

EXON

THE EXETER COLLEGE MAGAZINE ISSUE 24 AUTUMN 2021
WWW.EXETER.OX.AC.UK/NEWS

Artists are rats! Rhizomes, polluters, pluralists, filth addicts!

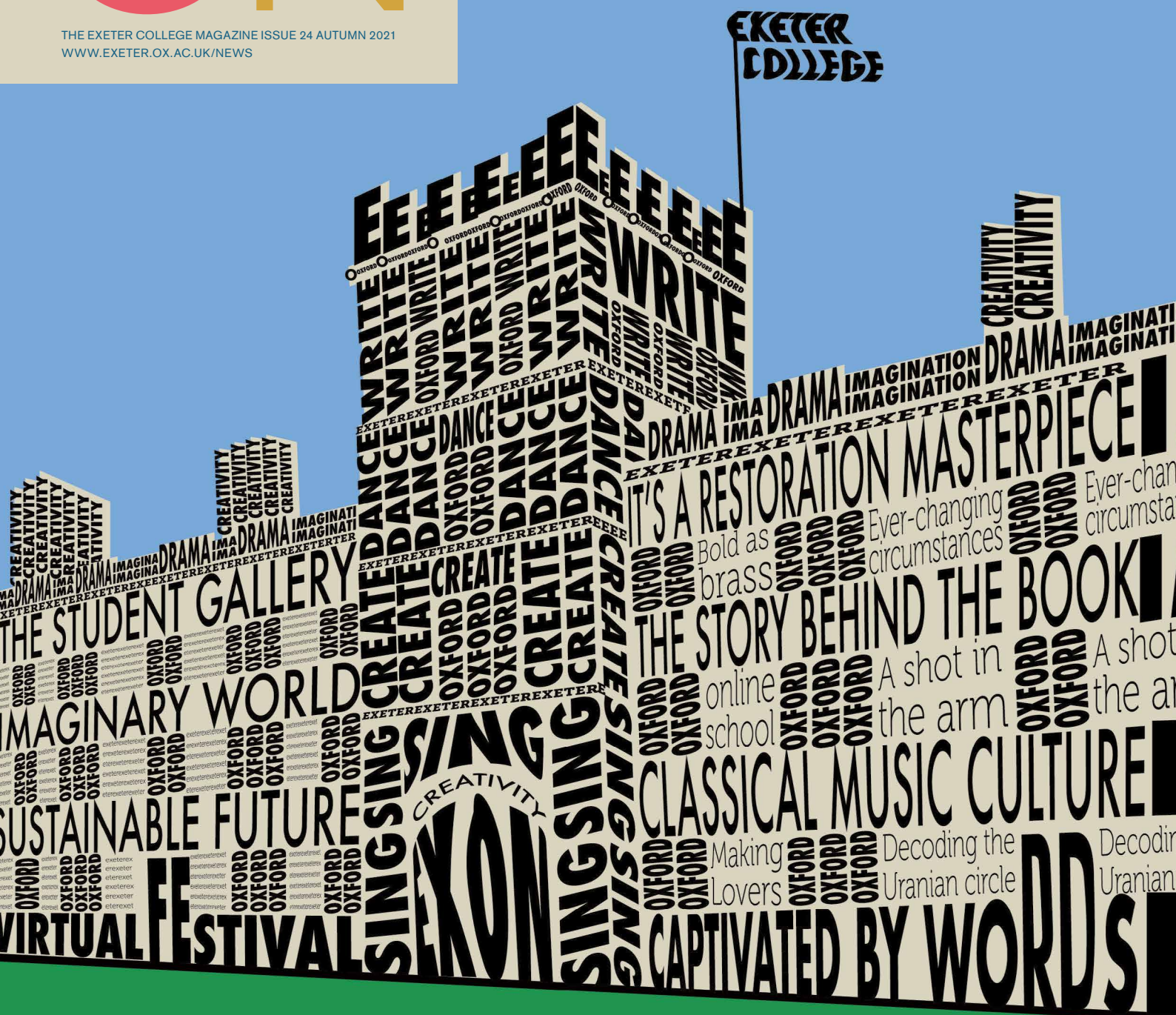
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The hunt is agonising. Many darlings will die along the way.

Jenny Bond on advertising

Deliberate attempts to be creative may not optimise creativity.

John Parrington on neuroscience



Writer's block is for amateurs

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Editorial

For approaching two years now, the Covid-19 pandemic has affected our lives. The severity of its impact varies enormously, but for each of us the pandemic has changed our language, our behaviour, our way of thinking. It would be impossible to produce a magazine like *Exon* and not mention Covid, but when newspapers, social media and even our small talk have reached saturation point, how can *Exon* provide a fresh angle?

Last year we focused on *community* and the spirit of support and collaboration the pandemic has inspired. This year we take as our theme *creativity* and look at some of the ways Exonians – in Covid times and out, because of the pandemic and in spite of it – have demonstrated originality, flair and resourcefulness.

Among them, Senior Research Fellow Professor Cath Green deserves particular mention. She played a leading role in developing the Oxford AstraZeneca vaccine, more than a billion doses of which have now been released worldwide. We review her new book, *Vaxxers*, which tells the remarkable story.

Interviews with famous alumni, including author Sir Philip Pullman and artist Helen Marten, explore their extraordinary creative talent. Other articles shine a light on the creativity of less well-known, but no less accomplished, alumni in fields such as advertising, classical music, education, theatre and film. We also share examples of the creative work of Exeter students and Fellows. I am indebted to everyone who has contributed. Particular thanks to editorial interns Costi Levy and Rosa Chalfen for their hard work and to Elly White, Communications Assistant, whose photography has enhanced this edition tremendously.

Creative work inevitably divides opinions. This edition of *Exon* is surely no exception. Whether these pages inspire or provoke, edify or challenge, I hope you will find much to contemplate and enjoy.

Matt Baldwin,
Head of Communications



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Rector's review

Rector Professor Sir Rick Trainor reports on an extraordinary year that has compelled the College to react nimbly and with creativity to ever-changing circumstances.

An issue of *Exon* devoted to creativity might seem to restrict the scope for a Rector's review of the academic year 2020/21. But the dictionary definitions of 'create' and 'creative' suggest otherwise. To create is to 'bring into being or form out of nothing...by force of imagination...to invest with a new form, office, or character'. Meanwhile 'creative' is 'having power to create...pertaining to imagination, originality'.

From these points of view the theme of creativity is highly appropriate to a Covid academic year, in which the Exeter community had the opportunity, even the necessity, of displaying many of these characteristics. Admittedly Trinity Term 2020 provided a sort of 'dry run' for adapting the College's traditions and routines to the pandemic. But during the three terms of 2020/21, as the initial lockdown gave way to a complex set of changes in national policy, Exeter had to show much imagination, to design many innovations, and to display a good deal of originality. Meanwhile, happily, the College showed few signs of an additional, slang definition of 'create', i.e. to 'make a fuss'!

The various positive dimensions of creativity – plus the flexibility and lack of pretension so typical of Exeter – provided the ingredients for a substantial degree of success in dealing with the pandemic. An important additional ingredient of this outcome was the determination that underlies achievement in the creative arts themselves (of which more later).

The academic year required Exeter – within the general guidelines of the Government, the University and Oxford's Conference of Colleges – to devise a huge number of detailed adaptations as the nearly full presence of students in Michaelmas Term gave way to their widespread absence in Hilary and to a staged return in Trinity. Constant fine-tuning was required, especially to the lockdowns in November and January, but also to many intermediate stages in the ratcheting up, and the ratcheting down, of restrictions.

How did the College cope?

Extraordinary patience was widespread, encompassing the students who often had to remain at home, the numerous staff members who spent much of the year on furlough, the Fellows who frequently had to combine home schooling with their academic duties, and the administrators who had to issue frequent changes of instructions.

A key coping mechanism was Exeter's Covid-19 Action Group (or 'CV Group') which gained greatly from having an unusually wide composition; the Group included, perhaps uniquely in Oxford, student representatives as full members. Meeting frequently, the CV Group operated under the general authority of the Governing Body, its officers and its committees, and interacted frequently with those formal instruments of governance. In the background, too, were numerous informal meetings with student leaders. They liaised closely with their JCR and MCR colleagues, who showed commendable creativity through online study sessions and social activities.

As Covid restrictions prevailed from the start of the academic year, from the outset the CV Group had to monitor the invention of student 'households' and regulate the permissible social activities focused on them. Likewise the Group oversaw a mix of in-person and online teaching, Exeter's implementation of the University's digital examination protocols, and the College's energetic online welfare services. In the latter, 'Zoom' information sessions complemented frequent individual consultations, including conversations with the many overseas students who could not make the journey to Oxford from their home countries. The College also adapted its Exeter College Summer Programme to an online mode for summer 2021.

Another sphere of creative adaptation was catering. Except during the Hilary Term lockdown, a marquee in Front Quad made it possible for students to eat College meals – and socialise – somewhere other than their



A marquee in Front Quad made it possible for students to eat College meals and socialise while safely distanced



Students were able to eat in Hall thanks to socially distanced places and plexiglass barriers



Professor Nandini Das, Fellow in English



Professor Giuseppe Marcocci, Fellow in History

individual rooms. For much of the year students, like staff and Fellows, could also eat in Hall, where the venerable tables added socially distanced places and plexiglass barriers. When regulations allowed, there were special meals there, including in October five undergraduate, and five postgraduate, freshers' dinners. During other periods there were innovative variations, such as the decorated takeaway meals provided for the special occasions of Diwali, Thanksgiving, Christmas, Burns Night, and Chinese New Year. For those students who had to isolate because they or their fellow household members contracted Covid, College catering coordinated delivery of meals to their rooms. At the very end of the academic year, the MCR adapted to rising infection levels by holding outside, on a balmy evening, a special dinner – perhaps the first ever sit-down meal served in the lovely setting of the Fellows' Garden.

A creative approach also prevailed in the spiritual aspects of College life. There were online as well as (when permitted) in-person chapel services; choir members recorded individually at home, in the former format, and sang through masks, in the latter. The Chaplain launched a new organisation, the Friends of the Chapel, and led an innovative Mattins on Ascension Day in the Fellows' Garden, with the choir on the mound, thereby circumventing the Covid dangers that the traditional service atop the Tower would have entailed.

A more general innovation was the College's webinar programme, which allowed Exeter – through online talks by Fellows and alumni – to reach broad audiences at a time when in-person College events were impossible.

Substantial as the disruptive effects of the pandemic were, then, Exeter's creative adaptations ensured that much of the College's 'normal' activity could continue, albeit often in unusual forms. This was excellent news for teaching and learning. For example, Rector's Collections – and individual postgraduate reviews – showed that a great deal of student work was being productively completed.

Another important positive aspect of the College's adaptation to the pandemic was the persistence of the creative and performing arts, albeit sometimes in truncated form, in and around Exeter during 2020/21. Such recent creative activity in the College, and by Exonians, has taken a great many forms, as the heterogeneity of the articles in this issue of *Exon* demonstrates. These include: the ongoing fiction writing of Philip Pullman (1965, English); the Vache Baroque Music Festival (Betty Makharinsky [2012, Music] and Amelia Anderson [2012, Music]); film-making ('A Deed without a name' by Josh Clarke [2017, Engineering Science], Rosa Chalfen [2019,



Exeter students take part in the Town and Gown 10k race in Oxford

English] and Costi Levy [2019, Philosophy and Spanish]); playwriting ('The Merthyr Stigmatist' by Lisa Parry [1998, English]) and directing (Brian Friel's 'Lovers' directed by Sarita Williams [2020, English and Modern Languages] and Jack Klein [2020, Philosophy and French]); fine art production (by Exeter Fellow Oreet Ashery [Director of Studies for Fine Art], alumna Helen Marten [2005, Fine Art], and students Megan Erridge [2020, Fine Art] and Chris Roscoe [2019, Fine Art]); poetry (by Noah Cohen-Greenberg [2020, Williams], Ned Summers [2020, Computer Science], and Sarita Williams); funk music (Will Osborne [2017, Earth Sciences] and his band, 'Dot's Funk Odyssey'); and the pandemic version of the Turl Street Arts Festival. Also relevant here is the virtuosity of Honorary Fellow Sir Antonio Pappano, recently named the next Principal Conductor of the London Symphony Orchestra. Likewise – turning to alumni – creativity features in the cinematic efforts of Jessica Palmarozza (2010, English), the advertising craft of Jenny Bond (1979, English), and the literary work of authors Amanda McDonald (1991, English) and Melanie Challenger (1996, English).

The past year was also notable for creative *architecture* at Exeter. Architects Nex, who had won a competition for the role the previous year, produced an innovative design for the restoration and renovation of the College Library. Authorised by the planning authorities and the Governing Body, this project is now the focus of a funding appeal to Exeter's alumni and friends. Similarly, recent creativity in architecture associated with Exeter by Alison Brooks Architects resulted in a Civic Trust Award for Cohen Quad.

Significant creative achievements in *academic* research at Exeter during 2020/21 also merit attention. Some of these feats occurred in disciplines often associated with the creative and performing arts. Examples are a co-edited

book on multilingualism by Fellow Jane Hiddleston (French), the prize-winning volume in early modern world history by her colleague Professor Giuseppe Marcocci (History), and the production by English Fellow Jeri Johnson of an update of her edition of Joyce's *Ulysses*. Another instance was a Radio 3 series on the cultural importance of 'Rainsong in Five Senses' presented by Professor Nandini Das (English).

In a multidisciplinary college it is important also to emphasise the creativity inherent in excellent *scientific* research. A spectacular example associated with Exeter occurred during 2020/21: the invention of the Oxford AstraZeneca vaccine. Exeter Senior Research Fellow Professor Cath Green was a key member of the team. She received an OBE in the 2021 Birthday Honours. Also, Cath published in July, with Professor Dame Sarah Gilbert, *Vaxxers: The Inside Story of the Oxford AstraZeneca Vaccine and the Race Against the Virus* (Hodder & Stoughton).

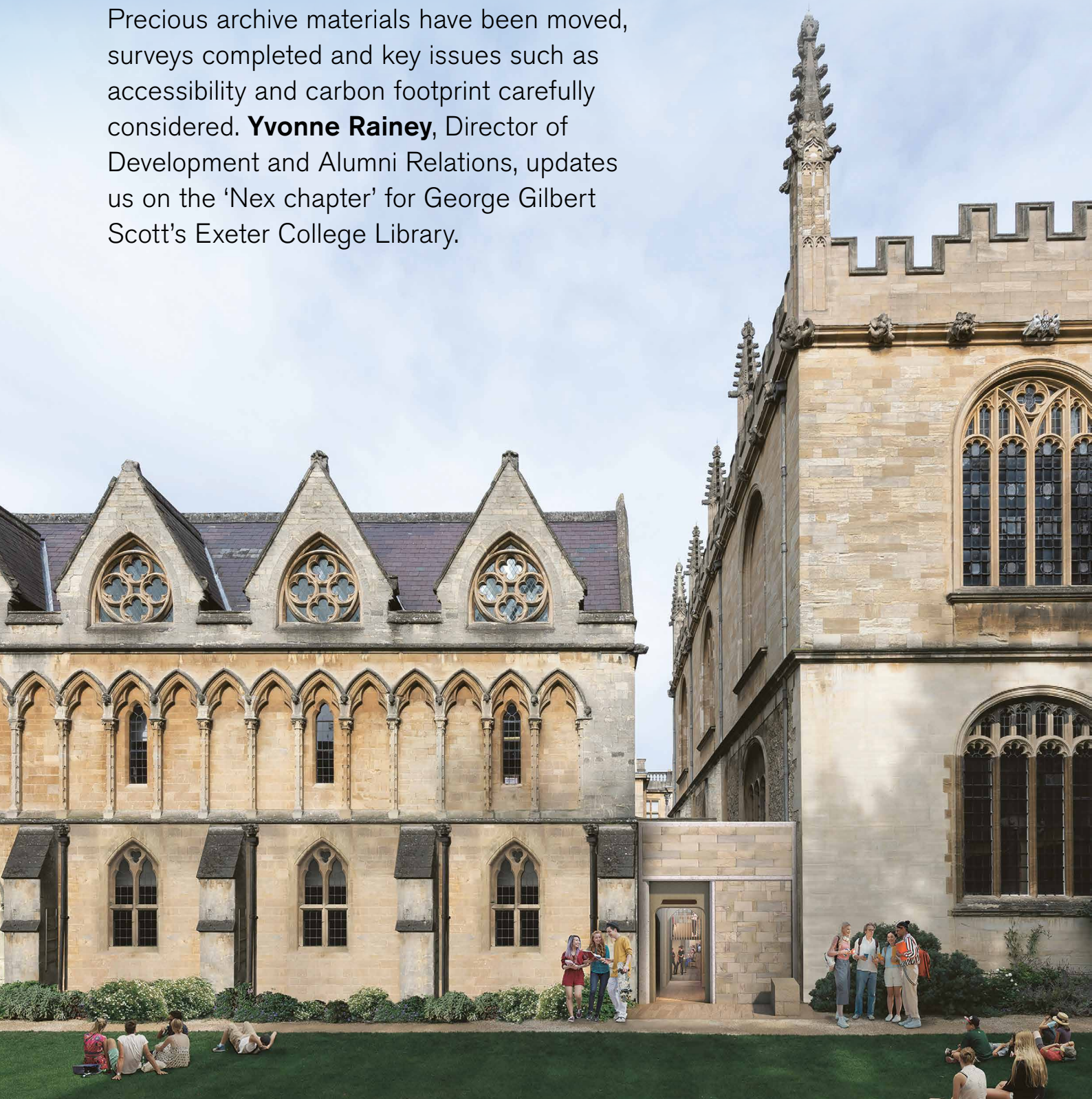
Other Exeter scientists followed suit, notably: Emeritus Professor Frank Close (Physics), elected a Fellow of the Royal Society; Professor Ervin Fodor (Virology), named to the influential European Molecular Biology Organisation (EMBO); and Professor Dame Carol Robinson (Chemistry), who was appointed inaugural director of the Kavli Institute for NanoScience Discovery. In addition, numerous Exeter postgraduate scientists (like their counterparts in humanities and social sciences) presented ingenious presentations to the annual Subject Family Dinners. Undergraduates also participated in those events, and a third-year student (Tabitha Thornton-Swan [2018, Medical Sciences]) showed creative excellence by winning the national George Lewith Prize for General Practice for her Final Honours School Research Project on undiagnosed diabetes.

