

Oriel College



Issue 27 2025

# floreat



## Provost

**Britain is a soft superpower but let's  
not take it for granted**

# From the Provost

**W**elcome to this issue of Floreat, which goes to print as we come to the end of the College's 699th year since foundation.

We're looking forward to celebrating our septingentenary with everyone throughout the year. There's a great deal happening, with events in the UK and others being organised with the support of alumni around the globe. You can read the programme as it stands in this magazine.

I am afraid this edition contains an interview with me on Britain's soft power. In January, I joined the UK government's new Soft Power Council, which is advising on how to utilise soft power effectively. I've been reminded often about the importance of the University of Oxford for Britain's global influence. The latest HEPI Soft-Power Index, published in October, ranks institutions that have educated the most world leaders. Oxford came in second after Harvard, educating 12 of the 59 UK-educated world leaders. Our university continues to attract the best and brightest students from all around the world. As international alumni pursue careers around the world we know that most retain a favourable inclination towards their college, the University of Oxford and the UK.

As communicated by email in November, Oriel will begin the formal search for our 54th Provost in the second half of 2026. I will end my second term as Provost towards the end of 2027. Details about the recruitment process will be shared at the appropriate time. I'm fortunate indeed to be able to serve as Provost during our 700th anniversary year and will continue to engage with Oriel over the coming years.

Thank you so much to everyone who has supported Oriel during the past year. 2026 brings the anniversary that we've been counting down to for at least two decades. I hope that many of you will join us in commemorating this wonderful moment in our college's long history.

Floreat Oriel!



Lord Mendoza CBE

# Contents



## Features

- 04** Britain's soft power
- 08** Photobombing de Gaulle
- 10** Responding to absence
- 12** Celebrating women at Oriel

## Research

- 14** Ageing in space
- 17** Selborne, Oxford and back
- 18** Monitoring nature recovery

- 20** Biochemist brings £1.3mn lab to Oxford

## 700th anniversary

- 22** A year of celebration

## College

- 28** East Range project complete
- 31** Spin-out acquired by Samsung
- 31** New Year Honours

Communications Office  
Oriel College  
Oxford  
OX1 4EW

Tel: 01865 616759  
Email: [communications@oriel.ox.ac.uk](mailto:communications@oriel.ox.ac.uk)  
Website: [oriel.ox.ac.uk](http://oriel.ox.ac.uk)  
Alumni website: [alumni.oriel.ox.ac.uk](http://alumni.oriel.ox.ac.uk)

© 2025 Oriel College Registered Charity  
No. 1141976

**Editors**

Jared Smith, Communications Officer  
Aarti Basnyat, Head of Communications  
Marco Zhang, Director of Development

**Contributors**

Colin Bailey, Aarti Basnyat, Cécile Bishop,  
Charlotte Buckley, Emma Davis, Kathryn  
Ferguson, James Fletcher, Ben Ford, Dmitry  
Ghilarov, Bobby Higson, Stephanie Holt,  
Ian Horrocks, Margaret Jones, Loren Kell,  
Maria Kyriazi, David Maw, Lord Mendoza,  
Oriel College Boat Club, Jan Rosenow, Jared  
Smith, Bawa Suleman, Robert Wainwright,  
Jess Webb, Marco Zhang

**Design**

B&M Design and Advertising  
[bm-group.co.uk](http://bm-group.co.uk)

**Print**

Lavenham Press  
[lavenhampress.com](http://lavenhampress.com)



**Cover**

Lord Mendoza CBE is a member of the UK government's new Soft Power Council



- 32** Dig turns up original features of medieval college
- 33** Doctor of the Church
- 35** Rudder!
- 35** Alumna helps obstruct Cambridge wipe-out
- 36** Running for gold
- 37** Harvard's lost Magna Carta
- 38** Professor of Geroscience
- 38** Conversion practices ban
- 39** Album for 700 years

## Alumni and friends

- 40** Jan Rosenow joins Oriel
- 42** Queer or trans in conservative contexts
- 42** Leaving a legacy
- 43** New women's second boat
- 43** Provost's Court welcomes youngest member
- 44** Oriel Alumni Survey
- 46** Events

Provost

# Britain is a soft superpower but let's not take it for granted

**B**RITAIN IS CONSISTENTLY ranked either second or third, after China or America, on global soft power indices. Whereas America and China are the world's two biggest economies, though, Britain places fifth, its GDP less than a quarter of that of China. When it comes to soft power, Britain is punching in a higher weight class.

However, Britain is being complacent, according to Lord Mendoza. The Provost of Oriel College is a member of the new Soft Power Council which was set up to advise the government on its soft power strategy and to identify ways for Britain's soft power assets to be harnessed to achieve other objectives such as security and growth.

"We think we're great and we take it for granted," Mendoza said. "There's fierce competition from other countries. We may lose our soft power status if we don't pay more attention to it." He also paraphrased Tom Fletcher, the former Principal of Hertford College who served as a foreign affairs policy advisor to Number 10, saying: "We leave our soft power assets lying around."

The American political scientist Joseph Nye coined the phrase "soft power" to refer to a nation's ability to achieve the outcomes it wants "through attraction rather than coercion or payment". When David Lammy, the former foreign secretary, launched the Soft Power Council in January 2025, he said that soft power can help "build relationships, deepen trust, enhance our security and drive economic growth".

In addition to his role at Oriel, Mendoza is the chair of Historic England, which is an arm's-length body of the Department for Culture, Media and Sport responsible for looking after England's historic environment. He also previously served as the government's Commissioner for Culture.

To see how much heritage adds to Britain's soft power, Mendoza said that "you only have to look at the tourism sector". The sector is worth more than £100 billion to the British economy, according to VisitBritain, the national tourism agency. What draws overseas tourists in sizeable numbers to

David Lammy, then foreign secretary, and Lisa Nandy, culture secretary, with Lord Mendoza and other members of the Soft Power Council at its launch in January 2025



Britain, Mendoza claimed, are primarily Britain's heritage and heritage sites such as the Tower of London, national museums and other cultural destinations. He added that the tourism draw will be different in other countries.

On the Soft Power Council, Mendoza is joined by other experts from across culture, sport, the creative industries, higher education and geopolitics, including Tristram Hunt, director of the V&A Museum, Dame Katherine Grainger, chair of UK Sport, General Sir Nick Carter, former Chief of the Defence Staff, and Vivienne Stern, chief executive of Universities UK. Dr Linda Yueh, an economist and Fellow at St Edmund Hall, Oxford, also serves on the council. The council is co-chaired by the foreign secretary, Yvette Cooper, and culture

secretary, Lisa Nandy, who can then argue for soft power and its use in the cabinet.

Mendoza said that the council defines soft power "really widely". As well as being a vehicle for hard power — the ability to influence through "coercion or payment" — he explained how even the military is considered a soft power asset. When the HMS Prince of Wales warship docked in Tokyo in August, this was not to intimidate or coerce Japan but to demonstrate, he said, "allegiance, alliance and cooperation".

"I suppose the point of soft power," Mendoza added, "is to project a collection of ... how a country sees itself, through its culture, through its foreign policies and through its political values."

The creation of the Soft Power Council is the first time any serious attempt has been made to bring representatives of Britain's multifarious soft power assets together in one room. Many disparate sectors, industries and organisations all contribute to the nation's considerable soft power base — as do multiple government departments. But before now Britain's soft power has more or less been left to grow or decline without any thought-out concerted effort to protect it or harness it for other ends.

Meanwhile, other nations have worked to increase their influence by backing, financially and otherwise, strategic industries and infrastructure projects. China, for example, has financed billions of dollars of investment ►►



“  
There is this idea  
that we should  
value our soft  
power assets and  
understand what  
they are so we don’t  
let them decline,  
that the world  
is different and  
multi-polar ... so  
therefore we can’t  
be complacent”

Lord Mendoza is the 53rd Provost of Oriel College. His second term ends following the end of the 2026/27 academic year. Photo by James Hill

to build ports, roads and railways across Asia, Africa and much of the global south, as well as funding scholarships, while also increasing its military and economic hard power. South Korea has put its weight successfully behind the creative industries, resulting in the global proliferation of K-Pop, K-Film and K-Beauty.

Given this global context, Mendoza said that Britain cannot afford to be “casual” about soft power anymore. “There is this idea that we should value our soft power assets and understand what they are so we don’t let them decline, that the world is different and multi-polar ... so therefore we can’t be complacent,” he added.

But not every nation seems to be valuing soft power. America, which is the premiere soft power nation, for example, appears to be retreating from its soft power assets, such as

dismantling USAID, closing services like Voice of America and Radio Free Asia and restricting visas for foreign students.

Mendoza has argued that there is an opportunity for Britain to fill the space that America has vacated. In May 2025, he told Franklin Nelson at the Financial Times that he thought it was a “brilliant moment to increase” spending on organisations like the BBC World Service, arguing that budget cuts could threaten Britain’s soft power. “If there’s an opportunity, why wouldn’t you be bold?” he added.

For all the influence it affords Britain around the world, Mendoza claimed that the BBC World Service easily justifies investment. In 2024/25, the World Service had an average audience of 313 million per week.

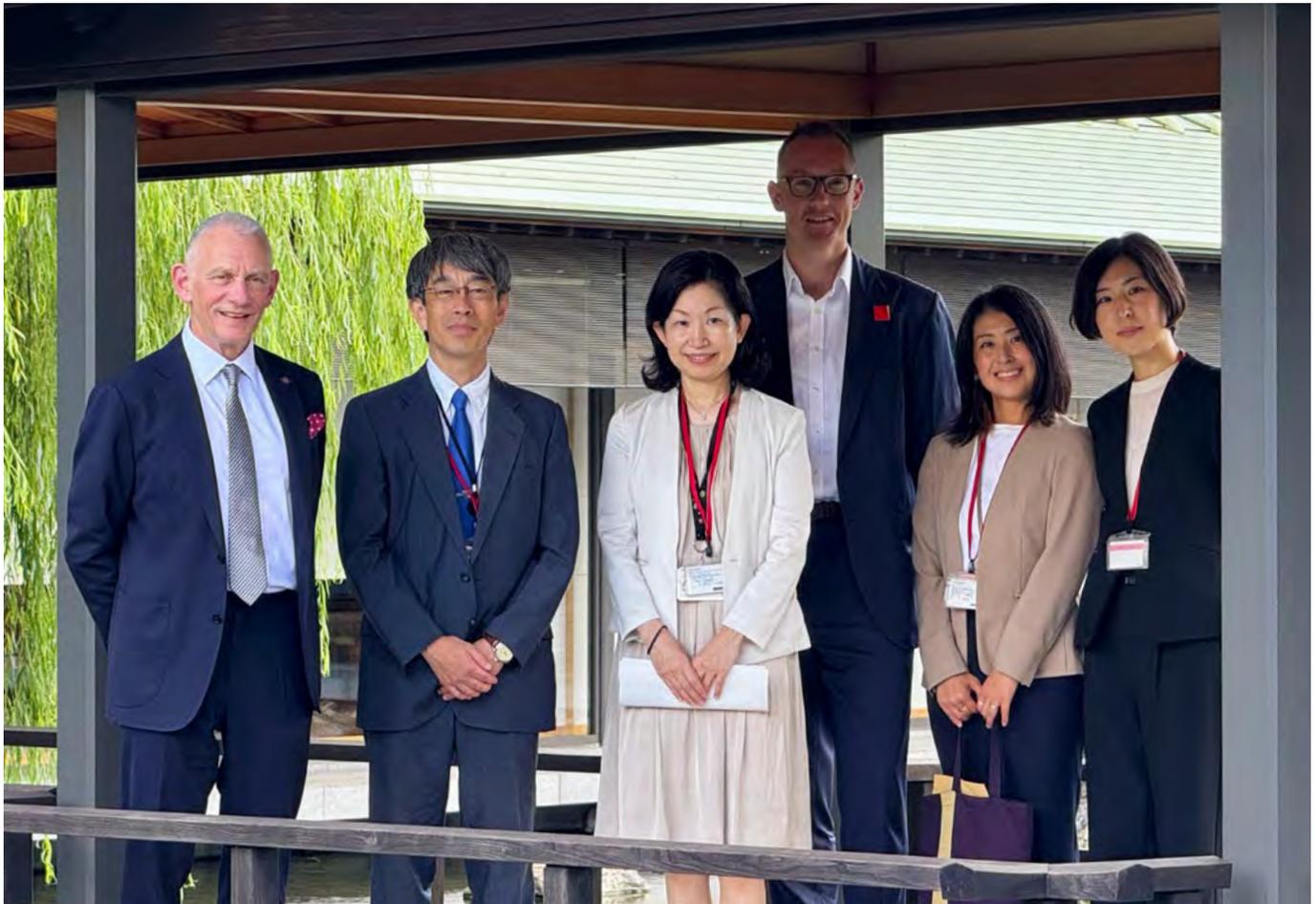
With the Trump administration attacking the independence of American universities,

restricting academic freedom on campuses and attempting to curb international student numbers, Mendoza also sees an opportunity to attract more international students and academics to Britain. He described this opportunity as one “to pick up some of the best”.

Britain’s higher education system is among the best in the world, second only to America’s. It is also a key source of the nation’s soft power. The effect of admitting large numbers of international students, said Mendoza, is that Britain has “hundreds of thousands of alumni all over the world who mostly will think better of the UK for having had the experience of studying and living here”.

According to the 2025 HEPI Soft-Power Index, Britain has educated the second most world leaders after America, with more world leaders studying at Oxford University than at any

Lord Mendoza in Kyoto with culture and heritage officials from Japan's Agency for Cultural Affairs



other institution in the world apart from Harvard. Mendoza said “the transformative educational influence of the University of Oxford delivers a great chunk of the UK’s soft power.”

Because he thinks it will deter international students, Mendoza questioned the British government’s proposed 6 per cent surcharge on international tuition fees, which surfaced in a white paper from the Home Office in August 2025.

He said that universities are “incredulous” about the proposal and asked: “Why would you try and put off people from coming, especially to a university sector that is struggling financially and where international students are an incredibly important part of their operating model to make it break even?”

Since being appointed to the Soft Power Council in January, Mendoza has made several

international trips on behalf of the Foreign Office. The first of these was in August to Expo 2025 in Osaka, Japan, where he accompanied government ministers and spoke with culture and heritage officials from Japan’s Agency for Cultural Affairs, as well as meeting ambassadors and officials from other countries.

