TEDDY HALL’S LIVING WALL

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p16 ANNA BOTTING: IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF MY FATHER
It is remarkable to think our community of 700 undergraduates and graduates produces such an array of writers, artists, poets, musicians and athletes. Much of the inclusive, all-embracing ethos of the Hall is thanks to you, the Aularian Community. You both curated, and continue to enable, this special environment.

As a student body you moulded the Hall culture to be one in which academic excellence and the enriching pursuit of interests and hobbies work harmoniously together. Now, as alumni, you provide support that gives today’s students the best possible opportunities. Often your support is made through generous gifts and our thanks go to the 1,101 Aularians who supported the Hall’s record-breaking fundraising year. Donations are used to enhance the student experience and our infographics (opposite) highlight a few examples of the impact your gifts have.

As Principal Willis leads the Governing Body in a strategic review that will shape our work for the coming years, we know that the characteristics of academic excellence, inclusiveness and Hall Spirit need to be preserved and enriched.

How your gifts enriched the student experience…

- 25% of undergraduate students received a means-tested bursary
- 28 Masterclass awards were provided to support the pursuit of non-academic coaching and training
- 24 graduates received a scholarship
- 14 Blues and 14 Half Blues – the most of any Oxford College and 64% were awarded to women

Supported by your gifts, the College Library...

- processed 5,759 loans and 5,184 renewals
- added 1,468 books to the collection
- had a daily average of 150 users with over 90% of students regularly using the library

How your gifts enriched the student experience...

We plan with the backdrop of continued uncertainty and your solidarity remains more essential than ever.

Our community of 10,000 Aularians are spread over 109 countries. Recent events in Tokyo, New York, Singapore and across the UK provide opportunities to be reacquainted with old friends and make new ones. For those of you who are unable to join us at an event, the Hall’s social media channels and the website provide an opportunity to stay connected with Hall news and in June the Hall ran its first-ever global Giving Day.

Thank you for your support...

£5,062,974 was donated to the Hall in 2017/18, the most on record
13% of contactable Aularians made a gift to the Hall last year
561 alumni spoke to students in the March telethon. Well over 50% of people then chose to make a further donation following the conversation

Thank you for your support...

69 Aularians have signed up to the Floreat Aula Legacy Society, bringing the total to 302 members
1,762 alumni, students and Friends of the Hall attend a Hall event
Over 16,100 follow the Hall on social media
The Matt Greenwood Scholarship

The Matt Greenwood Scholarship was established in 2017 by the students, staff, alumni and friends of the Hall in memory of Matt Greenwood (2013, Engineering), who loved to travel and sadly passed away while a student at the Hall. Dr James O’Donovan (2017, DPhil Education) was the first recipient of the Scholarship in 2018 and has written this report about how he used the award.

I did not have the pleasure of knowing Matt personally, but from what I have heard about him from friends and family, he sounds like an amazing young man who was taken too soon, too young.

Having recently lost my close friend Gareth at the age of 27 from the same illness as Matt, I wanted to do something to jointly commemorate both of their memories. Both men were active, generous and adventurous.

Therefore, I have used the award to establish a series of primary ear-care training programmes across low and middle income countries (LMICs) and to resource poor areas of the world in partnership with the World Health Organisation. Hearing loss affects, approximately, 6% of the world’s population, and the burden of the disease falls disproportionately on LMICs. Hearing loss, especially in childhood, can have a serious negative impact on the life of an individual and they are often ostracised, hidden away, shunned and fail to reach their full potential.

With the help of the award, I travelled to Alaska and Sierra Leone later in the year to help establish further ear-care training programmes.

In speaking with Matt’s parents we have made provisional plans for me to take some of Matt’s ashes to Uganda and to write for Matt’s blog: www.goodmorningsunshine.uk

Thank you once again for this opportunity and for allowing me to do something to benefit the greater good of mankind in Matt’s memory.

“Having recently lost my close friend Gareth at the age of 27 from the same illness as Matt, I wanted to do something to jointly commemorate both of their memories.”

Marceline Bresson (2017, Economics and Management), Lizzie Fry (2015, Geography), Freddy Leo (2016, History) and Agastya Pisharody (2017, Materials Science) received huge support from students, alumni and staff at the College, who avidly followed their progress.

St Edmund Hall’s Principal, Professor Kathy Willis said: “Congratulations to Agastya, Marceline, Freddy and Lizzie. The Hall has been revelling in their achievements and we are deeply proud of them. Although Freddy has attracted the majority of the media attention, thanks to his lightning-quick buzzing, the depth of knowledge across the team has been truly impressive, especially when you remember that they had an average age of just 19 at the time of filming. It has also been fantastic to have a gender-balanced team, which isn’t all that common for University Challenge teams. It has also been fantastic to have a gender-balanced team, which isn’t all that common for University Challenge performance, reaching the final against Edinburgh. It was a nail-biting conclusion to this year’s competition, which saw the lead switch several times and ended with Edinburgh clinching the victory 155 to 140 points.”

University Challenge

In April, Teddy Hall celebrated its best-ever University Challenge performance, reaching the final against Edinburgh. It was a nail-biting conclusion to this year’s competition, which saw the lead switch several times and ended with Edinburgh clinching the victory 155 to 140 points.

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St Edmund Hall put in some very strong performances throughout this year’s competition. They beat the University of York 240-105 in the first round; then, with almost exactly the same score, won against Clare College, Cambridge 245-105. In the quarter-final matches, they beat Emmanuel College, Cambridge by 190-55 and Bristol University 150-130. They reached the final by winning against Darwin College, Cambridge 165-140.