Students also involved themselves creatively in the College's increasing array of climate change initiatives such as carbon offset and reduction of solid and heat waste. Likewise, students played key roles in maintaining student activities online and, in June, imaginatively sponsored – for the benefit of the student charity ExVac – Exeter runners in the Oxford 10k race. Charitable creativity was evident in alumni ranks, too, as David Thomas (2008, PPE) won the OBE in the Covid-delayed 2020 Birthday Honours for his work in founding the Oak National Academy to provide free online lessons for school pupils during the pandemic.

During the past academic year, therefore, Exeter showed more than enough creativity – in dealing with the pandemic, in the creative and performing arts, and in a range of academic and extracurricular activities – for creative effort to be the fitting theme of the 2021 edition of *Exon*.

BY GEORGE! IT'S A RESTORATION MASTERPIECE

Precious archive materials have been moved, surveys completed and key issues such as accessibility and carbon footprint carefully considered. **Yvonne Rainey**, Director of Development and Alumni Relations, updates us on the 'Nex chapter' for George Gilbert Scott's Exeter College Library.



The task to restore Exeter College's Library is long overdue but we now have a major opportunity to improve this much-loved and well-used building, which is one of the masterpieces of a great neo-Gothic architect, George Gilbert Scott.

One could argue that there's not much room for creativity in renovating a Grade II listed building and all the restrictions that entails. However, those same restrictions often force you to be more creative within the space you have. Maintaining the historic fabric of a building whilst also making it fit for 21st century learning and study is a challenge, as anyone who has renovated an old property will know. It's also more expensive than building something new but we are confident that the design by Nex Architects will deliver a sympathetic transformation and retain the special atmosphere that so many of you remember. Planning permission, listed building consent, historic building consent, bat surveys and archaeological surveys have all been successfully navigated and we are now moving on to the tender process for the construction work.

The archives and oldest, rarest and most valuable books having moved to Cohen Quad in 2017, the lower half of the Library Annexe is currently unused and unusable, thereby creating the opportunity for the proposed redesign to increase the number of reader spaces by about 30 per cent. We can create workspaces, in marked contrast to those in both wings of the current Library, appropriate to the digital needs of today's students.

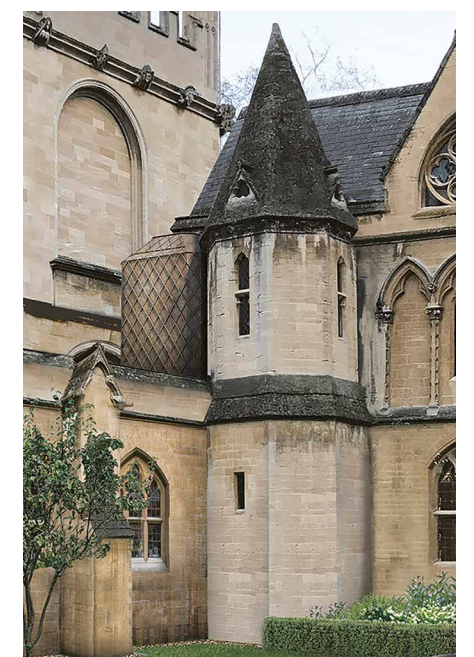
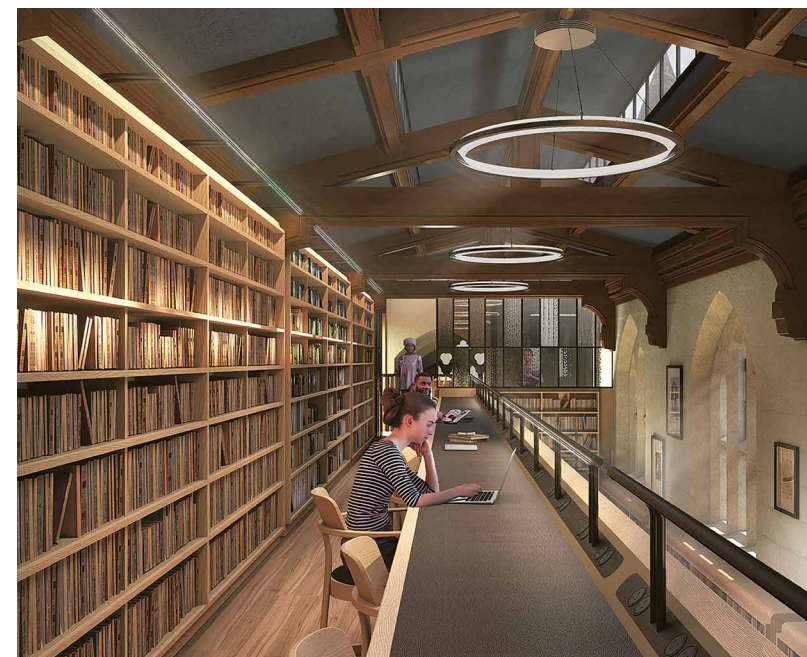
The final design is a result of extensive consultation both outside the College (including with the Bodleian, the Victorian Society and Historic England) and within Exeter.

One of the major benefits that the new design will deliver is complete accessibility for all to the Library via the installation of a lift. As well as extra reader spaces there will be a dedicated working space for staff and a meeting area. The new lighting and ventilation will reduce the College's carbon footprint. The roof will be refurbished and all the exterior stonework cleaned and restored. A digital seating system will ensure optimal and efficient usage of work spaces.

These outcomes all fall within the main themes of the College's Strategic Plan which, as well as explicitly envisaging the restoration of the College Library, emphasises a commitment to excellence, diversity and access, community and sustainability.

During the construction phase, which is scheduled to start in the summer of 2022, it is envisaged that a core stock of approximately 5,000 books will be kept at Cohen Quad. The remaining stock will be held in Bodleian Library storage facilities in Swindon and an order and deliver service will be available to students. A marquee will be erected in the Front Quadrangle to accommodate 60-70 study spaces. Students will also be able to study in Cohen Quad.

If all goes according to plan, the Library will re-open for the start of Michaelmas Term 2023. Following a cornerstone gift from Exonian William Jackson (1983, Geography), which allowed the project to go ahead, we have launched our 'Write the Next Chapter' campaign to raise a further £6 million, including a contribution from College funds. We look forward to sharing regular updates on how the work and fundraising are progressing.



Opposite page: A new entrance will provide easy access to a lift.

Left: The half-width mezzanine level in the Library's annexe. Right: The lift shaft will stand discreetly next to the staircase spire

Sustainable future

As the consequences of rising average global temperatures become all too clear, Head of Communications **Matt Baldwin** shares important initiatives to cut and offset Exeter College's impact on the environment.

As Glasgow prepares to host the 26th UN Climate Change Conference in October, recent news coverage of floods, droughts, heat waves and wildfires around the world paints a vivid picture of some of the devastating consequences of global warming. There is widespread agreement that action must be taken to limit the increase in the global average temperature. This year Exeter College stepped up its efforts to alleviate its impact on the environment by launching a new initiative to offset a large portion of its carbon footprint from day-to-day operations, with help from students, Fellows, staff and a generous donor.

Sustainability is one of the key themes in Exeter's strategy, which was formally ratified by Governing Body in 2019. The College has reduced its carbon footprint in many ways, large and small, including using electricity generated from renewable sources of energy, installing smart radiator valves that can turn the heating off when a room is not in use, and investing £200,000 in refurbishing windows at our Turl Street site, significantly upgrading their thermal insulation. We continue to explore ways we could cut our carbon footprint further, such as replacing the gas boiler at Turl Street with ground or air source heat pumps. But to help prevent

potentially catastrophic climate change we appreciate that we need to do more, both to cut and to offset our carbon footprint.

In Trinity Term we teamed up with leading experts in carbon offsetting projects, AlliedOffsets, to identify ways we could offset the carbon emissions from Exeter College's use of gas and our consumption of food and drink. We calculated these emissions to be in the region of 1,050 tonnes of CO₂ per annum, based on figures for 2019 – the most recent year when College operations were unaffected by Covid. AlliedOffsets put forward a number of projects that not only remove, reduce or avoid greenhouse gas emissions, but do so while making a positive contribution to local communities. A panel of students, Fellows and staff shortlisted four projects, and then we invited all students, Fellows and staff to decide how Exeter should allocate its support between them.

Following that consultation, Exeter College has offset 1,050 tonnes of CO₂ – roughly equivalent to the carbon absorbed by a forest of 50,000 trees each year! The largest share – with 550 tonnes of CO₂ offset – was allocated to a project in Peru, which protects indigenous communities by reducing deforestation and land degradation. In Malawi the College offset 183

Exeter College has offset 1,050 tonnes of CO₂ – roughly equivalent to the carbon absorbed by a forest of 50,000 trees each year!

tonnes of CO₂ by supporting a project that invests in improved technologies, including clean cook stoves, and promotes better and more efficient kitchen and firewood management practices. A further 124 tonnes of CO₂ were offset through a similar project in Guatemala, which replaces inefficient open-fire cooking with much more efficient and clean cook stoves. The remaining 193 tonnes of CO₂ offset was through a project in Ecuador where methane from decaying landfill waste is captured and used to generate electricity.

All of the projects are carefully audited to ensure that they meet their goals, with successful removal, reduction or avoidance of greenhouse gas emissions and benefits for local communities.

This year's carbon offsetting initiative is just the beginning of an important and exciting drive to help fight climate change. We are in the process of understanding more fully our use of energy and the waste we produce, as well as ways we can work together to reduce them both. Meanwhile we want to continue to collaborate with students, Fellows and staff – and, going forward, with alumni, too – to determine how best to cut the College's carbon footprint and offset its remaining carbon emissions while supporting communities around the world.



Exeter has contributed to a carbon offsetting project in Peru that protects indigenous communities by reducing deforestation and land degradation

You can find out more about Exeter's drive towards carbon neutrality at:
www.exeter.ox.ac.uk/carbon-neutrality



Scientists Prof Sarah Gilbert (left) and Prof Cath Green (right) at an event to celebrate the launch of their book, *Vaxxers*

A SHOT IN THE ARM

Vaxxers, by Exeter College Senior Research Fellow Professor Cath Green and Oxford Professor Sarah Gilbert, is a timely, incisive, warm, and accessible lesson in the power of vaccines – and the ordinary people behind them – to save lives. Medical students **David Launer** (2018, Medicine) and **Patrick Oliver** (2019, Medicine) review the bestselling book.

'No one is safe until we are all safe': in *Vaxxers*, Prof Sarah Gilbert and Exeter's Senior Research Fellow Prof Cath Green describe their creation of the Oxford AstraZeneca 'vaccine for the world'. The pair curate a timeline, from the first reports of a 'Pneumonia of unknown cause' in Wuhan to the vaccine rollout in full force in mid-2021. It is the story of how decades of vaccine research for lesser-known infectious diseases, alongside planning for a 'disease X', allowed a team of experts to move from lab bench to human arms in record time.

The need for this kind of book seems obvious. Vaccine hesitancy is an old problem, posing a particularly large barrier in the current pandemic, and accounts like *Vaxxers* help get the facts across. Part personal diary and part accessible scientific explanation, the pair retell the development of the vaccine in a way that gives names and personalities to those behind the vaccine drive. Instead of monolithic universities and big pharma corporations, we get Cath and Sarah. At one point in the book, Prof

Green recalls explaining to a vaccine-suspicious dogwalker at a campsite in North Wales that, while she may not look or sound like it, 'I am "them"'.

One of the many charms of the book is that Prof Gilbert and Prof Green narrate alternate chapters. This leads to each author's unique personality shining through, particularly in a section by Prof Green on the barriers women face in academic science and, curiously, a section by Prof Gilbert on wasps. You'll have to read the book to understand the latter, but it makes for touching reading.

There's plenty of personal insight into the lives of the authors in *Vaxxers*, but it doesn't shy away from the biomedical science either. Highlights include a detailed description of how the biological code of an important protein in the coronavirus, 'spike', is plugged into an established vaccine template, as well as a recipe for the early scale-up of vaccine production. Prof Green and Prof Gilbert are evidently scientific experts at the tops of their respective fields, but they are skilled communicators too. In fact, you'd be forgiven for thinking the book belonged in the food section! Mentions of pizza, breadmaking, and roast dinner as analogies for different aspects of cooking-up a vaccine make the book that much more readable.

This kind of approach offers a platform for the authors to engage with common vaccine misconceptions, and wider

issues at stake in modern science. The pair champion the view that 'science itself needs to be seen'. In *Vaxxers* they achieve this through rigorous, logical reasoning, presented in clear and easy to follow arguments. Moreover, both authors have fierce words for how the academic world and society at large disadvantage female scientists. Prof Green wittily tackles the sexist undertones of the reporting press – who repeatedly wrote about Prof Gilbert and Prof Green in the context of their physical appearance – by describing the hair colours of her male colleagues. The jarring nature of this information reaffirms the point she is making.

Readers of *Exon* may be particularly attracted to *Vaxxers*. Not only is it written by an Exeter Fellow, but it is firmly grounded in the city of Oxford. Prof Green and Prof Gilbert tell the story of the Oxford vaccine in Oxford itself. The first doses were born in Headington, with trips into colleges and out to Port Meadow. The vaccine team were fed and watered by local establishments including the Perch and the Magdalen Arms (Prof Green's favourite, apparently). This book makes a vaccine that has been distributed to millions worldwide feel like a local job.

Vaxxers was published on 8 July by Hodder & Stoughton.

Vaccine hesitancy is an old problem, posing a particularly large barrier in the current pandemic, and accounts like Vaxxers help get the facts across.



A small event was held in Exeter's Fellows' Garden in July to celebrate the publication of *Vaxxers*

VAXXERS

The story behind the book

When literary agent Neil Blair (1986, Jurisprudence) heard the amazing story behind the Oxford vaccine, he knew it had the makings of a bestseller. But first he had to persuade some doubters, starting with the book's authors! **Elliot Yates** (2019, Biochemistry) reports.

It is one of Neil Blair's jobs as a literary agent to spot exciting stories with wide public appeal and help develop them into creative works. Like the rest of the world, in 2020 he was closely following the efforts of a team in Oxford to develop a Covid-19 vaccine – 'a way out of this mess,' as he puts it – and he sought to tell their world-saving story.

Mr Blair attended an Exeter College webinar with Senior Research Fellow Prof Cath Green, where she described the development of the Oxford vaccine. Afterwards he encouraged her to write a book.

At first, Prof Green was surprised there could be enough interest to warrant it. Mr Blair notes that '[Prof Green] has got many amazing qualities, and one of them is that she is very humble.' He recalls that Prof Green initially had two key concerns: she didn't want to steal the limelight for a collaborative effort involving so many scientists, and she didn't want the writing to compromise the fundamental work on the vaccine. Prof Green suggested that Prof Sarah Gilbert – a leading figure in the vaccine team – could join as co-author.

'I was delighted,' comments Mr Blair. 'I already had come across her many times in the media.' Prof Gilbert shared Prof Green's concerns that writing might be a distraction. Therefore, they agreed to write the book once the vaccine had been sent to clinical trials.

Both Prof Green and Prof Gilbert were, as Mr Blair says, 'really keen that the book would have a level of data and scientific knowledge that would reflect the precise nature of what they were doing' – in part to dispel some of the misinformation that has spread and continues to spread about vaccines. However, they needed to strike a fine balance if it was going to be accurate, but also accessible. The writing couldn't be so burdened with scientific terminology that you'd need a medical degree to understand it but, on the other hand, it mustn't be so simplistic that it distorted reality. To address this, Mr Blair recruited a ghostwriter, Deborah Crewe, who had recently worked on the acclaimed book, *Factfulness*. Ms Crewe worked



Neil Blair (1986, Jurisprudence)

closely with Prof Green and Prof Gilbert to make their story accessible for wider public reading, whilst retaining their distinctive voices.

The balance between scientific integrity and accessible reading was pulled into question when Mr Blair sent the proposal for the book, *Vaxxers*, to the editors of major publishers. He says, 'one or two publishers were concerned that the book might be too highbrow for a wider audience to enjoy,' but the majority agreed it is an important book that tells an inspiring story.

