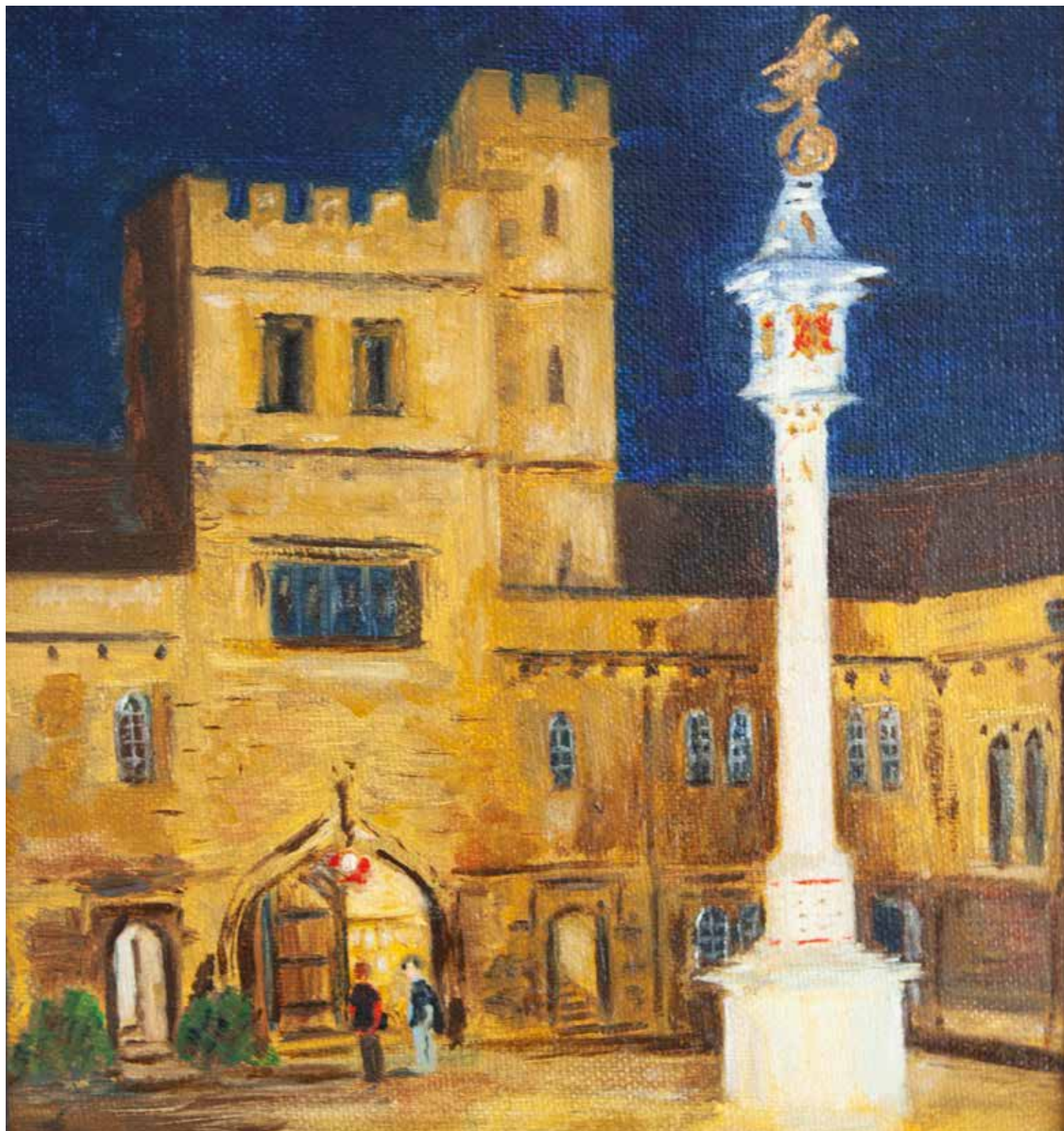




# Sundial

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# Welcome

## From the President Professor Helen Moore



This edition of the *Sundial* wings its way to you from an Oxford bathed in sunshine that has seen, at long last, the return of many of the aspects of Trinity term that make it the most charming period of the Oxford year. Even the exam season this term had an air of relief as well as expectation, with the reinstatement of in-person exams for many Finalists and others. Those graduating from three-year courses this summer are the generation who were locked down in March of their first year, an experience that seems both long ago and only yesterday. We are all delighted for them that in their final term they were free of restrictions and able to socialise and work without the burden of pandemic regulations. Whilst being grateful for the convenience offered by technology over the past two years, and the way in which it helped us to continue so much of our academic activity, tutors and students are all agreed that there is no substitute for in-person learning and the dynamic conversations that characterise life in Oxford. As you will see from our 'College Faces' feature on pp. 10-11, philosophers have always been amongst Oxford's most enthusiastic conversationalists, and the newly-formed Corpus Philosophy Society is indicative of the enthusiasm with which our restored three-dimensional and sociable academic life has been re-embraced after the past two years.

The class of 2022 goes out into an unpredictable world, and they carry with them our best wishes and admiration. Some of them will be heading into teaching, and it is a pleasure to celebrate the anniversary of Teach First, the educational charity that has been placing talented graduates into some of the country's most challenging schools for twenty years now. As CEO Russell Hobby (1990) notes, some 750 of those former students have been from Oxford and many have built careers in teaching.

A selection of our Corpus 'Teach Firsters' share their own stories and love of teaching on pp. 6-7.

We celebrated a different kind of anniversary at the end of term, marking the arrival of John Watts as Fellow and Tutor in History 25 years ago. A warm and witty colleague, tutor and friend, John has devoted his career to prising apart the political complexities of the late Middle Ages, and he shares insights from his latest project on the Wars of the Roses on pp. 4-5. A new arrival is Susanna Dunachie, Professor of Infectious Diseases, whom we are delighted to welcome – fresh from her experiences advising the University on its response to Covid-19 – as the latest addition to our strong tradition of medical research and teaching at Corpus. A medical theme is also taken up in the latest instalment of the 'Corpus Papers' on pp. 12-13, as Huntington Library Exchange Fellow Dr Meagan S. Allen explores some of the diverse range of uses to which alchemy was put as revealed by items from our significant holdings of medieval alchemical manuscripts originally from the collection of Dr John Dee (1527-1608), astrologer to Elizabeth I.

Little did I think when writing the introduction to last January's *Sundial* that war in Europe would have returned by the time of the next issue. But so it has, with all its attendant griefs and anxieties. As a diverse and international community committed to the values of freedom and peace, we deplore the Russian aggression perpetrated in Ukraine and stand with our colleagues and friends across Europe in supporting those who suffer and reiterating our collective determination as universities to uphold peaceful debate, democratic values, the rule of law and human rights.

