Setting the Scene

Before I come to the trenches, let me tell you the village is a ruin and the church spire a stump; every single house has been devastated by shell bursts and machine gun fire.

I saw a hare advance down the main street a moment ago, then pause with the sun shining bright red through his ears.

Sir Andrew Motion
Oxford Executive MBA

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Jeremy Harris, Director of Public Affairs, University of Oxford

This month’s cover is a specially commissioned painting by Jenny Urquhart (St Hilda’s, 1994), who reflects on Sir Andrew Motion’s (Univ, 1970) war poem ‘Setting the Scene’. The poem adapts a letter sent from the Western Front by Captain Ted Wilson, but the creative significance of the adaptation and the painting reside in the fact that we don’t ‘remember’ the Great War any longer, since we weren’t there. As Oxford’s Professor Sir Hew Strachan puts it in his video series (see p8), we instead ‘discover’ it.

In a marvellous epigraph to his recent collection of war poems, Professor Emeritus Jon Stallworthy (Magdalen, 1955) makes a similar point. “What was it for, /that War to End Wars? /It was for us. /It was for you and yours.” The painting is dated 2014, the poem published in 2012. The contrast of dereliction and death, and the sun “shining bright red through [the hare’s] ears” is both vitalistic and plangent. Elsewhere, our feature about the University and the war (p36) tells a little-known episode about the many German and Austrian summer school students and what happened when the war broke out in August 1914. In a deliberate juxtaposition of a more recent conflict, this issue also pays tribute to Tim Hetherington (LMH, 1989), who paid the ultimate sacrifice in his career as a war photographer when he was killed in Libya in 2011.

Keeping a broad perspective, we also look at Restoration Oxford through the young eyes of the Earl of Rochester, and consider the upsurge of entrepreneurialism in the University. On a lighter note, we are soliciting Oxford-centric cooking and recipes, and in return are giving away some space-age saucepans (see p21!).

Dr Richard Lofthouse
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Oxford Today
In this issue…

Michaelmas Term 2014

Your voice
6 Letters

OT digital
8 Web, email & apps

Inside Oxford
10 News
14 The Big Picture

Shaping the world
16 Debate
19 Research
22 Oxonians at large

Alumni diary
25 Diary

Features
28 Entrepreneurial Oxford
How entrepreneurship is currently blossoming as a result of learning

32 Rochester’s Oxford
Restoration Oxford through the eyes of John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester

36 The Germans in Oxford
The outbreak of WWI, and how it affected the summer school of 1914

44 Explaining the world to the world
The life and legacy of Oxonian photojournalist Tim Hetherington

Common room
51 Books
57 Good sport
58 Food and drink

Oxonian lives
60 Portrait
65 Obituary
66 My Oxford

MICHAELMAS HIGHLIGHTS

22 Oxonians
Meet Oxonians who are shaping the world, including etymologist Mark Forsyth and his book in a nutshell

57 Good sport
Channel swimmer Marisa Schubert discusses her swim and the sporting opportunities at Oxford

66 My Oxford
Vivienne Faull, Dean of York Minster, on her life at the University and her career in the Church

Meet David Leake, Head Gardener at Corpus Christi, p60
Your Voice Letters

In response to...

OT 26.2: The Sins of Financiers

I doubt if I will be alone in wishing to congratulate Dr Michael Black for his admirable article ‘The Sins of Financiers’ (OT, 26.2, p.42). It is the best, most comprehensive yet concise summary of at least two decades of financial lunacy that I have read.

Two questions arise.

First, if the Nobel Institute has rules to prevent it making posthumous awards, perhaps its regulations should be altered to allow it to annul a Prize in the event – such as that described by Dr Black – that supposed economic science turns out to be quackery, however seductive to the credulous.

Second, on the basis of a career spent in the banking industry in the UK and overseas, I think Dr Black is right to refer to other ingredients which added to what turned out to be a perfect financial storm. The development of computer-driven models pointed to an apparently golden future where decisions would be ‘better’, and certainly cheaper, than those made by experienced, but necessarily fallible, human beings.

For example, illiquidity, the intrinsic danger arising from borrowing ‘short’ and lending or committing ‘long’, was well known to us fallible mortals active in the 1960s to 1990s, as the reason for the collapse of many financial institutions in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. But we were old hat and therefore ignored. I hope the current and future generations will never again forget to be wary of politicians, economists or technocrats who dream of any new financial paradigm.

I look forward to reading Dr Black’s next article – on quantitative easing?

AG Bacon
Hertford, 1958

In light of Michael Black’s illuminating and entertaining article on ‘The Sins of Financiers’, one really wonders whether economics should not be reassigned to the Faculty of Theology.

David Richardson
Magdalen, 1963

This is just an appreciation of the best explanation I have read (even including Buffett’s letter of 2003) of derivatives and I’ve spruiked it at bit.ly/otsins. So thank you and congratulations.

Alistair Mant
University of Sydney

William Blake

Jonathan Downing’s discovery of William Blake’s Illustrations for the Book of Job is an augurous find, and a refreshing report on treasures that still await an intrepid bibliophilic explorer. Oh, the joys of a dusty old library, in our age of e-books and social media. I am reminded of the Oxonian novel A Discovery of Witches by Deborah Harkness, where heroine/modern-day-witch Diana Bishop follows the mysterious manuscript Ashmole 782. Could there be something like an Ashmole 782 in one of the college’s libraries? I await with bated breath!

Reynaldo Nera Obad
University, 1966

Ruby Wax

I was delighted to read of Ruby Wax’s experience as a mature student. I, too, studied for an MSt, but at the ripe old age of 51. Being an undergraduate would have been idyllic, but, as with her, I was not quite ready for academia in my earlier years. However, it is never too late to study. I was accepted by my fellow twenty-something postgrads as if there was no age gap and even played football for the HCR against the BNC staff (just the one half). It was one of the finest years of my life.

Dudley Moore
Brasenose, 2003

Hogacre

I am delighted to see that you are spearheading the development of Hogacre Common Eco-Park (OT 26.2, p28). However, in the interests of high Oxford scholarship, Barrie Juniper (Mr Apple-Oxford) must correct some of the statements.

In your group photograph, the lady to the right (Madeleine Ellis-Petersen) is holding a Bramley’s Seedling, the best cooking apple in the world, but nothing to do with Oxford (Nottingham c.1812). Of the apples you list, I wouldn’t bother with any of the Waste/Eynsham varieties, including Red Army; not worth devoting space to in any orchard. Blenheim Orange from Woodstock, certainly: still a fine dual-purpose apple, and in my orchard at Wytham (where I have more than a hundred varieties) I have what is supposed to be the nearest clone to the original Blenheim. What Rosemary Russet and Allington Pippin have to do with Oxford, I don’t know. The former was raised at Ronald’s Nursery in Brentford, Essex, in about 1831. Allington Pippin was raised in Lincolnshire. A real Oxford apple, one that your great-grandmother used for Christmas apple sauce for the goose, is Hanwell Sourcing: Hanwell, up near Banbury. It grows well in my orchards.

Barrie Juniper
St Catherine’s, 1953

Class of 2012

Tom Doak thought his lectures in the 1970s were poor (OT 26.2, Letters): they were also mostly poor, and irrelevant to the curriculum, in the 1950s. The tutorials weren’t marvellous, either – accurate and informed, but hardly inspiring. In 1755 or so Edward Gibbon found that ‘Dr – well remembered that he had a salary to receive, and only forgot that he had a duty to perform.’ Is this perhaps yet another cherished Oxford tradition?

Ron Farquhar
Oriel, 1955

We welcome letters for publication, but may edit them to fit. Unless you request otherwise, letters may also appear on our website. Write to us at: Oxford Today, University Offices, Wellington Square, Oxford, OX1 2JD
Oxonians at Large

I enjoy reading ‘Oxonians at Large’ but wonder if you might consider including some of us who have gone into fields which are slightly under populated by our peers, such as social work.

James Rowland
Pembroke, 1998

Tutes and Tech

I enjoyed Kate Lindsay’s spoof article ‘Tutes and Tech’ (OT 26.2, p24) and, in particular, her colourful phraseology: my favourites being ‘optimum digital experience’ along with ‘web annotation tools’ and ‘augmented reality’. The hilarious make-believe world in which students book their tutorials on the internet like buying a railway ticket and interact with other students (sorry, ‘peers’) by video conferencing is brilliantly conceived. No wonder these virtual reality students and staff are so busy, being in thrall night and day to their gadgets, oblivious to the real world of sensory perception.

I very much enjoyed the piece on the premature junketing at Oxford by the allied powers in 1814, as well as noting the remark about Frederick, Duke of York. The ‘rhyme about marching up to the top of the hill’ most probably came from Marlborough’s wars a century before. The ‘grand old Duke’, actually aged around 30, has now been recognised as a great Commander-in-Chief, most recently by Roger Knight in Britain Against Napoleon. It was a role he fulfilled for the best part of 30 years, excluding a short intermission due to mistress mischief!

Chris Crowcroft
St Catherine’s, 1971

Margaret Thatcher

When I moved to Oxford in 1983 to succeed Sir Richard Doll as Warden of Green College, I attended my first meeting of Congregation, that memorable occasion when by a significant majority vote it was decided not to award an honorary degree to Margaret Thatcher, then Prime Minister. Many of those who voted against were close friends, doctors, scientists and others for whom I had a high regard; all of whom shared my concerns about her government’s policy on the universities. However, those opponents failed to recognise, as I believed they should have done, that the award of an honorary degree is not intended to endorse policy but rather to acknowledge achievement. For Thatcher to have become the first female Prime Minister of the United Kingdom fully justified the award of such a degree.

John Walton (Lord Walton of Detchant)
Belford, Northumberland

While I would agree with Lord Sainsbury of Preston Candover KG that a donor of a building to Oxford University has the right to name that building, I would note in respect of Margaret Thatcher’s refusal to accept Lord British Against Napoleon. It was a role he fulfilled for the best part of 30 years, excluding a short intermission due to mistress mischief!

Chris Crowcroft
St Catherine’s, 1971
Oxford and the Great War

A quick guide to online features marking the Great War and Oxford

Oxford Today is hosting a series of remarkable films looking into the history of the Great War. There is also a broad-ranging, World War One microsite hosted by the University, and a further consideration by Oxford University Press, which not only explores how the war affected the Press, but reviews numerous books published this year to coincide with the centenary of the outbreak of the conflict.

1. Letters
Consistently a winner on our website – evidently you like to read what others wrote! bit.ly/otletters

2. Farewell, Tolkien’s Tree
The beloved black pine that may have inspired Professor Tolkien has finally had its day, but its demise will furnish the answer to a burning, two-century-old question about its provenance. bit.ly/otblackpine

3. Beating the BBC at Grammar
John Humphrys, on Radio 4’s Today programme, gets in a spot of grammatical bother. bit.ly/otgrammar

4. Celebrating the Sheldonian
To celebrate its 350th birthday, here are ten things you didn’t know about the Sheldonian Theatre. bit.ly/otecelebrating

5. Would You Kill the Fat Man?
A review of David Edmonds’ philosophical tome, posing a moral question for the ages: would you sacrifice the life of one man to save five? bit.ly/otfatman

The University has created a dedicated microsite to commemorate Oxford’s role in the Great War.
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Helping Burma

In direct response to Aung San Suu Kyi’s request, the University is actively helping Burma’s HE sector.

When Aung San Suu Kyi received her honorary doctorate from Oxford two years ago, she asked the University to help Burma’s beleaguered HE sector to get back on its feet. In the intervening two years major strides have been made towards this goal, focused especially around the University of Yangon, an affiliate of the University of Calcutta from 1878, and formally founded as Rangoon University in 1920. Professor Nick Rawlins, Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Development and External Affairs, paid Oxford’s first official visit to Yangon in May 2013. At that point, Yangon had not educated undergraduates since 1988, and had been systematically deprived of funding by Burma’s military authorities. Oxford is working with Yangon on a transformative strategic plan covering everything from library management to curricula development. Particular foci include law, IT systems and library management, zoology and conservation, English language teaching, political science and gender studies. With the generous assistance of donors, both St Hugh’s and Balliol colleges have been able to establish scholarships for Burmese students, while Oxford students have already visited Yangon, part of a long term, strategic partnership.

