



Brazen Notes

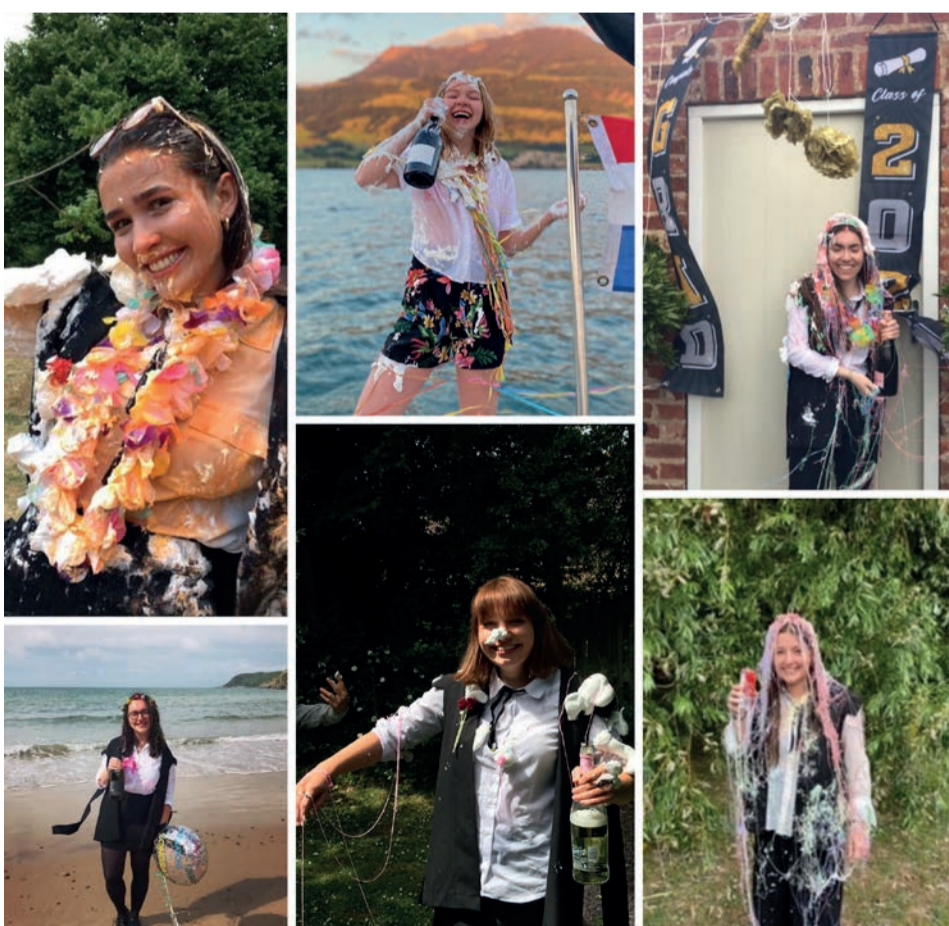
Brasenose Community Spirit

This bumper edition of the Brazen Notes covers the period October 2019 – July 2020, and highlights the many innovative and encouraging ways the College and its community have lived, worked and studied throughout the last academic year. In addition to acclimatising to the challenges of the last few months, numerous alumni, staff and students have gone the extra mile, with many volunteering to help their local communities during the pandemic, or through being key workers. We salute them all for their hard work and dedication.

We are delighted to announce record-breaking undergraduate final degree results! Of the 92 final year students, **48 achieved a First-Class degree**, which is believed to be the highest number in the College's history.

Tributes must be paid to our teaching staff for providing excellent tuition, and the whole Brasenose community for providing food, accommodation, entertainment, security, welfare and a whole array of other support to our students. But most of all praise must be given to our outstanding students for triumphing so spectacularly during this difficult time.

Although our finalists have completed their studies and their time at Brasenose, they are always welcome in College and remain a member of the BNC community for life. Welcome all new alumni!



Some of our enterprising students still managed to celebrate the end of their studies in the traditional way but in untraditional locations!

Congratulations to them all.



The Alumni Relations and Development team have been learning and adapting throughout the past six months whilst working from home, taking many of our events online and our fundraising initiatives offline. We have missed seeing you face to face at Gaudies, networking, regional and international gatherings, but it has been a great pleasure to have been able to communicate with so many of you using creative and alternative methods. We hope it will not be too long before we can welcome you back to our beautiful office on Staircase VII.

As ever, the College is now looking to the future and will be welcoming over a hundred new undergraduates and a similar number of new graduates to Oxford in October, and staff are working hard to ensure that a quality educational experience is possible, whether in person or remotely. The Domestic Bursar and other senior College Officers have been working tirelessly to ensure that our new and returning students will be able to study in a safe, Covid-secure environment. Outreach has continued throughout the lockdown and we are delighted to welcome our most diverse cohort of freshers yet. We look forward to the time when Brasenose is buzzing with students once again.

In this Edition

News	Page 2
From the Archives	Page 4
Dr Tony Hill: Interviewed	Page 5
The Principal's Blog	Page 6
Spotlight On: BNC Staff	Page 12
BNC Students: Interviewed	Page 14
The Covid-19 Appeal	Page 15

Your News

This is where we share your news. 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, email us at development.office@bnc.ox.ac.uk



Eddie Chaloner (Medicine, 1983) and **Matt Wordsworth (Clinical Medicine, 2005)** have been working at the London Nightingale Hospital during the Covid-19 pandemic. Eddie is a Consultant Surgeon (Clinical Lead Medical Workforce) and Matt is a Plastic Surgical Trainee (Tactical Ward Commander)

Congratulations to **Alexander Georgiou (Jurisprudence, 2014)**, who, on 2nd November 2019, was elected to a Prize Fellowship at All Souls. Alex graduated with the top first in Law (Wronker Prize) in 2017, and a Distinction in the BCL in 2019.

Asha Hartland (Classics, 2010) is pleased to announce the birth of her son, Alistair James Hartland-Asbury, on 26th May 2020.

Brasenose Fellow in Law, **Professor Birke Häcker** has been made an Honorary Bencher at Lincoln's Inn. The ceremony took place on 17th December 2019.

Chris Martin-McDonald (Modern Languages, 2001) writes: Since leaving BNC I have worked for Google, retrained as a doctor, got married, learned German and am now working happily in Psychiatry in Switzerland. BNC gave me the confidence to follow my goals and the flexibility to adapt to new circumstances. Life, it turns out, can take you all sorts of odd places that you never expected. BNC was a memorable and formative chapter.

Claire (Molecular Biochemistry, 2009) and **Henry White (Mathematics, 2009)** are pleased to announce the birth of their daughter, Penelope Catharine Barbara White, on 13th October 2019.

Douglas Vernimmen received a Best Director award in the 'Super Short Film' category of the New York Movie Awards for *Oxford Through the Lens*.

Geraldine Brodie (English Literature, 1976), Associate Professor in Translation Theory and Theatre Translation at University College London and a Senior Fellow of the Higher Education Academy was appointed Chair of the Actors Touring Company (ATC) board of trustees on 19th May 2020.

Johannes Linn (PPE, 1965) writes: I had the honour to serve in 2019 as the 'Global Facilitator' for the First Replenishment of the Green Climate Fund, the multilateral organisation set up under the Paris Climate Agreement to support climate mitigation and adaptation investments in developing countries. The year-long intergovernmental negotiations, which I chaired and supported, had a successful outcome, with total pledges of US\$ 9.8 billion for 2020-2023.



James Rogers (Mathematics, 2009) entered into a Civil Partnership with Tommy Ross on 13th September 2019. They are happy to say that lockdown together has been delightful.

The latest annual meeting of the BNC golf group took place at Denham on 23rd/24th October 2019. There have been comings and alas many goings since the group first gathered in the mists of time to contest a trophy in memory of **Jeremy Summerscales (Modern Languages, 1955)**, who was notorious for spending most of his time at BNC on the tee and at the Buttery bar.



