



HOW TO SURVIVE A
VIKING INVASION

VACCINATION
VOLUNTEERS

SPOTLIGHT ON
SCHOLARSHIPS



Pieces

ISSUE 41 • EASTER TERM 2021

welcome

FROM THE MASTER



Welcome to this issue of *Pieces*.

It continues to be a challenging time for all of us, but as I write, the students are finishing their last exams, and there is a happy buzz about the College, with a great many enjoying the (still unheated!) swimming pool and the flower-studded Fellows' Garden in this lovely weather.

We have plans, revised due to the UK Government's announcement about the delay to lockdown easing, for a graduation ceremony and celebration for this year's graduating students, and garden parties are proceeding, albeit in a slightly more subdued form than usual.

As ever, I have been encouraged by the way in which the Christ's College community has responded during the Pandemic. In this issue of *Pieces*, you can learn how two of our undergraduates and our Development Director have become volunteer vaccinators to assist with the rollout of the vaccination programme, and the work of Professor Ed Wild (m. 1996) in setting up a number of mass vaccination centres in London. On the research side, current MB/PhD student Ben Beresford-Jones has been exploring whether wastewater can predict COVID outbreaks.

We also hear from our Chaplain and Director of Studies in Theology, Dr Bob Evans, on "How to survive a Viking invasion", based on his extremely popular alumni webinar earlier this year, and read about the heart-warming interaction between two of our benefactors and the student whose PhD research they are helping to fund.

We have sent out invitations to our reunions in September, and are very much looking forward to welcoming alumni back to Christ's. It has been a long time since we have been able to host in-person events, and we have missed seeing you. In the meantime, I hope you enjoy connecting with the College through this edition of *Pieces*, and wish you all a happy and healthy summer.

Professor Jane Stapleton

IN THIS ISSUE



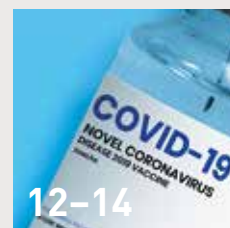
3-5



10-11



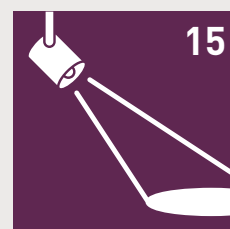
6-8



12-14



9



15

3-5 NEWS

6-8 HOW TO SURVIVE A VIKING
INVASION

9 CAN WASTEWATER HELP
PREDICT COVID OUTBREAKS
BEFORE THEY HAPPEN?

10-11 CHRIST'S COVID NEWS

12-14 VACCINATION VOLUNTEERS

15-16 SPOTLIGHT ON SCHOLARSHIPS

16 STAY CONNECTED

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The College is very sad to report the death of **Professor Sir Peter Lachmann** (Fellow) on 26 December 2020. A distinguished immunologist, he was extremely generous to the College in many ways, unflinchingly giving his time and support to the Fellowship and College, and serving in many roles, most recently as 'Keeper of the Bees'. A full obituary will be published in the College Magazine.

His Honour Judge Thomas Teague QC (m.1972) has been appointed Chief Coroner of England and Wales. The role involves providing national leadership, guidance and support to the coroner service as well as the authorisation to sit as a deputy High Court judge.



Mr Michael Parsons (m. 1983) has been appointed Bursar of Christ's and will take up the post this summer. Michael read Natural Sciences and Computer Science at Christ's, and subsequently qualified as an accountant with Cambridgeshire County Council. Michael has held several board roles in local government and in the civil service, where he has worked for the last 8 years as a Director General in both the Home Office and the Cabinet Office. Michael has extensive experience in finance, human resources, property management, and pension fund investment; he is currently head of the Property Function across government.



Dr Ian Sare

Two alumni were recognised in the New Year Honours: **Mr Richard Wohanka** (m. 1971), Chair and Trustee of the Nuclear Trust and Director of the Nuclear Liabilities Fund, was awarded a CBE for services to the Nuclear Industry. **Mr Adam Baird-Fraser** (m. 2003) Team Leader at the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office was appointed MBE for services to national security. In Australia, **Dr Ian Sare** (m. 1972), Senior Science Advisor Aadi Defence Pty Ltd, has been made a Member of the Order of Australia for services to science and technology.

QUEEN'S BIRTHDAY HONOURS



Reverend John Tattersall



Professor Paul Elliot



Ms Priya Guha



Ms Hannah Wood

Four alumni and one Fellow were recognised in the 2021 Queen's Birthday Honours. **Dr Richard Axton**, Fellow, was awarded an MBE for services to heritage and the environment in Sark. **Reverend John Tattersall** (m. 1970) received a LVO for his role as Chair of the Court at the Royal Foundation of St Katherine. **Professor Paul Elliot** (m. 1972), who is a Professor of Epidemiology and Public Health Medicine, has been awarded a CBE for services to scientific research in public health.

Ms Priya Guha (m. 1993) has received an MBE for services to international trade and women-led innovation. In her role as Deputy Director, Taskforce Europe, **Ms Hannah Wood** (m. 2008) was awarded an MBE for services to EU negotiations. An OBE was awarded to former Fellow, **Dr Catherine Green** in her role as the Head of Clinical BioManufacturing at the Nuffield Department of Medicine, University of Oxford, for services to science and public health.

