



Brazen Notes



△ Formerly known as Lecture Room XI, and named after its generous donor, the redesign of the Amersi Foundation Lecture Room finished in May

The Amersi Foundation Lecture Room

Brasenose College was delighted to unveil its new Amersi Foundation Lecture Room in May 2019. The extended space will allow students to gather and learn, staff and Fellows to share ideas, and alumni and friends to visit and contribute to an ever-increasingly diverse and rich Brasenose education and experience.

Before the renovation, the College identified the need for an impressive space for events and teaching. The success of the “Principal’s Conversation” series – which has already showcased presidents, prime ministers, industry leaders and senior academics – demonstrated the need for a larger events space on the main College site. Similarly, our outreach work with prospective students and schools required more innovative spaces to capture the imagination of the young minds who visit us.

The extended and refurbished space was generously funded by the Amersi Foundation, through our alumnus and Honorary Fellow **Mohamed Amersi (EMBA, 2014)**.

Previously known as Lecture Room XI, the original space was designed by TG Jackson. The renovation was a complex and multifaceted project involving heavy structural modifications, including the removal of a supporting wall and incorporation of the room behind – the old College Workshop (or

the old “Small Lecture Room” depending how far you go back).

The architects, Berman Guedes Stretton, have fully refurbished the room, and their sensitive and skilful matching of the existing woodwork and room timbers means that the original late 19th century character has been preserved.

The new facilities installed however are anything but Victorian, with digital screens deftly concealed within panelling and an integrated sound system that allows the space to be easily adapted for use by both smaller groups and for larger lectures.

Suspended just below the timber roof structure is the affectionally named ‘raft’, which provides air circulation and temperature control. It also offers an impressive array of lighting options meaning the room can be converted from a lecture theatre to a reception room when needed.

Adorning the walls is the College’s new temporary art exhibition on loan from the Ingram Collection (see page 3). The installation of these contemporary art pieces adds a 21st century element to this Victorian-era building.

The Principal, John Bowers QC, said: “The College was delighted when Mohamed Amersi offered through his Foundation to refurbish Lecture

Room XI. This is an excellent space where we can debate all sorts of issues. The whole community is incredibly grateful for his generosity. Thank you, Mohamed! The completion of the room significantly increases both the type and scale of event that the College is able to hold and we are extremely proud of it. We look forward to welcoming alumni back to visit our wonderful new space.”



△ Lecture Room XI, before its transformation

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News

This is where we share news from the College – and you! Whether it is an award, personal achievement, a new baby, job, or just an update on how you are getting on – we want to hear it! If you would like your news to be included in the next issue, go to www.bnc.ox.ac.uk/submissions or email us at development.office@bnc.ox.ac.uk



Congratulations to **Richard Cockram (Mathematics, 1962)** on receiving a Distinguished Friend of Oxford (DFO) award for his outreach work in Cornwall. He received his award at a special ceremony hosted by University of Oxford Vice-Chancellor Professor Louise Richardson (pictured). Photo courtesy of John Cairns.

Andy Ford (History, 1984), writes: "I am finally completing my M(Res) in Medieval Studies at University of Reading this summer. At the tender age of 54, I will be starting my Doctorate (The Royal Forest Under Henry III) on a part-time basis in the autumn. Hopefully I will finish in time for my 60th birthday."

Jim Ring (English, 1976)'s latest book, *How the Navy Won the War* has been shortlisted for the Mountbatten Award, the leading maritime literary prize. *We Come Unseen*, his previous work on the Royal Navy, was one of the first winners of the prize.

Madeleine Walker (Classics, 2013) graduated in 2018 with a masters' degree in Contemporary Acting at the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama and has gone straight into work as an actor. After signing with an agent, she was cast as Delphi in *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child*. She will be performing this role at the Palace Theatre until May 2020.

Tom Beardsworth (PPE, 2011) writes: "I confess to sniggering a little in 2011 when Graeme Richardson, Brasenose's then-Chaplain, told us Freshers assembled in Hall on our first day that approximately four among us would marry each other. He was way off – it is already somewhat higher. **Anna Broadley (History & Economics, 2011)** and I are the latest to furnish that statistic. We got married at All Saints Church, Fulham, on 31st August 2019 after meeting in the Brasenose JCR almost eight years earlier. Many Brasenose contemporaries were among our closest friends that joined us, including **Will Round (PPE, 2011)** who played the organ."

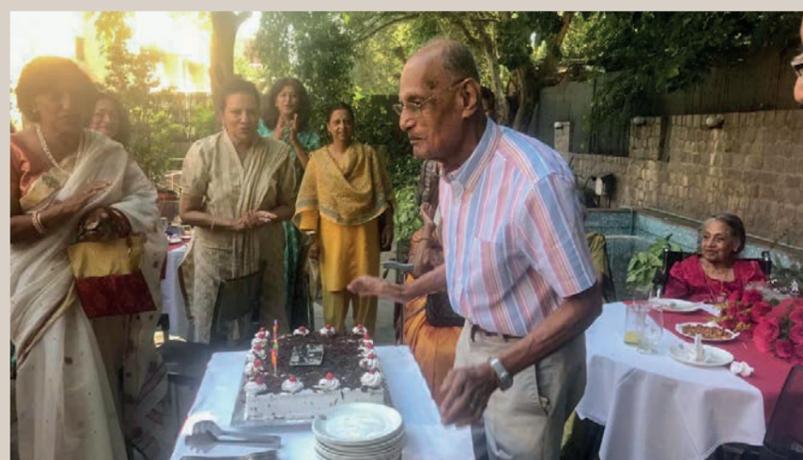
On 1st December 2019 **Robert Cashmore (History, 2010)** will become HM Government's Head of Investment for the Middle East, North Africa, Afghanistan and Pakistan, having spent the last four years working at the British Embassy in Riyadh as Head of Investment for Saudi Arabia. Robert's new role will be based at the British Embassy in Dubai.

This is just a small selection of the news we received. If you cannot see your submission printed here, it may appear in the next edition of the Brazen Notes or Brazen Nose. Please note that Brasenose College reserves full editorial control over all its publications.

