

Brazen Notes

Progress on Alumni Funded Works



Matthew Hill, Domestic Bursar, updates us on the building works happening on Old Cloisters and Deer Park.

As we near the end of the academic year, phase two of the Library Project, which began in September 2015, is almost complete.

Works have progressed well in Old Cloisters, with the original stone floor tiles now levelled off and re-laid and the windows refurbished. Movable partitions have been fitted to allow for greater flexibility of working space for students. The room was temporarily returned to normal use in time for Trinity Term.

In the Stocker Room basement, the new archive facility is largely complete. The staircase has been installed and the new boiler fitted. During the works, wall paintings from the 16th and 17th century were unexpectedly uncovered. The paintings are of a swirling pattern of flowers, and were totally unknown until now. They have been protected and stabilised for the future.

The redesign of Deer Park is also nearing completion. Larger pathways and raised planting beds have been created and three new trees have been planted so far.

During the Deer Park project, a curved drain was discovered around five metres below the quad, it is thought to be the original well which served the medieval kitchen and, therefore, it pre-dates Deer Park itself.

The final phase of this project will start in mid-July 2016 with the refurbishment of the Upper Libraries. In mid-September a spiral stone staircase will be fitted, which will connect Cloisters to the Upper Library.

If all continues to run to schedule, the entire building and renovation project is due to be complete by the beginning of Trinity Term 2017.



△ As work continues on Deer Park, a medieval well is discovered which brought water to the College before Deer Park ever existed



△ The work continues as new turf is laid on Deer Park. Also in view, one of the three new trees that has been planted.



◁ 16th-17th century wall paintings discovered during the creation of new archives space below the Stocker Room.

The project was entirely funded by generous donations from our Old Members. As well as larger gifts, the works have been made possible by supporters of the College generously donating to name chairs, desks and bookcases for the finished library, either in their own, or a loved one's honour. Such naming opportunities are still available.

If you would like to enquire about naming a library chair, desk or bookcase then please email our Senior Development Officer, James Fletcher on james.fletcher@bnc.ox.ac.uk

Features in this Edition

Admissions at Brasenose	Page 2-3
Ellesmere Presidents: Interviewed	Page 4-5
Academic Profile.....	Page 7
A Day in the Life of a Current Student ...	Page 9

Alumni News In Brief

Brasenose Two in Under 30

BNC was well represented in the 2016 *EU Forbes 30 Under 30* list with two alumni named in the list of Europe’s brightest and best. Dr Matthew Cole (Eng Sci, 2004) was included in the Science & Healthcare category, while Andre De Haes (Phil & Mod Lang, 2006) made the list in the Finance section.



Torpid

Roger Gilboy has produced a film of the BNC Women’s Boat Club, following them through from Fresher’s day to Torpids, showing just how much commitment is needed to make a crew successful. You can watch the film here: <https://vimeo.com/144258507>



Mentoring Success

In December 2015, recent BNC graduate Philip Rigley met with Paul McGrath (Law, 1991), partner at Withers LLP, for some career advice as he began applying to City law firms. Philip said of his experience, “Meeting with Paul helped give me confidence going forward. The conversation we had was relaxed, honest and informal and, as Paul really understood the process I will be going through, the advice I received felt authentic and bespoke – the free coffee was an added bonus!” Our alumni are really helping to shape the futures for BNC students. *To enquire about mentoring a student, please email development.office@bnc.ox.ac.uk.*

Dr Helen Firth Delivers Inaugural Lady Estelle Wolfson Lecture

BNC Alumna, Helen Firth (Medicine, 1975) was chosen by an RCP panel to give the inaugural Lady Estelle Wolfson lecture as part of the RCP’s Advance Medicine course in February this year. She was selected as a result of her ‘outstanding contribution in translational medicine with demonstrable benefit to patients’.

The Real Oxford Admissions Process



Principal, **John Bowers QC**, dispels some of the myths surrounding the Oxford admissions process and explains how the process *really* works.

Applications to Oxford University may appear more complex than other universities since candidates are invited to state a college preference, take admissions tests in most subjects, and also be interviewed. In consequence, Brasenose and the other colleges expend a lot of effort guiding prospective students through the process and correcting many myths.

