In honour of Ann
The court is complete
The way to bounce back: invest in science

Sir Adrian Smith (SE 1965)
President of the Royal Society

The Royal Society is the world's oldest national scientific academy. Founded in 1660, past presidents include Isaac Newton and Christopher Wren. Now, for the first time, the president is a Selwyn alumnus: the distinguished mathematician Sir Adrian Smith. He argues the case for continued investment in science that makes a difference to lives across the UK and the world, and that doesn't leave poorer communities behind.

Sir Patrick Vallance with the prime minister. (Image 730x153) Laptop in the world. Every mobile phone and tablet in the world.

The University of Cambridge and the Royal Society have a long and proud history of collaboration. For example, we have been partners in the UK government’s National Nanoscience and Engineering Centre, and we have been working on our understanding of COVID-19 and ways to fight it, with epidemiologists modelling treatments or vaccines. Some of those scientists have also played a crucial role in helping public understanding of the pandemic through our public events, and through media work. Our peer review journals have helped to disseminate the sharing of information among scientists, feeding the public interest in the science that fuels our long term collaboration.

And we have also conveyed a number of expert groups to help provide the evidence and the assessment of that evidence that has been central to policy making. All of these roles have been important, but it is in the last area where the independence of the Royal Society has been and will remain most vital. Early on in the pandemic the government mantra was that they were 'following the science'. The implication was that science had all the answers, but science is so often about uncertainty and that was never more true in dealing with a virus that many of us had never previously heard of.

In such situations, it is the job of independent scientists to ensure that the science is presented in an open manner and that all the uncertainty is clear. That is essential to supporting the government in making the tough decisions that they have had to take. There are so many tragic stories from the past year but we can take some positives. The spectator success in developing such a range of effective vaccines, at speed, has been a testament to the strength of the UK science base and international collaboration. We have also seen that in improvements in treatments and our ability to sequence genomes and identify variants.

None of this happened by accident – it has been the result of decades of investment in people, ideas and facilities. If the UK is going to build back better, continuing to build on that investment is essential, as well as our open and outward facing UK.

That building back better must also be for all the people of the UK. It cannot just be for the few or those in some parts of the country. Cambridge has provided a beacon for growth – the knowledge and innovation driven by the university has allowed the region to thrive and with great university spread throughout the UK, we can see that replicated, if we are willing to invest in and support those people, ideas and facilities.

I am lucky that, as a Fellow of the Royal Society and Selwyn College, I get to see that thriving ecosystem of ideas up close. Of course, I am not the first to have a foot in two such illustrious institutions. Fellows of the Society have been connected with Selwyn College at all points in their careers. I mention the shared Fellows because it is the Fellows that give the Royal Society its strength, the strength that I described earlier, that has served us well in the pandemic and will continue to serve us well in the future. It is their expertise that makes a national academy of science so important as a founder, as a source of reliable information for the public and as a source of independent advice for policy makers.

Sir Adrian Smith

Professor Sir Alan Cook FRS, Former Fellow. A physicist who spent 1983-93 & Master of Selwyn 1981-83. Alan Cook was a pioneer, who spent most of his career researching and developing treatments or vaccines. Some of those scientists have also played a crucial role in helping public understanding of the pandemic through our public events, and through media work. Our peer review journals have helped to disseminate the sharing of information among scientists, feeding the public interest in the science that fuels our long term collaboration.

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Sir Adrian Smith
The fight against Coronavirus – what happened next...

There is no doubt that the past winter was much, much harder than the first months of the crisis. January 2021, in particular, is a time I would never want to experience again. At its peak, the NHS had close on 40,000 people in hospital being treated for Covid, with nearly 5,000 of them in intensive care. Here in Cambridge, we had 112 people in ICU – which is getting on for four times the capacity we had before this crisis started. It was the miserable depths of winter, with the new variants scything through the country and more patients than we could ever have imagined – and our staff were, frankly, exhausted. They had been through the first wave, and now things were worse than ever.

Of course, we got through it. We now know a lot more about effective treatments, and we have the hope provided by the vaccine. I am personally grateful for the phenomenal response of so many people – including Selwyn medical students who volunteered to work in the hospital on top of their academic work. I was also buoyed by the kind words from college alumni and friends. After a particularly difficult day, a short message of appreciation could transform the mood. But I would say that we remain in uncertain times: we cannot be sure what the future will bring. I am hopeful, yet far from complacent.

Dr Charlotte Summers

© Financial Times Ltd

“For all the pressures on the medical staff, we always remembered that individual patients were at the heart of what we were doing. Often, they were scared and alone. Personal attention mattered, even on the busiest of days.”

