

Rayant Thelwa

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SCHOLARSHIP TRUST

2019 BULLETIN



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Cover image:

Michael Bishop Foundation Thatcher Scholars Telemi
Emmanuel-Aina (2018, PPE) and Joe Salf (2017, Medicine)

Photo by John Cairns

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"REMEMBERING BEGINNINGS"



As I REFLECT ON another successful year for the Trust, I am struck by several important anniversaries. 2019 marked a century since the first woman took her seat in the House of Commons, 60 years since Margaret Thatcher became an MP, and 40 years since she was elected as the UK's first female Prime Minister.

The world of today is remarkably different from the one in which Lady Thatcher began her political career. In 1959, there were only 25 women MPs. Today there are 220, the most in the UK's history.

I was delighted that so many of you could join us to mark these milestones for a panel discussion asking 'Does a woman have to act like a man to succeed in this world?' The answer – which started and ended with no, but included many fascinating discussions in the middle - was provided eloquently by Cindy Gallop, Lord Willetts, Anya Hindmarch, Lady Arden, and Sacha Romanovitch.

Their responses underscored the importance of creating opportunities for talent to flourish. I am certain that Lady Thatcher would be delighted to know that the Trust is leading the way in this work, including with the new Lee Kuan Yew-Thatcher Scholarship (page 7). These scholarships will support exceptional Singaporean students from disadvantaged backgrounds to study at Somerville. The opportunity is provided by the generosity of ST Telemedia, a global investor in communications and media, data centres and infrastructure technology businesses based in Singapore.

It is only fitting that a charity that has always been the result of collaboration across borders has become more global in its outlook through this new award. Mr Lee, Singapore's founding Prime Minister, was one of the very first patrons of the Trust, and we are delighted that the mutual respect and friendship between the two leaders is celebrated by this scholarship.

It is all the more important to think across national boundaries when so many of the pressing issues of our time demand international solutions. Perhaps the greatest among the challenges facing our world is climate change. In this respect, as in so many things, Lady Thatcher was ahead of her time: 2019 also marked the 30th anniversary of her prophetic speech to the General Assembly of the United Nations, where she became the first leader of a major economy to use the words 'climate change' in a public address.

Lady Thatcher was not just a politician: she was a scientist who had been educated at Somerville by Nobel laureate Dorothy Hodgkin. She drew upon the latest studies, including new evidence of deforestation and melting polar ice-caps, as she made her case to the gathered representatives, and she promised that Britain would lead the way: next year, the UK hosts the COP26 Climate Change Conference in Glasgow.

At Somerville, we are living up to her example. Professor Renier Van Der Hoorn has been appointed as our new Governing Body climate change champion and will lead our efforts to make this a greener college. An environmental audit will be conducted to identify ways in which we can reduce our carbon emissions, and we are adopting a new sustainable food policy. And the work of our Oxford India Centre for Sustainable Development is helping to forge a path to a greener future.

We would not be able to continue the pioneering legacy of Lady Thatcher without your support, and I am deeply grateful to all of those who have enabled the Trust and the Development Programme to go from strength to strength

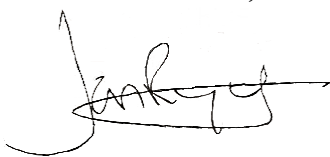
this year. The continued excellent stewardship of our endowment by Oxford University Endowment Management means that, as of 2019, the endowment stands at £10.24m, with funds made available by the Oxford Graduate Scholarship Matched Funding Scheme raising this total to £13m.

For our students, a Thatcher Scholarship is a new beginning: a transformative gift that enables them to complete their studies and start their professional lives free of financial burden. There are now fourteen Thatcher Scholars at Somerville, but our aim is to have twenty or more permanently endowed Thatcher Scholars by 2023, when we will commemorate the 10th anniversary of the death of Lady Thatcher.

Those Thatcher Scholars will join a flourishing network of peers and alumni. There are now six Thatcher Scholar alumni, who have gone on to work in law, public service, and further research (page 14).

