



IN CONVERSATION
WITH ARDON PILLAY

A NEW CHAPTER:
THE LIBRARY+ PROJECT

SPOTLIGHT ON...
CRICKET



Pieces

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welcome

FROM THE MASTER

Welcome to the Spring issue of *Pieces*.



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Two and a half years into my time as Master, Governing Body has agreed a revision of the College strategy. The new version rests squarely on the old one: we remain an institution dedicated to academic excellence, balanced between study of the humanities and social sciences (on the one hand) and science, maths, and engineering (on the other); we

also aim to maintain our present size. When preparing the draft strategy, I talked to all Fellows; I was struck by the near consensus about what we stand for and how we should change.

So, the strategy reaffirms our desire to attract and support students who may find it difficult to even entertain the possibility of a Cambridge education – particularly those from under-represented groups and regions within the United Kingdom, and those affected by war and humanitarian crises around the world.

It commits the College to long-term sustainability objectives, such as achieving carbon neutrality before the University's target of 2048. This will be accomplished through an ambitious programme of works that include the de-gasification of the kitchens, the installation of solar panels and heat pumps, and the refurbishment of several of our buildings to improve insulation.

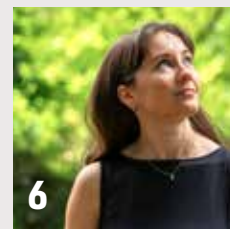
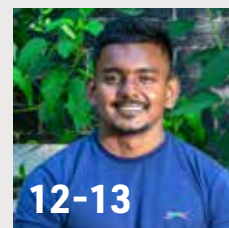
The most ambitious of these works is replacing the College's working library and opening up Bath Court. Last Spring, the Fellowship chose Grafton (a Dublin practice) as the architects for the project. Over the last twelve months, they have refined the design which won the competition. I believe they are fulfilling the brief – to provide us with a beautiful, durable and practical building worthy of the historic setting in which it will stand. The centrefold of this issue of *Pieces* provides more detail.

Elsewhere in the issue, the team has interviewed students past and present whose passions will, I hope, spark wider interest: Jemma Jeffery has been working with schoolchildren to produce visualisations of birdsong, while Ardon Pillay has been undertaking an intercalated PhD as part of his medical training. Via a short piece on cricket at Christ's, featuring Gilbert Jessop (who swung his bat more than a century ago) and Dihan Udugampola (our recently graduated wicketkeeper), we round off the edition with an interview with historian Esme Smith, who has been working at Lutyens' Thiepval Memorial in Picardy.

I conclude by reminding the readership that 'once a Christ's person, always a Christ's person': do come back and see us at a reunion event or by exercising your life-long dining rights at High Table.

McDonald of Salford

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FRONT COVER IMAGE: 3D rendering of the new College Library, Grafton Architects

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Our first event of the year saw alumni gather in London for *Christ's at the Crick*, an exclusive and unique event celebrating and exploring the brain. The evening featured a private view of the Hello Brain! exhibition, plenty of conversation and a panel discussion between Dr **Camilla Nord**, **Kara Gnodde** and Professor **Kate Watkins**. Fascinating insights were shared into how biology can explain mental health, how grief and love are processed in the brain, and even the role of laughter as a communication device during arguments with partners! The formation of the Crick was heavily influenced by Christ's Honorary Fellows Professor **Jim Smith** and Professor **Keith Peters**, so it was a very special occasion to gather with so many alumni at the iconic Institute.



Running from July to November at the Fitzwilliam Museum and co-curated by Christ's Fellow Professor **Caroline Vout**, the exhibition *Paris 1924: Sport and the Body* explored how the

modernist culture of Paris shaped the future of sport and the Olympics we know today, through an eclectic collection of art, fashion, film, photography and more. Caroline mused, "If anyone had told me, even five years ago that I would be curating a show on sport I would not have believed them. (Yet) Art and sport need not be separate spheres. Rather, as the ancient Greeks knew very well, sport is more than exercise, it is culture."



Following on from their audio biography of Winston Churchill, Professor **David Reynolds** and alumnus **Russell Barnes** (m. 1987) have released the second season in their *Creating History* podcast series. The twelve episodes in *Summitry* take us behind the scenes at pivotal meetings that shaped history, beginning with first episode on 'Peace for Our Time' which invites listeners to step into the high-stakes world of 1938, where peace in Europe hung on a series of summits between Adolf Hitler and Neville Chamberlain, culminating in the notorious Munich Agreement. You can listen via @Creating_Hist on X or Instagram.

news

Researchers including Christ's Fellow and ornithologist **Daniel Field** have identified an almost intact complete skull of the *Navaornis hestiae* from the Mesozoic Era. The bird lived approximately 80 million years ago in Brazil, before the mass extinction of all non-avian dinosaurs, and fills a 70 million year gap in our understanding of how the

brains of birds evolved. The group's work, combined with advanced visualisation and analytical techniques, have revealed fundamental insights into the origins of birds, the most diverse group of living vertebrate animals. About the discovery, Daniel said: "This might be just one fossil, but it's a key piece in the puzzle of bird brain evolution".