“A year ago in this magazine we featured on our cover Dr Charlotte Summers, a Selwyn medical fellow and also a specialist in intensive care and respiratory diseases. She told us then about the start of the battle against the coronavirus – “the very challenge I’ve been trained for” – and about the terrible consequences of infection for so many people around the world. But there was hope, too, that the National Health Service in Britain would prove its worth; and Charlotte and her team were already showing how the dedication of researchers and hospital staff and key workers would help us fight back against Covid-19.

This is a photographic record which illustrates what happened since then, courtesy of a Financial Times cameraman who followed Charlotte in her work at Addenbrooke’s hospital. She also shares with us some of the thoughts prompted by the images.

Photography: Charlie Bibby
Courtesy Financial Times Ltd.

“We had at least three briefings every day, as the various shifts handed over to each other. I never underestimated the strain on colleagues. Many of the nurses come from overseas, and they hadn’t seen their own families for many months. So there is that burden of worry in addition to carrying out extremely stressful professional tasks.”

“I’ve no idea how many hours I was working. Maybe an average of 60 a week, but I was on call morning, noon and night. This reflected both my job at Addenbrooke’s and the role I was playing in the national fight against the coronavirus. I was also finding time to answer emails as Dean of Selwyn!”

“I have never at any stage regretted the career path that brought me here: not for a single minute”
I procured it. Here, amid a chronic national workload and hours expanding rapidly, referrals of patients to the nurses, I found my practitioner medical centres and the constant whilst providing care for our students and 19 pandemic. The college was extremely fortunate in that a major donation by Peter and Christina Dawson in 2019 started the funding of a year-round post, replacing the

To conclude my story of police and their children. Staff worries. This at times was distressing for the families and my children, seeing me travel, I had to make sure they were safe and that my job was done with the utmost dedication. I found that triaging at Selwyn was easier than anywhere else, due to the smaller size of the college and the supportive environment in place. The nursing staff were always there for me, providing advice and support whenever I needed it.

I also found that my time at Selwyn was beneficial for my career development. I attended many training courses and workshops, which helped me to improve my skills and knowledge. I was able to develop my leadership skills and work effectively in a team. I also had the opportunity to work with different members of staff, which helped me to gain a better understanding of the healthcare system.

In conclusion, my time at Selwyn College was an invaluable experience. The college provided me with the knowledge and skills I needed to become a successful nurse. I would recommend Selwyn College to anyone looking for a challenging and rewarding career in healthcare.
Prince Philip at Selwyn

It is with sadness and deep respect that Selwyn marks the passing of HRH Prince Philip, the Duke of Edinburgh on 9 April 2021, just two months before his 100th birthday. Prince Philip was Chancellor of the University of Cambridge for 35 years, from December 1976 to June 2011. Prince Philip visited Selwyn on three occasions as Chancellor of the University. The appointment of a Royal Chancellor in 1976, the first since Prince Albert in 1847, prompted Owen Chadwick to confess to the Queen that, owing to the second master’s disability, Selwyn took the loyal toast seated. In November 1977, Prince Philip made a courtesy visit during his first year in office; and a photograph shows the planting of a magnolia in the winter gloom. This visit was noticed by a sharp-eyed Princess Margaret on her visit to the college in May 1979. On signing the visitors’ book, she spotted that an earlier signatory had been ‘Philip’ and she pointed out that his writing had been so forceful as nearly to perforate the page.

Prince Philip’s visit in June 1983 was to mark the end of the Selwyn centenary year celebrations (1882–1983) and is well illustrated in the photographs. As the College History records, the chancellor’s address ‘was brief but his words were well chosen’. He was particularly good at ‘doing a room’. In other words moving round a room full of people and somehow talking to everyone. If a postgraduate was due to be presented it was worth ensuring they had six crisp sentences ready to utter about their research. The chancellor was certain to ask about their work and waffly responses were not well received.

The chancellor’s third visit to Selwyn was an overnight stay in the Master’s Lodge in July 2000 prior to his opening the university’s Centre for Mathematical Sciences. He was an easy and delightful guest. We invited a dozen junior members of the college to have breakfast with him in the Lodge and it has to be said, at least at that time of day, Prince Philip was the most wide awake person present.

Sir David Harrison, April 2021

Michael P. Wells (SE 1973):
‘Did an excellent job as University Chancellor, exceptionally engaged and supportive!’

Below: Prince Philip and Owen Chadwick

Neil Swinnerton (SE 1975):
‘I was at Selwyn from 1975 to 1979 and met the Duke of Edinburgh during his 1977 visit. I even spoke to him briefly. He made a favourable impression on me and I have thought of him fondly since then.’

Below: Prince Philip plaing a magnolia in the gloam of a clauser moring. Right: The magnolia asy 4 yeas on.

Below: The archive materials on display proved to be of interest to Prince Philip during his visit.