Abigail Berhane

(m. 2019) has been awarded The Amelia Earhart Fellowship 2021–2022. This US, \$10,000 Fellowship is awarded annually to up to 35 women pursuing doctoral degrees in aerospace engineering and space sciences. Abigail has been awarded the Fellowship for her work on Future Propulsion and Power/Turbine Aerodynamics.



Christ's new archivist, **Dr Genny Silvanus**, has been giving small guided tours of the Muniment Room to history students. In addition to caring for the College archive and answering queries, Genny will be working on the Legacies of Enslavement project with **Dr Helen Pfeifer** (Fellow) and several student interns over the next two summers.



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Professor Sir David Klenerman (Fellow) and his colleague, Professor Shankar Balasubramanian, have been awarded one of the world's most prestigious science and technology prizes – the Millennium Technology Prize – for their development of revolutionary DNA sequencing techniques.



Honorary Fellow and alumnus, **HRH Prince Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein** (m. 1987) has been appointed as the next President and CEO of the International Peace Institute. He started his tenure in March 2021.

Dr Antoine Feylessoufi's

(m. 2014) PhD dissertation was named best doctoral dissertation 2020 in the Tech & Innovation section by INFORMS (Institute for Operations Research and Management Sciences).



IPI

INTERNATIONAL
PEACE
INSTITUTE



Congratulations to **Mr David Carr** (m. 1984) who was named as Racing Writer of the Year in the Horserace Writers and Photographers Association awards 2020.



Professor Toby Wilkinson (m. 1990 and Former Fellow), began his new post as Vice Chancellor of Fiji National University at the beginning of 2021 with the formal installation taking place in April 2021.



Congratulations to **Felix Reilly** (m. 2020), who is studying for an MPhil in Development Studies. He has been awarded one of the Vice-Chancellor's Social Impact awards. Felix is the founder and president of the University's Enactus Society, an international network supporting student-led social innovation.

TELEPHONE CAMPAIGN 2021

After a year's hiatus, the annual telephone campaign was back. This time calling took place remotely, including all training sessions. Our student callers made 706 connections with alumni and over £373,000 was raised; this transformative total beat our initial target of £200,000. A huge thank you to all those who took part, both callers and alumni alike. The money raised will go towards continued support of staff and students during and beyond the COVID-19 pandemic.



HOW TO SURVIVE A VIKING INVASION

The Christ's webinar series that this year, replaced the in-person events that were inevitably cancelled, has been hugely successful with up to 400 alumni booking in to listen to the varied subjects being discussed. In this piece, Christ's Chaplain and Director of Studies in Theology, Dr Bob Evans, revisits his webinar – How to survive a Viking invasion: tips from continental Europe in the ninth century.

Early in the ninth century, anxious news swept through much of Europe of fierce marauders launching devastating raids along the coasts and waterways of western Europe, seizing plunder and power, and earning themselves a reputation for adventure and violence that lasts to this day. On the continent, they were called 'North Men', but among the English, these raiders became known as 'Vikings', a name that remains notorious centuries later. The Vikings had an enormous impact on European history, especially in Britain (Cambridge itself was captured by a Viking army in 875). They continue to be big business even now. Novels, music, films and TV shows, blockbuster museum exhibits, all show our enduring fascination with these seaborne invaders.

My interests, however, lie very much with the Vikings' victims, a somewhat stressed array of rulers, soldiers, theologians, and peasants. Given the past year, I have found myself increasingly sympathetic to their attempts to sustain society in the face of apparent catastrophe. I am especially interested in the Vikings' victims on the continent, in the kingdoms of the so-called Carolingian Empire. This state emerged in the early 700s and lasted into the tenth century. At its height it stretched from northern Spain to Austria, from Denmark to southern Italy, and was responsible for the major cultural and political achievements which lay the foundations for medieval Europe. And yet, this Empire and its inhabitants (known as 'the Franks') found itself challenged – even shaken – by the Vikings. What did the Franks make of the raiders? How did they

plan to deal with them? How did they reconcile themselves to a world in which the Vikings were going to prove a perennial problem?

Some predicted imminent civilizational collapse and panicked accordingly. Various sources portray vast barbarian hordes, tens of thousands strong, descending upon defenceless monks and peasants. Given that these accounts were written by the victims, one can hardly blame them for lapsing into hyperbole (or failing to count the exact number of Vikings involved). Other sources, however, kept matters in perspective, especially sources closely connected to royal government. Kings and Emperors even ordered public inquiries into the Viking raids, which shows a state that was keen to gather intelligence and formulate a coherent policy, rather than panicking. These government sources often give more realistic and more precise numbers, and show us the Vikings not coming to conquer and subjugate but to loot and gain prestige among themselves. This was a problem, but not an existential threat. After all, the Franks had managed to conquer most of western Europe, a few Vikings should have been manageable.

