



SCHOLARSHIP TRUST

Bulletin
Michaelmas 2017

Valedictory Report from Dr Alice Prochaska

The Margaret Thatcher Scholarship Trust was established in 2013 at Somerville College to create a living legacy to one of its most illustrious alumna. Margaret Thatcher wanted no memorials, but when consulted about the scheme, Lord Powell, her close friend and long-term adviser reported that, “she was plainly delighted and honoured by the thought that holders of such scholarships bearing her name would carry forward the reputation of the College to which she owed so much herself”. The aim of the Trust is simple: to enable the brightest students – regardless of their gender, ethnicity, nationality, religion and from all walks of life – to reap the rewards of an Oxford and Somerville education that will unlock their potential, and provide them with the skills and tools to become leaders in their field.

Funds raised

To date, total funds pledged to the campaign are £8.2m of which £7.96m has been received. We have been able to secure matched funding for graduate scholarships from the University’s Oxford Graduate Scholarship Matched Fund totalling £2.2m. Fine stewarding of our endowed funds by Oxford University Endowment Management has added a further £700,000 to our endowment, which means that our total funds now stand at just under £11m.

Scholarships

The Margaret Thatcher Scholarships, the first of which were awarded in Michaelmas 2016, fully fund the tuition fees and living costs of undergraduate and graduate students, freeing them from any financial difficulty they might encounter in the pursuit of their studies. This allows them to engage fully with the wide variety of opportunities afforded to them by Somerville and the University, and enables them to graduate free of debt.

We now have a range of named and unnamed scholarships aimed at the full spectrum of students at Somerville, including: the Margaret Thatcher Scholarships, the Michael Bishop Foundation Thatcher Scholarships for Home/EU undergraduates, the Qatar Thatcher Scholarships with a preference for students ordinarily resident in Qatar or other Arab nations, and the Ng Teng Fong Thatcher Scholarship with a preference for students ordinarily resident in Singapore, Hong Kong or China. One Michael Bishop Foundation Thatcher Scholarship and one Margaret Thatcher Scholarship were awarded in Michaelmas to undergraduates who had excelled in their first public examinations.



Dr Alice Prochaska, former Principal and driving force behind the establishment of the Margaret Thatcher Scholarship Trust

By the start of the academic year 2024/25 there will be no fewer than 22 Thatcher Scholarship alumni!



For 2017, a Qatar Thatcher Scholarship has been awarded to an outstanding overseas undergraduate applicant from Vietnam reading Computer Science, an Oxford Thatcher Scholarship to a DPhil applicant from South Africa reading English Literature, an Oxford Qatar Thatcher Scholarship to an applicant from Malaysia reading Engineering, and an Oxford Margaret Thatcher Scholarship to a Bachelor of Civil Law student from the UK. We will also be awarding a further Thatcher Scholarship and Michael Bishop Foundation Thatcher Scholarship to two Home/EU undergraduates. You can read more about our new scholars later in this bulletin.

In future years, we expect to award four or five new scholarships annually. Owing to the varying lengths of degree courses on offer, the number of Thatcher Scholars studying at Somerville at any one time will fluctuate; but at the current level of funding we anticipate having no fewer than fourteen in place in 2020/21.



Development Programme

The Thatcher Development Programme was launched in Michaelmas Term 2016, consisting of weekly lunchtime seminars, which aimed to increase students' personal, academic and professional skills. Following that initial programme of lunchtime sessions on subjects suggested by Fellows and identified through student surveys, there is now an extensive programme of events, covering a diverse range of areas (see right).

This programme is constantly evolving, with the Programme Director encouraging feedback and suggestions from students, staff and Fellows. There are also plans in the year ahead to increase the number of visits to external organisations to provide students with in-depth knowledge of particular subjects, sectors and careers.

The Thatcher Development Programme has provided funding on a three-year basis for the College's e-mentoring platform, *Aluminate*. This has been established to facilitate links between students and recent graduates from Somerville with alumni who are enjoying successful careers and are able to provide advice, work experience and internships.

The Development Programme comprises lunchtime and evening seminars on a variety of topics delivered by internal and external speakers, companies and alumni.

- Workshops and symposia aimed at smaller groups, exploring themes that will develop students academically, personally and professionally, and prepare them for the workplace.
- 'Drop in' advisory sessions with the Programme Director on a one-to-one basis offering guidance on applications for the Development Awards and internships as well as informal careers and mentoring discussions.
- Talks and workshops run by university organisations, such as the Careers Service.
- Careers networking events.