In November, current choir members and alumni came together to celebrate the 40-year anniversary of Professor **David Rowland** as Director of Music. Taking place at Great St Mary's, the musical celebration featured choir and solo performances of Parry's *I was glad* and Handel's *Zadok the Priest* alongside instrumental accompaniment from alumni and students. We welcomed over 100 choir alumni back to Cambridge for the special occasion. David remarked, "The concert went every bit as well as I thought it could and I was very touched by the number of people who wished me well on this 40th anniversary. I look forward to future events with singers and instrumentalists who have studied at Christ's."



Housekeeper Joyce, who currently looks after the 3rd floor of New Court, is celebrating her 30-year anniversary working for Christ's. She said: "My mum was at Christ's for 25 years and for a while we worked together. I've actually been here for over 30 years, but with career breaks to look after my children. I came back permanently when my youngest child started school. It's all gone so quickly!". Joyce's photo was taken by Martin Bond to recognise her 25-year anniversary in 2020; it can be found along with photos of other long-serving staff members on the ground floor of the Todd Building.

The Christ's University Challenge team has taken no prisoners in recent matches against St Edmund Hall, Oxford; Imperial College London and the University of Warwick. Captained by biologist **Oscar Despard**, the team members were all undergraduates at the time of recording. Alongside Oscar, they are: **Anniko Firman** (Classics), **Linus Luu** (Mathematics), **Brendan Bethlehem** (Linguistics and Egyptian), with **Ari Vladimir** (History and Modern Languages) as the reserve. With their successive victories they have reached the semi-finals, due to air in April. You can catch up with all episodes on BBC iPlayer.



Congratulations are in order for **Elvis Addai**, a second-year undergraduate studying Law at Christ's, who was part of the squad which won the Rugby Union Varsity Match against Oxford on 8 March, at the StoneX Stadium in London. The team clinched a brilliant 35-28 victory over their dark blue rivals. When he's not on the field, Elvis currently serves as the Secretary of Christ's Law Society. Other Varsity competitors this year include third-year History PhD student **Joe Robertson**, Vice Captain of the Cambridge Rugby League team, and **Alisa Kinaret**, who will be turning out in the Women's Football match.



ONCE A WINKER...

In 1955, the Cambridge University Tiddlywinks Club was co-founded by Christ's alumni **Bill Steen** and **Lawford Howells**, with their pals **Peter Downes** and **Brian Tyler** also joining in its earliest days. Seventy years on, **Bill**, **Lawford** and **Peter** returned to the College to flex their skills and reminisce about where it all began.

As self-confessed 'hopeless athletes', the Club's founders formed the club to be in with an outside chance of winning a coveted Cambridge 'Blue', with **Bill** saying: "the sportsmen were the real stars so we decided our best chance was to invent our own sport – and preferably write the rules too."

Having gone the extra mile and written both a thesis on the game's mechanics and an anthem to be played before matches, the friends' exploits – according to **Bill** – "practically cost us our degrees". **Lawford's** results were similarly impacted: "I got a 2.1 and sometimes wonder if I might have got a First had we not got carried away with all the attention."



The attention was indeed far reaching, with the club challenging celebrities and even royalty to matches. One such challenge was accepted when, in 1958, Prince Philip responded to a request for him to compete by appointing the comedy group *The Goons* as his champions at a Royal Tournament, held at a sellout Cambridge Guildhall. The match was won by the Cambridge 'winkers', who were awarded a well-deserved quarter-Blue for their efforts.

Today, the Club still competes in the British Universities Championship that first took place in 1961, with teams vying for the Silver Wink. Its ongoing popularity has certainly surprised **Bill**, who said: "Over two thousand students have played Tiddlywinks – it's absolutely extraordinary. The real joke is that we started this just for fun!"



CALL OF THE WILD

Musician Jemma Jeffery's compositions have addressed environmental themes including climate change and plastic pollution – her latest project examines the topic of birdsong.

Against a backdrop of growing concerns about children's engagement with nature, Jemma's MPhil project marked the merger of her interests by examining the visual representation of birdsong, and how youngsters make sense of the world around them. "I've always been interested in the environment more broadly, but I chose to gravitate towards birdsong as one of the archetypal sounds of the natural world – it's been described for centuries as the voice of nature itself. What I was exploring were the different ways of visualising birdsong, and how these visualisations could be made more interpretable for children. Over the course of the project I gradually realised how the act of producing these visualisations might also represent an exercise in closer listening, encouraging a greater connection to nature through sensory engagement.

