

| 6 Profile of a Kantian

| 22 Hong Kong moment

| 26 Female firsts

Somerville²⁰¹⁵

THE TRAILBLAZERS ISSUE

magazine



Mary Somerville & the Illumination of Science | 16

Contents

Principal's Message	3
News & People	4
Universally Speaking: A profile of Onora O'Neill	6
Commemorations	9
Midlands Moment: Somerville for all	10
Somerville Fictions	12
Two Somerville Centuries	14
Luminary of Science: Mary Somerville	16
In her own words: Peggy Rimmer	18
Student Spirit	20
Wind in their sails: Hong Kong alumni profiles	22
European focus: Of print and princes	24
Female firsts:	
Baroness Vadera	26
Sacha Romanovitch	28
Great War Roadshow	30
Business Creator: Dominic Perks	32
Ada Lovelace	34
Future Events	35



Cover image:

Mary Somerville in 1834, the year
*On the Connexion of the Physical
Sciences* was first published.
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(www.chrisriddell.co.uk)

Magazine committee

Design: Laura Hart
Printing: Hunts
Paper: Diamond White
Fonts: Oswald by Vernon Adams,
Helvetica by Max Miedinger
Editorial: Alex Monro

Contact:

communications@some.ox.ac.uk



Somerville College
Woodstock Road OX2 6HD
Telephone +44 (0)1865 270600
www.some.ox.ac.uk

Principal's Message



One defining characteristic of Somerville for most of us is a desire to break down barriers and discover new paths. That quality is abundantly evident in this year's Somerville Magazine. I was privileged to speak about Mary Somerville herself at this year's winter meeting of the Somerville Association, alongside

the distinguished actress Lesley Manville who portrayed her in the biopic *Mr Turner* (See p16 and below). Mrs Somerville's trailblazing work, like that of her protégée Ada Lovelace (p34) laid some fundamental foundations for modern science and, equally important, for the appreciation of science among the public and in government.

Somerville College has produced trailblazers since its foundation in 1879. In this 136th year we celebrate Baroness Onora O'Neill (p6-8) who unflinchingly applies her discipline of philosophy to current issues; and Baroness Shriti Vadera (p26) and Sacha Romanovitch, each the first woman to be appointed to top positions in her respective profession of banking and accountancy. We recognise a woman who has spent her career at the forefront of science in Peggie Rimmer (p18) and a younger alumnus who is already making waves as an entrepreneur, Dominic Perks (p30). The College continues also to produce novelists (p12) in a tradition reaching back to our founders.

Successful Somervillians often look back to the formative time when their Tutors imparted not only academic rigour but also the key values of curiosity and creativity. The work of teaching and research continues to flourish at Somerville. So does our strong international tradition, exemplified in these pages by the research

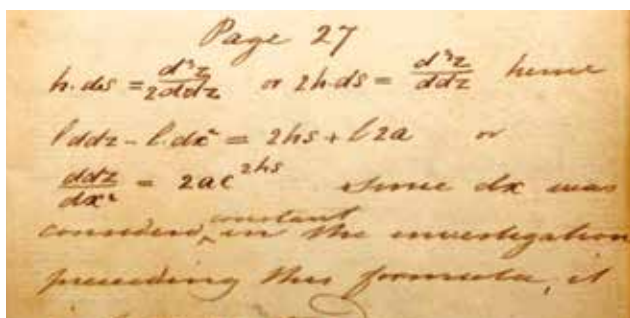
projects of Oren Margolis (p24) and Natalia Nowakowska (p25) and by the remarkable careers of some of our China-based alumni (p22) whom I had the pleasure of meeting last year in Hong Kong, at the University's first reunion for alumni in Asia.

Notable anniversaries in 2014-15 included the 50th year after Dorothy Hodgkin was awarded the Nobel Prize for Chemistry. Our celebratory event was sponsored jointly by UNESCO and the International Union of Crystallography, also celebrating their discipline's centenary. That day's keynote speaker, Nobel Prize winner Dr Venki Ramakrishnan, is an Honorary Fellow. We marked the centenary of World War I with a panel discussion and preview of the film of Vera Brittain's *Testament of Youth*, featuring Baroness Shirley Williams, Brittain's daughter and fellow Somervillian; and a Great War Roadshow (p30). At a more personal level, we consider the lives of Somerville centenarians Mary Burns and Margaret Hagger (p14).

Our students are at the heart of the College, and we are pleased to introduce a new 'Student Spirit' feature (p20) in which undergraduates reflect on the past twelve months at Somerville. It remains a high priority for the College to attract the best possible students regardless of their social, economic or national background. The award of HEFCE funding for a recruitment project based in the West Midlands, in which our Senior Tutor plays a leading role, brought Somerville the distinction of being the one Oxford college singled out by name in one of the successful bids (p10).

Somerville and Somervillians are still blazing new trails. We hope you will continue to be part of that tradition.

Alice Prochaska



Excerpt from a page of Mary Somerville's notebook headed 'Integration of difficult formulae in Laplace's *Mécanique Céleste*' (Somerville collection, Bodleian Library).



Timothy Spall as J.M.W. Turner in the 2014 biopic written and directed by Mike Leigh. *Mr Turner* is now available on DVD & Blu-Ray.

News & People...



Catherine Eva Hughes (Pestell), 24.9.1933 – 10.12.2014

Mrs Catherine Hughes, Principal from 1989 to 1996, died on 10 December 2014. Mrs Hughes oversaw the admission of male students to Somerville in 1994, and later became a generous benefactor. Somerville wrote Alice Prochaska at the time of Mrs Hughes's death, "was very close to her heart". A Memorial Service will be held at College Chapel at 2.30pm on 9 May.

Students

The Somerville **University Challenge** team reached the final of University Challenge 2014, losing 240-135 to Trinity College, Cambridge.

Students held an **international fashion show** as part of Somerville-Oriel EqualiWeek in March. A gallery of images can be found at on.fb.me/1EA8Qbe.

Matt Kerr (2011, Biochemistry) won the IFBB Henry Kissinger Essay Prize for an essay answering the question 'How has the modern diet contributed to an increase in mental ill health?'

The College's first **charity formal** was held to raise money for **Molly's Library in Ghana** (see p20).

Three new Indira Gandhi scholars joined Somerville in 2014; **Ranu Sinha, Garima Singh and Narendra Killada** are now conducting research under the auspices of Somerville's Oxford India Centre for Sustainable Development.

Fellows and Staff

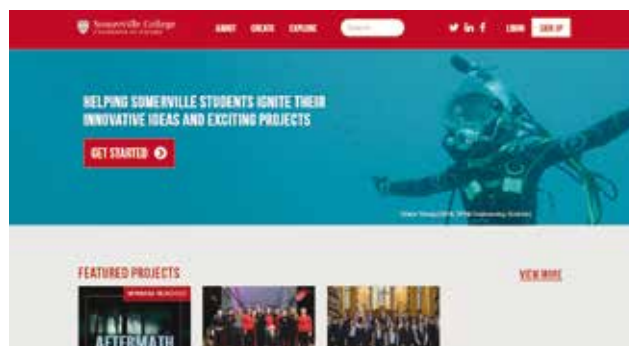
Professor Steve Rayner, Senior Tutor, co-led the only successful Oxford **HEFCE** funding bid that targets a region with below-average Oxbridge attendance (see p10)

Professor Alex Rogers, Professor of Zoology, received the **MPLS Divisional Impact Award** for his work as Scientific Director of the International Programme on the State of the Oceans.

Dr Nicola Byrom, Stipendiary Lecturer in Psychology at Somerville College, was awarded the **Queen's Young Leader Award** by the Queen Elizabeth Diamond Jubilee Trust for the work of her mental health charity, 'Student Minds'.

Results of the **Research Excellence Framework** found that the University had the largest volume of world-leading research of any UK institution of higher education. Among the 36 videos the University chose to feature on its REF webpage, four focused on research conducted by Somerville Fellows. The Principal and Professor Raj Thakker both served on REF panels.

Somerville launched a **crowdfunding platform** (see below) – the first Oxbridge College to do so. Appeals for the US Choir tour, Women's Boat Club and a student filmmaking project all exceeded their targets. "Crowdfunding empowers students to organise projects in support of their activities, connect with and inspire others and overcome challenges to achieve success. Projects have offered a very enjoyable experience for students and their supporters," said **Brett de Gaynesford**, Deputy Development Director.



New crowdfunding platform: somerville.hubbub.net

Alumni

In November 2014 *Too Good To Fail*, a high-profile report co-authored by **Dr Ruth Thompson** (1971, History), was produced by the Higher Education Commission. It argued that "the current system is not sustainable".

Baroness (**Onora**) **O'Neill** was awarded Germany's highest honour, 'Pour Le Merite'.

Testament of Youth, a film adaptation of **Vera Brittain's** autobiography, received its UK premiere in October 2014. Brittain's time at Somerville formed part of the story – but other Colleges were used for filming.

In a double-first for women, Baroness (**Shriti**) **Vadera** (1981, PPE) was appointed chair of Santander, the first woman to chair a major UK bank, and **Sacha Romanovitch** (1986, Chemistry) was appointed head of Grant Thornton, the first woman to head a major UK accountancy firm (see p26-9).

In the New Year's Honours list, **Esther Rantzen** (1959, English) was named Dame Commander of the Order of the British Empire for services to children and older people, and **Sonia Phippard** (1978, Physics) Commander of the British Empire for services to the environment and flood risk management.

Art at Somerville

In April 2015, Somerville welcomed new artist-in-residence **Patrice Moor**, formerly resident at the Royal College of Physicians and Oxford's Botanic Gardens. The painter describes her artistic focus as "decay, life and death" (see p35.)

Richard Twose was commissioned to paint the portrait of the Principal.

2014-15 Events

Ending the Divide: 20 years of Co-Education at Somerville, a reunion celebration, was held in September 2014 to mark twenty years since the first male undergraduates were admitted to Somerville.

The **Dorothy Hodgkin Symposium** was held in October 2014 to mark 50 years since her receipt of the Nobel Prize. Co-hosted by UNESCO, Somerville and the IUCr, the event drew more than 300 guests to hear Professor (Sir) **Venki Ramakrishnan**, a Nobel laureate, speak on crystallography. **Georgina Ferry**, Dorothy Hodgkin's biographer, was interviewed at the event.

The **Great War Roadshow** in November 2014 (p30) offered an opportunity for alumni and members of the public to have war memorabilia archived for online repository Europeana. Baroness **Shirley Williams** and **Mark Bostridge** spoke on **Vera Brittain** at a **Literary Lunch** at Somerville on the same day.

The **Dorothy Hodgkin Memorial Lecture** was held in March 2015. The address was delivered by Professor **Petra Fromme**.

The annual commemoration service was held on 14 June and Oxford services were also held for **Christina Roaf**, **Jean Wilks** and **Sally Chilver**. Funerals were held at Somerville for **Catherine Hughes** and **Anna Morpurgo Davies**.