*Helen Moore*

## Sundial

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COVER: The Sundial in the Quad, painted by Gwyolydd O'Brien, mother of Richard O'Brien (PPE, 1969).

## Profile

## Development & Alumni Relations Meet your Development Team

We exist to foster life-long relations with and amongst the Corpus community of alumni and friends, helping you to stay in touch with the College and with each other through events and communications. We also raise funds to enable the College to meet its strategic priorities. Your generosity has enabled the Corpus community of learning to flourish, with the highest of intellectual ambitions, nurturing the most talented and enthusiastic students, regardless of their background. The College is, and will always remain grateful for your support, in every form this may take. We are also always delighted to hear from our alumni, so please get in touch, and share any ideas you may have in support of our aims. We can be reached by emailing [development@ccc.ox.ac.uk](mailto:development@ccc.ox.ac.uk).

**Liz Lyle**  
**Development Director**

It's a privilege to lead the Development Team, having joined Corpus last year as Development Director. My focus is primarily on major gifts whilst providing overall strategic direction for all activity undertaken by the Team. My career has spanned both the private and voluntary sectors and I have an MSc in Development Management from the Open University, as well as a Professional Postgraduate Diploma in Marketing from the Chartered Institute of Marketing. After six years at American Express, in 2007 I took my marketing expertise to a local charitable organisation in Mumbai, India, spending two years working with Voluntary Service Overseas. Since returning to the UK in 2009, I have worked in high-value fundraising for both Oxfam and more recently Marie Curie. I'm thrilled that I now have the opportunity to bring that experience to Corpus.

**Begina Cox**  
**Development Executive**

I joined Corpus a year ago as Development Executive. I play an integral role in the strategic planning and execution of regular and major fundraising campaigns. I oversee legacies fundraising, create fundraising materials, prepare content for the College's social media channels, and develop and create the College branded designs. My career has centred around connecting people and building relationships, spanning sixteen years of working with members of the academic and non-academic HE community. Before joining Corpus, I worked in the University's Development Office, initially as a Project Officer within the International and Principal Gifts Team and subsequently as a Development Officer and then Acting Development Executive. On a personal note, I recently founded a start-up which focuses on igniting female empowerment and offering a consulting service supporting female-led transformative projects.

**Martha Baskerville**  
**Donor Relations and Events Executive**

I joined the Development Team as Donor Relations and Events Executive in January. I have over seven years' experience working for the University. My interest in building relationships with alumni was kindled as a student telethon caller at Keble. After graduating with a degree in Theology, I began my career as an Outreach Officer at St Hilda's, seeing at first hand the powerful impact that alumni donations can make on improving access to the University. I then trained as an Event Manager at the Ashmolean before re-joining my alma mater as Alumni Relations Officer. My primary role was to project manage the College's 150th anniversary events programme. This had been due to take place in 2020 but was sadly cancelled owing to the pandemic. I then worked for a year at an educational social enterprise leading its People Success Strategy, but my heart was in Oxford so I was delighted when I was invited to join Corpus this year.



ABOVE, CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT TO RIGHT:  
Liz Lyle, Sara Watson, Begina Cox, Martha Baskerville and Sarah Davies

**Sara Watson**  
**PA to the President**

I joined Corpus in January 2014. My role as PA to the President aligns with my communications role in the Development Team. I am editor of the *Sundial* magazine, an assistant editor of the *Pelican Record* and write the e-Newsletters, which land in your inboxes every few months. I began my career in publishing, joining a small art book publisher after St Andrews University, where I read French and German. I then moved into magazines and worked for the Chartered Institute of Building as Editor of Journals before spending 18 years working in boarding prep schools, initially as a teacher and boarding housemistress and then in the headmaster's office. I particularly enjoy Corpus's strong sense of community, encompassing academics, staff, students and alumni.

**Sarah Davies**  
**Development Officer**

I joined Corpus just over a month ago, having previously worked at Lady Margaret Hall. Within the Development Team, I run the joint inbox, so am the first point of contact for queries, requests, or comments. I can also be found at events, helping Martha to keep everything running smoothly. Before entering the world of work, I studied Mathematics at Keble. In my free time I sing in choirs, and given that Oxford has one of the highest densities of choirs in the country, it seemed as good a place as any to start my career. During my undergraduate study at Keble I really enjoyed working on the Telethon Campaign, connecting with alumni from across the generations and hearing their stories. After such a good experience, it was almost natural that I followed the well-trodden path into college development offices. Seeing the positive effect funding can have on students' lives makes all the hard work worthwhile, and it is wonderful to have the opportunity to meet so many interesting members of the alumni community.



Research

Professor John Watts  
Fellow and Tutor, Professor of Late Medieval History

# Re-thinking The Wars of the Roses

Professor Watts’s main interest as a historian lies in the nature and workings of power, looking particularly at what might be called political structures – institutions, practices, ideas and languages – and their influence on individuals and groups. Most of his published work deals with English political life in the later middle ages.

The later middle ages are one of the more colourful periods of history, evoked by the early twentieth-century Dutch historian, Johann Huizinga, by the mingled smell of blood and roses. ‘When the world was half a thousand years younger all events had much sharper outlines than now,’ he wrote. ‘The distance between sadness and joy, between good and bad fortune, seemed to be much greater than for us; every experience had that degree of directness and absoluteness that joy and sadness still have in the mind of a child’. Huizinga’s words are beguiling, and his famous 1919 book, long translated into English as *The Waning of the Middle Ages*, but now captured more accurately as the *Autumntide (Herfsttij) of the Middle Ages*, is a beautiful piece of cultural analysis, focused on the art, culture and social mores of the lands of the dukes of Burgundy in the fifteenth century, and influenced by the latest anthropological ideas of the time. Its images of over-ripeness, violence and high emotion influenced generations of historians across Europe, and merged in Britain with the disapproving legacy of the Victorians: ‘the middle ages passed away with Richard III,’ wrote J. D. Gairdner in 1898. ‘Their order had long been breaking-down, their violence and lawlessness increasing’. To the great medieval historian, Bishop Stubbs, ‘this was a worn out, helpless age’ – ‘weak as is the fourteenth century, the fifteenth is weaker still, more futile, more bloody, more immoral’.

I have spent most of my career as a historian working on this period, and my aim – like that of most other professional historians of the period – has been to try to understand it in less damning and overheated ways, to take its people seriously, and, above all, to look at their actions in a context set not just by the styles and manners of the era, but also by its ideas and its

political, cultural and social institutions. Seen from these broader perspectives, it looks a lot less violent and irrational, and – in certain respects, at least – a lot more like the world we live in today.