In 1986, Margaret Thatcher defined success as ‘hard work, and a certain sense of purpose’. You will find both in abundance in the words of this bulletin. I hope you enjoy discovering and sharing in the successes of the Trust and our Thatcher Scholars over the past year.

With all best wishes,



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

SCHOLAR HIGHLIGHTS

- **Anna Gee** (2017, Biological sciences, Thatcher Scholar) earned the second highest marks in the University in the second year Biology public examinations. She also undertook an internship at the Botanical Gardens in Edinburgh in the summer.
- **Chuoqiao Lin** (2018, Physics, Ng Teng Fong Thatcher Scholar) gained a distinction in his first year examinations.
- **Minh Le Quoc** (2017, Computer Science, Qatar Thatcher Scholar) undertook an internship as a junior software engineer at Roxar Emerson Software in Oxford.
- **Mai-Britt Wiechmann** (2018, DPhil in Modern Language and Medieval German, Oxford Thatcher Scholar) secured a prestigious award from the Studienstiftung des Deutschen Volkes and the Zentrum für Kulturwissenschaftliche Forschung, which has allowed her to extend her studies by one year and conduct archival research in Wolfenbüttel, Germany.
- **Kharthik Chakravarthy** (2017, DPhil Engineering Science, Oxford Qatar Thatcher Scholar) has presented at several international conferences and this year co-authored a publication submitted to The American Society of Mechanical Engineers' (ASME) Journal of Fluids Engineering. He was also elected captain of the Oxford University's Men's Squash second team.
- **Martin Fellermeier** (2018, DPhil Biomedical science, Oxford Thatcher Scholar), who is investigating novel cancer therapies, undertook a consulting internship with international pharmaceutical company Merck, to gain insight into the business side of biomedical science.
- **Kate House** (2016, English, Qatar Thatcher Scholar) was awarded a first class degree and was ranked 19/233 in her year. She has secured a Training Contract with Allen & Overy, which she will commence in 2021, after completing the GDL and LPC at BPP Law School, London.



Margaret Thatcher (right) and her tutor, Nobel laureate Dorothy Crowfoot Hodgkin (left), visiting Somerville College during our centenary celebrations in 1979

THE NEW 2019 THATCHER SCHOLARS



Edward Brewer
DPhil in Physical and Theoretical Chemistry
Oxford Margaret Thatcher Scholar

I am now a first year student reading for a DPhil in Physical and Theoretical Chemistry thanks to the generous support of the Margaret Thatcher Scholarship Trust, having graduated from the University of Birmingham in 2019 with 1st class MSci in Chemistry. As part of this programme of study, I am currently attached to Professor Stuart Mackenzie's research group, which specialises in the dynamics and reactivity of metal clusters in the gas phase.

My current research involves the modification of a velocity map imaging instrument to accommodate a reaction chamber to allow the study of reactions of metal clusters with thermally-excited molecules. In addition, I also carry out infrared experiments on metal-ligand complexes in the gas phase.

In my spare time, I pursue a variety of different hobbies, the most prominent of which is learning to code (specifically in Python). After I graduate, I hope to pursue a career in academia.



Ashrakat Elshehawy
DPhil in Politics
Oxford Thatcher Scholar

I was born and raised in Alexandria, Egypt. I graduated from the German School of Alexandria (DSBA) in 2013. I hold a bachelor's degree in Political Science and Psychology from the University of Mannheim in Germany and was an undergraduate visiting student at Trinity College, Dublin. I recently graduated with a master's degree in Political Science with a focus on Advance Quantitative Methods, also from the University of Mannheim.

My research focus is multi-disciplinary and lies in economic aspects of institution-making, inequality, and resource distribution in authoritarian regimes. I am also focusing on methods of computational text-analysis of Arabic text.

As an undergraduate, I worked as a research assistant at the GESIS Leibniz-Institut for Social Sciences and at the Mannheim Centre (MZES) for European Social Research. During my graduate studies, I was a researcher at the Chair of Empirical Political Research and a teaching assistant at the Chair of Quantitative Methods in Social Sciences in the University of Mannheim. I also worked as a student editorial assistant for the American Political Science Review. After my master's I worked jointly on the project "Individual Responses to International Democratizing Action" as a Research Associate at the Mannheim Centre of European Social Research, and as a visiting scholar the University of Houston.