The bigger problem facing the Carolingian government was not the Vikings at all, but internal disputes about succession (especially from about 840 onwards). The Franks seemed more interested in fighting one another than dealing with a few Vikings... and the Vikings knew this and exploited it to the full. Thanks to their ships, the Vikings were masters of speed and surprise, often attacking with little

warning along an exposed coastline or along miles of river. The Franks did not have much of a navy or the numbers to guard everything, so there was little chance of preventing landings. On land, the Vikings were determined to avoid open battle. They knew that they faced an expert military and their aim was simply to escape with whatever loot they could. If cornered, they often fortified themselves on islands in the middle of rivers or estuaries, which proved almost impossible to assault successfully. As a result, our sources often recount Frankish officers debating (even arguing) about how best to deal with a particular Viking army, because the Vikings only fought when the odds were heavily in their favour.

A Viking raiding party turning up presented the local Count (responsible for defence) with a serious dilemma that appears again and again in the sources. Should he muster whatever troops he had and join battle while he could, accepting that he might be outnumbered? Or should he wait for reinforcements and be sure of grinding the Vikings into the dust... at the risk of them getting away? In the chronicles, a commander usually won a great victory over the Vikings because they had attacked 'without delay', 'with speed and decisiveness', and sometimes 'with only a few men'. Frankish military culture valued aggression and no commander wanted to be accused of cowardice! Chroniclers often criticised Frankish commanders who withdrew without offering battle to the Vikings. The very same chroniclers, however, would also criticise any Frankish commander whom they deemed reckless. One Frankish

furor tuus. et omnes fluctus tuos induxisti super me. **DIAPSALMA**

Longe fecisti notos meus a me. posuerunt me ab ominatione mibi.

Traditus sum et non negrediebar. oculi mei languerunt in terra inopia.

Clamavi ad te dñe. tota die expandi ad te manus meas.

Numquid mortuis facies mirabilia. aut medici suscitabunt et confitebuntur tibi.

Numquid narra bitali quis in sepulchro mifericordiam tuam. et veritatem tuam in perditione.

Numquid cognoscitur in tenebris mirabilia tua. et iustitia tua in terra oblivionis.

Et exaudi te dñe. clamaui. et manioratione mea trahe me.

Ut quid dñe repellis orationem meam. auertis faciem tuam a me.

Pauper sum et continuo in laboribus uiui in te mea.

exaltatus autem humiliatus sum et conturbatus.

In me transierunt irae tuae. et terrores tui conturbauerunt me.

Circumdederunt me sicut aqua tota die circumdederunt me simul.

Elongasti a me amicum et proximum. et notos meos a miseria.

LXXXVIII. Intellectus

us aethan

et zrah litag



general, Robert of Anjou, once lauded for vigour and dynamism was eventually killed because he attacked the Vikings 'too vigorously and without restraint'. There was a fine balance between aggression and caution, and not everyone made the right call.

This is an important difference from the contemporary English. The Anglo-Saxons had a strong sense of the heroic defeat or the valiant last stand, which deserved to be celebrated. The Carolingians, by contrast, were pragmatists and concerned about winning, which sometimes made caution the better part of valour. An amusing example of this distrust of recklessness comes from one of my favourite sources from the whole period, a letter by one Carolingian abbot to another younger abbot, who had recently become head of monastery (and so responsible for the local militia). The older abbot had heard that the Vikings had recently turned up at the monastery. He cautions his young colleague for allowing his 'youthful energy' to draw him into the thick of battle. As a monk, he should confine himself to organising his troops and let them get on with the actual fighting.

THE VIKINGS MAY NOT HAVE POSED A CIVILIZATIONAL THREAT TO THE CAROLINGIAN EMPIRE, BUT THEY CERTAINLY HAD A MUCH GREATER IMPACT THAN THEY IMAGINED WHEN THEY SET SAIL.

This young abbot had clearly proved an effective anti-Viking general and the Franks often defeated the raiders. The further problem was that they just kept coming. The Vikings were not necessarily winning (as they were in England), but they were playing by different rules. However successful the Franks proved on the battlefield, this didn't change the conditions which made raiding so attractive to Scandinavian fleets. The Franks tried to tackle the problem at source and opened negotiations with the Danish kings at various times. The problem was that the King of the Danes had as little control over the Vikings as the Franks. The Vikings were not 'public sector', they were thoroughly privatised. In fact, their leaders were often those who had failed to succeed in Scandinavian politics and

so sought their fortunes overseas. And the Franks could not stop them all.

The pragmatic streak in Carolingian thinking came to the rescue: the Franks knew when to lower their swords and start negotiating directly with the Viking invaders. Some of our sources disliked this, which is hardly surprising: when the Vikings have torched your town, anything less than their total defeat is going to be a compromise. Thus, when one Carolingian king offered a Viking leader territory in the modern Netherlands to govern, many complained that he was subjecting good Christian folk to demon worshippers and surrendering the neighbouring regions to further raids. For the king in question, however, the deal had its advantages. He was fighting a civil war with his brothers. The last thing he needed was Vikings terrorising the Rhine, the main communication route through his territory. By making this deal, he not only pre-empted Viking raids, he also secured his northern border against his brothers. It was, of course, a double-edged sword because it gave Viking bands exactly what they wanted: security, wealth, and prestige (thus showing how Vikings could exploit Frankish civil wars). Given the various threats facing Carolingian rulers, however, reaching an accommodation was the least bad outcome.

