

# IMPRINT

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**Nigel Clifford**

Reflections on his first year as Rector

**A Life in Science**

Professor David Vaux's 50 years of  
academic life

**Courage and Connection**

Iona Thomas on the diplomatic  
frontline

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## From the Editor

In a year shaped by elections, conflict and climate extremes, our contributors' reflections feel timely, clear-eyed and quietly hopeful. Lincolmites are engaged with the world and shaping it for the better.

Our 600th-anniversary pillar for 2025/26, 'Open Lincoln', runs through this issue. The theme encompasses not only access and outreach, explored in Lydia Matthews' article, but openness in its widest sense: open doors, open minds and open futures. Our lead feature, by Rector Nigel Clifford, charts his first year in post and sets a tone of connection,

collaboration and clear purpose.

Professor David Vaux, retiring this year, looks back on nearly 50 years of research, teaching and collaboration at Oxford. Roel Konijnendijk unpicks one of classical history's persistent myths surrounding King Philip II of Macedon's success.

Continuing the openness theme, British High Commissioner to New Zealand Iona Thomas reflects on a diplomatic career grounded in curiosity and courage. Naomi Kellman, founder of Target Oxbridge, discusses its successes and her commitment to educational equity.

And Chris Smyth, Whitehall Editor of *The Times*, looks unsparingly at political journalism and politics itself.

We also hear from students shaping Lincoln today through sport, music, VacProj and the new Classics Society. This year's *My Lincoln* features Anna Coombs, whose time at College helped lay the foundation for her innovative theatre company, Tangle.

Thank you to all who contributed. *Imprint* is shaped by your ideas and voices, and it's a privilege to share them.

**Halley Cohen**, Communications Manager

# College News



## New Access Fellow starts

We're delighted to announce the appointment of our new Access and Career Development Fellow, Dr Fred Smith. Fred joins us from Balliol College, where he was an Early Career Fellow in Early Modern History. Here at Lincoln, he will be splitting his time between writing his next book exploring the European legacies of the English Reformation, and his passion for access and outreach. Before entering academia, Fred worked as a primary school teacher, having trained through the Teach First Programme – an education charity which aims to address educational disadvantage in England and Wales. He hopes to use this experience to help build on the excellent work Lincoln has been doing in recent years to make the College as diverse, vibrant and welcoming a place as it can be.



## 40 years of Berrow Foundation Scholarships

We were delighted to celebrate the 40th anniversary of The Berrow Foundation Scholarships, which have supported 161 students at Lincoln since its founding. A generous gift from the late Marquis de Amodio CBE provides seven or more scholarships to be awarded annually for graduates of Swiss universities to pursue advanced study at Lincoln. The Marquise de Amodio, presented with a book of memories, was the guest of honour at a warm and memorable evening in Geneva to celebrate the anniversary, which was co-hosted by the British Ambassador.



## Winning awards with the ZERO Institute

Lincoln is proud to be part of the ZERO Institute programme, which received the **Learning and Development Award at the 2025 CIBSE Awards**. Launched in 2024 in collaboration with Wolfson and Exeter Colleges and the Department of Engineering Science, the programme gives students at the three colleges hands-on experience tackling real decarbonisation challenges. Judges praised its real-world application, leadership training and potential to scale.

The ZERO Institute also won the **2025 ASHRAE UK Award for Zero Carbon Education**, recognising the Institute's commitment to advancing zero-carbon education through a range of initiatives and activities for undergraduate and postgraduate students.



## Lincoln Fellows in print

Recent books by Lincoln Fellows showcase the breadth and depth of scholarship thriving within the College. Professor J.P. Park's book, *The Forger's Creed: Reinventing Art History in Early Modern China*, offers the first in-depth look at how forgery – including fake paintings and invented text – shaped the canon of early modern Chinese art. Dr Perry Gauci's book, *The London Private Banker: A Social History, 1660-1825*, explores the societal impact of London's private bankers who engaged closely with the upper and middling classes. Dr Rebecca Menmuir's new book, *Medieval Responses to Ovid's Exile*, investigates the expansive influence of Ovid's exile in medieval culture, from the schoolroom and cloister to the poetry of Chaucer.



## John le Carré exhibition

*John le Carré: Tradecraft* is a major new exhibition at the Bodleian's Weston Library (1 October 2025 – 6 April 2026) showcasing over 1,200 boxes of archive material from Lincoln alumnus John le Carré (1952, David Cornwell). This free exhibition – which includes research notes, drafts and corrections from his novels, alongside original sketches, watercolours and letters to fans and friends – spans le Carré's life from his time as an Oxford student to drafts written in his final weeks, with some material shown publicly for the first time. The exhibition has been created with the support of his family.



## Lord Hague and the Italian Ambassador in conversation

Last May, Lincoln was honoured to host **His Excellency Inigo Lambertini**, Ambassador of Italy to the UK, in conversation with **Lord Hague**, Chancellor of the University of Oxford. Now in its 11th year, this much-anticipated event – organised by the Oxford University Italian Society – offered a wide-ranging and candid discussion, which touched on the excitement and uncertainty of modern times. AI was highlighted as a transformational step for humanity, affecting all aspects of our lives including the educational world. Finally, the importance of dialogue was stressed, encouraging us all to exchange views in a spirit of mutual understanding and exploration. Thank you to UK MD, Luigi Napolano, from Intesa San Paulo, for their generous support of this event.



## An evening of discovery with Mensun Bound

This year's London Dining Club dinner proved to be a true voyage of discovery. Guests enjoyed a captivating talk by esteemed maritime archaeologist, Mensun Bound (1978), who shared the remarkable story of his expedition to locate and excavate Shackleton's famed ship, *Endurance*, lost beneath the Antarctic ice.

Mensun's best-selling book, *The Ship Beneath the Ice*, offers a compelling account for those eager to read the full story. It was a real pleasure to welcome so many alumni and friends of the College for what was a memorable and inspiring evening.



## The Rector's Lodgings refurbished

The historic residence built in the 1920s has been fully refurbished, and we're delighted that the Rector, Nigel Clifford, and his wife, Jeanette, have now moved in. The works included minor structural amendments, rewiring and refurbishment of key original features such as the beautiful parquet flooring and listed light fittings. The kitchen and bathrooms have been updated and the whole house redecorated in period colours.

The College is very grateful for the sympathetic design provided by the architects, FJC Studio, and the high-quality craftsmanship by contractors Benfield and Loxley. The couple have added personal touches to the interior, including a red dining room inspired by their shared *alma mater*, Downing College, Cambridge.



# A year in: Reflections from the Rector

Nigel Clifford marks the end of his first year as Lincoln's 40th Rector by looking back on a lively and fruitful twelve months. From meeting students and settling into College life, to engaging with alumni worldwide and with our community closer to home, it has been a year of discovery, connection and momentum.

It is a great pleasure to write about my first year as the 40th Rector of our brilliant college.

First, I must pay heartfelt tribute to our predecessors, Henry and Deborah Woudhuysen, for the generous induction they gave to Jeanette and me on our way in to the College. I also thank Henry for the strong legacy he left.

The year has sped past, with the people of Lincoln, past and present, making the biggest mark and bringing the greatest joy – our students and academic body, our alumni and, of course, our unique Lincoln support team.



## Our students

Michaelmas was devoted to meeting every fresher and our hard-working JCR and MCR committees, to learn more about their lives and ambitions. This continued through the rest of the year, as, together with the Senior Tutor, we held 'Rector's Collections'.

Collections have been a revelation to me as they are not a feature of 'the Other Place'. I am a fan: they are like Formula One pitstops with Lincoln's experts gathered around our student, working together to get the stars of our Grand Prix really motoring.

Our students have a myriad of gifts beyond the academic, and they have created memorable occasions throughout the year. We have rarely missed Evensong, enriched by our choir led by our ambitious Organ Scholars. The Lincoln Cabaret

was a brilliant showcase for the breadth of talent in our College, with students giving their all. Vac Proj remains a defining experience for many of our students and their dedication to the cause is admirable. It was fun to offer a 'tour of the renovated Lodgings' as a fund-raising auction prize.

On the sporting side, Lincoln showed a mastery of rule #1 – Turn Up. This oft neglected tactic reaped many points and competition places. We have enjoyed shouting at people chasing hockey balls (Cuppers Finalists – what a match that was!), footballs, frisbees, a personal best, or the boats in front of them. I have also been very impressed by the generous spirit in which the games are played.

## Our academic body

It has been a year getting to know the members of the Senior Common Room and all have made us very welcome. One of the delights of High Table is knowing that whoever is there will bring an intriguing slant on life and learning. This thoughtfulness extends to the Governing Body where there is serious discussion and problem solving – always with the best interests of Lincoln in mind. We have a good blend of those with much experience of Oxford and the College, and the newer Career Development Fellows (CDFs). Our CDF positions are sought after, and provide a terrific opportunity for younger academics to obtain valuable research, teaching and administrative experience over an extended, but finite, period with Lincoln, to propel them to a permanent position. They also add much to the SCR.



## Alumni

Gaudies and alumni events have been a treat, helping me understand what it has meant to be a student at Lincoln. Our trip to the USA and events at the Royal Geographical Society, the House of Lords, Downing College, The Oxford and Cambridge Club and the Athenaeum are highlights with each event full of lovely Lincoln people. Equally memorable was the exuberant Lord Crewe Supper, celebrating the Prince Bishop's gifts to Lincoln – including, in full disclosure, the annual gift of £20 to the Rector!

The generosity of our alumni has been a major factor in reducing our annual deficit, while also offering the most extensive scholarship and bursary support for students in Oxford. Our whole community should be proud of this, given the profound difference it makes to our students.

Alumni support has greatly added to the academic fabric of Lincoln – specifically the HR Woudhuysen Junior Research Fellow in Material Culture, with Dr Thomas Cooper as its inaugural post

holder. We extend a heartfelt thank you to Simon and June Li, whose generous donation enabled us to completely refurbish the Rector's Lodgings (read more on page 5).

The 600 campaign launch at Tate Modern in London attracted a brilliant cross section of Lincoln people, spanning years, subjects and countries. The evening's success can be judged by its noise and length – we were, eventually and politely, told to leave!



## The Lincoln team

I must acknowledge and thank the people of Lincoln's support teams. Every day they influence the lives of all who work and study within the College walls. One of my first steps was to spend time with the teams, gaining an insight into their work, and I continue to make this a priority. We awarded the inaugural 'Peoples' Choice' award this year, with the first recipient being Mike Hawkins, our Head Gardener. We have undertaken a staff survey to understand what is good (or less so) about working at Lincoln, and its findings will be worked on in the year ahead.

In conclusion, I am grateful to everyone in the Lincoln family for your kindness, support and inspiration. I have thoroughly enjoyed my first year and look forward to the year ahead as the cycle starts again!

**Nigel Clifford**  
Rector

# OPEN LINCOLN: **ACCESS & OUTREACH**



Big welcome on open days



Pathfinders students in Hall



Student interview  
about subjects



Taking part in Pathfinders

Lincoln's commitment to access and outreach has never been stronger.

Here, Senior Tutor Dr Lydia Matthews outlines the College's growing portfolio of initiatives, all designed to ensure that talented students from all backgrounds not only arrive at Lincoln, but thrive here.

"The financial support provided by the bursary has been invaluable, not only in covering essential costs but also in giving me peace of mind. It has allowed me to focus wholeheartedly on my studies and extracurricular activities, free from the constant worry about financial constraints. This has made a tremendous difference to my experience, enabling me to seize the opportunities that Oxford has to offer."

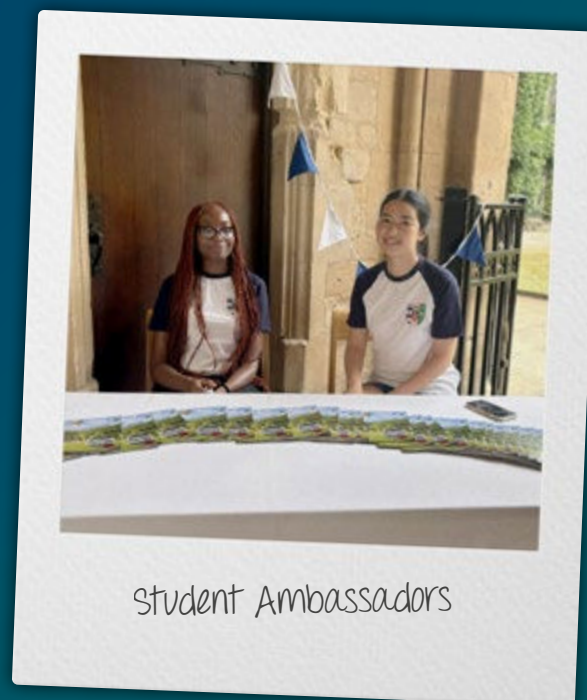
Crewe bursarian

**O**ur commitment to access and outreach is more than a strategic priority: it is a cornerstone of our identity as a friendly and welcoming college. Over the last five years we have invested in an ambitious programme of events as well as publicising our generous bursary support. Lincoln now plays a leading role in widening participation at Oxford, ensuring that academic excellence is not limited by postcode or personal circumstance.