Publications by Fellows and alumni

The Oxford Solid State Basics (OUP, June 2013) by **Steven H. Simon**, Fellow

Wittgenstein and Heidegger (Routledge, July 2013) co-edited by **Aaron Wendland** (2008, Politics)

Life Writing in Reformation Europe (Ashgate, June 2013) by **Irena Backus** (Kostarska) (1968, English)

The Memoirs of Walter Bagehot (Yale University Press, August 2013) by **Franklyn Prochaska** (2010; SCR member)

The Law of State Immunity (OUP, August 2013, third edition) by **Hazel Fox** (Stuart) (1946, Jurisprudence), Honorary Fellow

Just and Unjust Military Interventions (CUP, September 2013) co-edited by **Jennifer Welsh**, Fellow

Glory and Honour: The Scottish Renaissance (Birlinn, November 2013) by **Andrea Thomas** (1984, History)

Shakespeare and the Eighteenth Century (OUP, November 2013) by **Michael Caines** (1996, English)

Love and Music will endure (Island, December 2013) by **Liz MacRae Shaw** (1966, History)

Reading Romantic Poetry (Blackwell, February 2014) by **Fiona Stafford**, Fellow

Cases and Materials on EU Law (OUP, June 2014) by **Stephen Weatherill**, Fellow

Peter Levi. Oxford Romantic (Signal, August 2014) by **Brigid Allen** (1963, History)

The Crusades. A reader (Univ. of Toronto Press, August 2014) by **Susan Allen** (1985, History) and **Emilie Amt** (1984, History)

Twentieth Century Theatre Architecture (Ashgate, October 2014) by **Alistair Fair** (2000, History)

From Dust to Life: The Origin and Evolution of our Solar System (Princeton, November 2013) co-authored by **Jacqueline Mitton** (Pardoe) (1966, Physics)

Indian Capitalism in Development (Routledge, November 2014) co-edited by **Judith Heyer** (Cripps) (1956, PPE), Emeritus Fellow

Scout: A Memoir of Investigative Journalist Michael C. Ruppert (CreateSpace, November 2014) by **Jenna Orkin** (1974, Music)

Collected Works of Erasmus: Apophthegmata (University of Toronto Press, December 2014) translated by **Elaine Fantham** (Crosthwaite) (1950, Classics)

Bartholomew Fair (Shakenoak, December 2014) by **Ann Swinfen** (Pettit) (1956, Mathematics)

Language and Identity in Modern Egypt (Edinburgh University Press, January 2015) by **Reem Bassiouney** (1996, Comparative Philology)

The World of Yesterday: Memoirs of a European (Pushkin, November 2014); *The Girl who wasn't there* (Little, Brown; January 2015); *Gone to Ground* (Clerkenwell, February 2015); *The Flying Classroom* (Pushkin, March 2015); *The Glory of Life* (Haus, March 2015); *Inside the Head of Bruno Schulz* (Pushkin, April 2015); *The Winter of the Lions* (Vintage, April 2015); and *Light in a Dark House* (Vintage, June 2015) were translated into English by **Anthea Bell** (1954, English)

English Psalms in the Middle Ages, 1300-1450 (OUP, February 2015) by **Annie Sutherland**, Fellow

In the Family Way (Viking, February 2015) by **Jane Robinson** (1978, English)

Polemic. Language as Violence in Medieval and Early Modern Discourse (OUP, March 2015) co-edited by Professors **Almut Suerbaum** and **Benjamin Thompson**, Fellows

Eros•lonen (Mitteldeutsche Verlag, March 2015) by **Angelika Arend** (Manyoni) (1977, Modern Languages)

FORTHCOMING:

Portraits of Shakespeare (Bodleian Library, June 2015) by **Katherine Duncan-Jones**, Emeritus Fellow

A History of the Abbey of Bury St Edmunds, 1257-1301 (Boydell, July 2015) by **Antonia Gransden** (Morland) (1947, History)

See also Somerville Novelists (p12)

Do please let us know of any recent or forthcoming publications of your own.

Universally Speaking: A Profile of Onora O'Neill, Baroness O'Neill of Bengarve

Oxford is famous for offering philosophy alongside politics and economics, but the priorities of career politics and academic philosophy then tend to pull graduates in very different directions – it is rare to bring philosophy to bear directly on public life and policy. Yet in a career spanning five decades, Baroness O'Neill (1959, PPP) has done just that.

O'Neill arrived at Somerville to read History but quickly grew concerned that she couldn't understand why her Tutor, Barbara Harvey, liked her essays.

"Barbara sent me to Elizabeth Anscombe, who interviewed me very nicely about causality," says O'Neill. "I wrote something on it and Anscombe apparently wrote a one-liner back to Miss Harvey which said 'this girl is hungry for philosophy'. So I was allowed to change."

The rest, of course, is philosophy. O'Neill found studying under Anscombe stimulating and, at times, frustrating. Anscombe's greatest achievement, she says, was as one of the chief stimulants for the "enormous" move in philosophy towards virtue ethics, not least through her influence on the Northern Irish philosopher and fellow Catholic convert Alastair MacIntyre, and on his landmark work *After Virtue*. Yet for all her brilliance, O'Neill found Anscombe's reliance on theological assumptions for ethical justification awkward.

"She was a convert to Roman Catholicism and was theologically quite dogmatic," says O'Neill. "She believed ethics could only be done seriously if you started from a theological position, and she handed ethics teaching over to Philippa Foot. Elizabeth was a scourge of the dominant people writing in Oxford at that time – notably Hare and Urmson – but was much more interesting than either."

O'Neill studied for her PhD at Harvard, where she would ultimately come under the supervision of John Rawls – as well as taking seminars with Robert Nozick. It was here in particular that a lifelong love for Kant's philosophy developed, which she


took with her into her teaching at Barnard College, New York, the University of Essex and Cambridge. She has continued to publish widely on philosophy, notably on Kant – a second edition of *Acting on Principle: An Essay on Kantian Ethics*, republished in 2013.

Today she is a member of the House of Lords, a Companion of Honour, and chairs the Equality & Human Rights Commission. She has previously chaired the Nuffield Council on Bioethics and the Nuffield Foundation. O'Neill was Principal of Newnham College from 1992 to 2006. She has served as President of the British Academy and – a rare combination – was also elected an honorary fellow of the Royal Society. Philosophy, for O'Neill, always had political implications.

When political philosophy was dead

At Harvard, Rawls was yet to write his landmark *A Theory of Justice*, but elements of his thinking on justice were presented in several seminars O'Neill attended. Likewise Robert Nozick, another of O'Neill's professors, had not yet published *Anarchy, State & Utopia*. Unlike Rawls, Nozick argued that a minimal state was needed if people's rights were to be respected.

"I took Nozick's first graduate seminar at Harvard – a time when he was still a utilitarian, and not much interested in rights. We read Luce and Raiffa's *Games and Decisions*, so it was a sort of formal course in game theory and decision theory," she says. "Kant became interesting to me when I wrote a little paper on interpersonal utility comparisons, but ended up rejecting the whole rational choice approach because I concluded that it did not offer a convincing view of reason."



"I started going back to Kant by looking at some philosophers who'd been writing in the 1950s and '60s about formal models of rationality – Marcus Singer on universalisation, Kurt Baier and so on – but their approaches all seemed fearfully thin. Then, one fateful day, I thought 'I'll read Kant again'."

O'Neill had been introduced to Kant by Philippa Foot at Somerville (where an entire Easter vacation was devoted to Kant's *Groundwork*), and extended her understanding of Kant's philosophy when she studied under John Rawls and Stanley Cohen. As Teaching Assistant to Cohen at Harvard, O'Neill taught Kant's Religion within the limits of Reason alone to undergraduates. And she took Charles Parson's, course on the *Critique of Pure Reason* in which students had to write a ten-page summary of the latest allocated sections each week.

"There was a lot of sheer chance in it," says O'Neill. "The lines of thought that I began to develop all queried the prevailing account of rationality, and their background reliance on logical positivism. That slogan of the 50s – 'political philosophy is dead' – was not yet old hat at that point. Indeed, one of the baleful effects of logical positivism had been to kibosh both ethics and political philosophy. People credit Rawls with the revival of political philosophy and it's important to say that it really did need reviving."

Constitutional implications

Kant's thesis that the categorical imperative can guide actions – despite its spare, formal approach – is one with which O'Neill concurs. It has also been enormously influential internationally, ensuring his legacy is felt in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the European Convention on Human Rights. Yet those documents also reflect an ethical culture that Kant would have viewed as lopsided in its combination of eloquence about rights with silence about duties, not to mention virtues.

"Kant's ethics is not just an ethics of principles but an ethics of principles of duty – duty is primary," she says. "This was deeply unpopular through the twentieth century, when philosophers often held that any ethics of duty must be narrowly rigid, damaging and overly focused on blame."

O'Neill points out that World War One tarnished the concept of 'duty', perhaps because of a misguided and narrow focus on conceptions of 'patriotic duty' which cost so many human lives. Nietzsche's writings had foretold the shift, but after World War One it was the logical positivists who began to push the rejection of 'duty' into the philosophical mainstream, while some took a more radical path towards nihilism.

"But then you have to ask: what grew out of nihilism and logical positivism?" says O'Neill. "Well, it was communism and fascism, so suddenly it doesn't exactly look as if the move has been a fantastic moral achievement."

At the end of World War II, the great question – ‘what must we do?’ – could not be ignored, and with ‘duty’ out of the running, philosophers, politicians and commentators alike turned instead to ‘human rights’.

“If I am to be very naughty about it, rights are appealing because they are the answer not to the old (Kantian!) question ‘what ought I do?’ but to that much more appealing question ‘what ought I get?,’” says O’Neill. “I’m afraid that shift is far too popular. Yet we can have no rights unless others carry the counterpart duties”

Nevertheless, the emerging concept of human rights was only slowly translated into constitutional and legal enactments. This was partly because the 1950s and 1960s were the great age of decolonization, and many pairs of eyes focused almost exclusively on the right to self-determination. A wider focus on human rights emerged only after the 1960s.

“However, even in the early post war years, people were saying that mere ‘manifesto rights’ were not effective unless the counterpart duties were allocated,” she says. “The UN Covenants of 1966 also didn’t allocate the duties – they only said that it was the duty of the signatory states to allocate those duties and enforce them. This approach to duties reflects a historical moment in which the powers of states were very extensive, and it was assumed that all duties would lie with the states party.”

Signing Declarations and Covenants proved easy – implementing and realising rights less so. Yet duty remained taboo. O’Neill’s approach is to show why respecting others’ rights is impossible unless duties are duly discharged. Less conceptually, however, she also argues that the assumption that states alone can protect human rights is flawed.

“Duties ultimately have to be carried by individuals and institutions but this kind of realism is too often lacking in certain debates about human rights,” she says. “A right to a fair trial requires very complicated and effective institutions that assign a whole raft of duties to protect it – likewise the rule of law. The right to food requires farming, transportation, and markets that get it to the right people. It’s not enough to say that the state needs to allocate food to the people.”

O’Neill is a fan of the European Convention on Human Rights, believing it to be better drafted and more illuminating than the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, in large part because it both defines the rights, and lists ways in which they must be qualified to achieve mutual coherence.

She argues against the view that rights could be better protected and realised by a single, more powerful world state, which she suspects would only increase corruption

and inefficiencies. In consequence rights and duties may be differently implemented in different jurisdictions: there may be no unique way of securing rights.

“If you have a plurality of jurisdictions, with all its disruptions and opportunities for conflict, then you have to recognise that there is also a plurality of ways of implementing rights,” she says. “Moreover, over time what you’re trying to implement will change. For example, it would not make much sense to ask what rights the Inca had against their Viking contemporaries – they didn’t know of each other’s existence. But now we have a world in which we jostle up against one another all the time.”

O’Neill concludes that Kant’s claims about universalisability are not and need not be linked to uniform requirements, or take a single constitutional form.

Checking imbalances

O’Neill has also written widely on the right to freedom of expression and on the relation of media freedoms to trustworthiness and to trust, beginning with her Reith lectures in 2002 and including a recent TED talk.

She argues that clamour for greater trust is mistaken: we need well placed trust that tracks trustworthiness rather than ‘more trust’. There is in fact little evidence that trust in politicians and journalists used to be much higher, and where there are problems the remedy is not to increase trust but to increase trustworthiness.

In the beginning was... ethics

O’Neill is keen to emphasise that good science is reliant on good ethics.

“Hume was right when he said ‘you cannot derive ‘ought’ from ‘is’ and, of course, Kant thought the same way,” says O’Neill. “Physicists generally agree that you cannot be value-neutral and do science. In shorthand, why would you be interested in honesty in the practice of science if you didn’t have an ethical commitment?”

It is that ‘ethical commitment’ that characterizes O’Neill’s life and work, her determination to apply philosophy to life and politics, and to seek out better solutions to press regulation, bioethical questions, and challenges in human rights.

Kant believed in the possibility of an “ethical commonwealth” in which all people were “well-disposed” to one another. O’Neill has written less on these themes, but her vision highlights two crucial Kantian qualities that would seem to underpin her own resolve: hope and, of course, that other word we’re not supposed to mention – duty.

