Magdalen and the Book
Celebrating Magdalen’s literary connections

Magdalen and Australia
University Challenge
College Life in 1915
From the President

The redevelopment and extension of the New Library continues to figure prominently in College life and I am delighted to report that with just a year to go, both the construction and the fundraising for this landmark project are well on schedule thanks to the many generous alumni who have given their support.

This emphasis on the Library has reminded us just how central books have been to life at Magdalen since William of Waynflete bequeathed his personal Library to the College in the 15th Century. In this year’s issue of Floreat Magdalena, we have tried to give a flavour of the wide range of books linked to the College, and those being written and published by alumni today.

Magdalen’s links to Australia, from Nobel Prize-winners to Supreme Court Judges, are also explored, and there is plenty of College news (and history) to catch up on, from just missing our fifth University Challenge victory, to the 100th anniversary of a rather special dinner in College.

I look forward to seeing many of you back in College or at an alumni event near you soon.

Floreat Magdalena!

David Clary
The President
Professor David Clary FRS

Welcome to the 2015 issue of Floreat Magdalena

From the Alumni Office

We love hearing from old members about their time at Magdalen, so do keep in touch.

Recently we have heard from former Academical Clerk John Pearce (1963) who proposed to his wife in the early hours of May Morning 50 years ago before singing up the tower; Jeremy Leigh Pemberton (1954) on his contemporary, Dudley Moore:

‘He had a little upright in his room and you would hear a Bach fugue but soon the left hand would be playing a boogie with the right hand still playing Bach!’

and Elizabeth Mitchell (1984) whose grandfather John Dawson Tyson (1913) shared a staircase in Chaplain’s Quad with the then Prince of Wales (later Edward VIII):

‘There was no running water so the scouts used to bring up a tin bath & fill it with hot water; the Prince of Wales always used to kick the empty bathtub down the stairs, making an enormous racket.’

Don’t forget old members can visit the College with a small number of guests with no charge. All alumni events are listed in the monthly e-newsletter, so please make sure we have your current email address. We welcome your feedback, stories and photos, so do please keep in touch with us at alumni.office@magd.ox.ac.uk or +44 (0)1865 610342.

Best wishes,
Anna Norman
Alumni Relations Manager
Over 4,000 books in the College library are authored by Magdalen alumni and Fellows, an astonishing output, with more being added to this collection each year. From outstanding fiction, poetry and plays by Alan Bennett (former lecturer), Oscar Wilde (1874), Aravind Adiga (1997), Fernanda Eberstadt (1979) and many others, to hard-hitting medical journalism by Ben Goldacre (1992), biographies by William Hague (1979) and a fascinating anthropological study of football by Desmond Morris (1951), Magdalen writers have penned books on virtually every subject under the sun.

Magdalen and the Book

We asked notable Magdalen literary alumni to write about a book which has influenced them, inspired their writing, or changed the course of their lives. Some have chosen a single book, some a reading list, and others have written about the enduring fascination of books:

**Alan Hollinghurst** (1972)
*Author of The Line of Beauty, The Stranger’s Child and other novels*

The book that made me feel at home in the language of the past was an anthology called *Fifteen Poets*, first published in 1941, and given to me as a school book in 1967. It ran from Chaucer to Arnold, with each poet allowed a good thousand lines. I’ve just looked at it again for the first time in 40 years, with an almost uncanny sense of recognition. “There was a sound of revelry by night”, “So all day long the noise of battle roll’d”, “Is the night chilly and dark?”. For a year or two I took it everywhere with me, for a term learned a poem, or part of one, by heart each day, and have hardly forgotten them now – “The night is chilly, but not dark” still the vaguely droll but unhesitating answer. I think it was the book through which the sounds and movements of literary language, the manners of verse and the syntax of the past, entered into me, and became so natural to me that my own first fourteen-year-old writings were politely Wordsworthian sonnets. Twenty years later I found I could only write prose, but *Fifteen Poets*, in its blue-black Oxford binding, still feels to me magical, decisive, many-coloured.

It is not possible to choose just one book as the book that shaped and coloured your life. The reason is simple: one book leads to another, and they quickly form patterns among themselves, patterns like ladders up which you climb in all directions. To love one book is to love many; to profit from one is to harvest the riches from a host of others.

Books you read as a child might have a claim to significance if they made reading an unbreakable habit – if the delight they gave turned reading into an addiction – but even more significant are those that contain revelations, force a revision of prejudices, and introduce possibilities that settle your vocation. They are the books that are turnings in the road, every one of them leading to better places.

If one book is a link to another, then a library is a centre of universes. The books it contains distil human effort and desire, insight and hope, and not infrequently wisdom. Nowhere is like a library in the immeasurable value of its contents. Nothing is like a book in its sheer power, if power it has, to change everything.
Magdalen and the Man Booker Prize

Magdalen enjoys a close connection with the Man Booker Prize. Three alumni authors have won the prestigious prize in the last 11 years, and four Magdalen judges have been on the panel in recent years.

WINNING AUTHORS

2004:
Alan Hollinghurst (1972) for The Line of Beauty (Picador)

2008:
Aravind Adiga (1997) for The White Tiger (Free Press)

2011:
Julian Barnes (1964) for The Sense of an Ending (Vintage)

JUDGES

2013: Robert Macfarlane (1997, Chair) & Robert Douglas-Fairhurst
2014: A C Grayling (1976, Chair)

In the summer of 1997, shortly before I arrived at Magdalen for a two-year MPhil, I spent several weeks in north-west Canada, climbing in the Rockies and hiking the wilderness trails of the Pacific coast. I was alone for long periods of time, with many hours to kill in tents, so I got through a lot of books. Whenever I came back to cities between trips, I would head for the nearest bookstore to restock. I was browsing shelves in Vancouver when I found a copy of Barry Lopez’s Arctic Dreams. There were several good reasons not to buy it. One: I had never heard of Lopez. Two: the book’s subtitle – ‘Imagination and Desire in a Northern Landscape’ – struck me as Mills & Boony. Three: it was expensive for my budget at that time. Four, and above all: it was heavy – almost 500 pages long and printed on thick paper. Because I had to carry everything I read, I’d taken to assessing my books according to a pemmican logic: maximum intellectual calorie content per ounce.

But for some now-forgotten reason I disregarded these objections, bought the book, and read it while I walked the Pacific Rim path on the east coast of Vancouver Island, camping on surf-crashed beaches, and suspending my food from trees in compliance with the bear-safety code. I read it then, and it amazed me. I read it again, lost my copy somewhere near Banff, bought another copy, gave it to my father as a present, borrowed it back off him and read it again, and again, and again. I still have that copy (with a red-ink inscription from me to my father, dated 18 August 1997): the spine is cracked, the uppers ripped, the margins dense with annotations, and the pages are held together with Sellotape, now brown. Arctic Dreams changed the course of my life: it inspired me to begin writing.