### OPENING OUR DOORS: OPEN DAYS AND STUDY PROGRAMMES

Lincoln's Open Days are a vital bridge between prospective applicants and the realities of academic life at Oxford. Last year, over 6,000 visitors came through Lincoln's doors across three days, offering students and families a vivid and personal introduction to Oxford. The June Open Days coincided with warm weather and featured open Library sessions, demonstration interviews, and tailored 'applying to Oxford' sessions, all with the aim of demystifying Oxford and Lincoln.

Alongside Open Days, our annual Subject Study Programmes serve as immersive academic experiences for high-achieving students from underrepresented backgrounds. These include focused residentials in disciplines such as History, English Literature, Physics, Engineering and Modern Languages, with each programme offering academic seminars, interview preparation and sustained contact with tutors and student ambassadors. In the most recent event, more than half of attendees met one or more access criteria, and 76% had average GCSE grades of 8 or higher. This is a testament to the balance of academic strength and widening participation that Lincoln is striving to achieve.



### PATHFINDERS AND REGIONAL COLLABORATION

Now in its third year, Lincoln's Pathfinders programme exemplifies sustained outreach. In partnership with the University of Lincoln, Pathfinders supports talented students from the East Midlands, particularly those eligible for Free School Meals, through a three-year programme of academic enrichment, mentoring and Oxford-based experiences. The most recent cohort event brought together 74 students from four schools for a full day of academic sessions and networking.

Lincoln's involvement in the North East Residential, part of a consortium with other Oxford colleges, offers a strategic regional focus. By hosting 26 Year 12 students from North East state schools during Open Days, the College provided vital exposure to Oxford for students who might otherwise never consider applying. These programmes were supported by Lord Crewe's Charity, underscoring our ability to combine targeted outreach with meaningful financial backing.

### SUSTAINABLE LEADERSHIP IN ACCESS

A unique feature of Lincoln's access work is the Access and Career Development Fellow (ACDF), a post that embeds access into the academic life of the College. This Fellow leads on the delivery of outreach content, maintains long-term school relationships and ensures that initiatives like Pathfinders are academically rigorous and strategically aligned. You can read more about our new ACDF on page 4.

"I am grateful for this bursary as it makes living away from home much easier and, in truth, it reminds me that I belong at Lincoln College. I am the first in my family to attend university, and such, the first to attend an institution as prestigious as Oxford. This bursary, alongside the Relocation Grant, removes much of the financial burden that is associated with reading for a degree in Oxford."

Crewe bursarian

### SUPPORTING STUDENTS

Access to Oxford must be matched by the ability to thrive here, and Lincoln's bursary provision plays a crucial role in supporting students once they arrive. Thanks to donors, the College provides a comprehensive suite of financial assistance, including:

- **Relocation Grants** of £500, awarded to 34 students this year, help ease the financial and practical challenges of transitioning to university life. Students used this support to pay for travel, accommodation, essential study materials and even the small comforts that make a new city feel like home.
- **Undergraduate Bursaries**, awarded to 1/3rd of our students, offer annual support to those who need it. Recipients describe these bursaries as transformative, removing financial pressures, enabling them to fully engage in academic life and affirming their place within the Lincoln community.
- **Undergraduate Academic Support** – including Study Skills Lecturers in medicine, the sciences and humanities – offers students structured support through workshops and one-on-one sessions. Finals performance has been strong, with 95% of undergraduates achieving a First, Distinction, or Upper Second.
- **Postgraduate Scholarships** ensure that financial need does not limit postgraduate ambition. Awards are made on both financial and academic merit, enabling talented students from underrepresented backgrounds to contribute meaningfully to Lincoln's academic community.

This support is all provided by alumni and friends of the College and helps to guarantee that we can attract the very best students and ensure that they flourish here, irrespective of their financial circumstances.



Lord Crewe Scholars, 2023

### LOOKING FORWARD

With Lincoln's expansive outreach, sustained support for students and strategic vision, the College continues to widen access to an Oxford education. These efforts are not only helping more talented students from diverse backgrounds to apply, but also equipping them to succeed here and when they leave. The support of our alumni is a vital part of this story. Through advocacy, mentoring, or support, their continued connection helps ensure that Lincoln remains a place where ambition meets opportunity.

**Dr Lydia Matthews**  
Senior Tutor

# Sports and Societies

## Lincoln College Music Society

Although the Lincoln College Music Society (LCMS) was only launched earlier this year, it has already made an exciting and meaningful contribution to college life.

In Trinity term, LCMS organised and launched three main events: a string quartet night in 2nd week, a jazz night in 4th week, and an organ recital series throughout the term. Each event featured musical talent from both within Lincoln and beyond, with students performing, collaborating and engaging with music in a lively, supportive atmosphere.

Our string quartet night was a true collaboration and included performers from all undergraduate years. The programme was an eclectic mix of classical and popular music – from Mozart and Bach to ABBA and Miley Cyrus – reflecting the diverse interests and talents of our musicians. After just a few rehearsals, the group delivered a warm, dynamic performance that captured the inter-year camaraderie at Lincoln, brought together through music.

Two weeks later, we held our jazz night, which showcased a variety of well-loved and well-known music. The evening



featured standout performances from Lizzy Nightingale (2021) and Oli Spooner (2024), whose duet brought the night to a memorable close. With its relaxed yet vibrant atmosphere, and participation from students across multiple colleges, the event was both a celebration of jazz and a chance to collaborate more widely within the university.

Our organ recital series, launched and curated by LCMS Treasurer and Junior Organ Scholar, Louis Fletcher (2024), featured a wide range of organists and repertoire. Set in our beautiful Chapel, the series was a great chance to hear a variety of beautiful organ music and enjoy the amazing sound in the Chapel.

I would like to thank my committee for their dedication and energy in making these events happen, and all the performers and supporters who contributed to the events' success. The warmth, generosity and talent on display were truly inspiring.

By organising more events every term, we hope that LCMS continues to grow as a platform for students to share their musical passions, connect across year groups and subjects, and build a vibrant, inclusive musical community here at Lincoln College. We look forward to seeing, welcoming and including you in our events next term!

**Natalie T Perera (2024)**  
President



## Classics Society



In Michaelmas term 2024/25, a new society was founded: the Lincoln College Classics Society. Originally planned as a

way to gather all members of College interested in antiquity, we were astonished by the response with more than 60 members joining from disciplines such as law, economics and English literature, including undergrads and graduates, staff members and alumni.

The society was officially inaugurated in Hilary term with a talk by Emeritus Professor and Lincoln alumnus Nigel Wilson who wittily remarked on the future potential of AI and modern technologies for decoding ancient texts such as the Herculaneum scrolls. We also enjoyed a selection of editions of ancient texts kept in the Lincoln Senior Library, courtesy of our librarians Dr Sarah Cusk and Lucy Matheson. Additionally, the guests were able to enjoy (or pretend to enjoy, at least) a recreation of an ancient Roman recipe for cheese bread, baked by our very own co-founder Joel Bellviure Perez (2022).



Once inaugurated and logo designed – which combines the Lincoln Imp with an ancient laurel wreath by Lincolnite Esther Goddard (2024) – the society organised a trip to Roman London. We visited the remains of the London city wall, stumbled over Latin inscriptions in the modern cityscape, admired the London Mithraeum and explored the Roman amphitheatre located beneath the Guildhall Yard.

In Trinity, we kicked off with a screening of blockbuster *Gladiator II*, a love-hate relationship for Dr Roel Konijnendijk, our Classicist Ancient History Fellow, specialist in ancient warfare and YouTube star. He examined the accuracy of the battle scenes, and the society's co-founder Marie Theres Wittmann (2021) assessed the validity of the depiction of the Severan emperors and Roman North Africa in the film.

Lastly, we visited Bath to learn more about ancient bathing culture and technology and took a sip from the sacred spring of *Aquae Sulis* – the only natural warm water source in Britain.

We wish to thank College for its kind contribution to all these activities. If you have an interest in Ancient Greece or Rome, do not hesitate to contact us. All are welcome to join! Stay tuned for more. *Valete, xairete!*

**Marie Theres Wittmann (2021)**  
President

**Joel Bellviure Perez (2022)**  
Secretary and Treasurer



# Sports round up

## Hockey

Lincoln Hockey began with the Winter League, aiming for promotion after a 2024 relegation. That goal was secured with a game to spare, thanks to dominant wins over Teddy Hall (6-2) and Balliol/Univ (5-1). With Division 1 status confirmed, Cuppers became the focus.

In Trinity, we won three games to reach the Quarter-Finals of Cuppers. Against New College, trailing 1-0 at half time, we switched tactics and scored twice to seal a gritty 2-1 win. A composed 1-0 semi-final victory over Hertford followed.

The final against Teddy Hall was fiercely contested. An early Hall goal was cancelled out by a brilliant strike from the Corpus captain. With shootouts looming, we pushed for a winner, but heartbreak struck in the final play. Despite the cruel ending, we restored pride to Lincoln hockey. With the squad largely intact, we'll be back stronger next season.

## Cricket

After a successful winter recruitment, Theodore Brodbeck (2023) led a fresh-faced side that would aim to repeat the successes of previous years. Having decided to focus on the league, we strolled through our opening fixture against St Anne's. Having restricted them to a low score thanks to a complete bowling performance, Gaurav Mediratta (2021) and George Gardiner (2024) put on a stand of 80 before both retiring and allowing the rest of the team to finish the game.

This set the tone for a steady procession of victories against St Peter's, Teddy Hall and Oriel that would see us qualify top of the group. We then faced Balliol College in the first knock out round. After a strong performance the game stood in our favour as we left them 28 to get off the last 2



overs. However, their university batsman got a hold of our inexperienced fresher-filled lineup at the death. A strong start and good signs for next year.

Thanks to the popularity of cricket at Lincoln, we are launching an alumni cricket club and plan to start an old boys' fixture next year, which we are keen to keep growing. If you would like to take part, please get in contact with the College.

## Football

Football is one of the most popular sports at Lincoln. Monday training occurs throughout the whole year and we never struggle to put out a team for our midweek fixtures. We had an exciting league campaign this year, finishing third on goal difference and narrowly missing out on promotion. Multiple games were won or lost by a single goal, which led to some great celebrations. Our top scorer this year was former Manchester United Academy player Daniel Mayers-Jones (2024), with many other freshers contributing consistently. Our midfield was run by Oscar

Dyble (2024) and Dan Grant (2023) and dominated most games. Oscar himself won many 'man of the match' performances including some long-range screamers that will live on long in our memories. Some notable fixtures were the 3-2 win over Trinity and a 3-2 win over Univ.

Many thanks must go to the captain and general at the back Luca Moretto (2023) for not only organising every game and training session, but also for organising our futsal campaign in the summer, where we got to the semi-final of the plate. This was at one point very unlikely as we were three-nil down at half time against Pembroke, but thanks to an amazing display in the penalty shootout by goalkeeper Victor De Oliveira (2023), we made it through.

We are hoping for another strong intake of freshers next year and hope to push for promotion under new captain Alex Webster (2024).

Lincoln's women's team also had a successful season under Catrina McNamara (2023). They won both of their league games and go to the semi-finals of the Futsal Cup.

## Netball

This year has seen Lincoln Netball continue at a steady rate. The weekly matches have seen a good intake of new freshers and both termly divisions saw us sit comfortably in the middle of Division 2. The cuppers campaign in the middle of Trinity meant our third years unfortunately were unable to turn up. However, a solid showing with one win and a loss ensured we left with our dignity still intact. All in all, a very solid season and we look forward to going again next year. Many thanks to Evie O'Flynn (2023) for putting in so much effort as captain.

## Downing Sports Day

Almost 50 Lincoln students journeyed to Downing College in the first weekend of Trinity. The sporting events started with the women's football match played in one of the quads of Downing. Everyone who was there came out to support what was a hotly contested fixture. The Lincoln women were not intimidated by the Downing team's med-balls and stretchy bands and were 5-all at half time thanks to Catrina McNamara (2023) and Anja Woosnam (2024). The second half proved to be just as intense but sadly Lincoln came out on the losing side 8-9.



The men played an equally enthralling game. Having been 3-0 up at half-time thanks to the returning Peter Braybrook (2022), a couple of defensive errors left the score at 3-2 in the closing minutes where Downing hit the crossbar. Luckily it bounced out and the boys secured a great final victory of the season.

Downing is lucky enough to have both netball and tennis courts in their college and after a great effort from both of our teams against a college twice the size of us we managed to draw both fixtures. Great play was seen in tennis from Oliver Spooner (2024) and in netball from Isabella Coles (2024). The day concluded with some social tug-of-war and rounders both won by Lincoln before a social in the Downing Bar. The day was fiercely competitive and enjoyed by all.

Lincoln boasts many other sports teams. Our running and rowing clubs are particularly active, and we also have strong tennis and rugby teams. Sports at Lincoln provide an almost unique way for the college community to bond between year groups and many sports have strong social cultures off the pitch. It has been great fun getting to meet people and compete.

