

# Somerville<sup>2013</sup>

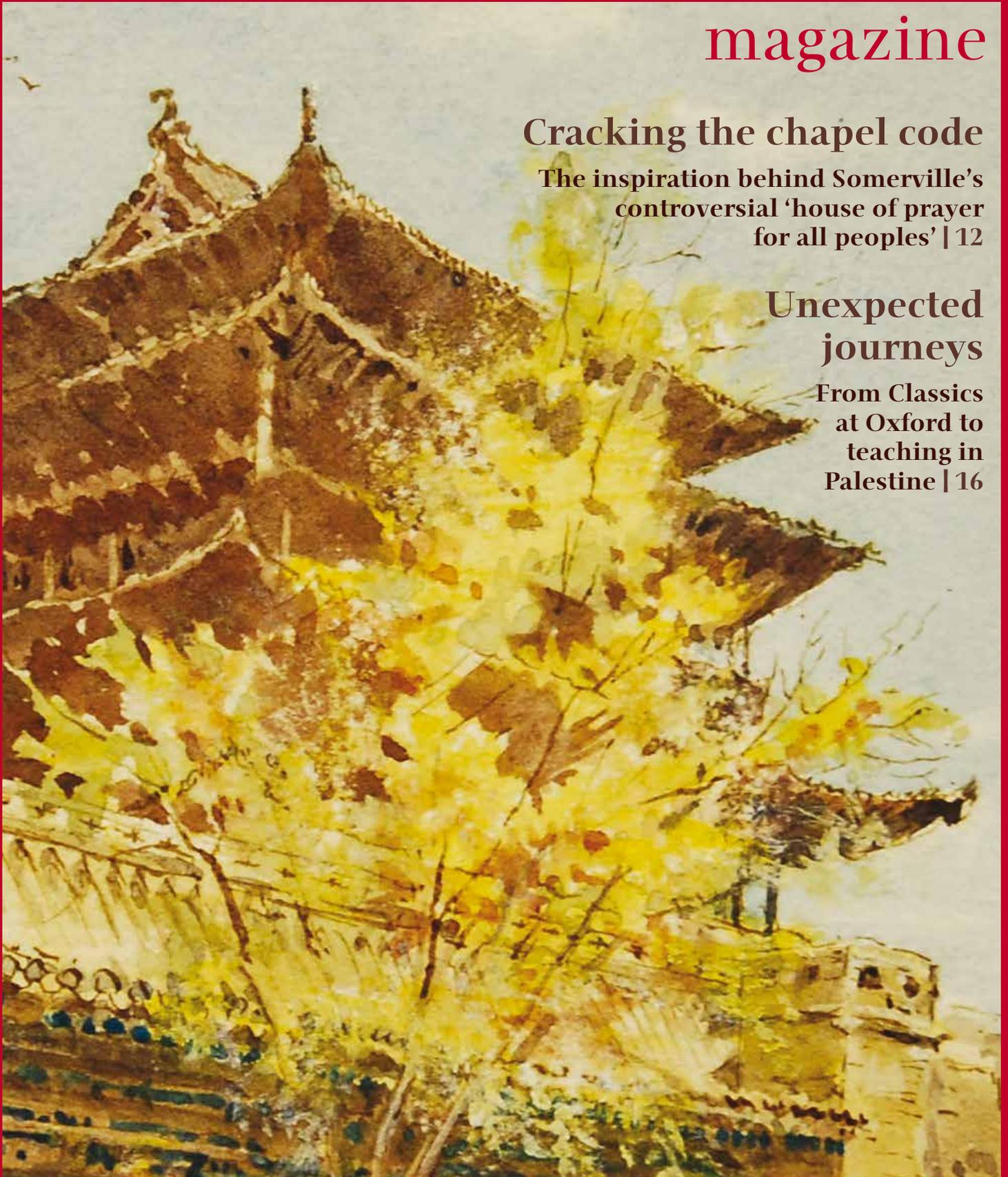
magazine

## Cracking the chapel code

The inspiration behind Somerville's controversial 'house of prayer for all peoples' | 12

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From Classics at Oxford to teaching in Palestine | 16



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## An update to our database: moving to the Development & Alumni Relations System (DARS)

Somerville, in common with several other colleges, will this year transfer to a new database system, DARS. This system holds the details of alumni, students, staff and friends previously held in separate alumni and development databases of the University and the participating colleges. More colleges are joining and the result will be a single, comprehensive database allowing, on a regulated basis, colleges, faculties, departments, administrative units, international offices, recognised alumni societies, and sports and other entities associated with the University (the 'Participants'), access to all the data held in it. We hope that this will lead to the details of our alumni, students, staff and friends being kept more up to date and that it will help improve our communications with you.

For past and present members of Somerville, we and any other college you may have affiliations with are still your primary contact within the collegiate University; the use of DARS is not changing this. Included with this magazine is a sheet containing the full details of this move.

Please note that your data will continue to be held securely. For full details on the way in which your data will be held and used, please see the Privacy Statements at:

**[https://www.alumni.ox.ac.uk/data\\_protection](https://www.alumni.ox.ac.uk/data_protection)**

(or get in touch at the address below to request a hard copy).

If at any time you have any queries about the use of your personal data in DARS or wish to change the fact of, or extent of, use of your personal data, please contact Sara Kalim, Development Director, at the address or email below.

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Front cover image: 'Taichow Chapel' by E.G. Kemp. Watercolour, courtesy of Ashmolean Museum.

Magazine committee: Elizabeth Cooke (Secretary to Somerville Association), Amy Croweller (Access and Communications Officer), Antoinette Finnegan (Annual Fund and Alumni Relations Officer)



ALICE PROCHASKA

# Principal's Message

Somerville certainly packs an ambitious array of special meetings and events into the year. This issue of the Magazine records its fair share of regular events, all extremely well attended.

The winter meeting this year heard from the Somervillian who has been described as Karl Lagerfeld's muse, Amanda Harlech of Chanel. We combined the meeting with our second annual Parents' Day, filling the newly refurbished Flora Anderson Hall to capacity. The European Oxford alumni reunion, which happens once every two years, met this year in Madrid, and Somerville's dinner at the Ritz was among the best attended of all the colleges' dinners.

Events organised by particular groups are often especially successful. The Somerville London Group's tour and dinner at Strawberry Hill House in Twickenham was sold out, on a beautiful summer day. A City Group meeting at Goldman Sachs headquarters in Fleet Street heard from Honorary Fellow Baroness Shriti Vadera about the Eurozone crisis, and she later visited the College to talk to students about her career and her own economic vision. I always enjoy these smaller meetings where students have a chance to engage in lively debate with role models from previous generations.

A concert in aid of our campaign to endow fellowships in Philosophy and French at the Ashmolean Museum in November heard a beautiful programme of baroque music for voice and lute, sung by Dame Emma Kirkby (also an Honorary Fellow) with lutenist Jakob Lindberg. Our Philosophy Fellowship has now been endowed in perpetuity, thanks to the generosity of many Somervillians, and to one in particular who gave the largest lifetime gift yet received from any of our alumni, but wishes to remain anonymous. In March, Somervillians in Scotland crowded into the Edinburgh drawing room of Foundation Fellows Sir Gerald and Lady (Margaret) Elliott for a talk by another Honorary Fellow, Professor Carole Hillenbrand, on the historic clashes between Muslims and Christians in the Middle East. We had the added attraction of a talk about Mary Somerville by our Librarian Anne Manuel. It was a revelation to most of us that the long-lived Mary Somerville (1780-1872) was not only a renowned scientific writer in her day but also an accomplished painter.

Honorary Fellows provide something of a theme for the year. So many of them give so much to Somerville, and this year we were especially fortunate to bring some twenty-five of them together for a

symposium and dinner to discuss the future of the College and to meet some of our current students. They included an ambassador, entrepreneurs, the writers Victoria Glendinning and Hilary Spurling, and senior stateswoman Baroness Shirley Williams. The theme that took up most of our discussion time was that of access for people from disadvantaged backgrounds. Widening access to Somerville is a constant aim of the College (as of all Oxford colleges); and it takes up an increasing amount of time. The Honorary Fellows produced some fertile ideas and, in a brief round-up of career trajectories, some truly inspiring life stories.\*

If the Somerville year belongs to one Honorary Fellow more than any other, it has to be Margaret Thatcher. Her death on 8 April was a national event. Together with two students, I represented the College at her funeral. Back in Oxford, the College screened the BBC's live coverage for a group of staff, fellows, alumni and students. I found myself reflecting how extraordinary it was that this great ceremony, attended by the Queen and all the nation's leading politicians, presided over by the Bishop of London and Archbishop of Canterbury, was for the first non-royal woman ever to be so honoured. So controversial and so dominant in life, this most famous of Somervillians earned at her death the ultimate and most sober tribute. How did she do it? What combination of her nature and her education equipped her to hold the office of British prime minister for longer than anyone else in the twentieth century, and to become so world-renowned? Baroness Thatcher was always generous in her praise for the education Somerville had given her ("If I had not been there I would not be here" she wrote from 10 Downing Street). Somervillians have been writing to the College with a range of responses to her death, from admiring to hostile and mostly in tones of moderation, with a perspective lent by the passage of time. Perhaps there is in all of us a grain of that determination and that hard learned courage, which people find they can admire even across great distances of experience and belief.

*\*The Principal's blog (<http://principal2010.wordpress.com>) contains my Foundation Day speech to students, for which the Honorary Fellows' dinner provided inspiration.*

# News & People...

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Margaret Casely-Hayford



Anna Poole

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## Somerville News

### **Professor Aditi Lahiri,**

Fellow and Professor of Linguistics, has been elected an honorary member of the Linguistic Society of America.

### **Professor Matthew Wood,**

Fellow and Tutor in Medicine and Physiology, will lead a new 30 million Euro project to develop new methods for drug delivery.

The project has been launched by a new public-private consortium (known as COMPACT), funded by the Innovative Medicines Initiative (IMI) of the EU, and will focus on improving the delivery of biopharmaceutical drugs.

