

WOMEN INSPIRE





Women Inspire: An Introduction to the Exhibition

The Principal, Keith Gull, realised that in the autumn of 2015, St Edmund Hall's 3000th woman student would matriculate at the Hall. He decided that this should be celebrated with a series of events, reflections and initiatives: 3000 Women at the Hall.

One of the events planned as part of the celebrations was the commissioning and display of portraits of 20 women to be exhibited in the Wolfson Hall. Alumni, Fellows and present students (both JCR and MCR) were consulted and asked to nominate women, associated with the Hall, who they felt were inspirational in a wide variety of contexts. A strong sense emerged from the consultations, that students, especially, did not simply want twenty academic high fliers; they wanted some of the nominees to be those who had contributed, either to the Hall, to society, or to some section of society in a notable way. In short, just inspirational women! No particular criteria were employed except that the final twenty need not be representative of disciplines, careers or positions held. Given that many of the nominees could have been chosen, the final exhibition of portraits should be seen as simply a collection of inspirational individuals.

I was asked to coordinate the activities necessary for the exhibition. Consultation came first! An agreement on aims, ethos, style and aesthetics was essential... Sally Smith and Kate Townsend (both from the Development and Alumni Relations Office), myself, and the photographer, John Cairns, made up the team. At this point I want to acknowledge the contribution made by John – we knew he was an excellent photographer – he had worked for the Hall previously, but we could not have predicted with what enthusiasm he would embark on our project nor how generously he would use his expertise to advise us on many different fronts. We quickly decided that we wanted the exhibition to be modern, lively and informal. The portraits were to reflect the variety of our twenty women and to have no set format; they did not have to be 'head and shoulders', photographed inside or outside, serious or smiling... we hoped that our exhibition would truly reflect the variety of the women we were asking to take part.

I contacted the twenty nominees, explained the how and the why and what would be needed and asked them to take part. No one refused.

John asked that all the nominees he was to photograph be given five questions to answer before he met up with them, to give him some insight into them as individuals and to inform the pictures he was to take:

- Your favourite memory of Oxford?
- Your favourite place in Oxford?
- Your favourite quotation?
- When do you feel most alive?
- What five adjectives would you use to describe yourself?

As one would expect, the answers were witty, often unexpected but always insightful. Armed with this information, John set out to take the pictures in a place of each nominee's choosing. One example which displays the psychology clearly is that of Samira Ahmed; her chosen quotation was 'Mog sat in a dark room and thought dark thoughts.' And the result is the lovely, dark, moody and brooding picture of Samira. John's skill in producing a range of highly individual portraits is evident, but in addition many of his sitters emailed me, post session, to say how much they had enjoyed an experience they had originally viewed with a degree of trepidation.

I decided that we needed a brochure to accompany the exhibition, to reflect the ethos that had underpinned the photographs. Accordingly I contacted everyone to ask for this information. The following criteria were used:

- When they came to the Hall
- Why they came
- 500 words max.
- A favourite memory of the Hall – suggested by the students involved in the consultation

The first three were compulsory, the last optional. I stressed the fact that we had no format in mind, that what they wrote and chose to include was entirely a matter of personal choice and that I expected the variety in the responses would be a true reflection of the variety in our inspirational women.

I was not disappointed... What we have collected together in our brochure is a set of highly individual accounts and photographs. Some accounts are short and concise, some much longer. Some are funny, some serious. Some are poignant and moving, some brought tears to my eyes. We now have a collection of information on twenty inspirational women associated, in one way or another, with Teddy Hall.

Thanks. My first thanks must go to the women who took part; it is no cliché to say that without them this exhibition would not have been possible! I have already mentioned John Cairns. But I need also to acknowledge the contribution made by Sally Smith, Kate Townsend and Philippa Machin from the Development and Alumni Office, who at all stages contributed their guidance and expertise but who were also understanding, insightful, encouraging and funny. In short, a joy to work with.

Dr Dianne Gull
Oxford 2016





Samira Ahmed

1986, English

Photographed by John Cairns at her home in West London

I was a shy girl with a long plait, just turned 18, when I started at the Hall. The memories that are strongest are of the rituals in my room: the essay writing, discovering Radio 4 when mid-80s pop music made me give up on Radio 1, the all-night diligence of my application form-filling for journalism traineeships as the end of my third year loomed, and the cheap retro 70s sophistication of my bedroom fondue-and-Angel Delight dinner parties.

It wasn't till years after I left that I began to appreciate what skills I'd learnt through all those tutorials and Anglo-Saxon textual analysis classes – the ability to pick out the right stuff and work out the meaning. Most of my friends came from the clubs and activities I did in the wider university, but the Hall was where I got the most inspiring teaching, and where I always felt at home.

When I left Teddy Hall in 1989 I felt all the fixed certainties of the Cold War world were collapsing. The Berlin Wall came down, then Margaret Thatcher resigned as I joined the BBC as a news trainee, and a colleague told me a civil war in Yugoslavia was imminent. Reporting on everything from IRA bombs to the OJ Simpson trials in Los Angeles to the rise of Tony Blair in Britain, I felt a great sense of excitement and privilege in being there with my notebook and my microphone. At Deutsche Welle, Channel 4 News and now again the BBC, the thrill of journalism's never failed for me. And through it all has been the realisation that an ability to read, observe and analyse, to trust my instincts, is something I learned here at College.