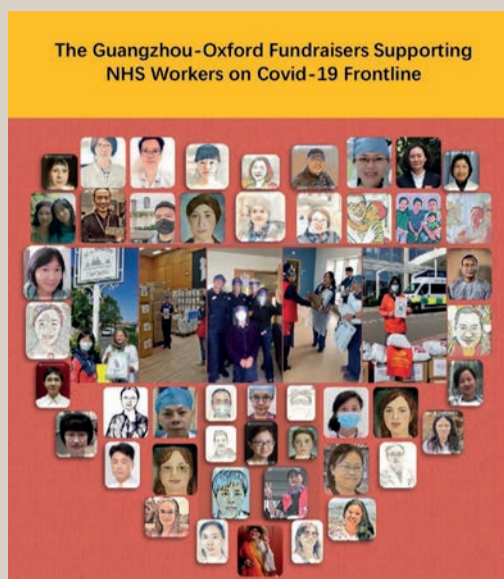
Left to right: **Roger Murray (History, 1956)**; **David Lawday (Modern Languages, 1958)**; **James Flecker (Classics, 1958)**; **David Veit (Classics, 1957)**; **John Youngman (Jurisprudence, 1959)**; **Sir Scott Baker (Jurisprudence, 1957)**.



Left to right: **John Sanders (PPE, 1962)** this year's trophy winner; **Sam Seed (Physiological Sciences, 1955)**; **Ian Roberts (Medicine, 1955)**; **Robin Veit (Brother of David and alumnus of Lincoln College)**.

Ying Cui (Physiological Sciences & Medicine, 2004) writes:

Currently I am working with Professor Clare Verrill in Digital Pathology at the Nuffield Department of Surgical Sciences. In addition to work, I have organised and fundraised to purchase, deliver and donate certified PPE to the NHS over the past few months. Most recently, 790 face shields to OUH and 300 masks to St Andrew's Care Home.



Tassos Economou (PPE, 1995), has been appointed as YPO Chairman for 2020-21. Tassos will take office 1st July 2020 and joins the group as the 69th member to be elected to YPO's highest office.

Rosie Thomas (PPE, 2012) writes: I'm usually an Operations Lead at a start-up social enterprise that connects supply teachers and schools, but work has been pretty quiet! So I've spent my time during lockdown working for a start-up organisation called Meals for the NHS, which is working to feed hard working NHS staff where they need it most, whilst supporting small and independent food providers nationwide.

Secondly, I recently took part in the Soho Labs Comedy Course, and though our final presentations have been postponed until theatres re-open, I made a video to share how I have been 'Coping With Lockdown' <https://youtu.be/5CHjdWOiUvQ>



Carol Elizabeth Photography

Philippa Collins (Law, 2015) and **Joshua Denton (Education, 2016)**: We were married in University College chapel on 17th August 2019 and celebrated with drinks in Brasenose. "We would like to express our great gratitude to Julia, for leading a wonderful service and for her support during our preparations for married life. A year on, we would also like to thank again the alumni members of the Brasenose College Chapel Choir, whose beautiful singing is one of the most memorable parts of the entire day, for both us and many of our family and friends!"

Patrick Martin (Classics, 1960) writes: I retired from a career in electronic component manufacturing and machine-tool sales in December 2015. In June 2020 I was awarded a PhD by the University of Winchester for a thesis entitled *Understanding the Last Judgement Mosaic at Torcello, Venice*.

Chris (Engineering & Computation, 2002) and **Sarah Shucksmith, née Byrne (Mathematics, 2002)**, are delighted to announce the birth of their son Sam Edward Shucksmith on 19th June 2020, brother to Leo.

Elizabeth Julia Reynolds was born on the 7th June 2020 at 11:24am at 7 lbs 5 oz to **Bryn (Economics and Management, 2006)** and **Gabriel Reynolds (née Carnwath) (Classics, 2000)**.

Three BNC alumni were recognised in the Queen's New Year's Honours. **Robert Cashmore (History, 2010)** received an MBE for services to Trade and Investment, **Joseph Irvin (PPE, 1974)**, an OBE for services to Active Travel and to Charities and **Alan Tavener (Music, 1976)**, a BEM for services to Choral Music in Scotland.

Four BNC alumni were recognised in the Queen's Birthday Honours. **Graeme Biggar (History, 1993)** received a CBE for services to National Security, **Charles Beckford (Classics, 1982)** received an OBE for services to National Security, **Richard Jay (PPE, 1965)** received a BEM for services to Young People and Music in Northern Ireland and **Michael Reade (Medicine, 1999)** received a 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.

Editors Note: This is a selection of the news we have 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.

From the Archives

Call for College Memories!

Thank you to **The Revd Canon John Shepherd (Theology, 1960)** for sending the College this wonderful College Ball poster from 1962. John was at BNC from 1960-63 and chaired the Ball committee in June 1962.

Have you stumbled across any BNC gems whilst undertaking a lockdown spring clean? We'd love to see! Get in touch to let us know what you've found at development.office@bnc.ox.ac.uk

He tells us more:

"The below Ball poster shows an engraving of the College, showing what was on and where. Each person at the Ball was given this rolled up like a scroll, tied with red ribbon. Practically not a good idea as it was far too large, but people liked it...

The glass was replaced with pink satin and each lamp was suspended from its four corners with loo chain linked to a key ring – Heath Robinson, but effective. Then the lamps were hung from brackets in the main marquee for the Ball, to give a romantic light... I can't imagine the College still has these! It was such a happy, fulfilling three years at BNC."

In Leeds, I remember buying six or eight lanterns of old gas street lamps. These were solid copper and when stripped and polished looked great.



Dr Tony Hill: Interviewed

Widening Participation

An advocate for diversity, access and outreach at Brasenose, the wider University and many other organisations, alumnus and benefactor **Dr Tony Hill (Mathematics, 1968)** sat down with Principal John Bowers QC to discuss his thoughts and passion for widening participation. We thank Tony for his long-standing commitment to encouraging the best and brightest to apply to Brasenose, and the huge influence his support has had on the evolution of our Access and Outreach programme.

Where does your passion for Widening Participation come from?

My passion comes from the simple observation that (say) mathematical talent occurs across the whole population. In giving all young people the opportunity to live up to their potential, we create a richer and fairer society. This benefits everyone.

How long have you been involved?

I have been involved for the last ten years, both as a participant and a funder. Over that time the landscape has changed. There is certainly more work going on – but much of it is isolated and short term.

You have worked extensively with BNC; which part did you find most satisfying?

My biggest project with BNC has been to partially fund the College's Access and Outreach programme over a five-year period. During this time, I'm delighted to say that applications from state school candidates increased significantly. The most satisfying part of this initiative was the regular contact with everyone involved in widening participation at BNC. It was particularly heart-warming to witness the enthusiasm and triumphs of the team so ably led by Senior Tutor Simon Smith, and Schools Officer Joe Organ. Their model made excellent use of current undergraduates in the very many school visits.

Describe your current projects

One of the big lessons I learned from supporting outreach at BNC is that it's not just about getting students from non-traditional backgrounds to apply to Oxford. If they are to succeed, they must be well-prepared for the challenges of the admissions race.

My current focus is within the University's Mathematical, Physical and Life Sciences division, specifically Mathematics, Physics and Chemistry. There are three principles behind this work. Firstly, the emphasis should be on schools that are historically under-represented at elite universities. Secondly, the best outcomes follow from several universities collaborating together. Finally, I am a catalytic funder, in the sense that my biggest contribution is in the early stages of any project.

At what point do you think success will have been achieved?

The ultimate test for success is that the student population in our institution mirrors the underlying

general population. There is certainly a long way to go! Of course, there is a further challenge: in common with all diversity initiatives, it is essential that we make this new population feel welcome and included.

Are there any pitfalls to be avoided in Widening Participation projects?

I think there are three important aspects to any project. Firstly, of course, any intervention has to be effective. There are many ways to achieve this locally over a short period of time. However, the really significant tests are scalability and sustainability. So, I'm especially interested in projects that have the potential to apply across the UK – and are very likely to be durable. In my view, the only way for this to be achieved is by universities working together. This is, perhaps, the biggest lesson, and challenge, for Oxford colleges and departments.

What are your other passions?

