

# Selwyn

The magazine  
for alumni and friends  
of Selwyn College,  
Cambridge



# 2020

Issue 27 Summer 2020



## A Selwyn doctor's story



## Editorial

This magazine was produced during the lockdown and, given the scale of the events that have been unfolding, it inevitably dwells on the consequences of the health emergency. We are particularly pleased to include a short essay specially written for us by alumnus and Honorary Fellow Tom Hollander, who discloses that he had coronavirus himself – but that he can see some benefits for society in the changes that have been forced on us.

We retain a focus in these pages on the other big issues of our time. In particular, alumnus Lord Deben – better known as John Selwyn Gummer – talks about his work fighting climate change. He tells us that the battle against deniers of man-made climate change has largely been won, though his optimism does not extend to the current president of the United States.

Our use of energy is also at the heart of a fascinating piece about India, featuring Selwyn Fellow Ronita Bardhan. It sounds like a simple and good proposition: move people from slum dwellings into newly-constructed social housing. But she reveals that a lack of proper planning can lead to dramatic surges in energy consumption and an environment in which pollution intensifies. Her solution, as an architect, is the obvious one: good design, which looks after the needs of people and the planet. There's further encouragement that even densely-built cities can have green aspirations in an article about how Selwynite Chong Lee Tan is trying to bring plants and wildlife into the heart of Singapore.

We know that readers of this magazine enjoy hearing about the people of the college, and the amazing range of activities they undertake. In this edition, Richard Edwards reveals how he brought the artists Gilbert & George and James Rosenquist to the mountains of Colorado; Nigel Newton explains that he was responsible for the

rise of Harry Potter; and Katie Sim admits to first-day nerves as a police officer in Scotland. Three more of our Fellows are profiled. We hear from sociologist Patrick Baert, lawyer Sarah Fraser Butlin – and Katharine Ellis, the Cambridge professor of music, who confesses a liking for the songs of John Shuttleworth. Also from the college establishment: the Master tells us the inside story of his appearance on Christmas *University Challenge*, and the fear of an incorrect interruption.

There is the opportunity for some nostalgia and relaxation too. Alumnus Christopher Angeloglou shares his wonderful photographs of 1960s Cambridge – a world that is familiar but distant, especially in these times. We hope you enjoy those images, and everything else in the pages which follow.

## Selwyn Magazine 2020 Issue 27

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Registered Charity No. 1137517

Design: Smith (www.smithltd.co.uk)  
Cover photograph: Marcus Ginns



This publication contains paper manufactured by Chain-of-Custody certified suppliers operating within internationally recognised environmental standards in order to ensure sustainable sourcing and production.

# Postcard from the Lock



The world changed in early 2020. We were living with a pandemic, and with the tragedy it has brought.

Our hearts go out to all those affected by the coronavirus, and many of us have joined in the applause for key workers who have devoted their efforts to keeping us safe.

In the following pages, we give a sense of how Selwyn and its people have reacted to the challenges of these times. In March, we took the unprecedented decision to close the college because of the health emergency; and since then our community of Fellows, staff and students has adapted to new ways of working and to alternative teaching methods. The college closed its gates to all but essential staff, and it has been looking after around 40 students who could not return home and the 15 or so Fellows who live here permanently.

We asked a selection of Selwynites to share their experiences and to show what a resilient place this is. They include a report from the real frontline of the battle against the virus, with one of our Fellows helping to lead the teams at Addenbrooke's Hospital. We also hear from academics and heads of department, who underline what a team effort it has been to keep things going – and how we'll learn lessons from the lockdown as we resume more of our normal activities.



Selwyn freshers of 2019, whose first year at college was disrupted by the health crisis.



# down



## Dr Charlotte Summers Selwyn College Fellow and Dean, Director of Studies Clinical Medicine

Intensive care specialists are something like the canaries in a coalmine. They're often the first to spot something that's new and worrying; and it was around Christmas time last year that I remember first hearing about doctors in Wuhan in China seeing some unusual symptoms that concerned them in their patients and who needed ventilation. By January I was sure that there was something very nasty heading our way.

Yet this is the very challenge I've been trained for. My specialism within intensive care is in respiratory illnesses; and I had previously been part of the preparations for one of the previous waves of a coronavirus in Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS). It's no exaggeration to say that my career has been exactly about this: preparing for a pandemic. I couldn't be sure how bad it would be – but I suspected it was likely to be the biggest challenge in our lifetimes.

In addition to being a practising doctor, I was chosen to lead the bronze crisis team at Addenbrooke's – which meant that I was involved in the managerial and organisational challenges alongside the medical ones. All you can do is plan and do your best, and it meant completely reconfiguring the entire hospital.

Our starting position was that we had 32 intensive care beds; and I remember on the 15th of March we saw projections that we would run out of space by the end of the month. But in fact we rapidly increased the number of beds to 84, and thankfully they have never all been full. Indeed, we were able to bring patients in to Cambridge from other areas to relieve pressures there. But at times I was waking up in the night wondering "will it be enough?" It's not just about equipment; it's also about the vital human resources, such as training nurses rapidly into the needs of the ICU.

It was incredibly complex to look after the patients. That's obviously because of the seriousness of their conditions – but also because we were working in full PPE. It was hot and exhausting, spending hours donned up in full gear; and all the time we were hearing reports from around the country of medical staff themselves ending up in intensive care. But we were fortunate in Cambridge that we always had adequate PPE, and that was partly because of some wonderful collaboration with the university who helped source supplies.

There was no avoiding the sad fact that many of our patients would die. A typical mortality rate in



Richard Westcott @BBC

Dr Charlotte Summers is an intensive care specialist at Addenbrooke's Hospital and one of Selwyn's medical Fellows.

**"A typical mortality rate in intensive care is around 20%, but with COVID-19 it has been more than 50%."**

intensive care is around 20%, but with COVID-19 it has been more than 50%. We were dealing with something on a catastrophically awful scale. What gave us heart was every time a patient beat the virus and some of them were keen to talk to the television crews who visited the hospital to praise the care they'd been given and some of the innovative treatments we'd been using.

I have never at any stage regretted the career path that brought me here: not for a single minute. In some of those sleepless nights during the crisis, I have worried about whether the emergency plan would deliver in the way we hoped. But I have never doubted that I'm doing what I always intended to do, and I hope that my teams and I have made a real difference to some very poorly people.

The reaction of the public has been tremendous, too. I'd been so busy that I'd missed the start of the idea of clapping for the NHS on a Thursday night, and it was only the second time it happened that I really noticed it. I'd arrived home about five minutes before 8 o'clock, and I went outside with my family – and was completely overwhelmed by the applause and the banging of pots and pans that could be heard throughout my Cambridgeshire village. This is not like me at all, but I ended up in floods of tears; and it really did make a difference to know that people were behind us, and that – in these terrible times – the community was coming together.



**Friday  
26 June**

**Online talk**  
Dr Charlotte Summers will be presenting an online talk on Friday 26 June, sharing her COVID-19 experiences as an intensive care specialist at Addenbrooke's Hospital. For more information check our website nearer the time: [www.selwynalumni.com/eventsalendar](http://www.selwynalumni.com/eventsalendar)

## Postcards from the Lockdown (continued)



Marcus Gibbs

Photo taken before lockdown and social distancing measures.

### Helen Stephens Head Porter

When the lockdown began in March, we were caught up in what for three weeks felt like a frenzy of activity in a rapidly moving crisis, with an ever diminishing and often worried number of students trying to get home to places all around the world. Demand and commands became a feature of everyday business not just for us in the porters' lodge but for everyone as the college changed, adjusted and settled. My team pushed to the limits of our abilities – all the time steadfast in our resolution to remain resourceful and supportive.

Time has passed and a new normal is unfolding. It's hard to imagine a college without its students, Fellows, staff and guests – with empty courts, empty streets, locked gates, closed pigeon holes. But here we are – a merry few. My excellent team, reduced by half following college-wide furloughing, maintain 24-7 operations with their usual aplomb. Parcels and post have kept on coming; fire checks, daily security patrols and lock-ups all carry on as though students were all still here; and, for those who are, we are pleased to continue to help where needed.

Outside the window, nature burst into life. Blossoms drowned the trees on Grange Road. There was lilac, wisteria, bluebells and birdsong everywhere – though in Old Court you could literally

**“It's hard to imagine a college without its students, Fellows, staff, guests – with empty courts, empty streets, locked gates, closed pigeon holes.”**

hear a pin drop. Foxes, muntjac, ducks, dogs, cats and bees have graced our gardens, and for a moment we have had the chance to 'stop and stare'.

Our beautiful college – serene, majestic, enduring – reminds us that there will be better times and we do have a lot to look forward to even if times are tough now. But for students I have a simple message: we miss you. Wish you were here!



Left: The shop in Hall was a big success - offering supplies to the students and Fellows remaining in college.



Howard Beaumont

### Matt Rowe Catering Manager

Was it only this spring that I cheered on Selwyn winning the rugby cuppers at Grange Road while thinking about the first 'super formal' and parents' lunch? Within a week our community had changed: the bar shut, social distancing started with chairs removed from Hall – and staff started to be furloughed.

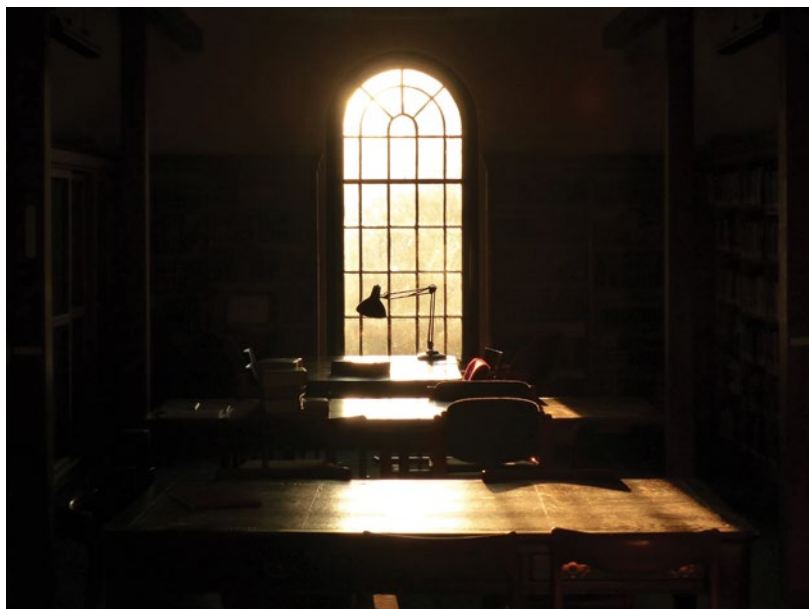
It was particularly hard after years of work building our catering business, increasing numbers both internally and externally, to see it swept away. College members left with no farewells and conferences cancelled.

So what could we do? Some colleges were shutting down their catering operations, but this option would leave our remaining residents to fend for themselves and did not feel right for us. Many staff felt happy about continuing to come to work because of the measures we had taken.

Tables were moved into the servery to create a two metre barrier, and cash sales are no longer possible. We moved to takeaway only.

We asked the residents what they would like to be able to buy from us. Fresh fruit and vegetables was an easy one followed closely by toilet rolls. The shop was a big success and outgrew the servery in the first week. It now takes up two thirds of the Hall with dairy, pulses, fruit and cordials – and bottles of wine are also available!