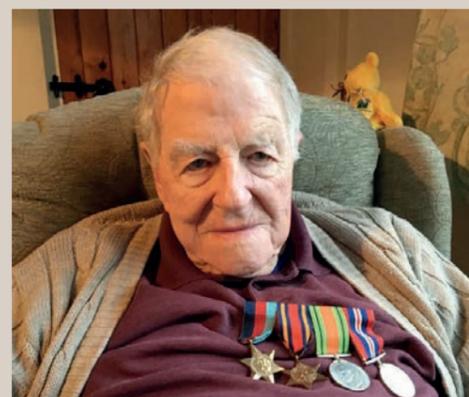


BNC on *University Challenge*

Brasenose competed on BBC's *University Challenge* in October. They were in a first-round match against Imperial College London, who, unfortunately for us, proved to be one of the strongest teams in the competition. BNC fought a hard battle, but alas, like their alumni counterparts in December, were sent home after their first match. It was a valiant team effort nonetheless from **Tucker Drew (Psychology, Philosophy & Linguistics, 2017)**, **Oli Hanson (Mathematics, 2015)**, **Allen Haugh (PPE, 2017)** and **Maud Mullan (Classics, 2016)**.



Here's wishing many happy returns to **Valliath Nair (History, 1940)** (top) and **Brian Robinson (Botany, 1938)** (right) – photo courtesy of Dave Lewis, Somerset Live), who both recently celebrated their 100th birthdays – we hope you both had fantastic days!



Installation of a God of the Forge

by **Dr Simon Smith, Senior Tutor**



Brasenose installed a sculpture by noted artist Sir Eduardo Paolozzi in Old Quad this Autumn. The work is a God of the Forge, titled 'Portrait of the Artist' (1988). Its body represents *Hephaestus* (Vulcan): god of blacksmiths, metalworking, carpenters, craftsmen, artisans, sculptors, metallurgy, fire, and volcanoes. The head is that of the artist. It stands 150cm tall and weighs 150kg. God of the Forge is part of the Ingram Collection of 20th century British art that is being lent to the College for the year 2019-20 (*Ed: see box below for more information on this*).

It was a complex 3-day operation that involved several departments of Brasenose who worked together on the project.

Day 1

Delivery of the God of the Forge. A suitable, secure ground-floor holding area was identified and a security plan drawn up that calibrated risk, taking into account the fact that (at the time of writing) the Blenheim gold WC gang remain at large...

Day 2

Jo Baring (History, 1996), Curator of the Ingram Collection, and **Robyn Salt (Fine Art, 2016)** deployed a cardboard maquette to assess the best orientation of the sculpture (*below*).



The intended site in Old Quad selected by Jo and **Dr Ian Kiaer, Tutorial Fellow in Fine Art & Curator of Pictures** proved problematic after University Parks detected a hidden underground cable. Porters, IT and the Workshop joined with Crown Fine Art and University Parks in assessing whether installation could go ahead as planned.

After a CT scan and the digging of an exploratory trench, site A was abandoned and an alternative plot chosen.



The base area was excavated and 300kg of concrete laid. With the assistance of **Bradley Johnson (Medicine, 2016)** Robyn turned the first sod of earth (*above*).

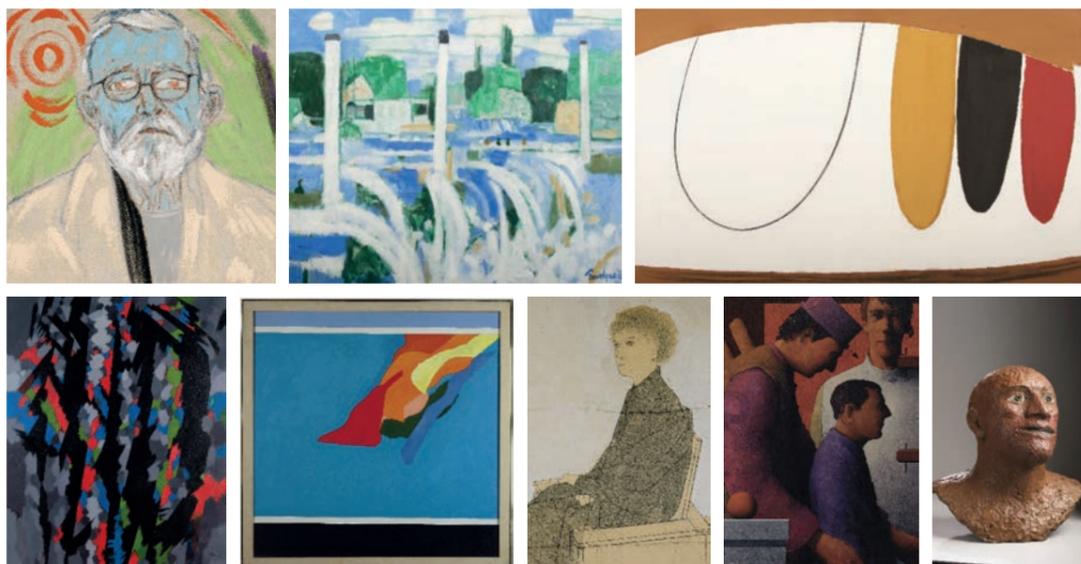
Day 3

God of the Forge was wheeled out of the secure zone and attached to a hoist apparatus permitting the final stages of installation to be carried out. Unfortunately, complications arose in securing the god to the base with steel pins due to risk of lightning strike. The installation was temporarily called off for safety reasons.

Day 4

The second attempt at installation was completed successfully, aided by much improved sunny weather. We welcome Brasenose's newest recruit!

Editor's note: This is not the first statue to be erected on Old Quad – turn to page 5 for a report from the Archives about the statue of Samson that stood there between 1727-1881.



The Ingram Collection at BNC

Principal John Bowers QC comments: "We are thrilled to have several exhibits from the Ingram Collection, which was brought together by Christopher Ingram and is curated by our alumna **Jo Baring (History, 1996)**. The biggest waves have been made by the exquisite God of the Forge, entitled 'Portrait of the Artist', by Sir Eduardo Paolozzi, which is in a prominent position in Old Quad. Its body represents Hephaestus, god inter alia of blacksmiths and metalworking. Other items (as seen in this box) are on display in the Amersi Foundation Lecture Room, the Platnauer Room and the staircase down from the Rotunda. In due course we will hold an event to explain the background to this wonderful Collection."

