Welcome to this year’s edition of the Alumni and Development Newsletter. It feels incredibly odd to think that it is now a whole year since the Covid-19 crisis first hit Cambridge, and that we are now in our third lockdown here in the UK.

As most of you will know, last year we had planned to celebrate our 60th anniversary with a series of live events. These events have had to be postponed, but happily our anniversary is somewhat moveable! The College has the milestone year of 2021-22 being the 60th anniversary of undergraduates being admitted but also 1972 was the first year that women were admitted to the College. There are many things to celebrate.

I have written before about how well our community responded to the immediate effects of Covid-19. Back in October, it was a delight to welcome the students back in the autumn after six months of a sadly quiet site. Most international students arrived well before the start of term for two weeks of quarantine – when, of course, the College did all it could to support them, including with food deliveries. We welcomed a larger than usual Freshers’ intake, because of the fall-out from the A-Level results (without impacting on our excellent widening participation statistics), but were, nevertheless, able to make sure they all had accommodation on site. As well as 74% of the intake attending a state school, 17.9% were from areas with lower progression to HE in the UK (POLAR quintiles 1 and 2). We are also delighted that for the first time in the College’s history the gender split is 50:50.

The JCR and MCR did a great job of setting up a virtual Freshers’ week and provided either socially distanced or virtual events in that period. Let me take this opportunity to say how grateful I am to them for their help and wisdom in trying to provide the best environment we can for all the students, and the support they gave to the College with the difficult decisions we had to make. The College was able to provide catering in Hall for those who wanted it, as well as take-away food from the buttery. We created study spaces that were socially distanced, and outdoor we erected marquees where students were able to meet according to existing guidelines. Each student was assigned a household, in which they could socially mix at will, these are groups that share kitchens and/ or bathrooms, typically groups of 6-9.

The University and Colleges worked together to set up pooled asymptomatic testing during the Michaelmas term – a pilot scheme which is proving of great interest to the Government coupled with producing a wealth of research data – a process which has continued for those students who have been in Cambridge during Lent term. Infections in College have been very low, which has helped to give confidence to the entire College community, as well as the wider city community.

Now of course, we are in our third lockdown, with just over 200 students on site, and no mixing allowed outside households. The College is very quiet again and the fellowship are almost all working from home. But we continue to provide support for all those who need it, whether they are on site or for away. Our Tutorial team keep in regular touch with the students, counselling continues to be available for those who need it, and by this point I hope we have all mastered the vagaries of Zoom and its relations.

The College is incredibly grateful to all the alumni and Fellows who contributed to our Covid-19 contingency fund in 2020, which helped us to provide some of these extra levels of support, when College lost its rental income for Easter term. The fund raised over £300,000 including matching funds, and helped ensure we could continue providing help, for example for students who found themselves stranded, or in terms of hardship funds where families saw a drop in income or loss of employment. Thanks to the buffer provided by this fund, we were also able to ensure that staff in the College were supported.

Although we have not been able to celebrate 60 years since we received our Royal Charter in 1960, we did nevertheless launch our Think Forward campaign through our telephone campaign, which elicited a great response – more about this later in this Newsletter. Thanks to this and other magnificent support, we have already raised £4 million for this campaign within its first year. The key areas of support are for the endowment and endowed funds to support students and teaching – we aim to try to raise £6 million per year once the pandemic crisis is over.
Given the importance of endowment, it was fitting that one of our few live events in 2020 was to recognise the immense contribution one alumnus has made to the College’s endowment in terms of his own philanthropy, as well as in giving his time to our Investment Advisory Committee. In October 2020, on a rather wet By the Archives Centre, and his (U70) as a Winston Churchill Benefactor Fellow Committee. In October 2020, on a rather wet pandemic, or any other crises, by being less position to weather a future crisis, but to paraphrase the founder, it may be too early even to call this ‘the beginning of the end, or even the end of the beginning’.

Science, through the development of vaccines, diagnostics, treatments and an understanding of the immunological response, has much to offer. But it isn’t simply about the science: all the other disciplines too, have vital contributions to make, in understanding the effects of the pandemic upon our society, how to mitigate these and what future policy should look like. Our fellows have been playing their part, as the ∈-Newsletters have been making clear over the past months: we include a few highlights in this newsletter. I look forward to welcoming you back to College in due course, as we (finally) can get our Think Forward Campaign live events underway, to celebrate our 60th years, and for regular alumni events. In the meantime, I hope all in our community of alumni and supporters keep safe and well. Thank you for your support and encouragement.

Another major global event was the wave of protest against racism in society, sparked by the tragic death of George Floyd in police custody in the USA, though the Black Lives Matter movement has been around for much longer than this. The College is examining its own links with the Empire and we are conscious that we are very much a product of the UK’s imperial past (as was our Founder). We have started a series of events examining the legacy of empires and Sir Winston’s own views on the Empire and those countries that Britain colonised. This is not about ‘washing reputations’. It is about looking at things objectively, admitting that Churchill, like all of us, was a complex character. Churchill College was founded to advance education and learning. It can only do that by encouraging diversity, responding to new research and acknowledging different perspectives and difficult truths.

Furthermore, we wish to celebrate this diversity in our community, as it is now and has always been. Indeed, as part of this legacy we have had students from Commonwealth countries from our earliest years. We are currently curating many initiatives on this theme involving personal accounts of our Black alumni and current students. We are also launching a fund specifically to support Black British students at Master’s and undergraduate level. The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee is examining all aspects of the collegiate life and community. We all look forward to the end of this global crisis, but to paraphrase the founder, it may be too early even to call this ‘the beginning of the end, or even the end of the beginning’.

So far the campaign that was launched in September 2020 online and during our telethon has raised over £4million. Our aspiration is to raise at least £30million in the next six years, for a variety of projects which support the long-term future of the College and its students. We plan to continue with a series of events to promote Think Forward around the world, when it becomes possible to gather alumni together again.

Think Forward for student access:

The average debt after a three-year undergraduate degree for a UK student at Cambridge is now an estimated £55,380. While our poorest students can borrow much of the money they need, this can act as a deterrent to considering a university education. Churchill has a long tradition of welcoming students from non-traditional Oxbridge schools and regions. Bursaries and hardship grants make a significant difference in encouraging students to apply to Churchill who otherwise might fear getting into debt, and to their educational outcomes once here. We are also facing increased demand for undergraduate bursaries this year as families across the UK and the globe are hit by the economic consequences of the pandemic.

Once here, even with a Cambridge Bursary, students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds still face the acute need to secure paid work during vacations with the knock-on effect that opportunities available to their more privileged peers – such as unpaid or expenses only internships, overseas travel or further study – are constrained. This is why students in the greatest need at Churchill are also awarded a top-up bursary of up to £2,000 per year.

All of our bursaries have only been made possible because of generous alumni support. It is vital that the College continues to have at its disposal the funds needed to support our package of bursaries, to build on our success and help ensure that the best young minds, from all backgrounds are encouraged to apply to Churchill and can thrive, regardless of their financial circumstances.

In these uncertain times we are grateful for the ongoing support of all our alumni and friends. Their long-term support has given Churchill College a sound financial basis to help us weather the current storm. Launched in Churchill College’s 60th year, our Think Forward campaign aims to boost our long-term financial sustainability so that we have additional capacity to face the challenges the future may bring and to ensure future generations of students can thrive.

Professor Dame Athene Donald DBE, FRS

Master

Think Forward Campaign

In increased impact

As has been widely publicised, the University has set up a matched funding programme called the Harding Challenge. Qualifying gifts are matched and used to provide financial support for students. Churchill is set to benefit significantly from this fund as we are a College with a large number of students in receipt of bursary funding. This means that if you make a qualifying gift, your donation will be topped up and bring even more benefit to needy students at Churchill and across collegiate Cambridge.

