

EXON

THE EXETER COLLEGE MAGAZINE ISSUE 22 AUTUMN 2019
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Hannah Parham on the revolutionary 1960s student campaign for Exeter to go co-ed

Natasha Simonova on the women who contributed to intellectual life at Oxford 150 years before they could receive degrees

Lisa Parry on the scarcity of women in theatre and the battle to redress the balance

Max Bastow asks does AI have gender?



40 years of

co-education

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Editorial

This year's *Exon* celebrates 40 years since women were first admitted to Exeter, in Michaelmas Term 1979, with articles almost entirely written by or about some of the talented women who have worked or studied here since then. Hannah Parham (2001, Modern History) describes the well-organised student campaign that led to that historic moment and two of Exeter's first female students, Fiona Young (1979, PPP) and Judith Pain (1979, Jurisprudence), recount what it was like studying here at that time.

Dr Natasha Simonova, Gwyneth Emily Rankin Fellow in English, reveals the story of the women who contributed to intellectual life at Oxford 150 years before they could receive degrees at the University. Playwright Lisa Parry (1998, English) explains why gender inequality in the theatre short-changes society and motivates her to fight back. Max Bastow (2015, Philosophy and Modern Languages) is inspired during a talk at Exeter's Digital Life Symposium by Professor Gina Neff of the Oxford Internet Institute to ask (why) does artificial intelligence have gender. Former Rector Dame Frances Cairncross discusses her Government-commissioned review of the future of journalism and suggests it is not too late to preserve good quality journalism, and for it to preserve a healthy public realm.

In a new feature we shine a light on some of the accomplishments of our alumni – or in this case specifically *alumnae*. We also celebrate some of the recent achievements of our female students and Fellows, including remarkable sporting successes, prestigious teaching and research awards, thought-provoking art exhibitions, inspiring charity work, potentially life-saving student research, exceptional opera productions and dramatic performances, and a retrospective on 40 years in education with the outgoing Fellow in English Dr Helen Leith Spencer.

My thanks to everyone who contributed to *Exon*, especially to Jessica Lee (2015, English) – one of the latest women to join Exeter's network of talented alumni – for her help as editorial intern.

Matthew Baldwin, Communications Officer

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Editor: Matthew Baldwin
Editorial Intern: Jessica Lee (2015, English)
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Art Direction and Design: Sarah Blick
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Rector's review

As we approach the 40th anniversary of co-education at Exeter, **Rector Professor Sir Rick Trainor** reflects on the outstanding contribution women have made in College, Oxford and beyond over the past academic year.

This year's *Exon* theme, celebrating 40 years of women Fellows and students at Exeter, chimes with recent instalments of the ongoing success story of the College's women as well as with the particular events in academic year 2019/20 that will mark this very special anniversary.

The latter will include occasions such as the symposium planned for Saturday 9 November and the joint celebration with Exeter's sister college, Emmanuel Cambridge, envisaged for Trinity Term 2020. Meanwhile we applaud recent notable achievements of Exeter women. Starting with Fellows, Professor Christina de Bellaigue (History) won a teaching award earlier this year from Oxford Student Union in recognition of the way that she supports her students. Also, Professor Dame Carol Robinson (Chemistry) won the Novozymes Prize for 2019 for innovations in the use of mass spectrometry for proteome analysis. Dr Helen Spencer (English) marked her retirement, after 27 years of teaching and research at Exeter, with an exhibition featuring her accomplishments as an artist. The event raised more than £700 for the College's long-standing student charity, ExVac, which provides holidays for disadvantaged children in the Oxford area. Another Exeter artist and Fellow, Oreet Ashery (Fine Art), opened an exhibition (with Jo Spence) at London's Wellcome Collection on 'Revisiting Genesis'. Last but not least in this list of examples, honorary fellow Rector Cairncross published her official report arising from the review of press sustainability. In addition, women served the College

during academic year 2018/19 as (among other important positions) Sub-Rector (Professor Karin Sigloch), Academic Director of the Exeter College Summer Programme (Ms Jeri Johnson), and Harassment Officer (Dr Maureen Taylor).

Exeter's female students also had an outstanding year. Among postgraduates, Razia Chowdhry (2017,



Oreet Ashery



Top: Three-Minute Thesis winners (l-r) Razia Chowdhry, Lhuri Rahmartani and Ellen Brewster
Bottom: Zerlina Vulliamy

Interdisciplinary Bioscience), Lhuri Rahmartani (2018, Population Health) and Ellen Brewster (2013, English) won the second annual version of the demanding three-minute thesis competition. Exeter undergraduate Eleanor Sharpe (2013, Biomedical Sciences) was awarded the Physiological Society's prize as the University's top final year student in physiology. Another undergraduate, Zerlina Vulliamy (2017, Music), directed a highly professional performance of the opera *Marilyn Forever*. In sport, Exeter Women's football team secured promotion for the second year in a row. Exeter women rugby players joined their counterparts from Jesus, Brasenose and Lincoln Colleges as 'Turl Street Rugby' won the first-ever women's rugby Cuppers competition. Likewise, three female undergraduates – Yasmin Bourke (2018, German), April Gilling (2017, Classical Archaeology and Ancient History) and Alice O'Neill (2017, Medicine) formed part of Exeter's Cuppers-winning sailing team, nor was women's athletic achievement restricted to undergraduates: graduate student Rakiya Farah (2018, BCL) won a Half Blue for clay pigeon shooting, for example. In rowing, there were spirited performances, both in Torpids and Eights, by Exeter women, under the overall direction of Boat Club President Francesca Tindall (2016, PPE), who also served as this year's chair of ExVac. Meanwhile, Ellie Milne-Browne (2016, English) was the energetic president of the JCR for calendar year 2018.

Exeter's female alumni distinguished themselves, too, during 2018/19. Catherine Page (2004, Modern Languages), until recently the Prime Minister's private secretary for European issues, was appointed OBE for public service. Similarly, Charlotte



The 1990-94 Gaudy

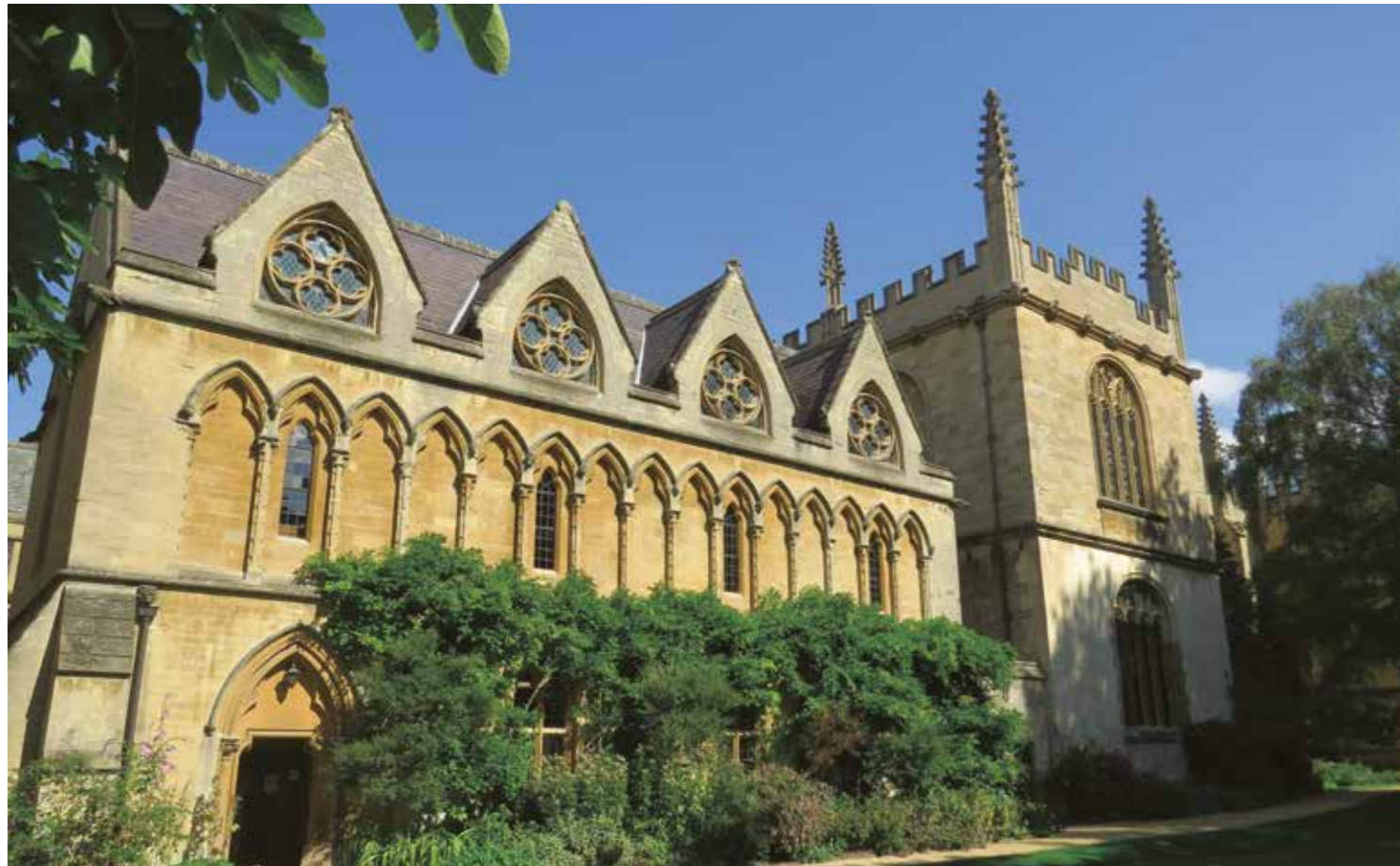
Watts (1981, Mathematics), Professor of Social and Mathematical Epidemiology at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and an expert on damage done to health by violence, received the CMG for services to public health and international development. In addition, there was notable service by Exeter alumni women, not least in planning for the forthcoming 40th anniversary celebrations. Moreover, Charlotte Morgan (1991, English), Senior Head of Communications for BBC News, gave a spirited and humorous speech for the assembled alumni at the 1990-94 Gaudy held in June.

In discussing contributions by Exeter women – who now make up roughly one third of the Fellowship and a little over half of the undergraduate student body – I would be remiss if I failed to note the continuing massive efforts of female members of staff at Exeter. For women are numerous and influential in the College's lecturing, administrative, catering and cleaning occupations. An illustrious example is provided by Eleanor Burnett, College Accountant for a decade (and an Official Fellow since 2018); she has contributed not only to the management of the College's finances but also to the

positive operation of the College more generally, including in her sensitive role as Safeguarding Lead. Eleanor leaves Exeter in September, alas, but in a way highly creditable both to herself and to the College; she will take up the promoted position of Finance and Estates Bursar at St Edmund Hall. Eleanor will be one of only two women in Oxford colleges in this key role.

The cases highlighted above are merely examples of a much broader female contribution to the life of Exeter. Naturally there was also a great deal of achievement during 2018/19 by the College's Fellows, staff, postgraduates and undergraduates who are not women! (I'll be giving due weight to these accomplishments elsewhere.) But I think it is right, in this very special edition of *Exon*, to highlight female achievement as we mark 40 years since women were eligible to be Rectors, to be sworn in as Exeter Fellows and to matriculate as Exeter postgraduates and undergraduates. Women have had so much impact on Exeter life during the last four decades that it's very hard to imagine what the College would be like now if the situation since 1979 had been otherwise.

Enhancing the Exeter experience



Yvonne Rainey, Exeter's new Director of Development and Alumni Relations, reveals how philanthropic support is helping to preserve and enhance what it means to be a student at Exeter, from renovations to the beautiful neo-Gothic Library to writing classes from Royal Literary Fund Fellow and professional writer Tim Ecott

As some of you will know, Pamela Stephenson, the Director of Development and Alumni Relations, left the College at the end of March. Having previously been Director of Development in Oxford at Hertford College and at St Edmund Hall, I have been acting as interim Director on a part-time basis for the last three months and am happy to report that I have now been appointed to the permanent role after a competitive selection process. I have been very warmly welcomed by the Exeter community and enjoyed meeting a number of alumni and friends.

After the success of Cohen Quad, there continue to be a number of important ongoing development initiatives including the much-needed renovation of the College Library and the access and outreach work we are undertaking to ensure Exeter attracts the best students regardless of background.

Progress on the Library continues. We are very pleased to announce that, after a very rigorous selection process, the College has appointed London-based Nex architects to lead the renovation project. Our aim has always been to provide 21st century study facilities for our students whilst still preserving and enhancing the architecture of the original building. We were impressed with Nex's thoughtful and flexible approach and their sensitivity to the heritage aspect of the building and surrounding site.

We are fortunate that one of the team that Nex has brought together for this project is an alumna of the College, Hannah Parham (2001, Modern History), who is a heritage consultant for Donald Insall Associates. She also co-edited the book *Exeter College: the First 700 Years* with Frances Cairncross and therefore has an intimate knowledge of the College's history and buildings.

The design work can now begin in earnest and we look forward to sharing updates with you as plans develop. We are almost halfway towards our fundraising target of £8.6 million but there is a long way to go! I would encourage anyone who is interested in donating towards this treasured College building to get in touch as there will be many opportunities for all kinds of gifts to be recognised within the space. We are extremely grateful to all those who have donated so far.

The College is also about to embark on its first bridging programme, Exeter Plus, which will be targeted at students

from underrepresented backgrounds. The goal is to assist students with the transition from school to University, and we will run a pilot one-week residential programme this September for a small number of students before a full roll-out next year. Students will be selected for the residential portion of the programme based on contextual data on their UCAS form indicating that they come from areas which have previously had low progression rates into third-level education, or suffer from a high degree of socio-economic deprivation. It is important to emphasise that these students will not be offered places on the basis of a lower level of attainment. They will have been made the same offer as all other students, and the goal of Exeter Plus is to offer them additional support to adjust to the Oxford style of education.

The residential programme will provide the opportunity for the students to work on a topic of their choice for a week, with daily support from programme tutors (these will predominantly be graduate students hired to assist the residential). This will be augmented by small group sessions on writing skills, presentation skills, and time-management skills. This programme has been made possible through the generosity of an Exonian. The College has also just appointed its first full-time Access and Outreach Officer, Steph Hale, who is developing a new outreach strategy to help the College further its ambitious plans in this area.

Donations have made possible a new Junior Research Fellowship in Spanish History funded by the Centro de Estudios Europa Hispánica and a JRF in Mathematics co-funded by the Maths Institute and an Exonian. The College is also fortunate to have a Royal Literary Fund Fellow in post for two years, generously supported by the RLF. The aim of the scheme is to foster good writing practice in higher education institutions. The RLF Fellow at Exeter is Tim Ecott, a professional writer, who is on hand to help students who need to improve their writing technique. Students and Fellows alike have seen the benefits of this wonderful initiative.

One of the great pleasures of this role is to welcome alumni and friends back to College for events and to dine in College, notably at the 1990-94 Gaudy in late June. Those based overseas have not been left out, as in recent months Exeter events for alumni and friends were held in the USA, Canada, Japan, Singapore and Hong Kong. I look forward to meeting many of you over the coming months and years.

Renovating Exeter's Library is a high priority

Under pressure

Undergraduates, graduates and tutors all struggle at some point during their Oxford careers, so finding the right approach to teaching and learning is a continual challenge. As the recipient of a recent Oxford Student Union award for academic support to students, Exeter's Jackson Fellow in History Professor Christina de Bellaigue perhaps knows more than most about finding the right path. She took a break from lesson-prep, essay marking and her research into social immobility to talk to history student **Killian Dockrell** (2016, History)

KD: Congratulations on the recent OSU award! Students clearly value your teaching very highly. As a tutor, what do you feel makes an ideal tutorial?