*A young Margaret Thatcher (Roberts) at Somerville in 1943
(back row, fifth from right)*

Development Awards

The Thatcher Development Awards were launched during the 2016/17 academic year. It was anticipated that there would be five awards of up to £2,000 to give students at any stage of their studies the opportunity to pursue an innovative idea. Priority would be given to projects enabling students to develop their academic skills, contribute to their personal development and have a positive impact on others.

We received 32 applications, 13 from graduates and 19 from undergraduates, many of which had been discussed with the Programme Director during 'drop-in' sessions. Several projects aimed to build cohesion within their disciplines, establish JCR-MCR connections and contribute to outreach activities. Applications to pursue research, contributing to applicants' academic and personal development, were also received.

Eight Thatcher Awards were made, three to graduates and five to undergraduates. These projects included: volunteering in a refugee camp in Kenya; a biology expedition and the foundation of a Science and Society Club at Somerville; the establishment of an India-Pakistan Arts/Politics Collective; volunteering in Peru; producing a show at the Edinburgh Fringe; attending a conference and setting up a mediaevalists' discussion group. One application received unanimous support and was funded in full (£1,574); this student will undertake voluntary work in a refugee camp in Kenya in the summer and is planning to pursue a career in international development. A number of applications also received support from other College funds.

The enthusiasm and support that we have found among friends, admirers and colleagues of Lady Thatcher's around the world for this endeavour has made it a most exciting project for us all.

Alice Pochacka



A scene from 'Dates' at the Edinburgh Fringe



Poster for the Pind Collective exhibition in Delhi



Ben Hawkey at the refugee camp in Kenya



Report from the 2016 Thatcher Scholars

Isobel Hettrick

Michael Bishop Foundation Thatcher Scholar
BA Politics, Philosophy and Economics

I grew up near Guildford in Surrey. I've always been interested in current affairs, and studying PPE was the obvious choice for me. I was initially put off Oxford by what I'd read in the papers, but I changed my mind after visiting. When I first walked into Somerville I immediately loved the friendly and open atmosphere.

Closing the gap in educational attainment is hugely important to me, so the fact that Somerville was founded to give opportunities to women and that it continues to support access work was a perfect fit. I've worked with University access events and gone back to my own Sixth Form College to give a presentation about studying at Oxford. This year, I'll return to my secondary school to talk to students there about university and Oxbridge. I'm looking forward to giving back to a community which helped lay the foundation for my recent achievements, and I hope I can inspire students to pursue educational opportunities which they might otherwise think are out of their reach.

I've enjoyed my academic work so much, especially studying British Political History since 1900 and seeing the impact of the past on current political issues. I've also had the chance to develop other interests and, as JCR Sports Officer, I helped to organise the first Somerville Sports Day to give students a fun and inclusive outlet for their energies! I've volunteered in a local school, helping to run after-school revision sessions. I've also completed an internship as a Learning Assistant at the South Oxfordshire Food and Education Academy. During the summer, I had a ten-week internship at the Financial Conduct Authority and I've gained a conditional offer for their 2018 Supervision Graduate Training Programme.

I've learned a huge amount and been encouraged to push myself; the Thatcher Development Programme has helped increase my confidence and given me practical help with applications and networking. Having a Michael Bishop Foundation Thatcher Scholarship has maximised my opportunities and helped me focus on my long-term goal of making a beneficial impact on the world.





Report from the 2016 Thatcher Scholars

Will Sargent

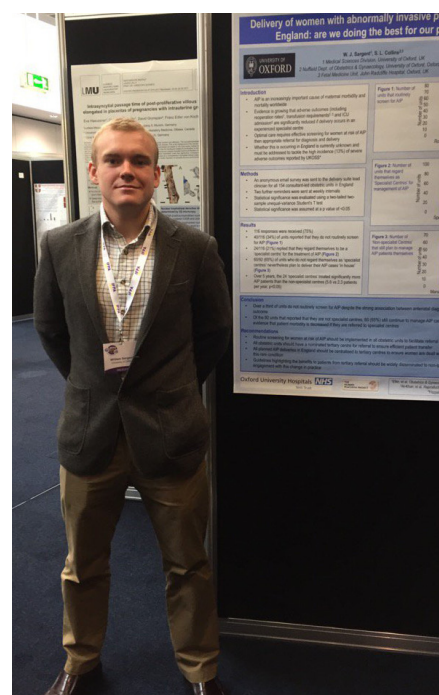
Margaret Thatcher Scholar
BM BCh Medicine

The academic year began with a fortnight in a hospital in Milton Keynes and the first few months were punctuated by weekends in Pirbright for starting the basics of soldier training. This was quite a change of tone from the warm and cosy atmosphere of clinical medicine, but provided an opportunity to meet people from different backgrounds and tackle some interesting challenges together.