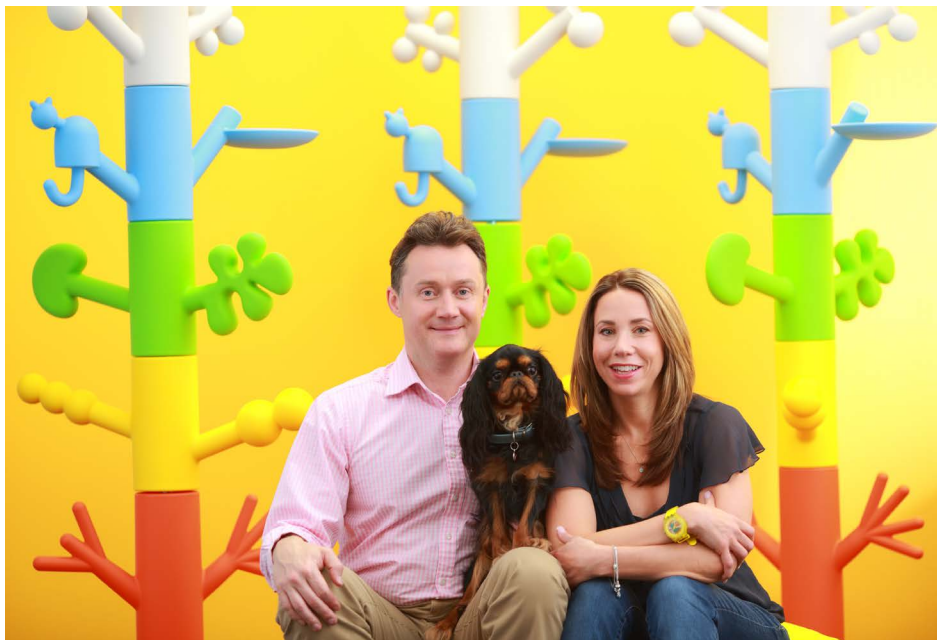


Pallavi Aiyar

1996, History

Photographed by Raiyani Muharramah in her garden at home in Jakarta

I read Modern History with senior status, so socially I was part of the MCR, rather than the JCR. My brother had been at the Hall a few years before me, which is why I had chosen to apply to the College. My two years there were my first away from “home” and yet I felt more at home at the Hall than I ever had before. It felt like finding my tribe. Since graduating I have lived around the world, working as a foreign correspondent out of China, Europe, and Indonesia. I am also the author of several books, both fiction and non-fiction. Even today, there is scarcely any anxiety that conjuring up the sensation of being punted along the Cherwell while nibbling on a strawberry won’t dispel.



Natasha Ashton

1993, Modern Languages

Photographed by Peter Olson with her husband and their dog Monty in Philadelphia

“Great love and great achievements involve great risk” - Dalai Lama

I took those words to heart, it seems, and they changed my life forever. I didn’t get to choose the Hall; the Hall chose me and in doing so transformed my life. I had all but given up hope of going to Oxford when a call came through informing me that there may still be a few places left at St Edmund Hall if I was willing to take the risk, and so began the journey of a thousand steps. Though I was ultimately awarded one of those coveted few places it came with a strong warning that the Hall was taking a gamble on me. I have spent every day since making sure that it paid off.

I suspect that my picture will stand out in that it includes Chris (1991, Geography), but the truth is that my experience of the Hall and how it shaped my life thereafter is inextricably linked with Chris, whom I met in the library and who has been my constant companion ever since. My best friend, partner and companion through countless trials and tribulations. We were fortunate enough to be married at the Hall, though we always chuckle at the fact that the first time both of us were in the Chapel at the same time was the day that we were married.

Today we live in Philadelphia over 3,000 miles away, with our 8 year old two legged son and our 2 four legged sons and run one of North America’s largest pet health insurance companies that we founded 12 years ago. None of this would have been possible were it not for the Hall taking that gamble all those years ago and for teaching us to take risks each and every day!



Sarah Asplin

1982, BCL

Photographed by John Cairns on a street near to her chambers in London

I came to the Hall after graduating from Fitzwilliam College, Cambridge - Teddy Hall's sister college. I immediately loved the intimacy of the Front Quad and the library at the Hall and was disappointed to discover that for the most part I had to work in the Law Bod instead.

There were three of us doing the BCL at Teddy Hall that year and we all did Conflict of Laws with Adrian Briggs, an experience not to be missed. He was certainly a force to be reckoned with.

I shall always remember my one and only May Day morning, which was unfortunately very wet. Practically hanging out of the window of the MCR trying to watch *Brideshead Revisited* on a Sunday evening with what seemed like every other member of the entire university and punting from the wrong end of the boat which I found particularly difficult!

Although three of the people I knew on the BCL course became academics, a group of us intended to become barristers and travelled up to London together in the evening to eat our dinners at Gray's Inn. We were all called to the Bar on the same night and three of us have become High Court Judges. Two of us are in the Chancery Division and were respectively the third and fourth women ever to be appointed to that office.

I look back on my short time at the Hall fondly and I am certain that the BCL made all the difference in my career.