In September, Mendoza then attended and spoke at the Cultural Investment Conference 2025 in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. He also signed a new partnership agreement between Historic England and the Saudi Heritage Commission.

The partnership develops from Prime Minister Keir Starmer’s earlier visit to Saudi Arabia in December, when he signed a landmark deal agreeing to share Britain’s cultural and creative expertise. Mendoza described the deal as an “excellent example of cultural and heritage expertise leading in national soft power”. 

# The man who photobombed de Gaulle

**O**N 26 AUGUST 1944, the day after the liberation of Paris, General Charles de Gaulle, the leader of Free France, led a procession of troops down the Champs-Élysées. In one of the photographs from the occasion, a sole black soldier from Gabon is captured walking a few metres away from de Gaulle. The soldier's name is Georges Dukson. His right arm is in a sling, apparently due to an injury he incurred during the previous days' fighting.

Gary Younge, a professor of Sociology at Manchester University, as well as a columnist and author, discussed the presence of Dukson in the photograph in his Rex Nettleford Lecture at Oriel College in June. The soldier's appearance on 26 August is notable because, officially, he was not supposed to be there.

Dukson was not supposed to have fought in the liberation of Paris at all. In the photograph of the procession, Younge said, Dukson is "effectively photobombing de Gaulle in the nation's moment of glory".

In 1944, American and British troops contributed the majority of the Allied forces' firepower. But de Gaulle saw in the liberation of Paris an opportunity for France to turn a corner following the nation's humiliating military defeat to Germany in 1940. He made the unusual request to General Eisenhower that French troops be among the first to enter Paris. ►





“  
What they couldn’t tolerate was the sight of one of the continent’s most celebrated cities ... being rescued from barbarism by black troops”

General Charles de Gaulle strides down the Champs-Élysées on the day after the liberation of Paris. Georges Dukson is a few feet to his left, walking slightly in front. © Serge de Sazo / Gamma-Rapho via Getty Images

The Americans agreed. However, they also had a request of their own: the troops in question had to be white. "It is more desirable," Eisenhower's chief of staff Major General Walter Bedell Smith wrote, "that the division mentioned above consist of White personnel." De Gaulle acquiesced, as did the British, and so the allies set about forming a French division of white soldiers. This was far from straightforward. Two thirds of the soldiers in the French liberation army were colonial troops, with large numbers drawn from France's colonies in North and West Africa and the Caribbean.

"To be clear," Younge said in his lecture, "the US was comfortable spilling blood and spending treasure to free France and then choreographing that freedom in a way that gave credit to the French for delivering it. What they couldn't tolerate was the sight of one of the continent's most celebrated cities ... being rescued from barbarism by black troops."

Younge argued that the presence of Georges Dukson in the photograph next to Charles de Gaulle demonstrates the importance of understanding Europe at the end of the war "not so much geographically ... but as politically sprawling across Africa, Asia, the Caribbean and Oceania". While Dukson was born in Gabon, Younge noted, he was nonetheless a French citizen, Gabon being a French colony at the time. He was a French man fighting for France.

In 1944, France had colonies across Africa as well as the Middle East, Pacific and Caribbean. Indeed, Younge explained that such was the extent of French colonialism that the number of black people in France's colonies was greater than the number of white people in France. The equivalent could also be said of Britain and Belgium and their colonies, Younge said. He gave the statistic that black Belgians in Belgium's colonies outnumbered white Belgians in Belgium at a ratio of six to one.

For Younge, although the Second World War "marked the triumph over the genocide and the militaristic pathologies of the Axis powers ... and Nazi Germany in particular, it can in no way be meaningfully understood as a war for democracy or freedom". He claimed neither existed among the Allied powers at the time. In August 1941, Roosevelt and Churchill met off the coast of Newfoundland to discuss the world order that would prevail should the Nazis be defeated. There, they produced the Atlantic Charter extolling "the right of all peoples to choose the form of government under which they still live". Except that right, Younge said, was not to extend to "all peoples".

While Britain, France and other European

states imposed colonial rule across the globe, Younge noted, America's army was still segregated along racial lines. The freedom for which millions were fighting and dying was not universal freedom but just the freedom of Europeans living under Nazi rule — something that Younge said Churchill later made explicit before Parliament.

More than a million African Americans served during the Second World War and, by the end of the war, more than a half-million Africans and about 16,000 West Indians had enlisted to fight for Britain. Rarely, though, are they represented by media or acknowledged in historical accounts. "In the huge, blood-soaked morality play that was the Second World War," Younge said, "black people do not appear as heroes, villains, victims, perpetrators, conquerors, collaborators or resistance. We're just not there."

Younge added: "Like Dukson on the Champs-Élysées during the liberation you wouldn't know they were there unless you went looking for them. But they were there in a range of ways, in sizable number and to notable effect."

Younge argued that it is not so much "by accident" that people do not know stories

about black soldiers from the Second World War as it is "by design". "The knowledge of who these people were and what they did," he said, "is not so much lost as obstructed and then discarded". In 1950, Life magazine published a 368-page pictorial history of the Second World War. The book features more than a thousand pictures from the war. But just one, according to Younge, shows a black American.

At the end of his lecture Younge suggested that the lack of visibility and acknowledgement of the integral role of black soldiers in the Second World War may have ramifications for how black people are viewed in Europe today. He asked how conversations relating to black people and migrants, including about responsibility, entitlement, patriotism, integration, welfare and justice, would change if the contributions of black soldiers to the war were properly recognised.

Younge then concluded the lecture by coming back to the photograph of Georges Dukson. "How different would our view of black people's place in the continent be today," he asked, "if we were to spot Dukson in those pictures of August 26, 1944, and not think, 'What is he doing there?' but instead 'Where are all the others?'" 🗣️

---

## Race and visibility

# Responding to absence

In 2014, the exhibition *Paris libéré, photographié, exposé* at Paris's Musée Carnavalet revisited the liberation of Paris. The museum had held the first-ever exhibition dedicated to the liberation in 1944, just three months after the fighting, but probably displayed no photographs of black soldiers.

The 2014 exhibition tried to increase the visibility of black soldiers during the liberation, in response to the erasure discussed in Gary Younge's talk. For Dr Cécile Bishop, the exhibition reflects a wider effort, visible in the press and in public discourse, to address that symbolic absence by making black soldiers literally visible.

While the strategy aims to correct the visual record, Bishop considers that it too needs to be critically examined. By presenting "race as an unproblematic visual fact," she said, it risks assuming the same "ways of seeing" race that motivated the erasure of black soldiers from the visual record in the first place.

Bishop is the Kelleher Fellow and a tutor in French at Oriel College. Her forthcoming

book, *Forms of Blackness: Race and Visibility in the French-Speaking World*, explores how race is seen, perceived and turned into a visual fact through aesthetic means. The first chapter of the book looks at the photographic archive from the liberation of Paris.

The catalogue from the 2014 Musée Carnavalet exhibition includes a photograph of the surrender of the German *Kommandantur* on the final day of fighting. The image covers almost an entire double-page, and the caption reads that it features "one of the few black soldiers to have got around the American demands for a 'white' liberation army."

The image, though, shows a sizeable crowd and does not specify where the black soldier is to be seen. There are the German officers in the middle, their hands raised above their heads. But around them are hundreds of others in a crowd so large it fades into an undifferentiated backdrop. The caption prompts the viewer to search the crowd for the visible signs they associate with blackness to locate the black soldier in the picture.



Top: Black and white image of a woman kissing a soldier, August 1944. © Gaston Paris / Roger-Viollet

Bottom: Edited version of the same image by Dr Cécile Bishop. © Gaston Paris / Roger-Viollet



This indicates a broader assumption, Bishop argued, because it presupposes that the blackness of the soldier is self-evident. The soldier's blackness is regarded as an objective, physical fact which has been registered in the black and white of the photograph and then

made visible to the viewer as such. In other words, Bishop said, the caption "naturalises" racial perception.

Beyond the case of the liberation of Paris, Bishop questions the idea that visibility is always politically empowering. Other

chapters of her book discuss how, historically, black figures were contained to the margins of representation, as pages, servants or decorative presences whose function was to heighten the status and visibility of white subjects. In contemporary culture, by contrast, blackness has become a hyper-visible cultural commodity, especially in music, fashion, sports and advertising.

According to Bishop, this fascination reflects the ability of blackness to circulate as an image or an aesthetic, partly detached from the subjects who are deemed black. But this visibility, she said, does not automatically translate into recognition or power. Instead it reveals how racism can value the aesthetics of blackness while disregarding black people. It is "very possible", she added, paraphrasing a quote by the Stanford academic Harry Elam Jr, to "love blackness but not love black people".

The search for photographic evidence of black soldiers and resistance fighters is, by definition, limited by the scarcity of these images. Rather than responding to their absence simply by searching for photographic evidence of black soldiers and resistance fighters, Bishop has argued for an approach inspired by the Caribbean-American artist Andrea Chung. In her 2008 "May Day" series, Chung reproduced photographs of Caribbean plantation life during the 19th century but "cut out" the figures of the black workers.

Adapting Chung's technique, Bishop has edited photographs from Paris's liberation to replace seemingly white soldiers with white silhouettes. The silhouetted figures direct the viewer's attention to the absence of black soldiers behind the visible presence of the white soldiers. In doing so they acknowledge that absence without reaffirming the same "racialised codes" that gave rise to it.

The edited images also undermine those codes, for Bishop, because they "problematise" both the relationship between race and the visible and the objectivity of the photographic image. The silhouettes invite the spectator, she said, to be active in questioning the visibility of race, and ultimately to recognise it as a "system of forms" that organises vision, rather a visible, objective and physical fact that can be caught on camera. 🍷

# Celebrating women at Oriel

**O**RIEL WAS the last college in Oxford to admit female students, but it was also the first to try. In 1971, before any other Oxford college, the motion to admit women was tabled at a Governing Body meeting. Despite most Fellows voting for change, the proposal fell just two votes short of the required two-third majority. It would take more than a decade to reach that threshold. When the decision finally came, it represented one of the most significant transformations in the College's student community since the Renaissance admission of undergraduates.

The historic vote in May 1984 was implemented incrementally. Women graduates arrived that same year, followed by the first cohort of female undergraduates in October 1985 — just 24 students including the graduates, representing less than a quarter of the student population. Today, 52 per cent of incoming undergraduates are women.

Those early years brought a cascade of firsts: the first women's boat, the first female JCR and MCR presidents, the first woman to receive a full Blue. Susanna Phillippo (1985) reflected in the 1996 issue of the Oriel Record: "Did we change things? Probably not much. Our business, had we thought about it in those terms, was rather to make a place for women at Oriel, gain acceptance, prove that women with a whole range of personalities could survive there quite happily."



In 2024 members of the first cohort of women were invited to have their portraits taken in their most-loved places around Oriel, from the Chapel to the windowsill of their favourite staircase. Photos by John Cairns

Plenary session at the September celebration, 'Experiences of Oriel Women', featuring Moira Wallace OBE, Oriel's first female Provost (2013–18). Photo by John Cairns



Oriel College has admitted women for four decades. Photo by John Cairns

In September 2025, Oriel welcomed back more than a hundred alumnae to celebrate 40 years since the arrival of the first cohort of female students. Photo by John Cairns



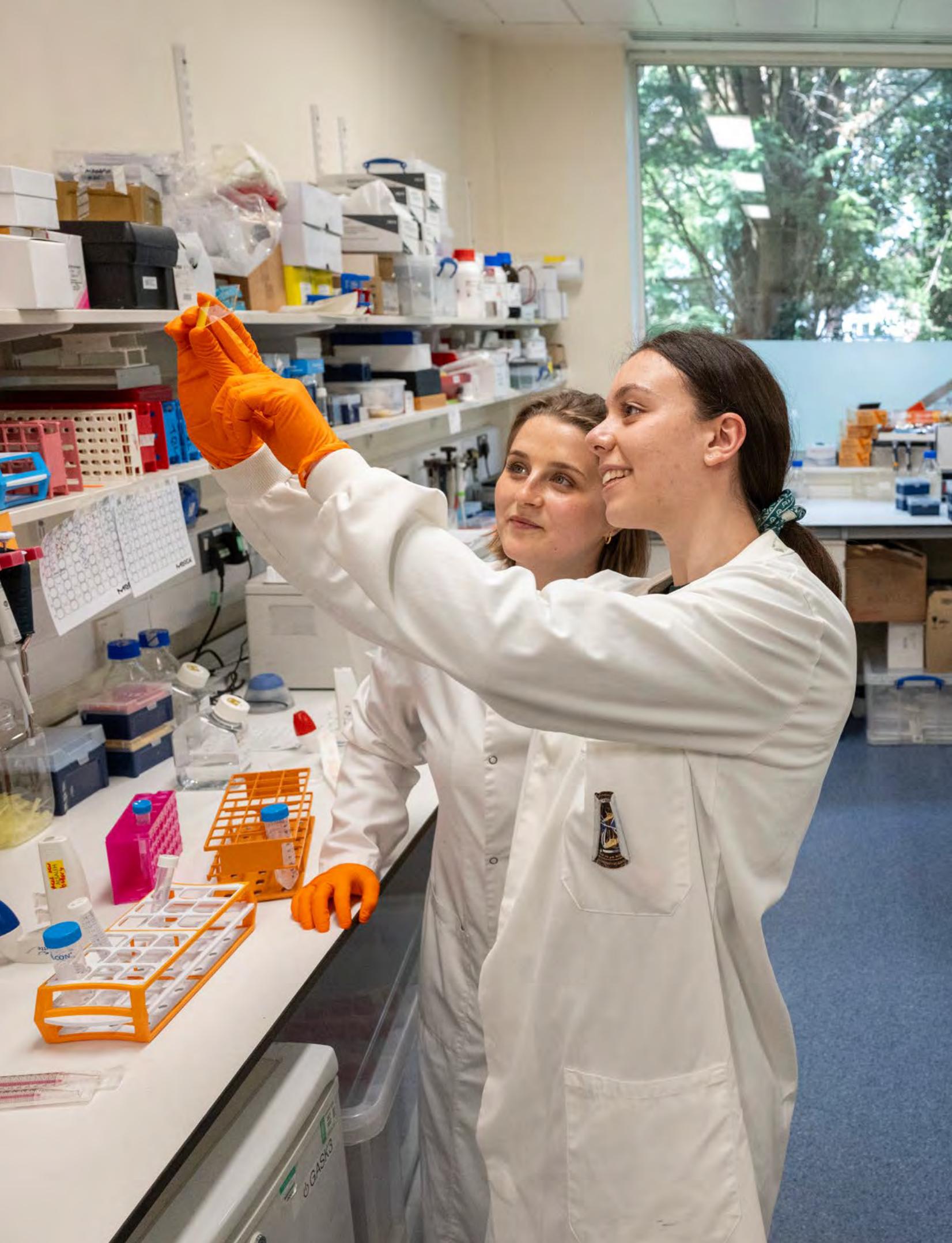
Workshops and talks at the September celebration covered topics including women's health, wellbeing and experiences in male-dominated industries. Photo by John Cairns

In 2025, Oriel welcomed back over a hundred women to mark 40 years since the arrival of the first cohort of women. In the intervening decades, they have become business leaders, politicians, scientists and pioneers across every sector, innovating and transforming their fields.

