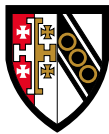


2024

Selwyn

Magazine





FOCUS ON: MEDIA & JOURNALISM

The dawn of the modern newspaper

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Backing British content

TIM DAVIE

RESEARCH IN ACTION

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SOPHIE WILSON

Shooting stars

DR MATHIAS NOWAK

Unearthing the riches of the volcano

DR CARRIE SODERMAN

Eastern lights

SCBC

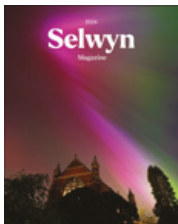
TEACHING EXCELLENCE

Interacting with young minds

Graduation 2024

Development news

Master's diary



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Welcome

We hear about what's happening in the world through the media. These days, social media platforms compete with the longer established brands - and we have never had more information at our fingertips. Pretty much everything known to humankind is available on our phone. But whether we know or understand more as a society is debatable, and that provides the main theme of our opening pages in this magazine.

Selwyn is lucky to have among its alumni two of the biggest figures in world media: David Thomson who chairs the Thomson Reuters organisation, and Tim Davie who has served since 2020 as Director-General of the BBC. They both write exclusively for us, with David focusing on how his early years were shaped by his family with its ground-breaking newspapers and Tim setting out the case for the BBC in a fragmenting world. They are supplemented by a robust defence of the values of journalism by Paul Bascobert, the President of Reuters News.

Of course, none of this explosion of media would have been possible without the pace of change in technology. Again, we have a report from the frontline. Alumna and honorary fellow Sophie Wilson is one of the most distinguished computer scientists of our age, and she has written specially for this magazine about the question we probably all have: what on earth is coming next?

We have supplemented Sophie's fascinating piece with two examples of the research being done by college fellows at earlier stages of their careers. Carrie Soderman writes about earth sciences, while Mathias Nowak explains how he captured the universe from the prosaic location of the fellows' garden at the back of the college.

That ties in neatly with our cover picture for this edition. It shows the night that the Aurora Borealis came to Cambridge, providing an exceedingly rare light show across the city and much of the United Kingdom. The pleasure of this magazine is that we can give a proper showing of some of the photographs taken around the college, and we're appreciative of all the contributions that are published online throughout the year and in print here.

Later in the magazine, you will find our regular feature on fellows and their work. This year we feature the vice-master, who is a distinguished lawyer, along with an engineer and a theologian. It's a reminder that the academic work of the college, which is world-leading, is done by people from a multiplicity of different backgrounds. Novelty is no longer particularly novel. Jörg Haustein discusses his background in East Germany, and he is our first fellow from there; just as we also recently installed our first fellows from Chile (maybe even the first ever from South America) and Syria. Ours is a diverse community that offers a model of how we can work together for the benefit of the United Kingdom and the wider world.

If you enjoy what you read here, please also keep an eye on our website and our social media platforms where we feature daily updates about life in Grange Road. Just search for 'Selwyn College Cambridge' and you will find our main outlets, including a wide range of videos on YouTube, with @selwyn1882 the handle to look out for on Twitter/X and Instagram. We're in the media business too...

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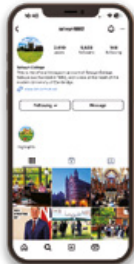
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YoYo

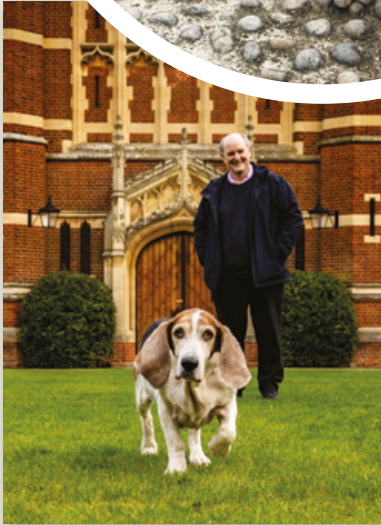


Celebrating our college cat

We're sorry to report that YoYo, the master's dog and a resident of the college for more than a decade, died in June - a couple of months short of her 12th birthday. YoYo was famous as Selwyn's college cat, a title which she owes to former council secretary Dr Rupert Thompson. He noted ahead of her arrival that cats rather than dogs were the normal adornment to a master's lodge, so he recorded in the minutes that council had given the master permission to keep "a very large cat". The story was subsequently picked up by *The Times*, the *BBC*, *Sky News* - and international news outlets from Globo in Brazil to the Xinhua news agency in China.

Since her arrival in January 2014, YoYo became a firm favourite with generations of students. She managed to get into the room and beg for treats at 80 freshers' suppers; she took part in JCR welfare walks to Grantchester; and she was a fixture at alumni events and Easter egg hunts, as well as showing her sociability by sitting on a wide range of distinguished visitors.

We therefore ask for no condolences but rather a celebration of a magnificent basset hound who, as these photographs show, brought pleasure to so many people.



Toronto-based **David Thomson** (SE 1975) is chairman of the Thomson Reuters Corporation – one of the world’s leading media and information companies which includes the historic Reuters news agency. In this article specially for *Selwyn* magazine, David reflects on his time at the college and the influence of his extraordinary grandfather. Roy Thomson (RHT) built the company we see today, and during his career he acquired *The Times* and *The Sunday Times* – then at the peak of its influence – and launched Scottish Television.

The dawn of the modern newspaper



Gary Herchon/Corbis News/Getty Images

Journalism featured greatly in my life from earliest days. A single recollection stays lodged. My father left me in my grandfather’s Mississauga study as a very young boy. RHT read his newspaper intently with bottle cap glasses drawing him within millimetres of the page. The radio broadcast news at a high decibel. I sat in silence, trying to imbibe his world.

Our family resided in London during the late 1960s, as my father became chairman of *The Times*. RHT had a room in our flat and joined us for breakfast several mornings a week. Newspapers, radio, discussion followed. We would visit with him in his home in Buckinghamshire on most weekends. My sister and I adored exploring nature but conversation usually gravitated to newspapers and journalism. I sensed the tension and began to understand the bifurcated world, internal and external.

My high school days in Toronto passed swiftly. RHT and my father were keen on several US universities but my heart gravitated to the UK. A fellow Cambridge graduate of my father’s time was a tutor at Selwyn, Dr. Ian Muir. He kindly suggested that I apply and write the exams for history.

I could hardly believe the news of my acceptance, having struggled badly with the sciences and suffered poorly. Selwyn loomed large. I kept to myself, playing ice hockey for the university and taking time to pursue the art world alongside history studies. RHT lived mostly alone in his Buckinghamshire home. I risked reprimand in driving off far too often to sit with him. He was in the midst of dictating his autobiography *After I was Sixty* (1976). The tales of encounters with Khrushchev, Chairman Mao, Sadat, J. Paul Getty, Hammer and many other figures were redolent.

He read prodigiously from our imprints: Hamish Hamilton, Michael Joseph, Sphere Books. I would hear him speak to the press room seeking to learn of the copies of *The Sunday Times* that made the delivery vehicles.

The first oil concessions in North Sea were in play. RHT had weighed and accepted the risk of joining the consortium of Occidental Petroleum Corp., Getty Oil (Britain) Ltd. and Allied Chemical (North Sea) Ltd. My father had taken us to our Claymore oil field off Wick when RHT suffered a major stroke on June 21 1976. He fought hard to recover but passed away in early August. My father took the reigns thereafter. I would become closer to the businesses which found themselves drifting towards America with the newfound resources from North Sea oil.

International Thomson began to pursue professional content businesses at the dawn of the digital age. Thomson Newspapers continued a parallel path within their sector, and TRN (Thomson Regional Newspapers) was also at its zenith. I was blessed to have ample exposure to the leaders of both newspaper groups, and especially *The Sunday Times* under Sir Harry Evans’ leadership. I adored the man, and so deeply admired his indefatigable nature and resolve to hold power to account. RHT sensed a kindred spirit in Harry, and the two were inseparable throughout the heyday on the paper with its colour supplements and investigative teams. Our family has never stood taller.

Selwyn was a crucial part of my journey in heightening those familial realms that espoused journalism and its ability to shape lives for the better. RHT and my father would scarcely believe our present



Ree Coleman/Baron Studios/NPG

Roy Herbert Thomson, 1st Baron Thomson of Fleet.

course with Reuters, and *The Globe and Mail*. They so admired the former and cherished the latter. I feel immensely proud to be alongside these fabled news organizations. The present leadership is fuelled by a passion and resolve to make a difference in our world. We stand upon the shoulders of Sir Harry and a host of brilliant journalists that shaped these legacies. The future has never looked brighter. The ‘glass must always remain half full’.

Selwyn College permitted time and space to observe, reflect and shape directions for my life. I am grateful. The memories rekindle warm moments.

