

Spring 2022



Lincoln College  
UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

# The Grove

Lincoln College Murray Society Newsletter







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## Report from the President of the Murray Society



Not that we had ever doubted how much we missed being together, or being in College, but the Murray Day in October 2021 was a particular pleasure. We were treated to an excellent lunch in the resplendent, newly-restored Hall by the Chef and Butler and their teams and enjoyed the chance to talk together. After lunch, Professor Cristina Dondi - not only Oakeshott Senior Research Fellow at Lincoln, but also Cavaliere della Stella d'Italia - gave a captivating talk about the first edition of Dante's *Divina Commedia*, illustrated by Sandro Botticelli, printed (and

misprinted) in Florence in 1481 (above). She had conducted a census of all the surviving copies, held in 134 libraries from around the world, from Japan and Belarus, from Athens to Los Angeles. Her research exemplified the power of scholarly collaboration, and her talk was described by one of the audience as 'awesome'. In the afternoon Susan Harrison led an impromptu tour to show what had been thought impossible: the miraculous transformation of the Mitre. There was admiration for the achievement and appreciation of what benefit this will bring for students.

The Society's proposed visit to Alnwick in the summer of 2020 was thwarted; we were disappointed again in 2021. Because of current uncertainties and fears of another disappointment, it does not seem propitious to arrange an outing next term. But next year we hope for a splendid summer sortie. Meanwhile, we look forward to another vintage Murray Day in College in the autumn.

**Dr Susan Brigden**



# Choir fundraiser for new CD



The Lincoln College Chapel Choir is unique amongst Oxbridge colleges, in that it is the only fully auditioned choir which is exclusively organised and directed by students. This niche not only makes the Choir very desirable to be a part of, but also provides an extremely beneficial learning experience for everyone involved. Every person feels as though they are truly a contributing member, and everybody has a say in what we do and how we do it. The Choir does a perfect job of enhancing worship within the gorgeously restored Chapel. The warm and intimate acoustic is a wonderful setting for the singers, complemented beautifully by the Drake organ whose casework looks as though it were an original fixture within the antechapel.

The Choir traditionally undertake a tour each year to give the singers a chance to perform in different venues, acoustics, countries, and with large audiences. It also helps build a strong bond between individual members, creating a trusting atmosphere which very much translates into the Choir's sound. This year, however, due to ongoing difficulties surrounding the pandemic and travel, we have decided to produce a CD recording instead. Having already produced several CDs in the past, the Choir decided it was time to try something different, and the decision was made to focus exclusively on repertoire we are unable to perform at Lincoln for a variety of reasons.





Inevitably we were drawn to some of the large French choral works, some of which require two organs and/or a large orchestra. This is due partly to the love of the repertoire, but also as we hope our next tour will be to the Parisian churches from which these works originate. The highlight work of the CD will be Yves Castagnet's *Messe Salve Regina*, which until this point has only been recorded at Notre Dame de Paris. To complement this work, we decided upon Durufle's *Requiem Mass* as it is a choir and congregation favourite which we are unable to perform at Lincoln. Coincidentally, a new work by Jonathan Dove was commissioned recently by the trustees of the Lord Crewe charity on the occasion of its 300th anniversary. We saw it fitting to include this in the CD programme and have padded it out with a couple of other works by the composer. We will be the first people to record this piece for a CD production.



Having decided upon the repertoire, it was then time to find a suitable venue, and one single place was the obvious candidate. That venue is Notre Dame de France, Leicester Square, London. This church has a stunning example of a Cavaille-Coll organ, an enormous acoustic, and is also right in the centre of London, meaning that it should be very accessible for people to attend our fundraising concert immediately after the recording.

On the topic of fundraising, we have two main events. On 15 March 2022, Lincoln College is hosting a choir concert, dinner, and wine reception, with a free pre-order on the CD included in the ticket price. On 2 July we will be putting on a concert of the recording repertoire at Notre Dame de France, with tickets made available to the public. This concert will include



organ improvisations on themes decided upon in a fundraising auction. Other fundraising activities include personalised happy birthday videos sung by the College Choir, as well as a donation page through the College website. Please do not hesitate to get in touch with me ([matthew.foster@lincoln.ox.ac.uk](mailto:matthew.foster@lincoln.ox.ac.uk)) or the Development Office if you have any questions.