The achievements of current members of Oriel speak to this continuing legacy. From winning national gold medals to composing original musical works marking the 40th anniversary, from sending human tissue to space to receiving academic accolades, the women of Oriel continue to excel across a range of fields and activities.

The anniversary celebrations showcased alumnae expertise in pioneering mental health work, blazing trails in male-dominated spaces and advancing research into women's health. One truth emerged clearly: Oriel has fostered a resilience, sense of belonging and deep affection that continues to shape its women's lives.

As Sara Snell (1985) beautifully expressed during the 2025 International Women's Dinner: "Floreat Oriel! Whatever the future holds, long may women at Oriel flourish." 🍷





Dr Loren Kell and Maria Kyriazi are members of the Space Innovation Lab at Oxford University, which is sending samples of human tissue into space.  
Photo by James Hill

## Longevity

# Ageing in space

**D**R LOREN KELL, a recent doctoral graduate, and Maria Kyriazi, a third-year doctoral student, are members of a research group that is sending samples of human tissue in the form of “organoids” to space as part of a set of pioneering experiments that could help extend health into later life.

In the early hours of November 2024, Kell and Kyriazi joined colleagues at the Space Innovation Lab, which was established in 2023, to watch live from Oxford as a rocket carrying the samples took off from the Kennedy Space Center in Florida, USA, before beginning its flight to the International Space Station (ISS). The sample materials were sent from Oxford and transported to Florida to be developed into organoids by two of their colleagues.

Once onboard the ISS, the box that contained the samples was fitted into the station’s ICE Cubes Facility, providing a data feed to the group’s lab, led by Associate Professor Ghada Alsaleh, in Oxford and allowing the group to interact with the samples in real time.

The samples returned safely to Florida after a month in space and are now back in Oxford, where they are being compared to control samples that remained on Earth.

Kell, Kyriazi and their colleagues are looking at “ageing markers” on the organoids to determine how the space microenvironment affected the ageing process. According to Kell, there is a possibility of discovering new pathways of ageing.

Alsaleh, the lab’s principal investigator, described the project as “ground-breaking” and said the “discoveries could significantly improve the quality of life for people on Earth” by leading to breakthroughs in treating age-related diseases.

“Our project seeks to uncover how ageing progresses under microgravity conditions, and to test if these conditions could speed up the study of ageing processes that take much

longer to observe on Earth,” she said.

The experiment is based on previous evidence that exposure to the space environment accelerates the ageing process in humans.

In 2019, NASA found that for the year astronaut Scott Kelly was aboard the ISS, he displayed signs of ageing faster than his identical twin brother Mark had done on Earth. For scientists in the longevity field like Kell and Kyriazi, the discovery promised an exciting line of research.

If being in space accelerated how quickly Scott aged, Kell explained, there may be pathways that can be modulated to reduce the rate of ageing. Life-changing drugs could be developed to “turn on” pathways that slow ageing, or “turn off” pathways that speed up ageing, delaying the onset of chronic diseases such as dementia.

These outcomes could result in longer total lifespans. Yet what interests Kell and Kyriazi is not so much that as increasing the proportion of life people spend in good health. “What we do in the lab”, Kyriazi explained, “is try to find ways for all people to live better so they don’t live from the age of 65 to 100 but in very poor health.”

Kell made a similar point. “We’ve had all these big leaps in healthcare and sanitation and diet, and the great thing is that that’s made people live a lot longer,” she said. “But the problem is that, though people are living longer, the actual period of life when they’re healthy has generally stayed the same.”

The average life expectancy has more than doubled since the start of the 20th century, from a global average of 32 years in 1900 to 71 years in 2021.

Kell and Kyriazi are both recipients of Oriel College’s Mellon Longevity Graduate Scholarship and study the role of a physiological process known as cell senescence in ageing. With age, cells begin to stop replicating and ►►

Kell and Kyriazi are both recipients of Oriol College's Mellon Longevity Graduate Scholarship. Photo by James Hill



then accumulate in the body. The accumulation of these aged, “senescent” cells correlates with the onset of various age-related diseases. But the relationship is poorly understood.

Whereas Kell studies the role of cell senescence in the dysfunction of the immune system with age, and how immune responses might be “rejuvenated” in old age, Kyriazi focuses on understanding why older adults are more susceptible to musculoskeletal diseases such as osteoarthritis, the leading cause of disability globally, by studying how senescent cells contribute to their development.

Throughout 2025, Kyriazi presented at a number of national and international conferences, winning several awards. Kell completed her doctorate in November 2024 and continues to be a part of the Space Innovation Lab as a postdoctoral researcher. Meanwhile she has also presented her research on immune system ageing at conferences across the world.

In September, at the British Society for Research on Ageing's annual conference, Kell

won the Korenchevsky Prize for the best talk by an early career researcher. The prize, which is one of the most prestigious awarded by the scientific society, will fund her attendance at the 2026 American Aging Association conference in Utah, at which she will present her work.

Both Kell and Kyriazi are ecstatic to be part of the space experiment and the possibility of unlocking some of the secrets of ageing. “This project was an amazing surprise for all of us,” said Kyriazi. “When we both started [our doctorates], it wasn't planned. So we were thrilled to see this happening from the start.”

The maiden experiment by the Space Innovation Lab will be followed by additional tests over several years. The aim is to arrive at a more reliable model of ageing that can be used to test interventions including drug therapies and even lifestyle changes that delay the onset of health issues.

The experiments will also test putative anti-ageing drugs which could protect astronauts from the adverse effects of space flight. 🇬🇧

“  
This project was an amazing surprise for all of us. When we both started [our doctorates], it wasn't planned. So we were thrilled to see this happening from the start”

# Selborne, Oxford and back

*Stephanie Holt is a doctoral student in History at Oriel College. Her research considers the evolution of networks of natural historians in the latter half of the 18th century and how this influences scientific practice today. Her work has a particular focus on Gilbert White and how the personal networks he developed throughout his life shaped his work, life and legacy.*

**G**ILBERT WHITE is likely known to many readers. His book *The Natural History and Antiquities of Selborne* (1789) finds its way to the bookshelves of many of us, and it remains to date the fourth longest constantly in print book in the English language (after the King James Bible, *The Complete Works of Shakespeare* and Bunyon's *A Pilgrim's Progress*). White remains trapped for many within the confines of the small Hampshire village of Selborne; he is little considered beyond its bounds. However, in April 1740, shortly after the death of his mother, White travelled to Oxford to begin his studies at Oriel College.

Oxford was undoubtedly an exciting, and perhaps overwhelming, place for the 20-year-old. Although he travelled to Basingstoke for his schooling, White's experiences would otherwise have been restricted to his small rural village and its environs. The family had moved to Selborne when White's grandfather was made vicar of the village church of St Mary's — a living in the gift of Magdalen College, of which he was a member. Yes, the White family is of Oxford origin.

Originating in Witney to the north of Oxford, Gilbert's great-grandfather Sir Sampson White had twice been mayor of Oxford — once either side of the interregnum and the family had a long connection with the University. You can find the memorial stone to Sir Sampson and other White family members in the University Church, just above the till in the shop.

On arrival at Oxford White would have been taught by Edward Bentham, by all accounts an excellent and dedicated tutor. My research is currently piecing together the friends and connections he would have made both at Oriel College and beyond, and the lifestyle he would have led. Our College archives have been invaluable for this work. We hold letters and

several personal items, including a beautifully embroidered tablecloth, likely stitched by relatives. But the most useful items by far are White's account books for the time he was at Oriel.

White was never a rich man. He had to account for every penny spent and earned, and consequently these books give an incredible record of where and how he spent his money, and how his tastes changed. We can find him visiting the botanic gardens, bringing guests to the Radcliffe Camera, buying paper and ink and developing his penchant for green tea and strawberries. His dress also changed from the collection of plain shirts he records bringing with him, to silk stockings and shirts in his later years at College.

White graduated with his bachelor's degree in 1743. He appears to have been awarded a significant prize as we know that at his graduation he was gifted a copy of Alexander Pope's translation of Homer's *Iliad*. This was presented to White by Pope himself.

The volume was clearly treasured since it is now held in the British Library, but it gives us something far more important than a record of White's academic achievement. White never sat for a portrait during his lifetime. However, tucked into the margins of this book we find two ink profiles of White, signed "TC" — one of White's College friends. These profiles are the only pictorial record we have of what White looked like. Beyond them we only have the description of his great-nephew Rashleigh Holt-White.

In 1744 White received his MA and then was accepted as a Fellow of Oriel College. He remained an active resident member of the College, twice holding the position of Dean. From a College history perspective his most significant moment was when he challenged for the position of Provost. In the end, however, he withdrew, ceding the election to Chardin Musgrave.

Although keeping an eye open for significant livings, he was never offered anything acceptable by his lights, and by 1755 we see



Colourised version of one of two ink profiles of Gilbert White found inside his volume of Homer's *Iliad*, presented to him by Alexander Pope. Courtesy of Gilbert White's House and Gardens

him writing to his long-time friend and fellow Orielensis John Mulso indicating that Oxford had lost its shine. It was time for White to start to return to Selborne, look after his aging father and seek a life away from the city.

That did not come without controversy. When White's father John died in 1758, many assumed he had come into a significant inheritance, but this wasn't the case. He didn't even own the house at Selborne, this having passed to his uncle Charles, much less inherit a fortune. But the rumour mill was convinced he had and that he should resign his fellowship as a result. He never could, however, with little inheritance and no lucrative living, and he remained a Fellow of Oriel College for life.

White returned annually to Oriel for the elections, even in his later years. He was always an Orielensis at heart and we find references throughout his journals and letters to the city, university and college where he spent some of his formative years. 🇬🇧



# Monitoring nature recovery using eco-acoustics

Postgraduate scholarship recipient Bawa Suleman is using machine learning and eco-acoustics to monitor nature recovery in the Kwahu region of Ghana. Photo by Jared Smith

**T**ODAY THE KWAHU landscape in the Eastern Region of Ghana is a mosaic of scattered forest patches surrounded by savanna and shrubland. But the region used to be blanketed by transitional dry and moist semideciduous forests. The environment made it ideal for cocoa, coffee and cola cultivation. This was not that long ago.

Several factors probably contributed to the environmental degradation of the Kwahu landscape. Among the attributable causes, said Bawa Suleman, a doctoral ecologist at Oriel College, was the construction of a hydroelectric dam on the River Volta in the early 1960s. “Residents who lived through this period recall being forewarned about the potential consequences of the dam on the hydrology of the area and its cascading effects on tree cover and tree crop cultivation,” Sule explained.

True to the warning, the construction of the hydroelectric dam led to extensive upstream flooding and the creation of Lake Volta, the world’s third-largest man-made lake. These hydrological alterations, combined with illegal logging activities, significantly disrupted the local climate. The resulting environmental changes contributed to an upsurge in grazing activities and wildfires, exacerbating deforestation and habitat degradation.

In response to these circumstances, AJA Ghana Limited, a subsidiary of AJA Climate Solutions, a Singapore-based company, is undertaking an ambitious project to recover the Kwahu landscape. The project aims not just to restore deforested cocoa lands through cocoa, coffee and plantain agroforestry but also to rehabilitate degraded forest reserves and rewild an off-reserve area.

At the project site, Sule’s doctoral research explores the use of eco-acoustics and artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning technology to support a scalable, evidence-based approach to monitoring nature recovery. He is deploying a network of acoustic recorders across the landscape, feeding the soundscapes into an AI model to track biodiversity trends and ecological processes across space and time.

AI models have been developed to identify species in audio recordings before, but Sule is exploring a more effective “unsupervised” model which is able to function with “minimal labelled data”. Such a model, according to Sule, will be more scalable than a supervised one, due to the reduced data labelling requirement and applicability in new environments.

Beyond taxonomy and acoustic events, Sule will also use eco-acoustics to assess ecological function. There are critical features of resilient ecosystems aside from the number of species, such as high functional diversity, where species fill different ecological roles, and niche differentiation, where species’ functional roles complement each other. By looking beyond species diversity, Sule expects to develop a more accurate picture of whether the nature recovery programme is actually creating a more resilient ecosystem.

The final strand of Sule’s research incorporates high-resolution LiDAR technology and spectral imagery to model species occupancy and distribution, how soundscape relates to vegetation complexity and what that tells us about ecosystem recovery. This will enable him to make predictions regarding the effectiveness of different interventions for restoring the Kwahu landscape.

The findings of Sule’s research could transform conservation strategies in the Afrotropics. They could also, Sule said, “contribute valuable insights to the broader field of ecological restoration, eco-acoustic science and AI-driven biodiversity monitoring”. But several challenges need to be addressed first.

Logistically, Sule estimates that no fewer than 60 audio recording devices will be required to record a sufficient amount of data for his study. With that many devices, recording whole soundscapes on a continuous cycle for two years, high computing power will be required to process the data.

Sule’s research is being supervised by Professor Yadvinder Malhi, a Jackson Senior Research Fellow at Oriel College and the director of the Leverhulme Centre for Nature Recovery, and Dr Ella Browning. He is a recipient of a scholarship at Oriel, which is fully funded by an alumnus, awarded to outstanding students from sub-Saharan Africa. 🌱



# Biochemist brings £1.3mn lab to Oxford

Dr Dmitry Ghilarov using a cryogenic electron microscope. Photo by Artem Popovich

**D**R DMITRY GHILAROV founded his lab in 2021 after receiving a £1.3 million grant from the Wellcome Trust. Now, he and his colleagues have moved the lab to Oxford University where Ghilarov has taken up the role of Ron Bancroft Fellow at Oriel College.