There have been and are still a few challenges. Keeping our customers and our staff safe is the priority. My biggest concern is for my staff who are furloughed: how they are, are they coping and are any ill or needing assistance? We have set up Facebook and WhatsApp groups to keep in touch, sharing memories and photos – and all are well, though sometimes a little bored. The staff that have continued to keep the service open have been amazing. Appreciation has been given for our efforts from all areas of college: Fellows, students and staff are using Hall. I feel it has had the additional benefit of human contact because face-to-face conversations are taking place – albeit at a distance.



Laurence Moscrop



## Sonya Adams Librarian



This would usually be the busiest time of year in the library, with someone at every desk, in every chair, so it was odd to imagine it dark and empty. I'm missing seeing the students about the place, working hard and needing encouragement to stop from time to time, so I enjoyed replicating some of the library's extras – puzzles and tips for taking a break – in our Easter term guide, even if there's no actual tea and company.

The library is more than a study space, and much work has been going into making scholarly resources available to those who need them. Librarianship often involves a lot of sleuthing in hunting down resources and puzzling out references, but there has been more dogged determination required during the crisis with many resources physically inaccessible. Luckily, finding and supplying electronic equivalents of the items students need is a collaborative endeavour across Cambridge and beyond, with many publishers granting temporary access to some or all of their titles and library staff working hard to make access to this material as easy as possible.

I've been keeping in touch with staff in other college libraries, which has mostly involved pooling ideas for student support and recovery planning. That said, we are having the occasional virtual tea break so

**“There has been more dogged determination required during the crisis with many resources physically inaccessible.”**

that furloughed staff can join in and see some familiar faces and we can all catch up on how people are coping.

Planning is continuing on the new library and auditorium building, with virtual meetings allowing us to hone our ideas remotely. Planning from my front room lends a different quality to the thinking process, though I'm surrounded by books, which definitely helps.

## Dr Stuart Eves Undergraduate Admissions Tutor

Together with the selection of new undergraduates, the role of the Admissions Tutors is to encourage students to consider Cambridge for their degrees. For some, it is a familiar place and a known path to follow, but for others it is important that we can show them what we offer. The two cornerstones of this are to encourage potential applicants to visit us, and for us to bring Selwyn to schools via outreach trips. As with so many things, this has hit obstacles in the first few months of 2020.

It has however, been a chance to think creatively about these interactions. Certain elements cannot be replaced: we have a saying in Admissions 'If they come for the day, they'll choose Cambridge, if they stay for the night, they'll choose Selwyn'. But other aspects stand to benefit from the flexibility of online provision. In the trips we do, we aim to provide coverage of as many subject areas as we can, but this often means that Fellows in the smaller subjects are making long trips for a handful of students. I am grateful that so many colleagues do this enthusiastically; and we must promote the smaller subjects, as they are often those that make Cambridge unique.

It is crucial that potential applicants understand how subjects such as Archaeology, Classics and Anglo-Saxon Norse and Celtic fit among more familiar options. But I'm pleased that we are currently converting a number of these outreach sessions into online resources. This allows students to attend, albeit virtually, a range of different subjects, and allows us to highlight the merits of each.

Another key initiative is being run by the university. Selwyn is part of the Cambridge Admissions Office's 'virtual tour.' The use of 360° virtual reality photographs of Selwyn, on an interactive tour map of the city, allows students to explore Cambridge and get a real flavour of the place – supplemented by our prospectus and online information. And all without the threat of punt touts...

## Postcards from the Lockdown (continued)



**Jenny Frost**  
(SE 2018, Modern and Medieval  
Languages Undergraduate)

Easter term would normally pass in a bit of a blur: the first half is spent revising for exams, then in the second half, exams happen, and we celebrate with friends and enjoy a summery Cambridge without the pressure of work. The nature of all this has changed this year, but the college and university communities are still as strong as they ever were, and my friends and I have all been keeping in touch by video call.

Just because university has gone online, it doesn't mean that there's been any less work to do. I'm finishing my second year of my degree in French and Italian, and there's certainly been plenty to be getting on with. I've been revising for online exams, making lots of mind maps and writing more translations than I ever thought possible. Although contact time is very different online, it's been a comfort to know that supervisors are only ever an email or phone call away.

I sing in Selwyn's choir, and services have gone virtual this term. We've been sending recordings of ourselves to our director of music, Sarah MacDonald, who then edits them together to create a virtual choir. It's been brilliant to be able to keep singing with everyone.

At the end of Lent term, I started playing for the college's mixed netball team, and I would have loved the chance

**"Just because university has gone online, it doesn't mean that there's been any less work to do."**

to get more involved this term. As it stands, my exercise is now cycling and running, and there's a small Selwyn community motivating each other virtually to keep exercising!

I'm due to go on a year abroad in August; I'm still waiting to see if that can happen, and in what capacity. Whatever ends up happening, I'm grateful for the supportive Selwyn community which exists both physically and remotely.



**Dr Mike Sewell**  
Senior Tutor

Tocqueville wrote that great revolutions introduce fewer innovations than is generally supposed. It is a good antidote when pundits tell us the emergency will transform everything.

Things have changed. We have learned new words and repurposed old ones that were almost forgotten – I like furlough's reboot. We have had to adapt. We have developed skills in communicating in 'remote' (have we abandoned 'virtual?') interactions. We have become familiar with new 'platforms' to do so. I have learned that I can create an online survey, but also not to give responders too much freedom. Permutations of free text replies to 'Tutor's Name' are near endless, though I did enjoy High Shilson-Thomas and Dr David Sith.

College is unusually quiet. However, we must not forget continuity. I am lucky that my own circumstances and experiences make adapting easy. I have previously taught and interviewed virtually. Familiar activities are done in new ways and work feels altered but is not impossible. Teaching is happening. Final year students will take radically different assessments away from Cambridge or, weirder still, the few 'remainers' will take them remotely from their college room. Degrees will still be awarded.

Whilst missing the camaraderie of face-to-face (i.e. real) interactions, I welcome the adaptations we make to compensate. We recently installed new Fellows remotely. Research Fellowship shortlisting and interviews still happen if remotely. We adapt, in double quick time, and we keep our sense of continuity. College activities go on even if routine activity is not quite routine. Colleges and the university have approached the crisis with a speed of decision-making that is truly remarkable for our venerable institution. Together we confront the immediate issues and 'Recovery Task Forces' peer forward into the fog of possibilities. We urgently discuss the present and the future, most crucially when face-to-face activity can safely start to resume.

Uncertainty abounds. Anxiety is part of this, but that too is routine for Senior Tutors, for whom there is always something or someone to worry about. There is also a sense almost of exhilaration, of excitement definitely, at being part of trying to wrest a semblance of familiarity from the oddness; to preserve some normalcy in strange times; to ensure that if business is not quite as usual, it continues. It may feel like it's the end of the world as we know it, but I feel fine because it isn't the world's end, just the endless dialectic of continuity and change.



## Dr Vicky Young Kawashima Lecturer in Japanese Literature and Culture, Director of Studies for Asian and Middle Eastern Studies

The months between March and June are usually the most enjoyable of the Cambridge year. Days grow longer and lighter to announce that summer is on the horizon. Although exams and dissertation deadlines keep life busy, the tasks of studying and revising are sweetened by the ability to sit out on the college lawns, while the promise of a garden party (or five) brightens the work of marking scripts.

The speed with which the pandemic approached was startling by contrast. In my last modern Japanese literature class, we read fiction written after the earthquake, tsunami and nuclear meltdown that struck Fukushima in March 2011. Suddenly those 'post-disaster' narratives shook with new and unsettling resonances as we tried to understand the brave new world unfolding around us.

The threat of the virus has shaded these months with a greater sense of uncertainty than we would all like. As a university lecturer, I have spent this time devising ways of teaching down the lens of a webcam that might keep ideas, discussions and passions alive. As a Tutor and Director of Studies, I have also faced the challenge of how best to support students who find themselves separated from libraries, lecture theatres and direct interactions with their teachers and peers. Even as I remain in Cambridge,

I can see how easily the days of lockdown merge into each other without the usual structured routine.

However, staying in Cambridge also allows me to keep in sight those things that have not changed. The college grounds and neighbouring Sidgwick site have been eerily deserted, but we retain some sense of community thanks to the porters, staff and resident Fellows, who on warmer days scatter around the gardens with their lunchboxes and books. The cherry blossoms on Grange Road came and went, albeit without the usual passersby pausing to take photographs. In Japan, the fleeting appearance of these flowers is regarded by many as a symbolic reminder of life in all its complex beauty and transience. We all hope that the current situation will pass as quickly. Until then, I hope to reassure my students that Selwyn remains ready to welcome them back as soon as we safely can.



## Martin Pierce Bursar

The college's management team meeting on Microsoft Teams: Martin Pierce, Bursar; Janet O'Sullivan, Vice-Master; Mike Sewell, Senior Tutor; and Roger Mosey, Master.

At the end of February, three months into my new role as Bursar and feeling like I might just possibly be starting to get the hang of it, I left for two weeks on leave...

I came back in mid-March to a college – and to be fair, a world – completely transformed. But what happened next should, I think, make us all proud to be part of this small corner of that world. 'Unprecedented' was something we kept saying – and 'there's no textbook for this'. Colleges are so much about a community interacting in a shared space – but suddenly our task was to disperse that community, to stop those interactions. In short, we had to do something Selwyn had never done before – to close the college as far as possible and as fast as possible. Even if there was no textbook, I do think nevertheless some recurring themes have shone through.

The calm dedication and professionalism of Selwyn's staff, who have admirably taken it all in their stride and more.

We've actually been surprisingly good at adapting. Some have jested (only half light-heartedly) that we have leapt from the 19th to the 21st centuries in a single bound. Governing

Bodies and Fellowship installations are on Zoom, chapel Evensong is on YouTube, the Hall is a grocery store, staff are working digitally and remotely from their homes. Who would have thought it?

When we have been in doubt (which is often enough), trying to 'do the right thing' has been a good starting point. We haven't got everything right for sure, but it led us for example to early decisions to waive Easter term rents and to assure staff that they would continue to be paid, even before the furlough scheme was announced.

But we can't deny that, as well as the personal toll of the crisis, the impact on the college's finances is serious, profound and will affect us for years to come. At a stroke we lost over £1m of income from conferences, and another £1m+ from Easter term rents and catering income. Probably a quarter of the college's annual income will be lost in just six months, with huge uncertainty about what follows in the autumn and beyond. However we have already mobilised a taskforce to set about the challenge and will apply a suitably Selwyn 'can do' approach.

## Postcards from the Lockdown (continued)



**Sarah MacDonald**  
Director of Music



Lent term's chapel services ended on Thursday 11 March. The choir then had a few days respite before rehearsals began for concerts in London, Winchester, Bristol and Cardiff, and recording sessions for a new CD. As you'll have realised, this isn't exactly how things turned out. Instead, everything was cancelled and everyone went home.

When it became apparent that this was an opera rather than an introit (to coin a phrase), we realised that we had to be imaginative if this year's choir was going to continue. Since two-thirds of them are finalists, the thought that they had sung as an ensemble for the last time ever without realising it was sobering for all of us.

We decided to film a short service every week, to be released on YouTube so that it could be viewed in any time zone. Readers and preachers would be sourced from the chapel community, and the choir would record a psalm, an anthem, and a hymn from home for me to knit together into one virtual choir (making a "virtue" of necessity quite literally). The only minor complication was that I had never used video editing software in my life – in the first week of term, my learning curve was slightly steeper than that of COVID-19!

For the first couple of weeks, it was an all-consuming task, taking upwards of 80 hours to produce a 25-minute service. I am down to about 20-30 hours now, including

time for editing, exporting, downloading, uploading, converting, etc. We are the only Cambridge chapel putting on bespoke online video services (i.e. not just re-using previously-recorded material), and the chaplain and I have been gratified by the appreciative emails we have received.