Many Choir alumni mention their experience in the ensemble as being the heart and soul of their time at Lincoln College. We aim for the Choir to be fun whilst also challenging and we hope what they learn during their time with us benefits them for the rest of their lives and creates long lasting memories.

**Matthew Foster (2020, Music), Senior Organ Scholar**



# More than a little guitar

When I was asked to write something about my ukulele collection to complement an article about the marvellous Lincoln Choir, I was somewhat daunted. Then I remembered that in 2000, the first ever Oxford music degree recital on the ukulele was successfully delivered by Andy Eastwood.

The ukulele's origin can be dated to 1879 and the docking in Honolulu of a ship carrying Portuguese migrants. They brought small guitar-like instruments from Madeira which charmed the Hawaiians, who had no stringed instrument of their own. Within 10 years, the ukulele had emerged, adopting the form of the four-stringed Madeiran *machete* but with tuning probably taken from another instrument, the *rajão*.

Growing American influence over Hawaii led to the end of the monarchy and by the 1920s a ukulele craze had overtaken the USA. Wooden ukuleles weren't loud enough for many entertainers, so ukulele tuning was adapted to 'banjo ukuleles' which were much louder and punchier.

Readers of *The Grove* will know that guitar strings are tuned successively lower from the top string down. The relative intervals between strings are the same on a ukulele, except that the bottom string is an octave higher than expected, technically 're-entrant tuning' (G4-C4-E4-A4 in the C tuning). Happy strummers in ukulele groups and classrooms may be blissfully unaware, but re-entrant tuning creates the ukulele's bright sound and

makes it more than just a 'little guitar'. It gives many possibilities for playing and it's also crucial to the infectious syncopated style that was somewhat mysteriously developed by the untutored George Formby, with Andy Eastwood now the top exponent and foremost entertainer in the vaudeville style.

The 1920s was also the golden age of ukulele and banjo ukulele manufacture. In the USA, the Martin guitar company became paramount for wooden ukuleles. Amongst the key names for banjo ukuleles were Gibson and Ludwig in the USA and Abbott in England. The finest quality woods such as mahogany, maple, rosewood, and ebony were used to create superb instruments. Some of them have survived almost 100 years



and are still just as playable today. Good examples of these vintage ukes will cost several thousand pounds in an enthusiasts' market.

In recent years I've become a ukulele devotee, historian (patents and trade marks), and collector. Pictured is my Martin Style 5K from the early 1920s (top left). The K stands for koa wood from Hawaii, the equivalent of mahogany but with a lighter colour and



distinctive banding. The 5K was Martin's top model, with abalone inlays and the renowned Martin tone, volume and sustain, which have never been equalled. The other illustration shows a Ludwig 'Crown' banjo ukulele (top right). These were made in Chicago only in 1927 and 1928, and are now generally regarded as the most desirable of all banjo ukuleles.

