Dr Hart has had such a summer seminar to give, and the uncertain state of UK politics suggests that he should stand ready for 2018!

The biggest Exeter event of recent months came on 19 March with the formal opening of Cohen Quad by the Vice-Chancellor, in the Sheldonian. Coupled with the festive event in the Ashmolean which followed, the Sheldonian occasion capped a weekend which had brought hundreds of the Quad’s 4,662 supporters to Walton Street, where they participated in tours, watched a video about the new building and attended lectures and panel discussions on a variety of topics. There were special events for the opening of the Kloppenburg Room and for the unveiling of plaques (in the foyer commemorating Sir Ronald Cohen’s parents and, in the Learning Commons, in honour of the key role of Rector Cairncross in the Cohen Quad project). Praise for the building’s beauty and functionality also featured during the annual meeting there in April of the Amelia Jackson Society, the College’s club for those planning to leave legacies to Exeter. During Trinity
Term itself, Dame Frances and her husband Hamish McRae opened the Cairncross and McRae ‘family kitchens’, and further special opening events are to follow.

Students are using those kitchens intensively, just as a wide range of members of the Exeter Family (including Fellows, staff, graduate students, and undergraduates residing elsewhere) are using other parts of Cohen Quad, not least by mingling at lunchtime in the Dakota Cafe. The historic site on Turl Street remains very important, but it’s already becoming difficult to imagine how the College ever managed without Cohen Quad!

Alumni, too, regularly visit Cohen Quad. Among recent alumni successes have been the Charlemagne Prize awarded to Professor Timothy Garton Ash (1974, Modern History) and the appointment of Professor Carolyn Evans (Law, 1995) as Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Deputy Provost of the University of Melbourne. Marguerite and I met many alumni during our trip to Hong Kong and Singapore in late March; in each city we held a successful Exeter event (many thanks to David Webb [1983, Mathematics] regarding Hong Kong) and attended a University jamboree.

Fellows remain key to the academic vitality of Exeter. Trinity Term featured major accolades for Professor Dame Carol Robinson (Dr Lee’s Professor of Chemistry), who was elected a foreign associate of the US National Academy of Sciences, and for Emeritus Fellow Professor Hugh Watkins, who became a Fellow of the Royal Society.

Diversions during Trinity Term included the annual Exeter Ball – this year (for a pleasant change) without either rain or extreme cold; the theme, ‘The Yellow Submarine’, was congenial to the small minority of ‘baby boomers’ attending but evidently also to the more youthful majority. More sober entertainment took the form of nine Rector’s Seminars, ranging (apart from the pre-election event discussed above) from Brexit and referendums to early modern patriarchy, the ‘gig’ economy’s implications for employment, the Norrington Table, threats to the liberal international order, choosing colleagues with whom to start companies, and Donald Trump’s use of social media.

Saturday of Eights Week provided the usual excitements – the garden party for the 1314 Society, Young Alumni Drinks at the Boathouse and, of course, the rowing itself. The Women’s First Boat rowed over on day 1 and then bumped each day after that, moving from 13th in division 2 to 10th and so just missed out on blades. The Men’s First Boat rowed over, then were bumped down a place, but came back strong and bumped up in their last two races, being promoted from 1st in division 3 to 13th in division 2 in the process. Exeter’s ‘rowing renaissance’ continues!

Trinity Term at Exeter ended, as usual, with the conclusion of exams (and trashings!) and the leavers’ parents’ lunch and service, followed soon after by the Grand Gaudy (this year for those who came up between 1980 and 1984, a quinquennium all the years of which included women undergraduates).

Katrina Hancock having begun her career break at the end of March (as anticipated in my Hilary Term news), her successor Pamela Stephenson, joining Exeter from the University of Western Australia, started in early June. A major task for Pamela, a Brit who has many years’ experience of working in UK institutions, is the project to refurbish, in sympathy with its historic fabric, the Turl Street Library. This project, already prioritised by the Governing Body, will feature prominently in the College’s emerging new strategic plan. Onward and upward!