The role previously belonged to Dr Maïke Bublitz. When she left the College in 2023 after eight years of service Dr Dominic Alonzi, who has taught Biochemistry at Oriel College since 2021, stepped in as temporary Fellow.

The central piece of tech used by Ghilarov's lab is an elaborate imaging device suitable for cryo-electron microscopy (cryo-EM), a new, advanced methodology that allows scientists to see biomolecular life in extraordinary detail.

Ghilarov and his team use the device to study how bacteria use enzymatic "molecular machines" to manipulate the structure of peptides and nucleic acids.

The research has many possible applications, such as developing antibiotics, combatting antimicrobial resistance and discovering therapies for treating cancer.

The reason cryo-EM is revolutionary is because it allows biochemists to visualise intact molecules such as proteins and nucleic acids at atomic level.

During cryo-EM, biomolecules are rapidly cooled to cryogenic temperatures and then imaged exactly as they were at the moment they were frozen. This allows scientists to generate time-lapse "movies" of key processes of life such as protein translation as they happen in real time.

In 2017, three scientists were awarded the Nobel Prize in Chemistry for developing the technology. The press release read: "Biochemistry is now facing an explosive development and is all set for an exciting future."

Ghilarov's lab is especially interested in a class of enzymes called topoisomerases which disentangle DNA by breaking and mending the polymer's double-helix structure.

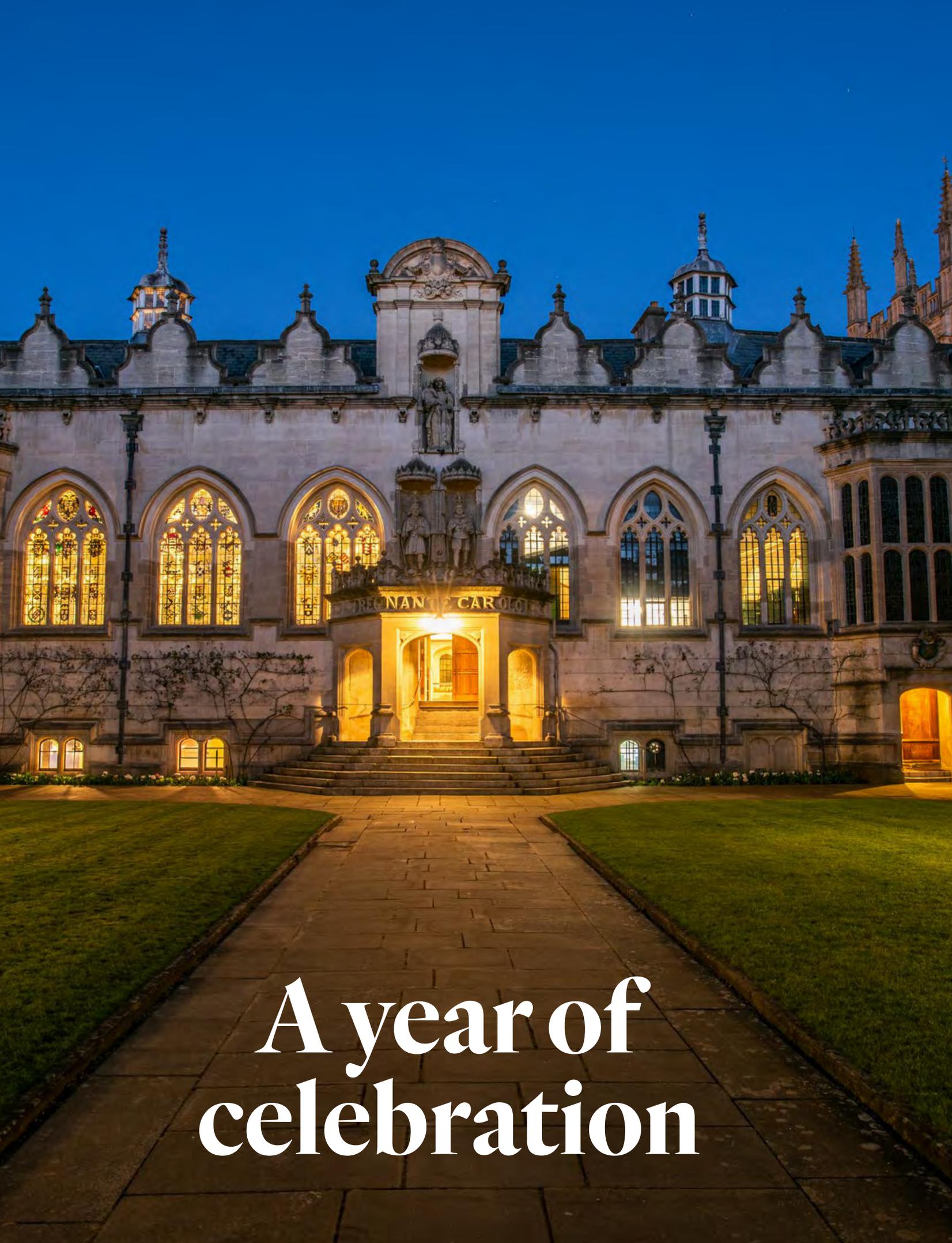
The enzymes do this in all living organisms on Earth, but until recently biochemists have been unable to study how. They are a target for anti-cancer drugs such as etoposide and antibiotics such as ciprofloxacin.

Ghilarov's research group also investigates the biosynthesis of peptides with antimicrobial properties. In nature, bacteria use these natural antibiotics to compete with each other for resources. But Ghilarov believes they could be harnessed for new medicinal purposes and developing biotechnology.

In his role at Oriel College Ghilarov will tutor Biochemistry undergraduates. He said he is looking forward to passing on the "ideas and experiences that were ... transformative" to him as a student in Moscow. 🇬🇧

Dr Dmitry Ghilarov filling a sample holder station with liquid nitrogen to cool it for cryogenic imaging. Photo by Artem Popovich





# A year of celebration



Oriel College celebrates its  
700th anniversary in 2026.  
Photo by John Cairns

# How Oriel College is marking 700 in 2026

**O**RIEL IS THE FIFTH oldest college in Oxford, and also the oldest royal foundation. In 2026 it marks the 700th anniversary of its royal foundation by King Edward II, in 1326. Oriel College, however, was also founded 1324.

There are two foundation charters and, correspondingly, two foundation dates.

The first charter was issued to Adam de Brome, then rector of the University of Church of St Mary the Virgin, Oxford, to establish a “certain college of scholars”. But this college failed to take root as de Brome had hoped. So in 1326, he sought a second charter. This time round he made sure it came from the highest and mightiest power in England: the King.

During 2026, Oriel is marking the 700th anniversary of this royal 1326 foundation with an exciting programme of events. The entire collegiate community is invited to attend and take part, and alumni are also going to be celebrating globally. There are three themes of events: “Inspire and Inquire,” “Return and Reconnect” and “Far and Wide”. Additionally, plans are being made for a big three-day anniversary weekend — including a classical music concert, alumni ball and family garden party — at the start of September. You can read more about the range of events over the next few pages.

All alumni contactable by email were invited to attend a reunion dinner or lunch with alumni who matriculated during the same decade. All six events are now sold out, but alumni can contact the Development Office to join a waiting list.

More events will be added to the programme over the next few months. To hear about events as they are announced and tickets are released, alumni should ensure that Oriel College has their up-to-date email address. Alumni can update their contact details and communications preferences at [alumni.oriel.ox.ac.uk](mailto:alumni.oriel.ox.ac.uk)/contact-the-team or by emailing [development.office@oriel.ox.ac.uk](mailto:development.office@oriel.ox.ac.uk). Event invitations are only being sent by email.

# Key

● Far and Wide

● Inspire and Inquire

● Return and Reconnect

## Foundation Day

The date of Oriel College's royal foundation. On this day Adam de Brome's 1324 foundation of a "certain college of scholars" was confirmed in a royal charter issued by King Edward II.

📅 WEDNESDAY 21 JANUARY

## ● Oriel in the City — Cardiff

Informal drinks with alumni.

📅 THURSDAY 22 JANUARY | 6.30PM  
📍 THE CORNERHOUSE, CARDIFF

## ● Joanna Macgregor

Concert by concert pianist, curator and composer Joanna Macgregor CBE (Visiting Fellow 2015–16).

📅 FRIDAY 30 JANUARY | 8.00PM  
📍 ORIEL COLLEGE

## ● Hare Club Dinner

Dinner for anyone who played or currently plays rugby for Oriel College Rugby Football Club.

📅 SATURDAY 7 FEBRUARY | 8.00PM  
📍 ORIEL COLLEGE

## ● Evensong at St Paul's Cathedral

Special Oriel service at St Paul's Cathedral, London, with the Chapel choir performing evensong, followed by informal drinks.

📅 TUESDAY 17 FEBRUARY | 5.00PM  
📍 ST PAUL'S CATHEDRAL, LONDON

The Chapel choir on Ascension Day. Photo by James Hill



## ● Craig Ogden

Concert by classical guitarist Craig Ogden (Visiting Fellow (2017–20).

📅 FRIDAY 20 FEBRUARY | 8.00PM  
📍 ORIEL COLLEGE

## ● Edinburgh Dinner

Dinner hosted by William Carnegie (1957) and Sir Iain Torrance (1974) with the Provost.

📅 THURSDAY 5 MARCH  
📍 THE NEW CLUB, EDINBURGH

## ● International Women's Day Dinner

Annual International Women's Day dinner for students, staff and alumnae.

📅 FRIDAY 6 MARCH  
📍 ORIEL COLLEGE



## ● Anniversary Service of Thanksgiving

Service to commemorate Oriel's 700th anniversary followed by a drinks reception.

📅 SUNDAY 8 MARCH  
📍 UNIVERSITY CHURCH OF ST MARY THE VIRGIN, OXFORD

## ● Decade Dinner — 1990s

Reunion dinner in Hall. SOLD OUT

📅 FRIDAY 20 MARCH | 7.00PM  
📍 ORIEL COLLEGE

## ● Adam de Brome Lunch

Annual lecture and lunch for members of the Adam de Brome Society.

📅 SATURDAY 21 MARCH | 10.30AM  
📍 ORIEL COLLEGE

## ● San Francisco Reception

Reception hosted by Christopher Pritchard (2003) and his wife Sonia in San Francisco, CA, with the Provost.

📅 TUESDAY 23 MARCH

📍 CHRISTOPHER AND SONIA'S HOME

## ● Los Angeles Reception

Reception hosted by Zane Dalal (1983) in Los Angeles, CA, with the Provost.

📅 WEDNESDAY 25 MARCH

📍 ZANE'S HOME

## ● Decade Dinner — 2010s and 2020s

Reunion dinner in Hall. SOLD OUT

📅 FRIDAY 27 MARCH | 7.00PM

📍 ORIEL COLLEGE

## ● Dinner at British Embassy Washington

Evening at the British embassy in Washington, DC, with the Provost.

📅 FRIDAY 27 MARCH

📍 BRITISH EMBASSY, WASHINGTON

## ● New York Dinner

Dinner hosted by Brian Dickie (1973) and his wife Sue in New York, NY, with the Provost.

📅 MONDAY 30 MARCH

📍 THE HARVARD CLUB, NEW YORK

## ● Atlanta Dinner

Dinner organised by Nikki Key Murphy (2002) in Atlanta, GA, with the Provost.

📅 TUESDAY 31 MARCH | 6.30PM

📍 ST CECILIA, BUCKHEAD, ATLANTA

## ● Decade Dinner — 1970s

Reunion dinner in Hall. SOLD OUT

📅 FRIDAY 17 APRIL | 7.00PM

📍 ORIEL COLLEGE



All alumni have been invited to a reunion dinner. Photo by Keiko Ikeuchi

## ● Inspiration Day: 'Being Human'

What does it mean to be human? Distraction and attention in literary studies, mathematical approaches to consciousness, bias and fairness in medical image analysis, and God-becoming-man. For all ages.

📅 SATURDAY 2 MAY

📍 ORIEL COLLEGE

## ● Professor Jan Rosenow in conversation with Greg Jackson

An Oriel Environment Group event. Professor Jan Rosenow interviews Octopus Energy founder and CEO Greg Jackson.

📅 THURSDAY 7 MAY | 5.00PM

📍 ORIEL COLLEGE

## ● Richard Tunnicliffe

Concert by cellist and harpsichordist Richard Tunnicliffe (Visiting Fellow 2013–14).

📅 FRIDAY 8 MAY | 8.00PM

📍 ORIEL COLLEGE

## ● Inspiration Day: 'Past and Future'

Hear from academics about the origins of language, Western literature and the universe, the philosophy of time and space, and mathematical descriptions of space and geometry. For all ages.

📅 SATURDAY 16 MAY

📍 ORIEL COLLEGE

# Key

● Far and Wide

● Inspire and Inquire

● Return and Reconnect

## ● Rex Nettleford Lecture

Annual lecture on colonialism and its legacies.  
Speaker TBA.

📅 MAY (DATE TBA)  
📍 ORIEL COLLEGE

## ● Dame Sarah Connolly with Julius Drake

Concert by soprano Dame Sarah Connolly (Visiting Fellow 2016–17), accompanied by Julius Drake on piano.

📅 FRIDAY 29 MAY | 8.00PM  
📍 ORIEL COLLEGE

## ● Summer Eights Celebration

Reception before supporting the men's and women's boats at the Boat House.

📅 SATURDAY 30 MAY  
📍 ORIEL COLLEGE

Oriel College's Boat House during Summer Eights. Photo by James Hill



## ● David N Lyon Lecture

Panel discussion on LGBTQ+ inclusion with Tessy Ojo CBE, Chief Executive of the Diana Award; Priscilla Mensah, inclusion expert who works for Microsoft; and Dame Julia Hoggett, CEO of London Stock Exchange.

📅 THURSDAY 4 JUNE  
📍 ORIEL COLLEGE

## ● Inspiration Day: 'Risks and Opportunities'

Why we should think and write for ourselves and human-environment relations. Artificial intelligence, the creative originator and the German Peasants' War of 1524–6. For all ages.

📅 SATURDAY 6 JUNE  
📍 ORIEL COLLEGE



## ● Celebration of Sport

A celebration of Oriel's contribution to sport. A day of interactive fun and inspiring talks from notable alumni sportspeople.