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Selwyn was a crucial part of my journey in heightening the familial realms that espoused journalism

DAVID THOMSON

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Why I have faith in the future of journalism

Paul Bascobert, president of Reuters News, on how the Thomson vision thrives today.

“I wonder if that’s true?”

And so it begins. A headline, a post, a video. It may sound just true enough, or maybe untrue enough. At least that’s what we infer from logic or our own life experiences, and maybe we click a bit deeper. We may attempt to triangulate with a trusted conversation in that slightly rhetorical manner that carefully balances an assertion with genuine inquiry. Heads nod. It sounds truthy enough and misinformation takes another step forward.

The challenge we face today, however, is not simple misinformation; frankly that’s been an issue since the first words were put on paper. Early printing presses, in the hands of politicians and prophets, were often purpose-built propaganda machines. The real issue is just how masterfully misdirection is being delivered in the modern digital ecosystem. Peel back the flood of comments from influencers, bots, and boiler rooms and maybe you arrive at a study purporting to be “objective.” But is that objectivity real?

Are the experts real, are their degrees? What about the assumptions or statistical methods these experts use?

Now, imagine a world of AI where content creation is limitless and can be tuned to produce carefully persuasive narratives at scale. The provenance of objective facts or observed outcomes has never been more elusive and it’s about to get exponentially murkier.

Should we care? Beyond the moral imperative of uncovering truth and fact in the modern age, is there some more compelling self-interest we can invoke?

I submit that coordinated misinformation and its stagnating effect on human progress should now take a seat alongside the other great challenges of our time: food, clean water, disease, nuclear weapons, climate, and freedom – challenges where the personal implications have become alarming enough to command action. Let me explain further. When truth and facts are obscured from individuals, they become disconnected or diverted from the real problems and the financial and societal benefits of solving them. Misinformed prejudice and dogma also limit the freedoms and resources needed to incubate and scale breathtaking innovation. As a result, the entrepreneurs and problem-solvers in society are left to wander in the dark.

When a common fact base is obscured from society at large, we lose our shared understanding of the world, or worse, risk becoming unwitting pawns in some



nefarious agenda. These agendas seek to polarize, recruiting followers at the expense of inconvenient truths. This misinformed tribalism tears at the social fabric that enables collective action, a uniquely human trait that has powered numerous advances from the neolithic revolution to public education to the underpinnings of the internet. As a result, we are diminished in our ability to rationalize the individual compromises required to rally around great collective advances.

There is a solution. Well-run journalism organizations like Reuters, BBC and others give no allegiance to any agenda other than the pursuit of objective facts. They have rigorous standards for sourcing, use of language and corrections. These organizations understand the evolving challenge of facts and are committing the resources necessary, including developing advanced AI properly supervised by human editors. Their mission is to deliver facts and rigorous analysis, to shed light on truth without fear or favor.

Ultimately, as a free marketer, I place my faith in enlightened self-interest, to the core idea that to not seek truth and objective understanding is to participate in the decline of the world in which we live. The toll of a steady diet of half-truths and deceptions may not manifest in my lifetime, but it will affect the next generation.

And so, it comes back to each of us. As the implications of misdirection become clearer, I believe a group of global citizens will emerge who, like in the other great human challenges, will advocate for change, seek collective action, and press for innovative new tools. Similarly, a group of media providers will rise: they will hold fast to their standards while building new products to better connect and serve their audiences. As with all movements, great social transformations begin with our individual choices. Here, the choice of where to begin that media journey of a headline, a post or video falls to each of us. So, alongside our reusable containers, shorter showers and LED bulbs, let us also choose our information sources wisely.



Bloomberg/Getty Images

Backing British Content

In the UK, the hottest seat in broadcasting is director-general of the BBC. The corporation remains the strongest force in British media, with over 90% of the public consuming its content each week. It has hundreds of millions more in its worldwide audience. And yet it is always near the centre of controversy about its funding, its programmes and its politics. **Tim Davie** (SE 1986) sets out the case for the organisation he leads.

In the past few years, a new wave of technological change has rapidly reshaped our media landscape. It has brought with it huge benefits to consumers, with more choice than ever before, and exciting new opportunities in areas such as AI. It is amazing to think that during my time at Selwyn we had no mobile phones, no social media and only four TV channels!

But the new world brings fresh challenges too. The challenge to our democracy from disinformation and malign international influence is growing. Over 70% of the world does not even have a free press. And there is the challenge to our society from media fragmentation, polarisation and social division.

Earlier this year, I set out ‘A BBC for the Future’. It is a plan for how we intend to focus our mission and resources more closely on the needs of today’s society, and respond more directly to some of the shared challenges we now face.

It prioritises three clear roles for the BBC in the years ahead. To pursue truth with no agenda, by reporting fearlessly and fairly. To back the best British storytelling, by investing in homegrown talent and creativity. And to bring people together, by connecting everyone across divides.

I could focus on any one of these here, and institutions like Cambridge are important partners in nurturing a stronger, enlightened society. But I sometimes think that in this country we take our creative success and global cultural influence for granted. It is worth reminding ourselves of exactly what is at stake.

The UK’s creative industries are a growing £125 billion success story. They are built on a unique, globally-admired system of public and commercial investment that has proven itself over decades in delivering profits for both society and the UK balance sheet. They are much more than ‘soft’ power.



Jacob King/PA Images/Getty Images

Tim Davie

Born: 25 April 1967
Education: Whitgift School, Croydon;
Selwyn College (1986–1989)

1991
Joined Procter & Gamble as a trainee

1993
Marketing & Finance Dept, PepsiCo

April 2005
Joined the BBC as Director
of Marketing, Communications and
Audiences

2008
Appointed Director of Audio & Music, BBC:
responsible for BBC’s national radio
networks, BBC Orchestras and BBC Proms

2012
Acting Director-General of the BBC

2013
CEO of BBC Worldwide

2018
Appointed a Commander
of the Order of the British Empire (CBE)
for work in BBC Worldwide

2020
Appointed Director-General of the BBC

But in a competitive global market, the pressure on huge international businesses to deliver efficiency creates genuine jeopardy for UK-originated content and homegrown storytelling.

These are the stories that celebrate and showcase our world-leading culture and creativity. They document the differences that make each of our nations and communities special - think *Blue Lights*, *Sherwood* or *Happy Valley*. Most importantly, they are the stories that British audiences value the most. In 2023, of the two top ten most viewed programmes, 100% were UK stories or events, with 70% from the BBC.

And beyond these shores, it is the strength of our local storytelling that is the key to our international creative success. Authentic British stories, brilliantly and beautifully told, are our

unique point of difference in a saturated market that has become hung up on the abstract notion of global appeal.

This storytelling is deep in our DNA and is directly linked to my privileged days at Selwyn reading the very best of English literature from the last seven centuries.

On the global streaming services, a small minority of the offer is UK content. This is not a criticism - they are impressive companies that make many good shows. But there is no doubt that global economic models drive you to a different place, editorially, to a UK player.

Today the BBC invests far more in original British content than anyone else. No one does more to champion new talent from every part of the UK. Without us - without the public service broadcasters - the scale and scope of that spending on British stories would quite simply not be replaced.

