Unlocking
lockdown
The sun is already slipping lower in the sky and the edges of the leaves are tinged with signs of autumn.
Contents

Regulars
The big picture .......... 4
From the President .... 6
Your view .................. 7
Fellows’ news ............ 8
Online ....................... 11
College news ............. 12
Outreach .................. 14
Events ....................... 16
Donor impact ............ 17
Inside job ............... 48
Crossword ............. 50

Features
18 Unlocking lockdown
Learn more about the members of our community who were at the forefront of the fight against Covid-19

26 The consolation of books
Magdalen Librarian, Dr Lucy Gwynn, explains why so many of us read for comfort during the pandemic

30 Feeling unwell? Check your horoscope
Dr Michelle Pfeffer explains that without advancements in medicine we might have turned to an astrologer during the pandemic

34 Magdalen pioneers
We talk to Anna Lapwood (2013, Joy Sutcliffe, and President Dinah Rose (1984) about what it’s like to be a pioneer

40 State of the art
We meet Magdalen Fellow and fourth-plinth artist Professor Samson Kambalu and two Magdalen Fine Art students

46 Changing rooms
Discover some of our new, repurposed, and renamed rooms

Thank you to the alumni, students, Fellows, and staff who contributed to this issue of Floreat Magdalena.

The opinions expressed in Floreat Magdalena are those of the contributors and do not necessarily reflect those of Magdalen College.

Magdalen College. Registered charity number 1142149
The big picture

Mark Randolph from the Development Office is the winner of this year’s Magdalen College Photography Competition with his collection of beautiful shots of College and Oxford.
From the President

I am told that it is usual to begin an introduction to the Floreat by summing up the year in a word. But how do you describe a year like 2020/21? Perhaps “unprecedented” will do. After a full year as President, I have still not seen the College functioning as it normally does.

The challenges faced by the College community over the last 12 months have been immense. After a Michaelmas term in which we were initially optimistic about the relaxation of restrictions, we found ourselves locked down for the second time from December until late April. Although there has been a gradual return to normality for students in recent months, the constraints and the lack of social contact have been particularly tough on them.

We know that it has also been a challenging year for you, particularly for those of you who are frontline workers, so we are grateful to the alumni in the health and social care sector who took the time to share their experiences of life at the height of lockdown on page 20.

This year may have been difficult, but it has also been inspirational.

I remember one Sunday morning in late January when snow fell. From an apparently empty College, students magically appeared on the New Building lawns in little household groups. By lunchtime, we had an array of impeccably socially-distanced snowmen, a snow deer, and a snow igloo kennel for Scrumpy, the College dog. It was a sudden expression of joy that lightened our mood in a dark time.

I also remember services in the Chapel, which operated a wonderful array of online services, as well as remaining open for hauntingly beautiful candlelit evening prayers, sung by a single voice. Our May Morning celebration, secretly filmed at dawn at the top of the Tower a couple of days early, was received with great warmth by alumni and friends all over the world.

We have had the benefit of a fascinating series of webinars from Magdalen Fellows this year, with topics ranging from Shakespeare's second thoughts to computing and the meaning of the universe. I have enormously enjoyed the conversations with Fellows and alumni which these events have stimulated – at their best, they have had the intimacy of a tutorial, but with a global reach. We will be continuing this programme, along with more in-person and hybrid events in the future.

A particular inspiration to us all this year have been those at the forefront of the fight against Covid-19, including Professor Adrian Hill K.B.E. (1978), Director of the Jenner Centre, and Dr Maheshi Ramasamy, Principal Investigator at the Oxford Vaccine Group, an integral part of the team that developed and trialled the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine. You can learn more about them and others on page 18.

More than anything, this year has been transformative. The obstacles of the last 12 months have at times seemed insurmountable, but we tackled them together, drew inspiration from one another, and transformed and strengthened our College and our community in the process.

Our priority next year will be to build on the strength and support demonstrated by our community over the last year and look forward to new and exciting opportunities ahead.

Floreat Magdalena!

Dinah Rose
Dear Alumni Office,

Just a quick e-mail to thank the College and the Alumni Office for their efforts in arranging the webinars offered to alumni. It has been a most enjoyable experience to sit in on the vaccine discussion between the President and Professor Adrian Hill and to anticipate the next one with Professor Simon Horobin on A Day in the Life of the English Language.

I hope that these events will become a regular feature of College life!

Thank you very much once again for organising these events.

