

NOW
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Welcome to Regent's Now

The Revd Dr Rob Ellis - The Principal

Welcome to another edition of Regent's Now. It is once more my privilege to bring you up to date with the College 'goings on' over the last year. In this year's issue you will find a range of articles and reports which offer some windows into many aspects of College, Student and Alumni life. I hope that you enjoy reading it.

This past year we have had other 'publications' on our minds. At the beginning of 2015 the College website underwent a revamp, largely at the hands of final-year History student and JCR Vice-President, Will Tomsett. Please do have a look if you have not done so already (website below). Additionally, thanks to the generous sponsorship of Steve Mace (1976, Visiting Student) two videos have been made to showcase the College to prospective applicants. These videos will also be used in general promotional work – one focuses on the College's undergraduate courses, and one on ministerial education. These videos can be found on the 'College Life' section of the new website.

The year has been another excellent one academically. Undergraduates and graduates have achieved remarkable results once more - in fact we were the only College or PPH this year whose students all achieved a 2:1 or higher in their finals. The undergraduate admissions round in December saw us attract our highest ever number of first choice applicants, thanks in part to the ever-growing popularity of the Staton Essay Prize (more information on p.20). Our undergraduate numbers will edge up a little this year, while our graduate numbers also remain buoyant.

You will read in this magazine about many of the extra-curricular activities undertaken by students. It would be remiss not to add my 'hurrah' to the all-conquering Women's

VIII, the most successful rowing crew the College has ever produced. Winning the Christ Church Regatta for novice crews in December by beating a number of large college 1st VIIIs, and then taking maximum bumps at Torpids and Summer Eights – an outstanding achievement.

It is two years now since the death of the illustrious former Chairman of our College Council, Sir Godfray le Quesne in October of 2013. Over the summer plans have been put in place to create a College Law Society for all members of the College community with an interest in law, whether or not they are studying it here. The society will be known as the Le Quesne Society.

This year has also seen a number of new College events - the Ministerial Reunion (p.11) worked as a great substitute for the lack of meeting-time now permitted at the annual Baptist Assembly; our contribution to the 'Meeting Minds' Alumni Weekend in Oxford, a 'Literary Wine Tasting' has drawn a fantastically large crowd, and promises to be a bustling occasion; RPC alumni and their families joined us by the river in May to witness the our W1 Boat's tremendous achievements on the river; Regent's alumnus Roland Rudd (1981, Philosophy & Theology) opened his home to alumni in London for a new take on our London Drinks event.

And we hope to keep this momentum going with more events planned in the coming year. Some of our readers, friends and alumni, are across the Atlantic. Perhaps I can draw their attention to the next Oxford North American reunion. This event, held every other year, will take place in Washington DC in 2016 on 8-9 April. Regent's plans to be present and to hold our own gatherings as part of the event – do come if you can!

 www.rpc.ox.ac.uk



Success on the River

Shivani Oberoi (RPCBC Women's Co-Captain)

The RPCBC Women's Boat began the year as a novice crew, but has trained and raced over three terms to become one of the most successful in the history of the boat club.

Christ Church Regatta at the end of Michaelmas was our first major event of the year. We hoped to take advantage of the fact that we were competing on a level playing field, as it is a novice competition. Indeed, we were particularly keen to beat some of the bigger colleges who had four times the number of novice rowers to choose from to make their strongest boats. This objective was achieved when, in Round 1, our margin of victory over Pembroke A was simply described as 'Easily'. The competition grew fiercer but we proceeded to defeat Christ Church A, Keble A, University A, Wolfson A, and in an extremely tight final, triumphed over Wadham by a foot to win the Regatta overall. This was one of the greatest and most impressive sporting achievements in College history. The celebrations that followed were huge – indeed, so huge that we were forced to drop out of a time trial that we had planned to

race the following day. Our coach, Pete Bond, also gained overnight celebrity status on the towpath.

Now nicknamed 'The Bond Girls', and equipped with new 'stash' (courtesy of our sponsors, BlackRock), we pushed through cold, wet, snowy, 6am training sessions in Hilary. We embraced our first experience of bumps racing in Torpids with aggressive style, scarring Trinity II's boat after a collision on day 1 and then ploughing into Brasenose II on day 2 when our rudder broke just seconds after the start of the race. Despite the subsequent concussion of one of our rowers we powered on to bump St Anne's II on the same day, LMH II on the next day and on the final day, we overbumped Hertford II to secure double blades just outside our boathouse to the delight of all the Regent's supporters.

We began Trinity's competition, Summer VIIIs, armed with a score of motivational pop-song remixes including our number one hit, 'Everytime We Bump' by Cascada, and honed skills developed during pre-season training. Successful races on the first three days resulted in four bumps on Hildas II, LMH II, St Catherine's II and Lincoln III respectively. However, we knew that it was all to play for on the final day, and so were overjoyed when we bumped Balliol II to secure double blades. Our excited singing all the way back to the boathouse resulted in a shout-out from Racedesk, and we ended the season with a celebratory dinner at St Giles' Café and a crate of Bollinger champagne courtesy of Mr Bond.

The year did not end there, however. In June, we became the first RPCBC crew to compete in an international competition when we raced in the prestigious Trophée des Rois, which took place on the lake overlooking the Palace of Versailles. We rowed well to come fourth in the competition, including a win in our second round, and had a great weekend enjoying our embellished status in France as 'Team Oxford.' This was a fitting end to what had been a hugely fun and successful year.

We would like to thank our sponsors BlackRock, who have funded a refurbishment of the women's boat this year, and our incredibly dedicated, committed and fun coach – Pete Bond – without whom none of our achievements would have been possible. We can all say that we are now hooked on rowing, and those of us that are still in Oxford will be back for more this coming year.

 @RPCBC



JCR News Update

Alex Rennison (History) - JCR President



In recent years, the Junior Common Room has truly excelled itself in an ever-growing range of arenas, and the 2014/15 academic year has been no exception: the realms of sport, drama, student politics and music, among others, have all witnessed the continuing advance of the Regent's flag. But by far, the most impressive of all of the achievements that will follow is this: despite the significant amount of time and effort that the College's students have invested in academia and extra-curricular pursuits, they have managed to hold firmly to their reputation as a fun, inclusive and supportive community. Indeed, it is commonplace to hear visitors from other colleges expressing envy at the social environment that we have here at Regent's, and not one of the feats described hence was accomplished without the cheers, support and encouragement of those beyond the individuals and teams who achieved them.

The Boat Club's fortunes on the river this year were mixed: the men, sadly, suffered nine bumps across both Torpids and Summer VIII's, and yet from the Women's Boat we saw some of the most remarkable performances from Regent's students to date: they won the Christ Church Regatta in Michaelmas, Blades in Torpids, and then Blades again in Summer VIII's. As if that were not enough, the women bumped five times in both Torpids and VIII's, meaning that they moved up a division in both regattas, and gained the accolade of most successful

boat on the river this year. This excellent teamwork was matched with victory for Regent's in Mixed Netball Cuppers, and on an individual level with Blues for Miriam Hargreaves (Theology) in Basketball, Shivani Oberoi (PPE) in Cricket, and Kathryn Cole (History and Economics) in Sailing.

When it comes to the arts, Regent's put in a typically impressive performance: the Regent's entry in Drama Cuppers ('Once a Catholic') won second place overall, and the award for Best Actress went to Esther-Jane White (BTh) for her performance as Mother Basil. The pantomime, this year a rendition of *Sleeping Beauty*, was met with the usual critical acclaim, and a number of individuals featured heavily in the University's thespian scene. In particular, Suzie King (English) led the marketing campaigns for a number of successful plays, such as 'Captian Amazing' and 'Living Together' (the latter was performed at the Oxford Playhouse); Oluwafemi Nylander (PPE) earned continuing acclaim for his roles in 'Sweeney Todd', 'Westside Story', and also as frontman for one of Oxford's most in-demand student bands, Millie is a Boy; and Cassian Bilton (Philosophy and Theology) tried his hand with great success at both production and acting, earning himself a much coveted place on the OUDS Summer Tour.

As for happenings within Regent's, Trinity saw the second edition of a now firmly established tradition:

Emmanuelle's Birthday Party. Held again in memory of a former Regent's Student, Antonia Bruch, the event raised a total of £1314.31 throughout a day consisting of sunshine, Pimm's, a raffle, homemade baking, and a performance of 'The Importance of Being Earnest'. Of particular interest to younger alumni will be the appearance of Lizo Mzimba of CBBC Newsround fame, who popped in to give Emmanuelle his best wishes! It was, without doubt, a brilliant success of which both the JCR and the College can be proud.