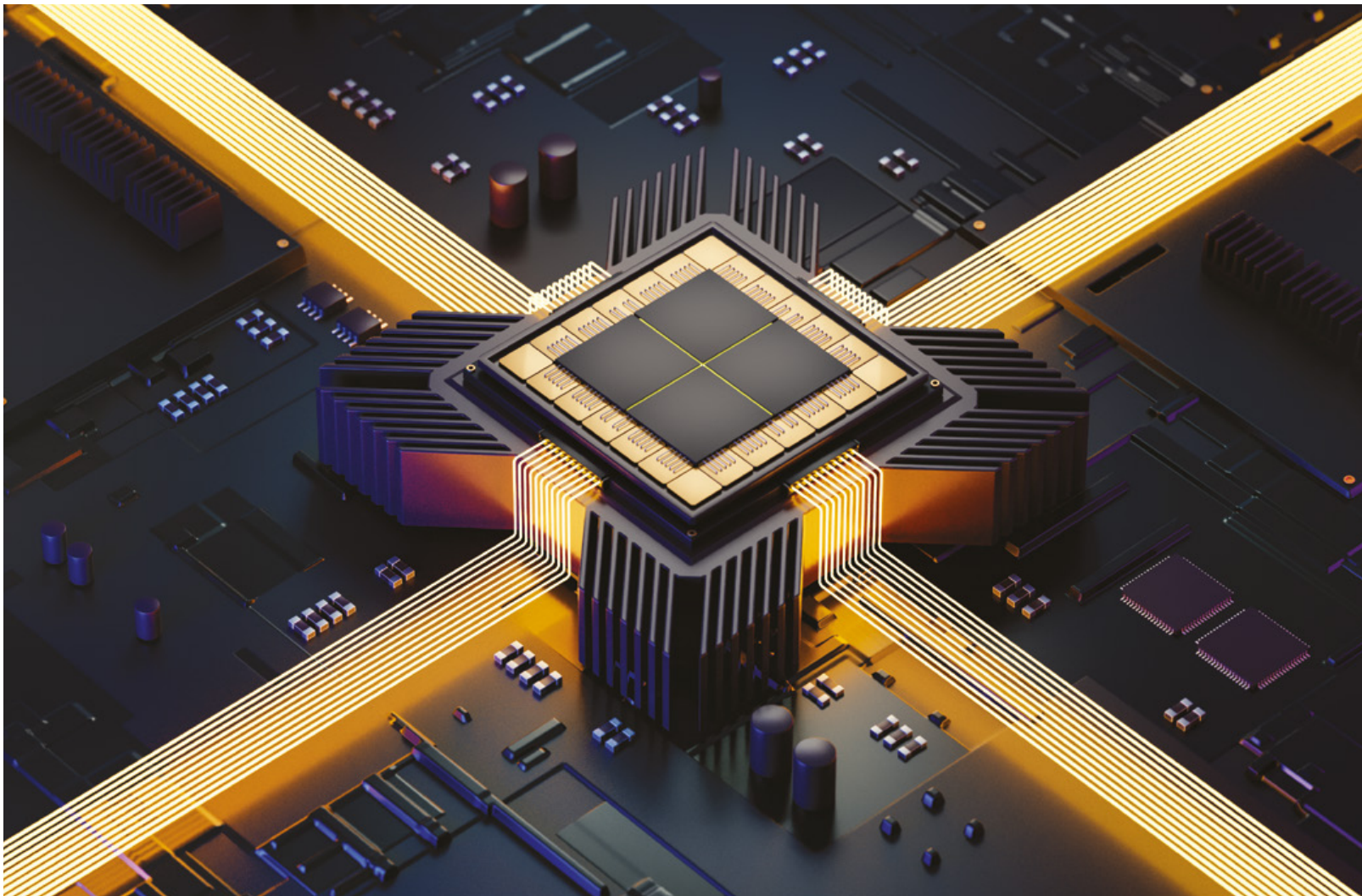
The result of all this is that the BBC represents a powerful growth and innovation fund for the UK. We contribute almost £5 billion to the UK economy each year, supporting over

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Authentic British stories, brilliantly and beautifully told, are our unique point of difference in a saturated market that has become hung up on the abstract notion of global appeal
”

TIM DAVIE

50,000 jobs and working with 14,000 suppliers. Every £1 of our direct economic activity generates £2.63 in the economy as a whole. And 50% of our economic impact is outside London, compared to an industry average of 20%.

Together we need to champion institutions like the BBC and make sure that the UK’s remarkable creative success story continues. That is why we are doubling down on our commitment to back the best British storytelling in the years ahead. Not only for the benefit of our audiences, but to safeguard the strength of the UK’s creative sector as a whole.



COMPUTING : SOPHIE WILSON



The AI PC era begins

Alumna **Sophie Wilson** (SE 1976) has had an illustrious career in computing science. The chip she devised is now in the overwhelming majority of smartphones worldwide, and she is seen as one of the most important figures in her field with a range of lifetime achievement awards and a fellowship of the Royal Society. Writing exclusively for this magazine, she reveals what’s coming next in technology.

Main image by Raimundas Gvildys

I last wrote for this magazine in autumn 2014, predicting that the future of computing lay in power-efficient microprocessors built on a single silicon die, all specialised for particular tasks. Over the past decade, all that has happened and more. Thanks to modern microprocessors, we now have accessible ‘AI chatbots’ on almost every website, with ‘AI image generation’ at your fingertips. What is next?

Firstly, hardware will continue to evolve. Machine learning is coming to your computers. Machine learning is one of the basic components of AI; in essence, it is a system that can learn and carry out tasks without human input. Indeed, it is already here – speech recognition is now done with machine learning algorithms, and so is unlocking your phone or computer with your fingerprint or face. You may not think of those things as being similar to ChatGPT, but they use similar algorithms to what ChatGPT uses and they are processed locally on processors on your device. In fact, if you bought a device or computer in the last four or five years, then you can run “proper” machine learning on it, which is usually more power efficient than sending all your data to a supercomputer in the cloud.

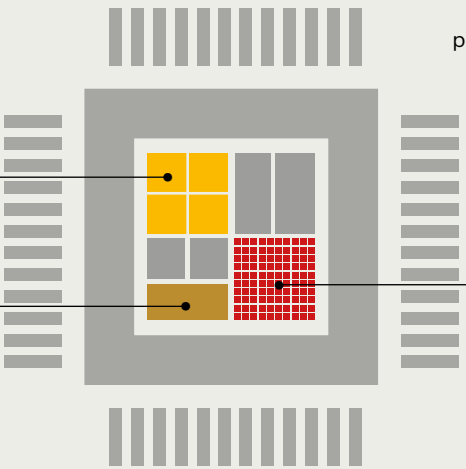
So where do supercomputers fit in with the future of AI? While modern computers are built out of a few silicon chips which contain one or more silicon dies with multiple processors on them, supercomputers are built out of lots of silicon chips. Furthermore, supercomputers purpose-built for machine learning tend to include many more high-performance processors on the chips, which are also highly specialised. For example, supercomputers have specialised processors called Neural Processing Units (NPU). NPUs are a relatively new type of processor that can compute similarly to our brains, which makes them useful for developing artificial intelligence. Over the last decade, there has been a dramatic race in NPU performance – a gain of 1000x for machine learning algorithms on a single chip – the same 1000x gain for Central Processing Units (CPU: the main processor in a computer) took three times longer. In fact, they have already trickled down to your devices: the machine learning algorithms for speech recognition and unlocking your phone are handled by versions of NPUs on your phone. So, there’s technically nothing that a supercomputer does that an ordinary computer, or your tablet or phone, can’t do – a supercomputer just does it a lot faster.

Measuring this sort of computer performance has always been tricky. With machine learning it’s even more tricky, as performance becomes more about how a processor on the chip called the General Purpose Graphics Processing Unit (GPGPU) can handle specific algorithms. We currently measure their performance scale in Tera-Operations Per Second (TOPS), with an operation defined as a simple task like a multiply or add.

The multi-processor silicon die

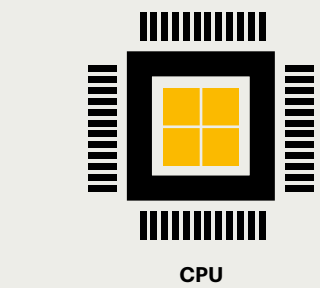
CPU
The Central Processing Unit (CPU) is the heart of your computer, following instructions to make everything happen in the machine.

GPGPU
A Graphics Processing Unit is a specialised chip for performing graphics rendering. A GPGPU is a general purpose graphics processor with the capability of handling some parallel processing on behalf of the CPU.

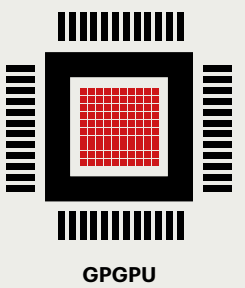


NPU
The processing for machine learning is described as a ‘neural network’ — this is a brain inspired set of processing routines. The Neural Processing Unit accelerates these processes for the CPU.

Comparing the CPU and GPGPU



Central Processing Unit
2–20 Cores
Good for serial processing
Quickly processes tasks, usually requires user interaction
Traditional programming is written for CPU execution



General Purpose Graphics Processing Unit
100s or 1000s of Cores
Good for parallel processing
Breaks jobs into separate tasks to process simultaneously
Requires additional software to convert CPU functions to GPU functions for parallel execution



Connie Zhou

Silicon wafers (pictured here) are very thin slices of pure silicon. Integrated circuits are etched into this wafer, which is then cut into microprocessor chips.

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The software for machine learning is evolving at pace, moving beyond the sole control of the technical mega-corps

SOPHIE WILSON

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For context, a basic modern computer chip like an Apple M3 chip (available on Apple’s latest laptops) is capable of 18 TOPS running on just a few watts of power. An Intel Core Ultra ‘Meteor Lake’ chip offers 10 TOPS, an AMD Ryzen ‘Hawk Point’ offers 16 TOPS and their future offerings are likely to be around 40 to 45 TOPS, which is what Microsoft advise for machines to be capable of running their ‘Copilot AI’ services locally. Look out for heavy marketing of ‘AI PC’ this year – far in advance of anyone knowing exactly what these services will provide, what use it is to people and therefore, what they’re worth.