**David Smith (Chemistry, 1965)**

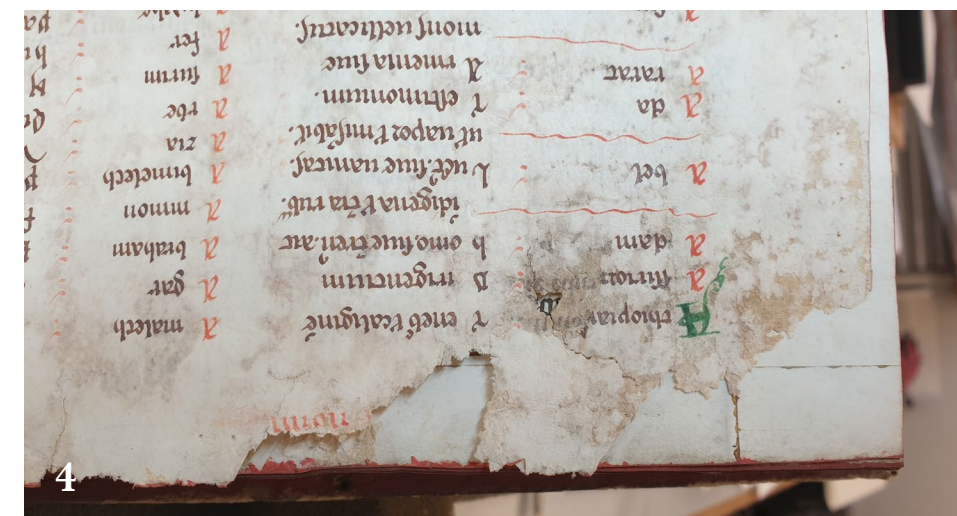
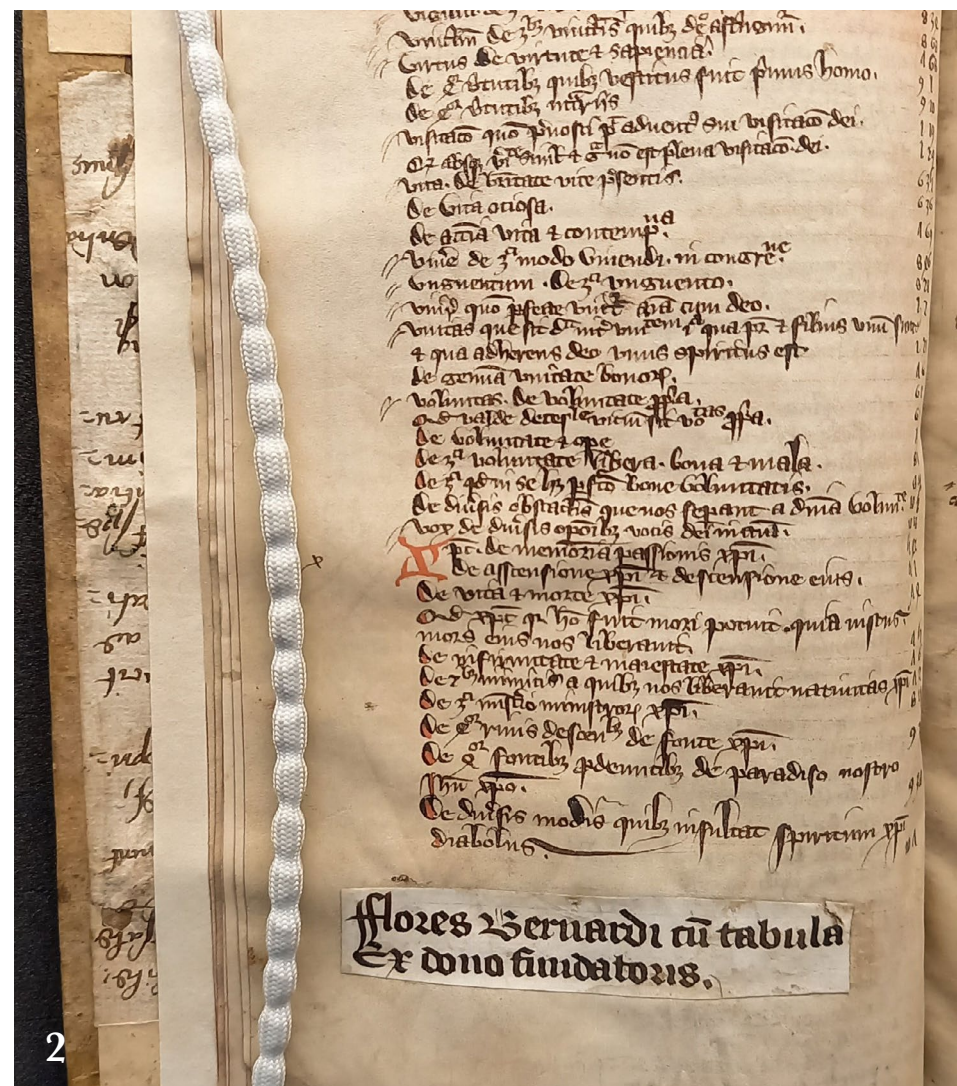
## Upcoming events



# Manuscripts and more

Conservation is a vital part of the work we do with the College's historic collections to ensure that these treasures can be safely handled by researchers and enjoyed by future generations of Lincoln College members. Thanks to the generous donations we received at our *Lincoln Unlocked* auction back in 2019, we were able to initiate an ongoing conservation programme with the Oxford Conservation Consortium and are delighted to be able to share with you some of the items that have been treated in the last six months.