Telemi Emmanuel-Aina
Philosophy, Politics and Economics
Michael Bishop Foundation Thatcher Scholar

My name is Telemi, I am currently in my second year studying PPE. The part of my course I am most passionate about is international development; in particular, the reasons for the vast differences we see in the world today between countries.

In the future, I would love to pursue a career dedicated to helping bridge the development gap as I believe this is the key to providing genuinely equal opportunities to all people, regardless of their place of birth. To aid me in this career path, I desire to study a masters in Development Economics.

Outside of academia, my main interests are dance, and volunteering at my local church. I started dance at the age of 8, and this passion has continued with me to university where I am co-founder of Somerville Dance Society. I volunteer twice a week at my home church, serving as part of the visuals team and also as teacher of the youth group. Another of my hobbies is baking, which I love doing at home with my younger brother. I am also an avid football fan!



Mathew Madain
MSc Modern Middle Eastern Studies
Oxford Qatar Thatcher Scholar

I am a native of Los Angeles with strong family ties to Jordan. I graduated from The University of California, Berkeley in May 2019 with Phi Beta Kappa honours and a bachelor's degree in History, Near Eastern Studies, and Global Studies.

As a Haas Scholar, I conducted historical research in Jordan on the experiences of Arab civilian communities during World War 1. My undergraduate thesis examined memories of the 1918 exodus of Transjordan's Christian families. I presented my

research at the Eastern Mediterranean Studies International Graduate Conference in Budapest this summer, and will be further presenting on the topic at the Mediterranean Studies Association Congress in Gibraltar in May 2020.

I am now pursuing an MSc in Modern Middle Eastern Studies under the supervision of Professor Eugene Rogan, thanks to the generous support of my Oxford Qatar Thatcher Scholarship. I also serve on the editorial board of the Oxford Middle East Review.



Zineb Mimouni
MSc Water Science, Policy and Management
Oxford Qatar Thatcher Scholar

I am a water enthusiast from Morocco. I completed a bachelor's degree in Engineering and Management Science, focusing my research on groundwater arsenic contamination in Bangladesh. It is a case where water access, security and equity are put to the test. My work revolved around biosorption technology. It presents a simple, cheap and sustainable solution that could guarantee the needs of millions of people who are currently consuming the poisonous water.

I could not be more excited and proud to have started my MSc in Water Science, Policy and Management. This program will allow me to explore my interests such as the mitigation of urban water challenges and the importance of transboundary water management in greater detail. Not only will I get to be a part of the School of The Environment and Geography, a world-leading institute renowned for its ground-breaking research, but I will also learn to take a multi-disciplinary approach to my field which will be instrumental for my future professional career.

As the first person in my family to graduate from both high school and university, I understand the importance of education to create change in one's life and the wider world. I am eternally grateful to the Margaret Thatcher Scholarship Trust for granting me the life-changing experience of studying in Oxford.



Federico Trinca
DPhil Mathematics
Oxford Thatcher Scholar

I grew up in Lecco, a small town by Lake Como in Italy. As soon as I started high school, I realised that mathematics was my path. Hence, I decided to enrol at the University of Milan for an Undergraduate degree in pure mathematics with a focus on Analysis and Geometry. I moved to Zurich for my Master's degree. In ETH Zurich, I found myself in a stimulating environment, which made me improve both from a mathematical and personal point of view. Here I also defined more precisely my research interests.

My general area of interest is Differential Geometry, which could be simply defined as the study of differentiable manifolds (smooth curved spaces). The Euclidean plane, and the surface of a ball (sphere) or of a doughnut (torus), are easy examples of two-dimensional differentiable manifolds.

Even though Differential Geometry may seem very abstract, it is closer to the real world than you imagine. Indeed, it has striking links to Theoretical Physics. For instance, General Relativity and String Theory describe the universe as a differentiable manifold of "high" dimension.