📅 SATURDAY 20 JUNE  
📍 ORIEL COLLEGE

## ● Decade Lunch — pre-1970s

Reunion lunch in Hall. SOLD OUT

📅 TUESDAY 23 JUNE  
📍 ORIEL COLLEGE

## ● 2026 Commemoration Ball

Student-organised ball.

📅 SATURDAY 27 JUNE  
📍 ORIEL COLLEGE

## ● Decade Dinner — 2000s

Reunion dinner in Hall. SOLD OUT

📅 SATURDAY 11 JULY | 7.00PM  
📍 ORIEL COLLEGE



Image of the 2018 Commemoration Ball. Photo by David Archer

## ● Decade Dinner — 1980s

Reunion dinner in Hall. SOLD OUT

📅 SATURDAY 25 JULY | 7.00PM  
📍 ORIEL COLLEGE

## ● Tamar Halperin and Andreas Scholl

Concert by keyboard player Tamar Halperin and countertenor Andreas Scholl (Visiting Fellows 2020–22).

📅 FRIDAY 5 SEPTEMBER | 8.00PM  
📍 UNIVERSITY CHURCH OF ST MARY THE VIRGIN, OXFORD

## ● Oriel's 700th Anniversary Weekend

An unmissable weekend to celebrate Oriel's 700th anniversary. Enjoy a classical concert on Friday evening, an alumni ball on Saturday and a family garden party on Sunday. Full details to follow.

📅 FRIDAY 4 – SUNDAY 6 SEPTEMBER  
📍 ORIEL COLLEGE

## ● Thierry Escaich and Zane Dalal

Handel and Poulenc concertos with organist Thierry Escaich (Visiting Fellow 2009–10) and conductor Zane Dalal (1983).

📅 NOVEMBER (DATE TBA)  
📍 UNIVERSITY CHURCH OF ST MARY THE VIRGIN, OXFORD

## Could you host an event?

Oriel's Development Office is collaborating with alumni to organise events all around the globe in 2026, with celebrations already being planned in China, Germany, Switzerland, Australia and New Zealand — as well as more events in other regions of the UK and US. Interested in organising an event near you between 16 and 30 September? Our Development Office would love to hear from you. You would just need to book a venue and be our on-the-ground contact on the day. We'll handle all promotion and bookings. Contact the Development Office now at [development.office@oriel.ox.ac.uk](mailto:development.office@oriel.ox.ac.uk).

# College





Temporary kitchen facilities being crane-lifted over the Provost's Lodgings. Photo by Jared Smith

## Renovation

# East Range project complete

The significant project to renovate Oriol College's East Range, including the kitchens and beer cellar, is now complete.

After two years, meals are now once again being held in the Grade I-listed Hall, built during the reign of Charles I. The food is prepared by chefs in reconstructed kitchens outfitted with state-of-the-art equipment and air source heat pumps for improved energy efficiency.

Lord Mendoza, the Provost, said the project is "of lasting value" for Oriol College "and will stand for generations to come".

"The experience," he added, "of dining, living and studying in this historic environment is part of what makes being a student here incomparable to anything else."

Mendoza also said he is grateful for the support for the project from staff and students and for the tireless work of everyone involved to minimise the disruption to collegiate life.

There have been careful changes to the overall layout of the premises, such as a new passage connecting the refurbished beer cellar to Hall and three accessible lifts to ensure that everyone can easily go between different levels.

The spaces are also elevated by new creative commissions, including a floor tiled mosaic at the top of the Pugin stairs from the beer cellar to the Hall. Additionally, a parish marker of the University Church of St Mary the Virgin has been "sensitively relocated" to the wall beside the mosaic, and a feet flagstone from 1674 is set into the wall at the half-landing of the staircase.

The parish marker was relocated following consultation with the University Church, the local conservation officer and Historic England.

Below ground, the beer cellar has been extended to accommodate an increased capacity. The new design also incorporates alcove seating plus a darts board, sound system and large TV screen.

Meanwhile additional measures to improve the energy efficiency of the buildings ►►

“  
Repairs and improvements to our important heritage buildings are complex and expensive since work must be done with the utmost care to protect the historical character that makes Oxford such a beautiful city”

include secondary glazing and low-energy lighting in the kitchens, heat recovery units in the toilets, and increased thermal insulation. Colin Bailey, the Master of Works, said that sustainability was considered throughout the project.

Margaret Jones, the Treasurer, described the project as a tremendous success. She also commented on the considerable financial costs, saying: “Repairs and improvements to our important heritage buildings are complex and expensive since work must be done with the utmost care to protect the historical character that makes Oxford such a beautiful city.”

She said that “while we are fortunate to have an endowment which enables us to provide the tutorial system of teaching at no added cost to students”, the renovations still strained available finances as “one of our largest investments of the past 100 years”.

The College secured a long-term loan to help meet the project cost and also benefitted from millions of pounds contributed by alumni and friends.

For the duration that work to refurbish the beer cellar and rebuild the kitchens was ongoing, dining took place in the curious location of the Senior Library.

To accommodate dining in the Senior Library,

temporary kitchen facilities were erected on the lawn in Second Quad. These have now been removed, exposing a grateful wisteria to the sun once again, and the lawn has been returfed.

To remove the temporary facilities, they needed to be lifted out of Second Quad and over the Provost’s Lodgings by a 250-tonne crane which was stationed in Oriol Square for two days in late September.

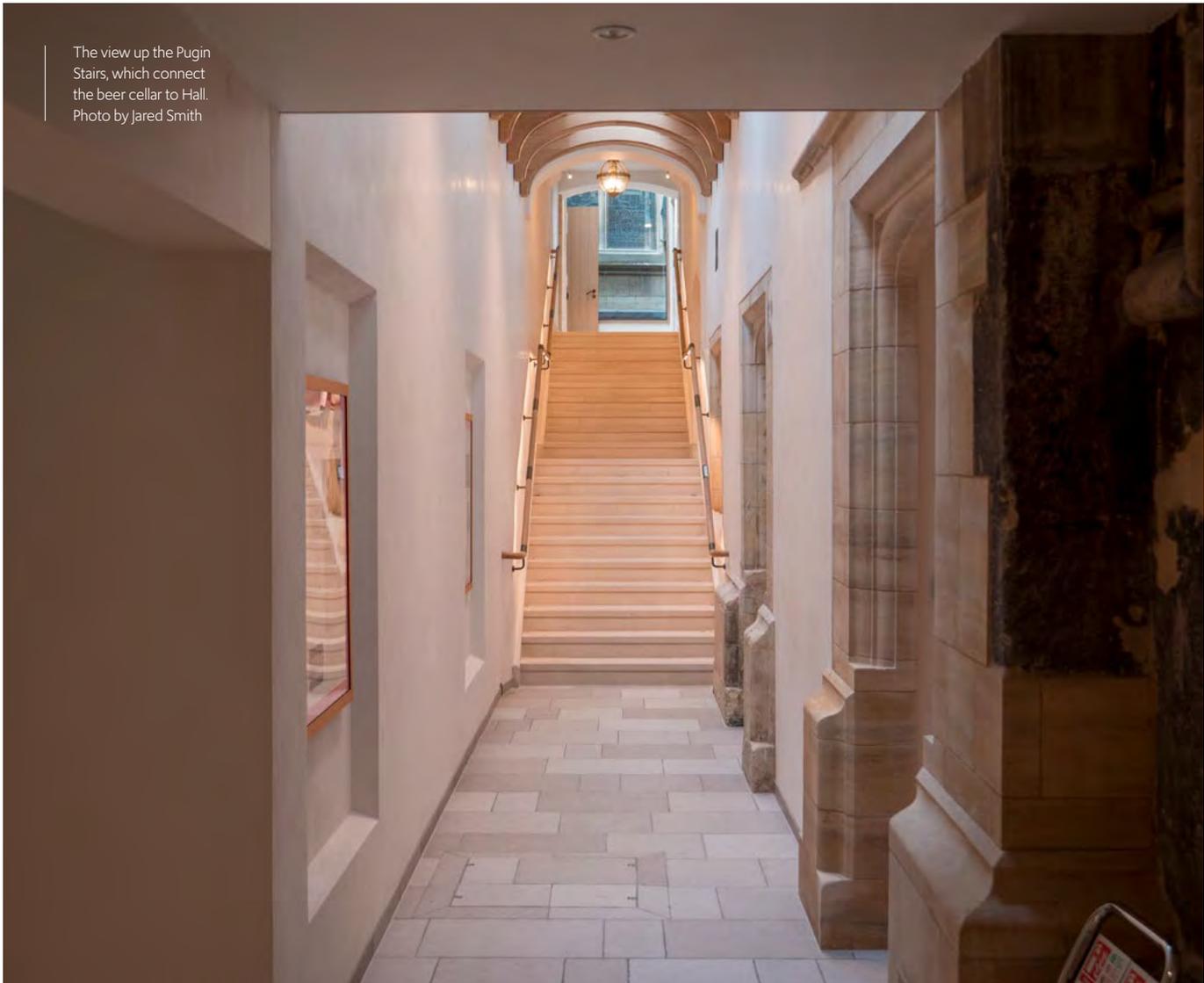
During 2026, the Senior Library, no longer furnished with dining tables and benches, is going to be used as a multi-functional events and exhibition space. A project to restore and upgrade the library will then begin in 2027.

Before the library was used as a dining hall, its collection of rare books and manuscripts was decanted to secure external facilities. Specialist conservators were also brought in to survey and stabilise the collection.

The oldest books in the Senior Library collection date from the 15th century. They were printed in the decades following the invention of the printing press by Johannes Gutenberg.

Oriel College also owns several much older manuscripts, including two that date back as far back as the 11th and 12th centuries which are currently held by the Bodleian Libraries.

The view up the Pugin Stairs, which connect the beer cellar to Hall.  
Photo by Jared Smith





Oxford Semantic Technologies co-founders with Oxford's Vice-Chancellor, Professor Irene Tracey, at the 2025 Vice-Chancellor's Awards. Photo by John Cairns

Artificial intelligence

## Spin-out acquired by Samsung

Professor Ian Horrocks, a professorial Fellow in Computer Science at Oriel College, is one of three co-founders of Oxford Semantic Technologies, an Oxford University spin-out company which was acquired by Samsung in 2024.

Horrocks established Oxford Semantic Technologies together with Oxford professors Boris Motik and Bernardo Cuenca Grau in 2017.

In 2025, the tech spin-out won the Innovation and Commercialisation Award at the Vice-Chancellor's Awards.

By comparison to machine learning, which finds patterns in datasets and draws statistical outputs, Horrocks and his colleagues use knowledge graph technology to make "logical and explainable" decisions based on data. Samsung are using the technology on

their smartphones and other devices.

"Samsung's acquisition of Oxford Semantic Technologies demonstrates the potential to turn Oxford's world-leading academic research into successful science and technology applications," Horrocks said.

"Our technology is set to play a big role in the advancement of AI across a range of Samsung products including their flagship Galaxy phones, providing Samsung's customers with even more sophisticated personalisation."

In 2020, Horrocks won the BCS Lovelace Medal in recognition of his "major contributions" to the development of reasoning systems such as those being developed by Oxford Semantic Technologies. He has been a Fellow of Oriel College since 2007.

Alumni

## New Year Honours

James Thomson (1985), Dr Jonathan Brewer (1973) and Simon Walters (1991) were among those who received awards from the King in the 2025 New Year Honours list.

Thomson, a Geology graduate, was appointed a CBE "for services to policing and inclusion".

Thomson was the chair of MJ Gleeson plc, the listed housebuilding company focusing on high-quality low-cost homes for first time buyers, until April 2025.

He has been a councillor for the City of London Corporation since 2013 and is a board member of the Serious Fraud Office and City Bridge Foundation. He previously served as the chair of the City of London Police Authority Board and is now the deputy chair.

He said he is "truly surprised and humbled" to be awarded a CBE and added that "it reflects the support and hard work of many others over some 22 years

supporting the City of London Police and elsewhere".

Brewer, who is also a Geology graduate, was appointed an OBE "for services to global non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction".

He is a visiting professor at King's College London where his research focuses on countering the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and its financing. He said he is "very pleased" that the award focuses on this subject.

Walters was appointed a CMG "for services to foreign policy".

A PPE graduate, he is currently His Majesty's Ambassador to the State of Israel, a role to which he was appointed in July 2023.

Formerly Walters was the director of national security for the Middle East and Africa at the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office.

Archaeologists found a medieval roasting hearth and oven base during excavations. Photo by Oxford Archaeology



## Archaeology

# Dig turns up original features of medieval college

Archaeologists unearthed the fragmentary remains of some of Oriel College's original structures from before it was redeveloped in the 15th century.

Because of some of the findings, which include a wall and a roasting hearth and oven base, the layout of the medieval college can now be more accurately mapped, according to Ben Ford, the lead archaeologist on the dig.

The archaeological dig was possible because renovation and reconstruction of the kitchens and beer cellar created a once-in-a-century opportunity for excavations to go ahead.

Ford and his colleagues at Oxford Archaeology had made a significant discovery before the literal dig even began. Using specialist borehole drilling equipment to extract cores of earth from deep below ground level, the archaeologists located the original eastern defensive line of the late-Saxon town of Oxford.

In making the discovery they managed to confirm a hypothesis that had gone unresolved since 1899 when excavations in the Clarendon Quadrangle outside the Bodleian Libraries revealed a section of wall. It was thought that the wall was

the Viking-era town's north-eastern corner. The discovery at Oriel confirms this.

The whereabouts of the defences also lends credibility to theories that the early fortified Oxford was considerably smaller than the later medieval town. They also suggest the town had a square perimeter like walled Roman towns such as Winchester.

Following the dig, Ford described Oriel College as an "archaeologically rich area of Oxford, having once been located in the late-Saxon town's south-eastern corner, before the city expanded to the east".

He continued: "These recent findings at Oriel build on our understanding of how it has developed.

"The discovery of a roasting hearth and oven base tells us where Oriel's medieval kitchens were located."

Ford believes the stone wall they uncovered was the former boundary between what used to be St Martin's Hall and land owned by Oriel College to the north.

The findings, Ford said, "add detail to the otherwise patchy evidence from the earliest known historical maps, views and the surviving historical documents."