In the last year, I have been working on a short book on the Wars of the Roses, most of which I gave as a lecture series in Dublin last March. This long period of political insecurity, punctuated by risings, demonstrations, battles and usurpations, running from the 1450s to the turn of the sixteenth century, is a classic example of the gap between the way the period has been seen and the way it is coming to be understood. When we hear about the Wars of the Roses, we think of Shakespeare, Machiavelli, and *Game of Thrones* (all closely related, in fact) – of Richard III and the Princes in the Tower, of Warwick the Kingmaker switching sides to attack his one-time Yorkist allies, of Henry Tudor struggling against pretenders cynically launched into England by the nation’s enemies. So far back do these stories and images stretch that they have the ring of truth about them, but in fact the chronicle writers of the 1470s and 80s, who laid the foundations for the works of Polydore Vergil, Thomas More, Holinshed and Shakespeare, and for much modern historiography, borrowed much of their interpretation of events from the despairing narratives of the fall of the Roman Republic. The tales of ambition, trickery and intrigue that colour our sense of the fifteenth-century civil wars were derived from an utterly different time – and indeed from the moral and political anxieties and educational programmes of that different time – and if we want to understand the Wars, we need to start in a completely different place.

➤ This year Professor Watts celebrates his 25th anniversary as a Corpus Fellow and Tutor.

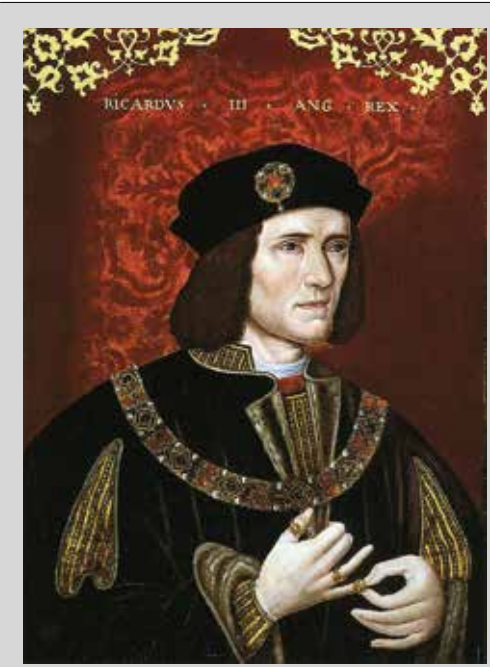


FIGURE 1: A late sixteenth-century portrait of Richard III; National Portrait Gallery, London




FIGURE 2: Henry VIII's childhood copy of Cicero's *De Officiis* By Marcus Tullius Cicero, c. 1500 – Washington, Folger Shakespeare Library Digital Image Collection. Note the handwriting at the bottom: 'Thys boke is myne, Prynce Henry'

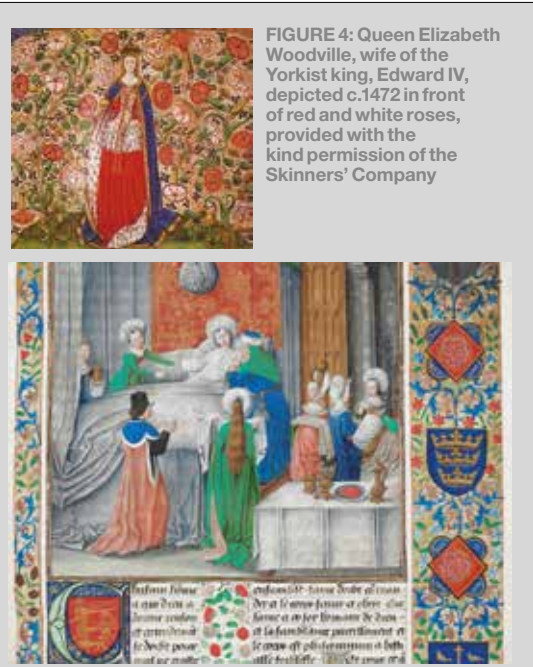


FIGURE 3: The red and white roses that decorate the borders of one of Edward IV's fancy books, produced for the king in Burgundy in the 1470s: [http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=royal\\_ms\\_17\\_f\\_ii\\_fs001r](http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=royal_ms_17_f_ii_fs001r) (Royal MS 17 F II, fo. 9r)

FIGURE 4: Queen Elizabeth Woodville, wife of the Yorkist king, Edward IV, depicted c.1472 in front of red and white roses, provided with the kind permission of the Skinners' Company

As a number of historians have noted, later medieval England was governed by a political system, which combined the authority of a king with the social power of lords and communities, with an extensive system of representation – through parliament, manor courts, advice and petitioning, demonstrations and so on – and with the relatively routine operation of laws and institutions. It was a system that delivered remarkably effective governance when all parts were in harmony, but which blew apart when the royal regime lost public confidence. Government that did not plausibly promote the common weal – defend the realm, protect justice and order, maintain a reasonable burden of taxation – provoked public reaction, from MPs, popular rebels and ultimately magnates. But reactions of this kind could all too easily destroy the authority through which the realm was governed, creating a near-unmanageable ‘collective action problem’ as weakened kings and usurpers, on the one hand, and critics compromised by allegations of treason, on the other, struggled to create sufficiently powerful coalitions to be able to rule effectively. These were the basic conditions of the Wars of the Roses – not a struggle of contending dynasties (in fact, the various rulers of the period sought to draw everyone into their orbit, and borrowed each other’s dynastic markers: see figures 3 and 4), but something like a Hobbesian state of nature, in which none of the usual means of authority were fully available. Under such circumstances, trust was in short supply, calculation was necessary, and no-one was fully reliable – small wonder the period was so full of bloodshed and betrayal.

Looking at the Wars as a systemic breakdown – and not the first in medieval England: something rather similar had happened between the 1370s and the 1410s – frees us to think in new ways, to appreciate the interdependence of political actions, and to offer a less personalised, less purposive, and more wide-ranging account of events. In my lectures, I touched on three other large-scale influences on the period. One is the dynamic of reform, a programme of political recovery which was, in most of its features, shared by all the contending politicians of the era, and which laid the foundations on which the Tudor monarchy and the Reformation of the Church were built. Another is the set of social changes unleashed by the Black Death and the shift of the industrial economy from wool to cloth: these developments produced a much more mobile and assertive peasantry, resistant to arbitrary surplus extraction, whether from lords or taxes, and available for political action to promote the common weal. A third is the complicated geopolitical setting of the British Isles and north-western Europe, where the assertions of the historically-powerful English crown had left a messy legacy of half-completed conquests, while the first great age of diplomacy offered new possibilities to its many enemies. Placed in these wider optics, the fifteenth-century civil wars look less like a mass of romantic but incomprehensible details, and more like the alarming politics of our own times. The fifteenth century and the twenty-first are different, of course, but, much as historians must acknowledge the pastness of the past, we’re not doing our job if we don’t open up comparisons.