Student Support facts:
• 100 undergraduates received a means-tested Cambridge Bursary in the last academic year.
• 68% received the maximum annual Cambridge Bursary of £3,300, awarded to those with family incomes lower than £25,000.
• 77% of offers to UK students in 2020 were to state school pupils, significantly above the Office for Students (OFS) target of 65%.
• The total expenditure for UGs on bursaries, grants & awards in 2019/20 is £462k.

Support for student welfare has increased significantly – the cost for confidential counselling has risen from £33k in 2017/18 to over £65k in 2019/20.

The College has just launched two new funds to increase access in specific areas. The Black Students’ Support Fund will be dedicated to providing bursary and MPhil funding to UK registered Black African and African- Caribbean students.

We have also started a Student wellbeing Fund to help to cover the increased expenditure the College has dedicated to support its counselling service.

Think Forward for future academic leaders

With over 400 postgraduates from all over the world, Churchill’s thriving cohort of graduate students form a vital part of the College’s diverse academic community and are conducting groundbreaking research to address global
Building a Graduate Studentship Endowment

The College has several funded studentships for postgraduates. One of these, the Southern African studentship fund was started in the apartheid era and has supported many students over the years, including Professor Njabulo Ndebele (G75), now a professor at the University of Cape Town.

Initially the fund was started in the 1970s by students of the College jointly with Sidney Sussex, supported by members of the Colleges and their fellowships. It is now supported by alumni, Fellows and current students, and the two Colleges now run their own schemes separately. We are delighted to include an interview with the current Southern African studentship holder, Ayanda Mhlongo, who is studying for a MPhil in multi-disciplinary gender studies, on p. 10.

We have also launched a studentship fundraising campaign for a fund in memory of Dr Stuart Warren, our Fellow who sadly died last year. The fund aims to raise enough funding for a PhD student in chemistry from a SADEC country. There is more about the fund on p. 11.

looking ahead I see opportunities to apply my skills in nanofabrication industries in the UK and the US, and eventually hope to lead research into new applications and pioneer exciting industrial projects. This has only been possible because of the generous funding I have received.

Jake Meeth (G14 – MPhil & current PhD Engineering student)

The College performed well academically and financially even during the pandemic crisis. Academic performance remained strong, though not all students were examined because of the pandemic. All graduating students were guaranteed a grade equivalent to Tripos performance the previous year due to the difficulties in setting exams remotely at short notice.

The accounts below show a surplus, only after donations and endowment income has been factored in. Donations contributed over £1 million to the College in the last financial year, in part, with the proceeds of the Covid-19 appeal.

The education account table shows the College’s expenditure on teaching, research, student support and awards and pastoral care against its income from academic fees. In most years the funding gap between academic income and providing the high standard of education for which we are renowned is over £1.5 million (last year it was £1.7 million). This gap can only be funded by income from donations or from the endowment (and conference revenue, when this recovers). As well as the funding the educational needs of the College, the College and endowment income is also needed to fund any expenditure on maintaining our site and buildings.

The table below shows the income and expenditure of Churchill College in the year ending 2019 and 2020. The College financial year runs from 1 July to 30 June. The audited accounts and annual report of the College are available online at www.chu.cam.ac.uk/about/official-documents

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Support in Unprecedented Times

When the College first went into lockdown in March 2020, all teaching and exams were delivered online and the Tutorial team continued to support our students wherever they were in the world. Although students were able to return for the Michaelmas term, this respite was short-lived and students were once again asked not to return to College during lockdown 3, unless they were unable to study from home.

Throughout this period the College has maintained support for the students left here and its staff, with many furloughed on full pay. The loss of almost all rental and conferencing income from March to June alone, triggered a 30% drop in income in the 2019/20 academic year.

It was in response to this financial crisis that the College launched a Covid-19 contingency fund in April 2020, to support core College costs such as teaching and pastoral care and to provide urgent support for students facing hardship. The fund raised £300,000 (including matching) over the summer and has now raised almost £400,000. The impact of having this extra funding has been significant in terms of giving the College capacity to fund more student hardship grants, as well as meeting the increased demand for student bursaries as more families face financial uncertainty. It also meant that the College could continue to fund its staff on full pay throughout the government’s lockdown.

Examples of student hardship during the pandemic:

• Students needing to buy equipment such as laptops to access their remote learning and buy flights at unprecedented high prices in order to travel home safely.
• The loss of summer work and internships restricting or preventing the accumulation of financial funds that students would usually expect to be able to use in the next academic year.

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In keeping with the coronavirus restrictions at that time, there was a small group of six present to mark the occasion. Michael and Hilary both planted trees, Hilary a Cercis reniformis at Cowan Court, Michael a Metasequoia Glyptostroboides near the Archives centre, in the 60th anniversary year of the foundation of the College. 63 years after Sir Winston planted an oak tree, before the buildings went up.

In her speech marking the occasion, the Master quoted Sir Winston, who said when he planted the tree: ‘I trust and believe that this College, this seed that we have sown, will grow to shelter and nurture many researchers, teachers in all subjects, artists and skilled people to the world – this would not have been possible without the support of many significant donors, of which Michael is a prime example and has given financially and given time to support the College.

In response, Michael noted that it was 50 years in October 2020 since he had come up as an undergraduate to read engineering, adding ‘Hilary planted a Cercis reniformis ‘Texas White’ at Cowan Court. This is Metasequoia Glyptostroboides ’Gold Rush’. Is this a hint?!

We are both very honoured to do this, sixty years after the foundation of Churchill College with the motto FORWARD... I was a Fresher here this month fifty years ago. There was a Hall, Offices and some Courtyards, but very few trees and little foliage. No Archives Centre...

‘College is now altogether a better environment and has gained some back gardens along Storey’s Way, beutified them and so we make our contribution towards net zero carbon aspirations.’

Michael Cowan came up to Churchill in 1970, and got his taste for investing whilst at College. After working at Rothschild’s, Lazard’s and Morgan Stanley, Michael was a founder of Silchester International Investors in London in 1995. His primary role is to manage international equity portfolios for large US endowments, foundations, pension funds and private family offices. He is a Fellow of the Chartered Institute for Securities & Investment.

He has been the College’s most generous benefactor since Mr AP Møller, and has donated over £5 million to the College since an initial gift of £2,000 in 2007. His most recent gift was for the College endowment. Added to this he has generously given time and non-financial support to the College for many years, having served on its Investment Advisory Committee for over 20 years and is still a member of the Investment Committee.
Ayanda Mhlongo (G20) is from Kwazulu Natal in South Africa and is studying for a one-year MPhil in Multi-disciplinary Gender Studies at Churchill. She is the current holder of the Cambridge Trust and Churchill South African Bursary. The Studentship is joint-funded by the Cambridge Trust and Churchill College and covers course fees and an annual maintenance grant for living expenses. Almost half of Churchill’s contribution to the scholarship is funded by students and Fellows through an £11 annual voluntary donation which was supported by 88% of current students in 2019/20.

Ayanda was named after the Zulu word meaning ‘abundance and fruitfulness’. She was born at a time when University was not an option for her parents who were both involved in the fight against apartheid. Very sadly, Ayanda’s father died when she was just two years old and her mother was left alone to raise a family of four. Ayanda credits her drive, resilience and faith to her mother who forfeited her own dreams to take care of her children.

Although Ayanda’s three older brothers all graduated from College and one went to University, she is the first person in her family to pursue postgraduate studies. She attended a government high school with forty in each class, with very limited resources, and it was often a struggle to pay the fees. Ayanda excelled in her studies and when her mother was no longer able to afford the fees she was able to obtain a scholarship, but she vividly recalls going to school hungry and learnt how to fast to concentrate when she experienced hunger.

Driven by a deep motivation to escape poverty Ayanda decided to pursue a career in law as this was a route that she thought would enable her to support her mother. She won a prestigious scholarship to attend the University of Cape Town but quickly discovered she didn’t have a passion for law. She was given permission to switch courses and managed to secure some funding from the National Student Funding body from South Africa. Social Sciences were not considered to be as prestigious as studying law or medicine but she stayed focused, worked hard and went on to achieve a distinction for her BA in Social Sciences, majoring in Social Development, Organisational Psychology and Gender Studies (Triple major) and an MA in Social Development.

