



# Sundial

04

**Research**

Gold and the 'Medieval':  
a comparative perspective

06

**College Faces**

Meet the new members  
of the Development Team

08

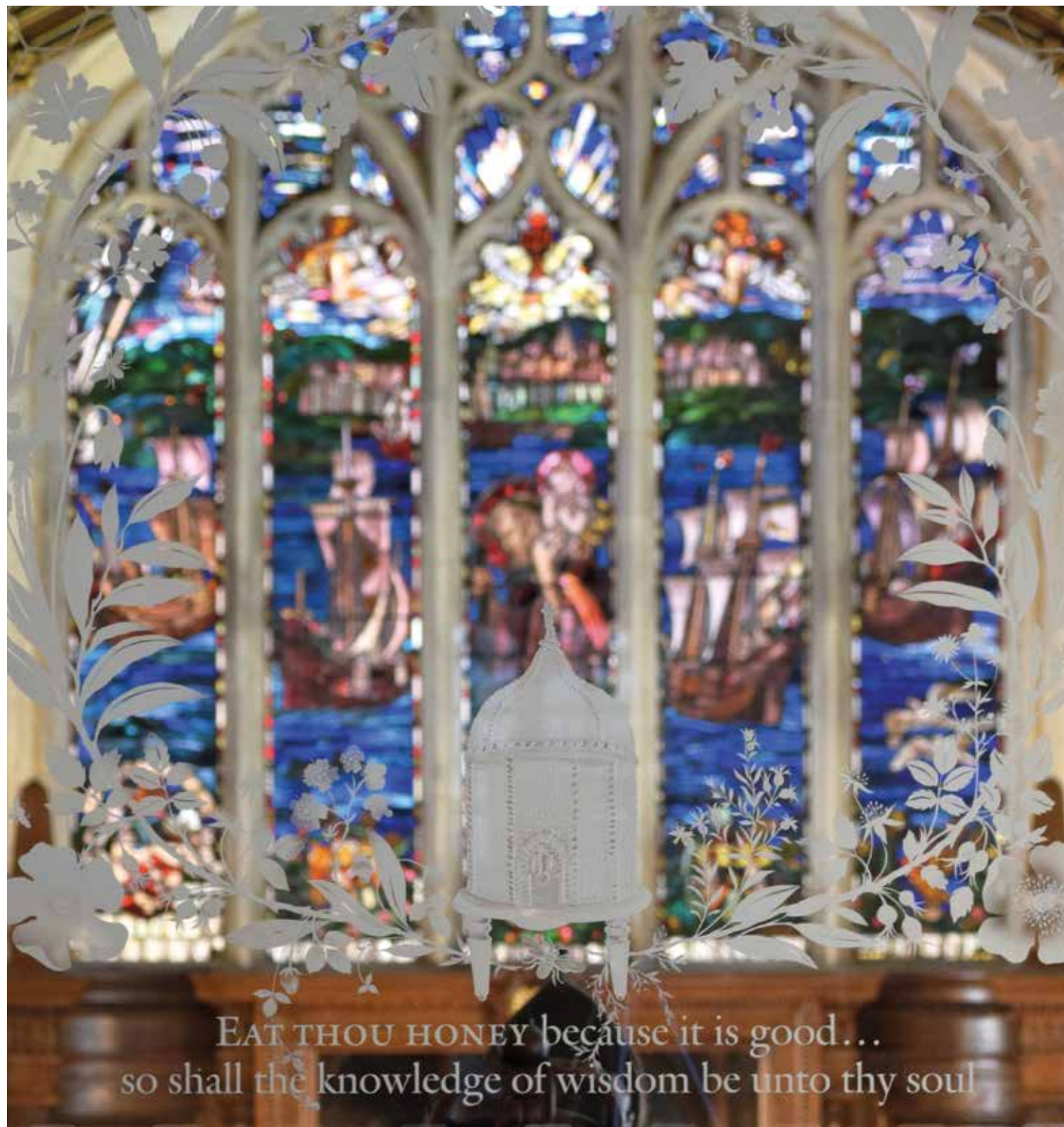
**The Big Picture**

Corpus women row  
their way to blades

12

**Access and Outreach**

Expanding outreach  
in a pandemic



EAT THOU HONEY because it is good...  
so shall the knowledge of wisdom be unto thy soul



# Welcome

From the President  
Dr Helen Moore



The front cover of this issue of the *Sundial* features the new window, engraved by the artist Sally Scott, that has been installed between the chapel and the library to commemorate the renovation of the chapel that took place as part of the Quincentenary in 2017. Alluding to the metaphor of the college as a hive of bees that was a favoured theme of our Founder, Bishop Fox, it symbolises our continuity of purpose as an academic institution and speaks across ages and cultures of the centrality of wisdom and knowledge to human endeavour.

For our Fellows and researchers, the long vacation that has just begun provides the time and opportunity to pursue this goal by thinking, writing and experimenting. In this issue, Mark Wrathall and Yusen Yu provide insights into their work: serendipitously, both make reference to the world of lived experience, and in particular the role played by the arts in that experience. Yusen’s article about his new project on the consumption of gold in late medieval Afro-Eurasia (pp.4-5) highlights the cultural ambivalence of gold through his discussion of the Iranian vogue for gold-flecked Chinese paper, and Mark describes his involvement with the Bombay Beach Biennale, an immersive art, music and philosophy event (p.3). ‘Lived experience’ also features in the work of Kathryn Stevens, our new Fellow in Ancient Greek History (p.7); her research embraces the intellectual and cultural history of ancient Greece and Mesopotamia and her next project will focus on the social history of the Seleucid empire.

Innovation is the life-blood of Oxford and its people, and on pp.14-15 you can read the fascinating story of how DPhil student and prizewinning poet Tara Lee turned her hand to the challenging task of creating linocut prints, a process in which she found, as she puts it, ‘plenty of room

for discovery’. Innovation coupled with dynamism has also been the hallmark of our Access and Outreach work over the past year, as revealed on p.13. We are delighted that the Derby Scholars Programme has been nominated for a National Education Opportunities Network (NEON) award; since the start of the pandemic over 45 virtual school sessions have been held, reaching more than 1400 students. As the stories of some of our first-generation students reveal, vision and determination are the hallmarks of success (pp.12-13) and the goal of our Access and Outreach work is to help as many young people as possible to achieve their ambitions.

The end of the academic year 2020-21 nonetheless marks the beginning of a new phase in the life of the Development Office at Corpus. We were delighted to welcome Liz Lyle, our new Development Director, in January, and last month she was joined by Begina Cox, who takes up the new role of Development Executive. Liz and Begina between them have extensive experience in the charity, fundraising and university sectors. We look forward to the time when we can resume in-person events and you can meet them face to face, but for the moment look to pp.6-7 to read more about their first impressions of Corpus and plans for the future.

Even though on occasion the days have seemed to pass both more slowly and more quickly during the Covid-19 pandemic, the rhythms of the academic year assert their own kind of order upon an intermittently disordered world. Much has changed over the past 16 months, and we have all made and encountered some valuable innovations that are no doubt here to stay. At the same time, the injunction engraved in our new window is a reminder of the continuity of human aspiration and experience across the centuries: ‘Eat thou honey because it is good’.