Robert Macfarlane (1997)
Academic and author of Mountains of the Mind and other travel books

Helen Conford (1998)
Penguin Publishing Director and winner of the British Council’s UK Young Publishing Entrepreneur Award 2009

I haven’t been able to choose one book. At eight I checked Arthur Ransome’s Secret Water out of the library and fell in love with these very middle-class adventurers. At sixteen, Joan Smith’s Misogynies made me certain of feminism and the ability of words to invoke indignation. At twenty, The Count of Monte Cristo showed me that a great plot can transcend time as easily as great prose, a useful countertop to my considerations of seventeenth-century English literature. At twenty-two I read the poets Don Paterson and Charles Simic. Some of their phrases linger and float up at certain moments, most recently the closing of Don Paterson’s ‘Waking with Russell’ at the birth of my daughter: “I kissed your mouth and pledged myself forever.” At twenty-six I read Dispatches by Michael Herr on a beach in Papua New Guinea and felt the rush of adrenalin and moral complexity so strongly I could believe I was there in Vietnam. I work as a publisher, and these writers - and many more - influence the suggestions I make to other writers in turn. Right now I’m also rediscovering some very early influences as I go to libraries to find books for my daughter, hoping she will come to love reading and literature in time. Top of the list is Avocado Baby by John Burningham, where the baby is always ‘it’ and never a ‘he’ or a ‘she’.
Walter Benjamin once said that a book is a screen through which the light of the world shines. This image allows us to imagine how it would appear in reality.
Librarian James Fishwick introduces some of Magdalen Library’s oldest books

Magdalen’s Old Library contains around 20,000 books made before 1820. Most of them are printed books, but the collection also includes over 200 manuscripts.

Our very oldest items are possibly the earliest surviving fragments of a codex (a book with flexible pages rather than a scroll). These three tiny scraps of papyrus, each about the size of a postage stamp, contain parts of the Gospel of Matthew, Chapter 26. They are written on both sides, and once belonged to a pocket-sized book with a two-column format. It is not clear whether the book contained just the Gospel of Matthew, or all four Gospels.

The fragments were given to Magdalen in 1901 by Charles Bousfield Huleatt, a Magdalen demy turned missionary, who discovered them in Luxor. There has been debate about the age of the fragments ever since—Huleatt dated them to the third century, however when they got to Oxford the papyrologist Arthur Hunt suggested fourth century. In 1953 Colin Roberts re-dated the fragments to the late second century.

Our fragments shot to public fame on Christmas Eve 1994, when The Times reported that Carsten Peter Thiede had re-dated the fragments to the first century, making them the oldest surviving fragments of the New Testament. Thiede’s claim, elaborated in 1995 in a scholarly article and a best-selling book, has prompted much discussion. The academic community tends to agree with Roberts’s dating, but even if they are ‘only’ from the late second century, they are still amongst the dozen oldest surviving fragments of the New Testament.

The next oldest books in Magdalen date to the eleventh and twelfth centuries: we hold over 35 manuscripts dating from these centuries, including William of Malmesbury’s Gesta Pontificorum Anglorum from 1125–1135. This is Malmesbury’s own copy of the text, with corrections by him. It is one of the oldest surviving books from England written in the author’s own handwriting, rather than a copy or a copy-of-a-copy like most manuscripts. The spiky handwritten notes in the margin are by John Foxe, a Magdalen alumnus famous for writing The Book of Martyrs.

Our oldest printed book is Cicero’s De Officiis, printed in 1465 in black and red ink on vellum, and decorated by hand with large illuminated initials and elaborate decoration, making it look and feel more like a manuscript than later printed books. These rare and special books are occasionally on public display in one of College Library’s termly exhibitions.

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I remember the time I built a fort in the New Library. It wasn’t intentional, nor was it really a fort, more like towering walls of books around my desk which, yes, interlocked for stability and really only lacked arrowslits and crenellations.

I don’t now know which books they were, but they played a significant role for me then, establishing a zone of quiet and some psychological space. When I started writing *Second-Hand Stories*, my book about my Classics books and the people who’d owned them before me, I wanted to learn what these books had meant to their previous owners.

In some cases, if the owner - whom I traced through Oxbridge archives or assiduous Googling or serendipitous guesswork - was still alive, I asked them directly. To Seb Armesto, a young actor and writer, his copy of *Latin Prose Composition* signified school day frustrations and the process of putting together a play. Emilie Vleminckx’s *Homer: Poet of the Iliad* was a bitter reminder of her disastrous Mods campaign.

The dead took this niche information with them, though you could surmise. Tom Dunbabin, who led the resistance against the Nazis in Crete, had owned my copy of *How & Wells’ Commentary on Herodotus*, which had presumably been of great use when he wrote his book on early Greek colonies. Belinda Dennis had a tour guide to Rome’s ruins with her markings in. (I can’t know if she appreciated the fascist origins of this slim volume.)

These books were important of themselves and as symbols, keys, for entire lives, which is why they fascinated: each book opened up a story. And now that I look at my books, I see - I hope - that they will do the same.

*Second-Hand Stories* is available from unbound.co.uk.

Librarian Anne Chesher writes about the variety of ways people can leave evidence of their ownership in books

When marking their books, some people simply write their name on the title-page or use initials, codes and mottoes. They may paste a bookplate inside the front cover—a practice dating back to the fifteenth century—or stamp the outside cover with an armorial or heraldic emblem, commonplace in England since the mid-sixteenth century. Sometimes items such as letters can be found inserted inside the books or former owners’ notes are found in the margins, providing insight into their thoughts and responses to ideas in the text.

Magdalen College Library grew mainly from donations and bequests in the early years, starting with a collection of around 800 books given or bequeathed by members of William Waynflete’s large circle of friends and colleagues and brought with him to Oxford in 1481.

Donations and bequests have continued down the centuries. One significant bequest came in 1699, when John Fitzwilliam (D. 1656; F. 1661–70) left approximately 840 books and £500 cash for the purchase of new books. He was a Nonjuror; that is he remained loyal to James II, refusing to swear the oath of allegiance to William III. Fitzwilliam inscribed most of his volumes with his name and a motto: *reddenda est ratio villicationis* (‘an account of [your] stewardship will have to be given’).