"The first section of my thesis looked at how historically we've represented birdsong, from the field guides of the late nineteenth century that used traditional musical notation to 'transcribe' the different calls, through to graphic scores and spectrograms, which plot sonic frequencies against time. One of the earliest uses of the spectrogram in birdsong research was here in Cambridge, by the zoologist William Homan Thorpe, who set up the University's Ornithological Field Centre in Madingley. Thorpe was not only a keen birder but also an excellent musician, and his scientific recordings are peppered with little musical notes."

"THE OTHER OUTCOME THAT I HADN'T NECESSARILY EXPECTED WAS HOW MANY OF THE CHILDREN MADE AN EFFORT TO PERSONALISE THEIR DRAWINGS, EITHER REPRODUCING A MEMORY OR SOMETHING FROM THEIR IMAGINATION."

As part of her research, Jemma went into a primary school and worked with groups of Year 6 children: "I started by playing a range of sounds to get the children accustomed to the recordings and to help them think more closely about what they were listening to. Not all of the sounds were birdsong – an audio clip of R2D2 from Star Wars fooled quite a lot of them! Once they were comfortable, we considered some examples of how you might more creatively represent sound to imply different meanings, looking first at a medieval love song *Belle, Bonne, Sage*, which is written in musical notation but in the shape of a heart, then György Ligeti's abstract score for *Artikulation*.

"When it came to the task of visualising birdsong, I left the task as open-ended as possible, giving the children the option to choose their drawing materials and to listen to the recording as many times as they wanted. I'd chosen two extracts – one of a song thrush and the other of a chaffinch – the latter influenced by Thorpe's famous study of chaffinch song at the Ornithological Field Station.

"Although notation and spectrograms are useful for scientific research and in comparing species, part of the principle

behind my project was to promote slightly slower and deeper engagement. For that reason, in my extracts I decided to retain the contextual background sounds rather than isolate the birdsong, to avoid the detached, clinical feel that 'cleaned up' audio can have."

After each drawing was finished, Jemma would take time to talk with the children about the different features they'd depicted, and why they'd chosen to represent the sounds in a certain way. What kind of things did they come up with?

"There were four main themes that I found interesting. One concerned the form that the drawings took, and although a few children represented the sound in abstracted, swirling patterns, the majority chose to draw what were effectively sound waves, with peaks to mark each chirp in the extract, and troughs representing moments of quietness. What was very pleasing was that when I created spectrograms of the extracts and laid them over the children's drawings, a lot of them fitted perfectly.

"The use of colour was also striking: colours would not only be used to naturalistically represent the imagined environment, but also commonly used to express emotions. In that way, yellows and pinks were often chosen to reflect happiness, while red might be deployed for moments of intensity or loudness, and blue for calmness and stillness. Additional layers, too, were often used to connect the birdsong to its environment, and it was interesting how many of the children chose to include those background sounds – trickling water or a gust of wind – even imagining a whole other context and environment in which the sound was situated.

"The other outcome that I hadn't necessarily expected was how many of the children made an effort to personalise their drawings, either reproducing a memory or something from their imagination. Sometimes this would mean that the sound waves would be coming out of a bird's mouth, but it was interesting that a number of the children would also draw themselves into the picture as well. One very charming example was that of a child who drew himself and his family at Center Parcs, with the figure of his dad holding a pair of binoculars looking at a bird in the tree that was merrily singing away. It felt like a way of making the sounds relatable to themselves and their own understanding, and although there was inevitably some in-group copying, all of the children had very good justifications for making the decisions that they had."

With the project at an end, has Jemma found that her own relationship with nature has changed in any way? "Absolutely. I hadn't quite anticipated how the act of visualising itself might become more important than the resultant representation, and it's definitely made me think more carefully about how I would visualise sounds that I hear when I'm out and about, and how I could incorporate nature into my work as a composer."

Jemma Jeffery recently completed her MPhil in Music at Christ's, supported by a William Barclay Squire Studentship.

A NEW CHAPTER: THE LIBRARY+ PROJECT

Alumni who have visited Cambridge in recent years will know that the College has embarked on an extensive programme of renovation in First Court in order to conserve the historic fabric of what is the oldest part of Christ's, and to introduce sustainability measures where appropriate in these Grade 1 listed buildings.

When the work has been completed, we will see a Court that has been fully re-roofed with like-for-like slate tiles quarried in Collyweston, the Northamptonshire village where our founder Lady Margaret Beaufort established a palace in the late fifteenth century.