William Lawrence (1976)

Thanks to Tim Beech (1984) for sharing this brilliant panoramic view taken from the Great Tower in the mid-eighties. A shot (or series of shots) like this certainly took a lot more commitment to produce back then than it does today. If you look closely, you can see a pristine Grammar Hall and the deer in the Grove.

If you’ve never climbed the Great Tower, you can watch us climb it here at https://bit.ly/3gkP1PH

Your view

“I have only one desire for 2021:
To take Magdalen ever higher.”

Quatrain contest
Earlier this year, we asked you to write a quatrain on what you were most looking forward to following lockdown.

And the winners were…

My dream is for the world to open to travel,
And for everyone to be safe and secure in the knowledge,
That the masks and vaccines work and nothing will unravel,
So we can come visit our boy at Magdalen College.

Katherine Blass Asaro

I have missed my friends’ dear faces,
Their old habits and their smiles,
I hope to once again see places,
Where we can walk and talk for miles.

Olivia Krauze (2018)

A very close runner up was:
A lazy river or a crowded train,
A hushed woodland or a darkened cinema,
To sleep in late or rise early,
Solitude or company - to choose, to choose, to choose.

Miranda Lewis (1979)

Even the President joined in:
I have only one desire for 2021:
To take Magdalen ever higher -
And then my work is done.

Dinah Rose (1984)
Fellows’ news

Magdalen Fellow Professor Adrian Hill KBE FRS (1978), a key member of the team that designed and developed the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine, has been awarded one of the highest Queen’s honours, becoming an honorary Knight Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (KBE) for services to Science and Public Health.

He was also elected a Fellow of the Royal Society for his world-leading work in the design and development of new vaccines for globally-important infectious diseases.

As well as helping to develop the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine, Adrian is a member of the team whose recent malaria vaccine trial proved to be 77% effective, the first vaccine to achieve the World Health Organisation’s goal of 75% efficacy.

He is the Lakshmi Mittal and Family Professor of Vaccinology, and founder and Director of the largest academic vaccine centre in the world, the Jenner Institute at the University of Oxford. Professor Adrian Hill studied Medicine at Magdalen from 1979.

Magdalen Supernumerary Fellow Professor Xin Lu has also been elected as a Fellow of the Royal Society for her contributions to cancer biology. Professor Lu is the Director of the Ludwig Institute for Cancer Research, Oxford Branch.

Xin Lu is a cancer biologist distinguished by her contributions to understanding cellular pathways that control cell fate in development and disease, particularly cancer. She has a long-standing interest in how to selectively kill cancer cells, and her major research advances have provided insights into how the most mutated or inactivated tumour suppressor in human cancers can make life or death decisions for a cell.

“I am humbled to receive this honour from the Royal Society,” said Xin. “As someone who barely spoke English at the beginning of my scientific career, I am hugely grateful for all the support I have received from my supervisors and mentors.”

The Royal Society is a Fellowship of many of the world’s most eminent scientists and is the oldest scientific academy in continuous existence.

Magdalen Fellow Jane Gingrich has been awarded the title of Professor of Comparative Political Economy in this year’s University of Oxford Recognition of Distinction awards.

Jane's research interests involve comparative political economy and comparative social policy. She is currently completing a book manuscript on third way social democracy, examining the changing electoral and policy fortunes of mainstream European left parties.

She is additionally working on a European Research Council-funded project on the politics of post-war education reform, looking at both the political drivers of varying educational structures and the long-run consequences for social mobility and the regional concentration of skills.

Finally, she is working on a number of small projects related to differentiated geographic and household effects of automation.
I am absolutely delighted to be elected a Fellow, and I am excited to be joining at such a pivotal time.”

Magdalen Fellow and Associate Professor of Fine Art at the Ruskin School of Art Samson Kambalu will be the latest artist to have their work displayed on the fourth plinth in Trafalgar Square.

Samson’s piece, Antelope, is a sculpture that restages a 1914 photograph of the Baptist preacher and pan-Africanist John Chilembwe and European missionary John Chorley.

More on page 40.

Professor David Gann CBE CEng FICE FCGI has been elected to a Fellowship by Special Election at Magdalen.

David is Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Development and External Affairs at the University of Oxford, a member of the UK Government’s Innovation Expert Group, Chairman of the UK Atomic Energy Authority, non-executive director of Directa Plus plc, and non-executive director of VenCap International plc.

David was previously Vice-President (Innovation) at Imperial College London (2013-19), and Professor of Innovation and Technology Management at Imperial College Business School (2003-20).

