



MEET
THE VOLUNTEERS

THE ONLINE INFORMATION
ENVIRONMENT

TAKE 2: CHRIST'S GOES GREEN



Pieces

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welcome

FROM THE MASTER



The College has been a hive of activity over recent months, and it is truly heartening to see Christ's come back fully to life after the pandemic. The irises in Third Court look stunning, and the addition of picnic benches means that the students are enjoying sitting out chatting, eating lunch, and even revising. The Malcolm Bowie Bathing Pool is also surprisingly popular, given that it is unheated!

Christ's has emerged from the COVID years an even more harmonious community than before with morale very high across all parts of the College. The dedication of our talented students continues to give the College a Golden Age of academic success while our superb JCR and MCR committees ensure a rich supportive array of extra-curricular diversions!

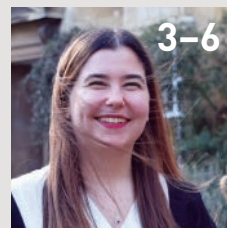
In this edition of Pieces, you can learn about some of our recent activities and initiatives. We are starting a series looking at volunteering at Christ's and by members of College, and in this issue we meet the people who are supporting the work of the archives. We are also very excited to announce that the new building on the domus site, which is scheduled to be completed over the next few months, will be named Yusuf Hamied Court, in recognition of the extraordinary support we have received from the Yusuf and Farida Hamied Foundation.

Also in this issue, you can read about an important project by the Royal Society, chaired by my predecessor, Frank Kelly, about misinformation and the internet. Separately we were pleased to bring together Camille McCarthy (m. 2020, current JCR Green Officer) and Fiona Harvey (m. 1990, Environment Correspondent at The Guardian) for a conversation about environmental awareness at Christ's and how it has evolved over the years. You can also hear about the impact Christ's had on one of our alumni, who was committed to supporting students from disadvantaged backgrounds in his lifetime, and has continued his support of the College through a legacy.

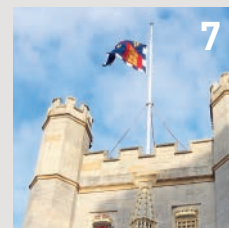
I now look forward to a summer of events and activities, including a Staff Appreciation BBQ to pay tribute to our wonderfully dedicated staff, and a special lunch for our distinguished Honorary Fellows. Peter and I will return to Australia in the autumn, but will certainly be back to visit. We take with us a swathe of rewarding memories of our years at Christ's. One of my most treasured memories is the stunning cross-community solidarity that I witnessed during the pandemic. Thank you again to all of you for your support during my Mastership of this remarkable College.

Professor Jane Stapleton

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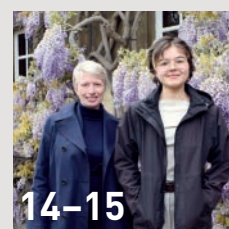
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FRONT COVER IMAGE: Christ's Magnolia tree, photo by Katie Coakes

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With more than 500 applications for only 60 places, the Christ's and Trinity Women in Maths Residential course was a great success. The young women aged 16 and 17 spent two days, during the Easter vacation, split between Christ's and Trinity learning more about what it's like to study Maths at Cambridge. The sessions included talks from Fellows and PhD students from both Colleges on subjects such as 'Why Maths Matters' and 'The Complexity

of Prime Numbers', as well as hearing advice on the Cambridge application process. This initiative is just one of many being undertaken by the Christ's Admissions Team: they have been hosting webinars and virtual tours. Later this year they will host a Bridging Course, with King's and Gonville & Caius Colleges and a Summer School, alongside Murray Edwards and Sidney Sussex Colleges for students from Low Participation Neighbourhoods.



The Christ's College Choir has been busy working on their latest CD. They were recording music composed by [Dr Annabel McLauchlan Rooney](#) (m. 1991). This will be their second CD devoted to Annabel's music, which will be released next year.



The [Charles Blackham](#) Memorial Music Competition is held each year, in Lent term, in memory of the late chair of the Christ's College Music Society (m. 2007). This year the winner was [James Tett](#) (m. 2019) who won the competition with a stunning performance of Prokofiev's Violin Concerto No 1.