Teddy Hall’s previous best performance on University Challenge had been when the team of 1983 were defeated at the semi-finals stage. “To reach the finals of University Challenge is a huge achievement; the first time in the College’s history,” added Professor Willis. “All of the Teddy Hall community has enjoyed cheering them on and although the final unfortunately didn’t quite go our way, we have celebrated the team’s wonderful display of Hall spirit throughout the contest.”

“University Challenge was an unforgettable experience and I couldn’t have asked for a better team to go through it with. When I showed up to try out, I didn’t expect to make the team, let alone be a part of Teddy Hall history by reaching the final!” - Agastya Pisharody

“The whole experience kind of baffled me – I didn’t know what University Challenge really was until I made it onto the team so it was all very unexpected!” Freddy, Agastya and Lizzie are amazing people but I also want to attract some attention to Mike Atkinson (2015, PPE) who was there with us the whole time while preparing for the finals as our reserve.” - Marceline Bresson
This forthcoming academic year marks 40 years of co-education at Teddy Hall. We are celebrating this anniversary with a series of initiatives and events. Including, the launch of an online exhibition entitled ‘21st Century Hall’, a formal dinner in Hall to bring the generations together and a series of Teddy Talks.

### 1979
Bridget (1979, Geography)

“The admission of the first women to SEH was a smooth and almost painless procedure.”

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### 1980
Ann Taylor
appointed as the first female Tutorial Fellow.

### 1981
Sue Anderson (1987, MPhil English) becomes the first female MCR President.

### 1988

“The First Ladies”

### 1990

“Arriving as a tutor in 1990, I found the Hall to be a lively and engaging community, although perhaps still with the cultural legacy of its single-sex origins. Today, the increasing diversity of student backgrounds, interests and outlooks combines with the traditional welcoming atmosphere to make this a truly fun place to teach.”

Professor Robert Whittaker (Vice-Principal & Professor of Biogeography)

### 1991
Madeleine Pill (1989, Geography) becomes the first female JCR President.

### 2006
Teddy Hall women’s crew first to go past the boathouse to deafening cheers of “HALLLL!”

### 2018
Professor Katherine Willis CBE appointed as the Hall’s first female Principal.

### 2019
Launched the online exhibition ‘21st Century Hall’ to showcase our dynamic community (see page 10)

### 2015

Celebrated the matriculation of the 3000th woman at the Hall.

### 2018

Professor of Biogeography

“Life at the Hall was certainly a roller-coaster of attitudes, although pretty even handed - a prize for both Mr and Mrs obnoxious was awarded annually - but it was also a riot of colour, fun? and sometimes just a riot. I loved every minute of it. Thank you, SEH.”

Judith (1981, English)

Save the Date
To mark the 40th anniversary of co-education please save the date for a celebratory formal dinner in Hall on Friday 27 March 2020.

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21ST CENTURY HALL: AN ONLINE EXHIBITION

In 2015, the Hall celebrated the matriculation of the 3,000th woman by curating the ‘Women Inspire’ exhibition, from which 20 portraits still hang in the Wolfson Hall. To complement this, last summer we asked for nominations for a new online exhibition, 21st Century Hall Faces. We wanted to show the dynamic and diverse community of people that have been part of the Hall over the past 19 years. The exhibition focuses on alumni who, we feel, have made a significant contribution to the Hall, their community, society at large or in an unusual or extraordinary hobby or achievement.

Please visit www.seh.ox.ac.uk/21stcenturyhallfaces for full bios on all the alumni highlighted in this article. This exhibition will be ongoing, so if there is anyone you would like to nominate for consideration, please do get in touch providing their name, association to the Hall and a short paragraph on their achievements and personal qualities.

Alexander Gebhard
(2016, MPhil Politics: European Politics & Society)

Although I arrived at the Hall as a politics student, I left the Hall having decided to dedicate myself to full-time singing. This rather unexpected turn of events would not have been possible without the fantastic support I was given during my time at Teddy Hall. On the back of this, I have now gained a scholarship to study classical singing at the Royal Academy of Music in London. This is but the first step of what will hopefully turn into a long and varied career as a professional opera and concert singer.

Mel Gurney
(2011, Fine Art)

After leaving Teddy Hall in 2014 with a Fine Art degree, I began working in London installing sculptures into derelict spaces. This kick-started my journey in urban planning and I subsequently completed a Masters in International Real Estate and Planning at UCL. I am now a Chartered Town Planner, specialising in the cultural, heritage and creative sector, advising a wide range of internationally-renowned institutions. This role enables me to work on installing bigger sculptures within the built environment.

Jessica Hatcher
(2001, Modern Languages)

After leaving Oxford, I moved to London for a job in public relations. Five years elapsed before I saw my by-line in a newspaper. I wrote fiction (unpublished), performance poetry (unperformed, thankfully) and celebrity news and gossip (my bread and butter for a year). Eventually, after a successful reporting trip to Kenya, I moved to Nairobi to begin a career as a foreign correspondent. By 2017, I had moved from Nairobi to North Wales, and started a family, while I shifted my focus to the inequity and unfairness that affect women closer to home in the UK.

Sakaria Ali
(2017, Master of Public Policy)

I gained a First Class Honours International Health BSc from the University of Leeds before completing my medical degree at the University of York. After this, I did my postgraduate medical training in London and I currently work as a Paediatrician at Great Ormond Street hospital. Alongside my clinical work I have maintained a mix of public policy work and humanitarian work that has taken me to East Africa and the Middle East. More recently, I have been involved in optimising public services by integrating technology in the NHS. I also sit on a number of charity boards as a trustee.