Mr Blair acknowledges the dangers associated with the oversimplification of scientific writing – an argument often used to criticise popular science books. He confidently argues that *Vaxxers* is not one of those books, but rather the scientists' own story in their own words, with the facts and data properly reflected.

Both the story told in *Vaxxers* and the story of the book's creation explore the ambiguous boundary between science and creativity; 'it's a story of scientists,' says Mr Blair.



Poppy Bartrum (2018, Biochemistry), Secretary for the Turl Street Arts Festival, celebrates the success of this year's virtual festival.

Oxford's biggest and best Arts Festival is considered a highlight of Hilary Term. Every year the Turl Street colleges – Exeter, Jesus and Lincoln – come together and put petty rivalries aside for a week of live performances and celebration of the arts. However, when a third lockdown was announced in January, it seemed likely that the festival would be cancelled. Regrettably, many of the week's best-loved events, including the Jazz Ball and Opening Ceremony, did have to be scrapped. Yet, the festivities went ahead (albeit online) during the second week of Trinity Term.

The week featured a series of panel discussions centred on the evolution of art in the modern age. In a virtual gallery tour, we were introduced to the bizarre and rather horrifying meme-inspired art of Mike Winkelmann, known professionally as Beeple, who recently sold one of his digital artworks as a Non-Fungible Token (NFT) for \$69 million. During a panel discussion on the future of live music, music industry professionals reflected on the increasing popularity of virtual concerts, and how virtual reality may one day be used to recreate the physical experience of concerts at home. The literature panel discussion focused on the lack of cultural diversity in mainstream media, and how this can be improved upon by the university and wider education system.

The festival also provided a chance for students to display their artistic talent after a year with fewer opportunities than normal: from the diverse musical talent in the 'Oxfactor', to the Lincoln Photography exhibition, to creative poetry at the open mic night, there was a wealth of work to enjoy. The life drawing class and comedy workshop also allowed students to try their hand at new skills.

A highlight of the festival was the online street fair, which showcased local Etsy shops against a beautifully designed Brasenose Lane-inspired backdrop. The street fair also featured 'takeaways', where students could get art postcards or personalised haikus pigdged to them.

Setbacks and restrictions aside, it was truly wonderful to see so many people come together to make the festival a success. Here's to a vibrant, restriction-free festival in 2022, discovering even more of our collective creative talent.



Necessary Creativity: The College choir in the time of Covid

Creative thinking and hard work allowed music to prevail as the choir continually reinvented its approach during the pandemic. **Christopher Holman**, Parry Wood Organ Scholar, reveals how student detective work also unearthed a catalogue of outstanding works left dormant for a century, which the choir will now tour to major cathedrals in England.

Reflecting on the past academic year, I asked members of the College choir to sum up their experience of singing in very difficult circumstances with no more than two words – some said 'learning', 'a great time', 'pushing boundaries', 'supportive', and even 'challenge accepted'. As the Parry Wood Organ Scholar and director of the choir, I agree with all of these, but personally would describe this pandemic-driven year as requiring 'necessary creativity'.

By now, the musical community is intensely aware that singing can be a super-spreader event and, as such, safety

had to be our top priority. When first investigating how Michaelmas Term could work with singing in masks and at two metres' distance, we realised that Chapel architect Gilbert Scott's marvellous work in perspective is deceptive – despite feeling like a grand cathedral in miniature, the Chapel's floorplan can only accommodate about 40 people with distancing. We faced a wonderful challenge shared by few other Oxford college chapels: we have a choir of 24, and, unusually, a fairly large and active congregation. Instead of reducing our service and musical offerings, we expanded them from three to five sung services per week,

each led by an octet, providing choir members and chapel-goers ample opportunities to participate in community life. Despite the occasional household isolation, this worked well.

And then lockdown in November hit. With congregational gatherings banned, we suddenly had to come up with a new approach. The solution was simple enough in theory: meet as a full choir three times per week and record a service each day. But our new Junior Organ Scholar, Miles Swinden, who plays for all the services, was called into isolation for two weeks, and Chaplain Andrew Allen needed to return home to Germany. The community was falling apart, yet the choir members remained determined to sing. And so we did. Gabriel Fauré's powerful *Requiem* (accompanied admirably on almost no notice by postgraduate Theodore Hill), Bach's virtuosic motet *Komm, Jesu, komm*, and a stunning newly commissioned setting of William Morris's poem *Masters in this Hall* by MPhil composition student Caitlin Harrison not only kept us in top vocal shape but continued the sense of community and kept morale high. Thanks to some necessary creativity and hard work, music prevailed.

Yet lockdown dragged on, and in Hilary Term it was clear we would be in isolation, like Trinity Term 2020. We moved to one online service per week, meeting and rehearsing on Zoom and recording at least two pieces per service in isolation as a virtual choir. But it was a shadow of the real experience of singing together. What saved morale was the creativity of social secretaries Max Parfitt and Lily Carson, who came up with dozens of brilliant games, quizzes, and even a spectacular murder mystery that could be accomplished via Zoom. The standard of music-making also remained high, and halfway through Hilary Term our isolation recordings also caught the ears of the Derwent Valley Mills UNESCO World Heritage site in Derbyshire: they invited us to record and premiere a work from isolation, *Water Hymn*, by DPhil composition student Leo Geyer. We also premiered undergraduate music student

Nate Sassoon's new kaleidoscopic setting of George Herbert's poem *The Windows*.

By Trinity Term we were all exhausted, yet ever enthusiastic. We were able to return to three sung services per week, each led by 12–16 singers, which was certainly more normal, and allowed us to explore more of the standard choral repertoire, though we also explored head of composition Robert Saxton's motet *Our Father*, whose creative word, with Prof Saxton giving us guidance and encouragement.

But throughout all this, on top of the constant strain of the pandemic, the choir was also eager to explore underperformed music by marginalised composers. As a DPhil student in musicology, digging through libraries to find interesting music is always great fun, and I enlisted the help of other music students in the choir to track down excellent pieces to address the imbalance in the Anglican repertoire. We were able to breathe new life into outstanding works that we're almost certain haven't been performed in the UK in at least a century, by Samuel Coleridge-Taylor, Fanny Hensel, Thomas King Ekundayo Phillips, Amy Beach, Raffaella Aleotti, José Maurício Nunes Garcia, Lili'uokalani of Hawaii, and dozens more. In September the choir will be touring major cathedrals in England, including St Paul's in London, Winchester, and Hereford, and we will specifically perform these works, in the hope that others will hear this excellent music and may be inspired to programme it for their local choirs.

Despite the difficulties of this past year, the members of the choir have shown dedication, passion, and a work ethic that exceed any reasonable expectations of seasoned professionals, and have been creative and open to new ideas in the midst of great stress. I consider it a tremendous privilege to share music, old and new, with such extraordinarily gifted musicians. No matter what the coming year brings, we will continue to be active and creative – music simply demands it.



Opposite page: The choir sings from the mound on Ascension Day. Above: In Chapel the choir stood two metres apart and wore masks

A Deed Without a Name...

...and a play without an audience. Cinematographer **Joshua Clarke** (2017, Engineering) explores the challenges and opportunities of theatre during lockdown.

In true 2020 style, Exeter students Rosa Chalfen (2019, English) and Costi Levy (2019, Philosophy and Spanish) faced a challenge figuring out how to rehearse and perform theatre amid ongoing restrictions. The solution: to produce a compilation of Shakespeare monologues filmed around Oxford and livestreamed to the College. I had the privilege of filming and editing the show.

This was a new experience for me. I had previously produced short-form videos and so following a production from casting through to premiere was an unmissable opportunity. After a few Zoom calls with Rosa and Costi, we chose various locations around Oxford that fitted the wide range of monologues the performers had selected. We were quickly reminded of how extraordinary it is to live in Oxford, with access to countless settings associated with famous literature, not least from our own alumni, JRR Tolkien and Philip Pullman.

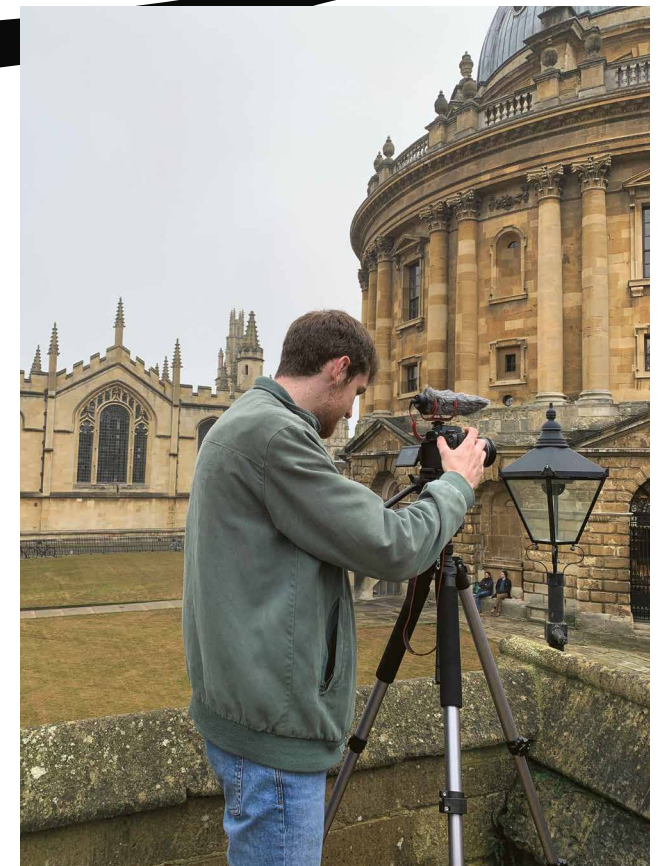
Anyone involved in extra-curricular activities at Oxford knows the challenge of squeezing rehearsals and performances around busy work schedules, and this production was no different. We had just over a day to film in the bleak November daylight and another day to edit the footage down to 20 minutes. This pushed us to make quick decisions about how to film each monologue with the fewest shots and to find creative solutions to problems. Our final locations included Aston's Eyot, a wooded nature reserve near the College boathouse, Najar's Place, a falafel stall and favourite Exeter haunt, and, of course, the mound in the Fellows' Garden.

I initially struggled with how best to tie the compilation together in the edit. Cutting between the different moods and settings of each monologue risked leaving the film disjointed and confusing. My solution was to use themed music to frame each scene and establishing shots of each location to contextualise and mark each new play. This helped to guide the audience from Sarita Williams's (2020, English and French) dark performance of *Macbeth* to Sophie Elliot's (2019, Biochemistry) charming monologue from *As You Like It*.

The first extract was a little different. Act IV Scene I of *Macbeth* – the witches' famous 'toil and trouble' scene – was performed by Daniel McNamee (2020, Classics and English), Kitty Debieux (2020, English), Lachlan White (2020, History), Costi Levy and Sarita Williams. Each actor was filmed individually in a range of Oxford alleyways using walkie-talkies to communicate as if they were preparing backstage for a production. This gave the illusion of a group performance despite separate shots and the result was a snappy and humorous piece.

The film also included a monologue from *Richard II* by James Green (2020, Classics and English), who filmed himself as if trapped in the 'prison' of self-isolation, and striking performances from Rosa Chalfen, Imogen Lewis (2019, French and Spanish) and Giana Foster (2020, French and Spanish).

Most of the performers were first year students, an encouraging sign for drama at Exeter going forward. The final production can be viewed at bit.ly/ExeterDrama.



From left to right: Sarita Williams, Sophie Elliot, James Green, Giana Foster, Rosa Chalfen, Daniel McNamee, Imogen Lewis, Kitty Debieux

Above: Joshua Clarke behind the camera



Making *Lovers*

'I hadn't really known what directing would be like, but I didn't expect it to be so fluid and shared'. **Sarita Williams** (2020, English and French) describes her experience directing Brian Friel's play, *Lovers*.

I've never directed before – unless you count asking my friend to be a more tree-like tree in GCSE drama. If I'm honest, I wasn't *entirely* sure what a director was supposed to do until recently. Despite this, directing a play is how I ended up spending Trinity Term of my first year, and here's how it went.

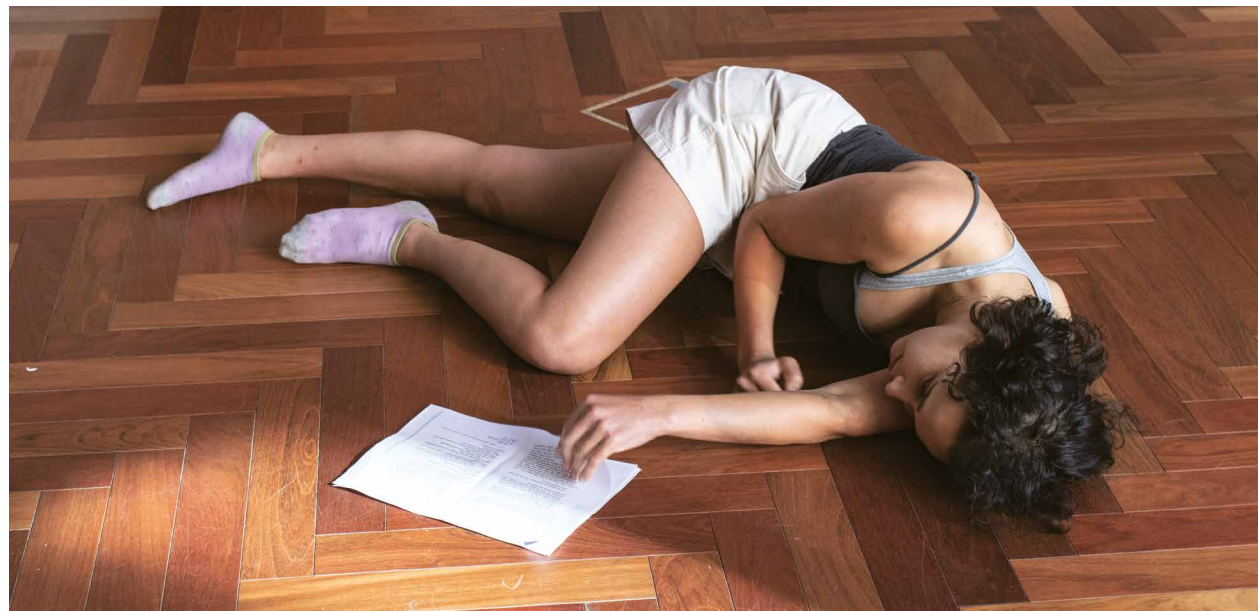
It all started with Daniel McNamee (2020, Classics and English), our producer, who decided to stage *Lovers*, a play by the dramatist Brian Friel about the life, love and tragedy of two teenagers living in a small Catholic town in 1960s Northern Ireland. It was a College production, which Jack Klein (2020, Philosophy and French) and I directed, and it starred Costi Levy (2019, Philosophy and Spanish) and Kitty Debieux (2020, English), both from Exeter, as well as Isaac Heeks (Hertford) and Charlotte Wilson (Oriel).

The first few rehearsals were a case of muddling through. We traced out the rudimentary sketches of a show and painted some of the initial washes of character and setting. Slowly but surely, the image before us began to solidify – scenes ran smoothly one into the next, a gentle chemistry began appearing between our actors onstage – and a singular totality began to emerge, a unified piece of work.

Yet what I enjoyed most about the experience was not just the satisfaction of watching fragments of emotion and storyline cohere on stage, but the collaboration and togetherness within the group. As we all asked questions and bounced around ideas, the process came to feel gratifyingly *collective*. I hadn't known what directing would be like, but I didn't expect it to be so fluid and shared.

I remember feeling fascinated by what had happened, what might be described as a kind of translation: the ink markings made by a man 50 years ago had been taken by us and rendered into a language of bodies and facial expressions, of living realism. It was as if we had laid the pages of the script on the floor and a life had grown straight out of it.

Unfortunately, our story doesn't have the happiest of endings: we had to cancel the show at the last minute due to Covid restrictions. Naturally, this was quite deflating for all of us, but hopefully we will be able to stage the show next year. I look forward to that, but until then, I can say that I've thoroughly enjoyed the devising process in all its collaborative creativity.



Pictured opposite page:
Costi Levy ('Mag')

This page clockwise from the top:

Costi Levy, Isaac Heeks ('Joe'), Charlotte Wilson ('Woman'), Jack Klein (Director), Sarita Williams (Director), Sarita Williams, Jack Klein, Kitty Debieux ('Woman')

BOLD AS BRASS

For the past four years trombonist Will Osborne (2017, Earth Sciences) has delighted audiences with Oxford's leading funk band, Dot's Funk Odyssey. **Cara Murphy** (2018, Music) spoke to him to find out where his musical talent will take him next.

Cara Murphy: To kick off, could you tell me how you got into music?

Will Osborne: I was very lucky that my mum encouraged my early musical career and always had music playing around the house. My school also, very rightly, saw music as an essential subject, beneficial to all aspects of developing social and academic skills, as well as an important pursuit in its own right.

WO: The lockdowns have certainly made me appreciate being able to play live music a lot more. I hope that as things get back to normal, music will bring people together more than ever. Lockdown has been a good opportunity for many of us to discover new music online, and I hope this translates into bigger audiences for local music events, as it has been a very tough year for music professionals and independent venues.

CM: The trombone seems to be one of the most overlooked brass instruments.

When did you first pick it up?

WO: I saw a trombonist at the local pantomime when I was 11. I think I was mostly drawn to the comedy sound effects they were playing and I started lessons at school, although my arms were too short to reach some of the notes!