I have been a runner my whole life. But, as I have got older, I spend more time doing long distance

walking, to the extent that my walking miles now exceed the miles I do in my car! Finally, my favourite day of the week is Wednesday – where my wife and I get to look after our three year old granddaughter.

Why did you decide to do a second doctorate?

I imagined after my finishing my first PhD, in semiconductor modelling, that mathematics would be a central part of my working life. However, wherever I went, there always seemed to be many more opportunities in management. So, after I retired (early) in 2006, I decided that I had one last chance to do some serious mathematics. As part of my preparation, after 30 years in software, I enrolled for an MSc with the Open University. Two things became clear. I was still in love with Mathematics – but my interest was now very much in Analysis, an important discipline within Pure Mathematics. My goal was to become part of the vibrant Analysis research community in London, and doing a second PhD, has proved to be a very rewarding way of achieving this.



Tony immediately after he had walked 100 miles in less than 24 hours in 2014. In doing so, he became C1133 in the Brotherhood of Centurions. His medal is being presented by Ann Sayer, MBE, the very first female Centurion.

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



October 2019

On 17th October, I visited Brasenose alumni based in Luxembourg. I had only visited the city before in order to appear at the European Court of Justice, and inevitably it is difficult to sightsee around the city on such occasions. We were also lucky enough to be there when Lord Stephen Green of Hurstpierpoint was giving the first of the British-Luxembourg Society's rejuvenated Sir Winston Churchill Memorial Lectures on the subject of Asia and Europe. This was presided over by alumnus **David Clark (PPE, 1970)** who is Chair of the British Luxembourg Society and a member of the Oxford University Society of Luxembourg.

On 22nd October, we celebrated at High Table the eightieth birthday of Emeritus Fellow in Chemistry **Professor Graham Richards CBE, FRS (Chemical Biology, 1958)**. Professor Richards has spent almost all of his career here at Brasenose and was head of the Department of Chemistry of the University from 1997 to 2006. He was also instrumental in promoting the decision to admit women to the College.

I hope that you noticed that the famous photocopied letter to the European Commission seeking an extension to the departure from the EU was signed by our alum **Sir Tim Barrow KCMG (English, 1983)**, UK Permanent Representative to the EU.

It was welcome news that the University is developing its environmental sustainability plan with a full strategy expected next year. The first Questions & Answers of Heads of House with Vice Chancellor Professor Louise Richardson was devoted to this challenging subject.

Thanks to our University Challenge team, who put up a spirited performance against an excellent Imperial College squad.

I attended the great display by the Library staff of eight antique science books as part of the University-wide *Thinking 3D* series. I found most fascinating the Kepler *Phaenomenon Singulare* which was published in Leipzig in 1609. In it the famous astronomer and mathematician describes a presumed transit of Mercury in May 1607 using a camera obscura. What he thought was the planet was in fact a sunspot. Congratulations to the Library Team for putting this on.

November 2019

The packed antechapel positively pulsed to the jazz/fusion group Wandering Wires at our first Platnauer Concert of the year on 1st November. One of the four was our very own **Joe Bradley (PPE, 2015)**.

On 3rd November, Cathrine Ngangira, who is training for the priesthood at Durham University, and is a former member of the Community of St Anselm at Lambeth Palace, was interviewed by our Chaplain as part of the Sung Eucharist for All Saints' Sunday. She spoke of her growing up in Zimbabwe and her road to the priesthood.

There was an excellent attendance for a series of talks about **Professor Peter Birks QC**, who was a Law Fellow at Brasenose from 1971 to 1981. Firstly, **The Right Hon Lord Andrew Burrows (Jurisprudence, 1975 and Brasenose Honorary Fellow)** spoke about Peter's work on Unjust Enrichment, then Professor Helen Scott of Lady Margaret Hall spoke about him as a Roman lawyer and finally, **Professor Bill Swadling** on his contribution as a scholar. It was wonderful to have in the audience Peter's wife Jacqueline and

On Saturday 9th November, about forty former students came to Brasenose for a day in honour of Dr Bernard Richards. Many others sent in fond wishes and contributed to a gift to enhance his upcoming holiday and a keepsake book of personal reminiscences in poetry, prose, art and anecdote.

Animated and artistic, attendees revelled in three lively discussions as Bernard transported them back in time by being as energetic as he ever was and also donning the same velvet smoking jackets (custard-coloured in the morning, rhubarb-coloured in the afternoon) that he famously wore as a BNC tutor.

His alumni agreed that it was a joy to watch Bernard guide, provoke and entertain the group through a talk on pictorial intertextuality. The group particularly enjoyed his many side trips

into loosely connected ideas, which bought back memories of wide-ranging conversations in tutorials; in fact, as Bernard himself said, the subtitle to his talk (and the title of any future memoirs) could be 'I digress...'. The next discussion was on the state of the modern novel. Margaret Atwood's *The Testaments* was variously annihilated and praised by the group – and declared by Bernard not as good as the first, especially as – he noted – sequels are not often a success. *Toy Story 4* was declared an exception to the rule by the room, however. Finally, we discussed the very nature of poetry. A sub-section of the group confessed they hadn't actually read poetry for a fair few years. The shame!

Contributions by Tamlyn Driver, Drusilla Gabbott and Jane Johnson.



It was a truly glittering occasion for the opening of the Amersi Foundation Lecture Room on 5th December as some 120 guests of **Mohamed (EMBA, 2014) and Nadia Amersi** crowded into our newly expanded and refurbished room. The fine room was opened by Rt Hon Theresa May MP, who gave a wonderful speech championing the University and stressing the role of colleges as true communities. Mohamed then gave a rousing description of his philosophy. This includes supporting philanthropically 'Three Es' – Education, Engagement and Empowerment.

Mohamed joined the College as an EMBA student in 2014 and was elected to the College's Honorary Fellowship in 2019. It was my pleasure to thank him personally and most sincerely for his enlightened generosity in funding the renovation and extension of the Amersi Foundation Lecture Room.



son Theodore. The talks gave a fascinating insight into his very significant legal career, and offered up some of his aphorisms which we would all do well to abide by, such as: if you can't explain it in simple language, you do not know what you are talking about.

On 8th November, **Bethany Reeves (Music, 2017)**, our versatile and extraordinary Organ Scholar, performed a one-woman concert. She played the organ, alto saxophone and piano, to rapturous applause.

Sarah Jackson OBE (Classics, 1977) gave our first Equality Lecture on 13th November. A leading expert on work-life issues in the UK, Sarah led the work-life charity Working Families for 24 years and was appointed OBE for services to quality of life issues in 2007. Her basic thesis on "work, family and the economy" is that we are being short-changed, and will continue to be so unless and until we are brave enough to ask fundamental questions about work and how it is organised and to act on the answers. An outstanding presentation.

On 12th November, **Claudia Neuschulz (Water Science Policy & Management, 2014)** spoke to the PPE Society about her work for the European Bank of Development. She presented a set of slides about water and how we forget that some 70% of the world is water but 2.2 billion people do not have access to safely managed drinking water services. I had not realised that there was a right to water in the South African constitution.

Thanks to the William Delafield Charitable Trust, our Library and Archives are delighted that a selection of our archive collection of 18th century maps showing College estates across England are now available to view via <https://digital.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/>

Before the end of the 19th century much of the income of Oxford Colleges came from the ownership of land throughout the country. Most of these estates were given by benefactors who conveyed the property to their chosen College as a gift, for example to fund a scholarship or fellowship.

Liz Woolley, a local historian, gave an excellent talk on 22nd November on the history of Lloyds Bank at 1-5 High Street which the College bought earlier this year. Lloyds Bank occupies several buildings at Carfax, on the corner of the High Street and Cornmarket. There were many things about the building and the location which I had not realised before this fascinating lecture. The plaster ceiling was made from casts of the 16th-century ceiling which had been saved from Slatter & Rose's shop. The original ceiling itself was bought by an ophthalmic surgeon, Fergus Ogilvie, who had it re-erected by Benfield & Loxley in the library of his home at 72 Woodstock Road. That house is now the home of the Principal of St Hugh's College.