Montana Butsch
(2002, MSc Educational Studies)

Since leaving the Hall I came back to Chicago to start up Chicago Training Center (CTC). CTC was my personal thank you to the City of Chicago and a bucket-list item of mine. I oversee the development of that agency for 11 years and then left to pursue my Executive MBA. My current project is the start-up spotivity (www.spotivity.com) which aims to help all teenagers and parents find meaningful after-school activities, while also providing administrative support.

Jessica Leitch
(2002, Engineering Science)

Since Leaving Teddy Hall, I completed a DPhil as part of the Life Sciences Interface Doctoral Training Centre. My research investigated the biomechanics of running related injuries. I was awarded Knowledge Transfer Funding to investigate the possibility of setting up a private running gait analysis service at The Oxford Gait Lab. The project was successful and in 2011, Run3D was launched. Run3D Limited develops 3D gait analysis systems for treating and preventing running related injuries. We franchise the technology to physiotherapists, podiatrists and musculoskeletal specialists who use it treat their patients.

Catherine White
(2016, MSt Women’s Studies)

Since graduating in September, I have just finished my first professional acting job, playing Miss Osborne in Laura Wade’s new play The Watsons at Chichester Festival Theatre. I’m now able to combine my passion for gender equality and activism through my work with the United Nations and my love for performing, hopefully working on stories that bring women to light in a different way and make the world a slightly better (or at least more joyful) place.

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NEW LIFE FOR THE OLD LIBRARY

Since last summer the sedate, quiet and austere calm which normally reigns in Teddy Hall’s seventeenth-century Old Library has been replaced by the noise and industry of a large-scale building renovation programme. The project is now complete and an exciting new chapter in the life of the Library has begun.

The 4,800 books in the collection were put into storage during the work but have now been safely returned by a team of specialist antiquarian book movers from the Bodleian.

There were a few hitches. At the last minute we discovered the holders for three of the shelves had gone astray. I had to send an urgent appeal to other college librarians for 12 small nineteenth-century pieces of metal (‘tonks’ is the term of art I discovered).

The books are now back on the shelves, where some of them have lived, in the same order and position, since the Library was built. Indeed, if you have ever taken a tour of the Library, you might imagine it to have been unchanged for centuries. In fact, the space has undergone several transformations and restorations; notably in 1920 when it first became the ‘Old’ Library and modern books were removed to form the basis of the undergraduate borrowing collection or the extension of the building in 1952 when the purchase of a small strip of land from New College allowed what had previously been the false frontage of the northern end of Library and Chapel to be filled in.

It’s also easy to forget that the Old Library was once new, and not only new but modern, even in some sense hi-tech.

The renovation builds on this heritage and, as with the original construction of the Library, has been made possible by the generous help of alumni and Friends of the Hall. Modern environmental controls and new lighting are being installed to provide better conditions to preserve and protect the books. The woodwork and fittings have been cleaned and restored. All of this effort will enable the Library and its collections to play a larger part in the life of the Hall, in its intellectual work and in its outreach.

A key part of the project has been the installation of a new display cabinet which will allow us to show off some of the treasures of the collection. Its very first use was to celebrate the 80th birthday of Emeritus Fellow (and former Vice-Principal) Professor John Knight — we mounted a display of his own distinguished works on China and development economics alongside volumes from the collection including our eighteenth-century edition of Adam Smith and a descriptive account of China from 1688.

The renovation is also a continuation of the opening-up of our special collections, begun by the cataloguing project (2013–2018) which put details of all the Old Library’s books on the University’s online catalogue SOLO, making them visible to scholars across the world. All of this work will enable the Library and its collections to play a larger part in the life of the Hall, in its intellectual work and in outreach.

James Haworth, Librarian

Thank you to our alumni and Friends of the Hall who funded this project.
One of the most popular draws of the weekend was the opportunity to climb the Library tower as part of the College tour route, where visitors enjoyed views over the Queen’s Lane site from the windows of our Library Fellows’ office. For those more interested in exploring the subterranean areas of the College, tours of the Crypt were equally popular.

The weekend showcased a great variety of musical skill. Guests enjoyed atmospheric guitar and bagpipe performances and an organ and harpsichord recital. The College choir sang on both days of the event and welcomed visitors to join them for “Come and Sing!” sessions.

There was a varied programme of “Teddy Talks”. These were accessible 15 minute research talks given by our academics and postgraduate students. Topics ranged from Peace Processes and Political Inclusion, to Fusion Reactors, to the History of the Hall.

Visitors of all ages enjoyed hands-on activities in the Old Dining Hall. From using a historic printing press to having a go at ‘Brain Games’ led by neuroscience students. We welcomed student volunteers from Oxford Hands-on Science who ran a whole range of interactive experiments for children, from learning about how the digestive system works to creating mini explosions!

There were performances in the graveyard from Oxford University Pole Sports Society led by Teddy Hall postgraduate student Robin De Meyer, as well as a reprise of the Annunciation & Visitation play which was originally performed as part of the Medieval Mystery Cycle at the College.

The Librarians, James and Sophie, opened up the Old Library to showcase an exhibition featuring some of the recent creative writing produced in Teddy Hall alongside works by Aularians from 1680 to the present. Also on display were literary works from the collections and some of the rarest books we possess.

We welcomed around 740 visitors into the newly refurbished Old Library during the weekend.

We hope to build on the success of this event and open the Hall’s doors to the public again soon.