Scout Debbie Hall: Interviewed

Debbie Hall has worked as a scout at Brasenose for a quarter of a century. And a lot has changed in those 25 years, both in the College and in Debbie's own life, she tells journalist Olivia Gordon.

I meet Debbie over cuppas in the housekeepers' room, a tiny den at the end of a maze of service corridors. She tells me that when she first came to Brasenose for an interview, having heard from a friend who worked at the College that there were jobs going for scouts, it was with her mum. Both were given jobs starting the very next day.

The job was a new challenge for Debbie, who had spent the previous decade recovering from a serious car crash.

37 years ago, when her son Anthony was eight months old, Debbie got into a car with her son's father – who was no longer her partner – and he drove them to buy fish and chips near Debbie's home in Cowley. She had no idea that he had been drinking. Just as he drove around a corner, a tyre burst, he lost control of the car and they hit a brick wall. 'I can't remember much,' Debbie says today. 'I can just remember lying in a pool of blood and trying to say "I can't see".'

Fortunately, it was a doctor's house they had hit. But while Debbie's ex-partner escaped with a few scratches, for Debbie the accident was life-changing. She had been flung through the car's windscreen, and as well as sustaining injuries from head to toe, she instantly and completely lost the sight in her right eye.

The process of recovery over the years that followed involved multiple operations, and many periods in hospital. Debbie's parents, brother and sister rallied around, and over time Debbie married her childhood sweetheart Kevin. Eye doctors eventually told Debbie there was nothing more they could do and she accepted the loss of half her sight. The emotional recovery was very tough. Debbie says: 'You just think everyone's looking at you, you don't want to go out in the world, you don't want to see anyone, you just want to shut yourself away.'

In 2011, thanks to medical advances, a natural-looking artificial lens was implanted over her blind eye. Still, it hasn't been a smooth path. In the last year, Debbie has had more surgery due to eye infections, and a small growth discovered at the back of her damaged eye. She had to have her original eyeball removed in an operation. In its place, she now has a metal ball implant, attached to her nerves. Initially her body rejected the implant, but after a second implant was tried, the operation was a success. The effect was a new eye, a perfect match with the healthy one – today, looking at Debbie, one would never see a difference between her two lively green eyes.

Extraordinarily, despite all she has been through, Debbie has refused to let anything stop her. A keen runner, she has completed two half-marathons, and last year would have also run a third, the Oxford half-marathon, had her surgeon not forbidden it. She has 100 per cent vision in her original eye, and her next challenge is to learn to drive.

Anthony was 10 when Debbie started as a scout at Brasenose. She vividly remembers her first day: 'I was just given a tabard and I was put into one of the lecture rooms and told: "There's the cleaning bucket, there's the mop, get on with it!"' Born and bred in Oxford and from a family who have lived in



△ Debbie (middle row, fourth from left) with the rest of the Housekeeping team in 2014



△ Debbie Hall

the city for generations, Debbie had never had any dealings before with the University, and had never done cleaning work apart from a Saturday job cleaning floors at BMW with big machines, having previously worked in an office and shop.

She started working from 7.30am-10.30am, 'then I worked my way up to 11.30am, and they finally gave me a staircase. Staircase 14 was the first staircase I had.' She worked her way up to deputy housekeeper, overseeing the team of 20, and says: 'I've just seen so much change. We've got new buildings, we've got the Rotunda, we've got all the new servery.'

Working life has evolved too, of course. At Brasenose 25 years ago, the induction of a scout was very different from today. Back then, says Debbie, 'you had no training with chemicals, when you first came. Today everyone is trained with high standards of cleaning.'

The strangest thing Debbie has seen in a Brasenose room was many years ago in Staircase 14: 'one student had a rabbit in there, and one had a big tropical fish tank. I went in there and thought "Oh my God." Obviously, we had to report that. Don't get me wrong, they looked nice in the room, but you can't have them.'

Most students are reasonably tidy, although she says girls can be messier than boys, and she remembers another room on Staircase 14 years ago 'where I literally couldn't open the door; you just couldn't see the floor.' Mostly though, Debbie's experience of students and Fellows has been very positive. Today, scouting in Staircase 9 and Stamford House, she says: 'I've got a tremendous lot of lovely students.'

She gets to know her students quite well – many away from home for the first time tend to see her as a motherly figure. She says: 'I think it's nice to have a good relationship with your students, because I think then they do appreciate you. A lot of my students, if they see me cleaning the showers on the landing, they'll say "Good morning, Debbie."' When students thank you for cleaning their rooms, 'it gives you a little boost'.

She tries to make admissions candidates feel comfortable, too, asking them how it's going and reassuring them the tutors are nice.

In 2016, Debbie reduced her hours – she has many commitments looking after her elderly parents, as well as her own health. In September the College celebrated her 25th year of work with a party and flowers – a highlight of Debbie's time at Brasenose.

Oxford colleges have gradually become part of Debbie's family's life as well as her own. Anthony is now 37 and has been Assistant Steward at Queen's College since the age of 18 – having started his career at Brasenose aged 14, earning pocket money by waiting in the dining hall after school. To Debbie's great happiness, he got married last year

– in Worcester College, where his wife works in the Development Office. Debbie's sister is buttery manager of Wadham. And after 45 years in the car factory, Debbie's father went to work at All Souls.

Today Debbie's wish is for health, for her and her loved ones. 'I've been through quite a lot really, but I just say don't give up,' she says. Working at Brasenose has been a constant in her life and she is grateful for the support her colleagues have given her over the years. 'I couldn't imagine not working here. I'm part of the family.'

Five things you never knew about Debbie Hall

- She loves gardening, especially growing flowers. Her favourites are begonias and pansies.
- She enjoys holidays abroad, and usually goes to Tenerife or Gran Canaria in the winter.
- She's a big fan of the *Inspector Morse* spin-off show *Lewis*, and when Kevin Whately filmed at Brasenose, she had her picture taken with him – then the following day he sat next to her at breakfast in the dining hall, a moment she will always remember.
- Her first dance at her wedding to Kevin was to 'Cherish' by Kool and the Gang.
- She has raised more than £3,500 for the blind running her two half-marathons.