CM: For the last two years you have led Dot's Funk Odyssey (DFO) – arguably Oxford's greatest funk band. What sets funk music apart from other genres?

WO: To me Funk and New-Orleans-style brass band music both strike the perfect balance between improvised, spur-of-the-moment playing and tighter-sounding sections where all the band move as one.

CM: You were part of DFO for all four of your undergraduate years. What stands out during that time?

WO: Wadstock, Wadham's day-long music festival, is a brilliant event. I think the whole horn section ended up on people's shoulders in the crowd in my first year, which was great.

CM: Something that always strikes me when watching DFO play is the power of music to uplift and unite. Do you feel that the pandemic has highlighted the importance of live music in bringing people together?

CM: On the topic of online music, do you think that live performance has a unique quality that simply cannot be replicated virtually?

WO: I personally don't think online performances are any substitute for the real thing. On the other hand, there has been a lot of innovation in the industry, which wouldn't have occurred without the lockdowns. For example, the band I play with at home worked on an online recording project involving brass bands from around Europe. It has been great to see how quickly performers have adapted. I hope this spirit of collaboration and adaptability continues post-lockdown!

CM: Looking forward, what can we expect to see (or hear) from you music-wise now that you have graduated? Will you hang up the trombone to focus on Earth Sciences?

WO: My rock-based interests will be taking a back seat for the next year or two. I'm looking forward to working on a number of new projects, finally getting round to some trombone practice, and going to lots of gigs!

CM: To finish with a Desert Island Discs moment, who is your musical idol and what album would you want if you were shipwrecked?

WO: The first band I remember going to see live, Youngblood Brass Band, and their album, *Word on the Street*.



The Student Gallery

Welcome to the Student Gallery – our opportunity to present some of the stunning artistic works, both visual and literary, created by Exeter students during the past year.

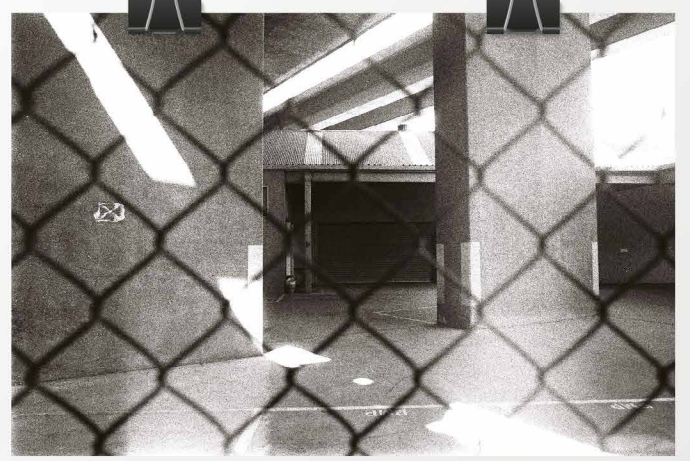
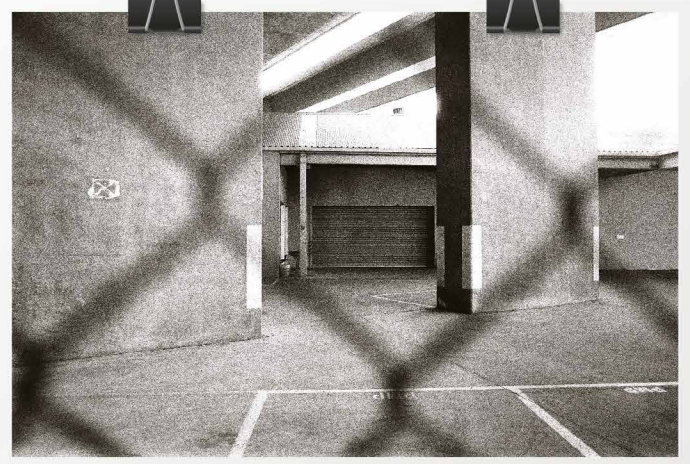
These include a series of poems and one photographic triptych first published in *The TURL*, a student-run arts magazine that aims to nurture creative work and articles by members of the Turl Street colleges.

We are also thrilled to share visual artworks by two of Exeter's Fine Art students.

Bound

Ned Summers

(2020, Computer Science)



in a network
of lines that
enlace —
a triptych

Ned Summers

(2020, Computer Science)

Do you see the lines? These widthless threads
tie moments into kaleidoscopic patterns and

bind a boy in geometry. He catches sight of them
in the corner of eyes or doorways. Sometimes

lying awake staring at a needle of light, they
draw so taut he can hear them sing.

Disorientated by staring obliquely, he tangles.
Grasps hair and necklaces in haste,

fails to notice that the gold chain
runs bloodied through foreheads.

With his findings they sew dresses and radar
under fluorescent strip lights.

By adolescence he enters every room
sideways, crawls on his back under

tables, pulls behind him everywhere
a ball of red string and a box of brass tacks.

The glass walls of his mind are covered with felt-tip pen.
The sunlight breaks in in splinters.

In adulthood, he pierces his septum with fishing
line and declares "I am a logistician",

spends months on chip boards
searching for folded dimension but

fails to notice that his words too have folded;
that to declare epsilon was to get no closer,

that he binds himself in knots of know-how to flee
the moments that drip and are thick with blood.

We shared a bed

We shared a bed,
The dying light, the evening red,
His rayon sheets, his chest, my head,
We shared a bed.

We shared a bed!
Before last night his face looked bored,
And never really would afford
The smallest chance of something more,
No passing clouds, no backlit door,
But still we shared a bed.

We shared a bed,
And when the dawn's light bled
Into the sky I woke and set my sights
On flawless days and flawless nights
Of glowing streetlights, leather car seats,
Syncopated restless heartbeats
(Though even then I knew deep down
That this could only really go one way)
But what could be thrilling as to say
We shared a bed.

Noah Cohen-Greenberg
(2020, Williams)

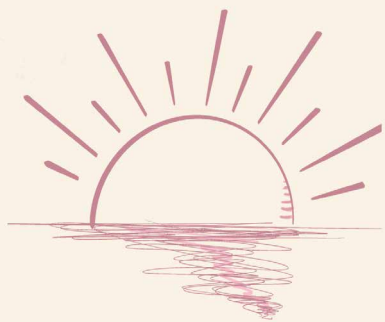


Illustration
Matilda Houston-Brown
(Lincoln)

If this poem were strong enough
To carry your name as its title,
It could hold back the rain
That knocks at our window
And leaves you groggy
In the mornings.

If this poem were beautiful enough
To show your name,
It would read like Heaney,
Feel like fresh sheets,
And taste like buttered toast.

If this poem were so holy
As to be written in your name,
It'd have been sainted long ago
Killed so brutally, so atrociously,
You would find it hilarious
And laugh with your hands on your hips

Your name

From x to why / Returned

glitter in gutter spluttered relics
the same frames
border lines
in the tear-rain-drop of my glasshouse.

seconds roar then shudder -
the same traipse beneath the oaks,
in circles,
ovoid veins, cuboid eyes.

the sun is boxed
in the half-heart
i splinter into compost.
to be crumbled and still

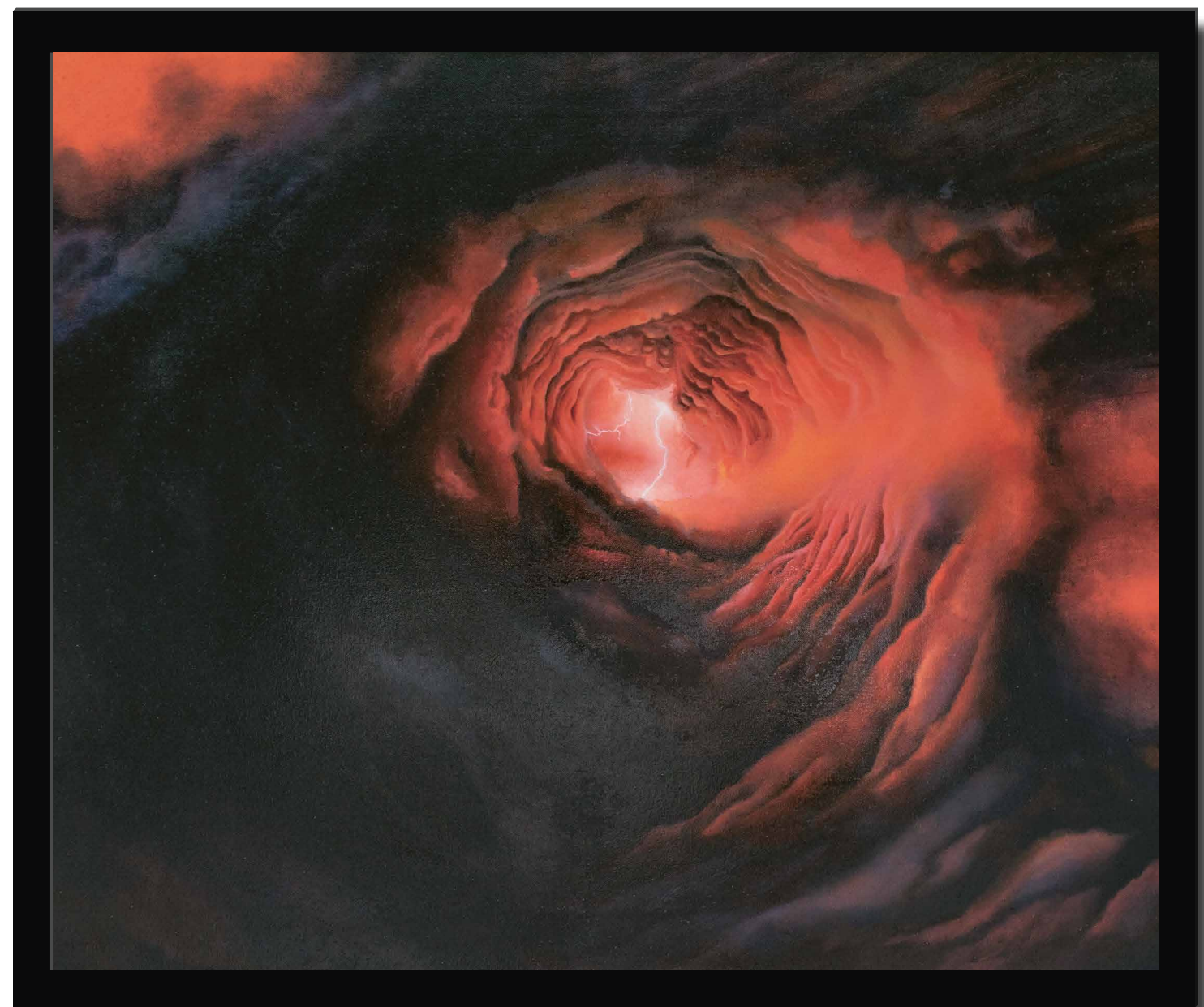
ocean to fish tank, snowdrift to flake
i harden
to
winter.
a scramble locating
the river ive run and
the floods
I wade -

Sarita Williams
(2020, English and French)

Christopher ROSCOE

(2019, Fine Art)

As the second year of Fine Art is not formally assessed, my work at present is at something of a crossroads. I have been continually drawn to a specific dramatic quality of light, but the reasons behind this remain completely opaque to me. These paintings, along with several non-painted works, are a personal exploration of this with a view to expanding and deepening the concepts in the near future.



Megan ERRIDGE

(2020, Fine Art)

What does it mean to exist in the present? Through concealing ourselves (behind doors, masks, screens, personas) what do we reveal?

Intended as a costume for the performance of the everyday, *Did I get it right?* explores the tension between privacy and the lives we project. The work draws upon a culture of 'sharing' and perceived openness in conflict with a new kind of loneliness that has little to do with the presence (or absence) of others.

Since starting at the Ruskin/Exeter College in October 2020, my work has focussed upon rules as a way of rationalising the chaos of life. Our reliance on authority as a force to rebel against is integral to my process of art-making; for me, found objects and collage represent a pre-existing structure to be co-opted and subverted.

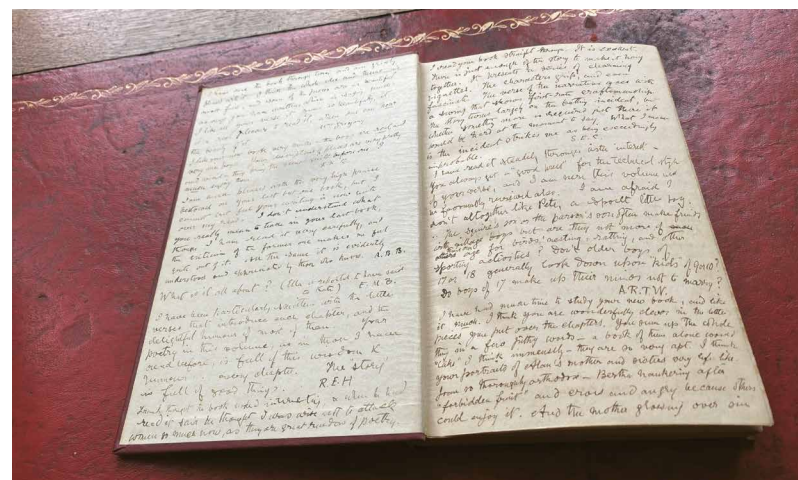
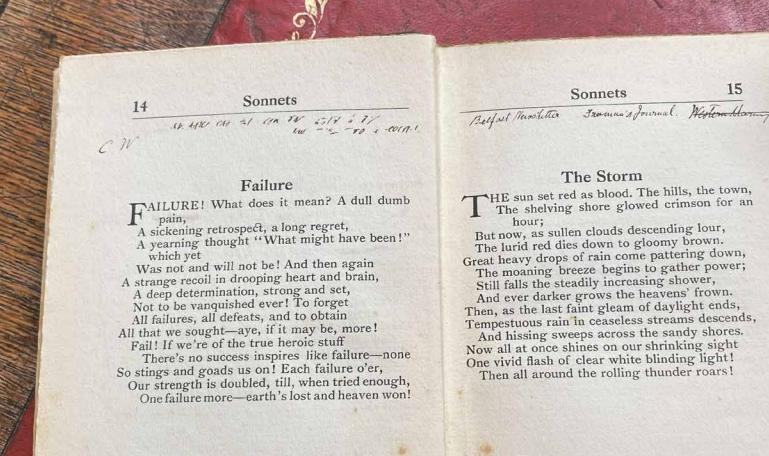


Did I get it right?

Cotton, embroidery, elastic, digital photography
January 2021



To see more of my work this year, follow me on Instagram @megs_not_home, or watch my recent (very!) short film, *In the Holding Room*, at www.vimeo.com/565278383



DECODING THE URANIAN CIRCLE

In Trinity Term, the College was delighted to purchase a collection of books by Exonian EE Bradford, full of his own private annotations, some written in a cipher yet to be broken. A clergyman and member of the Uranian poetry movement, which peaked in the late Victorian era, Bradford's work provides exciting opportunities for scholars of literature, history and cryptology. Classicist and part-time antiquarian bookseller **Connor Wood** (St Cross), who helped facilitate the acquisition, explores the extraordinary collection.



Holly Barker (2019, Modern Languages)
chaired an online seminar about
EE Bradford in Trinity Term

One of the main goals of studying history and literature should be to dispel myths. The stereotypes of people, places, and times presented in the media, combined with the narrowness of our education and experience, sink in till a few associations govern our entire mental image – Oxford is Hogwarts, the whole Victorian age is a Dickens novel, and so forth. The little-studied and rarely-read Uranian poets of the turn of the twentieth century shatter two stereotypes at once: the ideas that Victorian England was a land of uniformly strait-laced heterosexual morality, and that gay literature must necessarily be activist or radical. The Uranian poets – classicists, clergymen, and schoolmasters, usually with Oxbridge degrees – enjoyed middle-class stability and social prestige, yet as men who loved men they could not speak openly or live authentically. Thus, they developed a poetic language within strictly conservative and traditional confines, expressing their homosexual desires in classical imagery and familiar verse-forms, nothing like the wit and subversion of better-known early queer writers like Oscar Wilde.

Much of the Uranians' private language drew on classical models – a subject on which I will gladly harp, since I always need reasons to justify my classics degree! What we would today call homosexual acts were not only accepted but even valued in many parts of the ancient Greek world, and much poetry was written by men praising male lovers, or in the case of Sappho (whose career on the isle of Lesbos gives modern lesbians their name), by a woman loving women. Later scholars contorted themselves in knots to find an acceptable explanation for these themes when Western mores had changed: Sappho, for example, was reinterpreted as a schoolmarm with a fond regard for the girls in her classes. But like many readers in later times, the Uranians saw through to the poems' original meaning: Greece's 'amorous enthusiasms of an abnormal type', in Walter Pater's guarded words. As the preserve of an educated elite, classical languages granted the Uranians a mode of expression: some wrote gay erotica in Latin and Greek, and many compared their would-be lovers to Ganymede or Hyacinth.