Apart from mathematics, I enjoy playing the violin, watching movies and going to the theatre.



THE LEE KUAN YEW-THATCHER SCHOLARSHIPS

Somerville College and the MTST are soon to offer a new scholarship for undergraduates from Singapore, named in honour of Lee Kuan Yew, Singapore’s founding prime minister and one of the Trust’s first patrons.

The Lee Kuan Yew-Thatcher Scholarships have been created through the generosity of ST Telemedia, a global investor in communications & media, data centres and infrastructure technology businesses based in Singapore. The scholarships will provide opportunities to exceptional Singaporean students from disadvantaged backgrounds who have succeeded against the odds, whether it be financial disadvantage, disability, bereavement, or being a first-generation university student. One new scholarship will be awarded annually for the next four years, with the first scholarship awarded in October 2020.

“This partnership between the Margaret Thatcher Scholarship Trust at Somerville and ST Telemedia highlights the enduring bond between Singapore and the UK. This is a bond that is rooted in our shared values: a belief in opportunity for all; that hard work will reap rewards; a commitment to academic excellence,” said Somerville College Principal Jan Royall at the launch event.

The scholarships help disadvantaged Singaporean students by offering them an invaluable opportunity to pursue their academic aspirations at top universities. ST Telemedia has also launched scholarships in partnership with Fitzwilliam College, Cambridge – Mr Lee’s alma mater – and the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy at the National University of Singapore.



Somerville Principal Jan Royall spoke at the launch of the Scholarships

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Ho Ching, chief executive of Temasek Holdings and a patron of the Trust, spoke about the scholarships’ transformational potential at the launch event in June.

Good afternoon, distinguished guests and friends. As you have heard a little while ago, in the early decades of independence, Singapore benefited much from the generous Colombo Plan. Hundreds of young Singaporeans were given scholarships to study in the UK, Australia, Canada and elsewhere. These were opportunities that they would never otherwise have had. I am proud that Singapore, in turn, been giving scholarships in recent decades for young people to study in Singapore, including those from ASEAN and Asia. As the Chinese saying goes: “饮水思源” –

remembering the source whenever we drink our water.

Today, I'm equally proud to see STT launching three scholarship programmes, to mark its 25th anniversary. As a company, STT has benefited much from Singapore, and in particular, from the leadership and strategic support of our founding Prime Minister, Mr Lee Kuan Yew, during challenging times. I thank STT for honouring him.

It is particularly fitting that two of STT's scholarship programmes are with "Oxbridge" colleges in the UK – Fitzwilliam, in Cambridge, is the alma mater of Mr Lee Kuan Yew; and Somerville, in Oxford, is the alma mater of Mrs Margaret Thatcher, the former Prime Minister of the UK.

These two former PMs held each other in high regard – they remained close friends long past their retirement from high public office. They shared many common traits – both were forthright and direct in their views. They were fearless leaders, with the courage of their convictions. Many of the older generation, here in Singapore and around the world, remember and respect their far-sightedness and resolution in leading change, however daunting the challenges. Both left indelible marks on their respective countries. It was a coincidence, of course, that both of them stepped down as Prime Ministers on the same day – 28 November 1990. That's almost thirty years ago – not quite the thirtieth anniversary yet!

Mr Lee was later a patron of the Margaret Thatcher Scholarship Trust till his own passing in 2015. This Scholarship Trust gives young people a chance to study at the Somerville College, especially those from around the world who have succeeded "against the odds". Somerville was an early pioneer in opening up opportunities for university education to those from disadvantaged backgrounds. I'm pleased that Fitzwilliam [College] shared the same ethos. Mrs Thatcher herself never forgot how Somerville had given her a chance, for her own studies. She spoke often about providing opportunities to open up all sorts of abilities which young people may not realise they could have. She encouraged people to "have a go" and to make progress, step by step.