*Heidi Moore*

## Sundial

Issue 14  
July 2021



Editor  
Sara Watson  
above  
sara.watson@ccc.ox.ac.uk

©Corpus Christi College  
Oxford, 2021  
www.ccc.ox.ac.uk

Designed by  
www.pelotondesign.co.uk

Printed by  
Taylor Brothers Bristol Ltd

If you would prefer not to receive copies of this publication in future, please email  
development@ccc.ox.uk

All details are correct at the time of going to press.

COVER: The recently installed etched window between the Library and the Chapel. Photograph: Nick Read

## Profile

Professor Mark Wrathall  
Fellow and Tutor in Philosophy

Professor Mark Wrathall joined Corpus in 2017, and is Professor of Philosophy in the University. He is also editor of the *Pelican Record* and serves as the College’s Equality Fellow.

Professor Mark Wrathall works in the intersection of the phenomenological and existential traditions of philosophy. As its name suggests, existentialism’s main focus is human existence. Existentialists are particularly interested in understanding the non-rational dimensions of human life. To exist in the world is not just to think and reason, but also to act, to feel, to be passionately moved by the situations and people we encounter in the world. Dostoevsky’s *Underground Man* could have been composing the manifesto of existential philosophy when he wrote: “reason is a fine thing, there’s no doubt about it, but it’s only reason, and it satisfies only man’s rational faculty, whereas desire is a manifestation of all of life”. The descriptive method of phenomenology complements the areas of concern of existential philosophy. According to Edmund Husserl, founder of the twentieth-century phenomenological movement, the “battle cry” of the phenomenological movement is: “put an end to empty word analyses! We must question the things themselves. Back to experience, to intuition, which alone can give sense and rational legitimacy to our words.” The method of phenomenology, in other words, is designed to ground philosophical analysis in a direct, and first-personal experience of the subject matter in question.

For instance, Professor Wrathall has organised a series of conferences at Corpus on the philosophy of religion. The focus of these meetings, however, is not theology. They look rather at the way religious practices structure the practitioner’s experience of the world. The Arts are another rich source for phenomenological insight into different forms of human life. Professor Wrathall’s philosophical essays frequently draw on painting, film, and music. These interests have led him to collaborate on a variety of artistic projects, including working as a writer and philosophical consultant for documentary films like *Being in the World* and *Monogamish*. More recently, he has been heavily involved in the inception of the *Bombay Beach Biennale*, an immersive art, music, and philosophy

event that the *New York Times* has dubbed “the Anti-Burning Man.” Professor Wrathall’s more traditional scholarly projects include *The Cambridge Heidegger Lexicon*, a massive (900+ page) reference work that was published this year after more than a decade of research, writing, and editing. German philosopher Martin Heidegger (1889–1976) was a pivotal figure in existential phenomenology, and one of the most original and influential thinkers of the twentieth century. Heidegger’s accounts of human existence, temporality, ontology, and his critique of technology have inspired theorists in fields as diverse as theology, anthropology, sociology, psychology, political science and the humanities. But Heidegger’s writings are notoriously dense and his use of language is idiosyncratic – he redefines many key philosophical concepts in unusual ways, and coins a large number of neologisms. The *Lexicon* provides a comprehensive and accessible guide to Heidegger’s thought.



“The method of phenomenology is designed to ground philosophical analysis in a direct, and first-personal experience of the subject matter in question.”



Research

Dr Yusen Yu  
James Legge Memorial Junior Research Fellow  
in Comparative Aesthetics and Art History

GOLD & THE  
‘MEDIEVAL’: A  
COMPARATIVE  
PERSPECTIVE

Dr Yu is Corpus’s inaugural James Legge Junior Research Fellow in Comparative Aesthetics and Art History. The generous benefaction of local art collector, the late Mr Gordon Aldrick, allowed the College to establish a fitting memorial to James Legge (1815-1897), the University’s first Professor of Chinese and a Fellow of Corpus Christi.



THIS PAGE: Figure 1  
Simone Martini and Lippo Memmi,  
Annunciation, 1333.  
Florence, Uffizi Gallery.

Like other forms of historical periodisation, ‘medieval’ is not a neutral term. The concept becomes still more complex when applied to non-western contexts. My new research project on the consumption of gold in late ‘medieval’ Afro-Eurasia (the world – interconnected by trade – comprising Europe, the Mediterranean coast of Africa and the continent of Asia) seeks to tackle some facets of this problem. The case of gold illustrates the issues well: it is recognized as a universal equivalent, and we understand the function of gold coins as a medium of exchange. But this can be misleading. Gold was of varied significance as a coinage metal at different places across the world. Preliminary research indicates that only in the Mediterranean throughout the Middle Ages did gold coinage dominate the exchanges. Beyond the region of the old Roman empire, the general tendency was to use silver in currency. In Mongol Iran, for instance, most gold coins appear to have been produced as presentation-pieces for celebratory or donative purposes. China presents us with an empire in which gold rarely acted as a lynchpin of the monetary system. Indeed, circulated by weight, gold was treated as a commodity rather than a currency. My working hypothesis is based on an observation of the great Dutch medievalist Johan Huizinga (1872-1945) to the effect that in the Middle Ages “a sense of power... is more personal, and in order to be recognized, power must manifest itself through great display – of a large retinue of faithful followers, of the costly adornment and impressive appearance of the mighty...” (Huizinga, 2010, p.38). The splendour of gold certainly played a part in medieval extravagance, as in the gold ground of mosaics, manuscripts, and panels (figure 1). Like works produced in the Latin West, the presence of gold on the paper surface in Islamic Arab and Persian manuscripts played an essential role when it came to the experience of the viewer (figures 2 and 3): when gold is used, it represents the idealized, or otherworldly sphere of the sacred. On the other hand, costly adornment was certainly a means of achieving and maintaining both cultural reputation and political power in societies where almost only royal and princely members could afford the precious material. The aesthetic similarity of Islamic and Western European uses of gold in art is not surprising, as both traditions seemed to have looked to Byzantine origins. Byzantine gold-ground miniatures became available to Muslim painters when the Abbasids endeavoured to translate works of Hellenistic scholars and other secular Greek texts into Arabic between the tenth and thirteenth centuries, including the illustrated version of the famous *De Materia Medica* of Dioscorides, which later served as an artistic model (figure 2). In the meantime, by the twelfth century Byzantine influence had also made itself felt, for example, in the mosaics of Sicily and Venice. There are technical differences, of course. While Western artists applied gold in ultra-thin leaves, their Muslim counterparts always used gold paint. In the embellishment of Islamic manuscripts, the dazzling substance of gold decoration risked making it suspect from certain moral perspectives, especially in critiques of wealth or excess. Islamic polemics warned against accumulation of precious metals in particular, which ultimately amounts to pagan idolatry. Could this explain the waning of golden backgrounds in Islamic, especially Persian, art that seems to have started from the sixteenth century? There is an interesting comparative perspective here. In discussing the diminishing role of gold in late medieval and early Renaissance Italian painting, Michael Baxandall attributes it to a “selective inhibition about display” (Baxandall, 1972). To explain how tastes changed, he gives an example of how gilt fabrics were abandoned in fifteenth-