Professor Wood says that this important project is “a vital opportunity to bring the strengths of academia and industry together to dramatically improve the delivery of new drugs into the brain. Within five years we aim to have safe and effective new methods available to test in patients.”

A major challenge in treating many currently incurable neurological diseases, such as Alzheimer’s, is to achieve effective drug delivery to the brain across the blood brain barrier (a natural barrier that protects the brain). The new IMI project aims to tackle this challenge within the next five years.

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### **Professor Dame Nancy Rothwell**

was named in February as one of the 100 most powerful women in the UK in the BBC Radio 4 Woman’s Hour Power List.

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## Alumni News

### **Farah Bhatti (1984, Physiology) and Dina Medland (Kapur, 1977, PPE)**

both appeared on this year’s Asian Women of Achievement shortlist. Farah was the first female consultant cardiothoracic surgeon in Wales, and the fourth woman in the UK to hold such a role. Dina is a journalist who contributes regularly to the Financial Times and the FT-NED website, among others, is a columnist for Chartered Secretary magazine, as well as writing a popular blog on boardroom issues.

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### **Dr Doreen Boyce (Vaughan, 1953, PPE)**

has been awarded a Lifetime Achievement Award by the Three Rivers Chapter of the National Association of Corporate Directors (NACD). This award was given to her in recognition of her leadership in corporate governance and women’s advocacy and for her role in creating three well-respected organisations, including the Three Rivers Chapter of the NACD, the Executive Women’s Council and the International Women’s Forum.

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### **Margaret Casely-Hayford (1980, Law)**

has been appointed as a Non-Executive Director of the NHS Commissioning Board by the Government. The Board has responsibility for overseeing the effective, efficient and appropriate use of the £95 billion budget for commissioning services for the whole country. It’s a great privilege for Margaret to have been asked to join the Board, particularly at a time of great change for the NHS, as the Minister transferred power and oversight responsibility for the NHS to the Board in April this year.

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Martin Roe



Dame Lucy Neville Rolfe

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### **Anna Poole (1988, Law)**

was appointed QC in September 2012.

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### **Martin Roe (1997, Classics)**

wrote and co-produced *Buzkashi Boys*, which was nominated for an Academy Award in the Short Film (Live Action) category. *Buzkashi Boys* also won the Jury prize for Best International Short Film at the Raindance Film Festival and the prize for best drama at the LA Shorts Fest.

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### **Tessa Ross (1980, Oriental Studies)**

received the Outstanding British Contribution to Cinema Award at the BAFTA Film Awards in February 2013 and was also named among the 100 most powerful women in the UK in the Woman's Hour Power List.

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### **Joanna Haigh (1972, Physics) and Julia Yeomans (1973, Physics)**

have been elected to the Fellowship of the Royal Society, the national Academy of science in the UK.

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## **Somervillians recognised by Queen's Honours**

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We are delighted to congratulate the following Somervillians on their New Year's and Queen's birthday Honours:

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### **Eleanor Fuller**

**(Breedon, 1972, Modern Languages),**

formerly UK permanent Representative to the Council of Europe, an OBE for services to human rights and diplomacy.

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### **Joanna Haigh**

**(1972, Physics),**

Professor of Atmospheric Physics, Imperial College London, a CBE for services to Physics.

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### **Dame Lucy Neville-Rolfe**

**(1970, PPE),**

a DBE for services to industry and voluntary service.

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### **Alison Wolf**

**(Potter, 1967, PPE),**

a CBE for services to education.

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# From the JCR President

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**I**t has been a wonderful year for the JCR. We began very positively with a wonderful freshers' week which introduced a new group of very vibrant and eager students to Somerville. Our gym was refurbished and Governing Body very kindly approved the building of a new social hub which will be instrumental in strengthening our community and bringing the JCR and MCR closer together. During the year, the JCR voted unanimously in support of high table after a lengthy discussion about its symbolic importance and worth, we voted to seek College approval to have a tortoise as a College pet and, for the first time in recent memory, we had a very controversial referendum concerning Meat-Free Mondays. This referendum drew College-wide involvement and eventually resulted in a compromise – we now have 'More-Veg Mondays'.

We have a fantastic JCR executive made of students who are so hard working and so selflessly devoted to making the JCR's undergraduate experience the best that it can be. I must particularly mention our incredible College welfare and peer support teams which have no equal in Oxford. The JCR executive is very proud of this year as it has been marked by a significant increase in involvement and interest in college life and thus a heartening sense of togetherness and Somerville in unity.

Somerville students continue to shine in all aspects of University life. We have a very healthy pool of University sports players including Beth Debenham, who captained the Oxford Women's Lacrosse team to victory in their varsity match, and Alex Probodziak and Julia Skisaker, who are captains of the University Athletics and University Women's Football Clubs respectively. Somerville is strongly represented in University news by a number of students including Alis Lewis, who has recently become the news editor of OxStu. Somervillians are climbing the ranks of both OUSU and the Union and we also have a very large group of students who are involved in the Arts. Furthermore, Somerville has a very strong team in for University Challenge, with Michael Davies, Sam Walker and Chris Beer from the JCR. This will be something to look out for this summer.

Our boat club has also been moving from strength to strength. After minimal water training time due to poor weather, our crews 'smashed and dominated' at Torpids. The first women's boat bumped four times under captain Laura Jennings, and the first men's boat, captained by Tom Loveluck, rowed convincingly to blades and into division two for the first time. Sophie Phillbrick also rowed for the Oxford women's lightweight against Cambridge, winning of course.

All of this wonderful news shows why Somerville topped the barometer for student satisfaction last year. Somerville students are very proud of their College and so thankful for all the opportunities the College presents them with to maximise their potential in academic and extra-curricular endeavours.



This year's JCR President, Marsha Sudar (2011, Physics and Philosophy)

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Trinity term saw our glorious quad transformed for our Triennial Somerville-Jesus Ball with many students and alumni coming together to celebrate our College identity. With prelims and finals at this time of year, our library is, as ever, filled with students working diligently for their examinations.

It has indeed been a wonderful year. But as always at Somerville, one does not know what further excitement and challenge the next year will hold. Perhaps the best is yet to come.

# Commemorating

## Somervillians who have died (as of 6th June 2013)

*This year Somerville's Commemoration Service was held in the College Chapel on Saturday 8th June. This important event in the College calendar underlines the enduring relationship between Somerville and its former members. All Somervillians are welcome to attend the annual service. The service opens with the traditional words of the College Bidding Prayer, in which we commemorate the College's founders, governors and major benefactors; it ends with the solemn reading of the names of members of the College and its staff who have died in the last year.*

*If you know of any Somervillians who have died recently but who are not listed here, please contact Liz Cooke at Somerville College, Woodstock Road, Oxford OX2 6HD. Email [elizabeth.cooke@some.ox.ac.uk](mailto:elizabeth.cooke@some.ox.ac.uk) or telephone 01865 270632*

**\*to be commemorated in 2014**

### Honorary Fellows

Rachel Jean <b>Banister</b>	(Fellow 1951-1984; Emeritus Fellow 1984-2013) on 15 February 2013	Aged 95
Nina Mary <b>Bawden</b> (Mrs Kark)	née Mabey (1943; Honorary Fellow, 2001) on 22 August 2012	Aged 87
Professor Dame Louise <b>Johnson</b>	(Fellow 1973-1999; Honorary Fellow 1990) on 25 August 2012	Aged 71
Olive <b>Sayce</b>	(Lecturer 1946-62; Research Fellow 1962-65; Fellow 1965; Emeritus Fellow, 1990) on 25 February 2013	Aged 90
Margaret Hilda <b>Thatcher</b>	née Roberts (1943; Honorary Fellow, 1970) on 8 April 2013	Aged 87

