

A year of moving forward



THE ACADEMIC YEAR OF 2017/18 was a great one for the Margaret Thatcher Scholarship Trust. The growth in the Thatcher Scholarship Programme has been exceptional and we have seen the number of our students benefitting from awards and support rise significantly.

It was also a year of hellos and goodbyes. We saw the number of Scholars rise from two to eight at the beginning of the year when we said hello to six new Thatcher Scholars. We also awarded a further six scholarships commencing in the 2018/19 academic year. You can read more about them in this bulletin (pg. 3-6).

Our goodbyes were to our first Thatcher Scholar alumni, Isobel Hettrick and Sean Butler, who graduated at the end of Trinity Term. They have both taken their first steps in careers that will help them to make a real impact in the world. Isobel is now working for the Financial Conduct Authority and Sean spent the summer as a Summer Fellow at the Bingham Centre for the Rule of Law in London, where he produced a briefing paper for MPs on the Rule of Law implications of the Brexit Withdrawal Agreement. He is now working as a Judicial Assistant in the Court of Appeal. I am

particularly delighted that both of them have chosen to deploy their knowledge and skills in public service, in keeping with a distinguished Somerville tradition. I am certain we shall hear more from these two stellar alumni in coming years.

The Development Programme has blossomed and is becoming an established and unique offering at Somerville. Through this Programme, we support all our students with academic skills workshops, mentoring, networking, well-being and mindfulness, and careers talks. The Programme is flexible and responsive, such that if tutors identify a particular need, our Scholarship Programme Director, Dr Claire Cockcroft, can arrange help and support in a bespoke manner. Dr Cockcroft also manages the Thatcher Development Awards, which fund innovative projects during the long vacation. You can read in this bulletin about some of the extraordinary and ground-breaking projects which have been supported by these awards (pg. 9-11).

I am so grateful to all our donors, supporters and volunteers who have enabled the Margaret Thatcher Scholarship Trust and the Development Programme to go from strength to strength. The fine stewardship of the funds under the University of Oxford Endowment Fund means that one of our 2018/19 scholars will be funded as a result of the significant growth in the endowment. As of the end of the last financial year (July), our endowment stands at £9.13m, which with funds from the Oxford Graduate Scholarship Matched Funding Scheme raises this total to just over £11.5m.



In the next academic year, there will be fifteen Thatcher Scholars studying at Somerville, and it is my ambition that we should have twenty or more permanently endowed Thatcher Scholars by 2023, ten years after the death of Lady Thatcher.

2019 marks the 40th anniversary of Margaret Thatcher's election to No 10. It is also the centenary of the Sex Disqualification (Removal) Act that allowed women to enter the professions. We will be celebrating this with an event on the 17th May where a panel of speakers will talk about how far we have come, or not, in the last forty years since the glass ceiling to the highest office in the land was broken. Please save the date in your diary and look out for your invitation in the spring.

I hope that you enjoy reading this bulletin and share with us the success of the Thatcher Scholarship Programme. Our exceptional scholars really are the ones that will forge and mould a better future for their generations and those to come.

With all best wishes,

*The Rt Hon. Baroness Royall of Blaisdon
Principal, Somerville College
Chair of Trustees, the Margaret Thatcher Scholarship Trust*

Scholar Highlights

- Will Sargent was awarded the Hobson Mann Lovell Scholarship for outstanding progress on the clinical medical course. He also completed his Reserve Commissioning Course at Sandhurst.
- Sean Butler was awarded the Law Faculty Prize in Constitutional Theory
- Ben Etty was elected President of the Oxford University Conservative Association for Michaelmas Term 2018
- Joe Salf was awarded the Gibbs prize in Physiological Science for attaining the highest results in his year in the Preliminary Examination
- Kate House was elected President of the Oxford Advertising Society in Hilary Term 2018



Introducing the new Thatcher Scholars

Chuqiao Lin

Ng Teng Fong Thatcher Scholar
MPhys Physics

I am still feeling a little dazed to even have a place to study at Somerville, and I am even more amazed to have now been awarded the Ng Teng Fong Thatcher Scholarship.