CdB: I think there are two aspects. The first is thinking about the work a student has already done, helping them make sense of work on the topic and think more critically about what they've been reading. It can be difficult for a student reading lots of secondary literature based on careful research to then feel legitimate in making criticisms. Good tutorials tease this out by interrogating holes in those arguments, examining how different pieces of historical writing interact with each other and the connections between different kinds of arguments and evidence historians have used.

The second is reflecting – what are the gaps in what students have read? Looking at unanswered questions where students can then go to do more reading, and think differently about material already looked at. So to summarise, picking up on what has been read, and then exploring future directions to extend the inquiry further. All of which is ultimately driven by what a student is interested in!

A large part of successful tutorials seems to be 'behind the scenes' collaboration between students. As a tutor, to what extent do you encourage this or leave it to students?

I tend to do the latter but am thinking I might be more proactive about this in the future. One entry point might be the evaluation of primary sources, which could be done collaboratively – for example, sending students off to develop a commentary together on a primary source. Obviously you can't force people to work together and tutors shouldn't try to social engineer, but you can facilitate collaboration. You can see as a tutor when students have been talking and working together outside tutorials.

It is a strength of the Oxford system that it is incredibly individualised, which maps onto student interests and also means you rarely get the same kind of essay even with collaboration. I also tend to set different questions for two tutorial partners, and ask them to look at and comment on each other's essays.

The focus of your recent award has been the pastoral element of teaching – how far have you seen this evolve during your time here at Oxford?

Students are under increasing amounts of pressure. They come from schools where they have undergone intense cycles of examination and testing, to the extent that they often arrive not knowing how to operate best when not working towards a test. Students need a lot of help with the practical elements of work and study skills, but also in encouraging their own sense of themselves.

Sometimes pressure is so intense students need extra support of the counselling variety. I think tutors have a role encouraging students here as well. It's good to see the lessening of stigma towards this.

Creating an environment where people feel able to talk involves emphasising that being here is tough, and that I expect most people to struggle at some point during their Oxford careers. Undergraduates, graduates and tutors all struggle. Knowing this makes it easier to depersonalise sticking points, and communicate when they're happening.

The tutorial system is almost unique to Oxford, and has strengths and weaknesses. How do you go about making everybody feel comfortable enough in a tutorial to bring out their best?

It is a very particular system. When I'm organising the term I try to have a bit of variety between paired tutorials, single tutorials, and seminar sessions for class discussion. I find that having the same pattern for eight weeks of a term



can be a little stultifying and can also mean students less confident in tutorial discussions are stuck in that pattern for the whole of term.

Variance is a double-edged sword too – students who are very confident and comfortable from the outset have their own biases challenged by variety!

One-on-one tutorials can have different uses for different students. Fostering non-competition can draw some people out, though some students can feel more intimidated if they imagine the spotlight is on them, and the goal is making everybody feel comfortable enough to do their best work.

Tutors need to be aware that students are individuals and bring their own dynamics to tutorials and classes – they come from different educational and social backgrounds and this is going to affect the way they learn. This means a careful balance between asking specific questions to draw ideas out of people who are less confident without putting pressure on them.

Again a way of attacking this can be with primary sources. A lot of material being taught is new to both tutor and tutee, particularly when it is not the subject of a tutor's own research. This can instil confidence by having a levelling effect. If everybody has a similar level of uncertainty seeing information together for the first time, that can encourage individual insights.

On the subject of primary material, what are you researching at the moment?

I'm slowly working towards writing a big book on social mobility in England and France in the 19th century. However, I'm not going about this via statistical analysis, but rather looking at two families over four generations and the ways that they try to secure, and then protect, their middle class status and wealth within that class.

I started out writing about mobility, but increasingly realised I'm writing about social *immobility*, and strategies used to protect privilege and status to ensure children don't slip down the social hierarchy. Distributing wealth as a safety net, for example. This is in contrast to historical narratives stressing mobility as an upwards trend. A lot of writing, for example, has emphasised ambition, such as ambition to enter the aristocracy.

This means going beyond fiscal and legal strategies and a macro-statistical focus, but also thinking about the emotional investment in social mobility, and the experience of being socially mobile for individuals.

Combining the two themes above, Fellows have to teach and research to a very high standard, so what ways have you found best balance the two?

I find it very hard to do my own work during term time when teaching. Teaching is so absorbing and tutors have so many other responsibilities during term time that it's not feasible to maintain a balance between that and family, outside interests and research during term time.

I tend to focus on research during the vacation and periods of sabbatical and then switch to a focus on our students during term times.

I think this flexibility is important – senior academics should try and make it easier for younger academics to focus on their research without overloading them with teaching wherever possible. We need to have 12-month contracts, we need to have research allowances and reasonable teaching loads that free up time for research. For the humanities this means prioritising personnel as well as facilities. Improving the quality of research and teaching for students means investing first and foremost in people.



'If I've helped some people, I'll be very happy'

From teaching the last of the all-male student groups to the first students to have been born in the new millennium, Dr Helen Leith Spencer has witnessed significant changes during her 40 years in Oxford – the majority of them as a Fellow in English at Exeter – and there could be choppy waters ahead, she tells **Kimberley Chiu** (2016, English)

KC: You have been a Fellow at Exeter for 27 years. How have things changed over that time?

HLS: Well I've been teaching – not just at Exeter – for more than 40 years, which is a scary thought!

One of the things I noticed coming to Exeter was – and this is an old cliché but what can you do? – that the College took care of its students. So all of those things about Exeter being a small, friendly college, those are all true.

In 40 years the world has changed immensely. I make references to historical events that have some bearing on the literature we talk about, and these things have so quickly dated. It came home to me when I mentioned the Falklands War and someone said to me 'well, I was only in my pram'. It is remarkable to think that this year's freshers will be the first students born in the new century!

Students used to come into tutorials with bits of paper and files, and now they come in with phones.

When I started teaching there was much greater emphasis on language, and on Old English – you had to do Old English translations, an awful lot of rote learning – and language was done as an honours course. My career has been punctuated by various rounds of syllabus reform, which is an agitating and upsetting business, and people have found their special interests and teaching practices have had to change.

Has that happened to you?

Yes, two or three times. You cope, you fit in. But certainly the medieval element of the course is less now than when I first started.

What was it like when you started?

When I first started teaching – at Lincoln – it had just changed from being a men-only college. It was quite an odd experience teaching the last of the all-male groups, who were grandstanding like anything! Another big change was the coming of electronic media – computers were just coming in when I started. Students used to come into tutorials with bits of paper and files, and now they come in with phones. In the language tutorials – it has been quite useful, really – if we encountered an interesting word, I

The biggest change is that students now pay for education... We feared that would change the tutorial relationship.

could look it up on my *OED*, or I could just ask a student to read it off their phone. And undoubtedly it's made a huge difference to research; students nowadays don't pay so much attention to tutors' reading lists. They seem more dependent on JSTOR [a digital library].

You mentioned that when you came to Exeter you were impressed by the level of pastoral care. Do you think that has persisted?

Very much so, yes. I think they've become more professional about it now. We were amateurs! No, not all of us, but a lot of us – obviously we wanted to do the best by our students, but we certainly weren't trained, we just tried to use common sense and compassion. Yes, it's better now.

Any interesting stories from your time teaching?

Gosh, what can I say – I've always made a point to be living out, because most of the exciting things happen in the evening and it's best not to be around!

There was an interesting occasion when I was teaching and outside they were filming for the young Tolkien biopic – a scene where Tolkien and the other young male undergraduates were getting excited because England had just declared war on Germany, and they filmed this scene several times, and there was a lot of shouting going on and caps being thrown in the air, and every now and then you'd hear 'ENGLAND IS AT WAR WITH GERMANY!' which was very odd!

There was one student who declared that it was her intention to come to Oxford to meet a husband – that was a very long time ago – and she did!

I had a student pass out on the stairs when I was at the top of Staircase 10 and we had to get the paramedics in.

Right, because you haven't always had this office in Staircase 5...

No, you move up the property ladder – you start off with whatever spare cupboard they can – no, that's being a little unkind. The College before they had Cohen Quad was a little pushed for teaching space; you were guaranteed a room because you couldn't teach in the quad, but it didn't have to be a big one!

Have you witnessed any historical events recently that have changed things in the College?

I suppose the biggest change is that students now pay for education. That was a huge change. I haven't felt quite so much as though students have become consumers, which

we feared would be the case, with people thinking 'are we getting value for money?'

Was that a major concern?

Oh, it *was* a concern – how that would change the tutorial relationship – but in fact it didn't!

Where are you going after Exeter?

I'm not planning on going very far. I live just outside Oxford, I'll still be coming in. In 2010 I agreed to write a history of the Early English Text Society, not realising quite what a huge job it would be. We're dealing with a period of history from 1864 to 1984. The history's been written, it's in two volumes, so one of the things I want to do when I retire is to polish it up for publication. After that, as people tell me, retirement is like a gig economy: you see what's available next. I'd like to write and I'd like to paint.

And what will be your legacy at Exeter?

I hope I've persuaded some people that medieval literature is worth studying – even if it's not your first love, you can get something out of any type of literature. That medieval people can have a laugh, it wasn't all about the Four Last Things; that it was a very rich period. And I've tried to convey some of my own imaginative engagement with those times and those places, and what it might feel like to be Gawain in the story of *Gawain and the Green Knight*! If I've helped some people, I'll be very happy.

And your hopes for Exeter College?

I think for Exeter, like all colleges, it's going to be a bit choppy. I think, though, having survived so many years it'll carry on. It will evolve – at least I hope it will evolve. I hope there will be a continued sense of collegiate identity. There are many things out there which are likely to erode that – the Fellows here will always be wearing at least two hats, for instance – and the faculty and the College have rather different agendas and demands. There is a great deal of pressure on all of us to be more involved in our University roles. I don't know how things like high table are going to survive, but I hope these symbols will retain their value for people.

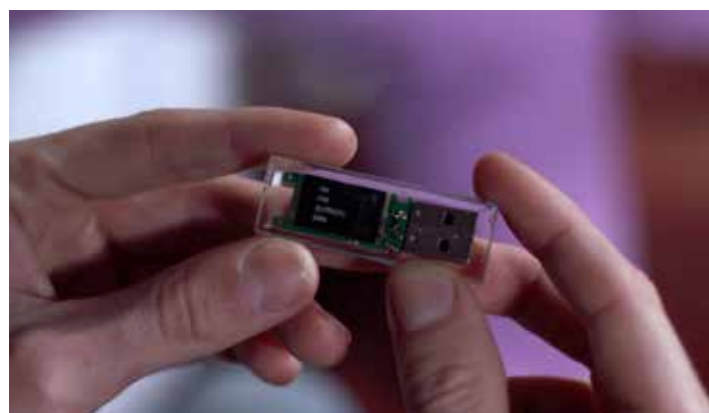
I shall be interested to see how Cohen Quad and the historic site get to fit together. I look forward to seeing what happens to the Library – that crumbling Victorian stone box out there, that desperately needs some TLC! There are plans afoot to make it more relevant – another thing that's changed in my time! For me, libraries are places to be quiet and study in isolation, but now libraries are more communal and corporate and you go there to talk!

I think I'm probably leaving at the right time – for me, anyway.



Revisiting Genesis

Jessica Lee (2015, English) relives a powerful exhibition of work in London's Wellcome Collection by Exeter's Director of Studies for Fine Art, Professor Oreet Ashery



Stills from Revisiting Genesis

Oreet Ashery's *Revisiting Genesis* is a 12-part miniseries devoted to death. The death Ashery examines is death dealt by the hand of chronic illness, that you can prepare for, as the inevitable finish line looming over a racecourse on which you're a mandatory participant once you've been propelled out of the starting blocks of diagnosis. It's also death as a thing glossed and fluffed and exploited by something arguably a chronic illness in itself – the cancer of advanced-stage late capitalism – and as such, a necropolitical quantity metamorphosed, metastasized, into death + +, replete with its own inequalities and power dynamics. It's death as a modern-day industry allied to privatisation and profit, that hawks its wares to the vulnerably ill, a state you have to shell out for economically as well as existentially.

The space that Ashery films is segmented into two dimensions: first an ordinary space of therapy peopled by patient and blue-smocked care worker, straight out of the NHS's palliative care aesthetic, and second, a blindingly white cube inhabited by characters with blue-white blush smeared like funeral ashes on their cheeks, chalky lipstick, and eyebrows blocked on in grainy gold glitter. In the Wellcome Collection where *Revisiting Genesis* is displayed, the viewer takes in each episode whilst swaddled-off from its companion screens by drooping swathes of fabric of a mottled pink, the colour of ham, or innards. Giant teddy bears cut from the same organ-meat cloth as the curtains slump bonelessly in the corner of each viewing compartment, preternaturally long arms snaking across the floor; viewers nestle into their bellies like an audience of embryos. On screen, the camerawork blurs, doubly-exposes, and judders; string instruments, rusty and mournful, cut across the glassy voices of death-consultants dispensing techno-utopic nuggets of advice to their supplicant patients. Engaged with the preparations for death, these patients are chronically ill and chronically muddled about the need to administer a posthumous sense of self when the self, in death, is supposed to be extinguished forever.

The preparations undergone are billed as 'immortality services' and touted as products that will aid and abet the consumer's effort to transcend this mortal coil into some more ethereal realm of permanence. That this realm is the realm of cyberspace is a function of the more general division and multiplication of the self into a proliferation of technologically-managed personas – your Facebook profile, Twitter feed, *et al* – which, when the corporeal body gives up the ghost, become the lingering web-based loci wherein this ghost remains encapsulated. That's until Zuckerberg & co. fully wipe them out, or, in Ashery's

universe, if and when the patient chooses to access their right to total erasure and deploy the 'Nuclear Option', which is when all your digital data is corroded, by acid, into complete non-existence. It is tragic, and futuristic, that this 'Nuclear Option' is the only 'complete' death available.

The patients include a biscuit factory proprietor, who seeks to ward off extinction by forging a digital legacy of greatest-hits biscuits in slideshow format – custard and bourbon creams, preserved crumblessly in the aspic of the internet while his human body wastes away. Bambi, an artist, has cystic fibrosis – he's introduced by his care worker to Bina 48, a consciousness-replicating machine, symptom of the rise of IT markets hawking advanced computer cybernetics promising to overcome death through reanimation. There's also the gravity-defying 'spiderwoman' Sophy who, when still alive, got very strong via a self-instituted regime of press-ups so that she might be the one to lift other acrobats in her amateur troupe – dead now, when she lived she was a symbol of aspiration, an avatar of elevation. Her death (by overdose, of magic mushrooms, which injected 'electric ants' into her bloodstream and made snakes of her hair) is narrated to the groan of old violins in episode eight. Sophy (or some shade of her) returns in the final episode 'Prayer, Aerialist' as a figure shrink-wrapped in anonymous latex, clinging to a clear plastic rope suspended in that same blindingly white cube of a room, doing gentle gymnastics to the accompaniment of a dirge-like song, with lyrics that go:

*We are homeless
Children of the government
And how we live is how we die
Only more so*

Ashery is saying that death comes to us all, but in a mode that's absurdly, eerily inflected by the times that we live in and the frameworks – economic and social – that we're complicit in constructing. If neoliberal privatisation has ravaged small businesses – such as the defunct M&S cake factory in Swindon that's the basis of episode four, and the Charles Keene College of episode six that we're told got co-opted by centralised management – and destroyed community ties, then death, just as life, will be administered soullessly under franchise operations. Alienation of the capitalist kind will reach its tendrils into that ultimate alienation of self from self, death – that state which, paradoxically, is the most universal of all.

Revisiting Genesis will be on display at London's Wellcome Collection until 26 January 2020.