So that’s the hardware evolving – more processors doing more things, just like before. In a way it is properly boring – but boring is good, and it lets engineers work towards the future.

The real fun is in the future of software. The software for machine learning is evolving at pace, moving beyond the sole control of the technical mega-corps (in this case: Microsoft, Google, Amazon, Alibaba, Baidu).

When OpenAI’s machine learning model ChatGPT, a Large Language Model (LLM) to be specific, first appeared it galvanised the

Sophie Wilson

Born: June 1957
Education:
Harrogate Grammar School,
Selwyn College 1976–1979
Computer Science

1979

Started at Acorn Computers

1981

Developed the BBC Micro computer

1985

ARM chip entered production

2012

ARM is the most used mobile and
computer architecture

1999–2001

Co-Founder & Chief Architect at
Element 14, which was acquired by
Broadcom in 2001

2001

Research Fellow and Director
at Broadcom Corporation

2019

Appointed a Commander
of the Order of the British Empire (CBE)
for services to computing

market and the research establishment. Some companies such as Meta (formerly Facebook) made their LLMs open source, and other companies also released models for things such as image generation.

This has spawned a cottage industry who are collectively innovating rapidly, especially as these models are generally designed to run on accessible modern computer chips like the Apple M3. Most importantly, there are now models of various sizes.

The size of a Large Language Model is measured in parameters (a technical term for the factors that an AI system learns from), and they get better as its size increases. For example, a 2 billion parameter one is easy to run ‘locally’ on your phone but has noticeably poor performance. By performance, I mean that it is capable of responding to questions/ conversations but is a bit dull and limited in its answers and prone to ‘hallucinations’ – outright making things up.

At 7 billion parameters, the LLM gets better at doing the tasks you want but is still quite error-prone. You begin to see something useful at 10 billion and 14 billion, but these need a moderately powerful PC to run. For 70 and 140 billion parameter models, you need a top-of-the-line machine with high-powered components. These are still accessible to a consumer, albeit at a steep cost.

I’ve concentrated on LLMs here, but this applies to other uses of machine learning – image generation and image processing of all kinds (increase resolution, remove objects, corrections). And I have to add a warning:

LLMs of even the largest size are still prone to hallucinations, and have all kinds of bias. But they’re very useful. For example, I’ve used open-source local LLMs for summarisation, both because I can’t send things to the cloud for security reasons or because it is easier to experiment with local models. On the other hand, I did try fairly hard to make a Christmas card with a robin sitting on a garden fork handle in a snowy garden on a locally running image generation model, but I couldn’t get the result I wanted... I think there’s now a new skill for humans of the future: working out a prompt for a machine learning programme.

One last thought: there are a lot of people are discussing ‘AI’ as a magical cure-all or ultimate threat. The dictionary definition of ‘intelligence’ is “the ability to apply knowledge to manipulate one’s environment” as one of its clauses. The machine learning we have today certainly doesn’t do that. At best AI is only 50% of that – it is definitely artificial. Any manipulation of the environment is left to the user.

Below: Pictured in 2014, Sophie Wilson demonstrates how processors have shrunk in size, comparing a scale image of a contemporary ARM processor against a plot of the original from the 1980s.

Glossary

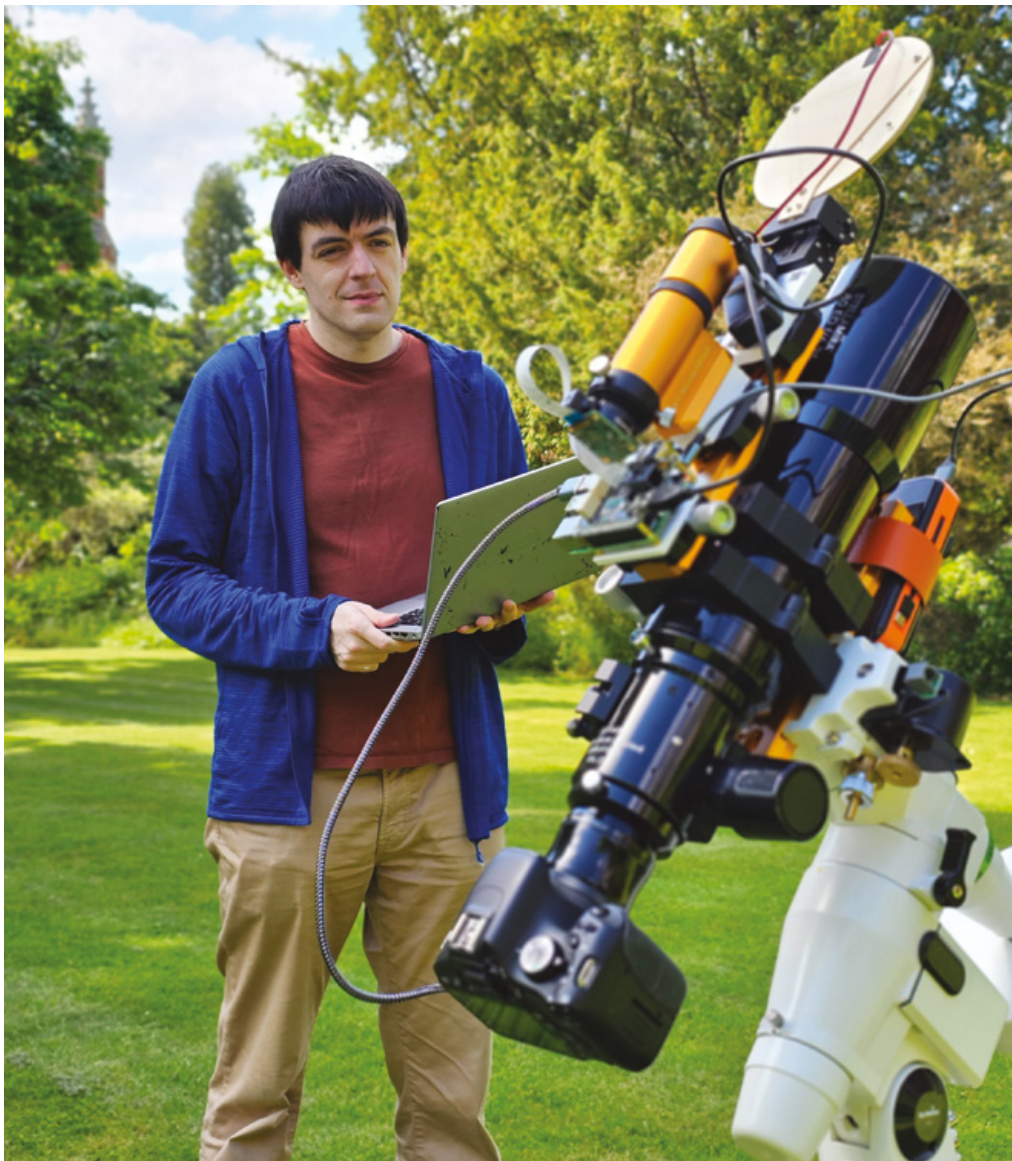
Open AI

OpenAI is a relatively new organization that has gained prominence for developing artificial intelligence technologies, most notably ChatGPT.

Large Language Model (LLM)

A LLM is a computer program that has been fed enough examples to be able to recognize and interpret human language or other types of complex data. Many LLMs are trained on data that has been gathered from the Internet — thousands or millions of gigabytes’ worth of text.





Thirath Ramawaka

Dr Mathias Nowak, Gavin Boyle Fellow in Exoplanetary Science, is an astrophotographer, capturing the stars from the college gardens. He let us into his process, telling the story of his night capturing the Whirlpool galaxy from the fellows’ garden.

26 April 2024

19:00 The clouds disperse, just as the Met Office forecasted. It promises to be a clear night, in the heart of spring ‘Galaxy season’. I’ll be setting up my telescope in the fellows’ garden.

21:10 The mount, carrying my 80mm refracting telescope with an old DSLR camera, is standing in the garden, roughly aligned to the north. A small guidescope with a guide camera are piggybacked on the main telescope, and a single-board computer with a battery complete the set up (pictured in the image to the left), along with the usual web of cables.

The plan is to use the guide camera to take short exposures and send them to the computer. There, they will be analysed by software to detect any drift of the stars. The mount, properly aligned on the Earth’s rotation axis, should compensate the apparent motion of stars. But if there is any residual drift, the software will adjust the pointing to keep the image perfectly still on the DSLR, which will take long exposures.

Overall, it’s a standard rig for astrophotography, with one notable quirk: the mount I use, an EQ-5, is designed for visual use, not for photography. As such, the motors adjusting the pointing are controlled manually. The computer can’t talk to them, which is unacceptable for what I plan to do. So I added an electronic board, which I designed and built to serve as an interface between the two.

