

*Raymond Thelmer*

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SCHOLARSHIP TRUST  
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2020 BULLETIN





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Somerville's then-Principal Dame Fiona Caldicott converses with Baroness Thatcher during her visit to the college in 2005 to unveil her new portrait. Dame Fiona passed away in February.

## Picture credits

John Cairns: Pages 3, 10, 11 (top left and bottom right of collage, profile photos), 12, 13

Claire Cockcroft: Pages 9 and 11 (bottom left and top right of collage)

Jack Evans: Pages 5, 6, 7, 16

UK Houses of Parliament: Page 8 (portrait of Lord Sherbourne)

Neil DeMaster: Page 15 (parrot)


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# “RISING TO THE CHALLENGE”

## THE PRINCIPAL’S FOREWORD

When I wrote my introduction to last year’s Bulletin, little did I know that the first lockdown of this pandemic in the UK was fast approaching. No one could have envisaged the difficulties that this last year has wrought on everyone’s lives, and the challenges that we would all face. Here at Somerville, we have tried to face those challenges with characteristic Somervillian pragmatism, creativity, and flexibility, not to mention a deep concern for our students and the impact of the disruption on their education.

As with all educational institutions, we were forced to pivot at short notice to remote teaching and learning for the summer term. We worked hard in the holidays to ensure that a safe return to College would be possible, and the work paid off with no significant outbreaks during the term. We were also delighted to be able to welcome all offer-holders into the first year, save eleven who will join us instead in October 2021.

Sadly, our return to Somerville was short-lived, and the latest national lockdown ushered in a return to remote teaching and learning. In the summer, we had up to 100 students still resident in College who were unable to return home, or for whom home was not a safe or appropriate place to continue their studies.

Somervillians have not just endured these challenges with resilience; they have also made a difference. Throughout the last year, I have been enormously proud of the work of Somervillians in the fight against Covid-19. Notable among them are Professor Dame Angela McLean, who, as Chief Scientific Adviser to the Ministry of Defence, participated in many of the initial media briefings by the government; and Dr June Raine CBE, Chief Executive of the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Authority, whose approval of the vaccines after rigorous examination of the trial data has saved lives and brought hope to all.

Thatcher Scholars and alumni have also been working hard on the frontline. Will Sargent, who graduated in Clinical Medicine in 2019, has had a baptism by fire working in hospitals in London in infectious diseases wards, respiratory high dependency units, A&E and now Intensive Care in Hammersmith. Malak Alshaikhali, Oxford Qatar Thatcher Scholar in 2018–19, has also been on the frontline in London hospitals, from patient encounter in A&E, to caring for Covid patients and assigning them to ongoing national clinical trials, as well as being a member of the resuscitation team responding to cardiac arrest calls. Unable to take up a prestigious internship in conservation owing to the travel restrictions, Anna Gee joined the Covid testing team, putting to use the transferable skills she developed throughout her Biology degree. As she said herself, she is “grateful for the opportunity to use these skills for the public good at a time when testing is so desperately needed.”

In College, Martin Fellermeier helped train his fellow Somerville students in how to conduct rapid Covid tests with a lateral flow device as part of the essential testing programme to allow students to return home for Christmas safely. Meanwhile, Ashrakat Elshehawy was elected President of the Middle Common Room (the community of graduate students in Somerville) and has inaugurated a new academically engaging and thought-provoking series of talks and research presentations, ensuring that intellectual life continues to flourish in spite of our scattered geographies.

Despite the challenges of the last year, our Thatcher scholars and alumni have produced a flurry of distinctions, as you will see in the section below. Our scholars and alumni continue to show their commitment to hard work and excellence, and I am enormously proud of their achievements.

We are hopeful that the vaccine rollout is bringing an end to the cycle of lockdowns and a return to a time when we can interact more closely. Whatever the future brings, I know that our students and scholars will continue to find new and ever more creative ways to continue along their paths regardless, never compromising their hopes, standards, or potential.