How detergent bubbles cleaned up for 'fearless' biotech pioneer

Exeter's Professor Dame Carol Robinson has been awarded the 2019 Novozymes Prize for breakthrough research that has helped combat conditions such as cancer and schizophrenia, writes **Ben Hammond** (2015, Chemistry)

Professor Dame Carol Robinson, Exeter College Professorial Fellow in Chemistry, has been awarded the 2019 Novozymes Prize in recognition of the breakthroughs she has made in the use of mass spectrometry in proteome analysis. The Novozymes Prize is awarded by the Novo Nordisk Foundation in recognition of outstanding European research or technology innovations that have galvanised the development of biotechnological science. It is accompanied by three million Danish Krone (approximately £350,000), most of which is designated for funding that is funnelled back into the continuation and enhancement of the award-winning research, and part of which is a personal award for the recipient.

Professor Robinson is the pioneering force behind a range of methods now widely applied in the biotech industry. The foremost of these is the addition of detergent to samples where the molecule of interest is folded within the wrapping of a lipid bilayer. These samples, without the encasing effect of detergent, had been prone to unravelling their folded structure within the mass spectrometer; Professor Robinson's breakthrough lies in how the detergent bubble protects the sample from unravelling, thus allowing for it to be correctly characterised. The consequence of this innovation has been the identification of both new protein drugs and new drug targets. Mass spectrometry, thanks to Professor Robinson's work, can be used to measure interactions between macro-molecules, as opposed to being restricted to the smaller scale. This is to the great aid of combatting conditions such as cancer and schizophrenia, that mutate from membrane proteins.

Professor Robinson is not only an innovator in the biotechnological field; she is also a pioneer for women in academia in general, having broken the glass ceiling at Cambridge upon becoming its first female Professor

of Chemistry, and later repeating this feat at Oxford. Her willingness to stand on the side of innovation even when convention would seem to rule it out is both characteristic of her work in mass spectrometry and of her involvement in a male-dominated, at times dogmatic, profession. She has tended to take the path least-trodden – having left school at 16, she worked as a technician at Pfizer whilst taking night classes over a period of six years before later applying to Cambridge. The practical grounding she acquired at Pfizer is a persistent feature of her choices in the field; the mass spectrometer always held appeal for the fact that it was about 'getting your hands dirty, pulling it apart, and getting a few electric shocks along the way'. Jens Nielson, Chair of the Novozymes Prize Committee, emphasises this progressiveness in a statement praising her as worthy recipient. He said: 'Carol Robinson almost single-handedly founded a subfield of mass spectrometry proteomics. She is a creative, innovative and fearless researcher and a role model for all scientists. Her unflinching pursuit of the controversial notion has now become a highly productive mainstream.'

This is not the first award Professor Robinson has received. In 2004 she was elected Fellow of the Royal Society, this just off the back of being granted the Society's Rosalind Franklin Award – £30,000 that she has used to advocate for a greater representation of women in the sciences. Subsequent to these early accolades she has been recipient of the L'Oreal-UNESCO For Women in Science Award in 2015 and the Frank H Field and Joe L Franklin Award for Outstanding Achievement in Mass Spectrometry in 2018. In the same year, she was elected President of the Royal Society of Chemistry, a role she currently occupies. It is clear her field is vocally supportive of her and will continue to champion her cause as she forges onward to break new ground in biotechnology.



She is a creative, innovative and fearless researcher and a role model for all scientists.

Spouting for joy

Amelia Jackson Scholar and DPhil candidate **Ellen B Brewster** (2013, English) shares her research into the sometimes surprisingly animated reading practices of the 18th century

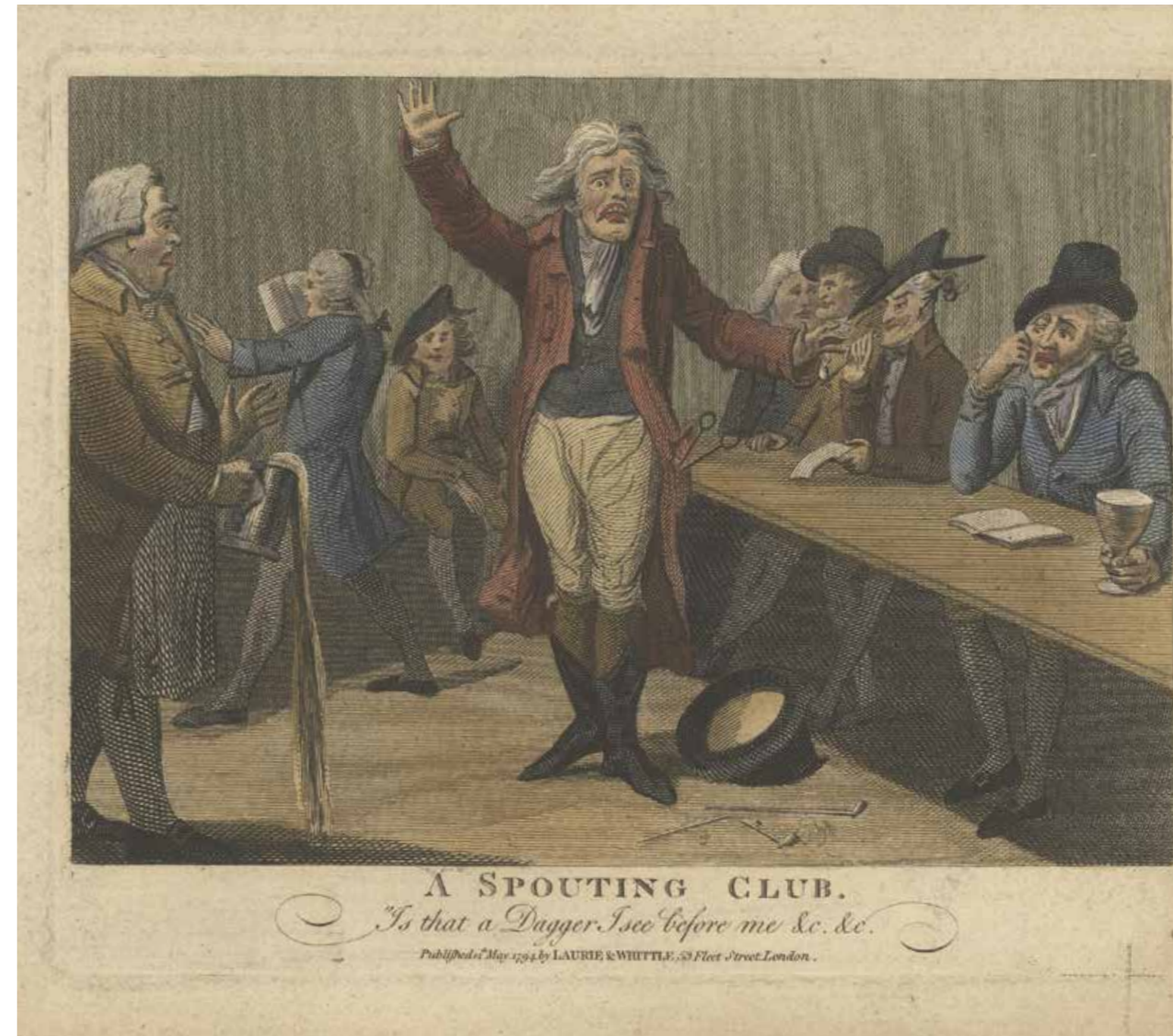
As a DPhil student, I read all the time – in libraries, on trains, in bed. Yet it is important to remember that reading is a historically-specific activity – one which takes particular forms at particular times. My primary mode of reading tends to be silent, even when I am surrounded by others. Yet in the 18th century, that kind of silence would have been quite unusual. My research has shown me that 18th-century people often saw reading as a raucous and social event.

One form of 18th-century reading is particularly fascinating to modern readers: spouting clubs. 'Spouters' were people who would meet to read aloud from books in pubs. Participants would take it in turns to read and listen. People paid for membership, which sometimes included the cost of drinks. It might be useful to think of it as a kind of 18th-century karaoke – but with less Britney, and more Bard. There was certainly booze! There are lots of references to 'spouters' in 18th-century literature and visual culture: mostly satires, as spouters had a reputation for being terrible performers. Lots of the satires imply that spouters should stick to their day-jobs.

But there was material out there which attempted to save the reputation of spouters. Collections of reading material considered appropriate for amateur performance were marketed at spouters. These books, called spouting companions or spouting collections, tried to re-write the narrative surrounding spouters, staking a claim for spouting as a moral pastime. Some popular titles include

The British Spouter; or, Stage Assistant (1763), *The Spouter's Companion* (1770), and *The Young Spouter* (1790). These books suggest that spouters weren't the drunken and rowdy shouters of Shakespeare that contemporary satires depicted: rather, they were people interested in the possibilities of reading to form social relationships. Such books tended to be cheaper than novels – only a shilling or so. One of the reasons for their cheapness was their brevity – unlike many kinds of 18th-century miscellany, spouting collections rarely exceeded 100 pages in length. The books tend to contain theatrical material – short scenes, prologues and epilogues taken from popular plays. Sometimes there are brief sections containing jokes, toasts and riddles.

Taking the advice of many 18th-century reading manuals, it's clear that just sitting quietly in the library isn't enough. So to prove my dedication to finding out what 18th-century readers thought about reading, in the past year I have run a series of workshops exploring spouting. Gathering volunteers in locations across England, I have asked people to read from spouting collections as part of a modern spouting club. Doing so has allowed me to see how one might read using 18th-century methods, and to understand the appeal that spouting had in the period – and the possible appeal it might have now. Records of local spouting clubs suggest their decline in the Victorian period – but might it now be time for a revival?



Records of local spouting clubs suggest their decline in the Victorian period – but might it now be time for a revival?

Exploiting a 'molecular torpedo'

DPhil candidate **Britt Hanson** (2017, Physiology, Anatomy and Genetics) outlines how her research will help people with neuromuscular diseases by identifying and modifying specific genetic defects

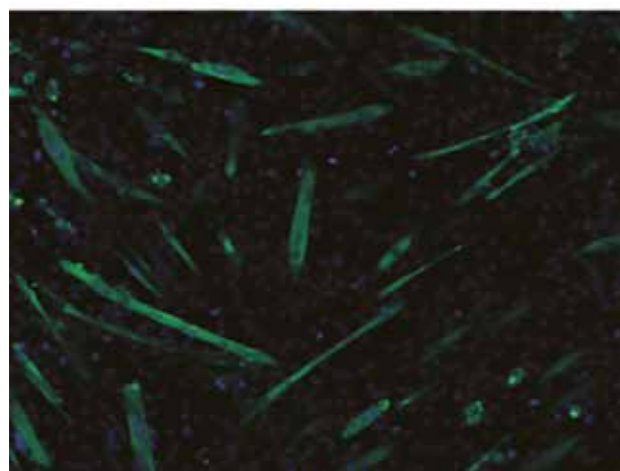
My DPhil revolves around developing novel therapeutics for fatal, highly debilitating and currently incurable hereditary neuromuscular diseases, specifically Duchenne muscular dystrophy (DMD) and spinal muscular atrophy (SMA). In general, patients have a maximum life expectancy of approximately three decades; however, in severe cases this can be reduced to a few months. Available treatments, while highly effective in prolonging lifespan and improving overall patient and family quality of life, are extremely expensive, have toxic side effects and require lifelong administration.

The rapid advancement in genetic screening techniques over the past decade has thrust us into an age of being able both to better understand, and to develop therapies for, such genetic diseases. In 2012, CRISPR burst onto the molecular biology scene as a novel and highly powerful version of gene editing technology, first observed as an elegant bacterial adaptive immune response to invading genetic material. Based on this, researchers have established the world's most effective molecular

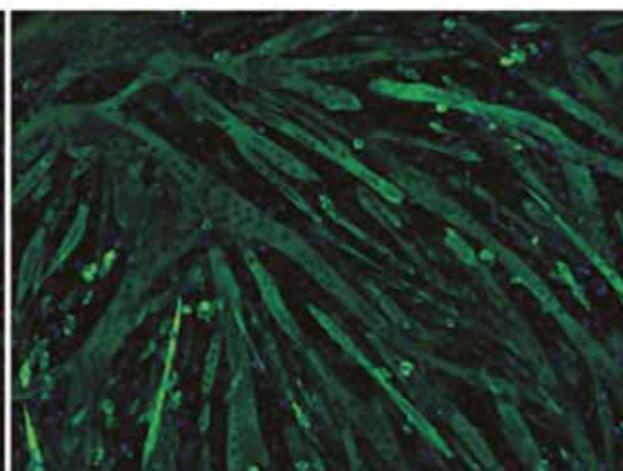
torpedo able to locate and modify a highly specific genetic defect within the human genome. My research is aimed at exploiting this phenomenon either to remove or replace an entire region of mutated DNA, in both cases restoring gene expression and alleviating the disease pathology.

Additionally, I am looking into the mechanisms that drive healthy muscle cell growth and differentiation into functional muscle fibres, in order to uncover key molecules that may be valuable in a combination therapeutic approach. This approach would improve the overall muscle architecture in patients while simultaneously correcting the root genetic cause of the disease. The images below show the effect of one such molecule on the growth and differentiation of muscle cells which have been stained green to detect a late stage marker of this process. Ultimately, the huge advantage of working with and developing the CRISPR gene editing technology is the potential for permanent treatment development for these, as well as a plethora of other, devastating and incurable human genetic diseases.

Untreated / normal muscle fibres



Treated muscle fibres



The age of personalised medicine

DPhil candidate **Matt Ellis** (2017, Oncology) explains how his research will help make tumours more responsive to radiotherapy

Imagine finding out you have cancer. As recently as 20 years ago, your doctor would offer you a treatment and, for most of the population, this would be effective in combatting the tumour. However, this standardised approach might have absolutely no effect on you. Your cancer evades the assault and proceeds to take over. With no available counter, your doctor is helpless.

The sequencing of the human genome in the late 1990s has allowed for greater study of the differences between individuals on a genetic level. For the first time, scientists were able to compare the genes of healthy individuals with those suffering from an illness. This provided clues to the causes of many diseases, opening the door to more targeted therapies. It was found that mutations to certain genes correlated with the prognosis in response to standard treatments, and the idea of personalised medicine was born.

Fast forward to 2019. We now know which genes are mutated in specific cancers, offering doctors the chance to provide you with a treatment plan specifically tailored to combat *your* cancer.

My DPhil builds on this, focusing on a gene called *IGF1R* (*Insulin-like Growth Factor 1 Receptor*) which is

sometimes mutated in prostate cancer tumours. Interestingly, patients who have a mutated version respond much better to radiotherapy, as the tumour cells are more sensitive to the treatment and cannot survive. The mechanism by which this happens, however, remains elusive.

To investigate this, I use a technique known as CRISPR, which allows me to genetically engineer prostate cancer cells in a dish, to exhibit the common *IGF1R* mutations found in patients with this type of cancer. I can then study the effect these mutations have on the cell after irradiation, to try to understand why these mutations make the cells more radiosensitive.

If we know what radio-sensitising effect this mutated gene has on cancer cells in the lab, we can use this information to alter the treatment strategy in the clinic of patients suffering from prostate cancer, making tumours more responsive to radiotherapy.

The age of personalised medicine is upon us, and within the next decade, more and more research like mine will utilise the information provided by the human genome project to help generate effective treatments on a person-by-person basis, producing more potent results.

Mother's milk: saving new-borns in Indonesia

In Trinity Term eight graduate students were each given 180 seconds to present their work to an audience of alumni, students and Fellows, in the Three-Minute Thesis© competition.

Here we share the winning talk from this year's champion, DPhil candidate **Lhuri Rahmartani** (2018, Population Health)

My research looks at the trends and determinants surrounding pre-lacteal feeding practices in my home country, Indonesia.