So ends a lengthy round-up of the JCR's achievements throughout the year. There is, of course, a great deal more that could be said, but sadly not enough space in which to say it. Just let it be known that the JCR continues to do some really quite impressive things within both the College and the wider University, all whilst retaining the kindly atmosphere and community spirit for which you will no doubt fondly remember it. It can therefore come as no surprise that Regent's is becoming increasingly recognised on the University stage for the great place that it is - as my predecessor put it last year, long may this continue!

 www.RegentsJCR.com

 [@RPCEmanuelle](https://twitter.com/RPCEmanuelle)

 [#RegentsOxford](https://www.instagram.com/RegentsOxford)

Editor's Note

Following last year's edition of Regent's Now in which we sent out an alumni engagement questionnaire, a number of alumni sent back personal messages recalling stories and anecdotes from their time at Regent's. One such alumnus was Howard Tillotson (1959, Physics). I asked Howard if I could publish his reflections on College life, and his experience going through Oxford whilst his wife Norma attended another University in London. Howard agreed, and this became the first confirmed article for Regent's Now 2015. Shortly before the publication was due to go to print, I learned of Norma's death in the early summer. Howard insisted that she would have wanted this article to go to print.

I met my wife, Norma, before coming up to Oxford. We were a Romeo and Juliet from the opposing Baptist chapels (separated by a police station) in Barnoldswick, then in Yorkshire. Despite the separation, we youngsters slyly got our youth groups together. We were not adequately supervised: we were trusted and our seniors were not in fear of the Health and Safety industry.

I am not sure how I found myself reading Natural Philosophy (Physics) at Regent's Park College in 1959. I was born in February 1940, so missed National Service by a matter of weeks. Oxford and Cambridge had been requiring successful candidates to do National Service before taking their place, so much of the 1959 intake was determined before I applied to Oriel and St John's. I received letters of rejection from both.

Some weeks later I received a letter from Dr Henton Davies inviting me to interview for Regent's. This resulted in my being offered a place!

On arrival, there was a note waiting for me from Dr Francis Price inviting me to see him at Worcester College. He was a friend of my headmaster, who had been concerned about my choice of College! Dr Price was Deputy Director of the Clarendon Laboratory and had arranged my tuition with a former pupil of my school who had recently moved from Cambridge and was an excellent teacher. I never needed to call upon Dr Price

for help, but spent time with the Worcester Physics students. The endless discussions about life and everything in the College brought me through at least 50 years of cultural development from small town Yorkshire. I guess the national culture is more uniform now as it is reflected by scores of radio and TV channels.

The JCR President in my first year was Brian Tucker who was always held up as an example when I asked Dr Davies for a weekend away to visit Norma. I was told that Mr Tucker had been married very recently and never asked for a weekend away in the precious eight weeks of term. I was never refused, just made to feel guilty.

The major topical issue of my time was the admission of women to the College. Indeed it was one determined lady, Marie Isaacs, who insisted on joining Regent's. There was a vote to determine whether to admit her to the JCR! She was to be a Regent's student for the Baptist Union but a St Anne's student for the University. I met Marie years later in Birmingham - she became a chaplain in St Francis Hall in the University. Such fudging of the issue of sexual equality luckily did not apply to my daughter Catherine when she went up to Regent's to read English in 1991.

Having sharpened my wits avoiding compulsory games for eight years at school, the rough and tumble of sports at Oxford held no appeal. However, I did take to punting and this led to one of my fellow students asking me to teach him to punt, as his beloved

was due to visit him the following weekend. We spent an hour or so on consecutive afternoons on the river and after three days there was no improvement. We careered from bank to bank and were fended off by other boaters who had spotted the floating disaster area from afar. I could not believe that a theologian could have so little comprehension of Newton's contribution to our understanding of the universe. The solution to the growing problem of the promised weekend activity was that I acted as gondolier for the happy couple

I never needed to do paid work. My father's death the year before I came up meant that I received a full grant and the wider family were well-off and supportive. Indeed, in my final year I ran a car which I was allowed to park in the quad on Sunday evenings provided that it had disappeared before prayers on Monday. One weekend I was 10 minutes late on my return from visiting Norma whose Hall of Residence was in Greenwich. The gate had not been shut: and Mr Kennedy was standing by it and said, "I knew you wouldn't be long."

I have never doubted that I belong to the Regent's community; Norma and I have the same birthday. She was 18 when I was 21. I came down to breakfast on my 21st birthday to be presented with a parcel from the chaps. It was a portrait photograph of Norma by a professional photographer which they had commissioned.

We celebrated our Golden Wedding last July.



Ministry in India

Edward Williams (1953, Theology)

In 1959, the BMS sent my wife and me to Serampore College in India, where we lived for nearly ten years in part of the very house in which William Carey, 'father of modern missions', had lived. What a privilege! BMS used to provide four staff members

for the College, usually teaching Theology, but they were eager to find someone with a main degree in Physics to place in the (very much larger) Arts-Science Dept, and I fit the bill!

Serampore's head of Physics was an impressive figure with a Tagore-like beard, who had taken his MSc in Calcutta University. In this, he took second place to CV Raman, who later received a Nobel Prize in Physics! Later, he became involved in an argument with some historians, insisting that whilst no one could just take up Physics without preparatory studies, anybody who wanted could do History! Naturally, they challenged him – so he proceeded to study History in his spare time from running the Physics Department. After his BA he continued, still in his spare time, and took first place in the University in his MA! Outstanding as a teacher, he was also well known for his integrity, and was a deeply spiritual Hindu. Despite knowing many Christians, he had not become one. I struggled with my missionary calling: "to turn them from darkness to light"! I concluded that I could wholeheartedly describe him in the words of Luke 2 as "righteous and devout" – but still "waiting".

His deputy and successor was a very different character, who challenged my faith at a very different level. "You Christians believe that God is behind the physical universe but cannot say how God began. I believe the universe is all there is, but cannot say how it began. What's the difference?" I'm sure he was right; I myself would not use this argument. Other members of the Physics staff became some of my closest friends.

Although not teaching in the Theology Department (my wife did, in her spare time from looking after our three daughters) I had much to do with the staff and students there, who came from every part of India. One practical thing I learned was that "curry" is a method of cooking, not a measure of heat – a family from one part of India used half a chilli per head, another allowed sixteen each!

Serampore was ecumenical long before the UK church became so – one great friend with whom I am still in touch was a Mar Thoma minister, and the student who was the most zealous in personal evangelism was Syrian Orthodox. (I used to tease some of the students about their "16 languages and 17 heresies"!)

I was part of the local Bengali Baptist Church, sometimes cycling out to village homes to share Communion, aware that I had nothing else in common with some of these folk except our belonging together in Jesus Christ. (One source of income for the church was the auction of fishing rights for the Baptismal pool!)

In my "spare" time I was also responsible for overseeing the repairs and maintenance of the entire historic campus – that's the sort of thing missionaries used to do! Again, what a privilege! I got a particular tingle when I had to "clean Carey's ears" (on his bust,

that is)!

One experience here showed how the caste system could (and should) work. One of the "sweepers" was a fine, upstanding young man. I have seen him up to his neck in a septic tank, cleaning out "gunge" that would have been repulsive to me, as certainly it would have been to my (mostly Brahmin) colleagues, but for him there was no loss of self-respect. Nor (after he had cleaned himself up) was he shunned – he was welcomed and valued as a member of the staff football team.

My responsibility also covered the cemetery in which Carey, Marshman and Ward were buried, along with their families and colleagues – once described as "one of the holiest places in Asia, east of Jordan".

I will always look back with fondness on the time I spent in India.



The Le Quesne Law Society

An Open Invitation
Emily Burke - Society President

In Michaelmas Term 2015, Regent's Park is launching its first law society under the name the Le Quesne Law Society. The Society was founded by Natasha Stevens (3rd year, Jurisprudence) and the first Committee was elected in Trinity Term 2015. To give a little insight into the Society, it is open to students from all degree disciplines with an interest in law, whether from an academic or careers-orientated perspective, studying at Regent's and other PPHs within the University. This inclusivity, we feel, really sets the Le Quesne Law Society apart. The Society is aimed at providing a forum for students to engage with like-minded peers in a variety of ways such as through workshops to help forge a pathway into law and an annual moot engaging with the academic aspects of law.

We would like to invite alumni to join the Society as Alumni Members. This membership is open to all alumni or those who have an association with Regent's Park or Greyfriars who studied a Law degree and/or are at any stage in a career practicing law or academic law. Alumni members of the Society are welcome to attend all events which are free, these are listed on the term card circulated by the Committee. There will be at least one event each term where alumni will be particularly welcome: this term it is the Society's launch drinks party on Saturday 17th October. This event, which will formally launch the Le Quesne Law Society, will be held in Regent's and will bring together student members and alumni with drinks and canapés. There will be speeches from the Committee, Malcolm Bishop QC (honorary standing counsel for the College)

and possibly Lady Le Quesne, the wife of the late Sir Godfray Le Quesne, in whose honour the Society is named. We would love the opportunity to welcome back alumni to Regent's and hope that it would offer a fantastic opportunity for you to return to the College, reconnect with your university contemporaries and meet new people with similar interests, whose memories of Regent's may be older or newer than your own. If you have any experience or anything you would like to share with the Society, such as through a workshop or question and answer session, please do get in touch, we would love to hear from you! This is a really exciting time for both the Society and Regent's and as the Committee, we look forward to working together over the coming year to make it as successful as possible for all involved.