### Alumni

Hilary May <b>Alpin</b>	(1933) on 14 February 2013	Aged 98
Annette Claire <b>Baier</b>	née Stoop (1952) on 2 November 2012	Aged 83
Marie Louise Sidney <b>Beesley</b>	née Woolf (1943) in November 2012	Aged 87
Janet Elizabeth <b>Bouri</b>	née Powell (1954) on 3 January 2013	Aged 77
Hilda Betty <b>Buddle</b>	née Staple (1937) on 30 April 2012	Aged 92
Bridget Rosemary <b>Burge</b>	(1956) on 10 May 2012	Aged 74
Elizabeth Mary <b>Clarke</b>	née Potter (1940) on 18 May 2012	Aged 90
Rita Harriet <b>Cornforth</b>	née Harradence (1939) on 6 November 2012	Aged 97
Kathleen Elizabeth (Liz) <b>Daunton</b>	(1937) on 31 October 2012	Aged 94
Alison Gwen <b>Davies</b>	(1950) on 14 May 2012	Aged 80
Margaret Joan <b>Dawes</b>	née Monk (1936) on 16 June 2012	Aged 93
Brenda Mary <b>Duncombe</b>	(1934) on 8 February 2013	Aged 98
Marianne <b>Fillenz</b>	(1950) on 15 December 2012	Aged 88
Margaret Ann <b>Finer</b>	née McFadyean (1946) on 9 September 2012	Aged 87
Sarah Louise <b>France</b>	née Charlton (1980) on 25 April 2012	Aged 50
Andrée <b>Gibson</b>	née Welch (1935) on 20 June 2012	Aged 96
Aelfhryth Georgina <b>Gittings</b>	née Buzzard (1958) on 31 December 2012	Aged 73
Elizabeth Eve <b>Hawkins</b>	née Sowerby (1934) on 12 November 2012	Aged 96
Susan Jacqueline <b>Hicklin</b>	née Cox (1935) on 22 December 2012	Aged 96
Lucienne Marie <b>Hill</b>	née Palmer (1941) on 29 December 2012	Aged 89
*Hazel Christine <b>Hoffman</b>	née Gill (1943) on 27 May 2013	Aged 87
Margaret Howell <b>Jepson</b>	née Gwyther (1943) on 21 October 2012	Aged 86
*Mary Jennifer <b>Kearsley</b>	(1949) on 23 May 2013	Aged about 83
Jennifer Lilian Margaret (Jenny) <b>Knauss</b>	née Dobbin (1955) on 11 June 2012	Aged 75
Christina Anne <b>Le Prevost</b>	(1962) on 7 July 2012	Aged 69
Pamela Frances <b>Liebeck</b>	née Lawrence (1949) on 3 July 2012	Aged 81
Virginia Rose Cecilia <b>Luling</b>	(1957) on 7 January 2013	Aged 73
Leila Rebecca <b>Mizrahi</b>	née Dagut (1944) on 7 June 2012	Aged 86
Beryl Reid <b>Mustill</b>	née Davies (1950) on 18 February 2012	Aged 79
Jennifer Margaret <b>Newton</b>	née Clapham (1961) on 2 March 2013	Aged 76
Margaret Anne <b>Oddie</b>	née Timmis (1950) on 28 July 2012	Aged 80
Joan Mary <b>Paddon</b>	(1934) on 4 February 2013	Aged 96
Alison Anne <b>Palmer</b>	née Oates (1969) on 7 December 2012	Aged 61
Vivien Alice Maud <b>Pilton</b>	née Cox (1930) on 26 September 2011	Aged 99
Zaïda Mary <b>Ramsbotham</b>	née Megrah (1943) on 17 March 2013	Aged 87
Betty <b>Robbins</b>	née Spice (1943) on 14 March 2013	Aged 87
*Moiria Enid <b>Rowland</b>	née Armstrong (1945) on 8 May 2013	Aged 85
Shirley <b>Shea</b>	née Ashton (1952) on 7 December 2012	Aged 78
Catherine Anne <b>Stoye</b>	née Wells (1947) on 12 June 2012	Aged 83
Deborah <b>Thornton</b>	née Jackson (1952) on 28 July 2012	Aged about 79
Audrey Geraldine Northcliffe <b>Verity</b>	née Stokes (1939) in May 2013	Aged 93
Rosemary Ethel <b>West</b>	née Lambert (1948) on 2 February 2013	Aged 84
Moira Jill <b>Worthy</b>	née Woodhead (1950) on 28 September 2012	Aged 80
Jean <b>Wright</b>	née Atkinson (1949) on 9 January 2013	Aged 80
*Mary Margarite <b>de Zouche</b>	(1942) on 22 January 2013	Aged about 89

# Fellow Profile: Professor Jennifer Welsh

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Jennifer Welsh, Professor in International Relations, is a core member of Somerville's PPE team. Her research interests lie at the intersection of ethics and armed conflict, with a particular focus on the United Nations Security Council, the practice of military intervention, and the evolving principle of the 'responsibility to protect'. She currently co-directs the Oxford Institute for Ethics, Law and Armed Conflict (ELAC).

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DAVID RAILTON (2009, PPE)



Over the last few years, Jennifer has become one of the foremost authorities on the Responsibility to Protect, a political commitment undertaken by heads of state and government at the UN World Summit in 2005.

Jennifer Welsh's office is a long Maitland room. In winter, the single glazed windows mist up, with the plush student-friendly sofa draped with scarves and shawls. In summer, light rushes in from main quad, picking out lettering on the cluttered shelves and ring-bound papers on the low coffee table. On one shelf sits a block of dull concrete, a couple of inches across. It's a piece of the Berlin Wall.

As is often the case in a tutorial, the story behind this object emerged tangentially. The discussion had been ricocheting around; from the Arab Spring, to the role of NATO, to the last wave of democratisation to sweep across a region. Jennifer gestured to the unremarkable lump of rock, which had gone unnoticed despite a term of study. 1989 was during her first spell at Oxford; a Canadian from the University of Saskatchewan, she had taken up a Rhodes Scholarship to pursue first an MPhil then a DPhil in International Relations.

Caught in the midst of research, Jennifer had immediately perceived the importance of the events in Hungary and Czechoslovakia which precipitated East Germany's Peaceful Revolution. After a quick trip to the student travel agency, she had jumped on a plane to Berlin with a group of friends as the demolition began. Along with many thousands of Germans, she became part of *die Mauerspechte*: the wall woodpeckers, carrying off a trophy to commemorate the historic event.

Jennifer has not been afraid to travel with her work. She has held a number of distinguished posts in universities across the globe. In Florence, she was a Jean Monnet Fellow of the European University Institute, whilst she has spent periods lecturing on International Relations in Canada, at the University of Toronto and McGill University, as well as in Prague, at the Central European University. Nor has she been confined to academia. For a time she was a Cadieux Research Fellow in

the Policy Planning Staff of the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs and she continues to act as a consultant for the Canadian Government on international affairs. Her influential book *At Home in the World: Canada's Global Vision for the 21st Century* was recognised by the Canadian Political Science Association and has ensured her a place as a frequent foreign policy commentator in Canadian media. Jennifer's advice is not sought purely in Canada though; she has also consulted for the UK Government and the US-based Aspen Institute. This work, together with appearances in the British media, has been centred around her latest field of interest: humanitarian intervention.

Jennifer had immediately perceived the importance of the events in Hungary and Czechoslovakia which precipitated East Germany's Peaceful Revolution.

Over the last few years, Jennifer has become one of the foremost authorities on the Responsibility to Protect, a political commitment undertaken by heads of state and government at the UN World Summit in 2005. R2P emerged at the confluence of several debates in international relations over the nature of state sovereignty, the responsibilities of the international community in the face of mass atrocities, and the role of the UN as a co-ordinating and legitimating body. Jennifer has written at length on each of these strands, co editing *The United*

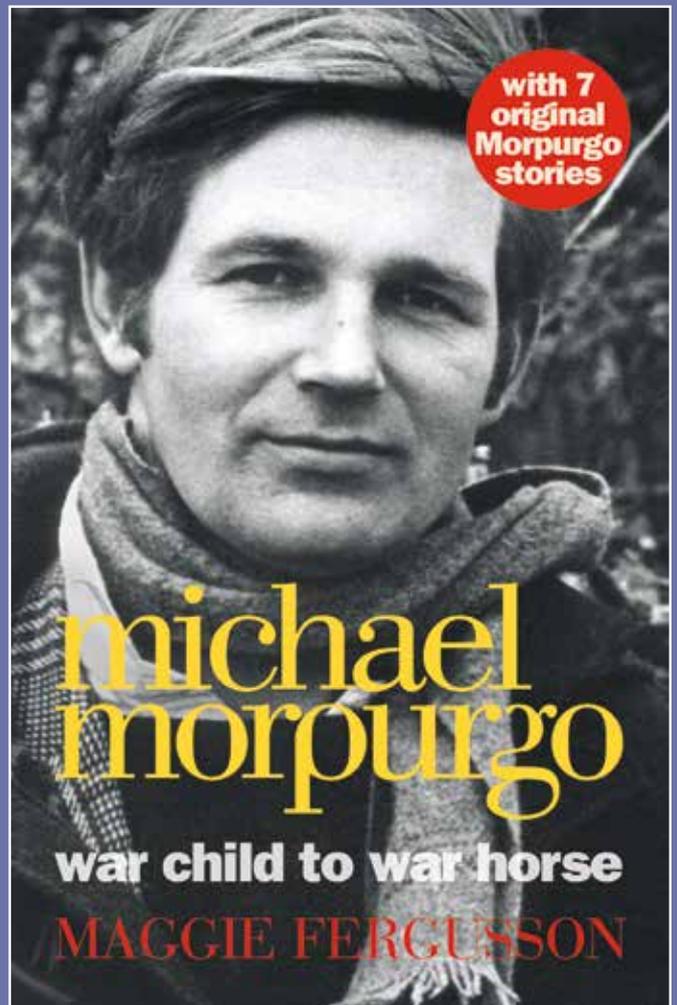
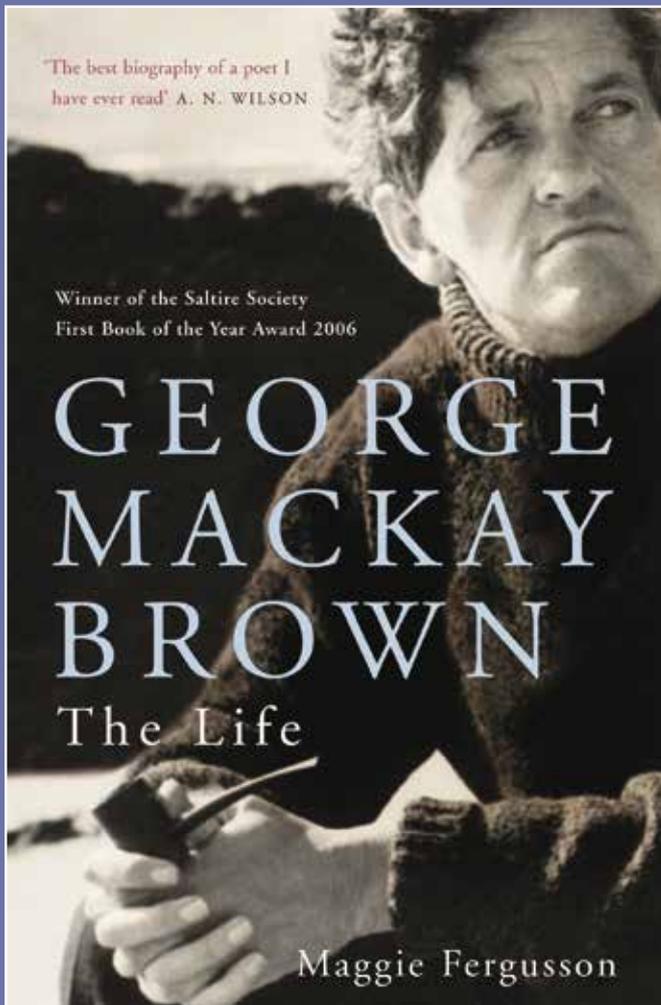
*Nations Security Council and War* in 2008 and more recently helping to contextualise the intervention in Libya. Returning to Oxford fitted seamlessly with these interests. As well as joining Somerville as a Fellow, Jennifer became a Professor of International Relations and a Co-Director of the Oxford Institute for Ethics, Law and Armed Conflict, ELAC ([www.elac.ox.ac.uk](http://www.elac.ox.ac.uk)). The Institute's mission is to investigate how a combination of laws, norms and institutions might restrain armed conflict in the modern world, an ever pressing fear given the inter-state and intra-state violence which has wracked regions of the world since the wall fell and the Soviet Union unravelled.