Fitzwilliam’s inscriptions are not the only marks of ownership in his collection; some books also bear the names, mottoes and annotations of previous owners or are in the armorial bindings of previous owners. Many books were given to Fitzwilliam by authors, editors and illustrators showing that he was part of the literary and publishing circles of his day, including a volume of Pepys’s *Memoires* given by the author.
Jeremy Hutchinson, QC (1932) is celebrated in a new book about some of his most notorious defence cases from Great Train Robber Charlie Wilson to ‘Mr Nice’ Howard Marks

Jeremy was born in 1915 into the fringes of the Bloomsbury Group; his mother, a great friend of T S Eliot and Aldous Huxley, was the inspiration for Virginia Woolf’s Mrs Dalloway. With such literary pedigree, it is no surprise that one of Jeremy’s early cases saw him preparing the defence for Penguin Books in the famous Lady Chatterley’s Lover trial. In an extract from a new book about his famous cases, author Thomas Grant writes about this extraordinary trial:

Of the many obscenity cases in which Jeremy acted, the most celebrated is R v Penguin Books Ltd. The prosecution of Penguin for the publication of D.H. Lawrence’s novel Lady Chatterley’s Lover attracted vast publicity at the time, and remains perhaps the most famous English trial of the twentieth century. Indeed, as a set-piece courtroom drama, with its explicit sexual references and ‘four-letter’ words, a cast list of distinguished writers, clerics and literary scholars, and its thinly disguised class antagonisms, it could hardly be surpassed. Penguin’s acquittal is rightly considered as a milestone in the history of the freedom of literary expression. But the trial’s significance goes beyond its immediate compass and it now stands as a watershed moment dividing two worlds: the repressive past and the liberal future.

To modern eyes, it is an extraordinary fact that [Mr Justice] Byrne was joined on the bench by his wife, Lady Byrne, who remained there throughout the trial. Jeremy explains that it was at the time unremarkable for judges to be sometimes accompanied during trials by their wives, or even on occasion a friend, though it is baffling that this judge should want to subject his wife to the salacious material that the trial would inevitably rake over. Perhaps Mr Justice Byrne hoped that no jury would dare acquit in the face of her moral authority. Jeremy remembers Lady Byrne, seated beside her husband with her arms crossed, glaring down at him, a grim and disapproving spectator.

A photograph that appeared in the Evening Standard at the time shows the judge, his wife beside him, on his way to court to deliver his summing-up on the last day of the trial, both faces seemingly locked in determined grimaces.

The moments before the trial started remain imprinted in Jeremy’s mind. He was struck by the extreme irony of the situation. ‘Although on that October morning the dock, planted in the very middle of the courtroom, was empty (because only the company had been prosecuted, not its individual directors), the person who was really on trial was D.H. Lawrence. I had an image of Lawrence, slight, pale-skinned and red-bearded, with his sharp darting eyes, sitting alone in that enormous dock, normally reserved for those on trial for the most heinous crimes. And for what? For writing an allegedly pornographic book, with the avowed purpose, in Lawrence’s words, of restoring the beauty and sacredness of the physical relation of two people in love.’

Jeremy Hutchinson’s Case Histories by Thomas Grant is published by John Murray, www.johnmurray.co.uk.
The Shepherd’s Life by James Rebanks (1999) is a daily account of shepherding in Cumbria

The first son of a shepherd, who was the first son of a shepherd himself, James and his family have lived and worked in and around the Lake District for generations. After studying Modern History at Magdalen, James worked as a cultural consultant and for UNESCO, before once more taking to the land and continuing the family farming tradition. In his new book, The Shepherd’s Life, serialised as ‘Book of the Week’ on BBC Radio 4 earlier this year, James takes readers on a journey through a shepherd’s year, with a unique account of rural life and of the many people who exist and endure even as the world changes around them. Many stories are of people working desperately hard to leave a place. This is the story of someone trying desperately hard to stay.

The Shepherd’s Life by James Rebanks is published by Penguin, www.penguin.co.uk. Follow James on twitter @herdyshepherd1

The history of the John Murray Publishing House is more than a history of authors and books

It is the history of a remarkable family whose particular quality was its friendship with authors. Founded in 1768, each of the seven generations, all called John (the latter two matriculated at Magdalen in 1927 and 1960 respectively), brought his own distinct force of character and passion to the publishing house, helping it not only to survive wars, recessions and technological revolutions but also to retain its publishing excellence into the 21st Century.

Successive generations of John Murrays managed the publishing house through some of the most exciting and complex periods in our country’s history, seeing pioneering discoveries in science, medicine, exploration and archaeology. They published the key books of the 19th Century – Jane Austen’s Emma and Persuasion, Charles Lyell’s Principles of Geology, Charles Darwin’s On the Origin of Species and David Livingstone’s Missionary Travels to mention just a few. 50 Albemarle Street in Mayfair (where the Murrays lived and worked from 1812) was the centre of a literary circle, fostered by John Murray II’s tradition of what Walter Scott called his ‘Four o’clock friends’ – a daily meeting of authors and friends.

John Murray II’s most notable author was Lord Byron with whom he built up an extraordinary friendship, and most of whose works he published. The first cantos of Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage appeared in 1812 and sold out in five days, leading Byron to observe ‘I awoke one morning and found myself famous’. On 17 May 1824 John Murray II participated in what has been interpreted as one of the most notorious acts of literary vandalism. Byron gave his friend, the Irish poet Tommy Moore, the manuscript of his memoirs and Moore, who needed money, sold them to John Murray. There was a heated discussion among Byron’s friends and executors as to what should become of the memoirs. It was considered important that Byron’s reputation should be protected from the ‘scandalous’ contents (there is no real evidence that the contents were scandalous) and Murray in particular did not want the anguish of Byron’s separation from his wife stirred up again and the memoirs were thought to include details of the separation. In the end, it was agreed by the five people present that the memoirs should be consigned to the fire in the grate.

The seventh John Murray (1960), like his forebears, always enjoyed a close relationship with his authors and helped build a list rich in variety. He steered the publishing house through a period of mass-production, specialisation and computers. He eventually sold it in 2002 to Hodder Headline who have retained the imprint within their group and John Murray remains synonymous with good and interesting publishing. The John Murray Archive was transferred to the National Library of Scotland in Edinburgh in 2006. It is made up of over 150,000 manuscript letters as well as manuscripts of the works of Byron, Walter Scott, Livingstone and many others.

To explore the archive, including a fascinating interactive timeline, go online to: digital.nls.uk/jma.
Earl Spencer (1983) talks about how he came to write *Killers of the King*

I didn’t write at Magdalen. I just did the set work. I was an efficient exam-taker, but had no ambitions to continue with history after graduating - apart from reading mainstream history from time to time. I really started writing in 1998 - I went to the book launch of a friend of mine (Edward St Aubyn), and his literary agent had seen something insignificant I had written, and said he’d like to represent me. My first effort was a coffee table history of my family home, Althorp; the second fleshed that out with a history of the Spencers. It wasn’t till 2004 that I wrote my first “proper” history book - *Blenheim: Battle for Europe*, which was lucky enough to catch a wave.

My main tutor at Magdalen was the wonderful Angus Macintyre - a really special man, who combined a real care for his undergraduates with sincere charm, and an intuitive grasp of how to get us each to function as well as we could. My degree helped me to get a working knowledge of presenting facts in an intelligible way. Because I wasn’t the hardest working undergraduate, I had to pep up my essays by writing in a lively way - not that I really bluffed anyone! I then worked for a decade for one of the American news networks - NBC - where I learnt the key lesson of ‘less is more’, presenting and writing news features, and a series of documentaries.