It is with great sadness that we announce the death of **Professor Geoffrey Martin** (Fellow Commoner). Geoffrey joined the Fellowship at Christ's in 1966 as the Lady Wallis Budge Junior Research Fellow, leaving in 1970 for a post in London. A respected Egyptologist, Geoffrey was most well known for his discoveries of the tomb of Maya, Tutankhamun's treasurer, and the private tomb of Horemheb. He was elected a Fellow Commoner in 1998, and spent many years as the College's Honorary Keeper of the Archives, and also serving Christ's as Praelector. A full obituary will be published in the College Magazine.



Three paintings by Michael Hunt.



The College is grateful to have been gifted some wonderful items recently. A set of gold coins were donated by **Mr Roger Rees** (m. 1948, Lady Margaret Beaufort Fellow), following his death last year. The set includes coins from the reigns of Henry VI, Henry VII, Mary I, and Elizabeth I. Through the kindness of Mr David Cuthbert, the College has received a Kashmiri carpet from **Mr Roy Webber** (m. 1940). Roy came up to Christ's as a Choral Exhibitioner to read

Natural Sciences, and spent his career as a teacher and lecturer, while continuing to sing with the London Bach Choir. He bought the carpet from the Kashmiri Carpet Factory in Srinagar in 1982. **Mr Michael Hunt** (m. 1949) has given the College three of his paintings for use in the student picture loan scheme. Michael, now aged ninety, was a leading equine vet and paints every day. For the last 30 years he has painted exclusively in abstract impressionism.



Congratulations to **Professor Stephen Blyth** (m. 1985, Lady Margaret Beaufort Fellow), who has been elected as the next Principal of Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford, a role he will take up later this year.

On a beautiful spring day in March the 2020 Scholars finally got the chance to celebrate their achievements. The official photograph was taken in First Court and was followed by tea on the hallowed First Court lawn. Congratulations to those scholars – better late than never! Read more about this in the accompanying Donor Report.

Left and right: Scholars enjoying tea.





LENT BUMPS

The College had a very successful Lent Bumps this year, with every crew finishing higher in the rankings than they started, apart from M1 who were hamstrung by illness. W1 bumped Fitzwilliam and First and Third, as well as having two strong row overs, finishing up in eleventh in their division. M1 finished with spoons at seventeenth, but battled valiantly despite being hit by setbacks throughout the week. W2 had a great Lent Bumps, bumping St Catharine's, St Edmund's, and Clare, ending the week fourth in their division. M2 bumped Robinson and St Catharine's, with two good row overs to also finish the week in fourth place. Alumni are invited to join their friends and support the CCBC at the College's May Bumps Picnic on 18 June.



Dr Camilla Nord (Fellow) has been named an Association of Psychological Science (APS) Rising Star. The award is presented to outstanding APS members in the earliest stages of their research career post-PhD.

NEW YEAR HONOURS

Congratulations to **Mrs Kathryn Brown** (m. 1998) who was awarded an OBE for services to climate change research in the New Year Honours. Kathryn was previously the Climate Change Committee's Head of Adaptation, and is currently the Wildlife Trusts' Director for climate action.



The Senior Tutor, **Dr Robert Hunt**, has awarded the annual Old Member Sports Awards. These awards help students with the costs involved with competing at a College, University, or even higher, level. This year they were given for a wide range of sports from rowing and table tennis to dance and volleyball, amongst others. The award recipients were Felix Asare, Carrie Day, Valentina Elnor-Kupcha, Anniko Firman, Matt Harris, Katy Hempson, James Ho, Yu Jiang, Pranav Madan, Jean-Michael Mague, Emma Parker, Andrea Pizzi, Sarah Posavec, Pippa Prendergast-Coates, Kiran Raja, Lucy Sargent, Sandra Strahlendorf, Petar Suman, Junjun Tan and Tom Wilkins. Congratulations to them all.



Senior Tutor, Dr Robert Hunt, with some of the prize winners.



We are delighted to report that Christ's Fellow, **Dr Ned Allen**, has been awarded a STARS grant

by the University of Padova. For two years, commencing in September, Ned will be running a project called 'Radio Waves: Network Building and the Making of Modern Europe'. The project will provide a fresh insight, amidst the fall-out of Brexit and ongoing crises of European integration, into the reconstruction of nations, blocs, and regional modes of identity after the Second World War. It will do so by narrating the history of broadcasting institutions, the history of the writers who worked for such institutions, and the important part 'they played in mediating the fantasy' – part fiction, part fact – of an evolving European Union in the years 1945–1981. As Principal Investigator, he will be working closely with a team of postdocs with a view to triangulating the BBC with outfits in Italy and Greece, which drew conspicuously on the model of a restructured BBC in the late 1940s.