From the Archives

The Statue of Samson by **Georgie Edwards**, College Archivist (right)



For the first 100 years of the College's existence, the Brasenose buildings consisted of just one quadrangle (Old Quad). Built in the early 16th century, the Quadrangle was only two storeys high, with the Hall and Tower at their present heights. The Chapel was in the south west corner, and opposite this was the original College Library. The Principal's Lodgings occupied most of the east side, including part of the Tower.



as 'Cain and Abel', although subsequently it was identified as a copy of a work by John of Bologna depicting Samson slaying a Philistine; a version in marble can still be seen in the Victoria and Albert Museum. The College's copy was

By the 17th century, more space was needed as student numbers grew, and Old Quad was extended to include a third storey. We know from David Loggan's engraving of the College of 1675 that a knot garden existed where the grassed quad now stands and that in October 1727 this garden was substituted for a grassed quad with a statue. The Antiquarian, Thomas Hearne (1678-1735), recorded the fact with great indignation. He said that the garden was 'the only one of that kind then remaining in Oxford' and that it 'was a delightful & pleasant Shade in Summer Time. This is done purely to turn it into a Grass Plot, & to erect some silly Statue there'. The "silly statue" in question was known in the College from the beginning

purchased in London and brought to Oxford by barge. It was removed in 1881, having been decorated and adorned by students on many occasions. The final straw for its removal seems to have come in March 1881 (*the following from a blog post by **Dr Llewelyn Morgan, Vice-Principal & Fellow in Classics***):

"On 9th March 1881, the 'bump supper' celebration of a Brasenose success on the river turned ugly. 'In the flickering light of bonfires,' recalled L.R. Farnell, the scholar of Greek religion, 'could be seen the figures of some two hundred young men bounding and leaping high . . . and passing from lurid light into deep shadow alternately; and the leaping was accompanied by terrifying yells and the most fantastic music ever devised by savages standing on the verge of culture.' Finally, the undergraduates turned their attentions to a statue that had stood in the middle of Old Quad lawn for 150 years, and defaced it with indelible paint. It and its obscene graffiti were quietly despatched to a scrapyard soon after.

The target of their drunken assault, whether or not those Victorian hoorays were aware of it, was an appropriate one. Although universally known as Cain and Abel, the statue was in fact a copy of a Renaissance image of Samson slaying a Philistine. Walter Pater, a Fellow of the College, found some consolation in the sight of these Brasenose athletes ('like panthers,' he had described them) leaping naked over bonfires. But the presence of the arch-aesthete in Oxford's heartiest College during its most philistine phase throws up manifold anomalies: the mind boggles, for example, at the notion of Pater tutoring the future Earl Haig. On the matter of the statue's destruction, Pater was defensive. If we can believe Edmund Gosse, it was 'almost the only thing that ever ruffled him': on mention of the statue, 'Pater would sit up in a moment, and say, with great acidity, "It was totally devoid of merit, no doubt."'



△ 1875 Eight grouped around statue in Old Quad

The Principal's Blog

BNC's Principal, John Bowers QC, keeps a blog of his thoughts and impressions of Oxford College life. We have gathered some snippets from the last few months to give you an insight into Brasenose's daily running. Read the full blog here:

www.bnc.ox.ac.uk/about-brasenose/princblog

May 2019

We are delighted that our excellent Greenland Library was favoured with three architectural awards on 23rd May. It is a magnificent space and a great tribute to the excellent team who designed it and those who implemented the design. The craftsmanship is uniformly superb. We thank again the generous funders of the project, **Duncan Greenland (PPE, 1966)**, **James Del Favero (Engineering Science, 1978)** and **Gerald Smith (Philosophy, 1984)**. We are very proud of our Library, and our students love it, but it is wonderful to have the quality of the project recognised by such an illustrious body.

On 29th May, I addressed the resplendent blazers at their pre-Eights breakfast in the Shackleton Room. I spoke of our successes on the River over the 19th century. The College for example rowed as head of the river on thirty consecutive nights in 1852-5 and in two of those years (1852 and 1853) held the headship simultaneously in both Eights and Torpids. Remarkably, five of the stars of the boats in these years became priests.

On 30th May, Ascension Day, there was the annual 'Beating of the Bounds' around the College. This long-established custom demarcates parish boundaries by parishioners with sticks striking boundary stones and marking them with chalk. A building may not be constructed across parish boundaries and it was necessary to know who was in each parish for the purpose of the Poor Laws. The day commenced with Morning Prayer in Chapel, and then there was a procession from St Mary the Virgin, which arrived in College at the



△ Students enjoying Ivy Beer at Lincoln College on Ascension Day

High Street gate (which is not normally open) to mark the boundary of their parish with that of St Michael at the North Gate (boundary stones are next to Broadgates and staircase 4).

At noon, Andy Talbot, the Head Porter, opened the door to Lincoln College, allowing Brasenose folk to partake of Lincoln's penitential Ivy Beer al fresco. Coins are then thrown from the top of the front Tower at Lincoln which are scooped up by school children. It is a really moving and evocative ceremony.



△ Kenneth Lonergan in conversation

At the end of May, we were delighted to welcome Kenneth Lonergan as our First Frankland Visitor. Joyce Frankland was a 16th century benefactress so it is appropriate that we have launched our Artist in Residence scheme with her name. Kenneth is probably one of the most interesting screen writers and directors currently operating. He has an extraordinary record of 91 nominations for awards with 55 wins (and counting) including an Oscar.

We really worked Kenneth hard during the two days he visited us, plying him with questions about his work from all parts of the College. On 30th May – just after he arrived – he spoke at a round table event organised by the JCR. Kenneth spoke about his films and plays especially *Margaret* (which was twice screened in the JCR earlier in the week) and the Oscar-winning *Manchester by the Sea*.

On 31st May, there were three events with Kenneth in College. He first spoke to English students in the study of **Professor Simon Palfrey, Fellow in English**, about his career, and then we held an SCR lunch where our **Royal Literary Fund Writing Fellow Rebecca Abrams** led the questioning. Later on, I asked the questions at a fascinating Principal's



Conversation. I discussed his early life and whether he preferred film or theatre, and in particular his films and the play *The Starry Messenger*, which opened in the West End of London last week. He answered all of the questions with grace and good humour. He spoke of working with Casey Affleck and his lack of interest in Oscar ceremonies. He explained why he cast his wife in *Margaret* and why he casts himself in most of his films.