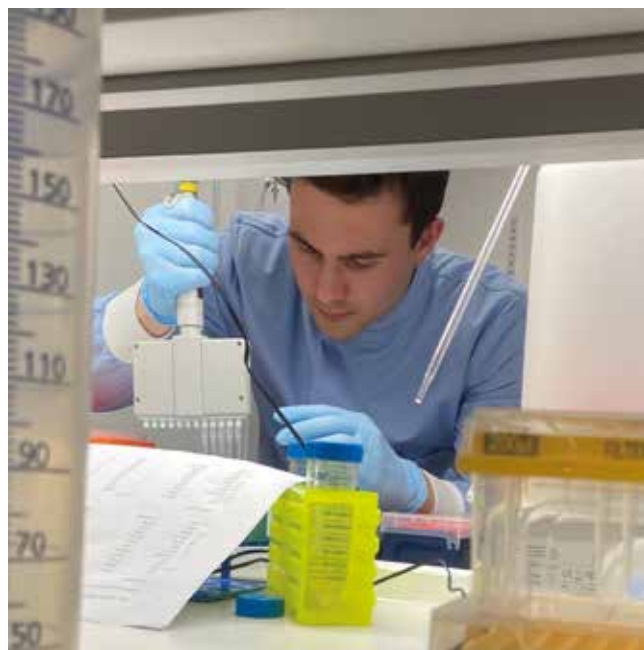
The realities of compromise and co-existence reveal how similar the Franks and Vikings could be. Far from posing a civilizational threat, many Viking leaders wanted to enjoy the obvious benefits that the Carolingian empire had to offer. Numerous Vikings even entered Carolingian service and some (not all) proved themselves reliable agents of Carolingian government as poachers turned gamekeepers. The most successful example was a Viking leader called Rollo. In 911, King Charles the Simple granted Rollo territory around Rouen in return for Rollo's loyalty. The region was called Neustria but soon became 'the land of the Northmen', eventually shortened to 'Normandy'. Rollo and his men very quickly 'went native'. The coins Rollo minted, the documents used by his administration, his titles, they were all very Frankish, almost as though Rollo was trying to be a mini-Carolingian. The results speak

for themselves: Rollo's successors ended up conquering England in 1066!

In most cases, the deal involved the Viking becoming a Christian and being baptised. This might seem odd because one of the caricatures about the Vikings is that they were all militantly pagan, famed for their mythology: Valhalla, Ragnarok, and the gods Odin and Thor. Unfortunately, almost everything we know about 'Viking' religion comes from written sources written much later. The most famous myths were only written down in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries by Christian Scandinavians. They are almost useless for reconstructing the religion of the Vikings in the ninth century and it's impossible to know what your average Viking believed (apart from the fact that they did not start as Christians). As they engaged with the Franks, they seem to have been very open to Christianity. It did not, however, always work quite as well as the Franks might have hoped. Those being baptised were given white robes as a symbol of new life. A story is told of one Viking being baptised (supposedly a once-in-a-lifetime event) and complaining that he had been through 'this washing business' twenty times already...and the robe he had been given this time was the worst yet!

Most Frankish responses to the Vikings were very practical but the raids also prompted more philosophical considerations. The Franks found themselves reconsidering their place in the Universe and the extent to which they could (if at all) control the world around them. Such questions did not just concern monks and bishops, but appeared in sources written by soldiers and generals, and even in the sentiments of Viking converts. In one sense, the Carolingian Empire was enormously powerful. But again and again, its inhabitants reminded themselves that this was contingent upon God's mercies. We find these sentiments not just from clergy or even Franks, but from soldiers and generals and Viking converts and it represented the kind of living and practical theology current in ninth-century societies. The Vikings may not have posed a civilizational threat to the Carolingian Empire, but they certainly had a much greater impact than they imagined when they set sail.

Benjamin Beresford-Jones (m. 2014) is an MB/PhD student at Christ's. He is in the final year of his PhD at the Cambridge Institute of Therapeutic Immunology and Infectious Disease (CITIID), Department of Medicine and is affiliated with the Wellcome Sanger Institute. We spoke to Benjamin about his work following the publication of his recent article, 'Through the Gut, Down the Drain' in *Nature Reviews Microbiology*.



Ben Beresford in the lab

CAN WASTEWATER HELP PREDICT COVID OUTBREAKS BEFORE THEY HAPPEN?

Benjamin's work explores the interactions of the gut microbiota with the mucosal immune system, and the role of a host species-specific microbiome on defining outcomes of health and disease. Looking at diseases such as salmonellosis, *C-Difficile* and inflammatory bowel diseases amongst others, Benjamin's work is unique in that it looks at both the host and the bacteria at the same time, rather than as two separate entities. "By using whole genome and shotgun metagenome sequencing you get a much better idea of how disease is occurring in the host. If we can attribute differences in the gut microbiota to specific outcomes of disease this is a huge breakthrough for general medicine."

As with many, Benjamin's work was severely impacted by COVID-19 when his laboratory work had to be paused. For Benjamin, this didn't mean the chance to sit back and relax – instead he took the opportunity to re-skill in meta-genomics and big-data analysis. This then helped to pave the way for the rest of his PhD, giving him more tools to look at things in new and different ways.