century western Europe for the restraint of black. In the east, the vogue in fifteenth-century Iran for Chinese paper enlivened with flecks of gold does seem like a “selective inhibition about display”. This kind of paper became newly available for Muslim patrons and artists through the diplomatic contacts with China. Called Zarafshan in Persian, literally ‘gold-sprinkling’, this coloured and gold-decorated paper was reserved for fixed genres of texts: the Qur’an, religious poetry, treatises on Islamic mysticism (figure 4). Patronage for such gold-decorated manuscripts was employed to evoke the distribution of money, as the same term Zarafshan also refers to royal benevolence (Yu, 2021). The materiality of gold in a manuscript therefore alludes to the patron’s largesse and piety. But compared with gold ground, sprinkled gold paper was already more ‘economical’. Greater changes were to come. Towards the end of the sixteenth century, a vogue for single-page paintings emerged in Persia. Often plainly decorated, the protagonists were no longer prophets, kings, and saints, but mystics, dandies, pilgrims. Some view this trend as the result of a boom in non-royal patrons, who could not afford the high cost of a complete, lavishly-decorated manuscript. This explanation is too superficial, but it brings to mind the shift in patronage from the Church to wealthy bankers and merchants like the Medici in late medieval Italy. The Church’s demand for religious subject matter, which provided the prime context for the use of gold, was replaced by human subjects and such themes as landscape. Consequently, styles changed as well in Iran. Figures become lifelike, even identifiable, and the brushstrokes feature great spontaneity (figure 5). More than ever, a painter’s style acted as a trademark. In the case of the Safavid painter Reza Abbasi (1565-1635), as his signature identifies him, his later style was characterised by earthier colours and coarser, heavier lines on paper. There was no lapis or gold. Here, we confront an essential question in art history, much broader than just the Western canon: What constituted value? Gold or the quality of brush-work? The expense of materials or the painter’s skilled hand? This question was debated by early Renaissance patrons and painters, when gold ground ceased to be popular. The value of materials and the esteem of artistry have not been linked by necessity since. Is that an issue as true of Persia, India or China as it is of the early Modern West?



LEFT: Figure 2  
Dioscorides and  
Students, 1229. Istanbul,  
Topkapı Museum  
Library, Ahmet III, 2127,  
fol. 1v-2r.



LEFT: Figure 3 The  
Prophet Muhammad,  
on Gabriel's shoulders,  
ascends through  
the seventh heaven,  
*Mirajnama* (Book of  
Ascension), ca. 1317–35.  
Istanbul, Topkapı  
Museum Library, H. 2154,  
fol. 42r.



LEFT: Figure 4 A Timurid  
or Aqquyunlu Qur’an,  
written on  
gold-sprinkled Chinese  
paper, 1400–1500.  
Private Collection.

RIGHT: Figure 5  
Reza Abbasi, The  
Mashhad pilgrim, 1598.  
Washington, D.C.,  
National Museum of  
Asian Art.





Meet the new members of the Development Team – Liz Lyle and Begina Cox

**Begina Cox** joined Corpus in mid-June as its Development Executive, a vital new role in the Development Team.

Begina is responsible for Corpus's regular giving programme, as monthly, quarterly and annual donations are particularly impactful in helping us to plan for the future. She is also working alongside Liz Lyle, the Development Director, develop partnerships with alumni and friends to secure major gifts, and to identify new funding opportunities for Corpus's strategic priorities.

Begina's career has revolved around connecting people and building relationships. Whilst studying for her postgraduate degree in Philosophy at the University of Szczecin, she served as President of the Academic Association of Philosophy. This included leading and organising student activities, interdisciplinary events, national and international conferences, and collaborating with local authorities and media. At the same time she also worked as a journalist for the Polish Press Agency and for the University of Szczecin's PR and Information office, reporting on major cultural events and local political affairs.

In 2014, she joined the Global Academic Division for the Journals and HE Departments at Oxford University Press. After three years, she made the move to the University's Development Office, joining as Project Officer within the International and Principal Gifts Team, with responsibility for establishing a major gifts fundraising strategy for engagement across China, Asia-Pacific countries, Scandinavia, and Africa.

In her subsequent roles as a Development Officer and then Acting Development Executive, she organised philanthropic events, oversaw regular giving campaigns, worked on outreach and access projects, and significant funding for the Humanities Division.

BELOW: Begina Cox (left), Liz Lyle (right)



Professor Kathryn Stevens  
Tutorial Fellow and Associate Professor  
of Ancient Greek History



**Liz Lyle** joined Corpus in January. We asked her about the opportunities, as well as challenges, she envisions as the College's new Development Director.

**What is it about Corpus that makes it an attractive place to work?**  
On a personal level, it's a real privilege to be able to work in these 500-year-old buildings with the academic community that my colleagues and I in the Development Team are here to support. It has been inspiring to have already met many Old Members, who have so generously shared their experiences of living and studying at Corpus. Our strong values of integrity, academic excellence and humility are a common thread through all the stories that I have had the honour to hear.

**What is the role of the Development Team here at Corpus?**  
At this year's Leavers' Reception, I was able to congratulate our finalists on making it through a challenging year. My overriding message to them was that they are and will always be a part of the Corpus community. It is the role of the Development Team to ensure that all our alumni feel a life-long connection to the College, wherever life takes them.

**What challenges face a Development Director in an Oxford College?**  
State support has fallen year on year and it is therefore the responsibility of colleges and the University to do more. The pandemic has also had a considerable impact on the College. The student experience has been affected, and untold pressures have been put on our student and academic community. Alumni events in College have been on hold for the last eighteen months. One positive legacy of this year is that our engagement with alumni has naturally moved more online, and as a result has increased in breadth, culminating last week with Old Members from all around the world watching the Summer Torpids from the 'virtual bank'.

**If there is one thing you would like Old Members to associate with their generous support, what would that be?**  
A positive impact – it is vitally important that our Old Members and friends are aware of the life-changing impact their support is having on our students and academics. Support can come in many forms, whether it is making a gift of any size, being an active member of one of our societies or committees, or leaving a legacy to the College and becoming a member of our Frost Society.

**What are the College's fundraising priorities?**  
Corpus was the first Renaissance institution in Oxford to pioneer humanist educational values and we remain academically strong in the fields of Medicine, Philosophy and Classics. However, the funding situation for postgraduates in the Humanities is a matter of continuing concern and ongoing strategic importance for the College's academic mission. Only 50% of our humanities postgraduates are fully or part funded. We would like to be able to offer more postgraduate scholarships and increase the number of bursaries available for students who encounter unexpected financial need.

Fundraising to support our access and outreach work is another central priority. I am proud that across the University we have a higher than average number of state school students at undergraduate level and that we have the second highest number of undergraduates from postcodes indicating areas of low progression to university. However, there is so much more we can do, and I hope you enjoy reading about some of our access initiatives on pages 12 and 13 of this magazine.