Side by side with her loaded research, Jennifer is a prominent figure in College. There is more than a little irony that I was not introduced to Jennifer the scholar of international law, but Professor Welsh, the arbiter of Somerville discipline. Thankfully, I seldom met Jennifer wearing her Dean hat (well, Dean gown and Dean frown). When we did meet, it was more likely to discuss the minutiae of the next Bop. I joined my peers in seeing Dr Welsh as a figure of unrivalled fairness. Notably, she more or less dispensed with fines, preferring a 'community service' approach to student misbehaviour, which both humbled students and gave the scouts a helping hand. Still, Deanhood was just a passing phase in her relationship with Somerville. Instead, it is the PPEists who undoubtedly carry away the richest experiences. Jennifer declaiming animatedly at the lectern in South Schools; Jennifer waving jugs of orange juice at that awkward first freshers' drinks; Jennifer's unfailingly blunt one line emails. And Jennifer standing at the white board in her Maitland office, drawing coloured circles for the schools of Realism and Liberalism, and breaking off into tangents. Even with three students, the squashed sofa offers warmth and comfort. But they're all on the edge of their seats.

## Author Profile:

# Maggie Fergusson

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Maggie Fergusson (Parham, 1983, History) is Secretary of the Royal Society of Literature and Literary Editor of *Intelligent Life*. Her first book, *George Mackay Brown: The Life*, won the Saltire First Book Prize, the Marsh Biography Award, the Yorkshire Post Book of the Year Award and the Scottish Arts Council Biography Award. She was awarded an MBE for services to literature in the 2012 New Year's Honours list.



“Don’t go into a bank, and turn money into more money.” That was Daphne Park’s advice to us as we prepared to leave Somerville in 1986, and I’m afraid I ignored it. Getting a job in the City was too easy. A CV and an interview (these were conducted in twin-bedded rooms in the Randolph Hotel) were enough to secure a starting salary beyond undergraduate dreams. But after a few weeks analysing the building sector for a pension-fund-management firm, I wished I’d listened to Daphne.

There’s not space here to explain how I escaped from that chrome-and-glass powerhouse by London Bridge to the Royal Society of Literature. Suffice it to say that in the RSL’s gracious, dilapidated, Bayswater home, wonderful things began to happen. On the dusty shelves of the first-floor library, I discovered the work of the Orkney poet George Mackay Brown. The imagery was dazzling – fresh, yet so true as to seem almost inevitable. Lovers at harvest time lay under the “battered bannock of the moon”; sunset drove “a butcher blade in the day’s throat”. He wrote fiction as well as poetry, I discovered, and he had a new novel coming out. *The Times* agreed to send me north to interview him.

Suffice it to say that in the RSL’s gracious, dilapidated, Bayswater home, wonderful things began to happen.

It was June, so Orkney was spilling over with light, and George Mackay Brown was perhaps the wisest, wittiest and most gifted man I had ever met. For the next few years, I seized every opportunity to return, to get to know him and his islands better. Then in 1995, the summer before he died, he agreed I should write his biography.

How do you tell the story of a man who scarcely travelled, was never involved in scandal, and who doggedly dodged the literary limelight? A fortnight after George’s death, in Edinburgh University Library, the librarian handed me a box, previously unopened, containing hundreds of letters. They were from George to his muse, Stella Cartwright, and they revealed a love that had endured, through thick and very thin, over a quarter of a century. I had never read a correspondence so moving. A central part of George’s life began to emerge from the shadows; others followed. The biography took shape.

That book was such a labour of love I thought I’d never write another. Then, shortly after its publication, the children’s writer Michael Morpurgo bounced into my life, and asked if I would write about him. So, a completely different project – a living subject this time, and a born showman, but with his private demons, just like George.

What next? I’m not sure. Twenty-two years on, half my week is still devoted to the RSL, and shortly before she died Daphne Park visited us to address the question “How Real was James Bond?”. She received a standing ovation. Helping her into her car afterwards, I reminded her of the careers advice she’d given us so many years before. “Ah,” she said, fixing me with those kind, beady eyes. “I hope you all realised how much I loved you.”

# Cracking the

DANIEL MOULIN, Chapel Director

It is no secret that the chapel caused controversy when it was built. Less well-known are the origins and meaning of the building: the vision of an eccentric Somervillian whose forward-thinking proposal of a 'house of prayer for all peoples' has perhaps only just come of age.

The story of the chapel begins with the journeys of its donor, the adventurer, artist and writer Emily Georgiana Kemp (1860-1939). Kemp, a Baptist from a wealthy industrialist family, was one of Somerville's first students (1881-1883). Studying at the Slade School of Fine Art after leaving Somerville, Kemp then spent a lifetime travelling, writing, sketching and painting in China, Korea, India, Central Asia and the Amazon. Often intrepid, she was awarded the 'grande médaille de vermeil' by the French Geographical Society, and made a Fellow of the Royal Scottish Geographical Society.

Kemp's journeys are documented in her books: *The Face of China* (1909), *The Face of Manchuria, Korea and Russian Turkestan* (1910), *Wanderings in Chinese Turkestan* (1914), *Chinese Mettle* (1921) and *There followed Him, women* (1927). These travelogues show her preoccupation with the welfare and education of women, and the role of women in religion.

Letters in the College's archives indicate how Kemp's experiences travelling inspired her vision for the chapel. The diverse religions and cultures she encountered, and the Christian faith of her travelling companions, had a powerful impact upon her. Consequently, she developed a belief in the universal good will that united, and was common to, people of all religions and nations.

Kemp's career also brought her into contact with some of the most progressive religious thinkers of her day. One of her friends was the theologian Marcus Dods, who, like Kemp, was interested in the relationship between Christianity and other religions. Kemp's circle also included H.

N. Spalding, the eccentric explorer Sir Francis Younghusband, and the Nobel prize-winner, Albert Schweitzer. Each of these luminaries has a part to play in the story of the chapel. H.N. Spalding, founder of the first professorial chair in Eastern Religions and Ethics in the University (the first incumbent being Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, the second of India) helped with the negotiations between Kemp and the College concerning the donation of the chapel. Schweitzer, at Kemp's request, came to the chapel to advise on the purchase of the organ, while Younghusband, the founder of Britain's oldest interfaith organization, the World Congress of Faiths, arranged for delegates representing the world's major religious traditions to visit it in 1937.

Kemp's proposal for a space for prayer, meditation and spiritual exercises open to those of all nations and creeds affected the design of the chapel. The historian of architecture, Sir Nikolaus Pevsner describes the chapel as 'bleak.' But

simplicity can have meaning. According to Vera Farnell, who dedicated the chapel in 1935, the chapel was intended to be a symbol of 'universal brotherhood.' It was designed by Courtney Theobald who was son-in-law, and business partner, of the architect of the original Wembley stadium, Maxwell Ayrton. Ayrton served as assistant to Edwin Luytens, to whose style the chapel's monolithic design can perhaps be likened.

The interior represents a compromise between a traditional chapel, and the radical concept of a multi-purpose building for use by those of all faiths. The College Council authorized Kemp's chosen biblical phrase 'A house of prayer for all peoples' (Isaiah 56) to be written in Greek on the outside of the chapel. This was meant to indicate openness to those of all religions and beliefs. The engraving in the vestibule dedicating the building to Christ, on the other hand, was placed by Kemp without permission, following a number of disagreements with the Principal, Helen Darbishire.

Members of the College Council were told that the stained glass window designed by George Bell was to be abstract. The window installed, however, shows the resurrected Christ above two female figures dressed wearing chasubles and stoles: one holding the lamp, a symbol of truth; the other a mirror, a symbol of learning. Despite the skepticism of Darbishire and others, Kemp saw no conflict between the chapel's function as a place of prayer for all faiths, and this Christian symbolism. She argued that in all her lifetime of engagement with other cultures, the figure of Jesus was revered by all of the world's religions.



Above: Somerville's chapel today

# chapel code



Above: The 19th century Della Robbia



Above: Emily Kemp during her student days

The chapel holds one further hidden clue that helps us understand Kemp's motivation for donating to Somerville. Tucked behind the arch at the East is a 19th century Della Robbia derived from the Annunciation lunette in the Ospedale degli Innocenti, Florence. The subject of the Annunciation – the divine mission of a woman – was of great significance to Kemp. She saw it as symbolic of the special importance of women in serving God, spreading the Gospel, and liberating other women.

Kemp shared Schweitzer's spiritual appreciation of music, and she intended the chapel to be a place where music could flourish – hence its fine acoustic. But unlike the chapel itself, the chapel organ (Harrison and Harrison, Durham) was not donated by her. When Schweitzer's help proved to be unfruitful, 231 contemporary and prior members of the College, including Dorothy L. Sayers, raised the necessary funds. The fundraisers felt these donations were a way of showing Somerville's thankfulness for the gift of the College chapel.