I grew up in an ordinary family in China, but I was not educated in the same way as many of my peers. My parents fully supported and respected my ideas: instead of being forced to attend extra classes to outperform others in the highly competitive Chinese education system like many students do, I was allowed to pursue my own interests such as badminton and table tennis, which have become lifelong hobbies for me. I also learned classical guitar and ancient Chinese characters. My upbringing taught me to think independently and follow my inner voice.

While my various interests are what I devote my time to, Physics is what I devote my life to. I can still feel the helplessness of 19th century physicists when the crisis of classical mechanics began almost as my own, and I am also moved by many of them who struggled to change the postulates and develop quantum theory in order to finally conquer these eccentric particles. Ever since our ancestors first looked up at the stars, humans have had the desire to explore and discover. I would like to be one of the pioneering intellectual explorers who conduct experiments, develop ideas and solve problems.

I regard the Ng Teng Fong Thatcher Scholarship as the greatest opportunity I have had since I first won my place here, and an encouragement that urges me to work ever harder.

Anna Gee

Thatcher Scholar
BA Biological Sciences

Studying Biology has given me fascinating insights into the processes that have created all life on Earth, and also growing concern over what the future holds. For me, environmental issues are of the utmost importance; a healthy, functioning ecosystem is the essential basis for all human activities and is so often taken for granted. I believe that a future career in conservation, habitat creation and environmental policy will best enable me to effect positive change in the world.

During my time at Oxford I have worked on parrot conservation in the Caribbean (thanks to a Thatcher Development Award), volunteered with Oxford City Council during Green Week, and





become actively involved with the Climate Justice Campaign. I also volunteer in the Oxford Herbarium, which is a fascinating resource for research into plant sciences intended as a record of plant diversity on Earth for centuries to come.

I remain very conscious of the incredible opportunities I have been given and would like to express my sincere gratitude to the Trust for this life-changing scholarship. I will continue to dedicate myself to the causes I believe in, which includes working to ensure that others have access to the same opportunities that I have benefitted from so much, regardless of background.

Joe Salf

*Michael Bishop Foundation Thatcher Scholar
BA Medicine*

As a pre-clinical medicine student, my work currently focuses on the fundamental biomedical science underpinning clinical practice. An enjoyably broad subject, my studies can range from things like molecular pathology to gross neuroanatomy.

In the future, I would like to contribute to global humanitarian medicine and hope that the MTST can help me to develop pertinent language skills.



Outside of my degree, I enjoy long distance running and am involved in access initiatives, with a particular focus on improving diversity in medicine. I believe the opportunities offered by the Thatcher Scholarship will help me become a better clinician and am incredibly grateful for the financial footing it will give me when I begin life as a junior doctor. I would like to extend my personal thanks for making this possible.

Malak Alshaikhali MD

*Oxford Qatar Thatcher Scholar
MSc Integrated Immunology*

I am a medical student from Gaza. I spent the last year after graduation working within the health department of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency. This post has increased my understanding of disease on a clinical basis and further increased my enthusiasm to become involved in the academic field and medical research in order to contribute to the reduction and prevention of those diseases.

I can definitely foresee that the Integrated Immunology MSc at Oxford University would add to this pursuit. The applied possibilities of integrated immunology makes it a highly valuable study area in providing guidance for clinical practice and basic research. Having a chance to study this postgraduate course will equip me with the academic background and research methodologies necessary to undertake investigations that advance the field, especially in the areas I am most passionate about: antitumor immunity and cancer immunotherapy.



On a personal level, I enjoy doing handworks such as embroidery, learning new languages, and reading.



Martin Fellermeier

Oxford Thatcher Scholar

DPhil Medical Sciences

I was born and grew up in Herzogenaurach, a small Germany city known as the “city of sports” due to being home to both Adidas and Puma.

During my undergraduate studies in Molecular Biomedicine at the University of Bonn, I became fascinated by tumour biology. In particular, I was interested in how cellular mechanisms lead to the creation of these “immortal” cells.