He has formed five companies, mentors start-ups, and advises boards on innovation and technology management.

David’s research explores why and how innovation happens, the ways it continually transforms the world we live in, and how it can be managed. He publishes on technology management and innovation strategy in many leading journals, writes a blog for the World Economic Forum, and has authored or co-authored eight books published in eight languages.

David said, “I am absolutely delighted to be elected a Fellow of Magdalen College, and I am excited to be joining at such a pivotal time.”

Professor of Law and Fellow at Magdalen Jeremias Adams-Prassl has been awarded a Philip Leverhulme Prize in recognition of his outstanding research achievements.

The Prize, which includes a sum of £100,000 to be used to promote Jeremias’s research, is awarded to those whose work has had ‘international impact and whose future career is exceptionally promising’.

Philip Leverhulme Prizes have been awarded annually since 2001. They commemorate the contribution to the work of the Trust made by Philip Leverhulme, the Third Viscount Leverhulme and grandson of William Hesketh Lever, the founder of the Trust.

Jeremias was also awarded a prestigious European Research Council (ERC) grant. The ERC is the EU's flagship programme to support innovative, high-impact research across all academic disciplines, awarding grants for scientific excellence to top researchers across Europe.
Emeritus Fellow Professor **Liam Dolan** has been appointed by Her Majesty the Queen as her representative on the board of trustees of Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew.

Kew is governed by a board of trustees which comprises a chairman and eleven members. Ten members and the chairman are appointed by the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, and the Queen appoints her own trustee on the recommendation of the Secretary of State.

Liam was Professorial Fellow at Magdalen College between 2009 and 2020 while he held the Sherardian Chair of Botany at the University of Oxford. Liam has been Senior Group Leader at the Gregor Mendel Institute, Vienna, since autumn 2020 where he carries out research on plant development, evolution, and mechanisms of resistance.

On the subject of plants, here's a stunning 16th century illustration of an iris from our collection by German botanist Leonhardt Fuchs.

On St Mary Magdalen Day, Former President Professor Sir David and Lady Clary returned to College for the long-awaited opportunity for current and former Fellows, staff, and close friends to come together in person to thank them for their 15 years of service to the College. It was also an opportunity to unveil the portrait of Sir David by Keith Breeden RP.
Online

The College organised online exhibitions, curated by academic staff, Fellows, and other members of the College, throughout the year. Here is a selection of their most recent ones.

**Making History: Christian Cole, Alain Locke & Oscar Wilde at Oxford**

They were bright. They were audacious. They were, without a doubt, exceptional. This exhibition tells the story of three nineteenth- and twentieth-century trailblazers who changed Oxford University and the world beyond it. Christian Cole was one of Oxford University’s first Black African undergraduates, Alain Locke was the first African-American Rhodes scholar and dean of the Harlem Renaissance, and Oscar Wilde was the greatest Irish wit and dandy of all time. Discover more in this fascinating online exhibition: makinghistory.magd.ox.ac.uk/

**Immobility**

With this online exhibition, we open up the multiple dimensions of mobility, from movement to stillness, from the physical to the imaginary. Bringing together a number of themes, ranging from migration, maps, and data, to music and the stars, we rethink ideas of what movement and stillness can be. We challenge popular conceptions of mobility and argue that immobility is also movement – simply from a different perspective. We also show how movement does not always happen along a straight path from A to B, and how it can change through time and space. Discover more: immobility.magd.ox.ac.uk

**Women and Power? A Magdalen Story**

Why has power been dominated by men in institutions such as Magdalen? In what contexts have women found ways to shape Magdalen, for themselves, for their peers, and for future generations? Who speaks and who is heard are essential political questions for any community. One aim for ‘Women and Power? A Magdalen Story’ is to stimulate debate on how we build inclusive, diverse, and meaningful communities, for today and for the future. We hope that this online exhibition will help to widen this much-needed conversation. Discover more: womenandpower.magd.ox.ac.uk

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We are the most followed Oxford College on Instagram and Twitter. We may only be in second place when it comes to Facebook, but we have the most engaged audience. Thanks for staying in touch!
Programme to find next generation of leaders in second year

Two groups of rising stars from the world of politics and business took part in the second Pathway to Success Leadership and Development programme this year. Pathway is an initiative designed to help create the next generation of minority ethnic leaders.

The two-week-long programmes were developed by Operation Black Vote and the House of Commons in collaboration with Magdalen College, the Blavatnik School of Government, and Lloyds Banking Group, and aim to equip participants with the tools and knowledge required to stand for leadership roles.