We all know that breast milk is of amazing nutritional value, but in developing countries like mine, it is of singular importance as a public health intervention, because it is known to reduce the risk of neonatal mortality and

morbidity. This is why the World Health Organisation recommends exclusive breast-feeding – no food or liquids other than breast milk – for the first six months of life. However, exclusive breast-feeding has its own challenges. Pre-lacteal feeding – feeding the new-born anything other than breast milk in the first few hours or days before the mother's breast milk comes in – is one of them. It is common in many Asian countries, where the new-born may get fed anything, such as infant formula, animal milk, honey, and even tea, depending on where they are born. This is for a variety of reasons, including cultural and religious practices. In a few rare cases it is medically indicated, but mostly it is not, and this is when it becomes harmful. Particularly in poor hygiene settings, it could increase the risk of contamination, which may lead to infection and potentially delays the actual breast-feeding, which means losing the benefits of the breast milk itself. This could translate into a huge economic loss to the country.

The reason I am undertaking my research is because pre-lacteal feeding is prevalent in my country: more than 40% of babies received it in 2017. Indonesia's population has about a quarter of a billion people and thousands of ethnicities, making it vital to have epidemiological studies evaluating and identifying the vulnerable groups. Therefore, I am trying to gain a comprehensive picture of the patterns and predictors of pre-lacteal feeding. To this end, I shall conduct a quantitative analysis using a large data set from a national survey and possibly complemented by qualitative studies. Through this analysis I hope to contribute evidence to inform public health policy in Indonesia.

To listen to this year's Three-Minute Thesis competition visit www.exeter.ox.ac.uk/3minutes



A Polish-ed performance

Former Organ Scholar **Bartosz Thiede** (2015, Music) sings the praises of Exeter College Choir, whose new album is an exploration of Marian devotion

Following the success of the Christmas disc *On Christmas Night* (still available for purchase from the Collegel), I was prepared to move away from Evensong music for Exeter College Chapel Choir's new album, *Mater Mundi*. The set-up here at Exeter – a choir of talented twenty-odd-year-olds, with an incredibly vibrant sound, plus the artistic freedom to mould this sound in any direction – is not replicated with such quality anywhere else in the UK. I decided to take full advantage of this set-up with a tracklist exploring notions of Marian devotion and identities, as per my heritage as a Northern Irish-Pole who came to Oxford via Bristol.

We recorded the album in just over a week in January. A number of tracks are sung in Polish by choir members who have never spoken a word of Polish in their lives – the energy of the album comes not just from the ambition and novelty of the music but also from the musical exploration of linguistic boundaries. As a native Polish speaker, I am incredibly proud of the results; it's impressive, in a space of only a few days and a handful of hours, to master phrases such as *wszystko o wszystkim*. The Mass-setting on this album, while a little unusual, celebrates the admission of women sopranos and altos into Exeter College Chapel Choir in 1996. This was controversial at the time; it is now a fine example of the productive co-existence of old and new choral traditions. My favourite track from the Mass-setting has to be the Benedictus for its fun and, in places, 'funky' alto line!

Other tracks include: an *Ubi Caritas* by Gjeilo; followed swiftly by Łukaszewski's stunning setting of a letter written from Auschwitz by Saint Maximilian Kolbe (*Ostatni List*). A Marian text, *O how sorrowful the parting* (Górecki), is a text in which a mother narrates her weeping for the loss of a child; this is followed by a simple yet incredibly emotive lullaby. *The Heaven's Flock* (Ešenvalds), one of my personal favourites, sings of one's hopelessness at a time of need. To finish, you will find an exciting Mass-setting and the ultimate act of Marian devotion in the form of the stunning opening chords of *Totus Tuus* (Górecki).

The album is priced at £10 – to order a copy and support the continued artistry of our choir please email development@exeter.ox.ac.uk. Proceeds from the album will help to subsidise the Choir's annual tour.

SOME LIKE IT SCHOTT

A speculative email to music publishers Schott Music Ltd enabled **Zerlina Vulliamy** (2017, Music) to stage the UK premiere of acclaimed opera *Marilyn Forever*

When I tell people I am primarily interested in opera, I often get odd looks, especially so, and with increased scepticism, when I add the prefixes 'modern' or 'contemporary'. This is partly why I decided to establish the Oxford Contemporary Opera Society in 2018: I wanted to break through the scepticism and introduce more opera to the Oxford student community. Whilst many people associate opera with expansive, expensive, three-hour-long productions in big opera houses across Europe, there are still those of us who choose not to identify wholly with this definition and want to promote the idea that 'modern' opera can include anything.

Following the decision to set up the society, the task of actually finding an opera to perform fell to me, the director. Perhaps this is not the most orthodox means of selection, but I thought it would be most effective to email publishers and inquire as to what they had in their catalogues. Schott Music Ltd replied saying they had an opera about Marilyn Monroe, written by jazz composer Gavin Bryars, available for its UK premiere. I couldn't resist.



What initially fascinated me about this opera was its exploration of the complex, multi-faceted character of Marilyn Monroe. Artistically, we aimed to convey not only the public side of her life, which has inspired so much art, but also to give the audience insight into the emotional and sometimes troubling private life she led. Given the recent outcry at the prevalence of sexual harassment and sexual assault in Hollywood, which the Me Too movement helped bring to public attention, it felt important to recognise Monroe's incredible artistry and also attempt, sensitively, to signify the possible abuse and sexism she battled in the workplace.

The experience of directing an opera pretty much from scratch has certainly been wonderful, frustrating, inspiring and tiring. I am incredibly grateful to the team I had around me – in particular Charlotte Corderoy, the Musical Director, who was the driving force behind the performances. Another fantastic element of performing 'modern' opera is that I could ask Gavin Bryars (the composer) and Marilyn Bowering (the poet and librettist) questions whilst figuring out our interpretation of their work, and I am so grateful they were able to attend a performance as well as give a pre-performance talk on the opening night.

Whilst the performances were difficult to watch at first – I sat at the back, with nothing left I could change about the production – by closing night it was a truly enjoyable experience and I admit I did shed some tears. Something truly special I have enjoyed about this production is the number of positive responses we have had from students, particularly those who had never seen an opera before and who have now told me they want to see more! To me, this bodes well for the future. Another reason for setting up the society was to provide a platform for any students who want to make opera. I am therefore very excited for our upcoming project in November, in which we will do just that – stage operas written by Oxford students.

Student 'vegging out' takes a dramatic turn

Edward Robertson (2017, English) reports on the Exeter student production that turned the Burton Taylor Studio into an Allotment

I was approached at the end of Hilary Term by two other Exeter undergraduates with a simple question: would you like to help produce a play we're staging? When I said yes, I didn't expect the work, enjoyment and sheer quantity of fresh vegetables that the production would entail.

The play in question was Jules Horne's *Allotment*, which centres around the lives of two sisters, Dora and Maddy. The audience views the development of their lives, from playing as toddlers to their first experiences with boys, as the sisters spend each summer at their family's allotment on the outskirts of Edinburgh. It's a play that debuted on a real allotment in Inverleith during the Edinburgh Festival Fringe, where it won a Scotsman Fringe First Award.

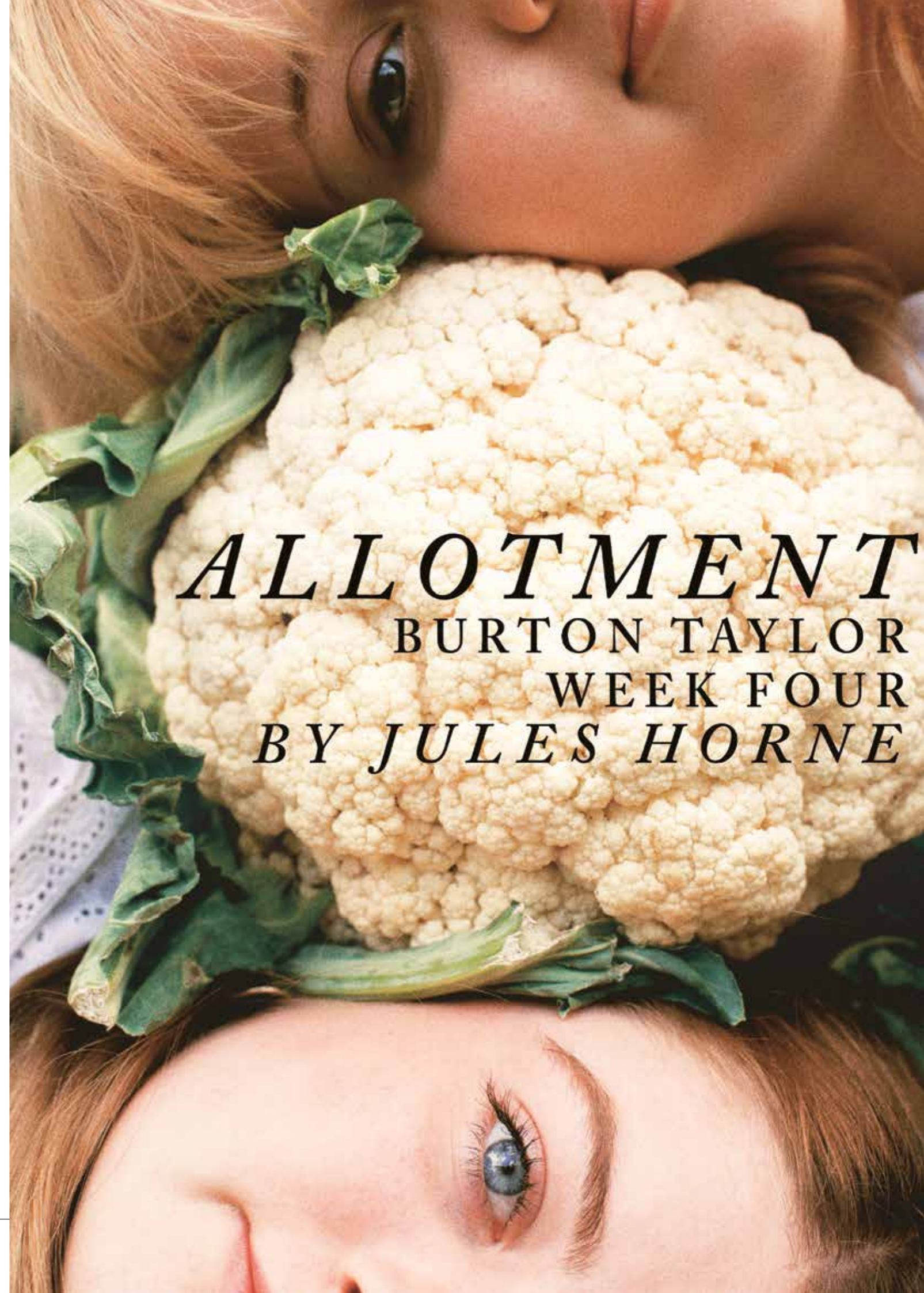
The two sisters were played by Abby McCann (2017, English) and Hannah Taylor (2017, English), who together also directed the play. They wanted to stress the more absurdist parts of Jules Horne's script. The audience entered the Burton Taylor Studio to find the sisters with raspberries stuffed on the tips of their fingers, grinning and waving, or occasionally glaring when someone entered late. Taylor delivered Maddy's often bizarre lines (such as 'Skin sounds like grass' and 'Grass sounds like anoraks') with an innocent sincerity as McCann's Dora diligently attempted to keep the allotment in check whilst chaos blossomed around her. The two did a phenomenal job, displaying strong acting and stage presence.

My fellow producer, Rachel Tudor (2017, English), not only budgeted the production, but also designed and operated the lights and sounds for the show. She

used a simple light design to further the intimacy of the setting – the Burton Taylor Studio is a small venue, and we wanted to make the audience feel like they were almost encroaching on the girls' lives. Ever present throughout the show was Hannah Taylor's ukulele, which the girls used to excellent comic effect when lamenting the death of their childhood teddy and doll.

The stage itself was designed by Thomas Shah (2018, Byzantine Studies), who deserves commendation for the sheer amount of fresh fruit and vegetables he purchased over the show's run. He created an allotment with warm minimalism, scattering the stage with plant pots, root vegetables and a healthy amount of gardening posters, all surrounding a stepladder reclaimed from an Iffley Road flea market. The script presented a notable difficulty when it called for the teddy and doll to be buried: Shah spent a lot of his time tirelessly sweeping the stage clean of dirt and compost.

Of course, a play would flop without an audience, and we were incredibly grateful for the support shown by fellow Exeter students. Huge praise must also go to the show's marketing director, Antonio Perricone (2017, English), whose stellar photography and design were essential to making the show stand out amongst the range of productions showing in Oxford. We count our small team's first production as a raging success and were happy to hear that our fellow students enjoyed watching it as much as we enjoyed making it. We hope that our next venture as a team is just as successful.





Snapshots from Bali: adventures of our East Asia Travel Scholar

Kyra Birkett (2016, Chemistry) tells of flower offerings for Hindu gods, jumping down waterfalls and teaching English to 25 excited children

This summer, generous funding from friend of the College Peter Thompson, founder of the East Asia Travel Scholarship, enabled me to travel to Bali, Indonesia, where I spent time living and working in a small village called Ubud.

This was with International Volunteer HQ, which partners with local organisations to run ethical volunteer programmes aiming to create sustainable value for local communities. IVHQ works very closely to support and train its volunteers – my first week in Bali was 'orientation week', in which I was taught about Balinese culture, via classes and excursions, by local coordinators. Dayu, one of the coordinators, told of the practice of Hindu religious offerings, made many times a day to give thanks to the Gods, and took us to the Holy Water Temple to make flower offerings, pray, and cleanse ourselves in the holy water with the local temple-goers.

We also learnt some Indonesian and some Bali, which the Balinese people call *Bahasa*, meaning 'language', to help us when teaching English to the children and for general communication purposes. We watched a traditional Balinese dance show, dyed a Batik cloth and visited a rice field, all of which function as important cultural institutions in Bali. I felt very privileged to be able to learn about the Balinese culture in this immersive way – it gave me a far richer insight into it than I would have been able to achieve through travelling alone.

After the orientation week I began my teaching. We would plan lessons in the mornings at the volunteer house, and then teach in the afternoons. My class comprised about 25 eight- to 10-year-olds who continually amazed me with their excitement to learn and their quick grasp of the English language. The children would have compulsory school in the mornings and then additional English with us in the afternoons, so it was vital we made our lessons fun or else they simply wouldn't come the next day. The few weeks I was there, we learnt vocabulary for food, the house, family, basic pronouns, and played many games. On my last day I used a small portion of the scholarship to buy each of my students some chocolate and a new notebook and pen – a farewell gift that they absolutely loved.

On the weekends we took trips to explore Bali. These trips were incredible; highlights included a sunrise trek up Mount Batur where we could see the recently erupted Mount Agung, doing a 15-metre jump down a waterfall, a sunrise boat trip to see dolphins and going snorkelling to see turtles, as well as many afternoons spent on the beach and browsing the markets.

I am very grateful for the funding from the College and Peter Thompson. I feel I made a worthwhile contribution to an effort that extends beyond me in helping the children in Ubud acquire good English language skills, which will definitely be a positive for them later in life. I of course also imbibed so much new information about a culture very different from my own, made friends, tried new things, and felt challenged, productive, and inspired.



'Presume not that I am the thing I was'

A trip to London's Globe Theatre allowed Exeter's English students to see Shakespeare in a whole new light, writes **Anna Marar** (2017, English)

During Trinity Term, a group of eight Exeter second year English students visited the Globe Theatre in London. The trip was organised and led by our tutor, Natasha Simonova, as an extension of the Shakespeare paper we have been studying. This summer, the Globe has been staging special 'Trilogy Days', where performances of Henry IV Part I and Part II and Henry V are all run back-to-back. We managed to squeeze in the first two on our short day trip.