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

## SCHOLAR & ALUMNI HIGHLIGHTS

- **Althea Sovani (2018, BA Classics and Oriental Studies, Qatar Thatcher Scholar)** won the 2020 Chancellor's Latin Prose Prize for her translation of an extract from Goethe's *Italienische Reise*.
- **Zineb Mimouni (2019, MSc Water Science, Policy and Management)** and **Mathew Madain (2019, MSc Modern Middle Eastern Studies)**, both **Oxford Qatar Thatcher Scholars**, were awarded distinctions on the completion of their degrees.
- **Luca Webb (2019, BA History, Michael Bishop Foundation Thatcher Scholar)** helped to support efforts to expand access to Oxford as President of Schools Plus Oxford, a tutoring programme which places Oxford students as tutors for disadvantaged state school pupils.
- **Ben Etty (2016, BA History and Economics, Michael Bishop Foundation Thatcher Scholar)** graduated from the London School of Economics with a distinction in Finance.
- **Isobel Hettrick (2015, BA PPE, Michael Bishop Foundation Thatcher Scholar)** passed her Level 6 Financial Services Professional Development Programme with a distinction.
- **Kate House (2016, BA English, Qatar Thatcher Scholar)** was awarded a distinction for her Graduate Diploma in Law. She will now begin a training contract with Allen & Overy.
- **Sean Butler (2017, BCL Law, Oxford Margaret Thatcher Scholar)** has completed his Bar Professional Training course at City University, supported by a Wilfred Watson Scholarship awarded by Gray's Inn, with a grade of 'outstanding'.
- **Chuiqiao Lin (2018, MPhys 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 E&P Software in Oxford.



# THE NEW 2020-21 THATCHER SCHOLARS



**Emer Shell**  
**MBiochem Molecular and Cellular Biochemistry**  
**Sir John Vickers Thatcher Scholar**

My name is Emer and I'm a second year Biochemistry student at Somerville. I grew up in a small town in East Lancashire and I've always been fascinated with learning about the world around me through science. As I progressed to A levels, I began to foster a particular interest in Biochemistry and I am delighted to be able to pursue this interest here, at university. I am particularly interested in genetics and how it can be used to study and treat disease.

In my spare time, I enjoy running and playing for the college netball team, as a joint captain. My other hobbies include Irish dancing, which I have practised for more than ten years, and baking. I am also a part of the Entz team of Somerville's JCR, which is responsible for organising social events for the college.

I am honoured to be in receipt of this scholarship and I am both excited and grateful for the opportunities that the scholarship will offer me in furthering not only my academic development but also my contribution to university access and outreach work.



**Althea Sovani**  
**BA Classics and Oriental Studies**  
**Qatar Thatcher Scholar**

Classics is my life - both my academic discipline and my greatest hobby. I love the Greek and Latin languages, particularly studying their structure and understanding the grammatical code into which the ancients thought and wrote.

I come from a small city on the periphery of Milan. In Milan, I attended a state school, where I first learned to translate from Greek and Latin. But it was at Oxford that I first learned to use them. Writing and speaking in Greek and Latin changed my perspective on Classics completely.

This year, I have started learning Sanskrit, which constitutes the Oriental side of my joint degree and which I have been waiting to study for years, hoping to broaden both my cultural and, especially, philological perspectives. My studies focus on Indo-European Philology, and Greek and Latin Historical Linguistics. Besides Comparative Philology, I am interested more broadly in the relationship between thought and language, and in Platonic philosophy. I particularly love the writings of Marcus Aurelius and Benedetto Croce, the latter of whom is a role model for me along with Anna Morpurgo Davies, the eminent philologist and former Fellow of Somerville.

Outside of my studies, I am also secretary for the Oxford Latinitas Project, which uses a teaching method based on spoken Greek and Latin to broaden access to Classics. I love reading Samuel Taylor Coleridge, and I write my own prose and poetry too. I also like to listen to jazz, especially Dave Brubeck and John Coltrane.

I'm proud and honoured to be a Somervillian and a Thatcher Scholar - thank you for choosing me!



**Luca Webb**  
**BA History**  
**Michael Bishop Foundation Thatcher Scholar**

I grew up in South Buckinghamshire and attended my local grammar school. I first came to Somerville as a teenager with my school and had no prior knowledge of higher education, let alone Oxford, as I'm the first generation of my family to attend university. Participating in a taster session for History with one of the Somerville tutors when I visited only confirmed that this was the subject I wanted to pursue further. History requires nuance, attention to detail and great imagination, and so is endlessly challenging and fascinating to me.