Some of the particularly stubborn misconceptions:

- It is difficult if not impossible for state school students to get in because of ‘social privilege’, or for public school students to get in because of ‘social engineering’.
- The selectors are only looking for polished candidates.
- Applicants need to be given training by their school or by a company to shine at interview.
- It is necessary to choose the college very carefully as schools have relationships with each one.

All of these contentions are nonsense.

There are no special agreements with schools. The main thrust of our outreach is to provide guidance to gifted students considering an Oxford application, and not to market Brasenose specifically.

To avoid wasteful duplication of effort, each college is assigned a region of the country where it takes the lead in outreach work for the University as a whole; Brasenose focuses on North Yorkshire and West Berkshire. Under the leadership of our excellent Schools Officer Joe Organ, Brasenose contacts every school in our region regularly and makes a large number of visits to state schools in those areas. We also welcome students and teachers from a wide range of schools across the country to come and visit Brasenose.

What will help candidates to succeed is wide reading, a fascination with their subject, an interest in the world, general intellectual curiosity, the ability to think for themselves and a clear desire to study at Oxford. A sophisticated approach and potential are the keys which are most likely to unlock the door.

Admissions is thus based solely upon academic merit, and our aim is to attract and recruit from those who we think will get the most from the

unique opportunities offered by the very rigorous academic life of the University. This means those who are ready and keen to work hard and are excited by intellectual challenges. We are looking for students who will genuinely enjoy the course and thrive on it.

We stress that the interview is only one part of the selection process. A common misconception is that the interview is all-important. We take into account information on the UCAS form (especially contextualised exam performance) for final selection as well as shortlisting.


I was at a grammar school which became a comprehensive when I was in the sixth form. Few people even thought of applying to Oxford from my school. I am now passionate about encouraging people from all backgrounds to consider applying.

We welcome any potential student with open arms to come and see the University and talk to current students; who are indeed our best ambassadors.



△ *Brasenose students file into the Sheldonian Theatre for their matriculation ceremony.*

Some Observations on Undergraduate Admissions



By **Dr Simon Smith**,
Senior Tutor and
Admissions Tutor

Back in 1990, the University received just over 9,500 applications. In 2016, 19,000 candidates applied for the same number of places.

Many things have changed over the past quarter century. The year 1990 saw Margaret Thatcher’s stint as PM end, Nelson Mandela released from prison, the reunification of Germany and the launch of the Hubble Telescope. Mobile phones were priced upwards of £1,500 and the internet age had scarcely begun. Fast forward to 2016 and the world is very different. The Iron Curtain has long gone, more than three billion people are online, and a Brasenose alumnus holds the keys to Number Ten.

A key number in Oxford admissions is 3,200: the total available places at Oxford for all courses. Of these 3,200 places, 107 are currently at Brasenose.

One thing that has remained unchanged is Oxford’s overall undergraduate quota.

Gaining admission to Oxford has always been challenging but the ratio of applicants per place is now at a record high. Numbers of overseas applicants have increased, driven in part by extraordinary development in China and India, coupled with the former Soviet Bloc’s closer integration with Europe. Domestically, the UK’s GDP per head is about 1.5 times greater than it was in 1990. Among other things, this means that public spending on education is higher – one of the reasons why state school students now comprise 64% of both Brasenose and Oxford’s UK applicants.

Stats:

- Applications to Oxford have DOUBLED in 26 years (from 3 applicants per place, to 6).
- Every year since 1990, the number of applicants has increased by 350 year-on-year.

Who to Consider?

Given the impossibility of granting places to all those wishing to study at Oxford, the question arises as to who has the most compelling claim to entry, and how do we make it fair?

A ‘measuring rod’ approach could be taken: places could be given to applicants scoring the highest marks in a test designed to measure ability and potential. Alternatively, the test scores of entrants could be adjusted to take into account differences in social and educational opportunity. Or we could randomly assign places to applicants meeting a threshold score.

Each of these approaches has its advocates and critics, its benefits and draw-backs. The approach Brasenose takes, in common with the rest of the collegiate University, is a compromise. Measured potential and contextualisation of results both play some role in allocating places.

Making Decisions

For each subject, the selection criteria and procedures Brasenose employs correspond with those that the collegiate University as a whole has decided to adopt (details are published online). Although candidates can choose which college they apply to, the odds of gaining an interview or

offer do not differ substantially between colleges, reflecting the fact that subject selectors work in concert and apply common entry standards. Reallocation (the process by which colleges will transfer deserving candidates to another college if their own is oversubscribed) evens out the success rates, ensuring that all available places are taken by applicants assessed according to a common framework. In 2015, for example, 21% of direct applicants to the College were successful versus 20% for the University as a whole.