"It's a really exciting time to be working in this area

as it really has the potential for real-time tracking of disease, or indeed a pandemic, in populations both quickly and affordably. This means we can help to identify viral outbreaks before they display themselves at a clinical level. That information can then influence policy decisions that will impact people's lives, such as when to and when not to impose restrictions like social distancing, lockdowns, and other public health policies.

"As well as clinical testing we can look at wastewater which pools together viral loads from any particular population area and can then be studied to detect infection early. By using wastewater as an indication of population health it allows for the identification of disease outbreaks, be that variants of COVID or any other virus, and that even includes being able to identify indicators of long COVID. Viral loads remain in the gut for weeks after it is no longer present elsewhere; this is particularly relevant for predicting things like long COVID and determining levels of disease in patients."

When asked what inspires him – "I have always been interested in how complex interactions between bacteria and the host impact human health. In the gut particularly, these interactions are associated with a multitude of diseases – it's relevant to everything." And what's next? "I'll continue on this path, and once my PhD is complete I'll go back to my medical degree. The beauty of doing the MB/PhD is that I can marry clinical science with academic science and this is something I'm keen to continue with, post PhD and post-pandemic too."



Dr Christian Boehm



Professor Paul Moss



Dr Michelle Jones

COVID news

Many of Christ's College's students, Fellows and alumni have joined the fight against COVID-19 in a number of different ways. Here are just some of the initiatives they have been involved in.

FELLOWS, STUDENTS & ALUMNI

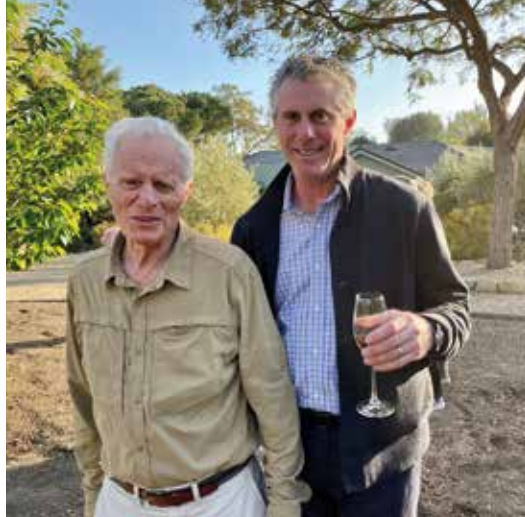
University of Birmingham immunologist, **Professor Paul Moss** (m. 1980), is leading a major new project, the UK Coronavirus Immunology Consortium, bringing together scientists from 17 research institutions to understand immune responses to the novel coronavirus. The scientists aim to develop better tests to define immunity, to study the body's immune response to SARS-CoV-2. These studies will determine when and how immunity persists or whether people can become re-infected. He is also leading the National Core Studies Immunology programme on Covid-19 which is funded directly from the Government Office for Science.

Dr Christian Boehm (m. 2013) is Deputy Head of the Division 'New Methods in Life Sciences' at the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research,

which, among other aspects of biotechnology, is responsible for the development of COVID-19 drugs and vaccines. His other responsibilities at the Ministry have fallen into the areas of bioeconomy, marine and green biotechnology, and biodiversity research. Christian explains: "Drugs and vaccines such as those developed by BioNTech or AstraZeneca are essential for tackling COVID-19, yet to increase our resilience to future pandemics we should not stop there. We also need to reconsider our interactions with ecosystems and the biological diversity they contain. A silo mentality will neither resolve the global challenges of human health nor those of environmental degradation."

Dr Michelle Jones (m. 1995) is Vice-Chair of the BioIndustry Association's IP Advisory Committee, which has been working

throughout the pandemic to help politicians and policy makers understand the vital role IP plays in supporting the development of vaccines and therapies for COVID-19. Michelle is VP, Strategy and Operations and Head of IP at Astex Pharmaceuticals, Cambridge, a drug discovery company focused on the development of novel treatments for cancer and diseases of the central nervous system. As an essential industry, Astex continued its operations during the lockdown, although COVID restrictions necessarily resulted in reduced on-site capacity for laboratory scientists to continue to work safely. To overcome this, a global out-sourcing strategy was quickly established to help keep the science progressing, leveraging Astex's strong partnerships with collaborators still operating in other parts of the world.



Dr Philip and Mr Clifford Wyatt

© OUIJOBY SESSIONS



Dr Andrew Soltan



Paul, from the Catering Team, delivers meals to students self-isolating



Dr Maheshi Ramasamy

Dr Andrew Soltan (m. 2012) has been leading on research into the use of AI to rule out COVID-19 in patients presenting to A&E. The AI test (known as CURIAL) correctly predicted the COVID-19 status of 92.3% of patients coming to two emergency departments during a two-week test period. Following those results, Andrew and his team were awarded £82,000 of Wellcome Trust funding to roll out CURIAL in the real-world, streamlining CURIAL so results could be produced in as little as ten minutes.

Dr Lucy Jessop (m. 1995) is the Director of Public Health for the National Immunisation Office in Ireland and is currently leading on several parts of the COVID-19 vaccine rollout for Ireland including the vaccine distribution and clinical advice to the programme, a hugely challenging immunisation programme with many moving parts.