Being at Oxford has made me realise how privileged I have been to receive the educational opportunities that I have, and so I want to work to ensure young people have an equal chance to succeed. I've tried to begin this work already, becoming President of Schools Plus Oxford, a tutoring programme placing Oxford students as tutors for disadvantaged state school pupils. I will always be incredibly grateful to Lord Glendonbrook for funding my scholarship and am committed to using my talents to engage with society to support and improve the lives of others.

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**Hazim Azghari**  
**DPhil History of Science, Medicine and Technology**  
**Oxford Qatar Thatcher Scholar**

Born and bred in Northwest Africa, I spent a lot of time around the Mediterranean while growing up. Over time, my bookish interests and love for the landscape have converged to focus on the historical relationship between humans and nature. An environmentalist by training, I have worked in environmental NGOs for a few years and also taught environmental subjects at an undergraduate level, both with a focus on climate change adaptation, plastic pollution, and the history of environmentalism.

My DPhil research will pertain to the early centuries of Islam in the Mediterranean, particularly how technology and natural philosophy were influenced and informed by different worldviews. I hold a bachelor's degree in Communication and a master's in Environmental Change and Management. I hope the DPhil in History of Science, Medicine and Technology will be a stepping stone on the path to becoming an interdisciplinary researcher.

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**Victoria Brown**  
**MSt Modern History**  
**Oxford Thatcher Scholar**

I am very excited to study at Oxford over the coming year and for the opportunities offered by the Thatcher Scholarship programme. I grew up in a small village in Wiltshire. I was fortunate to be surrounded by a supportive family and a great network of teachers that encouraged me to think independently and have confidence in my own ideas, even when this wasn't always easy to do. I feel very grateful for the opportunity I have now to study for a Masters in Modern British History at Somerville, a subject area that I

genuinely believe to be both fascinating and vitally important to modern society. I am particularly interested in groups and events that have been traditionally marginalised in historical accounts. My work focuses on the development of political thought throughout the twentieth century and on historicising gender, BAME and LGBT+ communities, and the modern-day socio-political implications of their omission in conventional narratives. I consider history to be a powerful vehicle for change and a subject that we are increasingly seeing the value of in light of current issues.



**Osamah Sufyan**  
**MSt Mathematical & Theoretical Physics**  
**Oxford Qatar Thatcher Scholar**

I was born and grew up in a small village in southern Yemen. My village secondary school barely offered science courses due to a shortage of teachers and the unrest in the country, which began in 2012. Nevertheless, my love for mathematics and natural sciences was great and I taught myself the basics of physics and mathematics by candlelight (as my village suffered from electricity cuts).

After scoring highly in a national academic merit competition, I was awarded a scholarship to study Physics in Germany. I studied my bachelors degree at the Technische Universität Berlin with a focus on mathematics and theoretical physics, and worked as a teaching assistant for maths and as a student research assistant to Prof. Holger Stark on a project on soft matter theory. I am specialising in my Master's study here at Oxford in mathematical physics and quantum field theory. I am also the course student representative of my cohort. In my free time, I enjoy listening to Yiddish and Hebrew music and reading Hebrew literature.



**Joshua Booth**  
**DPhil Linguistics, Philology and Phonetics**  
**Oxford Thatcher Scholar**

I am a linguist with a particular interest in Phonology and Historical Linguistics. After graduating from Oxford in 2014 with a BA in German and Linguistics, I completed a PGCE and spent time in teaching. I returned to academia and Oxford in 2018 for an MPhil in General Linguistics and Comparative Philology. My thesis focused on the impact of Romance loan words on the Middle High German stress system, reflecting my interest in Germanic languages and Metrical Phonology. This year, I began my DPhil in Linguistics, Philology and

Phonetics at Somerville College. I am hoping to build on my earlier research and provide a diachronic account of the changes to the word prosodic system of German between the mediaeval and modern periods.