Kathryn Stevens arrived in Michaelmas 2020 as Tutorial Fellow in Ancient Greek History; she is also Associate Professor in the Faculty of Classics and Lecturer at Christ Church. She was previously a lecturer at Durham University, and has held postdoctoral fellowships at the University of Copenhagen and Trinity College, Cambridge; she completed her PhD at King's College, Cambridge.

Kathryn read Classics with Oriental Studies as an undergraduate at St John's College, Oxford, and is very happy to return to the University with a position at Corpus, where she had her first tutorial encounters with Hellenistic history – now her research specialism.

She says: "It is a powerful testament to the strength of community and intellectual exchange at Corpus that both are so vividly apparent despite social distancing, masks and the constraints of Teams and Zoom. Joining the College in 2020, I have been inspired not only by the deep commitment to intellectual inquiry for which Corpus is widely known, but by the immense kindness and thoughtfulness shown by students and colleagues as they have supported one another through this challenging time, and by their determination to keep alive the academic and social connections that make the College such a wonderful place. It is a great privilege to be here."

Kathryn's research is concerned with the intellectual and cultural histories of ancient Greece and Mesopotamia, and how the inhabitants of these regions made sense of the world and their place within it. Her recent work has focused on Greek and Babylonian scholarship in the period after Alexander the Great's conquests, exploring the complex interplay between political and intellectual developments in this time of transformation and arguing that meaningful similarities can be detected across cultural boundaries.

Her next project is a social history of Seleucid local elites, which brings together evidence from Asia Minor, the Levant, and Mesopotamia to reconstruct lived experiences of the Seleucid empire. Kathryn enjoys teaching across the full range of ancient Greek history for Corpus and Christ Church, from the eighth to the first century BC. She is delighted to be part of the vibrant Classics community at Corpus, with its long tradition of excellence in the study of the ancient world.



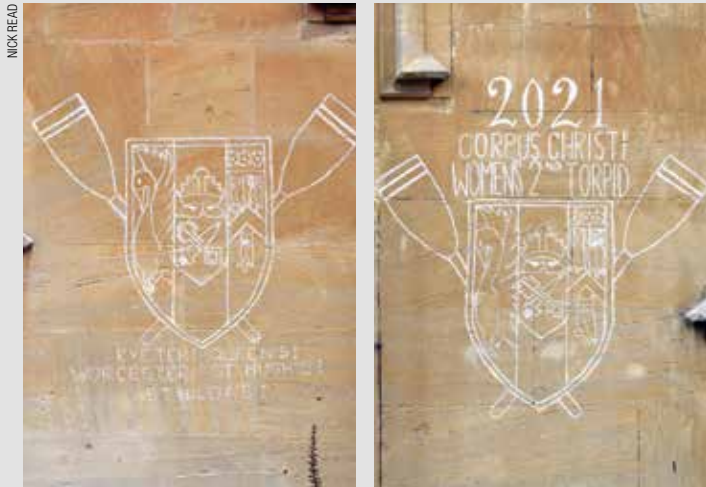
# The Big Picture

## Corpus women achieve double blades Rowing

For the first time in the College's history – we think – both women's crews achieved blades in the 2021 Summer Torpids. Bumping on every day of racing, W1 overcame Exeter, Worcester, Queen's, St Hugh's and St Hilda's. W2 recorded bumps on Christ Church, Worcester, Balliol and on the final day Linacre. Both move up a division and start next year's racing in Divisions III and V respectively. With Covid restrictions making it almost impossible for full eights to go on the river during Michaelmas and Hilary, the Corpus rowers had to do most of their training on land until the start of Trinity, when training on the river began in earnest, with rowers congregating at the Boat House every morning at 6.15am. The result was our teams were back to full fitness by Tuesday 8 June, the first day of Summer Torpids. Although it wasn't possible to watch in person this year, alumni and supporters of college rowing were able to support via a livestream. Those watching from the 'virtual bank' saw all the excitement as both W1 and W2 rowed to victory.

We would like to thank the six Old Members who have supported our rowers over the past two years. This year, M1 was racing in the 'Robert Newman', a gift from Mary Bywater Cross in memory of her late partner Professor Robert Newman (PPE, 1945).

W1 (RIGHT, TOP) and W2 (RIGHT, BELOW) returning victorious to the Boat House.