In May, the College opened its doors for the inaugural Access Hall Areas event, which saw the Hall welcome over 1000 visitors, young and old, many of whom had not had an opportunity to participate in activities within an Oxford College before.

A full photo gallery and videos of the Teddy Talks are available on our website: www.seh.ox.ac.uk/aha.
It was the sound of scuttling that kept me awake. The robber crabs, circling the tent, their claws scratching at the canvas all night, as I batted them away.

Wild camping I had done before, but this was wildlife camping, on a coral atoll in a remote part of the Indian Ocean, a giant tortoise a foot away, sleeping in the heat, as if expired.

65 years ago, staring at a map of Africa, desperate to find an unknown island to explore, my father Douglas Botting (1954, English), put a pin on the Island of Socotra, a mysterious mountain land, a dot on the map where the Arabian Sea meets the Indian Ocean off the Horn of Africa. Two years later, in 1956, on sabbatical from St Edmund Hall, he led an Oxford University scientific expedition to Socotra and wrote his first book, Island of the Dragon’s Blood, still in print today.

I got a call from work this year, which my father would have loved, had he still been here. Would I like to join a scientific expedition to explore the deep sea, with scientists from Oxford University, off a remote island in the Indian Ocean? A UNESCO World Heritage site since 1982, Aldabra is uninhabited save for a dozen rangers. It is pristine, perfect, protected…and covered in ocean-borne plastic. We filmed as volunteers, from the University of Oxford and the Seychelles, collected some 50,000 flip flops, 25 tonnes of rubbish in total.

My father, an English student and keen ecologist, would have been delighted that Paradise Lost has, at least for now, been restored.

“Scuba divers don’t get much below 30 metres, even Jacques Cousteau’s brave team. And it was with humbling pride I became the first to dive deeper in the famous seas around Aldabra.”
Opening Medieval Manuscripts

Professor Henrike Lähnemann grew up in three medieval German towns that shaped her interest in medieval literature and religion: Münster, Lüneburg and Nürnberg. Henrike is the Professor of German Medieval Linguistic Studies and a Professorial Fellow at St Edmund Hall.

Open a 500-year-old manuscript and discover the place where faith and devotion meet art and inspiration. The prayer-book of Medingen in Oxford is a luminous example of female creativity, providing insight into the immense cultural productivity of medieval nuns living in northern Germany. These women read, wrote and sang extensively and led extraordinary lives, not only of the mind, but also of the soul.

Opening a book unfurls a new world. In the case of the pocket-sized prayer-book, Oxford, Bodleian Library MS. Lat. liturg. f. 4, it is one of magic and surprises: gold dragons, an orchestra of angels, nuns and biblical figures (see figure 1) populate the margins of 584 packed pages. The black ink is laced with black, red, blue, and gold letters but even more colourful is the text itself, an idiosyncratic mix of flowery medieval Latin and vernacular poetry.

To find the significance of this visual and linguistic fireworks, it is necessary to trace the manuscript back to its origin and decipher or rather decode its text and decoration, as well as the link between the two. The Low German dialect is that spoken in Lüneburg, one of the centres of the Hanseatic League, the most important trade area in Europe before the EU. Lüneburg's salt production financed Medingen, the convent in which this prayer book was written around 1500. Every nun wrote several manuscripts as part of her personal devotion, each of them a jigsaw piece of a different shape and colour, constructing a bigger picture of female piety and agency.

We are extremely lucky that we can reconstruct their physical world in greater detail than perhaps any other medieval community. This is because the convenants on the Lüneburg Heath survived as religious institutions through both the Protestant Reformation of the 16th and the Napoleonic Secularisation of the 19th century. The women had a remarkable staying power — and fortunately, they never disposed of any of their possessions: the world’s oldest spectacles, for example, were found under the choir stalls of the neighbouring convent Wienhausen. The convenants’ sewing and writing tools, as well as their breathtaking architecture, all provide a window into the rich spiritual life of the late Middle Ages, into a time when the nuns wrote letters, played the organ, educated girls and looked after a large and prosperous community.

These books reveal to us not only the physical world in which the nuns lived, the religious or spiritual realm that they aspired toward. It is a world that cannot be seen with the physical eye. Rather, it has to be grasped with the ‘visio spiritualis’ (spiritual vision) and ‘visio intelectualis’ (sense of intellectual understanding). Their monastic training enabled the nuns to look beyond: when the priest raised the bread above the altar, the nuns could truly see the Christ-child being lifted from its cradle, taste the heavenly meal, hear the angels sing and feel the divine vibrations of a whole world dancing with joy.

This macrocosm of late medieval devotion is mirrored within the microcosm of the Oxford prayer-book. The book is meant to be carried around: at a size comparable to about six smartphones (stacked two wide, three high), its sturdy leather-covered boards just about fit into a hand. It had small clasps since it was allowed! is the clue to recovering a lost sensual experience (no white gloves allowed!) is the clue to recovering a lost world, the real “Sound of Music” of nuns and laypeople singing together, the nuns in their white habits, the Lüneburg crowd in their Sunday best. This was a world where the nuns could truly see and taste the heavenly meal, hear the angels sing and feel the divine vibrations of a whole world dancing with joy.

In the next rubric, the nun is encouraged to embrace Christ in the “arms of his soul” and to greet him as her bridegroom coming to rescue her. Easter became an existential moment when engaging with the true meaning of the liturgy enabled the nun to be part of salvation history. All of this happened through the power of this pocket prayer-book, which came to the Bodleian through a series of sales after anticlergians came to view these devotional manuscripts as objects. However, the tactile quality of this book appealed differently to these collectors than it did to the nuns who wrote it and engaged with it on a daily basis.