I was training for the Portsmouth marathon at the time, so was pleased that I could keep up with the demands of the Army PT instructors. In January I attended a four-day selection event for entry to the Army Officer training programme, an interesting mix of physical and mental tests that emphasise teamwork and quick thinking. Passing this allowed me to attend the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst to begin officer training, which I hope to complete in the next few months.

Before Christmas I had begun a research project investigating how cases of Abnormally Invasive Placenta (AIP) are currently managed in England, with the aim of building new guidelines to optimise the treatment of women with this rare but potentially life-threatening condition. I look forward to presenting some preliminary results from this at a conference of the International Federation of Placenta Associations in Manchester in September, and hope to submit the results for publication in a journal before the New Year.

The rest of the year was taken up with the day-to-day routine of clinical medical school, with the last month taken up with revision for the end-of-year exams. I am glad to say these went well, and I was lucky enough to be awarded a distinction and take the prize for best result in the OSCE, an exam of practical medical skills. In the upcoming months I hope to gain my provisional Commission with the Army Reserves, complete my ongoing research project and sit my first set of exams for the year.



Will presenting his research at the University



2017 Thatcher Scholarship Awards

Minh Le Quoc

Qatar Thatcher Scholar
MSc Computer Science

I'm from Vietnam and I love travelling. When I was in high school, I was given the chance to visit some of the mountainous regions in Vietnam and this gave me a whole new perspective on the world. I met children who had never had the benefit of an education, and people who were so badly off that they were struggling to survive. I want to use my studies to help raise the living standards of those people, to make the world a better place to live. Perhaps my dream does look dreamy, but Oxford is a place where dreams come true.



Talitha Slabbert

Oxford Thatcher Scholar
DPhil English Literature

To formulate my research interests quite broadly, I am interested in how we think about meaning, and specifically, in how our myths and fictions – what Giambattista Vico called our “fantastic wisdom” – might serve as signposts whereby we can situate ourselves within the world and orient ourselves, not only in relation to the other, and to our socio-political contexts, but also in relation to history and to the future. I consider the study of literature to constitute a remarkable mode in which to examine what, historically speaking, we have made, and continue to make of our own being-in-the-world.

In my DPhil, I would like to study the way in which the images of sea voyage and of descent into the underworld operate together in the texts of Modernist authors like Ezra Pound and T.S. Eliot. I would like, furthermore, to examine the relation of these strangely paired images to the respective authors' conceptions of meaning and hermeneutics. Apart from my academic interests, I enjoy playing football and listening to music: particularly to The Smiths, David Bowie, and Nick Cave and the Bad Seeds.





2017 Thatcher Scholarship Awards

Kharthik Chakravarthy

Oxford Qatar Thatcher Scholar
DPhil in Engineering

I'm from Malaysia – specifically from a small island called Penang – and I spent the last four years in Imperial College London studying for a Masters in Mechanical Engineering. My work there had a strong emphasis on the application of fluid and thermodynamic principles in a range of areas, including jet propulsion and transmission design. In Oxford, I'll be working for a DPhil in the Department of Engineering Science where I'll be developing laser diagnostic techniques to be used in thermofluid applications.

I love playing sports and exercising during my free time. I played squash competitively during my undergraduate studies and I definitely intend to continue that here. I've also had a go at directing and writing scripts for the stage, and I enjoy acting and singing.



Sean Butler

Oxford Margaret Thatcher Scholar
BCL Civil Law

I hold a Scottish MA in philosophy from the University of St Andrews, and a BA in law from the University of Oxford. During my philosophy degree I developed a strong interest in moral and political philosophy (particularly in justifications for the powers of the state), as well as more abstract areas like metaethics and philosophical methodology. These interests carried over to my law degree where I was most interested in public law and jurisprudence, but also in the principles underlying private law and the place of private versus public rights in a legal order.

I am looking forward to exploring these issues in greater depth during the BCL. I also plan to continue cycling, running (I am training for a half-marathon at the time of writing), and mooting.