Below: Prince Philip planting a magnolia in the gloom of a clauser moring. Right: The magnolia asy 4 yeas on.

Below: Prince Philip was the guest of honour Selwyn’s Centenary garden party.

Above: Selwyn’s Domestic Housekeeping Supervisor at the time of the Duke’s visit in July 2000, was in charge of all the domestic arrangements for his overnight stay in the Master’s Lodge. She remembers all the attention to detail that was required to ensure The Duke of Edinburgh was made comfortable – including purchasing a cream coloured, pure new wool blanket from Robert Sayle’s department store (now John Lewis). Mrs Jefferies still has the letter of thanks passed on by Sir David Harrison on the notice board in her office.

Above: Selwyn’s White Gloved hosts Prince Philip.

Above: Sir David Harrison shows Prince Philip Selwyn’s ambitious plans for the development of the college.

Left: Prince Philip signs Selwyn’s visitors’ book once more.

Above: The Prince always interested in speaking to students, was particularly good at ‘doing a room’.

Below: Prince Philip signs Selwyn’s visitors’ book once more.
There is something particularly eloquent about objects that have witnessed war and conflict. As a historian who works with material culture, I have developed a great appreciation for the tangible nature of objects and how they present opportunities to investigate the ways in which people lived and interacted with one another in years gone by. Military collections can tell us many things, including how developments in science and technology have influenced the application of force and innovations in tactics and strategy; or how war has infused art, fashion, design and popular culture. These collections can also tell us much about the first-hand experiences of the soldier, the brutality of the battlefield, and the significances of memory. 

Late last year I joined Selwyn as the inaugural National Army Museum Fellow in Indian Military History. A post established through the combined efforts of the college and the present director of the museum (and Selwyn alumnus), Justin Maciejewski (SE 1985). Using the museum collections as a basis for research, the fellowship called for an innovative project on the history of the British Indian Army. The National Army Museum’s collections reflect an enduring relationship between South Asia and Britain, and the entanglements of war, conquest, collaboration, resistance and empire. The significance of the history of the British Indian Army to the museum is mirrored in the Indian Army Memorial Room at the Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst. The room was initially formed in 1936, after calls were made to preserve the heritage of the British Indian Army, which was disbanded in 1947 after Independence and the partition of India. Many of the artefacts chosen for the display would form the foundation collections of the National Army Museum, established by Royal Charter in 1960.

During my three-year fellowship at Selwyn my research will investigate various aspects of the history and material culture of the British Indian Army. To determine if there were unique means of memorialising experiences and campaigns specific to British Indian Army personnel, objects that have (and continue to) feature in regimental messes such as paintings, sculpture, ceramics and silver, along with weaponry commissioned by or gifted to the regiments, will be studied. How the British Indian Army was reflected in exhibitions and displays, past and present, will also be examined and put into context. Lastly, the project will trace where the material culture of the British Indian Army transferred to with the amalgamation of regiments, the creation of the armies of India and Pakistan, and the establishment of military museums abroad and in the United Kingdom. It is hoped that one of the major outputs of the project will be an international conference held at Selwyn’s Quarry Whitehouse Auditorium.

My work during the fellowship draws on my past postdoctoral work at National Museums Scotland that I developed a great interest in examining the meaning and function of artefacts in military culture, including their creation (and modification) to form trophies, memorials, and reliefs. This project involved undertaking research on artefacts held in regimental, corps and service museums across the United Kingdom, and coincided with a revival of interest – and much academic and public discussion, controversy and debate – on the colonial origins of collections. Through my investigations, it became clearer to me that provenance research benefits greatly from a deeper understanding of both imperial and military history, as well as practices that are specific to particular military cultures.

The premise of my fellowship at Selwyn finds many parallels with Cambridge University’s growing commitment to examining collections forged in the context of war and empire, and I look forward to collaborating with curators and scholars at the Fitzwilliam Museum, the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, and the University Library during my time here. One of the most promising aspects of the project will be the potential to exchange knowledge with curators and institutions in India and Pakistan, through networks established by the Centre for South Asian Studies at Cambridge, and the National Army Museum. I hope that through the project I will have a chance to make connections with both retired and current serving officers in the United Kingdom and abroad, to gain a greater understanding of how the history of British-Indian relations has shaped local and international military cultures to this day.

For more information, see the National Army Museum website: www.nam.ac.uk and The Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst Trust: www.sandhursttrust.org.
Clive Lewis is the son of a miner who went to a comprehensive school. David Dabydeen spent time growing up in care. Both rose to eminence: Clive as a senior judge, and David as a writer, academic and diplomat. Now both are honorary fellows.

