It has been a pleasure to meet a wide variety of alumni across the college site. I have been inspired by the stories of going to press.

All details are correct at the time of going to press.
The Great War, the Caribbean, and the World

The commune of Marigot clings to Martinique’s north-eastern coast. Close-knit groups of sugar cane plantations, known in the French Caribbean as habitation, once clustered along the narrow strip of flat land which borders the Atlantic. One Friday in February 1917, around the start of the annual sugar harvest, Joseph Martiny and the other cutters at Habitation Changere suddenly stood down their tools, left the habitation, and stayed away from work the next day. That week, the same thing happened at neighbouring agencements César and Jean-Pain de-Sure. Charpentier’s manager, Joseph Lagarrigue de Mélicier, had an explanation. ‘I was told’, he reported, ‘that people were spreading a rumour that everyone there who had been employed to cut cane would be mobilised. Here, France had extended compulsory military service to its Caribbean colonies in 1915. During the First World War, the authorities had exempted some 40-50% of those called for examination not to attend, and for 80% of those who did to receive temporary or permanent exemptions on health grounds. A nineteen-year-old Martiny had been given a temporary exemption in June 1916 on account of his ‘insufficient physique’. It was not implausible to believe that the military authorities had come to see cutters’ long, arduous hours in the fields as proof of their hardiness. Martiny, however, also had personal reasons to be anxious. In October 1918, an older brother, Julien, had been killed in action at Belloy-en-Santerre on the Western Front.

In the Antilles, the war fell upon islands which had been in decline for some time. The French Caribbean’s lending fortunes owed much to the decline of its staple crop, sugar. Once the jewel in the imperial crown, Caribbean cane sugar had increasingly lost out to state-subsidised beet sugar from continental European powers like France and Germany. For islands which were essentially monocultures, entirely dependent on their exports of sugar and its by-products, the effects were devastating. During the 1890s, the area of land cultivated in cane in Martinique halved, the value of the island’s commerce plunged, and agricultural workers’ real wages plummeted to well below one franc per day. The war was the deus ex machina which promised to solve this seemingly insoluble problem. At a stroke, beet sugar’s heartlands in northern France became a morass of mud, blood, and barbed wire. At the same time, the state began to requisition vast quantities of Antillean rum, used as an industrial alcohol in manufacturing munitions. Mooring between a quarter and a half of the islands’ output each year, and carried out at irregular intervals well below market rate, requisitioning encouraged speculation, and so precipitous price rises. Adjusted for inflation, the unit price of rum on the French market rose by 800% between 1915 and 1919. A conflict to which Martinique and Guadeloupe were supposedly peripheral, then, revived the industries which together directly employed at least 60% of the islands’ workforce, and accounted for some 85% of their exports by value. Rum and sugar became nothing less than war industries. Economic mobilisation reshaped production patterns, such that the export basis of the islands’ economies shifted. Rum, now more profitable, overtook sugar as the islands’ chief export. Martinique’s rum exports increased by 42% between 1915 and 1917, while its sugar production almost halved. The number of distilleries, meanwhile, nearly doubled between 1915 and 1920, from 75 to 141 in Martinique and Guadeloupe. The majority of these new industrial operations were so-called distilleries agricoles: small to mid-sized, independent of the usines (sugar factories), and manufacturing rum using cane juice rather than molasses. The usines also poured more and more of their production into the merchant distilleries. And this huge expansion of the islands’ distilleries imported vast quantities of molasses to fuel their expanding production. These changes were incalculably political. Antillean papers took them in the ripping fields of cane which extended their reach over the landscape one more. They witnessed them in the evictions which followed, as habitation managers forced tenants off the land and replaced them with sugar estates. And they felt them in their pockets, as local food producers’ incomes halved, and imports grew scarcer and more expensive. In leaner times, most petits plantiers, agro- and cultural workers who owned or leased their own plot of land, would hire themselves to a local usine or habitation as wage labourers. Now, with cane fetching such high prices, many found that they no longer needed to take on this arduous and many believed, degrading work. Instead, they could make a living cultivating cane for the distilleries agricoles, most of which had no agricultural land of their own. The political and social dynamism of this shift was profound. For a cutter like Martiny, it meant independence from a plantation complex which perpetuated the inequalities of slavery. These workers had, one letter to Guadeloupe’s socialist daily Le Nouvelliste celebrated, been ‘liberated’ from the usine.