I guess I’m a historian, but more an accessible and narrative one than anything else. The Civil War is one of the great periods of history - dramatic, profoundly important, and with a uniquely fascinating cast of key players. That really came home when researching *Killers of the King* - so many of Charles I’s killers were truly intriguing characters.

*Killers of the King* by Charles Spencer is published by Bloomsbury, www.bloomsbury.com.

On the 20th anniversary of Seamus Heaney’s Nobel Prize, poet and academic Bernard O’Donoghue recalls the great poet’s time at Magdalen as Professor of Poetry

When Seamus Heaney finally agreed to stand for the Oxford Chair of Poetry in 1989 (he had been asked but declined in the two previous elections), I had the menial but highly gratifying task of rounding up his backers. It was a very easy job. The enthusiasm that greeted Heaney’s candidacy was well founded. In addition to the kudos he brought to the University, his presence in Magdalen was a huge addition to College. His great enthusiasm for the College is declared in the introduction to the book of essays that was made from his lectures, *The Redress of Poetry*. There he says ‘I shall always remember the delight of waking up there on autumn mornings just as the sopranos of the college choir were beginning to run through their scales in the practice room below.’ While he was staying in College, he fitted in as an easy and smiling presence at lunch in the SCR, as much at home there as anyone else.

Heaney wrote the following poem on the occasion of the retirement of Professor Tony Smith in 2005:

**A Toy For Tony**
Fritillaries in flower, the deer,
He’ll miss them, miss them. And the tower.
And choir and cloisters, fellows’ gardens,
The office even and its burdens.

And we shall miss his just being there,
His sprezzatura, staying power.
His presidential head of steam.
His smile. His visionary gleam.
Fellow in English, Robert Douglas-Fairhurst, writes about his latest book, which was featured as Radio 4 ‘Book of the Week’ earlier this year

Everyone knows the story of Alice in Wonderland: since its first publication 150 years ago, the White Rabbit, Cheshire Cat, and other crazy characters who populate Lewis Carroll’s underworld have become as familiar as Superman or Santa Claus.

Thanks to John Tenniel’s original illustrations, images of the fictional Alice as a little girl with blonde hair and a crisp pinafore dress remain instantly recognisable. Images of the real Alice who inspired her – Alice Liddell, one of the daughters of the Dean of Christ Church – are almost equally famous, largely because of the photographs taken by Carroll in which she posed as ‘The Beggar-Maid’ and other storybook figures.

My book shows how tangled together were Alice Liddell’s life and the cultural afterlife of Carroll’s heroine. Stretching from Carroll’s birth in 1832 to Alice Liddell’s death in 1934, it shows a relationship that went to the heart of Victorian culture, and also reveals a number of the aftershocks that would later ripple out into the twentieth century, from the birth of photography to growing anxieties over the sexualisation of children. For ultimately The Story of Alice is not only about how one little girl grew up, on and off the page; it is also the story of how we came to be who we are.

The Story of Alice: Lewis Carroll and the Secret History of Wonderland is published by Harvill Secker (UK) & Harvard University Press (USA)

Hear more about Robert’s book in a special talk for Magdalen alumni at the Cartoon Museum, London on Monday 28th September. See www.magd.ox.ac.uk/alumni-friends/events for more details.

Fellow in History, Nick Stargardt, concludes 21 years of research into Germany during the Second World War in a new book

The German War is a book I did not originally intend to write. In 2005, I promised myself and anyone else who would listen that having just completed Witnesses of War: Children’s Lives under the Nazis, I would not be writing anything more on children, the Holocaust or Nazi Germany. This book began as a short essay about what Germans were fighting for, something I felt the need to write before I could move on to a ‘proper’ subject. It began to take shape during a fruitful sabbatical year spent at the Free University in Berlin in 2006-7, but as soon as I gave the first talks in Germany it became clear that this was a subject which required a much lengthier treatment in order to explore a variety of different perspectives and the ways in which people changed over the course of such a long and intense conflict.

When war broke out in September 1939, it was deeply unpopular in Germany. Yet without the active participation and commitment of the German people, it could not have continued for almost six years. Seventy years on, despite whole libraries of books about the war’s origins, course and atrocities, we still do not know what Germans thought they were fighting for and how they experienced and sustained the war until the bitter end.

Drawing on a wealth of first-hand testimony, The German War is an exploration into how the German people experienced the Second World War, told from the perspective of those who lived through it — soldiers, schoolteachers and housewives; Nazis, Christians and Jews.

The German War will be published in early October 2015 by Bodley Head (UK) and Basic Books (USA).

RECENT FELLOWS’ BOOKS

This small selection gives a flavour of the huge number of books published by Magdalen Fellows each year

John Fuller
Gravel in My Shoe
(Chatto and Windus, Nov 2015).

Bill Johnson
Look Back in Laughter: Oxford’s Postwar Golden Age
(Threshold Press, 2015)

Jeremias Prassl
The Concept of The Employer
(OUP, 2015)

Michael Allingham
Distributive Justice
(Routledge, 2014)

Robin Dunbar
Human Evolution
(Pelican, 2014)

Christopher Peacocke
The Mirror of the World
(OUP, 2014)

Guenter Treitel
Frustration and Force Majeure
(Sweet & Maxwell 2014)

Simon Horobin
Does Spelling Matter?
(OUP, 2013)

Toby Garfitt
God’s Mirror
(Fordham University Press, 2014)

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Literary Luminaries

Among Magdalen’s many notable literary connections throughout the centuries, four renowned British writers stand out. A Nobel Prize-winner, a Poet Laureate, a writer of much-loved children’s books, and an oft-quoted playwright, poet and wit, all drew inspiration from the ancient stones and beautiful grounds of the College.

JOHN BETJEMAN
Poet, writer and broadcaster Sir John Betjeman, came to Magdalen in 1925. He was taught by C. S. Lewis who thought that he was an “idle prig”.

Betjeman thought Lewis was an unfriendly and uninspired tutor, and spent his time here socialising rather than studying. As a result, he never graduated from Oxford, though he was given an honorary doctorate of letters from the University in 1974.

SEAMUS HEANEY
Seamus Heaney was made an Honorary Fellow at Magdalen in 1989 when he took up the post of Professor of Poetry at Oxford University.

He remembered his time here fondly, saying: “the Choir’s voices, every morning when we awoke, were like an angelic alarm call, making every Magdalen wake-up and lie-in magical.”

Heaney won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1995, and refused the honour of Poet Laureate in 1999 for political reasons.

OSCAR WILDE
Oscar Wilde studied classics at Magdalen from 1874-1879. He filled his student rooms with peacock feathers, lilies and blue china, and by his third year he had adopted a mythical air around College.