And yet, the appeal of the book endures. Sensual experience (no white gloves allowed) is the clue to recovering a lost world, the real “Sound of Music” of nuns and laypeople singing together, the nuns in their white habits, the Lüneburg crowd in their Sunday best. The songs of praise happen in a world full of gold, images and moveable parts (20v shows a paper clipping of a golden initial; 131v has a paper clipping of a flower girl passed over a cut in the parchment (see figure three). Its enduring appeal lives on in the successors of the medieval nuns, namely in the Protestant women of today (see video online, using the link below) who continue to share devotion for their historic buildings and spiritual heritage with the community around them, just as their predecessors did. They even wrote a cookbook with regional recipes Das Faured hüten (in English: Tending the Hearth) and continue to welcome visitors into a world full of heavenly experience.

Originally published on www.knowwithall.com

“These books reveal to us not only the physical world in which the nuns lived, wrote and read manuscripts, but also the spiritual realm that they aspired toward.”
then you haven’t seen anything yet. Tom in fieldwork expeditions was unusual, performing experiments and taking part
If you thought that a mathematician
is at its least.
location on Earth the influence of humans
ocean — and as the most remote
process is the same — lighter freshwater
its plethora of ice sheets. The ultimate
rivers, it makes up for in meltwater from
the southern-most continent lacks in
being discharged into a heavier saltwater
mixing together by
between the lighter freshwater and the
but the complexity of the interaction
water goes when it enters the ocean.
His research investigates where river
is also very active in outreach and public
engagement as the author of the award-
winning website www.tomrocksmaths.com which looks to entertain, excite and educate about all things maths. The
key approach to Tom’s work is to make entertaining content that people want to engage with, without necessarily having
an active interest in maths. Questions such as ‘how many ping pong balls would it take to raise the Titanic from the
ocean floor?’ and ‘what is the blast radius of an atomic bomb?’ prise your attention and curiosity, meaning you have no
choice but to click to find out the answer!
Tom is also the creator of the ‘Funbers’ series which was broadcast on BBC Radio throughout 2018 telling you the
‘fun facts you didn’t realise you’ve secretly always wanted to know’ about a different number every week. From
the beauty of the ‘Golden Ratio’ to the world’s unluckiest number (is it really 13?), via the murderous tale of ‘Pythagoras’
Constant’, Funbers is a source of endless entertainment for all ages and mathematical abilities alike.
And now for the big finale. If you are
Tom Crawford is the man behind the
‘Naked Mathematician’ (yes, you did
read that correctly). To try to show that
maths isn’t as serious as many people believe, to try to engage a new audience with the subject, and just to have fun, Tom
regularly gives maths talks in his
underwear! His ‘Equations Stripped’
series on YouTube has reached 250,000
views — that’s a quarter of a million
people who have engaged with maths
who may otherwise have never done
so. His recent tour of UK universities
saw several thousand students come to
a maths lecture of their own accord to
learn about fluid dynamics. It may not
be to everyone’s tastes, but our current
methods of trying to engage people
with maths are failing, so why not try
something new? This is maths, but not as
you know it.

Teddy Hall’s Living Wall

We are proud to be the first Oxford College to install a Living Wall.
The wall, which measures 39m², includes over a dozen plant varieties: ferns, grasses, hostas are coupled with flowering evergreen perennials to give year-round interest and colour.
Evidence suggests that green spaces are beneficial for our health and well-being. The rear section of the Hall, where most students are accommodated, currently has no green space. We’re looking at how our concrete areas can be transformed into a dynamic environment that inspires students. We also know that environmental sustainability is a key concern for students and the Hall wants to minimise its impact on the planet. We already have plans to eliminate single-use plastic and reduce our carbon footprint.
We hope the green wall is just the beginning of our journey to ‘green the Hall’ both in its physical appearance and in its environmental impact.
The Hall would like to thank the anonymous Aularian, and his family, who have fully funded this installation and its future maintenance costs.
Watch the installation of the wall online at www.seh.ox.ac.uk /discover/livingwall

You can find all of Tom’s work on his award-winning website tomrocksmaths.com and follow him on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Instagram @tomrocksmaths for the latest updates.
In 2019/2020 we plan to offer alumni and friends even more opportunities to reconnect, network and hear about developments at the Hall. Please do visit the website to see what events we have coming up in the next year.

To book an event or to share photos of an event you have hosted, please contact our Alumni Relations Manager, Kate Townsend at kate.townsend@seh.ox.ac.uk or +44(0) 1865 289180.

EVENTS SUMMARY

Over the past year Aularians have attended over 35 alumni and student events. We have travelled to cities over the UK and worldwide, including Tokyo, Manchester, London and New York.

As I enter the third year of my term as as the President of the SEHA, I set out in this letter a summary of the progress and activities in what has been a busy year and also some of the priority actions for the coming 12 months.

Firstly, we have welcomed Principal Professor Katherine Willis and we are delighted to hear her fresh ideas and thinking as she tackles a broad range of initiatives. Katherine has already attended the Manchester Lunch, New York Dinner and London Dinner and is looking forward to connecting with Aularians worldwide at other events this year.