The Uranians also wrote at a time of increasing calls for social and sexual reform, which provided a vocabulary as well as an ideological grounding. Reformists like Edward Carpenter and JA Symonds wrote polemics for a rethinking of Victorian and Edwardian familial and class distinctions; a frequent refrain was a 'new aristocracy' not based on

wealth or status, but on 'friendship' and 'comradeship' between men across class boundaries. Carpenter, for example, despite his inherited wealth and Cambridge education, became life partners with George Merrill, an ironworker with no formal schooling. Uranians drew on this model to propose a new kind of relationship, similar also to the same-sex relationships of ancient Greece, whereby they, from their perches in the academic or ecclesiastical establishment, could bring telegraph-boys and coal-heavers into polite society and elevate their tastes and habits. Yet this new model, so unusual for its time, was also paternalistic and self-serving, as it maintained their stable position in the social elite while looking down on the condition of the lower orders whom they would 'civilise'.

Exeter College produced one of the most prolific Uranian poets: the Rev'd Edwin Emmanuel Bradford, Exon. 1884. In his days as an undergraduate, Bradford met his first friends with similar inclinations and established lasting relationships with collaborators and publishers, like the poet Samuel Elsworth Cottam, Exon. 1885. During a long subsequent career as an Anglican clergyman, Bradford wrote numerous books of poetry expressing both the depth of his desire and the tragedy of his inability to pursue it. His poems were admired by no less than WH Auden and John Betjeman, both of whom could relate to his alienation from social expectations of heterosexual marriage and family: Bradford wrote 'I have no heart to procreate.../ The Love that links me to my mate/Himself is his reward.'

The collection now in Exeter's Library represents Bradford's own copies of his books. In them he has written copious annotations and marginal notes, changing his mind on a choice of words or recording the reaction of an admirer or critic. They show the closeness of the Uranian circle, as many notes contain other poets' words of support or gentle advice that would not otherwise have survived. A few are written in a private code, presumably to conceal details too risky even for his own copies of his books; deciphering it would be a valuable project for an Exeter scholar. As a bookseller and bibliophile, I believe strongly that an unread book is a dead thing, and especially as a gay man and an Oxonian I am proud to have helped Exeter acquire this piece of history, not to be entombed on a shelf but to be used and valued by students at the college that Bradford loved.

Above: the books contain private annotations, some written in a cipher yet to be broken



'If students can't write, why are they at Oxford?'

After three years as Royal Literary Fund Fellow at Exeter, **Tim Ecott** reflects on his time working as a writing mentor.

There's a perception, both within and without Oxford, that students arrive somehow fully equipped to deal with the challenges of a degree. It's taken for granted that they have the intellectual skills to complete their course, and that writing is somehow an ancillary talent that will develop naturally, if it isn't already there. The Royal Literary Fund Fellowship programme was set up precisely because those inside the system know that writing does not always 'come naturally' and that in higher education tutors

and lecturers do not see the teaching of writing skills as part of their role. Being at Exeter has given me much insight into the kinds of challenges that students and tutors face when writing essays, dissertations and theses.

Over these past years I have seen students from virtually every discipline, from medics to mediaevalists, business students to art historians, classicists and musicians as well as many from the traditional humanities, including English. What I have learned is that the subject

matter is mostly irrelevant, as all subjects require clarity of thought and the ability to express those thoughts in a logical, structured format, preferably with a little bit of elegance thrown in. I have been privileged to be asked to offer guidance to first year undergraduates, post-graduate students and even several members of the academic staff. They had one thing in common: they recognised that their writing needed improvement, and were not embarrassed to ask for help. Some students saw me just once, others came regularly over the course of an entire year.

Exeter is, famously, a friendly college, and I was made very welcome by the Rector and other members of the SCR. It helped tremendously that so many tutors were willing to recommend my services to their students, and so I was never short of 'customers'. When people asked about my role they often seemed surprised that students at Oxford could possibly need help with their writing. And, there lies the heart of the problem. We all write – in some shape or form in our daily lives. But the school system doesn't necessarily reward or quantify a definitive standard for that skill. It was always a surprise to students when I suggested that very, very few people can write well naturally. For most of us, it is something that requires repeated application, self-editing, a second pair of eyes, and lots and lots and lots of writing. In most cases, that is not the process that pupils at secondary school experience.

It became very clear to me in the first term of my fellowship, that it was impossible to predict what circumstances would produce a good or bad writer. I saw students from the most prestigious public schools, from regional comprehensives where few students were expected to go to university, and from different professional backgrounds, since about half of those who sought help were post-graduate and often mature

students. I saw good writers who had simply lost confidence, and bad writers who were convinced they were good. I think that out of almost three hundred students, I encountered only two whose problems stemmed from a lack of application, one freely admitting that sport and 'parties' resulted in most essays being written on the day they were due for submission. Our sessions aimed at looking at the student's diary and agreeing a compromise to redress the balance between fun and work, because as I pointed out, if the academic work petered out, the fun of being at Oxford would stop too.

Tutoring writers requires creativity. It's like being an editor on a magazine or newspaper, the professional background in which I honed my own writing before becoming an author.

It requires a dispassionate assessment of whether the words on the page do the job required. But, to help the writer make those words

better, requires a degree of kindness. The

last thing a struggling writer needs is to be told that their writing is 'bad'. Frequently, students found advice on study techniques and essay planning as helpful as any pointers I could give regarding style. It was also notable that many students, even those studying Humanities subjects, confessed that they did not incorporate reading into their lives. Reading, in my view, is a discipline or a habit, and if one doesn't read, it is very difficult to write well. We absorb good style and even grammar by a process of osmosis. And I remain convinced that if the majority of our reading is done 'on-screen', it seems not to be absorbed in the same way.

The RLF role has been immensely satisfying, especially during 'lockdown' when so many students were glad of additional feedback when working in isolation. Writing should be a pleasure, and I hope my students have learned to love it.

The school system doesn't reward or quantify a definitive standard for writing skilfully. It was always a surprise when I suggested that very few people can write well naturally.

TIDE salon

Professor Nandini Das, Fellow in English, makes waves with a new multisensory digital installation, writes **Rosa Chalfen** (2019, English).

The crashing of waves on a beach greets me as I enter the TIDE salon, the new multisensory installation from Professor Nandini's research project, TIDE. This is quickly replaced by the lilt of classical South Asian music, fragments of spoken word and the flashing of 16th century portraits. It's a somewhat overwhelming, and thoroughly intriguing, experience.

The last year has been a prestigious one for Professor Nandini Das (Tutorial Fellow in English). Within the last six months, she has been appointed Vice President of The Hakluyt Society, presented numerous programmes on BBC Radio and been awarded a European Research Council grant for her work developing courses for teachers on the teaching of race, identity, empire, and migration in secondary schools. But perhaps the most exciting development has been the launch of the TIDE salon, a digital installation that features creative responses to Professor Das's research.

The salon is the latest development in an ERC project that Professor Das directs, exploring travel, transculturality and identity in England (TIDE) in the 16th and 17th centuries. It is a multimedia collaboration between the TIDE project and artists including internationally acclaimed novelist Preti Taneja, and spoken word artists and musicians, Zia Ahmed, Steven Savale, Sanah Ahsan, Shama Rahman, Ms. Mohammed and Sarathy Korwar. Replicating the creative atmosphere of early modern European or Mughal salons, the salon provides a creative

atmosphere in which artists can explore concepts of alienation and foreignness that, having evolved in the 16th and 17th centuries, remain intensely relevant to the modern world. Professor Das describes the salon as 'a place where different layers of source material mix and mingle, allowing visitors to hear new music, embark on a series of visual and textual discoveries, and gain behind-the-scenes access into the ideas and exchanges that produce creative work.'

A key part of the TIDE project is the TIDE 'keywords', such as 'alien' and 'foreigner', which were used as prompts for artists to create their own responses, drawing on their personal histories. These words seem particularly poignant in a post-Brexit landscape, as post-doctoral researcher Dr Lauren Working, who has been appointed a BBC and Arts and Humanities Research Council New Generation Thinker following her work in the project, notes: 'I don't think we realised when we started the project how relevant these terms would seem. If anything these terms have seemed more and more political over the last three or four years.'

The relevance of the terms are brought into the 21st century by the fantastic spoken word of Zia Ahmed, which explores his response to the key word 'alien' in an innovative combination of modern beats produced by Steven Savale and 16th century text to question our understanding of the term and its implications in contemporary society. Similarly, Sanah Ahsan's reflection on the word 'traveller' and its implied transience, along with



TIDE salon is a place where different layers of source material mix and mingle, allowing visitors to hear new music, embark on a series of visual and textual discoveries, and gain behind-the-scenes access into the ideas and exchanges that produce creative work.

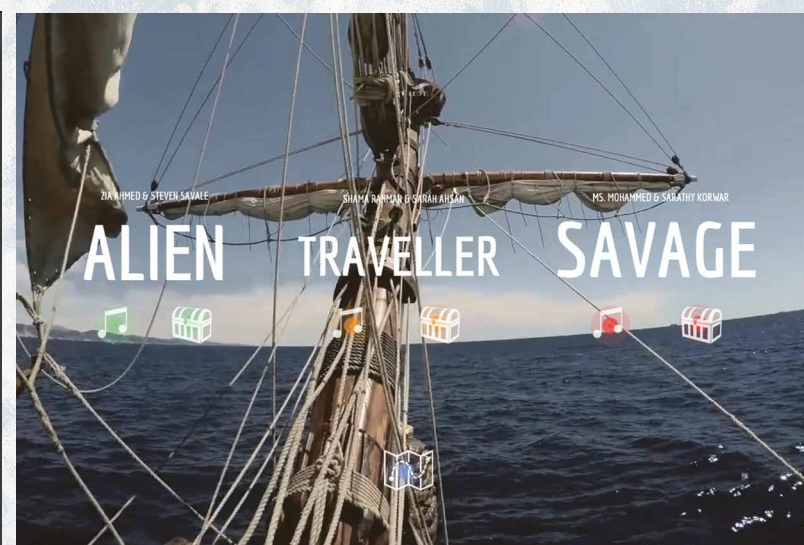
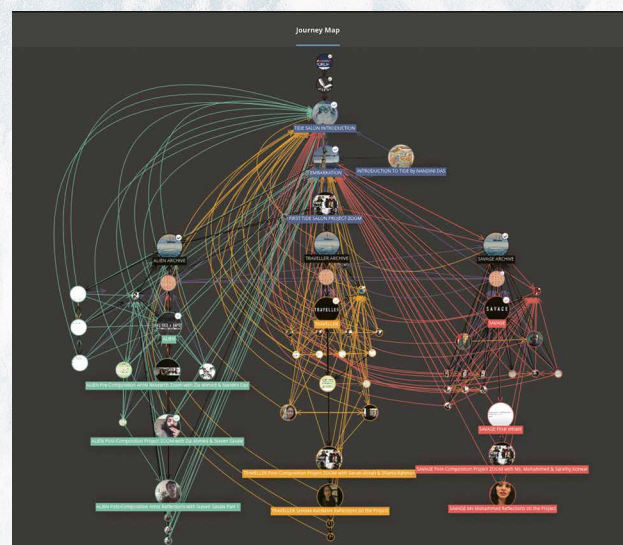
the soothing tones of Dr Shama Rahman's instrumental, provides a completely new angle on the term as well as a beautiful aural experience. Preti Taneja's fragments, written as if found by an archivist and a translator working a century on from now, play on how we interact with words from the past and the messy process of categorising history. The project demonstrates how academic research can intertwine with and be enriched by creative response, opening the interaction between these two disciplines for future possibilities.

The layout of the salon is also thoroughly engaging, with a pirate-like 'map' allowing viewers to easily access different sections of the site. Not only does the salon span various art forms, but it also delves into the background of the creative process, giving access to the team's Zoom calls, WhatsApp messages and personal reflections. Seeing the interaction of artists, producers and academics really enriches the works themselves, particularly through

their interaction with language and vocabulary. The idea that these forms of media are of equivalent value to music or text is a new and interesting one. Being able to view the artists' drafts, mistakes and ponderings also humanises them in a way that is not often seen – creativity is presented as an evolution rather than a perfect, finished product. The circumstantial restrictions of the project being forced online seem to have improved it rather than limiting it.

The salon's intriguing mix of Renaissance literature, spoken word, music and even Zoom calls creates an incredible multimedia experience that sheds new light on Professor Das's research and even on the future of academic projects in general. I would therefore thoroughly recommend diving into the TIDE salon.

To explore the TIDE salon visit:
www.tideproject.uk/tidesalon



Visitors to the TIDE salon are encouraged to navigate their own way on a voyage of discovery



Clockwise from top left: Zia Ahmed, Shama Rahman, Sarathy Korwar, Ms. Mohammed, Sanah Ahsan, Steven Savale



Home movie

In 2020 artist and Exeter Fellow and Director of Studies for Fine Art **Oreet Ashery** was awarded a Turner Bursary by the Tate in recognition of her 'significant contributions to new developments in British contemporary art'. Here she speaks to curator George Vasey about her recent work, *Dying Under Your Eyes*, which was commissioned by Wellcome Collection.

GEORGE VASEY: In *Revisiting Genesis*, you foreground non-normative familial and friendship structures of care. In your new work, *Dying Under Your Eyes*, you focus on your own family. The film addresses the recent death of your father but is also about the relationship between your mum and dad.

OREET ASHERY: *Revisiting Genesis* is a story that came from early adulthood in England, marked by non-heteronormative relationships and chosen families and kinships. *Dying Under Your Eyes* is about my parents. While their relationship is heteronormative, the gender roles are less traditional.

Growing up, my father did all the cooking and cleaning and was an emotional man in an overbearing, militant culture. My mother was outward facing and took care of the modest financial mobility of the family. I am grateful to my parents—unknowingly and unintentionally, they helped develop my gender-nonconforming identity.

GV: In the film, your father often plays up to the camera and is aware of you filming while your mother is more reticent. It can be difficult sometimes to know if your father's playful personality is due to dementia. The film leaves it quite uncertain.

OA: I had the same question myself as he was never officially diagnosed with dementia. His otherworldliness oscillated between elated playfulness and severe anxiety and depression. In the film, we see him singing aloud from the newspaper, as he did for hours daily. His transpersonal states of mind have certainly influenced my creativity.

GV: The diaristic nature of the film evokes the aesthetic of home movies. The iconography of the family album is often created through the parental gaze, but with this work, you're inverting that gaze. Do you see the film as an attempt to rewrite some of those familial stereotypes?

OA: Yes, I hope that comes through. It wasn't intentional though. I filmed my dad with my phone, never meaning to make a work out of it, but to overcome the geographical distance and create proximity.

GV: Did you learn anything about your family, looking at this material?

OA: Definitely. I've got to know my dad a lot better through this film. He makes more sense to me now. I feel closer to him.

GV: You dress up as him in the film. How do you see this re-embodiment?

OA: I often used to wear his clothes when I was a teenager meandering in the streets of Jerusalem. But since he was an effeminate man in an ultra masculinist environment, the borrowing was more nuanced for me. I reenact his fall a number of times for the film. He fell off his bed onto the marble floor that ultimately caused his death. His dying was quite sudden, and making the film helped me process it.

GV: There is a moment in the film when your parents' carer, Nishanti, talks about being like a second body for your father. Nishanti suggests that your mum is more reluctant to take that care.

OA: When my dad died, Nishanti started to look after my mum. My dad was very open and could take in the routine intimacy of her care; bathing, changing him, and moisturising. My mum is more private and less surrendered, and she often refuses the care Nishanti affectionately offers. It's a different form of ageing from my dad's, with more resistance. This comes back to the idea we discussed earlier: how we die is how we live. Nishanti's form of care reflects my parents' different ways of being in the world.



Images: Scenes from Oreet Ashery's recent work, *Dying Under Your Eyes*

GV: Do you think the process of documenting your parents becomes a form of care?

OA: As he got older, my father would embark on long monologues, often filled with anxiety, that were hard for me to follow. The camera enabled me to focus on him and listen; it was a way of mediating our relationship. Editing helped me to make sense of him and his stories, retell them and spend longer with him. I took much care in editing the film, and I think this relates to the grieving process.

GV: The camera also archives and provides testimony for someone's experience.

OA: Even right at the end, in his last few days, he was aware of the camera. It was a way of witnessing and creating a relatable document.

GV: *Dying Under Your Eyes* is tonally very different from *Revisiting Genesis*. It is more fragmented and has a heightened surrealism that creates this charged atmosphere, almost like grief. For instance, short elements of the film are played backward. Why is this?

OA: I tried to capture how memory works and how sense of time becomes disoriented through grief. After my father died, I completely lost my sense of time for at least three months. I couldn't exist within the rigidity of the clock. I couldn't help but miss appointments and public obligations. Through reversing clips, I was able to capture dislocation.

GV: Can you talk about the two women who appear dressed in various tie-dyed clothes? Are they apparitions?

OA: Yes. They are angels and the subconscious and also members of my family, so they are genetic apparitions. They indicate the looming of death and the playful, childlike side of my dad. For example, in one scene we see one of the women cutting a kitchen paper roll in half, which then became two toilet papers. It is the kind of thing my dad did. Later, as he gets older, we see them beckoning him to come onto the balcony. In his last year, he went to the balcony in the middle of every night where angels were singing and calling him. They also perform mourning rituals such as walking on top of the furniture in the flat and jumping on my parents' bed.

GV: Could you talk about the soundtrack? It creates an ominous and charged atmosphere.