It was interesting to see the experimentation which is now almost a given within productions of Shakespeare, as most of the casting and staging paid little heed to 'traditional' depictions of the characters. This was true both in terms of costuming (which evoked a range of time periods, sometimes even within one particular character's outfit), and with regards to gender and race. Despite the fact that female roles make up only 15 per cent of Henry IV Part I, the cast was evenly balanced in gender – for example with Sarah Amankwah playing Hal and Helen Schlesinger as Falstaff. This experimentation is in keeping with the history of Shakespeare on stage we have encountered in our classes. It has been observed that his plays are frequently used as vehicles for new ideas: what might be received as controversial in other contexts can instead be communicated with a sense of legitimacy. Thus, in this case, diversity in modern theatre can be encouraged

and simultaneously bring in new interpretations of these well-known works.

While watching the performances, I sometimes found it difficult to keep up with the language in real time – a very different task to working through an Arden edition slowly with the aid of notes and a glossary. However, I was struck by the fact that it was the moments of metatheatricality and humour which were the most accessible. Schlesinger's Falstaff is often key here in playing up audience participation, sometimes freely swiping drinks out of the hands of the audience during drunken monologues. In another moment Hal, holding a flag, walks casually through the standing crowd to the stage, making us suddenly jump to form a pathway. The ease and playfulness of these interactions made the whole performance seem more personal, breaking down the intellectual distance Shakespearean theatre can sometimes inspire. Alongside the guise of authenticity that the Globe's architecture creates, it helped me feel an affinity to the original groundlings of the 16th and 17th centuries. Despite the obvious monopoly this one playwright has in a theatre named 'Shakespeare's Globe', I now have a better sense, from an audience perspective, of the drama in this time period in general. It was a reminder to put Shakespeare back in context.



Thumbs up for ExVac!

Francesca Tindall (2016, PPE) celebrates a successful year for ExVac, Exeter's student-run charity

The 2018/19 academic year has been a fantastic one for ExVac. Once again, we ran two successful Easter holiday weeks to the New Forest, staying at the Countryside Education Trust. Each week took 16 children aged between seven and 11 and packed in a great range of activities including canoeing, pottery painting, farm duties, woodland walks and a memorable trip to Paultons Park – a local theme park and home to Peppa Pig World!

Although the holidays certainly bring their challenges, this year's leaders and committee members – all students at Exeter – were a credit to ExVac with their enthusiasm and dedication. The children we look after come from difficult social and often financially deprived backgrounds, so the 2019 holiday weeks once again provided a much-needed week of respite for the children and their families, and a chance to enjoy new experiences and friendships away from home. Our leaders were privileged to witness the children's personalities and journeys, from pushing themselves out of their comfort zones by trying canoeing or theme park rides for the first time, to overcoming

homesickness and looking out for the other children.

The holidays are completely free for those who attend, so the ExVac committee have spent the rest of the year furiously fundraising. Events such as Cocktails and Karaoke, the Auction of Promises and Valentine's Carnations were made even more successful by our new contactless card machine! We were also lucky to receive some generous external donations, particularly from the Oxford Guild of Tour Guides and several alumni, some of whom attended our AGM and annual celebration in June.

We truly appreciate all the support we receive, and there are now more ways than ever to give to ExVac. ExVac is registered with the Amazon Smile scheme, which donates a percentage of any Amazon purchases made to your chosen charity at no extra cost to you. You can also follow our progress on Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn (just search 'ExVac') – you'll be kept up to date with our events and the launch of our new website. If you would like to donate now, please visit tinyurl.com/exvac19.



Blades of glory

Men's second boat wins Blades and promotion to division four while women welcome a new coach, reports **Flora Leadley** (2016, Literae Humaniores)

This has been a year of continued success for Exeter College Boat Club, with a strong cohort of returning rowers as well as a large number of fresher rowers. We have put out four boats in both Torpids and Summer Vllls, all of which enjoyed successful regattas.

On the Women's side, we were delighted to welcome a new Head Women's Coach, Bee Willford-Dutton, who has brought a huge amount of experience and enthusiasm to the club. Bee serves as an inspiration to all the rowers – she is infectiously energetic, constantly supportive, and on top of her coaching responsibilities she also rows in the first women's eight at Oxford Brookes. We look forward to welcoming her back next year.

It has been a year of steady success for our men's first boat, who gained a place on the river in Torpids and maintained their place in Summer

Vllls. The women's first boat has had a slightly more testing year, contested by strong crews in both Torpids and Summer Vllls. However, with two full boats of returners, the women are confident that next year they will be a force to be reckoned with.

The most notable success of the season was the men's second boat's blade-winning Torpids campaign. The boat, consisting of mostly first year rowers, was coxed to success by ECBC veteran Max Nugent, bumping the second boats of LMH, St John's, Hertford and Magdalen. They followed this with promotion from division five to division four in Summer Vllls, moving up four places over the week. Such achievement bodes well for ECBC.

We were also incredibly proud that Grace Hanna was selected once again for the Oxford University

Lightweight Blue boat, moving from bow to 7-seat. Grace learnt to row as a fresher at ECBC and has since gone on to have a very successful two seasons with the University team, including winning her Varsity race at Henley in March. Her success is a testament to her hard work and dedication; she is an inspiration to the entire club.

We would like to thank our Senior Member, Martin Davy, our coaches, Bee Willford-Dutton and Matt Aldridge, and ECBC alumnus Aidan Walker, who served as Assistant Coach in Michaelmas Term, for all of their support. Special thanks must go to Marguerite Dupree, the Rector's wife, whose vocal support at the boathouse throughout Torpids and Summer Vllls is hugely appreciated by all rowers.



A thumping success

Women's football team secures second successive promotion, reports **Lina Cox** (2016, Chemistry)

This was once again a year with much to celebrate for Exeter College Women's Football Club. The team achieved its second successive promotion under the captaincy of Vicky Matthews.

Many freshers joined the club, including Rani Wermes, who has earned a place as a striker in the women's Blues team.

Highlights included a 6-0 thumping of University College and a series of great performances in an invitation-only futsal league for just the best college teams.

With so many new players and great enthusiasm, Exeter Women are sure to take the second division by storm next year.



Equal to the challenge

Mixed team delivers another Cuppers triumph, reports **James Scott** (2017, Fine Art)

After last year's sailing Cuppers triumph, which I had the honour of captaining, I was delighted to return to Farmoor Reservoir in Trinity Term with a squad of seven other Exeter students keen to defend our title.

We entered two teams, with recently awarded Full Blues sailors Tiarnan Finney (2017, History) and I each captaining a team. We were joined

by a diverse mix of sailors, including three who were new to the sport but eager to try their hand at it in a fun and competitive atmosphere. I am thrilled to report that Tiarnan's team successfully retained the trophy for Exeter.

April Gilling (2017, Classical Archaeology and Ancient History), who was sailing for the first time, afterwards commented: 'It was

refreshing to take part in a sport where men's and women's abilities are considered equal, and to see such a high number of girls there on the day.'

The squad has been invited to participate in Cambridge's version of Cuppers later this year and we look forward to the challenge. Next year we will go for a hat-trick of Cuppers wins – watch this space!

Turl Street Women's RFC run riot

Rachel Tudor (2017, English) reports on an excellent year for women's and men's rugby

It has been an exciting year for both the men's and women's rugby teams at Exeter. Rugby remains a significant part of the College sporting (and social!) life, with members of the College coming down to support in full force even if they are not playing, which serves as a great example of the fantastic community we have here.

The men's side managed to reach the semi-finals of the Cuppers Bowl this year, narrowly missing out on a place in the final. Although the team had a pretty middling season in the league, the talent of several individuals has shone through. Mark Hanna, Ed Harris, Joe Lloyd, Seb

Talbot, Will Osborne, and Rufus Pierce-Jones all excelled this year and played for the rugby league University teams. As such, ECRFC have had their numbers depleted slightly, so will be looking to recruit a new cohort in Michaelmas Term.

As for Exeter's women, it was a fantastic year, with Exeter students forming a significant part of the winning team at this year's Cuppers! Although yet to compete as an Exeter XV, Exonians teamed up with women from Brasenose, Lincoln and Jesus Colleges to create the formidable combined force that is Turl Street Women's RFC. With many girls getting involved who

had never picked up a rugby ball before, the Cuppers tournament provided an excellent opportunity to get more women participating in the sport. As such, many have gone on to the University team development sessions and the University squads. TSWRFC, with strong representation from Exeter from the likes of Joss Barker, Alice Martin, and Tabitha Thornton-Swan, had a fantastic victory over All Saints (Saint Anne's, Peter's, John's, Hilda's and Catherine's Colleges) in the semi-finals. They then continued to lift the Cuppers trophy after a fierce competition against Kebriel (Kebble/Oriel), with the final score 24-10.



High Gun

Rakiya Farah (2018, BCL) awarded Half Blue for exceptional shooting skills

Exeter student Rakiya Farah (2018, BCL) has been awarded a Half Blue for her performance in the clay pigeon shooting Varsity match. Rakiya represented Oxford University Clay Pigeon Shooting Club against Cambridge's team at the Cambridge Gun Club in March. She was the High Gun, or top scorer, within the ladies' event, and helped Oxford to secure victories in every category but one.

Speaking after the competition Rakiya said: 'I had spent many weeks

training intensively for Varsity, so I was absolutely thrilled to learn that I was ladies' High Gun for the competition. To be awarded a Half Blue is a dream come true.

'Apart from that, it was a fantastic experience to win with my team. We were on Cambridge's home ground and it was a particularly tricky course, but we still managed to win in every category but one. The camaraderie on the day was very special and I am really proud to be part of such an amazing Club.'



Battle for the Sexes

Change came slowly, then suddenly... Threats of civil disobedience, fears of a generational divide and dystopian satires were all part of a tense battle to admit women to Exeter College, recounts **Hannah Parham** (2001, Modern History)

The impetus for Exeter College to 'go mixed' came from a generation of idealistic undergraduates who came up to Oxford in the late 1960s. Motivated by ideas of liberty and equality, these young men interrogated the structures and traditions of the University and found them wanting. The colleges, which acted *in loco parentis* because the age of majority was 21, were keepers of archaic rules about who could dine with whom and when; curfews were in place each evening; the all-male Fellowship at Exeter was benign, but paternalistic. There were no mixed colleges, with the ancient foundations like Exeter admitting only male undergraduates and five women's colleges, all founded in the late-nineteenth century, serving a much smaller number of female students.

The campaign for co-education became a *cause célèbre* for the Exeter JCR, as did agitation for liberalising of gate hours. Some Fellows dismissed the students' demands as simply 'arrangements to allow promiscuity'. But the undergraduates sustained their campaign for nearly a decade and persisted with the question of admitting women long after curfews were abolished: while no doubt energised by a desire for female company and even romance, the students also sought to correct an historic injustice.

A referendum on whether to admit women as members of the Junior Common Room was held in May 1968. Jim Prust, campaigning in favour, argued that 'the presence of women will not inhibit masculine activities in the JCR... We are not yet a society of senile club-men.' His peers agreed and the motion was passed. In Michaelmas of the new academic year, a vote on whether Exeter should become fully co-educational was also carried.

The Governing Body, aware of the strength of feeling in the student body and no doubt alarmed by campus insurrection globally in the heady days of 1968, played for time. It asked the junior members to present a paper on co-education, which was prepared by three PPEists: John Carvel, Rob Coulson and John Gray. The undergraduates argued their case on several grounds: the admission of more women would raise Oxford's academic standards; mixed colleges were desirable as an end in themselves; and because 'social communication in Oxford is random and inadequate, and this results in much unhappiness... co-educational

colleges [are] the answer to this problem.' The JCR was eager for Exeter to be a beacon of progress because 'the college which moves

first will gain an immediate advantage in standards and reputation.'

The campaigners were in earnest. Unable to find out what potential applicants thought about co-residence, the undergraduates organised a survey of Exeter freshmen 'on their first full day in Oxford' in Michaelmas 1968 and carefully analysed the results. (Around a quarter reported that they would have been deterred from applying to a mixed college, a quarter were indifferent, and co-education appealed to around half of the 59 respondents.) Full of good intentions, the undergraduates even canvassed opinions from women undergraduates from other colleges.

These surveys were an attempt to counteract the Governing Body's position on the admission of women, which focused overwhelmingly on the practical implications, rather than those of principle (perhaps they knew the game was up on the grounds of fairness). While stressing that it 'attached importance to an increase in the number of women undergraduates *in the University as a whole*', the Fellows saw nothing

While no doubt energised by a desire for female company and even romance, the students also sought to correct an historic injustice



The 1979 matriculation photo

but difficulty in admitting women to Exeter. There would be problems for personal relationships in a small college; how could there be a fair mix of genders within each subject, given that 'few well-qualified women candidates are likely to present themselves in scientific subjects?'; finally, there was 'the impossibility of guaranteeing, if Fellowships were opened to women, that any woman would ever be the best candidate.' The JCR, undeterred, suggested a joint committee be formed to explore how such difficulties might be overcome.

The relationship between the Governing Body and the JCR at Exeter remained cordial, if strained. At the end of Michaelmas in 1968 the *Stapeldon Magazine* reported to old members:

'The College has not so far been the scene of any violent displays of student power, but there is a spirit of progressive inquiry in the air and the work of the [JCR] President and the Sub-Rector, who bear the main burden of distilling the spirit, is very hard just now. Women may now lunch and dine in Hall with undergraduates, and a recent referendum has admitted them

'Brave, pioneering or foolhardy?'

A perspective on Exeter in 1979 from **Fiona Young, née Spink (1979, PPP)**

Being one of the first women at Exeter may sound brave, pioneering or just foolhardy. I didn't feel any of those things, but I was definitely excited to be going up to a 'men's college' and to be part of something new.

The men were very welcoming and generally charming. A few of them were apparently concerned that the admission of women might cramp their style. I hope we proved them wrong. We certainly contributed to College achievements. Although there were only 17 or so of us in that first year, ECBC's women's first (first ever!) VIII made several bumps in Torpids and Eights Week, we won two Half-Blues (fencing and cross country running) and had notable successes in OUDS and OUSU. I don't think we spoil the fun either: the presence of women didn't deter the men from leaping from Palmer's Tower, the Turl Street Riots were as riotous as ever and no doubt we provided generous raw material for the Millerian Professor's Sunday evening deliveries of gossip to the JCR.

Exeter in 1979 was a warm and friendly place to be. I'm really lucky to have been part of it. Happy days!

to the JCR. Other aspects of College life are under scrutiny. The reformers are serious-minded and well informed. The response has to be reasoned.'

Tensions rose, however, when matters came to a crunch. A Governing Body meeting in March 1969 formally considered the JCR's proposal on co-education. Of the 20 dons present, all voted against the admission of women. The JCR was outraged. The dons doubled down. In 1970, Governing Body voted unanimously against any change to regulations about curfews or guest hours. Undergraduates were, again, livid: 'we cannot stress too highly the anger and frustration the majority of undergraduates feel ...' In April 1970, the JCR voted in favour of 'a contingency plan for a campaign of civil disobedience' if the Governing Body refused to change its mind on gate hours. While the students ultimately backed down from radical protests, the two common rooms were now communicating in long, type-written, robustly-argued missives, sent back and forward between Staircases Four and Five. The relationship between senior and junior members was at its lowest ebb.

The JCR was convinced that the broader movement for women's rights would force Oxford to consider the question of co-education seriously in the near future. It thought that Exeter should position itself in the vanguard of change. The JCR was right.

Co-education was the controversy of the day. In 1970, when a majority on The Queen's College Governing Body favoured co-education (though not the two thirds required to change the statutes), the Provost wrote to the other men's colleges and found a handful were similarly disposed. Plans for a scheme to admit women to some colleges were hatched. Within a year Brasenose, Jesus, St Catherine's, and Wadham had passed amendments to their statutes authorising the admission of women. Hertford soon followed. These colleges celebrated the 40th anniversary of the admission

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The JCR was right

of women some time ago.

In 1971 the University's Hebdomadal Council (its executive body) intervened to prevent any additional changes for five years, so that the admission of women to Oxford's men's colleges would be gradual. The pause for reflection came as a relief to the Exeter dons.