Margaret Thatcher's visit to Somerville College in 2005

2017 Thatcher Scholarship Awards

Benjamin Etty

Michael Bishop Foundation Thatcher Scholar
BA History and Economics

I find attempts to resolve the big social and political issues of the day endlessly fascinating, and believe an appreciation of history and a practical understanding of economics is as good a basis as any with which to try and find solutions to problems, from globalisation to inequality. Hence the basis for my degree in History and Economics, which though challenging is also greatly enjoyable. Outside of my studies, I am active in student politics, having been Social Secretary and Political Officer of the Oxford University Conservative Association, which has involved running weekly debates, organising events and plenty of electioneering. Margaret Thatcher herself was President of the Association in Michaelmas 1946, so it is a great privilege to be a recipient of a scholarship named in her honour. Additionally, I volunteer regularly while in Oxford to help alleviate the big homeless problem in the city – an attempt to give back to the wider community.



Kate House

Qatar Thatcher Scholar
BA English

Access to education is one of the most fundamental rights a person should be able to expect, and something which I feel passionately about supporting. During my time at Oxford, I have developed not only academically in my study of English, but also personally through my extra-curricular interests such as performing with the Oxford Belles, my university a capella group. I have loved every minute of my time here, and so it has felt entirely natural for me to encourage other likeminded students to do the same, which has been one of the primary reasons for the access work I have done with my local schools at home. In the future, I hope to go on to study a Masters or a Law conversion, and would love ultimately to work in a global and political industry such as law or humanitarian aid. The Margaret Thatcher Scholarship has made these goals more of a reality, and it is inspiring to represent a scheme whose values and ambitions, with regard to access to education, align so comfortably with my own.





**The Rt. Hon the Baroness Royall of Blaisdon
New Principal and
Chair of the Margaret Thatcher Scholarship Trust**

Surprising as it might seem to some people, it is a real honour for me to be associated with the Margaret Thatcher Scholarship Trust. Somerville is a wonderful place that includes the excluded but also celebrates and nurtures excellence. The Thatcher Scholarship Programme enables us to bring these two aspects of our College ethos together.

A couple of weeks ago I had the difficult task of chairing the panel which awarded scholarships to two home students. We had some superb candidates and chose two extraordinary students, Benjamin Etty and Kate House. They will both be outstanding scholars as well as powerful ambassadors and advocates for the Programme. Last week I had the pleasure of meeting all of the Thatcher

Scholars. Eight young people who come from different cultures, communities and disciplines but who share a determination to succeed and to demonstrate that the scholarship has been life changing, giving them opportunities which otherwise would have been beyond their reach.

In addition to the scholarships, I am passionate about the Thatcher Development Programme, which is of benefit to all Somerville students. Amongst other things it enables them to hone their essay writing skills, to learn the importance of time management, to polish up their cvs, to find out more about volunteering opportunities and to explore career options. It is a means of providing holistic support to our students so that they are not only academically excellent but also confident and resilient when they go out into the world. The Thatcher Scholarship Programme in all its different parts would simply not be possible without the support of the MTST.

There is a clear need to build on the Development Programme and to increase the number of Scholars so my task is to carry on the excellent work of my predecessor, Alice Prochaska, and help the MTST to flourish.

Jan Royall

Enriching the Study Experience at Somerville

Q & A with Dr Claire Cockcroft, Programme Director

Q - What have been the highlights of the Programme over the last year?

It has been a great privilege to return Somerville to direct the Thatcher Scholarship Programme, creating opportunities to support our students' intellectual and personal development, as well as creating experiences to help inform career decisions. Mentoring students through the Development Awards process has been highly rewarding, seeing projects come to fruition that have brought life-changing experiences. Another highlight has been discovering that the Thatcher Development Programme is a unique offering at Oxford, providing the whole student body with seminars and practical skills, that enrich their academic experience, boost confidence and resilience, as well as giving career guidance. Word is getting out about the 'added value' this brings. Alumni have returned to give insight into careers such as Management Consultancy, how to avoid the cardinal sins of interviewing and communications training. Through our e-mentoring platform, *Aluminate*, we are linking students with alumni, for advice about particular professions.



Participants at the session on Big Data

Q - What new elements have you added to the Development Programme this year?

We launched the academic year with a 'Night at the Museum'. Freshers explored the Pitt Rivers Museum and heard about opportunities to curate their own projects or volunteer with the Oxford museums. Seminar attendance and evaluation has been consistently high this term and we are proactively responding to requests for specific skills training or career development. As an example, we have organised sector-specific careers events for the Civil Service. 'Big Data' is a hot topic. Whether it is applying algorithms to understand consumer preferences, finance, personalised medicine, e-learning or weather predictions, maths is officially cool, reflected in a record turnout for a seminar about careers in Data Science. Next term sees our first Hackathon, in partnership with a global e-commerce conglomerate.