The choir has also learned new skills: singing alone in front of one's phone requires a confidence, a discipline, and a perfection that the safety of the choir stalls does not. I am sure that they would agree that it is a poor relation to being able to breathe, resonate, enunciate, communicate, and make music together as one instrument, but it is better than nothing.

**Below:** Selwyn's virtual chapel service: It was an all-consuming task, taking upwards of 80 hours to produce a 25-minute service.



# Singapore – A city in a garden



Parks and open spaces have always been places to seek relaxation and recreation. And now more than ever they are appreciated as a relatively safe environment to which we can retreat with our family and friends. Chong Lee Tan (SE 1988) studied Natural Sciences (Physics) at Selwyn and now works as Assistant Chief Executive Officer for the National Parks Board of Singapore (NParks), the government agency which manages Singapore's nature reserves, gardens, parks and roadside greenery.

Despite being a very densely populated city-state, Singapore prides itself as one of the greenest cities in the world. This is the result of over five decades of consistent deliberate efforts of planting trees and greening the country, guided by the belief that greenery and nature improve the quality of our living environment, uplift the human spirit and make the country more attractive to visitors.

The work at NParks goes beyond managing greenery but

also includes nature conservation, biodiversity and the management of those species of flora and fauna that are native to Singapore, and which thrive in its tropical climate. A thriving economy inevitably puts pressure on Singapore's open spaces and fragile habitats but equally the local population appreciates access to these oases where nature can flourish.

One of Singapore's most imaginative developments is its Park Connector Network, created by NParks. This system of linear open spaces around major residential areas, links up major parks and nature sites across the island via carefully chosen routes alongside rivers and canals and spectacular treetop walkways.

As more of the world's population becomes urban, cities throughout the world are grappling with the challenge of maintaining a balance between development and safeguarding the natural heritage. Singapore offers an inspiring example of what can be achieved and what might be possible in the future.



den

Bret Clay / Stockphoto



Singapore aims to have more than 80% of its building green by 2030.



National Parks Board, Singapore.

**Top left:** Aerial view of Singapore Botanic Gardens with city skyscrapers in the background.

**Inset left:** Chong Lee Tan.

**Below:** Singapore's Botanic Gardens.

**Right:** Greening vertically can transform urban landscapes.

**Below right:** Roadside plantings of native Trumpet trees.

**Bottom right:** Eco-Link – an ecological bridge connecting two nature reserves over the expressway.



National Parks Board, Singapore.



Jasminu007/Stockphoto





**Selwyn Fellow and Director of Studies in Architecture, Dr Ronita Bardhan has been researching sustainable urban design – specifically the design of homes being built in Mumbai, India.**

**By Tom Almeroth-Williams, Research Communications Manager at the University of Cambridge.**

Millions of new houses being built for former slum-dwellers are failing their residents and fuelling unnecessary energy use. New research aims to improve their design before it's too late. Well over 100 million people live in squatter or slum-like settlements in India. In 1995, the state of Maharashtra trialled a policy to move some of these people into permanent slum rehabilitation housing (SRH) as a way to clear Mumbai's slums. Following its perceived success, the policy was adopted by the Indian Government in 2014.

So far, the country has built one-third of its planned SRH stock – the Government intends to create another 20 million homes by 2022. And now other countries in the Global South, including Ethiopia and Brazil, are poised to follow India's lead. But Selwyn College's Dr Ronita Bardhan, University Lecturer of Sustainability in the Built Environment, has major concerns about the design of the buildings and how they have been laid out. Bardhan is urging the Indian Government to make urgent improvements before rolling the programme out any further. By making certain modifications, she argues, the country can dramatically improve the lives of inhabitants and slow the spiralling use of electricity-hungry fans, air conditioning (AC) units and lights. Currently, many households are spending around 40% of their income on electricity. In a survey of 1,244 SRH households in Mumbai, Bardhan found that ownership of AC units rose by 100% after people moved from the slums to SRH.

"India's energy security is based on the assumption that the poorest in society won't be using much fuel," Bardhan says, "But we've found that when people move from the slums into a rehabilitation home, their energy consumption dramatically increases."

"As the climate heats up, people will suffer even more discomfort in these poorly designed buildings. They're being forced to buy AC units and if they don't have the money to use them all day now, they will do as they get wealthier. This could have a big impact on India's energy security but also global warming."

# Fixing India's Slum Rehabilitation Housing



**Top left:** Mumbai's vertical slum rehabilitation housing apartments – poorly designed and electricity-hungry.

**Right:** Ronita Bardhan, in a group discussion with SRH women and children, found they no longer know their neighbours.

The SRH policy deserves credit for its good intentions and ambition. Under it, the slum-dweller receives a house or apartment for free (a life-changing opportunity); the developer receives prime land for free which he can use to sell high-end apartments; and the Government avoids having to evict or compensate anyone. But it needs urgent modification. The construction of rehabilitation housing in India is led by developers, leaving the Government with relatively little direct oversight over its design and construction. Developers are expected to respect seventeen basic specifications but Bardhan is calling for the adoption of additional design guidelines to include the obligation to fit an exhaust fan to every house; the provision of public space; and measures to improve natural ventilation.

Bardhan's proposals are based on extensive on-the-ground research as well as her architectural training. She derives her design solutions from data collected from heat, humidity, light, air flow and pollution sensors, as well as findings from qualitative surveys and focus group discussion.

When Bardhan moved to Mumbai in 2014 and saw the city's vertical SRH apartment blocks for the first time, she was shocked by the lack of space between them and the residents' obvious despondency. The architect then read an interview with a resident. Asked how life had changed, he complained that his family and neighbours spent a lot on electricity and had to visit the doctor much more than when they had lived in the slums. "The report didn't offer any clear explanations," Bardhan says, "so I decided to examine how these buildings were working for people."

She convinced a family to let her install temperature and humidity sensors in their house and was shocked to see readings of 37°C when it was 10°C cooler outside. "The people were so uncomfortable and wanted to buy an air conditioner as soon as they had enough money. It struck me that, if these conversations were happening in every house, this could have huge implications for energy policy, climate change and the well-being of millions of people."

Bardhan argues that understanding social and cultural practices is essential to reducing the Global South's emerging carbon footprint. Aspiration plays a significant part – air conditioners and fridges are often purchased as status symbols. "People don't really understand why they are spending so much on electricity," Bardhan says. "They switch on the light at six in the morning and leave it on until they go to sleep at night, which they never did when they were in the slums where they spent most of their time outside."

In the slums people lived with resource constraints over many generations. They did so by developing and passing on innovative ways to derive comfort from their built environment. Slum-dwellers have always relied on their social networks for work and support. And when they move from the slums to rehabilitation housing these networks break down. Bardhan has found, for instance, that people who used to cook together in open spaces in the slums were now forced to cook individually in their homes, meaning that their fuel consumption has significantly increased.

"SRH has taken the flexibility out of crucial spaces," she explains. "Cultural norms haven't been translated into the design and the liveability factor has been lost. When design doesn't respond to the social network, people start getting alienated. This seems to have been completely overlooked in the policy's development."

To make matters worse, when Bardhan conducted cooking experiments she found that rehabilitation housing

traps high levels of particulate matter and retains this pollution for up to two and a half hours because the air exchange rate in these buildings is far below acceptable levels.

Bardhan has found that the policy has a particularly negative effect on women and children. She often hears women complain that they no longer know their neighbours and so can't share childcare with trusted people. You can have separate policies for air and fuel quality, or the well-being of women and children, but good design can solve multiple problems in one go.

The architect's research has attracted extensive media interest in India but so far the Government's response has been more muted. Nevertheless, Bardhan has already worked on a year-long state-funded investigation into the rise of tuberculosis in Mumbai. The Indian Government wants to eliminate the disease by 2025 but, Bardhan points out: "Rehabilitation houses are a breeding ground and yet the authorities want to build 20 million more of them by 2022."

Part of the problem is that existing building bylaws mean that some houses never receive sunlight and therefore expose their occupants to a higher risk of infection. Bardhan argues that access to safe levels of daylight should be prescribed because most people cannot afford to buy air purifiers. Other small steps in the right direction suggest that the authorities accept that their policy can be improved. Soon after Bardhan published several research papers in 2017, the Government revised their specifications to increase the minimum size of housing plots from 22 square metres to 30.

More recently Bardhan has examined heat islands in Mumbai and hopes this will convince the city's planners to choose appropriate structures to reduce dangerous levels of heat stress. Confident that she can make further inroads, the architect says: "There is movement on sanitation and the provision of organised open spaces, particularly for the use of women and children."

Bardhan's own experiences of urban life in India and elsewhere continue to inform her approach. She grew up in Calcutta and spent many happy hours at her grandparents' house, a traditional building arranged around a courtyard where her grandmother dried fruit while she played. "Nobody needed electric fans, people gathered outside to sit and talk, and everybody knew each other," she recalls. "Those memories probably explain why I'm still so passionate about integrating open spaces into architecture."

Bardhan's family home provided further inspiration. Designed by her father, the building had large balconies and a terrace: "His design was very sensitive to our needs as a family, to having sunlight, fresh air and outdoor space."

Bardhan was a PhD student in Tokyo where she lived in a high-rise apartment. At just 22 square metres, this was marginally smaller than Mumbai's rehabilitation housing. "That made me realise what a massive impact good design can have," she says. "I had everything I needed and I thought 'well, if this can be done in Tokyo why not in Mumbai?' Resources alone don't explain the huge difference in quality of life experienced in these two building types. Many of the improvements I'm proposing are simple and inexpensive."

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**Rehabilitation houses are a breeding ground and yet the authorities want to build 20 million more of them by 2022.**

Dr Ronita Bardhan

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**Below:**  
Ronita's own experience of city life in India continues to inform her approach to urban design.



**Alumni  
Festival  
2020**

**Online talk**  
Dr Ronita Bardhan will be presenting a talk online on this subject during the Alumni Festival in September 2020. More details of the date to follow. For more information, check our website nearer the time: [www.selwynalumni.com/eventscalendar](http://www.selwynalumni.com/eventscalendar)



There is an evocative power in photography – especially when the images capture a time of change. We celebrate here what a Selwyn student achieved in the 1960s, when he witnessed the traditions of Cambridge and also the people who were starting to transform the university and the society in which we live. He himself went on to become a professional photographer and a picture editor for leading newspapers.

# 1960s Cambridge

**Christopher Angeloglou** (SE 1959) realised early on that the camera was more than a passing phase and that journalism was what he really wanted to spend his life doing. He quickly found his way onto *Varsity*, where he ran the photography, and then became editor of *Image Magazine* and also did photographs for *Granta*, where he photographed the then editor, David Frost.

As this was a way into photography as a profession, he had to turn his hand to everything. Not only the daily life at university but also: news – when Oswald Mosley visited the Union; sport – when Herb Elliott was on the track; the *Footlights* when Peter Cook and Dudley Moore had audiences in stitches, and where Cambridge hosted celebrities like Harold Pinter, Yevtushenko and Lotte Lenya.

In his final year he did a marathon study of the May Balls and then a recording session with Cliff Richard and the Shadows, which he says was the hardest non-academic work he did in all the three years.

After he graduated from Cambridge he joined the *Sunday Times Magazine* as a photographer and then as Picture Editor.

He says journalism is a very fluid profession (you move around a lot) and over the next thirty years he worked for four other newspaper groups, before finally becoming a photographers' agent. Although retired (like most who matriculated at Selwyn in 1959) he says, "You don't stop photographing... you just rely more on auto-focus."