Education special



# Teach first

**Russell Hobby (PPE, 1990) was awarded a CBE for services to education in the 2022 New Year Honours list. He joined the Teach First charity as chief executive in September 2017 after leading the NAHT school leaders’ union for most of the last decade.**

A student who is eligible for free school meals – a simple measure of childhood poverty – will be, on average, eighteen months behind their more affluent peers by the time they take their GCSEs. And there are 1.7 million children on free school meals. It is hard to build a fair, prosperous or unified country on such a foundation. We know that this inequality is not inevitable, because some of these young people do clearly achieve outstanding results. And there is usually a talented teacher standing behind them. Indeed, most of us can think of a teacher who lifted our horizons and inspired us. That’s how I ended up applying to Oxford!

This is the basic story behind Teach First. We encourage the nation’s most talented graduates to spend some time teaching in the country’s most challenging schools. Interestingly, most of them end up staying for good – we now have over one hundred headteachers who originally qualified through Teach First, each of them leading a stunning school. We develop these graduates as leaders (and where better to test your leadership skills than in the classroom?) and we join them together into a powerful alumni network, while working as a charity to try

and shape government policy in favour of disadvantaged schools. This is because we know that, although teachers are incredibly important, we cannot ask them to compensate for poverty by themselves.

Over the twenty years since we began, we have trained thousands of teachers – 750 of them from Oxford University, including a number of Corpuscles. There will be students now at Oxford who were taught by Teach Firsters and will be here, partly, because of their influence.

The closure of schools during the pandemic caused massive disruption to learning and hit those with the least the hardest. The statistics quoted above will be worse by the time this year’s exams are taken, and teachers report a significant toll on mental health as well. Our vision for the future is to correct this, to mobilise the teaching and leadership talent in our country to ensure that, quite simply, the children from the poorest communities get to go to the best schools.

ABOVE: Russell Hobby

## Why teaching?

**Joe McCrudden (English, 2010) is Assistant Principal in charge of Teaching and Learning at Yewlands Academy Sheffield. He trained to teach through Teach First:**



Sharing that I studied at Oxford can help show students that their teachers are experts in their subjects and genuinely want to be there teaching them. I chose to become a teacher from a range of options, and it sometimes shocks students that being there with them is the thing I most want to do! When students apply to Oxford, I definitely share my experience and knowledge of the university and support them as much as I possibly can. I think the more students from disadvantaged communities accepted into Oxford and other Russell group universities, the better.

**Manny Botwe (PPE, 1999) is now in his seventh year as Headteacher at Tytherington School, which is a comprehensive 11-18 school in Macclesfield, Cheshire. Prior to this, he served as a Deputy Headteacher in South Oxfordshire.**

Before teaching I worked for the University of Oxford as a Schools Outreach Officer. The purpose of the role was to encourage high-flying youngsters from non-traditional university backgrounds to consider applying to Oxbridge. The job took me all over the country and I was fortunate enough to visit some really exceptional schools doing fantastic work with challenging cohorts. This inspired me to get into teaching.

I was born and raised in a council house in South London and was the first member of my family to go to university. This experience made me feel that I might have something to offer the teaching profession.

I have a genuine belief that fantastic schools have the power to transform people’s lives and their circumstances. This was certainly the case for me and this has always been a source of motivation. I passionately believe that all youngsters, irrespective of their background, should have the opportunity to enjoy a rich and broad education.

No two days are the same and I feel incredibly lucky to be in a position to help shape future generations. If you are passionate about making a difference, you want variety in your life and you enjoy the company of young people, then teaching is the profession for you!



JANE LEIGH

**Sam (PPE, 2009) was a Teach Firster for two years in east London, teaching Maths to 11 to 18-year-olds.**

“You were an awful General Studies teacher, but if you hadn’t taught me, I wouldn’t be here,” said Matt, a few weeks ago – eight years after I was his sixth form tutor.

Teach First was the only job I applied for while at Corpus. I wanted to do something socially valuable, that would give me some life experience and skills, and take me out of the comfortable bubble I’d always lived in. Teach First felt like the obvious option. I knew I would be given six weeks intensive training in the summer holidays before being sent to teach in a school with a high number of pupils from low-income backgrounds. I’d be paid as a full-time teacher in my first year, alongside completing a fully funded PGCE. In my second year, I would be a qualified Maths teacher and would continue teaching at the same school. The goal of Teach First was to address educational inequality and I believed in that.

I finished my Finals on a Thursday, had a week off, and started the Teach First Summer Institute the next Monday. It was exhausting but I learnt an incredible amount about leadership, pedagogy, psychology, Maths and how to present, to put it mildly, to challenging audiences. These skills have stayed with me and made me much better at what I have gone on to do since, in investment management and diplomacy.

As we queued up for our coffee, Matt added, “I hope you were a better Maths teacher.” I tried to reassure Matt that I was, but I’m not sure he believed me. After making

a staff referral to the recruitment team, Matt joined the FCDO in 2019 and we’ve now been working together for three years. Seeing him walk into the building on his first day was one of the most rewarding moments of my career. It was a powerful conclusion to my Teach First journey and, if I am honest, I am not sure I’ll have such a significant professional impact again.

I asked what difference having a Teach First teacher at his school had made. He said that having a teacher from a totally different background, one that went to Oxford, who believed in his ability and encouraged him, opened his mind to options he hadn’t considered, and gave him the confidence to pursue them. “I mean it – I wouldn’t have considered applying to Imperial, and I definitely wouldn’t be here, if you hadn’t been my tutor. I think I could have done without the General Studies though.”

I only spent two years as a teacher, but those years were the most formative, impactful and memorable of my working life. If you want to make a real difference, learn valuable skills that will stay with you, and amass a goldmine of hilarious, self-deprecating anecdotes, I don’t think you can do better than Teach First.