Now I need to fine tune the alignment on the North Pole, a tedious process consisting in measuring the drift of stars in the images, before making small adjustments to a couple of screws on the mount, and repeating as many times as required.

22:30 An hour and a half! That’s how long it took me to achieve what I can only describe as a half-decent alignment. I can manage exposures of between two to three minutes before star trails become apparent. Not very good, but I ran out of patience, so I’ll go with it. I suspect the ground was a bit wet, causing the mount to sink while I was making the adjustments, and messing with the measurements.

22:40 I’m looking at the sky to find a suitable target. My options are limited. The Faculty of Economics blocks the eastern horizon, and light pollution gradually takes over towards the south, washing out most stars in that direction. A massive tree obscures the south-west almost up to the zenith. To the west, the Chapel is conspiring with a waning Moon to make observations impossible. I decide on M51, the Whirlpool galaxy. It’s high in the sky, so I should be able

to track it for a while before it disappears behind the tree, and it’s not too faint for my 2-minute exposures. I used to have a picture of it on my wall – a famous image taken by the Hubble Space Telescope.

22:50 Finding the target in the sky was easy. It’s between the Big Dipper and the two stars of Canes Venatici. I am now controlling everything remotely from the fellows’ parlour. All I can do is add exposures and various calibrations, and wait. My telescope isn’t the Hubble, and the sky above the fellows’ garden isn’t really comparable to low-Earth orbit, but I’m curious to see what I can get! For now, I only see a smudge in the middle of the images...

27 April 2024

02:40 I’ve lost the target. It seems to be behind a tree. I add another set of calibration frames in the observing queue and return to the fellows’ garden to pack up.

In total, I have 88 two minute frames of M51, totaling about three hours of photography. However, I am unsure whether these are of any quality. Much like scientific observations, only through proper calibration and processing do the details reveal themselves. The main fight is against the pesky light pollution, which tends to leave an uneven background in the images. It is very difficult to remove, but here it is (pictured below): the Whirlpool galaxy, seen from the fellows’ garden.

Below: The Whirlpool galaxy seen from the fellows’ garden.



Dr Mathias Nowak

ASTRONOMY : DR MATHIAS NOWAK



Shooting stars



Cambridge Philosophical Society

GEOCHEMISTRY : DR CARRIE SODERMAN



Unearthing the riches of the volcano

Rare earth metals, mined from the remains of ancient volcanoes, are used to create components that make modern technology possible — but these resources are difficult to find, and therefore their supply is under threat. Solving this problem is **Dr Carrie Soderman**, whose research focuses on how we can better locate them.

When we think of volcanoes we often think of the explosive eruption of magma at the Earth’s surface. However, beneath every volcano lies a hidden chamber: a mushy pile of magma and newly formed minerals crystallising.

The movement of this magma can be detected as earthquakes, and sometimes parts of this mush are forced out of the top of the volcano as an eruption. However, not all the magma beneath a volcano erupts over its lifetime. Once this magma cools in the crust, we are left with the preserved chamber that once fed a volcano, with lots of crystallised minerals.

Some of these minerals contain ‘critical elements’: elements that are essential for modern technology with no easy substitution available, but whose supply is at risk of disruption. My research focuses on understanding the behaviour of these critical elements beneath volcanoes, and working out why some volcanic systems are rich in them, and others effectively barren.

I am most interested in a group of elements called ‘rare earth elements’ (REEs), such as neodymium and dysprosium. The REEs have the highest supply risk of all critical metals but are used for key components (particularly magnets) in wind turbines, fuel cells and motors, and have uses in robotics and computing. At present, most of the global REE supply comes from China.

My research combines modelling and chemical data from natural samples to understand what factors in the geological history of a magma chamber mean it is likely to contain certain minerals, and therefore host certain elements. For example, does it matter how much water there is, or the pressure and temperature under which the magma crystallises?

We’ve found that rocks formed underneath alkali-rich volcanoes seem to be rich in REEs, compared to most other volcanoes on Earth. Alkali-rich volcanoes are those which have more sodium and potassium relative to aluminium and silicon, which is what most volcanoes have an abundance of. Alkaline igneous rocks are often found in regions of continental break-up (rifting), such as the present-day East African Rift system, or the over 1 billion-year-old Gardar rift in southwest Greenland where I will be doing fieldwork this summer to collect samples. These samples consist of rocks we collect at the surface and samples from the hearts of ancient volcanoes, brought to the surface for the first time through industry and research drill cores. We can slice these rocks into a 0.03mm cross-section and observe it under an optical microscope or an electron microscope- the latter can measure chemical composition within a single crystal. This can tell us about the minerals in each rock, and the elements they contain. Importantly, each unique mineral contains a different mixture of elements because certain mineral structures favour certain sizes or charges of ions. For example, if an ion of a given element is too large to fit into the lattice of a mineral without causing significant strain in the structure,

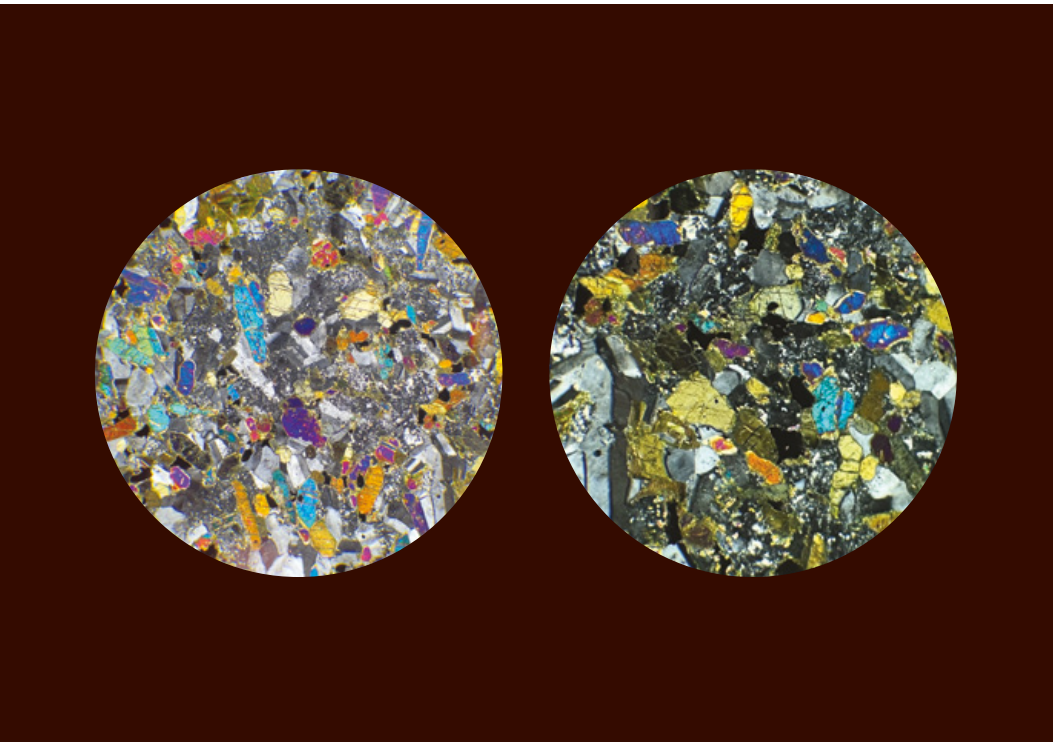
thanks to thermodynamics, that element will ‘prefer’ to stay in the magma rather than be hosted in the mineral.

We also use geochemical modelling to test hypotheses about the conditions under which the volcanic magma might be particularly rich in REEs versus conditions where most of the REEs are held firmly within mineral structures. Generally, we find that the less that REEs are absorbed by minerals that form early in the crystallisation of a magma chamber, the more likely it is that the concentrations of REEs in the magma left behind reach high enough levels to form an ore deposit that could be mined. By understanding how magma chambers become rich in REEs, we can figure out where to look for them, which will help diversify the range of industrially valuable REE sources available, improving global supply chain security.

This security is especially important in a world where demand for REEs is predicted to grow rapidly over the coming decades, driven mostly by growth in electric vehicle and wind turbine production, but faces a shortfall in supply of about 30% by 2035. Our research also supports a wider understanding of these volcanic systems that can have huge social impacts on local communities, such as in Malawi, where groundwaters near the alkaline volcanic rocks contain such high levels of fluoride that they are causing health problems, but the exact source of the fluoride from the rocks is unknown making it hard to mitigate risks. For geoscientists, it is clear furthering our knowledge of these REE-rich alkaline igneous rocks is vital for securing the supply of our resources and protecting the health of communities living near these geological features.

“
Demand for REEs is predicted to grow rapidly over the coming decades, but faces a shortfall in supply versus demand of about 30% by 2035
”
DR CARRIE SODERMAN

Below: Two thin section views of a syenite, a type of alkaline igneous rock, viewed down a microscope.