### George Gardiner (2024)

JCR Sports Rep (with thanks to Felix Cripps, 2022)



## Lincoln Blues

The Blue is the highest sporting accolade awarded to student athletes at the University of Oxford. Being awarded a Blue or Half Blue depends on the sport's official status and the specific performance criteria set for competing at the highest level in that discipline. We are delighted to honour the dedication and talent of our Lincoln Blue and Half Blue athletes.

### Blues:

**Harry Bridgewater**, Rugby Union  
**Martha Buhmann**, Basketball  
**Edwin Gosnell Burley**, Eton Fives  
**Betrys Galloni**, Hockey  
**Sasha Gorin-Delmas**, Football  
**Katie Hains**, Rugby Union  
**Jack Hamilton**, Rugby Union  
**Lutong Hao**, Fencing  
**Beatrice Jones**, Hockey and Cricket  
**Joshua Sammet**, Handball  
**Taanvir Sood**, Golf  
**Charlotte Wargniez**, Alpine Ski Racing  
**Sofya Filatova**, Alpine Ski Racing

### Half Blues:

**Shion Evans**, Athletics  
**Jonathan Dye**, Swimming  
**Momoko Howell**, Handball  
**Matthew Page**, Athletics  
**Xanthe Luckham-Down**, Clay Pigeon Shooting  
**Oscar Zhou**, Ice Hockey

# Sports and Societies

## On the river

With many familiar faces graduating last summer, this year has been one of renewal and rebuilding for Lincoln College Boat Club (LCBC). The energy was infectious from day one, thanks in no small part to our taster day and BBQ organised by social secretary and master of the grill, Harry Buller (2023).

The Isis was as unreliable as ever, with flooding wiping out much of the Michaelmas race calendar. Still, both men's and women's squads remained focused, logging countless erg sessions, and braving frosty morning runs and bike rides. Captains William Longtin (2023), Lindsey Ingrey (2024) and Nathalie Nick (2023) kept sessions sharp and spirits high.

Hilary term brought more red flags, but thanks to Treasurer Owen Hopes (2023) and our generous sponsors, rEvolution,

LCBC ran off two crucial Torpids training trips to Eton Dorney.

Just as everything started to come together, **Torpids** was severely restricted due to river conditions; only top divisions could race, and only with S-status coxes. M2 and W2 were sidelined but rallied as the loudest cheer squads on Boathouse Island.

With Robert McDonald (2019) briefly replaced by me in the cox's seat, W1 went +2 before close duels with GTC left them just inches from more bumps. M1, featuring only two experienced rowers, impressed with a dramatic campaign – row-overs, bumps and a Tokyo Drift-style overbump on St Catherine's made for a wild, valuable learning week.

Over Easter, LCBC returned to Shrewsbury School for training camp. With enough numbers for three eights, it was a

productive four days that helped develop the skills of our growing squad.

To kick off Trinity, W2 and M2 raced at **City Bumps** after missing out on Torpids. The sun shone and spirits were high, and special mention is in order to men's captain Will, who heroically learned to poleman on the job.

Then came **Bedford Regatta**, our first non-Oxford race of the term. With crews almost finalised for Summer Eights, it was the perfect test. W1 shone, dispatching Oxford and Cambridge opponents alike to bring home some well-deserved silverware.

Now for the highlight of the rowing calendar: **Summer Eights**. LCBC fielded an impressive seven boats this year, from M1 to M4 and W1 to W3, a remarkable achievement, considering the modest numbers we began with back in Michaelmas.





To kick off the annual festivities, W3, M3, and M4 lined up for Rowing On. W3 and M3, made up largely of novices who only took up rowing in the later terms, fully embraced the spirit of the sport. The progress they made in such a short time was nothing short of inspiring, and their determination just to race the course was a victory in itself.

**M4** – Rowing in Division VII, M4 found themselves surrounded by Blues rowers moonlighting as beer boat rowers. Their final record of -3 hardly reflects their tenacity. With ex-president Ellis Capp (2019) taking up the cox's seat, and two additional coxes positioned in the bows and stern, this crew

became legendary for never conceding early.

**M2** – Hoping to shake off last year's catchphrase, we are pleased to confirm that this year's M2 did make it to Donny Bridge—not just once, but on all four days! On top of that triumph, they treated Boathouse Island to some truly cinematic row-overs with the stellar steering of Amelia Kopacz (2021) bringing them to a hard-fought and well-earned result against Wolfson on the Saturday.

**W2** – After gaining some *unofficial* bumps experience during training (we're looking at you, St Edward's...), this year's W2 had one goal: break the cycle of back-to-back spoons and stay in the fixed

divisions. In classic dramatic fashion, they left it to the final day, but they did it! With matching sunglasses, face paint and infectious energy, W2 was easily one of the best-spirited crews on the river.

**M1** – Placed on “spoons watch” by most of the Isis due to the stiff competition around them, M1 were determined to prove the doubters wrong and show just how far they'd come since Torpids. The moment of truth came on Day 2 against Oriel M2. With overlap maintained from Donny Bridge to the finish, and Oriel within centimetres of a bump, it all came down to one last hail-mary move, M1 swerved off the racing line to the opposite side of the river and crossed the finish unbumped. A legendary row-over that will go down in LCBC history.

**W1** – Apparently unfamiliar with the phrase “what goes up must come down,” W1 achieved a phenomenal +4 this Summer Eights, earning promotion to Division I and becoming the highest-ranking Lincoln women's boat ever. Their success meant they didn't see much of the course, routinely bumping before the gut, and even before Donny Bridge. Their achievements this year are truly historic, a testament to their hard work.

Overall, it's been an incredible year for LCBC, one made possible by every single member of the Club. From early morning ergs to late-night socials, it's the commitment, enthusiasm and camaraderie of our rowers, coxes and supporters that define who we are.

With our presence in College growing and our skills on the water improving every session, we on the committee want to say a huge thank you to everyone who made this year what it was. We can't wait to see where the Club goes next!

**Charlotte Paylor (2021)**  
LCBC President 2024-25







# David Vaux

## A life in science

On the eve of his retirement, Professor David Vaux looks back on nearly 50 years of scientific exploration and academic life, from his first nervous arrival in Oxford in 1974 to a distinguished career in cell biology and collegiate teaching.

**I**t was a cold day in December 1974 when I first arrived in Oxford, alone, by train and feeling underdressed and very nervous about the upcoming interviews. The science papers of the entrance exam had seemed fair, but I had no idea how I had performed in the mandatory general paper; I ran out of time and wrote a poem. I had no role models in my family for application to, or life at, any university, let alone Oxford. I applied to Corpus Christi, my headmaster's old college, and was interviewed there and in several other colleges. I remember describing in detail my device for time-lapse recording of microscope images to study electrode erosion during electrolysis, but to this day I don't know whether this helped or hindered my chances! In a way, it was a harbinger of my longstanding interest in dynamic processes at the microscopic scale, which has been a common theme throughout my research career.

And so I came to Oxford, long hair, goatskin Afghan coat, speakers the size of small coffins and an armful of prog rock albums. And it felt like coming home. It was the 1970s, life was sweet, but life as a medical student was frantically

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And so I came to Oxford, long hair, goatskin Afghan coat, speakers the size of small coffins and an armful of prog rock albums. And it felt like coming home.”

busy. In some ways little has changed, although current students would certainly not recognise the emphasis on long periods in the dissecting room and brutal fortnightly assessments after which the class results, listed by name for all to see, were given as z-scores! A highlight of the course then, as now, was the research project in the third year. This had a profound effect on me; I was captivated by cell biology, by experimental research itself, and the search, occasionally successful, for elusive molecular explanations for both normal and pathological processes.

A key branch point then loomed, with the eventual decision to interrupt my medical training to complete a DPhil, a then well-recognised route that fell into abeyance for years, although I am delighted that this reinvigorated pathway has been followed successfully by several outstanding Lincoln students over recent years. For three years in the late 70s I immersed myself in the cell biology of that fascinating scavenger and discerning orchestrator of immune responses, the macrophage, using the freshly minted monoclonal antibody technique for the first time to characterise the enigmatic structures hidden *inside* cells.

Life events then accelerated sharply, and within a few years I had completed my medical training, married, become a father, owner of a house in Headington and migrant to the medical school at Yale. Years of happy family life in Hamden, Connecticut followed, during which I turned my attention to the role of macrophages in combatting abnormal cell behaviour, whether viral infection or transformation into cancer cells, which saw me become a Fellow of the Yale Cancer Centre.

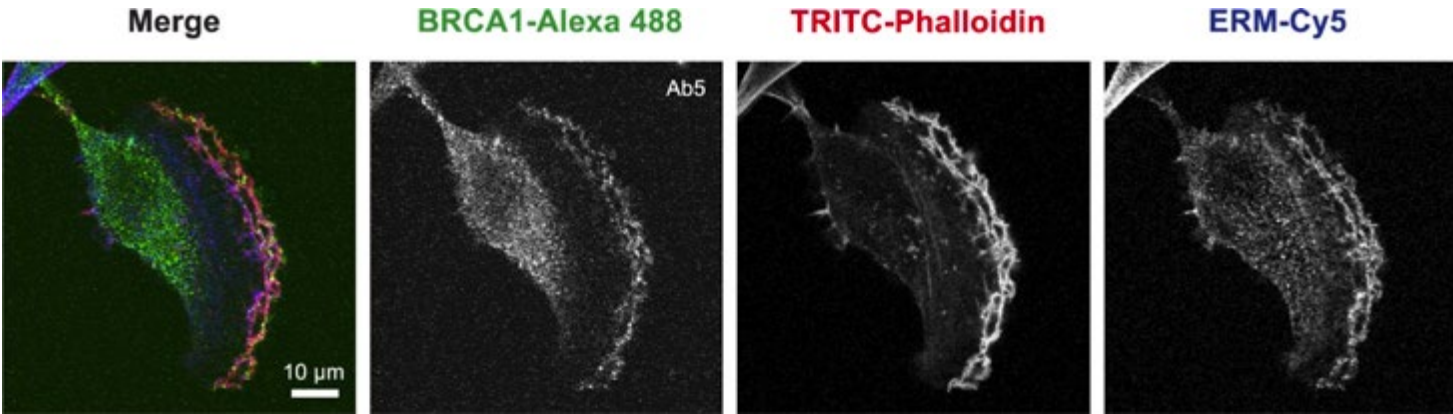
Then another shake of the kaleidoscope of being, a leap of 3.800 miles, and a new life in Germany. This time it was as a group leader in the cell biology programme at the European Molecular Biology Laboratory in Heidelberg. This gave me a chance – in that uniquely permissive environment – to build a group of like-minded scientists with a passion for both novel method development and the mesmerising beauty of the complex rush-hour traffic of tubes and vesicles to be found inside living cells.

But Heidelberg is close to Oxford in many ways, and the siren call of home became continually more audible and, eventually, insistent. And so the circle turned and I arrived once again in Oxford, alone, by train and feeling underdressed and very nervous about the upcoming interviews. Fellowship interviews are intense, with the entire Governing Body arrayed around a large horse-shoe-shaped table and the hot seat too far forward for the victim to see all his or her interrogators at once. But this was Lincoln, a quintessential community of scholars, at once polite and intellectually pointed, well informed and endlessly curious. One full day of interviews and a series of conversations as exhilarating as

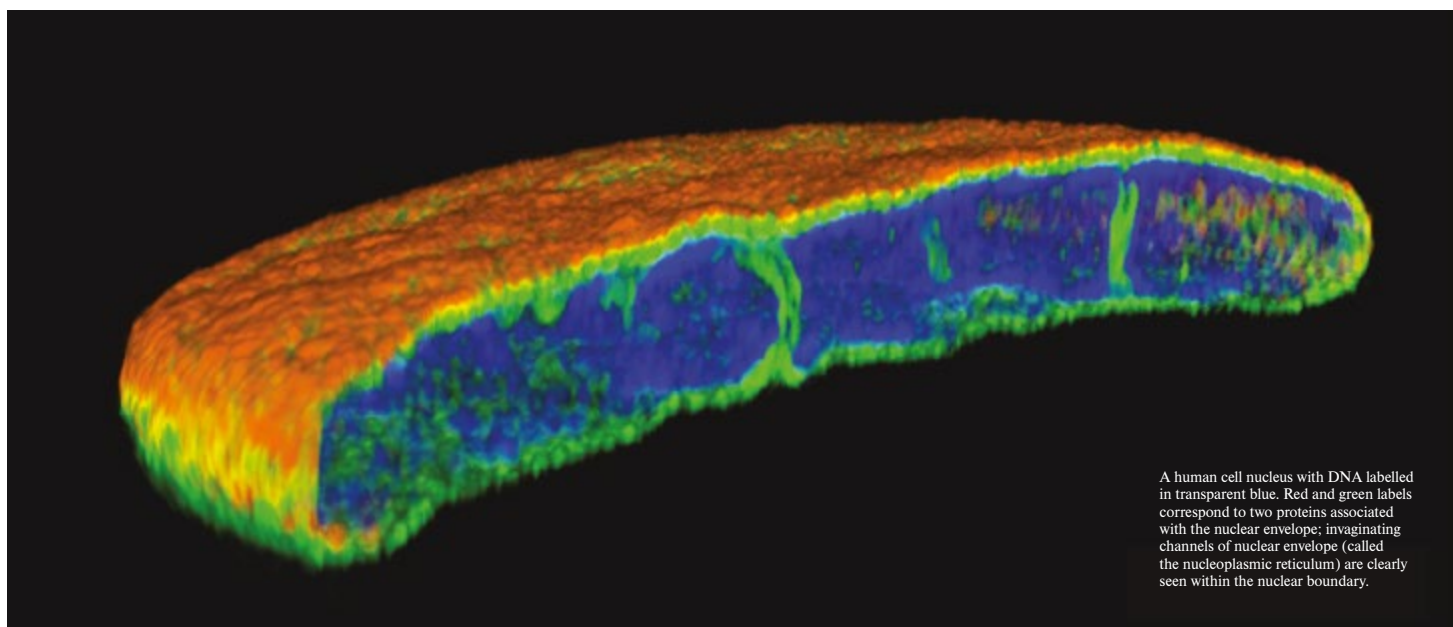
“Throughout my long years at Lincoln, I have been surrounded by the most extraordinary cavalcade of academic excellence, a fellowship that nurtures and supports while yielding tantalising glimpses of the intellectual journey of colleagues whose work is far from my own, but endlessly fascinating nonetheless.”

the very best of tutorials convinced me that I had found the perfect environment. In the years and decades that followed, I have always hoped that every undergraduate admissions interview conveys some of this special sense of coming home to a community of shared intellectual endeavour to every terrified applicant we ever saw.