Seeking to develop her knowledge and skills further, Ayanda successfully applied for the South African Bursary and arrived at Churchill in October 2020. Her MPhil course has a taught element which spans disciplines including languages, AI, law and history but it is through her research focus of understanding menstrual management and period poverty within the refugee population that Ayanda plans to make a lasting difference. Her research aims to shine a light on the problems these women are facing, seeking solutions and shaping policy to help ensure future generations don’t face the same struggle. Ayanda’s own personal experience has driven her desire for advocacy and she is hugely grateful for what she views as both the immediate and long-term positive impacts of receiving the studentship funding.

Firstly, this studentship will not only be helpful for me – it will also benefit other women whose voices are not heard. Secondly, it will provide me with the opportunity to sharpen my skills and knowledge and meet people who can help me be the ground breaker and leader that I aspire to be. Although Ayanda has not been at Churchill for long, she already feels at home despite the tumultuous changes wrought by the pandemic.

The Stuart Warren Studentship fund

The College last year launched a fundraising drive in memory of Stuart Warren (1938–2020), one of our longstanding fellows in Chemistry who sadly died in 2020. Alongside the Chemistry department we wish to provide an opportunity for an outstanding PhD student from sub-Saharan Africa to undertake research in chemistry at Churchill College.

Stuart was a leader in his field and passionate about his subject – he taught generations of Churchill chemistry undergraduates. He was a supervisor and mentor to outstanding academics including Professor Vaninder Aggarwal FRS, Professor Jonathan Clayden and Professor Kelly Chibale. Now we, his colleagues at Churchill and the Cambridge University Department of Chemistry, aim to honour Stuart’s memory to enable a student from the South African development area counties to come to study for a research degree in organic or physical chemistry at Cambridge.

The Stuart Warren PhD Studentship would fully fund a student from Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, eSwatini (formerly Swaziland), Zamb or Zimbabwe, which constitute the Southern African development region. This requires approximately £30,000 per year: £29,000 to cover the annual fee for an overseas PhD student, and £2,000 to cover living costs. We aim to raise at least £25,000 per year, or £100,000 over four years for one student to be fully funded, with matching funding from the Cambridge trust to make up the difference. Were this initial fundraising to overreach its target, we could hope to endow the studentship in perpetuity.

So far over £50,000 has been pledged or donated to this cause thanks to support from alumni and friends and colleagues of Stuart’s from the University Chemistry department. We require another £40,000 minimum to be raised in order to fund a PhD student for four years, with matching funding from the Cambridge Trust. Please contact Fran.malarkey@ch.cam.ac.uk if you are interested in finding out more.

One of Stuart’s former students, Professor Kelly Chibale, of the University of Cape Town says: ‘This opportunity is one that holds unquantifiable benefits for young Africans who are historically disadvantaged and under-represented in organic chemistry. Born and brought up in impoverished rural areas and townships of Zambia, I was given the rare opportunity through a scholarship to study at Cambridge. The high quality academic training I received from Stuart was the foundation for who I have become.’

Amongst many notable achievements, Kelly founded Africa’s first and only integrated drug discovery centre, H3D. With your help we aim to fund a future academic and broaden access to this University from an under-represented region. We hope this will also encourage others in African countries to consider degrees in sciences at all levels. We appreciate that there are huge obstacles to overcome for such students including a lack of teachers and resources for education in scientific fields. With your help we can commemorate one of our members who was a stalwart teacher and researcher himself with a lasting legacy.

I received from Stuart was the foundation for my future career in academia. The high quality academic training I received from him was the foundation for who I have become. ’

For more information and to make a donation, please visit: https://www.cantab.makethechange.org.uk/stuart-warren-studentship-fund

CHURCHILL COLLEGE NEWSLETTER 2020–21
An interview with Adrian Hobden (U72)

Adrian Hobden read Natural Sciences (Biochemistry) then obtained a PhD from the University of Leicester focused on epidermocoethocorous fungal toxins. After post-doctoral studies on Vitamin D with the UK Medical Research Council in Cambridge, Adrian was recruited to Glaxo (now GSK), working on pharmaceuticals for disease treatment. In 1996, Adrian moved to RTP, North Carolina to manage all of Glaxo’s biotechnology industry interactions and in 1998, established Myriad Pharmaceuticals in Salt Lake City. This was the first company to attempt to treat Alzheimer’s disease by inhibiting beta amyloid production. Subsequently he became CEO of Myrexis, a public biotechnology company, and is now CEO of Cerespir Inc – a company dedicated to finding treatments for neurodegenerative diseases.

How did you come to be a student at Churchill?

I was recommended for the sixth form visitor scheme by my grammar school, which was more orientated to science, which may have been why. But to my knowledge there wasn’t a direct connection to Dick Tizard, who ran the scheme. Slightly scary, I was summoned to the headmaster’s office and told I was to go to visit Churchill College on the scheme.

Neither of my parents went to University, their education was interrupted by the Second World War. My father went from school to be an apprentice engineer in Kent. He and a fellow employee went to sign up in 1939 for the RAF as apprentice engineers. He and a fellow apprentice engineer in Kent. He and a fellow employee went to sign up in 1939 for the RAF as apprentice engineers. He and a fellow employee went to sign up in 1939 for the RAF as apprentice engineers. He and a fellow employee went to sign up in 1939 for the RAF as apprentice engineers. He and a fellow employee went to sign up in 1939 for the RAF as apprentice engineers. He and a fellow employee went to sign up in 1939 for the RAF as apprentice engineers. He and a fellow employee went to sign up in 1939 for the RAF as apprentice engineers.

What did you most enjoy about studying at the College?

Being a geek-like scientist, the nice thing about the College is it puts you together with people from other disciplines, so I rubbed shoulders with people who read French and English, geography and history. If I had just been doing science in a faculty it would have been a much less rounded university experience. They encouraged me to read books which I had never read up to then. I think that is one of the most valuable aspects of the College system in Cambridge.

My perception had been that Cambridge was full of exceptionally intelligent people and that you could be out of place but then you get here and everyone else is kind of like you – there are some intellectual giants who are harder to socialise with, but most people are smart, and you can get on with them.

Studying elsewhere as a postgraduate you begin to appreciate the amazing facilities that had been available – the incredible libraries that Churchill and the biochemistry department had – but also sporting facilities. It never struck me at the time, but Churchill’s sporting facilities are right there; everyone else has to get on their bike and cycle off to the sports field. Churchill has always had one of the best cricket pitches – one of the best wickets in Cambridge.

And the worst thing?

I have very fond memories but the worst thing I can remember is Sunday morning lectures, cycling sometimes in terrible weather. It was just that distance was sometimes an issue!

What did you do on graduating?

One of my supervisors was Eric Cundliffe who had been a student of Ken McQuillen. I was inspired by him to do a PhD, and get a grant from the MRC. Eric was at the time, at the time, at the Pharmacology Department, then he got a

father worrying all the time! I chose Churchill because of its modern outlook and because it wasn’t stuffy.

How do you think to be in the US?

I worked for Glaxo for fourteen years, from being just me to 40 people. Initially I did everything for the company, like making genetically manipulated mice for oncology etc. However, it became obvious that you didn’t need the expertise of having a centralised genetics department, so instead of genetics, I ran programmes focused on disease areas: e.g., ones that focused on HIV drug discovery, cardiovascular disease, oncology, and on Central nervous system (NSC) diseases, which was really fascinating. I was really happy doing that but unfortunately the company decided he wanted to get back to what he knew, so we were spun out as our own company, Myrexis, and I was the CEO of a publicly traded company, for two uncomfortable years – the regulation is horrendous and the shareholders are even worse! How to be hated by everyone I had to go to NYC at least once a month to speak to our investors.