He was the first Frankland Visitor and was unforgettable.

June 2019

On 4th June we attended the Brasenose Society President's Summer Party in the magical setting of The Charterhouse in Charterhouse Square. I have passed the building many times but have never been into it. It is so old that it makes Brasenose look positively modern by comparison! We had a brilliant guided tour by **Stephen Green (Classics, 1962)** and **Dudley Green (Classics, 1954)**, two alumni who now live in The Charterhouse. There were over one hundred people at the drinks party afterwards which **Sir Paul Silk (Classics, 1970)** (President of the Society) and I addressed. I emphasised how much we regard alumni as part of our extended Brasenose Family.



△ The BNC Society President's Summer Party

On 7th June, the Amersi Foundation Lecture Room was packed for the visit of the President of Sierra Leone, His Excellency Julius Maada Bio, which we co-hosted with the African Studies Centre. He brought with him the Attorney General and the Ministers of Finance, Agriculture and Tourism. They were in the UK for an Economic meeting on the previous day in London and the Trooping of the Colour on the following day. He has been President of Sierra Leone since 4th April 2018. He is a retired Brigadier General in the Sierra Leonian Army and he was the military Head of State of Sierra Leone from 16th January 1996 to 29th March 1996 under a military junta government. The President is part way through a PhD in International Relations at Bradford University, but probably has little time for that now!

He first addressed a lunch for Fellows where he answered questions. Following that, he spoke to around 130 about the challenges faced by his country, which is one of the world's poorest but is keen to develop. A consistent strand of the speech was that the West (in particular its media) did not understand Africa. The President also emphasised his desire to stamp out corruption (which he said had been rampant under the predecessor regime) and to extend free education to all. He has set up an independent commission of inquiry focused on corrupt officials from past administrations, with the aim of recovering money that was pilfered from public funds, and using it toward the new development goals.



△ With the President of Sierra Leone, Julius Maada Bio

He stressed that he wanted trade rather than aid. There was a lively Q&A and many members of the Sierra Leonian diaspora asked questions. He spoke about his decision during the civil war to meet the rebel leader. It was a great opportunity to hear about a fascinating country.

15th June saw **Professor Sir Michael Stratton (Physiological Sciences, 1976)** speak in the Amersi Foundation Lecture Room. He was appointed Director of the Wellcome Trust Sanger Institute in 2010 and was knighted in 2013 for services to medical science. His most famous discovery was the identification of the BRCA2 breast cancer gene, which is now used in predictive tests in women with a family history of the disease. **Mehroz Ehsan (Cardiovascular Medicine, 2015)**, our former President of the HCR (who has just finished his DPhil) discussed Sir Michael's time at Brasenose, his research career and the future of genetic research in the era of big data, and artificial intelligence.



△ The JCR Garden Party in June

He spoke of the enormous amount of genome data which can now be processed, even compared to a few years ago, and the future which may be synthetic genomics. He also touched on some of the sensitive ethical issues which arise if there is a right of everyone to have their data. I want to thank Mehroz for taking the initiative in asking a great friend of the College and of mine.

As usual the JCR Garden Party on 20th June was an excellent event providing a great opportunity for staff and students to socialise together. After heavy rain the sun came out for the event. The following week on 25th June, the HCR party was held in the Hall (due to the threat of rain), and enjoyed by all who attended.

We congratulate those alumni who received an honour in the Queen's Birthday Honours List: **Graeme Biggar (History, 1993)**, lately Director, Office for Security and Counter Terrorism, Home Office: a CBE for services to National Security; **Charles Beckford (Classics, 1982)**, Director,

Foreign and Commonwealth Office: OBE (Diplomatic and Overseas List) for services to National Security; **Richard Jay (PPE, 1965)**: BEM for services to Young People and Music in Northern Ireland; and **Brig. Michael Reade (Clinical Medicine, 1999)**: Member (AM) in the Military Division – Australia for exceptional performance of duty as the Director of Clinical Services of the 2nd General Health Battalion and Professor for Military Medicine and Surgery.

We are very sad to note the passing of our Honorary Fellow **Martin Feldstein (Economics, 1961)**. He was a most remarkable economist. I enjoyed the conversations I had with him in College. He had a long and careful stewardship of the National Bureau of Economic Research which celebrates its centenary next year. It is based between Harvard and MIT, and draws on not just both of those august institutions, but nowadays a vast international network. They host workshops and conferences, and publish books and working papers. The working paper series is now 26,000 strong.

On 28th June, students from the matriculation years 2002 and 2003 returned to College for a very successful Gaudy. The Vice-Principal's claim that marking exams was "way harder" than sitting exams was not sympathetically received, but it was otherwise an excellent evening. Particularly memorable was **Fatema Orjela née Dawoodbhai (Jurisprudence, 2002)**'s account of a terrifying scuba-diving accident that was still nothing compared to Finals (and, it follows, marking Finals).



Gaudy for 2002-2003 in June



July 2019

The College is deeply saddened to announce the death of **John Gardner, Fellow and Tutor in Law** from 1991 to 1996. After election to a Prize Fellowship at All Souls College, he became a tutorial fellow at Brasenose. He became Professor of Jurisprudence in 2000 at the age of just 35, taking the chair previously held by former Brasenose Principal, Herbert Hart. He spoke superbly at our first Great Brasenose Lawyers event in 2016, celebrating the life of H L A Hart. John moved to a Senior Research Fellowship at All Souls in 2016. He died from cancer tragically young on 11th July. Our thoughts are with his wife Jenny and young family. A longer tribute by his successor as Tutorial Fellow, William Swadling appears on our website: <http://www.bit.ly/BNCJohnGardner>



△ 1509 Party at the Royal Geographical Society in July

On 4th July, the College thanked a collection of generous donors with a party at the Royal Geographical Society. We are hugely grateful to **Mark Humphreys (History & Economics, 1988)** and to the Society for making their splendid venue available, and also for a remarkable display of items from the Society's collection (for example, the very hats worn by Livingstone and Stanley at their famous meeting) that the guests were able to view.