# The Corpus Papers 14

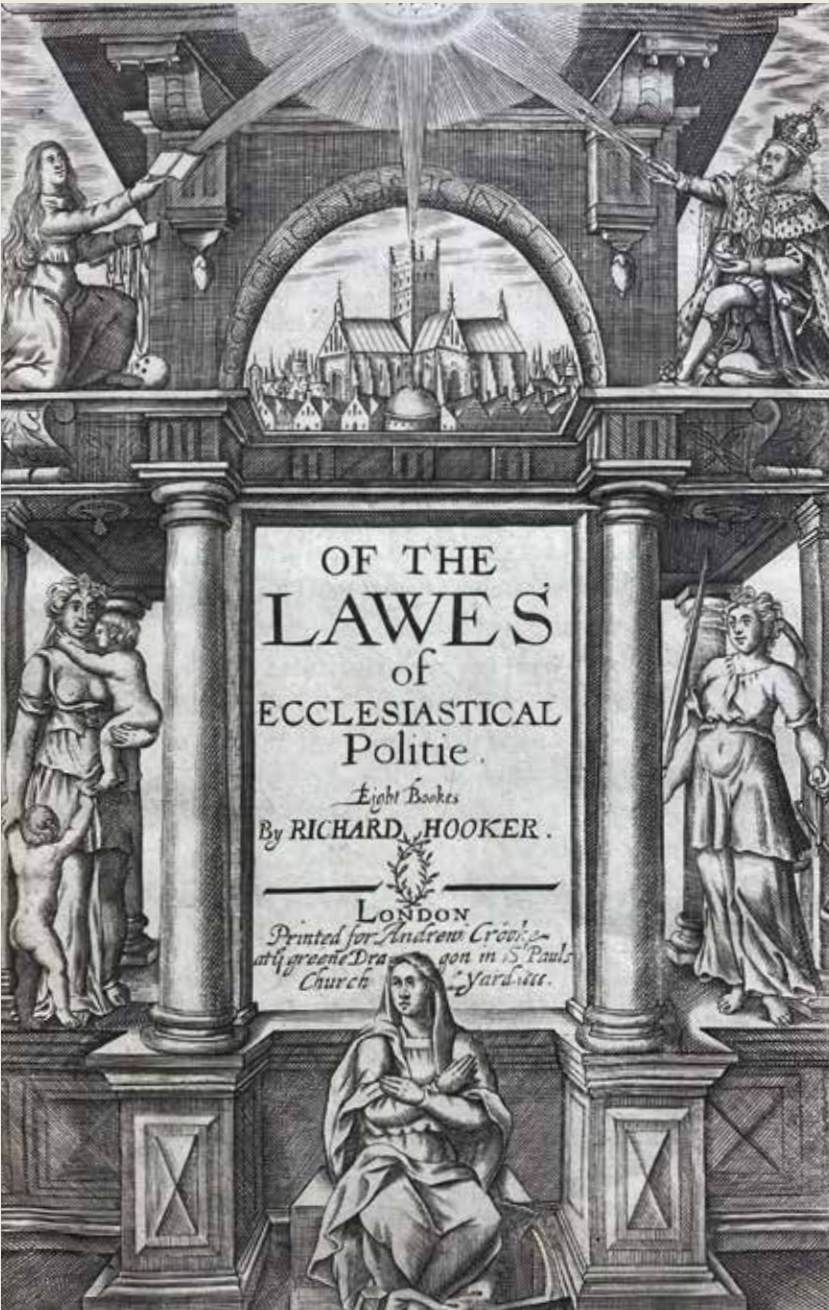
## WELCOMING ANOTHER EARLY HOOKER DONATION INTO THE FOLD

Sophie Floate,  
Antiquarian Cataloguer

The library was honoured to receive a gift from Richard Lofthouse recently. It is a second edition of Richard Hooker’s collected *Of the laws of ecclesiastical polity*, printed in 1622. This volume will fit very well in our Hooker collection and is particularly interesting because of the printed waste which has been used to line the binding. These sheets appear to have come from an Elizabethan statute attempting to regulate the use of various goods including honey (figure 1).

Richard Hooker was born in the Exeter area in 1554. He excelled at Exeter Grammar School and was helped to obtain a place at Corpus in 1569 by his uncle, John, who was a friend of Bishop John Jewel, himself a former student of Corpus in the 1540s. The curriculum at Corpus at this time was broadly humanist and by all accounts he studied widely, with music and poetry augmenting his main focus on theology. After Jewel’s death, Edwin Sandys, Bishop of London, became Richard’s patron and Sandys’ son, also named Edwin, became his pupil when he studied at Corpus in 1577. They became close friends and Sandys later subsidized the publication of the work for which Hooker was to become most famous, *Of the laws of ecclesiastical polity*. Only the first four books of the work were printed in Hooker’s lifetime, though they would subsequently be published in many editions over the following centuries, for Hooker died in 1600.

Hooker does not seem to have given any books to Corpus, nor any manuscript material. The only item we have in his hand is a copy of an anonymous pamphlet detailing Puritan objections to the *Laws* which has been heavily annotated by



Hooker but came to the Library after his death. Though Hooker apparently had a “magnificent library” (see Hooker’s entry in the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography) it is not known what happened to it. It is interesting to speculate whether he might have left his books to his widow, and perhaps intended them for the education of his daughters.

The Corpus Library holds at least 30 different titles by Hooker printed during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

OPPOSITE PAGE:  
Figure 2. K.1573 Ho.v,  
title page.  
BELOW LEFT:  
Figure 1. K.1573 Ho.kk,  
printed waste end paper.  
BELOW RIGHT:  
Figure 3. K.1573 Ho.m(1),  
title page.

These reflect the significant number of publications he produced during those years and are still present in many collections around the world. A search on the English Short Title Catalogue (ESTC) database produces 43 editions printed before 1800.

The majority of Hooker items in the Corpus library were given by Mark J. Simmonds in 1911. Simmonds was born in Lambeth in 1862 and matriculated at Balliol in 1880. He was Fellow and Librarian at St Augustine’s College (a missionary college) in Canterbury from 1886. In 1911 he wrote to the President of Corpus explaining that he had been collecting editions of Hooker’s *Of the laws of ecclesiastical polity*, saying: “I have now, I think, a complete set of those issued in the seventeenth century”, offering the set to the College as a fitting place for such a collection.

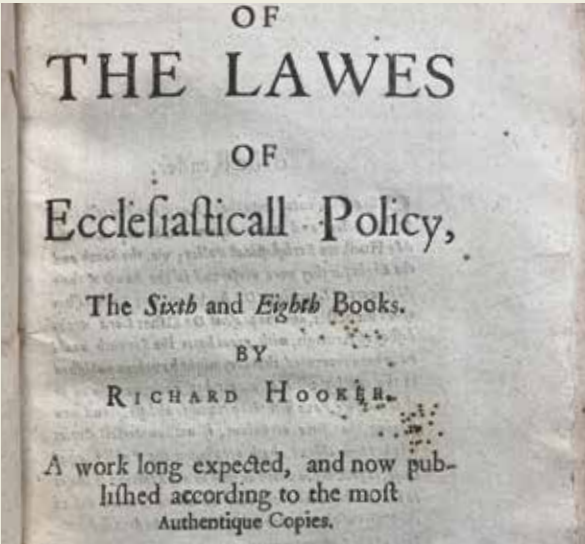
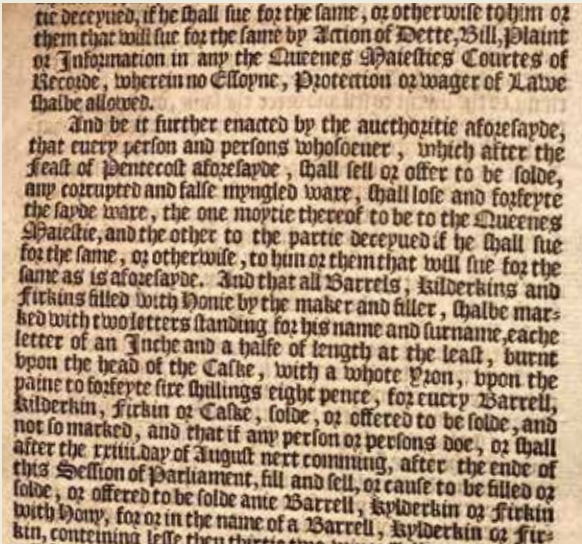
The donation included other works by Hooker, many published posthumously and consists of 24 individual works in total, printed during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, in a variety of bindings. The provenance trail showing how some of the copies ended up in Simmonds’ collection is recorded in the catalogue records (on the university library catalogue SOLO) as well as copy-specific information about the books such as the bindings and any imperfections. For example, several of these had been purchased from the sale of Francis Bedford’s books in March 1884. Bedford

Dr Richard Lofthouse was at Corpus as a Teaching Fellow in Modern History (2000-2004) and is now editor of the University magazine *QUAD*.

was the leading bookbinder of his time and the books he left were mainly bound by him. The Hooker items were first bought by William Buckley, Professor of Anglo-Saxon at Oxford, a great book collector himself, and subsequently purchased by Simmonds.

The Simmonds donation augmented Corpus’s collection of works by Hooker significantly. Copies had been given by other Corpus alumni; for example, a copy of the *Laws* was given by Daniel Agas who had graduated BA from Corpus in 1656; it is the 1666 folio edition with engraved title page (figure 2). Agas was rector at Lawford in Essex and gave at least 20 other books to Corpus, mostly during the 1660s. Another copy of the *Laws*, containing the sixth to eighth books and printed in 1651 (a much more modestly printed book than the copy given by Agas) (figure 3) was given by Joshua Reynolds, admitted scholar to Corpus in 1693, uncle and godfather to the famous painter of the same name. It is quarto-sized, with a plain parchment binding. This book has not survived in many copies – only ten others are listed in the ESTC. Reynolds gave at least 50 books to Corpus, though we are uncovering more as we progress with the cataloguing of the early printed books.