With a few honourable exceptions, very few mutual fund managers are scientists, but they are all supremely confident about their own ability. It is very difficult to keep a straight face when someone tells you that an MBA from Stanford is lecturing you on how to do drug discovery while absolutely no knowledge or experience of it or any other type of science. But had it been nice to them because they were investors – it was very frustrating! I had a board to keep happy as well (you aren’t ever really the boss) and I had a huge amount of responsibility to employees as well.

Utah has fantastic scenery, a great climate and world beating skiing but if you aren’t part of the religious culture it is difficult, so we moved to the Seattle area because it feels more European than any other parts of the US I have lived in. I took on the role of a CEO of a small start-up, Cerespir Inc. If I could contribute to a cure for neurodegenerative diseases it would be great, but I am trying to make a difference in that area – prevention or treatment.

Now I feel stable financially and I break down my giving into different areas. We live in a very middle-class island, which probably isn’t representative in some ways of the US. There are charities need like kids’ education, there are homeless people so we give some each year to charities here. I have two areas of scientific interest: one is neurodegenerative diseases and the other medical area is in cancer research. I am on the board of a small cancer charity which spends its money wisely. It is always an area that needs more attention (though treatments have come on apace in this area). I am also involved in drug discovery. We also support Seattle opera – it cannot just be science, art is important.

I owe a lot of my success to Churchill and Cambridge University, not only in terms of education I got but because of the whole experience, and social interactions. It’s also beneficial to say you went to Cambridge – this country is very sensitive to academic qualifications, and to which institutions you went. Everyone knows Cambridge, especially those who mattered in terms of my career, and the English accent doesn’t hinder you either! I was memorably told by one of my senior colleagues in the US ‘Every time I have met a person with a real English accent I add 30 points to someone’s IQ’. So I benefitted from this.

Do you ever get involved with donating/volunteering by being on the Board of Cambridge in America?

I would much rather do this way rather than in the case of what was very important and how can I help? I would rather do it in my Will, as that, hopefully, is a long time away. Developing people’s potential is important, as is keeping the cricket pitch in perfect condition so that it can be enjoyed by future generations.

How did you first get involved with the endowment fund of the College as part of the Think forward campaign, why have you chosen to support the endowment?

I feel a great debt of gratitude to Churchill College and to the University and so I was a part of the Think Forward campaign, why have you chosen to support the endowment?

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I feel a great debt of gratitude to Churchill College and to the University and so I was a part of the Think Forward campaign, why have you chosen to support the endowment?
Hard as it is to remember what the world was like pre-pandemic, back in 2019 and at the beginning of 2020, before we’d even heard of social distancing, the Alumni and Development Office organised a number of enjoyable, well-attended events. Here we take a look back at those events from the summer vacation in 2019 into 2020.

In early July 2019 we held two reunion dinners: the first of which in the Fellows’ Dining Room to celebrate the 50th anniversary of matriculation for our 1969 alumni; and the second one of our traditional large black tie dinners, this one for those who matriculated from 1977 to 1981. The latter of these was hugely popular, with around 300 people dining in total (and a few back on the river the next morning!). Writing this in January 2021, having been unable to hold a reunion dinner in 2020, is a reminder of how much we miss them in the Alumni Office. Once we are able to hold large gatherings in College again, do try to come to your next reunion dinner, it is so lovely to be back in Hall, hearing it alive with chatter and laughter between people who might not have seen each other for decades!

Events 2019–20

In September of that year, the Master visited New York and Toronto, enjoying a series of alumni events. In New York these comprised a brunch at the Morgan Dining Room, organised by alumna Dr Kit Cheung (G00), and an event organised by Cambridge in America featuring a talk on leadership and women in science by alumna Dr Liz O’Day (U86), followed by a dinner at the Harvard Club. In Toronto, the Master and alumnus Bruce Simpson (U80) of McKinsey Canada discussed the challenges of leadership at an event at the University Club of Toronto. Whilst we can’t hold physical events such as these in the UK or abroad at the time of writing, Kit regularly organises brunches for Churchillians to get-together and these have currently been moved online. If you would like the opportunity to join a virtual meet-up (primarily aimed at those in the Tri-State region of New York, Pennsylvania and New Jersey, but open to all), do contact the Alumni Office who will put you in touch with Kit.

Later that month we held our annual and popular Association Weekend, which in 2019 we coincided with the official opening of our amazing new graduate housing. The Weekend began as donors to the project were invited to an opening ceremony on the morning of 27 September performed by the University Vice-Chancellor, in addition to guided tours of the new accommodation, followed by lunch in Hall. The official Weekend programme commenced that evening by revisiting the new housing as its architects, alumni Simon Tucker (U&G86) and Priscilla Fernandes (U04), reflected on the design process in their talk ‘Designing from Memory’, a fascinating insight into the process of how they fed their experiences of life at College in its original rooms into the new buildings. The talk, with Q&A chaired by current Architecture Director of Studies, Dr Minna Sunikka-Blank, was followed by a choice of High Table or our ever-popular and over-subscribed wine-tasting event. The latter was chaired by Fellows’ Steward, Professor Christopher Tout, and the Alumni Officer can confirm on visiting...
On Saturday morning the College continued in the reflective mood set by Friday evening’s talk, hosting a panel presentation to explore how emerging technologies are leading to a new industrial revolution. Leaders in their fields looked at the implications, and we asked how does the College respond? That afternoon we welcomed Professor Bjørn Strømø (G75 and past Overseas Fellow) to give us ‘A Personal View of the Evolution of C++’, in which he discussed the development and programming language. Following the lecture, alumni still had time to squeeze in a tour of CamFM’s new studios at Fitz to mark the 40th anniversary of the radio station that used to be housed in the basement of a College property on Storey’s Way, or a tour of the Møller Centre, prior to our ever-enjoyable, annual drinks reception and dinner – this year with Sir Christopher Frayling (U&G65, Fellow) as our after-dinner speaker, discussing ‘the two cultures’.

The following month was also a busy one for events, with 2 lectures at the Oxford and Cambridge Club in London: the first by Fellow Professor Sir David Spiegelhalter, and the second by Dr Antonio Weiss (U05). It is hard to imagine Sir David talking about anything except Covid as this Newsletter goes to press, but back in the autumn of 2019, before we had heard of the virus, his talk based on his book The Art of Statistics saw all tickets go within hours of their release. Later in the month, Dr Antonio Weiss discussed his book focusing on the history and mythology of management consultants in government since 1960. Back at College, the Master invited Professor Dame Nancy Rothwell, President and Vice-Chancellor of the University of Manchester, to join her in conversation as part of the regular series of Paradigm Shift discussions with leading female academics.

In November we were incredibly excited to welcome to College, Adelina Chalmers, also known as the Geek Whisperer. Adelina is an expert in transforming communication skills into what is known as the Geek Whisperer. Adelina was welcomed to College, Adelina Chalmers, also known as the Geek Whisperer. Adelina is an expert in transforming communication skills into formulas that engineers and scientists understand, helping them learn how to transform research into a good time was clearly being had by all!

As we approached the holidays, we partnered with other Colleges for two events in London. The first aimed specifically at ‘young alumni’ (the somewhat arbitrary distinction of being 35 or under), which we hosted with Darwin, Emmanuella and Pembroke. The Underdog was a much more informal venue than others we use, such as the Oxford and Cambridge Club, so it was made for a fun, relaxed evening. The following evening we invited alumni of any age to join us at the Cittie of Yorke pub, along with Corpus. These pub meets have proved really popular with those who have come along and we look forward to offering these again once we are able to do so safely.

The following week was the annual Varsity Rugby matches at Twickenham, and for the second year running we took two adjoining boxes so alumni could warm up and eat lunch between the games. An added bonus was seeing Churchill student Jenny Shuttleworth (U&G15) play in the Storey’s Way official opening: (top) guests in the garden of the new building; (bottom left) Michael Cowan (U70), Professor Stephen Toope (Vice-Chancellor) and Professor Dame Athene Donald FRS; (bottom right) view from one of the stairwells.

women’s game. It’s a really fantastic day out and we can’t wait to be able to return!