The politics of rum and sugar were tied to the politics of empire. As war industries, both were subject to state intervention to secure supplies and rationalise production. Above all, the French state sought to tip the balance back in favour of sugar. From October 1917, a raft of measures sought first to requisition all colonial rum at baseline prices, then to entire colonial rum altogether. Collectively, these measures threatened the very changes and improvements which had occurred in the islands which were essentially monocultures, especially that it pronounces the death of the ‘peripheries’. In this case, the habitations of Marigot.
The students are increasingly aware of what they are eating. The trend is towards healthy eating rather than quantity.

Could you tell us a bit about how you came into your current role and your vision for Corpus cuisine?

I arrived with the job title of Second Chef with a view to succeeding the then Manciple, Mike Cuman. At the time, it was a bit of a sideways step for me but I saw it as a way in to a much-coveted role – running a College kitchen. I worked with Mike for three years and am just coming to the end of my first year in charge.

It has been a challenge trying to change the team’s mindset and I have enjoyed putting my own stamp on things. My aim is for Corpus to have the best College kitchen in Oxford. There is a lot of competition amongst the College Chefs; many of us have Instagram accounts so that we can show what we are doing.

The kitchens have been completely renovated and re-equipped this year. New crockery has helped improve presentation. We have a Pressurised Bratt Pan and a Thermo Mix Heated Blender for making puree dishes. New crockery has helped improve presentation.

What particular improvements have worked well?

The new kitchen has provided us with equipment far superior to what we had before. We now have a Pressurised Bratt Pan and a Thermo Mix Heated Blender for making cream puree dishes. New crockery has helped improve presentation.

Could you talk about your approach to the kitchen and how you have changed it over the last year?

I have gradually changing the culture in the kitchen to one of innovation. I encourage my chefs to make suggestions and accommodate new ideas. My Second Chef does a lot of menu planning as well. One of the constraints of my job is that I have to spend more time in the office than I would like. The Second Chef is in the Office on Wednesdays so that I can cook – Wednesday is the night of one of the College Guest Nights.

What are the challenges of catering for such a wide range of events from student breakfasts to presidential dinners?

I particularly enjoy using the range of skills required when catering for the needs of every member of an Oxford College. Menu planning is key. For the student menu, the limitations are largely affordability, but it is not difficult to offset an expensive item on the menu against a less costly one.

It seems that over the past ten years there has been an increasing awareness of the need to cater for special diets. How has this affected your menu planning?

On one occasion last term, we had a formal hall attended by 84 people with 24 different dietary requirements. It is all about trying to condense those into two or three different dishes at any particular meal. The students are increasingly aware of what they are eating. The trend is towards healthy eating rather than quantity – we have just introduced fresh smoothies at breakfast.

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TORPIDS – 1883: Head of the River

Last summer, during the refurbishment of The Mitre on the High Street, a couple of oars were found lying under the floorboards. One belonged to Lincoln College, but the other commemorated Corpus as Head of the River at Torpids in 1883.

The crew were almost all sons of clergymen or teachers and all studied Classics or Law. However, although Robert Chomley, James Michell, Cyril Carter, Gerald Hornby and Leonard Fumeaux then became school masters, John Godley ended up as Under Secretary to the Government of the Punjab. Godfrey Mosley and Thomas Arkel became solicitors and John Mitchell became a Canon of Liverpool Cathedral. However, their lives were not all Victorian respectability. One seems to have been blackmailed over a relationship with a woman, another wrote books supporting women’s suffrage and a third translated French novels. There will be more information on the lives of this celebrated crew in the forthcoming Pelican Record.

Corpus Christi College Boat Club Captain’s Report – Torpid 1883

The last night of the races needs little description. The torpid rowed splendidly, in a manner worthy of their proud position. Having no wash to row in they gained about 87 lengths on B.N.C. and being thus sure of their place, they paddled tranquilly home.

We must conclude by again congratulating the torpid on a success which was as great as it was well merited. No crew ever worked harder to get together, or paid more attention to the coaching they received. We hope the example they set will not be easily forgotten.
Special Collections Centre

The College is pressing ahead with a much-changed design for its long-planned Special Collections Centre. Thanks to a £5 million gift from Michael Spencer (Physics, 1973), the largest in the College's history, Governing Body was able to give the project the green light at the beginning of Hilary Term.

Specialist library architects, Wright and Wright (whose previous work includes libraries at St John’s, Magdalen and Corpus Cambridge) were asked to come up with a scheme that minimised the impact on the College’s historic character, while delivering the highest standards of modern storage and reader space. A new façade will be created looking onto the College car park that will replace the existing twentieth-century garage and flat.