On 13th July, amongst some twelve graduands were two golden oldies (if they do not mind my so saying!): **Niall Robinson (Physics, 1981)**, now based in Monaco, and **Peter Berg (Chemistry, 1956)** from Canterbury, who gave an elegant vote of thanks at the lunch. Niall and his "team" brought an array of classic cars with them, which were beautifully parked in the Square.

On 15th July I visited to Downing Street to meet our alumnus **Sheridan Westlake (PPE, 1993)**, who worked there under both David Cameron and Theresa May as a Special Adviser to the Prime Minister (Political Policy).

We are all thrilled at the appointment of alumnus and Honorary Fellow **Professor Andrew Burrows QC (Jurisprudence, 1975)** to the Supreme Court. He is Professor of the Law of England and Senior Research Fellow at All Souls College. He is only the second person (in modern times) to be appointed to the highest court without having been a full-time Judge, the other being Lord Sumption. This is a remarkable and much deserved achievement.

Brasenose celebrates the fiftieth anniversary of the Apollo 11 Moon Mission by recalling Brasenose's role in the project. In 1839 **Sir William Robert Grove (Classics, 1829)** invented the gas voltaic cell. If an electric current is passed through water, the water is split into oxygen and hydrogen. Grove's experiment reversed the reaction to generate an electric current. A century later, Tom Bacon developed this basic idea to create a viable fuel cell to supply astronauts with electricity and water. As various news outlets have pointed out, Bacon's refinement of Grove's invention was praised by President Nixon as being integral to the Apollo project.

Sir William Grove, who lived between 1811 and 1896, devised another type of fuel cell that was deployed in the early US telegraph network. He was appointed the first Professor of Experimental Philosophy at the London Institution in 1841, yet was a true polymath, having read Classics and also being called to the Bar by Lincoln's Inn. His interest in early photographic technologies led him to speculate on how photographic evidence would affect legal proceedings in later centuries.

On 18th July, I attended the Rare Rising Stars awards ceremony at the House of Commons celebrating the achievements of outstanding Black British University students. Target Oxbridge, with which Brasenose works closely, is a subsidiary of Rare. The awards were conferred by its founder Naomi Kellman, who spoke eloquently at Brasenose's access symposium earlier this year and, like me, is a Lincoln alum.

We record with sadness the death of Emeritus Fellow **Sir Fergus Millar** who was the pre-eminent Roman historian of his generation and a scholar of genuinely global stature. He was made a Fellow of the British Academy in 1976 and subsequently a knight in 2010. Most of his work dealt with the Roman Empire (very widely construed), and latterly its manifestations in the (Greek) East, especially under Theodosius II.

Fergus' association with Brasenose was principally as holder of the Camden Chair of Ancient History and a Fellowship of the College (1984-2002). He knew the College from his time as a doctoral student under the supervision of Sir Ronald Syme, his predecessor but one in the Camden Chair. He was also Tutor for Graduates.

He was a regular attender of social events here during my time as Principal. We send our condolences to his wife Susanna and his three children.

I enjoyed listening to **Rajan Datar (PPE, 1981)**'s Radio 4 programme *Testing the Tebbit Test* and what it said about identity. You may recall that in 1990 Norman Tebbit, then a Conservative MP, caused great controversy when suggesting that the proportion of Britain's Asian population who supported touring teams in test matches against England, could be used to gauge the extent of cultural assimilation. Rajan defended the programme on *Feedback*, also on Radio 4. Many commentators have contrasted Tebbit's perspective with England's thrilling victory in the recent Cricket World Cup Final. I had the pleasure of bumping into the multicultural squad at 10 Downing Street where they were attending a celebratory reception.

We are delighted to record that **Professor Polly Arnold (Chemistry, 1990)** has been appointed Director of Chemical Research of the Lawrence Berkeley National Lab, and to the faculty of the Chemistry Department of UC Berkeley: this is a major job in a world-leading department. Congratulations, Polly!

We are delighted with the excellent results for our undergraduate final examinations this summer. With 105 finishing their courses, 41 achieved first-class degrees and a further 54 secured an upper-second classification. Several of our students were also awarded University prizes, topped their class lists, or received special commendation from the Chair of Examiners in recognition of their efforts. As was the case last year, there was an even gender split with 20 women and 21 men achieving first-class honours. Students reading History & Joint Schools (7/10 Firsts), Physics & Joint Schools (5/7 Firsts) and Biochemistry (2/3 Firsts) performed exceptionally well.

August 2019

One of my favourite tasks remains speaking to our graduates at our main graduation day. This year the sun shone for over 300 people at the reception following the ceremony on the New Quad. It is wonderful to celebrate with the family members whom the students bring and to hear about the extraordinary range of jobs, graduate schemes and internships our students are going on to. **Dr Llewelyn Morgan, Vice-Principal**, carried out his functions excellently as Dean of Degrees.



△ Graduation in August

September 2019

On 4th August, we held the Alumni Garden Party in a marquee on New Quad. Many children attended to be entertained by a magician, crayons – and my speech! It was a muggy but not sunny day. It was great to see so many families attend, sometimes with three generations. Attendees travelled from as far afield as Lincolnshire, New York, Surrey and Sussex.



△ Our Alumni Garden Party in August

We are thrilled that **Professor Eamonn Gaffney, Tutorial Fellow in Applied Mathematics**, has received a Recognition of Distinction from the University and that our alum **Ravi Gurumurthy (History, 1995)** has become the Chief Executive of NESTA, having just finished as Head of Innovation at the International Rescue Council in New York (where I had tea with him in July).

I love going to different parts of the UK (as well as abroad) to meet alumni. On 4th September, the train took me to Leeds and on the following day to Birmingham, where there were very spirited dinners in good restaurants.