Charles Darwin and Galápagos Islands Junior Research Fellow, **Dr Katie Dunkley**, is on a research trip to the Galapagos. She is completing her own fieldwork on the dynamics of reef species interactions

and ecological networks as well as assisting the Charles Darwin Foundation with their long-term subtidal ecological monitoring programme. Katie is using the latest methods in machine learning, an artificial intelligence (AI) method, to construct a reef-based ecological network, which will provide a conservation tool to study the structure and resilience of reef ecosystems. This will enhance the knowledge of reef ecology whilst also informing local, regional, and global conservation practices.



TELEPHONE CAMPAIGN 2022



Telephone Campaign 2022: we are delighted to announce that the College has raised nearly £323,600 in pledges and donations over the next three years from the Campaign – a transformative total that will be put towards the College's most pressing needs, as and when they emerge. Thank you so much for everyone who participated, it will really change the lives of our students. If you would still like to make a gift, to be put towards the Campaign, you can do so on our website <https://alumni.christs.cam.ac.uk>.

On 25 March we were delighted to welcome back alumni who matriculated in 2013 and 2014 to receive their MAs following delays due to COVID. As usual, the ceremonies took place in the Senate House and alumni enjoyed a buffet lunch and dinner in College. The following weekend it was the turn of the 2015 cohort and it was wonderful to see them all back at Christ's.



An alumna leaves the Senate House after receiving her MA.



SPOTLIGHT ON A LIFELONG LEGACY



Mr Asish Dey
(m. 1977) and
Mr Roger Rees at
the 2018 Fisher
Society lunch.

Roger Rees (m. 1948 and Lady Margaret Beaufort Fellow) was a lifelong supporter of Christ's. In January 2021, he passed away, and the College flag was flown at half-mast above the College gates to mourn the loss of this key member of our community.



A long-standing supporter of Christ's, Roger's philanthropic contributions were put towards every aspect of College life: the teaching of Law at Christ's; the redevelopment of King Street; and a special focus on providing bursaries to disadvantaged students to study here, which was his particular passion.

Roger came to Christ's from Kirkby Lonsdale School, to read Law, thanks in part to the historic connections between the College and the school, which provided exhibitions at Christ's for Kirkby Lonsdale pupils. It was therefore an obvious choice for him to pass on the benefits he received through the provision of bursaries. This led to the founding of the Kirkby Lonsdale Bursaries, as they were named: awards for students with a financial need due to hardship, for all disciplines, and from any part of the UK.

Indeed, Roger's generosity, for which he was recognised in 2018 by being elected as a Lady Margaret Beaufort Fellow, has touched the lives of numerous students over the past two decades; students who would otherwise not have had the opportunity to study here, in many cases. The difference this made to them can be seen in their own words.

'STUDYING AT CAMBRIDGE HAS BEEN ONE OF THE MOST REWARDING CHALLENGES OF MY LIFE, AND I GREATLY APPRECIATE THE SUPPORT THAT HAS ALLOWED ME TO BE HERE. I WOULD LIKE TO CONVEY MY GRATITUDE FOR YOUR FINANCIAL SUPPORT, WHICH HAS EASED MY FINANCIAL CONCERNS AND ALLOWED ME NOT ONLY TO PURSUE MY ACADEMIC AMBITIONS BUT HAS ALSO AIDED ME TO BROADEN MY HORIZONS INTELLECTUALLY AND SOCIALLY. THIS OPPORTUNITY HAS BEEN INVALUABLE.'

Kirkby Lonsdale Bursary Recipient.

'TO BE AWARDED SUCH A GENEROUS AMOUNT OF MONEY THAT I WILL NEVER NEED TO REPAY GOES A HUGE WAY TOWARDS PAYING FOR MY ACCOMMODATION AND THE GENERAL UPKEEP OF MY WELFARE EACH TERM, AND FOR THAT I AM INCREDIBLY GRATEFUL. FAMILY FINANCES HAVE OFTEN BEEN STRETCHED, PARTICULARLY WHEN MY FATHER WAS MADE REDUNDANT JUST BEFORE I STARTED UNIVERSITY AND WE HAD TO MOVE HOME. MY THANKS GO TO THE CHRIST'S COLLEGE ALUMNUS WHO KINDLY SET UP THE KIRKBY LONSDALE FUND, AND I HOPE THAT IT CONTINUES TO SUPPORT MANY MORE CHRIST'S STUDENTS IN THE FUTURE.'