*Daniel Moulin is Chapel Director at Somerville College and a DPhil Candidate at Oxford University's Department of Education. He would also like to acknowledge the help of The Spalding Trust and the Carmen Blacker Fund in supporting the writing of this article.*

*Daniel would be interested in receiving any Somervillians' recollections of the chapel and its role in college life from any period ([daniel.moulin@some.ox.ac.uk](mailto:daniel.moulin@some.ox.ac.uk)).*

# Make love, not porn



TIM WILLIAMS  
(2010, PPE)  
talks to  
CINDY GALLOP  
(1977, English  
Literature)

## After 38,000 tweets and counting, she can surely lay claim to be Somerville's most prolific tweeter.

We sit down in the Old Parsonage Hotel on Banbury Road and the waiter asks our order. Aware it's late afternoon and my interviewee has already advertised, on Facebook, that she'll soon be mixing martinis with students in the College bar, I hesitantly guess we're going non-alcoholic. Thankfully Cindy Gallop takes charge of a familiar situation. She, after all, is the one who "dates men in their twenties". Tea, scones, jam and "lots of cream" it is.

It's been a big year for the former advertising executive. While she has continued her consultancy work "to pay the mortgage" and ran websites *IfWeRanTheWorld.com* and *MakeLoveNotPorn.com* (MLNP) from her New York base, her workload has been transformed by her new start-up, *MLNP.tv*.

The user-generated crowdsourced site, which for a small fee allows users to watch others' "real world sex" video submissions while encouraging them to also submit videos themselves, launched in the autumn. A powerful message lies behind the video venture: porn, which many now use to begin to find out about sex, is a world away from reality. Her big idea is to "get people talking about sex" and share their experiences – tagline: 'Pro-sex. Pro-porn. Pro-knowing the difference.'

The .com version of her website starkly lays out the differences between the porn and real worlds. The "extraordinary response" to that instilled a feeling of "personal responsibility" to take the idea to a new level.

"We should be able to laugh at ourselves having sex. Real world sex is funny, messy, dirty. It's also responsible." She points out there are no condoms in porn. "I want to make those awkward condom moments hot and arousing."

The site's launch and her ability to give a good quote has not gone unnoticed by the international press, with provocative features in the Mail and Guardian and, to her own surprise, a prime-time television interview on Ireland's RTE.

"I've not been waiting for publicity in the slightest but it's been incredibly easy to get coverage without doing a single piece of media outreach."

"We were going to go live under the radar, to test things out, but it's been great".

As well as leading the business, one of Cindy's and her small team's roles is to "curate" the videos people send in. Only ones which pass certain criteria go up. "I find the right moment of the day – I don't often [watch videos] at breakfast."

“

I feel a lot more in touch now with the rest of the world in the right kind of way.

The journey to launch was tough and at times despairing.

Despite believing she was "an investor's wet dream" with a tech concept designed to disrupt a sector worth billions of dollars in a way both socially beneficial and potentially highly lucrative, it took two years to get funding. At first, "nobody would come near me".

Funding eventually in place, the next problem was accessing it, because no bank accepted business accounts with "porn" in the name. With the likes of Paypal also refusing adult content clients, she directly contacted tech entrepreneurs via Twitter to find a payment system for the site.

As anyone who follows her on Twitter or Facebook can testify, social media is a "seamless" part of Cindy's life. After 38,000 tweets and counting, she can surely lay claim to be Somerville's most prolific tweeter.

It's all part of her self-branding – building on skills she developed at advertising firm BBH but, of course, without the pay packet.

"I'm reinventing myself financially. My old days were high-flying advertising exec. These days it's impoverished start-up entrepreneur. I'm no longer one of the one percent; I'm one of the 99 percent. And I think that's a good thing. I look back at my old life and am horrified at how extravagant I was. I feel a lot more in touch now with the rest of the world in the right kind of way."

I suggest this is all still a long way from tutorials in Maitland and then perilously begin comparing her to an ordinary Somervillian – something which brings out a ferocious support for the College.

"There is no such thing as an ordinary Somerville alumnus," she responds.

"I feel enormously strongly about helping Somerville because I think it has been a fundamental part of helping me to achieve the things I've always wanted to do. I'm a huge believer in giving back, that's why I'm here (to fulfil an invite, from a current student, to speak at a TED conference). I would love to see more alumni really understanding the relevance Somerville still has to all of our lives and doing what they can in their different capacities to help give back."

There is a potential future for her idea in sex education, but although she says she has enough to be getting on with, you couldn't rule anything out if the right business partner came along.

"Everything in my life has been accidental. If you had told me five years ago that one day the leading porn industry trade journal would have Cindy Gallop on its front page, I'd have told you you were joking."

# Unexpected

SUCHANDRIKA CHAKRABARTI (2001, English) talks to  
CARL GIBSON (2006, Classics and Modern Languages)

Carl Gibson, who finished his degree in German and Classics in 2011, is an example of just how far extra-curricular activities can get you.

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Carl has spent much of his time since graduating from Somerville working for the NGO Teach for Palestine, teaching English to schoolchildren in Nablus – a project he initially became involved with thanks to a Horsman Scholarship from the College. And it's not just this financial support that he is grateful for from Somerville: Carl believes that he would not have been able to get such a great start in his dream career of development without the Arabic that he started learning in his spare time there.

Carl was one of the first people from his school (Queen Elizabeth's in Wimborne, Dorset) to go to Oxbridge. His decision to apply was based upon attending a UNIQ Summer School that was hosted by Somerville. He was given a week-long introduction to German during the course, and found that he really enjoyed it.

Although he confesses that he was terrified before he went along, he found that the course debunked the preconceptions he had about Oxford. He found that Somerville was much friendlier than he had expected

an Oxford college to be, and of course, the huge quad was a selling-point for him.

His burgeoning interest in Arabic was nurtured by his German tutor, Almut Suerbaum, who encouraged him to visit the language centre. Carl's interest in Arabic was at first linguistic; having learnt Ancient Greek and Latin from scratch as part of his degree, he was looking for a new challenge. Arabic was topical and sounded interesting, but the political side of things only came to him much later.

Dr Suerbaum noticed his growing fascination with studying Arabic, and introduced Carl to the Modern Languages Faculty's Heath Harrison Travelling

Arabic was topical and sounded interesting, but the political side of things only came to him much later.

Scholarships. The proceeds from the prize enabled him, at the end of his second year, to spend a few months studying Arabic in Cairo. Carl calls the prize “a real godsend,” and even though he found Cairo itself an intense place to visit, he was not put off from visiting the Middle East again. He has been to Jordan, as well as making several trips to Palestine, and would like to visit Syria.

During his degree, Carl spent a year undertaking Middle Eastern Studies in Germany. This introduction to the political side of the language that he found so linguistically fascinating marked a turning point for Carl, convincing him that this was the direction he would like to head in.

After graduating from Oxford in 2011, Carl started on an MA course in Middle Eastern Studies at the University of Reading. He found the shift from Oxford to Reading quite a major one, mainly due to the change in subject matter, but also because he had to leave the tutorial system and all its benefits behind. He found that it prepared him well for a lecture- and seminar-based course, as he was “very used to stepping up and giving [his] opinion.”



# Journeys

“

Things like tear gas and sound bombs were not what I expected to experience. It takes you aback, but you get used to it.



Carl left for Palestine “about four hours after” finishing his Masters. He had become interested in development over the course of his MA, and felt that his knowledge of Arabic would come in useful in a field where many don’t actually speak the language on a colloquial level that would be understood by the locals.

Carl has some fairly harrowing tales of his time in Palestine last year. As he says, “it was a hectic year for Palestine, even by its own standards... we had the bombardment in Gaza.” He found Palestinians surprisingly calm during bombardments, because they have become used to them. However, he did find the situation “exceptionally tense” by last November. There were only around 40 westerners left in Nablus by this stage, and the rioting and bombardment became much more frequent events; as Carl puts it, “things like tear gas and sound bombs were not what I expected to experience. It takes you aback, but you get used to it.”

He found sound bombs, which are used to disperse riots, the most disruptive to his class. The explosion hurts the ears and scared his pupils so much that they’d run off home – “so that was my day done.” Carl says that he and his colleague were so busy that they just worked through the rioting, tear gas, sound bombs and Israeli jets flying low overhead: “aside from that, it was pretty much life as normal for us.”

Now safely back home, Carl is firmly on the job hunt. He would like to move further into development work, and the education system in Palestine remains a focus for him.

Carl would like to say a heartfelt thank you to Somerville for the support, which has been crucial in his education and travels so far.



# Mrs Thatcher's other peculiarity

JILL RUTTER (1975, PPE)

Margaret Thatcher, arguably Somerville's most famous alumna, died in April 2013, aged 87. Britain's first woman Prime Minister was also its first scientist Prime Minister – a fact that has so far gone relatively unnoted by the media. Here, Jill Rutter examines what impact Mrs Thatcher's scientific training at Somerville had on her approach to politics.

A few years ago I was walking back into the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs where I worked, when I met the then Labour Climate Change Minister on the doorstep. He had just had a meeting with the Democrat Senator Barbara Boxer. They had spent much of the time discussing why climate change was a divisive politicised issue in the US, but the subject of bipartisan consensus in the UK, where the world's first Climate Change Act was about to be passed – with only three dissenting votes. He asked me why the politics of climate played out so differently in the two countries. I pointed out that the first leading mainstream politician to take the threat of global warming seriously was a British Conservative: Margaret Thatcher. And perhaps the principal reason for that was that she was not just our only woman Prime Minister, but the only Prime Minister to have studied science at university. Strange enough to have a Somervillian as prime minister – but a Somerville chemist was truly exceptional.

Most of the tributes to Mrs Thatcher focused on her convictions, her courage and the simple fact of her being a woman. But few drew attention to the importance of her scientific training. Former government chief scientific adviser Lord May noted her delight at being made a Fellow of the Royal Society. Her closest ally, Lord Tebbit characterised the “two great influences in her life. One was her scientific training. The other, of course, was her religious belief”. Lord Waldegrave

underlined the point with a story about how Mrs Thatcher used her scientific training not just to see off a proposal for regulation of the coal industry, but to intimidate her German counterpart, on a day when Bonn was suffering from a smog which could have been used to justify the policy change: “‘Now Helmut’, she said to the cowering Chancellor – he was always a little nervous of her, as were others – ‘I will tell you what you have here. You have got an inversion and a smog. If you had proper clean air laws, like we do in England, that would have put paid to all that. I will explain the chemistry to you if you like’. He did not want to know the chemistry”.