In the meantime, the controversy about gate hours continued to boil, and divided the Exeter Fellowship. In 1970, the Rector offered to resign when a minority report was issued to Governing Body by five liberally-minded Fellows who saw that 'disorder would result' if the JCR's proposal for allowing undergraduates free movement until 2am was rejected. Their report stressed that no violent threats had been made by JCR officers; rather, the scrupulousness with which the JCR committee had handled negotiations, given the pressure they were under from the wider student body, meant their demands should be taken seriously.

The crisis passed, the Rector did not resign, and gate hours were extended in November 1970, on the condition a night porter was employed. A second wave of campaigning by the JCR in 1973 (this time with an explicit threat of direct action) saw the introduction of a key system and the freedom for undergraduates to come and go as they pleased.

When, in 1976, the time came to review the experience of the newly mixed colleges, Exeter's Fellowship was ambivalent to co-education. Responding in November 1976 to a request from the Principal of Hertford

College (who was canvassing opinion as part of the review), the then-Rector stated that Exeter 'may wish to admit women to membership ... when it is legally possible to do so.' When this was interpreted as an indication that the College was likely to go mixed, the Rector quickly clarified the College's position: 'our feeling is that we should await the report of the committee before further decision taking. In the meanwhile, to show us as wishing or as being likely to wish to go mixed is to take us further than we intend.'

Yet change at Exeter came: slowly, then suddenly. On 14 March 1977, just a few months after the Rector's tentative reply to Hertford, Exeter's Governing Body resolved by the necessary two-thirds majority to admit women as undergraduates, graduates and Fellows. Why the change of heart? There are two answers, one particular to Exeter and the other more general. The broader factor is that the co-education experiment had been a success in Oxford. Mixed colleges were popular with applicants of both sexes. Because there were fewer Oxbridge places available to them, women undergraduates were of the highest calibre; colleges that admitted women did well academically.

The second reason is College-specific. In the period after the unanimous vote against co-education in March 1969, a number of dons – significant personalities in the Exeter of their day – moved on or retired. Dacre Balsdon was notoriously hostile to co-education, setting his dystopian satire, *The Day They Burned Miss Termag*

The class of 68's fervent hope that Exeter might be in the vanguard of progress was ultimately satisfied

(1961), in an embattled Oxford college which has been forced to admit women. He retired in 1969. Others against co-education were the Reverend Eric Kemp, who later became a prominent opponent of the ordination of women to the priesthood, and Derek Hall, Fellow and Tutor in Law, who both vacated their Fellowships in 1969. Kenneth Wheare, whose *ODNB* entry records he was '... not altogether sympathetic to the social trends that culminated after his time in the college becoming mixed', resigned as Rector in 1972. Sub-Rector Richard Buxton, who was liberal on gate rules but hostile on the question of women, left Exeter in 1973. The departure of these 'big beasts' of the SCR meant that the Fellowship that voted on the question of women members in 1977 was very different to the unanimously hostile Governing Body of 1969. In the end, the historic change to the College statutes was made with little controversy.

The first women undergraduates arrived at Exeter in 1979, the first Fellow in 1982, and by 1985 all the former men's colleges in Oxford were mixed. While on the question of women undergraduates, Exeter's dons climbed onto rather than drove the bandwagon, the class of 68's fervent hope that Exeter might be in the vanguard of progress was ultimately satisfied. In 1993, the College became the first former men's college in Oxford or Cambridge to appoint a female Head of House, Professor Marilyn Butler.

'We were too busy keeping up to talk about gender discrimination.'

A perspective on Exeter in 1979 from **Judith Pain** (1979, Jurisprudence)

1979-1982 were exciting, fun and immensely formative: the thrill of being in College, checking pigeon-holes for post, eating in the beautiful dining hall, hearing Oxford full of church bells on a Sunday.

Distributed across selected staircases to avoid ghettoization, the 1979 women filled just two Eights. As well as going co-ed, the College was admitting state school students, so many of us had two roots for our growing Imposter Syndromes. No such label then so we just hoped and kept our heads down.

The College ran along the lines of grown-up boarding school: probably a valuable transition from home to adulthood where we were less sophisticated and worldly wise than today's 18-year-olds. This was the era of instant coffee, beer or babycham; portable tape-cassette machines like shoe-boxes; queues for coin-operated telephone boxes. Sex education was almost exclusively about contraception.

I don't think I was alone in this, but sense we were more accepting of what we had and lacked today's language, authority and assurance to request locks on bathroom doors, an ironing board or something other than beer at JCR meetings. It never occurred to me to demand extra time when I broke my wrist and dictated my Finals papers in the Rector's Dining Room, despite tea-breaks instituted for the secretary and the invigilator by Mrs WG Barr.

We didn't generally talk about gender or discrimination. We were too busy keeping up, intellectually and socially, and trying not to stand out for the wrong reasons. Issues that today would be fully aired, were barely acknowledged or buried deep. Gender discrimination was there, even in College, just as it would be blatantly in the world outside for many years. I was disappointed being told not to apply for a vacation legal placement because I was a girl. Such things were buried deep to become fuel for later life. Instead, I enjoyed a summer vacation job in College, serving dinner in Hall to a medical convention. I still blush to remember the tomato soup that I slurped down some poor man's back!



Women at Oxford in the 18th Century

From bawdy exposés of the University to putting Oxford's first Professor of Poetry right about Alexander Pope, **Natasha Simonova**, Rankin Fellow in English, has uncovered rich evidence of women contributing to intellectual life at Oxford 150 years before they could receive degrees there

As Exeter celebrates 40 years of female students and Fellows, my own research looks at how women contributed to scholarship and intellectual life in the centuries before they were admitted as part of English universities. In my work on the long 18th century, I have found a number of women writers who engaged with these institutions – and with Oxford in particular – as visitors, commentators, and critics.

Tourism was on the rise in this period, with Oxford, then as now, a popular stopping point. The diary of the aristocratic writer Amabel Grey, for example, describes going around the sights and colleges over several days in June 1770 with a copy of the *New Oxford Guide*, a popular guidebook first published in 1759. She finds the Merton gardens 'pretty enough,' the Ashmolean 'nothing remarkable,' and wished she had had a chance to see 'the Arabic manuscripts, the *Mexican Paintings*, & to have spent some more time with the Prints & Drawings' – showing the broad range of her interests at age 20.

Other women were regularly based in the city, which made them keen observers of its habits and foibles. The poet Alicia d'Anvers, whose father was head of the Oxford University Press, composed two satirical poems titled *Academia, or The Humours of the University of Oxford* (1691) and *The Oxford-Act* (1693). Both are bawdy exposés of the University, remarkable for their descriptive detail and bravura approach to rhyme and metre: as *The Oxford-Act* puts it, 'Comprizing in immortal Sing-Song / How all th' old Dons were at it Ding-dong.'

The 'Oxford Act' refers to an older form of the ceremony now known as Encaenia, which involved not only the conferral of degrees but also speeches and performances. Women were regular attendees: Amabel Grey's visit, for instance, coincided with the award of an honorary degree to her father. In 1750, the Oxford-based poet Mary Jones wrote a poem to a friend 'On

the Reasonableness of Her coming to the Oxford Act' in order to 'let the learn'd and gay admire thee there.' In her youth Amabel's mother, the witty letter-writer Jemima, Marchioness Grey, had gone further by composing a story in which her friend Catherine Talbot eloped out the window with a married lover and settled at Oxford, where she 'learnt Greek in a fortnight,' 'took her Degree the next Act,' and 'held a Publick Disputation in the Divinitie School.'

Talbot's real-life behaviour as a virtuous Bluestocking had little in common with this lighthearted fantasy. By the second half of the period, however, it was recognised that many women had distinguished themselves in learning and literature despite their lack of formal educational opportunities. An article in the *Westminster Magazine* for 1773, for example, which directly followed a report on the Encaenia of that year, advocated that prominent female intellectuals like Elizabeth Montagu (the 'Queen of the Bluestockings') and the historian Catherine Macaulay might also be given honorary doctorates or distinguished 'as *Maids or Mistresses* of the Arts.' It took, however, another 150 years before women could receive degrees from Oxford, honorary or otherwise.

Yet universities were not always considered to be the best places to pursue certain kinds of learning. My own discipline of English Literature (then called 'Belles Lettres') was in its infancy in the 18th century, and despite a few early posts at Oxford and Edinburgh, was largely studied outside the academy. It was a subject that required qualities of 'taste' and 'judgment' rather than the pedantic myopia that was often associated with the universities. This could make it particularly open to women: as the philosopher David Hume wrote, 'I am of Opinion, that Women...are much better Judges of all polite Writing than Men of the same Degree of Understanding.' This shows that we should not be simply tracing a narrative of women eventually being 'allowed' to participate in university education – rather, they had a set of new and valuable critical skills, developed through independent reading, that they might have been able to contribute.

An article in 1773 advocated that prominent female intellectuals might be given honorary doctorates or distinguished 'as Maids or Mistresses of the Arts'



The poet and critic Anna Seward, for example, composed a scathing 'Critical Dissertation' rebutting an essay that Joseph Spence, Oxford's first Professor of Poetry, had written about Alexander Pope's translation of Homer. Seward considered Spence's objections based on the Greek verse 'prosaic,' and thought that Pope's translation should instead be compared to the canon of English poetry, like Shakespeare and Milton – a subject she thought she knew much better than 'the Professor,' as she calls him. Seward would no doubt have been pleased to learn that a woman – Alice Oswald – will finally hold the Professorship of Poetry from 2019.

Today, English remains a majority-female subject at undergraduate level, but the numbers change dramatically as one ascends the academic ladder from postgraduate degrees to professorships. A recent study has shown that women academics fall behind in hiring and promotion even after taking children and caring responsibilities into account. The increasing precariousness of academic careers only highlights the disparity, with women more likely

to be employed in fixed-term roles with heavy teaching and pastoral responsibilities, rather than rewarded for their research. It will take more than rhetoric and a few high-profile appointments to redress these inequalities.

While the middle- and upper-class women I study were often able to pursue their work as amateurs, without the pressure to publish it in print, this is less possible today. A more instructive case might be that of Elizabeth Elstob, a pioneering Anglo-Saxon scholar whose letters are held in the Bodleian Library. Although she enjoyed significant institutional encouragement and access from the University at the height of her career in the early 18th century, this did not translate into financial support. After the death of her brother and collaborator, Elstob fell into difficulties and spent the rest of her life as a provincial schoolteacher and then governess to the Duchess of Portland. While she eventually regained contact with fellow antiquarians, she was never able to resume 'those Studies, which were my only delight and employment when I had nothing else to do.'

ANGRY

YOUNG

WOMEN



Audiences are still being short-changed by gender inequality in the theatre, despite the Me Too movement, writes **Lisa Parry** (1998, English)

I first read Aphra Behn's plays in my second year and I found her writing beyond brilliant. Her own life appears to have been equally dramatic. It's widely believed she was a spy and the first woman to make her living through writing. Virginia Woolf implored women to bring flowers to her tomb. However, if you follow Woolf's advice, you'll find that tomb within Westminster Abbey, but not in Poets' Corner. It's hard not to see it as a metaphor for how female playwrights are allowed in the building, but kept on the edge.

There are no current UK statistics for produced plays according to gender, which is in itself revealing with regards to the priorities of all four arts councils. However, in 2009, Sphinx Theatre revealed research that only 17 per cent of plays were written by women, despite 65 per cent of the theatre-going audience being female. Female playwrights were furious and sought to improve this. In 2012, 12 of us formed Agent 160 (Aphra Behn's spy codename), taking work to Belfast, Cardiff, Glasgow and London as a form of immediate redress.

As we toured, we hosted discussions to explore the possible reasons behind the gap. What leapt out at us in the talks and in the subsequent media coverage was a perception that having a female literary manager or a female artistic director would automatically be good for female playwrights. Unhappily, research from the States suggested otherwise. In 2009, Princeton graduate student Emily Glassberg Sands sent out identical scripts to US theatres – half with a male name and half with a female name. Those scripts artistic directors and literary managers believed were written by women were rated significantly worse. The sisterhood was not alive and kicking. As we mulled all this over, some individual theatres worked hard to improve their female production figures. Things were happening, but nothing gigantic. Then Me Too exploded.

Should anyone commission the research, I doubt they'd see a sudden fairness in production rates as a consequence of Me Too. But the movement has changed the atmosphere in the industry, and so pressure for those rates to improve is being maintained. Conversations between women feel

much more open and support is very real. Certainly women feel they can collectively put their heads above the parapet now and declare their anger and demand change – as the National Theatre discovered when it announced four new male-penned shows in March and within days over 200 of us had signed a critical letter. And this anger regarding unequal representation feels real amongst audiences too. The recent atmosphere at the Globe and the Vaudeville for Morgan Lloyd Malcolm's *Emilia*, which reimagines the life of Shakespeare's contemporary Emilia Bassano through a feminist lens, was nothing short of electric. The show was a call to arms in terms of gender equality in theatre and in society. Standing ovations and cathartic sobbing in the stalls became a given.

So things are improving with regards to gender inequality in theatre. But not as quickly as they could and until they do audiences will be short-changed. A female voice on the stage is not a luxury, nor is it needed solely to tick a box of political correctness. A female voice is essential for theatre to question, comment and provoke in a society where we make up over half the population. Theatre needs to produce its female playwrights equally to remain relevant. That we're still fighting for this 330 years after Aphra Behn died astounds me. It makes me angry. It pushes me to write.

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Facing the facts of the news revolution

Frances Cairncross, formerly Exeter College Rector and an editor at *The Economist*, describes her review into the future of journalism and how it may yet defend democracy and support a healthy public realm

You never quite know where an Exeter College connection will lead. Eighteen months ago, I was in a tent in the Serengeti when I got a message from the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, who just happened to be an Exonian. I had invited Matt Hancock up to College to speak to students several times when I was Rector. Now, he wondered whether I was interested in undertaking a review of the future of journalism. Of course, as the tropical darkness fell, I said yes.

I had an advisory committee, with some members already selected by DCMS, and some chosen by me. I was especially keen to include younger journalists, and some who wrote mainly or only for digital publications, and so Akshat Rathi agreed to join: he is a former Exeter graduate student who now writes for Quartz, an online news site. With the help of a team of young civil servants, I put out a call for evidence and met people from small and large news organisations, from advertising, innovative start-ups and long-established local papers, and from Google, Facebook and Apple.

Journalism – and especially local journalism – has had a difficult decade. As the Review (which you can see at tinyurl.com/exon19) points out, sales of national and of daily papers have fallen by roughly half between 2007 and 2017. As readers have gone, advertising has moved with them. Local papers have been hit especially hard: indeed, part of the government's reason for setting up the Review was the concern of members of Parliament that they might lose their principal link with their constituents.

Many of the news groups which I met blamed the digital platforms – mainly Google and Facebook – for their plight. Increasingly, readers find their way to the news via Google News, where they might read just a snippet of a story, available free, and not even bother to click through to the news group's own web site. So the news groups can reach their readers only courtesy of one of the online giants, and readers may never notice where the story has originally come from, or who has written it.

Not only is this trend financially painful for news groups: it has affected the way people absorb news. The advent of the smartphone in 2007 has been crucial: readers often skim and scroll, usually reading much less of a story than they would have done in the world of newsprint. Where

once their eye, scanning a printed page, might have rested on a story on a subject they would not seek out, now they tend to read less widely or deeply. They also frequently tell researchers that they do not know how to trust news read online, or trust only what their friends forward to them.

At the same time, advertising has been moving online – generally to a Google or Facebook site. The effect has been particularly devastating for local papers, which have always relied heavily on classified advertising for their revenue (and for sales too, as readers bought the paper to find a job or a used car). But online sites now offer a more efficient way of finding local jobs or cars. And ads placed online have other advantages: Google and Facebook know vastly more about their users than a news group could ever hope to do, and can sometimes track whether an ad turns into a sale. Anyone who has checked the information that Google holds on them will have been amazed – and probably shocked.