The Right Honourable Lord Justice Lewis

Clive was brought up in the town of Pontardawe, near Swansea in south Wales, an area long associated with mining and heavy industry. Clive’s Father was a miner, and you will find the miners lamp he used right up until he retired proudly displayed in Clive’s home as a reminder of his deep roots in the Welsh valleys. Clive’s Father was a miner, and you will find the miners lamp he used right up until he retired proudly displayed in Clive’s home as a reminder of his deep roots in the Welsh valleys. It is not that unusual for academic lawyers to migrate to the bar after a while, but Clive is fortunate enough to be taught by Clive, or to count him as a colleague or friend, will all attest to his razor-like intellect: he can always put his finger on the point of view of the black slave boy pictured within them.

Professor David Dabydeen (SE 1974)

Professor David Dabydeen is an academic, a writer and a diplomat. He studied English at Selwyn, an award-winning novelist and poet, and a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature. He was a professor at the University of Warwick, based in the Centre for Caribbean Studies. Having previously been a member of the UNESCO executive board, he became Guyana’s Ambassador to China in 2010 and served until 2015. Professor Dabydeen is now the director of the Ameena Gabori Institute for the study of indentureship and its legacies.

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I was born in Guyana. Literary rates in the West Indies are exceptional, parents keep vigilant eye over their children’s schooling and teachers are revered. There are some excellent secondary schools in Guyana and the region, modelled after British public schools. However, competition between students and strict disciplines in the classroom were excessive, so I was relieved to find myself in a London college in 1969, where the atmosphere was much less stifling, teachers more relaxed and the examination system not so relentless. In many ways, it wasn’t the easiest of times. ‘Paki bashing’ was rife, racist graffiti daubed everywhere, bovver boys on the prowl. On the other hand, all my teachers were good, decent people, respected by the pupils.

A Harriet’s Progress

Above: David Dabydeen’s A Harriet’s Progress: moments chronicles: including a prototype and a young servant boy – from William Hogarth’s engraving from 1732.

Below: Plate 2 of the series of engravings.
The Quarry Whitehouse Auditorium, named by benefactors Gareth Quarry and Jill Whitehouse (both SE 1978), has already hosted live events. The annual Ramsay Murray Lecture, this year given by Professor Rana Mitter on Where China goes next, had a small group of guests in the auditorium, and a large virtual audience via live streaming – if you missed it, you can see the recording by following the link in Listen to Lectures on our website: www.selwynalumni.com/listen-to-lectures. We hope to be able to invite you back to Selwyn to see the new building very soon – and to host many more events here in the future.

Ann’s Court is now completed. The plaque unveiled by our principal donor Chris Dobson records that the buildings span 2005 to 2021, and together form the Court which is named after Chris’s late wife Ann. We believe the best was saved until the last, and after seven years of planning, and the many progress reports and photographs of construction, we are thrilled that the wonderful new Bartlam Library and Quarry Whitehouse Auditorium are open. We invited the University of Cambridge photo diarist Sir Cam to visit our new building and to give you a glimpse of what it’s like. We at Selwyn are very proud that more than 1,000 alumni and friends donated funds to this very exciting project and made it a reality.

The Bartlam Library and Quarry Whitehouse Auditorium building completes Ann's Court. The gardening team have taken the opportunity of reseeding the court and putting in new plantings. Spring showers have helped the grass establish quickly - and recent heavy rain left an unusual perspective on the Court.

The tiered seating in the Quarry Whitehouse Auditorium is designed so that the space is available theatre-style for performances, lectures and presentations, and is also retractable – opening up the area for social gatherings or other events, such as exams or conferences, creating a multi-functional space.

The first floor will be home for the majority of the Bartlam Library’s 30,000-plus books and periodicals, with quiet reading nooks and study rooms. Students have been using the library to revise for their exams. The books will be transferred from the old library during the summer vacation. The library has been named by Tom Bartlam (SE 1966), whose generous philanthropy helped make the project possible.

Above: The Donald Welbourn Reading Room on the second floor, supported by Robin Jeffs (SE 1959) together with his wife Freda who made a major benefaction. The room is made bright and welcoming by the light streaming in through the skylights and large windows on all four sides.

Above right & right: Some of our donors chose to have their names – or the names of a loved one – inscribed on bricks and paving stones. Others asked for chairs in the auditorium or library to have a nameplate inscribed. A few were able to have a study room named after them – so, as in the case of the 1991 year group, remembering two alumni who have sadly died, Paddy Smith and Tony Hitch.

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Selwyn Issue 28 Summer 2021
SELWYN’S FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

Improving housing for future generations
Using sustainable solutions

The college recently took the opportunity to expand its property portfolio around the main site with the purchase of a former vicarage in 1 Selwyn Gardens. This will be converted into accommodation for up to 10 graduate students, and will offer an expansion of our affordable housing for MCR members.