Kirkby Lonsdale Bursary Recipient.

This support was not just limited to his own lifetime; Roger was an active member of the Christ's College Fisher Society, our society for those who have decided to leave us a gift in their Will, and regularly attended the events in College. As part of his estate, we received the collection of rare coins, mentioned in the news section; but also a £300,000 bequest, to be invested in the College's endowment. This will allow us to continue the work that Roger was so passionate about throughout his relationship with Christ's, ensuring that his memory will live on through the support provided for our students

These twin Legacies, alongside the ongoing impact of the work he funded, are a testament to Roger's enduring character: unorthodox, unabashed, and truly unique.

If you would be interested in talking with us about intentions for your philanthropic giving in your Will, you are more than welcome to reach out to development@christs.cam.ac.uk for a confidential discussion.

MEET THE VOLUNTEERS

Christ's has a number of volunteers within its ranks: those that help and support the College in the library, archives and access, and the alumni Year Group Reps. There are also a large number of our community who make an impact through volunteering outside of Christ's. Over the next few issues of Pieces we intend to talk to just a few of these volunteers, understand more about what they do, why they do it, and the impact they have on those they help. In this issue, we met the College's archive volunteers.

On a beautiful March day four people from different walks of Cambridge life huddle together to help the College Archivist, **Dr Genny Silvanus**, to repackage photographs from the College archives. This work, whilst on the face of it may seem mundane, is a vitally important part of preserving the College's history and is in itself a soothing and meditative process. Christ's has a long history of welcoming volunteers into its ranks, and without them, and their enthusiasm for the College there are many things that would simply not get done. The process being done by the archival volunteers sees them repackage hundreds of photographs from various decades in the College's past, moving them from regular plastic folders into purpose-made photographic archive sheets. If this work is not done, these photographs will, over time, degrade, stick to the plastic and be ruined. Without the benefit of digital copies, or even negatives to look back on, the history enshrined in the photos would then be lost forever.

This kind of work is just one example of the work the Christ's archival volunteers do. We spoke to

Anna, Emily, Ellena and Heather about why they volunteer for Christ's and what they enjoy about the work.

Emily Rhodes is second year PhD History student at Christ's – she comments: "I was originally doing some archival work at Jesus, but when Genny started here at Christ's I immediately switched as I really wanted to do this kind of work for my own College and help uncover the history here." When asked if her future plans involved archive work she said, "Whilst I probably won't go on to work in archives myself, I will and do use archives for my research and so knowing how they work and how they're curated and maintained is really important. As an American in Cambridge, I've found it really useful to be able to connect with the heritage of Christ's and the College that I'm a part of. Last week, we looked at the original documents to do with the founding of God's House from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries; they were fascinating, and showed just how different things were back then, and how, as a student at Christ's you're part of a long line of people stretching back hundreds of years." Volunteering is something Emily is keen on in other parts of her life, so long as it involves history in some way, she is a visitor experience volunteer at Audley End, during the summer and weekends, helping visitors understand the history of the house.

Another Christ's PhD student, **Heather Weston**, is another of the volunteers we spoke to. Following a tour of the Muniment Room in College, Heather became hooked on College history, "The tour was just fascinating, everything from the winding staircase to the giant key for the heavy, wooden door. Genny was so open and interested in sharing what was here that I wanted to be a part of that."





CHRIST'S HAS A LONG HISTORY OF WELCOMING VOLUNTEERS INTO ITS RANKS, AND WITHOUT THEM, AND THEIR ENTHUSIASM FOR THE COLLEGE THERE ARE MANY THINGS THAT SIMPLY WOULD GET DONE.

Ellena Groom sorts and repackages photographs from the archives.