Father and son alumni **Dr Philip Wyatt** (m. 1952) and **Mr Clifford Wyatt** (m. 1987) are involved in the fight against COVID through their company Wyatt Technology, based in California. Philip founded the company almost 40 years ago to develop laser based scientific instruments for mass and size measurements of liquid borne molecules and nanoparticles. Wyatt instruments are used worldwide in more than 50 countries by thousands of customers in universities, government agencies, biotechnology companies, and all major pharmaceutical companies. With the advent of COVID, many of the key biotech and pharmaceutical companies utilized these laser based instruments to characterize their vaccine and therapeutic products.

Dr Maheshi Ramasamy (m. 1995) is a Principal Investigator at the Oxford Vaccine Group where she leads on adult clinical vaccine trials, most recently this meant running the trials for the COVID-19 vaccine.



VACCINATION VOLUNTEERS

The feeling of helplessness and powerlessness is something that many of us have felt during the past 15 months, and so when the opportunity came along to alleviate those feelings many people jumped at it. Three such people were **Hannah Covell** (m. 2018), **Felix Asare** (m. 2019), and Christ's Fellow and Director of Development, **Catherine Twilley**. All three of them are volunteer vaccinators in the mass vaccination programme being rolled out so successfully across the UK.

Hannah Covell, a third-year Natsci Neuroscience and Physiology student and Felix Asare, a second-year Music undergraduate, both felt the call to do something to help during the pandemic. Catherine Twilley, after persuading her dentist husband to sign up, joined the vaccinators after enjoying her initial role as a volunteer steward, "I knew they were desperate for vaccinators and I thought if I was giving my time up to wipe chairs and direct people I could give my time up to be trained to deliver the vaccine."

"Once the decision had been made the rest happened very quickly", remembers

Catherine, "I sent in my application on the Sunday evening and by midday on the Monday I had been interviewed, references had been checked, and I was signed up to start the online training."

It was a similar story for Felix:

"the training was extensive and at times a little overwhelming but it was also reassuring – I found it interesting to know that one of the reasons the vaccines were approved so quickly was that the virus was so prevalent in the population at the time; usually developers have to wait a lot longer due to the relative scarcity of the relevant disease." Hannah, adds, "Yes, the training was a lot to take in but it was also really comprehensive, easy to follow, and definitely helped to prepare you for the next stage and also to be able to answer queries and comments from the public that you would be dealing with."

Despite worries about not passing, and hearing (unsubstantiated) needle-based horror stories, including fears about 'hitting a bone', Felix, Hannah, and Catherine all passed their online and in-person training and were well qualified to dispense their first jabs. They reflected on how they felt on that first shift, Hannah – "I just got back from Chesterton vaccination centre, it was a great experience, I absolutely loved it! I tried to hide how terrified I was for the first jab but everything went smoothly and I soon got into the rhythm of it. The administrator and Health Care Professional that I was working with were also such lovely and supportive

people, which helped. It was extremely rewarding and I'm looking forward to the next one!"

Catherine agreed, "Once you're all set up with your ID badge, uniform, and training 'passport' it actually all goes really smoothly and there's little time to think about the enormity of it all. There were issues for all of us in getting the first shift arranged, as, understandably, each centre can only have a certain number of new vaccinators at any one time but once that first shift is done and you're officially signed off it's easier to get the next one."

Felix remembers the nerves on his first day, "The vaccination centres can be quite an intimidating place when you're not a medical professional and when I arrived everyone seemed so busy, but once I was set up and had shadowed a 'pod' for a while, I was then let off on my own. I was even given some scrubs to wear and that actually really helped me to feel professional. I really enjoyed that first shift, it was such a feeling of relief and elation that I was able to do it. I remember the time of year so clearly – it was late March, the weather was getting better, a roadmap out of lockdown had been announced and I felt generally quite positive, happy, and rewarded."



Felix Asare





Catherine Twilley stewarding

Those dark, winter days are now, thankfully, behind us all and the country is beginning to feel like it is emerging slowly from the lockdown phase of the pandemic. How were our volunteers going to fit in their new role as their old lives start to open up again? The minimum requirement for volunteers is to commit to at least two shifts per month, and Felix finds that this is not too hard to fit in. "I would normally be doing a lot of music during term time, but all those things are still not really happening. I have just received my exam timetable so it's going to be interesting trying to juggle everything but I don't think two days a month will be too hard. My friends actually think it's really cool and interesting that

I'm doing this so they understand if I'm busy sometimes."

Hannah, "Yes, there's actually still a lot less happening than normally would be at this time, there's no organised sport – such as rowing or badminton which I would have been doing. I also find that with online learning there is less structure to the day, so having a set shift to go to of 8am – 5pm actually helps to give me back some structure and focus, otherwise, you just end up sleeping, eating, and working in one room. 'It's nice to eventually feel somewhat useful!'"

Catherine agrees, "Yes when I signed up to volunteer a part of it was to give myself something else to focus on other than work and home. It's great to be able to give something back but we're all getting something from it as well. I was amazed on my first day that I was given lunch and a vaccine!" The food provided to the vaccine centre workers and volunteers is provided by the Captain Tom Foundation. "During the very strict days of lockdown in February, when I was volunteering at The Grafton Centre, it felt like a real treat to be given lunch in a canteen and to be able to sit with people other than my family to eat it!"