These include important manuscripts given by our founder, Richard Fleming (d. 1431), to enable the College – as recorded in his preface to first Statutes – ‘to overcome those who with their swinish snouts imperil the pearls of true theology’: an early 14th century copy of works by St Bernard of Clairvaux in a medieval binding (2) and a copy of Waldensis’ *Doctrinalis fidei catholicae* with beautiful historiated initials (3). Four manuscripts from Fleming’s nephew, the humanist Robert Fleming (d. 1483), have also been treated: a 12th century Greek copy of the *Acts of the Apostles* (7), works by Pliny the Younger, written in Fleming’s own hand (6), works of St Jerome (4) and John of Abbatis-villa - *Sermones Dominicales per anni circulum* (5). Remarkably, these last three are also still in their medieval bindings.



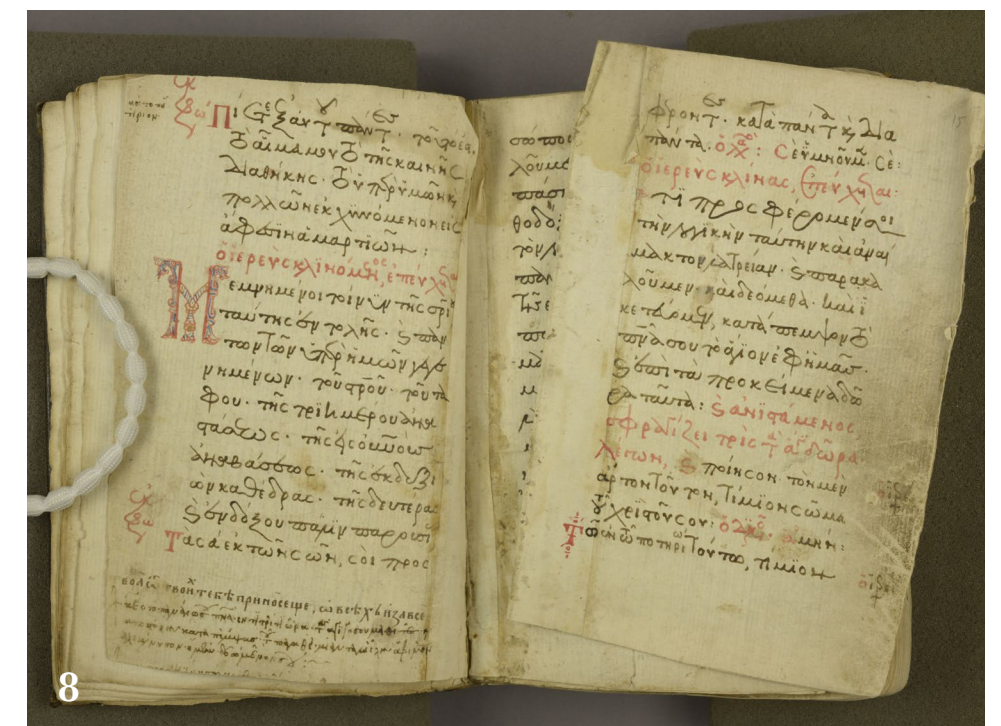
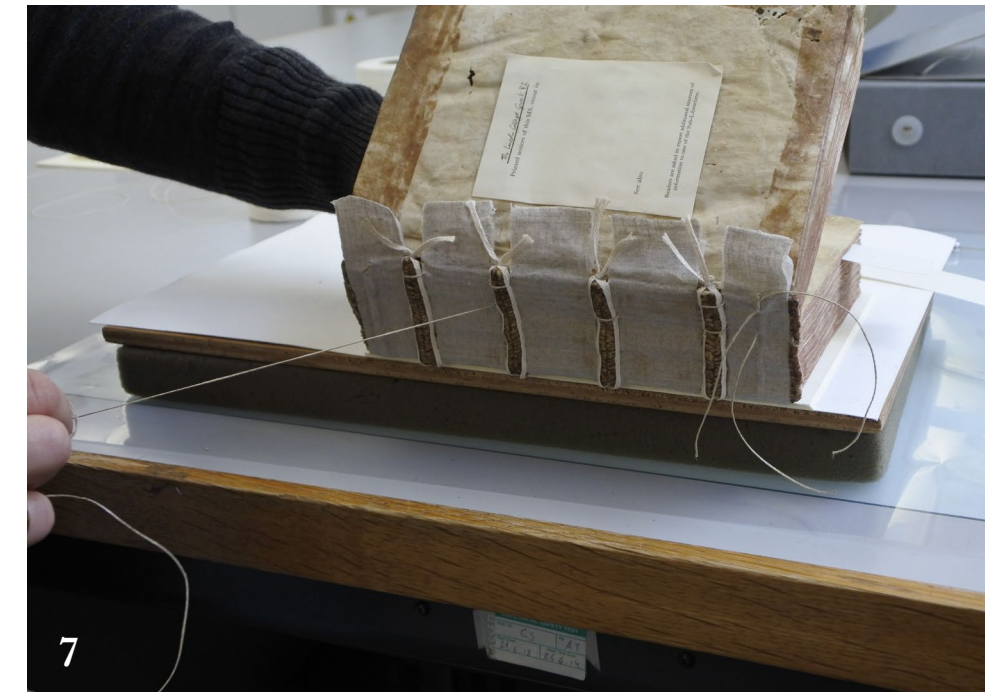