Participants are selected based on their proven skills and undertook a week of intensive masterclasses in politics, governance, community, business, and commercial and civic environments to build their know-how in running for political office and further develop their leadership skills.

Due to the coronavirus pandemic, sessions this year were delivered online with a mini-residential at Magdalen scheduled for later in the year.

As an extension to Pathway, Magdalen College developed a mentoring programme that offers one-to-one support to participants following the week-long programme, as well as providing access to a network of mentors and fellow participants. All mentors are alumni of Magdalen.

Professor Robin Cleveland, the Access Fellow at Magdalen College, said, “Magdalen is delighted to continue its involvement with Pathway to Success programme in order to grow diversity in leadership positions in society.”

Magdalen runs remote work experience at Nuffield Department of Medicine

As part of an extensive Outreach and Access programme our Outreach Team recently collaborated with Dr Tammie Bishop, part of the team led by Nobel Prize-winning Magdalen Fellow Professor Sir Peter Ratcliffe, to give 15 Y12 pupils a chance to participate in remote work experience at the Nuffield Department of Medicine.

The week involved lectures and workshops delivered by Tammie and her team, including Isobel Argles, Dr Thomas Keeley, Samvid Kurkelar, and Maria Prange-Barczynska. Students also produced their own presentations, experiment ideas, and essays.

“Students visit the lab each summer for work experience, and we didn’t want them to miss out on this opportunity – Covid-19 or not,” said Tammie. “We came up with the idea of running a remote work experience week as an alternative to try to give students a taster of research and University life. The event was extremely fun and valuable for participants and organisers alike and we look forward to running it again.”

Students were introduced to a range of medical courses offered at the University of Oxford, including Biomedicine and Medicine.

One participant, Jana, said, “I am very grateful for this fantastic opportunity as I have learnt so much within a week. The workshops, lectures, Q&A sessions, feedback, and the work that has been set were very informative and interesting to me. I was able to significantly benefit from this experience and come out of it with some new knowledge - that is very exciting.”

For more details about our wide range of outreach and access activities, search ‘Outreach Magdalen’.
Virtual May Morning from the Great Tower
The May Day celebrations may have been cancelled again, but the Choir of Magdalen College was determined to build on the success of last year with another virtual May Morning performance, this time from the top of the Great Tower.

The members of the Choir sang from their homes via video link in 2020, but this year, the Choristers and Academical Clerks were able to climb the 172 steps to the top of one of Oxford’s most famous landmarks to welcome spring a few days earlier than usual.

Directed by Mark Williams, Informator Choristarum at Magdalen College, the Choir recorded the traditional Latin hymn, prayer, and madrigals at the top of the Tower to an unsuspecting Oxford at dawn a few days earlier.

“As soon as it became clear that we could do it safely and within the guidelines,” said Mark, “we knew that we wanted to record this year’s May Morning from the Tower. The Choir was sworn to secrecy, as we couldn’t risk people finding out, in case we drew a crowd; it’s been Oxford’s best-kept secret. I suspect some early morning joggers got quite a surprise!”

“We were delighted to be able to share it once again this year with the Magdalen community – and with thousands of others around the world – continuing a truly magical custom dating back over 500 years.”

You can watch the Choir welcome spring on their Facebook and YouTube channels.

Magdalen forms racial equality advisory group
As part of Magdalen’s commitment to encouraging and celebrating diversity, the College has formed a new group tasked with increasing access and opportunities, supporting and representing current members, and increasing education around race.

The group is made up of key members of the College including the President, Senior Dean of Arts, and Tutor for Equality and Diversity, as well as the JCR and MCR Presidents and representatives for racial equality.

The formation of the advisory group followed recommendations made by the JCR and MCR.

“Matters of equality are of utmost importance... and we believe there is a lot more we can do at Magdalen.”

“We presented a paper to the Governing Body, jointly with the JCR, highlighting how racial equality could be improved in College,” said MCR President at that time Lucy Baehren.

“The paper included a number of suggested action points, prompted by thoughts from the MCR and JCR. The racial equality advisory group was created in response to this paper and will continue to meet and review the actions to ensure we are making progress on these matters. We are hopeful that this will give momentum to these important changes in College.

“Matters of equality are of utmost importance to the MCR, and we believe there is a lot more we can do at Magdalen.”

Prize-winning poetry
Annabelle Fuller (2018) has won the Sir Roger Newdigate Prize with her poem Koinobionts. The Prize is given annually for the best student poem of up to 300 lines. Previous winners of the Prize include Alan Hollinghurst and Andrew Motion.