Q - What unexpected benefits have arisen through the Programme?

Strengthening links between the JCR, MCR and Junior Research Fellows brings many benefits to College life. Projects integrating these communities have been catalysed through the Development Programme and Awards scheme: A Science and Society Club founded by biology undergraduates and another bringing together medievalists are fostering an interdisciplinary approach to study. Each term we run an interdisciplinary themed event, most recently on sleep – weaving musical performances around dream vision literature, poems and scientific research – giving students chance to present ideas and gain confidence as performers. I am impressed with the number of students volunteering alongside their studies and the Somervillian reputation for compassion shone through in last year's Development Awards applications. Through these awards we hope to inspire students to go beyond just caring about an issue, to actively engaging with it, and last year's recipients are sharing their experiences with other students.

Q - If you had unlimited funds, what would your aspiration be?

Providing students with valuable research and work placements to enrich their experience and CVs is vital. My vision is to establish an internship programme that will fund professionally and personally rewarding opportunities, access to inspirational role models across all disciplines, and insights into career paths. Expanding the portfolio of activities under the auspices of the Thatcher Scholarship Programme will equip students to go into the world empowered to make a meaningful difference as they embark on their careers.



The Thatcher Scholars with (from left) Amanda Ponsonby, Lord Powell, Cynthia Crawford ("Crawfie"), Lord Sherbourne and Caroline Ryder

An afternoon in extraordinary company

The idyllic setting of Amanda and Rupert Ponsonby's home near Chipping Norton provided the venue on the 21st October for the first gathering of the Thatcher Scholars and some of Margaret Thatcher's closest aides. Amanda Ponsonby was Margaret Thatcher's Personal Assistant during her Downing Street years. On hearing about the Margaret Thatcher Scholarship Trust, Amanda approached then Principal Alice Prochaska with the offer to host a lunch where the Thatcher Scholars would meet people who had worked closely with Margaret Thatcher. She was very keen that the scholars hear first-hand about the woman after whom their scholarship is named, and to learn more about her as a person.

Among the group that Amanda had gathered to meet and speak with the scholars were: Lord Powell of Bayswater, Margaret Thatcher's long-time friend and foreign affairs adviser; Lord Sherbourne who was her Political Secretary; Caroline Ryder who ran Margaret Thatcher's office both in Opposition and in No 10 Downing Street; Cynthia Crawford who was her constituency assistant and later ran her household. "Crawfie" remained a close friend for the remainder of Margaret Thatcher's life, being one of her regular visitors prior to Lady Thatcher's death in 2013.

Over delicious food and wine, stories and anecdotes were exchanged about days in opposition, times in No 10 Downing Street and later years. It was a real privilege to speak with those who worked so closely with one of the global political icons of the 20th century and to learn more about the woman behind the legend.

Very many thanks to Amanda and Rupert, as well as their children Emily and George and their friends, who made us all so welcome and offered this rare opportunity to spend time in such extraordinary company.

Mrs Jessica Mannix



Celebrating the living legacy

Friends, patrons, donors and scholars travelled from near and far to celebrate a momentous 4 years of the Margaret Thatcher Scholarship Trust at Somerville College, on Tuesday 31st October. This special occasion offered ample opportunity for supporters and donors to meet the present eight Thatcher Scholars.

The afternoon's events began with a drinks reception at the College's Mary Somerville Room followed by lunch. There were no speeches – these would come later in the afternoon – instead, those who have been so instrumental in the establishment of the Thatcher Scholarship Programme were able to talk at greater length with those who are benefitting as a result of their efforts.

After lunch, everyone moved – appropriately – to the Margaret Thatcher Centre where the Scholars spoke to the gathered audience about the transformative impact that the Thatcher Scholarship has had in fulfilling their ambitions. Following this, some of the recipients of the Thatcher Development Awards presented to the attendees the many innovative summer projects that were made possible because of the Margaret Thatcher Scholarship Trust. To conclude the presentations, Dr Claire Cockcroft, Programme Director, spoke about the Thatcher Development Programme, the seminars and events that have taken place so far this term, as well as the plans for the year ahead.

The whole day was a wonderful celebration of the vibrancy of the living legacy that Somerville has established for its illustrious alumna, Lady Thatcher.



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