PM unveils new Thatcher building

The Prime Minister David Cameron (Brasenose, 1988), unveiled a portrait of the late Baroness Thatcher (Somerville, 1943) at Said Business School on Friday 13 June 2014 to mark the naming of the School’s new building: the Thatcher Business Education Centre. Welcomed by Professor Andrew Hamilton, the Vice Chancellor, and by Professor Peter Tufano, Dean of Said Business School, the Prime Minister unveiled the painting of Baroness Thatcher before speaking about her business legacy. An edited transcript of his speech can be read at www.oxfordtoday.ox.ac.uk

Petraeus visits the University

On the occasion of the annual lecture of Oxford’s Changing Character of War Programme, General David Petraeus (pictured centre, above), discussed his career with British General Sir Nick Parker (above left) and Chichele Professor of the History of War, Sir Hew Strachan (above right). Subjects included the transformation of the US Army from Cold War institution to a self-critiquing, learning organisation equipped to mount small unit counter-insurgency operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. Petraeus, who commanded allied forces in Operation Desert Storm in 1991, emphasised the need for provocative thinkers, and how the general must be a politician in coalition warfare.
Encaenia celebrated

Coinciding with the 350th anniversary of the Sheldonian Theatre, 2014 marked a splendid Encaenia.A

Accompanied by Merton College choir, five honorands were presented this year to the Chancellor and bestowed with honorary degrees. Reverend Dr Katharine Jefferts Schori, who heads the American Episcopal Church, was made Doctor of Divinity. Formerly an oceanographer, Schori is the first woman to head the Episcopal Church and the first scientist – and incidentally, as the Orator noted, holds a pilot’s licence. Sir Anish Kapoor CBE, the sculptor, and Mr Robert Silvers, co-founder of The New York Review of Books in 1963, were both made Doctors of Letters. Professor Jean-Marie Lehn, PhD, was made a Doctor of Science. Currently Professor Emeritus at the University of Strasbourg, Lehn won the Nobel Prize with two colleagues in 1987 for their work on the chemical basis of molecular recognition, and was formerly a visiting professor at Lincoln College. The composer Sir Harrison Birtwistle CH, RAM (Hon FRAM), was made Doctor of Music and described by the Orator as “an Orpheus of our time, a most skilled priest of Melpomene”, a reference to his work The Mask of Orpheus and his opera The Minotaur, besides other work. ☀

Below, from left: Katharine Jefferts Schori, Robert Silvers, Anish Kapoor, Harrison Birtwistle and Jean-Marie Lehn

Wadham isn’t going vegan

In June, students at Wadham College voted to ban meat and dairy products in college, to raise awareness of the link between diet and climate change. However, contrary to reports in the press, Warden Ken Macdonald noted that the college “has no plans to serve exclusively vegan food”. Instead, vegan options will be made available within the college menu. University research has found that a meat-eater has a carbon footprint approximately double that of a vegan (see p19).

Hutton leads bike ride to Venice

Hertford Principal Will Hutton, whose weekly column in The Observer may be familiar to readers, led a group of 32 Hertfordians from Hertford’s Bridge of Sighs to Venice’s, in just 11 days in July, pedalling 1,100km and raising nearly £300,000 towards student support and access. Hutton notes, “The target is one way or another to enlarge the possibilities from those from lower income families.” Hertford’s special bridge opened a century ago, on 14 January 1914.

ONLINE

For a full listing of academic appointments, honours and awards, go to www.oxfordtoday.ox.ac.uk
Send-off for Tolkien’s black pine tree

Health and safety has ended the life of one of Oxford’s greatest trees

After two limbs fell earlier this year, Oxford University’s Botanic Garden has had to fell the famous black pine known as ‘Tolkien’s tree’ on the advice of experts from the City Council and University. The tree, a *Pinus nigra*, was a favourite of JRR Tolkien during his time in Oxford.

Dr Stuart Lee, an English academic at Oxford University who has studied the fiction and manuscripts of Tolkien and ran the 2013 Tolkien Spring School in Oxford, said: “Tolkien hated the wanton destruction of trees for no reason but it sounds to me like this is for all the right reasons. So whilst this is sad news, it is inevitable. “It is often said that the black pine inspired the Ents in *Lord of the Rings*, and it may be he liked the tree and saw something in it that inspired Treebeard, but in fact the Ents have many sources. ‘Ent’ means ‘giant’ in Old English, and Tolkien’s love of trees goes back to his childhood.”

The loss of the tree will have a silver lining. Dr Stephen Harris of Oxford University’s Department of Plant Sciences explains: “The received wisdom regarding the black pine is that it was planted in 1799 from a seed that was collected by the Third Sherardian Professor of Botany, John Sibthorp, in Austria. If the story of the black pine is true then it should be at least 215 years old. The pine having to be cut down means that we have the opportunity to date the tree precisely and determine whether Sibthorp is likely to have been involved. The particular subspecies has also been a point of controversy which we should now be able to settle.”

Dr Alison Foster, acting director of the Garden, notes that the garden will propagate from the tree, while the dead wood will be used for an educational project.

2014 Distinguished Friends of Oxford

On 14 June recipients were honoured at a ceremony at Harris Manchester College

The Award recognises those who have given of their time, contacts and influence in support of an initiative beyond that which can be recognised through traditional channels. Their impact has been profound and the results would have been impossible to achieve using current available resources. Separate from any financial contributions, their legacy will have a lasting impact on the collegiate University and above all they are perceived as role models to other volunteer contributors.

- Dame Helen Alexander DBE (Hertford)
- Mr Elliot Gerson (Magdalen)
- Dr Bettany Hughes (St Hilda’s)
- Mr Andrew Lo (Green Templeton)
- Mr Dean Lush (Oriel)
- Mr Guy Monson (Lady Margaret Hall)
- Mr Richard Salter QC (Balliol)

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The Big Picture
Nature’s homespun super material

Scientists often study nature to imitate it, but a team at the Department of Zoology, led by Professor Fritz Vollrath, are directly harvesting nature’s product. That’s why his team are developing fascinating new ways to use silk in modern manufacturing.

The silk produced by spiders and silkworms is already wonderful – light, strong and highly elastic – but it has untapped potential. Vollrath’s team has discovered that it can be cleaned, treated and remoulded to tune its material properties, so it can be made super-strong, say, or highly biodegradable.

The result is a material with many possible applications. Its low density and high elasticity means that it can be used to create a new breed of lightweight protection, such as cycling helmets or car body panels, that keep us safe without weighing us down.

And, because the material is biocompatible, it can be used to create hard-wearing replacement joints or lightweight scaffolds to promote the regrowth of nerves that are readily accepted by the body.

It’s also highly sustainable: natural, environmentally friendly, and potentially straightforward to mass-produce. Forget your tie; the whole future could be woven with silk.

Fritz Vollrath and Nephila edulis, the golden web spider. Professor Vollrath’s team at the Oxford Silk Project explore the biological, chemical and mechanical properties of spider silk.
Safer than you think

Fracking has already been used in more than two million boreholes so is hardly a new and unproven methodology. For instance, fracking is routinely used to enhance recovery of oil and gas from many conventional reservoirs of sandstone and shale, such as, for example, in Europe’s largest onshore oil field in Dorset, Wytch Farm, nestled in the beautiful New Forest. The legitimate concerns relating to fracking are no greater than would apply to any industrial operation, and are addressed by the right regulatory framework. But there is huge public fear and even unrest in many countries and indeed, in the US itself, at the prospect of fracking coming to ‘our community’.

Hydraulic fracturing of a shale gas reservoir involves drilling into the reservoir and pumping fluid into it at sufficiently high pressure to overcome the natural tensile strength, plus the confining stress. There is nothing intrinsically dangerous about pumping fluid into the deep subsurface at high pressure, provided the well is monitored carefully throughout. The resulting minor ‘earthquakes’ are tiny, relative to

Too risky by far

I am opposed to fracking in the UK for five main reasons: economic risk, local environmental cost, global environmental cost, social cost and opportunity cost. All the evidence for what follows is in the log of events on my website, www.jeremyleggett.net.

First, the economic risk. The US ‘shale boom’ looks as though it will turn into a bubble. The oil and gas industry is losing cash by the tens of billions, because high drilling costs mean most companies are spending more than they are earning from fracked gas and oil. Wider US industry may have benefited from cheap gas in the short term, but production from all shale gas regions save the Marcellus has peaked already, and many of us watching the detail see little prospect of the gas industry delivering growing production far into the future.

Second, the local environmental cost. Once Dick Cheney freed fracking from scrutiny under the Safe Water Act (the so-called ‘Halliburton Loophole’), bad news about contamination and health impacts should have been predictable. It has been slow to emerge, in part because of widespread use of gagging orders by
The scale of fracking.

...aquifers. This is a fear that rests on a failure to grasp fracking fluid will eventually penetrate groundwater being incorporated with water and sand into the activity.

...accidents are very rare compared to the scale of operations, accidents can and do happen. But such accidents are very rare compared to the scale of the activity.

...there is another concern: that the chemicals being incorporated with water and sand into the fracking fluid will eventually penetrate groundwater aquifers. This is a fear that rests on a failure to grasp the scale of fracking. A typical fracture is less than a centimetre across and no more than 200 to 300 metres tall. Because shale gas reservoirs are only exploited at depths of 2 to 3km below the surface, and groundwater aquifers are typically a few hundred metres beneath the surface, the likelihood of fractures propagating anywhere near the water supply is extremely small.

...The greatest risk to groundwater comes instead from poor drilling methods, and particularly from poor quality cement lining of the borehole, which is a recognised problem for all drilling operations and for which regulations are already specifically designed. The chemicals used in fracking fluid also amount to about one per cent of the total pumped volume, and are strictly controlled in the US and UK.

...Methane leakage to the atmosphere is not well quantified at present, partly because of the paucity of data on natural leakage of methane from the deep subsurface into shallow aquifers and to the surface, but this does need careful monitoring in the future.

...Without a doubt, the greatest risk to communities where fracking operations would be undertaken comes not from pollution from drilling, or from induced seismicity, but from the vastly increased road traffic that would be required to supply the drill site. Only local communities can judge whether this disruption is justified by the privileges of living in a highly developed society, fuelled at least for the time being in large measure by oil and gas.

...Many such objectors are Conservative voters. The Prime Minister says he wants to deliver sufficient shale gas to drive down the gas price enough for manufacturing to return to the UK. He has little or no chance of getting that past his own voter base without committing political suicide, even if much gas proves extractable by fracking – which the British Geological Survey clearly has doubts about.

...Fifth, the opportunity cost. There is a shovel-ready alternative over time that can be developed surprisingly quickly: a power source that is infinite and easy to tap. Politically, the government's own opinion polls show that solar is outstandingly the most popular energy technology with the British public, year after year, miles ahead of fracking – even now, so early in the game. The opportunity cost is that many leaders in the oil and gas industry, and their supporters in government, want actively to suppress this fast-growing global industry, with its fast-falling cost base – along with other clean-energy industries – so as to not put investors in gas off.

...‘Fracked gas may well be worse than coal in greenhouse terms, over the full-life-cycle’

...the industry as part of compensation payments for wrecked farms and impaired health. But now a regular drip of bad news has started, soon likely to snowball as ever more people realise the reality behind the industry’s insistence that all is well.

...Third, the global environmental cost. Gas industry operations can leak methane, a potent greenhouse gas, from wellhead to hob. Early research by the rare university teams not cowed by oil-industry funding are very worrying when it comes to fracking. Fracked gas may well prove to be worse than coal in greenhouse terms, over the full-life-cycle. And British shale basins are far more faulted than US shale basins.

...Fourth, the social cost. It is likely that few British people as yet fully appreciate the industrial infrastructure, waste disposal challenges and lorry movements that are required for a typical US shale ‘sweet spot’, and what the social cost of that would be if superimposed on rural Britain. Yet already local opposition is severe, even against single vertical unfracked test wells. Planning for the first such was recently rejected by a council in Sussex for the first time, with objectors ‘weeping with relief’ in the chamber on hearing the decision.

...Many such objectors are Conservative voters. The Prime Minister says he wants to deliver sufficient shale gas to drive down the gas price enough for manufacturing to return to the UK. He has little or no chance of getting that past his own voter base without committing political suicide, even if much gas proves extractable by fracking – which the British Geological Survey clearly has doubts about.

...Fifth, the opportunity cost. There is a shovel-ready alternative over time that can be developed surprisingly quickly: a power source that is infinite and easy to tap. Politically, the government’s own opinion polls show that solar is outstandingly the most popular energy technology with the British public, year after year, miles ahead of fracking – even now, so early in the game. The opportunity cost is that many leaders in the oil and gas industry, and their supporters in government, want actively to suppress this fast-growing global industry, with its fast-falling cost base – along with other clean-energy industries – so as to not put investors in gas off.
Invest in Oxfordshire helps companies relocate into Oxfordshire and expand their business in the county. This free and confidential service is delivered on behalf of the County Council and the Local Enterprise Partnership and has seen an upsurge in interest over the last year, as innovative companies seek to tap into the rich resources in the area.

If you are looking to set up a business in the county, or indeed grow your business here, you can access a wide network of support to help smooth the path. This includes:

- Finding commercial premises
- Accessing specialist facilities
- Linking to sector networks
- Support for recruitment and training
- Helping companies apply for funding
- Assisting the relocation of staff (housing/schooling)
- Providing on-going business support

**Life Sciences:**
A major sector in Oxfordshire is Life Sciences. Companies leverage the scale of the research activity within the University and the strength of the cluster in the county. Successful initiatives cover a full spectrum of activities, including drug discovery, development and clinical trials.

**Advanced Engineering:**
Oxfordshire sits within the heart of Motorsport Valley™. Key technology areas include:

- Materials and composites
- Hybrid technology
- Aerodynamics

**Space-Related Technologies:**
Oxfordshire is the UK’s gateway to the space sector and home of the Satellite Applications Catapult. This provides:

- Support for companies to commercialise products and services that utilise data from space.
- Themes include transport, resource management and security.

**Creative Industries:**
Oxfordshire has a thriving creative industries sector, with strengths in:

- Publishing
- TV & Film
- Gaming
- Music & Sound

www.investinoxfordshire.com
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Power to disrupt

How new energy sources could tip the scales for the global economy

The use of unconventional energy sources could create global problems, even reigniting East-West political struggles, according to research from the Smith School for Enterprise and the Environment.

The new study examines the environmental, economic and political implications of fuel sources like shale gas and tight oil, its liquid equivalent. While the work recognises that such advances could themselves be a blessing for the global economy, it also warns that their impact could stretch beyond the merely economic. Indeed, it suggests that they could redraw the global map in terms of trade balances.

The research cites the United States as an example, pointing out that its imports of natural gas have dropped to below three trillion cubic feet per annum, while domestic production has soared to more than eight trillion. The majority of that rise has come from sources such as fracking, and it’s estimated that those yields will continue to increase.

The report, published in Applied Petrochemical Research, suggests that US independence in fuel procurement will likely be closely followed by the EU, though the means of extraction may differ.