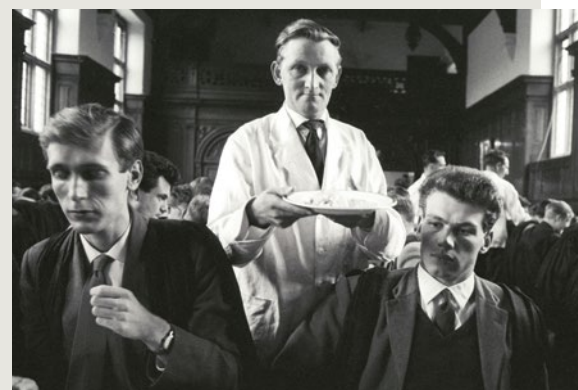
Top left:  
Christopher Angeloglou.  
Right:  
Evening meal at Selwyn.  
Note that gowns were compulsory then as now, but students sat on benches and, of course, no women students back then.





Above:  
David Frost editing *Granta*  
magazine.

Right:  
Students enjoying a May Ball  
in the summer of 1962.



“  
**You don't stop  
photographing...  
you just rely  
more on auto-focus.**

Christopher Angeloglou (SE 1959)  
Photojournalist



Above:  
Selwyn College Hall.  
Left:  
Punting on the Cam,  
Grantchester Meadows.

# The Fellowship

## Take three Fellows

### Professor Katharine Ellis

Subject: **Music**

University Position: **1684 Professor of Music**

University Department: **Faculty of Music**  
 Research interests: **Cultural History of Music in France during the 19th and early 20th centuries**

#### Where were you born? And what kind of family do you come from?

I was born in Surrey but grew up in Nottingham. I've always felt myself a Midlander. My grandparents were lower-middlers who had made good in the grocery trade; but my mother's generation was financially fragile and, possibly because of that, more educationally aspirational. My brother, cousins and I are the first university-educated generation of the family.

#### Was there always music in your life?

I certainly can't remember life without it. We must have been the neighbours from hell: horn, percussion (timpani lived on the landing), piano and violin. Immersion in orchestral and string chamber music came early for me because Nottingham's councils were incredibly generous with free tuition, a Saturday music school, and various youth orchestras. Then there was my music library, which grew out of family pilgrimages to the second-hand section of Blackwell's Music Shop. Those visits catalysed the browsing habits of a lifetime.

#### You went to a comprehensive school... At what point did you start thinking Oxford or Cambridge might be a possibility for you?

At 16 I moved from my local comprehensive to a former grammar school across town, mainly so that I could continue doing Latin.



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**There's a can-do mentality within the Fellowship that is wonderfully refreshing.**

Professor Katharine Ellis

”

In my first year I was probably the only pupil there who hadn't taken the 11+, but I was suddenly in an environment where teachers advocated trying for Oxbridge, and I had unstinting family encouragement.

#### Did you feel at home in the Oxford of the 1980s?

I don't think the term 'impostor syndrome' existed then, but I had it in spades. After a month I fled home in a panic of class anxiety and had to be coaxed back – after which things went better. Co-education was still new at Oxford, but my college, Univ, managed the transition so well that I don't even recall thinking very much about my gender as I went about my daily work. So the short answer is that I settled – and in the end I enjoyed it so much I went back for more.

#### You have had a stellar academic career. Was that you always wanted to do?

I was torn. After Oxford I did a diploma in orchestral violin-playing at the Guildhall School in London. But I wasn't good enough quickly enough, and the risks of rank-and-file life were all too real. I once made the mistake of telling my desk-partner I was looking forward to the day's music. His only response was 'Oh God, I've got an enthusiast'. After that, I started thinking about other career options. (The offending piece was Brahms Two. And yes, I still play for pleasure.)

Returning to Oxford, I brushed up my French reading skills and worked on Parisian music journalism of the 19th century. I found I loved both the thrill of the chase and the wordsmithing that followed. By the time I finished my DPhil I was a Junior Research Fellow in French Studies at St Anne's and primed for the interdisciplinary cut and thrust of my first permanent job, at the Open University.

#### “Music” is incredibly broad, of course, so can you tell us what your specialism is in 50 words?

I work on musical culture in nineteenth- and early twentieth-century France. It involves trying to understand what musicians and amateurs experienced, how they were educated, what music they might have had access to (or not) and what they made of it. Musically, it demands breadth: my research covers repertoires ranging from medieval plainchant to 20th-century modernism.

#### We're delighted to have you here at Selwyn, but how have you found being a college Fellow?

I'm in clover. There's a can-do mentality within the Fellowship that is wonderfully

refreshing, and we are intellectually serious without taking ourselves too seriously. We have our rituals, but I'm glad we don't let them rule our lives (especially when I get them wrong). And our students are a delight to teach.

**In Cambridge you have spoken quite a lot about women in music and you have been associated with initiatives like the Minerva Festival. Do you still think there's a long way to go before we fully recognise women composers and musicians?**

It seems to be a case of each generation fighting its own version of the same battle. But I am optimistic about recent trends in live and broadcast programming, and in the conducting world: creative women are becoming (deep breath) almost normal!

**What's your guilty musical pleasure – the album you would hide if students came round to visit?**

A few years ago, I would have said anything by Poulenc, given that I gorge on a favourite box set the way other people watch *Downton Abbey*. But I now teach his music, and find students wanting even more of it. I do however have an unhealthy fondness for the deadpan comedy of John Shuttleworth. I think being caught listening to '500 bus stops' or the 'vacuum cleaner song' would be pretty hard to live down. Especially if I happened to be singing along...

## Professor Patrick Baert

Subject: **Sociology**

College Position: **Fellow and Director of Studies in Human, Social and Political Sciences**

University Department: **Sociology**

Research interests: **Social theory, philosophy of social science, history of philosophy, sociology of culture and sociology of ideas.**

**You were born in Brussels. Tell us about your early life.**

I grew up in Woluwe-Saint-Pierre, a quiet suburb of Brussels, as part of a large family with four siblings who were all much older. My father was often abroad for work so I didn't see so much of him. My parents had a *laissez-faire* approach to bringing up children and mostly left it to my older siblings to look after me. This meant that at an early age I was exposed to the 1960s counterculture, having to listen to anti-war songs and



**“Don't ask an academic to describe what they do in 50 words...”**

Professor Patrick Baert

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lots of talks about the New Left and libertarian socialism. The fact that my siblings were in charge also meant that I had more freedom than most and I spent a lot of my time reading comics. I became gradually more interested in philosophy and politics, and thought that at undergraduate level sociology would be a good fit.

**You took your doctorate at Oxford. What made you want to study in the UK?**

Well, I wanted to study abroad and was particularly drawn to the college system. I thought it was important to be part of a community, especially for people in the humanities whose work tends to be more solitary than their counterparts in the sciences. I was also keen to work with Rom Harré, a philosopher at Oxford, who became my supervisor. We remained in touch till the end of last year when he sadly passed away.

**You've also lived in a number of different countries. Why did you decide to make Cambridge your home?**

The university is obviously a thriving place. I am always amazed by the quality of the students both at undergraduate and postgraduate level; this might sound trite but I learn so much from engaging with students. As for the town, I found it initially rather small, but it has grown immensely in the last couple of decades. And, of course, the big plus: we can cycle everywhere.

**“Sociology” is a subject that people know about without maybe being absolutely sure about its remit. Can you describe what you do in 50 words?**

Don't ask an academic to describe what they do in 50 words as they will use 250 to explain why that can't be done! Sociology is a broad church and some of my recent work is at the intersection with philosophy and intellectual history. As for the 50 words, I study how, throughout history, key social and political events have altered the way people think about how society should be organised and what our priorities should be. For instance, the First World War sparked an interest in pacifism, especially in this country. It also fuelled fascism, notably in Italy.

**You have written and spoken a lot in recent years about Sartre, and you do so in a very accessible manner. Do you think that's important for academics – to be able to connect to a broad audience?**

Yes, no doubt, although it does depend on the nature of the work; some research is obviously better suited to reach a broader audience. I do think it is important to convey things lucidly, whether addressing specialist or laypeople. Wittgenstein wrote that if things can't be said clearly, then it is better to remain silent. He didn't always practise what he preached, but I certainly agree with the sentiment. In my field – social theory – people often obfuscate things.

**At Selwyn you've been a long-standing tutor as well as a director of studies. Why do you think it's important that academics also retain that strong focus on a college's undergraduates, alongside their university commitments and research?**

Cambridge is trying to accomplish two very different things: being a top research university and providing the type of education which you find in the very best liberal arts colleges. Some people within the university focus on one rather than the other, but overall I am struck by how many academics juggle both. In my field, staying in touch with younger generations is really important, although I realise that I probably sound terribly old by just saying this.

**An inevitable question, maybe. How often do people think you're French?**

Well, if you want a number: I would say 8 out of 10 times. Unlike Hercule Poirot, it doesn't really bother me. Oddly enough, my first language is Dutch, not French, but in Brussels you end up speaking a lot of French, which probably explains my accent.

(continued overleaf)

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**What do you do to unwind? And we should say that you have been spotted in the past playing dads and lads football on Lammass Land...**

We now play at Parker's Piece and we have also recruited mums and girls! I love watching films even on television. I also read novels. In general, I do not feel I need to unwind too much; this may sound like a cliché but I feel particularly lucky in being able to do the work that I love.

**You got married in Selwyn chapel. That suggests this is a special place for you?**

Both our children were christened in the chapel – long before we got married! My own family was stridently secular, whereas Emma, my wife, comes from a South-African Anglican background. There is something quite unique about the understated spirituality and inclusiveness of the Church of England.

**Sarah Fraser Butlin**

Subject: Law

College Position: **David K P Li Fellow in Law**University Position: **Affiliated Lecturer**  
University Department: **Faculty of Law**Research interests: **Alongside Professor Catherine Barnard currently undertaking research on the Free Movement of People, funded by the Economic and Social Research Council, UK in a Changing Europe programme.****Tell us about your background – where you grew up, where you went to school?**

I grew up in Hertfordshire and Leeds, though I was born up in Scotland. My dad's a clergyman so moving was part and parcel of growing up. By secondary school, I was at a church school in Harrogate.

**Can you remember when you first developed a flicker of interest in the Law?**

It was quite a gradual process. I have always read voraciously and loved logic problems. I felt strongly about injustice and, as a Christian, was challenged by the Bible passage that calls us to act justly, to love mercy and walk humbly with our God. Slowly that became an interest in Law and it seemed an obvious choice once I was thinking about university.

**Was Cambridge always part of your plan?**

No not at all! No one from my family had ever been to Oxbridge so it really wasn't on my radar. In my mind, it was something that was for other people. Fortunately, my school suggested I apply and I came down to the Sixth Form Law Conference. I still wasn't sure it was for me but I applied anyway. By the time I went home after my interview, I loved it and would have been devastated not to get in!

**Why did you want to be a barrister?**

I always intended to work in international development but realised that I needed some professional qualifications. I planned to qualify and practise for a few years before returning abroad. Sadly, family circumstances intervened and I decided that I could not live and work abroad long term. By then I had also found that I loved being an advocate and the law itself and I have happily stayed in practice ever since.

**You've ranged quite widely in law – from trade unions and employment to medical negligence. What is it that fires you up about particular subjects?**

It's all about the people involved. Labour law touches on people's identity because so much of who we are is expressed in what we do. That comes to the fore to an even greater extent when discrimination and equality issues arise. Medical negligence can often impact people in the most deeply personal way and it is a privilege to work with clients who are seeking both answers and a way to rebuild their lives after tragedy. My research is primarily in labour law and has tended to focus on those in precarious work contexts. I've been thinking a lot

about those in the gig economy and also about the impact of Brexit on EU migrant workers who are frequently working in sectors where we see more labour exploitation.