There are no hidden criteria that favour groups of candidates sharing particular characteristics and no special relationships with schools or teachers affecting admissions decisions. Brasenose supports the diversity targets the University has itself agreed as part of its Office For Fair Access agreement. Targets are distinct, however, from quotas – there are no quotas for any group of applicants. Like the rest of the University, we aim to promote access by encouraging applications from well-qualified individuals in currently under-represented groups.

Our procedures are monitored annually and statistics on outcomes released through University Admissions to enable any interested party to view the profile of applications and acceptances for themselves.

Advising someone thinking of applying:

- Stay positive – BNC’s students come from a wide range of backgrounds and from all over the country (and overseas) so there is probably already somebody at the College similar to you who gained a place.
- At the interview stage don’t be afraid to ‘think out loud’, even if you are not confident about your answer or idea; and don’t be afraid to speak up.
- We are looking for students who love learning and ask challenging questions rather than those who simply love school and are happy to be in the top group.

Ellesmere Society Presidents: Present Meets Past



Undergraduate, **Polly Calver** is the current President of the Ellesmere Society, she caught up with past Presidents: **Christopher Moss** (1968), **David Zeffman** (1977), and **Paolo Santi** (2003) to hear their memories of Brasenose and of the Ellesmere. She also discovers how the art of building a career in law might have changed over the years.

PC: What’s your most distinctive memory from your time at Brasenose?

PS (2003): It’s hard to pick one, as there are quite a few. Finishing finals looms pretty large. Also, playing lawn bowls on Old Quad with the tutors after finals, and having dinner in Hall. We spent lots of time hanging around in the JCR: there used to be this arcade machine where you could play tennis. I bet that’s gone now.

PC: It’s still there, but I think the quiz machine is more popular!

DZ (1977): My memories of BNC are a montage: the view from my first year room; tutorials with Peter Birks; women (at that time Brasenose was one of only five mixed colleges); discos in lecture room XI; camaraderie in the Stallybrass; croquet cuppers second team; swimming in the Cherwell after finals; punting and making lifelong friends.

CM (1968): There’s one that jumps out: about a month after finals I got a very frightening letter from the college demanding that I return for a viva. I had to come back to Oxford and try and re-learn all my notes! The night before the meeting there was a list in the Lodge and my name was just struck off, I’d somehow conned my way into being close enough so I didn’t have to interview afterall!

PC: Do you have a particular memory of being Ellesmere Society President?

PS (2003): Organising the dinner was quite a big thing logistically, because there were something like 100 guests – you’ll probably remember that from when you did it! I was told off by the head chef because there were last minute changes to the numbers – it was pretty scary! I remember mootting too: a memorable mootting experience was the Shearman and Sterling Oxford University mootting competition where we managed runner

up despite almost pulling out because my mootting partner had terrible food poisoning. To his credit, he turned up – I still remember how green he looked at lunch!

DZ (1977): The main thing about being Ellesmere President is the dinner, where I secured a rare attendance from alumnus, Lord Scarman, as speaker. Unfortunately, he pulled out at short notice and was replaced by Lord Tweedsmuir, who was also an alumnus but had nothing to do with the law (according to Wikipedia, he got a 4th class degree in history). The anxiety as President was all about how your speech would go down but, no doubt helped by good food and wine, it seemed to get a good reception!

CM (1968): I’d have to say the most memorable thing was for all the wrong reasons! I was made the secretary in my first term, so I had to make a speech at the dinner. I’d never even been to a formal dinner before – I really hadn’t any idea what was expected. That was pretty terrifying actually. I think the Society is much more active now, for example with mootting: there wasn’t much undergraduate mootting at all in my time. The dinner really was the most important event of the year because if you wanted to go to the bar and you had no connections, meeting Old Members at the dinner was a way of getting a pupillage and, in fact, was the way I got my pupillage.

*...discos in lecture room XI;
camaraderie in the Stallybrass;
croquet cuppers second team;
swimming in the Cherwell
after finals; punting and
making lifelong friends.*

PC: When did you decide on a career in law?