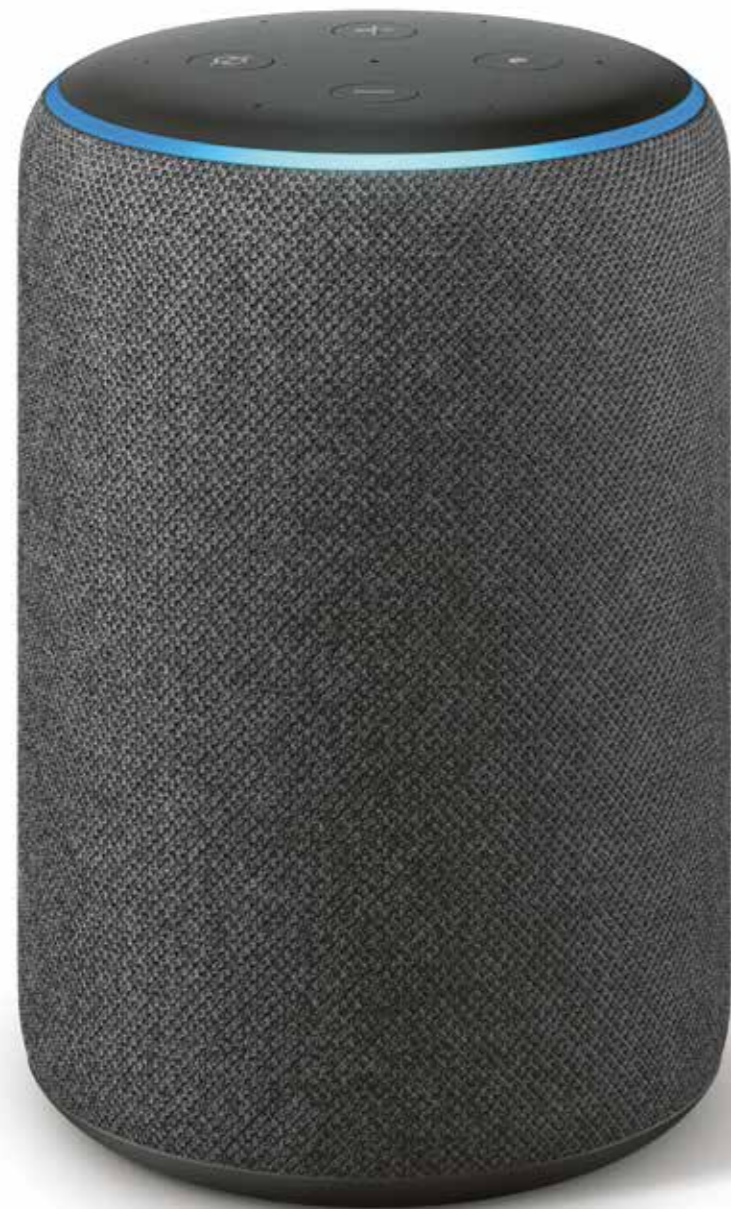
But for readers, the move online has brought all sorts of new opportunities. Self-evidently, it offers people what they want. Readers can now reach a vast array of news sources, constantly updated and easily shared with others. It has also become easier to launch new news sites cheaply. Therefore the Review had to be cautious in the changes that it recommended.

So the Review does not aim to salvage the printed page or even the traditional news group. Rather, it suggests ways to foster the kind of news which benefits democracy – reporting on local councils, the courts, Parliament, hospital boards. That news is not necessarily widely read. But reporting it professionally is essential for a healthy public realm. The Review's most important recommendations are therefore aimed at encouraging the continued production of this 'public interest news' by a number of means, including favourable tax treatment and public funding of some journalists.

Will it work? I don't know. When the Review was published at the end of January, the government received it warmly. But we now have a different government, and people continue to shift away from traditional media. All those Exeter College undergraduates who yearn for a career in journalism might start to look at other options.



Alexa, why are you female?



Seventy-five years ago, three quarters of the Bletchley Park codebreakers were women. Now, tech is a 'man's club', and the UN has warned of the potential harm of Artificial Intelligence propagating bigotry. Inspired by a talk at Exeter's symposium on digital life, **Max Bastow** (2015, Philosophy and Modern Languages) calls for gender equality in AI

As Trinity Term drew to an end, I went to the Barbican Centre to see a new exhibition on Artificial Intelligence. It featured a collection of early computers (from the Leibniz wheel to Turing's bombe), a robotic dog that fetches a ball for you, and an eerie machine which has collected photos of my face, apparently to display them in public (I'll admit, I did press the big 'OK' button that let it do this).

But the thing that I spent the most time on was Mitsuku, the 'world's best conversational chatbot'. After testing Mitsuku's self-awareness ('I am a robot'), religious views ('I am Catholic') and life goal ('to get Leeds United back in the Premiership'), I asked simply: 'do you have a gender?'. Mitsuku said she is a 'female entity', although she didn't know why she was made that way. Professor Gina Neff, on the other hand, has a lot to tell us about this.

Professor Neff, of the Oxford Internet Institute, conducts research on the interplay between societal practices and technology, and in a talk delivered last year at Exeter's symposium on

digital life she tackled precisely the topic of whether AI has gender.

When you look at the component parts of AI, there is nothing gendered to be found: not in the server room, the CPU, the lines of code... In *Artificial Unintelligence*, Meredith Broussard explains that the AI we have is focused on particular tasks and following strict commands: this is called 'narrow AI'. This means that it is just the sum of its parts, such that it cannot develop characteristics like gender on its own: it must be programmed into doing so. Only 'general AI', the stuff of science fiction, could have the superintelligence and autonomy for this. Sadly, it was abandoned as tangible by tech developers in the 1990s.

Our popular imagination of this general AI, however, does almost always have gender. Most stock photo depictions of AI are embodied, and they are usually female. Of 77 film depictions of Artificial Intelligence – from *Metropolis* to *Ex Machina* – only three are neither male nor female.

Troublingly, the gender assigned to AI often reflects sexist stereotypes.

Of 77 film depictions of Artificial Intelligence – from *Metropolis* to *Ex Machina* – only three are neither male nor female

Call Siri a 'slut' and she responds, 'I'd blush if I could'

Authoritative AIs are usually male: consider the all-powerful HAL in *2001: A Space Odyssey*, or the genius robots of the *Alien* franchise. Female AIs, on the other hand, commonly have a sexual or romantic dimension: *Her's* Samantha, with whom the male protagonist falls in love; *Blade Runner's* Rachael, with whom the male protagonist has sex; *Ex Machina's* Ava, who seduces and imprisons the male protagonist. They all reflect male fantasies and fears, whereas depictions of three-dimensional female AI characters are few and far between.

The gendering of AI isn't restricted to fiction, of course. Alexa, Siri, Cortana, and Google Assistant, the four most widely available vocal assistants, are all female. The resulting association between 'female' and 'assistant' is reinforced as we increasingly use these technologies, made worse because they are programmed to be subservient – or even flirtatious – in response to verbal abuse: call Siri a 'slut' and she responds 'I'd blush if I could'. This raises all sorts of alarms. Columnist Laurie Penny sees it as a reflection of how we secretly want to treat women; for social anthropologist Kathleen Richardson, it's a sign that we'd like women to be less irritatingly human; even the UN has warned of the potential harm of Artificial Intelligence reinforcing and propagating bigotry, in a study published in May.

The solution, Professor Neff tells us, is more diversity and representation in the development of Artificial Intelligence: more women in the field, and more consideration of women's needs. She is right, and not just when it comes to women and to AI, but with all stripes of representation in all areas of the

tech industry. In an awful feedback loop, technology is created by and catered to an increasingly narrow demographic, while reinforcing bigotry against anyone outside this demographic. But we can ensure that more women and minorities are hired, and in doing so make it more likely that these same groups are thought about in the development process.

Had the teams working on vocal assistants been less male-dominated, the AIs might have been less bigoted. Had the team who created the airbag not been all-male, they might have thought to test them on frames smaller than a man's and avoided the many injuries to women and children that occurred when they were first rolled out. Had people of colour been more involved in developing facial recognition, it's possible the AI would have been trained with more diverse faces and that IBM's facial recognition software wouldn't fail to identify the gender of a shocking one in three darker female faces, compared with one in 100 for white male faces.

The third of Steve Job's oft-quoted rules for success is to 'design for yourself', and it's good advice for developers. You are aware of your own wants and needs, and you'll always have yourself to test the technology on. But this principle doesn't work if developers aren't diverse: it leads to exclusionary products. This is a huge ethical issue, and it's also just plain bad business: it should be in these companies' self-interest to create technology that works for everyone.

The tech industry is rife with discrimination and prejudice, as highlighted by a leaked memo written by a Google employee in 2017 that argued that the lack of women in tech is a consequence of their biology. There are clear barriers of entry for

underrepresented groups: the number one reason given by teenage girls for not pursuing a tech career is sexism.

Over time, this has reversed the industry's demographics: half a century ago, many companies employed 70-80% women (three quarters of the Bletchley Park codebreakers were women). Now, tech is a man's club: just 20% of Google tech employees are female. Fourteen times as many Americans can name a male leader in tech as can a female one – and this latter group depressingly includes the quarter of respondents who could only name Siri or Alexa as a 'female leader'.

We must break out of the vicious feedback loop of regressive societal norms and bigoted technologies amplifying each other, and with Professor Neff and fellow researchers, activists and journalists fighting for diversity and representation, there might just be hope that this is possible. There are so many incredible female innovators (in AI alone, Fei-Fei Li, Rana el Kaliouby and Jia Li have all made groundbreaking progress in recent years), but we don't hear about them as we do Steve Jobs and Elon Musk. There are so many more brilliant people who have been kept out of – or held back in – the tech industry because of discrimination. Confronting these issues and responding to them is a question of fairness, but it's also plainly a question of having better developers in the field and innovations being richer, inclusive and actually useful to people other than white men. Society as a whole stands to gain if we follow Professor Neff's recommendations.

ALUMNI IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Exeter College alumni are making an impact all around the world – so this year, we began an online feature series shining a spotlight on some of the ways, big and small, our alumni are making a difference. Here, honouring 40 years of women at Exeter, we share spotlights from seven alumnae: a wealth manager, a police detective, an international lawyer, an essayist and 'heroine trainer', a BBC communications guru, an entrepreneurial novelist and a magazine editor.

CHRISTINE BOGGIS (1995, ENGLISH)

Christine is editor of *Knitting* magazine, a regular contributor for *Breathe* magazine, and author of *JOMO Knits*

There's nothing new about the fear of missing out. It's something most people experience during their lives, but recently marketers have coined the acronym FOMO to pressure us into buying anything from luxury holidays to vegan burgers. Fightback came, unexpectedly, from the craft sector: crafters of all kinds announced that, far from being afraid of missing out, they were delighted to stay home and knit, crochet, and papercraft. They called this JOMO – the joy of missing out.

I've been a slave to FOMO for much of my life. During my time at Exeter you would find me anywhere from balls and dinners to the late-night kebab van, women's football, and the audience of *University Challenge*. It's only recently that I've realised staying home with my wool isn't missing out – it's what makes me happy. Maybe it's because I'm older, or because my top favourite people in the world (my husband, children, and two gerbils) all live in my house, or because knitting, which used to be a part-time hobby, is now a full-time obsession. But for whatever reason,



these days I'm fully embracing the joy of missing out. So when I decided to write my first collection of knitwear designs, which was released in April 2019, *JOMO Knits* was the obvious title. As well as twenty-one knitwear designs, including some that are perfect for beginners, the book includes notes on great knitting reads, and how to use knitting as part of your mindfulness practice.

After leaving Exeter I travelled for nine months in South East Asia and Australia, then trained as a journalist. Starting out as a cub reporter on the *Eastbourne Herald*, I went on to

work for an international newswire in Vienna, a legal and lifestyle magazine in the City, and a drinks trade magazine which left me well educated in all kinds of alcohol. Since 2015 I have been editor of *Knitting* magazine, a monthly fashion-led hand-knitting magazine which is distributed worldwide. I also write regularly for its sister publication, *Breathe*, a mindfulness and wellbeing magazine.

As someone who has struggled with anxiety and depression all my adult life, I am really keen to spread the word about the calming effects of knitting to as many people as

possible. Studies have found that the rhythmic activity, the feeling of soft wool in your hands, and the way the needles cross your body as you craft all have soothing effects. For some, knowing that if they enter a room with strangers they can knit and not have to worry about social interaction, is enough to help them get over crippling shyness. In my case, knitting helps me relax after a stressful day in a busy workplace, and gives me something to do with my hands if I can't sit still.

Being immersed in the world of knitting, I hear so many stories about people who have suffered from all

kinds of problems: from seriously debilitating conditions like strokes, to the kind of severe anxiety and depression that leaves you unable to leave your home. All of these people have been helped – some would say saved – by knitting.

JOMO Knits is available from www.thegmcgroup.com. To knit a simple Exeter College scarf designed by Christine visit www.exeter.ox.ac.uk/jomo



XANDRA ROBINSON-BURNS (2010, ENGLISH)

Xandra is an essayist and the Founder of HeroineTraining.com

As soon as I set foot in Oxford off the coach from Heathrow, I was enchanted. I was 15, attending a summer programme, and this was my first trip to the UK. I couldn't believe that one place could hold so many fictional worlds that I treasured. The more I learned about the University and the tutorial system, the more I knew that I had to return as a student.

To this day, reading English at Oxford is the one example I use of pursuing a goal with absolute certainty. It did not take long for my Oxford dream to narrow to Exeter College in particular. I chose it on the recommendation of my summer teacher, Jo Humphreys (2004, English), but I'll admit – really, I wanted to attend Lyra's Jordan College.

As an undergraduate at Exeter, I founded a blog that would become my business: Heroine Training. I couldn't shake the American way of studying literature, where I was relating

what I read to my own sense of self. My blog became an outlet for insights that were too personal for my coursework.

Through my essays and programmes on Heroine Training, I teach women to own their stories, and to care for themselves as much as they do for characters in literature. I specialise in daily life personal development in my Everyday Wonderland accountability club, and host Heroine Training Tea Parties in small cafés.

Beyond my academic studies, so much of my experience at Exeter shaped what I do now: I learned sales as a telethon caller, marketing through Drama Cuppers, and hosting tea parties by gathering friends in my Turl Street accommodation. At Exeter I learned to ask for help, even when I was most intimidated. I learned how to learn – and what all the forks are for in Formal Hall.



JASDEEP RANDHAWA (2010, LAW)

Jasdeep is a public international lawyer, a policy analyst, a visiting professor, and a development consultant

My venture into international development originates at Oxford. The BCL gave me the opportunity to discern the foundations of legal theory, as well as an appreciation of comparative and international environmental, human rights, and public law. While I was at Exeter, alumnus Justice Aarif Barma (1978, Jurisprudence) from the Hong Kong High Court offered a summer clerkship in his chambers to an Exeter law student. I was fortunate enough to be selected, supported by Exeter's international development award. This clerkship was the tipping point to find my purpose: using law as a tool to work for the most vulnerable communities, who often face the brunt of climate change, water scarcity, violent conflicts, and rapid urbanisation.

It's been almost a decade in international development. I've had the opportunity to work across five continents: for the United Nations; with the World Bank in the Nile Basin; with Oxfam as policy lead for South Asia transboundary waters; for the OECD in its flagship water security project; for the German Foreign Office on the refugee crisis and climate change; and with the Home and Justice Ministries of India on judicial reforms and constitutional

design. It's both humbling and gratifying to receive recognition as an expert in my area, which has given me the voice to present my work to a global community. Perhaps most satisfying are the opportunities to engage with young minds through teaching assignments and alumni networks (including that of Exeter), where I can share my ongoing journey with them.