All three agreed that the programme was something to be proud of being

involved with. As Catherine says: "The vaccination programme is such a success story and being a part of it is something I'm so proud of. It's a real privilege to be able to do something positive for people. Everyone has just been so happy and relieved to be vaccinated that they were really fun to chat to, especially at the beginning when we were vaccinating the elderly, some of whom hadn't seen anyone for almost a year!"

With the need for second doses of the vaccine and the talk of boosters in the autumn it seems Catherine, Felix and Hannah will be volunteering their services for some time to come.

Hannah Covell



ED WILD INTERVIEW

Over the course of the past year, it has been a privilege to see the impact of Christ's on the world. We have regularly featured news of the work being done by alumni, staff and fellows to help beat the pandemic. We spoke to **Professor Ed Wild (m. 1996)** about his role in the COVID success story that is the vaccination rollout.

Ed Wild (m. 1996) is a Professor of Neurology at UCL working on Huntington's Disease clinical research, with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, in-person clinics with his patients were no longer safe to continue with and so Ed spent what little spare time he had helping out on desperate COVID wards during the first wave. When the possibility of a vaccine rollout

became a reality Ed joined and helped to lead the programme to vaccinate as many people as possible.

How did you become involved in the vaccination programme?

I'd been following the vaccine development closely – I was a volunteer in the Astra Zeneca trial and as the days, and the prospect of the second wave, got darker and darker the uplifting news of a vaccine being approved just seemed to be something that I would be able to help with. As soon as I could I completed the training and I signed up for as many shifts as possible to start vaccinating people – initially this was front-line workers in a clinic at the hospital. I started on Christmas Eve, handing out candy canes alongside the jabs! To be able to do something to help and make the lives of my colleagues better at this time was actually really good for me psychologically.

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How did you go from these small clinics to playing a role in the mass vaccination centres?

I recognized what a huge job it was going to be, once we'd vaccinated NHS frontline colleagues. I became pretty evangelical about it all and I was training my colleagues so they could help out too. At any one time, there was a disproportionate number of neurology consultants all in one place, all vaccinating people. It was much more important for chest consultants and emergency teams to be on the front line, our skills as neurologists were less necessary on the wards themselves and so this was the best way we could help – it turns out we're really very good at giving injections! I'm really proud of the way my neurology colleagues all came together at this time. I think my enthusiasm for what we were doing is what led those setting up the mass vaccination centres to ask me to get involved. Until this point, we were vaccinating 600-800 people a day but it was clear we needed to start doing far more than this.

What is your role within these centres?

I deliver the medical training and act as a mentor to the vaccinators on the day. Having set up and got the space at the Crick Institute underway I moved to the Business Design Centre to get that centre up and running. It was great to be involved with something scalable and flexible, we started off giving the Astra Zeneca vaccine then moved to Moderna, which meant re-training everyone. It was never anyone's job to be a leader within the vaccine programme, I just sort of got thrown into the role of helping to coordinate this hugely unpredictable world of vaccine supply where rules were constantly changing and what vaccine was available and when and for who but it's great that the programme continues to go really well despite this. I've loved seeing this huge national awakening of collectivism for a shared purpose.

How do you still do your day job?

I'm still doing all of my day job, this often involves doing video clinics with patients in the vaccination training room, surrounded by rubber arms! I'm actually starting to be able to start some of my in-person clinics again, which is great, but I'm still vaccinating in my spare time and I will always be available for guidance or help when needed.

How has the programme changed from the beginning?

It's changed quite a lot, we've got a much more diverse group of people actually delivering the vaccines. Whilst the people doing the medical consent are still medical professionals we now have enthusiastic volunteers, from cabin crew and journalists to cleaners and hedge fund managers. It's actually a beautiful thing to see people from such varied walks of life working together in a way they never would have imagined.

Why do you think the rollout has been so successful?

We started small and built up from there, gearing ourselves up for the larger rollout. We work on a pod system that is a unit of staff and resources and this works well in a larger or smaller setting.

What have been some of the impacts of the pandemic on you personally and professionally?

One of the most traumatic moments for me was during my first shift in intensive care, where I was looking after the sickest person I'd ever seen in 20 years of practice, her body was trying so hard to die when otherwise she was seemingly young and healthy. By contrast, the early days in the vaccine clinic were almost euphoric, I definitely had a moment when we first opened our doors to the over-80-year-olds – I met a lady who hadn't seen anyone else for almost a year. The magnitude of loss for those that hadn't even had COVID really struck me at that point.

Any advice for those still to get the vaccine?

Just get it and don't worry about the details too much. It's good to be informed but the correct vaccine for you is whichever one goes into your arm! It's really a choice between a vaccine and COVID, any potential side effects or risks to you are minimal in comparison. I tell people to think about side-effects as an indicator that your body is developing a superpower, akin to Spiderman when he was bitten by the spider, you are learning to defeat an enemy you've never met and you might feel unwell for a few days but will emerge superhuman!

One of my supervisors at Christ's was Margaret Stanley, the highly accomplished virologist, and she took me to one side once and told me that there was a vaccine for cervical cancer on the way – I remember being so in awe of someone who could do so much to help so many. My time at Christ's taught me to be someone who understands the importance of dedicated, smart people who can use technology to overcome very real, human problems and to not limit yourself to the things you believe to be your skillset but to be open to things that might be unusual to you in the pursuit of a greater goal.