He was rusticated for a term when he nonchalantly arrived late in the term after a trip to Greece, but it did not stop him from graduating with a double first. He was witty even on his deathbed, where he commented that “This wallpaper and I are fighting a duel to the death. Either it goes or I do”.

C. S. LEWIS
C. S. Lewis was a Fellow at Magdalen from 1925 to 1954 when he moved to Magdalene College, Cambridge, commenting that “I have exchanged the impenitent for the penitent Magdalen”. Along with his friend J. R. R. Tolkien, he was a member of a literary society known as ‘the Inklings’ who met at the Eagle and Child pub on St Giles.

As well as the world-famous Chronicles of Narnia, he also wrote science fiction; The Space Trilogy.

In 1993, Lewis’ late-in-life marriage was dramatised in an Oscar-nominated film Shadowlands, with Lewis played by Anthony Hopkins.

Magdalen Walks

The little white clouds are racing over the sky,
And the fields are strewn with the gold of the flower of March,
The daffodil breaks under foot, and the tasselled larch
Sways and swings as the thrush goes hurrying by.

A delicate odour is borne on the wings of the morning breeze,
The odour of leaves, and of grass, and of newly up-turned earth,
The birds are singing for joy of the Spring’s glad birth,
Hopping from branch to branch on the rocking trees.

And all the woods are alive with the murmur and sound of Spring,
And the rosebud breaks into pink on the climbing briar,
And the crocus-bed is a quivering moon of fire
Girdled round with the belt of an amethyst ring.

And the plane to the pine-tree is whispering some tale of love
Till it rustles with laughter and tosses its mantle of green,
And the gloom of the wych-elm’s hollow is lit with the iris sheen
Of the burnished rainbow throat and the silver breast of a dove.

Seal the lark starts up from his bed in the meadow there,
Breaking the gossamer threads and the nets of dew,
And flashing a-down the river, a flame of blue!
The kingfisher flies like an arrow, and wounds the air.

Oscar Wilde
Magdalen and Australia

Fellow in Law, Colin Tapper, reveals Magdalen’s connections to law in Australia

One of the earliest of Magdalen’s Australian lawyers was Sir Collier Cudmore (1909), a keen College oarsman, an Olympic gold medallist, and subsequently a member of the Legislative Council of South Australia. However the dramatic ascent of Magdalen’s more recent Australian connection owed everything, like so much else in Magdalen law, to the energy, ability, organisation, ambition, and sheer force of personality of John Morris after his election as Fellow and Tutor in Law in the mid-1930s.

It took off in 1946 with the arrival to read Jurisprudence, and subsequently the BCL, of three Rhodes Scholars, Dick Blackburn and Andrew Wells from South Australia, and Pat Donovan from Queensland. All of them started as academics in Australia, but Blackburn became a Judge in the Federal Court, Wells the Assistant Crown Prosecutor in South Australia and Donovan, after spells in the Law Schools of Adelaide and Melbourne, became an eminent governmental officer, a member of the Order of Australia and ambassador to the OECD.

A subsequent batch of Rhodes scholars in the early 1950s, Sir Jim Gobbo (1952) and Sek Hulme (1953) from Victoria, and Cedric Hampson (1955) from Queensland, provided further acceleration. Gobbo, like Cudmore, was a distinguished oarsman, President of OUBC in 1954 and 1955. He became a Judge of the Victoria Supreme Court in 1978 and was eventually appointed Governor of Victoria. Hulme and Hampson both played a vital part in promoting the Magdalen connection for outstanding young lawyers looking to further their legal education in Oxford.

From then on the flow was full and fast, with many Magdalen lawyers becoming members of the Australian Judiciary including John Doyle (1967) as Chief Justice of South Australia; Pat Keane (1976) as Chief Justice of the High Court of Australia and Geoff Nettle (1977) as first Justice of the High Court of Australia. One of Magdalen’s law Fellows has been an Australian native since 1965, and there is every reason to believe that the Australian connection will continue to burgeon.

Laura Hilly (2009) writes about her experience as an Australian BCL student

I came to Oxford in 2009 for one year – to read for the BCL and then, so the plan went, to return to Australia to continue life as a solicitor. Six years, a BCL, an MPhil and a DPhil later I’m still here in Oxford, currently working as a Postdoctoral Fellow and Deputy Director of the Oxford Human Rights Hub. It’s trite to say that Oxford changed my life. It would be hard for any of us who have lived here to say that it hasn’t made some kind of profound mark. The intellectual challenges, the rich culture and history of this place, the opportunities that are presented in this unusual city, cannot be underestimated. But by far the greatest gifts that I have received from my time in Oxford have been the global friendships that I have made. Some of the strongest and most enduring of these have their genesis at Magdalen College.

The majority of graduate students in Oxford these days are ‘internationals’. Oxford has undoubtedly enhanced my global perspective. Working in the field of gender equality and human rights, this has been so important. The countless conversations with my Indian, Southern African, Canadian and European friends (just to name a few) have been invaluable in opening up new perspectives – for allowing me to understand how our experiences of the world can be both so diverse, and yet so common and shared.

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The links between the College and Australia are very deep and it is always a great privilege to catch up with the many Magdalen members living there. I went in December 2014 and the first stop was Melbourne. The work of many of our members in this fine city is related to Law so it was entirely appropriate to have a dinner in the Essignon Club in the Victorian Bar. Former Governor of Victoria, Sir Jim Gobbo (1951), attended, and Honorary Fellow Gareth Evans (1968) gave an excellent after-dinner speech.

On to Adelaide, where I was giving a talk at the triennial meeting of the Royal Australian Chemical Institute. On arrival I also found that a Test Match was going on between Australia and India and I could not resist the special opportunity of seeing some top-class cricket! Mary Wilson, whose husband Ian Wilson (1955) was such a staunch supporter of the College in Australia, held a most pleasant reception at her beautiful house which was attended by several members and their guests from the region.

Then it was Sydney where I was giving the Noel Hush Lecture in the Chemistry Department of the University of Sydney. There a reception was held with attendance by Magdalen members from across the generations.

Magdalen continues to have excellent students coming every year from Australia and the loyalty of our members there is second to none. I am already looking forward to my next visit to see how our alumni continue to thrive across this magnificent country.

When Malcolm Fraser (1949) graduated with a degree in PPE, he returned to Australia and stood as a member of the Liberal Party. He was Prime Minister of Australia from 1975-1983. In retirement, he became involved in international relief and humanitarian aid issues and, domestically, as a forthright liberal voice for human rights. He died earlier this year at the age of 84. Michael Nelson (1949) recalls his final correspondence with Malcolm.

Shortly before he died I sent Malcolm Fraser a photograph of a Jowett Javelin saloon taken at the Beaulieu Motor Museum. It was in his Jowett Javelin that Fraser had taken two other friends (Nicholas Browne-Wilkinson, later Lord Browne-Wilkinson, and David Archer) and me round Europe for a month when we were undergraduates at Magdalen. In his thank you letter he said the photograph had brought back happy memories, including the chain smoking of one of our number when the four of us were trying to sleep in the car, with the rain pelting outside.