**Emma Holmes (PPE, 2018) will start teaching Philosophy at a school in London this September.**

I had a few reasons for deciding to pursue teaching. For one thing, I think (most of) it will be really fun! Thinking about and discussing Philosophy is just about my favourite thing to do. After being tucked away in quiet libraries reading old books for a while, I’m looking forward to spending my days with others. Teaching also accords well with my values: it’s good for people to think critically and creatively about the world and what matters. I hope it will be fulfilling to help people understand things better. Equally, I hope that hearing the students’ fresh perspectives on these issues will allow me to continue learning with them. I am so grateful for the teachers I’ve had (at Corpus and beyond!); if I can do for even one student what they have done for me, I will be happy. Finally, when teaching, it is important to bear in mind the role poverty and privilege play in the experiences of pupils. I intend to advocate for educational equality in whatever way I can.

LEFT: Manny Botwe



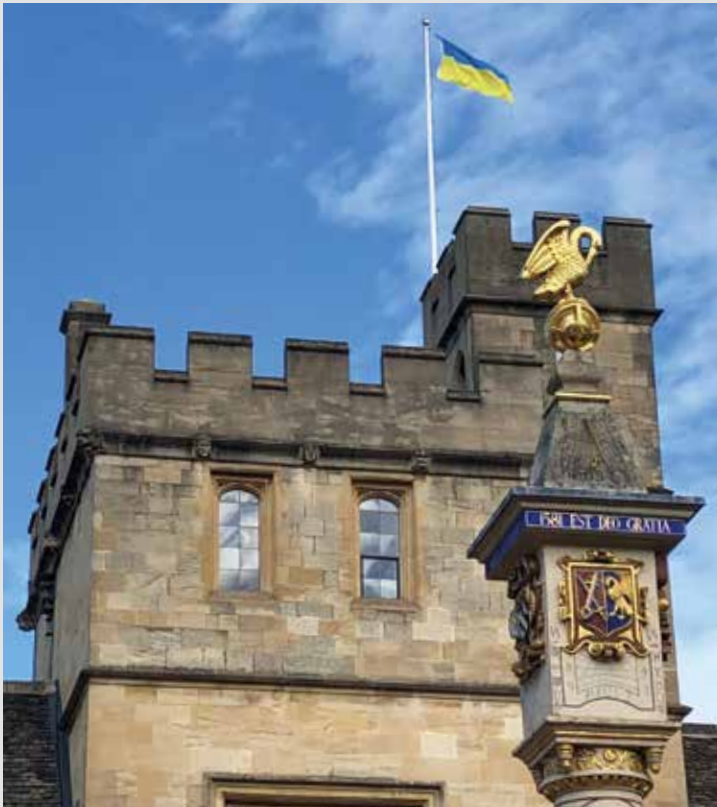
# The Big Picture

The war in Ukraine

To express Corpus’s solidarity with the people of Ukraine, the South Range of the Front Quad was lit up with the colours of the Ukrainian flag and the flag itself has flown over the Corpus tower for the past few months. We are supporting those impacted through the Disasters Emergency Committee.

The Corpus Auditorium has been a venue for panel discussions and a seminar on topics related to the war. On 6 March, a group of philosophers convened to discuss the moral implications of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, an account of which can be read on pages 10 and 11. On 11 May, BBC reporter John Simpson gave a seminar on the war’s cruel realities and its politics. And on 12 May, the Oxford International Relations Society held a Ukraine-Russia panel discussion, which featured Vadym Prystaiko, Ukrainian Ambassador to the United Kingdom, and Laurie Bristow, former British Ambassador to Russia from 2016 to 2020.

The Governing Body statement in response to the war in Ukraine can be read on the Corpus website: [www.ccc.ox.ac.uk](http://www.ccc.ox.ac.uk).





# College Faces



## PHILOSOPHICAL INQUIRY

ABOVE: Elad Uzan

Dr Elad Uzan joined the College in October as a Junior Research Fellow in Philosophy. He talked to us about his work and the attractions of being a philosopher at Corpus.

**What sparked your interest in Philosophy?**  
Three convictions shaped me in my youth: dedication to knowledge – loving it and seeking it out; the imperative to care for the weak, especially animals; and a strong sense of opposition to injustice. All of these led to and are reflected in my interest in philosophy, in particular the role of morality as a guide to behaviour and the importance of congruence between law and morality. Moral principles, discerned by philosophical analysis, should direct us in establishing legal prescriptions, and those principles should provide the standard against which legal constraints are evaluated. These are not, of course, ideas I could have understood as a child. But my work relies on

the power of moral intuitions, and those certainly are within the realm of a child’s reason and imagination.

**What is your field of research?**  
I work on a range of issues in moral, legal, and political philosophy. My current project deals with the moral constraints upon, and legal limits of, self-defence and war. Unusually for a philosopher working in these areas, I use techniques from mathematics and economics in order to formalise and refine moral claims. This kind of inquiry brings precision to otherwise murky problems of war, by unifying and quantifying diverse arguments and principles concerning permissible harm. This approach,

I believe, will produce better moral theorising, providing guidance for real-world, ethical decision-making.

**What are the attractions of being a JRF at Corpus?**  
Corpus is the centre of philosophical inquiry at Oxford. Luminaries who shaped moral and political thought in the second half of the twentieth century— Isaiah Berlin, Bernard Williams, Thomas Nagel, Jonathan Glover, John Broome and Jeff McMahan – all studied or were Fellows at Corpus. Another advantage is the small size of the College, which allows for close relationships with senior Fellows. The Fellows at Corpus are leaders in their fields, and this motivates me to do the best work I can. And as a musician, I find Corpus appealing for another reason: I can take a break from writing and play the fine organ or piano in the Chapel.

**What challenges face the young academics of today?**  
I would point to two distinct but related challenges. First is the unreasonable demand on us to produce an enormous quantity of ‘research outputs’ – a horrendous phrase, in my view – in order to find an academic job. Young scholars experience enormous anxiety as a result, leading to degraded quality of life and causing many promising people to leave their fields. Second, meeting this demand for quantity comes at the expense of originality and insight. Ideas develop slowly, and good writing needs time. Consider the aforementioned Corpus alumnus Thomas Nagel. Sixteen years passed between the publication of his two most celebrated books, *The Possibility of Altruism* (1970) and *The View from Nowhere* (1986). Today, junior academics are rushing to publish their dissertations as a book and then to immediately develop a second book for tenure. A deep, original work cannot be achieved in short order.

**What are your aims and ambitions?**  
I believe that philosophy and law can contribute solutions to current social and political disputes. Indeed, I know they can because they have before. During the period of widespread demonstrations against the Vietnam War, philosophers turned their attention to issues of civil disobedience and the morality of war, helping to inspire students to take up effective, ethical forms of protest and influencing reforms in government. There is no lack of opportunities for philosophers to become involved in serious problems today. Russia’s invasion of Ukraine has shown how precarious the moral, political, and legal foundations of the world order are, and the need for careful thinking about how to prevent and, if necessary, respond to wars of aggression. Through my work, I hope to produce and defend ideas that can bring moral clarity to the laws of war and thereby promote both justice and peace to the greatest degree possible.