PS (2003): It was always a consideration for me. Law students at BNC are exposed to the legal profession quite strongly: you meet firms at functions like the Ellesmere Dinner, you meet representatives from barristers’ chambers, so you’re already in that world. I really enjoyed my degree, and I did several vacation schemes with law firms and mini-pupilages at barristers’ chambers, and then I got an offer from Cleary before my third year. I guess it was something I always thought I’d end up doing.

DZ (1977): Not sure I ever did! I chose a law degree because I thought it might be interesting and I might be good at it. When it came towards the end of my degree, I thought I might as well qualify as a solicitor although I didn’t really know what they did. I just applied to the two firms recommended by my tutor (Peter Birks) and one of them made me an offer. So here I am, a ridiculously long time later, still practising.

CM (1968): I hate to admit it but in my first year, I thought the law was utterly tedious. John Davies would be appalled to hear that, he was an excellent teacher. I think it was when I was studying contract that I began to think I might like a career in the law. I hadn’t really thought in those terms before. In 1967 the subject we all wanted to do was PPE, but I didn’t think I was clever enough to do it. You could virtually get in to read law by signing your name, so things really have changed!

PC: How has your view of practising law changed since you started out?

PS (2003): I started in 2007, just before the financial crisis hit which made for an interesting, if not turbulent, experience as a new trainee! In 2007, Law was already pretty much a 24/7 job, but I think it’s heading that way even more now.



Christopher Moss
(1968, Jurisprudence) was the President of the Ellesmere Society in 1971. He is now a self-employed Maritime & Commercial Arbitrator.



David Zeffman
(1977, Jurisprudence) was the President of the Ellesmere Society in 1980. He is now a Partner at Olswang.



Paolo Santi
(2003, Jurisprudence) was the President of the Ellesmere Society between 2004 and 2005. He is now an Associate at Cleary Gottlieb Steen & Hamilton LLP.

DZ (1977): The biggest change has definitely been technology. When I started (in 1981) there was no such thing as word processing so redrafts of documents had to be laboriously retyped. When word processing came along, it facilitated ever lengthening documents. At that time, the only form of instant(ish) written communication was telex (younger readers please Google it), later replaced by fax – which seemed very high tech at the time. But it was the arrival of email in the mid-1990s which totally transformed communication and clients’ expectations. Today, one can be “always on” which is not necessarily a good thing but does have its benefits.

CM (1968): There’s a very big difference. When I went to the bar, legal aid was just getting under way and there was a lot of very varied work around. It seemed like a really interesting way of life because you could dabble in lots of fields, whereas now you have to be much more specialised. You can’t just be a high street solicitor anymore. I would say there are far fewer opportunities nowadays for young lawyers.

PC: Do you think you’d do anything differently if you were graduating this year?

PS (2003): The first thing I’d say is that these days it’s necessary to engage with the job market before you graduate. And I think it’s good to be mindful that there are other professions out there. It’s quite easy as a law student to get pigeon-holed into the legal profession, which is not necessarily a bad thing, but I’d say have a look at other areas and keep your options open. It’s a great profession to end up working in, but it’s quite easy to end up in a legal bubble – be aware that there are other opportunities out there.

DZ (1977): That’s a really difficult question – not least because it would be a bit weird graduating a year after my son! The only thing I can say is that nowadays I don’t think you can really drift into law in the way that I did and you have to be much more focused and organised.

CM (1968): I wouldn’t even think of going to the bar now without at least a couple of degrees. It’s

*...nowadays I don’t think
you can really drift into law
in the way that I did and
you have to be much more
focused and organised.*

desperately difficult. I have friends with third class degrees who have become successful silks and acknowledge that they would never even get a foot inside a chambers today with the competition the way it is. If I was going to the bar now, I would get in with a firm of solicitors first, because that’s where you really learn the nuts and bolts and get some life experience. Years really count: going to the bar at 24 after a few years as a solicitor you’re going to be in a much better position than at 21 straight from college. So that’s what I’d do differently today, I think: that route wouldn’t be looked down on today in the way it would have been in my day.

PC: What is the best thing you’ve experienced so far as a lawyer, and what is the worst?

PS (2003): Qualifying was great. It was in the midst of the financial crisis and there was a bit of uncertainty about whether people would be taken on at the firms they trained with. I remember when we found out: we had a meeting with a couple of the partners, and they made a big point of telling us that this was a really difficult time, which made people quite anxious. Then they said “...but you’re all kept on, congratulations”, and revealed a couple of bottles of champagne!