Commemorating

Somervillians who have died (as of 31 March 2015)

This year Somerville's Commemoration Service will be held in the College Chapel on Saturday 13 June 2015. 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 or telephone 01865 270632

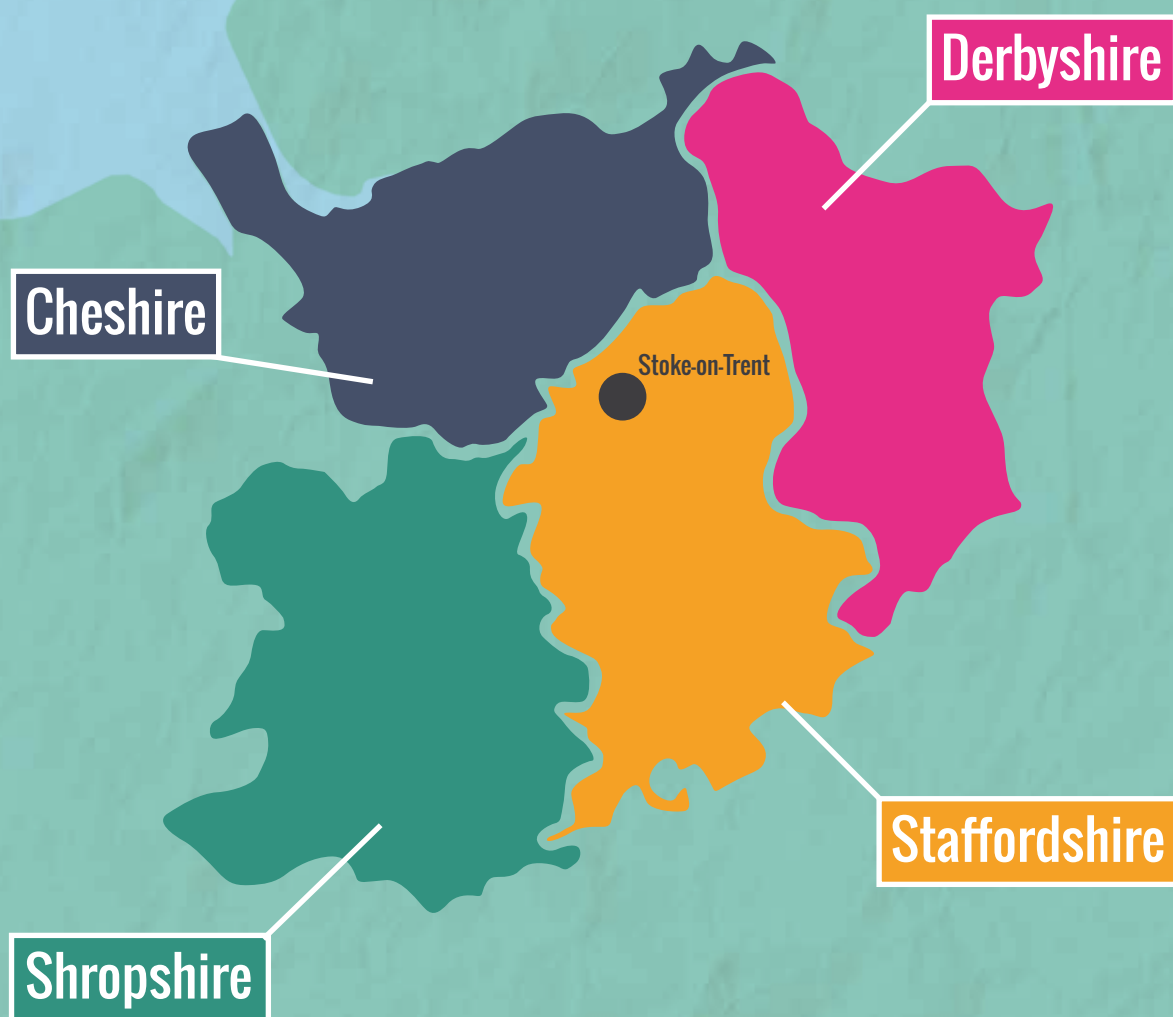
Honorary Fellows

Catherine Eva Hughes	<i>née</i> Pestell (Principal 1989-96, Honorary Fellow 1989) on 10 December 2014	Aged 81
Nina Byers	(Fellow 1967-8; Janet Watson Visiting Fellow, 1968) on 5 June 2014	Aged 84
Anna Morpurgo Davies	(Professorial Fellow 1971; Emeritus Fellow 2004) on 27 September 2014	Aged 77
Evelyn Christina Roaf	<i>née</i> Drake (1937; Fellow 1965; Senior Research Fellow 1979; Emeritus Fellow 1985; Foundation Fellow 2012) on 18 June 2014	Aged 96
Elizabeth Leila Millicent ('Sally') Chilver	<i>née</i> Graves (1932; Honorary Fellow 1977) on 3 July 2014	Aged 99
Kathleen Mary Ollerenshaw	<i>née</i> Timpson (1931; Honorary Fellow 1978) on 10 August 2014	Aged 101
Jean Ruth Fraser Wilks	(1936; Honorary Fellow 1985) on 15 July 2014	Aged 97

Alumni

Elizabeth Al Qadhi	<i>née</i> Strachey (1955) 1 October 2014	Aged 78
Jashodhara Bagchi	<i>née</i> Sen Gupta (1958) on 9 Jan 2015	Aged 77
Christa Renate Barber	<i>née</i> Krause (1953) on 20 January 2015	Aged 87
Dorothy Mary ('Molly') Barratt	(1945) on 3 August 2014	Aged 90
Margaret Helen Boon	<i>née</i> Booth (1959) on 2 May 2014	Aged 73
Jean Davies	<i>née</i> Roderick (1947) on 1 October 2014	Aged 86
Edna Wishart Deutsch	<i>née</i> Robertson (1960) in December 2014	Aged 75
Joan Collier Ferguson	<i>née</i> Sinar (1943) on 18 January 2015	Aged 89
Maria Katazyna ('Kasia') Greenwood	<i>née</i> Smolenska (1953) on 8 October 2014	Aged 79
Hilda Jean Harvey	<i>née</i> Thompson (1946) on 18 August 2014	Aged 89
Elizabeth Ann, Lady Kennet	<i>née</i> Adams (1941) on 30 November 2014	Aged 91
Pauline Mary Colette King	(1956) on 12 October 2014	Aged 84
Susan Mary ('Sally') Liya	<i>née</i> Villiers-Stuart (1964) on 15 February 2015	Aged 69
Patricia Kathleen Pearson	<i>née</i> Wheelock (1940) on 19 April 2014	Aged 92
Margaret Anthea Sharma	<i>née</i> Grubb (1957) on 30 September 2014	Aged 75
Marion (Mandy) Elizabeth von Sivers	<i>née</i> Boyd (1966) on 8 May 2014	Aged 79
Enid Dorothy Stoye	(1938) 2 January 2015	Aged 95
June Mary Tillet	<i>née</i> Burdess (1939) on 13 December 2014	Aged 95
Barbara Patricia Tizard	<i>née</i> Parker (1944) on 4 January 2015	Aged 88
Kathryn Anne Tonge	(1982) on 2 January 2014	Aged 49
The Lady Juliet Margaret Townsend	<i>née</i> Smith (1960) on 29 November 2014	Aged 73
Enid Constance Woodall	(1933) on 12 March 2015	Aged 100

Midlands moment: Somerville for all



The College Senior Tutor represents Somerville and Oxford in a network of higher education institutions that recently won HEFCE funding as part of the National Networks for Collaborative Outreach (NNCO) scheme. Three successful bids came from the University, but only the 'Higher Horizons Network' involved an individual College and focused on a region with below-average Oxbridge access rates.

Making the best universities accessible to the most under-privileged communities and individuals remains as difficult and important as ever. Oxford is not helped by its portrayal in the media, which is likely to dissuade some gifted students from applying on the basis of their background.

Somerville has certain in-built advantages, of course, such as its history as a College for outsiders, its informal architecture and its reputation for egalitarian and community values. Nevertheless, access work needs constant attention. It also needs the odd encouragement.

In January, that encouragement arrived in the form of an announcement that the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) had decided to approve a bid by the Higher Horizons Network (HHN). As a result, the HHN has been allocated £38,709 per annum over the academic years 2014-15 and 2015-16.

"I'm delighted that HEFCE have recognised the commitment and work that Somerville has put into improving access to Higher Education and to Oxford in a part of the UK with areas of significant deprivation," said Steve Rayner, Senior Tutor at Somerville.

Dr Rayner, who has sat on the group's board since its founding more than a decade ago, represents both Somerville and the University of Oxford. The group also includes the Universities of Keele, Staffordshire, Derby, Chester, Harper Adams, Manchester Metropolitan, and Reaseheath College.

Dr Rayner himself is from Stoke-on-Trent, which is where the scheme was initially focused. It has since expanded to include Shropshire, Cheshire, Derbyshire and North Staffordshire. Dr Rayner is never hard to spot at Somerville, as he is always branded 'Stoke City' – ordinary days usually see him in various black-and-red away shirts, formal halls in the club's collared (but crested) blue shirt.

"Working to help raise aspirations and progression rates into Higher Education in Stoke and the surrounding areas has been a personal quest for me now over a number of years," said Dr Rayner.

"This is a part of the world I feel a strong connection with. I really want to tell as many people from the region as possible, 'I was born in Stoke. I studied at Oxford for my undergraduate degree. I got about the best education on the planet and had the time of my life there and it proved to be the platform for a hugely

satisfying career. That could all happen to you, no matter what your background or where you come from. Go for it!"

A little under a decade ago, each Oxford College was allocated a local education authority region of England and Wales, in which it would hold responsibility for University access work. Somerville's region comprises Buckinghamshire, Richmond-upon-Thames, and Hounslow. Contrary to common perceptions, there is real socio-economic and educational disadvantage in parts of this jurisdiction. Nevertheless, indicators like the English Indices of Deprivation show that the counties that fall within the HHN's remit fall significantly below national averages – university access figures tell a similar story.

"Working to help raise aspirations and progression rates into Higher Education in Stoke and the surrounding areas has been a personal quest for me now over a number of years."

Steve Rayner

Figures published by the University of Oxford show that it accepted 181 applicants from the West Midlands in 2013 – 5.7% of its total intake (including overseas students). This is a significantly worse per-person acceptance rate than those achieved in the South East, South West and East of England. It is notable that 7.8% of all candidates accepted through UCAS in 2012 were from the West Midlands – whereas just 5.7% of Oxford acceptances in 2013 were for candidates from the West Midlands.

The HHN was launched by Keele University and all of its member institutions are based in the region, with the exception of Somerville. For Dr Rayner, the funding allocation represents recognition for a decade of work on improving access – and for the access priorities of Somerville more broadly.

"The main reason I'm so pleased about this award is that it will allow us to do more to reach more of the very capable students who could be highly successful at Oxford but who might be put off applying – Somerville, after all, is all about changing lives for the better through education."

Somerville Fictions

Somerville has always produced novelists who span the spectrum, from Iris Murdoch to Penelope Fitzgerald to Dorothy Sayers. Today there are too many living Somerville novelists to list, but here we highlight the work of some of our younger and early-career novelists and short story writers. We hope other alumni will let us know of their publications too.

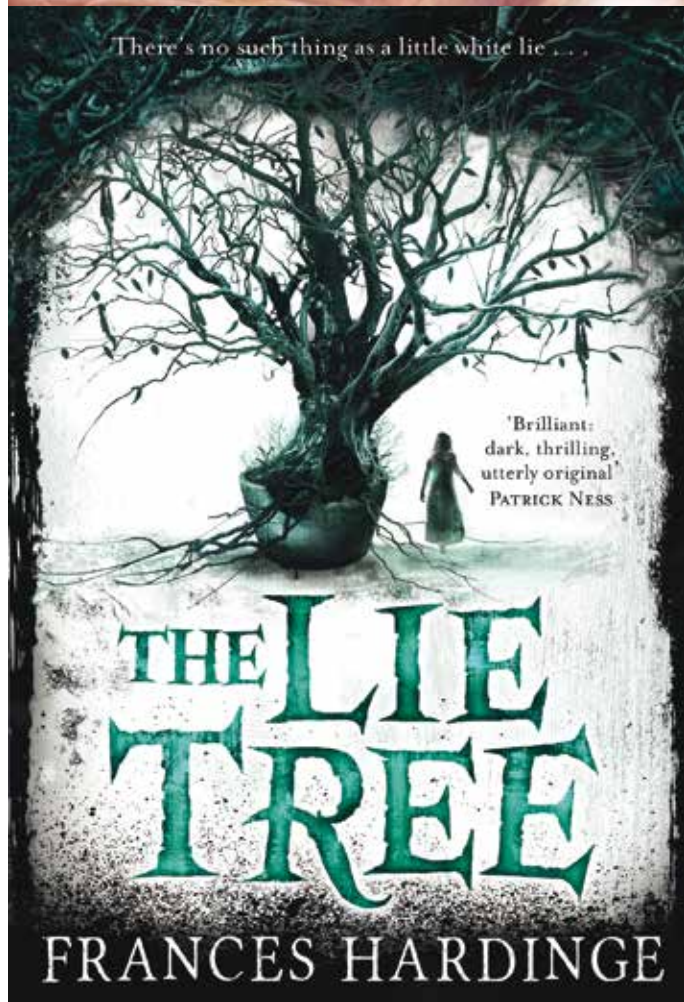
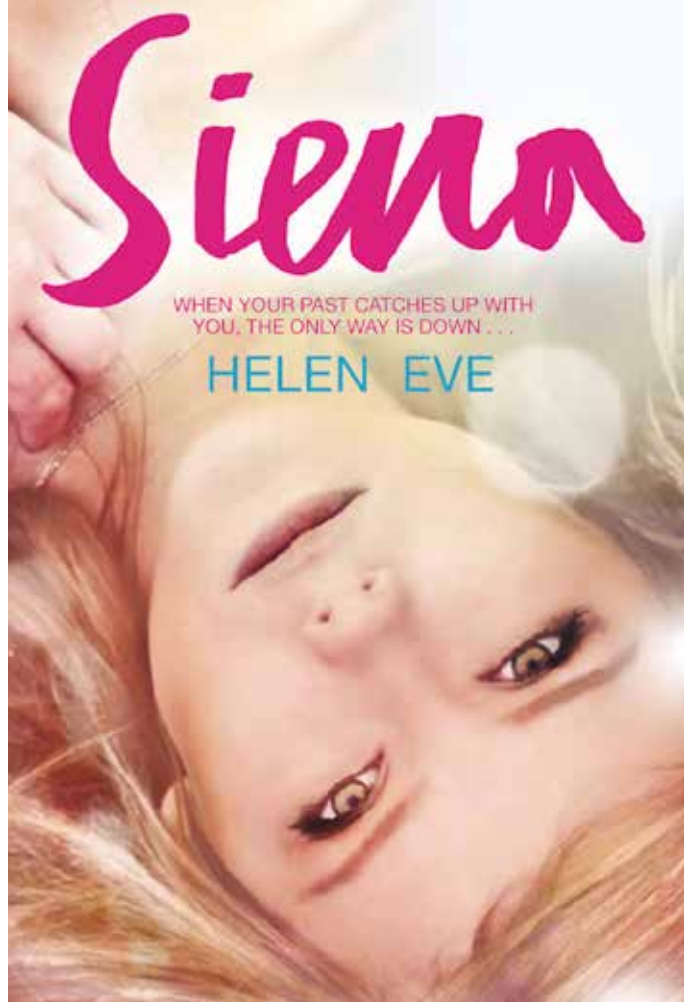
Siena by Helen Eve (Etty) (English, 1999)