On 6 March, a group of philosophers convened at Corpus to discuss the moral implications of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Their discussion addressed a range of issues including Russia’s conduct, the role of NATO, duties to refugees and the use of economic sanctions.

Professor Jeff McMahan, Sekyra and White’s Professor of Moral Philosophy, framed the discussion by explaining how the war in Ukraine illustrates the error of traditional just war theory. This theory only condemns governments who initiate unjust wars and not the soldiers who fight them, as long as their conduct conforms to the laws of war. He argued that Russian soldiers are committing moral wrongs when they kill Ukrainian soldiers in combat, because the war is unjust.

Helen Frowe, Janina Dill, Zosia Stemplowska and Massimo Renzo addressed wider issues raised by and related to the war. They discussed the claim that the killing of Ukrainian soldiers is not only wrong but also as morally bad as the killing of Ukrainian civilians; the claim that the West deserves blame for Putin’s invasion, due to NATO’s eastward expansion; Poland’s duties to accommodate refugees fleeing Ukraine; and the role of social media as a battleground in the so-called information war. Lastly, JRF Elad Uzan argued that the West has imposed such sanctions on Russia so readily, instead of taking direct military action, because sanctions involve less uncertainty. This is morally puzzling because sanctions invert the conventional ethics of war by targeting civilians instead of soldiers, who are the only actors morally liable to harm.

The discussion highlighted the contribution Philosophy can make to our understanding of the morality of war beyond simplistic condemnation, and helped to specify more exactly what is so wrong about Russia’s aggression.



**Bringing together the philosophically inclined**  
**This year has seen the launch of the Corpus Christi College Philosophy Society. The Society gathers all Corpus philosophers, from undergraduates and postgraduates, to early career researchers and Fellows, for regular events and friendly conversation.**

It has been wonderful to see this lively community come together. Termly events have included guest lectures by world-leading philosophers, such as Ursula Coope, Professor of Ancient Philosophy at Keble College, on ancient views on happiness, Adrian Moore, of St Hugh’s College, on immortality, and Alice Cray, University Distinguished Professor at The New School for Social Research.

The Society also gathers a few times a term in hall for ‘Philosophy Breakfasts’, providing a forum for members to present a ‘Work in Progress’ to a friendly audience, and for more informal conversation.

In what we hope was the first of an annual tradition, in Trinity we hosted an alumni tea. This was a chance for alumni to return to Corpus, where students relished the opportunity to meet them and hear about the way philosophy has shaped their lives and careers. We look forward to many more such opportunities in the coming years.

**Marion Durand**



# The Corpus 16 Papers

## THE MEDIEVAL ALCHEMICAL AND MEDICAL MANUSCRIPTS OF CORPUS CHRISTI

Dr. Meagan S. Allen, Huntington Exchange Fellow

The Corpus Library is home to approximately 240 Medieval Latin manuscripts, covering a diverse range of topics, including theology, philosophy, astronomy, medicine, literature, and grammar – all fields that one may expect to find in any college’s archives. However, the Corpus Library holds a hidden gem: a significant collection of alchemical manuscripts.

There are 11 medieval manuscripts entirely dedicated to the science of alchemy in the Corpus Library, plus an additional seven manuscripts that contain fragments of alchemical works. Though the term ‘alchemy’ may conjure up images of wizards and gold, alchemy in the Middle Ages was a serious scientific pursuit. At its core, alchemy was the study of how things in nature are created. Medieval scholastics believed that everything in the world was made from a combination of the four elements: air, earth, water, and fire. Alchemists sought to understand how these elements joined together to create things. By understanding how the elements interacted, one could try to manipulate the elements to perfect materials – and even turn lead into gold. As the science of the generation of all things, however, alchemy was engaged with many disciplines besides metallurgy. Some alchemists were interested in medicines, some in astronomy, and some even in agriculture!

Over one third of the alchemical manuscripts in the Corpus collection were at some point attributed to the Franciscan polymath Roger Bacon (1220-1292), who is the subject of my research. Bacon was born to a wealthy family in Somerset between 1212 and 1220, and was educated at the University of Oxford. Interested in natural philosophy, Bacon took up a position lecturing on Aristotle’s *Libri naturales* at the University of Paris in the 1240s and 1250s. Although the exact circumstances are unclear, around 1257 Bacon decided to leave teaching, and returned to Oxford to join the Franciscan Order there.

Despite changing vocations, Bacon continued to have a significant interest in natural philosophy, and authored many works on various subjects related to it over the next 35 years. His most famous works, the *Opus maius*, *Opus minus*, and *Opus tertium*, were written for Pope Clement IV as a plea to reform scientific education among the Christian faithful. One such area that Bacon was particularly interested in was the extreme prolongation of human life to its natural limits, which the Bible taught was close to 1,000 years. Bacon wrote several works arguing that sciences like alchemy could create medicines that would extend human life. Using the knowledge of the elements gained from alchemy, Bacon thought it was possible to fix human bodies, which were also made from the four elements. Bacon died in 1292, and was buried at the old Friary in Oxford. Though he did not receive much recognition during his life, by the 16th and 17th centuries he was often considered a pillar of English alchemical thought. Many works became attached to his name after his death, but of the manuscripts at Corpus, only two can without doubt be ascribed to Bacon, while the rest are now attributed to other medieval authors.