And the worst? In my second month as a trainee was involved in a complex financing transaction. The senior associate was really busy and I essentially had to run the transaction myself in a very tight time-frame. I remember not really fully understanding what was going on and there were times when I just didn’t know why someone was calling me. It was all quite stressful but in the end it all worked out fine. I remember my supervisor

telling me that whatever happens, it’s just a job and they can’t shoot you for it!

DZ (1977): I think I’ve probably blanked out all of the worst experiences although they would probably include getting “bad judges” in litigation – I’m not a litigator and really don’t like the occasional lottery of judges’ decisions.

Some of my best experiences would include: acting for the Beatles (through Apple Corps), setting up the MTV Europe satellite TV channel and lots of other TV channels in the 1990s; setting up Attheraces – a horseracing and betting TV channel and advising the Government on the funding of British Horseracing (which my contemporaries will recognise combined my professional and personal interests).

CM (1968): I can certainly tell you the worst thing. In my first two years at the bar, I got to chambers at 8.45am expecting to be there for the day, but the clerk said to me “you’re on in the number 1 court at the Old Bailey at 10:30 in front of John Buzzard”. John Buzzard was a very nice man, but a ferocious judge. So by 8.55 I was on my way down to the cells at the Old Bailey to meet the man who was coming up for sentencing, he was a serious professional criminal. Someone once said to me there are some clients who you can’t really say anything for, so I said, “I don’t know you, I’ve just read this. I’d recommend that you authorise me to say ‘your lordship, there really isn’t a lot that can be said for my client’.” In the end it was the right approach but I thought, “my God, what have I done to deserve this?”

Probably the most satisfying thing I’ve had in my career as an arbitrator is when I was involved in the court case known as the Achilleas. I was the dissenting arbitrator at first instance. I remember seeing Bill Swadling and saying to him “I’ve just been in a case which I think will go to the House of Lords” and it’s rare that you can say that, but I knew that the parties in this case were going to fight it all the way. When I look back, I think I was the only person until it got to the House of Lords who agreed with them up to that point. So that was quite interesting, and I did feel I made my own little contribution to the development of the law.



From the Archives...

The Ellesmere Society: A History

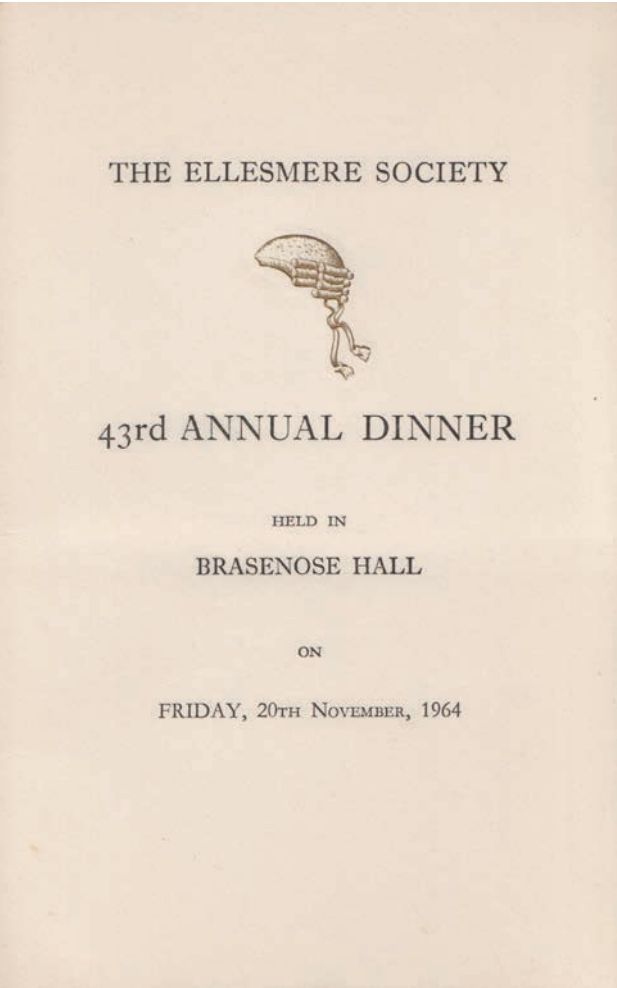
By **Georgina Edwards**,
College Archivist