Regardless of which new method is used, though, Dr Oliver R Inderwildi, from the Smith School, and his co-authors raise concerns about what it means at a geopolitical level. They point to rising tensions between the East and West, suggesting that “public attention [could be drawn] away from environmental issues towards energy security concerns.” While Europe currently relies on Russia for gas, for instance, Inderwildi posits that raised gas production in the US and the EU could strengthen transatlantic bonds and weaken dependence on the East.

While that frees the West from fuel dependency, it could create new tensions. “Russia is as dependent on foreign currency as we are dependent on fossil fuel imports,” writes Inderwildi. “When cash flows change directions from East to West, many in Russia will be mighty disappointed.”

Similarly, the authors point out that, while the US currently polices the seven global oil chokepoints, in turn creating a kind of stability in the Middle East through diplomacy and military presence, that may not last. “Will this continue when the US only has to import relatively minor amounts of petroleum which are likely to come from Canada, Mexico and Venezuela?” asks Inderwildi. “It is tough to forecast how this situation will develop.”

Eating green

Two University studies have revealed that eating less meat can reduce greenhouse gas emissions by half. Research by Dr Peter Scarborough, from the Nuffield Department of Population Health, studied the diets of over 40,000 people and found that emissions for a meat diet are approximately twice as high as those for vegans and about 50 per cent higher than for vegetarians.

Elsewhere in the University, a report by Dr Tara Garnett of the Food Climate Research Network at Oxford suggests that strong government leadership and substantial investment is required to shift our eating habits.

Seeing the light

Smart glasses that can help people with limited vision navigate have been tested in public spaces for the first time. Developed by Dr Stephen Hicks and researchers from the Nuffield Department of Clinical Neurosciences, the glasses use a video camera and computer processing unit to create high-contrast images of nearby objects. The glasses don’t replace lost vision, but do help boost awareness of surroundings and, in some cases, even facial features.

“Eventually, we’ll have a product that will look like a regular pair of glasses and cost no more than a few hundred pounds,” explains Hicks.

OT

ONLINE

Read the full study:

bit.ly/otpower
There’s a well-held view that technology will liberate us from work. But a new study from the Centre for Time Use Research within the Department of Sociology suggests people are working longer hours not because they need the extra money but because their work has become intrinsically more fulfilling – and that suggests that your grandchildren will work as hard as you. “Contrary to what most economists thought until quite recently, work isn’t going to disappear,” explains Jonathan Gershuny, Professor of Economic Sociology. “In fact, people could end up doing more.”

In a study co-authored with Dr Kimberly Fisher, also from the Centre, the researchers closely examined time-use diaries recorded in 16 countries since the ’60s. They have made the curious observation that many of the activities which occupied the so-called leisured classes in the 19th century – intellectual and creative pursuits, politics and the magistracy, estate management and even military endeavour – now constitute the paid work of the affluent. “Things that were really asserted definitely not to be work 150 years ago are very often the most highly paid work activities now,” says Professor Gershuny.

The pair link the upward trend of this kind of work with the observation that in post-industrial society wealth is no longer dependent principally on capital goods, but is increasingly won by the people who are best equipped to use their expertise in the provision of services. Much of the value ascribed to physical and artisan skills has been eroded, and instead a financial premium is now placed on the abstract abilities which are needed to develop and deliver new technologies.

The fraction of the population who can actually perform this premium work is also increasing, but not as fast. The explanation for that is simple. “Those who do enjoy doing it do more of it,” explains Gershuny. “People doing the most interesting work work relatively longer hours than people doing less interesting work. Some people’s work is their central life interest and they’ll want to carry on doing it pretty much indefinitely.”

BULLETIN

Suicides rise

The recession has been linked with more than 10,000 suicides across Europe and North America between 2008 and 2010, according to research from the Department of Sociology. The findings of Dr Aaron Reeves, along with researchers from the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, reveal that suicide rates rose in the EU, Canada and the USA after 2007, increasing by four times among men. Describing their estimates as ‘conservative’, the figures in fact demonstrate a reversal of a downward trend in suicide rates in the EU. Understandably, the study cites job loss, home repossession and debt as the main factors contributing to the increase in suicide rate. Read the paper: bit.ly/otrecession

England’s first skipper

England’s first football captain was an Oxford undergraduate. A new addition to the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography explains that Cuthbert Ottaway (1850-1878) was in his final year studying classics at Brasenose College when he captained the England association football side against Scotland at Glasgow on 30 November 1872 – the first ever official international football fixture. Ottaway was also a cricketer, batting alongside WG Grace and captaining the Oxford University Cricket Club to victory over Cambridge University at Lord’s in 1873. He represented Oxford at five sports against Cambridge.

OTNEntry: bit.ly/otcuthbert
Identifying disease from family snaps

Team builds software to help detect rare genetic diseases from photographs of faces

S potting rare genetic disease is, perhaps by definition, difficult. But now a team of scientists from the Department of Engineering and the Department of Physiology, Anatomy and Genetics has developed software that can spot such conditions by analysing family photographs.

Many genetic conditions are known to exist but impossible to test for, because the gene variants that cause them haven’t actually yet been identified. Instead, doctors often rely on pronounced facial features to make a diagnosis, because up to 40 per cent of rare disorders give rise to distinctive differences in appearance. Sadly, few clinicians are trained in this way, and even then it is hard work and open to subjectivity. For Dr Christoffer Nellåker and Professor Andrew Zisserman, the solution lay in computer vision: creating software that could learn to spot subtle differences in images, identify trends and then go on to apply those patterns to new, unseen images. This work ties together expertise across very different scientific fields – computer vision, computational biology and clinical genetics – to address a single, difficult problem.

Using 1,363 publicly available pictures of people with eight genetic disorders – including Down’s syndrome, Fragile X syndrome and progeria – the team created software that could spot 36 distinct facial features which could be used to distinguish between the separate conditions. It worked well, so the team has since expanded their tool, using 2,754 images to create software capable of identifying more than 90 disorders. The software has now been shown to make it 30 times more likely that a patient will be grouped with the same rare disease patients, making it easier than before to narrow the search and find the correct diagnosis.

“We hope that in future clinicians around the globe with access to a computer and a camera, or even just a smartphone, will be able to use them to aid the diagnosis of rare diseases,” explains Nellåker.

Who uses the web?

In 2013, 78 per cent of the UK population said that they used the internet – but that figure alone doesn’t tell the whole story. In the Oxford Internet Institute’s biennial Internet Survey, data about Britain’s internet use allows researchers to discover how the internet is used around the country. Use is highest in London, where 89 per cent of people report using the internet, and comparable in Reading and Leicester. By contrast, across large swathes of Wales and the North East, only 59-70 per cent of the population report that they get online. Such disparity has seen the Oxford Internet Institute coin new terms for digital users, from e-Mersives – those who are ‘comfortable and naturally at home in the online world’ – to Adigitals, who consider the internet difficult to use and full of immoral material.

Cooking (better) on gas

Dr Thomas Povey from the Department of Engineering Science has developed a new style of pan which can boil water using 40 per cent less energy than a normal design. Inspired by high-efficiency cooling systems used in jet engines, the Flare pan has fins around its circumference which channel heat from the flame across the bottom and up the sides of the pan, resulting in better heat distribution, shorter cooking times and lower energy consumption. The pans work best on gas hobs. Via UK retailer Lakeland, Oxford Today is running a competition to win a Flare pan. For more details please go to www.oxfordtoday.ox.ac.uk then ‘Common Room.’
Out of a nutshell

Mark Forsyth
Lincoln, 1996

Mark Forsyth has found literary fame writing about aposiopesis, polysyndeton and epizeuxis. He published *The Etymologicon* (2011); then *The Horologicon* (2012), and most recently *The Elements of Eloquence: How to Turn the Perfect English Phrase*. Forsyth, who read English literature and language at Lincoln, notes that: “I just wanted to explain the mechanics of language. Not just that a phrase was successful, but why.” His first book went to number one on Amazon. Forsyth helped it by printing the entire manuscript on a sheet of A4 and then folding it minutely to fit inside a walnut shell. With that, he evoked the origins of the term ‘in a nutshell’, which apparently has to do with a bishop, Homer’s *Iliad* and a bet.
Alternative investor
Michele Giddens
Balliol, 1984

Armed with an MA in PPE from Oxford, an American MBA and five years working in Eastern Europe, Bangladesh and the Middle East, Michele Giddens co-founded Bridges Ventures in 2001. A London-based investment firm that combines financial return with positive societal outcomes, Bridges Ventures has raised a range of funds that take this approach, ranging from growth businesses to property to social enterprise and social impact bonds. Most recently it launched an alternative property fund with an educational, healthcare and affordable residential accommodation remit. Past investments include a low-cost gym, a low-cost, walk-in vet clinic, a community and sustainability focused East London hotel and a social impact bond to help children out of care. Bridges’ first fund raised £40 million; its latest £125 million. A pioneer in a field still coming of age, Giddens has helped move sustainable and impact investment from the fringes to the mainstream, and is a leading light in the world of private equity. www.bridgesventures.com

Michele Giddens: focusing on social matters

Record-breaking birdwatcher

Neil Hayward
New, 1992

Starting with a Canada goose in January 2013 and ending with a great skua in December, Neil Hayward logged 747 sightings of distinct bird species in North America, smashing the previous record. The biochemistry consultant says his ‘big year’ happened by accident. He’d spotted 375 species by the end of March and was inspired to up the ante. He clocked up 195 nights away from his home in Cambridge, Massachusetts, drove 51,758 miles, was at sea for 147 hours over 15 days, and flew 193,758 miles on 177 flights through 56 airports. Highlights of the year included spotting a rare red-billed tropicbird in Maine and writing a blog about his experiences. This was followed by thousands as his target drew nearer, making it nearly as rewarding as the birdwatching itself. For ‘big year’ birders, spotting 700 species is the holy grail, and Neil became only the 13th person ever to cross this threshold. “My record is a personal achievement but it got people excited and talking about birds.” accidentalbigyear2013.blogspot.co.uk

Educator
Gautam Patel
Hertford, 1999

Gautam Patel co-founded the not-for-profit Sajeevta Foundation in Gujarat in 2010, his goal to “tackle the huge educational and social inequality in India by delivering high quality learning”. The Foundation’s aim is not only to develop an educational programme, but to teach creative problem-solving and life skills that Gautam partly recognised himself in Oxford’s tutorial system.

Healer
Stelios Kiosses
Rewley House (OUDCE), 2010

Kiosses is familiar as presenter of Channel 4’s The Hoarder Next Door, but his aim is to promote the benefits of cognitive therapy. Two episodes were even filmed at Kellogg College with the dean, Dr Alistair Ross. Kiosses left the NHS to set up a mental health clinic in Birmingham, where he uses an array of complementary treatments. “I call it modern science combined with ancient wisdom.”

Retailer
Chris Manson
St John’s, 1985

An unlikely saviour of the high street, Chris Manson founded stationery chain Blott, now with 12 UK stores, the latest in Oxford. After reading modern history at St John’s, Manson achieved huge success in various retail businesses before founding Blott. “We might be in a digital age but there’s still an insatiable demand for pencil cases, schoolbags and all that stuff,” he says.

www.bridgesventures.com

www.stelioskiosses.com

www.blottshop.com

www.facebook.com/sajeevta

@oxtoday
The Oxford Alumni Network’s Three Shires group recently held its third Oxford University Outreach Event for more than 90 local sixth-formers, and their parents and teachers. The sessions aim to dispel some of the myths surrounding the application process. For anyone who still thinks Oxford is not for all, we leave you with this quotation from a year 11 student:

“I looked at my jeans when I came in and wished I’d put on smarter clothes but then I met Steve Rayner (Senior Tutor, Worcester) and realised he’s just like me really.”

Our network of more than 200 regional alumni groups does so much more than just connect Oxonians in a particular region. They act as ambassadors and advocates for the University, contributing to Oxford’s ongoing success by supporting student recruitment, raising funds for on-course students, providing links to research/industry contacts, and increasing the profile of Oxford’s academic work in their location.

With representation in more than 90 countries, there’s sure to be a group near to you.

Ready to get involved? Find your local group on the website

www.alumni.ox.ac.uk/groups
A thirst for knowledge

Helen Massy-Beresford explores a growing demand from Oxford alumni for substantive academic engagement

Oxford graduates are demonstrating a growing appetite for staying in touch, not just with their college but with their department and the latest research in their subject. The University’s alumni relations department is adapting to meet that demand.

But with longer working hours and mushrooming demands on our time, reading an article in an academic journal may be more appealing – or at least more likely to happen – than committing to doing a course. “Just because you’ve completed your three-year degree doesn’t mean you lose that curiosity,” says Christine Fairchild, director of alumni relations.

The last major alumni survey, in 2012, highlighted a desire to access learning resources Oxonians enjoyed as students. Among the University’s responses was to join other institutions worldwide, including Yale and MIT, in providing access for alumni to the JSTOR digital database of academic journals. Former students from all over the world can read all the archived journal articles on the database that current students can access while at Oxford.

“Recent leavers and alumni are grateful for the service,” says Jennie Courtney, head of alumni resources at the University.

Almost 5,000 alumni have created an account with JSTOR since summer 2012, with 96,179 examples of alumni access and 124,508 separate searches. “The capacity to access peer-reviewed, rigorous and authentic research easily and from your home, rather than having to physically come to Oxford, is key,” Courtney observes.

Fairchild adds that the alumni relations department, which she directs, is working with colleagues in the Department for Continuing Education to find other ways it can meet the changing demands from alumni. Some possibilities are immersive courses over a long weekend, as well as executive courses to meet demand from professionals to keep up with new qualifications. “The art and the science of adult education are changing: people are increasingly seeing it as a way to keep their cylinders charged,” she adds.