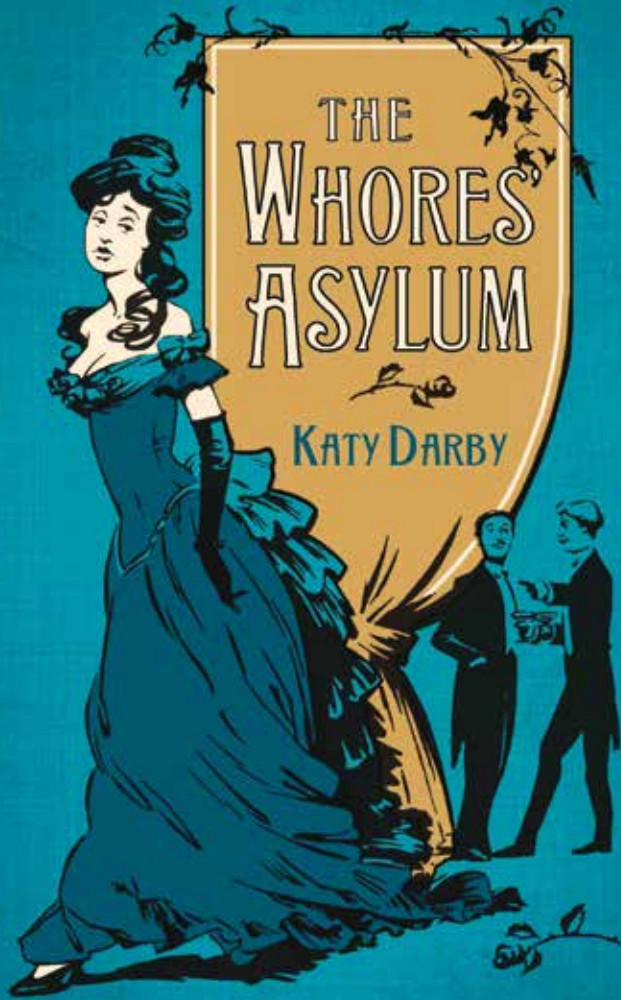
Siena is a contemporary Young Adult novel set at an elite boarding school. Narrated by the alternating voices of anti-heroine Siena and her rival Romy, the novel is a satirical exploration of the illusion of popularity, and the social media-led pressure to exhibit a perfect lifestyle.

Siena, moulded like a designer doll and protected by a chainmail of propaganda, has traded human connections for a covetable public image; she is both a manifestation and a victim of a society in thrall to the culture of celebrity.

"I have especially fond memories of my first year Victorian tutorials with Professor Fiona Stafford, not least because my love of *Great Expectations* led, several years later, to this creation of a modern-day Estella."

Siena is available now, published by Macmillan Children's Books in the UK and St Martin's Press in the US. It is a prequel to my first novel *Stella*, published in 2014.





FEN

BY

DAISY JOHNSON

A NOVEL PUBLISHED BY JONATHAN CAPE

The Lie Tree by Frances Hardinge (1992, English)

In 1868, a naturalist's family flee to small channel island, pursued by an unnamed scandal. When the naturalist dies in mysterious circumstances, his 14-year-old daughter Faith investigates. Amongst his belongings she discovers a strange tree that only bears fruit when lies are whispered to it. The fruit delivers a secret to whoever consumes it. The bigger the lie and the more people who believe it, the greater the secret revealed. Realising that the tree may hold the key to her father's murder, Faith spreads rumours far and wide across the island community. Her lies spiral out of control, however, and truths are uncovered that she is not ready to face. *The Lie Tree* is a historical fantasy for young adults.

The Unpierced Heart by Katy Darby (1994, English)

The Unpierced Heart (originally published as *The Whores' Asylum*) is a Victorian drama set in 1880s Jericho (then a seedy, run-down Oxford suburb) where two students, theologian Edward Fraser and brilliant medic Stephen Chapman, meet and become fast friends.

When beautiful, mysterious ex-nurse Diana Pelham sets up a refuge for prostitutes in Jericho and persuades Stephen to help, naturally they fall in love. Edward is horrified: he knows Diana from his Cambridge past, where she broke hearts and inspired fatal rivalries. But when he tries to warn Stephen against her, three lives unravel into tragedy.

Featuring duels, deception, dungeons, orgies, fallen women, drunken Oxonians and a dancing bear, *The Whores' Asylum* is "a truly Gothic little gem" (*The Independent*) and "a cracking novel" (*Metro*).

Fen by Daisy Johnson (2012, Creative Writing)

In this collection of linked stories, AM Heath prize-winner Daisy Johnson explores the landscape and legends of the fens.

This is land that was supposed to be underwater. This is a place where language burns, where babies are made from clay; a place where the gods will steal your words.

Mattie always knew her brother had it coming. He was a scrapper, a fighter. He was bad news.

When Archie and Marco disappear into the forest, only Marco returns – and there can only be one conclusion. Mattie isn't convinced, though.

She never believed Archie's stories about the town, but now, everything has changed.

Margaret Hagger and Mary Burns:

Born just eight days apart, Margaret Hagger and Mary Burns arrived at Somerville as undergraduates in 1933 to read Modern Languages. It was the year construction of the Golden Gate Bridge began, Roosevelt's New Deal became policy, Hitler became German Chancellor, Gandhi was sentenced to prison in India, and Churchill made his first public speech against German rearmament. Here we chronicle the lives of two Somerville centenarians in words and images.



With father Frederick, 1915



With sister Pip and brother Hugh, 1926



War babies, 1946



Canoeing in France



With grandchildren, 1979



90th birthday reunion, 2005

Margaret (Leith-Ross) Hagger

Born: 7 January 1915, Chelsea Hospital, London

Married: Arnold John Hagger (MA Oxon), Schoolmaster at Shrewsbury School, in 1939, Gloucestershire

Children: Judith in 1942; Mark in 1944; Ross in 1949

Lived in: 1939-45: London, Bristol, Lissmouth, Macclesfield, Cosford, Shawbury, etc. 1946-today: Shrewsbury

Grandchildren: Clytie in 1968; Sam in 1990; Tom in 1995; Jacob in 1969; Sarah in 1967; Allister in 1973



100th birthday celebrations, 2015

Two Somerville centuries



Mary Burns at Somerville in 1970 with daughter Alison (1967, Lit. Hum.) and husband Robbie

Mary (Goodland) Burns

My mother was born Mary Goodland in Taunton on 15 January 1915. She was just a year old when her mother left to join her father in India and Burma, and Mary spent the next five years, together with her older brother, living with foster parents on a remote farm on the Dorset-Somerset border. By the time Mary moved to North London in 1926 she was slightly wild and more than ready for some stimulus.

Mary attended Channing School for Girls, a Unitarian school in Highgate co-founded by her maternal Welsh great-grandfather. From Channing, she won a scholarship to read Medieval and Modern French at Somerville. She returned to London from Somerville and has only spent three years away from it since – in Washington DC (1949-52). After a social work training course at London School of Economics, Mary worked in Croydon's Public Assistance Department for two years before returning to London School of Economics to study – and then teach – child psychiatric social work. She has always said that these educational institutions saved her life.

At her first Somerville tutorial, Mary and her peers were exhorted to read widely beyond their immediate subject, opening their minds to such subjects as art and architecture. Fellow tutees became lifelong friends and Mary looks back with gratitude and admiration at a number of distinguished Tutors: Mildred Pope, Vera Farnell and Enid Starkie. After three years Mary was all set to study medieval reading habits, when the leftist mother of Jenefer Corbett-Fisher, a close friend in College, persuaded her to move into social work in London.

Only after Oxford and London School of Economics did she marry Robbie Burns, a civil servant, throwing herself into a loving and public-spirited family life – as well as bringing up four children, she served on educational committees for many years and worked part-time as a psychiatric social worker in a child guidance clinic. Following her husband's death in 1971, she increased her involvement in social work – in her active years after retirement, she studied art history and travelled widely.

ALISON BURNS

Luminary of Science: Mary Somerville



Close scrutiny is often the enemy of a good reputation, but not for the under-celebrated life of Mary Somerville – the closer you look, the more remarkable she appears.

“The universe is chaotic and you make us see it,” Mary Somerville (played by Lesley Manville, above) tells the artist in the 2014 Mike Leigh biopic *Mr Turner*.

It might seem a surprising response from the translator of Pierre-Simon Laplace’s *The Mechanism of the Heavens*. But it reflects a woman who was open to the wonder of the universe and who possessed the acuity not merely to understand contemporary scientific breakthroughs but, crucially, to explain and elaborate on them in clear prose for tens of thousands of readers.

Mary Fairfax grew up in a coastal home in Burntisland, across the Firth of Forth from Edinburgh. The wildness of her existence and

her fascination with natural history, which she inherited from her father, meant that she spent much of her early life studying sea shells, birds and flowers.

But it was the childhood discovery of an article about algebra which, as much as anything, set her intellectual course. In Edinburgh, she would ask family friends to teach her Latin, algebra, geology and natural history. Later, as a mother of small children, she would rise early to study trigonometry and astronomy, and to plumb Newton’s *Principia*.

She had to be doubly determined. Opportunities for women to study (let alone study science) were scarce and ill will towards

such women could be loudly expressed. Her first husband, Samuel Greig – who died three years after they married – was among those who scorned women taking up intellectual pursuits.

“I felt in my own breast that women were capable of taking a higher place in creation than that assigned to them in my early days, which was very low,” she later reflected.

Illuminating the universe

She had no financial need for science. An exceptional pianist and a gifted enough painter for others to assume she could live by it, Mary married the accomplished physician William Somerville in 1812. He was later appointed chief physician to the Royal Hospital, Chelsea and elected a Fellow of the Royal Society, and in order to get her work on the magnetising of solar rays published, he submitted it under his name to the *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society*.

Three publications established Mary Somerville's reputation above all. The first was her 1831 translation of French scholar Pierre-Simon Laplace's work *Mécanique Céleste* – ‘I translated Laplace's work from algebra into common language,’ she later explained. The second was her own. *On the Connexion of the Physical Sciences* brought the links between different branches of sciences into plain view for non-specialist readers – shorn of the equations. No scientific work would sell so well until the publication of Darwin's *Origin of Species*, 25 years later. A third book, *Physical Geography*, became a standard university text.