Outside of my studies, I can often be found in wellingtons, tramping through fields and over hills with my Scottish terrier, Bertie. I am also a keen skier and, closer to home, I enjoy board games, knitting and music (in addition to my unsurprising love of reading).



**Lucca Ricci**  
**DPhil Ancient History**  
**Oxford Thatcher Scholar**

Born and raised in Italy, educated in Australia and the Netherlands, and recently arrived in Oxford, I have always been a keen observer of multiculturalism and the ways in which people react to the exposure to different cultures. I investigate the relationship between culture, objects, cultural identity and cultural exchange in the ancient world. Being exposed from a young age to the Roman past, part and parcel of my Italian heritage, I have always been aware of the longstanding connection between past and present; us and "them".

Thus, it only makes sense to study the past as a way to acquire a better grasp of contemporary issues. After all, themes of multiculturalism, cultural exchange and identity formation are not the reserve of modernity. They interest us as much as those who came before us; perhaps, once again, they could teach us something new. In addition to my passion for the ancient world, I usually spend my free time listening to Baroque Opera, reading, visiting museums and, if the weather allows it, roaming the Italian countryside looking for unexplored archaeological sites.





## JESSICA MANNIX TRUST DIRECTOR

In what has been universally acknowledged as one of the most challenging years in living memory, the Thatcher Scholarship Programme has continued to move forward. We now have a record number of Thatcher Scholars with five undergraduate and 13 graduate scholars, as well as our 10 scholar alumni.

One of the great disappointments of the year stemmed from the way that so many of the students awarded Thatcher Development Awards were unable to undertake their projects, owing to the restrictions on travel. Of the nine approved applications, two projects were cancelled outright; four submitted revised proposals; two anticipated going ahead when travel restrictions allowed; and one applicant was still in limbo as to whether their project would be able to go ahead. I very much hope that, with a successful vaccination plan and restrictions being lifted, we will see a bumper year for applications in 2021.

Amid the downturn of world economies at the outset of the pandemic, the MTST funds fell by 15% from their total at the end of the 2019 financial year. However, at the end of the 2020 financial year just three months later, 72% of that loss had been recovered. Total funds carried forward into 2021 were £9,884,000, with £9,058,000 in the endowment.

While the endowment is just under 5% down on the high of 2019, the management of the income drawn over the previous years has meant that our commitments to the scholars have been unaffected. It has also allowed us to award an extra undergraduate Thatcher Scholarship this year.

After six years of service, Sir John Vickers, one of our founding trustees, has stepped down from the Board. Sir John's advice, insight, and perspicacity have been invaluable to the development of both the Trust and the Thatcher Scholarship Programme. In his honour, Emer Shell was awarded the Sir John Vickers Thatcher Scholarship.

I am delighted that Lord Sherbourne of Didsbury will be joining the Board of Trustees in Sir John's place. Stephen Sherbourne was Margaret Thatcher's Political Secretary from 1983 to 1988, during which time he headed the Political Office in No 10. He was knighted in 2006 and elevated to the House of Lords in 2013. Since 2014, he has acted as a volunteer and supporter of the MTST and been very helpful in advising and securing support for scholarships. We look forward to continuing to work with him.

Our ambition has always been to have 20 Thatcher Scholars studying at Somerville at any one time who are supported by the endowment. Fourteen of our current scholars are funded in this way, along with the Somerville Development Programme and the Thatcher Development Awards. The remaining four scholars are funded annually by donors.



*Lord Sherbourne*

To reach our target, we continue to seek support in the UK and around the world. It is only through the generosity and support of our donors, patrons and volunteers that we have been able to award transformational scholarships to our eighteen Thatcher Scholars and ten Thatcher Scholar alumni who, as you will read on **page 11** of this Bulletin, are already making their mark in the world.



# THE DIRECTORS



## DR CLAIRE COCKCROFT PROGRAMME DIRECTOR

As we approach one year since lockdowns became a way of life and the pandemic propelled us into a new era of online teaching, it is timely to reflect on the positive ways that the Development Programme has evolved to address the challenges. Now in its fifth year, it has expanded in scale and scope, becoming a focal point to keep our geographically-dispersed community connected while Covid prevails.