“  
These recent findings at Oriel build on our understanding of how it has developed. The discovery of a roasting hearth and oven base tells us where Oriel's medieval kitchens were located”



John Henry Newman

## Doctor of the Church

Saint John Henry Newman was declared a Doctor of the Church following a decision by Pope Leo XIV in July 2025.

The title recognises Newman's contributions to theology and doctrine and has been granted to only 37 other saints, including some of the Catholic Church's most influential thinkers such as the saints Augustine and Thomas Aquinas.

His teaching includes seminal contributions on the development of doctrine, faith and reason, conscience, the Church Fathers, ecclesiology, scriptural inspiration and tradition, as well as contributions to preaching and education.

The decision from the Pope was followed by a formal proclamation of Newman as a Doctor of the Church in Rome in November. The Pope also named Newman a co-patron of the Church's "educational mission alongside St Thomas Aquinas".

Oriel is marking the Pope's proclamation of Newman as a Doctor of the Church by co-hosting a series of academic seminars with the Oxford Newman Network about his teaching.

Newman was a Fellow of Oriel College from 1822 to 1845 and is the most recently canonised English saint.

He is distinct among all other saints declared Doctors of the Church as the only former Protestant. During ►►

his time at Oriel he was ordained as an Anglican priest and became the vicar of the Church of St Mary the Virgin.

He also became one of the leaders of the Oxford Movement. Along with notable colleagues such as John Keble and Edward Pusey, Newman argued that the Anglican Church needed to restore its catholic and apostolic heritage. Eventually the Oxford Movement led to the emergence of Anglo-Catholicism.

Over time Newman lost confidence in the Anglican Church and, in the early 1840s, he resigned his posts at St Mary's and Oriel.

He converted to Catholicism in 1845 and was ordained as a Catholic priest in 1847. In 1879 he was made a Cardinal. He died in Birmingham in 1890.

During his state visit to the UK in 2010, Pope Benedict XVI presided over Newman's beatification in Birmingham.

Pope Francis then presided over Newman's canonisation in Rome in 2019. He was the first English person born since the 17th century to be canonised. Thousands of Britons and many alumni of Oriel College travelled to Rome for the occasion.

Lord Mendoza, Provost of Oriel College, also attended the canonisation. In December 2023, he wrote to Pope Francis supporting the petitionary process to honour Newman as a Doctor of the Church.

In a statement after the Vatican's announcement in July, Mendoza said he was delighted Newman would be declared a Doctor of the Church.

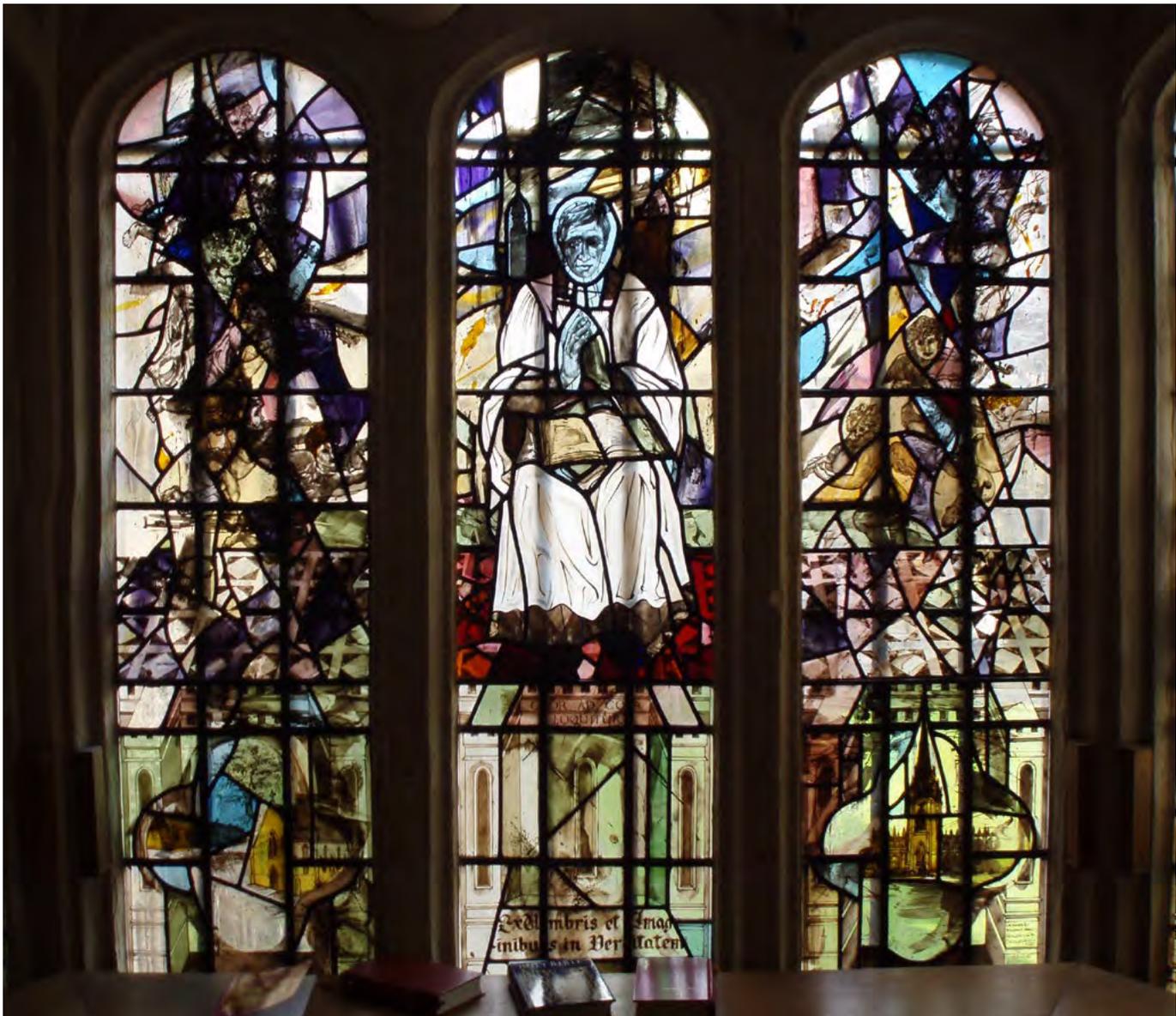
He added: "Since the day of his canonisation in 2019 I have been reminded many times of the profound impact Newman made as a Fellow of Oriel College ... on the study of theology, on the university and on daily academic life here and across Oxford.

"His emphasis on the tutorial system of teaching and on the personal, moral and social development of students was adopted by every other college.

"It is in part to his credit and his *The Idea of a University* that Oxford is an exceptional place to study."

Newman is only the second Doctor of the Church to be born in England. The first was Saint Bede, also known as the Venerable Bede, who was born in 672 AD and declared a Doctor of the Church by Pope Leo XIII in 1899.

The 'Newman window' in Oriel College's chapel, which was designed by Vivienne Haig, realised by Douglas Hogg and installed in 2001 to mark the bicentenary of John Henry Newman's birth



## Summer Eights

# Rudder!

Oriel College's men's first boat had to row over just once more in order to retain their place at Head of the River in Summer Eights. But when the time came they had no choice but to withdraw from the final, all-important race.

The crew of eight plus the cox included four students who had rowed against rivals Cambridge in the 2025 Boat Race.

Something was clearly wrong after just a few strokes. The boat was veering off-course, unresponsive to attempts at steering by the cox.

The cox quickly became aware of the problem and called for "emergency pressure steering" from the bow side.

But the situation proved to be irrecoverable and the crew were forced to make an emergency stop before

crashing into the bank.

Tom Mackintosh, one of two Olympic rowers in the boat, climbed past the stroke and cox then plunged a hand under the boat to investigate the rudder.

The rudder, Tom found, had been bent to one side and also back against the fin. Months of training and the race was over shortly after it began.

The crew watched from the side of the Isis as Wolfson's first boat rowed by.

The men's second boat had more success. After moving up two places, it is now the highest men's second boat by nine places and also the only second boat in a second division.

The women's first boat dropped three places to 11th. However, the crew nonetheless managed to hold their own in a highly competitive first division.



Jess Webb, sixth seat, in the Oxford women's veterans' boat at the 2025 Boat Race. Photo by AllMarkOne

## Boat Race

# Alumna helps obstruct Cambridge wipe-out

Dr Jess Webb (1999), a Medicine graduate from Oriel College, rowed in the Oxford boat that held off a total wipe-out by Cambridge oars at the 2025 Boat Race.

She rowed in the winning Oxford women's veteran's boat that finished the course from Putney past Hammersmith Bridge and to Furnivall Steps four lengths ahead of their rivals from Cambridge. Every single other Oxford boat lost to Cambridge.

Webb's record at the Boat Race began in 1998 when she rowed not for Oxford but for Cambridge in the women's reserve boat.

She began her six-year Medicine degree at Cambridge but completed the final three-year clinical component at Oxford, so had the unusual opportunity to compete for both sides.

During the course of studies, Webb rowed in the winning blue boats for both Cambridge (1999) and Oxford (2002). She was also, at different points over her six-year course, both President of Cambridge University Women's Boat Club and President of Oxford University Women's Boat Club.

She was also a member of the Oxford women's veteran's crew in 2024. She said she "could not resist the opportunity" when she heard about the race along the Tideway course in London, which was held for the first time in 2022.

When Webb was a student, the women's boat races were held outside London in Henley. The iconic Tideway course was only raced by the men, whereas today all of the boat races take place in London.

# Running for gold

Charlotte Buckley, recent Biomedical Sciences finalist, spent her last year at Oxford dividing her time between the laboratory and the athletics track.

Her 2025 athletics season began with a gold medal when in February she won in the 800m at the British Universities and Colleges Sport (BUCS) Indoor Championships. In May she then added a bronze in the same event at the BUCS Outdoor Championships and helped secure silver for Oxford in the 4x400m relay.

“For a long time, I was good but not getting better,” Charlotte explained. “Then last year I got a taste of success, winning silver at BUCS.” Motivated by this achievement, she committed to a more structured training programme, laying the groundwork for this year’s progress.

Her relationship with running started during her school days. “I ran for school sports days and was pretty good,” she said. “I joined a local club but didn’t really train when I was younger. I would just turn up for an occasional cross-country race. When you’re doing well at something, it’s easier to keep it up.”

At Oxford, she found herself immersed in a more committed sporting environment. Joining Oriol College gave her the chance to attend a pre-season camp with the University cross-country group, and she went on to compete for both the athletics blues and cross-country blues teams.

While competing at a high level, Charlotte also successfully completed her degree and graduated with a first. Her final-year project examined the role iron plays in immunity.

“I’m really enjoyed my research project on whether blocking iron entry into cells could prevent their growth,” she said, adding that she hopes to continue in the field as a research assistant.

Charlotte received this year’s Vincent’s Club Sir Roger Bannister Award, which supports outstanding scholar-athletes at Oxford University. She also said she was “very grateful” for the financial support from Oriol College which helped cover some of the “significant costs” of competing.

“  
You get on with  
the work more  
efficiently to  
be able to fit in  
everything you  
want to do”

June brought further recognition. Charlotte was named Sportsperson of the Year by Oxford University Sport and selected to represent Great Britain in the women’s 800m at the 2025 World University Games. She was one of only three students from Oxford on the team.

“It was a huge moment for me,” she said. International representation had been a goal of hers since she began “properly training” for athletics in 2017.

Balancing sport and study required careful management, but they also complemented one another. “Having sports as an escape is a good motivator in helping finish my coursework,” Charlotte said. “You get on with the work more efficiently to be able to fit in everything you want to do.”

The laboratory and the track brought different challenges, but each environment tested her focus and resilience. Together they shaped her Oxford years.

Charlotte Buckley in Birmingham. Image by Graham Smith





## Archives

# Harvard's lost Magna Carta

Of the hundreds of official engrossments of Magna Carta issued, only a few are known to still exist. Numerous unofficial copies, though, are in circulation.

Harvard Law School was of the impression they owned one of these copies. But it turns out the document is one of now seven authenticated 1300 engrossments of Magna Carta.

Professor David Carpenter, a professor of Medieval History at King's College London, was studying unofficial copies of Magna Carta online when he came across the supposed "copy" at Harvard Law School.

Carpenter suspected the document could be an official engrossment. He sought the help of another British academic, Professor Nicholas Vincent, a professor of Medieval History at the University of East Anglia, and together the two were able to establish its authenticity by comparing it to other 1300 originals.

One of the other six 1300 engrossments of Magna Carta belongs to Oriel College, where it accompanies the associated Forest Charter in the archives.

Lord Mendoza, Provost of Oriel College, congratulated Carpenter, Vincent and Harvard Law School on discovering the Magna Carta engrossment and said it "demonstrates why digital cataloguing projects ... are so important".

He added: "As Amanda Watson, Harvard Law School's assistant dean for library and information services, has said, the discovery ... is an example of what happens when historic collections are made accessible to researchers worldwide. We discover more, and learn more, about our history and our heritage."

In 1946, Harvard Law bought the newly discovered Magna Carta at a Sotheby's auction for \$2750. It was described as a "copy ... made in 1327 ... somewhat rubbed and damp-stained".

Professor David Carpenter visited Oriel College to view the 1300 engrossment of Magna Carta. Photo by Jared Smith

Carpenter and Vincent believe it could be the engrossment once issued to the former parliamentary constituency of Appleby in Westmorland.

It was sent to Sotheby's in 1945 by a British First World War flying ace, Forster "Sammy" Maynard CB, who is suspected to have inherited the manuscript among other archives from the abolitionist campaigners Thomas and John Clarkson.

The original owned by Oriel College has a less circuitous and easier to trace provenance. It is suspected to have been formally issued to St Mary's, University Church, then acquired by Oriel College when it was founded 700 years ago.

The manuscript remains in the College's archive and is in excellent condition.

The same goes for the engrossment of the Forest Charter, which was most likely issued together with the Magna Carta engrossment in 1300.

## Senior Library catalogue

Oriel College owns a large collection of rare books and manuscripts. The most valuable of these are stored in the archives. The majority, though, are kept in the Senior Library.

The library was decanted in 2023 so that it could be temporarily repurposed as a dining hall, with its collection going to secure, climate-controlled external storage.

The room will serve as an exhibition and events venue during 2026. But when the collection returns the library team's plan is to complete a full online catalogue of its approximately 25,000 items. This work has not been completed before.