Ed Wild and the London vaccination bus



In 2019, to celebrate their Golden Wedding Anniversary, Richard and Annie Greenhalgh generously decided to make the gift of a scholarship available, here at Christ's. As lifelong music, and in particular, opera fans, it seemed a natural choice for the scholarship to be for music, specifically, a PhD scholarship to support an outstanding student whose research topic is opera, or cultural and historical musicology of the nineteenth century.



Martin Elek and Richard and Annie Greenhalgh catch up on Zoom

Music and musical performance are a vital part of College life at Christ's, so much so that a dedicated music space will be a part of the new accommodation building currently being built on the College site. The idea of a music scholarship, therefore, seemed a fitting addition to the student support on offer at Christ's.

The recipient of the Richard and Annie Greenhalgh Scholarship is Martin Elek, from Hungary. Martin took his BA at Liszt Ferenc Academy of Music, Budapest, where he achieved excellent marks. He has since been a research assistant at the Institute for Musicology, at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences; from 2016 to 2019. He has been involved in various projects including the preparation of publications such as the Ferenc Erkel Operas Critical Edition, constructing a database comprising the Budapest National Theatre's nineteenth-century productions, cataloguing the historical music collection of the Kolozsvár Opera House, and taking lead roles organising international study trips which frequently involved engaging with source study in archives. For his PhD, Martin is studying the conductor Wilhelm Furtwängler, and the question of musical form in performance.

Richard Greenhalgh (m. 1963) read Archaeology and Anthropology at Christ's and, during his time here, was President of the JCR and Captain of the Boat Club and has remained a lifelong member of the Christian Minstrels. He has a background in education as a part of his role as Chairman of Unilever U.K., before retiring, and is the current Chair of United Learning, a group of schools committed to providing excellent education for young people, and is the Chair of the British

Youth Opera. Richard has an interest in both education and opera that goes beyond his years at Christ's. Annie, a trained artist, is a retired art teacher and magistrate.

Speaking about the motivations for their gift to Christ's Richard says, "The scholarship is a triangulation of my career, university life and my passion for opera. To us, a scholarship was a more attractive option than donating towards a building. We knew we wanted to give something and the Development Team were really excellent at helping us to go through the various options for giving and so when we finally decided on the scholarship it just felt right." Annie adds, "We both have a life long love of music and so when deciding to make this gift, music seemed the natural choice. It's also an area where there isn't a huge amount of funding."

Martin adds, "Yes, funding in music studies is difficult in the UK. Cambridge was the only place that could offer me a scholarship. Other universities, despite their size, usually only ever have one scholarship on offer. If it wasn't for Richard and Annie's scholarship I wouldn't have been able to undertake this research. The question of funding is really crucial and I've noticed that in recent years funding in general, for music-related projects, has really diminished."

What's in the future for Martin once he has completed his PhD? "The idea is to hopefully find myself an academic position, such as a lectureship and this scholarship should help make that possible." In terms of the impact of the pandemic on his work Martin has been relatively unaffected, "I've been lucky that my

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work hasn't been impacted by COVID too much. Some of my research trips are on hold at the moment but thankfully the vast majority of resources and literature I need to access are all available online. Doing a PhD is already quite isolating work so being in lockdown didn't really change that, it was just exacerbated, without the social life of the College to enjoy, so in that way, it was definitely challenging."

Richard and Annie add, "For us, it's been such a shame we haven't been able to meet up with

Martin since we saw him at the beginning of his PhD. One of the things that attracted us to the idea of a scholarship was the relationship we could potentially build with a student. For example, we'd love to be able to introduce Martin to the British Youth Opera, making use of the connections between his research and our experience." Proof that the relationship between student and benefactor goes beyond the pounds and pence of the scholarship itself but is one of mutual interest and even friendship that will stretch beyond the remit of the three-year PhD.

"THE SCHOLARSHIP IS A TRIANGULATION OF MY CAREER, UNIVERSITY LIFE AND MY PASSION FOR OPERA. TO US, A SCHOLARSHIP WAS A MORE ATTRACTIVE OPTION THAN DONATING TOWARDS A BUILDING. WE KNEW WE WANTED TO GIVE SOMETHING AND THE DEVELOPMENT TEAM WERE REALLY EXCELLENT AT HELPING US TO GO THROUGH THE VARIOUS OPTIONS FOR GIVING AND SO WHEN WE FINALLY DECIDED ON THE SCHOLARSHIP IT JUST FELT RIGHT."

Stay connected

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

2021

3 SEPTEMBER
Alumni Golf
Event & Dinner

12 SEPTEMBER
Reunion Garden
Party (1963 to
1974 inclusive)

17 SEPTEMBER
1st Reunion
Dinner (up to
& including
1962, & 1971)

18 SEPTEMBER
Blades Regatta
& Dinner

25 SEPTEMBER
2nd Reunion
Dinner (1975-
1979 inclusive)

Due to the pandemic, our in-person events are subject to cancellation, but we are looking forward to warmly welcoming you back to College when we can.