Following a rapid rethink over Easter 2020, we moved online to deliver our range of academic workshops, wellbeing support, transferable skills training, career advice, mentoring and motivational chats. With two events being broadcast most weeks, not to mention a high demand for one-to-one career advice sessions with me, Trinity Term was busier than ever. Events often benefitted from virtual visits from Somerville alumni and our Thatcher Scholars gained experience hosting panel discussions on international development and science careers. Enterprise seminars with inspirational innovators were also introduced to nurture entrepreneurial thinking and support students in University enterprise competitions.

After such a substantial disruption to their schooling, successfully switching to the expectations of University education was potentially a big step for our freshers. Test drive a Tutorial” sessions were set up before term got underway to help this transition. Thatcher Scholars volunteered to do mock tutorials online with postgraduates acting as tutors, allowing freshers to see how tutorials work in practice and how to prepare that all important first essay. The Development programme has also been supporting students whose places had to be deferred until 2021.

With our eighteen Thatcher Scholars scattered across the UK, overseas or in isolated bubbles in college, supporting them during the pandemic was ever more important. Launched in April, “First Friday” monthly meet-ups provided an online forum for presenting research and kept morale up in lockdown. Although catalysed by Covid, our new online scholars’ forum will remain a fixture for the future.



*Online seminars in action*

The Programme continues to build bridges across our community. We benefitted this year from an increasing input by our Junior Research Fellows, who shared tips on publishing and postgraduate applications and reflections on their route into academia. Together we are planning internships on topics like transboundary water policies in the Middle East and machine learning, to provide insights into academic career paths.

Furthermore, the Programme has also introduced opportunities for students to hone their presentation skills and engage society in dialogue about global challenges. Students presented at The Oxford Science & Ideas Festival on topics ranging from music psychology to global food security. A virtual ‘Explorazone’ – highlighting plastic pollution, biomedical discoveries and fun kitchen chemistry experiments to do at home – was created by students including new scholar Emer Shell and previous Development Award-recipient Jess Crompton.

The Development Programme has come into its own during the pandemic. Despite the new reality of digital working, we can be optimistic that our unique programme of support, made possible through your generosity, will keep Somervillians connected, motivated and moving towards their goals to fulfil their potential.

# EMPOWERING YOUNG ENTREPRENEURS



*Keen to cultivate an entrepreneurial mindset in our students, we introduced a new seminar series – Venture Builders – to the Development Programme. One Scholar is developing a new business idea that could save the NHS £1 billion. Dr Claire Cockcroft reports.*

When the pandemic closed labs across Oxford in March 2020, research students found their work put on hold. Not to be deterred, Kharthik Chakravarthy (DPhil Engineering, Oxford Qatar Thatcher Scholar 2017) used the time to turn his energy towards entrepreneurship.



*Kharthik is steering a course to success thanks to Venture Builders*

After tackling Stanford University's 11-week 'Introduction to Machine Learning' in a mere six weeks, he signed up for the 'Venture Builder' course. This new series of seminars and enterprise training facilitates the first steps towards entrepreneurship with the support of biomedical entrepreneur and Engineering tutor Dr Erfan Soliman.

"There are so many aspiring entrepreneurs who have the readiness to start the next world-changing business, they just don't have an idea or a team yet," Dr Soliman suggests. "We're creating an environment that facilitates team formation and we teach a methodology, focused on need-led innovation, for finding high-impact business ideas."

The significance of effective resource management for patient care and hospital budgets became apparent during the pandemic, when the NHS came within days of running out of vital items of PPE. Kharthik spotted a 'need' and realised that he could put his machine learning know-how to use and create a new platform to revolutionise healthcare inventory management, potentially saving millions of pounds.

"There is mismatch between supply and demand when it comes to many healthcare services," Kharthik explains. "We interviewed several key stakeholders from pharmacists to doctors, GP managers and inventory technology founders. What we heard from them suggested that the NHS could make a 10-20% saving if they were more organised with their procurement and inventory."

"Zylem is the world's first AI-powered predictive tool that analyses historical inventory usage, together with data points like demographics, seasonal demands and need history, to enhance forecasting of healthcare inventory needs and make smarter ordering decisions. By optimising inventory levels, we can avoid shortages or oversupply, minimising costly waste and reducing the likelihood of delayed or cancelled procedures."