At the beginning of 2020 we squeezed in a few more gatherings before events caught up with us and the country went into the first lockdown. These began in January with our Pitch to Win Enterprise Competition, enabling students and alumni to put into practice what they had learned from Adelina Chalmers at the pitching workshop and Cambridge Club that would have taken place during this year’s Churchill Enterprise ‘Pitch to Win’ Competition January 2019.

We concluded our in-person events for 2020 in March with two of our annual College-based events before it became clear that it was no longer safe to continue to hold these, just ahead of the lockdown. These were our lunch for the Winston S. Churchill 1958 Society, those alumni and friends of College who have chosen to leave events in quick succession. The first of these a panel event around Investment Management and the second in early March around the zero-engineering industry. We are planning more Business Network events for 2021 (initially online). Do email the Alumni Office if you would like to be added to the mailing list for these.

We were saddened not to be able to go ahead with the many events we had planned for the rest of 2020 due to Covid, especially because it was the College’s 60th anniversary year and we had exciting plans to celebrate that. That said, circumstances forced us to recreate discussion/lecture events as online ones, which has meant that many more people have had access to these than would have done had they had to travel to Cambridge or London.

We began this move online to replace events that would have taken place during this year’s Association Weekend. The first of these featured a gift in Will, followed by the Computer Science lecture, this time given by William Turzill-Pedoe (U88), an entrepreneur focused on Artificial Intelligence and Deep Tech.

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The scientist who launched a comic and flew the flag for Black History Month

Self-confessed comic addict Osarenkhoe Ogbeide (G18) sees beyond the superhero to the scientist. When he’s not developing printable gas sensors, he’s passionate about celebrating the contributions of Black scientists throughout history.

Marvel films and comics sparked my interest in science subjects. I realised that lots of the best superheroes had a background in science – Ironman was a genius engineer and Spiderman studied as a biochemist – and they would often use this knowledge to solve problems.

Today I’m a PhD student at the Cambridge Graphene Centre, working on developing the next generation of gas sensors using 2D materials, such as graphene. The real-life applications of the technology include monitoring CO2 in the home and ammonia in industrial settings, but it also has the potential to be used as a medical diagnostic tool. Last year our group published a paper that explored using gas sensors for personal healthcare monitoring. I helped to develop a tiny sensor to test for ammonia gas concentrations in exhaled breath, as it is an indicator of kidney or bowel disease.

While I’ve been in Cambridge I’ve also been involved in an inspiring initiative called Africans in STEM, which promotes and celebrates the contributions of Black individuals to science, technology, engineering and medicine. Greater visibility gives Black researchers a chance to network and share ideas, but equally as important, it means that a career in STEM feels more attainable for other young people of African descent.

Many people are unaware of the contributions to society of Black scientists and engineers throughout history. For example, did you know that a technology you hold in your hand every day, GPS, was developed from the mathematical modelling of the Earth, programmed by Gladys West?

I would like to see a world where young Black students who want to pursue a career in STEM or academia are empowered in the mindset to know they can. I want them to have a free choice in what career path they choose – rather than thinking that people like them don’t do STEM.

I suggested flying the pan-African flag to mark Black History Month as a prominent reminder of my College’s pledge to tackle racism. To my knowledge, up until this month, the pan-African flag has never been flown by a Cambridge College. The flag was designed by Marcus Garvey, who is regarded as one of the greatest Black leaders, and it represents unity of African nations and celebrates African people.

My initial reaction on the day the flag was raised by Churchill College was relief – that it was sunny, and we had just the right amount of breeze! But on a more serious note, seeing the flag flying made me feel really welcomed and gave me a sense of pride. It felt like a really significant moment in time.

My love of comics has continued to this day, and during lockdown I launched my own business, New Africa Comics, based on African mythology, culture and people. Working with a writer and an artist, we have now launched the first comic, Shango. It’s been fascinating looking into mythology from both my own ancestry and other ancestries. There is such a rich culture and a wealth of stories that have never been told in this way before.

The comics also serve a deeper purpose – my aim is for them to be a vehicle for tackling tough social-political issues that affect our community, from government corruption on the African continent to colourism – all while entertaining the reader with amazing art and commentary of course!

The success of the film Black Panther shows that there is a real desire to see more narratives that represent African people and celebrate African culture. From a business perspective New Africa Comics taps into that gap in the market. I hope in time it will become for Africa what Marvel and DC are for America.

Alongside developing New Africa Comics, I am looking to stay in academia and one day hope to start my own world-leading lab in Nigeria or another African nation. I’d love to set up a lab which is like SpaceX or Tesla, where I can push the industry forward while creating usable products, and at the same time bring an African nation to the forefront of research.

This article previously appeared on the Cambridge University website. Words by Charis Goodyear, photography by Lloyd Mann.
Before Covid-19, we wouldn’t have thought twice about the air we were breathing when spending an hour or more in a meeting room with a group of colleagues. But now, alongside mask wearing and vigorous hand-washing, we are far more aware of our actions and the ways in which this virus is transmitted.

Savvas Gkantonas is a fourth year PhD Engineering student at Churchill, and like many of our members, he has bUnd his everyday focus shifted to tackle the pandemic. Whilst he was previously looking at particulate matter emissions from engines, when he saw the news saying that transmission of Covid-19 by aerosols wasn’t likely, he knew that the research was going to be of huge importance.

In order to safely protect their staff, businesses have then been consolidated into the website, where more parameters can be changed such as distance, occupancy, and ventilation in a room, and whether masks are being worn.

Airborne.cam has since reached 20,000 users and Airborne.cam will hopefully become an essential tool for all businesses using risk assessments to ensure that their buildings minimise the risk of all airborne infections to their users.

In addition to the recent successes of Airborne.cam, many Fellows, students and alumni have played their part in the fight against Covid. We have been publicizing their efforts in our regular community updates, which we have shared on our website, and some of them in our e-bulletins. Here are just a few stories from those updates, sharing some of that critical work.

Postgraduate student and Churchill Scholar Anita Qualls (G19) set up an organisation called Feed the Frontlines GA, to help those doctors, nurses, and support staff working on the frontlines in her native Georgia to make sure they get a hot meal. Anita explained, “These hospital workers eat a lot of times are just so slammed and so stressed out that they are not even able to get a hot meal during their shift at all. And a lot of the cafeterias in the hospital are actually shutting down because of the Coronavirus.”

Churchill staff member, Chris Reitter, joined the new testing laboratory set up by AstroZeneca GIF and the University of Cambridge at the University’s Anne McLaren Building. This facility is being used for high throughput screening for COVID-19 testing and to explore the use of alternative chemical reagents for test kits in order to help overcome current supply shortages. Chris also works at the Department of Pathology as a research technician in a molecular biology lab, so is able to use the same techniques that he uses daily.

Tom Willers, one of our Hospitality Porters, has gone beyond the call of duty to support the Churchill Community during this extraordinary time. During the current crisis Tom has been staying on site as our resident caretaker, assisting all of the operational departments, keeping an eye on security and responding to the needs of the residents, all in addition to undertaking his usual role. Tom’s work on site includes the critical task of clearing the rubbish, and in doing so ensuring that we don’t have a second public health crisis. Tom volunteered for this role as he wanted to keep busy, fit and motivated. Speaking of his adapted working life, Tom said, “It’s a joy to be working with the rest of the minimal workforce, and I’m enjoying getting to know my colleagues in other departments and improving my knowledge of the site.”

Tanya Mulaka, one of our College Bedders, has been busy sewing 400 protective masks from fabric we had at the College.

Alumnus Charlie Wartnaby (G18) has been doing part-time software development for ProjectREd who are developing a low-cost emergency ventilator called the “Respiratory Emergency Device”, or RED. His team is the only non-profit design team founded and led by engineers with ventilator design experience.

Alumna Lizzie Elgar (G15), along with her brother James, has co-founded an app intent on changing the world. The app, called ‘now-u’, aims to educate, inspire and empower people to tackle the most pressing problems today. Their first campaigns are focused on issues exacerbated by the pandemic: domestic abuse in the UK, refugee welfare and resettlement in Europe and water, sanitation and hygiene in low- and middle-income countries.