More than half of respondents to the 2012 survey said they still had an interest in their subject and recent research, explains Courtney.

Three years ago, only about seven departments had an alumni relations programme with dedicated staff. Now more than 30 people are working in dedicated alumni relations roles in the various academic departments.

Sending out subject-specific newsletters and magazines with Oxford Today is another way to meet graduates’ demand for staying up-to-date with their subject, and also boosts the departments’ networks. Subject-focused alumni relations can also forge connections with industry.

“Many alumni enjoy the opportunity to engage with prospective and/or current students studying the same course,” Courtney observes. “There’s an element of nostalgia, an interest in what has changed since they were studying the subject. And in many cases, a need to know about cutting-edge research to apply this to what they’re doing in their day-to-day lives.”

www.oxfordtoday.ox.ac.uk | oxford.today@admin.ox.ac.uk | @oxtoday
Explore Vienna with Oxford

The Meeting Minds: Alumni Weekend promises to be a Viennese break to remember

In April 2015, the University encourages all of its alumni to experience the magnificent city of Vienna with the fourth Alumni Weekend in Europe. Taking place biennially since 2009, Meeting Minds: Alumni Weekend in Europe is an opportunity to refresh your mind, meet old friends and make new connections against the stunning backdrop of the host city.

The Weekend offers a lively and varied programme. Alumni are welcome to bring guests and to book any selection of events which appeal to them. The cornerstone of the Weekend is a stimulating academic programme to be held on the Saturday in the eighteenth-century Orangery of the Schönbrunn. The programme brings members of Oxford’s academic fellowship together with expert alumni to discuss topics including the future of energy and Vienna’s place in history as a cultural capital.

The city of Vienna will welcome alumni on Friday with an opening reception in the Gothic Rathaus. Throughout the Weekend, there will be opportunities to dine in style. On Friday, college and department dinners in central Vienna will offer a wonderful excuse to catch up with old friends. On Saturday, the University will host a black tie dinner in the famous Palais Ferstel. On Sunday, Her Britannic Majesty’s Ambassador to the Republic of Austria, Susan le Jeune d’Allegeershebeque CMG, will kindly open her Residence to alumni, who are invited to enjoy a heuriger-style brunch.

For those who wish to see as much of the city as possible, the programme helps alumni make the most of their time through short thematic walking tours led by state-accredited guides. No cultural immersion in Vienna is complete without a waltz and the programme gives singles and partners the chance to take a short waltzing class in Vienna’s most prestigious dancing school. No experience is required, but survivors of Oxford May Balls are warmly invited to see if they have what it takes on a rather different sort of dance floor.

The Meeting Minds: Alumni Weekend in Vienna takes place on 24–26 April 2015. Online booking will be available from mid-October.

For more details go to: www.alumniweekend.ox.ac.uk/vienna

Professional Networking Events
Are you looking for industry insights? Join fellow alumni for Professional Networking events in London. Likely sectors to be covered include the City, the Law and Museums.

Please visit the events page at www.alumni.ox.ac.uk/events for the most up-to-date information about these evenings.

Christmas parties
A number of regional groups are organising Christmas gatherings for alumni. Kent, West Sussex and New South Wales already have dates in the diary; check the full calendar at www.alumni.ox.ac.uk/events

Varsity Boat Race
London, Saturday 11 April
Don’t miss the Oxford & Cambridge Boat Race as 2015 marks the first time that the Women’s race will be held in London alongside the Men’s. See www.theboatrace.org for full details. If you aren’t based in the UK, many regional groups hold Boat Race events around the world (more than 20 events were held in 2014, including in Chicago, Houston, LA, Luxembourg, Melbourne, Munich, San Diego, Strasbourg, Toronto and the United Arab Emirates). Check the full calendar at www.alumni.ox.ac.uk/events

Visit the University’s alumni website for more information on all of the benefits available to you. Find out what’s happening in your area, discover new offers and access a range of resources exclusively for Oxford’s alumni.

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With such a concentration of bright minds, Oxford fizzes with inspiration and ideas. But now the University is helping to bring together like minds, from undergraduates to alumni, to turn ambitious academic thinking into world-changing business. Welcome to entrepreneurial Oxford.

The University’s main focus always has been – and always will be – learning, but there is an increasing desire to apply it, too. “The University is primarily focused on teaching and research,” explains Stuart Wilkinson, from the University’s Knowledge Exchange team. “But people outside these walls – government, industry, alumni – are increasingly focused on the impact it can have. And a large part of that is down to entrepreneurship.”

Oxford already has a fine track record in turning academic work into commercial success, of course. Most recently Natural Motion – an animation technology company for the video game and movie industries, established in 2001 out of the Department of Zoology – was purchased by social network gaming company Zynga. By simulating the biomechanics and motor control nervous systems of real animals and human beings, Natural Motion creates animation with unprecedented realism, which has been used in everything from the best-selling game Grand Theft Auto to Hollywood films Troy and Poseidon. Perhaps no surprise, then, that it sold for a cool $527 million back in January of this year.

While Natural Motion succeeded because of great ideas and talented staff, it was also given an important helping hand by Oxford’s Isis Innovation. “Those guys just don’t fit the same model as academicians,” explains Tom Hockaday, Managing Director of Isis Innovation. “Those guys just don’t fit the same model as academics.” Hockaday is referring to the bright young things you might see inhabiting the hip startups of Silicon Valley rather than research labs among the dreaming spires: twenty-somethings for whom intellect, enthusiasm and determination are a surrogate for a lifetime in research. They need a different kind of help.

Isis Innovation’s solution is the Software Incubator: a physical space and support network allowing teams to develop nascent software ideas into real products. “We give them space to call their own, provide professional services like commercial mentoring and Intellectual Property advice, and generally lend a hand,” explains Hockaday. Open to all University members, the incubator is used by alumni as regularly as undergraduates. “So far, 27 projects have come in and 11 have turned into successful companies,” explains Hockaday.

Unsurprisingly, Isis draws most of its talent from the sciences, but not everyone arrives with a fully formed team. “We often try and introduce people, to build teams, to try and make them as effective as possible,” explains Hockaday.

Elsewhere in the University, more diverse groups are gathering without such explicit guidance, and represent something of a sea change. “When I arrived in Oxford four years ago, the business school had two centres for entrepreneurship: the Skoll Centre for Social Entrepreneurship and the Saïd Business School’s Entrepreneurship Centre,” explains Pamela Hartigan, director of the Skoll Centre. “I immediately thought that was dumb: why have two, when there shouldn’t be any dichotomy? Every entrepreneur should have social, environmental and financial concerns in mind.”

Acting on Hartigan’s idea, the two centres, while not merging, have collaborated to form the Oxford Launchpad, which opened in February 2014. “The idea was to create a shared space, where students, faculty and alumni could come together to ideate,” explains Hartigan.

Stepping through its doors at the front of the Saïd Business School, it feels as if someone took a small slice of one of Google’s international offices and placed it in Oxford. Formerly used as a reception room
within the School, the space has been transformed by a team from the Skoll Centre and the Entrepreneurship Centre at the Business School, including Becky Fishman and Zelga Anderson. Now, a blackboard, dense with new ideas scribbled in haste, fills an entire wall of the otherwise bright and light modern space; eager hands tap at laptop keys, their owners perched on the edge of Eames chairs lining a long central table; others kick back to think with a coffee as they lounge in brightly coloured sofas.

The Launchpad is open 7am until 11pm, seven days a week, and the space often has to turn people away. “One month we had 300 people wanting to use it,” explains Hartigan. “It’s just not big enough!” Indeed, the initiative already has approaching 1,000 registered users, a figure that’s rapidly growing – helped along by the fact that, unlike the Isis Software Incubator, the Launchpad is open to anyone, alumni or otherwise. While some within the space prioritise financial concerns, others social or environmental, the new centre provides a melting pot in which people from any background can work on business ideas. Hartigan believes that cross-pollination is the key to its success. “The magic really happens when we bring a diverse set of students together,” says Hartigan. “The problems of the world aren’t going to be solved by MBAs alone.”

That’s a refreshing message: if every business could have within its business plan a whole spectrum of performance indicators, and not just a profit target, then the world would change for the better. Certainly, there’s a remarkable range of business ideas already taking shape within the walls of the Launchpad, all of which take into account the triple bottom line: financial, social, environmental. They include game-based learning technologies for the developing world by iGBL to an ethical ticket sales platform called Tigmus that ensures that artists secure their fair share of an event’s taking. And this is all being carried out by people from a wide range of disciplines: in a recent case study competition at the Launchpad, where teams worked to prepare and pitch proposals for social entrepreneurial ventures, 72 students from 26 different Oxford departments took part. “We had people from the Departments of International Development and Public Health, the Blavatnik School of Government – even the English and Law Faculties,” explains Hartigan.

That cross-pollination isn’t limited to people, though. The Business School and Skoll Centre are now teaming up with Oxford’s Mathematical, Physical and Life Sciences Division to create a new Entrepreneurship Portal: an online hub, inspired by the one used by TechCity in London, to share updates and resources within the entrepreneurial community across the University and Oxfordshire more widely. “The portal aims to amplify events, resources and anything that can generally add value to the lives of entrepreneurs across Oxford,” explains Soushiant Zanganepour, who’s leading the project. The site should be running by the end of Michaelmas Term 2014.

All this may sound like the University is catering for those already certain that entrepreneurship is for them, but it’s helping the less experienced, too. Just up Banbury Road at the Careers Service is The Shed: the University’s approachable face of entrepreneurial training. Less a glamorous start-up space and more a series of workshops and events, its purpose is to introduce students to the concept of entrepreneurship and let them work out if it’s for them. “I was helping several groups of students who had come to the Careers Service to talk about entrepreneurial ideas,” explains Jonathan Black, Director of the Careers Service, who also has experience in entrepreneurship and currently chairs an Isis Innovation university spin-out company. “I asked them why they weren’t going to other University initiatives, and most of them said that they were a little… intimidating.”

The result is more of an educational programme than the other initiatives within the University. “We didn’t want to actually develop startups, just provide students with skills they’d find useful in the future,” explains Black. So The Shed runs innovation workshops, where students learn startup basics, and business plan challenges, where they see how an idea goes from concept to full-fledged business proposal. Perhaps the main draw at The Shed, though, is the Startup Immersion: a 48-hour taste of life as an entrepreneur, where students form teams, develop ideas, interview potential clients, build business models and pitch ideas to a panel of enterprise experts.

Furnished with such experiences, it’s no surprise that Oxford’s students are now taking on researchers and alumni. Wolfson Innovate, for instance: a social entrepreneurship competition open to college members, with a prize of £5,000 and advice from professional mentors, is just one of a handful of Oxford-based contests designed to pit Oxford entrepreneurs of all ages against each other. The winners of this year’s inaugural event were a team of DPhil students from the Institute of Biomedical Engineering, going by the name of Sentimoto, which is developing wearable devices to monitor the health of the elderly. Their smartwatch measures physiological attributes of the wearer as well as information about their surroundings to determine their wellbeing, feeding back information so that they can take action or share their data with family or carers.

Clearly, those bright young things that Hockaday noticed are showing established academics and alumni a thing or two – so it’s only a matter of time before initiatives like the Oxford Launchpad and Wolfson Innovate, which bring them together, spur the next Natural Motion. “We are at the very beginning of a wave of interest in entrepreneurship,” muses Hartigan. “And I think the overall message is that you need an excellent team around you to succeed. If you can’t find that at Oxford, where can you?”
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For years, the reign of Charles II has been regarded as a strange couple of decades, chiefly defined by the Restoration of the king to the throne after the decade-long Commonwealth interregnum. The clichéd images of men in enormous wigs flouncing about trying to outdo each other in witty sayings and widespread street prostitution might have some basis in fact, but they have long overwhelmed the reality. Now there is an ongoing reappraisal of the period, begun in 2009 by Jenny Uglow’s revisionist biography of Charles, A Gambling Man, and continued this year by two major drama series, both of which have attempted to offer an alternative perspective on the time. The first, New Worlds, is a long-awaited follow-up to the acclaimed 2008 drama The Devil’s Whore, which dealt with a semi-fictionalised account of the dying days of the ageing Charles’s court, and the other, The Great Fire, is a major four-part series looking at the social infrastructure of London in 1666, even as the city burnt to the ground.

These attempts to reassess a strange and contradictory time, as rich in philosophical thought and literary achievement as it was in strong wine and hard living, are welcome, especially as we approach the 350th anniversary of the Great Fire. It is also true that Oxford played a major part in both the intellectual and fleshly aspects of the day. Charles fled to Oxford in 1665, initially to escape the plague, setting up a satellite court complete with hangers-on and ladies of ill repute. One of the men who joined him there had only recently left the University himself, where his experiences had come to epitomise Oxford’s rapid change in miniature. Added to his growing notoriety – his arrival was delayed by his incarceration in the Tower of London for his attempted abduction of the woman who would become his wife – this would eventually lead him to become the most infamous figure of his age. This man was John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester.

Rochester, who had inherited his title in February 1658 after the death of his father Henry, a staunch Royalist supporter, initially arrived at Oxford in January 1660, at the age of 12. Although this seems young today, it was considered entirely normal for young gentlemen-in-training to arrive at university then; John Donne had attended Hertford (then Hart Hall) from the age of 11 in the previous century. Rochester found himself in a topsy-turvy world, torn between the traditions of its past and a chaotic present.