The first meeting of the Ellesmere Society was held in Hilary Term 1922. The Society was created when the then Fellow in Law at Brasenose, William Stallybrass, suggested that students form a broader based society than the earlier College Moot Club, which had declined because of its limited scope. The object of the Ellesmere was to encourage the study of law and kindred subjects through discussions, moots and mock trials, as well as the holding of dinners. To begin with meetings were held jointly with Oriel College, though it was agreed to name the society

after a Brasenose alumnus ‘as Oriel freely admitted they had no candidate of the eminence of the Brasenose Lord Chancellor’. The Brasenose Lord Chancellor they spoke of was Thomas Egerton, who entered Brasenose in 1556. On 21 July 1603 he was created Baron Ellesmere and shortly afterwards appointed Lord Chancellor.

The Brazen Nose records that ‘the first meeting of the Ellesmere took the form of an inaugural dinner, which was held early in the Hilary term, and was followed by a moot, a mock trial which achieved a surprisingly high standard of impromptu humour, and finally a brilliant paper on the *Judicial Temperament*, by Mr John Buchan’. Over the years the society has attracted many notable guest speakers, whilst law tutors and Fellows have been actively involved from its very beginnings. On 28 October 1946 Sir George Baker spoke on the Nuremburg trials, at which he had served as Assistant Adjutant General on the British War Crimes Executive. One prominent member of the Society, Lord Scarman, was a guest of the Ellesmere on more than one occasion and in 1947 he presided over a moot on dangerous animals. In 1966 the annual dinner was attended by Mrs Justice Lane, the first woman High Court Judge, though women were not admitted as members of the Ellesmere until 1976. As well as Stallybrass, two other Brasenose Principals were involved with the Society. From the 1940s to the 1970s, Barry Nicholas was described as ‘a guiding spirit’ and in 1966, H. L. A. Hart, whilst Oxford Professor of Jurisprudence, spoke on ‘Intention and Punishment’ and returned in 1979 to deliver an address on Jeremy Bentham.

There have, throughout its history, been slight lulls in the activity of the Ellesmere but today mooting and law societies thrive in Oxford. From mooting to cricket matches, tennis competitions and summer BBQs, to the sale of Society ties in the 1960s, it has remained one of the chief aims of the society to



△ A long-standing BNC tradition: the menu card from the 43rd Annual Ellesmere Society Dinner in 1964.

keep in touch with its members. An annual society dinner continues to be held, and guest speakers continue to attend, along with alumni, giving students the opportunity to meet with practicing lawyers and academics. Indeed, as one of the more recent society reports in *The Brazen Nose* indicates: ‘the Ellesmere Society has a crucial role in helping us develop the skills which we as lawyers will need in the future’.

If you have any further information about the Ellesmere, or any records you would like to donate to the College, please contact the Archivist: georgina.edwards@bnc.ox.ac.uk.



△ Sir Thomas Egerton (Baron Ellesmere) after whom the Society is named



Academic Profile

Dr Sos Eltis is a Tutorial Fellow in the English Faculty and Vice-Principal of Brasenose College. We spoke to Sos to get her perspective on life at Brasenose and to find out what (if anything) has changed during her 19 years here.

Can you give us a brief overview of your research interests?

My recent book, *Acts of Desire: Women and Sex on Stage, 1800-1930*, which I worked on for many years, is a study of theatrical depictions of illicit sexuality, encompassing prostitution, adultery, bigamy and seduction. It grew out of the work behind my previous book on Oscar Wilde and feminism.

Since then I have focused on writing a number of articles on topics like Peter Hall’s directing of Samuel Beckett’s plays, Women’s Suffrage theatre, and the theatrical representation of women’s work during WWI.

I have recently started work on a book which looks at being human on stage, at how the staging, performance and reception of character relates to contemporary ideas of psychology, social structure and motivation. It will span a wide range of genres from late-Victorian melodrama through to early socialist dramas and expressionist theatre, but also musical comedy, farce and the play of ideas.

How have you found this year’s cohort of undergraduates to teach?

This year’s intake has been a pleasure to teach. They are wonderfully energetic – I often find myself calling time on their debates rather than encouraging them to happen. Keeping a one-hour seminar to two and half hours is proving a real challenge!

I think that shows that Brasenose English students are now, as ever, above all in love with their subject – it’s bursting out of them. As Tutors, our job is to nurture their intellectual curiosity, but so much of the students’ intellectual growth happens outside tutorials: through the conversations they have among themselves. All we can do is to make sure that their enthusiasm is focused in the most productive way.