Professor Sir Rick Trainor
Rector
Co-founder of Twitter Biz Stone visits Exeter College

Students from across the University were enthralled to hear Twitter co-founder and friend of Exeter, Biz Stone, when he returned to College in June with his mentor, Steve Snider. Biz and Steve, an award-winning photographic artist and designer, joined this year’s illustrious speakers in the Rector’s Seminar Series, which aims to spark debate and conversation around today’s major challenges. Following the presentation, Exeter students enjoyed a rare opportunity to network with Biz and Steve over dinner in the Rector’s garden. Click here to read more about the talk.

Dame Carol Robinson elected foreign associate of the US National Academy of Sciences

Professor in Chemistry Dame Carol Robinson has been elected a foreign associate of the US National Academy of Sciences, one of the highest honours in science. Dame Carol is one of only 21 foreign associates to be honoured this year, alongside 84 American laureates. Click here to read more.

Professor Hugh Watkins elected to the Royal Society

Emeritus Fellow in Cardiovascular Medicine Professor Hugh Watkins has been elected to the Royal Society in recognition of his outstanding contribution to science. Professor Watkins is a physician scientist whose work has helped reveal the genetic basis of inherited heart diseases and has led to new approaches to diagnosis and therapy with substantial benefit to patients. Click here to read more.

Dr Gail Hayward’s research published by JAMA

Research by Exeter College’s Staines Medical Research Fellow Dr Gail Hayward has been published by the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA). Dr Hayward ran a clinical trial to investigate the effect of steroids on severe sore throats. The question Dr Hayward raised was: does a single dose of dexamethasone provide symptom relief for acute sore throat in adults presenting to primary care who are not also taking antibiotics? Click here to read about Dr Hayward’s findings.

First SCR/MCR Research Lunch held in Cohen Quad

The first Cohen Quad SCR/MCR Research Lunch took place on Thursday 8 June. Professor Philipp Kukura (Fellow in Chemistry), Marc Howard (DPhil candidate in Intl. Development) and Professor Christina de Bellaigue (Fellow in History) all spoke on the theme of Movement. The event was very well attended by graduate students and members of the SCR and we hope will be the first of many.

Summer Eights success for Exeter’s rowers

Exeter’s men’s and women’s crews enjoyed success at the 2017 Summer Eights rowing races. The women’s first crew narrowly missed out on blades, rowing over on day one and then recording bumps on days two, three and four. The men’s first crew had a slow start to the week, rowing over and then being bumped on day two. But they showed resilience in days three and four, bumping on both days. Click here for the full report. Image: David Murphy.
Exeter College holds formal opening of Cohen Quad

On the weekend of 18 and 19 March, Exeter College formally opened Cohen Quad, its new premises on Walton Street.

Rector Professor Sir Rick Trainor said: ‘The opening of Cohen Quad marks a major step forward for Exeter College as it moves into its eighth century. One of Oxford’s major new buildings of the 21st century, Cohen Quad provides, in a beautiful environment designed by architect Alison Brooks, a wide range of services for all members of the Exeter College community, including students, Fellows, staff and alumni. Cohen Quad, to which more than 4,500 alumni and friends have contributed through a financial gift, indicates the vibrancy of Exeter College and is a springboard for its ambitious plans for the future.’

Click here to read more about the weekend’s events. You can read about the opening of the Kloppenburg Room here and about the opening of the Cairncross and McRae kitchens here.

Exeter welcomes new Director of Development and Alumni Relations

On 5 June Exeter College welcomed Pamela Stephenson, the College’s new Director of Development and Alumni Relations. Pamela has spent much of her first four weeks in the role meeting with members of the College, its community of alumni and friends, and members of the wider University, learning about Exeter College and identifying priorities for the months and years ahead.

She said: ‘Exeter has a proud reputation for building longstanding relationships with its thousands of alumni, friends and donors around the world, thanks to the tremendous work that my predecessor, Katrina Hancock, and her team achieved. They have set a high bar indeed.

‘I am delighted to succeed Katrina as Director of Development and Alumni Relations and am enjoying navigating my way around the College and University worlds. This is not my first time working in Oxford as I began my development career more than 20 years ago at St Hugh’s. My time there sparked a passion and interest in higher education which has taken me around the country and, most recently, to Australia, where I led the Development team at the University of Western Australia to achieve the goals of the University’s $400M New Century Campaign.