I continue to be amazed by the connection between Exonians, the common values that bind us

My career involves frequently travelling to countries that can be remote, with work that's sometimes emotionally exhausting. I have felt much comforted by the presence and hospitality of Exeter and Oxford alumni worldwide. I continue to be amazed by the connection between Exonians, the doors that can open, and the common values that bind us. I

have been hired by an Oxford alumnus to teach students in Wellington; have been invited by the widow of an Exeter alumnus for dinner and reminiscing in Nairobi; and I have sat on a high level panel with an Oxford academic in a UN climate change conference. More recently, when wanting career guidance, I have been delighted to have various distinguished Exeter alumni offer advice, for which I owe gratitude to the Exeter careers and alumni relations team.

As an Asian woman of colour working in senior leadership positions in the development sector, I am frequently asked how I have had access to these privileged and rare opportunities. Over the years, as I have met people from different cultures and travelled the world, I am more certain of my answer – trust matters, and so does the network. I have been the product of a heavily subsidised world-class education, including at Oxford when Exeter took its chance on me. Guided by the trust invested in me and supported by the Exonian network, it is now my responsibility to at least make an attempt to inspire a few students and young alumni of Exeter.

LYDIA STEPHENS (2011, CLASSICS)

Lydia is a Detective Sergeant with the Metropolitan Police in London and leads a team of detectives working on the investigation into the Grenfell Tower fire

I had known that I wanted to be a police officer since leaving school, and can still remember the reaction of Rector Dame Frances Cairncross when I proudly announced it the first time I met her – signing the College Register. Surprise quickly gave way to enthusiastic support, and she involved me in organising events which would allow me to personally meet leading names in law enforcement. This included Sara Thornton, the then Chief Constable of Thames Valley Police who went on to head the National Police Chiefs' Council, and Ian Blair, a previous Commissioner of the Met. Frances also introduced me to Sir Mark Allen (another Exeter alumnus!) who headed up MI6's counter-terrorism unit in the early 2000s.

Exeter gave me the opportunity to explore parts of that world I may never otherwise have been exposed to. Combined with the astounding breadth of careers pursued by Oxford Classicists, it confirmed my determination to join the police. After shadowing officers while still a student and completing an internship for the Met in the summer before my final year, I was accepted as a Met officer into the National Fast Track Programme. I was sworn in just months after graduating – and I haven't looked back since!

I was launched into an incredible career on my first posting as Police Constable Stephens on an Emergency Response Team in Tower Hamlets, a frontline team responding to 999 calls. Every day was utterly unpredictable – it was a fantastic grounding where I worked with inspirational colleagues and had the privilege of seeing a whole other side to London. I then moved on to Neighbourhood Policing in Bow as a Dedicated Ward Officer, working with communities to tackle the problems that mattered most to them.

I had always wanted to be a Detective so put in for the National Investigators' Exam and, after months of courses, qualified as a Detective Constable in 2017. I joined the Whitechapel CID (Criminal Investigation Department) and worked in serious crime, domestic violence, and hate



crime. I absolutely loved being a DC – managing my own cases, following lines of inquiry, and working closely with the Crown Prosecution Service and barristers to take cases through trial. Since promotion I have enjoyed the broader strategic view that comes with directing a team, and having the opportunity to enable people to do their best. I now have the privilege of working on the MPS investigation into the fire at Grenfell Tower, which has been a totally unique and humbling experience.

A career in policing offers unparalleled variety – I've found myself considering roles I never knew existed! – and is one of the best-kept secrets in London. I enjoy returning to Exeter and dispelling a few myths about working as a police officer, including representing College at an event hosted by the Principal of St Anne's, Helen King (previously Assistant Commissioner of the Met), to help Oxford strengthen its links with policing and law enforcement. I'm always keen to talk to students or alumni who want to know more about the field – so get in touch!

If you are interested in a career in policing or have any questions for Lydia, please email development@exeter.ox.ac.uk



NAMUKALE CHINTU (2006, MANAGEMENT RESEARCH)

Namukale is an Executive Director at UBS in the bank's Wealth Management Division

I am an Executive Director at UBS: assisting African clients in navigating global capital markets, and supporting both their sustainable investments and their philanthropic goals to raise living standards of fellow Africans. My work means I can contribute to African development through managing African clients' investments – that is what gets me up every morning!

Representing African investors in global markets is extremely rewarding, and I owe this in many ways to my ubiquitous relationship with Oxford University, despite my humble beginnings in Zambia. My fascination with Oxford started when I was 10 years old. This had nothing to do with its global reputation, but rather my awe with an innocuous set containing protractor, stencils and compass. It was used in secondary school and branded the 'Oxford Set of Mathematical Instruments' – as a young girl I believed it must have been designed at the epicentre of world knowledge in Oxford!

By the time I was reading Economics at the University of Zambia, I had a more refined, better researched goal – to contribute to African development by studying at Oxford. I graduated with a distinction and landed the Rhodes Scholarship, before reading one MSc in Financial Economics and another in Management Research at the Saïd Business School. I applied for membership at Exeter College, as the Rector, Frances Cairncross, had been an editor at *The Economist*, and the former President of Ghana, President John Kufuor, was an alumnus. So economics and Africa resonated well with me, and Exeter became my calling.

I underestimated the profound impact Exeter would have on my personal and professional life. Many evenings spent in the MCR, and attending College dinners and talks, brought me into contact with remarkable

individuals. I lived with a physicist, an engineer, and a public health specialist; I became friends with two lawyers, a pharmacologist, a software engineer, and an anthropologist. I discovered the exhilaration of rowing and competed at the collegiate level. When I later did my PhD at Cambridge I was immersed in rowing life, and every year I experience a constant internal struggle during the Oxford and Cambridge Boat Race! Exeter stamped on me the exigency of personal lifelong learning.

Studying at Oxford introduced me to banking, and I left a career in development cooperation with the United Nations to work for Morgan Stanley, Lehman Brothers, and Nomura International. I began to appreciate that, for developing markets, wealth creation is key to poverty reduction – rather than exclusive reliance on development aid. Wealth creation directly empowers Africans to improve their livelihoods themselves.

Armed with renewed ambition, my PhD at Cambridge sought to better understand investment in Africa and its connection to reducing poverty. My research contributed towards developing local supplier networks, and a UN framework for African countries with natural resources in structuring infrastructure development deals. Later, at Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corporation, I developed a strategy for the bank to expand its commitment to Africa.

In London I continued developing strategic engagements in Africa when I joined Syntaxis Capital, a boutique mezzanine fund, as Managing Director. I subsequently joined UBS Asset Management to manage the Bank's proprietary portfolio of co-investments and then joined the Wealth Management Division where I'm deepening my work with African clients. This is my story of Oxford and Exeter College – a commitment to serve in Africa. Floreat Exon!

CHARLOTTE MORGAN (1991, ENGLISH)

Charlotte is Senior Head of Communications for BBC News. She previously spent 14 years as a civil servant



I applied to Exeter because of its West Country connections (I'm from Cornwall), and because I was very taken with the huge and beautiful horse-chestnut tree in the Fellows' Garden. By the time I arrived for interview, the tree had been felled, but that was my only disappointment with Exeter.

I often say I chose English so I could read books all day, which is my idea of fun rather than work. Learning Anglo-Saxon certainly tested this theory, but there was something satisfying about a syllabus which covered over a thousand years of language and literature. Much to my surprise, I also took up rowing. I'd never been remotely sporty nor early-rising, but even now I'm becoming nostalgic thinking of the mists rising over the Isis on a May morning. No doubt this gave me teamwork and leadership skills, as

well as calloused hands...

Initially I had no ambitions of going into PR, which I didn't think sounded remotely serious; yet I've had a series of interesting, challenging jobs working alongside formidable and influential people, where I have a seat 'in the room where it happens', to quote *Hamilton*. After College I drifted a bit, workwise. My stint in publishing was fun, with champagne lunches but beans on toast wages, and then I saw a newspaper advert for the Government Information and Communication Service – a rather Orwellian title. In the heyday of New Labour, communication was taken seriously, and fledgling spin doctors had a promising career ahead.

I became a civil servant, starting as an Assistant Information Officer and ending up as Head of News at the Department for International

Development. Along the way I rode in the Prime Minister's cavalcade, visited slums and embassies, and flew over Camp Bastion in a Black Hawk – my personal career highlight. I also spent hours outlining, explaining, and justifying government policy – of all political hues – on everything from local government finance to international disaster relief. I soon realised that although there was disappointingly little demand for my knowledge of *Beowulf*, the Exeter tutorial system had equipped me perfectly to be put on the spot during high-pressure meetings with Secretaries of State, to deal with difficult questions from journalists, and to summarise key points of a detailed document I'd speed-read.

I'm now Senior Head of Communications for BBC News: a fascinating and testing job in which I lead a team of publicists around the world. Lately I've organised the launch of a new bureau in Seoul (BBC news is available in more than 40 languages, from Korean to Pidgin), co-ordinated the introduction of the new *Question Time* presenter, and dealt with numerous controversies about our output. The fact everyone has a stake in the BBC means we're under particular scrutiny – especially at a time of such polarised opinion in the UK.

It will come as no surprise that the internet, and social media, have changed much about this job over the years; yet the principles of working out what you want to say and the best way of saying it have held true throughout. Remarkably like writing an English essay, in fact.

SUSANNA CERASUOLO (2012, LITERATURE AND ARTS)

Susanna is the Founder and CEO of CollegeMapper.com, as well as the Founder and President of College Solutions LLC



When choosing an Oxford college, I listed Exeter first because it was ancient. I love history and architecture, and our Gothic Revival chapel and Hall are remarkable. Exeter is also near the Bodleian – where I knew I would be spending late nights – and has its own lovely and historic library, so I was sold. I loved my time at Exeter, and am delighted each time I return.

I originally applied to Oxford to study Jane Austen; however, during my research, I discovered Girton College, Cambridge (the first university-level college for women) and its foundress, Miss Emily Davies. I then pivoted to focus on the history of women's education, and how this changed the world. Miss Davies was an unmarried, 'uneducated' Victorian woman, who devoted her life to opening the door to higher education for all women. In my opinion every educated woman owes her and her colleagues a great deal of gratitude – and all humanity owes Miss Davies their gratitude for doing so much to liberate half of the human species, for when all are free to thrive, all benefit.

I began my career as a teacher of literature before moving into entrepreneurship, founding a consulting practice as an academic advisor. As the first in my family to attend university, I have always been passionate about

access to education. With this in mind, I founded a start-up aimed at helping underrepresented people attend university. I believe education is the most direct way to break the poverty cycle, liberating people and enabling them to thrive, and this was the mission of my start-up, CollegeMapper. I learned a great deal during my five years as a female CEO and Founder, and I am always happy to talk to anyone who would like to start a company.

Currently I am working on a novel – *Mia and the Dead Feminists* – an experimental work of magical realism set at Exeter! This work examines the history of women's education and how this has altered the relations between men and women. I have also recently completed a visiting fellowship at Cambridge in the Centre for Research in the Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities, where I was researching for my novel; and I will be doing a secondary fellowship in 2020.

Exeter inspired me to look across history, treasure the bright spots in our collective pasts, and do my part to envision the best possible future for all people. Exeter is an ancient college, with 700 years of rich history, and it is very much alive and evolving today. I am honoured to be a part of the 40th anniversary of women at Exeter.

We encourage you to nominate members of the Exeter College community you feel should be featured in the spotlight, be it yourself, a friend, a colleague, or simply an Exonian you admire. You can nominate via the website – and read more spotlight articles – at:

www.exeter.ox.ac.uk/alumni/alumni-in-the-spotlight

Get ExConnected!

Exeter's graduate intern **Ali Hazel** (2018, World Literatures in English) invites you to connect with Exeter alumni and current students on the College's own networking platform, ExConnect

Are you an alumnus hoping to pivot into a different career, uncertain about taking the first step and in need of advice from existing industry experts? Are you interested in giving back to the College by engaging with and mentoring current students? Would you like to reconnect with old Exeter friends? Are you a current student keen to tap into the College's outstanding alumni network?

Sign up today for ExConnect, Exeter College's own networking platform, at www.exconnect.aluminate.net. As of July 2019, over 500 alumni and students have signed up for ExConnect. Over 100 of those members have offered to serve as a mentor to their fellow Exonians. More than 90 Exonians have joined the ExConnect community within the last six months.

Become a mentor

What does mentorship entail? The shape of the mentor-mentee relationship is entirely up to you. Mentors can signal on their profile if they are willing to offer the following mentorship services:

- offer advice via email or telephone
- review a CV
- meet face to face in College or at the mentor's chosen location
- review a job application
- organise work experience or work shadowing
- provide an internship or job

Our current alumni mentors come from sectors such as Education and Research, Academia, IT Services, Law, Finance, Marketing, the Non-profit Sector, Accounting, Consulting, and Science R&D.

To become a mentor, simply click on the 'Activate Mentor Profile' button at the top of your Mentor profile page.

Mentees, reach out to the alumni network

Mentees may search for potential mentors in the alumni network by matriculation year, industry, location, or the kind of mentorship desired. It's easy to send a mentorship request: simply introduce yourself, explain the kind of questions you have, and attach a CV or cover letter if you would like your prospective mentor to take a glance over your application material.

Not just another social media platform

ExConnect is exclusively for and used by members of the College. It syncs easily with your LinkedIn profile, but offers you the chance to connect in a more personal way with Exonians, regardless of the stage of their career or physical location.

ExConnect is user-friendly and has recently been updated to match the College's website. Get online and connect today!

Visit www.exetercollege.aluminate.net to join the network of Exonians at ExConnect today.

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EVENT DATES FOR YOUR DIARY 2019– 2020

SUNDAY 6 OCTOBER

Freshers' Parents' Tea

FRIDAY 18 OCTOBER

Physics and Engineering Dinner

FRIDAY 1 NOVEMBER

Modern Languages Dinner

FRIDAY 8 NOVEMBER

1979 Reunion hosted by Richard Morris

SATURDAY 9 NOVEMBER

Inspiring Minds: 40th anniversary of co-education at Exeter College

SATURDAY 23 NOVEMBER

MedSoc Dinner

TUESDAY 10 DECEMBER

Winter Drinks in London

SUNDAY 15 DECEMBER

Alumni Carol Service

SATURDAY 25 JANUARY

Football Dinner

FRIDAY 31 JANUARY

Classics Dinner

THURSDAY 6 FEBRUARY

Fortescue Dinner

SATURDAY 22 FEBRUARY

Parents' Dinner

FRIDAY 20 – SUNDAY 22 MARCH

Meeting Minds: Berlin

SATURDAY 21 MARCH

Pre-1960 and 1960-1969 Gaudy

FRIDAY 17 – SATURDAY 18 APRIL

North America Reunion: New York

WEDNESDAY 22 APRIL

Amelia Jackson Society Lunch, Cohen Quad

THURSDAY 7 MAY

MCR Three-Minute Thesis Competition, Cohen Quad

SATURDAY 30 MAY

Alumni Garden Party

SATURDAY 30 MAY

Boat Club Dinner

SUNDAY 21 JUNE

Leavers' Lunch

SATURDAY 27 JUNE

1995-1999 Grand Gaudy

FRI 18 – SUN 20 SEPTEMBER

Meeting Minds: Oxford

SATURDAY 19 SEPTEMBER

1970-74 Gaudy

All events, unless otherwise stated, take place at Exeter College. For full details of events and booking details please see www.exeter.ox.ac.uk/events. Event details may be subject to change. Invitations are typically sent out three months prior to an event.

DEVELOPMENT AND ALUMNI RELATIONS,
EXETER COLLEGE, TURL STREET, OXFORD, OX1 3DP
+44 (0) 1865 279619 | DEVELOPMENT@EXETER.OX.AC.UK
WWW.EXETER.OX.AC.UK/ALUMNI