Fellow and head of the Fluids in Advanced Manufacturing group, Dr Ronan Daly, is the co-lead in the IFM and Papworth trial of a ventilator sharing device, which it’s hoped could halve the number of ventilators needed during another pandemic. Testing of the new device showed that it is possible to split the airflow from one ventilator to mechanically support the breathing of two sedated patients with different lung capacity and changing breathing needs. This system could be adapted to for long-term use in countries that have ongoing ventilator capacity shortages post-Covid.

Alumnus Dr Antonio D’Ammarco (G11) was part of the team that received the President’s Special Award for Pandemic Service from the Royal Academy of Engineering for their work making cost-efficient ventilators. Employed by consumer goods manufacturers, Antonio has been working on a new drying system with Cambridge Aerothermal. But a large call to arms to engineering companies in March saw Antonio suddenly turn to making ventilators.

While it might not be an obvious transition from domestic appliances to life-saving equipment, the technology is largely the same. They both have pipes, compressors and valves, and are required to deliver a specific quantity of air.

At the National Physics Laboratory in London, who told the team that their ventilator was by far the most advanced that they had seen. Antonio credits this with the fact that the design was driven by clinicians, not by engineers. Working with doctors from South Africa and Italy, Antonio and the rest of the team were able to understand which specifications were essential and which they could compromise on.

Finally, most of our updates have included a mention of Fellow and statistician, Professor Sir David Spiegelhalter, who has been kept extremely busy over the last year with many media appearances commenting on the use and abuse of statistics, more than we have room to summarise here! We are delighted that he was awarded the President’s Medal at the annual Market Research Society Awards in December for informing public discourse with data-driven insight.
An interview with Dr Susan Lim (G85)

Dr Lim came to Churchill in 1985, with a research scholarship from the Gulbenkian Foundation, to undertake a PhD in transplant immunology, in the relatively new research area of organ transplantation. She completed her PhD in 1988 and went on to perform the first successful cadaveric liver transplant in Asia and Singapore in 1990. Susan and her husband Deepak Sharma support the Dr Susan Lim bursary fund at Churchill College for students in STEM subjects. Susan’s maiden orchestral piece, the Lim Fantasy of Companionship for Piano and Orchestra, which she co-created with her daughter Christina Teenz MD, a neuroscience researcher at Stanford University, composed by Manu Martin of Bordeaux, France, was released in April 2021.

What are your fondest memories of your time at the College?

What I remember well are the wide open green spaces which provided me with the inspiration for creative thinking, shaped by the rich diversity of views at the College. It was like a breath of fresh air, after having been immersed for a year in full-time general surgery in the operating theatres of Singapore’s busiest public hospital. I loved that the College was not isolating for graduate students, but that we were part of the greater community of undergraduates as well. I had arrived in the autumn, and found that it was wonderful to relax and unwind on the College lawns with friends, after being in the research labs and hospital wards at the Addenbrooke’s.

What was it like recording your Fantasy at Abbey Road Studios?

If I had been convinced that the artificially intelligent, embodied robots and other companions that will take their place alongside humans are currently perceived by many in society, as a threat, and with some degree of fear and hostility. On the other hand, one of the biggest challenges facing us in society today, longevity coupled with loneliness, has presented an urgent need for these artificially intelligent inanimates, such as robot nursing assistants, and robot companions as examples.

When you left Churchill what did you do?

I had chosen to go to Cambridge and read Medicine (with a Gulbenkian scholarship) though I also had applied for the Rhodes scholarship at Oxford. The reason I went to Churchill was that Sir Roy Calne was willing to mentor me and said I could do clinical work in surgery and my PhD at the same time. This was a degree of flexibility that Oxford didn’t offer. When I completed my PhD (in transplant immunology) in three and a half years, I returned to Singapore. I conducted the first cadaveric liver transplant in Asia and 30 years later, the patient is still with us and I am the godmother to her child, so I was and am incredibly grateful for the scholarship I received.

What would your advice be to today’s medical students?

What was it like recording your Fantasy at Abbey Road Studios?

It started as a birthday wish, which my husband Deepak surprised me with, a recording session at Abbey Road studios, and a dream come true! Though I am not a player of any musical instrument, I am an avid consumer of music across genres, and always have been. This orchestral piece, the Lim Fantasy of Companionship, is cross-genre, which we recorded with the 78-member London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Daniel Harding, and features the acclaimed Todd Joseph on piano, as well as pop instruments, the electric guitar, bass and drums, together with a choral ensemble of London Voices, and a solo voice as the climax, which pleads teleportation.

The Lim Fantasy comprises six ACTs, which together unfold the fictional story of a companionship between a human and an inanimate, and the journey of a soul, twice teleported, from animine to inanimate, and to human.

Did you join any societies?

Over weekends, and whenever I had some spare time to relax, I would take to pen and paper and write or sketch short stories. The ability to be creative and to let my imagination steer my writing, was a necessary complement to the rigours and discipline of scientific writing, of papers and publications for the many International surgical and transplant meetings I participated at.

What is the inspiration behind Alan the Musical, and the Lim Fantasy of Companionship?

I have been convinced that the artificially intelligent, embodied robots and other companions that will take their place alongside humans are currently perceived by many in society, as a threat, and with some degree of fear and hostility. On the other hand, one of the biggest challenges facing us in society today, longevity coupled with loneliness, has presented an urgent need for these artificially intelligent inanimates, such as robot nursing assistants, and robot companions as examples.

I hope that in the future, the residency of companion robots and their emotions, as they can form a deep bond of companionship, will be as common as the companions of the past. The Lim Fantasy of Companionship is cross-genre, which I firmly believe that the partnership of man and an inanimate, that is positive, thought-provoking and portrays this future with optimism.

This really launched my clinical career as a surgeon but I was always so grateful that I had done a research degree and could think differently – while I loved the technical and precision aspects of surgeries, the PhD taught me to think about, and question the science underlying the innumerable surgical procedures that I performed in my career. It also cultivated my love for writing.

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An interview with Dr Helen Czerski (U&G97)

Helen Czerski (U&G97) read Natural Sciences (Physics) at Churchill, returning a year later to study for a PhD in experimental explosives physics, motivated by the opportunity to use high-speed photography to explore the physical world further.

After her PhD, Helen looked around for another subject that would allow her to continue to build that sort of experiment, but with an application in the natural world. This led to researching bubbles and oceans at the Scripps Institution of Oceanography in San Diego, followed by a postdoc at the Graduate School of Oceanography in Rhode Island. On returning to the UK, she started her own research programme on the physics of oceanic bubbles, first at the University of Southampton and then at her current academic home, University College London.

Just as Helen moved back to the UK from Rhode Island, she was asked by the BBC to audition for a presenting role, and this opened up a whole new way of sharing her enthusiasm for science. Since then, she has presented documentaries on a wide range of subjects relating to physics in general, and also atmospheric and ocean science. She is passionate about conveying the beauty and ingenuity of the physical world around us, and the perspective on the world that science provides.

Helen has recently been made an Honorary Fellow at Churchill, so we interrupted her incredibly busy schedule to ask her a few questions.

What are your fondest memories of your time at Churchill?

There’s a lot to choose from, because I did a four-year degree, spent a year working overseas and then came back for a PhD. Mostly, I remember the strong sense of community. Back then, Churchill was the big playing fields and the gymnasium and badminton throughout, and I also represented the University once or twice at squash and badminton. Lots of fun. There was a lot of outdoor sport as well. I’m pretty sure the reasons I chose Churchill were the big playing fields and the staircase kitchens (which some colleges didn’t have at the time). I was interested in so many things, and I did my best to explore as much as possible. Back then (only 20 years ago), the attitude was that the living was just as important as studying, and it was clear to everyone that they supported each other. My Dad said to me beforehand, ‘if you go to university and all you come away with is a degree, you’ve wasted half your time’. That was very much the attitude we had – we worked hard, but we also explored everything else.