Over long years of research, many of the important advances that we have made as a team have benefitted from the curiosity and experimental dexterity of a long series of talented Lincoln medical and biomedical science undergraduates who have spent time in my lab in the Dunn School of Pathology. Often it is advances in technology that reveal new avenues for research. The emergence in the 1990s of microscopes that could ‘cut’ optical sections through living cells provided a treasure trove of new observations. We were enthusiastic explorers in the hunt for novel structures, once leading to a study that elicited the comment in an influential review that “It is unusual to discover a significant new feature in a structure as large as the nucleus” and went on to explain our discovery that tubules of nuclear envelope can dive deep into the nuclear interior in a wide range of mammalian cell types. Helpfully, they also opined that this “raises new questions about how such three-dimensional tubes are formed and maintained”, which prompted us to continue work in this area for the next quarter century! This central theme in my research has ultimately unearthed unexpected connections between nuclear structure, cancer, fertility, premature cellular aging and longevity; a satisfying confluence, but one that begs another career’s worth of work.



Above: Migrating human cancer cell showing BRCA1 (the first identified breast cancer-associated protein, green channel), actin filaments (the cytoskeleton involved in cell movement, red channel) and ERM proteins (that link the cytoskeleton to anchor proteins enabling cell movement, blue). The merge shows the overlapping spatial relationship of these three features.



Serendipity certainly plays a significant part in a research career, and the early years of the new century brought a good example. A friendly disagreement with a professor of pathology in Belgium began a long and rewarding collaboration, the fruits of which included a new appreciation that the breast cancer associated protein BRCA1 that orchestrates a type of DNA repair in the nucleus is also functioning inside mitochondria. More exciting, we also discovered that some of this active enzyme homes to the inner face of the membrane at the migrating edge of cancer cells, where it serves to limit the migration of breast cancer cells. Indeed, cancer-associated mutations in the BRCA1 gene are associated with hypermobile cells, consistent with an increased risk of metastasis, an observation suggesting a future route to anti-metastasis therapeutics.

In the years running up to the turn of the millennium, another diversion occurred. This time it was an entrepreneurial collaboration that led to a spin-out company, engagement with venture capitalists, a research team based at Harwell, and new research directions around the biophysics of amyloid assembly and pathology. This new focus on chronic disease, especially neurodegenerative disorders like Alzheimer's Disease, led to a durable thread of research that extended to recognising that fibrillar amyloid material could also have important roles in normal physiology and biological structure. That silk is an excellent example of the natural exploitation of the physical properties of amyloid comes as a surprise to many, for example.

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This central theme in my research has ultimately unearthed unexpected connections between nuclear structure, cancer, fertility, premature cellular aging and longevity; a satisfying confluence, but one that begs another career's worth of work.”

More surprising to us was the discovery that some physiological peptide amyloids could detect a signal and switch between a droplet gel-like form and forests of tiny fibrils. In one example, a peptide called IAPP senses and then dissolves premature insulin crystals. In doing this, it can act as a timer defining the shelf-life of insulin granules waiting to be secreted by beta cells in the pancreas, establishing an unexpected link with type II diabetes and once again hinting at therapeutic opportunities.

The start of Michaelmas term 2025 marks my half century of association with this university, spanning three colleges. Throughout my long years at Lincoln, I have been surrounded by the most extraordinary cavalcade of academic excellence, a fellowship that nurtures and supports while yielding tantalising glimpses of the intellectual journey of colleagues whose work is far from my own, but endlessly fascinating nonetheless. But the thing that keeps us all young in mind is the constant flux of academically able, curious, stubborn, argumentative and insightful undergraduates who arrive at the College lodge year after year. These days rarely by train, rarely alone, never underdressed but still nervous of what the term might hold. The final reward is to watch what they become as they flourish in this unique place.

*Floreat collegii Lincolnensis*, for the next 600 years and more.

**Professor David Vaux**

Professor of Cell Biology, Tutor in Medicine and Nuffield Research Fellow in Pathology



# NEW WAYS OF WAR IN FOURTH- CENTURY GREECE

Did Philip II really learn the art of war from the Thebans? Dr Roel Konijnendijk challenges the myth, revealing a far broader web of military influence behind Macedon's rise.

**A**s I studied the life of King Philip II of Macedon, conqueror of Greece and father of Alexander the Great, I kept running into the same curious story. Ancient and modern commentators alike repeated the same tale to explain his success: that Philip had spent time as a hostage in Thebes when he was young, and the Thebans taught him everything he knew about war. The Thebans, after all, had defeated the vaunted Spartans in pitched battle – a feat no one else had managed to accomplish in 150 years. Who else could have taught Philip the skills he would eventually use to crush the Greeks by force of arms and subject them to his will? But my own earlier research told me the Thebans did not actually innovate much; they defeated the Spartans with pretty conventional methods. The story about Philip, then, did not ring true. As I dug deeper, I found that the Theban tale obscured a much richer story of innovation and inspiration.

In the course of his 23 years in power (359-336 BC), Philip not only raised Macedon from a kingdom on the brink of collapse to a state that dominated the southern Balkan peninsula, but also left an impressive military legacy. First, he used the gains from his rapid expansion to turn the Macedonian militia into a well-trained standing army. Second, his introduction of the two-handed *sarisa* pike (and the tactics to use it) transformed the previously unimpressive Macedonian infantry into a powerful force to field alongside the already renowned Companion cavalry. Third, he attached to his armies a state-of-the-art siege train that drastically reduced the time and effort required to take cities, making a critical weakness of his city-state opponents' lack of strategic depth.

This list goes a long way toward explaining Philip's many victories. But there is nothing here that we can easily link to Thebes. In fact, most of this would have seemed strange or unattainable to the Thebans. For all their successful battles and campaigns, the Thebans never had the means to create a standing army; like their Greek allies and enemies, they continued to rely on their citizen militia, thrown into the fight with little training or instruction. They never contemplated infantry reform or rearmament, and continued to fight as typical Greek hoplites using one-handed thrusting spears. They were not known for their siege prowess; indeed, they failed several times to take Sparta proper, despite the fact that Sparta had no walls. What they lacked in resources and technical skill, they made up for in civic commitment and diplomatic ingenuity. Thebes' rise was an impressive achievement in its own right – but it does not look like a promising template for an ambitious young king with a very different set of tools at his disposal.

As an ancient historian, I am as reluctant as any of my colleagues to throw out precious scraps of evidence. But the more I studied this, the harder it became to explain what ancient authors like Plutarch may have meant when they claimed that Philip learned his military skills from the Thebans. In their attempts to answer this question, other scholars have often pointed to the famous Sacred Band: an elite unit of 300 picked hoplites, maintained at public expense, that formed the backbone of the Theban battle line. Perhaps Philip was inspired by their skill and devotion; perhaps he even watched them train. Could this be why he established

a Macedonian infantry guard called the Foot Companions, which would become a critical component in Alexander's battle plans? It is possible; we do not know for sure. But having an infantry guard was characteristic of many Greek tyrants as well as Illyrian and Thracian kings, the neighbours of the Macedonians to the north

The battlefield at Leuctra today. The reconstructed monument marks the site of the Theban victory over Sparta.



and west. And there was another monarch who protected himself with a guard of foot alongside a guard of horse: the Great King of Persia, the most powerful man in the world, whose bodyguards of spearmen and heavy cavalry were well known to the Greeks. Was a man like Philip more likely to draw inspiration from the military institutions of a democratic city-state, or from the habits of kings and autocratic rulers like himself?

Once we acknowledge that Philip lived in a world full of military exemplars besides the Thebans, a lot of his other reforms become easier to explain. Beyond small units like the Sacred Band, standing armies were unaffordable to small city-states – but in the first decades of the fourth century BC, tyrants like Dionysius of Syracuse and Jason of Pherae had used huge armies of mercenaries to subject swathes of the Greek world to themselves. Jason ruled over Thessaly, a region on the southern border of Macedon with a strong cavalry tradition; it is hard to imagine a stronger parallel for the Macedonian situation, and therefore a more obvious source of inspiration. An eyewitness reports with awe how Jason led out his professional soldiers every day for drill and exercise; this is exactly what made Philip's new army so fearsome.

The Illyrians to the northwest of Macedon had recently introduced hoplite gear to their



Above left: Philip II, King of Macedonia, Roman copy of Greek original. Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, Copenhagen

Above right: Vase painting of a Thracian warrior, recognisable by his long patterned cloak (*zeira*), Phrygian cap, and crescent-shaped shield (*pelte*).

previously ineffective infantry and used it to defeat the Macedonians in battle, killing King Perdiccas III and clearing the way for Philip to ascend the throne. The crisis demanded an immediate response. In other words, Philip's reforms were not a nice idea borrowed from Thebes, but a response to a nearby threat. The idea for the introduction of long pikes may have come from neighboring Thracians and their hunting spears, or else from Xenophon's eyewitness reports of pike-wielding Egyptians or from Homer's tall tales of the colossal weaponry of the Greek heroes at Troy. Philip's siege train, too, was likely inspired by Dionysius of Syracuse, who was the first to adopt the siege tower from the Carthaginians, and whose engineers invented the catapult in the early fourth century BC. Meanwhile Philip's chief siege engineer, Polyidus, was another Thessalian. The list goes on, but the point is simple: who needs Thebans, when the world is full of good ideas? New and effective weapons and skills were available all around the Mediterranean for those with the means to implement them.

It seems the real question is why ancient authors were so insistent that Philip was

influenced by his time in Thebes. But it is not hard to guess. Philip really did spend some years in Thebes as a hostage to ensure the good behaviour of his older brother, King Alexander II. The Thebans themselves would no doubt have boasted that they had become so powerful, the princes of the north lived as captives among them. Later, when Philip had come to power and started to look more and more like a threat to the Greeks, it was useful for him to stress his Greek *bona fides*; he was no barbarian invader, but a civilised man who had learned from none other than the great and noble Thebans, who had liberated so many Greeks from Spartan oppression. Royal propaganda portrayed Philip, not as a foreign invader, but as a liberator with the Greeks' best interests at heart. And once it was all over – once Philip had shattered Greek resistance at the battle of Chaeronea and ended the autonomy of the city-states – there was at least some comfort for his new subjects in the thought that he could not have done it without his Theban education.

**Dr Roel Konijnendijk**

Darby Fellow in Ancient History

# REFLECTIONS FROM THE DIPLOMATIC FRONTLINE

FRONTLINE

THE DIPLOMATIC

**IONA THOMAS OBE (1998) HAS BUILT A CAREER AT THE SHARP END OF DIPLOMACY. NOW BRITISH HIGH COMMISSIONER TO NEW ZEALAND AND GOVERNOR OF THE PITCAIRN ISLANDS, SHE EXPLORES THE IMPORTANCE OF COURAGE, CURIOSITY AND STAYING OPEN TO NEW EXPERIENCES, IDEAS AND PERSPECTIVES.**





This page, from left to right: Kabul, Afghanistan, 2012. Iona at the UN Security Council, 2015.

Opposite page, from left to right: Receiving her OBE from Her Late Majesty The Queen, 2018. Speaking at a community event on Pitcairn Island, 2025.



As the school year draws to a close, my 17-year-old nephew's school is looking for ways to occupy the students before the long summer holiday. And so in mid-July, I found myself on the train to York, en route to speak to an enthusiastic bunch of sixth formers about "my career in diplomacy".