Hence, as a patron of the Margaret Thatcher Scholarship Trust, I'm honoured to witness the launch of the Lee Kuan Yew – Thatcher Scholarship by STT. This scholarship, under the Margaret Thatcher Scholarship Trust, is for Singaporeans to pursue undergraduate studies in Somerville. It is a fitting tribute to two transformational leaders who deeply valued education as a way to uplift lives, and also to build just and equal societies.

Mr Lee spoke of Mrs Thatcher's willingness to "rough it out with the toughest, and take on all corners." Others referred to her as the Iron Lady. She never took offence, and said instead: "Any leader has to have a certain amount of steel in them, so I am not that put out being called the Iron Lady."

Hence, it is interesting to note that Somerville has produced two first female Prime Ministers in the world – Margaret Thatcher was the first in the UK, and Indira Gandhi in India – two inspiring and resolute leaders of their time



Ho Ching (right centre) at the launch of the Scholarships with MTST Director Jessica Mannix (left), Somerville Principal Jan Royall (left centre) and Dr Lee Suan Yew (right), the brother of Lee Kuan Yew

Ladies and Gentlemen: the three scholarship programmes launched by STT today will help open up more opportunities for young Singaporeans to "have a go", especially for those who have risen "against the odds" in their lives. It is a thoughtful gift for them to learn about the world, think deeply about its challenges, and act to decisively bring about a better world, in their time. Both Mr Lee and Mrs Thatcher have set the bar high.

In closing, I thank the STT team for their precious gift of education. Your gift will help our young people, through education, to develop their potential; to make a difference to our collective future. It is a very meaningful way to celebrate your 25th anniversary. Thank you.

DISCOVERING MARGARET THATCHER

A REPORT FROM THE PONSONBY LUNCH



TELEMI EMMANUEL-AINA MICHAEL BISHOP FOUNDATION THATCHER SCHOLAR

On the 12th October, my fellow Thatcher Scholars and I had the pleasure of attending lunch at the home of Amanda and Rupert Ponsonby. Having only just received the excellent news that I was to be awarded a Michael Bishop Foundation Thatcher Scholarship earlier that week, this was my first opportunity to get to know the other scholars, and learn about the great woman behind my scholarship from those who knew her best.

Arriving at the lunch, we were warmly welcomed by Rupert and Amanda into their gorgeous home and ushered towards the lounge where we had the opportunity to converse with some of the central figures in Margaret Thatcher's life. I was introduced to Lord Glendonbrook, who funds my scholarship. I was particularly struck by his gratitude towards Lady Thatcher and her policies that enabled his airline to thrive. To see the positive change Margaret Thatcher was able to have on people's lives greatly increased my admiration for what she achieved as a politician.

During the lunch, those who knew and worked with Margaret Thatcher took turns to tell us some of their stories about her. I found it fascinating how close she was to the people who worked for her, and remained in contact with them past her time in office. The stories from Tessa Gaisman and Cynthia Crawford, who worked at number 10, about how Lady Thatcher would frequently come to stay with them and woke up so early that they had to make breakfast in advance, were particularly interesting. They showed me a side of Margaret Thatcher and her personality that isn't often talked about: how much she cared about and valued the people who were loyal to her. Being introduced to this side, made me feel a greater sense of connection to Margaret Thatcher, and proud to hold a scholarship in her name.

The opportunity to learn about Lady Thatcher from a personal perspective, not just as a successful politician, but a caring human being, was invaluable. I greatly appreciated the chance to meet with people who knew her personally, and the people who have helped put together this life-changing scholarship.

I would like to express how grateful I am to everyone who has made this scholarship possible. Not only has it given me immense financial help, but it has welcomed me into a growing family that is striving to create a living legacy for Margaret Thatcher. It is a gift I will always treasure.

DIRECTORS' REPORTS



DR CLAIRE COCKCROFT PROGRAMME DIRECTOR

With the fourth year of Margaret Thatcher Scholarships now in full swing, we are delighted to be supporting fourteen Scholars reading diverse subjects at both undergraduate and postgraduate level. There are also six Thatcher Scholar alumni working in professions such as law, medicine and finance. Other alumni are undertaking graduate courses and internships, partly made possible by the generous support they received as scholars, enabling them to graduate without debt and support themselves as they embrace further study to

reach their professional goals.