Our next significant challenge is to tackle one of our newest but most problematic buildings – the College Library – and the associated spaces that form a key part of life at Christ's: the kitchens and Upper Hall. Growing out of a master planning exercise undertaken in 2022, the Library+ Project represents the most significant building project on the

College site for over 30 years. The challenges the project aims to address include:

- The working library, built in the 1970s is, quite literally in some places, falling down. It has insufficient and impractical working space for students and staff.
- The kitchens are in significant need of refurbishment, and we wish to remove all gas as part of our commitment to reach carbon net zero.
- Upper Hall, the main student dining space, is too small and has no proper access for those with mobility needs other than the catering lift in the kitchen.
- The courtyard outside the library, Bath Court, is dark and dank, with uneven levels rendering the space all but unusable.
- The frontage to Christ's Lane formed by all these buildings is unsightly – it is not the welcoming face we wish to put to our local community and our visitors.

Following an architectural competition in 2024, we are delighted that RIBA Stirling Prize winners Grafton Architects have been appointed to design the new Library and reconfigured kitchen and dining facilities. The Dublin-based firm was founded by Yvonne Farrell and Shelley McNamara in 1978, with both women selected as the 2020 Pritzker Prize Laureates, the award known internationally as architecture's highest honour.

In their designs, Grafton have created an environmentally and historically responsive set of new spaces taking inspiration from the original use of Bath Court as a walled kitchen garden, along with the College's Darwinian heritage. They have also followed a design lead from other narrow lanes in Cambridge, characterised by tall chimneys on the boundary wall. Developed in close consultation with students, staff, Fellows and our alumni panel, the latest designs include:

- A beautiful, light-filled library, with more space for books than the current library and a range of 150 study spaces, representing an increase of 100% on the status quo. The link through to the Old Library will be maintained, and this space will be brought back into use as study space for postgraduate students.
- Outdoor terraces, and a beautifully landscaped Bath Court, including outdoor seating for the Buttery.
- A larger, airy Upper Hall, with an extension that can be, in periods of peak demand such as exam term, opened up as additional study space accessible from the library.



- Modern kitchens, pleasant for our catering team to work in and free from gas.
- Lift access to all areas, several of which are currently inaccessible, including Upper Hall and the OCR.
- A focus on sustainability, in material choice, design and approaches to lighting, heating and ventilation.

Put simply, the project will transform what is an unloved and disjointed corner of the College into an elegant and inter-connected environment in which our students can study effectively and live collegially. With RIBA Stage 3 complete, and planning permission submitted, we aim to start construction in July 2026 for a two-year period. We'll be keeping you updated at every stage of the process; if you'd like to know more, please do get in touch!



IN CONVERSATION WITH... ARDON PILLAY



Singaporean medical student Ardon Pillay is currently taking time out from his pre-clinical studies to undertake a PhD in Immunology. We caught up with Ardon to find out more about his experiences of the course and how he's been finding his feet with life in research.

"Within the first two years you cover a lot of the basic underlying science of medicine: the physiology of how the human body works, the underlying biochemical reactions that go on in individual cells, and how drugs affect different systems in the body. I found that I really enjoyed getting into the nitty-gritty science of things – of knowing *why* and *how* more than *what* – and I felt that the core structure of the course allowed me to engage with that. Then in my third year I specialised in pharmacology, which was a lot of fun. It was all about systems and how they work, and what the latest thing is in the field for how you can advance human health, which I found incredibly rewarding."

Being able to delve more deeply into the science behind disease was therefore something of a natural step for Ardon, but has meant that he's had to leave behind – albeit temporarily – some of the aspects of clinical work that he enjoyed: "It probably sounds like I'm romanticising, but I love the element of patient communication because at its heart it just seems like an utterly human endeavour. As a doctor you're in a very privileged position with your patients and it's your duty to do right by them, but I also really like having the one-to-one communication, forming those bonds and relationships, and being able to actually do something positive for an individual."

For the next couple of years, however, Ardon will be firmly focused on his PhD research, based in the Roychoudhuri Laboratory in the Department of Pathology. He explains his area of enquiry: "In essence, if you were to get a cold, you know you'd likely be better within a few days – the reason being that your immune system has the capacity to recognise the pathogen that's invaded and can eliminate it. This principle of recognition and elimination relies on the fact that the pathogen is not you, and your body can see that it's not you. But cancer is not you either, so the question is why the immune system is not as good at recognising cancer as it is at recognising a pathogen. And cancer has a way of trying to subvert the immune system and to stop it from being able to eliminate it."