Engaging with this young group, many of whom were already thinking about what and where to study to get them their dream job, got me reflecting on my own entry into the world of work. I vividly remember the graduate milkround in my final year at Lincoln, attending dinners and talks by firms from The City – bankers, lawyers, management consultants. Many of my college mates ended up in satisfying careers with such firms. While this path didn't really grab me, I also wasn't terribly sure what did appeal as "a career".

As a result, I spent the first half of my twenties travelling and teaching in South America and Africa, doing a Master's in Gender, Development and Globalisation at LSE and working for an NGO in Namibia. These varied experiences helped me work out what I wanted from a career: the ability to make a difference and have an impact internationally. So my sights settled on government and joining the graduate Fast Stream.

After the usual series of psychometric tests, exercises and interviews, I was thrilled to be accepted onto the Fast Stream, though slightly less delighted to have been allocated to the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) – a department that seemed the opposite of my ultimate aim to work overseas. However, it turned out to be an excellent training ground for learning about developing and implementing policy, government spending, how Ministers work with Parliament and the challenges faced by different UK communities. After four years at DCLG, I began to get itchy feet and sought work that was more international. Luckily, a job heading up the Afghanistan Political Team at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office was advertised and I took the plunge.

And so, in 2010 I joined the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and it has absolutely delivered the aspects of a career that I wanted. I've lived and worked in New York, Tunisia, Libya, Pakistan and New Zealand. I've helped shape policies about police training in Afghanistan, tackled ISIS in North Africa, and promoted human rights in Pakistan. I've worked with colleagues to help British Nationals facing forced marriages and other personal crises. The work has been rewarding, none

more so than when I was part of the team that helped to relocate Afghans who had worked for the British Government to safety in the UK after the Taliban fell.

In my current role, I have two distinct jobs – I am the British High Commissioner to New Zealand and the Governor of the Pitcairn Islands, a UK Overseas Territory. The UK's relationship with New Zealand is close and strong, built on shared history and people-to-people links. We work in partnership to promote security and stability in the world, increase economic growth in both countries and deepen our bonds. We share a passion for sport (often with contrasting fortunes on the rugby field) and thousands of Brits and Kiwis travel between our two countries each year to visit friends, family or see the sights.

In contrast, governing Pitcairn – one of the most remote inhabited communities in the world and the only British Overseas Territory in the Pacific – is no small task, despite its tiny population of forty people, most of whom are descended from sailors that mutinied on HMS Bounty in 1789. Despite getting off on the wrong foot all those years ago, their links to the UK are strong and it is a responsibility and privilege to ensure that Pitcairn's people receive the support and services they need to carry out their lives on the island.



The locations I have worked in and the issues I've covered have been diverse. I enjoy the variety of the work and discovering new places and forging new relationships. Picking up and moving my life every three years, means that I have had to develop resilience. And at times, I have found myself in challenging and volatile situations.

I remember my first trip to Afghanistan where I found myself in an unplanned stop-off in Kandahar Airfield on a flight to Lashkar Gah, watching in awe and some fear as troops, military aircraft and drones were flown in from nearby front lines. My job back in London was to draft our political strategy for Afghanistan and it was the first time I felt the weight of the policy work and its connection to the real-world suffering of Afghans and the bravery of troops putting their lives on the line.

Several years later while posted to the UK Mission to the United Nations as Spokesperson, I travelled with the Security Council to South Sudan. At the time the country was in civil conflict, and we visited a camp for people internally displaced by the fighting. The delegates had intended to set out the Council's work to resolve the conflict, but were met with anger and frustration from those in the camp. They didn't want to hear about discussions and drafting in New York; they wanted to share their pain and have



the experiences heard and acknowledged. The travelling Ambassadors were shocked, humbled by people who had no care for nebulous concepts like diplomacy. It was another powerful lesson in the importance of connecting the theoretical, policy making and diplomacy with the reality on the ground, and to listen to and value those who live with the consequences of political decisions.

During my next posting as Deputy Head of Mission Tripoli, my role was to re-establish our embassy in Libya after a peace deal, ending the fighting following the fall of Gaddafi. We had evacuated our embassy two years previously and had been based in neighbouring Tunisia since then. I worked with our private security team and remaining local staff to ensure that we had suitable accommodation and office space. Returning to the office for the first time was an eerie experience as I saw reading glasses, diaries and notes that had been left during the evacuation when staff thought they would be back in six weeks or so. Instead, the office had been abandoned for over two years. It was a salutary reminder that things often get much worse before they get better. Two years on, the security situation remained difficult but we returned to support the new Libyan government and work towards an enduring peace. I was humbled to be recognised for

my work by receiving an OBE from Her Late Majesty the Queen in 2018.

While posted in Pakistan, one of the UK government's priorities and key areas of my work was to promote Freedom of Religion and Belief and support minority faith communities. During a visit by the then Duke and Duchess of Cambridge, I had the honour of chairing an interfaith dialogue in the Badshahi Mosque in Lahore. We convened faith leaders from across different schools of Islam, Hinduism, Sikhism and Christianity with the Duke and Duchess. The discussion focused on where the core messages of the different faiths overlapped and where we could find commonality and promote harmony rather than division. It showed where the UK could play a powerful role, standing up for what we believed in and bringing people together to further understanding.

When I shared these stories with the sixth formers that I met in York, it became clear that the themes that drew them together and run through my diplomatic career were: curiosity, courage and connections. Curiosity about unfamiliar places, other people and problems that presented themselves. Courage to try new, difficult or uncertain things. And the importance of making personal connections to deepen understanding and find solutions to some of the world's most complex and pressing problems.

At a time when the world is both more connected than ever, but also seemingly turning in on itself, I hope that those sixth formers took away a message of how important it is – as they navigate their lives into adulthood – to remain open and not to close themselves off from other experiences, ideas and viewpoints.

I may not have decided on my career path when I was at Lincoln, but I do know that the range of experiences I had during my undergraduate years there – both academic and extracurricular – helped to foster my curiosity, develop my courage and make invaluable connections that continue to benefit me now, even on the other side of the world.

**Iona Thomas OBE (1998)**



# A second chance at belonging

Naomi Kellman (2008) founded Target Oxbridge, the access programme that has helped quadruple the number of Black British students at Oxford and Cambridge. Here, she reflects on the experiences that inspired her and her continuing commitment to educational equity.

2011 was the year that I graduated. It was also the year that Oxford found itself in a media storm about low admissions rates for Black British students. The public spat between the government and the University focused on the accuracy of the figures, with no mention of how the issue itself would be solved. I watched the row unfold with concern about its impact on aspiring students. As a first generation to university, Croydon state school educated teenager, with grandparents from Barbados, Jamaica, Nigeria and England, I had been worried about my own chances of getting in and fitting in when applying to Oxford. A week of negative headlines might have convinced me not to apply at all.

I arrived at Lincoln in 2008 to study PPE, the only student of Black heritage in my year at College. Thrown into a world of different cultural norms, I took a while to adjust, finding a 'home away from home' in the Oxford African and Caribbean Society (ACS). I remember having experiences that I would now refer to as microaggressions when out with my Black friends – for example, having our Bod cards checked more frequently than our peers when visiting other colleges. I knew these experiences made me feel out of place, but I didn't know how to challenge them.

When the admissions story broke, I was working at Rare Recruitment, which supports ethnic minority and lower income students to secure jobs with top firms. The Managing Director, Raphael Mokades, gave me the opportunity to set up a programme to tackle the issue. Relishing the chance to challenge the inequalities I had witnessed as a student, I threw myself into creating Target Oxbridge.



Target Oxbridge is a programme that helps Black African and Caribbean students in the UK increase their chances of securing Oxbridge offers. I designed it to address the three main barriers faced by Black applicants. Firstly, the myth that Black students did not belong at Oxbridge. Secondly, the lack of access to good support and advice when navigating the application process. And finally, the tendency to cluster around competitive subjects such as law, medicine and economics due to employability concerns.

Since launching in 2012, Target Oxbridge has changed the narrative on who belongs at Oxbridge by connecting our students with role models. It's always enjoyable to see the mixed look of shock and joy on the students' faces as they realise there are people like them flourishing at Oxford and Cambridge. Conversations at events include questions about courses and colleges, access to familiar food, the availability of Black hairdressers and experiences of racial bias.

Once they believe Oxbridge is for them, we focus on applying. Rare's graduate recruitment expertise means the team is well placed to allay students' and parents' fears about subject choice. For example, Rare's legal clients host Target Oxbridge events whilst sharing the fact that 50% of their lawyers did not study law at university. Application preparation takes place in one-to-one and group sessions that help the students develop the confidence to tackle challenging questions. Students also receive a subject specific mentor and mock interviews.

Target Oxbridge was a *pro bono* programme for the first five years, funded by some of Rare's graduate recruitment clients. We started with just six Year 12

students in the first year, growing slowly until demand significantly outstripped the 35 places Rare had funding for. After a stint as a policy advisor at the Department for Education and HM Treasury from 2012-15, I returned to Rare determined to expand Target Oxbridge with the support of the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge.

I had been in conversation with both institutions since the start of Target Oxbridge. At the time, programmes that targeted specific ethnic groups did not exist in the university sector. I therefore had to make the case for moving from general 'BME' programmes to targeting the specific needs of Black students. My persistence paid off with Oxford agreeing to fund an expansion and to host our first three-day residential visit in 2017. Cambridge followed, and in 2018, with support and funding from both universities, we expanded Target Oxbridge to 160 places.

When the pandemic hit, the majority of our students were from lower socioeconomic groups with parents in jobs that involved exposure to Covid-19. We moved online to open our sessions to the hundreds on our waiting list, sending out laptops and internet dongles to those with no internet access. When the pandemic ended, we formalised our online approach – each year the programme now offers 160 in-person places, alongside another 300 on a digital programme and up to 500 on a webinar series for Year 10s. We have also increased our focus on students from lower socioeconomic groups, students of Black Caribbean heritage and Black boys – groups with persistent educational attainment gap.

The 2019 Target Oxbridge Residential Visit to Cambridge. The photo captures all of the 80 students who took part in the residential visit.



The 2018 Target Oxbridge launch event hosted at Clifford Chance's offices. It captures the Q&A session with our Target Oxbridge alumni - students who had completed the programme and had started their studies at Oxford and Cambridge.

Target Oxbridge has now supported nearly 600 Black British students to secure Oxbridge offers, contributing to the quadrupling of the Black Oxbridge population, from under 1% in 2013 to 3.8% in 2024. Our alumni have consistently made up around a fifth of the Black British students accepted to Oxford each year and have gone on to make an impact beyond what I could have predicted. At Oxford, our alumni have been active members of the student body, co-founding the ACS Annual Access Conference, serving as JCR Presidents and Oxford Union Presidents, and – very recently – being elected Oxford Student Union president.

Oxford feels like a very different university. It is visibly more diverse and, importantly, it is a place where conversations about race and racism take place more frequently. There is an understanding that targeted work is important, highlighted by the University's Black Academic Futures Scholarship, and its BeUNIQ programme for Bangladeshi and Pakistani Year 10 students. There remains substantial work to do, with Black students still experiencing an awarding gap at undergraduate level and being underrepresented at postgraduate level. It is also the case that the

stubborn attainment gaps at GCSE and A Level for Black students, particularly Black Caribbean students, mean Black students are not yet represented at Oxford (or Cambridge) in line with their rate within the school population.

In 2023 I stepped back from running Target Oxbridge to become Head of Research for Rare Technology (Rare Recruitment's sister company). I have built on what I learnt about my students' experiences of racism at school to inform Hemisphere Education, Rare's anti-bias training platform for schools. My research into the experiences of students of Black, South Asian and Chinese heritage has informed modules that have been completed by thousands of teachers across 275 schools to date. I hope these insights will help schools to create the inclusive environment that students of all backgrounds need to flourish.

I have been incredibly grateful for Lincoln's support of Target Oxbridge over the years. The College welcomed me and my first cohort of students for a tour in 2012. It also contributed to the central pot of money that the University Admissions Office raises to fund the programme. After lockdown, Lincoln hosted us for lunch during our residential visit. Having the opportunity to sit in Hall with 80 students of Black heritage, watching them excitedly chatter away as they imagined themselves as future Lincolmites, was an emotional experience for me. During my time at Lincoln, I didn't always feel like I completely belonged and so I didn't get as involved in college life as others. My work on Target Oxbridge has given me a second chance to engage with Lincoln. Now I sit in Hall with my own sense of belonging and the knowledge that even if it took me a bit longer than others, I have been able to contribute to life at Lincoln in a way that feels authentic to me.

**Naomi Kellman (2008)**  
Founder of Target Oxbridge

The 2018 Target Oxbridge Residential Visit to Oxford. This was the first year that the programme expanded to 160 places a year, enabling us to take 80 students to visit Oxford for three days, and another to Cambridge. The photo is of a session in which Black Oxford student ambassadors shared their experiences of life at Oxford.



# THE VIEW FROM WESTMINSTER



Dr Chris Smyth (1998), Whitehall Editor at The Times, reflects on two decades reporting from the heart of Westminster. From the chaos of Covid to the collapse of premierships, he explores the challenges and value of political journalism today – and the all-too-human figures on both sides of the story.