△ The Media Networking Panel Discussion in September

There was a good attendance for our first Media Networking and Panel Discussion event on 11th September, kindly hosted by **Ed Shedd (Classics, 1985)** at his offices at Deloitte in London. I chaired a panel discussing such issues as media bias

and recent media coverage of Brexit with four alumni: **Chris Evans (English, 1986)**, editor of The Telegraph; **Victoria Fea (English, 1989)**, co-founder of Blue Jar Pictures, formerly ITV's Senior Drama Commissioner; **Robin Oakley (History, 1960)**, European Political Editor at CNN International 2000-2008; Political Editor at the BBC, 1992-2000; and Ed himself, who is North West Europe Technology, Media & Telecommunications Lead Partner at Deloitte. It was particularly gratifying to see the age range in the audience and the questions reflected this. There was a positive message that this is a golden age for television (especially drama).

At the University's Meeting Minds alumni weekend between 20th-22nd September, I went to the two talks from Brasenose speakers. **Prof Charles Hulme, William Golding Senior Research Fellow**, talked about Early Years Language Interventions. It was good to see that the first three questions came from Brasenose folk. **Dr Llewelyn Morgan, Vice-Principal & Fellow in Classics**, later spoke on Tracing Alexander's Footsteps in Indus Valley, which mainly chronicled his fascinating visit to the SWAT region this summer.

There was a joyous Gaudy on 13th September for the group which matriculated in 2012 and 2013. I knew most of them from my time as Principal, unlike Gaudies for earlier years. It was wonderful to see so many of them doing so well in their professions and the third sector in particular. The evening concluded with speeches by **Rosie Thomas (PPE, 2012)** and **Richard Ng (PPE, 2013)**.



△ Gaudy for 2012-13

BNC Society Annual Dinner 2019



In the evening of 21st September the Brasenose Society held their Annual Dinner. Both **Sir Paul Silk (Classics, 1970)**, the Society's President, and I paid tribute to the sterling work of **Alexandra Marks (Jurisprudence, 1977)** who is stepping down as Secretary after a 25-year period in the role. She received a standing ovation. The Hall was packed to capacity.

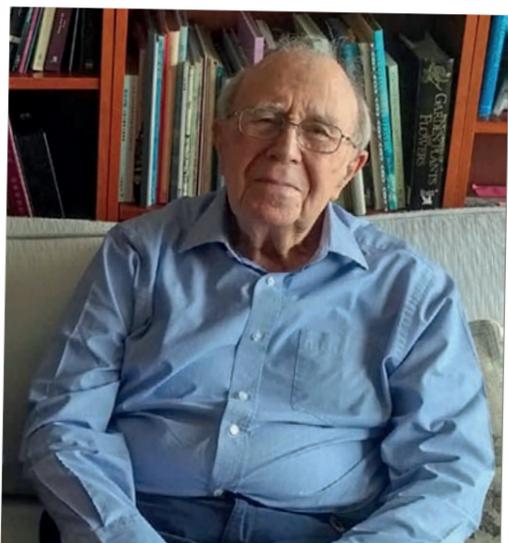


We are delighted that Honorary Fellow **Dominic Barton (Economics, 1984)**, lately Chief Executive of McKinsey, has become Canadian Ambassador to China, a job for which he is brilliantly qualified. He was appointed by Chrystia Freeland, the Foreign Minister of Canada, who by complete coincidence is married to one of our alums, **Graham Bowley (Economics, 1991)**.

It is a shame to hear that **Claire Perry (Geography, 1982)** is stepping down as an MP. She has been a great friend of Brasenose and spoke at our Brexit debate three years ago. She is going on to become President of Cop26 in Glasgow.

The Times Higher Education Rankings has just announced that Oxford is the top ranked university in the world for the fourth consecutive year. While we are all fully aware of the fallibility of these rankings, we should celebrate this remarkable achievement.

It is with great sadness that I learned that alumnus **Sir David Akers Jones (English, 1949)** passed away in hospital on 30 September. He was heavily



△ Sir David Akers Jones (English, 1949): 1927-2019

involved in many aspects of the history of Hong Kong. In particular, he was Chief Secretary of Hong Kong from 1985 to 1986, and then Acting Governor from 1986 to 1987.

David was at the heart of our Brasenose Hong Kong alumni community and also generously supported our Classics Fellowship, our Archives, and most recently, our archaeological dig in Italy. I visited him every year during our annual trip to Hong Kong – and just this March Suzanne and I met him at his home because he was not well enough to come into the centre. We had, as always, a fascinating discussion of Hong Kong politics although this was before the protests became violent (which must have caused him great anxiety).

He was a Distinguished Friend of Oxford University, a Member of the Vice Chancellor's Circle, and an Honorary Fellow of BNC. Above all, he was a dedicated public servant and a wonderful Brasenose ambassador. Hong Kong simply won't be the same without him.

October 2019

Our Michaelmas Dinner on 2nd October is a great way to start the academic year and is open to all Fellows. This year the dinner was packed, as we said goodbye to several Fellows and hello to more.

I welcome everyone who is new to College. Freshers' week is always a busy yet wonderful time. The Undergraduate and Graduate dinners and the drinks beforehand are excellent ways for me to meet (and to speak to) as many of the new students as possible. I am struck by the number of countries represented in both the Undergraduate and Graduate cohorts. I am also involved in academic induction for our new tutorial and research Fellows whom we warmly welcome.

15th October was a very busy one at the College. We had the pleasure of welcoming into College for lunch in the Medieval Kitchen Federica Mogherini, the EU High Representative for External Affairs. The lunch was arranged by our **Fellow in Politics, Professor Andrea Ruggeri**. In an informal but structured discussion with (primarily) International Relations professors, she gave a frank assessment of world affairs which I would love to share with you, but it was all conducted on Chatham House terms which means that I am unable to! I then attended her Cyril Foster lecture in the Department of Politics and International Relations at which she spoke publicly about the successes of EU Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (but nothing about Brexit).

Next on the list was the High Sheriff of Oxfordshire's Annual Law Lecture in the Examination Schools building. This was given by Sir Alan Moses, a retired Court of Appeal Judge in front of whom I had appeared on several occasions (usually unsuccessfully!). He gave a stimulating tour d'horizon on judicial review and then zoomed in on the recent decision of the Supreme Court in the Miller (No. 2) case about the prorogation of Parliament. His central thesis was that it was a false dichotomy to see law on one side of the equation and politics on the other and that this was why it was difficult to find the frontier between them.