If you would like to become a member of the Le Quesne Law Society, please email the Society's Secretary, Elizabeth Webb (elizabeth.webb@regents.ox.ac.uk).

If you would like to get in touch, or if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the Society's President, Emily Burke (emily.burke@regents.ox.ac.uk) or Vice-President (Non-Law), Zandra Beaumont (alexandra.beaumont@regents.ox.ac.uk).



College Radio Day

Dr Rob Quicke (1994, English)

In June 1997, I left Regent's Park College a proud graduate and excited about the future, whatever that might be. Yet it was, perhaps, a close thing to even finish at all! It was February 1997, and even as a third-year student eyeballing English Language and Literature Finals around the corner, I helped establish and launch the first ever student-run FM radio station in the UK. We created history with the launch of Oxygen 107.9 FM after two years of hard work and preparation. I was the first student on the airwaves when we actually went on-air. With our launch we generated national headlines in the newspapers. It all seemed a bit unreal that a group of cheeky teenagers, with more enthusiasm than real experience, had managed to pull it off.

I also remember in my final term Dr. Paul Fiddes (then Principal of RPC) bravely coming to my apocalyptically untidy room (M2) and interviewing me for the upcoming edition of Regent's Now. He asked me whether I saw my future as working in radio. I thought my answer perhaps was an opportunity for me to offer some defense of why I spent so much more time at the radio station than in the Bodleian! "Why yes, I hope so, as this is my passion," I replied.

It remains my passion to this day. Fast forward 16 years and I am in a classroom, at William Paterson University in New Jersey, teaching my students about radio production. I feel my mobile phone vibrate in my pocket.

Normally, I would never bring my phone with me whilst I teach, but this call is important. I take a risk and stop lecturing to the students when I see who is calling. Raising a finger to my lips to the students, I put the phone on speaker so they can hear. Everyone is silent, listening. "This is the White House calling for Dr. Quicke, may I please speak with him?" "This is he," I reply to the wide-eyed astonishment of the students in the classroom. "May we transfer you to the Vice-President's Office?"

In December 2010, I was searching for an idea that would unite college radio stations across the USA in a new and exciting way. I was General Manager of WPSC at my university, and wondered what it would be like to work with other college stations. Very quickly I thought of the idea of a day of unity to bring stations together: College Radio Day. The idea was for a celebration of college radio, to remind people that we exist and that we are one of the last bastions of creative

programming out there. College radio plays a hugely valuable role in discovering the next big music artists as well as being a vital training ground for future media broadcasters. It was also hoped that we would remind the larger North American public of the vital importance of college radio and its unique role in the media landscape, and also remind college administrations just how important their college radio stations are.

The idea resonated with student stations across the country. I felt as if I had fuelled the spirit of Oxygen radio from my Regent's

days into this new initiative. I was hoping for the first CRD to persuade 50 stations to join with my own station, WPSC, at William Paterson University. Instead we got over 360! Soon my phone rang with interview requests from the New York Times, USA Today, Washington Post and more. Even TIME called College Radio Day "a nationwide movement illuminating the cultural significance of student-run radio."

For CRD 2012, I found myself spending the morning with Coldplay's Chris Martin, who launched the day with a specially-recorded message from the band. In 2013, we had over 700 stations participate, and the day was launched by Wyclef Jean (ex-Fugees) at an MTV-sponsored gig on my campus, and also had the support of Moby and Avicii. Even President Obama wrote a letter saying that "College Radio Day celebrates the students who power these stations and the unique role college radio plays across the globe." I also got to interview Vice-President Joe Biden.



Coldplay's Will Champion & Chris Martin with Rob at CRD 2012

By this time more than 43 countries were participating in the event. In 2013, I flew to Colombia, the United Kingdom and India to meet with student radio groups and to encourage the creation of college radio stations around the globe. We received a letter from Italy's President Giorgio Napolitano after twenty Italian student radio stations got involved with the event, now known internationally as World College Radio Day.

My own radio station at William Paterson University, WPSC, has also flourished during this time. In 2012 and 2013, WPSC won Best College Station in the Nation (enrollment over 10,000 students) at the 72nd and 73rd IBS Awards in New York City, competing against hundreds of stations in the country. In June 2015 WPSC was named as the "Best College Radio Station in New Jersey" at the New Jersey Broadcasters Association annual Crystal Awards. And, just this week, we found out that WPSC is one of just five finalists nationally, two of whom are college radio stations, nominated for the Best Non-Commercial Radio Station in the Marconi Radio Awards, from the National Association of Broadcasters. The Marconi Radio Award is considered to be the most prestigious radio award in the country.

I think that my decisions about how to spend my time whilst at Regent's were a risk that ultimately paid off. Having dedicated my life to radio and producing content for commercial and BBC radio stations in the UK, I have found it deeply satisfying to now encourage and help develop the next generation of broadcasting professionals in America. In many ways the spirit of Oxygen 107.9 FM radio lives on in my own station. I see in the eyes of my students the sheer excitement of broadcasting on the air, as I once saw in the eyes of fellow students at Oxford. I also see in their eyes the same struggle to sometimes crack the books and spend time in the library!



Wyclef Jean performing at the 2013 CRD launch event

I am grateful that Regent's always encouraged me to follow my passion. I was always proud that, in some small way, I was able to represent Regent's within the larger University community.

Rob is an Associate Professor of Communication, and General Manager of WPSC FM at William Paterson University, Wayne, New Jersey. He also teaches radio broadcasting in India as adjunct faculty at the Asian College of Journalism in Chennai. He has an MA in Radio from Goldsmiths College, London, and a PhD in Communication Studies from Regent University, Virginia.

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An Inside Look at the Treasury Press Office

Hope Hadfield (2007, History)



As a press officer at the Treasury, my role varies: one day, I might be writing analysis on complex economic data, and the next exploring Crossrail tunnels with journalists.

My role is to tell the public about what the Treasury is doing, working closely with the Chief Secretary, Greg Hands (MP for Chelsea and Fulham). I previously worked for his predecessor, Danny Alexander, former MP for Inverness (who Labour branded 'the ginger rodent' – he took it brilliantly in his stride, and ended up supporting a brewery in his constituency that was making Ginger Rodent beer!).

I accompany ministers to events, set up media rounds (where you rush from one studio to another, generally running late and panickedly re-arranging live interviews with stressed producers) and have to make sure every detail is correct, from the precise figures of the policy they're announcing, to how straight their tie is.

After graduating, I was lucky enough to undertake a couple of Oxford University International Internships in the USA and India. I then started working at a PR agency in London a year after graduating. I managed to find the least glamorous job in PR, promoting biscuits, but I loved it.

About 18 months later, I applied for a press officer role and joined Defra (the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs), covering everything from farming to fishing to flooding and travelling around the country, getting a lot of use out of my wellies.

I recently moved to the Treasury to start my current role, and have since been involved in major news events including several Budgets (two in four months was a little intense), and of course the Election. The Election was a very strange time for us, as we went from a front-row seat on politics to watching ministers head on the campaign trail with no Civil Service support, as we're

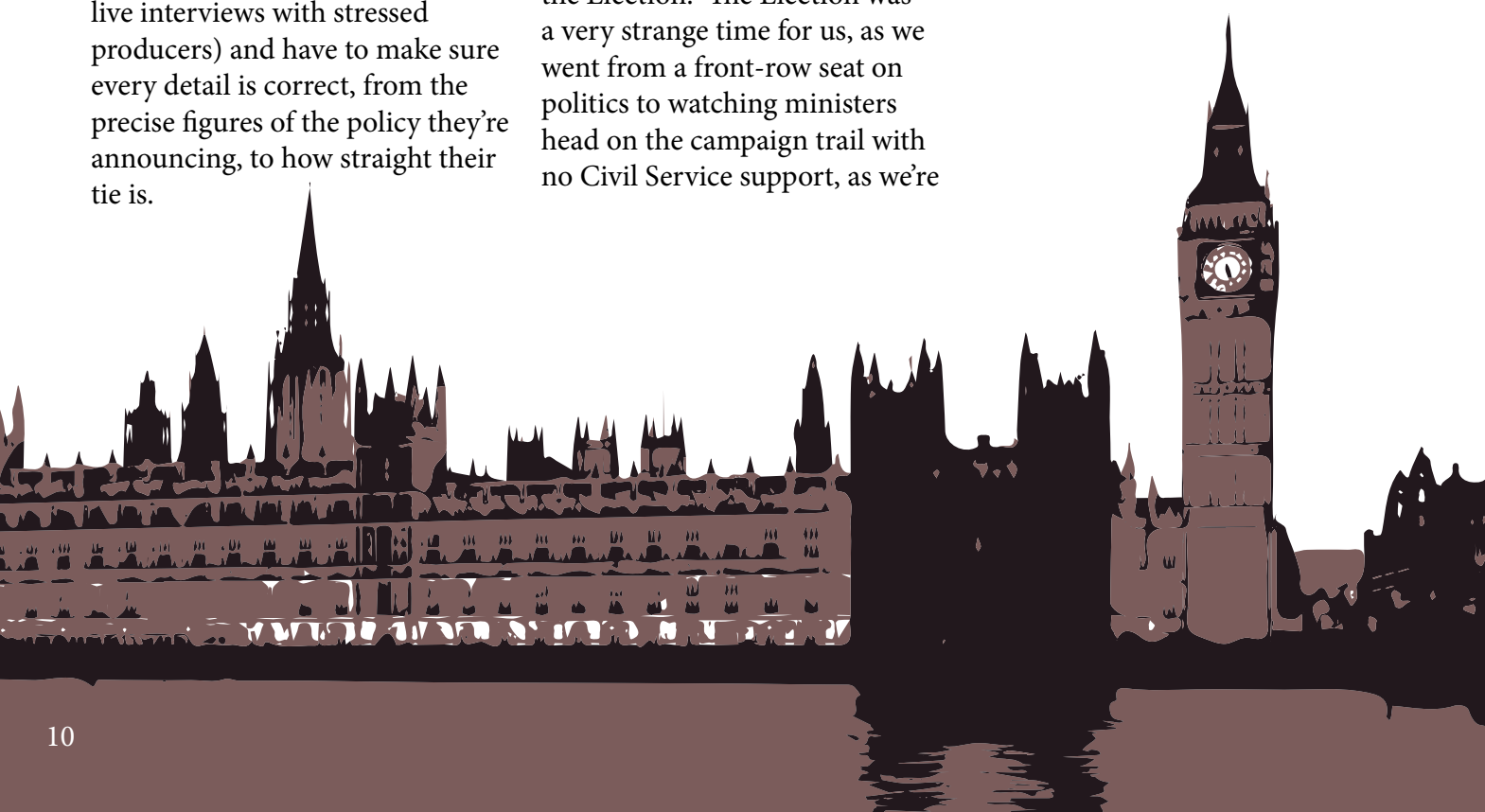
completely impartial.