St Edmund Hall Association (SEHA)
I flagged last year, that as part of a programme to modernise the SEHA, we were looking for volunteers to help bolster the Association and we have now seen a major change in the make-up of the committee. After providing us with considerable help over many years, several long-standing members have retired and we have seen the arrival of five new members. The result is that we now have a committee comprising 10 alumni, spread across the year groups, including a growing number of female members. Many thanks to these new volunteers who have taken on a wide variety of initiatives, as well as to existing members for their continued help. Particular thanks to retiring members, Sir Jon Shortridge,

who has made a fantastic contribution to the Association over many years.

We still have a few spaces left on the committee for the pre-1974 matriculand groups. If you are interested in volunteering please do get in contact.

We are continuing to build our network of regional and international “Ambassadors”. These alumni volunteers provide contact points for the SEHA, as well as helping the College to arrange regional lunches and drinks. With volunteers recently signing up in Edinburgh and Singapore, and after a successful drinks reception in Tokyo hosted by Michael Young (1985, Jurisprudence), we are now focused on other regions of the UK and North America.

Global Events
At the end of January, the London Dinner took place for the second time at 100 Wardour Street. With a record 220 attendees, the event ran smoothly and the feedback was overwhelmingly positive. We are delighted to say that we have secured the venue for next year on Tuesday 4 February 2020, moving the event out of “dark/dry” January for the first time.

Many thanks to Richard Finch (1976, Modern Languages) who retired in 2018 from his role as organiser of the dinner after 38 years and also to Chris Elston (1976, Engineering Science) who has taken over the organisational role. Chris did a great job at this year’s event and in securing next year’s date.

As well as the London Dinner, there are lunches and dinners hosted annually around the world. Last year events included regional lunches in Edinburgh, Bath and Manchester as well as the annual New York Dinner.

Helping Students at the Hall
In 2019, we hosted our second Presidents’ table event, where I and a number of the SEHA members dined at the Hall with the MCR and JCR Presidents and their fellow officers. We spoke with them to understand how the Association can continue to connect with students and assist them wherever possible. One initiative from these discussions has been the launch of an annual Careers Evening at the College: the inaugural event took place in October. A panel of alumni, from a broad array of professional backgrounds, spoke to students to provide guidance and assistance on the topic of ‘Transition to the Workplace’. We look forward to hosting a similar event early in the Michaelmas term 2019.

Connecting Aularians
Fundamentally our mandate is to connect Aularians together globally with a goal of promoting social wellbeing amongst fellow alumni. We now see a record annual increase in membership from the circa 275 new graduates from the JCR and MCR, boosting our numbers to some 10,000 members of whom 805 we are in contact with – and the geographical diversity is growing very rapidly at the same time. This is not just a growing and diversifying Association, but a thriving one.

Floreat Aula!
David Waring (1987, Geography) President of the SEHA
aularianconnect@seh.ox.ac.uk
As always, the members of the Teddy Hall Junior Common Room (JCR) have been busy demonstrating their diverse talents across a range of disciplines. Recent terms have seen a particular focus on charitable events, sports (as always) and music — read on to find out more!

CHARITIES

The JCR collaborated with the MCR to put on the annual Charity Formal, raising money for the Bone Cancer Research Trust and the JCR’s chosen charity, Dig Deep. It was a successful evening, raising £300 for charity! I’d also like to thank Natalie Beadle, who was instrumental in the organisation of this event. Natalie has also been running a series of additional events, such as charity club nights and events, in order to raise more money for Dig Deep, a charity which aims to provide clean drinking water, safe sanitation and education to communities in need around the world. As always, the members of the Teddy Hall Junior Common Room (JCR) have been busy demonstrating their diverse talents across a range of disciplines. Recent terms have seen a particular focus on charitable events, sports (as always) and music — read on to find out more!

SPORTS

Huge congratulations must be extended to SEHWAFC, who finished at the top of their league in Women’s Football Cuppers, and came away with an impressive third place in the coveted Hassan’s Cup. Led by co-captains Josephine Levy and Aimee Bertrand, this is the most successful SEHWAFC performance to date — well done ladies!

Many of our other teams have been equally successful. SEHRFC retained their Cuppers title and SEH Darts took Cuppers by storm in Hilary term to bring home the win, led by Captain Rafe Stustholm. SEHBC also put in a strong performance at Torpids, with M3 moving up into first division, and M1 bringing home blades. It was another great Summer Vills and full report is on page 28.

MUSIC

The music scene at Teddy continues to grow, with more lunchtime concerts, a ceilidh in the Wolfson Hall, to round off the evening was Valentine’s Day and the JCR performed to raise money for Breast Shepherd-Cross and Shayon Mukherjee. Toby Whitehead as President. Arts and Culture reps Julia Jones and Rafe Stustholm have initiated ‘Music Mondays’, an open mic event that takes place regularly in the college bar. This has proved extremely popular and is the perfect platform for our musical members to share their talents!

Finally, choir exhibitions have been introduced at Teddy Hall. In the 6th week of Hilary Term the choir exhibitioners and scholars performed in a Liederabend in the Principal’s Drawing Room. The choir also performed at Access Hall Areas over the May bank holiday. This was a College-wide event, allowing the public to enjoy the choir’s performances as much as we do (read more about Access Hall Areas on pages 14 and 15).