**T**he only out-of-body experience I have ever had came in Number 10, Downing Street. It was 22 March 2020 and, sitting a few yards in front of Boris Johnson, I demanded to know when he was going to lock the country down. As I did it, I seemed to be watching myself from the outside, marvelling at the utter absurdity of it seeming perfectly reasonable to suggest the prime minister hurry up and confine millions of people by law to their homes.

In some ways, such moments show the strength of political journalism. My colleagues and I were robustly challenging the nation's leader face-to-face on an issue of profound importance. Given what we know now of the utter chaos, irresolution and lack of preparation that delayed a full lockdown, such challenge was essential.

Perhaps too, it shows the weakness as, captivated by the gathering momentum of repressive measures, we did not spend enough time thinking of other options to the life-saving calamity that lockdown became.

Overall though, the collective out-of-body experience of the pandemic showed how essential

informed journalism still is. As *The Times's* Whitehall Editor – and *de facto* Covid policy correspondent – I spent those months navigating government meltdown to work out what was actually happening. Being first to tell people their risk of a deadly disease, when they might be locked up at home, or allowed to leave the house again, did feel like a public service.

It is now a cliché that journalism is in crisis, as social media gobbles up the world's attention and advertising spend. For most of my career, retrenchment and redundancy have been the norm, as the news industry puzzles over how to cope with the decline of print and, now, linear TV.

At the same time, the pandemic and political polarisation that have followed show more than ever the need for a considered counterweight to the frenzied conspiracy theories, outrage and frank nonsense that flourishes on social media.

Increasingly, though, opportunity has been emerging from the destruction. Fleet Street has long thrived on sensation, but is increasingly finding it cannot compete on that ground with the wilds of the internet. Instead, it is trying to compete on trust.



Paywalls, initially disliked by reporters and seen as a strategy of desperation, turn out to have a powerful upside: people will not pay for clickbait. But they will pay for the thorough, informed and engaging stories that journalists have always aspired to write. Or at least, some of them will. A tactic that works for *The Times*, the *Financial Times* and others has been far less successful for mass market and, especially, local news.

It is an emerging paradox of the modern media world that the political and social journalism on which democracy relies is in danger of becoming a luxury good. The open society thrives, but only behind a paywall.

The Westminster lobby, where I spend my working life, offers a similar paradox. For a century it has been an essential tool for informing Britain how it is really run. But to do so it depends on privileged access and a closeness to politicians that can sometimes seem unhealthy.

The lobby system dates from the General Strike of 1926, when Stanley Baldwin's government decided to invite some Westminster journalists in from the chaotic crush in Downing Street to explain what their policy actually was. For decades this informal system proved useful to both sides but was shrouded in an absurd level of secrecy – well into the 1980s, journalists were barred from even admitting it existed.

The charge of getting too close and credulous

often has validity: in hindsight the lobby was far too willing to believe Neville Chamberlain's arguments for appeasement and Tony Blair's for invading Iraq.

But the insight gained by the ability to chat off-the-record with ministers, MPs and advisors has added incalculably to understanding. Just wandering around the Palace of Westminster and seeing whom you bump into sometimes yields more than hours of painstaking analysis. Those Covid Zoom press conferences, living room door barricaded against marauding toddlers, were no substitute.

The difference was brought home to me on finally being able to have lunch with a senior contact who offered helpful if unspectacular online briefings during Covid. "Boris Johnson is totally innumerate – you give him a graph and he can't even tell which way up it goes", came the confidence over the main course. Suddenly policy made so much more sense.

Knowing the context of what you are seeing matters. One of the most awkward moments of my career came in the White House, when I asked President Biden a simple question, only for him to stare at me blankly. I repeated it, only for him to forget the first half of the question and ask me to repeat it again. It felt mortifying at the time, but if I had been more plugged in to Washington, I might have seen it as an early sign of the mental decline that forced him out of the election months later.

Even prime ministers can sometimes relax, usually on foreign trips when chatting to the travelling lobby crammed in the back of the government plane. Such access is the price of media tickets subsidising the flight. Sadly, the best stories from these trips cannot be printed, including the one where journalistic over-indulgence almost forced the prime minister of the United Kingdom into an emergency landing in Iran.

Sometimes there is no substitute for seeing the whites of people's eyes. On what turned out to be the last night of Liz Truss's government, a chaotic vote degenerated to the point where the prime minister was chasing resigning cabinet ministers through Parliament while recalcitrant MPs were manhandled through the voting lobbies. The look of shame and self-loathing on the faces of Tory MPs made it clearer than any words that the game was up.

Spending your time close up with politicians, of all parties, makes you realise they are human. Most of them are trying to do their best, although in many cases their best is not good enough. Some MPs are deeply impressive people; for others, the kindest thing to say is that they are representative of those electing them. There are obvious chancers at Westminster, but they are in the minority. Most are genuinely motivated by a desire to improve the country – with the streak of arrogance that comes with thinking the way to improve the country is having them in charge of it.

Overwhelmingly, though, the dominant and most alarming sense in Westminster is

powerlessness. MPs, ministers, even some in the Cabinet, feel they are too constrained – by the structure of government, by their own parties, by voters – to actually change things. This is profoundly unhealthy. Perhaps a politics that attracts the absolute best people would feel different. Undoubtedly, the Whitehall system needs reform to make it easier to get things done.

The deeper problem, though, is that politicians are facing competing demands that are impossible to reconcile. Voters are a demanding lot, and fear losses more than they value improvements. They have an unrealistic sense of what is affordable, and cannot agree on what is desirable.

It is tempting for someone professionally interested in politics to say the answer is for people to be more engaged, to understand the policy choices and trade-offs. Certainly, I would like this to be the case. But I fear it is unrealistic – the more interested people tend to be in politics, the more partisan they tend to be. Interest in politics, like with sport, tends to come with an overriding desire to see your side winning.

Political journalists are never objective – an impossibility – and impartiality can often be an unsatisfactory substitute for judgement. Instead, with politicians as with everything else, what we strive to be is fair. We do not assume bad faith, we take opposing arguments seriously, but we also demand evidence. In a polarised world, we could all do worse than that.

**Dr Chris Smyth (1998)**

Whitehall Editor at *The Times*





## My Lincoln

# Anna Coombs

Driven by determination and self-belief, Anna Coombs (1991) carved her own way to Oxford from a rural state school. At Lincoln, she found the freedom to think differently, a spark that would later lead her to found the innovative theatre company Tangle, which champions African and Caribbean artistic excellence.

### What brought you to Oxford?

Oxford's potent sense of tradition, expectation and aspiration, which I latched on to as a teenager, was hard to resist! Whilst my rurally located state school was excellent in many ways, it lacked capacity to support students who wished to sit the entrance exam. I was the only person to apply and my preparation was largely self-taught, with some informal local tutoring. I chose my own texts and authors, and worked independently for over two years. There was a degree of isolation, but I was pretty determined. I'll never forget the feeling when got a place. I'd also received an offer from the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama in London, but having put so much work into applying to Oxford, I went for that.

### Why did you choose Lincoln?

By closing my eyes and putting a pin on the page that listed the colleges! Although a random choice, I was pleased to discover Lincoln was very strong in my subject, English. I believe that I was one of the first from my school to get a place at Oxford. This grew a tradition of other students applying to Lincoln, which I believe still continues.

### What were your first impressions of Lincoln?

The interview experience – the ancient surroundings and the people – was magical. As a student, however, my first impressions were mixed. I felt daunted by my peers' confidence and self-assurance. Arriving straight from a season assistant directing at The Abbey Theatre, Dublin I'd been living and working with seasoned adult professionals for months, but Oxford felt like a very different world. People spoke in a coded language that I couldn't understand. Navigating the academic set-up was equally challenging: there was a strong sense of assumed knowledge around 'how to study', which I found hard to grasp.

Although much is being done to provide more access and support, at that time the student body felt relatively monocultural, dominated by male-identifying undergraduates from public schools.

This was quite overwhelming. However, people really did mix together in a friendly, supportive way, given time, and I've made lifelong friends from my years at Lincoln.

### What was your favourite thing about being at Lincoln?

There are many wonderful memories. Cycling through Port Meadow at dawn,

bells cascading across the city, Formal Hall, choral Evensong and studying in the Bodleian. I especially cherish the bespoke approach to learning and teaching. I was an unusual undergraduate but was given the freedom to explore precise academic areas. In my prelims, I wrote on Seamus Heaney and Iris Murdoch, and on Dion Boucicault for finals. I'm fairly sure that I was the first undergraduate in the university's history to do so.

My tutor, Stephen Gill, was exceptional in his care and understanding of how my mind worked. He went out of his way to help me, and to find tutors who would engage with unusual specialisms. We are still in touch after all these years!

### Why did you choose to study English Language and Literature?

It wasn't so much a choice as the only option that made sense. My state school offered core subjects only, although I was also trained as a classical musician. English was the area in which I had confidence and curiosity. I went with that.

### How did your time at Lincoln shape you?

Lincoln instilled in me the notion that being an individual thinker has value. That



Richard the Second, 2022



Anna with the company from Doctor Faustus, 2018

was revolutionary. I hadn't expected to be asked my opinion or to be taken seriously. It empowered me intellectually, even if I didn't act on that confidence until later in life. Lincoln also opened up a world of privilege and entitlement that I hadn't encountered before. I don't mean that in a critical way, just observational. It was new to me, and fascinating.

My time at Oxford also gave me the practical space to explore theatre as a potential career. I directed plays, worked with gifted people and began to develop my craft.

#### How has your career progressed since graduating?

After Oxford, I obtained an MA at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art. Whilst at RADA, I wrote (in a rather offhand

way) to the director Jonathan Miller, who, within an hour of meeting, offered me the opportunity to assist on his new production of Bizet's *Carmen* at English National Opera. That was my first London gig!

I went on to work at the National Theatre, Soho Theatre, and in the West End with Sir Andrew Lloyd Webber, Bill Kenwright and Thelma Holt. I worked regionally at The New Vic Stoke on Trent with Peter Cheeseman, The Oxford Playhouse and The Marlowe, Canterbury as well as directing on the London Fringe. In 2001 I joined Hall for Cornwall, Truro (now Cornwall Playhouse) as part of the team that turned this raw, new venue into an international success story. During those years, I reconnected with my familial heritage in South Africa. This, combined with the observation that Cornwall lacked

African influences, coalesced into the founding of Tangle.

#### What are you doing now?

I am the Artistic Director and Chief Executive of Tangle, a touring theatre company championing African and Caribbean artistic excellence. We produce a mix of new work and classical revivals. Although we are a touring theatre company first, we are also a family, a community and a movement.

#### What has been your proudest achievement so far?

Creating Tangle as an organisation with genuine integrity that is values driven. Our leading value is *Ubuntu*, a Nguni Bantu term, which encapsulates trust, generosity and understanding. In an oftentimes supremacist industry, we encourage openness and equity. I serve a huge group of artists, and my greatest pride is being able to do that with honesty and purpose.

#### What three words would you use to describe Lincoln?

Safety. Cosiness. Friendliness. Lincoln's centrality makes it an anchor in the shifting tides of university life.

"Lincoln instilled in me the notion that being an individual thinker has value. That was revolutionary. I hadn't expected to be asked my opinion or to be taken seriously."

# Events report

**T**he 2024-25 academic year was marked by the momentous launch of our 600th Anniversary Campaign. This historic initiative kicked off with a global series of 'Toasts across the Coasts' events and a magnificent reception at London's Tate Modern, setting a celebratory tone for the years leading up to our sexcentenary in 2027.

Alongside these special 600th events, we were delighted to host our full and varied calendar. From Gaudies and guest dinners in College, to talks and receptions across the UK and beyond, it was a year rich with opportunities for Lincolmites to connect.

## 600th anniversary campaign

Our 600 Anniversary Campaign launched on 10 October with a glittering reception at **Tate Modern** in London where around 200 alumni and friends gathered to socialise and hear speeches from Nigel Clifford and alumni. The Campaign's global reach was immediately evident with our 'Toasts across the Coasts', a remarkable series of events held in 26 cities across five continents, uniting Lincolmites worldwide.

## The Rector's USA tour

The Rector, Nigel Clifford, and his wife, Jeanette, had their first official visit to the USA this spring to visit alumni and friends on both coasts. The trip kicked off with a lovely reception at the home of **Pam and Dick (1973) Sauber** in Washington, DC, followed by visits and events in New York City. **Sean Brady (1987)** kindly

hosted a dinner in his home and made it as close to a High Table dinner as possible. A special thanks goes to **Chef** and **Paul** for sharing their sticky toffee recipe with the New York chef.

They then travelled to the West Coast. In Los Angeles, the group toured LACI (a clean energy incubator) organised by **Shawn Landres (1996)**, followed by a dinner generously subsidised by **Sabine Jaccard (1991)** and her husband **Pedro Catarino**. Next, they headed to the Bay Area for a clay shooting and luncheon in Sonoma sponsored by **Jason Chang (2006)** and a reception in Los Altos hosted at the home of **Neil (1979)** and **Ann Wolff**. They saw over 120 alumni and friends during the trip.