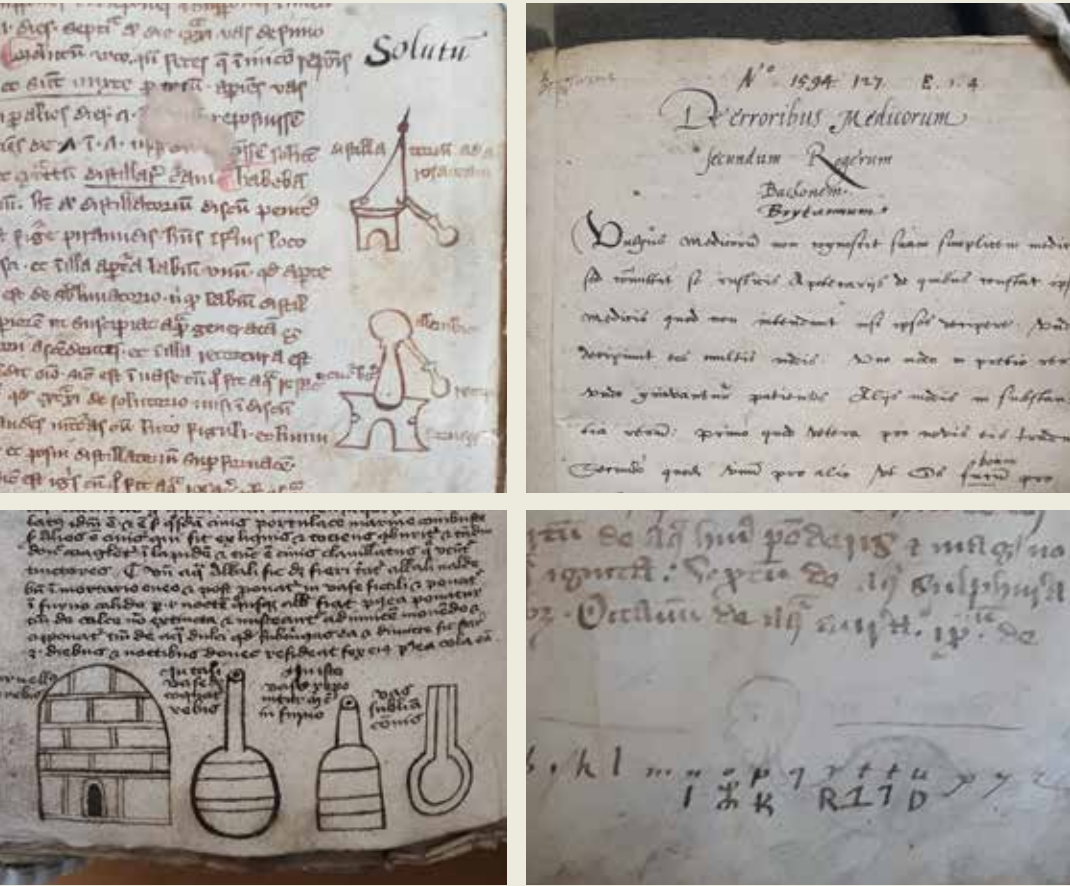
How these manuscripts came to be housed at Corpus is itself an interesting story, and one that demonstrates the exchange of knowledge in early modern England. Many of these manuscripts were at one point owned by the renaissance mathematician John Dee (1527-1608). Educated at St. John’s College, Cambridge, Dee would eventually become attached to the royal court, serving as court astrologer to Elizabeth I, as well as advising her on scientific and medical matters.

TOP ROW, LEFT TO RIGHT:  
Manuscript 125. Drawing of alchemical equipment in the margin of a medical and alchemical manuscript, written ca. 1300

Manuscript 127. Manuscript of Roger Bacon’s *De erroribus medicorum* with Brian Twyne’s name written at the top left corner

BOTTOM ROW, LEFT TO RIGHT:  
Manuscript 226. Drawing of an alchemical furnace and vessels in a 15th century manuscript

Manuscript 277. Drawing of a beast with a man’s head, possibly a basilisk. The manuscript dates from the 14th-15th century



His private library at Mortlake was rumored to have more than 4,000 works, including a number of mathematical, alchemical, and medical works by Bacon and other medieval authors. Dee was particularly interested in ‘occult’ subjects, such as alchemy and astrology, and considered Bacon to be an exemplar of medieval English thought. A great supporter of Bacon, Dee had several of his works published in English – the originals being in Latin – and produced several apologies for Bacon.

After Dee’s death, the contents of his library were sold, and a fair number were purchased by one Brian Twyne (1581-1644). Twyne was educated at Corpus and became a Fellow in 1606, finally assuming the role of Greek Lecturer from 1614 to 1623. Under the leadership of William Laud, Chancellor of the University of Oxford and Archbishop of Canterbury, Twyne helped revise the University statues. In recognition of his service, he was made the University’s first Keeper of the Archives in 1634. He also wrote the *Antiquitatis academiae Oxoniensis apologia* (published 1608), the first printed history of the University of Oxford, and was single-handedly responsible for preserving much of the city’s medieval records. Many records were lost in the 17th century, and are only known through Twyne’s copies. On 4 July 1644, Twyne wrote a will, splitting his collection of manuscripts and books between Corpus and the University. He died that same day, and his body was buried in the Corpus chapel, near the current organ. In his survey of the manuscripts of Corpus, Professor Rod Thomson estimates that Twyne left the College 57 manuscripts from Dee’s collection. Along with the Dee manuscripts purchased later, this made Corpus the largest single repository of Dee manuscripts.



# The Dial

► The 2021 Telethon Campaign raised over £110,000 for a variety of initiatives, including academic posts, graduate scholarships and outreach and access projects. Thank you for your support.

## A NEW ERA FOR THE CORPUS TELETHON CAMPAIGN

The annual Telethon Campaign plays an important role in the Development Office calendar. It is the time of the year when old and new generations of Corpuses can connect with one another. The forthcoming 2022 Telethon promises to bring new and exciting opportunities.

This year, nine students will play their part in making calls to Old Members, asking them to support a range of initiatives, including academic posts, graduate scholarships and outreach and access projects. We will also be raising funds for one of the most transformative projects at Corpus for centuries. The strength of our fundraising campaign is that so many alumni choose to take part. Our callers are looking forward to speaking to you and learning about your time at Corpus. Thank you to all of you who gave for the first time or increased your existing donation as a result of a telephone call with a student during last year's Telethon.

Our student callers come from a variety of backgrounds and study a range of subjects. There is no typical telethon caller. However,

the one thing they all have in common is a love of the College. This year's Telethon begins on 23 September. For the first time, our student callers will be contacting you from the Junior Common Room. Also for the first time, the Corpus website will feature a Telethon webpage, comprising videos of student callers, interviews with Corpus Fellows, descriptions of the Campaign's fundraising priorities, daily updates of income raised and much more. The page will launch on 23 September. Please look out for more information later this summer.

If you did not receive a call from us in 2021 and would like us to contact you this September, please email [development@ccc.ox.ac.uk](mailto:development@ccc.ox.ac.uk) with your contact details and preferences.

BELOW: 2019 Telethon Caller Celine Li (PPE, 2017)



### Opinion

We asked last year's callers for their reflections.

*"The Telethon made me realise how rewarding it is to be a finalist at Corpus. It showed me that I will never really leave and that I will still be a part of the College community after graduating."*

*"Conversations I had with alumni really moved me and I was given great advice for the future."*

Telethon callers make notes after every call. What did the 2021 callers say about the alumni they spoke to?