This latest addition to the collection will enable comparisons to be made between the different editions, and different owners, all of which helps to shed light on the transmission and ownership of this important work.





# Access & Outreach

Access

## First in the family

Corpus students past and present reflect on being the first in their families to go to university.

**Kwabena Osei** (History and Politics)  
As the child of a single mum who had very little formal education, being the first in my family to go to university, let alone Oxford, was much more of a culture shock than I anticipated. Despite this, Corpus was so welcoming, and over time I have become more comfortable with Oxford life. I chose to study History and Politics because I was intrigued by how historical events, especially in modern history, can be explained and justified through political theory.

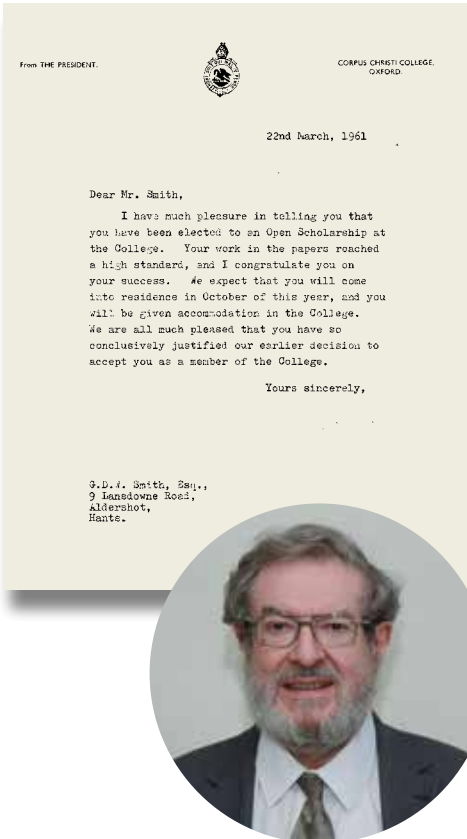
**Matilda Pratt** (Law)  
Being the first in my family to study at university meant that I had no external opinions or views imposed on me; this has allowed me to develop an organic and personal university experience of my own. My family have been deeply supportive of me and we have all enjoyed discovering the Oxford traditions. I have always been interested in a legal career. The turning point was meeting a barrister at a careers event I attended when I was eleven; she even let me try on her wig! I immediately felt that my personality and strong-willed nature could be applied to a career in Law.

**Taslima Sheikh** (Classics)  
As a first-generation student, it was guaranteed that my journey to Oxford would not be easy. Not only was I applying as a ‘minority,’ but I was applying for possibly the most stereotypically elite subject.  
There were times when I considered switching or did not believe in my application, but that did not stop me from applying! The first piece of advice I received was to make sure I loved my subject enough to get through the workload. As a Muslim student in Oxford, I was not sure how I would fit in. I need not have worried. Corpus and my tutors have been kind and accommodating towards my religious requirements.

**Pauline Sienniak** (Classical Archaeology and Ancient History)  
Being the first person in my family to go to university has been interesting and exciting, but also slightly confusing. I think, in comparison to some other students, I really didn’t know what to expect and I found my first few weeks slightly overwhelming. I was inspired to study CAAH after a trip to Greece with my school; I quickly realised that I loved Greek vase painting and sculpture and so Classical Archaeology was the perfect fit for me!



NICK READ



**Honorary Fellow Professor George Smith** (Metallurgy, 1961)  
Typical of the responses from the dozen colleges I approached in 1959, at the start of my upper Sixth Form year, including one from the President of Corpus, telling me that the only route for potential science entrants to the College was via the Scholarship Examination. No one from my family had been to university anywhere. No one from my school had applied to Oxford within living memory. The school did not, at that time, provide the coaching needed for the Scholarship Examination. It was all very discouraging.  
In the Summer of 1960, I obtained a decent set of A- and S-levels. My school decided I was their best chance of breaking into the Oxford system. They took a huge risk. I became the Third Year Sixth Form, with individual tuition in all main subjects. I wrote more letters to colleges. Finally, a breakthrough: one college (Corpus) offered me an interview for a place, without further examination.  
On 28 October, I had interviews with tutors Robert Gasser (Chemistry), Ronald Hill (Physics), with President Hardie and finally with Senior Tutor Frank Lepper. A key issue was that I wanted to read Metallurgy, a new and obscure subject, now called Materials Science, for which the College did not have a tutor. Why not Chemistry or Physics? The issue was finally resolved when Frank Lepper noticed I had obtained a higher mark in O-level Latin than in any scientific subject. He said that if I was that good at Latin, then I was an intelligent enough man to know my own mind, and he would not challenge my decision further. (A quintessentially Corpus perspective, surely?)  
That was it. Corpus had taken a risk. The College had given me my chance in life. I will always be grateful.

Outreach

## EXPANDING OUTREACH IN A PANDEMIC

The global pandemic has challenged Corpus to develop new ways to continue Bishop Fox’s legacy. The focus has been on raising our profile with those who might not be considering an application to Corpus or Oxford.



NICK READ

Before the first lockdown in Hilary 2020, the Outreach office at Corpus was the usual hive of activity. Suddenly, and ahead of two scheduled events with prospective students, the full consequences of the pandemic became clear. In one moment, all in-person outreach events were suspended indefinitely and Corpus outreach moved to working from home.  
We were lucky that we had used Microsoft Teams for some remote interviews during the December 2019 admissions round. The College had also spent considerable effort preparing a new online portal. So, we were well placed to adapt in-person presentations and events to an online format. Our trial academic sessions with already registered students received overwhelmingly positive feedback; prospective students were keen to access support and maintain contact virtually.  
With our access partners from the University of Derby, we rescheduled the Derby Scholars Programme. Derby Scholars targets disadvantaged students who live in Derby City. Our remote sessions were with the Year 12 and Year 9 cohorts, giving information and advice about Oxbridge, academic skills, virtual visits and the admissions process.  
In July the University hosted its first virtual Open Day. New films were made. Existing photographs and old footage were hastily combined with the new clips to create three new videos. During the summer Open Days, attendees from all over the world answered our polls and sent us over 700 questions. We were delighted that Corpus was the fourth busiest college over the two-day event!  
During outreach sessions, online virtual tours showing prospective students around the college site and Q&A sessions led by our student ambassadors resonated with prospective students. Our first remote online summer school, as part of the North West Science Network, received over 170 applications, the highest since it began in 2017.  
Since the start of the pandemic we have held over 45 virtual school sessions, reaching over 1400 students, many more than we would have been able to accommodate for in-person visits. However, visits to Oxford will always be a key element in outreach. Enabling prospective students to feel what it might really be like to study here inspires them in a way that is hard to recreate in a virtual space. While we look forward to hosting in-person visits to Corpus again, our minds are also focussed on how we can move successfully towards a new hybrid model for outreach.