MICHAELMAS AND HILARY

We began Michaelmas Term with record attendance during Freshers’ Week and ended Hilary Term with the bizarre cupboard stocking cards having reached record low! Highlights included the Halloween party, hosted in the St Peter-in-the-East graveyard and the Christmas Dinner, where Chef John McGeever and his team put on a fantastic five-course meal. Middle Common Room (MCR) Steward Frederik Soerensen put together a series of ‘tastings’, including a Michaelmas rum tasting and a whisky history tasting. In keeping with that trend, as the MCR’s token society event, we were wheeled out to do the traditional Address to the Haggis, followed by a wees dram or two. Helping out, MCR Steward, put a classier twist on our annual ‘Cakes and Cocktails’ party by throwing a 1920s speakeasy party. Whilst on a more abstemious note, the MCR Welfare team of Agata Rumannek and Charlie Clarke-Williams put together a range of events throughout term, from ice-skating to high tea. The graduate academic seminars, which members have an opportunity to present their research, were organised by our Academic Rep Samuel Lipp and Prof David Priestland, who generously provides a lovely home-cooked meal on a termly basis. This year has also seen our graduate student journal, Ex-Aula, swamped with applications, with Editor Slim Brooke posting the best articles on the MCR website.

FITZWILLIAM CAMBRIDGE EXCHANGE

For the first time in many years, we re-established contact with our sister college in Cambridge, Fitzwilliam College, and arranged for a mutual exchange visit. On a rather cold and wet January evening, our new friends from Fitz arrived at the Hall just in time for a sumptuous formal dinner, before embarking on a tour of Oxford over the next 24 hours. Fitz威廉大学 then reciprocated the offer and in February thirty MCR members visited “The Other Place”, with dinner at Fitzwilliam and a tour of the city. Cambridge had obviously pulled out all the stops to try and impress us, as, in contrast to their visit, the weather was particularly warm and sunny, resulting in shorts being worn and ice-cream consumed by St John’s Chapel. My sincere thanks to my opposite number at Fitz, MCR President Pavao Santak, for such an enjoyable visit and all those who helped facilitate visitors during both legs of the exchange.

SPORT

Participation of members in College and University sport continued to be significant. In rowing, the MCR contributed 19 members across the boat crews at Torpids, with the MCR’s 24 25

Doug Chesterton and Tom Swanton also competing in — and winning — the Lightweight Blue’s Boat Race against Cambridge. MCR members Yasemin Zuke and Jenny Jones also won their Varsity matches in Hockey and Real Tennis, along with Tim Donnison and Cas Widdereshoven at Ice Hockey. In Trinity Term, the MCR contributed members to Rugby, Cricket, Basketball and Croquet Cuppers.

EQUALITIES WEEK

For a third year, the Teddy Hall Equality Week, led by the MCR’s Christina Zou, was held with a range of talks, discussions and events taking place. A particular highlight for the Hall was the inaugural “Teddy Hall does Diwali”, a celebration of the Hindu Festival of Light. Organised by MCR member Majua Saxena and the University’s Hindi Chaplaincy, over one hundred students from across the University came together in the Junior Doctorow Hall for a traditional evening of Diwali celebration.

TRINITY

This term the MCR has been involved in organising and participating in the College’s Access Hall Areas event over the May bank holiday weekend, an extension of the Hall’s Research Expos of 2015 and 2017 (read more about Access Hall Areas on pages 14 and 15). We also held the MCR’s annual Garden Party and Trinity Dinner.
Every week I gave multiple tutorials on writing, editing and the business side of publishing to the brave, creative souls who offered up a stunning array of their work to me.

I gave a talk to the PPE annual dinner where I was inspired by my memories and the vision before me to conjure up an ode to PPEists.

And I gave a talk with the fascinating neuroscientists of the Centre for the Creative Brain on the origins of inspiration.

And, I’m delighted to say that the Hall did work its magic on me and inspired me to start my new novel. The first in the St Edmund Hall Trilogy: 66,000 words down and counting.

It was the history, the sense of continuity, the ghosts of those who walked these paths before me that inspired me. When you are an undergraduate you are of necessity concerned with navigating your own way into the future. There is less room for ghosts and the weight of history. Returning decades later, shorn of that glorious possessiveness where you think the moment and the Hall belong to you, could have been melancholic had not the Hall spirit worked its charms. Had there not been this sense of continuity. With that comes the ability to enter into the minds of those who have trodden the path before, real and imagined, and to invoke their story. Ideas and inspiration are part of the architecture. It was a rare privilege to return.

Linda Davies (1982, PPE)

“...it’s delight to say that the Hall did work its magic on me and inspired me to start my new novel. The first in the St Edmund Hall Trilogy: 66,000 words down and counting.”
SPORTS NEWS
ROWING AT THE HALL

This year St Edmund Hall Boat Club has had great success. The highlight for the year is the men achieving a Teddy Hall first: winning blades in both Torpids and Summer Eights and both for the first time in Division 1 (the highest blades ever won!).

The Men’s 1st VIII entered BUCS (British Universities & Colleges Sport) regatta in the intermediate 8+ category, winning the C-final as the Oxford University A crew.

Summer Eights 2018 saw the two 1st Viii’s have an unlucky week with the Women ending -1 and the Men ending +2 (after an unfortunate collision whilst bumping Magdalen). Despite this, the Club began training in Michaelmas with a renewed fervour, attracting a large number of novices who put in the best performance in Club history at Christmas Regatta, with 2 of the 3 crews reaching the Friday of racing. The senior Women’s squad entered multiple Isis Winter League head races and the senior Men won their match race against Balliol at the end of the term.

The Torpids regatta had mixed outcomes. The highlight for the week was the Men’s 1st Torpids capitalising on their success at the end of the term. At the beginning of the year, the Men won double Varsity matches with the University of Cambridge, with the Women going +2 for the week (finished 6th on the river) with an extremely unlucky row over on the Friday of racing; the Men putting in a dominant performance and winning back-to-back blades, bumping University, Balliol, Wolfson and Wadham (finishing 5th on the river). This is the first Summer Eights blades for the 1st VIII since 1934; the first ever Men’s Division 1 blades in Summer Eights and the first time that the Men have won double blades (Torpids and Summer Eights in the same year).