So what I'm looking at is: what is it that tumours seem to produce and secrete into the fluid that surrounds them that seems to impair an immune response against them? To investigate this, I'm removing genes individually from each immune cell that I'm testing, and then I'm subjecting each of those immune cells to the fluid from the tumour and then testing whether they can still activate. If the immune cell can activate with the tumour fluid, that suggests that the gene I've taken out might be playing a role in how the fluid is acting to shut down the immune system. We're doing this on quite a large scale where we're 'knocking out' 20,600 genes, using a pool system to identify which gene knockouts mean the immune cells can activate."

What are the most significant challenges Ardon has been facing in his doctoral work? "A big problem was initially getting to grips with some of the more basic stuff in the lab – finding equipment, setting up experiments and getting to grips with new techniques. You're surrounded by people who are steeped in the culture of research, whereas I felt like a bit of a neophyte coming in, and wasn't able to be as quick at analysing data. So that made me a bit worried and gave me slight imposter syndrome; it was like being a fresher all over again. But then you realise that developing that kind of understanding takes time and you can be at peace with the fact that there's a trajectory which you're likely to follow."

"IDEALLY WHAT I'M HOPING IS THAT WE'LL FIND SOME NEW MECHANISM BY WHICH THE TUMOUR FLUID SUPPRESSES IMMUNE CELLS. IN A VERY BLUE SKY WAY OF THINKING, IT'D BE GREAT IF THAT WOULD BE SOME KIND OF SYSTEM WHICH WE COULD EITHER TREAT WITH AN EXISTING DRUG, OR FOR WHICH WE COULD DEVELOP A NEW DRUG TO USE IN COMBINATION WITH EXISTING IMMUNOTHERAPY."

Before he returns to his clinical studies, what is it that Ardon's hoping to achieve by the end of his doctorate? "Ideally what I'm hoping is that we'll find some new mechanism by which the tumour fluid suppresses immune cells. In a very blue sky way of thinking, it'd be great if that would be some kind of system which we could either treat with an existing drug, or for which we could develop a new drug to use in combination with existing immunotherapy. There's a lot of research that's been done on cellular therapy, such as the adoptive transfer of CAR T cells and the 'supercharging' of T cells, but these are prohibitively expensive and their success is a lot more variable than you generally find with traditional drugs and immunotherapy. So I'm quite married to the idea that having a single drug that can be used in combination with existing drugs would be very good in terms of overcoming resistance, and for patients that are not responding to conventional treatment."

I also think it's important to increase our overall arsenal of drugs that we can use to treat cancer, because it would be great to have a future where cancer is treated as a chronic disease rather than as a death sentence. We're able to do that with diabetes, or with high blood pressure – where people are able to treat their conditions with medication over long periods and manage them in a way that doesn't cause any discernible problems. My hope is that we can do something like that with cancer, ideally by using the immune system, enhanced with immunotherapies, as a way of keeping it in check."

Having trained as an accountant at the University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Christ's student Dihan Udugampola recently completed a Master's in Finance at the Judge Business School. When he wasn't learning about financial markets, modelling and macroeconomics, Dihan could often be found donning his gloves and pads as one of the University's most talented cricketers. Before he finished his course, he told us a little more about his love of the game:

"I grew up in coastal Sri Lanka playing cricket on the beach, and it was only when my school's cricket coach saw me playing one day that he invited me to come and try out for the team. My mum was quite excited and bought me the equipment I needed, and she would help me with my cricket bag as I was too small to carry it! I started as a medium-pace bowler but because I was quite small in stature my coach suggested I try wicketkeeping, and since then that's what I've done. I won a few best batsman and best fielder awards in school tournaments in Sri Lanka, then played for my university team and captained my company side."

Making the move to Cambridge, Dihan has continued his cricketing career, turning out for both the College and the University sides as a wicketkeeper-batsman. "There have been some real highlights, including scoring a half-century in my first Blues game for Cambridge, and playing in the Crusaders Varsity match, which was the first time I'd played a three-day game. There were two of us from Christ's in that match – Harris Wood and myself – and we won, so we had a pretty good day! I also played in the Thirds Varsity

50-over match in Oxford, where I scored 93, and the next day I opened the batting in the T20 Varsity game and scored 59."

Outside of cricket, Dihan has taken the opportunity to immerse himself in the life of the College and try out another sport that Cambridge has to offer: "I'm the only student at Christ's from the Business School this year, so I consider it a real privilege to have been admitted. I love it here; everyone's really friendly and I can't express how wonderful the experience has been. I've met so many friends through the MCR, where I do some shifts on the bar, and through the Boat Club too – for whom I rowed in both the Lent Bumps and May Bumps, which was great fun. I'd never rowed before, so the Boat Club has taught me everything I know!"