Having completed my Masters studies in Oncology here at Oxford, I will be starting a DPhil in Medical Sciences in 2019 supported by the Thatcher Scholarship, focusing on immuno-oncology. I will spend the intervening year on placement with Merck as an intern with their in-house consulting team. The analytical proficiency I develop will assist me with my research when I take up my studies at Oxford, while the overall experience will give me a stronger grasp of how best to confront the emerging challenges of modern healthcare.

Throughout my studies, it has always been crucial for me to keep a good balance between work and extracurricular activities. In both my Bachelor and Master studies, I was elected as a student representative. My responsibilities have included trying to improve the academic experience for students, as well as organising social events and formal dinners. I also enjoy playing badminton.



Mai-Britt Weichmann

Oxford Thatcher Scholar

DPhil Medieval and Modern Languages

I am a medievalist from Germany. As an undergraduate, I studied History and Medieval Latin, and progressed on to a masters in Medieval and Renaissance Studies including History, German and Art History, both at Georg-August-Universität Göttingen. My special fields of interest are the late medieval history of piety and devotion, Middle Low German literature and the history of the book.

In my spare time I like doing sports, reading, playing music and all kinds of creative handicraft. I was involved in my parish’s youth work for many years. Currently I volunteer in the field of public history through working at a museum and conveying insights into late medieval everyday life as a historic interpreter at living history events.

In Michaelmas 2018 I started my DPhil project on early Low German book printing at the Faculty of Modern Languages. I am looking forward to a great time living and working here at Somerville College.





Kharthik Chakravarthy

Supersonic jets and squash: my first year

*Kharthik Chakravarthy, DPhil Engineering
Oxford Qatar Thatcher Scholar*

The focus of my research is on the development of optical measurement techniques to be used in high speed fluid flow applications. Optical diagnostics, as they are known, play a crucial role in understanding and quantifying valuable information from engineering systems. Given the race against climate change and the constant need to tackle environmental issues, these techniques have provided useful insights - specifically in thermo-fluid applications - allowing 'greener' changes to be made wherever possible. I hope to be able to extend these tools further during my time at Oxford for usage in applications where very high speeds are involved. Think of supersonic jets and space re-entry vehicles.

My first year as a DPhil student involved familiarising myself with experimental facilities and techniques. I designed a preliminary investigation to help me identify current limitations in this area of research and the steps needed to develop it further. Part of this process involved learning new skills relevant to a researcher, such as designing safe experiments, carrying out risk assessments, searching literature efficiently, and general presentation skills. It was particularly important to attend seminars and presentations on relevant research topics in order to learn about current issues in the field being tackled, as well as to improve my own scientific presentation skills.

Upon the completion of my preliminary experiment, I have a number of collaborative projects lined up to get involved with. I will mostly be working with the Oxford Thermofluids Institute and Imperial College London, employing my experimental tools in their test facilities in order to help them gain a better understanding of fluid flow phenomena.

While most of my days this past year have been spent in the laboratory, my nights have been spent at the University squash courts. I joined the University Men's Squash Second team in Hilary term and played in a number of friendly and competition matches against other universities. A personal highlight was defeating Cambridge at home in the Seconds Varsity Match.

All that I have achieved in the past year would not have been possible without the Oxford Qatar Thatcher Scholarship. In addition to the financial element of the Scholarship, I have benefitted from meeting and networking with experienced professionals, gaining support and guidance from members of the Scholarship Trust, and learning supplementary skills from the weekly seminars organised by the Thatcher Development Programme.

I have achieved and learnt a lot this past year thanks to the Oxford Qatar Thatcher Scholarship and Somerville College. I am looking forward to what I can accomplish in the years ahead!



Transcending the Political: House of Lords Reception, April 2018

Benjamin Ety, BA History and Politics

Michael Bishop Foundation Thatcher Scholar

Lord Lamont, Lord Howard and Baroness Bottomley were among the former Conservative cabinet ministers who gathered at the House of Lords for a celebration of Lady Thatcher's legacy at Somerville.

The choice of the Attlee Room might have seemed a strange one at first glance. We were swiftly reassured by Lord Powell, Margaret Thatcher's Private Secretary from 1983-90, that Attlee was in fact, after Churchill, the 20th century Prime Minister that she had admired most. The association reflects the way that Lady Thatcher's achievements and influences transcend the party political.