**You also sit as a recorder. How many people say to you that you don't look like the conventional (gendered?) stereotypes of a judge?**

I look much younger than I am and that's the comment that is usually made – you're not old enough to be a judge! Once I'm robed though, I think it's less noticeable, or at least that's what I tell myself.

**The obvious question that arises looking at your activities... working on the infected blood inquiry. Wide-ranging legal advice. Sitting as a judge. Becoming a Fellow of Selwyn. Teaching undergraduates. Research. Being part of a family with young children. How do you balance all those demands?**

I have an incredible husband who has been determined that we will share the raising of our children absolutely equally. It is still quite a challenge and my work-life balance probably looks terrible from the outside but I find it all very stimulating. There are also great synergies between the different elements and they are less disparate than they might appear. My thinking in court is often informed by my research and teaching, and what I have worked on in a case, often causes me to think about it more deeply as part of my research.

**What do you think of the way lawyers are portrayed in the media – from Rumpole to Silks?**

I don't really watch TV! I did watch *Silks* a while ago and thought that it was pretty accurate... if you compressed the entire careers of five barristers into just a few episodes and turned the saturation up to max.

**When you get home in the evening, what's the way you'd recommend to wind down?**

Hmm that's something I'm still learning. My boys keep my feet on the ground with detailed explanations of the character in the fantasy book one is reading, or the precise details of a particular player that the other has on a football card. Otherwise I can usually be found trying to tame our rather wild garden. My husband and I try and get away every few months to sail up in Norfolk where there is just the sound of the wind in the sails and a few marsh harriers. That is good for the soul!



**My thinking in court is often informed by my research and teaching..**

Sarah Fraser Butlin





# The University Challenge experience

**Top right:** Wadham College Oxford's *University Challenge* team of 1978.  
**Right:** A professor of neurology, political journalists and a Cambridge college head of house.

by Roger Mosey

A photo brings it all flooding back. That ridiculous, bouffant hair, now long gone; and the cardigan that had cost slightly more than the usual student purchases, and which I foolishly thought might look stylish on television. A student then on the dark blue side, at Oxford reading History and German, I was a member of Wadham College's *University Challenge* team of 1978.

But the recording itself was not an enjoyable experience. As the first starter question, we had to identify the year of Martin Luther King's "I have a dream" speech. I buzzed in on an interruption to say 1964, when it was actually 1963; and in the unforgiving world of *University Challenge*, close is not good enough. I have a sharp memory of realising at that point that this was serious stuff: I was on national television, on a programme I had long venerated, and I had started on the wrong foot. Unsettled by the early setback, I played poorly. "Roger was very active in the programme", noted one of my mother's friends. "Very active, though not often right."

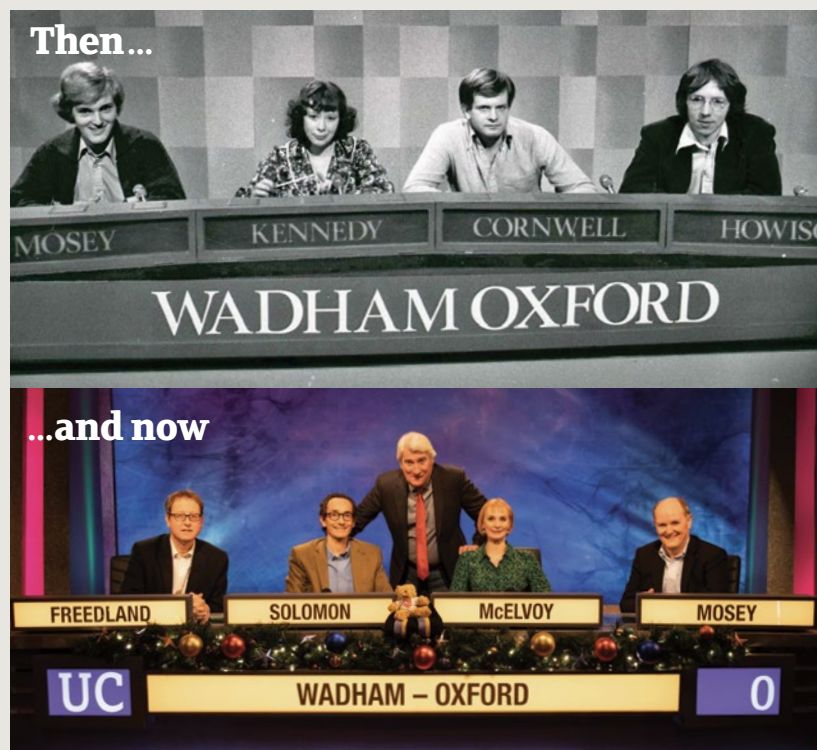
Truth be told, my main recollection is of disappointment; and I scolded myself that I should have done better. But I had, of course, believed that appearing on *University Challenge* would be firmly in the past. It was therefore a jolt to receive an email last autumn asking if I was interested in taking part in the Christmas alumni specials. A consultation with family and friends revealed divided opinions. "There is no upside to this," said one.

The extra peril was my job at Selwyn. I work daily with 60 brilliant academics, and 600 of the brightest students in Britain. How could I face them when I'd shown ignorance of their subject and countless others too?

In the end, heart won over head. I thought it might be fun. So I sent a reply saying they should count me in. On the day of the first recording, the Wadham team met for strong coffee in Salford's windswept Media City, and we agreed that this could be a foolhardy expedition. But there was a resurgence of some of the excitement I remembered from four decades earlier. We enjoyed being part of the production machine, in which you are moved from make-up to dressing room, with a man to iron your shirt along the way, before the rehearsals for the show itself.

In the green room, we watched on monitors the show that was recorded before ours. It did nothing for our nerves. A magnificent Leeds University

*Win or lose, we'd exceeded our own expectations.*



“Roger was very active in the programme” noted one of my mother’s friends. “Very active, though not often right.”

team, led by the Reverend Richard Coles, thrashed Clare College, Cambridge. We also saw the peril of facing Paxman, with Jeremy chastising the Reverend Richard for an alleged lack of knowledge of the bible. Then it was our turn, playing Birmingham City University. First, in front of the studio audience, there is a short test programme. The Wadham team sat mute through the easiest of starters. This stuff feels ridiculously more difficult when you're competing and under lights with a crowd watching. Birmingham City were soon into a 40-0 lead. A clammy feeling descended. Was history about to repeat itself?

On to the quiz proper. It began with a starter about a Dickens character played by Ron Moody. The immediate thought in my head was Scrooge. The memory of 41 years ago cut in: don't answer if you don't really know. Happily, my teammate Jonathan Freedland pressed his buzzer instead and answered "Fagin". Correct! I felt freed from the risk of a bad start. The second question sought a seven letter

word that describes "a liquid in which other substances dissolve" and "having assets that exceed liabilities." There was a curious sensation, which continued through the show, of my brain running fast and slow at the same time: fast in that I knew the answer must be 'solvent', but slow in that I remember checking the number of letters. I buzzed. Correct, and 10 more points for Wadham. From that moment on, I think we all decided it was going to be ok; and we won 160-75.

As one of the highest-scoring winners, we were summoned back the following weekend, and discovered that the producers had set up an Oxford v Cambridge battle in the semi-finals and we were facing Trinity Hall. The questions couldn't have been better for us, and this element of randomness in a contest was shown by the result: the Trinity Hall team, who had excelled in the first round, scored 25 – while we surged to 215.

With just time for a change of clothing – the producers like viewers to think the teams have spruced up specially for the event – we were back in the studio for the final. Our opponents were Leeds, and they were again on top form. Quite unfair, we joked afterwards, that they knew the answers to most of the questions and we didn't. Their winning score: 235-130.

But we'd enjoyed the televised twists and turns in our fortunes. In particular, I'm glad I didn't stick with that memory of the lad from Bradford with silly hair who had a touch of stage fright. Any opportunity to take part should be seized – and a second chance is best of all.



Kate Hyams

# The quiet rebel of climate change – Lord Deben

Two Selwynite paths recently crossed on the Committee on Climate Change. We reunited them so that its chairman, Lord Deben (SE 1958) might be interviewed by Tom Andrew (SE 2012).



Tom Andrew

**W**hen I left Selwyn in 2016 I didn't set out to work in climate change policy. I had a general interest in energy and the environment, but it was coincidence that my first job in the civil service was working on renewable heat.

It was there that I first became aware of the Committee on Climate Change. I thought the areas they were involved in – how the UK can decarbonise and adapt to climate change over the next thirty years – were fascinating. Climate change forces us to address important and difficult

questions about what society looks like in the future, how to ensure the transition is fair, and the roles of new technology and human behaviour in meeting our global responsibility to act. I joined the Committee in 2018, at what feels like a critical time for taking action.

Lord Deben, formerly known as John Selwyn Gummer MP before he entered the House of Lords in 2010, is the Chairman of the Committee and a fellow Selwyn alumnus. I recently interviewed him about his time at the college, his career and climate change.

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**I say to climate change deniers: “It’s not me that needs to prove that it’s unsafe - it’s you that has to prove that it’s safe.” Of course, they can’t!**

Lord Deben

”

**You graduated in 1962. How did you go from young undergraduate to the House of Lords and Chairman of the Committee on Climate Change?**

I started in the publishing industry before moving into general management. I was elected to Parliament twice – in 1970-74 in a marginal seat in South London, and then as a candidate for a Suffolk seat in 1979. I was a Minister for 16 years and later served as the Secretary of State for the Environment under John Major having been Minister of Agriculture under Mrs Thatcher.

When the Conservatives lost in 1997, I decided that I wouldn't be able to just sit on the backbenches, so I set up a business to help companies understand that sustainability was a good thing. Against the conventional wisdom at the time, we tried to explain to businesses that behaving ethically and sustainably would help their profits rather than be a burden. That has been going for 22 years.

I remained an MP until 2010 when I retired and was put into the House of Lords. I was chosen to be the Chair of the Committee on Climate Change by the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change and the First Ministers of Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland. This was a Lib Dem, a Scottish Nationalist, a Labour Welsh AM and a Protestant Unionist, so I fitted the bill because I was a Conservative and a Catholic, so could be seen as entirely independent! I still sit as a Conservative peer because I was a Minister for so long, but I don't think anybody thinks I'm anything other than an independent – certainly not the Government.

**What do you regard as your most significant achievements in that time?**

It's very difficult but I'm most pleased about getting the Government to vote in favour of the 'European Bubble' approach to the Kyoto Protocol, whereby the UK would do more towards climate change so that other parts of the EU, Ireland in particular, would do less because it was more difficult. That was important internationally because it laid down the concept that those who are best positioned to act should do the most, and the quickest. Secondly, I thought it was a way that I could personally do something in reparation for the appalling behaviour of Britain in Ireland for many centuries – something I've always felt very strongly about. Being a great believer in the European Union, I've recently been looking for Irish connections but there's no connection at all.

**Could you briefly explain the role of the Committee on Climate Change, and what you see your role as Chairman?**

The main role of the Committee is to set the targets on the path to our final goal, which is now net-zero emissions in 2050. The whole purpose of those targets in the Climate Change Act is to make sure that governments act now rather than delay action. The balance is very simple: we advise on the target. Parliament accepts it and it becomes the law, and it can't be changed without the Committee agreeing to that change –

which enables the Committee to exert significant pressure on the Government.

The second part of our job is to assess the Government's plans and whether it is on track to meet targets, and if it is falling short, then we point out what needs to happen to get back on track. That gets more acute the longer the Government doesn't do what it should be doing.

So it's a mixture of setting the targets, enabling Parliament to legally enforce them, and then constantly holding the Government to account, while providing the necessary scientific and economic advice to help them meet their targets.