Once, after a particularly long summer of working hard to finish articles, I got back to College wondering where I was going to get the energy from to teach. It was then that I ran into one of the new starters. He burst out with such enthusiasm, it was like plugging into the National Grid! It’s above

all what keeps me going and makes teaching a joy; when the hours get really long and I’m flagging, I am recharged by my students’ enthusiasm and energy.

What has been your impression of alumni events in College?

I love going to Gaudies. Often by the time a year group come back for their first Gaudy, they have had time to settle into their careers and are thriving. They have gone through those difficult years as new graduates and have started to set their own pace. They are safe in harbour – they are wise, and know their own priorities and what they value. I’m hugely impressed and proud of what they’ve achieved, and I love hearing about their partnerships, children and plans. Essentially they are more themselves – though they almost never look different at all!

You can see that the love of their subject is still as vibrant as ever. I went to a Gaudy recently and found out that the English cohort were running a book club over email and got just as heated in their discussions of books as they ever did in my classes.

One of my favourite alumni events was the panel on women in the media that was part of the 40 Years of Women at Brasenose celebrations last year. Seeing ex-students on the panel and how



△ Students perform a play on New Quad during Arts Week.

successful they have become since Brasenose is awe-inspiring; successful not only in their careers, but in the changes they have made to the world.

I can’t claim credit for what my students have gone on to achieve, but I like to think that at Brasenose they were encouraged to find and believe in their own voice. My job is to help strengthen that voice – which can sound easy, but often involves challenging, testing, proving it like metal to make it stronger.

Have you seen many changes during your years at BNC?

One of the funny things that I have observed is that students are no longer afraid to be overtly studious. In former years, there was pressure on brilliant students to achieve a first while being seen in the bar. The art was to be successful without being seen to work for it – to be able to be entertaining and clever on every subject topic outside your own work, to be as brilliant as possible, while appearing to be very laid back. That could make for wonderful debates down the bar, but could also put a huge extra burden on ambitious students.

Whereas now, it is taken as a matter of course that you have to work very hard to do a degree at Brasenose. There is no shame in spending your days in the library in order to keep up – or indeed, combining sports, arts, travel, politics and all the other fantastic things our students do, together with overtly hard graft. You don’t choose to do a degree at Oxford unless you are prepared to work twice as hard as at many other universities.

How would you sum up the atmosphere at Brasenose?

There is a real sense of community. The peer support network is incredibly active and all stems from the JCR – they look after each other.

One of my favourite times of the year is the Arts Festival, when the students really take over College. It marks the beginning of summer – when everyone takes possession of the grass. And there’s nothing like hearing the music and laughter, and some booming voices echoing round the quads. I love it.



The George Walker Bursary

Comedian, writer and Brasenose alumnus, **Michael Palin** (1962), paid the College a visit in February with the family of George Walker (1962), Palin’s friend and contemporary at BNC who sadly passed away last year. Mr Palin has recently set up a bursary to support an undergraduate in honour of his life-long friend and to give others an opportunity to benefit from an education at Brasenose.

George Walker and I were contemporaries, reading Modern History at Brasenose between 1962 and 1965. We became good friends, sharing digs together in our second year. He was well-read and enthusiastic, his company always lively and stimulating. Though performing was not his thing, he had a great sense of humour and was a valuable sounding board not only for matters of Modern History, but also for the comedy and drama which was becoming an increasingly significant part of my life at Oxford.

He relished his time at the heart of Europe, and was always exploring and sampling the continent, whilst building up an enviably wide knowledge of European history.

He died of cancer, far too young, in the late autumn of 2014, shortly after our last meeting together in hospital in Strasbourg.

He loved his time at Brasenose, and relished all the opportunities offered by College and University life.

My decision to set up a Bursary in his name was not only to recognise all the promise of a rich and busy life cut short, but also to perpetuate, in his memory and in his name, a chance for others to benefit from the College that meant so much to him. The George Walker Bursary is an investment in the talents of the future; talents that I hope will blossom into lives as active, energetic and beneficial as that of George himself.

Michael Palin (History, 1962)

Giving Back to BNC

Supporting student bursaries ensures that Brasenose can continue to attract the finest minds from around the globe, irrespective of financial background. Donations at every level, from regular gifts to the Annual Fund to fully endowed named bursaries, play their part in making sure that students have the greatest opportunities at BNC.