Light touch

Lesley Manville's accent-finessed portrayal of a sharp, inquisitive woman of ideas in *Mr Turner* has helped to raise Somerville's profile. In her first scene, Somerville gives her friend Turner a demonstration involving a prism, a sheet of paper and a demagnetised iron needle, in which she seeks to demonstrate that the violet of the colour spectrum magnetises more strongly than colours at the opposite end of the spectrum.

Somerville wrote extensively on light and magnetism, arguing – correctly, though it was not yet proved – that rays existed beyond the extreme violet which were part of the same colour band, even though invisible to the naked eye. The experiment in the film has never been successfully repeated and Somerville's violet theory since discounted, but her spirit of inquiry is aptly shown.

The range of her accomplishments makes it difficult to capture Mary Somerville's achievement in just a few words, but her ability to discount many of the accepted prejudices of the day is perhaps equally striking. Thus she viewed neither her sex nor her Christian faith nor marriage nor motherhood as an impediment to her pursuit of science. Nor did her pursuit



Mary Somerville in 1844, by James Rannie Swinton

of science mean neglect of her children, and presumably her daughter Martha agreed, given the care she took to edit her mother's diaries for posterity.

Nothing has afforded me so convincing a proof of the unity of the Deity as these purely mental conceptions of numerical and mathematical science ... the Differential Calculus... [and] the Higher Algebra, all of which must have existed in that sublimely omniscient Mind from eternity...

Age has not abated my zeal for the emancipation of my sex from the unreasonable prejudice too prevalent in Great Britain against a literary and scientific education for women...

The warmth with which [William] Somerville entered into my success deeply affected me; for not one in ten thousand would have rejoiced at it as he did.

Mary Somerville's contribution lay partly in her own research breakthroughs but above all in her original analysis of a wide range of scientific discoveries, and the way she brought them together in her writings to suggest further universes of enquiry. In this, she threw light on a spectrum of subjects advancing as never before for a reading public who knew precious little about them. She was, perhaps, a prism through which the light and colour of new science could shine onto new audiences.

In her own words: Peggie Rimmer

An early academic high-flier in a field dominated by men, Peggie Rimmer spent her career at the forefront of physics and computing, helping to pioneer a new research group at CERN and overseeing a young computer scientist called Tim Berners-Lee. Here she tells her story.

I came into a world at war, in 1940, in Haydock, ex-Lancashire. My Dad was a coal miner and so soldiered in the Home Guard rather than abroad. Thanks to him I had an early start in science and engineering, to wit, nature and DIY. Despite the chronic austerity rife at the time, two of HM Governments had the courage and insight to pass Acts of Parliament which made Britain – parts of it at least – truly great for so many of us: the 1944 Education Act and the 1946 National Health Service Act. I benefited enormously from the former while the latter saved my young brother's life.

Passing the 11-plus Scholarship Exam, I went to Broughton Hall Convent of Mercy High School for Girls where, except for the gardener's boy, the entire staff was female, half of them nuns. So my take on things in those formative years was that women could and did do anything. By the Sixth Form my nature studies had converged and in 1957 I went to Liverpool University where I received a First Class degree in Maths and Physics followed by a First Class Honours degree in Physics. There the prevailing male:female ratio was of the order of 20:1. Cherchez les femmes!

In 1961 I came to Oxford, Lady Margaret Hall, to study for a DPhil in nuclear physics. Lacking a very active MCR, we graduate students, especially the lab-based among us, were rather left to our own devices. So life continued in the almost exclusively male domain of physics, working at the Rutherford Laboratory where I don't recall meeting another female physicist. If there was one and she reads this, will she please forgive my forgetting. Then in 1964 I joined the Somerville SCR as a Mary Ewart Junior Research Fellow and found again the role models I badly needed – in abundance. Hurrah! Of several women whom I might emulate, I would like to record my special appreciation of Dame Janet Vaughan.



Working on wire chambers at the CERN of Russia, the Joint Institute for Nuclear Research, Dubna, with leading JINR scientist and detector tsar Igor Golutvin, circa 1976

Meanwhile our small physics crew, lead by Neil Tanner, had proposed an experiment at CERN, the European Particle Physics Research Centre in Geneva, Switzerland. The proposal was accepted, we became the CERN-Oxford-Göteborg group, and I spent a few years commuting between Oxford and Geneva. It's not a lifestyle I would recommend; your friendships can get out of kilter. In 1967, after my memorable time in College, I took up a two-year Fellowship at CERN – and never came back. CERN was then and is now a Mecca for particle physicists; 10,000 of them presently do their research there.



At Iguazu Falls on the Brazil-Argentina border in 2011

I gravitated towards the front-end electronic instrumentation used for getting event signals out of the particle detectors, transformed, and onto storage media. I was particularly beguiled by the computing equipment that was beginning to appear, and finally specialised in software for data acquisition and networking.

By the early 1980s, CERN was host to lots of small- and medium-sized experiments, using an anarchic jumble of mini-computers, operating systems, programming languages and networking links. I was leading part of the group endeavouring to provide data collection facilities for as many of these experiments as possible. The conundrum was how to embrace heterogeneity without having squads of experts generating exclusive solutions to intrinsically identical problems.

In 1984, Tim Berners-Lee joined my team. We were gearing up for the Large Electron Positron collider LEP, with the Large Hadron Collider LHC just below the horizon. The looming information explosion was the stuff of Tim's dreams. I was on several European-American committees defining international standards and we were dotting i's and crossing t's for a new system, FASTBUS, when Tim arrived. He wasn't best pleased when I asked him to write some FASTBUS application specifications, but came to appreciate the value of that unwelcome task when creating the standards that would underpin the first two Ws of WWW. In 1990 Tim got his Web prototype running at CERN and worked there on its meteoric growth until 1994, when he moved to MIT with its prestigious focus on pure and applied technology. The rest is history.

LEP was a great success too!

Around that time I joined the CERN public relations group – eventually running it – and began writing. My most important



At the Great Mosque of Djenné, Mali, 2009

publication was the LHC campaign brochure, *The Next Step*, which was very well received by the relevant decision-makers. I also revamped CERN's on-site Visitor Centre and built a world-class travelling exhibition, sowing seeds for the public understanding and popularity that CERN enjoys today. The last stage of my career was spent as Scientific Secretary to the Research Review Board overseeing preparations for the four big LHC experiments.

Now retired, I continue to write, contributing a 'how we lived then' article each month to the International Journal of High-Energy Physics, the CERN Courier. As well as regularly visiting much-cherished Oxford, I travel as far and wide as I can, indulging in my enduring passion for both the natural and manmade [sic!] wonders of this world, until it's time to leave.

Student Spirit

As of this year, a new feature will look back on the past twelve months through the eyes of one of our undergraduates. Here Nasim Asl (2013, English), music correspondent for *The Oxford Student*, reports back on a few of the highs of 2014-15.

Creatively, the college has flourished over the past year. Countless individuals have been involved with the production of student publications, holding positions in both student newspapers from staff writer through to editor-in-chief – Hilary Term saw two Somervillians editing the rival newspapers, whilst another student edited *Isis*, one of the UK's largest independent student magazines. *Arts Week* in March demonstrated the range of talent in these walls – students helped with organisation, and offered their artwork, creative writing and critical opinion to both the *Arts Week* exhibition and the College zine. Somervillians continue to fill chairs, podiums and stages for choirs and orchestras across Oxford, and the open mic nights in The Terrace boast an impressive range of musical talent – with plenty of audience support from Somerville, too.

The College has excelled on both grass and water – all boats performed commendably at *Torpids*, but a particular highlight was the second women's boat winning *Blades*! The men's first football team narrowly missed promotion but the seconds won their promotion, finishing top of their league – both teams are clearly on the up. The men's rugby team, meanwhile, has been promoted to the top division for the first time! Several College sports groups, such as the *Pool Team* and *Dance Society*, have grown into fully-fledged outfits this year, with strong and growing memberships.

The Somervillian reputation for care and compassion was well served. We now have a large and committed peer support team who play an active role in trying to better College life. Our first Formal Hall held in aid of charity was a success, with profits from the raffle going towards the Somerville Ghana Library Project, our long-running college charity. More attempts are being made to try and raise the £10,000 desperately needed to build a permanent library, in the hope that Somervillians will be able to travel to Ghana to help with the project soon. An incredibly successful fundraising campaign was led by 'Mo Sistas', a group of four female Somervillians who drew on their very own moustaches, every day for a month, in order to raise over £1,500 for *The Movember Foundation*.

Outside College, members have been dedicating their time to both OUSU and The Oxford Union, whilst internally the rise of new societies has been incredibly well received – *1920s Soc*, our college's newly founded feminist society, has led some engaging intellectual discussions, whilst *Another Gaze Film Club* has screened some iconic and important feminist and LGBTQ+ films to students from across the university.

With a new draft of the JCR constitution recently agreed, Somerville's students look to be as active as ever!



Somerville Men's Rugby Firsts



Somerville-Oriel EqualWeek Fashion Show



EqualiWeek

This year the LGBTQ rep, Women's rep, Disabilities rep and Ethnic Minorities rep came together to put on a series of events at Somerville to reinforce the College and JCR support for the equality of all people, regardless of colour, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion or ability. We teamed up with our opposite numbers in Oriel College in order to host as many events as we could and ended the week with a bang, sharing an 'LGBTQ Bop' with St. Anne's College JCR. The week coincided with *LGBTQ History Month* and the College flew the LGBTQ rainbow flag for the week.

The week included a series of talks, including one on the concept of equality by renowned human rights activist, Peter Tatchell, a talk on the future of Islam in the UK by Shaykh Fuad Nahdi, and another on autism. The week also saw some student-run events, such as a meeting of WomCam, the OUSU Women's Campaign, which featured a tutorial on active bystander training.

Overall, the week was a roaring success as the College came together in support of equality. Many of the events were extremely well attended and people from across the JCR, MCR, SCR and the city all made it to Somerville in order to take part in the celebrations. We hope it will continue in the future and each of us is very proud to have organised the inaugural EqualiWeek.

Jonathan Lawrence (2012, Languages), JCR LGBTQ Rep

Arts Week

This year Somerville Arts Week celebrated Somerville's heritage as a former women's college, adopting 'Women in the Arts' as its central theme. Eminent speakers from a range of professions came to share their experiences of working in the arts industries.

Famous trumpet virtuoso Alison Balsom spoke about overcoming gender stereotyping in the brass world, whilst Christine Lanagan, Head of BBC Film, gave us a peek behind the scenes of *Testament of Youth*, the recent film based on the wartime memoir of Somerville alumna Vera Brittain. Oxford graduate Nina Raine talked about her experiences directing and writing plays for the Royal Court Theatre in London, whilst comedian Lynne Parker performed improvised comedy for the audience.

Arts Week 2015 also saw Somerville student Jasmine Clark curate an art exhibition as part of the week's launch, whilst Naomi Southwell edited an *Arts Week* 'zine titled *Girls to the Front*. Katie Jeffries-Harris produced a concert version of Monteverdi's opera *The Coronation of Poppea* in Somerville's Chapel, and the whole team performed at an open mic night in the bar. All money raised has gone towards OSARCC and the *Somerville Arts Fund*, which will be launched in Trinity Term this year.

Freya Judd (2013, English), JCR Arts Officer

Wind in their sails: Hong Kong alumni profiles

In 2014 Oxford hosted its first Asian alumni reunion in Hong Kong. The Principal and Sara Kalim, Director of Development, met with some of our alumni who live in the region. Among them were Dr Sharon Chan, Jeremy Lai and Judith Crosbie-Chen, each of whom is enjoying a remarkable career in their respective fields – as well as loving Hong Kong life.



DR SHARON CHAN

After leaving Somerville in 2000, I lived and worked in London, Shanghai, Beijing and Hong Kong. For the past 2 years, I have been based in Beijing, heading up the Asian operations for Aeras, a non-profit funded primarily by the *Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation*. The organization's goal is to find new and effective vaccines for tuberculosis (TB). As of this year, 9 million people have fallen ill with TB and 1.5 million have died from the disease. Over 95% of TB deaths occur in low- and middle-income countries, and it is among the top 5 causes of death for women aged 15 to 44.

Day to day, I'm responsible for providing the vision and leadership to guide the organization to meet its objectives while overseeing the scientific, programmatic, and financial operations of the office – and looking to optimize Asia's role in TB vaccine development. Moving into the field of global health was never planned. After a PhD in Cardiovascular Medicine, I joined first a Japanese biotech and then Baxter Healthcare before taking an Executive MBA at the IE Business School in Spain. Oliver and Isabelle followed – both born in Hong Kong – and in 2011, when I was keen to have an impact in world health, an opportunity with the Gates Foundation materialised.