## Events in Oxford and beyond

As always, we had an 'event full' year with dinners, receptions, Gaudies and talks in College and across the UK. Alumni gathered in mid-September for our annual **Lincoln Alumni Guest Dinner**. It was a lively evening of reminiscing with old friends and a chance to meet the new Rector.

A **Festschrift** was held in October at College for former Rector, **Henry Woudhuysen**. Edited by two of his former PhD students, the **Festschrift** – entitled *Liber amicorum H. R. Woudhuysen: a Bibliographical Tribute* – brings together essays by friends and colleagues. It was a joyous and informative tribute to Henry, who is one of the most senior and influential early modernists, book historians and scholarly editors of his day.

Also in October, we welcomed to the College cellist **Dr Ronald Crutcher** (President Emeritus and Professor at the University of Richmond) and pianist and former Lord Crewe JRF in Music, **Dr Samantha Ege**. Dr Ege also returned to Lincoln in March to give an unforgettable International Women's Day Concert.

We are deeply grateful to **Emily Mortimer (1990)** for hosting a special screening in November of **Paddington 3** – where she played Mrs Brown – for alumni and their children. **Autumn Murray Day** took place later that month where Murray Society members enjoyed a presentation of Lincoln's Medieval Manuscripts at the Weston Library with **Dr Laure Miolo**, Research Fellow in Latin Palaeography and **Dr Martin Kauffmann**, Keeper of the Special Collections.

Clockwise from top right:  
Jane Jenkins at Tate Modern 600th launch event.  
Emily Mortimer gives special screening of Paddington 3.  
Alumni enjoying 600th launch event.  
Wreath-making workshop.



We entered the festive season with our final events of the year. Head Garden **Mike Hawkins** gathered a wide variety of plantings from College to lead a fun workshop for alumni and friends to make their very own sustainable **Christmas wreaths**. And the **Holiday Drinks** event at London's Oxford and Cambridge Club, sponsored by **Philip Dragoumis (1990)**, proved as popular as ever.

On 14 March, Lincoln Fellow **Dr Perry Gauci** discussed his new book on the history of the College at a dinner in Bristol. The following day, the London Dining Club gathered at the Royal Geographical Society for a captivating talk by maritime archaeologist **Mensun Bound (1978)** on the discovery of Shackleton's ship, *Endurance*.

In May, we celebrated the 40th anniversary of the Berrow Scholarships, which have supported 161 students at Lincoln to date. It was a chance to honour The Marquise de Amodio, who was presented with a book of memories from Berrow alumni, and we extend grateful thanks to the British Ambassador, who co-hosted.

**Lincoln Family Garden Party** on 7 June didn't actually take place in eighth week this year due to a clash with a Degree Day. Although it was held indoors due to weather, much fun was had – the entertainer dazzled everyone with magic tricks and stilt walking, and the refreshments were delicious.

Our **Lincoln for Life** events are open to young alumni who matriculated in the last 10 years. At this year's event in July, young alumni gathered in London for Summer Drinks at a Thames-side pub.

We held two garden-themed events during the summer. Alumni in the Toronto area were treated to a tour of the **Botanical Gardens and Edwards Gardens**, followed by lunch. And closer to home in August, we opened the College for the **National Garden Scheme (NGS)**, which gave the public the chance to visit the Fellows' and Rector's gardens and to see the external walls of the Chapel that are normally hidden from view.

Throughout the year, we held Evensongs in Chapel and hosted Gaudies for groups from 1961 and before, 1966-68, 1969-1971 and 1995-96. As ever, these evenings are a lovely chance for alumni to reconnect with old friends, walk down memory lane and enjoy toasts and speeches over dinner.

We are immensely grateful for the enthusiastic support of our alumni and friends, and look forward to another exciting calendar of events as we enter the second year of our 600th Anniversary Campaign!

**Halley Cohen**, Communications Manager



Open Lincoln

# Lincoln 600 campaign: Open Lincoln

**T**his has been a year of highlights, not least among them the launch of our 600 Anniversary Campaign and the installation of our 40th Rector, Nigel Clifford. Nigel joined in time to preside over the inaugural event of the Campaign at Tate Modern and, as you can read in his own article, he has quickly settled in to the College, and the recently refurbished Lodgings. I will write in the *Record* about some of the fundraising highlights of the past year, and there are many.

Here though, I would like to look forward to next year, when we embark on the next stage of the 600 Campaign, our Open Lincoln plan. Lincoln is proud to be among the most generous of all Oxford Colleges in terms of providing bursaries and scholarships to our students. All of this has been made possible through the generosity of our alumni and friends, and each year the list of named awards grows longer.

However, we are also aware that students can need different types of support when they are here. On the academic front, we provide study skills support for undergraduates, and our welfare team is kept busy helping students from both common rooms. Over the next year, we'd like to expand the support we provide for extracurricular activities, which are so important to the development of our students. These can include grants to established societies, such as LCBC, VacProj or choir, or newly established groups which might not otherwise get off the ground, including our new Classics society. Travel awards and support for conference attendance allow students to experience other countries and cultures, and to broaden their academic horizons. Likewise, support for internships for those who don't have family accommodation nearby, or travel awards to develop

language skills or broaden cultural understanding can make a huge difference to our students. Our current resources for these grants are limited, and we'd like to increase both their number and value.

We also want to use this year to open more doors, literally, in Lincoln. So there will be opportunities to see parts of Lincoln that you may not have seen before, including the Senior Library, the wine cellars and the kitchen. Look out for these special events when we announce them throughout the year.

So much of what makes Lincoln special is only possible thanks to our alumni. If you'd like to know more about our Open Lincoln initiatives, or to support one of them, do please get in touch with me or the Development Office team.

**Susan Harrison**, Director of Development and Alumni Relations



Left: Butler Tony Daly in the Wine Cellar  
Centre: Welfare and Arts painting event  
Right: Student Welfare Tea gathering





Caption here



# VacProj

**T**his year VacProj, Lincoln College's student charity, has entered its 53rd year of working with children from Oxfordshire's social services system. The charity has worked for over half a century to create fun and carefree weeklong residentials for nearly 1,500 children in Oxford, including some who are young carers or on Child Protection Plans.

Samir Shah (1987), who remains involved in VacProj as a member of its Advisory committee states, "It's been amazing to be involved with VacProj for all this time. Things are far more professional these days than when I was a leader in the 1980s and 1990s - but the underlying ethos still remains - we aren't going to change lives, but we can give some children an amazing week away. I treasure being part of the VacProj family."

The charity's patron, David Smith (1971), is one of the minds behind VacProj who helped create its very first holiday in 1972. He reflects: "It's been a privilege since the Millennium to help out, as a patron and cheerleader, albeit from a distance. Such a treat to see how VacProj unites all of us Lincoln volunteers over 50-plus years, indeed in many cases it's THE link between alumni and our College, as our gatherings for our 40th and then 50th anniversaries showed loud and clear."

This year's alumni Garden Party brought together volunteers of multiple generations. The current President, Kyra Radley (2023), stated, "It has been such a pleasure meeting so many people who still care deeply about VacProj. It's special to exchange stories from the weeks and compare how VacProj has been at the very heart of our Lincoln experiences. The responsibility of such an important cause doesn't escape any student



volunteers, but it is amazing to know the wealth of previous experience we can draw on."

Victoria Guest (1999), a member of the Advisory Committee, says "I consider it a real privilege to sit on the advisory board of VacProj, 25 years after my first holiday back in 2000. I'm certain I'm not the only VacProj alumna who would say the experience has had a lasting impact on both their personal and professional life."

The fact that VacProj is now celebrating its 53th anniversary is a powerful testament to the ongoing need for the holiday. However, the legal, regulatory and financial landscape continues to grow more complex. While the executive committee is working tirelessly to meet these challenges, support from the alumni community has never been more valuable. If you're in a position to offer help - whether that involves sharing your skills, knowledge, ideas or resources - please do get in touch via the Development Office.

**Kyra Radley (2023), President**

Top left: Games at St Catherine's  
Top right: Younger Week 2024  
leaders  
Bottom: Enjoying the Alumni  
Garden party

# Alumni News

## The King's Honours 2024–25



### Professor Julia Black DBE CBE FBA

Julia Black (1985) was appointed Dame Commander of the Order of the British Empire (DBE) *for services to Research in the Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences*. Julia is Warden of Nuffield College and was President of the British Academy from 2021–2025. Prior to becoming Warden, she was a Professor of Law and Regulation at the London School of Economics and Political Science where she also held a number of senior executive roles including Pro Vice Chancellor of Research from 2014 to 2019, interim Vice Chancellor from 2016 to 2017, and Strategic Director of Innovation from 2019 to 2024. She has also served on the board of UKRI (2017–2023), the Bank of England's Prudential Regulation Committee (2018–2024) and is on the board of the Financial Conduct Authority. She was awarded a CBE in 2020 for services to the study of law and regulation.



### Jerome Glass CB

Jerome Glass (1999) was appointed Companion of the Order of the Bath (CB) *for Public Service*. He was appointed Chief Operating Officer at the Home Office in June 2025. Before this, he served as Director General for the Ministry of Justice's Policy and Strategy Group, where he oversaw the Criminal Justice System and all of the department's policy work. He has led work on reducing reoffending, prison and wider criminal justice reform, improving the experience of victims (in particular of rape and serious sexual offences) and on improving access to justice across the country. He has been with the Ministry of Justice since 2016, holding positions such as Principal Private Secretary to the Lord Chancellor, Director of Strategy and Director of Prison Policy.



### Peter Dawson CBE

Peter Dawson (1981) was appointed Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE) *for services to Prisoners and to Prison Reform*. Now retired as Director of the Prison Reform Trust, Peter has been a leading voice in advocating for a more humane, effective, and just penal system. His career has spanned operational roles within the prison service and impactful work in policy and reform, including 15 years in the Home Office and as a Prison Governor. It was at High Down that he oversaw the opening of the Clink, a cordon bleu restaurant within the prison walls, but open to the public and in which all the food was prepared and served by prisoners.



### David C Case, MBE

David C Case (1962), Chairman of the Diss Triangle Project, was made an MBE *for services to the community in Diss*. He played a key role in the successful redevelopment of The Corn Hall in Diss, securing funding for its renovation and extension. His efforts helped transform the building into a thriving arts and cultural hub. He also led the Heritage Triangle Project, which revitalised St Nicholas Street, Mount Street/Market Place and Market Hill.



### David Richmond-Coggan BEM

David Richmond-Coggan (1967) was awarded a British Empire Medal (BEM) *for*

*Voluntary Services to Maritime Safety.* David has been an RNLI volunteer since he retired 16 years ago. Initially he was a Branch Secretary in Surrey, and was instrumental in developing it to raise nearly £20,000pa. He is now Branch Chairman in Christchurch and Bournemouth raising funds for, and awareness of, the work of the local RNLI lifeguards. Throughout he has also visited schools, speaking to nearly 90,000 young people to help them enjoy water activities safely and has spoken at many clubs and societies about the RNLI generally.



### Professor Stephan Chambers OBE

Stephan Chambers (1982) was appointed Officer of the Order of the British Empire (OBE) for services to Social Enterprise and to Philanthropy. Stephan has played a pivotal role in advancing entrepreneurship with a social purpose, notably as the founding

director of the Marshall Institute for Philanthropy and Social Entrepreneurship at the London School of Economics and as co-founder of the Skoll World Forum and MBA director at Oxford Saïd. He is a Senior Research Fellow at Lincoln.



**Irene Wolstenholme MVO**  
**Irene Wolstenholme (nee Wood, 1984)** was appointed MVO (Member of the Royal Victorian Order) in the 2025 New Year's Honours for her work at Coutts & Co in service to the Royal Household. The Royal Victorian Order is in the gift of the monarch and is awarded for personal service to the Royal Family. She was privileged to receive the badge of the order from the King at an investiture at Windsor Castle in March 2025.

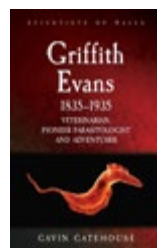
## 1950s

Derek J Mitchell, son of **Malcolm Mitchell (1959)**, has been appointed Academic Visitor in the new Department of Politics and International Relations at Oxford. Derek was Ambassador to Burma from the United States under President Obama and more recently President of the National Democratic Institute in Washington, D.C.



**Peter Kornicki (1968)** produced two books in 2025. One was in English – *Printing Technologies and Book Production in 17th-century Japan* (Cambridge University Press) – and the other was in Japanese and published by Benseisha in Tokyo. It is mostly about the continued production and circulation of manuscripts, even after printed books became easily available, and it explores the reasons for this phenomenon, which include the avoidance of censorship. The head of Benseisha edited it himself and smoothed out the awkward expressions in my Japanese, thank goodness!

## 1960s



**Gavin Gatehouse's (1960)** biography, *Griffith Evans 1835-1935* (University of Wales Press), recounts the colourful life of a forgotten microbiologist and veterinarian born in rural west Wales. During his army career in Canada and India, Evans met and impressed Abraham Lincoln and became a close friend of the physician, William Osler, and later, of David Lloyd George. His seminal demonstration that blood parasites, then believed to be benign, were pathogenic was rejected in India and Britain, but acknowledged and exploited by Robert Koch and Louis Pasteur in Europe. He waited 35 years for recognition by the British scientific establishment.