When asked what she has found especially interesting during her work in the archives she said, "It's so exciting to be able to poke around in different parts of the College that you wouldn't normally be allowed to, like the attics. Some of the most interesting things we've found are evidence of daily life from decades or centuries past that we weren't aware of. We've recently learnt about the eels that lived in Hobson's Conduit, from a story in a gardener's diary. There was a three-foot eel pulled out of the water pipe that fed the swimming pool from the Conduit! I just find these snippets of past life so interesting. One thing I really want to learn more about is the College Fire Watch, which we found some information about in a folder recently. Someone kept many notes from the start of the war until just after, all about the College Fire Watch. The notes are not sorted yet, and so organising them is my next challenge. The notes tell us about the tutorials that the students had, about what it was, to how they were going to organise their shifts, and all the correspondence during that period – and then importantly how they were honoured and thanked for their work. It is a great snap shot of how the war affected daily life at the College, and how it contributed to the war effort. It has been so well documented that it would be a shame not to organise and display it in some way." Heather went on to explain that helping in the archives is something she looks forward to each week. "Despite the work I have on this year, as I near the end of my PhD, coming and helping here has become something I really look forward to and can really focus on, away from my studies."

"USING VOLUNTEERS IS ACTUALLY REALLY COMMON IN ARCHIVES; I'VE WORKED IN ARCHIVES FOR NEARLY TWENTY YEARS AND EVERYWHERE I'VE WORKED WE'VE HAD THEM. IF THEY DIDN'T EXIST WHEN I STARTED WORK THERE, I RECRUITED THEM! THEY'RE AN INVALUABLE ASSET."

Ellena Groom who works for an impact-led chocolate company, helping to eliminate slavery and child-labour in the cocoa industry, has a passion for museums and archives and so was immediately drawn to the role here at Christ's. "I am trying to get as much experience as possible in a museum or archive setting. There is a lot of material at Christ's so the opportunity to get credible skills in repackaging, for example, is invaluable. It is so important to preserve history and the stories of the past. I especially enjoy volunteering because it's a much less pressured environment than a workplace and yet you can still gain valuable skills, meet likeminded people, and ask questions you might not be able to in a normal work setting."

Anna P-T is a second year English undergraduate at Clare College; she was looking to find some volunteer work in archives or in any of the old

College libraries when she got in touch with Genny. "I've always been really interested in pursuing practical work to do with books, I'm really interested in books as objects and I wanted to see what the options were for that sort of work. It's hard to know exactly what those jobs actually are and what they entail, so getting involved as a volunteer here is a great way to understand that and to learn how I could move on, after my degree. Working in archives long-term is something I am considering and so this experience is invaluable." She has especially enjoyed the experiences she has had with our archives, and relishes the opportunity to encounter something unusual, or especially lively, that highlights life in College in the past, "Last week I came across a letter that has been written by a student that had a drawing of a centipede in it. I especially like looking at the old photographs; I even came across one of Clare recently! They're a great reminder of the past people who have come through Cambridge."

Genny Silvanus, the College Archivist and the leader and instigator of this band of volunteers, explains just how vital the work is that they are doing for her, "It's really simple – they provide manpower for the work I do here, and help me to do things that I simply would not be able to achieve on my own. They have helped me to create a location guide for Y Attic, which is something that would have taken me months to do on my own. These photographs we are sorting in these couple of hours – we'll get through about one hundred today, this would take me several days to do on my own."

"Using volunteers is actually really common in archives; I've worked in archives for nearly twenty years and everywhere I've worked we've had them. If they didn't exist when I started work there, I recruited them! They're an invaluable asset. It is fairly easy to find volunteers for this kind of work, history often fascinates people – in county archives people often start volunteering because they're interested in finding out more about their family history and then they often stay for the social side of the role. When I first started at Christ's, I gave tours of the Muniment Room, after which several people wanted to continue finding out more. People who come to Christ's are generally interested in history, it is a part of why they come here, if they weren't they'd go to one of the other, newer Colleges."

The rich history here at Christ's is certainly testament to all the lives that have gone before; and the enthusiasm of these volunteers is a sure sign that the interest and fascination in Christ's history is showing no signs of abating any time soon.



Dr Robert Hunt, Mr Syed Rizvi, Professor Jane Stapleton and Dr Elena Punskeya at the Topping Out ceremony.

YUSUF HAMIED COURT REACHES KEY CONSTRUCTION MILESTONE

Back on a cold January day, the new building reached a significant milestone, which was marked by a traditional 'topping out' ceremony.