*"He really appreciated the call and being addressed as professor in his retirement. Feels he is very much indebted to Corpus, really enjoyed speaking to a student."*

*"Brilliant call. We talked about how the History course has changed. We discussed life at Corpus during the pandemic."*

## New Arrivals

**Professor Susanna Dunachie**  
*Clinical Teaching Fellow in Medicine and Professor of Infectious Diseases*

► Professor Susanna Dunachie was conferred the title of Professor of Infectious Diseases in the University's Recognition of Distinction Awards 2021.



In Michaelmas 2021, the College welcomed Susanna Dunachie, who joined as Clinical Teaching Fellow in Medicine. She is also Professor of Infectious Diseases in the Department of Tropical Medicine, holds a National Institute of Health and Care Research Global Research Professorship, and is a consultant in Infectious Diseases at the Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust.

Originally from Glasgow, Susanna did her undergraduate and clinical medical training at New College, and has worked as a doctor in Paisley, Newcastle and Oxford. She undertook a PhD with Adrian Hill at the Nuffield Department of Medicine in Oxford, where she conducted clinical trials for new vaccines for malaria and researched the T cell immunology of protection against malaria in the laboratory. From 2011 to 2015 she lived in Bangkok, Thailand with her family where she worked at the Mahidol-Oxford Tropical Medicine Unit and researched the immunology of neglected tropical diseases including melioidosis and scrub typhus.

She returned to Oxford as an Associate Professor and Fellow of Kellogg College, and established a research laboratory at the Peter Medawar Building for Pathogen Research in South Parks Road. She will be conducting the world's first clinical trial of a vaccine for melioidosis next year, and co-leads the national PITCH Study defining the T cell response to COVID-19. She played a key role

advising the University on COVID-19 and is now a Scientific Advisor to the Scottish Parliament on COVID-19 as well as sitting on a number of national and international committees. She also runs the University's Travel Clinic.

Susanna has always enjoyed teaching and is delighted to move to Corpus Christi to play a key role in guiding clinical medical students. She says: "I am excited to join the intellectual community of Corpus and enjoy inter-disciplinary discussions important to global health. Alongside the friendliness of the college, Corpus is able to attract some of the University's best medical students and I look forward to supporting them on their journey to becoming doctors."



# Listing

➔ Did you know that we regularly send out College news and invitations to events by email? Please email [development@ccc.ox.ac.uk](mailto:development@ccc.ox.ac.uk) if your contact details have changed and you would like to keep in touch. More information about the Development Team can be found on the College website [www.ccc.ox.ac.uk/alumni](http://www.ccc.ox.ac.uk/alumni).

## Corpus Christi College

### Alumni events 2022

For more information on all these events please go to: [www.ccc.ox.ac.uk/alumni/events-and-reunions](http://www.ccc.ox.ac.uk/alumni/events-and-reunions)

#### September 2022

16 – 18 September

### Meeting Minds Oxford

A variety of talks, panels and tours across Oxford, plus networking opportunities. Tickets available via the University website.

Saturday 17 September

### Benefactors' Garden Party

A family-friendly event to thank our generous benefactors. By invitation only.

23 September – 2 October

### Annual Telethon

An opportunity to bring our community together, calling for the first time from the JCR.

Friday 30 September

### Reunion Dinner

This event is open to alumni, who matriculated between 1970-1972 and 1985.

#### November 2022

Sunday 27 November

### Christ Church Regatta

More information to follow.

#### December 2022

Thursday 1 December

### College Carol Service Livestream

More information to follow.

Saturday 3 December

### Carol Service for Alumni and Parents

More information to follow.

Richard O'Brien

## Painting the Pelican Sundial

GWYOLYDD O'BRIEN



My mother, Gwyolydd O'Brien née Rhys, had a keen eye for colour, shape, and overall form – all of which she worked into her painting of the Sundial in the Quad. As soon as I saw the image on the cover of the *Sundial*, a tribute which

would have delighted her, I was immediately struck (for the first time) how the work draws upon all the colours of the Corpus crest – azure, or, argent, gules, sable, and vert – there on the top right corner of the magazine. In this night time picture the light shines brightly on the golden stones of Corpus, as the two Corpuscles debate their latest theories, or where to spend the rest of the evening, perhaps to take the stairway on the right, venture through the open arch to the outside world, or to take a look at the newly decorated lodge. An amateur artist, Gwyolydd (the Welsh for Violet, rarely adopted in that form as a

Christian name – Fioled being more likely) had formal training in her school and student years and, after a gap of half a century, took up her brushes again in retirement. She revelled in creating a collage of images, experimenting in acrylic, oils, watercolours, etchings, in all shapes and sizes, on card, board, and sandpaper. Taking her sketchbook to France and Italy, to the West Country, Wales, Yorkshire and Scotland, to India, to New York and to Washington, she exhibited with her fellow enthusiasts around the country and in London. Her painting of Corpus was completed in 1992.

## Hidden mural

Demolition work for The Spencer Building project has revealed a hidden mural, commissioned by President Frank Hardie in 1967 to serve as a memorial of the celebrations to mark the 450th anniversary of the College in 1967. The 450th anniversary was celebrated as the College was unable to celebrate its 400th anniversary in 1917. The inscription was composed by Robin Nisbet, Fellow and Tutor in Classics and, from 1970, Corpus Professor of Latin. It was painted by a student, Richard Alexander (Alec) Cobbe



(Medicine, 1963), who went on to a career as an artist and picture conservator. The inscription and its translation read as follows:

*Anno CCCCLo post Collegium conditum  
Festum diem in hortulis alumni  
celebraverunt  
Alacriores totam noctem saltaverunt  
Apiariam fabulam Franciscus Lepper  
scripsit  
Ulularum grex egit  
Hunc murum pingendum curavit  
Franciscus Hardie Praeses  
Mense Iunio  
MCMLXVII*

In the 450th year after the college was founded  
Its members celebrated its festal day in the gardens.  
They danced [even] more eagerly all night.  
Frank Lepper wrote a tale of a beehive;  
The company of Owlets performed it.  
President Frank Hardie took pains to have this wall painted  
In the month of June  
1967

## Leaving a gift in your will

Through the centuries, legacies and bequests have played a vital part in Corpus' success. Legacies have enabled us to

endow Fellowships, establish bursaries and scholarships, renovate buildings and create new teaching spaces. Your support makes a real difference. Whether large or small, every gift is valued and

appreciated. And if your intention is to leave a legacy, you are entitled to join the Frost Society, whose Virtual Luncheon, held on 19 May, was a huge success. Members enjoyed scones and jam sent to them in the post

while listening to a presentation by the Librarian Joanna Snelling. Next year's luncheon will be in person at Corpus. For more details please contact Begina Cox at [beginna.cox@ccc.ox.ac.uk](mailto:beginna.cox@ccc.ox.ac.uk).