The project will make the collection accessible to academics from all around the globe, who will be able to see what books and manuscripts it contains and then visit Oriel College to view them.



Healthy for longer

## Professor of Geroscience

The Medical Sciences Division at Oxford University conferred on Lynne Cox the title of Professor of Geroscience.

Cox, who was appointed the George Moody Fellow at Oriol College in 1996, is the principal investigator of the Cox Lab of Ageing and Cell Senescence at the Department of Biochemistry.

She is also the Program Director of the Dynamic Resilience programme, which is jointly funded by Wellcome Leap and the Temasek Trust, a global asset management company. The aim of the programme is to find and validate new measures of the resilience of individuals to “stress events” such as surgery and illness.

In 2023, Cox was awarded the Lord Cohen Medal by the British Society for Research on Ageing for her “outstanding achievements and contributions to understanding the biology of ageing”.

Lord Mendoza, Provost of Oriol College, said: “I congratulate Professor Lynne Cox on her new title conferred by the Medical Sciences Division. Lynne has taught students at Oriol College for almost three decades as a Fellow.

“She is a leading figure in the science of ageing. There is a direct line between her pioneering research and people living healthier, happier lives for longer.”

Oriol College has funding to offer scholarships to doctoral students doing research in the field of longevity, ageing and cell senescence. The two recipients of the scholarship to date are both members of the Alsaleh Lab which is sending samples of human tissue in the form of organoids to space to study ageing.

In September, Cox was a guest on the first episode of Professor Brian Cox’s new podcast with The Francis Crick Institute, ‘A Question of Sport’.

LGBTQ+

## Conversion practices ban

Leaders from public life, academia and faith came together to discuss the government’s proposed ban on conversion practices at Oriol College’s annual David N Lyon Lecture on Sex and Gender Identities in Diverse Societies.

The Labour government confirmed its manifesto commitment to ban conversion practices in its inaugural King’s Speech in September 2024. The practices are legal in the UK despite repeated promises by successive governments to legislate a prohibition.

The event opened with a video message from Anneliese Dodds, then equalities minister. Dodds reaffirmed the government’s commitment to a conversion practices ban and also pledged to “improve the lives of LGBTQ+ in our country and internationally, restoring the UK’s reputation as a beacon of fairness and equality on the world stage”.

Professor Ilias Trispiotis from the University of Leeds, the LGBTQ+ rights campaigner Jayne Ozanne and University College London’s Professor Phillip Ayoub ►►

each discussed a different aspect of the proposed ban. Oxford University's Chief Diversity Officer, Professor Tim Soutphommasane, chaired the panel.

Trispiotis proposed that governments have a legal as well as moral obligation to ban conversion practices. He argued that all practices aimed at changing or suppressing a person's sexual orientation or gender identity, because it is not perceived as desirable, fall within the scope of the prohibition of torture and inhuman or degrading treatment.

Ozanne then spoke about the political context of the proposed ban in the UK and her own experience as a gay evangelical Anglican who "voluntarily" consented to undergo conversion practices.

She expressed optimism about the incumbent government and said she expects to see a draft bill "very shortly". She also suggested that the delays to

introducing a ban have been "driven more by ideology than by fact".

Ayoub discussed the transnational networks contributing to the erosion of LGBTQ+ rights globally. Transnational tools have been associated, historically, with rights promotion in political science. Ayoub explained how they are being utilised by geographically disparate groups to resist LGBTQ+ rights.

David Lyon, a philanthropist focused on LGBTQ+ causes and the event's sponsor, said he hoped the event would "assist and inform" the government as it brings forward a legislative ban on conversion practices.

The 2026 David N Lyon Lecture will take place on Thursday 4 June. Panellists Tessy Ojo (Chief Executive of the Diana Award), Priscilla Mensah, (inclusion expert who works for Microsoft) and Dame Julia Hoggett (CEO of London Stock Exchange) will discuss LGBTQ+ inclusion.



Recording session at Keble College's chapel. Photo by Mike Cooter

Chapel choir

## Album for 700 years

Oriel College will release an album of music performed by the chapel choir to mark its 700th anniversary in 2026. Produced by classical music label Convivium Records, the album will be available from January 2026.

The album features performances of compositions by alumni Edmund Fellowes and Herbert Chappell as well as commissions from contemporary composers Judith Bingham, David Briggs and Cheryl Frances-Hoad, and original compositions by Director of Music Dr David Maw, who conducts the choir on the album.

"Music plays a central role in Oriel's cultural life, with our choir at its heart," Maw said. "Our septcentenary

provides an opportunity to celebrate this heritage and recognise Oriel's contribution to choral music, honouring our past while embracing contemporary creativity."

On the recordings the choir, which is made up of about 20 students, is joined by an octet of professional vocalists as well as soprano Grace Davidson, the Tippett Quartet and guitarist Craig Ogden.

The music was recorded in Keble College's chapel because of the exceptional acoustics of the space.

The recording project received generous support from Jeremy Amos (1966), who donated in memory of his friend Nicholas G Stodgen (1967), and other alumni.

# From the Director of Development

**T**hank you to almost 1,100 alumni and friends for your generous donations over the past year. Almost 40 per cent of alumni have made a gift so far to the overall 700th anniversary campaign and your kindness has been inspiring. Your support is essential for us to continue delivering the best research and education globally, and the incredible experience our students continue to enjoy on this magnificent heritage site.

During 2024/25, alumni and friends donated a total of £4.9 million through cash gifts, new pledges and bequests, and we are now just £2 million away from our "People and Place" fundraising campaign target of reaching £70 million during our 700th anniversary in 2026.

We received a sum of £2.7 million through new cash gifts and instalments towards previously known pledges and bequests. These funds are already making a difference, from supporting our students through bursaries to restoring our heritage buildings, endowing Fellowships and financing new equipment for our boat club and our athletes.

This section offers a preview of some of the ways that donations are supporting College. There is an online portal on our website where you can make a donation. If there is anything you would like to discuss, then please contact a member of the Development Office. We're very grateful for every donation we receive.

Marco Zhang  
Director of Development



**Make a donation or set up a direct debit at [campaign.ox.ac.uk/oriel-college](https://campaign.ox.ac.uk/oriel-college)**



Professor Jan Rosenow was appointed as a Jackson Senior Research Fellow following a donation from the Frank Jackson Foundation

## Energy policy

# Jan Rosenow joins Oriel College thanks to donation

In July, Jan Rosenow was conferred the title of Professor of Energy and Climate Policy by Oxford University's Vice-Chancellor, Professor Irene Tracey, on the advice of her Senior Appointments Panel.

The recognition came fewer than three months after Rosenow joined Oriel and Oxford University but reflected more than two decades of research into the energy transition, electrification and energy demand.

Rosenow was appointed as a Jackson Senior Research Fellow at Oriel in April following a donation from the Frank Jackson Foundation, a grant-giving trust which supports three research positions at the College for academics researching on energy systems, conservation and the environment.

He leads the energy programme at the Environmental Change Institute. The programme has an international reputation for its research on energy demand, informing policy decisions, market design and technology deployment.

Rosenow is a policy expert on the energy transition who has advised the World Economic Forum and the International Energy Agency. He also currently sits alongside Alex Gilbert, Head of Energy and Electrification at Transport for London, and the former Green Party MP Caroline Lucas on the Advisory Board of the Bennett Institute for Innovation and Policy Acceleration.

Furthermore, Rosenow is one of the most-read online voices on the global energy transition with almost 100,000 followers on LinkedIn, where he regularly shares his reactions to news stories and research findings.

His insights have been featured in The New York Times, Forbes, the BBC, ARD, El Pais and The Guardian, and he has also spoken a number of times before global audiences, including at COP27 in 2022.

Asked about his goals, Rosenow said he aspires to create a "better planet for us all" and an economy that "does not rely on fossil fuels".

"When I retire I want to look back and be able to say that the work I did together with my colleagues shaped decarbonisation policies around the world."

# Your support in numbers

**£2.7mn**

Funds received in cash gifts for Oriel's people and projects in 2024/25, including new commitments, instalments towards previously known pledges and bequests

**1,084**

Alumni and friends who made gifts or pledges in 2024/25.

**685**

Generous donors have set up a regular commitment to College, including monthly, quarterly and annual gifts.

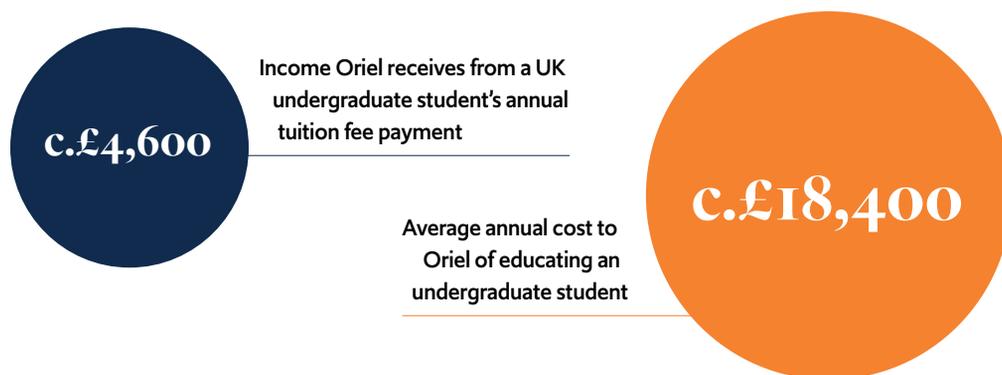
**282**

Members of the Adam de Brome Society, made up of those who have informed us of a bequest to Oriel in their will.

**35**

Number of countries from where alumni have made donations

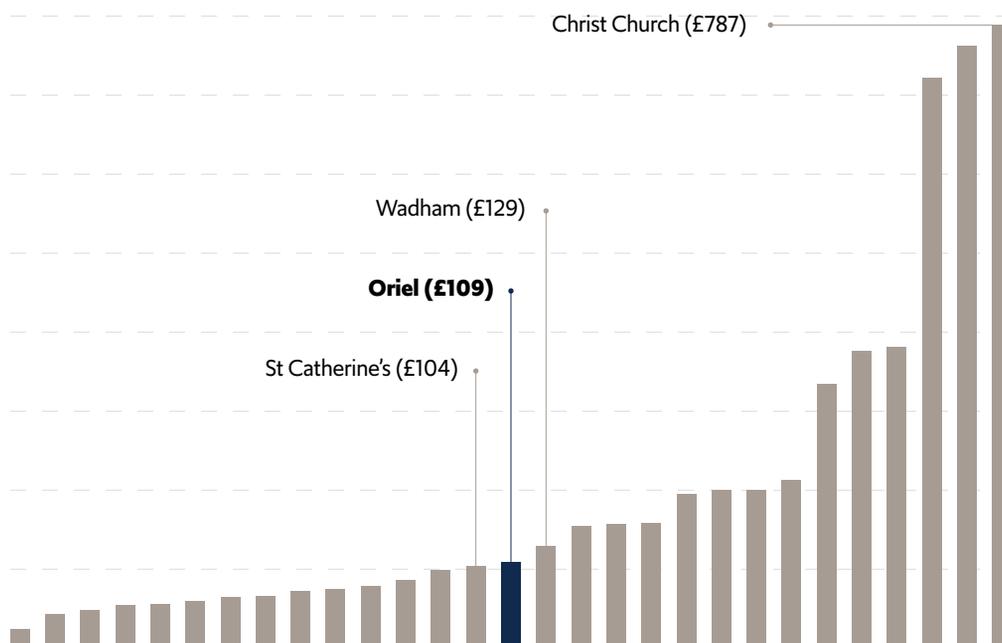
## Income from an annual tuition fee payment versus the annual cost of an undergraduate education



## People and Place campaign, 2025

**£68mn raised since 2003 towards 2026 £70mn target**

## College endowments (£mn), 2023/24



### Sex and gender identities

## Queer or trans in conservative contexts

Oriel has awarded the David N Lyon Scholarship in the Politics of Sex and Gender Identities to the third-ever doctoral student. The scholarship is sponsored by David Lyon (1980).

The student wishes to research the politics of queer and trans folks in conservative areas. He is asking whether their politics reflect the general population or are reactionarily more liberal due to conflict between queer and trans issues and conservative ideology.

He has already completed work in this area, focusing on the identity expression of queer and trans folks both inside and outside of Tokyo's gay bar district.

David Lyon also sponsors an annual lecture at Oriel. In 2024, speakers including leaders from public life, academia and faith came together to discuss the UK government's proposed ban on conversion practices (see page 38 for more).

The next David N Lyon Lecture will take place in June 2026.

Graduate scholarships allow Oriel to attract and support outstanding graduate students from around the globe. Thanks to generous alumni, the College is able to award 23 merit-based scholarships, in addition to the numerous scholarships offered by the University.

The College's graduate community represents more than 50 countries, providing a diverse and international environment in which scholarship recipients can advance their research, establish themselves as experts in their fields and prepare for careers in academia or industry.



### Adam de Brome Society

## Leaving a legacy

Frederick Schmidt (1980) and his wife Natalie Van Kirk joined almost 300 members of the Adam de Brome Society who have notified us of their intention to leave a bequest.

Frederick studied Theology at Oriel. He says his tutors shaped his life as a theologian and priest, and now he feels compelled to honour them.

Frederick and Natalie contacted the Development Office in 2025 to discuss their plans for leaving a gift in their will. They wanted to help secure the teaching of Theology and now plan to leave an endowment for this purpose in their will.

The 2023 gathering of the Adam de Brome Society, to recognise, celebrate and report to alumni who have informed us of their intention to leave a bequest in favour of Oriel. Members and their guests are invited to College every year to attend lunch and hear from College Officers. The annual gathering provides an opportunity for members to connect and for the Provost and Fellows to recognise the generosity of members and highlight the impact of legacies at Oriel.

Any alumni who are considering making a provision for College in their will, or have questions about doing so, are welcome to contact Emma Davis, Legacies Officer, to arrange a confidential conversation. To contact Emma email [development.office@oriel.ox.ac.uk](mailto:development.office@oriel.ox.ac.uk).

The 2023 gathering of the Adam de Brome Society.  
Photo by John Cairns

The women's second boat at Summer Eights, 2025. Photo by Nikola Boysova



### Rowing

## New boat for women's second eight

Oriel College Boat Club managed to obtain the funds to purchase a new boat for the women's second squad after finding out they would receive £5,000 from alumni who donated during the annual Giving Day fundraising campaign.