Around 20 representatives from the College and from the Hamied family were given a guided tour of the site by the contractors R G Carter, before heading onto the roof for a traditional 'topping out' ceremony to mark the building reaching its highest point. The final screws were put in place by the Master, the Senior Tutor, Mr Syed Rizvi (Hamied family), and Dr Elena Punskeya (Fellow, representing the donors to the Bill Fitzgerald Music Room), before a champagne toast was poured over the new roof.

The College is delighted that this new facility will provide 64 en-suite student rooms (including a number of accessible rooms), spacious communal kitchens, the Bill Fitzgerald Music room, seminar spaces, and a number of teaching rooms for Fellows. Yusuf Hamied Court will also provide a glass atrium



The Master with Dr Yusuf Hamied and Mr Syed Rizvi.

link to the adjacent Todd Building, providing lift access to both buildings. Additionally, there will be four retail units facing onto King Street.

The Master, Professor Jane Stapleton, said: "The 'topping out' today marks a milestone, and brings us a step closer to the completion of this exciting new addition to Christ's. It has been a priority for us for some years now to enable more of our postgraduate students to live near the main College site and take advantage of all that Christ's has to offer, and we are thrilled that this new development will bring 64 students into College. The environmental impact of the project has been a particularly important consideration, and the building will use air-source heat pumps for space and water heating, the College's first step in removing gas from our buildings on the main site, in line with our Net-Zero ambitions. I am deeply grateful to the Yusuf and Farida Hamied Foundation, and to everyone who is working so hard to make this a reality."

THE ONLINE INFORMATION ENVIRONMENT

FRANK KELLY (FELLOW AND
FORMER MASTER (2006–2016))

Misinformation about scientific issues, from vaccine safety to climate change, can cause harm to individuals and society at large. But what should be done about it? Professor Frank Kelly, Fellow and former Master (2006–2016), has recently chaired a project by the Royal Society to look at how the internet shapes people's engagement with scientific information.



“IN THE EARLY DAYS OF THE PANDEMIC, SCIENCE WAS TOO OFTEN PAINTED AS ABSOLUTE AND SOMEHOW NOT TO BE TRUSTED WHEN IT CORRECTS ITSELF, BUT THAT PRODDING AND TESTING OF RECEIVED WISDOM IS INTEGRAL TO THE ADVANCEMENT OF SCIENCE, AND SOCIETY. THIS IS IMPORTANT TO BEAR IN MIND WHEN WE ARE LOOKING TO LIMIT SCIENTIFIC MISINFORMATION’S HARMS TO SOCIETY. CLAMPING DOWN ON CLAIMS OUTSIDE THE CONSENSUS MAY SEEM DESIRABLE, BUT IT CAN HAMPER THE SCIENTIFIC PROCESS AND FORCE GENUINELY MALICIOUS CONTENT UNDERGROUND”

Wherever access to the internet is possible, individuals can access entire libraries-worth of knowledge, decades of news reports, vaults-full of documents and records, speeches, images and videos; and, in the current pandemic, the genome sequence of a novel coronavirus and a torrent of research preprints released before peer review. Once it would take days for news to pass from town to town, but the last century saw a speeding up of information transmission, from the early growth of telephony through to the advent of the World Wide Web in the 1990s and the popularity of social media from the early 2010s.

But it is not just high-quality information that is being shared. Inaccurate, misleading and completely false information is shared online in large volumes – both unintentionally by some and maliciously by others. Fictional stories end up being passed around as truth, conspiracies gain weight as they pass through the rumour mill and science becomes mangled beyond recognition. Misinformation is not new. Misinformation about water fluoridation was widespread in the twentieth century, well before the emergence of the modern information environment. What online technologies have changed, however, is the scale and speed of spread. Misinformation has fuelled mistrust in vaccines, been wielded by those determined to confuse discussions about tackling the climate crisis and increased opposition to genetically modified crops.

For some the response to this is to demand that misinformation should be removed from the public domain, but there are several issues with this. Firstly, who checks the facts and decides what is misinformation and what should be removed? Where does censorship come into play? The other key issue, certainly as far as the scientific community is concerned, is that science stands on the edge of error. It is a process of dealing with uncertainties, prodding and testing received wisdom. Science challenges us to continually assess and revise our understanding of the world. It is a process that depends on protecting and encouraging free speech and open debate, and a process that

requires the prioritisation of the best data and most trustworthy information. A safe and healthy online information environment is needed to allow robust and open scientific debate.