**I'm from a generation where climate change has – rightly – always been taught as fact. When did you first come to hear about climate change, and become convinced that something needed to be done?**

I've always had a particular interest in our environmental duties because I was brought up with the central concept that we are stewards of this world. We don't own it, it was given to us and we have to look after it. It was therefore very natural for me to be concerned.

I went to the Department of Agriculture in the 1990s and I know I went there believing in climate change. I can't tell you exactly how but it seemed very sensible based on my general reading and the simple science: the world was too hot for anything much to live on it until trees started to grow. They took the carbon out of the atmosphere, died and became coal and then oil. If you reverse the process we get into terrible difficulties.

If we suddenly put huge quantities of stuff into the atmosphere, we ought to prove that it's safe before doing it. I say to climate change deniers it's not me that needs to prove that it's unsafe – it's you that has to prove that it's safe. Of course they can't!

**It feels like in the UK that the battle against climate change deniers has been won, do you feel that's the case?**

Yes, I think the battle for the argument has been won and it's been won pretty widely. It's only not won yet where, for political reasons, people would prefer to say they don't know. If you know, you have a responsibility to do something. I quite understand why Mr Trump doesn't want to know, because if he does, then so much of his policy has to change.



Joe Giddens/PA Archive/PA Images

**“ This is something that really matters to young people, because they will have to live with the effects of climate change. ”**

Lord Deben

**We've seen a massive increase in public interest in climate change in the last two years and people – especially young people – are demanding action. Are you confident that something will be done? How can the young people of Selwyn contribute to the challenge?**

First of all, I'm optimistic that we can do it but it's a huge challenge and it does mean a fundamental change. When the Pope talks about climate change in *Laudato si'* – which I think is the most valuable short piece on the topic – he talks about it as the symptom of what we've done to the world. The symptom means we have to stop polluting but also look at the whole impact – poverty and the way we've treated people historically, biodiversity, soil health, deforestation and so on.

When it comes to young people, I think the key is that people are involved in the toughest kind of way. They need to recognise that this is something that really matters because they will have to live with this problem. So I would tell them to be an activist in the way that fits them the best.

Some will be activists in the kind of Extinction Rebellion way, which I think has an important role to play, but there are many others who wouldn't be like that because they want to focus on a realistic and practical solution. If every sports club and society and choir and church across the country did what needs to be done,

you would see a huge change. It's about living your life in a way that is responsible, and each of us has to do it.

I think Cambridge has very good leadership on this issue by the vice-chancellor, from the small to the very big: everything from minimising food waste to ensuring that when a new heating system is put in, it doesn't run on fossil fuels.

**What are your favourite memories from your time at university?**

I enjoyed my time at Cambridge enormously, but I was often more involved in the Union and the Conservative Association than I was in the college. The Master at the time, Owen Chadwick, was one of the great influences on my life. I read History and one of my special subjects was the Oxford Movement, Churches and the Establishment. He was a magnificent lecturer. He was a very special person who changed the lives of anybody that worked with him.

**Finally – I'm sorry to ask this – but it's hard to ignore that your middle name is Selwyn. Is it a coincidence?**

It's entirely a coincidence – I was named after my father and all his sons were called Selwyn. I originally planned to go to Oxford but I was lucky enough to get an Exhibition to Selwyn.

**Katie Sim (SE 2012) had moments of doubt as to whether she could cut it as a police officer. Now she feels that becoming PC Sim has been the best decision of her life.**

## From Selwyn to the Scottish Police

I entered the Scottish Police College (SPC) about two years after leaving Selwyn College, where I had studied French and Spanish. Living and working at a traditional institution again after two years of dubious freedom as a wayward ‘professional’ was pleasantly familiar, although I was shouted at much more at the SPC. There was also a lot more marching and boot polish. Memorably, we were instructed by letter to attend in business wear at the parade square for our first day, where we milled about in confusion and excitement. Without warning, a shiny man with a stick sprung forth from the bushes and screamed at us to line up at attention (what does that mean?). Without further explanation, all 220 of us were then closely inspected by this terrifying apparition (the drill sergeant, it would transpire), who would only break his theatrical silence to look deeply into someone’s eyes and say something rude. The man ahead of me was told he had excessive nose hair. On that occasion, I got away with some intense nose-to-nose eye contact, but would go on to fail a uniform inspection because of ‘neck hair’. Ouch.

It was an all-consuming three-month course on the beautiful Tulliallan Castle estate. Our stay there marked the beginning of a two-year probation whose end I am only glimpsing now, during which time I have sat several oral, written and fitness exams. I was 24 years old, however my colleagues ranged in age from 18 to 55 years old. I don’t know if there is another career where you work alongside such a diverse range of people; graduates and school leavers, professionals with long careers in other industries, as well as the dazed and confused.

My class and I were in the trenches together. We ran together, studied together and drank together. One person failed to toe the line, all accepted the punishment. Someone was left behind or allowed to fail, we were crucified as a group. My short time at the SPC would turn out to be a microcosm of my policing



Katie Sim

experience generally – team work makes the dream work. After the SPC I was posted to response policing in Edinburgh where I found a new team. Although a sickening cliché, my colleagues have become a family to me. There is nothing I wouldn’t do for them and I rely upon them in turn. You might think we’d get sick of each other, spending 40 or 50 hours a week trapped in constant conference, but weirdly you find they become your social life as well. Perhaps because of our shift pattern (no one else wants a pub sesh starting at 1pm on a Wednesday? Weird?) or perhaps because of a cultish mindset you develop doing such a strange and intense job.

When you pass your probation you can apply for any job in Police Scotland for which you have the relevant experience (perhaps not Chief Constable straight off the bat). A lot of graduates immediately give preference to accelerated promotion schemes when considering Policing as a career. That path held no appeal to me, personally. Response policing

“

**Who could dislike skidding around the capital city in a marked car, lights and sirens blaring, running red lights to get to someone who needs help right away?**

Katie Sim

”

**Below: Team work makes the dream work – running, training, studying and drinking together builds real camaraderie.**

is bread-and-butter police work, the bare minimum the public expect of us. It is a privilege to provide that essential service. Skipping ahead means missing out on the camaraderie and excitement of ‘the shift’. Who could dislike skidding around the capital city in a marked car, lights and sirens blaring, running red lights to get to someone who needs help right away? In a career that in my case will hopefully span at least 35 years, you have to walk before you can run. Where else would you develop the skills necessary to become accomplished other than at the coalface?

As a police officer you need to make quick and yet considered decisions. You have to consume and process huge amounts of information coming at you from all angles and feed this back to others with concision and clarity. You have to remain cool under pressure and control dynamic situations. You have to soothe and care for those in extreme distress, whether they are a victim of crime or are suffering a mental health crisis. You also have to complete huge amounts of paperwork to a high standard – these reports might trigger support services for a vulnerable person, log intelligence or deprive someone of their liberty.

I had assumed I would be taking a huge pay cut by entering a traditionally working class job, however that was not the case. I hope that by being terribly gauche and doing a little monetary myth-busting others may also consider this amazing career, if it’s something they have always secretly fancied. It’s a job and a lifestyle that puts you in crazy situations that you will laugh about for years to come. Sometimes you can even go home feeling like you’ve helped someone, just a little bit.



**Fiona Amery (SE 2019)**  
A PhD student studying History & Philosophy of Science, has taken on a research project about the material history of the science of photographing and capturing images of the aurora borealis and the scientists that took them.



# The art and science of light



## Carl Størmer Auroral Photography

Professor Carl Størmer, a mathematician, astrophysicist and the world's leading auroral photographer during the first half of the twentieth century. Dressed in furs and surrounded by the snowy landscape of Bygdøy, Norway, he is seen capturing the northern lights through the camera lens, to document the phenomenon for scientific study in the 1910s. His earpiece is linked via

telephone wire to his colleague at another station, so that their photographs can be taken simultaneously, facilitating later calculations of parallax and the height of the auroral form. It's quite rare and really useful to be able to visualise what was happening behind the lens to understand the conditions and equipment needed for long cold hours of auroral photography.



**Fiona's research funding is provided by a scholarship created by Scott and Lucy Littlefield (both SE 2005) and matched by the university. However, many outstanding students fail to find the MPhil and PhD funding they require to continue their studies. Please get in touch with Mike Nicholson, Development Director, if you would like to learn more: [development-director@sel.cam.ac.uk](mailto:development-director@sel.cam.ac.uk).**



## Northern Lights photographed by Ole Andreas Krogness

This is an early photograph of the northern lights, taken by Ole Andreas Krogness on 7 December 1914. The image depicts several faint bands of an auroral form twisting and shifting in the night sky above Norway. There are white scratches on the negative but also small pinpricks of light representing distant stars. It was important for stars to be captured in the frame to situate the auroral form at a later date. Photographs such as this were created according to strict

procedure so that they could be easily compared, revealing information about patterns of auroral appearances, their geographical extent and their relation to magnetic storms and other atmospheric phenomena.



## The Krogness-Størmer Camera

Used almost exclusively to photograph the northern lights between 1910 and 1940. Developed in 1909 by Krogness, the first director of the Norwegian Haldde Observatory, with the help of Størmer, the camera was the first piece of photographic equipment constructed specifically for capturing the aurora. One of the main advantages of the design was that each plate could render six photographs by virtue of the mechanical slide system. This meant six exposures could be taken in quick succession without the need for the fiddly procedure of changing the plate in cold conditions. A series would then be created, representing the movement of the aurora for easy comparison. Unfortunately, one of its limitations was the inability to record the brilliant colours of the lights!





**How did Richard Edwards (SE 1975) – a law student from Selwyn, help to create one of the top 500 galleries in the world – Baldwin Gallery and why in Aspen?**



# The accidental gallerist

I suppose that I am an accidental gallerist as it was never my intention to pursue it as a career. I read Law with John Spencer at Selwyn and, from the mid-1980s, had been working as an attorney in New York specializing in international arbitration and litigation. Contemporary art had always been an interest and I was fortunate enough to start collecting when I was relatively young. When I decided to move to Aspen for a winter to live with my partner, he suggested that we use our connections within that world to open a small gallery selling works by artists that we already knew.

At that time in 1994, Aspen had a small community museum together with a number of galleries selling Western genre and tourist art. It was, and still is, a fairly remote and inaccessible small town on the western slope of the Rockies with a permanent population of about 6,000 people. When we first started the gallery, we faced a number of challenges. Aspen

was not on the radar of most artists and it was difficult to persuade them that it was worth their while to make an exhibition of new work for presentation in a resort town that had no relevant art scene. In addition, collectors were not used to the idea of purchasing art in a small ski town. We had to counter a certain amount of initial scepticism but soon word got around amongst artists and dealers that we were serious in intent, the early exhibitions were selling and that artists could reach a new audience plus have a fun vacation at the same time.

As a result of interest and introductions from the artists, our roster has expanded greatly and now ranges from older established art stars, such as Gilbert & George, James Turrell and James Rosenquist through mid-career artists to hip younger artists, including Shara Hughes, Peter Coffin and Tom Sachs. We now have a 6,000 square foot gallery and present a varied programme of painting, sculpture, photography, video



**1**  
**Gnost**  
Tony Oursler  
2018  
Acqua resin, cloth,  
metal, media player,  
LED screen

and installation.

In the last year, the gallery has mounted a series of exhibitions which highlighted shows of new paintings by Mickalene Thomas, Genieve Figgis and Peter Halley; new sculpture by Sanford Biggers, video sculpture by Tony Oursler and photographs by both Robert Mapplethorpe and Adam Fuss.