The new boat will help build the boat club's depth. Rowing in the second boat serves as valuable training for the top level of intercollegiate competition. The better the equipment across the entire boat club, the higher the odds of the first boats regaining Head of the River in Torpids and Summer Eights.

The boat club had already raised £8,000 before the Giving Day, which took place at the end of June. However, they needed an additional £2,000 to afford a new boat.

Merle Beerens, the women's captains of boats, said: "It is very special to see how Orielenes keep the community alive through these donations and contribute to the success of OCBC, allowing many students to take part in rowing and truly enriching their university experience through the boat club."

Overall, alumni donated £129,127 during the 2025 Giving Day, with a total of 218 donors from 35 countries taking part in the campaign by making a gift through an online portal.

“It is very special to see how Orielenes keep the community alive through these donations and contribute to the success of OCBC, allowing many students to take part in rowing and truly enriching their university experience through the boat club”

### Provost's Court

## Provost's Court welcomes youngest member

The Provost's Court recognises donors who make the most significant gifts and have the most transformational impact on the College and its work. Richard Johnson (1997) has become the latest member of this group. At this edition goes to press, he is also the youngest member of the Provost's Court.

Johnson supports a scheme whereby schools from Oriel's outreach link regions can be reimbursed for their travel, accommodation and subsistence expenses should they send school pupils to widening participation and access events at the College.

Research suggests that school pupils who visit universities are more likely to view higher education as an option. The myth that Oxford "isn't for me" has long been believed by some academically-promising prospective students and has inhibited many from applying to Oxford, or university in general. The simple but effective scheme helps break down those barriers.

Johnson's generosity has enabled several years of this scheme to date and we are delighted to recognise his support by welcoming him to the Provost's Court.

# Oriel Alumni Survey

**T**hank you to 1,322 Orielenes, 23 per cent of our community, who contributed to the Alumni Survey 2024–25.

The breadth of respondents has been phenomenal, and your views are invaluable to us. Not only do they give us a sense of our community; they also inform future plans, such as our programme of events to celebrate our 700th anniversary in 2026.

The most common answer for why alumni might attend an event was “re-connecting with friends from Oriel”. We see the incredible turn-out at gaudies year after year, so this result came to us as no surprise.

We have added reunion Decade Dinners to our 700th anniversary programme so that everyone has an opportunity to reconnect with contemporaries during our year of celebrations. Most of the events during 2026 are open to all alumni, such as Inspiration Days and the Alumni Ball in September. Many are also family-friendly, based on your feedback that you would like to return and show off College to friends and family.

We received very helpful feedback that getting to Oxford can be difficult for many. In light of this we have made a conscious effort to organise “Oriel in the City” gatherings across the UK and at other countries around the world. In 2024, we held our first event in New Zealand, and we’re currently helping alumni plan events in Australia, the US, Germany, Hong Kong and Singapore. We have every intention of continuing this global focus past our anniversary in 2026. If you would like to be a host, this could be as simple as organising drinks at a local venue, and we would help with inviting alumni local to you.

As you may already be aware, our community’s demographics continue to evolve, and have changed significantly in recent decades. There are increasing numbers of postgraduate students at Oxford, and the MCR makes up almost half of our current students. At undergraduate level, we now admit more women than men by a small margin. Help us to understand how you enjoy engaging with Oriel by continuing to share your feedback and views.

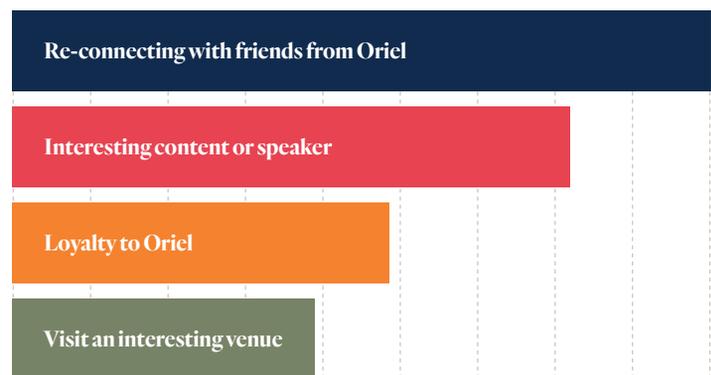
You can contact us on [development.office@oriel.ox.ac.uk](mailto:development.office@oriel.ox.ac.uk).

Bobby Higson  
Head of Alumni Engagement and Operations

## Age range of survey respondents



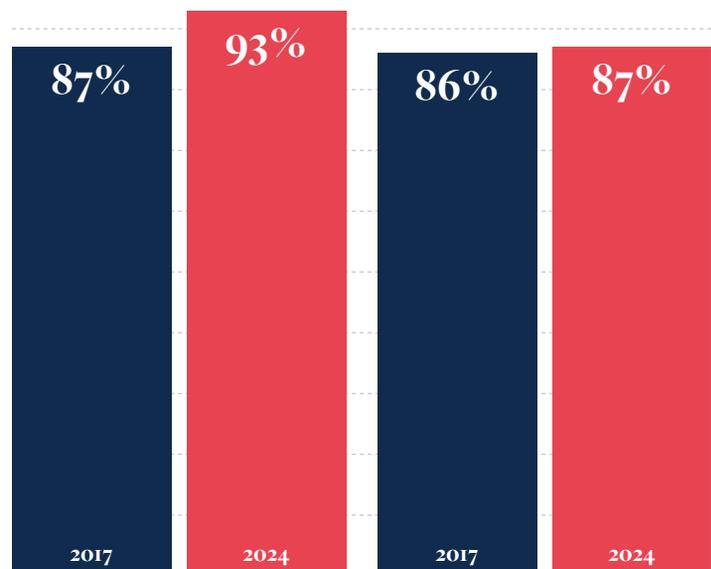
## Top four reasons alumni said they might attend an event at Oriel



## 2017 and 2024 survey results

Alumni who described their experience at Oriel as positive

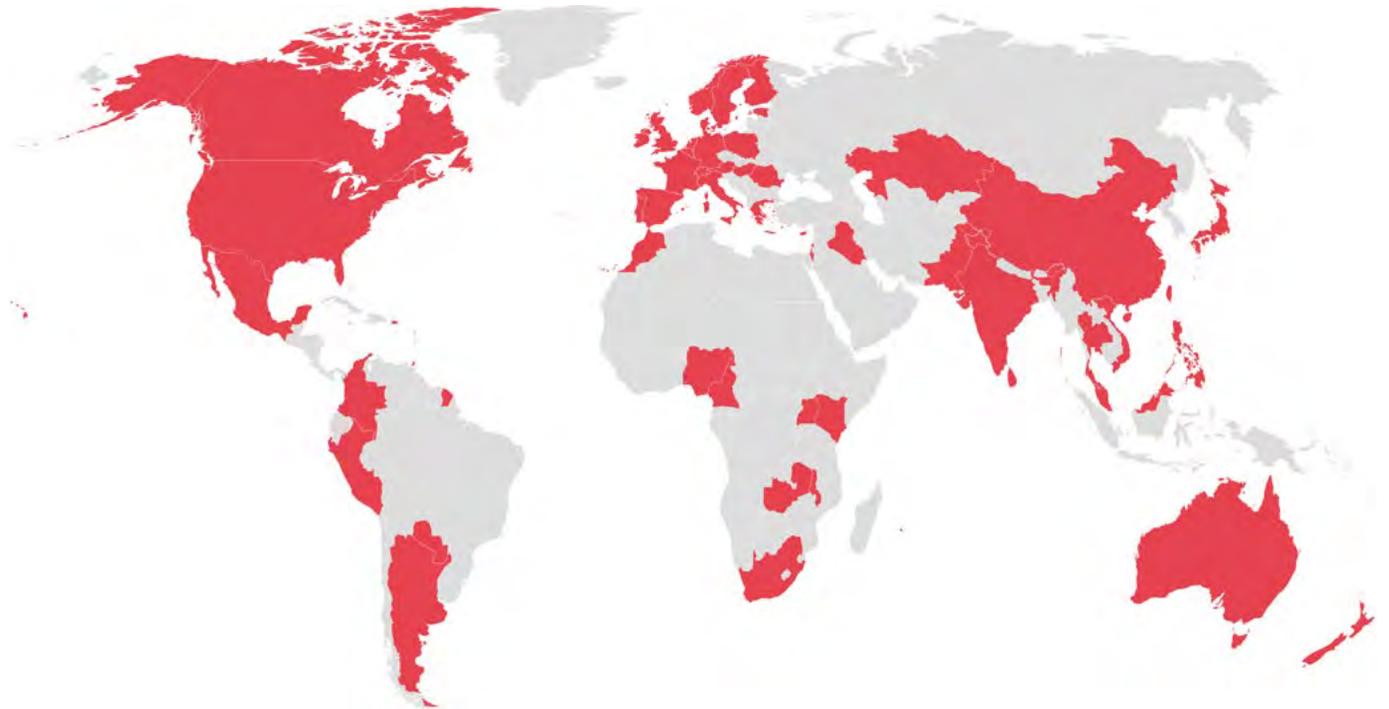
Alumni who said they are proud to be an Orielenis



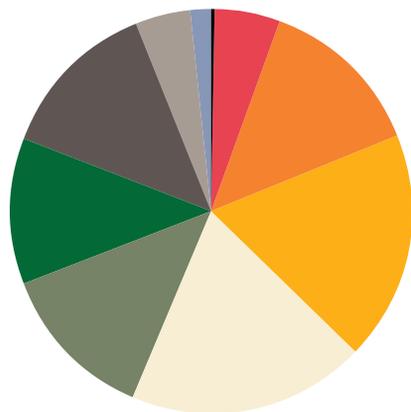
# A global community

Map created with Datawrapper

Alumni responded to the survey from more than 50 countries



## Matriculation decades of respondents



1940S	2
1950S	73
1960S	174
1970S	244
1980S	252
1990S	169
2000S	156
2010S	173
2020S	58
N/A*	21

\* Non-matriculated students (eg visiting students)

## Word cloud of the survey results

Generated from the responses of alumni to the 2024–25 Oriel Alumni Survey



# Events in 2026

---

**THURSDAY 22 JANUARY**  
Oriell in the City – Cardiff

---

**FRIDAY 30 JANUARY**  
Joanna Macgregor Concert

---

**SATURDAY 7 FEBRUARY**  
Hare Club Dinner

---

**TUESDAY 17 FEBRUARY**  
Evensong at St Paul's Cathedral

---

**FRIDAY 20 FEBRUARY**  
Craig Ogden Concert

---

**THURSDAY 5 MARCH**  
Edinburgh Dinner

---

**FRIDAY 6 MARCH**  
International Women's Day  
Dinner

---

**SUNDAY 8 MARCH**  
Anniversary Service of  
Thanksgiving

---

**FRIDAY 20 MARCH**  
Decade Dinner – 1990s  
SOLD OUT

---

**SATURDAY 21 MARCH**  
Adam de Brome Lunch

---

**TUESDAY 23 MARCH**  
San Francisco Reception

---

**WEDNESDAY 25 MARCH**  
Los Angeles Reception

---

---

**FRIDAY 27 MARCH**  
Decade Dinner – 2010s and 2020s  
SOLD OUT

---

**FRIDAY 27 MARCH**  
Dinner at British Embassy  
Washington

---

**MONDAY 30 MARCH**  
New York Dinner

---

**TUESDAY 31 MARCH**  
Atlanta Dinner

---

**FRIDAY 17 APRIL**  
Decade Dinner – 1970s  
SOLD OUT

---

**SATURDAY 2 MAY**  
Inspiration Day: 'Being Human'

---

**THURSDAY 7 MAY**  
Professor Jan Rosenow in  
conversation with Greg Jackson

---

**FRIDAY 8 MAY**  
Richard Tunnicliffe Concert

---

**SATURDAY 16 MAY**  
Inspiration Day: 'Past and Future'

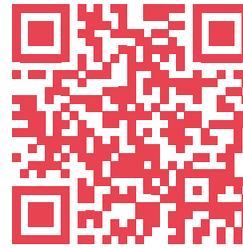
---

**MAY (DATE TBA)**  
Rex Nettleford Lecture

---

**FRIDAY 29 MAY**  
Dame Sarah Connolly with Julius  
Drake Concert

---



For more information about  
events and to book visit  
[alumni.oriell.ox.ac.uk/events/](https://alumni.oriell.ox.ac.uk/events/)

---

**SATURDAY 30 MAY**  
Summer Eights Celebration

---

**THURSDAY 4 JUNE**  
David N Lyon Lecture

---

**SATURDAY 6 JUNE**  
Inspiration Day: 'Risks and  
Opportunities'

---

**SATURDAY 20 JUNE**  
Celebration of Sport

---

**TUESDAY 23 JUNE**  
Decade Lunch – pre-1970s  
SOLD OUT

---

**SATURDAY 27 JUNE**  
2026 Commemoration Ball

---

**SATURDAY 11 JULY**  
Decade Dinner – 2000s  
SOLD OUT

---

**SATURDAY 25 JULY**  
Decade Dinner – 1980s  
SOLD OUT

---

**FRIDAY 5 SEPTEMBER**  
Tamar Halperin and Andreas  
Scholl Concert

---

**FRIDAY 4 – SUNDAY 6 SEPTEMBER**  
Oriell's 700th Anniversary  
Weekend

---

**NOVEMBER (DATE TBA)**  
Thierry Escaich and Zane Dalal  
Concert

---

## Term dates

**Michaelmas 2025** Sunday 12 October – Saturday 6 December

**Hilary 2026** Sunday 18 January – Saturday 14 March

**Trinity 2026** Sunday 26 April – Saturday 20 June



View out of the Senior Common Room at Oriel College.  
Photo by James Hill



# Oriel College

**Issue 27 2025**

Communications Office  
Oriel College  
Oxford  
OX1 4EW

01865 616759  
communications@oriel.ox.ac.uk

oriel.ox.ac.uk | alumni.oriel.ox.ac.uk



[twitter.com/OrielOxford](https://twitter.com/OrielOxford)



[facebook.com/OrielCollegeOxford](https://facebook.com/OrielCollegeOxford)



[instagram.com/orieloxford](https://instagram.com/orieloxford)



[linkedin.com/school/oriel-college-oxford](https://linkedin.com/school/oriel-college-oxford)