However, to counter possible spread of misinformation, fact checking is especially important, and this is an area where the scientific community can help. National academies and learned societies can react to new misinformation threats by quickly providing accurate summaries of what we know. To do this, better access to data is needed for researchers to identify topics of misinformation early in the process of amplification.

This will not be enough to counteract the algorithmic amplification of polarising misinformation in an attention economy which incentivises the spread of sensational stories rather than sound understanding. Ultimately, we will need to see legislation which can address the incentives of business models that shape the algorithms determining the spread of content. Scientists will need to work with lawyers and economists to make sure that the particular sensitivities of scientific misinformation are considered when legislation is framed.

Our conclusion is that censoring or removing inaccurate, misleading and false content, whether it’s shared unwittingly or deliberately, is not a silver bullet, and may undermine the scientific process and public trust. Instead, there needs to be a focus on building resilience against harmful misinformation across the population and the promotion of a “healthy” online information environment.



You can read the full Royal Society report at <https://royalsociety.org/topics-policy/projects/online-information-environment/>

FIONA HARVEY & CAMILLE MCCARTHY

CHRIST'S GOES GREEN

Camille McCarthy, a second year languages undergraduate, is in her second year as the JCR's Green Representative. Fiona Harvey (m. 1990), read English at Christ's and has been the Guardian's Environment Correspondent since 2011. We sat down with them both to look at how attitudes to the environment and climate change issues have, or haven't changed.

Fiona, what was the level of environmental awareness in 1990 at Christ's, and how involved were you?

We did have a Green Reps actually, Gareth Kane (m. 1990) in my year and then Karen Johnson (m. 1991) and although I was very supportive of what they were doing it wasn't until much later on that I became involved in environmentalism through my work. During my time at Christ's, in 1992, one of the most important climate summits took place, the Rio Earth Summit, which saw the beginning of the UN Framework on environmental change, essentially the pre-cursor to the Paris Agreement. Whilst we were aware of this happening, it was in a fairly dim sense, we were quite insular without the internet, social media and twenty four hour news. The Green Reps in my time did do a lot of great stuff; I remember what an achievement it was to get the glass bottles from the Buttery to be recycled. We also had a big push on not using plastic bags; you got a penny back if you took your own bag to Sainsbury's.

Camille, what have you been doing as the Green Rep now?

When I started last year, I worked on organising a few events and really finding my feet with the role. This year I've been able to get a lot more stuck in with College governance, meeting with staff on how sustainability within the College works and helping to look at a sustainability strategy College-wide. I'm also working with the May Ball Committee, it has been really exciting to have a role as a sort of mini environmental consultant for the event.

What are your thoughts on how to balance policy and strategy with the practical things we can all do?

Camille: It's a difficult balance. Even on a small scale in College, it can be difficult to motivate people. The media landscape can be quite hard to navigate and our social media and news feeds are full of contradictory messages. It's easy for

people to feel handicapped by the catastrophic nature of the warnings we're given and so they end up thinking their best efforts won't have any impact, so why bother doing anything at all. We do need to consider the bigger picture – a few hundred students turning their lights off every now and again isn't going to keep us to within the 1.5 degrees of global warming but there is a correlation between people's personal attitudes to sustainability and their wider attitudes to it on a global scale. I find it hard when people disregard the small picture because the small things do have an impact. Although we know there are 100 big companies basically responsible for most of global warming, these companies wouldn't exist if people didn't buy from them. It is up to us to question our consumption practices.

How do you feel about COP 26? Do you think it was a success or a failure?

Camille: I think it was a success for what it was, it was unfair to expect too much from it as UN conferences are never radical platforms for change, they are the place where wading through the wording of policies is necessary. I can understand why people might be disappointed about the nuances and disagreements around whether we say 'phasing down' or 'phasing out' coal at the very moment that island nations are being submerged, but the fact that coal was talked about for the first time at all is a huge achievement.