Emma Brockes

1994, English

Photographed by Caroll Taveras in her home with her twins, New York

Almost 20 years after graduating, my best-friend-from-college came to visit me in New York, to celebrate our birthdays and meet her twin goddaughters for the first time. Our birthdays are two weeks apart and we had just turned 40. “How on earth did that happen?” she said.

Things I remember from Teddy Hall, in no particular order: the rubbery black floor of the bathroom in Whitehall. The fact that rowers got double portions for the same money at dinner. Sitting in the graveyard for a poetry class on a beautiful summer day. Getting amazingly drunk after first year exams and falling over while talking to someone in the Old Dining Hall. Walking home from the Cherwell offices at dawn after finishing the paper and worrying, already, about the threat of a libel suit. Listening to people bore on about how all the “real people” lived up the Cowley Road. Wondering if I should be more interested in indie bands. Waiting outside Lucy Newlyn’s room wondering whether my essay on Wordsworth was, despite its apparent flimsiness, secretly completely brilliant. Quoting Terry Eagleton in an essay and being told, by the late, great Ann Wordsworth, that “Terry hasn’t said anything sensible about Marxism for 20 years.” Wondering why Pot Noodle didn’t taste better. Getting out five pounds at a time from the cash machine. Conducting a whole argument in note form on the front of an enemy’s college room door. Wondering where it would all end. Not reading any criticism. Revising under a tree in University Parks. Really, really contemplating the flavours of ice cream in George and Davis’. Assuming the internet was a passing thing. Standing in line for the pay-phone. (Yes, I am that old). Wondering if I should be smoking roll-ups.

After graduating, I went to Edinburgh to work at the Scotsman as a feature writer and a few months later came down to London to take a job at the Guardian, where I still work. I have been in New York for eight years, written two books, had twin girls, bought an apartment and made very good friends, none of which has displaced the amount of space that memories of college take up on my hard drive. It occurred to me, some years ago, that if I was ever paralysed in a freak writing accident, my best-friend-from-college was the only person outside of my family who’d have the patience to feed me with a spoon. That’s the nickname by which my American friends know her – “Spoon-Feeder.” I got the best education of anywhere in the world at Teddy Hall, but more than that, I got my best people.



Maggie Carver

1982, Biochemistry

Photographed by John Cairns at Newbury Race Course, Berkshire

A week in the life of Maggie Carver might involve meeting Princess Anne at the races, lobbying the Lords on internet porn, worrying about journalist security in Syria, deciding how to support the Gurkha radio station in Nepal after the earthquake, and topping up our stocks of gel-filled urinals.

I began my working life as an investment banker. There I got a good grounding in finance before moving closer to the coal-face as adviser to the Chief Executive of MAI plc. The big opportunity for me there was to work on the start-up of Meridian Broadcasting. This early experience as a director on company boards eventually led to my portfolio career, which developed almost entirely because people I met on boards recommended me for others. Whilst this was evolving, I became Managing Director of a television production company which produced Channel Four Racing and an outside broadcasting company providing mobile studios for Sky Football, Formula 1, cricket, horse racing and music events. This was a tough job as the business needed turning around and coincided with my starting a family. A serious illness threw me off the corporate hamster-wheel but I was able to maintain and grow my non-executive career which has included wonderful experiences at Channel 5 Television, Sporting Index plc, British Waterways, the Eden Project and eleven other companies. Added to that, ten years ago, my husband and I bought our retail business which sells products for the elderly and disabled. My current non-executive director portfolio includes Chairman of the Racecourse Association, Vice-Chairman of the British Board of Film Classification, Director and Former Chairman of ITN, and Director of SSVC.

So what does Teddy Hall mean to me? A husband (who I met at a chapel choir breakfast party!), a daughter currently at the College, a group of life-long friends who I meet regularly, a music scholarship that sent me to the Paris Conservatoire, and a degree that gave me critical thinking and analysis skills which have been essential to my career. What does it all add up to? A happy life.



Melanie Cumberland

1995, Modern Languages

Photographed by John Cairns by the Millennium Bridge, London

Melanie was nominated by fellow Aularians for her impressive success as a young barrister, whilst also juggling motherhood and family life.

She forged her own path from modern languages into law and works in one of the most challenging areas of the bar. Ranked as a leading junior in the fields of administrative and public law, extradition and crime, Melanie acts in a variety of sensitive and complex cases, focusing on inquests, public inquiries, judicial review, extradition and immigration proceedings. Recent references include:

‘An absolutely first-rate public lawyer whose advocacy is very effective indeed’
– Chambers UK

“A terrific worker” – Legal 500 2014/2015 (Administrative and Public Law)

“A delightful advocate with an excellent reputation” – Chambers UK

“She has a really effective manner. She’s very relaxed, very conscientious and the judges trust her” – Chambers UK 2015 (Administrative and Public Law)

“A highly rated junior barrister who offers expertise and experience in terrorism-related cases amongst others...” – Chambers UK 2015 (Extradition)

Her friends also describe her as an inspiration for the Hall’s community as she has built a successful career, as well as continued to be an outstanding mother. Melanie juggles her work schedule to take every school vacation with her boys, and is there for them every day.

She retains her incredible sense of adventure, which she was known for during her time at the Hall including a month long camper trip single-handed with two kids. She also remains bilingual in Spanish and fluent in French.