**The speeches she made in 1988 to the Royal Society and to the UN General Assembly, warning of the emerging risks of climate change and the need to act, are stunning to read today.**

Some commentators have suggested that it was her knowledge of the reality of scientific research, from her early career as a research chemist, that made her

rethink the role of the state during her years as Secretary of State for Education and Science in the Heath government: by forcing a market approach to science funding which she then extended into other areas as Prime Minister. But climate change was the area where her scientific grasp made a big difference. The speeches she made in 1988 to the Royal Society and to the UN General Assembly, warning of the emerging risks and the need to act, are stunning to read today. Now that there is more of a fissure opening up in the Conservative party over the reality of climate change, there is a debate on whether she would now be siding with the Lawsonian sceptics – but on this, as on other issues of science, she would have gone back to the science, and pride herself on being able to “explain the chemistry”.

However, it is quite hard to reconcile Thatcher the scientist with Thatcher the conviction politician. The current government is commissioning a set of “what works centres” to bring evidence to bear on social policy – part of a move to apply the “scientific method” to policy making. But Mrs Thatcher did not believe her flagship policies were “pilots” or “rebuttable hypotheses”. She believed they were simply the right thing to do, with something like a religious certainty. She was not embarking on a series of incremental changes, whose effects could be isolated in a randomised control trial, but rather was on a mission to convert the country.



The 1943 matriculation year; Margaret Roberts is in the top row, fifth from the right

But her scientific training showed up in a different way. She was much more interested in ideas than any other Prime Minister since, with the possible exception of Gordon Brown. But she was also a very meticulous and methodical Prime Minister. She read her papers thoroughly. She prepared well. She was happy to argue but would take colleagues apart if they did not know their brief (remember, she was a lawyer too) as well as she did. And although she is remembered for bold decisions, she mixed her boldness with

a hefty dose of caution: the privatisation programme started slowly and built momentum over time. She waited until she was ready – and knew she could win – to take on the miners.

One of the contrasts between chemists and PPEists at Oxford is how many hours the former have to put in the lab. That usually keeps them out of university politics. The stakhanovite undergraduate Margaret Roberts made time for both. As Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher was

famously not “for turning”. But she took that chemist work ethic with her too: our only scientist Prime Minister was not for “chillaxing” either.

*Jill Rutter is a former civil servant, now at the Institute for Government. This article is based on a piece originally written for the Institute ([www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk](http://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk)).*



Above and right: Margaret Thatcher and her former chemistry tutor, Dorothy Hodgkin, at the College's 1979 centenary garden party

# FOUR RHODES DIVERGE:

## How four unlikely women became Rhodes Scholars

CLAIRE GORDON

In 1977, it was as easy to picture a Rhodes Scholar as it had been in 1902 when Cecil Rhodes described him. Striding across Christ Church meadows with a book in one hand and a tennis racket in the other, he was the model of a fine mind in a fine body. A Rhodes Scholar was a person of “truth, courage, devotion to duty, sympathy for and protection of the weak, kindliness, unselfishness, and fellowship.” But the first and most essential quality he had to possess was “manhood.”

35 years ago the first female Rhodes Scholars arrived in Oxford. For four of these women in particular, gaining the scholarship was an extraordinary feat they had not imagined possible. Scrappy and working class, two from immigrant families, these young women had hardly heard of the Radcliffe Camera, much less expected to cycle past it in gown and cap.

“It changed my dreams and all the possibilities.”

Ann Olivarius (Connecticut and Somerville 1978)

“It’s transformative when people start taking you seriously.”

Annie Haight (Montana and Somerville 1978)

“[The Rhodes Scholarship] completely changed the trajectory of my life.”

Banuta Rubess (Ontario and St. Antony’s College 1978)

“[Without it,] the world would have been a much smaller place than it has been.”

Nadine Baudot-Trajtenberg (Québec and Brasenose 1978)



## PICKING FIGHTS

In the 60s and 70s, distrusting authority was the zeitgeist. But as teenagers, Ann, Annie, Nadine and Banuta took up this struggle with particular zeal. The status quo had been very unkind to their mothers, and they had no time for it. Three of them were also raised rigidly Catholic, and turned on the church very young. It's probably no coincidence that girls who challenged the order of things in their families and communities would go on to challenge the order of things on many other levels.

At Yale, Ann devoured political and feminist theory. The first test of it came early. During her junior summer, while interning at the Supreme Court, Ann was included in conversations about Nina Totenberg, a rising star of a journalist, who'd already managed to embarrass then president Nixon.

"How can we handle this problem?" Mark Canon, the Administrative Assistant to Supreme Court Chief Justice Berger, asked Ann. One day, a file on Totenberg was given to Ann. It was filled with evidence that Canon was trying to get stories planted against her including some nasty and untrue allegations. They wanted her fired, out of journalism for good, destroyed.

This was actual politics – vivid and real – a life Ann long thought she wanted to pursue. But the slime, the corruption, the self-righteous spite did not figure in the political life Ann had contemplated. She was embarrassed to see the Chief Justice's office conduct itself this way. Before she left the Court, she decided to put whatever gifts she had in service as a lawyer – to protect the Nina Totenbergs of the world.

## BEING WILDLY TRANSGRESSIVE

Teenager Annie had known what it felt like to take a political stand by the time she was 14 and had marched against the war in Vietnam. Although Annie's mother wanted nothing more than to raise a conventional daughter, it was clear this was not going to happen.

In high school, Annie's first group of great friends included two gay buddies. With her hippie jeans and curly red hair, she'd hang out with them on weekends visiting yard



Anne Olivarius (1978, DPhil in Social Studies)

sales. They'd try on pleated skirts right there on someone's freshly-mowed lawn. It was wildly transgressive and she loved it.

After graduation, Annie went to Reed College in Oregon. It was progressive and far away. But when her work started getting Cs instead of As, her confidence was shaken and she realized she didn't know what she wanted out of her life.

In her family's world, a girl like herself might become a nurse or librarian or teacher. Or, "if you were really high fallutin', and really thought a lot of yourself, you might dare to become a lawyer."

Annie dropped out of school and went back to Missoula. She got a room at the city's new yoga house where, in exchange for free rent, she did all the cooking and cleaning. After six months or so, she decided to go back to school, to the University of Montana. She met her boyfriend soon after.

"Just thank god, thank god I found you," she thought. "Someone who understands me. Someone who loves me. Someone who's on my side against my crazy family. It was just wonderful."

Annie moved in with him.

Four years before, The New York Times did an exposé on the phenomenon of cohabiting college students. The shackled-up co-eds



Annie Haight (1978, DPhil in History)

all spoke on the condition of anonymity, nonetheless the identity of one of the girls was quickly uncovered, and she was nearly expelled.

Annie must have had courage, strong will, and a sense of what she needed in order to move in with her boyfriend in her hometown without marrying him. But she didn't do it to shock. "It didn't seem to me like I was doing anything wrong," she said. "I was just being with my close friend."

What Annie needed at the University of Montana was to take a course with Maxine Van de Wetering. But what she didn't realize was that Van de Wetering not only developed the first women's studies curriculum at Montana and taught the history of science, she also made Rhodes Scholars in her spare time. Because of Maxine, the University of Montana was the seventeenth best university in the country at producing Rhodes Scholars, beating out better-ranked schools, like Columbia, Georgetown, and Berkeley.

One day, she called Annie into her office. "I don't know who your advisor is," she said, "but I'd like to be your academic advisor."

*This is an excerpt from Claire Gordon's article of the same name. To view the full article, please visit [www.some.ox.ac.uk/fourrhodes](http://www.some.ox.ac.uk/fourrhodes)*

# The social media entrepreneur

Q&A with  
Dan Lester  
(1997, Mathematics)

BOGDAN-ALEXANDRU PANAIT  
(2009, Mathematics and  
Computer Science)



Dan Lester is co-founder and Chief Operating Officer of Conversocial, a startup empowering companies to use social media as a channel for their customer support. It has offices in London and New York, and has raised \$6m in venture capital funding. He also co-founded iPlatform, which was sold to an international competitor in September 2012. iPlatform specialises in Facebook marketing campaigns for brands such as Tesco, Channel 5, and the FA. Dan has also spent time in Silicon Valley where he developed Open Socket, an interface between Open Social gadgets and Facebook.

#### **What part of the Somerville experience do you find has helped you most?**

After four years of studying maths, I didn't know what I wanted to do next – but it seemed sensible to get a job in London, you know, something computer based. I think I've always been interested by the idea of being an entrepreneur, or at least fascinated by stories like Google and Microsoft. So I spent five years working in the City, and then I suddenly decided that it was enough and it was time to start a company. I could program a computer and was full of ideas even before coming up to Oxford, but I guess I wouldn't have necessarily known how to do that in a business context. I think I ultimately matured as a person at Somerville.

#### **What prompted you to move away from the traditional City job in finance?**

I enjoyed five years working in the City, but, the real question, again, was why I wanted those City jobs in the first place, in terms of “who I am”. I guess, fundamentally, I was more interested in doing something over which I had more ownership and control. What prompted me to move away was more the attraction of what I wanted to go into. I guess it's difficult leaving a relatively well paid job and suddenly not being paid anymore. However, I believed that it would work out and it did. It helped that I was able to go travelling for a year – which made me move from that well paid lifestyle to one where you don't have an income. It was an easier transition than from going straight a well-paid job to a badly-paid start-up.

#### **How does the entrepreneurial mentality in Silicon Valley compare with the one in London?**

I think there are pockets of people in London who have been interested in high tech start-ups, but it's probably true to say that there wasn't an obvious network in London in 2007, like there was in Silicon Valley. I think being in London, in that community of people involved in start-ups, they've missed the point that there are already billion dollar high-tech companies in the UK. I certainly think it's possible that social media made it feel like

it was a group of people starting out for the first time building businesses. It would have been easy to feel isolated without being able to search on Google or Facebook for anyone else who was also trying to start up a business.