ABOVE: The Outreach and Admissions Team: Professor Robin Murphy, Mrs Katherine Baysan and Miss Laura Jackson.

### Key initiatives



**North West Science Network**  
virtual workshops, online twilight lectures, over 170 applications for the annual summer school.

**The Derby Scholars Programme**  
aims to raise aspirations and demystify Oxbridge, nominated for the National Education Opportunities Network (NEON) Widening Access Partnership Award.

**Regional school visits**  
virtual presentations and online tours, support during school closures, over 1400 pupils reached.



➤ **Tara Lee's** set of four linocuts will include views of the Front Quad, the Cloister, the Fellows Building and Merton Street.

Linocuts

IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF WILLIAM BLAKE

Over the last year, DPhil student Tara Lee has been working to produce a four-piece set of linocut prints of various college scenes. These prints aim to capture Corpus Christi's timeless beauty in classic black and white. They will soon be available for sale as postcards and as limited-edition prints via the merchandise page on the College website.



"But first the notion that man has a body distinct from his soul, is to be expunged; this I shall do, by printing in the infernal method, by corrosives, which in Hell are salutary and medicinal, melting apparent surfaces away, and displaying the infinite which was hid." William Blake, *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*.

From cobble stones to roof tiles, from the leaves of a bamboo plant to the gleam on a golden pelican, it has been immensely satisfying for me to work to reproduce the beautiful details that can be found around the college I have the privilege to call home. I usually begin with a fresh piece of linoleum, smooth as tarmac, and flexible enough that my engraving tool will cut into it without much pressure. I have a vision of what this piece of pale grey material could become, knowing that the material will have a say in the process as well.

With fineliner pen in hand, I sketch the outlines of my design, remembering to work in reverse, before laying down areas of shadow with washes of watered-down ink. Once I am happy with my loose plan, I am ready to begin carving, starting on the largest areas of white before attempting the finer detail. The work is

always improvisational. I think of it as sculpting in light. Each cut, bold or delicate, precise or impressionistic, marks where light reflects off a surface. Every cut is a decision made in the moment. There is little room for error, but plenty of room for discovery. Eventually the image emerges. I make several proofs, making small adjustments after each, before the piece is deemed done.



It's a delicious process, carving out pieces and slivers of light. In doing so I have sought to live out a certain artistic ideal, one in which concept and execution are involved in a curious feedback loop as the work unfolds moment by moment before my eyes.

William Blake was my introduction to printmaking. Writing on his etching techniques in my Master's thesis, I found myself aching to experience the artform at first-hand. Blake considered it the printmaker's task to reveal the visionary image which was hidden beneath the placid surface of the metal plate. However, his actual work was the vibrant product of spontaneity. According to the scholar Joseph Viscomi, instead of meticulously tracing a text and design which had been worked out in advance, Blake usually created the work directly on the plate based on loose preliminary drafts. Invention and execution were closely coupled in Blake's work as creative thinking occurred on the copper plate.

For me, linocut printing has indeed proven itself salutary, medicinal, in a time when many working environments, especially in the academic world, emphasise cerebral premeditation at the expense of intuitive experience, intimately and corporeally lived.

Library/Chapel

A certain bee garden

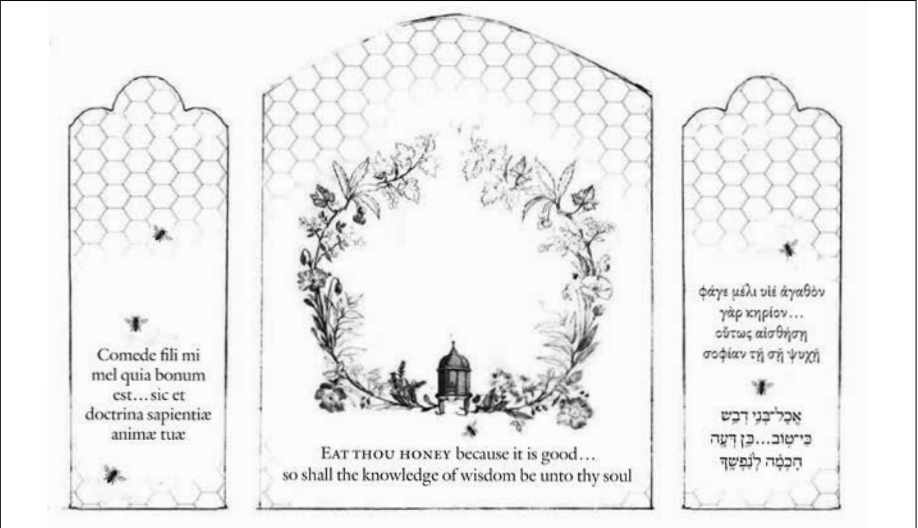
The Chaplain Dr Judith Maltby describes the thought processes which led to the design of the etched window between the Library and the Chapel.

"We, therefore, Richard Fox, by Divine Providence Bishop of Winchester ... have founded, reared, and constructed, in the University of Oxford, out of the means which God of his bounty have bestowed on us, a certain bee garden, which we have named the College of Corpus Christi, wherein scholars, like ingenious bees, are by day and night to make wax to the honour of God, and honey, dropping sweetness, to the profit of themselves and of all Christians."

Bishop Fox's foundation statutes for Corpus Christi abound in horticultural imagery. Its lecturers are to be 'herbalists', whose careful planting will ensure that the college nourishes 'ingenious bees' to make wax and honey. For many years now, at the annual service of Evensong for Commemoration of Benefactors, the Lesson from the Hebrew Bible has been taken from the Book of Proverbs (24.3-6, 13-14), to reflect Fox's metaphor of his college. The author of Proverbs tells us that what really builds a house is 'wisdom' and its foundation is 'understanding'. Proverbs encourages the young person to 'eat honey' – as honey is sweet to the tongue, 'so shall the knowledge of wisdom be unto thy soul'. In discussion with the artist, Sally Scott, we wanted a text and a design which reflected Fox's humanist educational values and his playful image of the college as a bee garden. The window is also the final piece in the major refurbishment of the Chapel completed in 2016. Fox joined the Library and the Chapel of his College at the hip, an unusual arrangement in Oxford colleges, which gives more insight into his educational and formational values.

By taking a text from the Hebrew Bible, it has allowed the window to capture the tri-lingual (and later quad-lingual) nature of Corpus' early scholarly contribution. Two years after Corpus' foundation, Erasmus wrote to President Claymond, predicting that 'more men will be drawn to Oxford by the spectacle of that library rich in the three tongues', housing not only Latin books, but Greek and Hebrew as well – educationally progressive by the standards of the day and making Corpus the first renaissance college in Oxford. By choosing an appropriate text from the Hebrew bible, it could also be rendered in Latin from the Vulgate and in Greek from the Greek Septuagint.