There's much more to the Civil Service than the fast stream, so I would recommend that anyone interested looks at the variety of roles available and thinks about what suits their skills.

The Civil Service is a hugely varied employer, so I can't say what makes a good civil servant other than the basics of integrity and values, but good press officers are chatty (even when in a freezing studio at 6am), analytical writers and have a keen eye for a great (or terrible) story. And a wonky tie.

Hope is Press Officer to the Chief Secretary of HM Treasury in London

 www.gov.uk/hm-treasury



The Inaugural Ministerial Reunion

Emma Nash (2010, Theology)

Who could possibly turn down the opportunity for a day at Regent's? To have coffee in the SCR once more, a seminar in the Collier Room and to dine in Helwys Hall? I was very pleased to be invited to the Ministerial Reunion, especially as I had been asked to speak about my experience of ministerial formation and my first two years in post as a BUGB accredited evangelist. I was less pleased when I realised that I would be speaking immediately after Professor Paul Fiddes. A rather tough act to follow, to say the least.

We began with coffee in the Senior Common Room, which provided a relaxed opportunity to catch up with old friends and tutors. It took me back to hobnobbing in the SCR on Friday evenings after Formal Hall, one of the privileges postgraduate and ministerial students enjoy at Regent's, and always a good opportunity to create goodwill with the people who mark your essays. Dr Rob Ellis gave us an update on College news and then we went through for lunch in Helwys Hall. When living in College there had always been the daily battle with one's conscience, or rather, body-consciousness – whether to enjoy a hot meal or to choose the salad bar. Of course, signing in for meals in advance meant one could forestall this by selecting the salad option in advance, but there was always the daily struggle: to pud or not to pud? Fortunately, as a visitor, I decided that I was allowed to knock myself out on the excellent Regent's food.

After lunch, Paul Fiddes spoke on the topic explored in his latest book, *Seeing the World and Knowing God: Hebrew Wisdom and Christian Doctrine in a Late-Modern Context*. He talked about the relationship between the self and the world, both the practical wisdom of handling daily experience and the kind of wisdom which is attunement to the world and ultimately to God. Baptist ministers are not always the greatest at keeping up with reading; I was once told that you could tell when a minister had left college by the publication date of the books on her bookcase. I enjoyed the opportunity to use the little grey cells once again, especially as the Old Testament wisdom literature was one of the joys I discovered during my time at Regent's.

I had the unenviable task of going next, and spoke about my experience of doing mission on the high street through a church coffee shop. During the discussion we explored 'pioneer ministry', asking whether this was something to which we were all called as ministers, or whether it was a gift (or possibly burden) given to a few. We reached no conclusions but enjoyed throwing some ideas around.

The day ended with worship in the Chapel led by The Chaplain, Revd Dr Myra Blyth. During my time as a college-based student at Regent's, the College became my church, with Friday evening chapel a significant regular act of worship. It was wonderful to return to this spiritual home and to speak familiar words now printed in a beautiful service book. Many thanks to all who organised the day, and I very much hope there will be another one next year.



MCR News Update

Matthew Mills (DPhil Theology) - MCR President

The MCR is now well into its second decade – a Graduate Society representative was first co-opted on to the College's Governing Body in 2002-03 – and as the home of postgraduate, ministerial and mature students at Regent's, we continue to evolve and adapt to changes in these constituencies. The past year has been no exception to the recent history of challenges and exciting developments in the life of the MCR.

The postgraduate body continues to grow and diversify, with students from fifteen countries, across five continents, comprising our group of thirty-four outgoing members whose achievements were celebrated at Valediction at the end of Trinity Term 2015. The only continent not represented by these students was South America; we look forward to welcoming new MCR members from that part of the world in coming years! The participation of such a range of students in the life of the MCR brings great enrichment to the College as a whole, and we continue to be very grateful for their contributions.

Two examples offer a flavour of the exceptionally talented international cohort at Regent's this year. Nihal D'Souza, who came to us from Europa Institut, Germany, and Bangalore University, is a candidate for the degree of Bachelor of Civil Law; Nihal is from India and alongside his studies he is Associate Editor of the Oxford University Commonwealth Law Journal and Associate Editor of the

Indian Journal of Law and Public Policy. Secondly, Paul Ayernor is a DPhil student in Sociology and his research explores the phenomenon of ageing and the well-being of elderly people in Sub-Saharan Africa, including his native country of Ghana; Paul is also Research Officer for the African Research on Ageing Network (AFRAN) at the Oxford Institute of Population Ageing.

Working at the cutting edge of his field, Paul is characteristic of the many exceptional postgraduate researchers at Regent's who, as well as writing their theses, continue to produce publications in peer-reviewed journals and to present papers at international conferences. This summer, the MCR Secretary, Scott Ables (DPhil Theology) – himself an international student from the USA – contributed to the seventeenth International Conference on Patristic Studies in Oxford, which attracts scholars from around the world for five days of academic exchange once every four years.

I have also been abroad recently, to Pennsylvania (USA), accompanied by a former MCR Vice President, Ross Maidment, to present papers at a conference of the Ecumenical Society of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The title of the conference was *The Virgin Mary in Christian Dialogue: Controversy, Convergence and Vision*. Ross proposed a re-reading of the Virgin's fullness of grace (*Maria, gratia plena*) in light of the concept of 'the paradox of grace' proposed by the Scottish

theologian, Donald Baillie (1887-1954), and I offered a critique of his paper from a Roman Catholic perspective. This conference showed that even in the venerable field of Christian doctrine exciting work is still taking place, especially as traditional confessional perspectives are explored and scrutinised ecumenically.

Indeed, Regent's has form when it comes to ecumenical Mariology and by presenting at this conference we were in fact contributing to something of an emergent theological specialism in College. In 2005, Dr Timothy Bradshaw, the Senior Tutor, wrote the Anglican commentary on the Mariological document of the second Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC II), *Mary: Grace and Hope in Christ*. Then, in 2010, Professor Paul Fiddes, Principal Emeritus and current Director of Research, concluded five years as Co-Chair of a series of ecumenical conversations between the Catholic Church and the Baptist World Alliance, which dedicated an entire symposium to the Virgin Mary. The excellent report produced under Professor Fiddes' co-chairmanship, *The Word of God in the Life of the Church*, can be read on the website of the Vatican.

In any edition of Regent's Now, it is only possible to offer a snapshot of the work of Regent's



postgraduates but these few examples are just the tip of the iceberg and as the MCR grows exceptional work like this abounds, enhancing the reputation of the College in the University and beyond. Our challenge now is to continue to build on these achievements by nurturing our common life and investing in the research and social facilities which MCR members require. I am pleased to report here that careful stewardship of our finances over the last two years enabled the

MCR to make substantial savings towards capital improvements, which have been carried out this summer; the Common Room itself and our Study Room in the Library have been refurbished, with new heating, lighting and décor. It is recognised elsewhere in this magazine that Regent's has modest financial resources and the MCR is no exception, but these changes show what can be achieved with a bit of imagination and huge amounts of goodwill!