Did you have a firm idea of what you wanted to do when you left Churchill?

No. I just wanted to do interesting things that were constructive in society. I’ve never seen much point in having a long term plan – I’ve just taken the attitude that you work hard and do your best, and do what interests you. Then you see where that takes you. As long as it’s constructive in some way for others, that’s enough. There’s this myth that you plan a career and then come back to the UK, she started her own research programme on the physics of oceanic bubbles, first at the University of Southampton and then at her current academic home, University College London.

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When America Stopped Being Great

Nick Bryant (U86), Churchill alumnus and the BBC’s New York correspondent has just published a book, When America Stopped being Great, both a lament and a love letter to America. His first experience of visiting the country was during the 1984 Olympics, when the US was in a completely different place – this visit had changed his life and led him to think about applying to Cambridge and Churchill, which was not a common path from his comprehensive school in Bristol.

We were delighted to host Nick in conversation with Professor David Reynolds in an online event hosted by the College in March, with an introduction by Richard Partington, Senior Tutor and History Fellow. Professor David Reynolds is a member of the Churchill Archives Committee and was the Roskill lecturer in 2020.

David noted that Obama ensured his place in history on day one, as the first Black president of the USA. He asked Bryant if there was a sense if Obama’s presidency was a disappointment, after the optimism of his election and inauguration.

Nick replied that the mood in DC was amazing after the election: the White House, which was built by slaves, now had a Black president within it, promising to change so much. There was hope that he would bring about a post-partisan and post-racial society. American renewal and rebirth and fixing the US economy were the other hopes. Obama didn’t want his presidency to be seen as about his racial profile, and he downplayed it. Nick felt that this may have been a missed opportunity.

Obama accepted his approval ratings went down when he spoke about race, so he didn’t do that enough, in Nick’s view. He wanted to unite the country but had a wall of opposition – a group of Republicans got together on the wall of opposition to do that enough, in Nick’s view. He wanted to have been a missed opportunity.

David asked if Obama was more cautious than he needed to be; Nick thought that he was, and also gave up on being bipartisan. Between 2010 and 2014 Obama got a ‘sheilacking’ in midterm elections and it cowed him, then in final two years he was re-energised. In a wide-ranging discussion about this issue, David asserted that Obama’s political capital was expended on Obamacare, and the financial crisis. His greatest and most consequential achievement was undoubtedly the Affordable Care Act, a fact that even Trump couldn’t roll back. He also drew attention to Obama saving the US economy in his early days as another overlooked achievement.

The talk turned to the rise of Trump. David said that he had, like many, underestimated Donald Trump, and asked what should we have understood about the Trump presidency and candidacy? He noted that Nick says in his book that Trump is ‘a one-man media conglomerate and vigilante candidate’, but what did he mean by this?

Nick explained that Trump, ‘...wasn’t only promising to throw a sardine into the post-industrial landscape of the rustbelt... but he understood that he would be the ultimate clickbait candidate’. He knew that traditional gatekeepers of news didn’t exalt the same influence; Trump understood that direct talk to the audience works and realised the reach of social media pretty quickly, that ‘... he was the Ringmaster of this media circus’, who could speak directly to people.

He further noted that Trump realised he could gain billions of dollars’ worth of free media airtime thanks to twitter. Since he was defenestrated from social media, the US feels like a different place. David suggested that news now may be generated by aggression, hostility and tantrums?

Nick contended that people were fed up people in the traditional Republican Party, figures such as John McCain, they wanted change. Both agreed that had it not been for Covid, Trump might have won. Republicans controlled more state delegations, and Trump came close to winning, even with 500,000 people in the US dead from Covid.

David observed that here was a man saying things that were crazy: building a wall on day one. He assumed Trump’s credibility would be broken when he didn’t build the wall, but to quote Selena Zito, ‘the press take him literally and not seriously, his supporters take him seriously but not literally’. (Atlantic magazine)

Nick had also felt Hilary Clinton might win during his visits to the rustbelt, but the ‘blue wall’ didn’t vote for her. Trump the billionaire became a working class hero, and negative partisanship became the winner. The 2016 election took the commentariat in Washington DC by surprise – they had misread the mood.

Both speakers also touched on the US constitution being flawed in its use of the Electoral College, a significant factor in Trump’s victory. Nick observed that this wasn’t the best design by the Founding Fathers, since some votes count more than others, leading David to observe that the US is not then, in a strict sense, a democracy. This particular dysfunction might be the price of protection of the Union, to hold together a country the size of a continent: the protection of the rights of a minority (for example, slave owners). Most countries have issues with their history, asserted Reynolds, and these issues can be time bombs waiting for a particular event to trigger them.

David wondered if the preceding decades of politics caused the rise of Trump, or was it individual actions; a question that often comes up in history, for example on the origins of World War I. Donald Trump was clearly the trigger for Nick’s book, but how do we explain Trump now removed from the current situation, after Trump was ‘like being at an all night rave and tantrums? Where is the hope in the US now? To Nick it rests in the fact that the 9/11 generation are coming of political age.

In reply Nick said that Trump, to a great extent, personified the decades, as a ‘spirit of the times’. In the 80s as a personification of Reaganism; in the 90s, the decade of tabloid scandals, Trump was a fixture. In the roughhes, with reality TV, he became a star. After the financial crisis he was a cipher for grievance and fear. There is a chance of union, and that Biden can bring the bipartisan politics. He wryly noted that Biden after Trump was ‘like being at an all night rave and for four years and coming home and turning on classic FM.

Where is the hope in the US now? To Nick it rests in the fact that the 9/11 generation are coming of political age. The wartime generation were keen not to fight political wars, because they experienced real war, whereas baby boomers had not to the same extent (and resisted fighting in Vietnam). Perhaps the 9/11 generation will bring the same attitude with more dialogue in Washington. However, Covid has unfortunately accelerated division and polarisation in the US and all over the world, rather than united people.

David drew to a close by asking what Nick means by ‘greatness’ in his book title. The latter pointed out that Trump never specified when the US was great, so being great was whatever and whenever people wanted it to be, and this could disguise his failures too.

The full talk is available online on our YouTube channel. Nick Bryant’s book, When America Stopped Being Great. A history of the present is published by Bloomsbury. David Reynolds’ book America, Empire of Liberty, is reissued this year by Basic Books.
Would this search involve a different kind of life for required by the search for truth according to Plato. Of Trent (1864–1925), a distinguished British soldier, Churchill Bookshelf

Overseas Fellow)

Bénatouïl (Past Professor Thomas

Dr Rodney Atwood (G74)

General Lord Rawlinson: From Tragedy to Triumph Bloomsbury Academic 2020 (paperback)

In this biography, Rodney Atwood details the life of General Lord Rawlinson of Trent (1864–1925), a distinguished British soldier whose career culminated in decisive victories on the Western Front in 1918 and command of the Indian Army in the early 1920s. He served his soldier’s apprenticeship in the Victorian colonial wars in Burma, the Sudan and South Africa. His career provides a lens through which to examine the British Army in the late-19th and early-20th century.

Jeremy Burton (U61)

We Never Sleep – Who Does in Economy Class? Austin Macauley Publishers 2020

Jeremy Burton did not set out to write a travel book. Instead he started, many years ago, to blog daily his idiosyncratic observations to a small dedicated group of online readers while travelling the equivalent of 100 times around the globe on business and at leisure. A selection of these daily travel blogs has been put together as the basis of this publication, written in rough and ready format while on the road, commenting on the city, the absurd, the thought-provoking and the downright surprising aspects of exploring more than 180 countries around the world.