Since 2006, I've also sat on the Awards committee of the *China Oxford Scholarship Fund* – its first patron was Margaret Thatcher! Once a year I interview new Oxford students who come from China as potential scholarship recipients – it's great fun getting to know them and exciting to know how much the scholarship will change their lives.

Hong Kong is a wonderfully international city, with great hiking and a lovely mix of ancient traditions and vibrant city life – plus my kids love dim sum!

Somerville was a wonderful, empowering community which equipped me to treat others fairly and with respect, and to take ownership of my work and responsibilities. I haven't been back to Oxford for many years, but I'd love to catch up with alumni at the next Gaudy!

JEREMY LAI

After graduating from Oxford in 2006, I returned to Hong Kong and worked in finance for seven years before starting my own ventures. Being an extrovert with an interest in helping people to identify their vocations, I started a recruitment company in 2013, which focused on selected industries. It was a lot of fun and it was rewarding. I was pleased to be able to meet people from all walks of life, and nothing was more satisfying than helping people find jobs which fit their talents and interests. I found it interesting that my academic background and local social norms dictated that there were only certain jobs which were considered “acceptable”, an attitude I was glad to see the back of. Early last year, I started my second venture, *Optica Technology*, a technology startup which strives to help people who are colour blind to achieve a superior visual experience on display panels. I was blessed to have incredibly gifted, yet humble partners, and together we became one of the winners of the *Google Empowering Young Entrepreneurs Programme*, a Hong Kong based start-up competition. We were awarded with the opportunity to visit Silicon Valley to pitch our project and connect with global investors and established startups. The free flow of ideas, commitment to excellence and the constant pursuit in pushing boundaries there resonated greatly with my time at Oxford.

I matriculated in 2003 and was blessed with the opportunity to read PPE under the tutelage of some of the leading minds in Oxford; Professor Lois McNay (Politics), Professor Jennifer Welsh (International Relations), Emeritus Fellow Lesley Brown (Philosophy) and Dr Judith Heyer (Economics). I enjoyed the casualness and friendliness at Somerville and thoroughly missed the lush green lawns during the summer; summer was doubly good because it also marked the end of prelims and Finals!

JUDITH CROSBIE-CHEN

I started my legal career in private practice in London and was admitted as a UK solicitor, but in the early 1990s I relocated to Beijing to study Mandarin. In 1992 the PRC's Ministry of Justice started to allow overseas law firms to set up representative offices in China, and I was appointed first resident representative of a top UK law firm. I was also a founding member of the British Chamber of Commerce in Beijing. In 1994 I moved to Hong Kong and then qualified as an HK solicitor. I worked as Gap Inc's top Asia-based lawyer for a number of years and as McDonald's China Development team legal officer during the late 1990s and early 2000s. In 2008 I became General Counsel (Asia) for Logitech's sales & marketing and manufacturing departments.

I love Hong Kong because it's such a dynamic part of the world, and being in that first batch of foreign practicing lawyers made me feel my destiny was in this part of the world. (Falling in love with a PRC diplomat helped, too!)

Looking back, Somerville gave me some very special years. Daphne Park was the Principal and Margaret Thatcher was PM. It would have been difficult not to feel privileged and empowered to create one's own (exciting) destiny. It's a long story but about ten years after graduation I found myself at a private dinner at the US Counsel General's private residence in HK with Supreme Court Justice Kennedy as the Guest of Honour. He expressed surprise that I had no reservations about encouraging McDonald's Corporate to litigate its civil disputes in China using the rather unpredictable and unregulated People's courts rather than the foreign arbitration system. I instinctively replied that the Oxford tutorial system had prepared me well for “unpredictability”. I don't recall his exact response but I do remember that my comments brought a smile to his face. And for the record, I didn't lose a single case for McDonald's during my almost-eight-year tenure in that role.

European focus: Of print and princes



Somerville has a rich heritage of scholarship on European literature that continues to be built on today. Here we pick out two projects – both run by Somerville historians – that have been receiving well-deserved attention both locally and internationally. Natalia Nowakowska has launched an international research project on central Europe’s powerful – but under-studied – Jagiellonian dynasty (1386-1572), while Oren Margolis recently curated a Bodleian exhibition celebrating the 500th anniversary of pioneering Renaissance printer Aldus Manutius (1449-1515).

Geographical conundrum: The Jagiellonians

The Renaissance period saw the rise of a new dynasty in central and eastern Europe whose former lands today comprise fourteen different states. In late 2013 a five-year research project was launched with a €1.4 million grant from the European Research Council and under the leadership of Somerville Fellow Professor Natalia Nowakowska.

At their height the Jagiellonians (1386-1572) ruled over lands stretching from the Baltic to the Black Sea to the Adriatic and yet, despite their significance to European history, even basic definitions remain in dispute.

Indeed, if geography offers proof of their importance, it is also the reason that they have rarely been studied as a single entity, with scholars tending to examine the dynasty through the lens of Polish, Lithuanian, Hungarian or Bohemian history. Geography also raises the question of how to define the dynasty – is ‘Eastern Europe’ too recent a designation to be applicable? How have the Jagiellonians contributed to what it means to be ‘central European’? Is it possible to disentangle a coherent Jagiellonian identity from the very different strands of interpretation that exist in the territories they once ruled over?

These are just some of the questions now being considered under *Jagiellonians: Dynasty, Memory and Identity in Central Europe*. The project, which focuses as much on how the Jagiellonians have been perceived as on their historical status, draws on a team of five regional researchers, each overseen by Professor Nowakowska. The six regions covered are Lithuania, German-speaking lands, Scandinavia, Bohemia, Hungary, and Poland – which forms Professor Nowakowska’s own regional focus.

“The aim is to produce a more joined-up history of the Jagiellonians that is able to incorporate – but also question –

some of the national narratives that have grown up about the dynasty,” said Professor Nowakowska. “Although ‘dynasty’ is a very familiar concept today, we are finding that 15th and 16th century Europeans probably understood that term slightly differently from how we do now. In this way, we hope our work on the Jagiellonians will be a stimulus to asking new questions of already-famous Renaissance dynasties, such as the Medici or Habsburgs.”

Moving ahead

Professor Nowakowska spoke on the Jagiellonians at the Cambridge Early Modern History Seminar in January this year, and the team speak again at the International Medieval Congress in Leeds this July in a series of sessions that will look at medieval and early modern dynasticism. Apart from academic articles, the research project will also produce two books on its findings.

Professor Nowakowska launched the research project at Somerville College – representatives of the Croatian, Slovak, Polish, Swedish and Lithuanian embassies attended the launch, as well as a number of Somervillians. The project has its own website (www.jagiellonians.com) and Twitter feed: @Jagiellonians.

“The research team are spending the first part of 2015 in archives,” said Professor Nowakowska. “When they return to Oxford, we shall start writing a collectively authored book together – that is quite an experimental approach still in Humanities, and it will be an interesting and novel experience for us.



Anna Jagiellon, 1523-96, Queen of Poland from 1575-86 and the last member of the Jagiellonian dynasty (opposite page); Somerville student curators Qaleeda Talib, Anna Clark and Jennifer Allan (above, left) beside their exhibits at the Bodleian; Aldus's famous dolphin-and-anchor mark of authentication in a book from the Somerville collection (centre) and in the East Corridor of the US Library of Congress, Washington D. C (right)

Aldus Manutius: Prophet of the paperback?

Somerville historian Oren Margolis curated a recent exhibition at the Bodleian entitled 'Aldus Manutius: The Struggle and the Dream' and even enlisted the help of three Somerville students. It forms part of global commemorations to mark 500 years since the death of the Renaissance pioneer who founded Venice's Aldine Press.

'Printing, sculpture and the Hypnerotomachia Poliphili' was the title of the talk delivered on 6 February by Oren Margolis at Convocation House in the Bodleian Library.

Margolis described the Renaissance book as a place in which to reimagine antiquity. Where ruins offered the viewer antiquity in material form, books would instead recreate it on the page. Aldus, argued Margolis, drew on this tradition to fashion a new identity for the publisher as an architect, the genius behind these 'sculpted letters'.

"Aldus Manutius called his punch cutter a 'sculptor of letters'," Margolis explained to his audience. "Obviously printing was just the means – not the ends – but the introduction of a sculptural technology was helpful in signaling antiquity."

The focal point of the exhibition was the remarkable and idiosyncratic *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*, which Margolis described as "perhaps the most beautiful printed book of the Renaissance". A multilingual work full of erotic imagery, this "pornographic Pevsner" was a private commission, and yet would become hugely influential, perhaps due in part to its pairing of antiquity and sexual metaphor. The

exhibition was reported in the Italian and US media.

"While it was a belated launch for the exhibition, the lecture marked a launch of sorts for me: of new research on Aldus and his ideology of printing within a Renaissance cultural context – something long overdue," said Margolis. "It was very pleasing to see how many people from different faculties and from the wider Oxford community turned up. Most satisfying for me was the way this project combined research with teaching and public engagement."

Student curators

Margolis's ambitions for the project did not end there – he was also able to ensure that three second-year Somerville historians co-curated a display case of Manutius's printed output on the day of the talk: Qaleeda Talib, Anna Clark, and Jennifer Allan.

"It's been really interesting to witness a display being put together behind the scenes," says Qaleeda Talib. "I learnt so much about Aldus and his press – in the end, it was hard to summarise one of his objects in just 80 words!"

Talib's favourite book was the *Hypnerotomachia*, for both the "trippiness of the plot" and the beauty

of its woodcuts, as well as for the questions it raised about Aldus's purpose. Fellow student curator Anna Clark was particularly struck by Aldus's technical brilliance – it is often said that the handy paperback owes its existence to Aldus's pioneering *libelli portatiles* (portable little books).

"My favourite Aldine work has to be the 1513 edition of Caesar's *Commentarii* because it contains both a vividly colourful, hand painted polychrome map and corrections in Aldus's own hand," says Clark. "This attention to detail to produce books that were not only beautiful but meticulously accurate is what I think set Aldus apart from contemporary printers."

Yet the motivation behind Aldus's great printing innovations and determination was his desire to resurrect the classics – even if there were some errors made along the way.

"I don't have a favourite Aldine book per se, but I was really struck by Aldus's commitment to finding and printing first edition classic works," said Jennifer Allan. "His inaccuracies and errata lists might be a little amusing given his professed commitment to total accuracy, but I admire his tenacity in following his dream nonetheless!"

Banking on the boss: Shriti Vadera

In 2014 Baroness Vadera was appointed as the first woman to chair a major UK bank. Her move to Santander follows a remarkable career that has seen her at the heart of banking, business and politics in the UK and abroad. We asked her about the global financial crisis, trouble in the Eurozone, the outlook for women in the workplace and the lessons she learnt from an exceptional childhood.

WHAT DO YOU SEE AS THE KEY MOMENTS IN YOUR CHILDHOOD?

My childhood experiences were very powerful. One of my earliest memories as a very young child was of my Ugandan nanny who was like a mother to me, crying because she did not have money to send her children to school and worrying that the money my family gave her would be taken by her husband to gamble and drink. It taught me the simple injustice that her children, who I played with every day, did not get the same opportunity as me to go to school. They were my friends, but in the eyes of the world were not my equals. I arranged with my grandmother that we would pay the school fees for her children directly to the school so she could afford an education for them.

Years later, in the early 90s, I advised the Government of Uganda on its external debt. It was a corrupt and chaotic situation and I took some personal risks to my safety in helping to clean it up. After that I became a debt relief campaigner, working with Oxfam and others. A decade later I advised the UK Treasury which led the way to provide debt relief for poor countries. As Uganda was the best organised, it became the first country to receive debt relief under the internationally agreed programme and they used the money to fund free education for all children. My life over three decades had come full circle and it was a profound moment standing at the back of the press conference in the IMF building in Washington when the agreement was announced.

HOW DID YOUR FAMILY'S BACKGROUND IN UGANDA, FLIGHT TO INDIA AND LATER SETTLEMENT IN THE UK AFFECT YOU PERSONALLY? DO YOU THINK IT HAS CONTRIBUTED TO YOUR OWN VIEWS AND INTERESTS WHEN IT COMES TO POLITICS AND BUSINESS?

I consider these experiences a privilege, however uncomfortable the memories of adult fear or being a stateless citizen are. I had a comfortable background and otherwise may not have gained any understanding of insecurity, injustice, poverty, knowing whatever you face there are those who face so much worse every day, seeing people fighting for their families' needs despite their own fear. And I learned to be an outsider comfortable in my own skin. It has been a huge part of making me the person I am.