Elisabeth Davies

1991, Philosophy, Politics and Economics

Photographed by John Cairns on an industrial estate in Wimbledon, London

Reflecting on the key themes in my working life after leaving Teddy Hall, there are two: improving access to healthcare services and improving access to justice. And despite any misgivings on the part of my parents when I first uttered the words “I want to study philosophy at Oxford”, I can honestly say that I do use and refer to many different parts of my PPE degree on a regular basis.

My career, combining professional and voluntary commitments, has centred on consumer engagement and a deep-seated belief in developing services that are truly consumer-focused. I’ve worked across the charitable and public sectors with a particular focus on the needs of health and social care users. I’m currently Deputy Chief Executive at Arthritis Care. Former roles include Carers UK, Age UK, the World Cancer Research Fund and as the founding Chief Executive of the UK Breast Cancer Coalition. In May 2015, I also became the Chair of the Patient and Carer Network at the Royal College of Physicians. This has given me the chance to work with over 60 patients and carers to ensure their voices are heard and their experiences shape the priorities and activities of one of the UK’s leading health bodies.

Alongside improving access to healthcare, I also try to improve access to justice. I’m currently the Chair and a founding member of the Legal Services Consumer Panel, a central feature of a new regulatory framework designed to transform the legal services market in England and Wales around user needs. This was a natural step for me as I’ve worked across the advice-giving sector where I was previously Director of Policy and Development at the Refugee Council and a former Trustee of the Immigration Advisory Service. I’m also a former Chair of Wandsworth Citizens Advice Bureaux.

If I could be greedy and choose one more career theme then it would be about supporting women. Throughout my working life I have benefited from the support and insight of inspirational women - women who have shown me that you can build a career around your values and that you can have lots of different facets to your working life. I am a deeply committed mentor, particularly supporting the Fabian Women’s Network mentoring scheme. I’m also a proud member of the International Women’s Forum.

‘Once an SEH Women’s Officer, always a Women’s Officer’. I think that probably sums me up. Back in 1993 it was about trying to get better lighting on Queen’s Lane, now it’s about getting more women into public life. The issues may have changed but I think I’ve stayed the same.



Olly Donnelly

1999. Geography

Photographed by John Cairns in her home in Richmond, Surrey

I had spent my “gap year” before university living in rural India and working at Familia Home for abused and abandoned children. During my time there I was exposed to many village communities and what I heard loud and clear was that these communities were living in poverty because they lacked access to finance and skills they could commercialise – little did I know these seeds of observations would be the start of Shivia 9 years later. I loved my course and my tutor at Teddy Hall; Geography gave me the opportunity to get back out to India to research and write a thesis on issues affecting the poor of West Bengal. I took the research to the next stage for my Masters thesis, another crucial step for gaining knowledge and valuable contacts for Shivia.

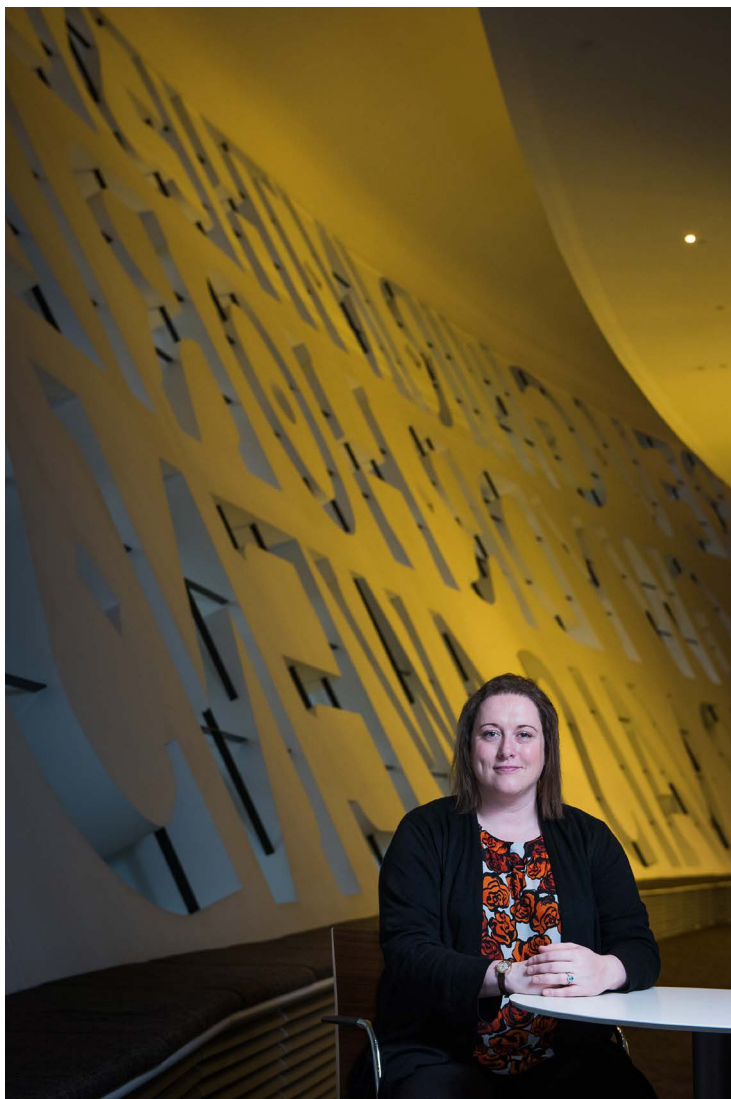
I look back at my time at Teddy Hall and know it gave me the confidence to “get out there” and achieve my burning desire to start Shivia and build an organisation that has since trained over 38,000 of the world’s poorest people in back yard poultry farming and enterprise development. That feeling of “home” when I walked through the Front Quad created the backdrop of inspiration and security that any entrepreneur or social entrepreneur needs to succeed. My Hall friends and contacts have been pillars of strength and support along the way.