The Selwyn Gardens site has a direct connection through the garden to the existing hostels at 29 and 31 Grange Road, both of which are due for refurbishment. We are therefore looking at the site holistically, and aiming to create an environmentally sustainable project which will deliver green solutions wherever possible.

The primary motivation for wanting to create sustainable housing for our students is to find ways to reduce the carbon footprint of the site and of the university as a whole. We are trying to balance performance with aesthetics and quality.

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SELWYN’S FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

New archive and study centre

Now that the Bartlam Library is built, and is in the process of being fitted out ready to house more than thirty thousand books, we can turn our attention to the exciting plans for the old library.

The ground floor of the original memorial library will be completely refurbished to create five flexible teaching spaces with movable walls to enable them to be converted into larger rooms. During the vacations, these spaces can double up as conference breakout rooms, earning income which can double up as conference and exhibition space, allowing more of the collections to be explored, displayed and enjoyed.

A new resource facility for medic and vet students

One of these spaces will be a new facility of a dedicated teaching and demonstration room for the medical and veterinary students. Selwyn has an impressive collection of anatomical models, skeletons, teaching aids and large illustrations, all of which would be enhanced by the provision of new digital resources, such as virtual cadavers and augmented reality (AR) anatomy teaching aids. All technology used to be associated with the world of gaming, however its increasing accessibility offers limitless opportunities to enhance medical learning in different ways and particularly the teaching of anatomy.

This new teaching and study room would provide students with access to these resources so they can be used during formal supervisions and teaching sessions but also in their own time for further learning and understanding. Overall, our aim is to create a resource that will be the best of its kind in Cambridge.

A hub for alumni and friends

Meanwhile, the upper floor of the library will become a new home for our alumni, together with the offices of the Development and Alumni Relations team. A light and comfortable reception area will be available for alumni and friends who may wish to meet during office hours, whether you are attending an event or simply passing through Cambridge. There will be tea making facilities and copies of books and publications by alumni to browse – and of course the opportunity to meet and chat with members of the development team.

Archives and rare books

The ground floor extension will provide much improved facilities for the college archives and its collection of rare books. These new facilities will benefit from environmental controls and meet shelving, providing a more suitable home for these important collections.

The location means that access to these collections will be much improved, easier to find and use. We hope that this in turn will stimulate a greater interest in the history of the college and underline the importance of alumni donations of photographs, records and other ephemera that new generations find so interesting. The archives will also offer a dedicated research area and exhibition space, allowing more of the collections to be explored, displayed and enjoyed. All the works are planned to be completed by Michaelmas 2022.

A call for help

The costs of the refurbishment and improvements will be £1.4m. In return, students and alumni will enjoy tremendous new facilities in the heart of Selwyn. If you are able to help us with this important project, please use the accompanying donation form or visit our website at www.selwynalumni.com/makeagift where you can make secure online gifts. Or better still, phone us on +44 (0)1223 763937 and we’ll be pleased to take a credit card donation and tell you more about our plans.

In our latest fellowship profiles, we hear about defining what we mean by war; developing a passion for animals; and designing buildings that change lives for the better.

Meet the Fellowship

Dr Ronita Bardhan

Subject: Architecture
College Position: Director of Studies in Architecture
Post Graduate Tutor
University Department: Department of Architecture
University Position: Lecturer of Sustainability in the Built Environment

Tell us about your background – where were you born and brought up?

I was born in Calcutta, India, and grew up in Kolkata. My family moved there when I was seven years old, and it remains my point of attraction. There were so many cultural practices that revolved around the courtyards. I grew up in Kolkata means growing up with architecture.

In what stage of life did you start taking a professional interest in architecture? What was the reason why architecture attracted me?

I started my interest in architecture during my school days. When I was very young, perhaps five years old, and it remains incomplete! I saw a house and was amazed. How did you find your way into the profession?

At what stage in life did you start taking a professional interest in architecture? What was the reason why architecture attracted me?

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What brought you to Cambridge?

My education was mostly architectural engineering and urban science but working in the transitional housing of India’s economic capital, which is still an informal housing. I started my research on this new transitional housing in India and globally.

“Growing up in Kolkata means growing up with architecture.”

Dr Ronita Bardhan

SELWYN

Meet the Fellowship

In our latest fellowship profiles, we hear about defining what we mean by war; developing a passion for animals; and designing buildings that change lives for the better.

Meet the Fellowship

Dr Ronita Bardhan

Subject: Architecture
College Position: Director of Studies in Architecture
Post Graduate Tutor
University Department: Department of Architecture
University Position: Lecturer of Sustainability in the Built Environment

Tell us about your background – where were you born and brought up?

I was born in Calcutta, now Kolkata, in India. A country where educating girls comes with its share of challenges, my parents always supported me in ensuring a good education. For them, it was probably the only way to secure my independence.