Dr Kit Cheung (G00) and Dr Lorna Ayton (U667, Past Fellow)

The Birth of Monkey King

Sun Wu Kung / El Nacimiento Del

Monkey King, Sun Wu Rong / El Nacimiento Del

The Birth of Monkey King was adapted from the Journey to the West. Colourful pictures, easy to read comic strips, exciting epic adventures with Monkey King, fun maths games for children to play, and comes with answers and abundant parents’ teaching notes. All games and teaching notes are designed and written by Mathematician Dr Lorna Ayton and reviewed by early-learning psychologist Dr David Whitebread. There are 8 mathematics games and puzzles in Monkey King’s early adventure, and they involve the children in counting numbers of different objects in the mountain, recognising different shapes, using numbers that are multiples of 12 to reach the top of the mountain, and allocating fruits to monkeys equally and formulating a correct equation. Each GAMIthons® book and app contains a series of teaching notes to help parents to teach their children mathematics based on the content of the games as well as real-life situations. Aimed at 5-6 year olds.

Dr David Cressy (Past Overseas Fellow)

England’s Islands in a Sea of Troubles

Oxford University Press 2020

In this book David Cressy connects the history of England and its islands to broader debates in legal, political and military history. It includes the neglected island focus to one of the most hotly debated periods in British history, allowing a de-centred view of England’s troubles and is based on original research in under-used sources.

Paul Dilger (U83)

You Don’t Know Jack!

Paperback/Kindle 2020

Ever wondered why the phrase ‘Jack of All Trades, Master of None’ is always used as a negative and never a positive? It’s as if being pretty good at a good few things is some kind of burden! It applies to a staggering 99% of us, yet almost nothing is written on this overwhelmingly large part of the human race that will probably never be a leader in its field.

You Don’t Know Jack! is the first book to explain the vital role the Jack of All Trades, or JOAT, for short, fulfils in society. It tells us why it’s OK not to get into the 1% and how our thirst for variety and ability to adapt give us the perfect platform for us to live richly, generously and happily. Paul Dilger, a dyed-in-the-wool JOAT, shares his own experiences through this thoughtful and original publication.

Dr Beth Hardie

(U660)

Studying Situational Interaction: Explaining Behaviour By Analysing Person-Environment Convergence

Springer International Publishing 2020

In response to misconceptions and sub-optimal assessment of situational interaction in the criminological literature, this volume is a comprehensive resource for researchers of person-environment interaction in human behavioural outcomes, with a focus on acts of crime. It provides a bridge between strong complex theory about causal situational interaction in crime and the appropriate methods for empirically testing proposed situational mechanisms. It is written under the principle that research should be driven by theory and served by method.

Dr Ghil‘ad Zuckermann (Past Fellow 2000)

Revivalistics: From the Genesis of Israel to Language Reclamation in Australia and Beyond

Oxford University Press 2020

Ghil‘ad Zuckermann’s seminal book introduces a linguistic game-changer: revivalistics, a trans-disciplinary field of endeavour surrounding language reclamation, revitalization and reinvigoration. Revivalist-linguist Zuckermann makes a strong case for a clear distinction between revivalistics and documentary linguistics, the latter being the established field recording endangered languages before they fall asleep. Whilst documentary linguistics puts the language at the centre, revivalistics puts the language custodians at the centre. The book reflects Zuckermann’s fascinating and multifaceted journey into language revival, from analysing critically his Israeli mother tongue to reclaiming what he calls ‘dreaming, sleeping beauties’ in Australia and globally.

Readers can buy the book with a 30% discount using code AMWC65.

Professor Peter Hollands (U65)

The Regeneration Promise: The Facts behind Stem Cell Therapies

Bentham Books 2020

The Regeneration Promise is a reader-friendly guide to the world of regenerative medicine and stem cell technology. It is a history of and general introduction to the subject, describing the many known types of stem cells and how these can potentially be used to treat disease. The author explains the pros and cons of using stem cell technology to treat patients in simple, factual terms throughout the book while clarifying many myths. There is valuable advice for people considering stem cell therapy or considering stem cell storage such as umbilical cord blood storage at the birth of a baby. The book covers current research, as well as promising regenerative medicine treatments emerging in the near future. The clear language and explanation of scientific terms makes the book an accessible source of information for anyone wanting to understand the debate surrounding stem cell technology and its use in disease therapy.

Dr Arazí Pinhas (G14)

Wisdom of a Mystic: Spiritual Wisdom from a Kundalini Awakening

Mystic Wisdom Press 2020

Informed by the mysteries of the Universe and an intense spiritual experience while at Cambridge, Arazí Pinhas presents a book on Bhakti Yoga, spirituality, and mysticism, telling the intimate tale of heartbreaks and hardships that ultimately led him to his spiritual awakening. Inspired by this experience, his book extends an invitation to look inward, to the depths of consciousness, as a way to connect with the richness of our own being. The wisdom we seek is hidden in plain sight and that spirituality can – and should be – informed by our most mundane experiences. Our darkest hours can spark our most meaningful transformations.
The Club was very sad to hear of the passing of Jim Cameron in summer 2020. Jim was the boatman for Churchill College Boat Club for 30 years, and a legend for generations of alumni rowers. He was a master craftsman and could repair all manner of broken boats and blades. Ross Tooley, the current CCBC Overall Captain has written:

‘Of all the anecdotes I have been told, my favourite is one from around 1990: Churchill were entering the Free Press Head Race and had the idea to row in a 12+. When Jim heard, he threw himself into helping them build it. He took the hulls of two old 8s and spliced them together! As the story goes, the Churchill 12 won the head race against the top college 8s, although I have no idea how they managed to turn the boat around at the start line!’

As senior treasurer I have a collection of memories of Jim Cameron which I can forward to any alumni who are interested. A full obituary was published 2020’s Churchill Review but we may have to wait a few more months before the Leys school for allowing us to use so many of their small boats.

The boat club managed to squeeze in only four weeks of activity in Michaelmas before Covid-19 restrictions.

The CCBC OC also writes, regarding Covid-19 rowing:

‘Unsurprisingly, there were plenty of new restrictions to get used to. For example, all ergs had to be done outdoors, and I can report that a cold, autumnal evening is a great incentive to pull a little harder. The coxes also had to wear a visor during outings, which was great until a rainy morning rendered all coxes half-blind! So, we invested in some water-repellent spray after that. A lot of club members started to learn to scull and row in small boats this term, so we made good use of our new pair and owe thanks to the Leys school for allowing us to use so many of their small boats.’

Additionally, thanks in part to a good start due to a legacy being received from Timothy P F Drake (U71), we have now set up an endowed fund to support rowing, and will try and grow it every year. Our aim is to reach at least £250,000 of endowment which would generate £8,000 per year when invested. The fund will be formally launched this year, which is also the 60th Anniversary since the founding of CCBC.

We sincerely thank all our donors who enable enjoyment of rowing to continue!

Fran Malarée

A socially distanced crew photo, Michaelmas 2020

Can you guess who these chair inscriptions in the dining hall refer to?

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To find out how to sponsor your own chair visit www.chu.cam.ac.uk/alumni/giving-college/current-appeals/take-seat/

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Jim Cameron pictured with Helen Attwood (née Russell) (U66)

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Ross Tooley, the current CCBC Overall Captain

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Churchill Teaser

Can you guess who these chair inscriptions in the dining hall refer to?

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Inscriptions can be as cryptic as you wish and can represent you, a loved one or someone influential.

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CHURCHILL COLLEGE NEWSLETTER 2020–21
Churchill alumni around the world

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The Development Team at home

Top left: Sharon Brownlow looks after our database. She loves clean data and a good natter.

Top right: Elizabeth McWilliams looks after alumni. She doesn’t love postponing dinners she wants to attend.

Bottom left: Fran Malarée is Development Director. She’s in charge and rocks Orla Kiely.

Bottom centre: Annabel Busher looks after our annual telethon and fundraising campaigns. She really loves planning.

Bottom right: Hilary Stimpson looks after our donors. She really loves tea.

Bottom right (inset): that’s Lauren Thomas, our Communications Manager. She runs faster than you.

DIARY OF EVENTS

Please keep an eye on our website for forthcoming events, as due to the ongoing pandemic and restrictions, dates for events such as reunion dinners are still undergoing revision.

Events are listed on our website at www.chu.cam.ac/events