Alumni members of the MCR

are always welcome to come and see what we are up to and, of course, ideas and support for further improvements are always gratefully received. You can also follow developments, including all of those described above, on our new website, which was launched earlier this year. From academic pursuits to the Vice President's appearance on a BBC gameshow, there you will find news of the many things taking place in the MCR and being undertaken by our members.

 www.regentsmcr.com

Ministerial Report

Ruth Gookey (MTh) - Ministerial Association Representative



For some of the ministerials, Michaelmas Term started a little early, not in Oxford but in Romania. A group of second- and third-year students, together with Dr Rob Ellis, the Principal, spent ten days looking at Baptist life in this beautiful country. Some time was spent up in the mountains and some in and around Bucharest. The group also spent a thought-provoking couple of days with Project Ruth, a charity begun by local Christians to provide education and other opportunities to the Roma community in and around the capital. It was a brilliant trip and a huge thanks to all who organised and facilitated it.

With the trip done and all the essays which were due over the summer complete (hopefully!), it was time to get back to Oxford and 0 week. Sam Richards from Oxford CYM (which provides training for schools, youth and

children's work) led the week and we also went out and about to see both church-based and community-based children's and youth work. The two other 0 week topics this year were 'Conflict Resolution' in Hilary Term, and 'Ministry beyond the local church' in Trinity Term. We are grateful to Jo Williams who led the 'Conflict Resolution' week and to all the chaplains who came to speak to us in Trinity Term. It was fascinating to hear about chaplaincy from many different contexts including sport, healthcare, the town centre, and the Army. We were also really glad to welcome Ed Kaneen in Hilary Term, who delivered the 2015 Whitley Lecture asking 'What is Biblical Ministry?' As ever throughout the year we benefitted

from many people coming into college to lead seminars and sessions, and the second years even managed an hour with Geraldine Luce (née Latty) over Skype (just!); this bodes well for next year when some sessions will be delivered in a webinar format!

As always, we had a bittersweet end to the year as we said goodbye to all those who had completed their time at Regent's. By the end of Trinity Term the majority had settled-in to churches and they go with our love and prayers into the next stage of their ministries.



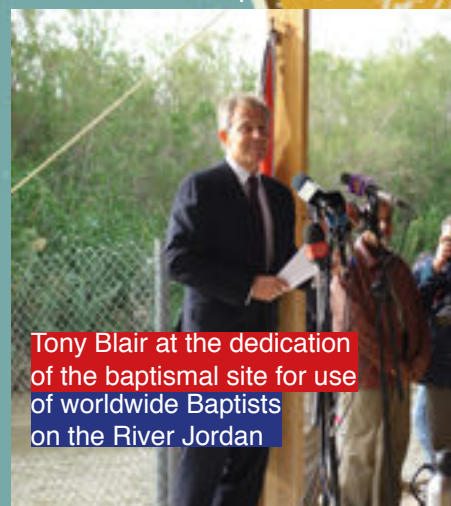
Ministerial Students at a castle in Romania



The Study of Love in Religion A Fellowship and a Project

The Revd Professor Paul Fiddes (Professor of Systematic Theology)

The onward movement of the so-called 'Islamic State', causing massive human suffering and devastation, is constantly in the news at the moment. There is also the constant danger of other forms of terrorism which make illegitimate appeals to religion. It is in this context that the establishing of a new post for the study of love in religion at Regent's Park College may make its contribution to peace and co-existence in the world. This, at least, is the hope of those who are funding the post, who are Muslim believers in Jordan. They have a daring vision, shared with us in Regent's, that placing the study of love in the academic context of a University will influence the minds and hearts of young people who come to study there.



Tony Blair at the dedication of the baptismal site for use of worldwide Baptists on the River Jordan

Two 'Chairs in love' have already been set up in Islamic universities in the Middle East, and now a Fellowship at Regent's will place love as proper subject of study in a University to which young people come from all over the world, students who will in the future play a key role in politics, education, commerce and law in their own countries. The Muslim supporters of this post believe that to turn the decision-makers and opinion-formers of the future towards love is a front-line resistance to movements like 'Islamic State'.

The funds to endow this Fellowship in perpetuity, amounting to £1.8 million, have thus come from two generous donors in Jordan. The first is the Royal Aal Al-Bayt Institute for Islamic Thought in Amman, Jordan, and the second is the King of Jordan himself. The post is named, in honour of the King, the 'H.M. King Abdullah II Ibn Al Hussein of Jordan Fellowship for the Study of Love in Religion.' The Fellowship has a fixed term of 5 years, and will alternate between a Christian and a Muslim scholar, beginning in 2016. Since the post is intended to

foster inter-faith relations as well as promote the academic study of love, it is essential that those holding it should have an active commitment to either the Muslim or Christian religious traditions and have experience in relating to those of other faiths than their own.

Those holding the post may specialize in any area of Christian theology or Islamic studies. The Fellow might be a specialist (for example) in Holy Scriptures, doctrine, historical theology, philosophical theology, sociology of religion or inter-faith studies, but he or she is expected to pursue the subject of love within that context. While the Fellowship is held at Regent's as a college-only post, the appointment is being made in collaboration with the Faculty of Theology and Religion, and so it is anticipated that the Fellow will give lectures on the subject of love in religion within the Faculty.

The Fellow, it is hoped, will also attract graduate students in the area of love in religion, who will enjoy his or her supervision. A fund has been set up to provide postgraduate scholarships for this purpose, and has been started off

with a generous gift from Mr Tim Collins, a businessman in New York. We hope this may prompt others to share in this venture.

Around the Fellowship it is planned to develop a larger project for the study of love in religion in which the Fellow will be involved but which will open up yet wider horizons. I personally hold the fascinating job of Lead Investigator, and the project will be run under the auspices of the Oxford Centre for Christianity and Culture. In the first three years the theme of love will be explored in three Abrahamic religions (Judaism, Christianity, Islam) and in future years the scope will be expanded into Indian and Chinese religious traditions. It is planned to hold research colloquia and conferences in Oxford, Jerusalem, Amman, Izmir (Turkey) and Qom (Iran). Young scholars will be made research associates in each of these places. Study will be shared not only at the highest academic level, but also 'on the ground' in local churches, mosques and synagogues. Studies will be made of the place of love in the daily life of local faith communities.

A key partner in this whole innovative enterprise is H.R.H. Prince Ghazi bin Muhammad bin Talal of Jordan, to whom a great debt of gratitude is owed for originally developing the concept and for making it happen. Prince Ghazi is the Personal Envoy and Special Advisor on Religious and Cultural Affairs to H.M. King Abdullah II. He holds doctoral degrees from the University of Cambridge and from Al-Azhar Islamic University in Cairo, both concerning the study of love, the first in western literature and the second in the Qur'an. He was also the author of 'A Common Word

Between Us and You', an open letter addressed in 2007 to all the leaders of Christian churches in the world. Proposing that co-existence between Muslims and Christians should be based on the two great commands of love of God and love of neighbour, this ground-breaking document was signed initially by 138 leading Muslim scholars and intellectuals. Since then the number of signatures has increased to over 300, with more than 460 Islamic organizations and associations endorsing it. All the Christian leaders addressed responded, and the open letter became the subject of many international conferences and awards.

The story of the relationship between Regent's Park College and Prince Ghazi begins with the response of the Baptist World Alliance to 'A Common Word', written by Professor Fiddes, and followed up by a visit of a BWA delegation to Jordan to continue the dialogue and to be present at the dedication of a baptismal site on the Jordan river set aside for the use of the world Baptist community. This place, used on that occasion for the baptism of about 100 young people from the region, is part of the 'Park of the Site of the Baptism of Jesus Christ' founded by Prince Ghazi in 1997 among his many inter-

faith activities, which include the creation of the United Nations 'World Interfaith Harmony Week'. Conversations with Prince Ghazi in Jordan led on in due time to a celebration of the first five years of 'A Common Word' at a two-day conference in Regent's Park College in October 2012, and to the development of the idea of a 'love post'.

The new Fellowship in the Study of Love in Religion may be seen as an extension of the 'Common Word' project, taking the appeal for unity and peace on the basis of divine and human love into the very heart of higher education. In recognition of his scholarly distinction, contribution to interfaith relations throughout the world and his enabling support of the Fellowship, Prince Ghazi has been elected an Honorary Fellow of Regent's Park College by the Governing Body, and has graciously accepted election with an ongoing relation with Regent's. He will be installed at Formal Hall on Friday 13 November following an academic seminar in which a paper by the Prince will be discussed by Oxford scholars of New Testament and Islam. At that event it is also hoped to announce the first holder of the H.M. King Abdullah II Fellowship. A vision first shared in Jordan 6 years ago will thus become reality.



Paul Fiddes with Prince Ghazi at a meeting in Jordan



Notes from the Development Office

Julie Reynolds - Director of Development & Alumni Relations

When Regent's Now arrived on everyone's doorsteps last year, I had been in post for around six months. It was clear from the outset that there was a great deal to do to build upon the work of my predecessor, Tim Pottle. The good news was that we had an up to date list of all of our alumni which we have used extensively over the last year to keep in contact with former students but from a fundraising perspective, we had, and still have, a long way to go.