The next stage is to develop a working prototype of the platform with industry partners and Oxford University Hospital Trust to unlock funding opportunities. They believe that Zylem could save the NHS £1 billion every year, as well as improving care and patient outcomes through more informed inventory decisions.

Oxford has always been a crucible of creative thinking and good ideas. Through courses like 'Venture Builders' and a need-led approach to innovation, we hope that more students will be inspired to develop their ideas and bring impact to the world.





# CELEBRATING FIVE YEARS OF THE THATCHER SCHOLARSHIPS

What is the purpose of scholarship? Five years ago, we sought to answer that question not with words, but with actions, when we appointed the first generation of Thatcher Scholars.

Our hope was that, with your support and our guidance, we could empower these brilliant young students to be the change-makers of the future – the individuals who would go into tomorrow's board rooms and classrooms, its hospitals and NGOs, its courts and corridors of power, to shape the world for the better. Today, five years later, that vision is taking shape, with the alumni of the Thatcher Scholarship Programme making substantial forays in the worlds of finance, law, medicine and environmental science.



*Ben Etty and Isobel Hettrick*

Scholars **Ben Etty (2016, BA History and Economics)** and **Isobel Hettrick (2015, BA PPE)**, for example, are making exceptional progress within the financial sector. Ben, who was a Michael Bishop Foundation Thatcher Scholar, has leveraged a Masters in Finance from the LSE to become an Associate at Strategy&, the global strategy consultancy arm of PwC. The projects on which Ben is now working address the toughest problems businesses face, requiring Ben to facilitate complicated, risky change with speed, certainty, and impact.

His fellow Michael Bishop Foundation Thatcher Scholar, Isobel, meanwhile is currently on external secondment in the Equity Research department of investment bank Keefe, Bruyette and Woods. On completing her



secondment, she will return to the Financial Conduct Authority where, having already completed the Graduate Training Scheme and passed the Level 6 Financial Services Professional Development Programme with a distinction, she hopes to sit Level 2 of the Chartered Financial Analyst programme.

In the legal arena, it is our scholars **Sean Butler (2017, BCL Law)** and **Kate House (2016, BA English)** who are making waves. Kate, who was a Qatar Thatcher Scholar from 2017-19, took

up Law after finishing her studies in Oxford. And yet, in spite of her recent introduction to the profession, Kate has already completed her Graduate Diploma in Law with distinction and will start the Legal Practice Course in June before joining her firm in October when the virus restrictions will, we hope, have been lifted.



*Kate House and Sean Butler*



*Sean Butler worked as a judicial assistant to the Master of the Rolls at the Court of Appeal, pictured*

Graduating in 2018, Sean Butler is a little further along the legal road and – Sean being Sean – has already garnered several prestigious accolades to prove it. On leaving Somerville with his BCL, Sean undertook a summer fellowship at the Bingham Centre for the Rule of Law, where he co-authored an analysis of the EU Withdrawal Agreement which has since been used as a basis for questions to the Government. Sean then spent a year as judicial assistant to the Master of the Rolls in the Court of Appeal, where he worked on high-profile cases such as Campaign Against Arms Trade v Secretary of State for International Trade. Finally, in the past year, Sean has taught contract law at UCL while doing his Bar Professional Training Course under a Wilfred Watson Scholarship and starting his pupillage at Blackstone Chambers.

Despite inhabiting very different worlds, our Thatcher alumni medics are no less impressive. On leaving Somerville in 2019, graduate-entry medic **Will Sargent (2015, Bm BCh Medicine)** began his rotation working on the Infectious Diseases ward at Ealing Hospital. When the initial wave of the pandemic struck, however, he voluntarily transferred to Ealing's respiratory High Dependency Unit, followed by rotations in A&E at St Mary's Hospital, Paddington and the ITU at Hammersmith. During this period, Will also found time to write a paper exploring whether chest X-ray severity correlates with clinical deterioration in Covid-19 patients, with the paper seeing publication in the January 2021 issue of Clinical Medicine.