About Olly

Prior to Shivia, Olly worked at Accenture Strategy in London and the World Bank in Washington DC. Whilst at World Bank she was awarded the World Bank Youth Innovation Fund.

Olly founded the charity Shivia in December 2007 and became its Chief Executive in 2010. Shivia empowers the poorest in India to create livelihoods, boost income and inspire permanent change. The charity and its founder have won several accolades and awards.

Olly has travelled extensively over the last 16 years both in India and Nepal and has much experience working with NGOs and charities. She sits on the board of the charity MAITS, the Teddy Hall Association Committee, and her school Alumnae Committee, St Mary’s Ascot. She has previously sat on the International Committee for Leonard Cheshire International and the board of Moonpig Foundation. She is the UK Ambassador for the NGO BASE, working with very poor communities in West Nepal, and is also heavily involved with the foster home, Familia, in West Bengal.



Ruth Evans

2002, Geology

Photographed by John Cairns outside the Welsh National Opera, Cardiff

I come from Llanarmom-yn-Iâl, a small village just outside Ruthin, in the Clwydian Range. During my time at Teddy Hall, I was JCR President, Choral Scholar, Blues Lacrosse Captain (3 Lacrosse Blues) and a double Rugby Blue. I have played international Lacrosse, Rugby and Hockey for Wales.

My favourite memories of Teddy Hall are geology field trips, chapel choir trips, winning Cuppers (in many sports as the Hall was so good!) and the subsequent Cuppers Winners dinners. I remember post prelims devouring the 5th Harry Potter Novel in the Graveyard with my friends Rachel Marshall (née Adams) and Amy Crofton. All 3 of us with a separate copy, leaning on the gravestones and reading!

Since leaving Teddy Hall, I completed an MA in music at Bangor University, studying voice and editorial musicology (specialising on Welsh female composer Grace Williams). I now work for Welsh National Opera as a producer and am responsible for the company's community opera work and productions. In 2015 I commissioned and produced a new Welsh language community Opera Gair ar Gnawd (meaning 'Word on Flesh') which was filmed by S4C and broadcast to over 30,000 people.

I'm also a choral conductor conducting a number of choirs and part of the tutor team for the UK wide singing charity Sing for Pleasure (www.singforpleasure.org.uk).

My spare time is spent with my fiancé Iwan, our curmudgeonly Westie, Hector, and I am a complete Archers addict (I never miss an episode due to Podcasts).



Joy Hibbins

1981, Modern Languages

Photographed by John Cairns at her home in Cheltenham, Gloucestershire

I recall very clearly my first day at St Edmund Hall. It was an unusually hot, sunny October day and I felt a mixture of excitement, anticipation and apprehension as I travelled up there. Would the other students like me? I wondered. A few days later I was in an Oxford pub, surrounded by fellow students who would become lifelong friends. Neither of my parents had been to university and I wondered, before arriving there, if I would fit in at Oxford. But St Edmund Hall is such a welcoming place and there were many students who, like me, had come from state schools.

It is the friendliest of colleges. You could stand in the front quad at any given moment and whoever happened to emerge from one of the college buildings and walk past would know you and greet you. There was a real sense of community. Many of my most vivid memories are of incidents which happened in the front quad. They are not the life-changing moments or the times of high excitement and exhilaration that I also experienced at SEH. They are simply moments that I remember with great affection, in the front quad which I found so beautiful.

I remember describing my world as very brightly coloured at that time. There were no indications at that time of the kind of work that would be my specialism later in life. I was happy, settled, and excited and optimistic about the future. My life was profoundly changed by a traumatic event in 2012 which propelled me into suicidal crisis. Unable to find the right kind of help and support, I set up the first Suicide Crisis Centre of its kind in the U.K. in 2013. We have been providing services for two and a half years and have never had a suicide of a client under our care.

The charity which I set up, Suicide Crisis, has aimed to find innovative ways to try to help people to survive suicidal crisis. I feel that nothing I have done in life has been more important than this. It has taken me this long to find what I believe I am meant to do with my life.

I was at St Edmund Hall for a very short time, as a Modern Languages undergraduate between 1981 and 1984. However, the affection that many of us have for SEH is extremely strong and we retain a sense of connection to it and to everyone that we met there. I feel that there is a part of us that always remains at St Edmund Hall.



Heidi Johansen-Berg

1997, DPhil Neuroscience

Photographed by John Cairns in Shotover Country Park, Oxfordshire

I joined the Hall in October 1994 to read Psychology and Philosophy. I had very little idea what either subject involved, but, like many teenagers, I relished the idea of grappling with big and meaningful questions.