We have also been able to carry out important conservation work on gifts from later donors. These include a Bible from the household of Charles II, bound by the celebrated Restoration binder Samuel Mearne and given to Nathaniel, Lord Crewe (1633-1721), who in turn gave it to Lincoln (1) and a volume containing the liturgy of St John Chrysostom and other works (8) given by alumnus George Wheler (1651-1724).

Items from the Archive have also benefited from conservation work, including three volumes of a quadripartite indenture contracted by Edmund Audley (c.1439-1524), Bishop of Salisbury and benefactor of the College. They have been digitised and bespoke storage created to protect the well-preserved seals (9).

This work could not have been undertaken without the support of our donors and the expertise of Oxford's conservators. If you would like to learn more, please visit [lincoln.ox.ac.uk/discover/lincoln-unlocked](http://lincoln.ox.ac.uk/discover/lincoln-unlocked).

**Lucy Matheson, Librarian**





# Leaving a legacy

Leaving a legacy to Lincoln enables you to invest in the future of the College with a gift that endures beyond a lifetime. Making a bequest to Lincoln in your Will can be an important way of supporting our future. Lincoln has always relied greatly on bequests from its alumni, Fellows, and friends. Virtually every major building, scholarship, and facility in the College owes something to a legacy benefaction.

## How to leave a legacy to Lincoln

It is easy to remember the College in your Will.

When making or adjusting your Will, we recommend you seek professional legal advice from a qualified solicitor. If you are interested in making a specific gift or legacy to the College, for example to establish a scholarship, Lincoln's solicitor is available to offer advice to your own legal representative.

## Benefits to you

Inheritance tax is payable following your death if your estate is worth more than a certain net amount after the deduction of any liabilities. At present, the threshold is £325,000 (or up to £650,000 for married couples or registered civil partners), and anything above that may be taxed at 40%. If you leave 10% of your estate to a charity in the UK, your estate will qualify for the reduced inheritance tax rate of 36%.

Lincoln is recognised by the Inland Revenue as a charity (number 1139261) and pays no tax on gifts of money or property received either during your lifetime or on your death. Bequests made to tax-exempt beneficiaries, such as the College or other recognised charities, can be deducted from the net value of your estate, thus reducing the amount on which your estate is liable to pay inheritance tax.

When you remember the College in your Will, you are invited to join the Murray Society. As a member, you will receive the following:

- Invitations to exclusive Murray Society events, including the annual Murray Day luncheon and talk. You can read more about the latest Murray Society event on p.3.
- An annual issue of this newsletter, *The Grove*.
- An exclusive Murray Society tie and/or scarf in Lincoln colours.

For more details and information about legacies or planned giving, please contact Susan Harrison (susan.harrison@lincoln.ox.ac.uk).