Like Will, **Malak Alshaikhali (2018, MSc Integrated Immunology)** graduated from Somerville in 2019 – and yet she came to Somerville via a very different road. Malak first qualified as a doctor in 2016, and practised medicine in her home city of Gaza for two years before taking the perilous, four-day journey across the Sinai Desert and on to Oxford to complete her Master's in Integrated Immunology. Since graduating, Malak has qualified to practice in the UK and worked on the frontline of the pandemic in London as an NHS junior doctor. She is now working for East Cheshire NHS Trust, putting the skills and experience gained in London to use during the virus' winter peak.



*Will Sargent and Malak Alshaikhali*



Finally, the MTST's commitment to shaping a better world is nowhere better reflected than in the work of our Environmental Scientists. Oxford Qatar Thatcher scholar **Zineb Mimouni (2019, MSc Water Science, Policy and Management)** was the first member of her family to graduate from High School and University, and in 2020 she consolidated these firsts by gaining a Master's in Water Science, Policy and Management from Somerville. Since graduating, Zineb has started a new role with publisher Global Water Intelligence as a research graduate, and secured a Development Award to undertake a project in the labs at Oxford University's School of Geography and the Environment, which she will carry out once coronavirus restrictions allow.

Then there is **Anna Gee (2017, BA Biology)**.

Anna is a star biologist who achieved first-class honours in all three years of her degree. Thanks to the support of her Thatcher Scholarship, Anna was also able to complement her academic work with volunteering commitments in organisations promoting sustainability and the environment, such as the NGO Echo Bonaire, which is currently working to save Bonaire's endemic subspecies of the Yellow-Shouldered Amazon Parrot from extinction. Since graduating, Anna has built on those experiences in order to pursue her interest in plant science as a means of reversing biodiversity decline, most recently securing an internship at a marine conservation charity in Indonesia, which she hopes to take up as soon as Covid restrictions loosen sufficiently.



*Zineb Mimouni and Anna Gee*

Thus it seems that, while the future remains unwritten, it is nonetheless in safe hands thanks to these scholars and the potential which your support has unlocked within them. The next five years will bring more brilliant scholars and an impact both more profound and far-reaching; in time, the legacy of these students' scholarship and vision will be clear for all to see.



*Anna Gee volunteered with NGO Echo Bonaire to help conserve Bonaire's endangered Yellow-Shouldered Amazon Parrots, pictured*

# THE THATCHER DEVELOPMENT AWARDS

*Pictured: Finlay Dove plays trumpet with a choir in Kisii County, Kenya. Finlay's ethnomusicology and education volunteering project was supported by a Thatcher Development Award.*

**The Thatcher Development Awards offer up to £2,000 to enable students to pursue a project that advances their academic research skills or which facilitates personal growth while having a positive impact on others.**

The pandemic had a significant impact on the plans of the awardees, forcing some projects to be put on hold. Many were able to adopt a flexible mindset, however, and re-cast their plans to work around the challenging conditions.



Those projects that were able to go ahead include a collaborative music project in Kenya, human rights law research in Oxford, and gaining new skills in teaching English as a foreign language in Poland – but the most remarkable of this year's Development Awards was Devaang Savla's (2020, BCL Law) project to create a new classroom for Legal Aid Social Development Educational Society (LASDES), a legal education NGO he helped to establish in the state of Uttar Pradesh, India.

LASDES supports extremely disadvantaged law students by providing classroom teaching focusing on the entrance exams, offering financial support to university students and graduates and by supporting the professional development of graduate lawyers from a background of poverty. They also sponsor litigation and provide free legal advice for people living below the poverty line.