My PA **Melanie James** retired from College at the end of Michaelmas term after almost 13 years of service. It was great to entertain her at High Table. Attesting to her popularity, it was the largest High Table since I have been Principal.

December 2019

On 1st December, I spoke at the memorial service in the Sheldonian Theatre for **Professor Sir Fergus Millar**, who was the Camden Professor of Ancient History attached to Brasenose from 1984 to 2002, and subsequently an Emeritus Fellow. I paid tribute to his role in being a Tutor for Graduates and saving Classics in the College. There were moving

speeches from many others attesting to his work on Jewish History, as a mentor and international scholar, and as a father. These were interspersed with music played by our own **Dr Jonathan Katz** and **Professor Susan Wollenberg**.

January 2020

Suzanne and I had a wonderful trip to Sunway University in Malaysia, after a very restful holiday deep in the Malaysian Rain Forest. Suzanne gave one of the Jeffrey Cheah Distinguished Lecturer Series on the modern news media entitled "Making News and Shaping Views; Riding the Rollercoaster of the Digital Revolution". There were almost two hundred friends, alumni and members of the public in the audience in Sunway University's magnificent lecture theatre and this was followed by a large (many course) dinner hosted by **Tan Sri Jeffrey Cheah** (the Chancellor of the University and an Honorary Fellow of this College).

We then flew to Singapore where we held a delightful College lunch for alumni.

To mark the occasion of his 55th birthday and twentieth year as a Fellow of Brasenose, **Professor Chris McKenna** has made a gift of silver to the Senior Common Room. The two silver decanter labels – one for Claret and the other for Madeira – were both made in 1809 by the London silversmith Elizabeth Morley. There is a wonderful parallelism in this name to the college's 1515 benefactress, Elizabeth Morley. The Victoria & Albert Museum in London has several similar decanter labels that were fashioned and hallmarked by her. It is great to add a female silversmith to our silver collection in Brasenose.

February 2020

There was a very pleasant Eucharist service for Candlemas on 2nd February. Rev Anthony Buckley, Vicar of St Michael at the Northgate, spoke of the split in Brasenose between his parish and that covered by the University Church so that weddings might take place in the two different churches depending on where in the College one lives*. At the end of the service, everyone lit candles and unusually the great doors of the Chapel were opened for a procession. *all members of Brasenose may marry in Chapel of course!

It is not often that we hear music which dates before the College was founded, but the quartet *Gothic Voices* filled the chapel with the sounds from the Medieval period (11th to 13th century) for the Platnauer Concert on 7th February. They are one of the world's most celebrated early music vocal ensembles and sang in Latin and Norman French.

The College takes reducing our impact on the environment seriously. For example, the new building at Frewin is planned to very high environmental standards, we hold a gold Green Impact Award, our students won the university-wide 'Switch Off' and 'Veggie Pledge' campaigns, our electricity is provided from renewable sources, we recycle (including waste food and oil), and we source locally produced meat.

On 18th February I attended the School of Climate Change event in the Amersi Foundation Lecture Room. Danny Dorling (School of Geography and the Environment) and Lisa Thalheimer (Environmental Change Institute) talked about the social impacts of climate change to a packed and committed audience.

At a dinner in London on 10th February, the BNC Society paid tribute to the work of **Alexandra Marks CBE (Jurisprudence, 1977)** over the 25 years she has served as secretary. The tributes were made by **Drusilla Gabbott (English, 1982)** and **Penny Andrews (Mathematics, 1979)**, the new secretary. They included the cool fact that Alexandra was mentioned in Debrett's Most Influential 500 people in the UK and that she was the first female President of the Society. She took the society from generally moribund to the dynamic group it is today, as well as being a Deputy High Court Judge, Linklaters Partner, member of the Judicial Appointments Committee and Chair of CEDR amongst many other things.

The Brasenose PPE Society welcomed **James Johnson (History and Politics, 2010)**, who previously worked as Senior Opinion Researcher and Strategy Advisor to former Prime Minister Theresa May. The audience engaged in a thought-provoking conversation with James about the electoral strength and future of three major parties. James shared his experience of conducting focus group and his insights into the working of No.10 and recent public opinion change. Many comments by James were invaluable for our PPE students, especially for those who are keen on political sociology.

Our wordsmiths were in great form for Ale Verses on Shrove Tuesday, 25th February. This excellent Brasenose tradition goes back as far as 1709, to the days when the assembled company were gathered round braziers in Hall, with smoke floating in the open timber roof. I understood most of the contents of the ditties which were set to the tune of modern artists. Subjects included the statue in our Front Quad (God of the Forge), the Dean (always a popular character); and the possible

naming of a College drink (which mysteriously did not happen as requested). The clear winner "Angels of the Forge" was set to *Angels* by Robbie Williams and had the immortal line at the end of a verse "And go to Lincoln instead". It was penned by the very talented duo of **Jacob Green (Engineering Science, 2016)** and **Bill Freeman (Classics, 2016)**. I was surprised (nay shocked) to see Mark Wilson, the Dean, described as "His face was rather fearsome and his voice was rather mean" although I think this was included just to make a rhyme. It was so difficult to restore order in the Hall that my gavel broke!

On 23rd February the Annual Runcie Sermon was given by Bishop June Osborne, Bishop of Llandaff. Archbishop Runcie (1921-2000) was an alumnus of Brasenose and one-time Archbishop of Canterbury. His portrait hangs in our Hall. June was one of the first women to be ordained as a priest in the Church of England when this became possible in 1994. Before she was consecrated she was Dean of Salisbury Cathedral. June's excellent sermon was entitled: 'A Brilliant Darkness'. June took as her theme discipline, suffering and glory. It was a very special occasion, as it was the first time a female Bishop had preached in Brasenose Chapel.

We had a terrific presentation at our regular Welfare Lunch from our Supernumerary Fellow Professor Russell Foster on 25th February about sleep. As usual he gave a virtuoso performance with wonderful slides. He reminded those present that we spend an average some 36% of our lives in sleep. He emphasised the need for good sleep for making decisions and the difference between sleepiness which can be corrected and fatigue which cannot and is harmful. He said that whilst napping for up to twenty minutes in the afternoon was good, longer was not. As always, I felt privileged to listen to him.

We had a terrific party for the Brasenose Women's 1974 Network at a pub within Kings Cross Station on 28th January. I spoke about diversity and why it was close to my heart and I was followed by **Margherita de Fraja (Modern Languages, 2013)**, who spoke about diversity portraiture within College amongst other things. The event was organised excellently by **Jane Johnson (English, 1987)** and **Amanda Holland (PPE, 1988)**.



On 20th February, we were hosted by **Scott Frisby (MBA, 2008)** at the RAF Club, London, for another gathering of the Brasenose LGBTQ+ Alumni Network. The event centered around 20 years since the lifting of the ban on openly LGBTQ+ people serving in the Armed Forces. I was delighted to chair a panel discussion consisting of **Michael Codner (Psychology & Philosophy, 1966)** (Director at the Royal United Services Institute), Angela Mason (Councilor on Camden London Borough Council and former Director of Stonewall), and David Isaac (Chair of the Equality & Human Rights Commission and former Chair of Stonewall). We were also joined by Patrick Lyster-Todd, a former Naval Officer and former chair of campaign group Rank Outsiders.

It was particularly poignant for me to chair this panel as I acted for the claimants in one of the original cases that resulted in the lifting of the ban which was eventually heard by the European Court of Human Rights at Strasbourg. The conversation focused on the outrageous treatment of LGBTQ+ personnel in the Armed Forces before the ban was lifted, the arguments on both sides of the court discussion on rule change, and ultimately the implementation of that change.

Patrick and Michael were able to give us first-hand accounts of their experiences in the Forces, while Angela and David gave us an insight into the campaigning that went on to bring about the change.

To celebrate LGBTQ+ History Month, the rainbow flag has been flying over Brasenose throughout February. I look forward to future gatherings of this network and all the other networks that celebrate diversity in Brasenose's community.



March 2020

We are delighted that **Dr Jayne Birkby** has been elected to the Fellowship in Physics (Exoplanets). She gained a first at Durham University and then completed a PhD in Astrophysics at the University of Cambridge. She is currently a Lecturer at the University of Amsterdam. She will join us at the start of the next Academic year.