Dr Carrie Soderman

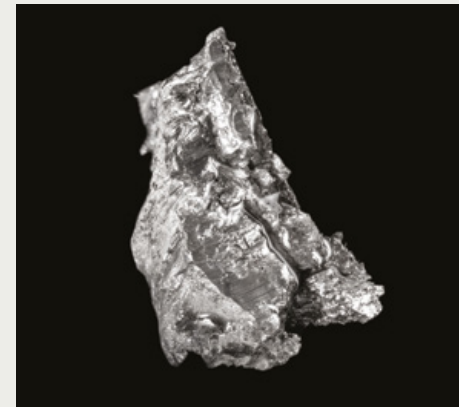
Uses of rare earth elements

Rare earth metals are classified into two categories: light and heavy. This graphic highlights the numerous essential items where these metals are found, highlighting their critical roles in everything from phones to renewable energy technologies.

H																	H
Li	Be											B	C	N	O	F	Ne
Na	Mg											Al	Si	P	S	Cl	Ar
K	Ca	Sc	Ti	V	Cr	Mn	Fe	Co	Ni	Cu	Zn	Ga	Ge	As	Se	Br	Kr
Rb	Sr	Y	Zr	Nb	Mo	Tc	Ru	Rh	Pd	Ag	Cd	In	Sn	Sb	Te	I	Xe
Cs	Ba	La	Hf	Ta	W	Re	Os	Ir	Pt	Au	Hg	Tl	Pb	Bi	Po	At	Rn
Fr	Ra	Ac	Rf	Db	Sg	Bh	Hs	Mt	Ds	Rg	Cn	Nh	Fl	Mc	Lv	Ts	Og
Ce	Pr	Nd	Pm	Sm	Eu	Gd	Tb	Dy	Ho	Er	Tm	Yb	Lu				
Th	Pa	U	Np	Pu	Am	Cm	Bk	Cf	Es	Fm	Md	No	Lr				

Light Rare Earth Elements

Heavy Rare Earth Elements



Neodymium

39	Y	Yttrium
63	Eu	Europium
65	Tb	Terbium

60
Nd
Neodymium

Neodymium
This is used to make powerful magnets used in loudspeakers and computer hard drives to enable them to be smaller and more efficient. Magnets containing neodymium are also used in green technologies such as the manufacture of wind turbines and hybrid cars.

66
Dy
Dysprosium

Dysprosium
Its main use is in alloys for neodymium-based magnets. This is because it is resistant to demagnetisation at high temperatures: an important property for magnets in motors and generators in wind turbines and electric vehicles.

57
La
Lanthanum

Lanthanum
This element is used in camera and telescope lenses. Compounds containing lanthanum are used extensively in carbon lighting applications, such as studio lighting and cinema projection.

58
Ce
Cerium

Cerium
Used in catalytic converters in cars, enabling them to run at high temperatures and playing a crucial role in the chemical reactions in the converter. Lanthanum and cerium are also used in the process of refining crude oil.

59
Pr
Praseodymium

Praseodymium
Used to create strong metals for use in aircraft engines. Praseodymium is also a component of a special sort of glass, used to make visors to protect welders and glassmakers.

64
Gd
Gadolinium

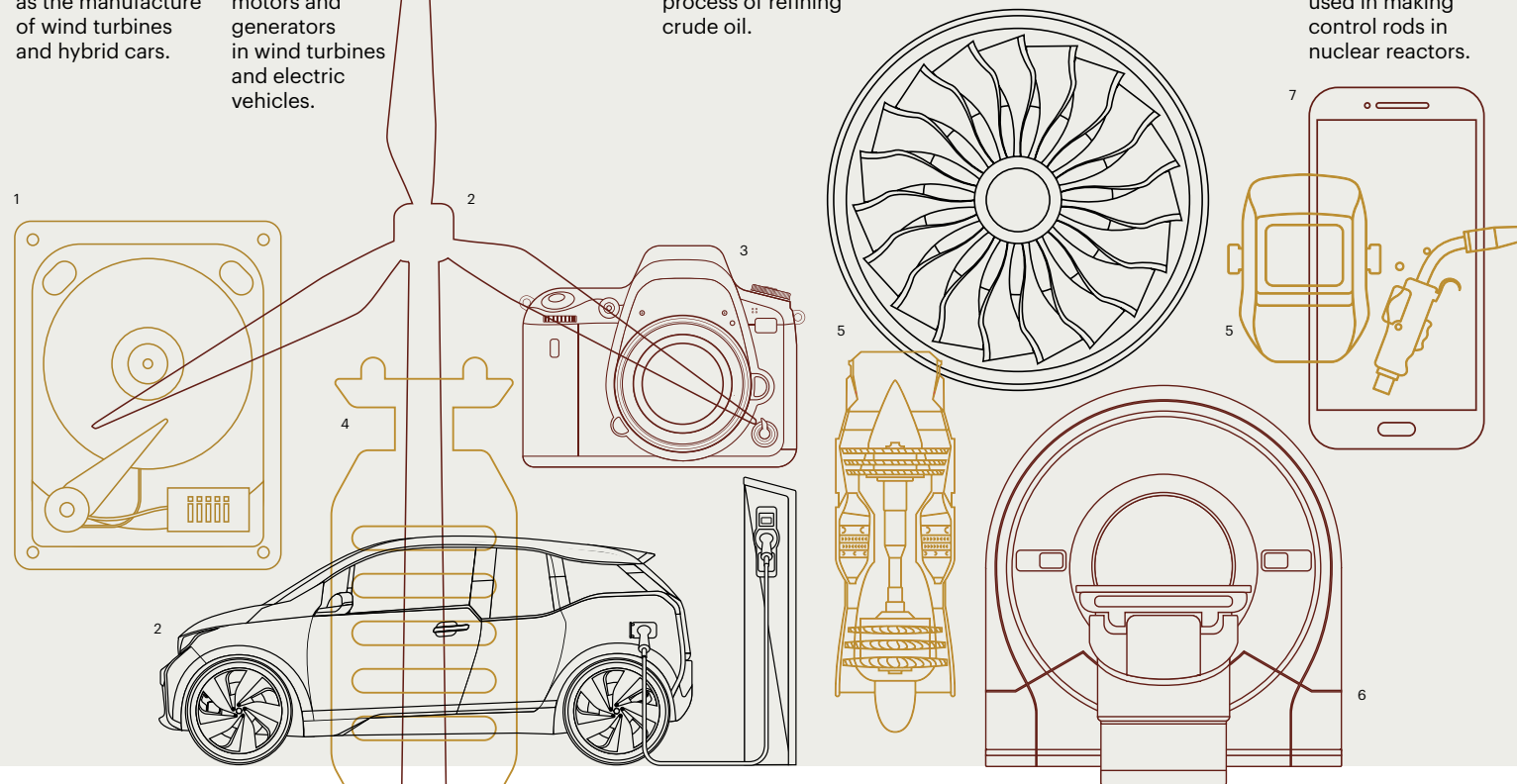
Gadolinium
Used in X-ray and MRI scanning systems, and also in television screens. Research is also being done into its possible use in developing more efficient refrigeration systems.

39
Y
Yttrium

63
Eu
Europium

Yttrium, Europium, Terbium
Important in making televisions and computer screens and other devices that have visual displays as they are used in making materials that give off different colours. Europium is also used in making control rods in nuclear reactors.

65
Tb
Terbium



Eastern Lights



The northern lights came to visit the east of England on 10 May 2024. Alumna and assistant organist, **Shanna Hart** (SE 2014), was on site with her camera to capture the beautiful long-exposure shots over chapel in the college gardens seen here and on the magazine cover.

Cambridge wouldn't be Cambridge without rowing, and here at Selwyn our Boat Club was founded at the same time as the college itself in 1882. After some choppy waters in recent years, our rowers are back to fine form – and the club captain Joel Kendall (SE 2020) takes us through the year's highlights.



May Bumps 2024

Off the back of an excellent 2023 May bumps campaign, it's a pleasure to report that SCBC continued to grow in 2024. Overall, the five crews went up 10 places, getting bumped just once, which is one of the best results to date.



Head of the River Race

The men's 1st VIII+ travelled to London to compete in the Head of the River Race. After a successful term, we were looking forward to see how they would match up against the rest of the country. They overtook a good few crews before Hammersmith, finishing in a time of 18:40, gaining over 80 places.



Lent Bumps 2023

Continuing Selwyn's great form, the Men's 1st and 2nd VIII+ both earned their blades bumping Churchill I, Christ's I, Caius II and Lady Margaret II and Churchill II, St. Catharines II, Lady Margaret III and Clare Hall I respectively. The Women's 1st VIII+ had a tough campaign and very narrowly missed out on a bump on a fast Homerton crew. The club gained 10 places making this one of the most successful campaigns to date.