I studied in Loreto - a convent school. Being a Loretoite, as we call ourselves, means we are taught to be responsible for our futures and able to script our own life stories.

Everyday life in Kolkata is juxtaposed within its glorious architectural past. I remember my childhood when we would be marked by visits to Indian Museum, Eden Gardens, or Victoria Memorial. St Paul’s Cathedral and Dog Market were a must-visit during Christmas, and for any other official event, it was the government buildings that bear Kolkata’s art legacy. In short, growing up in Kolkata means growing up with architecture.

At what stage in life did you start taking a professional interest in architecture? What was the reason why architecture attracted me?

I saw a new type of formal housing – slum rehabilitation housing emerging within the landscape of Mumbai. It was interesting to see that informal settlers, which constitute a majority of Mumbai’s population, will be living in formal housing for the first time. On the other hand, I saw the rehabilitated people were happy to own a house in India’s economic capital, which is still an aspiration for many (including me).

On the other hand, I saw the dysfunctional design with severe consequences to good living. I started my research on this new transitional housing in India and globally.

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Selwyn 2021
Dr Stuart Eves  

Subject: Veterinary Medicine  
College Position: Tutor, Undergraduate Admissions Tutor, Director of Studies in Veterinary Medicine  

Tell us about your background – where were you born and brought up?  

I was born in East London, although my parents still live on a smallholding near Romford in Essex. Turn left from the A12, turn right at the roundabout and you'll come to my family home and it’s countryside; turn right and it rapidly becomes London. It resulted in me going from a local primary school to a much larger comprehensive.  

Presumably that background helps you in your work as an academic?  

I think it gives you a perspective. I was a school with a lower-than-average socio-economic background, so I can see now that my school had a huge range of abilities to manage and multiple layers of progression. Staff and students alike need to understand what Cambridge is – not run by any kind of academic meritocracy – and the expectations are so high. So, running open days and admissions is to do with going to school is the reason I enjoy the role.  

Fame probably comes from the two tortoiseshell cats that roam the garden.  

When did the urge start to be a vet?  

Difficult to say because I think the strongest urge was that I would work with animals. There was a realisation during my A-levels that I wasn't going to make it straight into vet school. In fact, I was a school with a lower-than-average socio-economic background. So, I can see now that my school had a huge range of abilities to manage and multiple layers of progression. Staff and students alike need to understand what Cambridge is – not run by any kind of academic meritocracy – and the expectations are so high. So, running open days and admissions is to do with going to school is the reason I enjoy the role.  

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**College is its humanised courtyards and of the college. My favourite part of the its representation of the historical legacy for almost a fortnight which took almost a period of time due to travel restrictions. I was in Kolkata when Amphan hit the electricity, water and mobile connection I was in Kolkata when Amphan hit the electricity, water and mobile connection.**

Lockdown has been difficult for everyone, but we gather you had a particularly hairy experience with Cyclone Amphan on top of everything?  

Yes, I was worried about my parents who live in Kolkata. Fortunately we moved out of their house to a hotel which was flooded. Finally – what do you think of Selwyn’s architecture?  

What I like about Selwyn’s architecture is its representation of the historical legacy of the college. My favourite part of Selwyn is the courtyard, with the roofs and the paths along with the open spaces and the most beautiful gardens.  

I love teaching, and really that’s my focus. As a vet, I have always worked with animals, and I have always been passionate about animals.
Selwyn is one of the few undergraduate colleges that hosts MSt students from the Institute of Continuing Education, and they are an important part of our college community. Many of our current and former students have experienced great success, of which Selwyn is very proud. Law alumnus Annabel Steadman (SE 2010) returned to Selwyn to study creative writing. Her series of books - Sandbar and the Unicorn Thief - was the subject of a heated bidding war between multiple publishers. The winners of the auction, Simon & Schuster, will be publishing the first book in the series in 2022. Current creative writing student, Jill Danziger (SE 2019), has been signed by Astra House for her literary memoir Dirty Kitchen, with expected publication in 2023. Jill will be continuing her studies at Selwyn by beginning a PhD in English later this year.

Making writing a habit

The first concern developing a sustainable writing routine. Stories of Jack Kerouac typing On the Road onto a continuous scroll in just three weeks or Frederick Forsyth writing The Day of the Jackal in 35 days are as unhelpful as they are seductive for aspiring authors. (They are also misleading, overlong, as they do, the years of thinking, revising and editing that almost invariably attend such overnight successes.) The truth is that most novels are the product of sustained effort. As such, your best hope of writing a book lies in making writing a habit. As with so many things in life, the key to developing this habit is being honest with oneself. If you’re not a night owl, there’s no point committing to rising early to write; if professional or family obligations make daily sessions at the computer impossible, don’t set yourself up to fail by resolving to write seven days a week. A silver lining of Covid-19 has been that it has enabled many of us to rethink our routines and priorities. For those keen to start writing, this is a great opportunity. All the same, it’s important to be realistic about what it will take to make sure you’re still putting words on the page long after terms such as ‘social distancing’ and ‘lockdown’ have begun to sound quaint.