Hanna Smyth (2015, History) wins OxTALENT award

Congratulations to DPhil student Hanna Smyth (2015, History) who has won the OxTALENT award for best research poster. The OxTALENT awards recognise members of the University who have made innovative use of digital technology in order to foster learning and academic practice at either undergraduate or postgraduate level; develop more effective links between teaching and research; or improve impact through outreach and public engagement. Ms Smyth was awarded the prize for her poster Material Culture of Remembrance and Identity. It shows a striking image of the Vimy Memorial, Canada’s national First World War monument in France, together with key information drawn from Ms Smyth’s DPhil thesis. Click here to read more and to view the poster.
‘Exeter presents a different challenge: it may be a smaller team but our ambitions are no less inspiring. In the months ahead, we will shape the next phase of our Development and Alumni Relations strategy, which will bring to light our ambitions for the future. Working together, we will have a profound impact on the lives of our young people who will become the great scientists, creative thinkers, problem solvers and leaders of tomorrow. It is one of the great privileges of my role that I and my team can play a part in shaping their journeys to future success.

‘As I discover more about Exeter, I also learn what I still need to understand. Your collective knowledge and enthusiasm for your College will be invaluable to me and I look forward to getting to know you and to understanding your particular Exeter story. Please don’t hesitate to contact me as I would be delighted to see you.’

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Travel scholars to visit North America and East Asia

Thanks to the generosity of donors to the Annual Fund, this year’s North America Travel Scholarship has been awarded to Amy Clarke (2014, Biochemistry). During her trip Amy intends to visit key locations which illustrate the breadth of ecoregions the USA has to offer and explore the issues of invasive species and conservation, particularly how invasive species are managed on an ecoregion-to-ecoregion basis. Amy also plans to discover more about how organisations interact and engage with the public to increase awareness and encourage participation in conservation work. She will visit Boston, Philadelphia, Lynchburg, Orlando and Miami between 12 July and 14 August.

The East Asia Travel Scholar for 2017 is Rebecca Iles (2015, PPE). The Scholarship, which has been kindly donated by Friend of the College Peter Thompson, was created to provide an opportunity for Exeter students to explore interests and pursuits in East Asia. Rebecca intends to visit sites of great religious significance and to explore further the philosophy and political sociology of religion. Rebecca is also very keen to explore Chinese culture, politics and religions ahead of a ‘Politics in China’ module she is taking, and to look at the contrasts between East Asia and the UK. She will visit Singapore, Thailand, Hong Kong and China between 22 July and 30 August.

If you are based in the USA or East Asia and you would like to meet Amy or Rebecca, perhaps to offer a coffee or meal, or even somewhere to stay for a few nights, please email development@exeter.ox.ac.uk. Advice about places to visit is also very welcome.

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ALUMNI NEWS

Nick Hurd and Matt Hancock hold their seats in Parliament

Congratulations to Nick Hurd (1981, Literae Humaniores) and Matt Hancock (1996, PPE), who have both held their seats in Parliament. Nick Hurd (pictured) took 57.2% of the votes in Ruislip, Northwood and Pinner. Matt Hancock increased his majority by 9%, taking 61.2% of votes in West Suffolk. Click here to read more. Image: DFID.

Professor Timothy Garton Ash (1974, Modern History) awarded the Charlemagne Prize

Professor Timothy Garton Ash (1974, Modern History) has been awarded the 2017 Charlemagne Prize for services to European unity. The Professor of European Studies at Oxford University was awarded the Prize – one of the most prestigious European prizes – in recognition of his outstanding scientific and journalistic work. Click here to read more. Image: Carl-Johan Sveningsson / CC-BY Liisa Past.
Professor Evans appointed Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Deputy Provost of the University of Melbourne

Professor Carolyn Evans (1995, Law) has been appointed Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Deputy Provost of the University of Melbourne. Professor Evans is Dean of the University of Melbourne Law School. She did her DPhil at Exeter after an undergraduate degree at the University of Melbourne, and was subsequently a lecturer of the College. Click here to read more.