# conversocial

#### **From your experience with both iPlatform and Conversocial, what do you feel makes or breaks a team of entrepreneurs?**

I guess what makes it is being able to talk to each other and being open about things. I've seen attempts at start-ups where people are a little bit too formal about it and perhaps they worry about whose idea this is and who owns that bit of IP. Ultimately, we [Dan and his iPlatform and Conversocial co-founder, Joshua March] started to thrash out quite a bit of that in the first months of getting to know each other. We each had different contacts and I had the tech background, but after a while we realised there's only one way to go – so we shared the responsibility 50-50 from the start, and took it from there.



#### **Do you think your next venture will also be in the social media sphere?**

Facebook underpins a lot of the next generation of the web. However I don't think I am a world expert in social media or that I need to capitalize on my specific experience. Again, what's important is being able to find something a bit smaller and start off in the same way as before. With iPlatform, it started by playing around with Facebook when it was still small. I would try to find another technology to play with and see where that takes me.

KIRSTIN SHIPTON  
(Lund, 1963, Classics)



# Making his Mark on the Donor Wall



Somerville received an overwhelming response to the Make Your Mark building appeal. All supporters were offered the chance to have their names inscribed on a Donor Wall that stands at the entrance to our new buildings. One of those supporters, Kirstin Shipton, chose instead to honour her ancestor, who placed great value on education for both men and women.

“Write down on this slate what you learned at school today,” said Duncan Menzies to his young daughter Kate. It was September 1872. Duncan and my great grandmother Kate were sitting in a simple little croft nestling among the Ochil Hills where Duncan was a shepherd on the Harviestoun Estate. He himself had little formal education. But it was something he valued highly.

He had been determined that his young family should attend Dollar Academy nearby. At first the school refused to admit them – the family did not actually live in Dollar, but two miles away in the remote Dollar Glen. Duncan persisted. He went to see the Headmaster and pleaded his case. The struggle was rewarded. Young Kate, and three siblings, all won prizes at Dollar Institution (as it was called then). I have them today on my bookshelves.

I also have two photos, taken in 1926 and 1931. In the first picture Kate’s granddaughter, my mother Catherine, is holding some of the many prizes she has just won as Dux of the Mary Erskine School in Edinburgh. And in the next she is a graduate student at Oxford. She is steering a punt through the gentle waves of the Cherwell. This is a very different stretch of water from the

rough, torrential stream young Kate had trudged beside as she made her way to school through the deep ravines of Dollar Glen. And the education of women has been transformed since Kate attended Dollar Academy.

90 years after Duncan Menzies asked his daughter Kate what she had learned at school, Duncan’s great great granddaughter asked her Professor of Latin at Glasgow which Oxford College she should choose for post-graduate study. Without hesitation, my professor replied “Somerville”.

So what would I tell Duncan Menzies if he were alive today and asked about my first term at Somerville? I’d say how strange the water tasted compared to the pure clear streams of his native Perthshire. And – to a daughter of the Manse – how strange, at first, were the words of Evensong at St Mary the Virgin compared to the simple vernacular of the Church of Scotland. But I’d also tell him how exciting it was to meet in person the authors of books I had read as an undergraduate at Glasgow. I’d tell him that Oxford laid the foundations for my own academic career. I’d say that I was grateful to him, and proud of his interest in education.

Then I’d take him to the Donor Wall to see his name.

# Like coming home

Alumna Sara Kalim (1990, Classics) returned to Somerville this year as our new Director of Development. Here she outlines her career since leaving College – and what it is that made her Somerville years so special.



When I applied to Oxford, Somerville College was one of my top choices but, as I often hear fellow alumni say, I felt it really chose me. I wanted very much to experience the atmosphere and life of aspiration and intellectual rigour that were the same as in the days of Vera Brittain, Indira Gandhi, Margaret Thatcher, Daphne Park (the 'Queen of Spies'), Iris Murdoch, and the first female British Nobel Science Prize winner, Dorothy Hodgkin. These are just a few examples of people whose lives embody the new Somerville strap line: "If you want to change the world, come to Somerville". Now we are able to add to those ranks a brilliant new generation of both male and female Somervillians who are leading the way.

I adored my tutors as well as my time and activities while I was a student. The late Nan Dunbar was a wonderful support as a tutor. She shared her enthusiasm for ancient comedy as well as many notable anecdotes, not least about her friendship with CS Lewis whose portrait adorned her office. I continued my contact with Miss Dunbar until her death. I would often bump into her in front of her house on Walton Street and get to hear about her retirement activities, such as helping local primary school children with their reading. She may have instilled fear into many undergraduates in her time, but she had a very warm heart indeed.

Both she and my wisest-of-the-wise Moral Tutor, Lesley Brown, used to turn a benign blind eye upon my time-consuming thespian activities while I was studying at Somerville, confident in my ability to find a bit of time for essay writing as well. I did, however, get official approval to lead the Chorus when the Oxford Playhouse staged the Oxford Classics plays: Sophocles' *Trachiniae* in the original Greek; and Aristophanes' *The Frogs*, one of the most memorable experiences of my time at Oxford. I know I am not alone in cherishing these memories of my tutors; testimony to this is the number of letters of remembrance we have received from the former students of Olive Sayce, whose memory we honoured at a special service in College in May.

Let me briefly describe where Somerville led me personally: I trod the boards for a short time before embarking on 14 years of working on documentaries and current affairs programmes, starting at the BBC and then becoming head of development for two independent companies. My jobs included raising funds for programmes from all the major UK broadcasters as well as some international ones. It was a charmed life working in television – and it gave me the opportunity of working on such diverse subjects as the museums of the world, the strange world of sleep disorders, the history of women at St Hilda's College, Oxford, the 2008 Mumbai terror attacks and the unsolved case of the most prolific serial killer in Italy. I returned to Oxford for work and met my future husband and had my two daughters whilst juggling the film-making, including a spell working on Channel 4's Dispatches strand. The latter involved sending courageous reporters to some of the world's most hostile environments. This last three years,

working at the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, a research centre of the Department of Politics analysing the critical issues facing international journalism, brought me back to Oxford University.

While the Reuters Institute was a wonderful place to work, I could not resist the pull of Somerville, especially after hearing about its current ambitious campaigns and visionary projects. A very personal attraction was the College's plan for the Indira Gandhi Centre for Sustainable Development, since my own Indian grandmother, a politician and campaigner for the education of women in India, worked with both Mrs Gandhi and Prime Minister Nehru during her service on several national education committees.

Somerville has a wonderful tradition of promoting a sense of empowerment among its students in a characteristically non-conformist fashion. It is only in recent years, however, that I have begun to understand the transformative effects of that education and the doors it opened for me. I took my degree at a time of increased student funding from the state and no tuition fees. I myself came up to Oxford on a grant that covered my maintenance, and therefore I never had to worry about repaying student loans. Now the landscape has changed and we face the undeniable reality that we have to work much harder to ensure that gifted young people are afforded the same opportunities that my generation enjoyed and that, by supporting the excellent teaching at Somerville, we will protect what is most precious about the education we offer. College has certainly served me well. Now I find myself very happy and excited indeed to be back at Somerville, this time to serve the College.

I look forward hugely to getting to know the Somerville community of fellows, staff and alumni. I am very grateful for the warm welcome I have received so far and look forward to many more encounters with Somervillians, past, present and future. Our lively programme of events, dare I say one of the most envied by other Oxford colleges, offers the chance to all Somervillians to reconnect with the College. I am particularly excited about our forthcoming Family Day: a celebration of learning to be held on Saturday 14th September. This unique event, generously sponsored by an alumna, will give all our children (and grandchildren!) an opportunity to find out what we already know: Somerville is a wonderful place not just to get an education but also to get inspired.

If you would like to discuss how you can support Somerville, please contact Sara Kalim:

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Email: [sara.kalim@some.ox.ac.uk](mailto:sara.kalim@some.ox.ac.uk)

For the latest news on Somerville's Campaign, please visit: [www.some.ox.ac.uk/Campaign](http://www.some.ox.ac.uk/Campaign)

# Telethon News

## 2012 campaign raises £165,000

The 2012 campaign ran over two weeks in September and raised over £165,000. Over the course of the campaign 58% of alumni contacted chose to make a gift - the highest participation rate since the launch of the Somerville Campaign in 2009.

Last year our 16 student callers spoke to 864 Somervillians all around the world, and had a great time hearing stories from the College's past. Third year History student Lorna Sutton said she found the experience very enjoyable: "I was able to speak to so many fascinating alumni and hear how Somerville has changed over the years. Raising funds for College is so important and I'm glad I was able to be a part of the telethon campaign."

Louise Jones, who is in the fourth year of her French course, felt that the telethon offered her a chance to support Somerville's future. "This campaign will ensure that future generations of Somervillians receive the same benefits that were offered to us, such as a diverse range of subjects, updated buildings and facilities, and bursaries for those who need them, hence ensuring that Somerville remains one of the most meritocratic colleges in Oxford."

She added, "The telethon was hard work, but at the same time extremely rewarding. The highlight of the campaign for me was phoning a lady who happened to be directly outside the window I was facing. Having the opportunity to meet her and invite her around to the bar - our temporary call-centre - was surreal and, at the same time, priceless!"

We are tremendously grateful to everyone for helping us raise a grand total of £165,000. Money raised through the telethon goes towards the Annual Fund making a genuine and direct difference to students' lives at Somerville. The Fund provides help for students through bursaries and hardship funds, as well as support for the buildings and facilities and the tutorial system.



# Happy 100th Birthday Dame Kathleen!

DR ANNE MANUEL  
Librarian and Archivist

At a special lunch to celebrate Dame Kathleen Ollerenshaw's 100th birthday, College Librarian Dr Anne Manuel interviewed Dame Kathleen for the College archives oral history project.