Unfortunately I missed blurbs where the SCR speaker was **Professor Daniela Bortoletto**, who is a Senior Kurti Fellow here at Brasenose and the Head of the Sub Department of Particle Physics. Her work takes her regularly to the Large Hadron Collider at CERN in Geneva. Our HCR speaker was HCR President emeritus, **Matthew Speight**, DPhil student in Interdisciplinary Biosciences at the Department of Zoology. The title of his talk was 'Why Do Whales Exist? Understanding Cancer Resistance across the Animal Kingdom'. The reason I missed blurbs was because I was en route to my home town of Grimsby to visit schools. I met representatives of Havelock School and Franklin College, which was especially poignant for me as I knew Jack Franklin, a local councillor after whom the sixth form College is named.

The second in our series of Writers' Talks took place on 11th March when **Rebecca Abrams** our Royal Literary Fund Writer in Residence interviewed our Frankland Visitor, film director and playwright **Kenny Lonergan**. In a wide ranging and meticulously researched interview, Rebecca probed Kenny on his career, including how he compared working in the cinema and for the theatre. She drew out the fact that he was a "master of subtexts" and the impact of his being brought up by two psychoanalysts as well as the impact of bereavements in his work especially in Manchester by the Sea.

After much consideration, we went ahead with our annual Betty Morley Dinner on 14th March. There was a widespread feeling amongst those attending that this could be the last big event we would have in College for some time. It was terrific to welcome as Honorary Fellows two distinguished alumni, **James Del Favero (Engineering Science, 1978)**, a successful M&A investment banker and **Dame Vivian Rose** a member of the Court of Appeal. They both gave lovely speeches.

It is with immense sadness that we report that **Professor Peter Sinclair** passed away on Tuesday 31st March 2020, having contracted coronavirus.

Professor Sinclair joined Brasenose College as a teaching fellow in 1970 and stayed for 24 years, teaching in particular economic theory, monetary policy and international economics. Although he spent much of his later career at the University of Birmingham, he remained a familiar face in and around College as a popular Emeritus Fellow, and chaired the College's Remuneration Committee with his last meeting in February of this year.

He published widely in Economics, lectured all over the world, consulted for many institutions including the Treasury, and was also the Director of the Bank of England's Centre for Central Banking Studies. Many of you will recall the wonderful man he was and his kindness and compassion shone as well as his academic brilliance. He is

such a loss to his family, the College and the wider world. He has a large group of devoted students whom we will be informing of this sad news.

Our heartfelt condolences are sent to his wife Jayne and his wider family. We are working on a way to best memorialise Peter and his impact on Brasenose, and will be in touch with his former students in due course. To read tributes to Peter from his former students, please visit <http://bit.ly/PeterSinclair>. If you wish to be involved, please contact James.Fletcher@bnc.ox.ac.uk



Oxford is eerily quiet as I write. There are none of the usual tour parties in Radcliffe Square which is normally packed with tourists. There are fewer and fewer students in College as time goes on; we have 49 left in residence. The Libraries are closed. We are providing basic meal service for those who remain, normally international students who cannot get home or students who really have no home. A few students are self-isolating. Everyone is eyeing each other up so as not to get too close (but on the other hand folk are saying hello to each other and looking out for each other more than is the norm).

Many of the shops are closed or empty (and restaurants and pubs have been forcibly shut). The stress for our students is intense; can they go home? Will they have to still prepare for the exams? How will the exams happen? Should they self-isolate? Do the older generation know what they are doing? Is it fair they are the years who are having part of their wonderful time here taken away from them?

Our staff have been fantastic, pulling together for the good of the students who remain. They rightly avoid public transport and come in by car or bike. They show terrific spirit in the midst of adversity.

There are anxious meetings each day at 9am – either our 12-member College Core Response Group meets (remotely of course) or the inner group of managers. We eschew the silver and bronze titles used elsewhere. We take advice from our Medical Tutors. We communicate with everyone in College every day at 3pm. We liaise with the Central University. Heads of House discuss what it is like in their Colleges. We consult JCR and HCR. We are all getting used to Microsoft Teams as the way of communicating.

This is all for something we did not know existed until a few weeks ago.

April 2020

I wish you a good Easter and hope you keep well. We salute those in our community who work in the NHS. The Vice Chancellor has cited an Irish proverb that is very apposite in present circumstances: *There is no flood that does not recede.*

The Coronavirus pandemic has posed extraordinary challenges for our College community but I am so proud that we have faced them as a team and the College has come together as one. I want to pay tribute to all our College staff, academic and non-academic, who have really risen to the occasion. We have had to react rapidly to a fast-changing situation.

We supported our remaining students with meals for as long as this was feasible within Government guidance. We presently have about forty students in residence on our four sites, who are not able to leave College for a variety of reasons. As the crisis developed we were careful to provide information and support to students that were able to return home. I am delighted to say that no Brasenose student has been required to leave College. At the same time, we have also focussed on providing the

best support we can to those that remain, both domestically and in terms of their welfare and wellbeing.

Most College staff are currently working from home. All permanent College staff are being retained on their normal base pay. Some have been (or will be) placed on furlough (with their agreement) as there is no work for them in College, nor can they work from home.

There is unlikely to be any face-to-face teaching for students next term, and the Senior Tutor and our IT Director and their teams have worked tirelessly to arrange for remote teaching. We are preparing for a different sort of exam too. We will do what we can as a College to ensure that no student suffers undue detriment in their examinations and all are treated as fairly as possible in the circumstances. Our admissions and outreach team are working on new initiatives to support and communicate with offer-holders and prospective students. We have cancelled most scheduled events for next term, and the rest are likely to follow, but we hope that many can be rescheduled.

I have been heartened by the response from all members across our community, staff, Fellows and students themselves. The JCR and HCR have been

helpful and constructive. I want to offer particular thanks to **Domestic Bursar, Matt Hill** who is co-ordinating all things Covid-19, and to the IT Department for keeping things going.

We all miss the incredible community spirit that we have at Brasenose and the sense of fellowship, but are doing our best to keep things going as well as we can.

Our condolences to all who have lost a loved one or who have been ill themselves.

This will be a term like no other. There is a real sense of community at Brasenose and a sense of fun much of which comes from social closeness, making social distancing a big problem. It is not much fun working from home. We treat each other as family which is why the lock down is so hard.

I want to thank all who have rallied round to achieve the miracle of a start of term welcome back film message (**Joe Organ, Schools Officer** and **James Fletcher, Senior Development Officer**) and Collections (**Henry Jestico, Academic Administrator**).

Kudos to **Bradley Johnson (Medicine, 2016)** who along with a group of around 20 other medical

students, collectively known as Tingewick Firm 2020, is aiming to cycle 7200km (100km for every year the NHS has been around) collectively over the next month to raise money for the Oxford Hospitals Charity, which uses their funds to support healthcare workers across the Oxford University Hospitals NHS Trust. Keep safe everyone.

May 2020

I am delighted to hear that Remote Teaching is operating with only a few teething problems. We have now completed two Governing Bodies by Microsoft Teams. I am sure that we are all missing our normal College events.

One event where we were not able to continue normal activity was the plan we had to commemorate VE Day. So many Brasenose alumni lost their lives and we pay tribute to the courage of those who fought. Of all the Oxford and Cambridge Colleges, only Brasenose had more men killed in the Second World War than in the First, as abundantly clear on the chapel memorials.

I pay tribute to all those alumni who are key workers. I mention just a few. **Ying Cui (DPhil Physiology, 2004)** tells us that she has organised and fundraised to purchase, deliver and donate certified PPE to the NHS over the past few months: the recent consignments were of 790 face shields to OUH and 300 masks to St Andrew's Care Home.

I also wanted to mention **Eddie Chaloner (Medicine, 1983)** and **Matt Wordsworth (Clinical Medicine, 2005)**. They are, respectively, Consultant Surgeon/Clinical Lead, Medical Workforce, and Plastic-surgical Trainee/Tactical Ward Commander, at the Nightingale Hospital in London, the special hospital at the Excel Centre. See Pg. 2 for photos of our wonderful NHS alumni.