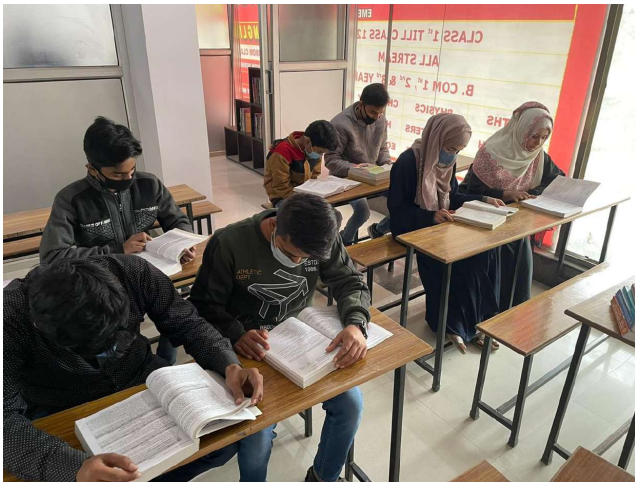
While the group had plenty of willing volunteer educators and many interested students, they lacked a physical space beyond a donated porch. Their classroom programme was dependent on the facilities of commercial coaching establishments, offered in exchange for free teaching from Society Members.

Devaang's Development Award of £1,650, the largest granted this year, equipped him with the necessary funds to transform the dilapidated porch into a dedicated classroom. Chairs, tables, lights, a backup power generator, a fridge and air conditioning now ensure a comfortable and practical environment for studying, while computers with access to the internet allow the NGO to support online learning and exam practice, as well as giving volunteer tutors the ability to offer remote teaching.



*Devaang in Allahabad with LASDES' new computers*





*LASDES students enjoying their new classroom*

The new classroom will benefit hundreds of students, and development of a virtual learning platform has begun to extend the benefits of the facility even further.

The project allowed Devaang to develop his leadership skills and learn first-hand how to develop a Non-Profit Organisation for public good, which will inform his future work in the charitable sector. He and LASDES hope that the self-sustaining model of providing free education that they have piloted in Allahabad will continue to develop and expand.

## RECIPIENTS OF THE 2020 THATCHER DEVELOPMENT AWARDS

- **Zach Brubert (2016, Bm BCh Medicine)** received £800 to create a documentary exploring the mental health of university students.
- **Gauri Chandra (2019, DPhil Public Policy)** was offered £1,000 towards the costs of an internship at the World Bank. The scheme was unfortunately cancelled due to the pandemic.
- **Finlay Dove (2018, BA Music)** was awarded £350 towards the cost of travel to Kisii County, Kenya, to conduct ethnography research exploring the intersection between ancestral tradition and globalised modernity in the music of the Abagusii tribe, and volunteer with Education Partnerships Africa.
- **Charlotte Finegold (2019, MSc Refugee & Forced Migration Studies)** was offered £1,500 towards an internship in Uganda with the charity Justice Defenders. After the pandemic hit, rendering travel impossible, she redesigned her project, instead working alongside noted human rights law academic Professor Catherine Briddick in Oxford.
- **Aivin Gast (2018, BA Classical Archaeology and Ancient History)** received £1,200 towards the costs of volunteering in Peru. His project has sadly been cancelled due to the pandemic.
- **Aaron Henry (2015, Bm BCh Medicine)** was awarded £2,000 to support a cardiology research project in the UK and Canada, although this has been postponed due to the pandemic.
- **Lucas Jones (2019, BA European and Middle Eastern Languages)** received £500 towards the costs of gaining a TEFL qualification and experience of teaching English as a volunteer in Poland.
- **Zineb Mimouni (2019, MSc Water Policy and Management)** was offered £700 towards a lab project to test out a novel method she has devised for purifying arsenic-contaminated drinking water in Bangladesh. This will take place this summer in Oxford's School of Geography and the Environment.
- **Oliver Quinn (2017, BA English)** was awarded £750 for a volunteering project with refugees in Calais, which has unfortunately been cancelled due to international travel restrictions.
- **Devaang Savla (2020, BCL Law)** received £1,650 towards equipment and physical infrastructure for his legal education NGO (see above).



*Emer Shell (2019, MBiochem Molecular and Cellular Biochemistry, Sir John Vickers Thatcher Scholar) and Luca Webb (2019, BA History, Michael Bishop Foundation Thatcher Scholar) in Somerville's Darbshire Quadrangle*

“Margaret Thatcher always recognised that education was one of the great spurs for both personal and career development, which is why she retained such a strong affection for her college, Somerville.”

*Lord Sherbourne of Didsbury, Trustee*

*Margaret Thatcher*

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