**H**onorary Fellow, Dame Kathleen Ollerenshaw (Somerville 1931-34 and 44-45) is an internationally renowned mathematician and educationalist, having played a major role in the creation of the Royal Northern College of Music and Manchester Metropolitan University, as well as in the administration of Lancaster and Salford Universities and UMIST (as was). In 1979 she became the first woman president of the Institute of Mathematics and its Applications. She became Lord Mayor of Manchester in 1975-6 and was granted the freedom of the city in 1984. In 1971 she was awarded her DBE for services to education.

Kathleen Timpson arrived at Somerville College for her interview in 1930. By any standards it was no ordinary interview. Concealing the fact that she was almost entirely deaf, she lip-read her way through the questions posed and stunned the Fellows into silence when, in answer to the innocuous question 'what did you do in the summer vacation?' she gave a full account of her attendance at an international Disarmament Symposium at the League of Nations headquarters in Geneva. The Fellows were duly impressed and she was awarded a scholarship.

She attended lectures given by T W Chaundey of Christ Church, and although she couldn't hear what he was saying, attended his lectures religiously. He took a special interest in her and when she returned in 1944 to study for her DPhil, Chaundy was her supervisor. She always worked hard and after three years of her four year undergraduate course, decided that she was ready to take schools. This she did, passing her exams with what would now be a 2:1. She did a similar thing ten years later when she was back at Oxford to take her DPhil. Publishing five papers in two years, she was awarded the degree without the need to spend three years writing a formal thesis.

But it was not all study at Oxford. Kathleen spent much of her time playing hockey, captaining the University XI for two years in her undergraduate years. She was also a keen ice skater and remembers that during the winter of 1944 she skated figures of eight on the water tank which had been dug in Darbishire quad as a fire precaution.

Although she had little to do with Margaret Thatcher when she was at Somerville (Margaret Thatcher would have been an undergraduate while Kathleen was then a graduate student), the two got to know each other well later on in life. Dame Kathleen remembers one occasion in particular when Margaret Thatcher was Secretary of State for Education, she invited her to Manchester to open a college of Further Education. Thatcher knew little about



FE at the time, so Kathleen briefed her the night before and was amazed at how expert she sounded the next day. "You would have thought she had known about it all her life!"

But perhaps Kathleen's fondest memories of Somerville concern the friendship she struck up with Principal Helen Darbishire, a renowned Wordsworth scholar. Kathleen's husband Robert delighted the Principal one day with his extemporaneous verse "Forgive me to remark, with the slightest touch of malice, That the straws in Wordsworth's hair would thatch the Crystal Palace!" Despite (or because of) the teasing, the Ollerenshaws became fast friends with Miss Darbishire and visited her in the Lake District every year in her retirement.

Dame Kathleen's lunch was attended by 25 friends and colleagues with speeches from The Principal, Professor Sir Martin Taylor, Warden of Merton College and of course, Dame Kathleen herself. We were delighted to welcome her back.

# Events 2012-13



## 1962 Golden Reunion

**22 June 2012**

The 50th anniversary of their matriculation was celebrated by 38 members of the 1962 year group, with a weekend of events and recollections.



## Garden Party 2012

**23 June 2012**

Somervillians of all ages and their families returned to Oxford to attend the Garden Party. Wet weather meant that we had to relocate to the Hall, but our spirits weren't dampened.



## Gaudy 2012

**23 June 2012**

The Gaudy this year was for those who matriculated between 1956 and 1966. The evening's black tie dinner was a glittering occasion, followed the next day by a fascinating talk from Alex Rogers, Professor of Conservation Biology, on the topic 'Exploring the Submarine Mountains of the Oceans'.

## Somerville London Group: An evening at Strawberry Hill House

**19 July 2012**

The London Group enjoyed a wonderful evening at Strawberry Hill House. A tour of the house was followed by supper, during which the Principal gave a talk about the Lewis Walpole Library at Yale – the prime source for the study of Horace Walpole and Strawberry Hill.



## Somerville London Group: Talk by Vice-Admiral Philip Jones Gaudy 2012

**27 September 2012**

Vice-Admiral Philip Jones, Fleet Commander of the Royal Navy, spoke to the London Group on the subject of the role of the Navy in the 21st century.



## Concert for the Somerville Campaign

**6 October 2012**

To celebrate the College's success, and to mark the start of the final phase of its £25 million campaign, Somerville held a magical concert featuring soprano Emma Kirkby and lutenist Jakob Lindberg, at the Ashmolean Museum.

## Somerville London Group: Private View of the Fleming Gallery

**19 November 2012**

The Somerville London Group returned to the Fleming Gallery for a private view of the exhibition of the Scottish Colourist George Leslie Hunter, along with a significant selection of works from the permanent collection in the new Upper Gallery.



### 1972 Reunion

**10 November 2012**

The 1972 Reunion took place in College. We were fortunate to have two former Chairs of the Somerville Association in attendance, Karen Richardson and Kay Brock, and the group enjoyed lunch in Hall before having the opportunity to visit the new ROQ buildings.

## Somerville Carol Concert

**29 November 2012**

The Somerville Choir performed in the Chapel at a wonderful evening for donors and supporters, followed by festive refreshments in Hall.



## Honorary Fellows' Symposium

**18 February 2013**

We were delighted to welcome back many of Somerville's distinguished Honorary Fellows to discuss wide-ranging topics, including access and outreach, fundraising and the important role they continue to play in College life.



## Winter Meeting

**9 March 2013**

Lady Amanda Harlech, long-term creative collaborator of Karl Lagerfeld at Fendi in Rome and Chanel in Paris, was the guest speaker. She spoke on the subject of Cartes de Tendresse, a reflective look back at her amazing career and fashion journey.

## Somerville London Group: Kate Williams

**28 January 2013**

Kate Williams delighted the London Group with a lively talk on the extraordinary life of Josephine Bonaparte on entitled 'Mistress, Empress, Collector'.

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"In the apt splendour of the Oxford and Cambridge club, Kate Williams brought to life in an entertaining way an oft overlooked figure in history. Her talk, peppered with humorous anecdotes, gave us a flavour of the colourful life of Josephine Bonaparte, who was in many ways just as remarkable as her husband."

DAN HARRIS (History, 1997)

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## Somerville Lawyers Group

**28 February 2013**

Laurence Marks gave a fascinating talk entitled "'Lest We Forget': Miscarriages of Justice', focusing on the murder trials of Ruth Ellis, Craig & Bentley and Christie & Evans. All of these cases involved highly controversial sentences of capital punishment in the decade or so before its abolition.



## Parents' Lunch Winter Meeting

**9 March 2013**

The second lunch for parents was a great success, with Hall filled to capacity with students and their families. This was a great opportunity for parents to learn more about College life, with the proceedings rounded off with a talk and a lively musical performance from Benjamin Thompson.

## Somerville London group: Tour of the Foundling Museum

**12 March 2013**

The Somerville London Group enjoyed a private visit to the Foundling Museum, where tour guides explained the history of the Museum and members were able to visit their special exhibition "Fate, Hope and Charity" – tokens left by mothers with their babies which offer a glimpse into the lives of ordinary women in the 18th century.

## Edinburgh Reunion

**16 March 2013**

Somervillians from all over Scotland gathered at the home of Sir Gerald and Lady Elliot where they enjoyed lunch as well as talks from Professor Carole Hillenbrand OBE (Oriental Studies, 1968, and Honorary Fellow) and Dr Anne Manuel, College Librarian and Archivist.

## Somerville City and Lawyers Groups: Talk by Sir Hector Sants

**18 March 2013**

The City and Lawyers groups joined together for this talk by Sir Hector entitled 'What does the financial crisis tell us about how professionals in the financial services should behave?'



"I think it would be an understatement to say it was a resounding success. We all had an amazing time."

IAIN COX (History, 2004)

## Historians' Dinner

**23 March 2013**

29 Historians from the 2000-2009 matriculation years returned to Somerville for a traditional-style Historians' Dinner. The tutors spoke about their current research and some of the returning Somervillians gave presentations on life since College.

"A wonderful evening to indulge in some high quality historical debate whilst serenaded by Benjamin Thompson's exquisite singing."

PATRICK CASSIDY (History, 2004)

"Seated in Somerville Dining Hall, surrounded by my classmates and copious amounts of red wine, I am reminded that the history dinner always repeats itself."

ALEX STARRITT (History, 2004)



## Medics Day

**20 April 2013**

The theme for this year's Medics Day was 'Tomorrow's Health Service: Evolution or Revolution?'. Over 50 alumni came back to College to hear a range of talks on this subject, with speakers including Dr Susanna Graham-Jones (1968), Sophie Corlett (1982) and Jenny Wright (1969).

## Madrid Reunion

**26 April 2013**

As part of the University's European Reunion in Madrid Somerville held a dinner at The Ritz. The elegant and sophisticated surroundings as well as the sparkling conversation made this a very special occasion.

"It will stay in my memory for many years to come! Everything ran so smoothly, and I am sure I speak for all attendees when I say we felt very well looked after. It was a true 'culture-intellectual-culinary-fest' from start to finish! ... It was lovely to have so much time to catch up and also have conversations with the Principal and her husband, as well as my fellow alumni. I have never felt more like a true Somervillian as well as a true Oxonian! Wonderful all round."

SUE CANDERTON (Hutchison, English, 1987)



Somerville College

# FAMILY FUN DAY

A celebration of learning

14 SEPTEMBER 2013, 2PM - 5PM

Free admission



On Saturday 14 September, Somerville will be hosting its first ever Family Fun Day.

This is a wonderful chance to bring your family back to College to enjoy fun activities for all ages, including a climbing wall, archery, zorb racing, science workshop, storytelling and much more.

In addition, there will be the opportunity to listen to subject talks by some of Somerville's tutors, tour the College and find out about student life at Somerville today.

This is a new and exciting initiative which has been very generously sponsored by one of our alumni. Numbers are limited and tickets will be allocated on a first come, first served basis, so we would advise an early response.

For information about how to book, and to find out about other events run by Somerville, please visit: [www.some.ox.ac.uk/AlumniEvents](http://www.some.ox.ac.uk/AlumniEvents)