The reason we were trying to sleep in the car was that we could not afford to stay in hotels and Fraser had rejected our proposal that we buy a roof rack to carry a tent as it would have spoiled the look of the car. We therefore slept out in fields, a railway marshalling yard, the Bois de Boulogne in Paris and in the car. It was a great holiday, for which we were very grateful to Fraser, but unfortunately it rained a lot on the Continent in the month of July 1951.

A full obituary of Malcolm Fraser will be published in this year’s College Record.
Magdalen boasts two Australian Nobel Prize-winning scientists; Sir John Eccles, was awarded the prize in 1963 for his work on the synapse, and Howard Florey won in 1945 for his work on penicillin.

Breaking the Mould

Fellow in Biochemistry, Quentin Settantau, writes about Florey’s life-saving career

Sir Robert Menzies, Australia’s longest-serving Prime Minister, described Howard Florey thus: “In terms of world well-being, Florey was the most important man ever born in Australia”.

Florey was born in Adelaide in 1898, the youngest child of Joseph (originally from Oxfordshire) and Bertha Florey. He was educated and attended medical school in Adelaide, where he was awarded a Rhodes Scholarship to Oxford in 1922 and chose to study at Magdalen College, the college of his old headmaster. Here he began research in physiology under the supervision of Sir Charles Sherrington, then Waynflete Professor of Physiology and President of the Royal Society. Sherrington subsequently encouraged Florey to apply for a PhD studentship in Pathology at Gonville and Caius College Cambridge, which he successfully completed in 1927. He was appointed Lecturer in Special Pathology at Cambridge, obtained his first Chair at Sheffield University in 1932, and in 1935 took up the prestigious Chair of Pathology at the Sir William Dunn School of Pathology, Oxford. It was here that he carried out the work on penicillin.

Florey rapidly recruited Ernst Chain, a recent PhD in biochemistry, and later Norman Heatley, together forming the core team central to the penicillin project. Florey and Chain were initially interested in understanding the antibacterial mechanism of the enzyme lysozyme. However interest in lysozyme waned when it became apparent that it was ineffective against pathogenic bacteria, and in 1938 they turned their attention to penicillin, an antibacterial substance discovered 10 years earlier by Alexander Fleming at St. Mary’s Hospital, London.

At the start of the penicillin project funding was tight, but the effort to provide alternative therapeutic agents to the relatively toxic sulphonamides for treating war wounds provided added impetus. The team focused on purifying sufficient penicillin to carry out in vivo experiments, and in 1940 completed a pivotal study in which mice challenged with an otherwise lethal dose of Streptococcus bacteria survived when treated with penicillin. Following this success the Dunn School was turned into a small-scale penicillin production plant, using every available contraption to increase yield. Hospital chamber pots were used to grow the Penicillium notatum fungus, a bathtub was a crude penicillin reservoir and a series of milk churns containing various solvents and buffers was used to extract the penicillin. This enabled sufficient penicillin to be produced to treat patients, and in 1941 Albert Alexander was the first such patient. Although the penicillin worked, the stock ran out before the bacteria could be eliminated and the patient sadly died. However with help from British and American pharmaceutical companies production was dramatically increased, and penicillin was hailed as a wonder drug towards the end of the war.

In 1945 Fleming, Florey and Chain were awarded the Nobel Prize for Physiology or Medicine for the discovery and development of penicillin. Florey was appointed a Knight Bachelor in 1944, President of the Royal Society in 1958, and became Provost of Queen’s College Oxford in 1962. He took up the role of Chancellor of the Australian National University in 1965 until his death in 1968, and was honoured posthumously by having his portrait on the Australian $50 note for 22 years.
In 1815 crews from Brasenose and Jesus raced from Iffley Lock to Mr King’s Barge, moored close to where the Head of the River pub now stands. Brasenose were victorious and this was the first time crews had trained and raced in specially made eight oared boats. To mark the 200th anniversary of this race, alumni from Jesus and Brasenose raced in replica boats just before Men’s division one took place in Summer Eights this May. Fittingly, Brasenose were triumphant once again!

Magdalen College Boat Club Summer Eights History:
- MCBC was founded in 1859. Since then, we have won Summer Eights Headship 20 times (placing us 4th overall, behind Christ Church, Oriel and Brasenose).
- We first won the Headship in 1880 and remained in the top 3 from then until the WWI. Our most recent headship was between 2004 and 2007.
- In 1949, at the height of rationing, the Magdalen 1st VIII crew ate whale meat for lunch and dinner to bulk up for Summer Eights.
- Magdalen women first competed in 1981. While they have never won a headship, they bumped up to 3rd place this year, so one may soon be on the way!
Cameron Quinn (2010) gives a ‘behind-the-scenes’ view of the College’s recent appearance on University Challenge

Scenes as straightforward and unchanging as those on Uni Challenge don’t have much to hide: the desks are made of low-density fibreboard, the chairs are patched with gaffer tape, and Jeremy Paxman wears shirts by T.M. Lewin and Charles Tyrwhitt (size 17½”–36”). Shock horror!

Some highlights came well before we ever went to Salford. This year a documentary about the show was produced, and our team was featured. This brought with it many absurdities, as when the cameraman and producer would try to get shots of us acting ‘naturally’, by asking us to do things we would never usually do, or insisting on getting multiple takes of one of us sipping water.

Then there was the second-round match, when the minibus we’d booked to Salford was set to leave at midday, and the 16,000 words’ worth of coursework that would make up 25% of my degree was due in for... midday. After a night of frantic footnoting, I managed to make it to Exam Schools and our bus before the noon deadline, only to encounter fearsome traffic and arrive at the studio two hours late.

The matches themselves were full of surprises: Harry’s extensive and theretofore un-signalled knowledge of British birds turned a potential set of three wrong answers into a full set of fifteen points; Chris’s excellent buzzes on topics from Chinese dams to orangutans to biochemistry consistently kept the pressure on our opponents; Hugh became an internet sensation for his use of ‘modular arithmetic’ to give a lightning-fast answer of ‘Wednesday’ to a question asking what day of the week it will be 100 days after Monday; and the stupid faces I made while listening to Paxman read the questions earned me the title ‘most punchable face in Britain’.

As for Paxman, people like to ask us what he’s ‘really like’. It’s tough to say, of course, because even when the tie’s come off and he’s sampling the Green Room Staropramen alongside the contestants, he has to stay on his guard in front of what is, after all, a small segment of the general public. Still, to judge on the basis of what we saw, I’d say he’s an absolute puppy dog—miles away from the pedantic ogre he plays on TV. I wouldn’t be surprised if on every fifth question card there was a little reminder scrawled in marker pen instructing him to ‘SAY SOMETHING CUTTING’, and so fill that episode’s cantankerousness quota.