This was further underlined by our Principal Jan Royall's address. Jan, a Labour peer herself, spoke also from admiration – in this case for Thatcher's extraordinary rise from a grammar school in Grantham to Oxford and then on to No. 10 Downing Street. While the Principal of Somerville does not share Lady Thatcher's politics, she can respect her achievements.



*Jan addresses supporters of the Trust
at the House of Lords*

Baroness Thatcher became disillusioned with the University in 1985 after she was the first Oxford-educated post-war PM to be denied an honorary doctorate; but, as Lord Powell reminded us, this never extended to Somerville. In the same year, she was made an honorary fellow of Somerville, and earlier in 1980 wrote from 10 Downing Street: *"It was such a privilege to be there. Without it, I should never have been here."*

There is no more intriguing illustration of Thatcher's Somerville link than the close relationship she maintained with her chemistry tutor, Dorothy Hodgkin, who would come to visit her at Downing Street. Said to be the one person Baroness Thatcher feared, she would revise exhaustively for Hodgkin's visits as if having a tutorial before listening patiently to her pacifist and socialist tutor explain everything she was doing wrong. It demonstrates another important Somerville value: "Believe in something, explain it clearly and intelligently, and have respect for the views of others, even when you disagree."

While Lady Thatcher's political legacy has and will endlessly be debated, as she transforms from a political to a historical figure it is possible to admire her achievements in a non-partisan light. Thanks to your generous support and donations, she has a living legacy in the form of the Margaret Thatcher Scholarship Trust. Her example provides an ongoing challenge to myself and the other Thatcher Scholars to emulate her achievements.



A Unique Offering: The Thatcher Development Programme

Dr Claire Cockcroft

Director, Thatcher Scholarship Programme

Somerville's Development Programme is a unique offering amongst Oxford Colleges. I am delighted to see how it has continued to grow in scope and success in our third year, delivering a diverse range of weekly events and seminars, supported by bespoke mentoring for both Thatcher Scholars and the wider student community.

We had over 700 sign-ups for events during the 2017/18 academic year and received enthusiastic feedback from participants and facilitators. Interview tips and presentation skills were popular sessions, alongside academic writing seminars and careers events giving insight into the Civil Service, consulting, and the world of 'Big Data'. Sessions supporting student wellbeing and resilience are also central to our programme. In one particularly well-received session, Somerville's Professor of Sleep Medicine, Colin Espie, and his team gave our students insight into the science and psychology underpinning sleep and 'peak performance'.

This year saw the introduction of several interdisciplinary events, including termly soirées featuring music, readings and academic presentations on a theme such as Dreams & Sleep (Michaelmas Term 2017), Love (Hilary Term 2018), and Justice (Trinity Term 2018). Students gain valuable public speaking experience and the events have drawn audiences from across the University, owing to their novel juxtaposition of music, literature, science and language. We also ran an interdisciplinary panel debate on climate change.

In addition to our events, I provide mentoring and careers advice throughout the year, helping students to secure internships and design projects to support their personal development. I also connect students with volunteering opportunities through The Oxford Hub. Many go on to volunteer during their summers, some supported by Thatcher Development Awards (pg. 9-10). Our scholars are working in their home communities and in Oxford, supporting homeless charities and engaging with Access initiatives to 'demystify' Oxford. Qatar Thatcher Scholar Kate House, for example, was able to volunteer at homeless shelters in Oxford: "I really enjoyed meeting and working with a truly diverse range of people, in terms of culture, age and background, and it was great to see my contributions make a material difference."



Thatcher Scholar Kate House discusses poetic justice in Shakespeare

A nascent scholars' alumni network is now evolving, following the graduation of Sean Butler and Isobel Hettrick in Summer 2018, which we hope will grow into a professional community keen to share experiences and support Somervillians' career decisions. Our first event is in February, when Isobel returns to share her insights from working at the Financial Conduct Authority (pg. 12).