Regent's, like every other higher education establishment in the country, faces a huge challenge; raising enough money to meet our key aim of providing a first-class education to every student who comes through our doors. Although tuition fees do meet some of our costs, the unique tutorial system means that this money only covers a small percentage of this expense. The College has done a great job over the years of using its facilities to raise income from conferences and other guests throughout the summer months but it's clear that fundraising has to play a much bigger part in generating income for the College, particularly in building a strong endowment, arguably the most effective long-term solution.

Fundraising Priorities

One of the main areas of work has been to identify our core fundraising priorities. This helps to illustrate more clearly areas where income is needed and also allows donors and potential supporters to direct any gift based on their particular interests. The funding priorities currently are:

- Academic Support
- Student Support (ministerial and non-ministerial students)
- Endowment Reserve
- Buildings maintenance and upkeep

These areas cover, broadly, the cost of our teaching, financial support given to all students, the often expensive maintenance and repairs needed on an ongoing basis and building the endowment to 'future-proof' the College. Within each of these areas there are naming opportunities as is usual throughout the higher education sector.

The next stage is to work with alumni and other supporters to discuss the best way to meet the aim of raising between £3m and £5m over the next 5 years. It's an ambitious goal but with the help of our passionate and committed alumni, enthusiasm of my colleagues and the knowledge

that we are securing the future of a unique place of learning within Oxford, I am confident of success.

Alumni Engagement

The other focus of the Development Office within the past year has to been to look at the way we serve our alumni community. Compared to many other Oxford colleges, Regent's has a very small alumni body, and as a ministerial college, its make-up is unique. Will and I have wanted to make sure that, in terms of both communications and College events, we are providing the right things for our alumni. This is why with the last Regent's Now, we sent out a questionnaire asking for more information on the sort of events alumni would like to see. We had a great response and it is helping to shape our communication and events programme; thanks again to all of those who took the time to respond. You can see the results of the survey here:

www.rpc.ox.ac.uk/2015andbeyond

Many of our Ministerial alumni commented that they missed the Regent's reunion that used to feature as part of a wider event organised by the BUGB General Assembly. As the BUGB event is now one day rather

than three, there has simply not been enough time to organise a bespoke Regent's event within that timeframe. Therefore in May we held a one-day Ministerial reunion which featured talks by Professor Fiddes and Regent's alumna, The Revd. Emma Nash. Attendance was good and feedback from our guests was very positive, ensuring that this will become an annual event. Keep an eye out for our next Ministerial reunion in 2016!

Where possible, we are also aiming to make our events free of charge for all alumni. This was made possible this year when Regent's alumnus Roland Rudd (1981, Philosophy & Theology) kindly offered to host the London alumni drinks at his home. It went very well and we are keen to replicate this in the future.

Another area which we feel has been underused is that of joining forces with the collegiate university to make the most of the existing series of events that happen across Oxford throughout the year. To this end we had Pimm's by the river on the Saturday of Summer Vllls to celebrate a fantastic season for the Regent's crews, particularly the stellar performance of the Women's boat. We also have two events happening as part of the Alumni Weekend in September; a wine tasting open to all attendees co-hosted by Dr Lynn Robson, Tutor in English, and Sarah

Knowles (2003, Geography) a Regent's alumna who is one of only six buyers for The Wine Society; and a Garden Party for all Regent's and Greyfriars alumni, which will be attended by the Chancellor, Lord Patten of Barnes. By the time you get this copy of Regent's Now, these events will have happened, so if you came I hope you had a great time and if not, we will see you at another alumni event next year!

Overseas Alumni

Part of the commitment to our alumni is to make sure that we are keeping in touch with everyone wherever they happen to be in the world. As a small College with a very modest budget for travel overseas, it's not always possible for The Principal or other staff to attend every Oxford alumni event abroad but we will always make sure that our alumni are aware of events happening in their area. This was the case earlier this year when a number of Regent's Alumni were able to attend an event held in Hong Kong organised by the Oxford China Office.

I am also pleased to share the news that Dr Rob Ellis will be attending the North American reunion in Washington in 2016. Once the programme of events is finalised, we will let all North American alumni know the schedule and hope to see many of

you there.

Regent's and Social Media

Over the last year we began to make greater use of various social media channels to keep alumni up to date with news and events. We have a Regent's Park College Facebook Page, LinkedIn Group, and Twitter account (more info at the end of the article).

You may also have seen the two new films which have been created to promote Regent's to potential students, academics and supporters and are hosted on our YouTube channel; simply type Regent's Park College into the YouTube search engine, or check the RPC website.

It has been a busy 12 months but I have enjoyed getting to know Regent's, my fantastic colleagues and meeting with many of our alumni. I look forward to sharing more exciting news with you over the coming months but if you would like to speak to me about any aspect of the Development work at Regent's, please do contact me on 01865 288141 or julie.reynolds@regents.ox.ac.uk.

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Life as a Performance Poet

Sophia Blackwell (2000, English)

I thought I'd write loads of poetry at college. When I imagined my life at Oxford, I saw myself floating through leafy quads or sitting at an antique desk, writing masterpieces. Having written a lot of angsty poems in high school about people who didn't fancy me, I imagined that just being in Oxford would help me to raise my literary game. Even the air there seemed more rarefied, and all the famous writers who had studied there- surely I could absorb their genius by osmosis? I imagined being showered with poetry prizes, like Oscar Wilde in a TopShop dress (not dissimilar to how I looked on bad days). What I didn't envisage was that I would get there, meet new people and fall in love with other, better poets. That for three years at least, my creative side would fall off a cliff.

It wasn't the crushing insecurity of being surrounded by so many bright people, or the imposter syndrome which, I suspect, dogged us all no matter how brilliant we were. It wasn't even that I couldn't see Percy Shelley or Virginia Woolf falling out of Fifth Avenue or Downtown

Manhattan's clutching a tray of cheesy chips, which they would then fall asleep in – something I did regularly. The problem was that while the teenage crushes I'd developed on Plath, Larkin and Eliot had blossomed into a series of dysfunctional two-week marriages. Whatever I tried to write came out like a second-rate version of what I had been assigned that week. The prize announcements pinned to the green notice boards never bore my name, and I told myself there was always next year. But then we had Finals, and the business of looking for jobs, not to mention the vast swathes of time wasted trying on several outfits a day, watching Neighbours and analysing the entire corpus of Dr. Dre.

Performance, which I'd also always loved, fell by the wayside too. My friends battled their way into OUDS productions but I didn't have the grit, talent or the thighs for it. I was more likely to be found sleeping off my essay crises, or seeing how much chips and Bailey's I could ingest before those fifteen freshman pounds turned critical. As valediction

approached, we all got a bit existential. How would people remember me? The girl who only made it to breakfast once, on May morning? Sweariest Yearbook Editor (a title I expect I held only briefly)? Reader of all Thomas Hardy's lesser works? For the most part, I'd done what I came to do, but it didn't feel like much of a legacy.

My epiphany came when I was twenty-one, still living in Oxford. Not having been organised enough to apply for an MA and defer adulthood a bit longer, I was in my own personal Last Chance Saloon - the All Souls exams. I wrote an essay about Eminem and didn't get in, but by the time I got their letter I had seen a shocking-pink poster, fallen down the stairs into a Cowley Road club and into a night called Hammer and Tongue, and my life had changed. I had seen some spoken word before, but in the civilised surroundings of galleries and theatres. I had never seen anything as raw and sweaty and beer-drenched as Hammer and Tongue. The poets' words, not edited into submission like my undergraduate



Then and Now

Sophia during her time at Regent's, and Sophia performing at a 'Society of the Golden Slippers' event

essays, had that passion and desperation that had spoken to me in Hopkins' desolate sonnets or Plath's four a.m. missives from her kitchen table. I knew I had to do this, and two months later, I did.

In less than a year, I was being paid to perform at Glastonbury. That first year was dizzying. I met hundreds of people who I went on to live with and share tents with and bomb along the motorway with at three in the morning, high on ambition, adrenalin and Mr Kipling's Bakewell Slices. I performed on the decks of barges, on rickety festival stages, in hundreds of rain-soaked tents, in oak-panelled college libraries and hotel ballrooms. It was very fast, and very strange, and after the initial high I hit a bit of a wall. More than once I felt the limitations of the art I'd chosen, and the limitations of my own talent.

There were dark moments - the first London gig where life seeped out of the room like a balloon, the workshops I'd been booked to teach where only one or two

people showed up, the sound cutting out on me mid-rant, my name mispronounced, and the fifteen-quid expenses wheedled out of promoters, paid two months later by cheque. There's a lot of indignity in showbiz – a lot of freezing on station platforms at 11pm, knowing you have to be up for work the next day, a lot of dealing with belligerent sound-men and harassed venue owners. There are times I've thought about giving up, but that was always when something magical happened. The huge, shaven-headed guy telling you he wants a copy of your book for his thirteen-year-old daughter, who's struggling to be a girl in this world. The nights I've pulled together out of the thinnest, most unpromising material and managed to wring some kind of magic out of them. The woman who told me, at an early gig, that it was the first night out she'd had since her partner's death and that I had made it worthwhile. I would never have had these moments if I hadn't opened my mouth in a Cowley Road basement and started, after years of being

silenced by my love for dead poets, to speak my own flawed truth.