Fairbairns



Fours

Above: The Women's 1st IV in action

Left: The 2023/24 academic year got off to a great start with a win for the Women's 1st Novice boat at Fairbairns as the fastest Women's Novice crew with successful results also for our senior and alumni crews.

Our fellows are the people who set the direction for Selwyn through its governing body and the college council – but crucially they are also the teachers within our community and across the university.

Interacting with young minds

thinking puzzles. So I made my decision at a very young age and, somewhat unusually, never wavered from it.

Your academic career in law wasn't so straightforward, though. How did you become an academic?

As a undergraduate I did very well academically, and in the Big Bang era City law firms were very proactive in recruitment. In 1989 I joined Slaughter and May: it is an outstanding law firm and I learned a huge amount about how the law operates in a transactional context, but life in the City wasn't for me and I missed academic law. I applied for a college teaching officer post at Selwyn almost exactly 30 years ago, where I was interviewed by a daunting but welcoming panel, including Sir David Harrison, Michael

Professor Janet O'Sullivan

College Position
Vice-Master and Director of Studies in Law

University Position
Professor, Faculty of Law

University Department
Law

Subject
Law

Research Interests
Contract and Tort, particularly remedies and professional negligence

You were the first in your family to go to university. Tell us a few other headlines about your early life. I was born in Romford, Essex, the eldest of three daughters, in a very loving family. I attended state school and then went on to study law at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge. My sisters and I were very academic, which surprised my parents – my father left school at 15, and my mother at 16!

You knew you wanted to be a lawyer long before you came to university - how did this come about? Two things influenced me. I used to come home for lunch while at primary school, and watched a courtroom drama on ITV called Crown Court. It had a scripted trial but a real public jury, and I found it captivating. I was also a voracious reader and loved detective stories, also solving lateral

“Teaching students is where my heart is, helping them blossom and ward off imposter syndrome”

Professor Janet O'Sullivan

Thiath Ranawaka

Tilby and John Spencer. To my great pleasure, I was offered the job, went on to gain a university lectureship in the Law Faculty two years later, and have been here ever since. I took my PhD in 2010 by an unusual route too – by virtue of published work, pursuant to the university's Special Regulations.

And last year you became a Professor. What's keeping you busy these days? I'm very interested in the intersection between the law of contract and the law of tort, both of which are core subjects that all undergraduates have to study, and which I thoroughly enjoy lecturing. I publish research in these fields, and am proud that my textbook on the Law of Contract is now in its 11th edition. Teaching students, however, is really where my heart is. I love interacting with young minds, helping them blossom and ward off imposter syndrome. I think it helps them to know that I struggled with it as a student – and to this day, really!

You're passionate about how the law affects people too. What should our readers know about your current projects? Last year, I gave a public lecture on the common law's inadequate response to gambling addiction and suicide; the relevant precedent is out of date, as it pre-dates both the Gambling Act and the arrival of internet and mobile gambling. Much of my time at the moment is taken up with the forthcoming mastership election, which I chair as Vice-Master, but I recently gave a lecture to the Commercial Court and am organising a symposium on an important milestone in the law of contract in the autumn.

Music is another important aspect of your life. What do you do in your free time? When I was a student at Corpus, I was a choral exhibitor – one day I'll find the time to rejoin a really good chamber choir. Meanwhile, I'm proud that in 2020 I set up Selwyn Voices, a choir open to the whole Selwyn community, which performs a concert once a term. Students, fellows and staff are on a wholly equal footing, and it is such a fabulous source of well-being. Outside college, I love the company of my three wonderful children. My eldest has just submitted his PhD in Cambridge, my youngest has just finished her finals at Oxford, and in between is my very special daughter Amy who has Down syndrome. As a family we love attending musicals and plays at the theatre, cooking and relaxing together (jigsaws have become popular, since the pandemic!)

As you celebrate 30 years at Selwyn, what's your favourite thing about the college? Somehow Selwyn manages to be academically outstanding, but also friendly, welcoming and truly collegiate, a fellowship without cliques or divisions. So after 30 years, it's still an extraordinary place to work.

Professor James Moultrie

College Position
Director of Studies in Engineering, Director of Studies in Manufacturing Engineering, Tutor for Rooms

University Position
Associate Professor in Engineering Design, Director of Graduate Education for the School of Technology

University Department
Engineering

Research Interests
Engineering and Product Design

You hail from the North, but you called the Midlands home for a long time. Where did your interest in design and engineering start? I grew up in Hull, in an area that in the 1970s still showed the scars of bombing from the Second World War. As a youngster, my main ambitions were to either play football like John Robertson (Nottingham Forest) or to draw for the Beano. I went to Kelvin Hall Senior School and like many kids who enjoy art but are also good at maths and physics, I was encouraged to specialise in the more technical subjects. My combination of Maths, Physics and Technical Drawing at A-Level led naturally to Mechanical Engineering which I studied at Loughborough University. I was fortunate to be sponsored by Rank Taylor Hobson (RTH) who also provided my work

“Designers face new challenges adapting to a world where we need to consume and produce less, so my real passion is developing how we teach design”

Professor James Moultrie

placements during industrial terms and holidays. This funded my first car, a British Racing Green Morris Marina Coupe. After four years of hard sums, my creative urges needed an outlet and I gave up a job offer at RTH to study an MA in Industrial Design at (what was then) Leicester Polytechnic. This led to a job in Sheffield for a year or so before returning to RTH in Leicester where I designed measuring instruments and optical equipment.

Your job in Leicester led you to some exceptional achievements. You have both an Oscar and an Emmy. Can you tell us how this came about? I was very lucky that for many years I worked as an engineer and project manager developing new lenses for the movie industry. I won my Oscar, the 'Scientific and Technical Academy Award', presented by Salma Hayek

Thiath Ranawaka

in a ceremony in LA in 2000, specifically for mechanical engineering on a new range of fixed focal length (prime) lenses, excitingly called the Cooke S4 lenses. The firm had not developed new lenses like these for over 30 years and we had to learn from scratch how to do it. The lenses had lots of novel mechanical features to make the life of the cinematographer easier. They also had extraordinary optical performance, working at a very wide aperture. They launched to the market in 1999 and have been used to make hundreds of films since then.

So with a career established in Hollywood and engineering, how did you enter academia?

After 10 years in industry, I fancied a change! I saw a research job at the Institute for Manufacturing which was in partnership with the Royal College of Art to help small companies design better products. It had my name on it. It also allowed me to study for my PhD (Churchill). I was very fortunate that completing my PhD and ending my research contract coincided with a vacancy to teach design.

And today, you work primarily in teaching. Did you always want to enter teaching?

I became a Lecturer in 2005 and joined Selwyn in 2006 after being courted by Ken Wallace. I had other options, but Selwyn was the only serious contender! Over the last (nearly) 20 years I have been lucky to supervise a lot of fabulous PhD students, with topics as varied as: measuring the economic impact of design; sustainable packaging design, and more recently the dimensional precision of 3D printing. Designers face new challenges to adapt to a world where we need to consume and produce less. My real passion has been developing how we teach design to our manufacturing engineering students and the highlight of every year is a public design show where we are proud to showcase their work.

Outside academia, how do you spend your time?

Outside of my work, I am a carer for a fabulous youngster with additional needs. I would ideally spend more time gardening and maybe even doing a bit of painting now and then, but work and caring tends to dominate. I also still like to watch Nottingham Forest whenever I can.

Dr Jörg Haustein

College Position
Director of Studies, Postgraduate Tutor

University Department
Faculty of Divinity

University Position
Associate Professor in World Christianities

Subject
Theology, Religion, and Philosophy of Religion

Research interests
Christianity

You grew up in East Germany. What was life like for you growing up?

It wasn't all that strange or exotic, but one did wake up to politics quite young. The contrast was just too great between what was taught in school and what we saw on (West German) TV or heard from visiting relatives from beyond the wall. Even as children, we learned to differentiate between the expected 'official speech' and what we thought or shared in private. Growing up Christian, I did occasionally see the need to stand up for my faith none-the-less, even as I knew this was risking my access to Abitur and university. Thankfully, the system collapsed before this quite common educational discrimination materialised in my life.

The wall came down, and you travelled abroad. What sparked your interest in theology?

As a citizen of Leipzig, I saw the demonstrations first-hand that brought down the government. It was very moving and liberating to be part of a crowd of 300,000 marching around the centre ring road, right by the local Stasi headquarters! When the wall came down a few weeks after it still was a big surprise. Less than two years later I was an exchange student in the USA, absorbing myself in the 'land of the free' but also feeling somewhat disillusioned with what I saw there. Returning home came with an equally strange sense of displacement, and I think it is this experience of being a traveller between different worlds that led me to ask larger questions about life. This youthful search for meaning and a strong sense of faith brought me into theology, both to be reconstructed substantially through the critical inquiry the subject entails.