Annabelle was also chosen as the winner of this year’s Richard Selig Poetry Prize. You can read her winning poem Mars and Venus Surprised by Vulcan at bit.ly/3kgw2Ha

Magdalen flew the flag for Trans Awareness Week.

Tobias Schroder (2017) was part of the men’s eight that won gold for Great Britain at the recent World Rowing Under 23 Championships in the Czech Republic, and, closer to home, our second women’s eight won blades in Summer Eights.
Magdalen is making significant increases in the numbers of students from underrepresented groups in their intake of undergraduates. We are proud of these improvements and keen to keep going. Access and Outreach continues to be a priority, to support bright prospective students who face barriers to accessing Oxford University, and to support our increasingly diverse student body.

Outreach in the Pandemic:
Outreach has not stopped for the pandemic, but we’ve had to work differently. Last March, we moved all our events online. In place of our usual school visits to the College, we have been providing a programme of virtual events including talks, tours, Q&As, and lectures. Recently, we also launched our Talks With Tutors Programme, where prospective applicants and school groups can sign up to attend mini lectures with Magdalen Tutors. These have varied in subject and age range but have included a talk from Professor Laurie Maguire on ‘Shakespeare’s Second Thoughts’ for GCSE and A-level students and a Biology talk on ‘Evolution In Action’ by Professor Tim Barraclough for younger secondary students.

We have hosted many of our larger projects and residentials online too. Last summer, we successfully held our Law Residential for the second year running with students joining online for workshops on admissions and Law lectures with our Magdalen Law professors. We also ran two popular Virtual BAME Humanities Study Days for Year 12s of BAME heritage who want to explore the possibility of studying a humanities degree at university level.

Since the outbreak of Covid-19 we have held 80 Magdalen Outreach Events, involving 2473 participants. In addition to this, we have been involved in Oxford’s Virtual Open Days and university-wide Remote Interview Workshops.

“Outreach has not stopped for the pandemic, but we’ve had to work differently!”

Post-Offer Support
Now that we are making such progress in increasing and supporting applications to Oxford, we have been keen to further support those who have received offers to study here and to ensure students who are here already are getting the most of their experience regardless of background. This year we have launched a new Post-Offer Support Scheme, to ensure that anyone with an offer feels welcomed and has access to all the information they need to make a decision about studying with us.

This year all offer-holders received a welcome pack, which included a welcome letter from our JCR Access and Admissions Rep and a booklet on student life. Offer-holders who met certain criteria for disadvantage were invited to a welcome morning hosted by the outreach team. These offer-holders were then invited to be part of our Mentoring Scheme, and be paired with a trained Student Ambassador for mentoring sessions held online. We have had overwhelmingly positive feedback on these sessions so far. One offer-holder told us, “It definitely made me more confident about accepting my offer, as a lot of the worries I had were addressed in the session.”

We continue to have fantastic input in our outreach work from our student body with an average of 20 student ambassadors getting involved during term time. Our new Outreach and Access Forum which we hold termly for the student body has also been a great place to get ideas and feedback on our work.

While we were sad not to be welcoming prospective students to Magdalen in person, we have been so glad to be able to continue our work throughout such a challenging year. We hope to see school groups back in Magdalen soon, but we will take many things forward from this year. We hope to reach even more people in the future with both in-person and virtual Outreach programmes.

If you would like to find out more about our Access and Outreach work please contact our Outreach Team at outreach@magd.ox.ac.uk
If you know someone who is interested in coming to Magdalen, a good place for them to learn more about our College is on our YouTube channel.
We’d like to thank everyone who joined us for one of our online events this year. If you missed one, or you’d just like to watch one again, you can find them all on our website under Alumni Events, Webinar Recordings.