You are an arbiter

For high achievers and perfectionists (as Selwynites tend to be), this glacial pace can be frustrating. Given that most of us use the written word constantly in our work and personal life, it is hard to conceive of the time and sustaining it can take to put a fully developed story on the page. Luckily, the freeing – and sometimes maddening – thing about creative writing is that starting out is that there are no deadlines. No Edw will grumble if you fail to complete your manuscript by the end of term; no Tripods mark hanging on your finishing revisions by a particular date. Instead of being tied to temporal markers, the bar you are trying to meet is a purely qualitative one and – in the first instance, at least – you are its arbiter.

Find support

Small wonder, then, that writing is fun characterised as lonely. However, it doesn’t have to be. Communities abound for wordsmiths keen to connect with peers. These days, courses come in all shapes and sizes – from PhDs to night classes, as well as industry-focused sessions, such as those run by the literary agency Curtis Brown. However, it doesn’t have to be. Communities abound for wordsmiths keen to connect with peers. These days, courses come in all shapes and sizes – from PhDs to night classes, as well as industry-focused sessions, such as those run by the literary agency Curtis Brown. However, it doesn’t have to be. Communities abound for wordsmiths keen to connect with peers. These days, courses come in all shapes and sizes – from PhDs to night classes, as well as industry-focused sessions, such as those run by the literary agency Curtis Brown. However, it doesn’t have to be. Communities abound for wordsmiths keen to connect with peers. These days, courses come in all shapes and sizes – from PhDs to night classes, as well as industry-focused sessions, such as those run by the literary agency Curtis Brown.
The Sigmund Munz Asia Travel Bursary

How a restless life inspired a gift for students

My grandfather, Sigmund Munz, was a visionary man: a Jewish businessman, born in Romania at the end of the 19th century. He had travelled on business to North and South America as well as around Europe by the end of the 1920s. He was also able to see how the Second World War was coming and moved his family from Vienna (where my mother was born in 1937) to Luxembourg and then to London in 1939, thus escaping the Holocaust. After the war, he moved to Jersey and in the 1960s to Geneva. He was never entirely at ease and certainly not complacent, always looking to understand what he didn’t understand or go somewhere else if that improved opportunities for his family. Inspired by him, I was brought up to believe that it was important to travel and meet people, to put oneself in their shoes and to understand their problems.

I chose to study Chinese at Selwyn in the 1990s for that reason. China – Asia – is no longer the distant, alien land that it may have seemed to me back in the 1990s but today it is even more important to meet and enable mutual understanding and appreciation as the world gets smaller and world power balances again. With the help of this bursary, I hope that...
Bishop Robert Hardy

We were saddened to hear of the death of Bishop Robert Hardy – Honorary Fellow of the college, and former chaplain. Rob, an alumnus of Clare College, first came to Selwyn as chaplain in 1985. He went on to become a bishop, serving at Maidstone and then Lincoln, but returned to the college in 2008 for two terms as Dean of Chapel and Chaplain. He remained a devoted supporter of the college, and gave the address at the funeral of Owen Chadwick in 2015.

Bishop Robert Hardy

Tributes to Selwyn Fellows

Dr Mica Panic

We also report with regret the death of Dr Mica Panic, former fellow in economics and Bursar of the college. It was during his bursarship in 1990s that the masterplan for the college site was developed which is now coming to fruition with phase III of Ann’s Court.

Dr Mica Panic

Musical Honours for Selwyn Organ Scholar

Michael Stephens-Jones (SE 2018), the Percy Young senior organ scholar, recently in his third year reading music, has been awarded the Fellowship diploma of the Royal College of Organists (FRCO), widely recognised internationally as the most prestigious qualification for organists in the world. The examination includes a solo organ recital, rigorous keyboard tests, and written papers testing a variety of musical and analytical techniques, as well as covering various historical topics. It is highly unusual for this diploma to be achieved by someone who is still an undergraduate. In addition, Michael has been awarded a number of prizes, including the Dr F J Read prize, for achieving the highest overall mark across the whole examination, the Coventry Cathedral recital prize, for showing “outstanding ability in the performance of pieces”, and the most-covered of all the FRCO prizes, the Limpus, Frederick Shem, and Durrant Prize for achieving the highest mark in the practical part of the examination.