What led you to study religions in Africa?

After my exchange student year, I regularly attended a meeting of international Christian students in Leipzig, most of whom were Ethiopians. I became fascinated with their culture, food and history and even started learning Amharic. After reading Education and Theology in Leipzig University, I was offered a PhD position in global Christianity at the University of Heidelberg. Remembering my Ethiopian friends from years before, I knew exactly what I wanted to research. I wrote the first history of Pentecostal Christianity in Ethiopia, a young and increasingly important religious movement in this traditionally Orthodox and Muslim country. Having imbibed a lot of postcolonial theory, I then wanted to interrogate German colonial history, which led me to my post-doc project on Islam in German East Africa. Luckily, my double expertise in African Christianity and Islam was exactly what SOAS was looking for when in 2013 they advertised a lectureship in religion in Africa. Teaching SOAS' very diverse student body in the vibrant London atmosphere was a great joy, but the institution also bore the significant strains of the UK higher education system. I gladly opted for the calmer waters of Cambridge when the opportunity arose.

How does your academic past influence your approach to teaching?

As a child, I could have never imagined that one day, I would be teaching and researching at the University of Cambridge. Through historical fortune my world suddenly opened up and I was given opportunities that remain foreclosed to many.

Now, as a researcher in Africa, I find myself representing the same unreachable, privileged 'West' to many interlocutors, just as my West German relatives did in my childhood. This contingency of privilege drives my teaching. I constantly challenge my students and myself to reflect on our positionality in our inquiries. Whatever achievements and insights we may boast, they are not based on merit alone but the product of global power structures. Equally, the cultures and societies we study are not foreign 'objects' to 'discover' but linked with our knowledge in deep historical relationships. This means to constantly query our epistemology, in particular when discussing something as normative and powerful as religious beliefs and practices. How did we arrive at the body of knowledge in front of us? What preconceptions do our questions

“My experience of being a traveller between different worlds led me to ask larger questions about life, which is what brought me to theology”

Dr Jörg Haustein



Thisath Ranawaka

reflect? How can intercultural 'surprises' challenge inherited paradigms?

Theology is an ancient study, but belief systems are still a firm part of society. Where does the modern study of theology fit in?

My subject area here in Cambridge is World Christianity – an exciting field that combines history, social sciences, politics and theology in studying how Christian communities globalise, diversify and engage with their cultural surroundings and other religions. In many ways, this perfectly reflects the study of theology and religion of today. The subject is interdisciplinary, multi-religious, and can be studied from an agnostic or a faith-informed perspective. Contrary to what one might think in Western Europe, religion remains an essential part of life almost everywhere in the world, and as such the subject provides a fascinating lens into a whole variety of human culture, conflict, and heritage. As Director of Studies I always enjoy seeing the different paths my students take through this broad offering, and usually it is not the topic that first attracted them to our offer!

When you are not immersed in your duties as Director of Studies and theology, how do you spend your time?

Nature is probably the most important balancing point for me. On holidays, I love to go on long mountain hikes; on normal weekends this sadly shrinks to a run or a walk in some quiet spot. Equally, getting my fingers dirty in the garden helps me unwind. My favourite garden project in the past few years has been a mini wildlife pond, leading me to a totally unexpected fascination with frogs, toads and newts.

Dr Jörg Haustein



Graduation 2024

The faces change but the ceremonies remain the same. These are some of the images from General Admission 2024, as our students gathered in Old Court for their photograph – watched by families and friends. Then it was off to the Senate House to become our newest graduates, and to know that everyone in the college is hugely proud of their achievements.

Photos by Howard Beaumont and Thisath Ranawaka.



Development News



Richard Harvey with his wife, Gill.

Over the past year, the college has seen an incredible level of generosity from alumni and friends which we know will have a transformative impact on our students' experiences.

£1.2m

A milestone for Selwyn

We're now able to share the news that the college has received notice of a £1.2m legacy from the estate of the late Richard Harvey (SE 1962) who passed away at the end of 2022. This will be one of the most generous bequests Selwyn has received and we look forward to sharing more news about the ways in which Richard's generosity will make a difference.

Sir David Harrison



Roger Mosey

Celebrating Sir David Harrison

Thanks to the generosity of Selwyn alumni and friends, £827,000 has been raised so far for the Sir David Harrison Fund in support of science, engineering and maths. This means that our initial goal of raising £1m is now within reach! If you can help us reach our target, details of the fund and how to donate can be found here: www.sel.cam.ac.uk/alumni/sir-david-harrison-fund

£827K



Thisath Ranawaka

£130K

Telephone Campaign

In the distant days before Christmas, thirteen of our students, ranging from first-years to finalists and PhD students enjoyed two weeks of calling and chatting to over 600 Selwyn alumni. More than £130,000 was raised for a variety of projects, including the Harrison Fund and to provide much-needed support for our students. Our thanks to all those who were able to help.



Malcolm Coffin

David Cockayne

Academic grants & funds

Thanks to the generosity of two relatively recent alumni, David Cockayne (SE 2000) and Malcolm Coffin (SE 1999), we've been able to establish the Cockayne Fund for Geography and the Malcolm Coffin Fund for HSPS. Both funds will provide much-needed small grants for students for a wide range of projects within these subjects, such as help with dissertation costs, academic-related travel, intern experience - or book and resource purchases. Small grants such as these can make a disproportionate difference to students. Most subjects would benefit from the provision of such grants which can cost just a few thousand pounds per year.

£4K

Master’s Diary

October

We begin the freshers’ suppers, now in their 11th year – and a feature for every incoming group of first-years, even at the height of the pandemic. In 2020 we moved from the Master’s Lodge to the Hall, but they still got their food. The menus started by being themed as Mexican, Italian and Indian in rotation, but enthusiasm for Mexican seemed to wane. There’s a finite amount of chili con carne that a master and his students can eat. But what cuisine could replace it? Our brilliant head chef Zsolt and his deputy Ferenc are Hungarian so – guess what – they suggested we introduce Hungarian night. It has been a big success. There has been a certain amount of adaptation: goulash is really a soup, but we serve it here as more of a beef stew. However, the chicken paprikash has gone down a storm along with authentic noodles. Best of all is dessert: an apple strudel, which I think Hungary is allowed to claim as part of the former Austro-Hungarian empire. Zsolt and Ferenc each make them somewhat differently – I can tell who’s cooking on which night – but the strudels score 10/10 with the freshers each time.



December

Christmas Day and another recent Selwyn tradition: drinks in the Lodge for students and academics who are in Cambridge over the holidays, along with some of my family and friends. We never have fewer than a dozen people turn up, and often around 20; and it always seems special being together on Christmas morning. In the first couple of these events in 2013 and 2014 we were joined by a PhD student called Milan. He was from Bosnia Herzegovina, and he brought the gift of a book about his home country. Later, meeting some of his family at graduation I learned more about his story – which,

when he was a child, entailed grabbing some possessions and fleeing from their home because, as Bosnian Serbs, they feared they would be killed by government soldiers. It was a reminder that horrifying events in modern Europe, with atrocities by all sides in the Balkans, predate the current crisis in Ukraine. Milan started work in the UK when he finished his degree, and a couple of years ago he became a British citizen. In the recent election, he was a voter in the UK for the

first time. Milan’s story is an example of how Cambridge changes lives, and makes this country better.



February

Cambridge United Football Club offered free tickets to Selwyn students for one of their home matches, as part of their attempts to build stronger links between the club and the university. A total of 35 people took up the offer, some of them going to a professional football match for the first time. I discovered that the tickets were for the standing area of the ground, so I’ll confess that I managed to arrange a seat in the stands for me and my fellowship colleague Daniel Beauregard because I am at a stage in life when the romance of the terraces has lost its allure. It was, in truth, not a great game. United lost to relegation rivals Cheltenham Town. But they’re a lovely club, and as a result of our contact with them the college is now entering into a partnership with their charitable arm the Cambridge United Foundation – which will provide volunteering opportunities for students and a way of bringing town and gown closer together. The lack of connection between the university and the rest of the city is troubling, so our aim is that we and other colleges can start putting things right.

June

The sadness of losing YoYo was softened by knowing how much she was loved in the college community. She was rehomed from a basset pack in Hertfordshire, and she swapped sleeping outside in a wooden-floored pen with 20 other dogs for sofas and cushions (which she came to see as essential) at Selwyn. When our alumnus Hugh Laurie met YoYo a few years back he said to her “well, you landed on your feet when you came here”. He was right. But I was very lucky to have her too.

Roger Mosey