As for what's next, Dihan is hoping to find work in London and continue his financial career there. But what about his cricketing aspirations? "I've been playing for Alleen's Cricket Club in the Surrey Championship, and once I move to London we'll see. What's certain is that I'll be continuing to play for someone!"



PUSHING THE BOUNDARIES

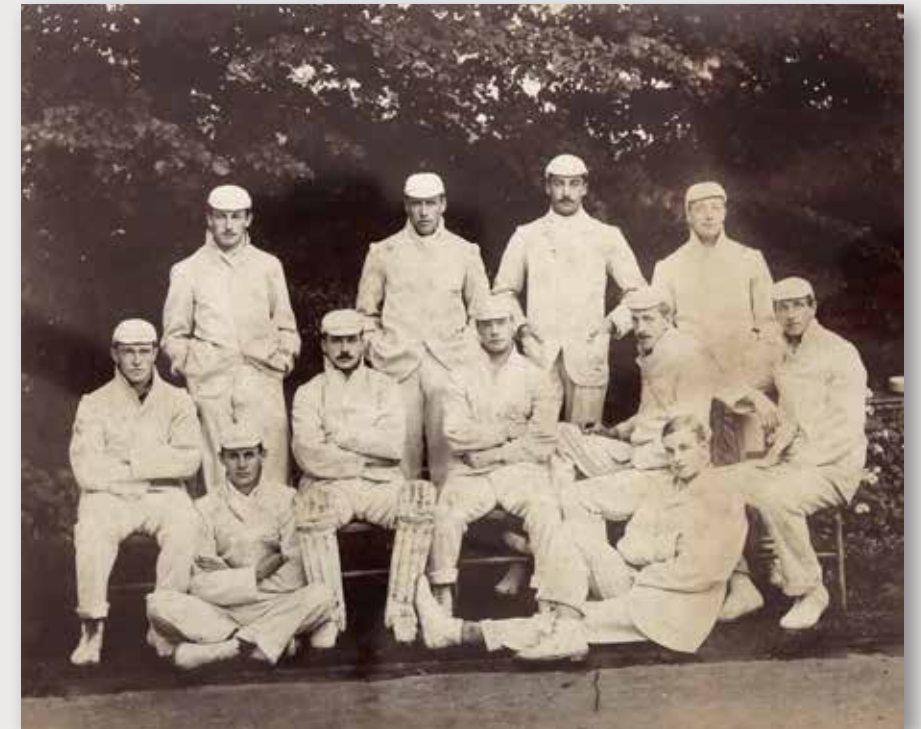
2024 marked the 150th anniversary of without doubt the most decorated cricketer to come out of Christ's, Gilbert Laird Jessop.

Jessop was born in Cheltenham in 1874, and after showing promise as a youngster, joined the ranks of Gloucestershire CCC while working as a schoolteacher. His first-class debut gave some indication of his prowess and personality: he came into bat facing a hat-trick ball and, rather than defending his wicket, struck the delivery to the boundary for four runs instead.

By the time he arrived in Cambridge in 1896, Jessop had developed a reputation not only as a swashbuckling batsman, but also for his bowling and fielding abilities. It was a reputation which he immediately justified, scoring 102 in the Freshmen's match in just over an hour, displaying his characteristically low stance that earned him the sobriquet 'The Croucher'.

Jessop spent four years in the University team and was made captain in 1899, while also demonstrating his abilities in other sports; he obtained his Blue as a hockey goalkeeper, turned out for The Casuals in football, played rugby on the wing for Gloucester R.F.C., and only missed out on the Varsity billiards match on account of being gated! Yet cricket remained his strongest pursuit, and in his final year at Cambridge Jessop was selected for the first of his eighteen Test matches for England.

The 1900 season proved to be a particularly memorable one for Jessop, scoring 2210 runs and taking 104 wickets, in doing so becoming only the third player ever to score 2000 runs and take at least



Jessop (seated in the centre on the bench) and the University Cricket team.

100 wickets in one season – a feat previously achieved only by WG Grace and CL Townsend, both also of Gloucestershire. The rapidity with which he scored runs – often at rates of around 100 runs an hour – made him popular with spectators but the scourge of opposing bowlers. The fastest of his 53 first-class centuries was his 101 against Yorkshire at Harrogate in 1897, an innings which lasted only 40 minutes – in an era when clearing the ropes counted as four, and only clearing the ground counted as six. The Yorkshire bowlers had particularly good reason to resent Jessop, as he scored six centuries against them – more than against any other team.

The match which cemented Jessop's fame was in 1902, when England played Australia in a Test match at The Oval. There, in conditions favouring the bowlers, England had been set 273 to win, only to lose their first five wickets for 48. With

the outcome seemingly a foregone conclusion, Jessop joined Stanley Jackson at the crease and proceeded to score 104 runs off 76 balls in an hour and a quarter, twice sending the ball onto the roof of the pavilion, thus turning the game on its head and paving the way for an improbable one-wicket England victory.