None of this success would be possible without the support of the Friends of St Edmund Hall Boat Club, and I’d like to pass on the thanks and appreciation from the whole club. The support provided by the Friends in the form of the very latest equipment and quality coaching, remains steadfast and could not be sustained without the continued generosity from Aularians and sponsors.

This year the Men again entered BUCS regatta, this time in the intermediate 4+ category – racing in the recently purchased ‘Matt Greenwood’. The Men also received a new 6+ carbon rigged Filippi just before Summer Eights – with some extremely long bumps for the 1st VIII, we are certain that the new boat helped with winning blades. These are just two recent examples of the quality provision from the Friends.
**RECOMMENDED READING**

Members of the Hall recommend their favourite recent reads.

### Citizen: An American Lyric
Claudia Rankine

Don’t be fooled by the title of this book, *Citizen: An American Lyric* — it is neither aimed solely at Americans nor is it the sort of book only poetry enthusiasts and other lovers of “lyric” can enjoy or understand. Claudia Rankine, a poet and professor at Yale, writes a gorgeously heartfelt and carefully positioned meditation on race, personalhood, tennis, art, solitude, community, and, more generally, what it feels like to live in any society, particularly if you are a member of a minority group (but not only). Despite being classed as poetry, this book is fully accessible without any experience reading verse — and indeed most of it is written in prose. There are pictures that work alongside the text to make you feel things as you read. There are personal anecdotes and accounts of internationally recognizable sporting and political events. There are moments of laughter and moments of tears. What I love best is how implicated you feel as you read — Rankine’s guilt is yours, your guilt is hers — not least because Rankine insists on writing her book in the second person (“you” rather than “I”).

### A State of Freedom
Neel Mukherjee

Neel Mukherjee’s *A State of Freedom* has — in the Penguin India edition I was given in Kolkata last Christmas — an image of a large dancing bear on its cover; and it is an extraordinary beast of a novel. Its principal theme is the tension between movement and constraint, between dreams of a better life and the injustices of both class and circumstance, as experienced by a set of interrelated families in contemporary India. This might seem like overfamiliar novelistic territory, but Mukherjee’s work has a strange, sublime, and terrible beauty all of its own.

The novel’s title, its themes, and the division of the narrative into five unequal sections all rework V. S. Naipaul’s (1971 Booker prize-winning) *In a Free State*. Zola’s Paris and Joyce’s Dublin also animate, or ghost, these pages from beginning to end. But even as he carefully acknowledges the constraining influence of his literary precursors, the novelist establishes for himself a peculiar freedom: the right to roam, and so to show, to tell, and (without ever being ‘preachy’) to denounce the multiple, enduring injustices of poverty, servitude, and caste. This is a writer with a peculiar ability to write about work and about violence, and one who understands the force of stylistic restraint. Rather than magic realism, then, or a grand sweeping narrative of post-colonial migration, contestation, or assimilation, *A State of Freedom* offers an exploration of internal dislocation within and across India, by way of the closely observed, intricately woven details of lives lived in the raw.

Mukherjee’s exploration of the limits of human resilience, animal endurance, and political action proceeds by way of five sections, each with its own distinctive style. As in life, so in this novel, the significance of life-determining experiences becomes clear very slowly, and/or retroactively. After a brief, unsettling prologue, the story seems to settle into a familiar post-colonial Bombay landscape — home-cooking, a recipetaking first-person narrator visiting from London, his disgruntled and displaced Bengali parents, their demanding and quarrelsome servants and so on. But what have either of the women servants to do with the bricklayer whose accidental death had been glimpsed by the father and his son in the opening section, as they drove by in a taxi; is the falling figure the same man as the much-missed, fox-faced brother of the would-be splendour, whose efforts at making a living for himself and his dancing bear form the centre of the novel’s compelling, gripping third section; and what of the two sisters of the fourth section, afforded different kinds of freedom by revolutionary action, religious conversion, and domestic service? The points of connection and affective relation between characters take their time to move into focus, and the different threads of the lives here narrated never quite resolve into a coherent pattern. The result is both oddy, insistently life-affirming, and shockingly, brutally painful.

“At last” the novel’s closing words, ending a long unpunctuated monologue which consciously echoes the last movement of Joyce’s *Ulysses*, connotes not so much sexual abandon, as the promise of release from the slavery of grinding poverty offered by death. To reveal which of the novel’s characters speaks its closing words would be to do an injustice to its careful plotting. For the novelist, even as he leaves a great deal of interpretive freedom to his readers also demands that we do some of the connective, affective work ourselves. In so doing, Mukherjee both exemplifies and explores the structures of privilege, circumstance, and class which sustain our reading lives, while also revealing with angry compassion the enduring reach, significance, and force of the novel as form.

(Professor Wes Williams (Professor of French Literature))

### The Eyre Affair
Jasper Fforde

To recommend *The Eyre Affair* is really to offer a gateway drug to the world of literary puns that is Jasper Fforde’s collected works. Set in the Swindon LiteratIeU.O.UK THE AULARIAN

WWW.SEH.OX.AC.UK

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(Professor Wes Williams (Professor of French Literature))
FORTHCOMING EVENTS

If you would like any further information, please contact Kate Townsend, Alumni Relations Manager.

✉️ kate.townsend@seh.ox.ac.uk
+
+44 (0) 1865 289180

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