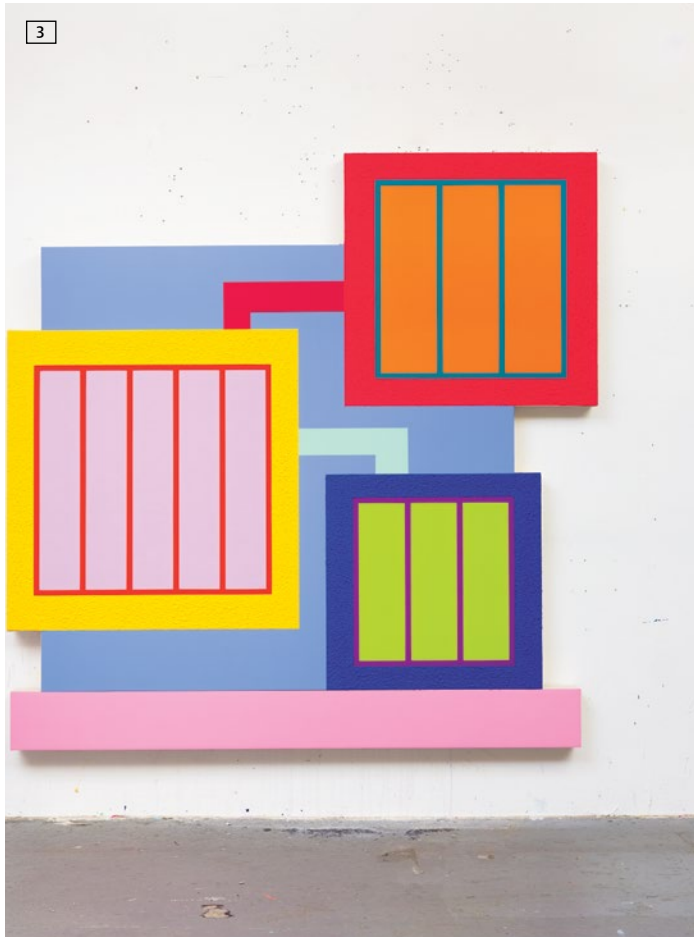
Looking back, our endeavour was a tad foolhardy but has been a fascinating and rewarding journey with gratifying results. Twenty-five years later, we have a thriving contemporary art scene in Aspen with a new Shigeru Ban designed art museum, several other galleries and a large collector base. We are proud that Baldwin Gallery is the only non-major city gallery to be invited to be a member of the Art Dealers Association of America and is also one of the few small-town galleries on the *Modern Painters* magazine list of 'Top 500 Galleries in the World'.

Courtesy of Tony Ouder and the Baldwin Gallery, Aspen



Courtesy of Alexis Rockman and the Baldwin Gallery, Aspen

2  
**Alexis Rockman**  
Tree of Life  
2018  
Oil on panel



Courtesy of Peter Halley and the Baldwin Gallery, Aspen

3  
**Purity Falls**  
Peter Halley  
2019



Courtesy of Marilyn Minter and the Baldwin Gallery, Aspen

4  
**Melt**  
Marilyn Minter  
2014  
Enamel on metal

“  
**Looking back, our endeavour was a tad foolhardy but has been a fascinating and rewarding journey with gratifying results.**  
”

Richard Edwards



Courtesy of Peter Coffin and the Baldwin Gallery, Aspen

5  
**Untitled (Rope and Hands)**  
Peter Coffin  
2015  
Bronze



National Trust



**Above:**  
Mrs Edith Pretty  
– owner of the Sutton  
Hoo site in 1939.

**Left:**  
Basil Brown and  
team excavating the  
ship.

**Below:**  
Basil Brown – the first  
archaeologist on site.



**Inset:**  
Charles Phillips  
– Selwyn College Fellow,  
led the Cambridge  
team that undertook  
archaeological work in  
1939.

**Dr Catherine Hills, Fellow Emerita of Newnham College, eminent archaeologist and Anglo-Saxon specialist investigates the burial mounds of Sutton Hoo and the treasures that they hold.**

# The Great Ship Burial

Sutton Hoo is one of the best known ancient monuments in Britain, the archetypal buried treasure, brought to light in the summer of 1939 just before war broke out. The gold and garnet shoulder clasps, the gold buckle and stone sceptre are all familiar images, and the helmet has become an icon illustrated on the cover of every book about early medieval England. The story of that discovery has a close connection to Selwyn College because the excavation of the burial chamber was directed by Charles Phillips, then a Fellow of Selwyn.

The investigation of the burial mounds at Sutton Hoo, near Woodbridge in Suffolk, embodies a microcosm of the history of archaeology in Britain, beginning with unrecorded pits and trenches from at least the sixteenth century. From 1965 to 1971 an even more meticulous investigation took place, led by Rupert Bruce-Mitford from the British Museum.

The third major campaign, directed by Martin Carver, was a carefully planned research project focussing on the burial site as a whole: mapping the site with a variety of methods including experimental soil penetrating radar.

The 1938-39 excavations still attract much interest, as much from the personal as the archaeological perspective. The National Trust has created a new exhibition about this in Tranmer House, which in 1939 belonged to Mrs Edith Pretty. It was her interest which led to the excavation of the intriguing mounds on her land which she could see from the windows of her house, and her generosity which gave the finds to the British Museum.

In 1938 Guy Maynard, the curator of Ipswich Museum, sent Basil Brown, a local archaeologist to investigate the mounds, several proving to be already robbed. His skill in uncovering the ship was fundamental. In some ways the key to the whole Sutton Hoo enterprise was Brown's realisation that the rows of small lumps of rusty sand they were uncovering were all that remained of a ship.

At first it was thought to be a Viking ship, and news of it reached Charles Phillips in Cambridge, who was brought in to oversee the excavation. He assembled a small but impressive team of archaeological friends and colleagues, who proceeded to uncover and excavate an astonishing array of finds in a very short period of time, in the second half of July 1939.

Basil Brown ignored instructions to cease digging and continued to work on the ship, leaving the burial chamber to Phillips and his team, which was a very good thing as otherwise the excavation



## Diary of events

This part of the magazine usually has a long list of dates, accompanied by the details of dozens of events that the college organises for the benefit of our alumni and friends around the UK and internationally. Since mid-March however, we've found ourselves busy with the unwelcome task of postponing or cancelling all of our planned events until September. Whether or not we'll be able to resume some sort of events programme then remains to be seen. In common with much of the hospitality

sector, Cambridge events are predominantly social in nature – and certainly not enhanced by the need to maintain a strict social distance. But we'll be monitoring the situation and government advice closely, and as soon as it's possible to start organising gatherings of any size, safely, we'll be ready to do so. Personally, getting together with Selwynites and guests is easily the most enjoyable part of my job, and I miss the good fellowship, humour and conversation that characterise our regular gatherings. So let me confirm that our intention is to reorganise any year group reunions that we've had to postpone, along with other major events in the college calendar.

On the plus side, our relative isolation means that we've all learned to firmly embrace the digital world and the opportunities offered by platforms such as Zoom. In May we held our first online Ramsay Murray lecture with Trevor Phillips OBE. Hundreds joined us via Zoom for his talk, including alumni in Japan, Australia, Africa and the US. We received terrific feedback from many individuals and being able to bring the Selwyn diaspora together for such moments is indeed a new experience and it's our intention to programme more of these online events in the months ahead.

Dr Charlotte Summers will be presenting our next online talk on **Friday 26 June**, and will be sharing her COVID-19 experiences as an intensive care specialist at Addenbrooke's Hospital. For more information check our website: [www.selwynalumni.com/eventscalendar](http://www.selwynalumni.com/eventscalendar).

For those of you who may never have attended a Zoom lecture or 'webinar' you don't require any special software and you can watch and listen via your home-computer, laptop, tablet or smartphone – providing you have internet access. If you're unsure, please get in touch and we'll be happy to help.

**Mike Nicholson**, Development Director  
E: [development-director@sel.cam.ac.uk](mailto:development-director@sel.cam.ac.uk)  
T: +44 (0)1223 335846 M: 07443 532907

“

**I don't normally do webcasts and never get to Cambridge for in-house events, but I found this lecture really interesting... I would be keen to see Selwyn do more.**

A Selwyn alumnus

”



Our first online Ramsay Murray lecture with Trevor Phillips OBE.

British Museum



Above and right: The ceremonial helmet, Sutton Hoo and a gold shoulder clasp.

National Trust/Robin Paterson

British Museum

of the ship might not have been completed. It was to become the richest grave excavation in Europe.

Brown and Phillips, despite some inevitable tension, did develop respect for each other. The ship, in some ways the most spectacular part of the excavation, is to be credited to Brown while the dissection and record of the burial deposit was the work of others: Stuart and Peggy Piggott, William Grimes and O.G.S. Crawford. Phillips himself did not do much of the digging because, as he said, he was 'quite a large man and was afraid he might squash some of the delicate finds'.

There were over 200 objects found, including items made of iron, bronze, silver and gold. Amongst the finds

included intricate shoulder clasps of gold inlaid with garnet and glass and the iconic Sutton Hoo helmet – now reconstructed – as when it was found it was only a series of shattered fragments.

It is of great credit to Phillips that he not only managed successfully the excavation of the burial chamber but also ensured it was widely known by publishing an account of it in *Antiquity* – edited by O.G.S. Crawford – within months of the find and remarkably, in the first year of World War II.

The National Trust visitor centre has to some extent reclaimed the site as a local Suffolk monument and attraction, although the originals of the artefacts were given to the British Museum by Mrs Pretty and remain safe in London.

### Watch the drama

'The Dig' is a new movie to be released by Netflix later this year. It stars Lily James, Carey Mulligan and Ralph Fiennes. Somewhat less probable is the fact they will play characters sharing the screen with Charles Phillips, an eminent Cambridge archaeologist and Fellow of Selwyn College. Dr Catherine Hills, who as a young academic worked with Phillips briefly, takes up the story of this very English excavation, which resulted in Europe's greatest archaeological discovery of the twentieth century.



Dominik Lipinski/PA Archive/PA Images

National Trust/Robin Paterson

# Honorary Fellows

**Selwyn welcomes two new Honorary Fellows – Selwyn alumni demonstrating considerable merit on a global scale.**

## Zia Mody (SE 1977)

Zia Mody studied Law at Selwyn and then gained her Masters in Law at Harvard. She has gone on to become one of the most successful lawyers in India, where she is considered the country's foremost corporate attorney and an authority on corporate merger and acquisition law.

"It is indeed an honour to be inducted as an Honorary Fellow of Selwyn where my study of the law began. I owe much of my growth to Selwyn which prepared me for a career in the legal profession and also trained my mind to think in an analytical and incisive way. Selwyn also left me with many happy memories.

It gives me great pleasure to continue to be a part of the Selwyn community and interact with great talent and good friends."

Zia Mody – champion of women's rights in India – both in and out of the workplace.



## Nigel Newton (SE 1973)



Founder and chief executive of Bloomsbury Publishing, Nigel Newton read English at Selwyn before beginning his career in publishing. He is a Member of the Advisory Committee of Cambridge University Library, Board member of the US-UK Fulbright Commission, and President of Book Aid International. In March 2020 he was awarded the publishing industry's Lifetime Achievement Award by the LBF, and has now become an Honorary Fellow of Selwyn College. He took time out during the coronavirus crisis to chat to *Selwyn Magazine's* Christine McDonald.