The young Rochester matriculated at Wadham, which highlighted the contrast between old and new. At the time Oxford’s newest college, it had been founded in 1613 by the wealthy landowner Nicholas Wadham’s widow Dorothy, and had risen to eminence thanks to its former Warden, John Wilkins, who supported religious and social tolerance and founded the ‘experimental philosophical club’, which later became the Royal Society, during his tenure. His successor Walter Blandford was a skilful politician who also served on the commission that restored Royalists to their previous places in society.

Oxford had been strongly Royalist in the early years of the Civil War, with Charles I making his court there, and this had led to the University being regarded with much suspicion by Cromwell, who recognised its potential for intellectual dissent. He made various attempts to control it and purged undesirable figures. He even had himself made Chancellor around 1650, presumably to keep an eye on any outbreaks of potential sedition.

The result was that Oxford slid into a moral and intellectual decline that did not abate for centuries. ‘Oxford slid into a moral and intellectual decline that did not abate for centuries’ Alexander Larman reconsiders Restoration Oxford and its influence on the young Earl of Rochester

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The Earl in a portrait by an unknown artist (c.1665–70), showing him bestowing a poet’s laurels on a monkey, who returns the favour by tearing pages out of a book.
Even when Rochester arrived in 1660, academic life remained strained. As an MA scholar, Rochester, who wore a more distinguished gown to mark him out from non-aristocratic undergraduates, had to attend theological discussions every other week for two hours. He was expected to attend chapel regularly, with a restored Anglican, rather than Puritan, ethos, and sometimes the services began as early as 5am. He then had a short break for a rushed breakfast of cold meat and coarse bread before spending the time until lunch at lectures, or preparing for these lectures with his college tutor. Lunch itself – a plain meal of bread and cheese, washed down with weak beer – was a strict affair in which only Latin and Greek were allowed to be spoken, and then the afternoon was spent at a mixture of lectures and university events, before the evening saw the presumably exhausted Rochester attend chapel and then see his tutor for private prayers and to discuss the activities of the day. It was an existence that created young men who were ready for whatever the world would throw at them.

At least, this was the reality for the poor students, who had no other option than to conform to the lofty ideals of godliness and a classical education, in the hope that it would equip them for roles in the clergy or as private tutors. The aristocratic students, who had no need to care about careers, blew off the requirements and regarded Oxford as a sort of exotic finishing school. They frequently had little interest in academic work and rebelled. The “strange effeminate age”, as the contemporary antiquary Anthony Wood later called it, saw the wealthy men dress in affected style, while the women of the town who fraternised with the undergraduates donned breeches. Unsurprisingly, in this place of cross-dressing lewdness, bisexuality, sodomy and drunkenness were rumoured to be rife.

Colleges vied with one another to see which was the most debauched; the students of St John’s made it their mission to attend chapel drunk, while Balliol men were made “perfect sots” by their “perpetual bubbling”. It was said that three MA students of All Souls, an especially notorious college, were so drunk at the Mitre tavern that they frightened the hostess to death. One bishop’s son was found dead, with a brandy bottle held tight within his grasp.

The fellows were no better. Magdalen and New College were notorious for their buying and selling of places, and at least one University ceremony had to be postponed because the Vice-Chancellor was too hungover to officiate. Proctors, allegedly responsible for discipline, made it their business to be “known boon blades” of the town, famous for their sexual and alcoholic prowess, and the tutors were ineffectual. Rochester’s own tutor, Phineas Berry, was more interested in drinking coffee in the newly founded coffee shops than he was in ministering to his students or keeping discipline.

Cromwell’s carefully nurtured home of Puritanism had become its opposite. Syphilis could easily be contracted from a prostitute in one of the city’s many whores or alehouses, while Wadham itself later became notorious for homosexual activity, revelling in its nickname of ‘Sodom’. Rochester was caught up in the midst of this bacchanalia. He became acquainted with a Merton don, Robert Whitehall, a dubious figure who proudly boasted that he was “joined with sack and faced with claret”. The two had a close relationship, with Whitehall lending Rochester his academic gown so that his protégé could visit the taverns and return home undetected by the proctors. This amity came at a price, and it was widely believed that Whitehall, a bachelor, and Rochester were intimately acquainted, possibly as a result of coercion – although the two men enjoyed a friendship that lasted long beyond university, with Whitehall continuing to send Rochester gifts throughout his life.

Yet it would be wrong to think of Restoration Oxford as purely a place of alcohoic and sexual abandon. Christopher Wren was based in the city throughout the decade, eventually designing the Sheldonian Theatre in 1664. Created the Savilian Professor of Astronomy in 1661, it was during his time in Oxford that he first came up with a redesign for St Paul’s, which became a reality after the cathedral was destroyed in the Great Fire of 1666.

Wren and others like him were associated with Wadham while Rochester was a student. Oxford imparted a spirit of intellectual curiosity and a willingness to question the established order that would last for the rest of his short life. Dying at 33, his notorious existence encompassed everything from impersonating an Italian doctor in order to seduce women to virtually annual banishment for insulting the king, and none other than Samuel Johnson later sniffed that he “lived worthless and useless and played out his youth and health in lavish voluptuousness”. It was possibly at Oxford that he contracted the syphilis that caused his death. Yet the University also inculcated an intellectual brilliance that would define his greatest poems and satires, leading him to challenge the established ideas of the day with wit and vigour. The charged atmosphere of the time led him to an interest in both philosophy and drama, the first of which dictated his great satires, most notably his masterpiece: A Satire Against Reason and Mankind, and the latter of which led to a near-fascination with disguise and role-play. Of course, so did dressing in Robert Whitehall’s tattered academic gown.

It seems impossible that his brilliant career would have occurred without his wild years at Wadham. Today he remains a source of fascination, was portrayed by Johnny Depp in The Libertine and is proudly extolled by the college as a great alumnus – an indication that time is a great healer, and that respectability, like posterity, settles on the most unlikely candidates.
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The outbreak of the First World War on 4 August 1914 occurred in the very depths of the university vacation. On 2 August, as the crisis deepened across Europe, Oxford’s Officer Training Corps, in which one in every three undergraduates was then enrolled, wrote to its past and present members “advising them to come to Oxford in the event of war”. TB Strong, Dean of Christ Church and the then Vice-Chancellor, established an ad hoc
three-man committee, which he chaired, to process the volunteers, and through August and September some 2,000 men who had made their way back to Oxford joined up via the University.

If Oxford was soon filled with its returning sons, at the moment when Britain declared war on 4 August we might imagine a local scene of high summer in Oxford – the last of those mythical, carefree, golden, pre-war summers, indeed – without students. We would be wrong, however. There were more than 300 of them in Oxford at the end of July for the third Vacation Course for Foreign Students: 190 women and 131 men. Of these, more than half came from the Axis powers: German students numbered some 156 and Austro-Hungarians 25. Their repatriation, a story hitherto untold, is both comical and poignant, and does Oxford much credit.

Summer schools for adult students under university auspices had been held in Oxford since the 1880s. From 1888 the Oxford Summer
Meeting attracted more than 1,000 students each year, many of them women, almost all of them comfortably middle-class, to courses on literature, history and the arts. From 1910 the new Workers’ Educational Association summer school in Balliol College attracted a different group of students who were attending WEA classes in history and economics in their home towns in the Midlands and North through the rest of the year. Over time, foreign students attended the Summer Meetings, and in increasing numbers: in 1909 when the theme of the Meeting was ‘Italy’, between 400 and 500 of the 1,800 students in total were from abroad, many from Germany. This was too many students for Oxford to handle at any one time, and the idea of a separate ‘Vacation Course for Foreign Students’ emerged, therefore, to be held in alternate years.

The first of these was organised for the next year, 1910, and the third course in 1914 was on ‘Contemporary England, its Political, Social and Economic Life, and its Literature’. Running for four weeks from 31 July to 25 August, students could elect to attend for the duration, which the large majority did, for the first two weeks, or for the last two weeks. Fees were set at £3 for the course (not including board and lodging) with a further ten shillings to pay if the student wished to be examined at the end. The foreign students boarded in the town in contrast to our current practice of accommodating summer schools in colleges. There were to be English language classes, courses on English literature and history, excursions to “places of historical or educational interest in the vicinity of Oxford”, and conferences and debates “dealing more particularly with the English Educational System”, a clue to the fact that most of the foreign students attending were teachers, many of English language and literature.

Readers will appreciate at once that there is little difference a century later in the nature and purpose of contemporary Oxford summer schools. The Master of University College, Reginald Macan, gave the inaugural lecture on Friday 31 July; a certain Mr Attlee, later the Prime Minister, was rostered to give a lecture on ‘Poverty’ at the Girls’ High School on 11 August, though whether he did or not is unclear. Major Attlee, as he became, would go on to distinguished war service at Gallipoli, and in Mesopotamia and France.

From 27 July it was clear that this was not just another diplomatic scare but a far more serious confrontation between rival European alliances. The head of the Oxford University Extension Delegacy, which was responsible for the summer schools, was the notable Oxford historian and legendary extension lecturer to audiences outside Oxford, John Marriott, later the Conservative MP for Oxford city. He plays a crucial role in Vera Brittain’s remarkable memoir of these years, Testament of Youth; without his lectures in Buxton, her home town, …
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and intervention with her parents, Brittain might
never have come to Somerville and Oxford.
Unflappable, commanding, stentorian – though
not without humanity and compassion – Marriott
was at the centre of subsequent events, and his letter
books, which are kept in the Oxford University
archives, provide a running commentary on what
occurred. He was supported by Vice-Chancellor
Strong, another long-standing proponent of adult and
workers’ education in the university, though Strong’s
attentions were mostly elsewhere as he organised
recruitment and assisted in the remarkable and rapid
transformation of Oxford from university city to
troop depot and hospital that summer and autumn.

Some foreign students who had left their
departures for Oxford late chose not to travel at all.
Many of the younger German men who did travel
arrived in Oxford, learnt the latest news or found
their military recalls waiting for them, and
immediately returned to Germany to join their units.
As Marriott wrote to Strong on 30 July: “Whether
there will be anyone left to attend [the course] after
mobilization, I cannot tell.” Caterers, tradesmen,
college bursars and booksellers were suddenly put
on hold. Marriott thought they might probably need
70 copies of John Galsworthy’s 1910 play *Justice*, an
attack on the punishment of solitary confinement
which had caught the liberal mood of the age, but
could “give no definite order”.

The Great Western Railway was laying on a train for
an excursion to Winchester but it had to be cancelled:
“It is quite possible that the attendance at the
Vacation Course may shrink from 300 to almost zero
in consequence of the war.” When Marriott wrote to
the Oxford Tramways Company to hire a “motor
conveyance” for a jaunt to Radley College, he added:
“Number of passengers cannot be guaranteed.” The
converazione at New College was cancelled, courses
were cut from the programme, apologies to tutors
were dictated, cheques in compensation sent out.
“Please act on the assumption, hourly becoming more
& more of a certainty that your services will not be
required,” wrote Marriott to one tutor on 3 August.
Angry Oxford landladies wrote to the University to
complain that their guests had returned early and left
them short, or in other cases, that their guests were
staying much longer than expected and had run out
of money for the rent!

But some aspects of the summer school carried
on as usual, including a musical evening on
12 August evidently organised by the German
ladies still in Oxford, which began with Schubert’s
Marches Militaires played by Fraulein Somer and
Fraulein Sellnick. How innocent they all were.

Marriott was not idle. A man for a crisis, on 6
August he wrote to the Home Office to request advice
and help “in regard to the departure of alien
enemies”. Many students had already left, Marriott
reported, but he was still responsible for 56 Germans,
including four men; 13 Austrians, all women; and
sundry others including 14 Norwegians, nine
Russians, eight Danes, seven Italians, seven French
and seven Swiss, five Americans, four Belgians and
students from Rumania, Luxembourg, Peru, Chile
and Japan as well, a total of 143. “The vast majority of
the above are teachers, some are nuns,” observed
Marriott, and they were greatly alarmed at their
situation. Were they allowed to leave Britain, he
asked? How might they leave, if they could? And what
was the probability that they would reach their
destinations if they began the journey? Many of them,
he pointed out, were running out of funds. The
German teachers were dependent on weekly
payments from their government which had been
frozen. In other cases banks could not be contacted
and the paper money that students had brought with
them to England could not be changed into sterling.

Marriott also wrote to the American Consul, asking
him to consult, on behalf of the University, with the
German and Austrian Consuls “who I understand
remain unofficially in London” about the situation of
their nationals in Oxford. On seeing an advertisement
in the press that the International Women’s Suffrage
Alliance was willing to support foreign students
cought in London, he wrote to ask if they might also
support students stuck in Oxford. On learning

‘Angry Oxford landladies wrote to the
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‘Oxford – town as well as gown – rose to the challenge of supporting the German students while still here’

that a train route to Germany was still open via the Danish port of Esbjerg, Marriott wrote to the Danish Consul in London to ask if he would expedite the repatriation of the German students in this way.

It took a month to resolve the situation, and involved several different initiatives. Oxford – town as well as gown – rose to the challenge of supporting the German students while still here and also paying for their passages home: the University raised a loan fund to which Oxford residents contributed generously. Marriott noted in his memoirs that the Germans were “truly grateful for the kindness shown to them, and by an arrangement with an agent in a neutral country all the money advanced to them was repaid.” The problem of physically returning them to their homes was greater still. The Austrian ambassador in London, Count Mensdorff, whom Marriott knew slightly, took some of his compatriots back with him by sea, but how most of the foreign students were repatriated is not completely clear from the records. Nevertheless one student, Else Rohns, wrote to Marriott from Meissen on 24 August to tell him that “our whole party of Oxford students has arrived safely at home” and to encourage “the other German ladies of the Oxford course” still remaining in the city to follow on “without fear”. She added that “we shall never forget your great kindness which has been such a comfort to us all during our stay at Oxford, and I hope that many of us will be able to return there in later years.” The Dutch Consul in London, one Louis Bonke, who evidently assisted in the repatriation, wrote thus to the University’s Assistant Registrar on 1 September 1914, by which time it would seem that everyone had been despatched: “I cannot refrain from expressing my admiration for the proofs of humanity and great kindness displayed by the Oxford University Extension Delegacy and the International Relief Committee to the women of a nation with whom this country is at war.”