A new entrance to the enlarged library will be created at the current entrance to Staircase 6 (affording first floor access to the existing library for users with mobility needs). Three new general reading rooms will be created alongside a secure area where Corpus’s unique collection of manuscripts and early printed books can be read in ideal climatic and lighting conditions.

The new building will create 24 new reader spaces for Corpus members and four additional spaces within the Special Collections area for researchers. An additional 167m of shelving will be created for the storage of our manuscripts and early printed books. The relocation of books currently stored in the lower rooms in the old library will free these areas for use as high quality teaching space.

The biggest change to the previous scheme is that the new build is to be entirely above ground (rather than excavating below the car park and small garden). In addition, the Edwardian frontage to Staircase 6 will be retained. These measures have reduced costs by over 50%.

Commenting on the new project the President, Helen Moore, said, “I cannot express my thanks too warmly to Michael Spencer for his generosity in making this gift. It enables the College to realise our long-held dream of providing a suitable home for our remarkable historic collections. I am also grateful to all the other donors who have supported this project over the past few years. Our architects have produced a scheme worthy of the original vision of our Founder when he set out his plans for his new trilingual library five hundred years ago.”
In September 2019, my husband Hugh Boulter (CCC 1959, History) and I visited the Conservation Studio to see the work being carried out on four important books from the Corpus Library—it was hugely impressive. We have a mutual love of books and during fifty-one years of marriage, our collections have increased enormously and now we have a huge library. For my part, I studied Biological Sciences at the University of Birmingham and have maintained my interest in science, recently researching and writing about Charles Darwin, and in particular the classification of barnacles to which he devoted eight years of study prior to the publication of *The Origin of Species*.

The previous year I was elected the First Lady Master of a City of London Livery Company, the Clothworkers. In the lead up to the year I sat on the Clothworkers Conservation Committee and was an active trustee. During my year as Master we attended functions connected to the craft of finishing cloth as well as supporting many charities. We also arranged a visit for the Clothworkers Court and a lunch at Corpus for which thanks must go to Head of Alumni Relations, Sarah Salter.

In July 2018 at the end of my year in office, Hugh and I were invited to choose a charity to which a modest Clothworkers donation could be made. With our love of books in mind, my interest in botany and classification, and Hugh’s in history and theology, in which he decided in 1997 to study for a PhD at Bristol, we contacted Joanna Smelling, the Corpus Librarian, to identify a conservation project in the Library. She had the perfect suggestion: a project to conserve two early printed herbals, an Italian history volume with botanical specimens, and a 15th Century Vulgate Bible. Corpus is a founder member of the Oxford Conservation Consortium to which seventeen other Oxford colleges also belong, with Jane Eagan at its head. Maria Kalligerou, one of the eight conservators, was chosen to undertake the painstaking work on the conservation of these significant books from the Corpus Library.

The 15th Century Bible has a 16/17th Century leather binding which had become almost completely detached. This meant that it could not be safely opened; in such a condition, the wonderful work of the scribes’ handwritten text in Latin on vellum, with marginal illustrations, had become inaccessible. The Bible’s cover has staple marks providing evidence that it was once chained in the college library, as well as the remains of catches that once kept the volume closed. With the use of paper hinges and conservation quality cloth, the detached binding was carefully reattached to the spine while preserving the original sewing thread. It is now safe for the work to be consulted.

Two of the three other texts are botanical and contain pressed flowers or leaves; these pages required special conservation treatment to allow users to access them without the risk of damage. The most widely used botanical reference work for a hundred years before Linnaeus introduced the binomial classification system using morphology was the work of Rembert Dodoens (1517 to 1585). He published his first herbal in 1554, and throughout his life edited and extended it through thirteen editions in several languages. The Corpus copy was published in Latin in 1616 and was presented to the College by William Clayton in 1667. With each successive edition, Dodoens had refined the ordering of the plants so that by the time of the Latin translation of 1585 he had ordered his subjects into twenty-six groups, illustrated by 1,309 woodcuts on 900 pages. Dodoens’ work is forward-looking and interesting because it shows the gradual evolution of the classification of leaves and flowers from the alphabetical listing of names to categories based on structure and form.