181 people 'attended' the first Principal's Conversation on Microsoft Teams. It was entitled 'Academics and the Real World: Fighting the Covid-19 Pandemic' and featured BNC Fellows, **Professor William James**, Professor of Virology, and **Professor Philip Goulder**, Professor of Immunology, both of whom are involved in fighting Covid-19. There were a wide range of questions on policy and the disease, which flooded in before and during the session; the Q&A section was red hot and I have many emails saying it was the best explanation they had heard. Recordings of all online alumni events can be found at <https://bit.ly/digimissit>. Sorry I did not look into the camera well enough; next time will be better! I thank all those across the College who made this possible and especially William and Philip for their clarity.

I congratulate **Christian Wilson** our Director of Music for producing this excellent Virtual Music video available on our YouTube channel at https://youtu.be/amAJ_wzb-98. There is a vast array of musical styles from *Blow Blow the Winter*

Wind to a Florence & the Machine song, from drum improvisation to *De Nacht, Stabat Mater* to synthesizer and much more. Definitely worth a watch; I watched it twice.

I gate-crashed our BNC Managers' Meeting this week. It was good to hear that our College being compared very favourably with other employers in the way we communicate with staff and how creative people were in working from home. Various social events are being planned including coffee mornings, quizzes and book groups. Some of our students are putting together a murder mystery entitled "Who killed Principal Bowers?" Yikes!

I am becoming a junkie for webinars of all sorts during shutdown. I was delighted to see that **Alex Betts** our Senior Golding Fellow has started the Oxford Development talks series which feature our other Senior Golding Fellow **Masooda Bano** amongst others. I heard the first talk by Sabine Alkire on how Covid-19 will it affect the multidimensionally poor. This is in collaboration with BNC undergraduate **Mia Simovic (Geography, 2018)** who is President of the Oxford Society for International Development.

June 2020

It is great that we have been able to put on some of our regular events albeit in different and unaccustomed formats. These include virtual music, virtual chapel, Principal's Conversations and this blog. Apparently, there were some 40,000 Microsoft Teams meetings in the university as a whole in April alone. I wonder how much more difficult this time would have been say ten or even five years ago before decent video conferencing. We are using Zoom for social activities and Microsoft Teams for work.

The four BNC final year medical students (**James Maye, James Tizzard, Alanna Wall and Gautam Menon**) would normally be on elective, or pursuing studies into areas of particular medical interest at this stage in the course. I am delighted to say that instead they have all volunteered to start work as doctors early, where they are taking clinical responsibility for patient care (under supervision). They all appear to be thriving in their new roles, and are enjoying their new responsibilities!

The fourth and fifth year students similarly have sought opportunities to help in their local communities. **Ruby Lawrence** and **Jana Bourhill** are working in care homes, whilst **Imogen Jury, Natalie Maalouf** and **Sunya Aslam** are all working for local charities, helping to care for the vulnerable in the neighbourhood. A clap for all of them.

I have had time to tune into the Hay Virtual Festival to which we usually go. There have been some great talks including by three Brasenose alums/ex Fellows. I may not have got to them all but I did

see **Professor Sir Simon Schama CBE, Jessie Burton (English and Modern Languages, 2000)** and **Tim Harford OBE (PPE, 1992)**, who are all distinguished members of our BNC community.

The scenes in the USA are shocking. I was one of the authors of a letter to *The Guardian* which was signed by all of the Oxford Heads of Colleges. I am pleased that we have recently initiated a scholarship for Black and Ethnic Minority students in Criminal Justice. The two inaugural D.Phil. Criminology students next year are jointly-funded by Brasenose and the Law Faculty. The College has also fully funded a Masters in Education scholarship for Black UK graduates wishing to train to become teachers or who are established teachers with aspirations to take leadership roles in schools. We were also about to launch our Diversity Volunteers Network when the pandemic intervened.

The first ever Brasenose staff online Zoom quiz was held on Tuesday 2nd June, hosted by **James Hellyer (Accommodation Manager)** and **Henry Jestico (Academic Administrator)**. The quiz was won by the Development Office team with an impressive 27/30. We are hoping to make these a regular feature while lockdown is in place and most people are working from home. Test yourselves on the back cover of this edition! Like most of you I am sure, I have been joining various events by Microsoft Teams or Zoom. Our staff coffee morning was excellent and enables us to keep in touch and "see" people. I also joined the excellent Oxford Law Faculty event last week which attracted a massive viewership.

About 230 people from all over the world heard our second Principal's Conversation on Microsoft Teams. **Diane Coyle CBE (PPE, 1978)** is an Honorary Fellow, Bennett Professor of Public Policy at Cambridge and member of the Council of Economic Advisors. **Tim Harford OBE (PPE, 1992)** writes the outstanding column in the FT "Undercover Economist" and introduces *More or Less* on Radio 4.

We enjoyed our first online 'Think-In' on 25th June at 10pm UK time with our North American alumni. The nine panellists offered a range of views on politics, economics, education and culture in the time of the pandemic. A lively discussion covered all manner of topics including introverts during lockdown, the Black Lives Matter protests and the effect on US-China relations.

All online alumni event recordings can be viewed at <https://bit.ly/digimissit>.

Sorry to see that Cambridge won the boat race but it was only virtual after all...

Spotlight On: Brasenose Staff

One sunny afternoon, somewhere in the midst of lockdown, *Have I Got Nose for You* was born. Affectionately known as HIGNFY (with a silent N), the e-newsletter featured updates, photos and amusing anecdotes from Brasenose staff (think quizzes, cakes, and dubious home haircuts) and was regularly circulated to keep spirits raised and staff connected during the period when most were not able to go into College. Each edition highlighted a different BNC department, and some of these spotlights can be read below. A huge thank you to all staff who contributed to *Have I Got Nose for You*.



Chapel and Music

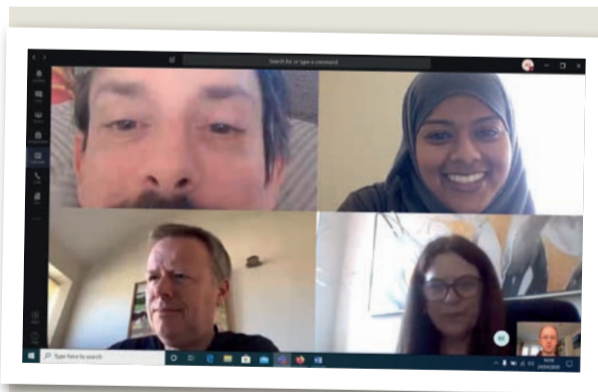
Before the lockdown, our wonderful Chaplain Julia thought YouTube was a brand of toothpaste... but in 0th week of Trinity Term she and Christian Wilson, Head of Music at Brasenose launched a channel for BNC Chapel and Music and the rest as they say is history. Virtual Chapel and Music has offered Brasenose ways of connecting and celebrating our community. Invitations have been issued to every member of College to participate in different ways either by creating audios or videos of music and readings of prayers or simply by watching at home.

Christian produces rehearsal videos for the choir to make individual audio recordings which are then processed and merged together using audio editing software. It's a time-consuming process, but the fruits we think are really worth it and the Chapel has, we suspect, been able to reach a much wider audience and congregation than perhaps it usually would. The YouTube channel has hosted College Prayers every Sunday night in term, some excellent BNC 'thoughts for the day' as well as terrific concerts with contributions from students, fellows and staff. All videos are available to view at: <https://bit.ly/bncchapelyoutube>

Christian has also been posting videos of 'Bach in Isolation' for piano to his own YouTube channel, recently completing the Goldberg Variations, all available to view at: <https://www.youtube.com/user/willisorganist/>

College Office

It has definitely been an interesting few months for the College Office! As well as adapting to new ways of working, we've also had to cope with new work, and lots of it. As well as setting up online teaching and collections, working out what's going to happen with exams and coursework and helping the welfare team stay in touch with students, the team have also been dealing with anxious applicants and working out how to manage outreach remotely. And of course Senior Tutor, Simon Smith has been overseeing all of it, and doing a lot more besides. Staying in touch with each other has taken place through daily WhatsApp conversations, lots of emails and Microsoft Teams chats, and weekly team meetings which have so far featured dogs, cats, children, cakes, gardens and strange clothing. We're definitely missing being in College but are coping with all the weirdness pretty well so far.