But the text is also rendered in the English of the Authorized Version or King James Bible, reflecting Corpus' profound contribution to the famous translation of the Bible published in 1611. President John Rainolds (1549-1607) was a renowned Hebrew scholar as well as every bit the ferocious puritan you might think he was by looking at his memorial in the Chapel. Nonetheless, even his theological opponents (and he had plenty) respected his great learning. Although he did not live to see the project completed, it was Rainolds speaking for the puritan party at the Hampton Court Conference in 1604, who convinced the newly arrived James VI of Scotland, now James I of England, that a new translation of the Bible, informed by developments in scholarship, was urgently needed. Through Rainolds and his successor as President, John Spencer, Corpus played a key role in the production of the Authorized Version. Not bad for 'a certain bee garden': 'Eat thou honey because it is good ... so shall the knowledge of wisdom be unto thy soul'.



Fundraising

REMOTE WORKING FUND TO THE NOT-AT-ALL VIRTUAL RESCUE

When lockdown was introduced in March 2020, our students were faced with the prospect of having to study remotely at home for the whole of the Trinity Term instead of returning to Oxford to complete the academic year.

Those with laptops or home wifi unable to cope with the demands of online teaching, or who had difficulty finding quiet places to study, struggled.

Thanks to the generosity of 15 Old Members and the College's Covid-19 Fund, Corpus was able to create a Remote Working Fund to help. A total of £24,127 was eventually shared among 140 students enabling them to purchase desks, chairs, noise-cancelling headphones, laptops and monitors.

In October 2020, an additional Fund was set up specifically for this year's Freshers, not all of whom had the resources to study online. As a result of this Freshers' Online Working Fund, the College was able to share a further £5,524 amongst 18 new undergraduates.

On behalf of all the beneficiaries, from whom many messages of thanks have been received, the College would like to thank the alumni who provided generous support at a time of such sudden and unexpected need.



# Listing

► 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.

## Demystifying Oxbridge



Tom Flatters

Young people who are talented, work hard, and persevere should all receive equality of opportunity when it comes to Oxbridge applications – regardless of other factors. Without equal access to university education, brilliant minds will go unnoticed.

The Oxbridge application process can be pretty confusing, especially for those who don't have access to help and advice. It saddens me to recall classmates (far more intelligent than myself) who didn't apply to or rejected interviews at Oxbridge owing to preconceptions of these mysterious institutions.

Before arriving at Oxford for my first term, I had started to collaborate on a project aimed at providing information to prospective Oxbridge applicants. Over the course of my first year at Corpus, the project morphed and pivoted until it finally united with InsideUni, a student-led, non-profit project, launched by a small Cambridge team in Michaelmas 2018.

My Oxford peers and I joined the InsideUni team in Michaelmas 2019 and helped to produce a platform to demystify the process for Oxbridge hopefuls. With help from nearly 2,000 Oxbridge student contributors, we have created free, detailed online guides offering insider tips about each Oxbridge course and how to apply successfully. We also host Q&A virtual events which shed light on life at Oxbridge and the application process, with applicants with protected characteristics or from low-income backgrounds offered extra support. Most importantly, the website has published students' real-life accounts of their admissions interviews at the different colleges and for each subject. This includes not only the kinds of questions they were asked by interviewers and the students' good and bad responses, but also how they prepared and what they wish they had known beforehand. All the content published meets editorial guidelines developed with Oxbridge admissions tutors.

In my role as Technical Team Leader, I have produced high-quality code, worked with new software packages, and managed a team of developers. Over the last few years, it has been exciting (if sometimes daunting) to see the project develop. At the time of writing, InsideUni has grown to an organisation of nearly fifty volunteers, with over 3,000 contributors and 50,000 users across the globe.

Our biggest problem is publicising the project to those who need it most. To do this, we make extensive use of social media and collaborate with schools and colleges. We hope soon that the average school student's perception will be of a not-so-scary Oxford University with its not-so-complicated application process.

## Reimagining the forgotten women of Pompeii

Elodie Harper

**Alumna Elodie Harper (English, 1998) explains how her historical fiction debut *The Wolf Den* was inspired by the many themes she discussed in her tutorials about women, women's history, power and who gets to tell the story.**

One of my strongest memories of studying at Corpus, is sitting in the Bodleian Library for the first time and looking round at the frescoes on the walls. My initial feeling was awe: I had never studied in a building so old or magnificent. The second was a sense that I did not fully belong: every single face on the wall was male. This feeling only deepened in my first year of undergraduate study, when I could count the number of women authors I studied on one hand. I loved being at Corpus, and on a personal level was made to feel welcome. But I felt largely alienated from the works I studied.

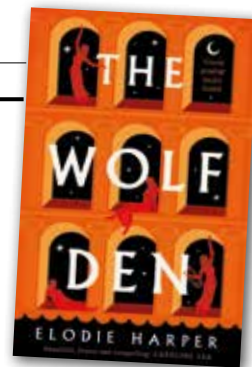
This changed after I began having tutorials with Dr Helen Moore. I discovered – and it felt like a revelation – that women had *always* been writing. I could go far back into the medieval era and hear female voices and I could take Feminist thinkers and critics with me to accompany my reading of texts by men. This made a huge difference not only to my study of literature but also my outlook on life.

It was years later that I started to think more about all this in relation to Latin authors. I had taken the option of continuing my Latin studies in my first year at Corpus, and have always loved the Roman world. With retellings of Greek mythology becoming popular, I wondered what it might be like to focus on the lives of ordinary women. I decided to write about the *lupanar* (or brothel) of Pompeii partly because it seemed in so many ways to be the least likely setting for a Feminist reimagining. I wanted to write a story which might make people look at something they thought they knew, in a different light.

*The Wolf Den* is set in 74 AD, in a Pompeii without reference to Vesuvius. The *lupanar* (which in Latin means both 'brothel' and 'wolf den') is recognisably the building you can visit as a tourist. There's the narrow corridor, the five cells with their stone beds and the erotic frescoes above the doorways. The surviving graffiti is mainly from customers, but sometimes we hear from the women. There's Beronice, Cressa and the forceful Victoria, who refers to herself as *Victoria Victrix*.

In trying to paint a picture of who the women might have been, I didn't want to focus primarily on the fact they were prostituted. We know they sold sex – but what about the rest of their lives? It's a fundamental human emotion to want better for yourself and to strive to find happiness wherever you can. I didn't think this need would be different at the *lupanar*, even if the women's hopes and expectations were of their era.

In telling their stories I relied heavily on the texts of their time, and the evidence of their town, but I found all of these familiar things can look so very different when seen from a woman's point of view.



### Publication

## The flipbook e-Pelican Record is here

Building on last year's re-design, the *Pelican Record* 2020 is now available as an online flipbook. With its easy page-turning and larger text, it's as close to the printed publication as a screen will allow. In order to open your copy, go to the *Pelican Record* and

*Sundial* page in the alumni section on the College website [www.ccc.ox.ac.uk](http://www.ccc.ox.ac.uk) and click on its front cover.

As always, we like to include your news. Please email [sara.watson@ccc.ox.ac.uk](mailto:sara.watson@ccc.ox.ac.uk) if you have anything you would like to share with your Corpus contemporaries.