To find out more about donating to Brasenose, email: development.office@bnc.ox.ac.uk or visit: <http://www.bnc.ox.ac.uk/alumni/supporting-bnc>

A Day in the Life... of the JCR President

Beth Jenkinson is a second year PPE student and the President of the JCR. We tagged along for her final day of Hilary Term; joining her for lectures, lunch in Hall and late night kebabs!...



8.30am
My daily morning commute from Frewin to College: the beautiful view walking onto Radcliffe Square.



9.00am
An extremely interesting lecture on political thought from Bentham to Weber, and a significantly smaller turn-out than usual – thanks to it being the last week of term!



10.30am
My friend, looking a bit too cheerful to be working hard in the library!



12.30pm
Me eating lunch in Hall, a good time to catch up with friends.



2.00pm
A sunny afternoon run around Christ Church meadow.



3.00pm
The JCR spent the afternoon painting the hoarding around the building works on Deer Park, loads of people got stuck in!



5.00pm
Heading back to Frewin the scenic route via Hertford's Bridge of Sighs.



6.00pm
Dinner with friends at the Chequers' pub: enjoying a well-earned end of term pint.



8.00pm
With a friend at the drinks reception for the Spring Party in Hall.



11.00pm
No night out is complete without a stop off at Hassan's (our beloved local kebab van) on the way home.

Alumni Events 2016

We have welcomed well over 500 alumni back to College over the past academic year. Here are a few snaps of some of those get-togethers.



See our Flickr site for the full events photo gallery:
www.flickr.com/photos/bnc_members



Part of the Oxford Alumni Weekend, in September 2015, ▴ ▢ ▾ the Brasenose Society's Annual Dinner was a wonderful evening, bringing together BNC alumni of all eras.



◁ ▴ In November 2015, we invited the oldest members of the college back for a special lunch to celebrate the anniversary of 60 years since leaving Brasenose.



◁ In March 2016, Peter Sinclair spoke at our inaugural *Breakfast with Brasenose* event, hosted by C. Hoare & Co. bank in London.



▴ 1956-59 matriculands joined us for the first Gaudy of 2016, where old friendships were re-kindled and a fantastic evening was had by all.



▴ As part of the *Principal's Conversations* series, John Bowers invited Simon Schama for a fascinating discussion in front of a huge audience of alumni, students and members of the public in the University Church.



◁ ▴ In April we invited back those who matriculated between 1960 and 1966 to celebrate 50 years since leaving Brasenose. It was a very jolly occasion!

Contact Us

The Alumni Relations & Development Office offers a warm welcome to Brasenose Members returning to College. We are also pleased to be able to arrange Alumni Dining in Hall during term time for you and a guest and to assist you with booking College accommodation should you require it.

If you would like to visit us in the Development Office, we're located on staircase VII/2, just before the Library. Our usual office hours are 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday.

**The Alumni Relations & Development Office
Brasenose College
Oxford OX1 4AJ**

Tel: **+44(0)1865 287275**
Email: **development.office@bnc.ox.ac.uk**
Web: **www.bnc.ox.ac.uk**

Events Diary 2016/17

GAUDIES

Gaudy for those who matriculated in 2000 & 2001

Friday 24 June 2016

Gaudy for those who matriculated in 2008 & 2009

Friday 23 September 2016

Gaudy for those who matriculated between 1963 and 1966

Friday 17 March 2017

ALUMNI & GUEST EVENTS

Alumni Garden Party

Sunday 31 July 2016

Bring the family

BNC Society Annual Alumni Dinner

Saturday 17 September 2016

Guests welcome

Informal drinks at the Oxford and Cambridge Club

Saturday 17 September 2016

Guests welcome

DONOR EVENT

Alexander Nowell Circle Lunch (Legators)

Friday 18 November 2016

All events will be held in College unless stated otherwise. Invitations will be sent out in advance by post or email where appropriate.

For more information, contact us on
+44 (0)1865 287275
development.office@bnc.ox.ac.uk

**Join our online BNC
Communities**



[www.facebook.com/pages/
Brasenose-College](http://www.facebook.com/pages/Brasenose-College)



www.twitter.com/bnc_members



www.linkedin.com

You are always welcome back to Brasenose!