At 5.30pm, alumnus **John Bowis OBE (PPE, 1963)** spoke to our PPE Society. John was MP for Battersea for ten years and a Minister in the Departments of Health and Transport and the Welsh Office. He later became an MEP for London. He spoke about lobbying and the differences between London and Brussels.

**[I am grateful to the Vice-Principal for the notes on the 1509 Society and June Gaudy which I was unfortunately unable to attend.]*

Photo Gallery



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

We had the second of our Women's 1974 Network events on 6th August at the Apple Tree pub in London, kindly hosted by **Lucy Fenton (PPE, 1994)** with a short speech from the Network's founders, **Amanda Holland (PPE, 1988)** and **Jane Johnson (English, 1987)**. The turnout was fantastic, and a brilliant evening was had by all.



BNCBC Dinner

by **Peter Edmondson (Economics & Management, 2016)**

Saturday 19th October saw a Boat Club Dinner take place in Hall.

Seventy people from a whole range of eras attended; there were members of the first ever women's crew to get blades for BNC back in the 1980s, a host of the 2013 blades-winning M1 crew and even two individuals celebrating the 50th anniversary of their Schools VIII. It was also great to see a number of former coaches there who clearly still have a strong affection for the club – even if they were in their Brookes blazers!

The evening started with a reception in Medieval Kitchen before we all moved into Hall for dinner. During dessert, guests were entertained (briefly) by speeches from **James Roper (Mathematics, 2016)** and **Dan Brocklebank (PPE, 1995)**.

James, the cox from the 2019 Torpids blades crew, spoke about the story behind that success and the lessons the current squad could take from it. This was followed by Dan who started by congratulating the current committee on their levels of organisation and drive. He argued that the role of BNCBC goes far beyond the maintenance of some wonderful traditions, something

which nearly tempted **Vice-Principal Dr Llewelyn Morgan** to his feet to add a few impromptu words on the role of sporting tradition dating back to classical times.

Instead, Dan firstly pointed out that participation in any sport, but perhaps particularly rowing due to its unique camaraderie, is a wonderful antidote to the surging mental health issues that are widely reported on today. He also pointed out that rowing at BNCBC offers a way to compound the effect of Brasenose's renowned, and highly successful, student Access programme because it broadens the pool of people who actually have a chance to take up the sport of rowing. Historically this has tended to be limited to relatively privileged pockets of society. He reminded the audience that alumni will always be delighted to see bumps on the river but will be just as delighted to see Brasenose get a reputation for having the best novices training programme amongst Oxford colleges.

Thank you so much if you came along, the energy everyone brought made it a wonderfully enjoyable evening. It was great to meet so many new people who I can't wait to speak to again.

Save the Date

Forthcoming Events in 2020

**Principal's Conversations:
Antonia Romeo (PPE, 1993)**
5.30pm, Tuesday 4th February
Amersi Foundation Lecture
Room, College
Free, guests welcome

Platnauer Concert
Gothic Voices
Friday 7th February
Free, no registration needed

LGBTQ+ Alumni Drinks & Talk
6.30pm, Thursday 20th February
RAF Club, Piccadilly, London
Free, guests welcome

Gaudy for 1990-1991
6.00pm, Friday 20th March
College
Free, £35 for accommodation
for the night

**Golden Jubilee Lunch for
1961-1970**
12.30pm, Friday 17th April
College
£35 per person, guests welcome

**Principal's Conversations:
George Monbiot (Zoology,
1982)**
5.30pm, Thursday 7th May
Amersi Foundation Lecture
Room, College
Free, guests welcome

Platnauer Concert
*The English Viola with Sarah-Jane
Bradley & John Lenehan*
Friday 15th May
Free, no registration needed

**Diamond Jubilee Lunch for
1960 & before**
12.30pm, Friday 22nd May
College
£35 per person, guests welcome

Gaudy for 1994-1995
6.00pm, Friday 26th June
College
Free, £35 for accommodation
for the night

Go to www.bnc.ox.ac.uk/alumni/events for an up-to-date list of our upcoming events, and to register. To update your contact details using our online alumni community, visit our alumni pages at: www.bnc.ox.ac.uk/alumni



Drinks at the O&C Club

Every month during the academic year, the Brasenose Society hosts after-work drinks for alumni at the Oxford and Cambridge Club on Pall Mall in London. All are welcome to attend, whether a member or not, with guests. Please note the dress code for the Club is Jacket and Tie/Business Wear (no trainers).

All O&C Drinks start from 6.30pm. The remaining dates for the academic year are:

- Tuesday 10th December
- Tuesday 7th January
- Tuesday 4th February
- Tuesday 3rd March
- Tuesday 7th April
- Tuesday 5th May

Brasenose Knows...



We leave you with another brain-teaser from **Professor Konstantin Ardakov**, Tutorial Fellow in Mathematics at BNC. Email your answer and postal address to development.office@bnc.ox.ac.uk.

The first five successful entries will receive a (very) small prize! The answer will be published in the next issue, or you can email us for it if you can't wait until then!

Question:

Prove, without using a computer, that $2^{10} + 5^{12}$ is not prime.

And the answer is... Issue 27's answer was:

Let S represent the value of the sum. For $n = 0, 1$ and 2 , it is easy to calculate S to be $0, -1$ and 2 respectively. To evaluate S for $n > 2$, first consider $f(x) = \sum_{k=0}^n (-1)^k \binom{n}{k} k^2 e^{kx}$. Then $f(x) = g''(x)$ where $g(x) = \sum_{k=0}^n (-1)^k \binom{n}{k} e^{kx}$, and $g(x) = (1 - e^x)^n$ by the binomial theorem. Therefore $f(x) = \frac{d^2}{dx^2} ((1 - e^x)^n)$. Finally, $S = f(0) = 0$ for $n \geq 3$.



Call for College Ball Memories!

If you have any Ball memories or souvenirs (menu/ invitations/photos, etc), particularly covering the 1960s onwards, please email contact the Archivists on archives@bnc.ox.ac.uk or +44 (0)1865 277 826.

Once a Member of Brasenose, always a Member of Brasenose!

Alumni are welcome back to College at any time. Let us know if you would like to visit, and we will let the Lodge know to expect you.

Contact us

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