Top left to bottom right: Joe Organ, Schools Officer; Nazifa Hoque, Academic Assistant; Simon Smith, Senior Tutor; Karen Arnold, Graduate Administrator; and a slightly smaller scale Henry Jestico, Academic Administrator



Rob Walker, Maintenance, keeping the grounds of Old Quad up to scratch

Housekeeping

Housekeeping would like to say hello and stay safe! Hoping all our colleagues/students and their families are keeping safe and well. We are working hard with minimal staff to ensure all's safe and well for your return. It's been very strange arriving early and leaving later in the day to have no-one around. We will welcome you all back with open arms, we cannot wait to get back to normality. We are working with safe distancing and missing you all.

Editors Note: These reports reflect the situation during the lockdown at the time of original publication and may not reflect the current state of affairs

Human Resources

Working in HR during these unprecedented times has been challenging to say the least. Overnight, life as we knew it changed and we entered the uncharted waters of lockdown and the world of furlough!

HR professionals generally like policies, procedures and guidelines to work to/with, but for the first few weeks of lockdown it felt like the rule book had been ripped up. We had to quickly adapt our processes and ways of working, and discover new ways to work efficiently and effectively whilst continuing to deliver a professional service. These constant changes left HR practitioners and business leaders waiting for the next instalment to see if it filled the gaps or left us wanting more!

With so many challenging situations and decisions being made, I was involved in areas of development and strategy that I wouldn't normally be, so the learning opportunities were abundant.

Now work and home life has settled down and things are starting to feel more 'normal' and familiar. I fear though the Orchid sitting on my desk suffered greatly during the early weeks of lockdown by losing all its flowers. I am now gently coaxing it back to life by playing classical music and feeding it the all-important plant food. HR I can do, plants are very much another matter!



Paula Bracher, HR Adviser and Orchid Whisperer



Liz Kay, BNC Librarian, on her weekly visit to college

The Library

We may not have any students in the library at the moment, but since lockdown the library has still operated a service to students and academic staff. Although a huge amount of additional material has been made available online (free for a limited period) by publishers and through the efforts of the Bodleian electronic resources team, some books are just not available online. Also, some people simply find it incredibly difficult to read books online and do not have a printer at home.

However, I knew that we could and must do more to help our students in their quest for resources and information. To that end, each week since lockdown I have ordered books and had them sent directly to students at home and abroad. I have also been allowed into College once a week to issue and post books available in our library to students at their home addresses, and to make scans of chapters which land on the recipient's laptop within seconds of the scan being completed. Furthermore, to assist those students still living in college accommodation, mainly graduate students trying to write up or progress their research, I have been able to issue books and leave them with the porters for people to collect from the lodge.

All of the books that are finally returned to the library will be re-shelved... but not until they are out of book quarantine!

The Porters' Lodge

The Lodge continues to operate as usual to ensure that our students still in residence are safe and cared for. There are currently seven porters providing 24/7 cover. They are Omer, Mel, Ray, Bernard, Iain, Damien and Sean. As well as ensuring there is a reception service at the Lodge to deal with day to day issues, the team are regularly patrolling and carrying out security checks day and night across all four sites. They are doing a fantastic job and we would like to thank them for their hard work during this difficult time.

We are very much missing our students, who are the life of the College and the very reason why we are all here. We are looking forward to their return.

Everyone in the Lodge would like to wish our finalists good luck and best wishes for their finals this term.



Left to right: Porters Sean Byrne, Omer Tariq and Ray May manning the Lodge



BNC Staff Coffee Morning

BNC staff have maintained our strong community bond throughout lockdown with weekly Zoom coffee mornings. It has been wonderful to see so many smiling faces each week popping by to say hello and catch up. Many thanks to Paula Bracher and Revd Julia Baldwin for organising.

Top left to bottom right: Paula Bracher, HR; John-Paul Clough, Development Office; Martin Wiseman, Steward; James Fletcher, Development Office; Phil Parker, Bursar; Karen Arnold, College Office; George Balkwill, Development Office; Hattie Partington-Smyth, Development Office; John Kinsey, IT

BNC Students: Interviewed

By **Hattie Partington-Smyth, Development Officer (Annual Fund)**

One of the great pleasures of my job as a fundraiser for Brasenose is being able to work with BNC students during our annual telephone campaign or 'Telethon'. The Telethon usually takes place during 9th and 10th week of Hilary term, which you will realise means... the last two weeks in March! This year's campaign was sadly cancelled due to Covid-19 and the introduction of lockdown, with the students who had been recruited as callers unable to participate.

I got in touch with some of them in May 2020 to chat about their experiences of adapting to studying from home, how the College has supported them, and what they miss most about being away from BNC.

Emily Duchenne (Geography, 2018) and **Greg Simond (Medicine, 2019)** are at home with their families in the UK, whilst **Estella Kessler (DPhil, Classics)** and **Finley Bettsworth (Medicine, 2019)** are further afield, in Germany and the UAE respectively.

So tell me, how are you feeling about lockdown?

(GS) I'm currently in the countryside, surrounded by fields, which is nice because I can go out without worrying too much as there are so few people to distance from. I'm doing alright but really missing Oxford. Lockdown wasn't too bad at first – after a busy term of work, I usually quite enjoy doing very little for a few weeks to 'recover'. However, I only enjoy doing that for so long!

(FB) Being in the UAE has probably made this virtual Trinity term a little more complex than if I were in the UK, but I'm still really enjoying studying Medicine, albeit via the internet! The start of term has really brought some (much-needed!) structure to my life.

(EK) Personally, I don't mind the lockdown that much. Germany has been relatively lucky in being able to keep track of the situation, but life won't be back to normal for a few months. You can only enter shops and public transport with masks, so you can't really escape the topic unless you choose to stay home. My parents are happy for me to have come home to help with the gardening, so I am actually constantly busy studying in the morning and gardening in the afternoon. I celebrated my birthday recently and the fact that my good friend from school stopped by for a chat over the garden fence was definitely the best present on the day.



Greg Simond working hard from home!

How are you adapting to term starting and working remotely?

(ED) Doing geography means most of my resources can be found online, and I've adapted my dissertation project to use social media, so remote working isn't too challenging at the moment. It's more not having the highs that go with some of the more intense bits of Uni, like just chilling with friends in the sun that are difficult. My learning schedule is much the same – in fact, I'm probably getting more meetings in now that it's easy to reach everyone on Microsoft Teams!

(EK) I value face-to-face so much more than online, so it took me some time to adjust to the new ways of communicating. Luckily, I am on the committee of the HCR (The Graduate Common Room) and the fact that we needed to prepare before the start of term for events even, if they have to take place virtually, meant that I was forced to engage with the technology and the fact that life must go on. I am also teaching for the first time this term and it was particularly stressful not quite knowing how to

recreate the true tutorial experience, while never having given one in real life.

(GS) There's a lovely social element to attending lectures, as not only do I see friends from other colleges, but all of us medics walk there and back together every day. Having to go through lectures alone at home doesn't quite feel the same. Now that lectures are available online, I find myself spending much more time on them than I usually would: the pause button is just too tempting. Although it takes me longer, I end up with much better notes. I can't justify simply highlighting a few words on the lecture slides anymore!

What is your exam / tutorial / general learning schedule looking like at the moment?

(EK) There are definitely fewer seminars being offered at the moment, but I am attending an extracurricular class on the Rigveda given by the Oriental Institute, which always used to clash with other activities in previous years. I read Classics & Sanskrit for my undergraduate degree, so this

is a good way of keeping up my language skills. Otherwise, I have to teach on a few days, so am focussing on that for the moment.