Alongside the Scholarships, I deliver Somerville's Development Programme of skills seminars. This is now firmly embedded in college life, attracting a steady flow of students to weekly sessions designed to help academic performance, well-being and careers. I am particularly pleased that Somerville alumni are becoming regular contributors, offering their advice and experience on public speaking, interviews and careers in international development.

Many students here have keen business minds, and so we have been flying the entrepreneurial flag high in 2019. I supported two teams of Somervillians taking part in the University's new ideas and enterprise competition, 'All Innovate', both of which made it through a field of 100 teams to reach the final. Dr Malak Al-Shaikhali (2018, MSc Immunology, Oxford Qatar Thatcher Scholar) provided expert nutritional advice to team Seastrong. The marine conservation social enterprise aims to produce a sustainably-sourced seaweed superfood, while protecting coral reefs and the livelihoods of coastal communities in India. We look forward to further developing our students' ideas and ambitions through new enterprise training seminars led by Engineering tutor and biomedical entrepreneur Dr Erfan Soliman, which start in 2020.

Mentoring is a growing part of the Director's role. I discuss career options with students, help them to identify summer placements and provide CV advice. Responding to interest in the heritage sector, I have secured placements with the Ashmolean Museum and will be exploring further opportunities this year, including a public event.

The Thatcher Development Awards continue to provide funding to students to pursue innovative personal development opportunities. This year's competition elicited a wealth of exciting and ambitious projects, taking students across the world to tackle social injustice, environmental challenges, world health and conservation issues (see p.12).

I am extremely grateful for the generous support of our donors which enables us to provide our students with these academic and personal development opportunities, an invaluable addition to their educational experience at Oxford.



JESSICA MANNIX TRUST DIRECTOR

I hope that reading through the articles and learning about the positive impact that the Margaret Thatcher Scholarship Trust has had on students at Somerville has filled you with a sense of pride and satisfaction. None of this would have been possible without your support, whether as a donor, patron, volunteer or friend of the Trust, and I am very grateful for your time and generosity.

In the six years since its establishment, the Trust has fully funded over 20 Thatcher Scholars; enabled more than 25 Somervillians to undertake innovative projects through the Development Awards; and supported hundreds of students through the Development Programme - an enormous achievement in such a short time. With our endowment now at over £10.3m, and matched funds from the University bringing us close to £13m, the work of the Trust and the Thatcher Scholarship Programme will continue for as long as there is a Somerville College.

The story doesn't finish here though. Our ambition is to have 20 endowed Thatcher Scholars studying in the College at any one time. I hope I can count on your continued support as we strive to make this a reality. Thank you!

THE THATCHER DEVELOPMENT AWARDS

Pictured: Ella Davies teaches Costa Rican schoolchildren about environmental sustainability and pollution. Ella's project was funded by a Thatcher Development Award

The Thatcher Development Awards provide funding of up to £2000 to enable students to pursue an academic or career development opportunity, an innovative idea or to undertake a travel project that will have a positive impact on others.



Alexander Brindle (2018, PPE) spent the summer in India teaching at the Flowers of Lakshmi School and creating a computer learning centre to enable the children of the surrounding villages to gain computer literacy. He reports:

"I came across the Flowers of Lakshmi School in Bodhgaya, Bihar, by chance two years ago. The school and the town left an impression on me - so much so that I returned with the help of a Thatcher Development Award to try to make a difference.

Each morning I taught English to a class of children. In the afternoon I managed the computer project, often going around the town to find and purchase the required supplies, before joining the workers I had hired to put plans into action. We rented a nearby building, plastered and painted the walls, built the desks, connected the electricity and bought computers. Somerville's Junior Common Room also supported the project by providing essential funds to buy an inverter battery, ensuring computers and fans kept running during the frequent power cuts.