On arrival I was particularly clueless when it came to Philosophy - trotting along proudly to Blackwells to ask if they had anything by Des Cartes. It was probably therefore for the best when, after the first year, I switched to Experimental Psychology, having discovered that what I really loved was the empirical process of Psychology, and particularly Neuroscience (though I was very sad to say good bye to logic, which should be compulsory for all).

I am lucky to have maintained a close relationship with the Hall ever since, having stayed in Oxford to pursue a career in Neuroscience research. I am now the Director of the Oxford Centre for Functional MRI of the Brain (FMRIB) in the Nuffield Department of Clinical Neurosciences, Professor of Cognitive Neuroscience and Wellcome Trust Principal Research Fellow.



Kay Langdale

1984, English

Photographed by John Cairns on the hills near Stokenchurch, Oxfordshire

I read for an MPhil in twentieth century literature, but then switched to a DPhil on Samuel Beckett. My thesis was entitled ‘God, the Narrator, and the Quest for an Aesthetic in Samuel Beckett’s Prose Fiction’. It was a study of two patterns; it traced a subtle and shifting progression from belief to atheism in Beckett’s thinking, and argued that this increasing sense of epistemological and ontological doubt modulated his fictional aesthetic.

I loved my time at the Hall. I learned to row, and was very proud to be in the Women’s First VIII which won blades in Summer Eights in 1985. I directed Peter Nicholl’s ‘A Day in The Death of Joe Egg’ for The John Oldham Society, and ‘Beckett’s ‘Eh Joe’ and ‘Not I’, which was performed in the wonderful setting of the Crypt. After submitting my thesis, I did some undergraduate teaching which was a hugely enjoyable way to complete my time at Oxford. I made life-long friends and met my husband, fellow Aularian Hamish Stevenson. We married in Christ Church Cathedral and held our reception at Teddy Hall.

In 1988, I began work at a brand consultancy, and worked as an account handler and copywriter on many household brands such as Persil, Coca Cola, and McVities. It was a brilliant contrast to the solitary endeavour of an arts thesis, and a fresh learning curve to work collaboratively on multiple projects over a range of brands. I really enjoyed the breadth of people that I worked with; from scientists developing new detergent formulas and formats, to graphic designers evolving pack designs and logos, to consumers in focus groups responding to new brand ideas. I learned that there is nothing simple about what people choose to put in their trolley in the supermarket.

Between 1992 and 1997, I had four children and began to think about what had been a long-held wish to try to write fiction. I started writing when my youngest child was three, and my first novel was published in 2006 by Transita. I was subsequently signed by Hodder and Stoughton and it has been a huge privilege to continue to be published by them. I am currently writing my seventh novel. Spinning a story out of thin air retains its fascination, as does the gleaning of new ideas and material. I am enjoying the challenge of building a readership, and of establishing a body of work.

I live just outside of Oxford and the city remains very much a part of my life. I feel very grateful for all that Teddy Hall has given me, and am delighted to be part of this exhibition.



Julie McCann

Former MCR Butler

Photographed by John Cairns at her home in Cowley, Oxford

I moved to Oxford from Dundalk, County Louth, Ireland when I was 24. At first, I didn't like the high grey buildings in the city as I was used to the green countryside, but I have grown to appreciate them. I spent 25 years working in the offices at British Leyland and then began to work at various colleges, including St Edmund Hall, in the evenings and then more permanently at the Hall in May 1990. During this time, I worked in the servery, the SCR and at wine tastings. In 1995, I joined the housekeeping team as MCR Butler following in Mrs Brown's footsteps. I continued in this role for 20 years until my retirement in June 2015.

My faith is very important to me and a particular highlight of my time at the Hall was serving on High Table when The Revd. Graham Midgley was presiding. He would always make time to bless me at the end of the evening. The Fellows were always so lovely and just after I started I remember Dr Bill Williams lifting his hat to me as I walked along Queen's Lane with a friend, who was very impressed.

I always found Teddy Hall to have a lovely atmosphere with very friendly students. I had great times at the Summer and Christmas MCR Dinners and met some great characters over the years.

I also enjoyed playing pranks on Lionel and Ricky in the Lodge on April Fool's Day, although they managed to get me back in the end!

I have been very busy with my 3 grandchildren, looking after my garden and elderly neighbours. I have also kept all the kind letters that I received on my retirement and during my time at the Hall and intend to look at them all again now that I have more spare time.



Nada Milkovic

Deputy Hall Butler

Photographed by John Cairns in the grounds of St Clement's Church, Oxford

Flicking through the Oxford Mail in 1995, I spotted a job advertisement for a Servery Assistant at St Edmund Hall and thought I would apply. An anxiously awaited week passed and the next thing I knew I was stood in an overall looking at this coffee machine which looked like something out of the future. Now and again, I would have to take a hasty swipe at the lever so it wouldn't overflow. There was no indication of when it was full! I was greeted by friendly faces and remember feeling instantly at home.

20 years have passed and that warm friendly feel as I walk through the entrance of Teddy Hall is still here. Teddy Hall, for me, is a place where everyone comes together. A place of celebration and happiness, where graduations, marriages, anniversaries and birthdays leave an affectionate scent all around the college. I have fond memories of my 50th birthday and my husband's 60th birthday in the Old Dining Hall; it was wonderful that I was able to share Teddy Hall with my family and friends. I was even lucky enough to have a student serenade me with their guitar on my birthday! It is memories like this that will always bring a smile to my face.