(GS) Luckily (!), my exams haven't been cancelled and I'm still being given a lot of work, which is keeping me busy. First year medicine exams usually have two parts. Part A consists of multiple-choice questions and part B involves writing detailed essays. Our part B exams have been cancelled, whilst our part A are delayed until the start of the next academic year (or as soon thereafter as possible). Although the faculty cancelled our part B exams, our tutors at Brasenose have suggested that we still sit end of year essays in order to practice our essay-writing skills under exam conditions, which will be useful for the next few years.

What do you miss about College, or are most looking forward to when we all get to go back?

(ED) Missing friends is the main one, but I really miss the Porters' Lodge, and just walking around College in the sun, and seeing the city... I genuinely feel like I took so much for granted. The JCR is keeping very active on social media so it's nice to remember they still have university at the front of their minds.

(EK) The first time that I truly missed Oxford was on May Morning. Although this is my 7th year at Brasenose, I still spend a lot of time in College. What I probably miss most is coming in every morning for breakfast and sitting down and reading a newspaper. I think when I am able to come back I will indulge in even longer breakfast times (perhaps even getting up earlier?) and just savouring the moment in the beautiful dining hall before the busy day starts.

Trinity would of course be the term when one could finally move one's studies outside onto the



Estella Kessler's study companion, Babylon the cat

quads or sit down in the Botanical Gardens, so I think many students will be sad to miss out on that experience. Somehow it would have been more convenient for lockdown to have happened during Hilary Term – although then one would have missed out on many lovely dinners... I guess, every term not spent in Oxford is a great loss.

(FB) I didn't realise quite how much I miss the pre-tutorial information exchanges over lunch in Gerties (well, to be honest, I'm missing Gerties in general!) and I've been recently hit by sudden, and frankly inexplicable, pangs to craft a BOP costume.

I'm certainly looking forward to getting back to Brasenose; it's such a wonderful place to learn and socialise. However, I still get a little slice of College delivered to me once a week via the online yoga sessions that we've been running – I find it wonderful to pretend we are back in Lecture Room VII (where Yoga is usually held), even if it is just for an hour a week.

How has College supported you through this time?

(EK) Since I am part of the HCR committee I see how much work is being done behind the scenes. We have a weekly meeting with the Senior Tutor and the Tutor for Graduates, where I learnt how much effort College is putting into guaranteeing the same standards of teaching for students scattered across the UK and the world. For example, the IT office has lent out over 30 laptops to students who would now be without the right technical equipment. Personally, I have benefitted a lot from the librarians' work, the support from College really has been invaluable in these times. Brasenose has also waived or refunded students' accommodation charges, which we normally would have paid during Trinity term, even though many rooms still contain student belongings.

(GS) After the Telethon's cancellation, I stayed in College for a few days and was amazed by how supportive they were. I'd heard that other colleges were getting all of their students to leave, without necessarily considering their individual circumstances. Brasenose was very clear that they would remain open for those students who needed sanctuary, and that they would provide them with what they needed. The Welfare team circulated a questionnaire that aimed to identify students with academic or welfare issues, in order to support them in the best possible way.

The Covid-19 Response Appeal

The impacts of Covid-19 have been rapid and turbulent, disrupting the way that the College operates at all levels. It has been remarkable to see how well BNC has responded to what has been an extremely challenging period.

A few weeks into lockdown it became apparent that even during the crisis, many alumni and friends of Brasenose were keen to support students who found themselves in sudden or increased need as a result of the pandemic, and to give what they could to help enable them to study effectively throughout lockdown. In May 2020 we launched the BNC Covid-19 Response Appeal, to provide a platform for those who wished to give.

We are completely thrilled by the overwhelming level of support shown by our alumni community and it is a great testament to the love that you, our alumni and friends, have for BNC that in just three short months we have already raised over £100,000 for the appeal. It was of the utmost importance for the College that our students and academics were able to continue to work and study throughout the pandemic, with all the quality and substance of the Oxford experience – even if for most it was from a distance. We also committed to providing safe harbour for any student unable to return home, for whatever reason. We are proud to have remained a sanctuary for over 30

students. The money raised has helped achieve this, and will do so into the coming academic year.

As we begin to fully understand the financial impact on both the College and University as a whole, we must plan strategically and pragmatically for our future. The lockdown has resulted in losses to our income which are likely to continue through 2020/21. In order to sustain our academic excellence, secure the future for our staff and students, and mitigate potential longer-term risks, we need to take action now.

To quote the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Louise Richardson **'Our biggest single cost, and our most valuable asset, is our people.'**

There is still the opportunity to give for anyone who wishes to. A giving form has been included with this edition for your convenience. All aspects of the Annual Fund are being used to support Brasenose students through the ongoing difficulties of the pandemic. On behalf of the entire College community, Thank You.

Hattie Partington-Smyth, Development Officer (Annual Fund)

Principal's Conversations:

generously supported by Robert & Lynne Krainer

We are grateful to Robert and Lynne Krainer for their exceptional generosity in sponsoring the Principal's Conversations.

Since their inception, the Principal has enjoyed riveting conversations with, amongst others, current and former world leaders, authors and journalists, stars of stage and screen, political activists, economists and even a football manager.

Even during lockdown, audiences continue to be granted unique access to some of the world's most interesting and engaging people, many of them BNC's own.

Principal's Conversations are being held online until further notice. Information on upcoming events can be found in our e-newsletter and on the Brasenose Website.

Brasenose Knows...



We leave you with another brain-teaser from **Professor Konstantin Ardakov**, Tutorial Fellow in Mathematics at BNC. The answer will be published in the next issue, or you can email us at development.office@bnc.ox.ac.uk if you can't wait until then!

Question:

Let x, y, z be pairwise distinct integers. Show that $(x-y)^5 + (y-z)^5 + (z-x)^5$ is a multiple of $5(x-y)(y-z)(z-x)$.

And the answer is... Issue 28's answer was:

The factorisation $x^4 + 4y^4 = (x^2 + 2y^2 + 2xy)(x^2 + 2y^2 - 2xy)$ applied with $x=125$ and $y=4$ shows that $5^{12} + 2^{10}$ is composite.

Brasenose Quiz

As online quizzes became the 'new normal' during lockdown, Brasenose's own Henry Jestico (Academic Administrator) and James Hellyer (Accommodation Manager) decided to write and host the first BNC Staff Quiz on Zoom. It was a huge hit, so we thought you may like to test your own general knowledge (no cheating!) with a sample of the questions included. Submit your answers to development.office@bnc.ox.ac.uk. Answers will be in the next issue.



ROUND 1: Firsts

- Which film won the first Oscar for Best Animated Picture when it was introduced at the 74th ceremony in 2002?
- Who was the first person to win £1 million on the UK version of *Who Wants To Be A Millionaire*?
- Valentina Tereshkova was the first woman to do what in 1963?
- Lord Byron was the first person to be commemorated in what way?
- Nicholas Breakspeare was the first (and so far only) British person to do what?

ROUND 2: Lockdown

- Who played the title character in *The Mask*?
- The word quarantine comes from which language?
- Which song by The Police was the best-selling single in 1980?
- Which of these units of measurement is closest to 2m: a chain, a fathom, a furlong?
- The phrase 'to wash your hands of something', meaning to refuse to take responsibility, is inspired by which Biblical figure?

ROUND 3: Links

- Which Scottish actor starred as King Leonidas in the film *300*?
- Who wrote *Downton Abbey* and won an Oscar for *Gosford Park*?
- Who, famous for his "tramp" persona, was the first actor to grace the cover of *Time* magazine back in 1925?
- Which American composer, famous for writing the musical *Kiss Me, Kate* also composed such standards as *You Do Something To Me* & *I Get Kick Out Of You*?
- What is the link between questions 1-4?

Save the Date

Unfortunately due to the ongoing coronavirus restrictions, we have not yet been able to confirm any future 'in-person' BNC events. However, do keep checking our Event Calendar at www.bnc.ox.ac.uk/alumni/events for the latest online events.

Keep in Touch

Alumni Relations and Development Office
Brasenose College
Radcliffe Square
Oxford
OX1 4AJ

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

Join us on social media

- www.facebook.com/brasenosecollege
- www.twitter.com/BNC_members
- www.instagram.com/brasenosecollege