As for Marriott, the bluff, effective and sympathetic hero of the hour, having sent the foreign students home – he wrote much later of having “shipp[ed] off the crowd of Germans temporarily on my hands” – he then addressed a number of meetings in Oxford and the surrounding villages to raise recruits for the new army. Nothing captures better the many ironies of the affair.

This vignette reminds us of just how close were the ties to Germany of British academic life in general, and of Oxford in particular, during the Edwardian era. As is sometimes recalled, in June 1914, five of the seven honorary graduates were German: the king of Württemberg and the duke of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha; the German Ambassador, Prince Lichnowsky; the papyrologist from the University of Leipzig, Ludwig Mitteis, and the composer Richard Strauss.

German students evidently flocked to Oxford, and Germany was usually the first destination of serious-minded Oxford undergraduates and graduates in this period. RH Tawney, the political thinker and historian, went for the first time to Germany in 1903 on leaving Balliol. He went again with his close friend William Temple, later the Archbishop of Canterbury, in 1906. Three years later he took his new bride, Jeanette, the sister of his closest college friend, William Beveridge, the great public servant, on an extended honeymoon in Germany, filled with social research. Tawney was later wounded within an inch of his life in the first hour of the Somme offensive.

Two World Wars literally ruptured these academic associations, but today German students are the most numerous of the European national groups studying at the University, as they were a century ago. We should celebrate this, and remember as well the calm, resolve, and courtesy shown by Marriott and his Oxford colleagues to the Germans in Oxford in August 1914.

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In Mohammed al-Zawwam’s memory of that day, there were so many badly injured people around him, crying out for help, bleeding onto the gurneys, that he almost didn’t want to film. Yet he did film. He didn’t stop until his battery died.

A dozen or so wounded people had arrived in the triage tent at al-Hekma hospital in Misrata, Libya, on 20 April 2011, following a mortar attack on the city’s embattled Tripoli Street. Some days had brought more injured to the tent during Misrata’s three-month siege, but 20 April was extraordinary in other ways, as is painfully clear in al-Zawwam’s almost unwatchable video.

A rebel photographer who spent much of the siege escorting foreign journalists through the conflict zone, al-Zawwam saw documenting the Libyan uprising as part of his job, though in reality it was almost everyone’s job. The Gaddafi forces busied themselves filming and photographing their assaults as well as episodes of torture and rape. Rebels and civilians snapped photos of the aftermath of bombs and of their friends and families juxtaposed against every kind of wartime backdrop. Professional photographers, most of them foreign, inserted themselves into the action with expensive cameras and iPhones, transmitting news and images of the war back home, and from there to the wider world; four of the Western journalists were now among the victims, which would be big news.

As al-Zawwam filmed, doctors, nurses and volunteers crowded around the gurneys upon which the injured writhed in agony or lay in telling silence. At times his camera was jostled, so that his footage veers wildly. At one point he pauses on the body of a tall, handsome man who seems to be attracting more attention than the rest. Until then there has been no voiceover, only the chaotic noise of the tent, but as a group of doctors and nurses and volunteers pound their fists on the tall man’s chest, al-Zawwam is heard to say, “Tim!” in surprise and recognition. His camera hovers on the scene for a moment, then zooms in on the man’s stubbled face, which appears to have been drained of blood.

At that moment, it becomes clear that Tim Hetherington (LMH, 1989, classics and English), the acclaimed war photographer who was in many ways a quintessential English explorer – intrepid, intellectually curious, intrigued by the lives of everyone he encountered, and especially those caught up in war – was dead. The doctors would continue to try to revive him for perhaps 15 minutes more, to no avail.

Hetherington’s death, and that of a fellow photographer, American Chris Hondros, as a result of the same mortar attack, put Misrata on the map for a global audience, momentarily trumping everything that was happening in Libya at the time – something that would have discomfited Hetherington, given that subsequent accounts made no mention of the local rebels who had also died, the very people he had come to document.

Soon after, Hetherington’s close friend and sometime collaborator, journalist Sebastian Junger, published what was essentially an open letter to him in Vanity Fair, in which he wrote, “I’ve never even heard of Misrata before, but for your whole life it was there on a map for you to find and ponder and finally go to. All of us in the profession – the war profession, for lack of a better name – know about that town. It’s there waiting for all of us. But you went to yours, and it claimed you.”

How Hetherington came to be in Misrata that day, after a decade spent chronicling war, would become the impetus for Junger’s second documentary film, Which Way is the Front Line from Here? The Life and Time of Tim Hetherington. During his career, Hetherington won three World Press Photo awards, including top honours in 2007 for his image of an exhausted US soldier in Afghanistan, and was nominated for an Academy Award for Restrepo, the documentary film he co-directed with Junger about US soldiers at a remote outpost in Afghanistan’s Korengal Valley.

Hetherington also published two books: Long Story Bit by Bit: Liberia Retold, and Infidel, about soldiers at the US Army’s Outpost Restrepo.

Though war coverage defined Hetherington’s career, and cost him his life, he saw himself less a combat photographer than a storyteller and as a “maker of images”: a distinction that many of Hetherington’s friends and family members have stressed in the nearly four years since he died. Hetherington was...
as likely to photograph soldiers asleep in their cots as fighting. His efforts were rooted not in the adrenaline buzz of the bang-bang club nor the public’s appetite for blood, but in a desire to “explain the world, to the world”, as he once put it. To pigeonhole him as purely a war photographer would be to overlook his considerable involvement in humanitarian efforts in places such as Sierra Leone, Darfur and Sri Lanka.

Timothy Alistair Telemachus Hetherington was born in Merseyside in 1970 and began his creative sojourn shortly after graduation from Lady Margaret Hall, when he left England to travel in China, India and Tibet with the help of a £5,000 bequest from his grandmother’s estate. The trip, he later said, opened his eyes to the lives of people beyond his familiar realm, and fostered a desire to share what he saw. After returning to study photojournalism at Cardiff and to a series of small jobs in England, mostly as a photojournalist, he travelled to West Africa, to the war-torn nations of Sierra Leone and Liberia, where he haunted the perimeters of conflict, photographing and writing about its lingering effects on people there while becoming increasingly curious about its causes. Then, in 2003, he joined documentary filmmaker James Brabazon for a trial by fire as a war photographer and videographer during Liberia’s second civil war, taking still photographs and footage for Brabazon’s documentary, An Uncivil War. He continued to mine the vein, working across Africa and Southeast Asia on magazine and television assignments, interspersed with projects for humanitarian organisations such as Human Rights Watch, including the documentary film The Devil Came on Horseback, about the Darfur genocide. In 2006, he took a break to work as an investigator for the United Nations Security Council’s Liberia Sanctions Committee – evidence of his investment in the lives of his subjects, which characterises his work to the end.

What set Hetherington apart from the prototypical English explorer, and from most war journalists, was his profound, sometimes rendering empathy for the people he met in extremely trying circumstances – blind war orphans in Sierra Leone, survivors of the genocide in Darfur, tsunami victims in Sri Lanka, US soldiers within a Taliban stronghold, Libyan citizens trapped inside the besieged city of Misrata. For him, the spoils of war were photos, footage and written words highlighting human attributes that become most evident during extreme duress – courage, nobility, compassion, camaraderie, desperation and unimaginable cruelty. His aim, as is evident in his work, was to find beauty amid the pathos, and to connect his viewers and readers with the lives of people in the midst of struggle, about which they otherwise would not know.

His own sense of personal responsibility, and curiosity, is evident in his earliest work, such as his photographs of victims of street violence in London. Brabazon recalled that during that first foray into the Liberian civil war Hetherington exhibited remarkable courage, and though mindful of danger, frequently put himself in harm’s way to get a revealing photo or segment of film footage. Hetherington was injured numerous times during his career; later in Liberia, he suffered three fractured ribs while covering a riot, and in Afghanistan he walked all night on a broken ankle as he evacuated with American soldiers from a mountainside Taliban attack.

Junger noted that Hetherington never described the personal demons that he hinted had sparked his interest in war, other than to say that he had been troubled as a boy by the violent bullying and use of corporal punishment at the boarding school he attended. But in Long Story Bit by Bit, he describes an interview with a former warlord who recalled her own experiences with violence and seemed “excited by the memory, like a person who has been through combat or seen strange things and had their moral compass turned so much that the springs inside have broken.” In seeking to make sense of such things, he increasingly focused on what he saw as the curious relationship between young men and war. What prompted them to put their lives at risk, to kill, and often to die for each other? His work provides clues – both to why they did it, and to why the subject kept drawing him back. He was sometimes equivocal about his own role as a journalist, wondering whether he was part of the conscience of the world, or a vulture. Yet he never slowed down in the face of the physical and emotional toll, and he often joked about being the tall, mannerly Brit among crazed warlords or hard-bitten US soldiers.

‘His aim was to find beauty amid the pathos, and to connect viewers with the lives of people in the midst of struggle’
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Hetherington faced a conundrum familiar to many artists and war journalists: how to remain far enough removed to maintain perspective, yet close enough to get at what really matters and to gain entry into his subjects’ lives. He likewise vacillated about how best to document the scenes unfolding before him. What was the best mechanism with which to approach a subject, and the best way to convey the meaning of what he observed? Throughout his career, he relied upon a unique mix of antiquated and modern technologies and techniques: old film cameras of a type in use since the 1930s as well as the latest digital versions; carefully framed, static images as well as impressionistic and experimental media. He was also comfortable crossing the boundaries between objective reporting and personal involvement with his subjects, though he was sometimes bemused by the degree to which his presence influenced the behaviour of others, and by the unwanted attention that was focused upon him: the kind of media awareness that has since resulted in hundreds of journalists being kidnapped and killed in Syria.

Among the soldiers, rebels, former warlords, humanitarian workers, photographers, writers, editors, academics, public officials and friends and family who paid tribute to Hetherington after his death, former US Army Sgt Brendan O’Byrne, who knew him at Outpost Restrepo, recalled that the members of his platoon were initially wary of Hetherington and Junger, but that the soldiers eventually came around. “Tim came [to Afghanistan] a stranger and he left a brother,” O’Byrne told his fellow mourners, as he fought back tears, during a May 2011 memorial service in New York City. In an interview with Public Radio International, O’Byrne noted that the soldiers at Restrepo accepted the journalists once they realised their intent was not simply to capture a few dramatic scenes and leave. “The truth was more important than anything else,” he said. “To me, and to everyone in the platoon, that was huge.”

If acceptance by the platoon could be seen as a validation of his work, Junger said it was also important to Hetherington in a profoundly personal way. In Afghanistan, for the first time, Hetherington had felt the intense camaraderie he had previously only observed. Perhaps, Junger said, Hetherington’s experience at Outpost Restrepo, where he became an embedded part of a fighting unit, provided a bridge between the theatre of war and the comparative safety of home – two worlds that were always at odds. At Restrepo, he had become more than an observer. He was part of a close-knit group struggling to survive great physical and emotional challenges. Junger said it “may well have been emotionally the most profound experience of his life”.

A few months before his death, while he and Junger were in Hollywood for the Academy Awards ceremony, Hetherington mentioned that he was thinking of travelling to Libya to cover the uprising, and the two considered going together. In the end Junger couldn’t, so Hetherington went – his first foray into a war zone on his own. He had been talking about giving up combat photography, because he was 41 and thinking of settling down. But he wasn’t quite finished.

On the morning of his last day, Hetherington and a group of fellow Western photographers accompanied the Libyan rebels to an abandoned furniture store, where Gaddafi snipers were holed up. A firefight ensued, in which the photographers accompanied the rebels inside the building as they fired their guns into the rooms where the snipers were cornered. Hetherington and the other photographers, caught up in the moment, took incredible risks, and produced dramatic photographs and video that were nothing like the formal portraits of rebels which Hetherington had come to Misrata to take.

At one point in Hetherington’s video, one of the rebels balances a piece of broken mirror on a section of angle iron and extends it through a doorway to reveal the snipers hiding around the corner. A bearded rebel in a headscarf steps forward and begins firing his Kalashnikov around the corner. It is unclear if he hits anyone, but he keeps firing.

Hetherington and the other photographers crowded in the hallway behind the rebels, who eventually set car tyres on fire to smoke the snipers out. Though the snipers were ultimately killed, the building caught fire and the rebels and photographers were compelled to make a hasty escape. It was a close call, and afterward the journalists regrouped at a safe house across town, where Hetherington convinced the others to return to Tripoli Street. He felt the story wasn’t finished; in particular, he was intrigued by a new character in his long-running chronic of human conflict: a rebel commander named Salah Hadin who offered to take them back to Tripoli Street that afternoon.

After the drama at the store and the subsequent rescue of a hostage family from a nearby neighbourhood that was held by Gaddafi forces, the rebels and photographers lingered on Tripoli Street. The fighting had died down and there was an uneasy calm, during which Hetherington and the other photographers searched for interesting photo opportunities. Hetherington came upon a helmet on the ground with a bullet hole through the top, which was to be the last image he took.

As photographers Guy Martin and Chris Hondros stood talking on Tripoli Street, debating whether to go back to the journalists’ safe house, they looked up to see Hetherington sprinting toward them, gripping his camera in his left hand, holding the strap of his rucksack with the other to keep it from bouncing as he ran. Seconds later there was an explosion of an incoming Gaddafi mortar.