The impact of global warming here has been striking. An ongoing drought has left many families without water. A priority for me is to raise funds for a new water pump (which costs £278), but we would like to achieve much more: an additional computer to add to our first five; a small fridge so the children can have cool drinks while they wait for their turn; and a water filter.

This project, which reflects the best of the College's values of education, public service and empowering women, would not have been possible without the support of the Margaret Thatcher Scholarship Trust."



Alexander shows a school teacher how to use the new computers



One of the many challenges facing healthcare providers in rural communities with limited access to electricity is keeping vaccines cold enough to remain viable. **Eleanor Thompson (2018, Engineering)** was keen to put her engineering skills into practice. With the support of a Development Award, she volunteered at Ecoswell (a non-profit organisation in Peru) to help tackle the problem.

“I was working in Lobitos. This is a relatively poor area of Peru that often suffers from power cuts, meaning the vaccines in the fridge at the medical post need to be replaced.

A project was underway to building a wind turbine system to charge two batteries as back-up power. They had a basic prototype, but there was a lot of work required on both the mechanical and the electrical side to get it operational.

I helped to design and build a mount for the wind turbine, using only resources that could be sourced locally within a tight budget. I also helped with the design of the electrical system, which was more challenging since the components had many different international versions and specifications.

Although I was thrown in at the deep end, I learned a lot of engineering. It was the first real hands-on project I have done where I have had to consider the design, budget, environmental impact, construction method, and the maintenance instructions for locals.

I also benefitted from learning about other projects - such as an ecotourism initiative by Ecoswell in a deprived town nearby - and how they research and quantify the impact of their projects. Their eco-friendly way of living also changed my lifestyle and attitude towards the environment.”



Eleanor also worked on an irrigation system using recycled shower water, along with other volunteers in Lobitos

RECIPIENTS OF THE 2019 THATCHER DEVELOPMENT AWARDS

- **Alexander Brindle (2018, PPE)** for his computer literacy project with The Flowers of Lakshmi School, India.
- **Max Bandurka (2015, Biochemistry)** to assist wildlife conservation in Costa Rica and to carry out work with Voluntary Service Overseas in Congo. The second part of this project will take place in 2020.
- **Ella Davies (2017, Chemistry)** to support a four week trip expedition to Costa Rica to work at Volcán Irazú National Park, and on conservation projects in the local community (pictured upper left).
- **Charles MacPherson (2017, English)** for his journey to Ulaan Bataar, Mongolia through the former USSR to create a short documentary film and travel journal about the region's endangered brutalist architecture. The trip also raised £1396 for two charities: conservation non-profit Cool Earth and disability charity Kith & Kids.
- **Eleanor Thompson (2018, Engineering)** for her engineering project to create a wind-powered backup vaccine cooling system in Lobito, Peru with non-profit organisation Ecoswell.
- **Aradhana Vadekkethil (2018, MPhil Law)** to carry out research into India's 'One Stop Centre' scheme to support women affected by violence in their families, workplaces and communities. She will evaluate these centres against the government's official guidelines to ascertain whether the policies are being enforced in practice. This project will take place in 2020.

ALUMNI

There are now six Thatcher Scholar alumni, who have gone on to careers in public service, law, medicine, and to further study. As our community of alumni scholars grows, we aim to keep connections alive so that alumni have the opportunity to support current scholars and Somerville students as they make key decisions about their future careers.

Isobel Hettrick (2015, Philosophy, Politics and Economics, Michael Bishop Foundation Thatcher Scholar) continues her work at the Financial Conduct Authority. This year, she returned to Somerville to speak to current students about her role, and give advice on applications and internships.

Kate House (2016, English Literature, Qatar Thatcher Scholar) graduated with a first-class degree in English Literature in 2019. She is currently studying for the GDL, a law conversion course, at BPP University, London. She will begin a Training Contract with Allen & Overy, a magic circle law firm, in 2020, which will include a month based in their Tokyo office. Kate has been advising a second-year English student, giving personal insights to help navigate the process of securing a training contract, and has created a resource pack to support other Somerville students considering a conversion to law.