OA: The soundtrack, by Simon Maheke Ngamaha, is a crucial part of the film. We worked to create a subliminal sense of suspense, disease, and other worldliness. Since 2017 my dad's life was dominated by death anxieties, reduced function, and loss of quality of life, even though

everything seemed the same. The music is a way of holding the foreboding space underneath the surface of daily life.

GV: Do you think that death is something we know but dying isn't? People generally don't talk about it, and we rarely see it.

OA: Absolutely. Nishanti narrates the story of my father's death to make it bearable. I interview her a year later, so there is some distance that renders the narration contained. Dying of a loved one is excruciating but also enigmatic, and Nishanti helps build the puzzle.

GV: The care home is just over the road from where they lived; you film it from their flat. This sense of intimacy and distance appears throughout the film. You appear on the screen via FaceTime at one point, amplifying this sense of your physical distance: your parents in Jerusalem while you're in London.

OA: For so many of us, our relationship to our family or loved ones is through the interplay of distance and proximity. The two can get mixed up at times.

GV: For me, the most difficult scene is when we encounter your father in hospital. He is aware of the camera but seems confused and unable to recollect why he is there. While there are difficult scenes throughout the film, you don't film his death, only his final days.

OA: I think what is difficult about that scene in the hospital is that we can still see ourselves in him at that point. However, further down the line, as he approaches death, it gets harder to identify; it is a natural defense mechanism that causes us to remove ourselves. I did film his actual death, but then the film became about that. It's like there is no return from this image. So I took it out.



Oreet Ashery has published a monograph containing rich material around her work in interviews, research notes and commissioned essays from world leading curators and writers. *How We Die Is How We Live Only More So* is available from Mousse Publishing: bit.ly/oreetashery

INTERVIEW: HELEN MARTEN

Artists are rats!



Installation view, *Fixed Sky Situation*, König Galerie, Berlin, 2019

'It is good to be a rat because it takes you closer to the ground,' 2016 winner of the Turner Prize Helen Marten (2005, Fine Art) tells Megan Erridge (2020, Fine Art).

Megan Erridge: The manipulation and reorganisation of space seems to be an important component of your work. What is your studio space like and how does this influence your creative process?

Helen Marten: I work in bouts of fanatic tidiness and manic chaos, extremes that force me to deal with being a body in a predetermined space. I'm interested in this structural or physical violence that architecture performs on us, how it indexes or emancipates. My studio is very large and opens onto a canal. Perhaps in that idea of liquidity there is a good metaphor for process, for time and productivity as generative but also drowning, in flux. I suppose in immodest failure the world survives, and it might be as simple as saying that the kind of *noise* I like to be surrounded by – books, paper, images, material,

language – is part of the rhythm that structures all bigger ideas. I do believe that provisional absurdities can provide deeply profound interpretation because of course there is politics in everything – the sonic density of history and all its semantics, its objects, its matter – it folds and survives in the smallest flecks.

ME: When working with found objects, at what point do you feel that a satellite disk, a crate, a drainpipe, for example, are transformed into an artwork?

HM: I actually don't really use any found objects. All the 'things' you list above are parts fabricated by myself or externally – they are not simulations or images of a known object, but part of a newly made system of visual information. It's interesting to think that it is possible to

build up an index of signs that can tangentially harness or reactivate the idea of labour. Process for me is complicated because there are so many feasible gestures. I'm wary of 'fabrication' but of course professional people help me make things. I touch everything, I know the *rules*, the responsibility to gravity, to engineering, but sometimes my hand is removed for a moment because I cannot bend or pour or join in the right way. We also ask substance to behave for us on a daily basis by virtue of interaction, so we're all consummate agents in creating the physical world around us. Anybody who has ever handled a sponge understands that it might be capable of soaking up liquid. That is our haptic power; we're lucky to be optically evolved enough to predict sensation. So the treachery in my work then might be a simulation of authority, a willingness to bastardise substance and ask it to behave in numerous unexpected ways. In fact I'm certain that even the most definitive materials are whorish deep down; they are metaphysically flirtatious. Maybe that is their skeuomorphic power!

ME: In a world which is so over-saturated with opinions, what do you think the role of the artist is or should be?

HM: Haha! Artists are rats! It's in the word, anagrammatically: *'tis, Rat!* Rats are rhizomes, polluters, pluralists, filth addicts; they are social and linguistic. They invent movements and demonstrate politics, territory and emotional temperature.

Rats are metacognition and prolificacy. They are the best and the worst. Perhaps the rat is a cheap metaphor, a cipher for something that is difficult to look at for too long. For we, as culture-ists, reek of the kind of stinking biology that has encouraged conditions where the young and impressionable take more empathy from global devices than their nearest of kin. The question itself is not an innocent one and I am a complicit villain.

So perhaps:

What the artist/art world should not be: a refuge for men in disguise; a corporate hegemony that turns violence of any kind into a subjectivity, or at worst, shades it as inadmissible.

What the artist/art world should be: information that is feeling; information that embraces grief and shock and science and any body that considers itself a participant.

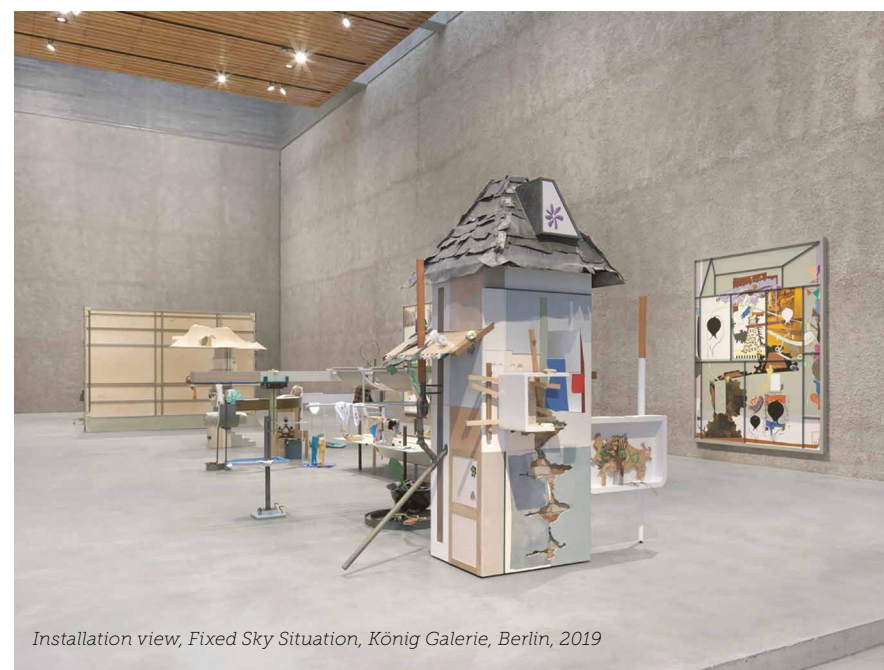
The future must not allow neurotic identity to plunge deeper into nihilistic fog. The future must

and can only be a circumstantial humanity, a humanity that sees the rat and rather than hurling it at the wall, absorbs creative reflection and builds outwards from beauty, failure or disgust. It is good to be a rat because it takes you closer to the ground. We require only a little order to protect us from chaos.

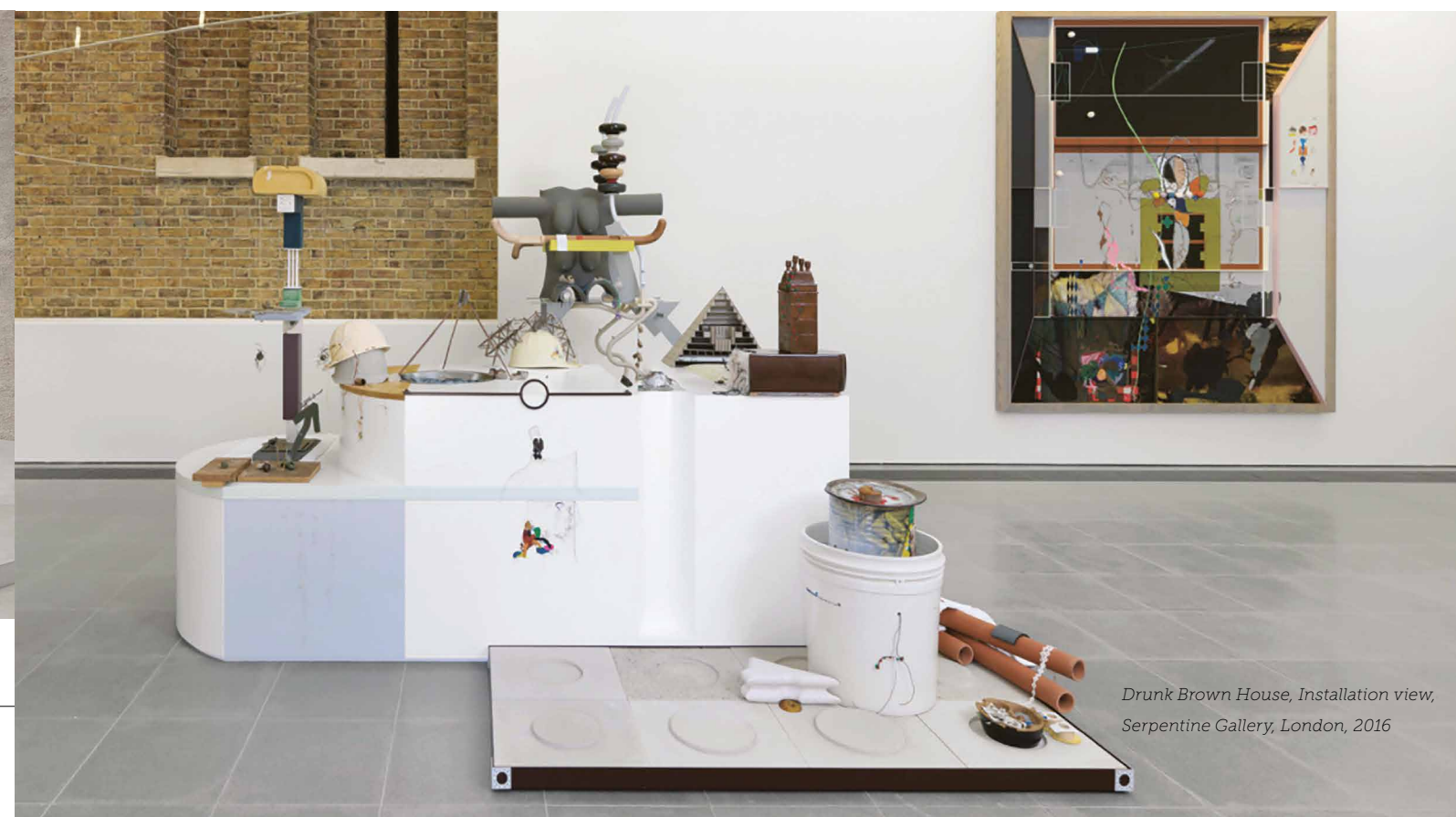
ME: As our methods of communication rely increasingly on the digital, do you think there is still space (literally and figuratively) for sculptural/site-specific artwork? How important are our bodies in the reception of art?

HM: I have great suspicion and mistrust of big data, of digitality. The hugely imperfect free media. Their impulse to normalise, to aggregate facts in a way that fears contamination, that sometimes forgets the shrinking number of steps between populism and popularity. If there ever exists a world where the physical experience of an artwork, a book, a play might propose to exist in the sanitised realm of the screen alone, then it is not a place I'd wish to inhabit.

Helen Marten is currently working on three solo exhibitions: Sparrows On the Stone, Sadie Coles HQ, London (September 2021); Therefore, An Ogre, Greene Naftali, New York; and a solo at The Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, Moscow (September 2022). A permanent commission of her work will also open at LUMA, Arles in September 2021.



Installation view, *Fixed Sky Situation*, König Galerie, Berlin, 2019



Drunk Brown House, Installation view, Serpentine Gallery, London, 2016



Left: *Census*, 2018. Right: *Moral clay*, 2018

Discovering his inner dæmons



When describing Jordan College, the childhood home and playground of his heroine Lyra Belacqua, Philip Pullman (1965, English) took inspiration from Exeter's stunning buildings and grounds. It is fitting, then, that he met with **Liberty Nicholls** (2018, English) in Exeter's Fellows' Garden to discuss his writing process as he works on the latest instalment of Lyra's adventures, part three of *The Book of Dust*.

Liberty Nicholls: Readers left Lyra in central Asia in *The Secret Commonwealth* – where will we find her heading in the next book?

Philip Pullman: She's in Aleppo on her way to central Asia and ... I can't tell you very much more than that! I find if I do talk about it, it leaks. I don't mean it leaks out into the public, I mean that my energy leaks out of it. But it's going alright.

LN: I did want to ask how the pandemic has affected your writing – of course we've all been working from home but if you usually do that anyway, did it make much of a difference?

PP: It made hardly any difference, exactly because of that. I did enjoy the first lockdown because it was so quiet! For years and years I've tended to work with my brain in the morning and my body in the afternoon so I tend to go into my workshop and do things with wood, which I love doing ... or else just come and make up answers to your questions!

Pan himself and Lyra, between them, can think out much more interesting things together than I can by myself.

LN: I've read about your woodwork! That got me thinking about Blake and his printing press, and the relationship between his artistry and his writing.

PP: The thing that first got me about Blake, when I was at school, was the revolutionary quality of *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*. I never lost my love for him – he can write the most memorable stuff and it's so simple: 'Oh rose thou art sick, / The invisible worm...'

LN: You seem to have a real knack for remembering and reciting poetry. Are these literary influences – Milton, Blake – conscious parts of your writing process, or more infusive?

PP: Well, that's an interesting question. We can all learn to cultivate our memories actually – and the best way to do it is by doing it! Learn poems consciously and then take them out occasionally. I can recite some poems in French and rhythm has a lot to do with how I approach them – French poems are generally written in Alexandrines whereas most English poetry is in iambic pentameter or tetrameter. Being conscious of that is a great help to me and I find it enormously interesting – for example, I wanted to make a statement with the rhythm at the end of *The Northern Lights*. So the last half sentence of

The Northern Lights is an alexandrine: '...and looked towards the sun, and walked into the sky.'

LN: Interesting! So how did the ideas of dæmons and Dust come about?

PP: I needed someone for Lyra to talk to. In the first chapter [of *The Northern Lights*], when she goes into the senior common room, she was alone before I thought of the dæmon, and I had to tell the reader what she was doing, what she was thinking, what she was feeling. You've got a dynamic there, when you have two voices – they can argue, they can compare things, they can urge each other on ... it's a much more active thing going on. The technical question that is solved by the invention of the dæmon is having someone to talk to, and the technical question that is solved by Dust is that I needed a word for Lord Asriel to say to the scholars which would make them all go: 'Heresy!' It didn't matter what it was – it could have been porridge! But, it happened to be dust. Now we've got something that has that reaction and makes people nervous because it's heretical. What is [Dust]? I then had to write another however many pages, and I still haven't got there. I'm only being semi-serious, but that did come into it!

LN: When Lyra's dæmon, Pan, came to you, did you have to process that idea through writing or take some time away to daydream about it?

PP: Both, really. Though, I certainly didn't plan it all out, because I was discovering as I went along. It's more interesting like that for me, and it's because [Pan] himself and Lyra, between them, can think out much more interesting things together than I can by myself. I'm still discovering things about the dæmon ... it was, though I say myself, quite a good idea! I was very lucky to discover it.

LN: And finally – do you have anything to say on creativity? When you sit down to write, how do you be creative?

The best thing to do if you want to write is to get into the habit of writing!

PP: It's a habit – the best thing to do if you want to write is to get into the habit of writing! You're not going to be inspired every day but it's not about being inspired – inspiration is for amateurs. So, incidentally, is writer's block. There are days when it comes easily and days when it's very hard but – tough! You've made an agreement with yourself to write 500 words every day ... so just do it!



Beyond our imagination

Recent neuroscientific research suggests that when individuals are being 'creative', many more parts of the brain are being activated than previously thought. **John Parrington**, Lecturer in Pharmacology, explains what this might mean for approaches to teaching as well as the development of the human imagination.

The ability to think rationally is an essential feature of being human, but it is hard to imagine how our species could have gone from living in caves to sending rovers to Mars in the space of 40,000 years without another crucial element – our creative impulse. Both Einstein and Picasso believed that their respective genius in science and art was based upon an ability to view the world as would a child. But clearly there is a difference between an adult with a childlike ability to think outside the box, and actually being a child. So what is the basis of

human creativity and imagination, and how does it differ between adults and children?

The Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky believed that each individual human consciousness is transformed by social interactions, particularly through language, but also other cultural 'tools' such as music, art, and literature. And he saw imagination as no less influenced by this social input than other aspects of consciousness, stating that it is 'the means by which a person's experience is broadened, because he can imagine what he has not seen [and] can

conceptualise something from another person's narration and description of what he himself has never directly experienced.'

Vygotsky thought that imagination was particularly stimulated in the developing child through the process of play. A key aspect of play is that it allows the child to reach further than their current stage of development. As Vygotsky put it, 'in play a child is always above his average age ... it is as though he were a head taller than himself.' But if play is part of the process whereby the powers of imagination are formed during childhood, how does this relate to creativity in the adult? Here it is worth noting that some aspects of adult human culture have attributes in common with play, including the link with imagination. For instance, when as adults we read a novel or watch a film, we can also imagine ourselves and others in the roles of the characters experiencing situations within it. By identifying with a character in an imaginary world created by the book or movie, we can become a 'head taller' than we typically are – just as in childhood. But equally, the rapidly changing circumstances that occur in mass movements and revolutions can provide opportunities for ordinary people to exercise creativity and imagination in ways unthinkable in 'normal' life, and in the process become a 'head taller' in ways that are fully grounded in reality, not someone else's fiction.