The Development Programme enables us, with your help, to assist the scholars with their development and to extend the multivalent benefits of the Trust to the entire student body. I look forward to finding even more ways to challenge and support our exceptional students in the year ahead.



The Thatcher Development Awards

The Thatcher Development Awards provide funding of up to £2,000 for projects that enable students to pursue an innovative idea or travel project that would develop their academic skills, contribute to their personal development and have a positive impact on others.

The Thatcher Development Awards Competition in 2018 received an impressive range of applications, including conservation expeditions, volunteering overseas, teaching English in China, environmental projects, laboratory research placements, entrepreneurial ventures, and archaeological digs to name but a few. Of the thirty-two applications, some remarkable projects were selected for funding: three volunteering projects in Bolivia, Kenya and Nepal, an entrepreneurial venture that is bringing energy to ‘off-grid’ parts of rural India (pg. 10), and a mouth-watering cookery course coupled with school talks discussing the chemistry of baking.



Matt Maclay in Kenya

Matt Maclay (3rd year PPE) spent 10 weeks in Kenya, volunteering at a sexual reproductive health centre, visiting local schools to facilitate sessions on reproductive health and helping groups of young women to develop business plans which they presented in a competition, two of which gained funding.

“I have developed massively as a person through my Thatcher Development Award. I have learned about managing myself, my own emotions and reactions to different experiences, and how to interact with different cultures. I learned first-hand from those in positions of poverty, understanding more about how development works on the ground, how NGOs work together, and the challenges and difficulties that they face. It has been an important part of my journey - and one which will aid me in my planned future career in international development.”



Students at the school in Bolivia where Alyssa volunteered, teaching and building greenhouses

Alyssa Crabb (3rd year Biochemistry) volunteered for six weeks in Bolivia with Oxford Development Abroad, a student-run charity. She and her fellow volunteers raised money for greenhouses and taught rural communities about nutrition and different types of crop planting to enable self-sustainable development. They also educated the children about hygiene using a specially written play.

“Many of the girls didn’t think they could ever study at university. We hope that, by working with us, they were inspired to aim higher,” she explained.



Villagers participating in a focus group with Gideon

Connecting rural India to the modern economy

In 2017, MSc Economics student Gideon Laux founded a social enterprise aiming to bring electricity to remote villages. With support from a Thatcher Development Award, Gideon journeyed to India last summer to pilot test their sustainable rural energy solution, with amazing results.

In November 2017, I teamed up with fellow Oxford students to start Empower Energy, a social enterprise aiming to make basic electric appliances, such as lighting and mobile charging, available and affordable to people living in underserved communities in rural India. In March 2018, I was awarded a Thatcher Development Award, which, combined with the support of our other funders, allowed us to pilot-test our solution in the Indian state of Odisha during the summer of 2018.



The project involved installing solar-powered charging stations at local shops

That is how, only days after completing my final exams in June, I found myself in one of the many remote villages inhabited by Odisha's large tribal population where we would set up the first of our so-called "Solar ATMs" – solar-powered charging stations managed by a local shopkeeper, where villagers can rent out rechargeable LED lamps and other energy-enabled devices.

Lacking alternatives, families in these villages light their homes with soot-emitting kerosene lamps which contribute to the more than four million annual deaths from indoor air pollution worldwide. The grid, if available, is highly unreliable with frequent outages, and appliances such as solar lamps come with insurmountable upfront costs and lack adequate localised support and maintenance.

Through its product-as-a-service model, Empower Energy removes all upfront cost for the final consumer, and the shopkeeper becomes a trusted local representative of the Empower brand who ensures high service quality. These innovative features of our distribution model meant that shortly after setting up in a village, we would reach full capacity and soon struggled to keep up with demand.

Initial results from our first six villages indicated that our customers reduced their kerosene usage by about 70% on average, and some even told us they had got rid of their kerosene lamps entirely. Students report studying longer after dark, and women who earn extra income by making so-called "leaf-plates" for road-side food stalls told us they were able to double the number of plates they produced each evening thanks to the brighter light of the LED lamps.