After that so-called "Jessop's match", he continued to play for England until 1909, when a back injury sustained while fielding resulted in a lengthy layoff. Jessop still regularly turned out for Gloucestershire, however, until the outbreak of the First World War, during which he served as Captain in the Manchester Regiment until being invalided out with a damaged heart in 1918. After his death in 1955, Jessop's influence was summarised by cricket writer Harry Altham, who remarked that "no cricketer that has ever lived hit the ball so often, so fast and with such a bewildering variety of strokes".

Q&A WITH ESME SMITH

During the summer of 2024, History graduate Esme Smith completed a three-month internship with the Commonwealth War Graves Commission at the Thiepval Memorial to the Missing in Picardy. While she was still in France, we spoke to Esme about her experiences during the programme.

HOW DID YOU COME TO TAKE PART IN THE INTERNSHIP PROGRAMME? DID YOU KNOW MUCH ABOUT THE COMMONWEALTH WAR GRAVES COMMISSION BEFOREHAND?

My great-great-grandfather served in the Lancashire Fusiliers and is buried at Sucrerie cemetery just north of where I'm working, and last September I went to visit his grave with my parents. I knew he was buried out here but I didn't know much about the role of the Commission, and hadn't really considered who looks after the graves, but having visited I was amazed by the level of care and attention that was being given, and knew it was something I'd like to get more involved with. My mum spotted that the summer programme had been advertised, so I applied and was interviewed, and ended up coming out to France in July. I'm mostly based at the Thiepval Memorial, representing the Commission by giving tours and answering visitors' questions, as well as conducting some research on the side.

COULD YOU GIVE US A POTTED HISTORY OF THE THIEPVAL MEMORIAL – WHY AND WHEN WAS IT BUILT?

The construction of the Memorial began in 1928, ten years after the end of the war, and was finished in 1932. It was designed by Edwin Lutyens, whose other buildings include the Cenotaph in London, and was built primarily to commemorate the men who died on the battlefields of World War I whose bodies were never recovered, either because there were no bodies to recover, or because they'd

been buried in an unmarked grave. In total there are more than 72,000 names inscribed on the Memorial, along with a Stone of Remembrance in the middle, bearing the biblical words "Their Name Liveth For Evermore". The words were suggested by Rudyard Kipling, whose only son John had died at the Battle of Loos – his body wasn't recovered until more than half a century later, so there was a very personal connection for Kipling.

WHO'S THE AVERAGE VISITOR TO THE MEMORIAL; HAS ANYTHING STRUCK YOU ABOUT THE RANGE OF PEOPLE COMING TO SEE IT?