“My Qatar Thatcher Scholarship provided an invaluable nexus of pastoral and academic support, both during my studies and moving forward, and the contacts I made through the alumni network and within Somerville had a material impact on my studies. I am proud to report that I achieved first-class honours in my final examinations, for which I owe thanks in part to the Thatcher Scholarship Programme, and the brilliant support it provides.”

Benjamin Etty (2016, History and Economics, Michael Bishop Foundation Thatcher Scholar) graduated with one of the highest-graded undergraduate theses in the University for his cohort, a study of *The Impact of the Railways on the Pattern of Coal Mining in the West Riding of Yorkshire, 1834-1914*. He has submitted the thesis for publication in 2020. He is now studying a one-year MSc Finance course at the LSE, and will be starting a career as a strategy consultant in September 2020. Before beginning his graduate studies, Ben travelled to China with the Sino-British summit, meeting senior staffers at the British Embassy and the British Chambers of Commerce in Beijing.

“It was very interesting to get deep insight into modern China from both Chinese and Western perspectives on the ground, and I returned much more informed than I had been. I am very grateful for the scholarship in giving me the financial freedom to go on this trip, which might not otherwise have been possible.” - *Dr Claire Cockcroft*



From left to right: Benjamin Etty, Kate House and Isobel Hettrick

“ARRIVING HERE FELT LIKE A MIRACLE”

DR MALAK AL-SHAIKHALI
2018-19 OXFORD QATAR
THATCHER SCHOLAR



Malak Al-Shaikhali is a doctor from Gaza who completed an MSc in Immunology at Somerville as an Oxford Qatar Thatcher Scholar.

It's not easy to become a doctor in Gaza. You have to be in the top 2% of pupils in the territory to even think about it. Once you are a student, there are still some fundamental difficulties: rolling blackouts, difficult and expensive access to clean water, and the high cost of studying.

After finishing my medical training, I worked for the UNRWA (United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East) which, amongst other work, provides primary health care in the Gaza Strip. I could see 90 patients on an average day, and some days as many 130 in 7 hours. By comparison, a GP in the UK sees on average 41.5 patients a day, an amount many say is too high.

Although I had always wanted to study in the UK, I didn't dare think of Oxford. Meeting the Gaza Group was what started to push that dream towards reality. The Gaza Group is a team of Oxford University doctors who visit the region every summer for a week to teach and take part in a research conference. One of them asked me why I hadn't applied to Oxford. I told him I hadn't even thought about it, but he simply said "send off an application, and I'm sure you're going to make it." Luckily, he was right.

I still had to clear some significant hurdles. Unable to get permission to travel to Oxford through Israel, I crossed the Sinai desert by car to fly out from Cairo. The Islamic terrorist activity in the region means there are many military checkpoints, and travel at night is impossible, so my journey to Somerville took 4 days. Finally arriving here felt like a miracle.

Without financial assistance from the Margaret Thatcher Scholarship Trust, and the generosity of the Qatar Fund for Development who funded my scholarship, there is absolutely no way at all I could have studied here. Becoming a Thatcher Scholar also meant becoming a Somervillian. I was inspired to discover the College's pioneering history, including the UK's first female Prime Minister, and an international, welcoming and inclusive community that embraced me.

My research in Oxford for my Masters focused on obesity. It's a huge issue in modern healthcare – 28.7% of adults in the UK suffer from the condition and this number is set to increase over the next decade. You wouldn't think that immunologists could help with obesity, but our understanding of the illness has come on leaps and bounds – it's not simply nutrient overload, and immuno-endocrinology is one of the latest approaches.

Somerville and the MTST continue to help me find my next steps in medicine. I'm currently on an internship in Oxford at the Department for Physiology, Anatomy and Genetics, and I'm planning to specialise in Oncology, a field which is increasingly calling for immunology expertise. Training as an oncologist will allow me to make more of a difference back in Gaza as well. We have a real shortage of oncologists there; people with cancer are often forced to go to hospitals in Israel, the West Bank, or abroad for treatment.

But for now, as long as I am connecting with people in my work, I know that I'll be on the right track.



Raymond Thelwell

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