So what happens next? I can only say that performance poetry doesn't have a defined career trajectory. Performance anchors you in the present, puts you in a stripped-back moment where it's just you under the lights. There's a purity to it that I like. Now I'm in my thirties, I've become more of a 'page' than a 'stage' poet – a distinction I've never liked, but one that means I've been published by some of the houses I used to dream of as a teenager. Also, last year I found out that one of my favourite poets, Michael Symmons Roberts – multi-published, winner of several awards – went to Regent's too. So you never know, there might be hope for me yet.

Sophia Blackwell is the author of one collection of poetry, *Into Temptation*, and a novel, *After My Own Heart*. Her second collection will be published next year by *Burning Eye Books*. She has also been published by *Bloodaxe*, *Nine Arches Press*, *The Emma Press* and *Sidekick Books*.

@Sophia Blackwell



The Staton Essay Prize

Dr Lynn Robson - Tutor in English

In December 2011,

Admissions Week was in full swing with everyone working hard to manipulate the admissions process to our maximum advantage. We were managing, as usual, the fact that historically Regent's has not attracted sufficient high-quality first-choice applicants so we have had to rely heavily on the University's reallocation procedure to find most of our student intake. This means that tutors have to do a lot of interviews as we know that we'll lose a substantial proportion of candidates to colleges above us in the admissions 'pecking order.' At the end of the week I was reflecting on our success at securing an excellent cohort of English candidates whilst taking rueful stock of my exhaustion and wondering how we might advertise Regent's and make all the advantages of studying in a small, friendly college dedicated to academic excellence visible to more prospective candidates, their parents and teachers. Just as the best ideas often pop into our heads as we're on the edge of sleep so post-Michaelmas and end-of-admissions exhaustion led to a creative solution: running an annual essay prize for Year 12 students.

Discussions with colleagues had already begun to establish a different perspective on what might be thought of as our 'limited' range of humanities and social science subjects. We recognized that we'd developed an expertise in running joint school

undergraduate degrees and that this expertise was the direct result of Regent's friendly, egalitarian atmosphere that promotes interaction and co-operation between colleagues. It was easy to propose the idea of an essay prize to my colleagues in Classics, Economics, History, Philosophy and Politics and it was received enthusiastically. We quickly established that the competition should focus on interdisciplinary work.

As always in Regent's, getting any initiative off the ground means confronting our limited resources and it was clear that funding the essay prize was going to present our biggest challenge. Working closely with the Development Office, we were fortunate to secure the support of Dr Cecil Staton, Regent's alumnus, then a State Senator in Georgia and currently President of Valdosta State University. Cecil's generous endowment meant that we could offer a top prize of £250 plus two further prizes of £150 each making Regent's Staton Essay Prize one of the most valuable in the University.

We ran the essay prize for the first time in 2012 and set the template for subsequent competitions. Each year we establish a theme that reflects current events: in 2012, it was 'Competition' (our inaugural year and the London Olympics); followed by 'Ambition', 'War' (2014 - the centenary of the outbreak of the First World War), and 'Freedom' (2015 - the 800th anniversary of Magna Carta). Entrants select one of three categories for their essay -

Contemporary Worlds, Historical Worlds or Literary Worlds - and each category has a choice of three questions. Questions we've asked include:

- Is it important that a literary character's reach should exceed his/her grasp?
- Should teachers' pay depend wholly, in part, or not at all on their pupils' exam results?
- Under what circumstances are wars remembered or forgotten?
- To what extent does competition drive progress?
- Can the price of freedom ever be too high?

In a 2000-word essay, entrants are asked to combine two or more subjects, such as economics and contemporary history, or literature and ancient philosophy. We award one overall prize for the most outstanding essay and then two other category prizes. We recognize strong essays with highly commended certificates and each entrant receives a certificate acknowledging their participation. The three winners and their parents or carers are invited to Formal Hall early in Michaelmas Term.

So - four years on: has the Staton Essay Prize been successful? One of its main goals was to make Regent's more visible to candidates. In 2012, we received 15 entries; in 2013, there were 50; 70 in 2014, and 81 this year. Just from numbers of entrants, then, more people know about Regent's and the opportunities we offer. In 2014, we opened up the competition to overseas entrants and the overall prize was won by an outstanding student

from Singapore. We also received entries from Hong Kong, Italy and Russia and the international trend has continued into 2015 with entrants from France and Germany as well. In 2014, I visited the school of one of the winners (not the one from Singapore!) to present their certificate and to talk to all the pupils in Years 12 and 13, dispelling some of the myths that often keep people from applying to Oxford, and focusing on Regent's. The number of schools involved has increased - in 2014 we contacted 332 schools and had entries from 56 of those. Teachers have commented that this essay prize gives students the opportunity to 'extend their wings and really begin to flourish'. It attracts entrants from all sorts of schools - independent, grammar, academies, comprehensives and sixth-form colleges. Other goals

were to increase the number of first-choice applicants and promote Regent's expertise in joint-school degrees. In 2014, we received two first-choice applications from essay-prize participants. One of them was awarded a place and begins studying Classics and English in October 2015.

The development of the Staton Essay prize has unfolded within the context of Regent's increasing commitment to access and outreach work. In the four years since its inception, the number of people attending Open Days has increased. Some attendees are drawn to Regent's because they entered for the prize but there are other reasons as well. Regent's now participates fully in the University's admissions process, the result of patient,

committed work by our academic and administrative staff - on University committees, through personal networking, participating in University Outreach events. Our excellent students are likewise determined that everyone should know what a great place Regent's is. We're fond of saying that 'we punch above our weight' but we say it because it's true. In 2014 Regent's received 50 first-choice applicants - more than ever before. If the Staton Essay Prize has contributed to that success then it's done its job.

If you wish to enter a school into the essay prize database, please contact essay@regents.ox.ac.uk

 www.rpc.ox.ac.uk/courses/staton-essay-prize/

The Chapel and The Arts

The Revd Dr Myra Blyth - The Chaplain

The College Chapel has both sponsored and been sponsored by the arts in 2015. The virtuoso soprano, Johanna Harrison (2011, English) gave a stunning recital of 'Stabat Mater' by G. B. Pergolesi (1710-36) in Trinity Term, with the proceeds going to the Chapel Development Fund. Throughout her three undergraduate years, Johanna's concert appearances were numerous within the University. Regent's has had many outstanding actors and directors. But it has also had a few outstanding musicians and Johanna is one such. Her contribution to music within the University has been remarkable.

A second musician who departs this year and leaves a mark in

Chapel and the music life of the University is Nicholas Crossland (2015, Philosophy & Theology). There is no instrument so evocative and moving in worship than the cello, which Nick played alongside Johanna in our Trinity recital. Nick's wonderful talent for a sonorous melody was also on show in the valedictory service; his rendering of 'Meditation' (from 'Thaïs') by Jules Massenet (1842-1912) at Valediction produced a moment which had the assembled community spellbound.

Some of our most talented musicians at Regent's are visiting students and this year was no exception, with a number of exceptional instrumental contributions. As always, the

student body at Regent's produced an excellent choir for the Advent Carol Service in Michaelmas Term; by the kind permission of the Principal, The Revd Dr George Westhaver, our Service was held next door in the beautiful Chapel at Pusey House. This year (2015-16), building on this Advent tradition, we are hoping to establish a regular Chapel Choir - watch this space! For the latest goings on in Chapel, you might also like to visit our new website.

 www.regentschapel.com



From Baptist Minister to Quaker Clerk

Phil Lucas (1960, Theology)

I lasted only ten years as a Baptist minister, having worked for six years in a new church on a large and challenging Bristol housing estate and for four years in a very friendly Baptist community in the Black Country. It is too easy to rationalize my reasons for quitting and I'm sure personal inadequacies paid a significant role, but there were particular experiences and personal developments which led to my parting company with Baptists.

My pastorate in Bristol was grant-supported and our family income, after my wife left her part-time teaching post to start our family, was barely enough for us to live on. I was convinced of my call to minister to those in the less affluent parts of society but felt a responsibility to give Pat, my wife, and two young children the support they needed. We met with a small group of other young ministers to explore other ways of working: of living, for example, as a self-supporting community, with some exercising their earning power in the world while others ministered in the community. But when we sought support for our ideas from more senior ministers we received none. Disillusionment with inflexibility and lack of vision in the denomination had its beginnings there.

After five years or more, it was time to move on. It then became apparent to me that our congregational system meant that, in order to earn a living wage, I would need to move to a church in a more middle class

setting. I 'preached with a view' in two or three of these and was unconvinced that this was where I was being led. I accepted a call to a church in the industrial Black Country. It was a lovely, warm-hearted community and we enjoyed much about living and working there. Our young sons quickly lost their Bristolian and developed Black Country playground accents.