**Michael Lewis (1968)** has written *Flight from Prague - the Making of a Refugee* (Haythorp Books, September 2025), an account of how his father, Harry, a young Jewish businessman, is forced to flee for his life from Czechoslovakia and seek sanctuary in Britain following the 1938 Munich Agreement.

# Alumni News

A story of displacement, fear and bewilderment, it traces the collapse of a familiar world, leaving the protagonist isolated and penniless on the streets of London. Set in a particular historical context, the book also speaks to the abiding pain and tragedy of the refugee everywhere.

In March **Philip Smallwood (1968)** delivered the 2025 David Fleeman Memorial Lecture to the Johnson Society of Australia, in Melbourne, on 'States of Happiness in Abraham Cowley and Samuel Johnson'. While in Australia he also gave an invited talk to the Melbourne 'Savages' entitled 'Raising the Dead: The Two Lives of Johnson's 'Life of Savage'. As Emeritus Professor of English at Birmingham City University, he was this year made an Honorary Senior Research Fellow at the University of Bristol where he has taught for the last fifteen years.



For translating his studies of inkjet printing fluid dynamics into industry and products, the

American Society of Imaging Science and Technology has awarded its 2024 Johann Gutenberg Prize to **Dr Steve Hoath (1969)**. This is a reflection of his work in the University of Cambridge Department of Engineering Inkjet Research Centre between 2005 and 2017, including his book *Fundamentals of Inkjet Printing: The Science of Inkjets and Drops*. Steve continues his additional work on International Standards for Inkjet Printing equipment for Printed Electronics with IEC TC119 WG3, and is an Emeritus Fellow at Wolfson College, Cambridge, working on sustainability.

## 1970s

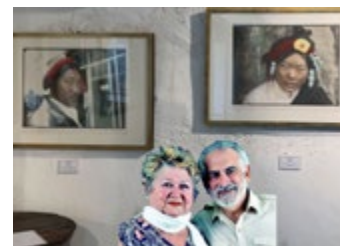


**Michael Geisow (1970)** at 76 has relaunched his activity in protein science, publishing last January on the annexins (a protein family belonging to our innate cellular defense and repair system) in *Nature Communications*. Following his Oxford DPhil in Molecular Biophysics, he identified and christened the annexins whilst working for the Medical Research Council at Mill Hill. One of the annexins is

presently in clinical trials as a therapy for retinopathies. His research career and (hopefully) encouraging words directed at young researchers can be found on his recently launched website.

**Neil Kern (1971)** attended the Royal College of Music Opera School after Zoology at Lincoln, before an MSc with Pretoria University on the small mammal populations of the Kruger National Park. He then pursued a career in independent education, ending as Headmaster of Durham School. After early retirement in 2008, he and his wife Ann ran a small game lodge in the Greater Kruger Park in South Africa for 13 years. They are now fully retired and living in rural North Yorkshire, with one daughter working with the National Trust and one in wildlife conservation in Australia.

**Nigel Siesage (1971)** has been president of the Leicester Literary and Philosophical Society for 2024-25 and gave his presidential lecture on nineteenth-century election malpractice. The Society was founded in 1835 and was instrumental in establishing the University of Leicester in 1921. As a Public Orator at the University, Nigel had the great pleasure of presenting Sir Patrick Vallance, Sir Chris Whitty and the exceptional young baritone, James Newby, at Degree Congregations during 2025.



The town of Sollies Toucas, Var France, requested **Ian Stowe's (1971)** wife Judit to hold an inaugural solo exhibition of her 30 years of photography in the newly renovated historic (1638) water-powered olive oil mill in the centre of the town. One hundred photos were taken during their residence for Ian's work and travel in India, China, Tibet, England, the USA, and voyages to many European, Asian and Middle Eastern countries were exhibited and printed on various media by Judit including silk, art paper, hand-made rice paper, gold film photo paper, canvas and aluminium. Search the web for 'Judit Stowe photographer' for her works.

**Mark Seligman (1974)** has been appointed a Deputy Lieutenant of Surrey. He is Chairman of the Brooklands Museum, allowing him to indulge his inner petrolhead after a long career in the City and industry. He also acted as Lincoln's first Remuneration Committee Chairman.



**Nick Hawkins (1975)** continues – as he has since 2016 – as a Corporate Barrister Partner at the now 400+ Partner UK and international law firm GunnerCooke LLP, but also as a busy Company Director and NED. Nick and his wife had a very good visit with **Krirk Vanikkul (also 1975)** and his wife in Thailand in Feb/March this year, and he also keeps in touch with other 1975 Lincoln lawyers including **Mike Chantler** and **Peter Hill**, and also with **Philip May (1976)**. Nick spends his summers playing cricket, as Club Secretary and Vice-Captain for Romany CC (historic Club) in Yorkshire. He lives between York and Harrogate and sees a lot of his children and grandchildren.



After 42 years in the film industry, including 38 in the Camera Department, I (**Simon**

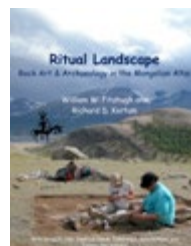
**Finney, 1978**) was privileged to receive the British Society of Cinematographers 'Operator of The Year Award 2024', alongside my colleague Karsten Jacobson DFF, for our work on the film *Wicked!* As I am sure many fellow alumni will confirm, recognition from one's peers is especially welcome. While a history degree from Oxford might not seem the most directly connected field to the film industry, I again feel privileged to have spent time at Lincoln studying a subject I thoroughly enjoyed with little of the 'vocational pressure' that I fear many students feel.

## 1980s



A Lincolnite who matriculated in 1862 returns in comic book form. To coincide with the publication of *The Essential Robert Duncan Milne: Stories by the Lost Pioneer of Science Fiction* – the first critical edition of Milne's work in 126 years – fellow Lincolnite **Keith Williams (1982)** and team at the University of Dundee have created a comic adapting several of Milne's stories. This is a sampler for a graphic novel on Milne's astonishing life and fiction that slipped through the

cracks in history until now. You can download a free PDF copy at <https://bit.ly/41eu94u>.



Although retired from the classroom, **Professor Emeritus Richard Kortum (1987)** continues to pursue research in both philosophy and rock art. He has recently published his second book on prehistoric petroglyphs, *Ritual Landscape: Rock Art & Archaeology of the Mongolian Altai* (International Polar Institute Press, 2025), with Smithsonian arctic anthropologist Dr William Fitzhugh. This follows his first book on the subject, *Ceremony in Stone: The Biluut Petroglyph Complex* (Nepko Publishers: Ulaanbaatar, 2018).

## 1990s



On 11 April 2025, **Thomas Dineen (Law, 1991)** was appointed by the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights to

a four-year term on Maryland's Advisory Committee to the Commission, then shortly thereafter elected its Vice Chair. Established in 1957 by the Civil Rights Act, the Commission is an independent, bipartisan federal agency charged with advising the President and Congress on civil rights matters.



**Anne Davies (1992)** is Professor of Law and Public Policy in the Faculty of Law at Oxford, and a Fellow of Brasenose College, where she is Vice-Principal. She was elected a Fellow of the British Academy in 2024. Her latest monograph, *Valuing Employment Rights: A Study of Remedies in Employment Law*, was published by Hart in 2024, and she is a co-author of *Human Rights at Work*, also published by Hart in 2024.

# Alumni News



**Lionel Smith (1992)**, Professor of Comparative Law at the University of Oxford, has been elected a Fellow of the British Academy. Commenting on this honour he said: “At Oxford and other universities, I have been most fortunate in benefiting from an excellent education, in having outstanding students, and in working with brilliant and generous colleagues. All these things are essential to being a successful scholar.” He took up his post at Oxford at the start of Michaelmas term 2024.

entitled ‘Turbulence: How Safe Is Your Flight?’. Following a spate of high-profile turbulence encounters, including one in which a passenger sadly died, he explained the science behind turbulence and how climate change is increasing it. Just when he thought things couldn’t get any better, BBC One’s *The One Show* called and invited him to discuss the same with the one and only Chesney Hawkes!



*The Reunion*, the debut novel of **Bronwyn Rivers (1997)**, was published by Little, Brown in 2025. A psychological thriller, it focuses on six teenagers who hike into the rugged Australian wilderness – only five of whom return alive. Now, on the tenth anniversary of the fateful hike, the remaining friends reunite at an isolated homestead deep within the forest and are forced to confront what really happened. Bronwyn wrote the novel while on leave from her career in education policy and drew inspiration from the spectacular Blue Mountains region near Sydney.

## 2000s

**Sarah Munday (née McBurnie, 2002)** and **Paul Munday (1999)** are delighted to announce the birth in June 2025 of Susanna Catherine, a sister for Thomas, James, Peter and Philip.



**Ben Bradley-Winzer KC (2003)** was appointed as King’s Counsel on 24 March 2025, aged 40. The Lord Chancellor, the Right Honourable Shabana Mahmood KC MP (1999), presided over the appointment ceremony at Westminster Hall. Ben continues to practise from Outer Temple Chambers in London.

**Nathalie Sinyard (2003)** married Mr Andrew Johnson and moved to New York City. They would be delighted to meet any other Lincolmites in the city.



**Peter Beaumont (2008)** has become Counsel in the International Litigation and Arbitration team at Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom (UK) LLP. Peter graduated in 2012 with a degree in Jurisprudence (with Law Studies in Europe) and began his training contract at Skadden the following year. Since qualifying as a Solicitor of England & Wales in 2015, he has specialised in international commercial arbitration and cross-border litigation in the UK and a variety of other jurisdictions. His extensive experience spans a wide range of industry sectors. Peter is also actively involved in *pro bono* projects.



It has been a year of TV appearances. **Professor Paul D Williams (1995)** was interviewed as an on-screen expert in a prime-time ITV1 documentary



**Alice Beckwith (2008)** was commissioned for the Choir & Organ New Music 2025 Series. The performance of

'Tomorrow, at Dawn' given by The Choir of Trinity College Cambridge and Director of Music Steven Grahl – "one of the top five choirs in the world" (*Gramophone* magazine) – is available to listen to online, and the score available to view on the *Gramophone* website.



**Kuangyi Wei (2008)** has opened a Japanese restaurant called Hotori in the City of London, specialising in 'beak to tail' yakitori, all while working as a full-time management consultant. Shortly after its opening, Hotori earned a review from food critic Jay Rayner in the *Financial Times*, recognising it as his favourite yakitori destination.

## 2010s

**Ginny Wheeler (2016)** and **François Lavergne (2012)** are delighted to announce the birth of their son Antoine in February 2025. The family now lives in Bern, Switzerland, as Ginny and François both work for the Swiss National Science Foundation.

**Elizabeth (nee Shorland, Jurisprudence, 2014)** and **Ranulf Outhwaite (History, 2014)** are delighted to announce the birth of their daughter, Rosalind, who arrived in January.

**Matt Whearty (2014)** is working towards obtaining his PhD at UCL's Centre for Advanced Spatial Analysis, with a project spanning the fields of quantitative and economic geography. His primary focus is the relationship between public transport provision, housing density and economic performance in cities across the UK, while the project will also involve the development of new functional urban region boundaries appropriate for such economic analysis.



**Darcy Allen (2015)** and **Ben Steward (2015)** celebrated their marriage in the College Chapel on 19 July. They were delighted that the ceremony was led by the Rev'd Dr Melanie Marshall, Chaplain throughout their

time at Lincoln, who was ably assisted by the **Rev'd Clemency Flitter (2015)**. Darcy and Ben were also very glad to be able to welcome a strong contingent of fellow Lincolmites amongst the guests, whose presence contributed greatly to a truly joyous occasion.

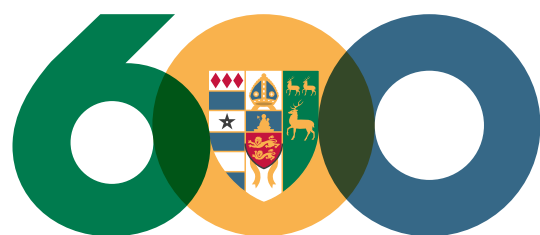


**Jonathan Chan (2016)** joined the Faculty of Law at McGill University in Montreal, Canada as an Assistant Professor in 2024, after three years at UCL Faculty of Laws. In May, he received the 2025 John W. Durnford Award for Teaching Excellence, voted by the students. In his Law and Finance courses, students highlighted his adaptive and practice-oriented teaching style and care. To quote, "he takes complex topics and makes them digestible. He is beloved for his kindness and availability, holding weekly walks to get to know students. Students have every opportunity to grow." (submitted by **Michael Chan (1982)** on behalf of son Jonathan)

## 2020



**Matías Carpio (2021, MPP)** took up a position as Manager at the Tony Blair Institute for Global Change in June. He has since relocated to the Western Balkans, where he partners with national governments, private sector actors and international development organisations to deliver strategic reforms across the region.



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