If play is central to the development of imagination during childhood, but also has similarities to imagination in adults, what can modern neuroscience tell us about the imaginative process? The areas of the brain involved in this process in adults are now being explored using sophisticated brain imaging methods. Previously it was assumed that imagination and creativity must be solely due to activity in brain regions like the prefrontal cortex – part of the cortex that wraps around the brain and positioned just behind our forehead – which was long assumed to be the place where 'higher' brain functions mainly take place. Yet a study by Alex Schlegel of Dartmouth College in the USA has indicated that imagination requires a highly distributed neural network, with 11 areas across the brain being activated when an individual takes part in creative acts. Schlegel believes that this network is equivalent to a 'mental workspace' – that is the connected neurons provide the basis for our ability to alter and manipulate images, symbols, and ideas, and gives us the intense mental focus that allows us to formulate new ideas and solutions to complex problems.

An unexpected aspect of Schlegel's study was that it highlighted an important role for a region of the brain called the cerebellum – a brain region positioned at the back of our heads – in imagination and the creative process. And this finding has been confirmed by another recent study by Allan Reiss and colleagues at Stanford University.

Interestingly, drawing on Vygotsky's arguments about the importance of play in the development of imagination, Larry Vandervert, of American Nonlinear Systems, has proposed that play in both animals and humans is based on the same mechanisms of repetition in the cerebellum, but play in humans has evolved from simple training for the unexpected, to long-term survival by predicting, mitigating, and preventing the unexpected. As play's role in our mental development evolved from its previous purely animal-like functions to taking on more specifically human attributes, a cerebellum region called the dentate nucleus became a river of nerve tracts running from the cerebellum to the prefrontal cortex. And as it increased the number of tracts interconnecting with higher mental functions, it may also have supported imagination in play and the development of creativity in the adult.

By identifying with a character in an imaginary world, we can become a 'head taller' than we typically are.

Previously the cerebellum has been more linked to control of balance and coordinated movement of the body's muscles. So how might this brain region influence imagination and creativity? Allan Reiss believes that the cerebellum plays a role in creativity and imagination in ways that are similar to its unconscious role in coordinating bodily movements. Reiss believes this illustrates why a deliberate attempt to be creative may not be the best way to optimise a person's creativity. While greater effort to produce creative outcomes involves more activity of 'higher' brain regions like the prefrontal cortex, it may actually be necessary to reduce activity in those regions to achieve creative outcomes. In other words, trying too hard may prove counter-productive when it comes to creativity. This has obvious implications for education, for it suggests that teaching approaches that are based on making the student consciously 'work' at learning may be actually counter-productive.

In summary, recent studies suggest that imagination and creativity in humans are not just functions of one specific brain region, but rather involve interconnections between multiple parts of the brain. In addition, they are revealing that the human brain is highly 'plastic', not just in children, but also in adults, with huge potential for every one of us to develop our imaginations given the right circumstances, and with the appropriate stimulation.

The creative business



Jenny Bond (1979, English), Senior Creative at Saatchi & Saatchi PG One London, on her quest to make ads that stand out.

If you want to be a Writer or Artist, steer clear of advertising. Your heart will be broken, many times over. If, however, you can come up with words and pictures that sell, you get to play with a dazzling array of photographers, directors, animators, illustrators, composers, musicians and actors. And that's heaven.

Advertising's version of creativity is the process of trying to find something 'sticky' that remains in the memory after the ad break has finished, or you've scrolled past on your phone. One boss used to call it 'tickle'. Another used to ask (in all sincerity) for 'new clichés'. I believe it's about coming up with an idea that will make someone say 'Oh, I hadn't thought of it like that before'. The hunt is agonising, and addictive. And, while you may solve it in the office, it's just as likely to happen while you're doing the washing. Even then, clients must be convinced, consumer research survived. Many darlings will die along the way.

When Oxford Junior Dictionary put the word Database in, Adder was out.

Magpie, Otter and Acorn have been replaced by Broadband, Chatroom and Bungee jumping, and dozens of other nature words have vanished too. Dictionaries reflect the words we use. And many

children aren't talking about wildlife anymore. The Wildlife Trusts are determined to put the wild back into childhood. Inspire a child at wildlifetrusts.org/ EveryChildWild



For The Wildlife Trusts, I wanted not just tickle, but impact. The charity is aiming to connect children more closely with nature, and by coincidence, I'd heard that a junior dictionary had dropped nature words, like Adder, from their listings because children aren't using them enough. Dictionaries reflect the language of the day. It was just the creative idea we needed. Here was a graphic way to show adults that we urgently need to get children talking about Adders, Kingfishers and Minnows again. I remembered pressing flowers as a child and found vintage books with gold tooling to echo a snake's markings, sky-blue endpapers for a bird, wavy marbling for fish to swim in, and digital artists did the rest. Airy-fairy aesthetics? Or details that add weight? Perhaps, in your gut, you fear for a species that children can no longer name.

Some briefs grow in thinner soil, or seem to. Investment trusts, for example. Use the words 'fungal infection' in your

Candida writes...



I didn't ask to be named after a fungal infection.

I didn't ask to be born blonde.

I didn't ask to be born at all.

I didn't ask to be dragged to France every summer.

I didn't ask for Dad to show up at every swimming gala.

And I definitely didn't ask him to start some savings fund so I could go to college. Boy is he asking for it.

Impossible to do anything right for your children? Not quite. A jump savings fund could go some way to smoothing relations. If only to finance their escape from the family nest. A monthly saving can build up over the years to an impressive lump sum. So call us for an information pack, or visit our website. And try bribing your way to some gratitude. Please remember, past performance is not a guide to future performance, and the value of your shares can rise and fall, so you may not get back the full amount you invested.



The savings fund for children
0800 082 81 80 | www.jumpsavings.com
Ref XXXXX

Witan investment trust

Issued and approved by Witan Investment Services. Witan Investment Services (of 4 Broadgate, London EC2M 2DA) is authorised and regulated by the Financial Services Authority to provide investment products and services. We may record telephone calls for our mutual protection and to improve customer service.



first line, and people might read on. Write it in the voice of an ungrateful Goth, and give it an inviting, poem-like layout, and they might get to the end. Brave client. The sector's heavily regulated, but needn't be dull.

Motherhood's another poorly-served subject. Who are all these women in their stain-free t-shirts? For Baby Dove, I wanted less airbrush, more grit. Over scenes of undone ironing and inconveniently escaping breastmilk, as well as cuddles, Anna Maxwell Martin read: 'If you can force your heart, and nerve, and sinew, to serve your turn long after they're gone... you'll be a Mum, my girl'. Mrs Kipling might have recognised herself. Dove's biggest new category launch for a decade was a success. Copywriters are pilferers.

I recently came across my first ad. The Sunday Times Magazine asked agencies to design posters for the next election. I got Margaret Thatcher, elected Britain's first female Prime Minister just months before I came up. I drew a big pair of shoes, the simplicity stood out, and it ran. Today, of course, we've moved on – there are far more women MPs, Theresa's been and gone (in her leopardskins) and we support and applaud men who wear women's shoes. It was a child of its time.

Hearteningly, there are now more women in creative departments, to express the female voice. When I began, a ratio of one in 10 was not unusual. As one of Exeter's first intake of 21 undergraduate women amongst some 280 men, I was lucky to be able to hit the ground running. The riddle is how we stop losing female creatives mid-career. Lockdown Work From Home may have helped. An idea doesn't mind where you have it. And that's not necessarily when you're still in the office at 8pm, straining to come up with a winner before the nursery charges triple-time.

Agencies are thinking creatively about this. Post-lockdown, mine's offering a two-days-in-the-office option. Bingo. Great for all parents, not just women. Advertising's Gender Pay Gap figures? Less bingo. 17.85% last year, higher than average compared to the rest of the economy. Up on the previous year.

The brief on my desk is about nappies. I shall find the words, from the thousands in a dictionary, to persuade you to buy Pampers. I'll force heart, and nerve, and sinew, to give voice to another under-represented group – Dads. And if I succeed, I'll contribute proudly to Procter & Gamble's bottom line (gross profits \$36.2 billion, year to June 2020). If I'm in the office, I might pop to El Vino on Fleet Street, where, until 1982, the year I left Exeter, I'd have been banned from ordering at the bar because I'm female. And if the words escape me? I'll go home, put a wash on, and wait.

STIGMATISED

Giving Voice to a Wounded Community



The Merthyr Stigmatist by Lisa Parry (1998, English) was produced by The Sherman Theatre and Theatre Uncut and premiered online in May 2021. It received four-star reviews from both *The Stage* and *The Guardian*, who described it as 'theatrical magic'. This fiery story, like its protagonist, cries out to be heard, writes **Costi Levy** (2019, Philosophy and Spanish).

'Plays tick around in my head for years,' says Lisa Parry, as she recalls the early stages of writing *The Merthyr Stigmatist*. Carys, a sixteen-year-old student from Merthyr Tydfil, South Wales, claims to have received the stigmata: Christ's wounds from the cross. She wants to tell the world about it, and she demands to be heard. Parry has always been fascinated by the idea of the stigmata, and spent some time researching it at the British Library. She then put her research aside for some time; 'I sort of parked it.'

It was the 2016 Brexit vote that led Parry to put pen to paper. She recalls going to London and hearing multiple nasty comments levied against 'Leavers'. The sentiment of

these comments, she felt, was, 'all the people that voted that way, they need to stay in their box.' Parry, who is a 'Remainer', strongly felt that 'you may not agree, I don't agree, but you need to stop and listen to *why*.' After the trip, she decided to write a play about Merthyr, to discuss prejudice against working-class people, and 'how it feels to be shut down and ignored, constantly.' She decided to use her research on the stigmata as an entry point for the topic. And she liked the idea of linking the stigmata to a young girl: 'that's how the voice comes out.'

The Merthyr Stigmatist is a refreshing juxtaposition to the trend towards monologues in much of recent British theatre: 'I'm a bit sick of monologues' says Parry, 'it's like

we've forgotten how to talk to each other.' Her play is a two-hander, and all the action takes place in one classroom between two women: Carys, who is locked in the room for detention, and Siân, her teacher.

'I like restrictions when I write,' Parry notes, explaining the process of writing an intense duologue set in one place. 'You put them in a closed room and don't allow them to leave – that's an explosive dramatic concept!' Much of the action in the play is also triggered by notifications on Carys's smart watch and Siân's computer. Technology acts as a means for information to come in and out of the room and pushes the play's narrative forward.

Despite the pandemic, the Sherman Theatre was able to stage the show – albeit for online streaming without a live audience. The play continued to develop in the rehearsal room, as the actors brought emotions and their personal journeys to the characters.

The Merthyr Stigmatist is a story that cries out to be heard. The play peaks as Carys exclaims to Siân, 'you stopped thinking people like me are worth hearing.' It is at this point in the play where the teacher–student power dynamic shifts. Siân learns that Carys feels ignored and brushed off on account of her background. It is only through the violence of the stigmata on her hands that she can be listened to. From this point onwards, the two women begin to listen and help each other. Indeed, the way in which the power struggle of the early stages of the play moves towards reconciliation is, Parry believes, made possible by the fact that both the characters are women. The characters need not destroy each other for the play to resolve; rather, at the end of the play Carys walks out of the classroom supported by Siân.

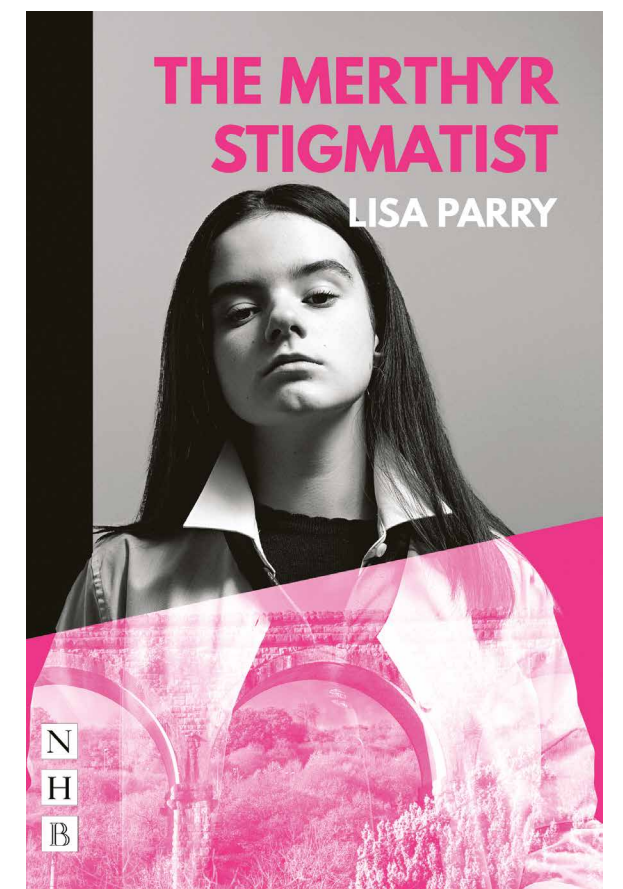
Parry recalls studying Marxist critical theory with her tutor Jeri Johnson, who continues to be a Fellow and Tutor in English at Exeter. In their tutorials they discussed how writing frames thought, and through her writing, Parry frames the way we think about the unique and important voice of every person. Parry recalls coming to Oxford feeling conscious of her working-class background and thick Dudley accent that set her apart from many other students. 'The voice of the working class matters,' says Parry, who credits the role her Oxford English degree has played in enabling her to bring her voice to the stage.

The Merthyr Stigmatist was published by Nick Hern books and is available for purchase now.



Overseeing the production: playwright Lisa Parry

Parry recalls coming to Oxford feeling conscious of her working-class background and thick Dudley accent that set her apart from many other students.



All the world's a stage



When Covid-19 forced opera houses and concert halls to shut their doors, musicians became creative about finding opportunities to work. For Betty Makharinsky (2012, Music) it was a chance not only to give hard-pressed musicians an impressive new stage on which to perform, but also to make top-quality productions accessible to a much wider audience. **Amelia Anderson** (2012, Music) reports.

Since the pandemic struck in early 2020, opera houses, concert halls and theatres across the world have fallen silent, performers have been left without a stage, and audiences have had to find their cultural fix online. Freelancers within the arts sector have been hit particularly hard, being forced to diversify and find new creative outlets.

Exeter alumna Betty Makharinsky (2012, Music), a freelance musician, did just that by launching an open-air classical music festival last September. Based within the grounds of the Vache, an historic stately home located in Chalfont

St Giles, Buckinghamshire, The Vache Baroque Festival brings audiences music, dance, drama and much more. Presenting music from the known Baroque canon alongside more obscure works, VBF strives to reimagine classical music in a more accessible, sustainable and enjoyable way for future generations.

The festival opened in 2020 with two staged performances of Purcell's opera *Dido and Aeneas* and following its success, has returned for a full season of events this summer. Highlights include *Paradise* and *Pandemonium*, a dramatic reading of

The Vache Baroque Festival strives to reimagine classical music in a more accessible, sustainable and enjoyable way for future generations.





These events will be a platform for emerging artists to play, sing, dance, act, design, and create alongside some of the industry's leading lights and to tell old stories in modern ways.

extracts from John Milton's epic poems punctuated with the music of JS Bach, and two staged performances of Handel's popular pastoral opera, *Acis and Galatea*. We also welcome the return of dance group BirdGang Ltd for an evening of contemporary dance to the sound of traditional 17th and 18th century dance suites.

At the heart of the festival, now a registered charity, is its key mission: to make high-quality productions of Baroque music and drama open to everyone. By combining contemporary artistic disciplines in performance and having pop-ups and installations away from the stage before each show, we aim to produce vibrant events that will inform, challenge, and entertain both new and seasoned audiences. These events will be a platform for emerging artists to play, sing, dance, act, design, and create alongside some of the industry's leading lights and to tell old stories in modern ways.

By observing and questioning the traditional access to classical music culture, the festival hopes to nurture a sense of belonging for all our artists and audience members, regardless of age, race, financial position, or experience of music. Via the gateway of the Baroque era, we want to introduce young people to the joy of live classical music and its many benefits, to inspire their creativity, and to invite them to build bridges between our past and present.

As part of this we have just launched our education programme, which includes the development of a schools

workshop programme inspired by our Dance Suites featuring BirdGang Ltd show, implementing a mentoring scheme for selected student singers, and providing performance opportunities within the 2021 season for local school children.

We have ambitious plans to grow both the festival and our education programme and cannot wait to see where the journey takes us. But until then, we're counting down the days until we can all be reunited to enjoy live music together once again!



The honeymoon's off – so let's set up an online school!



As the UK entered lockdown in March 2020, the need for a free online teaching platform was obvious: children weren't receiving an education and disadvantaged students were disproportionately affected. David Thomas (2008, PPE) felt he had to step-up, as he tells **Patrick Oliver** (2019, Medicine).