After all the twists and turns of shooting the series, in the end we came as far as we could go without going all the way, losing to Gonville and Caius, Cambridge in the final. Of course, we would have loved to have won it all and recaptured the dubiously grammatical title of ‘Winningest Institution in the History of University Challenge’ for Magdalen. We didn’t do that, but we had a lot of fun trying, and that was why we applied to be on the show in the first place.
Andy Higgs, new Lodge Manager, introduces himself and the Porters’ Lodge

What did you do before coming to Magdalen?
I was a police officer for over 30 years. My final posting was the management of custody suites within Oxfordshire, so my perception of Oxford was influenced by drug dealing, assaults, drunkenness and theft. Being part of Magdalen has enabled me to view the City more favourably.

How would you describe the role of porter?
The Porter’s role is to provide a friendly welcome to everyone who visits Magdalen and provide a reassuring presence 24 hours a day, in addition to being a source of information regarding the College’s structure, function and history. We also manage all the post to and from the College, and hundreds of keys. There are eight porters working in pairs on 12 hour shifts, 7am to 7pm, so there is always a porter on duty 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

What’s your favourite part of the job?
The best part of life in the Lodge is working with a wide variety of people. One of the most satisfying experiences to date was welcoming alumni to a Gaudy. Seeing the excitement and anticipation of renewing acquaintances together with the thrill of returning to College was most enjoyable.

What’s your favourite part of College?
The Great Tower has quickly become a favourite. The restricted access to College members, the difficult ascent, and the amazing view of Magdalen and the City is most impressive. I doubt if there is a better view of Oxford.

What’s the strangest delivery you’ve ever had?
Before my time the most unusual item brought into the Lodge were three chickens that were being reared by students on the roof of Waynflete. They were rounded up by Porters, and brought to the Lodge. I’m not sure what became of them in the end.

A busy year for the Chapel Choir

It has been a busy year for the Choir. In the last three months alone, the Choir’s CD of choral music by Matthew Martin (1994), was released to critical acclaim, the Choristers joined with Frideswide Voices to sing in a performance of the Monteverdi Vespers, directed by Daniel Hyde, at the launch of the Oxford Early Music Festival, and the Choir has had a number of Evensong collaborations with Phantasm to mark the retirement of Professor Larry Dreyfus. They were honoured to be invited to sing at this year’s Encaenia on 24th June.

Looking ahead, in Michaelmas Term, as well as the traditional and much-loved Carols by Candlelight in College Chapel, the Choir will also give a Christmas concert on 11th December at Cadogan Hall, London, followed by a performance of Handel’s Messiah at the Sheldonian on 12th December. Details of these concerts will be announced in alumni e-newsletters. The next recording, featuring music by Thomas Tomkins, will be released in 2016.
Careers Fair

One of the greatest concerns for most of our students is what they will go on to do once they have left Magdalen

The Careers Service at Oxford put on a variety of careers fairs throughout the year, but the one thing they are unable to provide is an opportunity to sit down with someone who knows what the transition from Magdalen to work in a particular sector is really like. The JCR were particularly keen to set something up that would provide such an opportunity, and so the Magdalen Careers Fair was born.

In October 2014 the College hosted its second successful Careers Fair, complete with panel discussions and CV clinics with some of our fantastic alumni. The panel discussions covered a wide range of sectors, especially those not normally covered by University-wide careers events, last year including the Third Sector, Media, Technology, Science & Engineering, Banking & Finance, Government & Civil Service and Management Consultancy. The students really value this opportunity to have a one-on-one discussion with someone who works in the sector they are interested in and feel that they benefit hugely from this. The CV clinics were especially popular last year, in some cases there were queues of people waiting to get advice from the old members on how to improve their CVs. A special thank you must go to all those who offered their time and expertise. We are looking forward to the next one in early November this year!

PRESENTATION SKILLS WORKSHOP

On the 20th of January, Michael Bird (1954) and Jane Reed CBE kindly came into College to give a talk on Presentation Skills to some of our students. Both Michael and Jane have extensive experience in this area. Michael has been a director, publisher and Managing Director of many notable titles including New Scientist, Ideal Home, Good Housekeeping, and Harper’s Bazaar. Jane is a former editor and publisher in magazines and newspapers, and sits on a number of boards including Times Newspapers, The Media Trust and The National Literacy Trust.

The workshop was held in the Daubeny Laboratory and there was a good turn out with members from both the JCR and MCR. Michael and Jane talked about the secrets of a successful presentation, in particular the importance of preparing well, having a clear story and clear aims and keeping things simple. They also covered how to deal with questions after a presentation and tips to help beat performance anxiety and the dreaded ‘dry-mouth’. The feedback from this workshop was extremely positive; the students felt the advice given would be helpful in many situations including presenting research and for future interviews. They also enjoyed the opportunity to have a group chat at the end about how to improve their CVs – always important for students looking for jobs!
Archivist’s Assistant Ben Taylor reveals the stories told by a 100-year-old dinner menu

“All the charming people are being taken”

The blithe spirit with which the British went to war in summer 1914 has been much recalled, particularly during the centenary in 2014. The feeling must have run strong at Magdalen, where since 1885 President Herbert Warren had led a closely-knit college imbued with the high Victorian ideals of public service, self-sacrifice, Anglicanism and fair play.

There is a document in the College archives, however, which can provide a vivid glimpse of Magdalen after one year of war. On 17th June, 1915, a J.P.’s son from Cardiff called William Treseder Griffin held a dinner to celebrate the end of his finals. Menus were printed and the guests signed Griffin’s copy, which eventually found its way into our archives. In attempting to understand the atmosphere of that time, I have relied greatly on John Brett Langstaff, an American student present at this dinner, whose memoir Oxford – 1914 records the period in excellent detail.

Little of the previous summer’s euphoria can have remained by the time Griffin and his friends gathered that evening. Langstaff recalls how he wrote in a letter home: “It was pathetic to observe the bewilderment and concern with which the dons were contemplating their college now that practically the entire student body had been snatched away from under them... They knew the war must end but they feared that the Magdalen which they loved could never begin again.”

By the time of Griffin’s dinner, the guests would have been faced every day with the consequences of the war. For one thing, it seems the College catering budget had taken a hit. Griffin and his friends sat down to five courses that night: a main course of lamb and mint sauce bookended with egg vol-au-vents and a redcurrant tart. A menu for a similar dinner held in 1905 lists eight courses, including soup, fish, poached chicken, sirloin of beef, and duckling, with trifle to follow. Far worse was the news from the front: the month before, May 1915, proved to be the deadliest of the whole war for Magdalen. Fifteen of its alumni were killed, ten of them in the 2nd Battle of Ypres. The diners cannot have been unaware of all this; nor of the near-certainty that this was a world into which they would soon be thrust.