The Corpus copy of this significant reference work has fine hand-painted woodcuts and, unusually, thirty-five botanical specimens inserted within its pages. Most of these were attached on the text-leaves with paper tabs, and for protected by hand-sewn pockets of archival tissue paper, each according to the size and shape of the specimen. The loose specimens remain in their original location while a detailed documentation sheet now provides guidelines for safe consultation of the volume with its plant insertions. All thirty-five of the leaves containing botanical specimens were then digitised, to provide further assistance for future users.

Readers consult many of the over one hundred medical texts William Creed left to the Corpus Library in 1711. Amongst them is a catalogue of the trees and plants of the Oxford physic garden at the time—the very beer garden outside the college that students would have gathered around in their spare time. The volume has an original early 18th Century binding and contains handwritten notes, presumed to be Creed’s own, referring to the structure of the plants listed, and the fly leaf lists no fewer than thirteen laurentian specimens he collected. The single botanical specimen in this book of the Campion family, has been beautifully preserved. Part of a large bequest from Henry Hare, Baron Coleraine, who died on 1749, is a history of Milan written in Italian. This volume had a large number of flower petals pressed between its pages which had caused staining and the petals themselves had become very fragile. Conservation of the pages and fixing of the petals will now enable scholars to consult the book.

Bespoke boxes of acid-free card have been made for extra storage protection and the books, their boxes and invaluable history will all sit in the air-conditioned College strong rooms. Both Hugh and I have found it a privilege and a joy to participate in this project.
Law

**Law Society Dinner**

The Frederick Pollock Law Society Day began with afternoon tea in the audiorium, giving old friends time to reunite and students and alumni the opportunity to get to know each other in an informal setting. It was a lovely to see students and alumni engaging so well, a wonderful example of the ever-thriving Corpus community.

This was followed by a Symposium on Truth in Criminal Law, chaired by Professor Liz Fisher. The panel comprising Alison Morgan (now QC), Edward Fitzgerald QC and Dr Matt Dyson all delivered insightful speeches on the subject. The discussion was then opened up to the room and insights into what truth is in criminal law were offered from professionals in areas across the field of law. One discussion about the practical and philosophical arguments of what truth is was particularly interesting.

After the symposium everyone moved to the Ramolids Room for drinks before convening in the Hall for the annual Law Society Dinner. The Dinner itself was peppered with stories from past and present Corpuscles. The evening was, for me at least, one to be treasured from my time at Oxford.

Rhiannon Ogden-Jones

Retiring President of the Law Society

Business and Finance

**Business and Finance Drinks**

This year’s Business and Finance Drinks, which took place on 23 May, was very generously hosted by Lord Justice Leveson. Over fifty Old Members networked over drinks and canapes, whilst enjoying views of the Thames through the Gothic windows.

Next year’s Drinks will be at Dechert’s London office near St Paul’s. If you work in business or finance and would like to join the group, please email development.office@ccc.ox.ac.uk

Nick Melhuish

**FROST SOCIETY LUNCH**

Named after Bishop Fox’s steward, who left the first legacy to the College, the Frost Society has been formed so that the College can acknowledge those who have let us know that they plan to leave a bequest to Corpus. Prior to returning to Oxford after a 27-year hiatus he worked as an investment manager for various companies on both coasts of the US and in Asia. Most recently he was Head of Global Equities at UBS and then Amundi. He serves on the Boards of a number of charities, including Trushthouse Charitable Foundation, a grant giving foundation focused on alleviating urban and rural deprivation where he chairs the Finance Committee and the London Clinic, a medical charity and private hospital where he serves as chair of the Audit and Risk Committee. He read Modern History at New College where he took a First in Final Honour Schools.

On the afternoon of Saturday 7 September, over 150 Old Members and their guests joined the President for sparkling wine and a delicious tea. The Quad had been specially decorated for the occasion with bunting cross-crossing above the tables and looping under the Library windows. This event is an opportunity for the College to thank those who have supported it over past years. This year, it also provided a specific opportunity to thank those who have let us know that they plan to leave a bequest to Corpus. Prior to returning to Oxford after a 27-year hiatus he worked as an investment manager for various companies on both coasts of the US and in Asia. Most recently he was Head of Global Equities at UBS and then Amundi. He serves on the Boards of a number of charities, including Trushthouse Charitable Foundation, a grant giving foundation focused on alleviating urban and rural deprivation where he chairs the Finance Committee and the London Clinic, a medical charity and private hospital where he serves as chair of the Audit and Risk Committee. He read Modern History at New College where he took a First in Final Honour Schools.