YOU WERE AT WARBURG THROUGH A REMARKABLE PERIOD IN THE FIRM'S GROWTH. WHAT LAY BEHIND WARBURG'S GREAT SUCCESS?

I chose Warburg when I was an undergraduate almost by accident because it had a team that advised developing countries, which seemed to me a neat combination of my financial bent and passion for development issues. The Warburg culture was very distinct and gave me the best possible grounding – it taught me that total integrity in all your professional dealings was an integral part of success, a real attention to detail and that only the best is good enough. I think Warburg's success made it forget to look out to how the sector was changing and so it was not nimble enough to survive - a lesson to be remembered.

"The financial sector would perform better with women at all levels, particularly senior ones – as a lot of research shows."



WHAT IS YOUR OWN TAKE ON THE CAUSES OF AND SOLUTIONS TO THE EURO CRISIS – IN A FEW WORDS?!

However complicated it seems, the distilled truth remains that despite the great progress made by some countries, others in the eurozone – and elsewhere – are overly indebted measured on any number of indicators. And economic history shows there are only so many ways to deal with sovereign indebtedness – default, restructure, inflate...

WHAT WAS IT LIKE PUTTING TOGETHER A BANKING RESCUE PACKAGE IN 2008?

2008 into the summer of 2009 was the most fraught period of my life and I still occasionally have nightmares about it. Over a couple of weekends, we had to force government capital onto some banks and guarantee the new funding of most of the others – measures that seem so obvious now but were unprecedented then. In fact we shocked many governments in Europe and the US even though they followed suit pretty swiftly. The London G20 Summit in April 2009, when we negotiated a \$1 trillion liquidity package to give confidence to the markets, was also a day of high drama – a largely untold story for another time!

WHAT ARE YOUR HOPES AND PRIORITIES AT SANTANDER?

I joined Santander because I think Britain deserves a banking system that provides a better core service to ordinary households and SMEs (small and medium-sized enterprises). It is shocking that a sophisticated global financial centre does not provide a simpler, more fair offering to its domestic customers. The large incumbent banks have many challenges and the smaller challenger banks can cherry pick successfully. I thought Santander was a “scale challenger” that could be transformative in the sector and that had the values and ambition to do the best for its customers. I wanted to contribute to that journey.

HOW SIGNIFICANT DO YOU SEE THE FACT THAT YOU ARE THE FIRST WOMAN TO CHAIR A MAJOR UK BANK? DOES THAT PROVIDE ANY SPECIAL OPPORTUNITIES TO ENCOURAGE CHANGE?

I think the financial sector would perform better with more women at all levels, particularly senior ones where the proportions thin out even more. It is not just a matter of equality and political correctness, but of improved financial performance as a lot of research shows.

First and most obviously, the organisation gets to pick from a wider talent pool. But second, women change a number of things that are important to performance whether in the trading room or in the boardroom. *The Hour Between Dog and Wolf* by John Coates shows that a trading floor dominated by young men's testosterone is subject to a volatility that does not perform as well in the long run as one with more women (and older men!) Margaret Heffernan's *Willful Blindness* is a very profound book on many levels but points to the importance of not giving in to group think and herd behaviour – not only can women think differently from men but, she argues, they are better at being prepared to stand out of the crowd, perhaps because they are more used to being on the outside. That makes for better discussion in the boardroom.

What I would say to women aspiring to any career, not just in finance, is that managers perceive the limits you feel inside you before they see your limits objectively. So don't let limits imagined in your head cap the achievements reality might bring. And secondly, don't imitate but be who you are. That includes, crucially, being a woman, which is in and of itself of unique value.

Questioning leader: Sacha Romanovitch



In 2014 global accountancy firm Grant Thornton became the first major accountancy firm to appoint a woman to head its UK business. We spoke to the Somerville chemist due to take over this June.

Sacha Romanovitch can look back to various influences and inspirations but Great Aunt Monica stands out. In the 1930s Monica worked at Coutts Bank, where she noticed that the men were given beer at lunchtime but the women were not. Monica went to her doctor and successfully obtained a prescription advising her employer to give her beer at lunchtime too. The result was half a pint of Guinness daily – and a lesson she was able to pass on to her niece.

“She always believed that I could do anything,” says Sacha, who grew up in Surbiton. “I was lucky with my family too. I was adopted direct from care at 18 months and my adoptive brother and sister were both very gifted – one studied PPE at Keble and the other is now a half-colonel in the army.”

For Romanovitch, however, chemistry beckoned, thanks in great part to a charismatic teacher at her secondary

grammar. The experience sparked a lifelong interest in the way things work. The combination of chemistry and Somerville was, she says, especially fortuitous.

“Studying Chemistry at Oxford, you were given space to think and to question,” says Romanovitch. “As for Somerville, I grew up in a kind of matriarchy, attended an all-girls school and was now at a women-only College. So it never occurred to me that I couldn’t do things because I was a woman – a mixed College might have been different.”

Little wonder, then, that she was dead set against the introduction of men to the College, a “terrible” move she campaigned against on the basis that society still feels unequal, giving women-only institutions a remarkable capacity to empower the marginalised sex.

“For my sister at Oxford, the girls’ rowing crews inherited their boats second-hand from the men,” says. “But at Somerville, there was of course not a whiff of that. And it really didn’t matter how you looked coming down to breakfast.”

In her fourth year Romanovitch began to prosper academically, enjoying the opportunities thrown up by a full year of lab research. (Finances were another matter – grants didn’t quite cover everything, so she made and sold ball dresses.) On the night of her 21st birthday, Romanovitch was working overnight in the inorganic chemistry lab studying solid state reactions.

“It was the first time I got evidence of the chemical reaction in solids – using UV light,” says Romanovitch. “And I clearly remember tutorials with Margaret Adams and Jo Peach, as they would always ask you questions. I think that’s crucial – in my job now, I use the coaching technique of asking people questions in order to get them to think, rather than just giving them the answers.”

Chemistry in the City

As well as a succession of world-class chemists, Somerville chemists have excelled in a number of other fields, such as politics (Margaret Thatcher or Lucy Powell) and business (Val Rahmani and Nicola Ralston). Behind that success lie some exceptional Chemistry Fellows – but might the subject have helped too?

“Chemists are great to hire because they not only have an inquiring mindset, but also the scientific discipline of experimentation,” she says. “In the business world, to really succeed you’ve got to be prepared to fail; in science, failure is part of the process – you learn by testing things out. There is something quite visceral about it.”

Romanovitch began to consider a career in accountancy when Mary Keegan (1971, Physics) visited her old College to speak on the world of work. She was, Romanovitch says, “a smart, sparky woman” – just the kind of inspiration a young student needed.

Romanovitch received various offers from the big firms but took a position with a small accountancy practice in Windsor – their passion and energy won her over. Girls-only education had insulated her from the usual workplace inequities but, even at her new company, two of the seven in her year group were women – not bad odds for the time.

“Only when I became a manager did I begin to notice that meetings were full of men,” she says. “I joined Grant Thornton in 1994, and in 2001 I was appointed the company’s first female audit partner in London. Just two of the sixty partners were women.”

Although she sees her work with *Access Accountancy* as addressing even greater inequalities across the profession than

the male-female divide, Romanovitch is not unaware of the potential impact of her latest appointment.

“It gives you the voice to advocate for change and to lead in a way that changes the culture,” says Romanovitch. “An even number of men and women join our firm at entry level, yet by senior management level the balance shifts – so much comes back to children. We need to change the working world so that the load – and reward – is more evenly distributed.”

Grant Thornton was notable for promoting Romanovitch onto its seven-member leadership team in 2007 while on maternity leave with her second child. (Her husband is now primary carer.) The managing partner called to ask her to head ‘People and Culture’, with a remit to attract and retain great people.

“I remember tutorials with Margaret Adams and Jo Peach, as they would always ask you questions – that’s crucial in my job now.”

“By the time my second was just nine weeks old I was presenting my vision to a full partner conference in Paris,” she says.

A major new challenge appeared in the form of the global financial crisis. Suddenly many of the company’s traditional clients – fast-moving, dynamic, acquisitive businesses – were no longer acquiring and growing. True to her questioning spirit, Romanovitch combed the company for ideas and suggestions – the company had to be nimble but it still had skills in high demand.

“We became very involved in remediation work with the banks, looking at what had gone wrong, who lost out and whether they had settled with people appropriately,” she says. “GT worked with the IMF to agree measures and monitoring around systemic banking failures such as those in Greece.”

Grant Thornton had broadened its remit, turning advisor as well as accountant. It meant, Romanovitch says, a chance to shape the market as well as operating within it. As a result, GT became a voice for mid-sized UK business – “the ones the growth needs to come from.”

This ability to seek out new opportunities and reimagine one’s work may yet prove to be her greatest asset when Romanovitch takes over in June. She has spoken publicly on the difference between managing and leading. The latter, she says, requires the vision to see what is happening in the market and to work out what the company’s purpose should therefore be, and the ability to inspire people to bring out their best in working towards that purpose.

It doesn’t take a Great Aunt Monica to see that Romanovitch is – in both senses – a leader in waiting.



The Somerville Great War Roadshow: College past and present

by KATHERINE O'DONNELL

On 15 November 2014, Somerville held its Great War Roadshow. Coinciding with the Shirley Williams Literary Luncheon, we welcomed alumni, staff and members of the public to contribute to *Europeana 1914-1918*, an international online project through which people can record their family stories and share their memorabilia of the First World War.

Experts were on hand to interview contributors and discover more about the items brought in as well as to photograph, scan and record them for the website. There were also exhibitions from Somerville's archives, the Museum of Oxford, the Oxford Family History Society and other World War One projects.

An upside of the day for Somerville was the number of stories that shed light on the history of the College and its members.

Miss Agneta Beauchamp was Somerville's Treasurer from 1925 to 1943, but before that she served throughout the war,

firstly with the Scottish Women's Hospitals then with the British Red Cross in Salonika. Amongst the documents brought along by family friend and alumna Sarah Wedderburn (1971) was Miss Beauchamp's passport and a hand-written account, plus photographs, of the Great Fire of Salonika in August 1917.

The letters of Somerville student Leila Davies (1913) revealed the concern and pride of an older sister whose only brother (Philip) had been detained for being a conscientious objector. She wrote, seeking advice and reassurance, to a member of the *No Conscription Federation* and her letters record both her brother's experiences, as a detainee facing court-martial and



Contributions being logged and numbered



The National Egg Collection Certificate of Honour awarded to Nancy Steele



Nurses photographed outside West (now called Park), Somerville Section, 3rd Southern General Hospital

her own, as his intermediary with the outside world. The letters were brought to the Roadshow by Bridget Davies (1950), Philip's daughter.

Pauline Harrison's (1944) mother, May Organe (1912), read Botany at Somerville. At Oxford she met her future husband, who had been sent to University College to take the Diploma in Forestry, with a view to aiding the war effort by joining the Indian Forestry Service. To avoid being chaperoned, they used to meet by cycling up and down the High together!

Several Somervillians brought in items and stories from their own family histories:

Emeritus Fellow Katherine Duncan-Jones contributed the story of her great uncle, Cecil Duncan-Jones. He had been in Alsace-Lorraine at the outbreak of the war and was interned in Ruhleben camp as an enemy alien for the next four years. A writer and actor, his poems and letters provide a detailed account of life in the camp and his attempts to get home despite deteriorating health and lack of funds.

Tutorial Fellow Fiona Stafford told us the stories of her grandfather, Peter Henderson-Green and her great uncle, Harold Thickett. An extensive collection of photographs illustrates not just their wartime experiences but also provides, inadvertently, a detailed record of the submarine base at Immingham!

Barbara Forrai's (1946) father, George Lockwood, worked for the Ecclesiastical Commission during the war and compiled a series of notebooks in which he recorded his

observations on the daily news reports and the falsehoods and rumours in circulation. His notes provide a unique and personal counterpoint to the propaganda of the time.

Margaret Lee's (1943) husband Ian contributed the story of his father, Leslie Gordon Lee. Commissioned in 1914, he was wounded at the Battle of Contalmaison in July 1916 and subsequently awarded the Military Cross. His photograph and war record have been added to Europeana 1914-1918.

Somerville's Deputy Lodge Manager, Julian Smith, brought a transcript of a letter written by his grandfather. A Yorkshireman, Reg Froggatt served with the Royal Fusiliers in what was then called British East Africa. He wrote about how he was involved in 'the art of "scrapping" in Africa', compared with the "wholesale murder" that was going on in France.