Building on these early successes, we received angel investment to fund the next phase of our development, as well as being selected for the Oxford Foundry's L.E.V8 accelerator programme, Santa Clara University's Miller Center GSBI accelerator programme, and winning the D-Prize, which was previously awarded to several now-leading organisations in the last-mile distribution industry. One of the competitions in which we took part –



the Hult Prize – even saw us present our solution at the United Nations headquarters in New York to a panel of judges that included the CEOs of Unilever and Verizon, as well as several high-level UN representatives.

Two of the co-founders, including myself, are now working full-time on Empower Energy’s expansion, based in Odisha. We are highly grateful to the Margaret Thatcher Scholarship Trust, the Oxford India Centre for Sustainable Development, and our other partners and advisors for the support we have received and continue to receive as we work towards our mission of “connecting rural India to the modern economy”.

Solving world problems before lunch: UNLEASH 2018

UNLEASH is the UN’s global project to harness the innovation and talent of young people around the world with the aim of meeting the sustainable development goals agreed by all member states in 2015. Through our partnership with Temasek and the patronage of its CEO, Ho Ching, we were invited to send a delegate to this event. Through funding from the Thatcher Development Awards, MSc Biodiversity, Conservation and Management student Gabriella D’Cruz was able to journey to Singapore to take part.



Gabriella D’Cruz, second from left, with members of her team at UNLEASH 2018

This year has been an eye-opener for me in terms of understanding the effects of climate change. We are in a race against time to stem the impact of climate change and face up to the dangers of an overheated planet.

Oxford gave me the space to understand the facts, ask the right questions and ideate. I felt empowered by the knowledge I had gained during this academic year, yet unsure of what I could do to make a difference myself.

UNLEASH was an incredible opportunity for me to put my ideas into practice. I joined the Climate Action team. We huddled together over copious amounts of coffee every morning at the incredible NUS campus in Singapore, discussing problems and putting forward ideas. Our team developed a solution for a coastal slum in Recife, Brazil, that was affected by sea level rise and poverty. The answer presented itself in the form of an educational program that would teach coding to local children, while educating them about climate change and its impacts.

When we weren’t solving world problems before lunch time, we were in talks with experts in the field of development and social enterprise; on tours through the beautiful city of Singapore; and out enjoying ourselves getting to know an incredibly international cohort of people thanks to some serious dance moves. There were a staggering number of innovative solutions that came out of UNLEASH 2018. I left feeling inspired and driven, and I had a fantastic new group of friends with whom to share my ideas and concerns.

I am truly grateful to Somerville for encouraging me to apply to UNLEASH and to the Thatcher Awards for helping fund my attendance.



Life after Oxford

Isobel Hettrick

Michael Bishop Foundation Thatcher Scholar

BA Philosophy, Politics & Economics

Alumna



I am in my first year of the Graduate Training Scheme at the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA). I supervise Principal Trading Firms, a portfolio which includes algorithmic trading firms, trading and corporate finance firms and commodity firms. My work includes reactive desk-based reviews such as investigating alerts on a firm's capital requirement and the proactive delivery of projects as part of the FCA supervisory strategy.

I am currently working on a project concerning Payment for Order Flow (PFOF), an arrangement whereby a broker executing an order on behalf of its client receives payment from market makers in exchange for sending them order flow, as well as getting a fee or commission from their clients.

My favourite modules which I studied for my degree were British Political History and British Economic History. I enjoyed examining the same events and issues in both modules, but from a slightly different perspective each time. It highlighted the restrictions politics place on choosing the best economic option - one example of this was the decision to return to the Gold Standard in 1925.

The scholarship has allowed me to graduate without any debt and so has reduced my financial worries, allowing me to choose my next steps with less immediate concern about the level of my remuneration. Furthermore, the support and opportunities I was able to access through the Thatcher Development Programme have given me the confidence and skills to realise my future professional ambitions. The skills I developed included networking and public speaking, both of which have proved highly beneficial in the early stages of my career.

I shall forever be grateful to Lord Glendonbrook, whose scholarship has provided me with invaluable opportunities, and to all those who have supported, and continue to support, the Margaret Thatcher Scholarship Trust.

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