On leaving Magdalen, those present at the dinner had very different first-hand experiences of the Great War.
Prince George of Teck
(C. MT 1914-15)
George was the nephew of Queen Mary, wife of King George V (1910-36). Despite his profound nearsightedness, he managed on finishing at Magdalen to obtain a commission in the Reserve Regiment, 1st Life Guards, and to survive the war.

William John Treseder Griffin
(C. Jan 1912-15)
The evening’s host had good reason to celebrate: he had won the first ever Oxford first-class degree in Spanish. He played little part in the war, but was present at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919 as a representative of the League of Nations Union, an early British human rights group.

Richard Byrd Levett
(C. Apr-Jun 1915)
Levett was commissioned as a 2nd Lieutenant in the Kings Royal Rifle Corps in July 1916. In his first action on 10 March 1917, he was killed by a German shell. He was 19 years old.

Raymond Lewthwaite
(A.C. 1914-15 and 1920-23)
Lewthwaite most probably had a quiet war: he served as a Lieutenant in India, where despite British fears of a “Hindu-German Conspiracy” there was no major fighting.

Beatrice Newton & Enid Barns
Unfortunately, the college records can tell us nothing about the two ladies present that evening.

Griffith Ifor Evans
(A.C. 1910-14)
A medical student, Evans wrote to his tutor Robert Günther in August 1912, about his plans to attend a surgery summer school in London: “I [will] go there and dissect an abdomen and attend any classes that would be useful”. He would likely have been glad of the experience: in 1917-19 he served with the Royal Army Medical Corps in France.

Reginald W. Windram
(C. Lent 1915 – March 1917 & TT 1919 – MT 1919)
Windram was commissioned into the American army in France. On hearing of the death of his “very dear friend” Richard Levett, he wrote to President Warren: “I feel as if all the charming people are being taken. So many glorious lives given up at their very beginning makes an afterlife seem almost a necessity.”

John Brett Langstaff
(C. MT 1914 – TT 1916)
The sinking of the Lusitania in May 1915 was a personal tragedy for Langstaff: his close friend James Young was among those missing. “You know what a splendid man he was to meet,” he wrote home. “His constant care was never to offend anyone.”

The deserted College in war time
A scrapbook compiled by the JCR Steward, Richard ‘Gunner’ Gunstone (1840-1924) is a poignant record of the losses that Magdalen faced in WWI. This hand-written poem, titled “The Deserted College in War Time”, thought to be by Gunner himself, sits alongside newspaper clippings and funeral announcements, charting the deaths of Magdalen students and staff in the conflict.
Alumni Events

Bletchley Code Breakers
In June the Auditorium was packed to hear former head of MI6 and Chairman of the Bletchley Park Trust, Sir John Scarlett (1967); historian and author Ben Macintyre; and Andrew Hodges, author of Alan Turing: The Enigma (on which the 2014 film The Imitation Game was based) talk about wartime code breaking at Bletchley Park. This event marked the completion of the fundraising campaign for the Angus Macintyre Fellowship in Modern British History.

Magdalen and the Book
November saw Booker Prize-winner Alan Hollinghurst (1972) in conversation with Magdalen Fellow in English Robert Douglas-Fairhurst at the Athenaeum in London. Earl Spencer (1983) opened up his ancestral home on a glorious May afternoon to an audience of over 100 Magdalen members and guests to talk about his new book Killers of the King.

Business Breakfast
Our Business Breakfast series continued with a meeting at the Lansdowne Club in Mayfair with speakers Pete Davies (1990), Senior Partner at Lansdowne Partners, one of the world’s leading alternative investment management organisations, and Professor Constantin Coussios, Magdalen Fellow and Chair of Biomedical Engineering at the University of Oxford, as well as founder and CTO of spin-outs OrganOx and OxSonic, discussing the relationship between venture capital and universities.

Garden Party
In September Magdalen held the first Garden Party since 2008, with nearly 1000 attendees. Old members brought their families, the Choir were on top form in Chapel with viol consort Phantasm, the Great Tower climbs booked out within minutes, the exhibitions were busy and children were entertained with magic, circus skills and a Punch & Judy show.
It has been another busy year for alumni events at home and internationally, providing a wide range of ways to engage with the College wherever you are. We are very grateful to members who help to bring the Magdalen community together by hosting or sponsoring alumni events of any size, and look forward to furthering the Magdalen network with our forthcoming events programme. If you are able to help in any way please contact Anna Norman in the Development Office at anna.norman@magd.ox.ac.uk.

International Events

The President visited Australia and Asia in December, which was marked by a drinks reception in Sydney hosted by Simon Rodgers (1988) and Sam Nickless (1992); a dinner in Melbourne with guest speaker Gareth Evans (1968) (thanks to Michael Rush (2000) for being our host at the Essoign Club); a garden reception in Adelaide hosted by Mary Wilson; and a dinner in Singapore hosted by Jesse Bhattachal (1979).

In April Ann and Steven Berzin (1972) hosted a New York reception for over 50 old members at their home off Central Park with guest speaker former Senator Russ Feingold (1975). Events were also held in Chicago, with a dinner hosted at the University Club of Chicago by Robert Wootton (1974); in Denver at a dinner hosted by Bryan Leach (2000) at his home; in New York with a garden reception hosted by Andrew Klaber (2004); in The Hamptons, a garden reception hosted by Brian Altenburg (1997) and Chris White (1994); a dinner in Los Angeles hosted by Cathy & Paul Tosetti (1977) at their home, and in Ottawa.

A Celebration of Science at Magdalen

Magdalen science and scientists were celebrated at the Royal Society in March with talks by the President, Professor David Clary FRS, on the development of Science at Magdalen College; Professor Ben Green FRS, Waynflete Professor of Pure Mathematics, on prime number sequences; and Professor Gero Miesenböck FRS, Waynflete Professor of Physiology, on optogenetics.

400 alumni came to the London Drinks in September

Business Breakfast speaker Pete Davies (1990)

Bletchley Park Code Breakers event in College

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Forthcoming events

2015
Saturday 19th September
Alumni Dinner in College & Magdalen Society AGM
Saturday 19th September
1964 Anniversary Reunion
Saturday 26th September
1969-73 Gaudy
Wednesday 21st October
London Drinks Reception
Saturday 5th & Sunday 6th December
Carols by Candlelight

2016
Saturday 13th February
Scholarships & Bursaries Lunch
Saturday 19th March
1982-85 Gaudy
Friday 8th April
New York Dinner
Saturday 9th April
Washington DC Dinner
Saturday 7th May
Benefactors’ Gaudy
Saturday 28th May
Fastolf Lunch
Saturday 25th June
Commemoration Ball
Saturday 2nd July
Grand Library Opening
Thursday 14th July
Law Dinner at the Law Society

Further alumni events are organised throughout the year, with details at www.magd.ox.ac.uk/alumni-friends/events.