Former College Secretary, Susan Partridge, contributed the *National Egg Collection Certificate of Honour* (see above) issued to her mother Nancy Steele. The scheme enabled children to contribute to the war effort, sending eggs to convalescent servicemen. One of the recipients wrote to Nancy to thank her and his letters were also added to the website.

Lawrence Bragg was an Australian scientist who, alongside his father, was awarded the Nobel Prize for Physics in 1915 for their work on the structure of crystals. Lawrence served in the war, developing sound ranging techniques in the trenches so that enemy artillery could be located with accuracy. His

story was brought to the Roadshow by his Somervillian daughter Margaret Heath (1950).

Other Somerville-related contributions included: a soldier's journal acquired by Jane Robinson (1978); letters and artefacts concerning John William Kingsland, a great uncle of Clare Bonney (1964); a copy of the *Daily Sketch* from December 1914 from current undergraduate Fairlie Kirkpatrick Baird; a crucifix brought back from Jerusalem by Joan Johnson's (1953) uncles; a book of the correspondence between the grandparents of Cassandra Phillips (1959); photographs and postcards collected by Tutorial Fellow Alex Rogers; a photograph of Human Resources Manager Lorna White's great uncle in uniform, a photograph of three nurses in Somerville (see above) taken when the college was a hospital from Peter Batts and a photograph of James Massey, who had been a medical orderly at the hospital sent in by his great granddaughter Lesley Jefferies.

Thank you to everyone who brought along contributions, helped on the day or just came along to see the exhibitions. We hope to produce a souvenir book about Somerville and the First World War, so if you couldn't make it on the day but have stories and photographs from that time with a Somerville connection, please do get in touch with Librarian and Archivist Anne Manuel anne.manuel@some.ox.ac.uk. If you'd like to read more about these personal histories from the First World War, or add your own story, please go to www.europeana1914-1918.eu

Business creator: Dominic Perks

At Somerville, Dominic Perks was writing essays on T.S. Eliot. Today, he's an entrepreneur whose 2011 start-up employed 120 people within three years. Tattoo removal and laundry delivery are just two of the industries he's ventured into and through his merchant bank, Hambro Perks, he's now investing in and advising others too. We asked for some tips.

WERE YOU BORN AN ENTREPRENEUR?

I was 4 when I had my first retail outlet – a shop underneath my parents' stairs selling stationery and confectionary. Embarrassingly, I also used to bring art projects back and create pop-up galleries. At school I set up a rival school magazine called *Scoop* to compete with the incumbent and funded it by selling advertising space.

WHAT DID OXFORD MEAN FOR YOU AND FOR YOUR CAREER?

I loved my time. I played a lot of cricket, opening the batting for Somerville. A friend and I turned around an ailing newspaper called *The Word*. He edited it and built an editorial team and I ran it. We made it viable by selling ads and creating supplements.

YOUR NEXT MOVE WAS TO MORGAN STANLEY, WHERE YOU WORKED AS AN INVESTMENT BANKING ANALYST, AND THEN AS A STRATEGY CONSULTANT. HOW DID THOSE POSITIONS EQUIP YOU TO STRIKE OUT AS AN ENTREPRENEUR?

My first job was surprisingly creative as I had to come up with investment ideas from a clean sheet of paper for private equity firms. I'd been drawn by the quality of the people and by the variety and access you got. I soon realized I was more interested in what you'd do with a business post-acquisition – the strategic and operational questions – than how you financed it. That's why I moved to McKinsey as a strategy consultant, which I loved because you're solving problems for CEOs. It was full of bright, challenging people. I left McKinsey with an open offer to return, which helped me take the risk of striking out myself.



Laundry pioneer: Dominic Perks launched Laundrapp in 2014

WHERE DO YOUR PARTICULAR STRENGTHS LIE AS YOU START A NEW VENTURE OR ADVISE OTHERS ON THEIRS?

It's learning to identify the right people that matters most. Our experience is that ideas change but that people rarely do, and all of our successes have been because the people involved have been brilliant. The reverse is true too – the wrong people make projects fail. I am spending a third of my time talent spotting and hiring – finding great people to work with at all levels, from chief execs to interns – which is probably fairly unusual. What I particularly look for is a combination of positive energy – a will to make it work – and integrity, because they need both the inner confidence to keep going and the self-awareness to take advice and nurture a team.

YOU STARTED A NEW SERVICE APP CALLED LAUNDRAPP IN 2014. WHAT ARE THE TYPICAL CHALLENGES WITH THIS KIND OF TECH STARTUP?

I had the idea in January 2014, did three months of research and concluded that the market was ready for an on-demand laundry service. I recruited the team and we built the product and technology in six months, developed the supply chain, soft-launched the business in October and hard-launched in January 2015 with TV advertising and so on. We recently closed a series-A fundraise into the business of £4m. But it's quite a challenge to launch something that doesn't exist as a service – persuading people via an app to give you their clothes.

HOW DO YOU PICK A PROJECT?

What I enjoy is the mischief of disrupting large industries with disruptive technology. Businesses that can scale at great pace and that meet emerging consumer needs, that can be internationalized – all of these things can be interesting to me. And I like fragmented markets as well – London alone has 1,500 dry cleaning shops paying high rents and rates. We're an app that's providing a better-value service and that collects and deliver at your door.

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO PEOPLE STARTING OUT AS ENTREPRENEURS?

To get as much advice as possible – and the resourcefulness it takes to find good advice is the same resourcefulness you'll need to make a start-up work. For a venture to then be successful, you need stakeholders in and around the business who have aligned interests. You also need to know yourself – energy and optimism is crucial but you need to work against your own personality a little. You need those people who worry about process, execution, legalities and contracts – often the person who can win the contract is not the person who diligently ensures it gets signed.

WHAT'S THE QUICKEST GROWTH IN STAFF NUMBERS YOU'VE SEEN?

Proskin, my skincare clinic chain, grew to 120 staff within 3 years and is now national. We specialize in all sorts of advanced skincare treatments. Tattoo removal is particularly popular. For example, one in five of the UK population has a tattoo – and one in five of them regrets it.

WHAT MOTIVATES YOU TO PURSUE THIS KIND OF WORK?

I love working with talented, driven people. I love the variety of working across different sectors and learning about different industries. I love helping develop people – I feel very excited at developing their careers and unlocking potential in people. A bit like a good Tutor at Somerville might do. I also like that what I do is quite creative – inventing new services and businesses is exciting.

WHAT'S YOUR ANNUAL TARGET FOR NEW BUSINESS CREATION?

I plan to found or co-found at least three businesses a year and to invest in a further five early-stage-growth businesses.

WHAT'S THE MOST COMMON REASON THAT STARTUPS FAIL?

They're not capitalized appropriately – or cashflow is not managed correctly. Or the founders are not pragmatic enough to respond to the market. But it's the people and their drive and determination which see the idea given the very best chance.

YOU'VE HAD A LARGE TECH FOCUS, SO WHY IS HAMBRO PERKS BASED IN LONDON?

The European and London tech market is growing at an exciting pace. Unlike when I left Somerville, the talent of Europe is now migrating to London. Aside from family, that's why I'm excited to be here. As for the US, there are some government tax schemes – SEIS and EIS – that give private, angel investors tax relief for investing in startups and those government schemes are attracting a wave of capital into UK-based startups. It's exciting for London and the UK – and investors young and old alike are interested.

WHY HAS THE US DONE SO MUCH BETTER IN TECH START-UPS THAN EUROPE?

The US universities are very geared to it. The size of the US market is such that it's possible to scale businesses bigger in that territory – plus they all speak one language across it. There's also the social or cultural element around a celebration of thinking big and a greater comfort around or ease with failure which culturally cultivates more appetite for risk-taking – in short, less conservatism and a greater willingness to try things.

HOW IS THAT NOW CHANGING, IF AT ALL?

These new UK government tax schemes provide tax relief for investors if the company fails as well as if it succeeds, which is a really interesting approach. So you could argue that the government is encouraging risk-taking.

WHAT IF SOMEONE AT SOMERVILLE WANTS TO FOLLOW IN YOUR FOOTSTEPS...?

We've had five interns from Somerville and have got three more coming this summer. We're always open to meeting talented individuals.

HOW SHOULD THEY START OUT AS ENTREPRENEURS?

Anyone interested in building companies should probably not do it first but get some other experience and skills to bring with them. The key is to be excited about what you are doing and feel as though you are learning. And that, frankly, could be anything.

Algorithm and blues: Remembering Ada Lovelace

Among those who owed a debt to Mary Somerville's influence was her tutee and protégée Augusta Ada Byron. The two corresponded for many years – though 35 years her junior, Ada would die twenty years earlier, aged 36. On the back cover of this Magazine, we commemorate 200 years since the birth of the great exponent of 'poetical science' with an evocative Chris Riddell cartoon from *Literary Review*.

In the lobby of Somerville College library hangs a life-size portrait of the vibrant face of a very young girl – even at eight years old, Ada's spark and style are unmistakeable.

Although born into privilege, her life was far from seamless. Ada Byron was born on 10 December 1815, the uniquely legitimate daughter of Lord Byron and his wife Anne Isabella. Her parents separated a month after her birth and her father left England, dying without meeting her again – the young Ada would develop a strong affection for him all the same. Her mother encouraged Ada to study mathematics and logic as a way of avoiding her father's 'insanity' but remained largely absent throughout Ada's childhood.

Despite long periods of illness, Ada persisted in these studies. She was also, according to some commentators, a manic depressive. Indeed, she often referred to her 'mania' and unquiet mind in her writing.

Her love life remains largely impenetrable. An affair with a Tutor in 1833, her marriage in 1835 (she had three children) and rumours of further affairs make for a complicated picture – her gambling got her in further trouble. Five months before her death, she made a confession to her husband (its content remains unknown) and never saw him again.

Somerville, Tutor

She was close, however, to Mary Somerville, drawn to a woman who, like her, had an exceptional mind and wanted to use it. Somerville tutored Ada in both manners and mathematics. At the age of 17, Ada was shown the working part of a calculating engine (or 'Analytical Engine') by Somerville's friend Charles Babbage, and was immediately captivated. In 1843 she published an analytical article about the engine.

It is the notes she added to the article which won her lasting fame. Here she wrote a stepwise sequence of operations for solving select mathematical problems which became



A young Ada, painted by Count d'Orsay

the first published computer algorithm. This has earned her the sometimes contested moniker of 'world's first computer programmer'. The notes also expressed her belief in the potential of computers to be useful beyond the field of mathematics.

Ada shared Somerville's analytical mind and ability to write about science. But she also saw herself as someone able to bring the benefits of imagination and a 'poetical' mind to the study of science, asking questions not just about the workings of technologies like Babbage's 'Analytical Engine', but also about how they would alter human society.

On 16 October 2015, Somerville College will host *Ada Lovelace: Celebrating Women in Computer Science*. The event marks the bicentenary of her birth by celebrating women in science more broadly. To book tickets for this event, please email barbara.raleigh@some.ox.ac.uk

Back cover: Reading about Ada Lovelace for his cover image for *Literary Review* led cartoonist Chris Riddell to base the protagonist for his own fictional series *Goth Girl on Lovelace*. He named her *Ada Goth*.
© Chris Riddell (www.chrisriddell.co.uk)

Future Events



Works by Patrice Moor, Somerville's new artist-in-residence

April

24-26 'Meeting Minds', University Alumni Weekend, Vienna

May

- 2** Medics Day 2015
- 6** City Group: 'High Performance Living: The Key to Success'
- 9** Memorial of Catherine Hughes, Principal 1989-1996
- 18** London Group: Emma Sky on 'High Hopes and Missed Opportunities in Iraq'

June

- 13** Annual Commemoration Service: College Chapel
- 15** London Group: Lord (Peter) Hennessey on 'The Condition of British Politics'
- 19** Teachers' Day
- 20** Memorial for Professor Anna Morpurgo Davies DBE FSA FBA
- 27-28** Gaudy for matric years 1989-99

September

- 12** Family Fun Day: A Celebration of Learning
- 16-17** 50th Anniversary Reunion for 1965

October

- 4** Literary Luncheon: Simon Russell Beale in conversation with Katherine Duncan-Jones
- 16** Ada Lovelace Bicentenary: Celebrating Women in Computer Science

December

- 3** Carol Concert for Alumni

Further dates to be confirmed

City Group Panel Discussion: Disruptive Technology

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Somerville College

Woodstock Road, Oxford OX2 6HD

E: communications@some.ac.uk

T: +44 (0) 1865 270600

www.some.ox.ac.uk/alumni

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