**You came to Cambridge from San Francisco in 1973 – what do you recall about your time at Selwyn?** The Freshers photo really determined my social life for the next 46 years. I struck up a conversation with the person next to me - Will Daniel - who introduced me to Francis Pike and David Pittaway (Sidney Sussex, 1973). We have all remained good friends ever since. I was struck by how quickly one

made one's college friends. I count amongst mine Richard Surfleet, Jamie Roberson, Phil Winston, Chris Jones, Steve Robinson, Alan Stevens, Rolfe Kentish, Jim Markham, Geoff Mann, Loch Trimmingham, Richard Davenport-Hines and many others.

**Having read English at Selwyn, when did you decide to become a publisher and why?**

Publishing was the only industry which interested me and I was fortunate that Macmillan offered me a job as a graduate trainee as that was the only publisher recruiting on the milk-round. From there I went to Sidgwick & Jackson. At the age of 28, I decided to start my own publishing company.

**Twenty eight is quite young to be thinking about starting your own business – what motivated you then and how did you raise the funds?**

Two things: the thought that 'I could do this!' and something frightening my father said: "Boy, if you haven't made it by the time you are 30, you never will." So, I duly started Bloomsbury a year late at 31. 1986 was a heyday of venture capital and we raised the money from four venture capital houses – one of which is still a shareholder: Legal & General.

**What do you think you can attribute your success to?**

Luck and determination. I am comfortable living with risk and have felt OK in the coronavirus crisis. If you regard business and life as one rolling crisis, when a big one comes along it's not a surprise. Being an optimist, my motto is "It will all be fine for reasons we don't yet know."

**In terms of risks, and you seem to like to take them – what was the biggest risk you have taken?**

Starting Bloomsbury and abandoning a nice salaried job. At that stage, I had two young children, Catherine and William. My wife Joanna also had a job, but we had a house and mortgage, so that step into the unknown was putting our family at risk. Since then there have been many individual 'punts' on titles – many of which have failed – but some of which have succeeded, spectacularly.

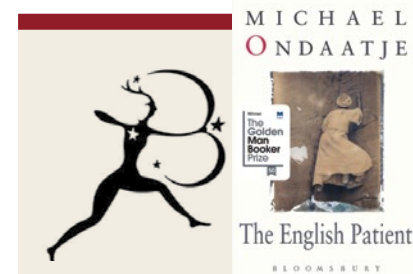
**What was it about the *Harry Potter* story, or the author, that made you think: 'Yes, this is something to take a punt on'?**

In 1996, literary agent Christopher Little sent *Harry Potter* to Bloomsbury. I gave the first chapters of it to my youngest daughter Alice, who was eight years old at the time, to read. She read them and said: "This is a book that will warm the hearts of seven and eight year old children. When can I read the rest of it?" The whole Bloomsbury team were keen on it, so I authorised an advance, which was negotiated and accepted. It was only later we found that 12 other publishers had turned it down. We were very lucky!

**What have been the major challenges you have faced whilst building up Bloomsbury?**

A major challenge is that publishing itself is very difficult to get right because you are engaged in the act of predicting public taste two or three years ahead of time when you sign up a book. A secondary challenge is that of running any business, making cash flow, actually having any sales. The biggest issue is always people. And then there is the economy...

Currently we have a monthly wage bill of £3.3 million with 750 employees around the world in London, Oxford, Haywards Heath, New Delhi, Sydney and New York, so that's a lot of money to pay out when your sales are well below what they normally are due to the pandemic, although our digital



**Bloomsbury perfectly bridges the popular and the academic, publishing over 2,500 well-judged books a year. Best known perhaps is *The English Patient* by Michael Ondaatje which won the Golden Man Booker prize as the best novel of the last 50 years.**

# News

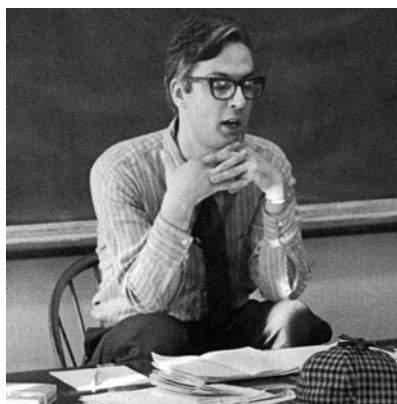
resource sales to university libraries are booming as they are good for distance learning.

## Why do you feel the need to help different organisations boards and trusts?

Mainly because they have asked me. I was asked by the then VC of Cambridge University, Alison Richard, if I would be on the university library advisory committee and said 'yes'. So here I am, twenty years later. I am giving my time and expertise – such as it is. I do have causes that I support and one of those is Selwyn, because I feel fondly towards the college and I like having a current relationship with it rather than an historic one. I was thrilled to be offered the Honorary Fellowship.

## Is there anyone who has had a tremendous impact on you?

One of the most important people in my life went to Selwyn in the late-1950s: Christopher Dixon.



Christopher Dixon (SE 1957) was the ultimate inspirational teacher.

He got a double first in English and Philosophy, became a school teacher, then emigrated to America and taught at Deerfield in Massachusetts where I was. I asked him if I could apply for Oxford. He said, "No. Impossible. You need to have Latin to read English at Oxford" and so my hopes were dashed. "But with French..." he said "there is Cambridge..."

Christopher Dixon was the ultimate inspirational teacher with his own cadre of followers. If he hadn't said 'but we could try Cambridge' I would probably be sitting in San Francisco 46 years later instead of here in East Sussex, but everything flowed from that one moment.



## Sir David Harrison (SE 1950) celebrates his 90<sup>th</sup> birthday

Sir David has a unique place at Selwyn: as an undergraduate, who started here in 1950; as a Fellow for 63 years, including being Senior Tutor; and as Master in the 1990s, following spells as a vice-chancellor at Keele and Exeter, and as Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Pro-Vice-Chancellor for the University of Cambridge. Sir David has had a

remarkable career, with many different roles across schools and colleges, the university and The Royal Academy of Engineering. Outside academia, he was Chairman of the Government's Advisory Committee on the safety of nuclear installations. He was awarded a knighthood in 1997. Over the years his various roles – including being admissions tutor and senior tutor – have earned him the respect and admiration of generations of students and staff. The college council has therefore decided to honour his birthday by renaming the New SCR as The Harrison Room, so that his contribution to the college will be marked enduringly. When the college reopens, we can all look forward to The Harrison Room as being one of the places where we will gather again. Alumni, friends and staff were invited to add their best wishes for the big day by contributing to a digital birthday card.

## Appointments

### Adrian Smith – President Elect of the Royal Society

Following in the footsteps of Christopher Wren, Samuel Pepys, Isaac Newton, Joseph Banks, Humphry Davy and Ernest Rutherford... We are thrilled that our alumnus **Adrian Smith** (SE 1965) is to be the next president of the Royal Society. Sir Adrian is a mathematician and statistician, who served as vice-chancellor of the University of London. He is an Honorary Fellow of Selwyn.

The Alan Turing Institute



### Top job at the BBC

**Tim Davie** CBE (SE 1986) has been appointed director general of the BBC. Tim, who studied English here, is a former marketing executive at Procter & Gamble and Pepsi. His previous BBC roles have included being director of radio, and chief executive of BBC Studios. Tim is also the chairman of Comic Relief, a trustee of the Tate and of the Royal Television Society, and chairman of the Creative Industries Council.

BBC



## Archbishop of York – John Sentamu (SE 1974) – steps down

The college wishes a long and happy retirement to its alumnus John Sentamu, who has stood down as Archbishop of York. Dr Sentamu studied theology at Selwyn in the 1970s, and was awarded his PhD here in 1984. He is an Honorary Fellow of the college, and he keeps in close touch with news from Grange Road.



## Gold medal winner

Selwyn medical student **Emma Baghurst** (SE 2017) won a gold medal in the Women's Winter Box Cup in January this year. Emma boxes for her home club, Berinsfield Amateur Boxing Club. She was also the champion in the senior female Class A (57-60kg) category in the National Development Championships in October 2019. Emma is currently studying for her Bachelor of Medicine, Bachelor of Surgery – MBBS, Medicine and is due to graduate in 2023.

Emma Baghurst



Guy Carshley/Alamy Live News

# Gone to ground



**Tom Hollander** (SE 1985)  
Selwyn Alumnus, Honorary Fellow  
and award-winning actor



David Rose

**D**ear Lord wake me up when this is over. Wake me up in the new age and let me learn the rules then. Tens of thousands dead, millions unemployed and the generation that parented me carried away gasping for breath. Just let me sleep and wake me up for the new normal. Or take me back to a noisy restaurant in February. That bygone age.

I had the virus. For two weeks I lay sweating, limbs aching, head splitting, skin burning, just able to walk up a flight of stairs before lying down again, unable to take a deep breath. But I didn't end up in hospital. Since, I've been recuperating in a barn at the end of a long lane. Away from it all. I am very lucky. I think I'm okay, except every couple of weeks I experience little shadowy reprisals of exhaustion and breathlessness and I have to lie down. And I succumb to anxiety and the apprehension that nothing will ever be the same again.

Our lives will be separated into before, and after, the pandemic.

But for the most part, without prospect of any work for months, and in between the horror of the news bulletins and the pantomime of the daily briefings, I have been enjoying the calm of daily walks through fields and have been counting my blessings in the eerie stillness of this suspended world. I know

the virus has divided society ruthlessly along lines of wealth and ethnicity. If the worst that happens to me is that I come through this with a slightly reduced lung capacity and chronic fatigue syndrome I'll be getting off lightly.

While other people struggle to save lives, or livelihoods, or to home school their children and others are being abused, or lonely, or grieving, or any of the myriad versions of existence that are not as fortunate as mine; while they struggle, I have been sitting in a country garden listening to the birdsong, planning my weekly shop and indulging my hypochondria. And in my fool's paradise I have had the time to consider what, and whom, I really care about. Mostly whom. Old friends and family. And I have concluded that much of my life has been consumed with fripperies and indulgences of one sort or another. With noise

and activity and adrenalin and restlessness and nonsense. Very fun, but perhaps a little wasteful. So, now I have time to tend my garden, real and figurative, and to reflect.

I am not alone I realise. There are other affluent, or at least not immediately impoverished people, who find themselves with an embarrassment of free time, guiltily enjoying the extended holiday gifted to them

by COVID-19, before the future takes shape.

But the real beneficiary of the pandemic has been, as we know, the natural world. Albeit temporarily. A drop in carbon emissions beyond the wildest dreams of Naomi Klein. Lord, can that be part of the new normal? Is that too much to ask? Before we restart the economy and resume our kamikaze ride to destruction, am I allowed a silent and entirely hypocritical cheer at the death of air travel, or at least its hospitalisation? That plucky little coronavirus hitched a ride on the planes and then grounded them all. And grounded us too.

And gave us a glimpse, perhaps a preview, as you look up into a clear sky and breathe as deep as you are able, of what the world might be like, if lived less elsewhere and more where you find yourself. Less free but less profligate. Perhaps a newly fashionable old-fashioned restraint. An enthusiasm for considering what's just under your feet.

And in this mood on my walks, I have been trying to learn the names of the wild flowers. Taught to me by my housebound father, by text. He's been telling them to me all my life, but this time I think they might be going in. Stitchwort, Yellow Archangel, Speedwell, Cowslip, Mallow, Birdsfoot Trefoil. Garlic mustard, Cuckoo flower, Wild Pea or Vetch....

If there is a plan is that what the pandemic was for? To stop us in our tracks. To slap us hard in the face and force sobriety. Those ten years left that we hear so much about. In the meantime Lord, I'm in my garden learning the names of flowers, counting the people I love, and reminding myself to let them know.

**“ I had the virus. For two weeks I lay sweating, limbs aching, head splitting, skin burning, just able to walk up a flight of stairs before lying down again, unable to take a deep breath. ”**

Tom Hollander