Solving difficult problems in education requires large networks of collaborative teams with diverse backgrounds and skills. This is the belief of Exeter's David Thomas (2008, PPE), who co-founded Oak National Academy, a free online teaching platform that has helped millions of students.

The need for a high quality online teaching platform in March 2020, as the UK entered lockdown, was obvious: 'Kids weren't getting educated,' Thomas explains, and disadvantaged students were disproportionately affected. For Thomas, taking action made sense: 'What better time to step-up than a massive global crisis?'

Thomas, already a head teacher by 27, successfully established an online teaching programme with his own school when the pandemic struck. He made sure staff and students had everything ready by the time schools were told to close. He purchased dongles to deliver internet connectivity, provided iPads and laptops for students who lacked them, and practised online teaching with staff and students in advance of lockdown.

A few weeks after students went home, Thomas realised more was needed: 'It was already really clear that not all schools had been able to do what we had done.' He asked himself, 'How do we help?'

Thomas took initiative and started contacting people. He emailed the Department for Education and said, 'I'm a head teacher... I've got a two-week holiday... I've got no plans... Is somebody working on an online school? I could help.' And so he did. Instead of travelling to Argentina on a two-week honeymoon, as he had envisaged, he spent his holiday 'glued to the screen, trying to set up a school.'

There were lots of challenges, the first being the tight deadline: 'If it wasn't ready on the first day of the summer term, you miss a really important boat,' he explains. Speed was essential, and Thomas found himself asking many people, 'If we did something, would you pitch in?'

And they did: a 'large group of incredible people' was responsible for designing the website, securing funding, and recording lessons. But getting people to help didn't solve everything. Thomas had to contend with emotively charged opinions on *how* and *what* to teach. For example, Thomas explains, when delivering science lessons 'there are differing views about how much should be practical work,' a topic people 'care deeply about'. Thomas had to be a decision-maker. Admitting to the challenge of 'keeping that coalition together,' he notes that 'it was only possible because everyone wanted to do the right thing and was incredibly generous.'

The success of Thomas's response to the pandemic – recognised with an OBE in the 2020 Birthday Honours – comes, he says, in part from 'understanding probability' and 'thinking about risk'. He developed these skills whilst studying PPE, working as a maths teacher, and acting as a consultant for McKinsey & Company. But when considering how best to prepare for future challenges, Thomas emphasises that he is 'wary of prescribing particular experiences that everyone needs to have.' He believes it is crucial that educational workers 'come from different backgrounds and can bring different things.' Through this, they can 'pool the diversity of experience so they can help support each other.'

Thomas is now married (the ceremony took place, belatedly, in Exeter College Chapel in March 2021) and will continue to uphold his values and enthusiasm for education with a new job overseeing a group of five secondary schools in Cambridgeshire. His decisive actions as the pandemic gathered pace remind us to be proactive, ignore personal limitations, and recognise the value of others in overcoming challenges.

ALUMNI IN THE SPOTLIGHT

The Full English

All three of the alumni featured in this year's spotlight pages are English graduates. As children, all three were also captivated by words. But for Melanie Challenger, Amanda McDonald and Jessica Palmarozza, career interests and strong personal experiences have taken their creativity in quite different and sometimes unexpected directions.



MELANIE CHALLENGER (1996, ENGLISH)

Once an English student and aspiring novelist, it is Melanie's 'inner anthropologist' that now shapes and inspires her creative output.



When I was very young, I wanted to be a novelist. I lived in books, and, as a teenager, I'd noticed that a lot of poets and novelists I loved, from Donne to Tolkien, had gone to Oxford. As I was home-loving, and Oxford was a nearby city, and the one I'd been born in, it felt at once distant and somehow accessible. Originally, I was torn between Anthropology and Archaeology, and English Language and Literature. I plumped for the latter, but there was always an inner anthropologist struggling to get out throughout my degree.

When I came to decide on a college, I was motivated in part by a track record in accepting kids, like me, from state schools. Oxford has done a lot to equalise opportunities since I applied, but, back then, it still seemed a good idea to find a college with positive rates of taking state school students. I was also keen on finding a female tutor, and Jeri Johnson, with Helen Spencer, were the tutors in English, along with the brilliant Marilyn Butler, who was Rector of

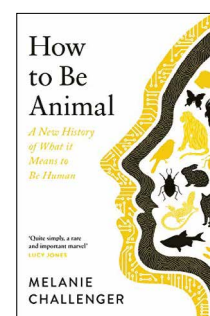
our college. However, it was probably the final piece of knowledge that Tolkien had studied there that tipped the balance for me...Now, of course, Exeter is famous for another crossover children's author, Philip Pullman. I wonder who will follow in his footsteps to keep the tradition alive?

I had a great time at Oxford, with all the usual emotional ups and downs that young adults face. It can be a challenging stage of life, and young people are under even more pressure nowadays. I feel very grateful we did not have social media back then. I would rather have a book than an iPhone in my hand any day!

After I graduated, I worked initially in the creative arts, writing poetry and making music. I published a collection of poems, and adapted the Anne Frank diaries for a large-scale choral work that is still performed extensively today.

Nevertheless, my early interest in anthropology took over, and I ended up focusing on the relationship of humans to the rest of the living world.

I published my first nonfiction book, *On Extinction*, in 2011, after research trips to the Arctic and Antarctica. A new and revised edition came out this year. I've just published a new book, the result of nearly a decade's research, called *How to Be Animal: A new history of what it means to be human*, which is all about the struggle we have, physically, psychologically, morally, with being an animal, and why that matters now. I like to think that the Great Debate in Oxford is still alive. People still haven't accepted what Darwin tried to show us.



Melanie's most recent book, 'How to be animal: A New History of what it Means to be Human', is in bookshops now.



AMANDA MCDONALD (1991, ENGLISH)

A joyous career in advertising and a remarkable recovery from cancer inspired Amanda to pen her autobiography – written in just five weeks during lockdown.



From a very young age, I have been captivated by words. I was rarely seen without a book in my hands. This love of language never diminished, and my English teachers at school, and at college in Stoke, continued to cultivate this passion. My English tutor at Sixth Form College was an Exeter College alumnus and encouraged me to apply to his alma mater. I was delighted to be awarded a place to read English Language and Literature at Oxford, matriculating in 1991.

After a brief stint as a Press and Publicity Officer in a theatre, I started work in an advertising agency as an Account Handler and progressed through the ranks. I then joined global agency McCann Erickson and worked on integrated campaigns for a range of clients from UPS (the international courier) to SCS (a sofa company). Part of the joy of advertising, for me, was my complete immersion in each client's business, and over the years I have become an expert in boilers, parcels,

sofas, footwear, tyres, airlines, pub chains, grass-roots sport, construction and even food waste!

This culminated in my role as Managing Director of a Midlands-based advertising agency, called Yes Agency. I led on client relationship management and was involved in every area of the business, including strategy development, copywriting and overseeing creative work. I enjoyed my job enormously.

However, in November 2013 I was diagnosed with breast cancer, which spread to my brain. I was given 'months to live' in October 2015. Over time, against the odds, I began to recover. In September 2017 I received the remarkable news that my cancer had gone and that I was 'considered cured'. In 2020, during lockdown, I decided to write my autobiography. Five weeks later it was completed (I did say I enjoyed writing!). It is called *The Miracle Lady*, a name that was used by the team at my local hospice where I

was to spend the last few weeks of my life.

I am now an Associate Director of Yes Agency and still love to write and to use my bizarrely still-functioning brain to solve creative problems. My time at Exeter College was stimulating and enjoyable. I benefited from the knowledge of world-class tutors and my Oxford education led to a fulfilling career, putting my written, creative, and interpretative skills to good use. I haven't quite found a way of applying my use of 'Old English' in my daily life, but who knows, that time may be yet to come.



Amanda's book, 'The Miracle Lady', is available to buy on Etsy, etsy.me/30okHvF



JESSICA PALMAROZZA (2010, ENGLISH)

Film was the medium that captured Jessica's imagination after graduation – and the hard work she learned to put in at Exeter is now helping her hold her nerve in her first publicly funded short as an independent producer.

As a child I was determined that I would study literature at university, inspired most likely by the delight I found in reading novels and writing overly earnest poetry. I was fanatical about stories; my hand went up in every English lesson at school, and at home my parents were subjected to plenty of amateur dramatics.

I chose Exeter College for its garden, a peaceful green oasis, hidden behind the limestone walls of Brasenose Lane. During my university years I continued the theatrics, directing sketch comedy in my first year and then various plays. After graduating, I interned at a theatre in London but quickly realised I was in the wrong racket. I switched to film and have been entirely addicted to the medium ever since.

There are many elements of film which make it so addictive: the ever-changing pace of the production process, the constantly evolving technology, the unbelievable talent and diversity of your collaborators. It is a truly international industry where stories play out on a world stage. It is also very challenging – amongst

all the clamour, the competition, the pressure – it can be hard to keep your nerve. I'm still learning to navigate it, but my anchor is something I learned at Exeter: hard work.

I'm currently making my first publicly funded short as an independent producer. As soon as I heard the idea for *one like him*, I knew it could be an extraordinary film. In the story, the protagonist struggles to put certain things into words; the parameters of language can't quite

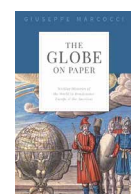
contain what he is expressing. The boundaries of time and space are broken in this surreal encounter between two men meeting after a separation of twenty years. For me, the film is about healing and my hope is that we can pass this message on to audiences around the world. That feels like a goal worth striving for.

Jessica is currently developing a slate of female-led projects with her production company Flumeri Films.



Recommended reading

This year's selection of alumni publications includes the intimately autobiographical, from Martin Amis, a debut novel from a Turner-prize winning artist, a new interpretation of Cicero's speeches, a powerful legal framework for the problem of domestic abuse and an important overview of 'urgent innovations' to improve mental health care.

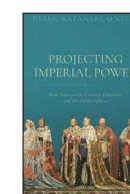


The Globe on Paper

Giuseppe Marcocci (Official Fellow in History)

[Oxford University Press](#)

A study of the cross-fertilisation of historical writing in the 16th and early 17th centuries, *The Globe on Paper* reconstructs a set of imaginative accounts worked out from Mexico to the Moluccas and Peru.

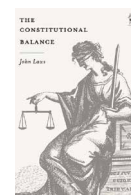


Projecting Imperial Power

Helen Watanabe-O'Kelly (Emeritus Fellow in German)

[Oxford University Press](#)

The 19th century is notable for its newly proclaimed emperors. *Projecting Imperial Power* is the first book to consider newly proclaimed emperors in six territories on three continents across the whole of the long 19th century.

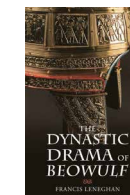


The Constitutional Balance

John Laws (1963, Literae Humaniores, Honorary Fellow)

[Hart Publishing](#)

'The meeting of Parliament and the common law, in the crucible of statutory interpretation, is close to the core of [the constitutional balance]', writes the late Sir John Laws. *The Constitutional Balance* engages with the continuing debate as to whether or not judges venture too far into issues of Government policy.

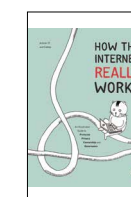


The Dynastic Drama of Beowulf

Francis Leneghan (Lecturer in Medieval English)

[Boydell & Brewer](#)

A strikingly original approach to *Beowulf*, linking its structure to the dynastic life-cycle. By unravelling the web of Scandinavian royal legends known to the work's original audience, Dr Leneghan allows the modern reader to appreciate better the role of the monsters as portents of dynastic and national crises.

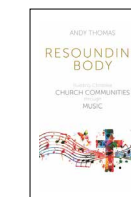


How the Internet Really Works

Corinne Cath-Speth (2016, Information, Communication and Social Sciences)

[No Starch Press](#)

An accessible introduction to how the internet works, designed to give people a basic understanding of its technical aspects, so that they can advocate for digital rights.

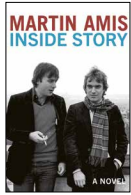


Resounding Body: Building Christlike Church Communities Through Music

Andy Thomas (1997, PPE)

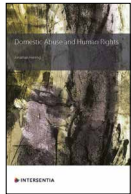
[Sacristy Press](#)

Thomas's new book is the first detailed attempt to frame the purpose of church music in terms of St Paul's metaphor of the 'body of Christ'.



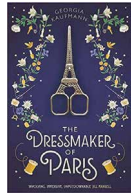
Inside Story

Martin Amis (1968, English, Honorary Fellow)
[Penguin](#)
Martin Amis's most intimate and epic work yet: an autobiographical novel about how to live, how to love, how to grieve and how to die.



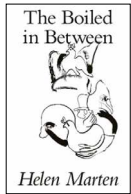
Domestic Abuse and Human Rights

Jonathan Herring (DM Wolfe-Clarendon Fellow in Law)
[Intersentia](#)
Herring sets out a human rights approach to domestic abuse. He argues that the European Convention on Human Rights provides a powerful framework upon which to build a strong legal response to the problem of domestic abuse.



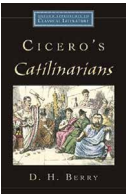
The Dressmaker of Paris

Georgia Kaufmann (1989, Social Anthropology)
[Hodder and Stoughton](#)
'Sensuous, sweeping and utterly engrossing' (Rachel Rhys), *The Dressmaker of Paris* tells the story of Rosa Kusstatscher, a remarkable woman who has built a global fashion empire upon her ability to find the perfect outfit for any occasion. Except she is no longer a child, but an undergraduate at St Sophia's College, Oxford.



The Boiled in Between

Helen Marten (2005, Fine Art, Honorary Fellow)
[Prototype Publishing](#)
In her debut novel, Turner Prize-winning artist Helen Marten transposes the poetic sensibility of her visual work to the page. Within the novel's sensuous and enigmatic world, characters navigate strange, meticulously indexed landscapes to illuminate the associative movements of our minds.



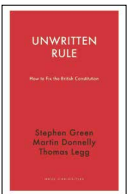
Cicero's Catilinarians

Dominic H. Berry (1983, Literae Humaniores)
[Oxford University Press](#)
The Catilinarians are a set of four speeches delivered by Cicero. Or are they? Berry puts forward a new approach to their interpretation.



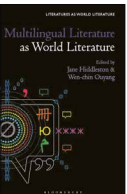
The Ruins of the Reich

Michael Geoghegan (1974, Modern Languages)
[Leitmotif Editions](#)
A vivid account of past and present German identity. The exploration unfurls as Geoghegan journeys through the former German Reich, through the 18 territories memorialised in the Hall of Liberation.



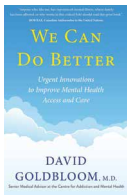
Unwritten Rule: How to Fix the British Constitution

Stephen Green (1966, PPE, Honorary Fellow)
[Haus Publishing](#)
The UK faces a crisis that can only be repaired by a new constitutional settlement. *Unwritten Rule* calls for a radical realignment, embracing a federal approach that would accommodate devolution, increasing democratic control, and modernising our national political structures.



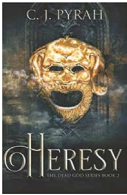
Multilingual Literature as World Literature

Jane Hiddleston (Official Fellow in French)
[Bloomsbury](#)
Co-edited by Professor Hiddleston, this book examines and adjusts current theories and practices of world literature. It reflects on the ways that multilingualism opens up the borders of language, nation and genre.



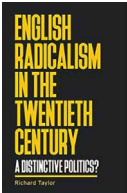
We Can Do Better: Urgent Innovations to Improve Mental Health Access and Care

David Goldbloom (1975, Physiological Sciences)
[Simon & Schuster](#)
Mental health care systems are falling short and the consequences are dire. In this urgent book, celebrated psychiatrist Dr David Goldbloom introduces proven innovations in medicine and health care delivery that could improve the mental health of millions.



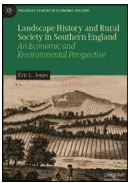
Heresy

Chris Pyrah (2011, Classical Archaeology and Ancient History)
[Next Chapter](#)
The second in The Dead God series, *Heresy*, follows Torben, as he attempts to fight for his life against an ancient threat that has been unleashed on the world of Ulskandar.



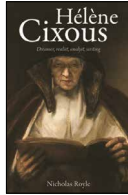
English Radicalism in the 20th Century: A distinctive politics?

Richard Taylor (1964, PPE)
[Manchester University Press](#)
An analysis of the historical and ideological development of English radicalism from the English Civil War onwards.



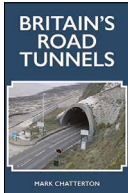
Landscape History and Rural Society in Southern England: An Economic and Environmental Perspective

Eric Jones (1958, Economics)
[Palgrave Macmillan](#)
Professor Jones's book applies an economic and environmental view to the history of landscape and rural economy, analysing a wide range of evidence in southern England, ranging from the reconstruction of parkland to the manufacturing of gunstocks for the African slave trade.



Hélène Cixous: Dreamer, Realist, Analyst, Writing

Nicholas Royle (1976, English)
[Manchester University Press](#)
A wide-ranging and up-to-date critical introduction to the writings of Helene Cixous (1937-), focusing on key motifs, such as dreams, psychoanalysis, realism and secrets.



Britain's Road Tunnels

Mark Chatterton (1976, Theology)
[Amberley Publishing](#)
Britain's Road Tunnels contains entries and photographs of all of Britain's known road tunnels, from Attadale in north-west Scotland down to Samphire Hoe in Kent.

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