If I could go back to my first day at Teddy Hall and look into the future I would always choose this path. Seeing students grow from their first days at dinner to their final year. Preparing the Hall for their Ball or Graduation Ceremony has been a pleasure, and I hope will be for many more years to come.



Anya Saunders

1997, English

Photographed by John Cairns on top of the BBC building, London

I remember driving into Queen's Lane on a cold autumn morning feeling incredibly apprehensive. How would I fit into this illustrious place? How would I cope with the academic pressure? Did one of the tutors who interviewed me let me in by mistake? Would I make friends? Within hours, I was drinking coffee – followed shortly by cheap wine - with the other new arrivals on my floor in Whitehall, and I soon ended up with the rest of the English freshers in the college bar. I fell completely in love with Oxford and the Hall and ended up staying for five years, taking an M.Phil in Romantic Studies after my undergraduate degree.

For those five years I threw myself into everything I could – working in the college bar, organising balls and cocktail parties, coxing the women's rowing eight and, of course, academia, which I later used as a springboard for my career. And while at the Hall I surprised everyone who knew me (as well as myself) by taking up rugby and going on to win seven consecutive Cuppers tournaments for the Hall, and a Blue for Oxford in the Varsity match of 2000, where we beat Cambridge 62-0.

Since Oxford I've gone on to a career in television, working my way up at the BBC from runner to producer and director, making mainly arts documentaries. My MPhil from Teddy Hall helped me secure my first major career break, researching for Peter Ackroyd on a BBC series on Romantic poetry. And I've been lucky enough throughout my career to continue to share my love of literature and the arts with some incredibly inspiring people. Highlights include bonding with Andrew Motion, Jane Campion and Ben Whishaw over a shared love of John Keats; exploring Picasso's relationship with the old master painters with Andrew Graham Dixon; and discussing family bust-ups with Noel Gallagher. Recently I've begun to specialise in producing innovative digital content and was in charge of editorial for the BBC's Make it Digital campaign, a nationwide campaign helping millions of people across the UK develop computing and coding skills.

It was also at Teddy Hall that I met my wonderful husband Olly. We've now been together for over 17 years and have two beautiful children whose godparents were also at the Hall. It's clear that both professionally and personally my life would have been very different if I hadn't gone to Teddy Hall.

Should I have been nervous driving up to Oxford as a fresher on that cold day in 1997, worried that Teddy Hall might not be the place for me? Probably – it still amazes me sometimes to think that I got accepted into the college alongside so many talented people. But my time at the Hall made me realise that a bit of courage, determination and application go a long way and that new challenges can be more rewarding than you might ever have dreamed.

**Ann Taylor**

Emeritus Fellow

Photographed by John Cairns at her home in Kidlington, Oxfordshire

I was elected to a Tutorial Fellowship at the Hall in 1980, when I was appointed a University Lecturer (Associate Professor) in the Faculty of Physiological Sciences. At that time I was the first and only woman Tutorial Fellow at the Hall, and as such I was greeted with a mixture of curiosity and apprehension! (This slowly dissipated in the following years as more women tutors were elected to the Fellowship). Perhaps the most surprising aspect of my activities at SEH was my involvement with the Boat Club - especially given that my only prior personal experience of boating in Oxford was of idle afternoons spent punting on the Cherwell! I became involved with Hall rowing when, as the only woman on the Governing Body, I was approached by a group of women rowers seeking support for their request to the GB that the college purchase a Lightweight Eight for their use. For many years, I thoroughly enjoyed going down to the river in Eights week to support the Hall crews, and was very proud when our Women's 1st Eight went Head of the Women's First division!

When the college put my name forward to fill a vacancy on the University Committee on Student Health, this was the start of my many years' involvement with health and welfare issues at both college and university levels. As Chair of this committee, my main achievement was to argue successfully for increased funding for the University Counselling Service, which permitted its much-needed expansion.

I have moved out of Oxford since my retirement in 1995 and am now living happily in a state of self-imposed rustication, amongst the birds, deer and badgers of Old Kidlington!



Jenny Taylor

1985, Biochemistry

Photographed by John Cairns at St Edmund Hall, Oxford

Oxford, and particularly St Edmund Hall, was an intoxicating atmosphere for a fresher arriving in 1985 from the strait jacket of life at a girls' state grammar school. Within a few weeks, the Hall had defined itself as a highly sociable community, whose epicentre was the Front Quad through which it was never possible to pass without meeting friends or navigating sports teams mustering ahead of training. The Hall's *esprit de corps* was rapidly ingrained and often vocalised, particularly at Cuppers contests.

Inevitably, I was introduced to rowing in my first term, a sport which has made an indelible mark on my life. From the rowing blunders of that first Christ Church regatta to the more serious attitudes demanded by our (successful) attempt at blades in Eights Week, to later captaining the Women's Club and rowing for OUWBC, rowing became a part of my life, but most importantly it gave me a lifelong commitment to exercise and fitness whether on or off the water.