No one knows why Hetherington was running, but his path took him directly into the line of fire.
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Roy Jenkins: A Well-Rounded Life
By John Campbell
Jonathan Cape, £30

The new Member for Glasgow Hillhead padded across the floor of the House of Commons in 1982 in an attempt to take possession of the coveted corner seat that faces the Treasury bench at a 45-degree angle, to find it occupied by Labour’s Dennis Skinner. In the broader sense of his career, in this excellent account, the incident speaks to the left’s ambivalence about the core values of metropolitan liberalism, those values that animated Jenkins’ frankly stunning first 21-month turn at the Home Office where he broke a manly lance for several despised minorities between 1965 and 67. It also speaks in its way to an important thread in Campbell’s fine portrait of Jenkins, namely that un-Asquithian air of vulnerability that always lingered around him. Jenkins remained haunted all his life by a war-time firing range accident that ended up killing a bystander. He never ceased to thank lady luck for handing him a pocket borough in a blitzed and semi-deserted Southwark in 1948. Campbell’s strongest chapters centre on Jenkins’ stewardship of the old Aviation Ministry, the Home Office, and HM Treasury. Not for Jenkins the late nights of Mrs Castle or the sullen torpor of Callaghan. Jenkins would gather all the relevant facts, take the weekend to ponder important judgement calls and then make his decision, usually on Monday mornings. Everything from tanker crashes, hunger-strikes and the sterling balances all proved amenable to this kind of treatment.

Campbell shows that Jenkins’ favourite job was his second chancellorship, this time of Oxford. He proved a most able practitioner of what Stalin called “dosing”: the knack of knowing who needs a dinner, a consoling call or an administrative poll brought down between their eyes. His only major error was when he repeatedly called Gorbachev “Mr Brezhnev” during a Sheldonian extravaganza. The General-Secretary of the Communist Party, having better manners than Dennis Skinner, was unfazed. After all, his Oxford host was himself another formidable champion of glasnost and perestroika, and his legacy too remains a possession in perpetuity.


The Gardens of the British Working Class
By Margaret Willes
Yale University Press, £25

It might seem unlikely that Margaret Willes (Lady Margaret Hall, 1964), formerly publisher of glossy National Trust tomes, should turn her scholarly and historical gaze on cottage gardens, window-box gardening and allotments rather than the grand designs of Stowe or Stourhead, but think again. The National Trust has hugely expanded its remit, and gets as excited about restoring Birmingham back-to-backs as it does about accepting a country house. Moreover, Hidcote and Sissinghurst, two of its most famous gardens, are tributes on a grand scale to cottage gardens, and to the fact that working-class gardens preserved humble plants banished by their ‘betters’. Allwoodi pinks and Spencer sweet peas were both developed from specimens found in village gardens.

Willes, herself an accomplished gardener and garden history writer, now lives in East London, a place full of rich pickings for evidence of working-class enthusiasm for gardens. Victoria Park rapidly became thronged with locals bathing in its lake, playing cricket, listening around the bandstand and admiring the colours and scents of its flowers and shrubs, and, to the amazement of middle-class Cassandras, “only in one solitary instance” causing damage. While Willes’ research is concentrated in the south-east, for all the ‘British’ of her title, nowhere was the hunger for ‘blessed plots’ greater than in the industrial cities of the north. Philanthropists did their best to provide green spaces, and twentieth century ‘homes for heroes’ were generously provided with gardens. Garden cities and Metroland illustrated the ideal, though the working-class were for the main part housed in tower blocks.

Willes dexterously broadens her brief from the domestic to the professional, giving us histories in brief of market-gardening, the gardeners of the wealthy, seedsmen and florists, allotments and the Dig For Victory campaign, and magazines and books about gardening. Are we still a nation of gardeners? Thronged garden centres suggest that we are – even though it may of necessity be a retirement occupation for most of the ‘hard-working people’ interminably apostrophised by politicians.

Christina Hardyment is an author and founding editor of Oxford Today.

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The Unexpected Professor
By John Carey
Faber & Faber, £18.99

My first encounter with John Carey was hearing him on Dickens. His Violent Effigy is sharp and illuminating; but I kept going back to his lectures because his readings lit up the comedy which was prone to be undervalued by over-serious youngsters such as I was. Much later I read The Faber Book of Science, a polyphony of observation and ideas superbly expressed by scientists from Leonardo Da Vinci to Dawkins, which Carey edited. That the same man could have filled these diverse roles suggests broad and healthy sympathies. Now his sparky and often hilarious autobiography seems to confirm that assessment. If there is a problem with the book it’s a common enough one with biographies, in which the rise is more interesting than the summit and decline; and especially with the autobiographies of successful people, which rarely chart the decline and finger instead, smugly, in the sunny uplands.

John Garth is a writer, Tolkien expert and Digital Editor of Oxford Today.

Rowan’s Rule: The Biography of the Archbishop
By Rupert Shortt
Hodder, £12.99

At the end of a decade as Archbishop of Canterbury, at the close of 2012, Rowan Williams was depicted by The Guardian’s cartoonist being taken down from a cross like a crucified Christ figure, while villainous clergy looked on in mean satisfaction. Not the whole picture, as this excellent, newly updated biography demonstrates, but pretty close. His servant-model of leadership was counted in personal pain, and intra-organisational conflict around gender, sexual orientation and church unity. While he was weak on economics (but on the money when the economy blew up), his real error was to appear to cave in to the anti-gay mob early on, by back-tracking on the appointment of a gay bishop, later pursuing a spurious ‘Covenant’ in the name of a questionable unity. And yet here we have a triple alpha-plus brain atop a true holy man, inspiring all who meet him through his “mansion of a voice”. So any failure is the world’s, unless you have leaden feet and can’t see beyond Lambeth and Westminster.

Richard Lofthouse (LMH, 1990) is the current editor of Oxford Today.
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The 4th Revolution: How the Infosphere is Reshaping Human Reality
By Luciano Floridi
OUP, £16.99

Luciano Floridi is Professor of Philosophy and Ethics of Information at Oxford. If his job title struggles to keep pace with its (enormous) subject, so do we, the readers. In fact some of us might even be suspicious of this book’s revolutionary claims and jargon like ‘Infosphere’. Yet, as the author insists, “Sometimes it is 16 December 1773 and you are in Boston, or it is 14 July and you are in Paris.” He continues, “What I stress in this book is that sometimes it is a new millennium, and you are in the infosphere.” What follows is fantastic in scope, but also fantastic, as in appealing. Floridi proposes nothing less than new philosophies of time, nature and anthropology. The infosphere is a ‘4th revolution’ because it follows three earlier ones by Copernicus, Darwin, and Freud. If this is sounding too massive, better just to read carefully and absorb and ponder. For instance – to seize one random example – in 2008, the Parliamentary Standards watchdog complained that the Commons’ Speaker, Michael Martin, had used Air Miles earned with public money for his family. Floridi’s point is that if you thought virtual currencies like Bitcoin were nothing to do with you, consider that Tesco Club Card Points and Air Miles are all virtual currencies, more or less unregulated. Online is becoming ‘onlife’ as our realities are increasingly enmeshed by technology. The book teams with insights like this, and is aimed at the lay reader. If the fate of Floridi’s larger claims remains unclear, the urgency of his philosophical mission is indisputable. Get it wrong and technology could destroy us. Get it right and it can (may) ameliorate our condition.

Roger Bannister: Twin Tracks
By Roger Bannister
The Robson Press, £20

Finally, Sir Roger’s autobiography, issued to coincide with the sixtieth anniversary of his breaking of the four-minute-mile barrier on a blustery, late spring day in 1954. “The noise in my ears was that of the faithful Oxford crowd. Their hope and encouragement gave me greater strength...”

Mount Athos: Renewal in Paradise
By Graham Speake
Denise Harvey, £18.25

A peninsula as well as a 2,033 metre peak, Mount Athos is the spiritual capital of the Orthodox Christian world. This second, updated edition of a fast-approaching classic surveys all the changes but concludes that, much like Oxford (one could venture), very little of substance has changed in a millennium.

Fall in, Ghosts: Selected War Prose
By Edmund Blunden
Fyfield Books, £14.95

A Great War poet who almost outlived all the others, Blunden (Queen’s, 1919), later a fellow of Merton, ceaselessly ploughed the literary furrows created by the war, editing in 1931 the standard issue collection of Wilfred Owen’s work, to name but one example. This volume is much overdue.

The Lost Domain
By Alain-Fournier
OUP, £12.99

‘The great moan’ as we used to call it at school (after ‘Le Grand Meaulnes’) has been wonderfully re-issued in a centenary edition with a fresh introduction by the President of Wolfson College, Dame Hermione Lee. Although it gets congested in the second half, there is no greater or stranger tale of French, pre-1914 literature.

An Appetite For Wonder
By Richard Dawkins
Black Swan, £8.99

Very few scientists can write as eloquently as Dawkins, as this memoir shows, explaining why as much as anything his historical appeal to would-be atheists has been rhetorical as well as scientific. Oxford – or rather tutorials – were “the making of me”. Read alongside Rowan Williams for balance!
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Swimming the Channel

Lindsey Harrad talks to Marisa Schubert about her amazing swim earlier this year

When did you first become inspired to swim the English Channel?
I've always loved swimming and when we lived in Devon I did a lot of sea swimming. The cold water never seemed to bother me. When I read Swimming to Antarctica by the American long-distance swimmer Lynne Cox and discovered that she had swum the English Channel at 15, I just thought this was amazing. At swimming camp we were asked to record our dream goal for the future, and I put swimming the Channel. As a 12 year-old kid, it seemed such a huge, unattainable ambition at the time.

Is swimming well supported in the University?
Swimming may not be as high profile as rowing or rugby within the University, but there's some really high-quality swimming going on and there's lots of support for the Varsity events such as the Channel Relay [which Marisa captained for Oxford and won in 2012]. The Rosenblatt Pool where we train is a beautiful facility and I find it a real joy to swim there. However, I'd love to see more support for open water swimming as it's becoming much more popular nationally.

You're a busy medical student: how do you balance your academic studies and swimming?
I'm a social person, but I do appreciate swimming as an opportunity to completely switch off for a while. Especially in the open water. Other times I will use my swims to go over revision in my head, so it's not necessarily lost time in terms of my academic work. I think you need that balance between sport and academic work; I wouldn't like to do one without the other. My swimming has increased my interest in certain aspects of medicine, so I enjoy researching subjects such as cold-water immersion, but I'm on a fairly established training path so it doesn't have too much influence on my studies.

Tell us about the logistics of swimming the Channel.
In terms of training, I have been swimming exclusively in open water since May this year, mostly in the lakes around Oxford, in the Thames and down at the coast, but I was also training six times a week with the University team in the pool prior to that. It takes a lot of organisation to do the real thing; you can't just decide to swim the Channel, you need a support team with a boat led by an experienced pilot. I also had my sister and two friends to keep me motivated and feed me along the way. You are not allowed to touch the boat, or another person, so I had energy drink in a water bottle on a reel and they fed me jelly babies from a cup on the end of a pole!

What was the most challenging aspect of the swim itself?
Other than the jellyfish stings, which luckily were not as bad as I expected, I reached a low point at about seven hours, mainly because I was just very, very tired after having only had just over three hours' sleep and starting the swim at around 4am to coincide with the tides. But when I reached that point, I did a basic physical check and realised there was no real reason not to continue.

You finished in 14 hours and 40 minutes. Were you pleased with your time?
With a swim like this, if you set a time, the likelihood of being disappointed is high and it's not fair on yourself as you have tides, currents and weather to contend with. The pilot decides the course you take; the rest of it is in the hands of the sea gods, so my only aim was to get across.

You've achieved your lifetime's ambition at the age of just 21. Was it everything you expected it to be?
It's still taking time to sink in that I've actually done it! I was glad to finish as after 14 hours you are a bit fed up and at the end you have to work hard to overcome the waves on the French coast, but I was surprised by how enjoyable the swim itself was. I expected longer periods of it being challenging and wanting to stop, but every so often I realised I was in the Channel and achieving my dream. It was an amazing feeling.

Marisa (Keble, 2010) is a fifth-year medical student at Green Templeton College. She swam in aid of the Stroke Association and received grants from the Oxford Alumni Association and the Atalanta’s Society—the University’s society for elite sportswomen—to fund the costs of the swim.
With Exeter’s 700th Anniversary drawing to a close, wine steward Hanneke Wilson turns to Piedmont to re-stock a depleted cellar.

Village Barbaresco, 2010
Late September rains led the produttori to tip the finest special cru grapes into the normale, with exceptional results: the 2010 Barbaresco is a wine of great intensity, offering a lovely purity on the nose, with raspberries and redcurrants, but also smoke and delicate floral aromas. The palate, which remains tannic and backward, has savoury flavours and a long finish. Not before 2018! The wine is a bargain at £153 per dozen in bond, from Bancroft Wines. www.bancroftwines.com

Giacosa, Dolcetto d’Alba, 2013
Bruno Giacosa ia my favourite Barolo producer, based in the neighbouring commune of Neive. His top wines are far beyond the means of most dons, but some of the entry level labels are still accessible. We are enjoying his Dolcetto d’Alba, the ‘little sweet one’, a gorgeous mouthful of mulberries and cherries, with hints of sage and dark chocolate, and a refreshingly bitter twist to the finish. £162 per dozen, from Armit Wines. www.armit.co.uk

Rocche Costamagna, Arneis, 2013
While most of Piedmont’s production is red, the white wines made from Arneis are worth seeking out. Its name means ‘twit’ or ‘awkward cuss’ in the local dialect, reflecting the grape’s loss of acidity as it gathers sugar. Rocche Costamagna, a venerable Barolista, makes a fragrant one with acacia and camomile as well as citrus scents, with tiny bubbles that impart a little extra acidity to counteract the natural loss. Private Cellar sells the 2015 at £12.75 a bottle. www.privatecellar.co.uk

Dr Hanneke Wilson (Merton, 1981) is the wine steward of Exeter. She is a wine writer as well as a philologist and coaches Oxford’s blind-tasting team for the annual Varsity match.
Molecular marmalade

Joy Boyce reflects on the science of making jam and marmalade

Dr Joy Boyce (Somerville, 1975), formerly a fellow of New College, took up jam-making with all the insight of a retired molecular biologist, and her smash-hit orange and clementine marmalade is in great demand by friends and fellows alike.