Michael Stephens-Jones

Professor David Newland

Thanks to a generous donation, the college has been able to purchase two unique prototype folding bicycles, designed in the 1960s by the late Professor David Newland (SE 1954). David was a leading mechanical engineer who was involved in major infrastructure projects – but these ingenious bikes, designed for Raleigh, show another side of his keen intellect and wide interests. Raleigh went on to purchase Moselfit, another manufacturer that already had a successful folding bike in production – so David’s designs never made it to the factory. However, we would love to hear from any alumni who might be able to undertake or help support a restoration of these rare survivals. Our plan is to put them on permanent display at Selwyn as an unusual addition to the college archives.

Professor David Newland

Student Thelma Zabički (SE 2020) – second from left, a member of a winning team in the J2K Cambridge University Enterprise Competition. It’s in the science and technology section for a start-up called CardiTeC created with four other students from Thelma’s MPHIN in Bioscience Enterprise.

Thelma Zabički

If you would like to hear Michael play, you can listen to his Williamson Prize recital, recorded on Sunday, 6 June 2021, on youtube.com/ watch?v=x-vIo6yfPhD

Real Living Wage accreditation

Selwyn College is officially accredited as a living wage employer. It has been announced that the University of Cambridge has now been similarly accredited. Selwyn’s becar Martin Pierce said: “We are delighted to see Cambridge University getting accredited for the real living wage too. Selwyn has been paying the real living wage for several years now and became accredited by the Living Wage Foundation during 2020.” The real living wage is the only rate calculated according to the costs of living it provides a voluntary benchmark for employers who wish to ensure their staff earn a wage they can live on, not just the government minimums.

Provisional Events Diary

2021

3rd June Court of Benefactors

2nd July Parents’ Lunch

8th July Parents’ Dinner

8th July Parents’ Evening

9th July Parents’ Evening

10th July Parents’ Dinner

17th July Parents’ Evening

18th July Parents’ Evening

25th July Alumni Day

1st September Parents’ Evening

5th September Parents’ Evening

9th September Parents’ Evening

10th September Parents’ Evening

5th November Parents’ Evening

12th November Parents’ Evening

14th November Parents’ Evening

5th November Parents’ Evening

12th November Parents’ Evening

14th November Parents’ Evening

5th November Parents’ Evening

12th November Parents’ Evening

For further information about events and to book: www.selwynalumni.com/eventscalendar or telephone +44 (0)23 7678 844.
When I arrived here in 2013, the other heads of house were overwhelmingly male and rather grand; and many were experts in fields of a level of complexity which didn’t translate easily into quick conversations over a glass of wine. Some of them were so busy in their labs or writing scholarly books that they inevitably had little time left for dealing with student life or wondering what the JCR was up to. But the colleges’ committee, on which all the heads of house sit, now looks rather different. There are roughly as many women as men, and by this autumn three colleges will be led by people from ethnic minorities. Even more strikingly, two of the new incumbents left school without going to university – one even without A-Levels. This is wholeheartedly to be welcomed as a sign that the colleges want people with the right talent irrespective of background. There’s just one note of caution. Future Mastership elections here or anywhere else are none of my business; but I would hate to see academics squeezed out of headships altogether. There is balance in all things, and I believe we outsiders have shown we can bring something to support the university’s aims of intellectual leadership. But without the academics themselves, Cambridge would be nothing; and some of them living in Master’s Lodges is an important sign of that commitment.

The death of Prince Philip prompted us to look at photographs from the archive, some of which you’ll see inside this magazine, and one showed him planting a tree in the college – seemingly by night. Just east of the chapel there is another tree planted by Princess Margaret, confirming our royal connections. When Prince Philip stayed in the Master’s Lodge in Sir David Harrison’s time, his room was the guest bedroom on the first floor. I’m wondering whether this may merit the Selwyn equivalent of a blue plaque?

Last autumn I joined the board of the Cambridge University Boat Club. It’s a new organisation bringing together the former men’s and women’s clubs and the lightweights, but its preoccupation remains the age-old one of how to beat Oxford. When we meet the other side, there is real tension: this is not a confected rivalry. Some big figures are involved, too. Sir John Bell, one of the creators of the Oxford Astra Zeneca vaccine, is a senior member of the OUBC and he has turned up for liaison meetings irrespective of the pressures of his day job. This year the first question was whether the race would be able to take place at all. There was the extra complication of the unsafe state of Hammersmith Bridge with the fear that it might collapse into the Thames as the crews passed underneath, which would not have been a good moment. I will admit that I thought the Great Ouse in the flatlands of Ely would be a poor alternative compared with our capital city, especially with nobody allowed to watch. But on the day of the races it looked rather beautiful in the Easter sunshine. Most important, of course, the Cambridge men’s and women’s crews both won. There has been some speculation about whether home advantage was a factor, but we’re eager to return to London again next year to prove that it’s the Light Blue spirit and not the Ouse that makes the difference.