Nick says it’s been exciting to come back to Oxford after many years away and to get to know Corpus, a college I visited but did not know away and to get to know Corpus, a college I visited but did not know away and to get to know Corpus, a college I visited but did not know away and to get to know Corpus, a college I visited but did not know away. I was fortunate to be taught for two terms by James Howard-Johnston but this was really only my prior connection with the College. I have enjoyed investigating Corpus’s fascinating history; it has been a welcoming and friendly community to join and I have enjoyed getting to grips with a new and wide-ranging job. Of course, the focus is the financial health of the College and particularly the stewardship of the Endowment which is so critical to Corpus’s mission. But the Bursar is lucky enough to get involved in many different aspects of the College’s life, from governance to the exciting project we have to install an engraved window between the library and chapel to commemorate the Quincentenary. I wasn’t expecting to be discussing the merits of sixteenth-century Hebrew fonts and the problems of translation of biblical texts but it has been a great reminder of the richness of Oxford life.

The big projects we have in front of us are the Special Collections Centre and making sure that we are able to devote more significant resources to access and the student experience and I will be devoting considerable efforts to these over the coming year. I’ve also been lucky enough to be appointed Director of the Asset Management Masterclass Program at the Said Business School which will give me some exposure directly to Oxford graduate students and to try my hand at some practical teaching which I have not done before. Oxford and Corpus bring lots of new challenges which is very exciting.”

Nick Melhuish joined Corpus in September 2018 to take up the position of Bursar. Prior to returning to Oxford after a 27-year hiatus he worked as an investment manager for various companies on both coasts of the US and in Asia. Most recently he was Head of Global Equities at UBS and then Amundi. He serves on the Boards of a number of charities, including Trushthouse Charitable Foundation, a grant giving foundation focused on alleviating urban and rural deprivation where he chairs the Finance Committee and the London Clinic, a medical charity and private hospital where he serves as chair of the Audit and Risk Committee. He read Modern History at New College where he took a First in Final Honour Schools.

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Did you know that we regularly send out College news and invitations to events by email? Please be sure to let us have your current email address if you want to keep in touch.

Merchandise

These products are available through our website: www.ccc.ox.ac.uk/Merchandise

Expanding Horizons Scholars

The Expanding Horizons project was launched by the College in its Quincentenary year. It offers students the opportunity to work or volunteer in the USA or in a non-OECD country. The scheme, generously funded by alumni, is intended to be of broad educational value. This year’s scholars, pictured above, went to Albania, Madagascar, Lebanon, Ghana, Washington and New York.

Rugby Cuppers 2018/19

Corpus/Somerville Men’s Rugby Team has made massive progress over the last few years. The team started Michaelmas 2018 brimming with confidence and excitement. By the end of term they had finished second in the league, having missed out to Keble by only one point. Hilary saw another string of victories but, weakened by injury and illness, the team lost again to Keble 43-36. Fortunately, however, enough points had been earned to win the division and the title. The Cuppers’ Campaign proved more challenging but Corpus/Somerville managed to see off Balliol and Hertford and then in the semi-finals convincingly defeated St John’s/St Anne’s in front of a large crowd. With Corpus now in the first Cuppers’ Final since the 1950s, tension was very high. After a difficult first half, with Corpus/Somerville down 15-0 to St Edmund Hall, Corpus managed to fight back in the second half, but still lost 18-12 to a very strong Teddy’s side. Hopes are high though for winning next year’s title.

April 2020

Friday 17 April

Oxford University Intercollegiate Golf Tournament

The annual tournament at Frilford will be followed by dinner at Merton College. All golfers welcome. Contact sarah.salter@ccc.ox.ac.uk to secure your place.

May 2020

Saturday 30 May

Eights Week Lunch

Corpus rowers are going from strength to strength. Come and cheer them on!

June 2020

Friday 26 June

Gaudy for 2000-2003

A midsummer night’s dream. Invitations will be sent out in March.

Corpus Christi College

Alumni events 2020

For more information on all these events and to book please go to: www.ccc.ox.ac.uk/Events-Calendar

March 2020

Thursday 5 March

Corpus in New York

To mark his departure from Corpus, Nick Thorn will be hosting a Farewell Dinner at the Harvard Club. More details to follow.

Saturday 7 March

Corpus in San Francisco

Nick Thorn will also be hosting a Farewell Dinner in San Francisco. More details to follow.

Saturday 21 March

Gaudy for 1986-1990

A very special night is assured. Invitations will be issued in the New Year.