Clare Fisher (2006, History) publishes debut novel

Clare Fisher (2006, History) has published her debut novel, *All the Good Things*. It tells the story of Beth, a 21-year-old woman in prison for having done something terrible – something so bad that she can’t believe she deserves ever to feel good again. With the help of her counsellor, Beth starts to build up a list of all the good things in her life. But no matter how much good there may be, the bad thing still lingers.

In August 2017 a collection of short stories by Miss Fisher will be published by Influx Press. *How The Light Gets In* explores the spaces between light and dark and how we find our way from one to the other. Click here to find out more about both books.

Reeta Chakrabarti among portraits commissioned to reflect Oxford University’s diversity

Oxford University has announced the full list of sitters and artists taking part in its Diversifying Portraiture initiative, which aims to broaden the range of people represented around the University. Among them is BBC journalist and Exeter alumna Reeta Chakrabarti (1984, English and French), film and television director Ken Loach, eminent astrophysicist Dame Jocelyn Bell Burnell, award-winning author Jeanette Winterson, and human rights activist Kumi Naidoo. Click here to read more.

Sir Tom Stoppard appointed Visiting Professor of Contemporary Theatre

Sir Tom Stoppard has been named as the next Cameron Mackintosh Visiting Professor of Contemporary Theatre. The Chair of Contemporary Theatre aims to promote interest in, and the study and practice of, contemporary theatre. Click here to find out more.

Construction begins on the world’s first super telescope

Scientists are a step closer to understanding the inner-workings of the universe following the laying of the first stone and construction starting on the world’s largest optical and infrared telescope. The telescope is being built by the European Southern Observatory, an international collaboration supported by the UK’s Science and Technology Facilities Council. Oxford University scientists are playing a key role in the project. Click here to read more. Artist’s rendering credit: ESO/L. Calçada/ACe Consortium.
EVENTS

2005–2009 Gaudy, Exeter College, Saturday 16 September

The Rector and Fellows warmly invite those who matriculated between 2005 and 2009 back to Exeter College for their Gaudy. The programme includes an afternoon tea, Evensong, and a banquet. Invitations will be sent out in July. Click here for more details.

Meeting Minds in Oxford Alumni Weekend, 15–17 September

Join alumni from across the University of Oxford in September for three days of stimulating talks, tours, tastings and performances. Click here for a full programme and to find out more.

Hold the date:

- Chemistry Dinner, Friday 13 October
- Engineering Dinner, Friday 27 October
- MedSoc Dinner, Friday 17 November

Invitations for the above events will be sent out over the summer vacation. We suggest you do not make travel or accommodation arrangements until you receive a formal invitation and have made a confirmed booking. Further details will be available on the College website shortly.

AND FINALLY...

Professor Jeremy Llewellyn champions celebration of female composers

Professor Jeremy Llewellyn, Lecturer in Music at Exeter College, is helping to champion the work of forgotten female composers in a BBC Radio 3 and Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) collaboration.

BBC Radio 3 and the AHRC aim to bring long-overdue recognition to women whose musical genius has been confined to the pages of history, their compositions often hidden in archives, libraries or private collections for centuries, unheard since their first performance. Five academics, including Professor Llewellyn, have each nominated a female composer whose work deserves greater recognition. The BBC Orchestras and Choirs will record their work, which will premiere on BBC Radio 3 on International Women’s Day next year (8 March 2018). Click here to read more.

Image: BBC Radio 3.

Bodleian purchases rare ledgers, revealing purchases of Tolkien and Waugh

The Bodleian Library has purchased the sales ledgers of Ducker & Son shoe shop of Turl Street. Among the notable names of customers is JRR Tolkien, who studied at Exeter College between 1911 and 1915.

The first record of a purchase by Tolkien is 11 October 1913, when the then undergraduate student bought a pair of black leather football boots for 14 shillings and sixpence and spent an extra sixpence on a pair of brown laces. It seems likely that Tolkien approved of the footwear, as he was still buying shoes from Ducker & Son in the 1950s when he was a professor at Merton College. Find out more by clicking here.