Academically, Oxford presented many novelties. It was rapidly apparent that, in contrast to the populous lectures in the Biology and Chemistry Departments, where sliding into the back rows on the wrong side of 9am was entirely feasible, biochemistry tutorials offered no place to hide and demanded a commitment to the weekly essays that transcended social and sporting activities. Later on, the opportunity to delve deeper into my subject and enjoy the freedom to pursue independent research was incredibly enriching and precipitated my decision to do a DPhil - albeit after a gap year - or three.

Life as a Molecular Biology DPhil student had a completely different rhythm with full days spent in the laboratory at the John Radcliffe hospital, demanding perseverance in the face of the vagaries of scientific experimentation. The Hall MCR provided a rich cultural and social context to these studies and my role as Cover Dean provided ongoing contact with the undergraduates, whose antics and haunts I was, unsurprisingly, rather familiar with.

After a brief spell in biotech I returned to the University to lead a programme of translational research in genetics, which I continue to this day. For me this combines the excitement of discovery research with the satisfaction of driving innovations in genomics into the clinic. And after more than a decade I am back at the Hall as a Fellow by Special Election so can attest that the Hall spirit is alive and well!



Faith Wainwright

1980, Engineering Science

Photographed by John Cairns in the Tate Modern, London

I came to the Hall in 1980 to read Engineering Science. I didn't expect to get into Oxford but was thrilled when I did, as one of my brothers, Barney, was in his final year, at Balliol, also reading Engineering Science. I had been at boarding school, and he, having already joined the Royal Navy, was often away when I came home, so I looked forward to a year of seeing much more of him than I had been used to – and indeed I did!

My first introduction to the friendliness of Teddy Hall was through people – who became great friends – in the Christian Union. The CU at Teddy Hall was one of the largest among college CUs and I also became the Secretary of the university-wide OICCU. I had many happy times with special friends, who I am in touch with to this day.

I was one of the first two female engineers at Teddy Hall (though women from other colleges had been tutored by our tutors, so thankfully this wasn't so much of a shock to them!). My co-engineer was Paula Skokowski, who I have recently been able to reconnect with. There were about ten women in the year of the engineering intake of a hundred students – I wonder how many are involved in engineering now?

Being a sailor, I was encouraged to get on the water, and I became the cox for the Teddy Hall women's boat. There were already strong women rowers in the year above me (the first intake of undergraduate women at the Hall), but this was the first year of a women's boat from the Hall, and we duly entered Eights Week. We used to have to climb over the gates to the Meadows at 6am to train – the gates had vicious spikes and I still have a scar on my knee from a nasty puncture!

Before I came to Oxford, I had a gap year with Arup, and I returned to them on graduation as a structural engineer. At Arup I found I was immediately involved in challenging, high-profile projects, working with inspiring engineers. I became a Director, and have worked on iconic projects such as Tate Modern, and am proud to have led the development of Arup's technical knowledge sharing Skills Networks, and established Arup University. Arup has a culture of freedom and innovation, and I have never tired of the interesting work.

I have enjoyed participating in the wider professional landscape, principally through the Royal Academy of Engineering and the Institution of Structural Engineers, and would always encourage others to find avenues to make a wider contribution.

I met my husband at Arup. Today we live in Middlesex, and have three children who are about to embark on their own careers.



Lynne Worton

1980, Physics

Photographed by John Cairns at Hoe Valley School in Woking, Surrey

Coming to the Hall was like entering a whole new world. My own parents had left school at 14, and attending the University and living at the Hall was like nothing I had experienced before. My time at the Hall transformed me as a person and gave me the confidence to go on and pursue my future ambitions. My modest claims to fame from my time at the Hall are that I coxed the Hall's first ever Women's eight in both Torpids and Eights Week, and my friend and I were the Hall's first two female Physics graduates. My other Hall highlight is that I met my husband there, and we are still married and have two children.

On leaving the Hall I built a career in the IT industry, starting in a technical role, and developing through team leadership, project management, sales support, business development and commercial management to become the Commercial Director of a \$200 million international IT business. This role was the head of governance for the business, responsible for risk management and approvals, commercial and financial management, quality management, business practices, and project directorship/governance. The role was demanding but exciting, and gave me the opportunity to experience many different customer businesses and to travel widely internationally. I had never even considered such a role when I first started my career, but the skills and experience I developed at the Hall gave me the self-belief, resilience and openness to possibilities that enabled me to develop and pursue new opportunities as they arose, and end up in a senior role which I enjoyed and like to think I was successful at.

I decided to give up work a few years ago, but I wasn't ready for slippers and afternoon TV just yet! My own life had been transformed from that of my parents because of my education and I am a firm believer that every child deserves access to high quality, state funded education. I therefore decided to become a school governor and make what modest contribution I could to help with that. I have been involved with a number of schools, but over the last two years I have been using my business skills and experience to manage the opening of a new secondary Free School in Woking, where I am now the Chair of Governors. This has been a massive challenge – we have had to recruit staff, find premises, attract students and develop a curriculum – but it has been hugely rewarding. Hoe Valley School opened on 9th September 2015, and it's probably one of the most satisfying things I have ever been involved with. I'd like to think we will inspire a new generation of Hall men and women in the years to come. My personal commitment to education continues. I received an MBA from Warwick Business School in 1997, and I am about to complete a Maths degree from the Open University.



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