Fiona: You're right, UN conferences are just that: they have a job to do, to bring everyone on board. However, COP 26 was a rather fragile success. The problem with it is that since the conference the world has changed hugely, things have largely fallen apart, in part thanks to President Putin, but also the rising cost of fuel as well as the cost of living crisis. The war in Ukraine has very starkly revealed the dependence of so many nations on fossil fuels, and how that reliance can be used as a weapon against them. I've been writing for years about

how climate change is a national security issue and now – here you go. It's terrible that it took a war for it to come to people's attention.

Fiona, how did you get into environmental journalism?

Sort of by accident: when I graduated the only area really recruiting, in journalism, was in technology, so I started writing about that in 1994, despite having little to no knowledge of the field. I interviewed Tim Berners Lee and I wrote endless articles about this thing called the internet and how it was going to change all of our lives. I joined the Financial Times in January 2000 and whilst still writing technology, I branched out into science, and more of this work tended towards the environment. The more I learnt, the more I realised this was a very important thing that just wasn't getting the attention it needed. The FT then gave me the chance to become the permanent environment correspondent in 2004. So many exciting things were happening at this time, climate was a focus point of the 2005 G8 summit and there was a real upsurge in interest. This coincided with an upsurge in the technology available, such as solar panels and wind farms, and the internet alongside that made communications so much easier. By the 2008/9 financial crisis there was a real swell of interest – there was talk of a green economic recovery – this didn't end up happening to the extent that it should have, but it did help take us somewhere.

How do you feel about the direction things are taking? Especially in a post-COVID world?

Fiona: We really should be looking at a green economic recovery from the pandemic. Unfortunately, like the financial crisis, it's not happened anywhere near close to the extent that it should have. We had this plunge in greenhouse gasses and emissions during the lockdowns but the rebound was really fast; China chose to use coal to restart the economy and even here in the UK people have been encouraged back into their cars and away from public transport. The opportunity for a green recovery has been largely lost, but you can't be disheartened, it doesn't help. Climate change is a problem created by people and so we know how to solve this, we have the knowledge and the tools to do it. We have all the technology, and it has all come down in price. We know what we need to do – we need to eat less meat, throw away less stuff, own less new stuff and we need to be fairer with how we organise our society. It is a soluble problem, it just needs us to think and do it.

Camille: I feel very positive about the conversations I'm having at the moment with the College and the University in general about



Fiona and Camille in First Court.

governance. There are lots of positive things happening, and things are moving in the right direction. The landscape at the University in terms of sustainability is changing a lot. I came up to Christ's right after the big divestment campaign which is now in progress, Christ's has committed to full divestment in fossil fuels by 2030. There is a lot more awareness now; it feels like a pivotal moment to keep the momentum going. Lots of practical things being done in College; as well as changes in buildings and maintenance, we've recently changed the meal booking option so that it is vegetarian by default, you now need to scroll down to opt into the meat or fish option. It's things like this that will help us to continue to move in the right direction.

COLLEGE SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVES

The College continues the work on its commitment to a more sustainable future. The Estates Strategy and Environmental Policy Committee, under the Chairmanship of Professor Ian Leslie, is developing a comprehensive Sustainability Strategy to present to Governing Body, proposing a 30% reduction in our carbon emissions by 2030, on the journey towards net zero carbon.

There are currently a number of sustainable initiatives underway; not least, in the impressive work being done on the new Yusuf Hamied Court on King Street. The building itself is made from CLT – a timber frame which has a 25% reduction of the build's CO₂ impact, and will lock away 2 years worth of the College's CO₂ equivalent within its structure for hundreds of years. The building does not rely on gas for its heating source; air source heat pumps will be used instead. Solar panels on the roof will complement the air source heat pumps, and a planning application has been submitted for solar panels to be installed on the roof of the New Court Building.

The College has completed a number of other energy improvement programs including improved LED lighting, and fitting one hostel with an air source heat pump to name but a few.

We continue to work with the student body to gain a Green Impact award via many small, but important, actions being taken throughout the College – all in all numbering over one hundred in total. More electric vehicle charging points are being installed and there is a more sustainable focus on the food being served in College, and we are working with suppliers to reduce packaging and waste.



Stay connected

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

2022

2 JULY

Association
Dinner

3 JULY

Family Day

10 SEPTEMBER

Reunion Dinner
for years up to
and including
1963, and 1972

16 SEPTEMBER

Reunion Dinner
for years 1979
and 1980

24 SEPTEMBER

Reunion Dinner
for years
1985–1989



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