Yet mysteries abound still – not just etymological (see competition below), but also chemical, as she explains. “In France, they use beet sugar. In England we use cane sugar, with remarkable differences in how the jam sets,” she reveals. The beet sugar creates a sort of slurry, but cane sugar interacts with pectin (“a long chain molecule carbohydrate”) differently – but we don’t know why. Not to disparage Bon Maman in favour of Tiptree, Boyce is clearly on the side of cane sugar, with its “sparkling clear jelly.”

Producing about 500 jars a year, including chutneys and savoury jellies, Boyce notes that small quantities made with freshly picked fruit offer real advantages over supermarket fare, and are completely free of setting agents and other additives. While marmalade is comparatively modern, there are Roman recipes for preserving fruit using sugar. “Jam is essentially simple: it’s sugar and fruit,” she notes, “plus a bit of water depending on the fruit.” Evincing a “Shaker view of the world – keep it simple”, Boyce minces her Seville orange peel, occasionally making “a batch of chunky” with sliced, and lamenting the loss of her mother’s WWII era marmalade slicing contraption. Seville oranges (“the sine qua non of marmalade!”) form at least 60 per cent after which in go lemons, limes and clementines. A hobby not a business, nonetheless Joy might be persuaded to part with a jar or two if you can collect it from a North Oxford address.

Dr Joy Boyce is based in North Oxford and can be contacted at jarsofjoy@gmail.com, but she cannot mail jam and marmalade!

COMPUTITION

Win a pot of Joy’s marmalade

Early writing uses ‘preserve’ or ‘marmalade’ and no one seems to know the derivation of ‘jam’. What is it? Answers by email to janet.avison@admin.ox.ac.uk, to win one of five pots of Joy’s marmalade.

Recipe

Lemon and Basil Jelly

Ingredients

4 large lemons, Sugar, 50g basil, Olive oil

Method

Weigh four lemons and allow 2.5 times the weight in water.

Chop the whole lemons finely or mince through a coarse cutter and add to the water in a saucepan.

Bring to a gentle boil and cook until the peel is soft. Leave the mix overnight, reheat to gentle boil the following day and strain through a sterilised jelly bag. Weigh the juice and add a tenth the weight of white wine vinegar.

Prepare a bunch of basil 40–50g, avoid the tough stalks but the fine ones towards the top of the plant are okay. Chop it finely or pound with a tablespoon of mild-flavoured cooking oil.

Weigh the sugar, allowing 0.6x the weight of the mix. Gently heat the liquid until it begins to steam, add the sugar slowly, stirring until each addition has dissolved. Turn up the heat and boil to near setting point, then add the basil mix. Cook again to setting point.

Pot and seal tightly. The basil will rise to the top. Allow the jelly to cool to comfortable hand heat and before it sets shake the jars to mix the basil throughout the jar.

Makes 4–5 jars (depending on the weight of the lemons) and is a delicious addition to a fish or chicken dish. Also successful in a tomato, mozzarella and avocado salad: beat 2–3 tablespoons of jelly into the olive oil. Add a few torn basil leaves for garnish.
The ultramodern greenhouse at Corpus Christi is part cultivation centre, part cabinet of curiosities. Among the cacti and tumbling rosehips, a landscape painting by a lodge porter stands alongside Madame Lulu – a salvaged shop dummy surreally equipped with bow and arrows, parrot and crab. In the huge, frameless plate-glass front window are items mostly collected by Corpus gardener David Leake while beachcombing: shells, a dried razorbill head, stones picked for their likeness to the seals of his beloved Norfolk coast.

David washed up at Corpus just as haphazardly in 1979 after a decade and more hitching around Europe, North Africa and Asia. To top up his funds he had occasionally gardened in the London parks; then, on a whim, he took a National Certificate of Horticulture. The Greater London Council refused to adjust his wages to match a qualification it did not recognise, but the certificate won him the Corpus job.

David found the gardens run down. Today, a vigorous 67-year-old with an equally vigorous grey mane and beard, he still plans, plants and maintains the college grounds four days a week, tending its other Oxford properties with an assistant on the fifth.

We walk and talk in the Corpus quads and gardens. Here is the quince tree whose fruit goes to friends and fellows. Here, flourishing in the heat from the kitchen vents, is a Wollemi pine – an early Jurassic species thought extinct until its rediscovery in Australia 20 years ago. Here the library windows are framed by bamboo, including one named after a college donor. David also grows olive trees, rosemary and wild roses in honour of the tradition of classical learning at Corpus.

There is something of the medieval illuminator in the way he fills his margins with symbols. But David, whose motto is rus in urbe – the countryside in the city – will not confine himself to the borders. In his greenhouse window is a cartoon: across a suburban garden wall, a suited gent on close-mown grass hectors a hippy who stands to his elbows in what looks like a prairie. David laughs, “It sort of symbolises my relationship with the college.”

There was some strain during the 15-year presidency of Sir Keith Thomas, who favoured a St John’s-style formality. David has enjoyed more freedom since, under Sir Tim Lankester and current incumbent Richard Carwardine. But this winter he removed hollyhocks from the Front Quad paving, plus a trailer full of ivy and jasmine, after a word from the President. “It was getting a bit jungly,” he concedes.

In a parallel universe David might have given rein to his wildest dreams. Improbably, he applied to succeed Sir Keith. Electioneering also formed an occasional parallel channel to his gardening, with several attempts to get onto Oxford City Council – for the Greens, as an independent opposing them, and even (in a favour for a friend) as a Conservative.

He remains a gardener, accepts the give-and-take involved in running his empire as a fief of the college, and recognises that among those his gardens must impress are Corpus’s potential benefactors. “I don’t think any other college would allow this in their garden,” he says of his greenhouse bric-à-brac. “I’m employed by them and I have to do what they want me to do – though it is a balance with what I want to do. On the whole they leave me alone, and you can’t ask for more than that.”

In 2009 the Fellows’ Garden, which he had worked for 25 years, was razed to accommodate the MBI Al Jaber Building auditorium by architects Rick Mather Associates (who also designed the new greenhouse). But David has found consolation in the roof terrace vista of Christchurch Meadow, affording such scenes as deer leaping through floodwaters. Here he also helps a graduate student tend a beehive in honour of 16th-century founder Bishop Fox, who wanted the college to be like a hive bringing forth sweetness.

Whatever occasional qualms some fellows may have about David’s exuberant tastes, others speak of his gardening in terms the bishop might have approved. “He’s brilliant,” says Dr Liz Fisher, reader in environmental law. “I say to the grad students that the college gardens represent the creativity we’re trying to encourage. It’s always unexpected, not regimented – an inspiration.”

David Leake
Head Gardener, Corpus Christi

John Garth meets the head gardener of one of the most storied, and unusual, gardens in the collegiate University

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Marilyn Butler
Former Rector of Exeter

Marilyn Speers Butler (née Evans) FBA, Rector of Exeter College, Oxford, from 1993 to 2004, and the first woman to head a formerly male Oxbridge college, died on 11 March 2014, aged 77.

Born on 11 February 1937 in Kingston upon Thames, she was the daughter of Trevor Evans and his wife Margaret, née Gribbin. Her father, a former coal miner who became industrial correspondent of the Daily Express, was knighted in 1967; she recalled a house full of newspapers and books, and lively discussions about current affairs. She was educated at Wimbledon High School and St Hilda’s College, Oxford, where she read English, graduating with a first in 1958. After a brief spell teaching in Cambridge and two years as a talks producer at the BBC, she returned to Oxford in 1962, having married the political scientist and psephologist (and fellow of Nuffield College) David Butler. With his encouragement she embarked on a study of the novels of Maria Edgeworth (his great-great aunt), her thesis earning her a DPhil in 1966 and forming the basis for her book Maria Edgeworth: A Literary Biography (1972). She and David Butler meanwhile brought up three sons.

After teaching part-time for various Oxford colleges she became a junior research fellow at St Hilda’s College in 1970, then a fellow and tutor at St Hugh’s in 1973. She quickly established herself as an authority on the English Romantic writers, paying particular attention to the social and political contexts of their work. Jane Austen and the War of Ideas (1975) located the novelist within the ideological struggles of her time (identifying her as a conservative and anti-Jacobin), while Peacock Displayed (1979) rescued from obscurity the author Thomas Love Peacock, whose mischievous sense of humour and dislike of pomposity she shared. Probably her best known work was Romantics, Rebels and Reactionaries (1981), which explored the social and political views of Wordsworth, Shelley, Keats and other Romantic poets. In 1986 she moved to Cambridge as King Edward VII Professor of English Literature (the first woman to hold this post), devoting her inaugural lecture to the then-neglected poet Robert Southey; while there she wrote several groundbreaking articles, and worked on an edition of The Works of Mary Wollstonecraft (1989) with Janet Todd.

While Rector of Exeter College she continued her work on the Romantics, with scholarly editions of Frankenstein (1993) and Northanger Abbey (1995), and a major edition of The Works of Maria Edgeworth in 12 volumes (1999-2003). As Rector she was much loved by fellows and students, and her warmth and encouragement of intellectual debate attracted numerous distinguished visitors. She was elected a Fellow of the British Academy in 2002. Her retirement years were blighted by Alzheimer’s disease. Her husband was knighted in 2011, but asserted that she would never choose to call herself ‘Lady Butler’. He survived her, as did two sons, Daniel and Ed; her middle son, Gareth, a BBC producer and collaborator with his father on the British Political Facts series, died in 2008.

A more comprehensive list of obituaries is available at: www.oxfordtoday.ox.ac.uk/obits

Obituaries are edited by Dr Alex May, research editor at Oxford DNB.
Vivienne Faull: pioneering in the Church

Vivienne Faull
The Dean of York Minster talks to Lindsey Harrad about her time at Oxford

What made you apply to Oxford?
I thoroughly enjoyed history lessons at A-level and it was the inspiration of my history teacher, also my headmistress and an Oxford graduate, that made me apply for history at St Hilda’s.

Were your studies your main focus?
We’re talking about the 1970s, when the reason that you went to Oxford, certainly for the vast majority of us, was to study. We had no debt, but very little money. So what we were anticipating at Oxford was the opportunity to study and meet people who would enable us to develop our intellectual skills. Arriving in 1974 in the year of the three-day week, all sorts of real crises in the nation and a time of acute economic depression, life was tricky for those trying to run the University and those studying.

Was being part of the religious life of the University important to you?
I became involved fairly quickly at St Aldate’s. That was a huge and transforming experience because I came from a village church and all of a sudden there was a church with a thousand people on a Sunday morning. I also sang in the chapel choir at Corpus in the evenings.

How did your experience at a male-dominated Oxford prepare you for life as a woman in the Church?
I think we gained a lot of self-confidence through the experience of being undergraduates and a minority at Oxford. I think one in ten of the historians of my generation were women – just the experience of walking into Exam Schools and feeling that everybody else was taller than you and you couldn’t see through the crowd, and the experience of lots of tutorials with male colleagues, gave us a tremendous sense of confidence in our own identity. That has been invaluable.

Did the Oxford experience have a long-lasting effect?
My sense of understanding people on the margins began at Oxford and has continued today. People who don’t easily have access to places where decisions are made become an important source of truth about institutions. I tend to want to know what the people on the margins are thinking. That influences what I do.

How did the culture of St Hilda’s influence you?
St Hilda’s was fascinating in that it was a great mix of talented people. It’s an extrovert college and that was also crucial in my formation.

What’s your impression of Oxford now?
It’s very interesting going back to a city that has become in some respects an outpost of London and of a wider, global community. When I was an undergraduate there was big industry there, as there still is. You’ve got the colleges that are beautiful and secluded environments, but the city itself is gritty, which I think is significant for those who live and study there, because it doesn’t easily offer an escape from the issues that face us all around the world – issues to do with justice, poverty, inclusion for all and economic and social development.

Your career has been studded with female “firsts”: ordained with the first intake of women to the Church of England, the first female chaplain of an Oxbridge college, the first woman to run an English cathedral as Provost of Leicester. Would you like to be one of the first female bishops?
My answer is that being Dean of York is a huge job and I’m thoroughly enjoying it. One of the interesting ways that vocation works in the Church of England is that as I have moved on in the Church, doors have been opened that my generation and I have not expected. I started off thinking I would be a lay worker in the Church. It became possible for me to be a deaconess straightaway – that was an innovation. Then it became possible to be a deacon, then it became possible to be a priest. So at each stage there was a conversation about what God was calling me to do. It wasn’t like a competition to see who would be the first woman priest. It was much more vocational than that: a sense of discernment of vocation. I think that’s also what we need to begin now in terms of those women who might have the experience that could benefit the Church. There needs to be a process of discernment for them and for the possible dioceses they might serve. It may be quite some time before there is a good fit between a diocese and a woman who might be a bishop there.
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