BUT there were three other Baptist churches within a mile and a half of ours, each with its slightly differing traditions and each fiercely independent. I suggested that we might benefit from working more closely together. What heresy! My own theology, influenced by the likes of Paul Tillich and John Robinson, was meanwhile becoming increasingly radical. (I gave quite a lot of my theology library to the Regent's JCR years ago, but Paul Tillich is still on my shelves). My congregation was open and tolerant and we had a lovely relationship, but I knew I was on my way out of the Baptist fold. I told them I planned to do a PGCE and leave for teaching. They showed uncalled-for generosity by allowing us to live on in the manse for a year while I trained, in return for just preaching on Sundays.

When I took up my first teaching appointment, we moved to an area where there was no Baptist church. We worshipped at the local Methodist Church (my wife having been a Methodist in her youth) but, although I did a little local preaching, I was not at home and was inclined to switch off during worship, not sing the

hymns or listen to the sermon, just taking the opportunity to listen to the still small voice within.

Six years later, in 1979, we were on holiday in a tent in Cornwall during one of the worst summers on record. We went visiting places, it not being beach weather, and chanced by a little cob-walled thatched seventeenth century Quaker Meeting House on the way to the King Harry Ferry near Truro. It was called Come to Good. It was open and no-one was there. We looked around and I picked up some leaflets and booklets, which I read later in our rain-soaked, wind-tossed tent. To use a Quaker phrase, they 'spoke to my condition' – they described precisely the place I had reached on my spiritual journey. I was intrigued and delighted. Returning home to the West Midlands, we found our way next Sunday to our nearest Quaker Meeting – also in a seventeenth-century meeting house and, to my surprise and joy, both of us felt immediately at home. We loved the openness, the tolerance, the acceptance, the lack of dogma, the emphasis on being and doing rather than words, the self-effacing equality. We were both admitted to membership of the Religious Society of Friends the following year.

When, at the age of 55 and having been a headteacher for some thirteen years, I decided I had had enough of defending my staff from the National Curriculum and Ofsted and all the other wonders being wrought in the English education system, we both took early retirement and were

appointed to manage the Central Edinburgh Quaker Meeting House, a busy building in the heart of the Old Town, which has the added interest of being a Festival Fringe venue in August. We did this job share for 13 years and it brought us many joys and gave us time to serve Quakers in other ways.

With no paid ministry, Quakers are completely dependent on everyone doing their bit according to gifts and aptitudes. Both of us have served on national committees and Pat has been clerk of three different Local Meetings (a Quaker clerk both 'chairs' and minutes business meetings). I have clerked Quaker Life Central Committee, the British national committee responsible for support of Friends and Meetings and I am currently clerk of South East Scotland Area Meeting, the regional body centred on Edinburgh which includes local meetings from the Borders country to southern Fife. We take on such tasks for a triennium and Friends rarely serve more than two triennia, except in specialized jobs like treasurership.

I value highly our distinctive business method. Our business meetings are grounded throughout in silence-based worship. We seek out of this silent listening to find what is 'the will of God' (or what is Right – not all Quakers are comfortable with traditional theist language). The clerk's task, apart from preparing the agenda, is to listen for the agreed truth as it emerges and then to reflect that back to the meeting in a written minute, which is worked on by the whole meeting until we are sure it is right. It can sometimes take time, but the minute is owned by the

whole meeting and reflects a fully shared and reflective process.

I have in more recent years become involved in a variety of ways which express my commitment to our Quaker peace testimony, a testimony which dates back to the time of Charles II. I have served on the management committee of the Edinburgh Peace and Justice Centre, am an active member of our local Campaign Against Arms Trade group and have worked for three months in Israel/Palestine with the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI). I currently sit on EAPPI's British/Irish support committee, which is half Quaker but includes representatives of partner organisations including Christian Aid, CAFOD, CTBI, the Church of Scotland and a URC minister who represents not only his own church but also Baptists and Methodists.

We both love Quaker worship and now find other forms of worship difficult. Each meeting for worship is different, though all are grounded in silence, and it's high risk and can be open to abuse, but it usually works well and is a golden time. We live in a small Scottish village and occasionally attend the local kirk, to participate in community life, but I now find the hymn-sermon sandwich difficult. We try to avoid the monthly Communion services. For Quakers, all life is sacramental.

We sit rather more lightly to the Bible as a principle source of inspiration than most Protestant Christians. Margaret Fell, a very significant figure in the early Quaker story, recalled George Fox saying in 1652, 'Then what had

any to do with the Scriptures, but as they came to the Spirit that gave them forth. You will say, Christ saith this, and the apostles say this; but what canst thou say? Art thou a child of Light and hast walked in the Light, and what thou speakest is it inwardly from God?' Our core experience is of this 'inward Light', shining through quiet individual and corporate discernment.

Quakers' commitment to equality and truth and our fresh theological approach has led us to take a more open stand on sexual matters than has been the Christian norm. This was first publicly evidenced by the publication of 'Towards a Quaker view of sex' back in the 1960s and has led us to be one of the few British churches wholly supporting same sex marriage. I spoke for Scottish Quakers in our campaign for the recent change in Scottish law permitting this. Two male Quaker friends of ours were married in Edinburgh Meeting House early this year, the first religious same sex marriage in Scotland.

I am profoundly grateful for the theological education I received in my youth, first at Exeter University and then at Regent's. It has been a rich resource for me. I have not been able to repay Baptists for the investment made in my education, which I regret, but I have had to go where the truth in my heart has led me. I hope Baptist readers of this confession will feel that this investment has not been entirely wasted.

The Almanac

Recognising alumni, students and friends.

In Memoriam

Peter Colyer 1943 - 2014

(1961, *Geography* & 1964, *Theology*)

Robert Gardner 1924 - 2014

(*Friend of the College*)

Alan Jones 1934 - 2014

(1957, *Theology*)

C. Samuel Reid 1936 - 2015

(1959, *Theology*)

Geoffrey G. Reynolds 1935 - 2015

(1957, *Theology*)

Roy Robinson 1930 - 2013

(1950, *Theology*)

Peter G Saunders 1930 - 2014

(*Friend of the College*)

Alumni Achievements

Peter Blair QC

(1979, *Jurisprudence*)

Having practised as a barrister for 30 years, Peter was appointed in October 2014 to the Office of a Circuit Judge and a Deputy High Court Judge. Peter has stepped down from heading the 80 barristers at Guildhall Chambers where he practiced as Queen's Counsel, and now sits as a judge in the law courts in Swindon trying civil and criminal cases, as well as handling Judicial Review cases in the Royal Courts of Justice in London.

The Revd Mark Perry

(2000, *CTh*)

Chaplain of Port Regis Preparatory School in Dorset Mark Perry has been elected as a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts. The society's previous members include Charles Dickens, Karl Marx, and Stephen Hawking.

Student Achievements

The following students were recognised for their achievements at a dinner in Trinity Term.

Mark Barclay – Student journalism

Michael Beale – Managing Director of the Alternatives a cappella group

Kate Bickerton – Editor of the OxStu Music section

Peter Burke-Smith – Oxford University Lightweight Rowing
Will Obeney – Chair of OUSU Council, OUSU Presidential candidate

Lucy Clarke – Producer and director, University drama (Macbeth); Editor of Vulture Magazine

Kathryn Cole – University Women's Sailing 1st Team captain

Emma Cookson – Deputy Editor of Cherwell, and founder and Editor of Oxford's only Student Travel Magazine, WILD

Beth Davies-Kumadiro – Sponsorship officer for the SIR (international relations society magazine); Member of the events management team for ISIS magazine

Emily Doctor – Publicity Officer for Oxford University Chorus

Megan Eldred – President of the International Relations Society

Thomas Fawcett – Producer and director of University drama (Macbeth)

James Gandhi – Vice-President of Oxford Media Society; Treasurer of OUDS; writer of a short-film, *Dog and Fags*, which was shown at the Phoenix Picturehouse

Miriam Hargreaves – Full Blue in Basketball

Beth Hibbert – Oxford Sirens Cheerleading Social Secretary

Evie Ioannidi – First Witch in Macbeth

Beth John – represented the University in the Southern Universities Dancesport Competition and Inter-Varsity Dancesport Competition.

Stephanie Kelley – Student journalism; Publicity Officer for WomCam

Suzie King – Marketing manager for a range of plays and shows, including Captain Amazing and Living Together

Paul Ostwald – Student journalism; President of the Oxford German Society

Camilla Rees – RAG Social Media; Super Student Bites founder and editor; Marketing Manager for Henry V

Henna Shah – Vice-President at the Oxford Hub, Oxfid Coordinator, OUSU Access and Admissions Officer

William Tomsett – Leading role in University drama (Iolanthe)

Rose Vennin – Representing and debating for the Oxford Union in country-wide competitions

Lizzie Webb – Convenor of the Oxford Women's Open 2015; representing and debating for the Oxford Union in country-wide competitions

Hebe Westcott – Colours in Netball, selected for the Oxford Women's Tennis First Team

Will Yates – University Rugby Fives 2nd Team captain

Taylor Yu – Section editor at the OxStu