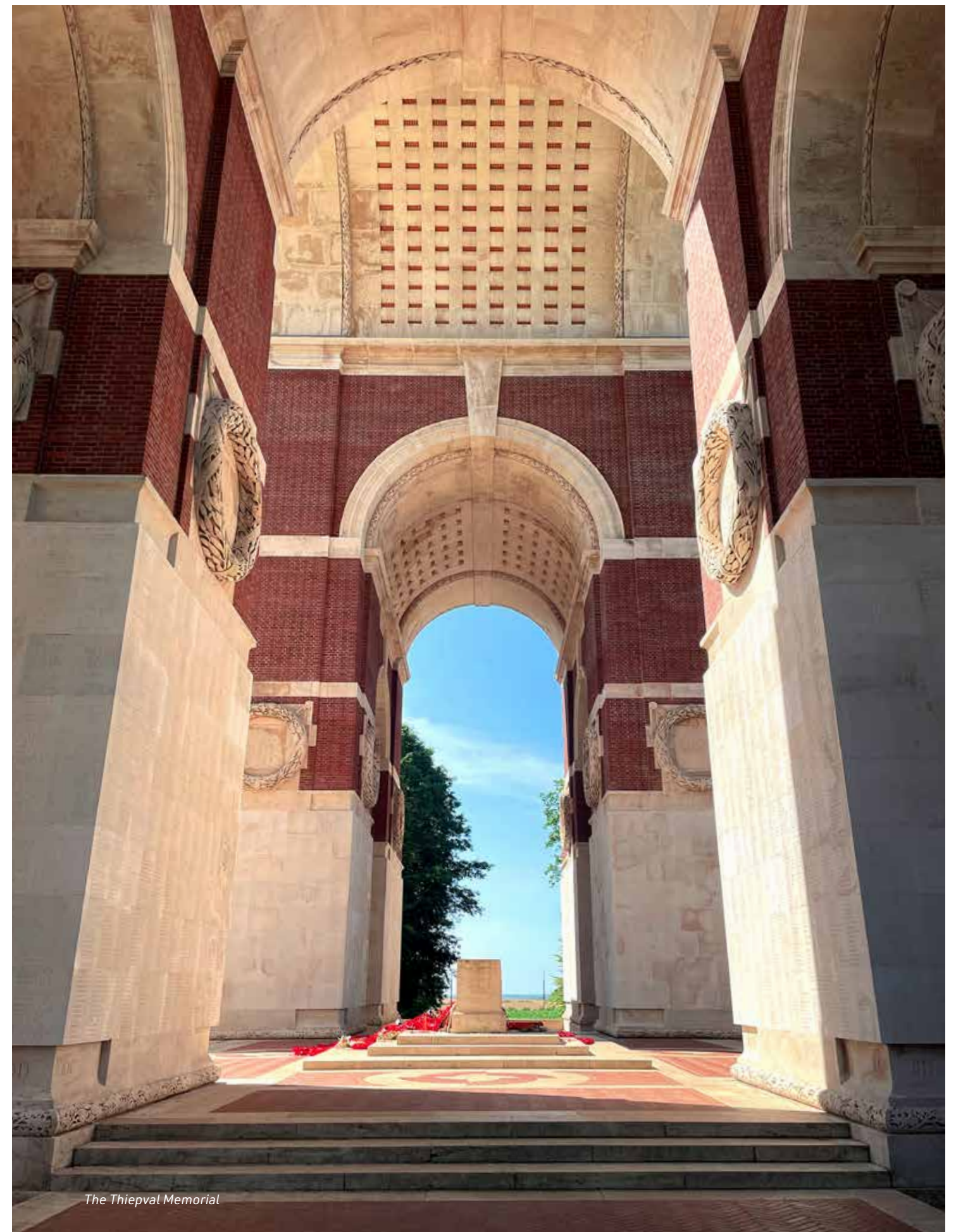
It's a really interesting mix; I'd expected the visitors to be predominantly British but there are also lots of French visitors, as well as Canadians, New Zealanders and Australians, and occasional Germans and Americans too. I'm told there's been an increase in visitors this year, probably because of the 80th anniversary of D-Day and lots of people making the trip to Normandy for the commemoration events there. Some are ex-servicemen, others are taking part in bike tours or on caravan holidays, and of course there are quite a few school groups – but the thing that's consistent is that everyone's always really respectful and polite.

YOU MENTIONED YOU WERE DOING SOME RESEARCH ALONGSIDE YOUR ROLE AS A GUIDE – COULD YOU TELL US MORE?

When I'm not at Thiepval I'm undertaking research into some of the medical officers listed on the Memorial, researching their responsibilities within their battalions and finding out anything I can about their personal lives. We're then compiling the research into articles and social media posts, and I've even done a few pieces to camera.

MONUMENTS, MEMORIALS AND OTHER SITES OF MEMORY LIKE THIEPVAL CAN PLAY A SIGNIFICANT ROLE IN HOW WE BOTH REMEMBER AND UNDERSTAND HISTORY – WHAT DO YOU THINK THEIR IMPORTANCE IS AND WHAT WILL BE YOUR MAIN MEMORY FROM YOUR STINT THERE?

It feels really important to have a physical memorial to remember these men by, and to remind us of the devastating impact of war. On a personal level, when you're here and you're talking to people every day who are looking for their family member, you realise that each individual name is a person with their own life story to be told, and that's very powerful.



The Thiepval Memorial

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DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

2025	26 APRIL Head of the Cam and Boat Club Dinner	19 JUNE Alumni Evensong	21 JUNE May Bumps Picnic	28 JUNE Association Dinner (open to all alumni and guests)	29 JUNE Fisher Society Lunch	5 JULY Old Members Reunion Lunch for 2011–2015 matriculants
	6 JULY Family Day	6 SEPTEMBER Reunion Dinner for all matriculation years up to and including 1965, and 1975	20 SEPTEMBER Reunion Dinner for 1970–1974 matriculants	26–28 SEPTEMBER Alumni Festival (across Cambridge)	27 SEPTEMBER Medics' Dinner and CCMAA Conference	1 DECEMBER Christmas with Christ's

2025–2028		JULY REUNION	FIRST SEPTEMBER REUNION	SECOND SEPTEMBER REUNION
	2025	2011–15	Up to and including 1965, and 1975	1970–74
	2026	1968–70 and 1977–79	Up to and including 1966, and 1976	1980–84
	2027	1985–89	Up to and including 1967, and 1977	1990–94
	2028	1995–99	Up to and including 1968, and 1978	2000–05



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