Here are a few of the webinars from the last 12 months.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event Title</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shakespeare’s second thoughts</td>
<td>In this family friendly webinar Professor Laurie Maguire shows us how to uncover Shakespeare's revisions.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bagels, Bumf, and Buses: A Day in the Life of the English Language</td>
<td>Professor Simon Horobin gives an online talk on his recently-published book <em>Bagels, Bumf, and Buses</em> which explores the fascinating histories of everyday words.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Can poetry make you happy?</td>
<td>Fellow in English Professor Robert Douglas-Fairhurst explores why poetry has traditionally been associated with doom and gloom, and shows how it might be a helpful resource in keeping up our spirits in difficult times.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The magic of magnetism</td>
<td>Fellow in Physics Dr Alexy Karenowska gives a whistle-stop tour for all ages of the fascinating two-thousand-year history of magnetic science.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Our social world: the most complex thing in the universe?</td>
<td>Professors Robin Dunbar and Lucy Bowes discusses the positive psychological and neurobiological mechanisms involved in friendship.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Astrological forecasting of epidemic disease in early modern England</td>
<td>Dr Michelle Pfeffer explains how early modern astrologers took on many of the activities we associate with public health today. More on page 36.</td>
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## Donor impact

In the last financial year:

- **£2.1m**
  - Amount raised thanks to our incredible donors (includes gift aid)

- **14%**
  - Percentage of alumni who made a gift

- **24**
  - Our youngest donor

- **1201**
  - Number of alumni who made a gift

- **101**
  - Our oldest donor

- **“It’s important for Magdalen to continue with the Access and Outreach programme. It helps create a better community at the College and help create stronger environments for individuals.”**
  - Rafiah Niha (2020)

- **18%**
  - The percentage of donors under 40

- **27**
  - The number of countries we received gifts from

- **12%**
  - Percentage of alumni who made gifts to Access and Outreach
Unlocking lockdown
Unlocking lockdown

Learn more about the members of our community at the forefront of the fight against Covid-19 and get an insight into life at the height of lockdown for some of Magdalen’s health and social care workers.

Professor Adrian Hill KBE FRS (1978) is a Fellow at Magdalen, the Lakshmi Mittal and Family Professor of Vaccinology, and founder and Director of the largest academic vaccine centre in the world, the Jenner Institute at the University of Oxford. He is a key member of the team that designed and developed the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine with the Oxford Vaccine Group.

Developing a vaccine would normally take many years, but Adrian and the team developed the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine in just 12 months. One reason for this speed is that the delivery method for the vaccine had already been developed for other diseases and had been tried and tested for almost ten years. ChAdOx1, as it is known, was created by modifying a harmless adenovirus that causes the common cold in chimpanzees.

The finished Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine works by delivering the genetic sequence of the spike protein of SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes Covid-19. The body cells read this genetic code and start producing copies of the spike protein and the immune system then mounts a response. A benefit of using ChAdOx1 for the vaccine is that it generates a strong immune response but is not a replicating virus, so cannot cause an infection.

As well as helping to develop the Covid-19 vaccine, Adrian is part of the team whose recent malaria vaccine trial proved to be 77% effective, the first vaccine to achieve the World Health Organisation’s goal of 75% efficacy.

Adrian recently became a Fellow of the Royal Society and an honorary Knight Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (KBE), for services to Science and Public Health.

Dr Maheshi Ramasamy is a Fellow by Special Election and Florey Lecturer at Magdalen College. In her role as Florey Lecturer, she acts as the Lead Tutor for graduate medical students at Magdalen College. She is also a Consultant Physician at the Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust and the Principal Investigator at the Oxford Vaccine Group where she leads on adult clinical vaccine trials including the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine trials.

The first peer-reviewed results of phase 3 human trials of the vaccine, which took place across the UK and Brazil, demonstrated efficacy in December last year, and at 7.30am on the 4th of January 2021 dialysis patient Brian Pinker became the very first person to receive the Oxford/AstraZeneca Covid-19 vaccine.

Unlike the Moderna and Pfizer vaccines, the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine does not require frozen storage making it easier to transport. It was also able to be manufactured in large quantities and at low cost.

Vaccinations were initially delivered to a small number of hospitals for surveillance purposes, before the national rollout began in earnest, initially for the most vulnerable patients. Last month, AstraZeneca announced that they had manufactured over 1 billion doses of the vaccine which had been released to more than 170 countries.

Professor Adam Finn (1980) is a Professor of Paediatrics at the University of Bristol. He is also Chair of the WHO European Technical Advisory Group of Experts on Immunization (ETAGE) which provides independent review to the Vaccine-preventable Diseases and Immunization programme (VPI), an ex-officio member of the WHO Strategic Advisory Group of Experts on Immunization (SAGE), and a member of the British Department of Health Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI).

The JCVI is an independent expert advisory committee that advises UK health departments on immunisation, making recommendations concerning vaccination schedules and vaccine safety. During the pandemic, the committee gave advice to the recently formed Vaccine Taskforce on the groups of people that should be prioritised for vaccination and later which vaccine different groups should receive.
Robert Staruch (2018) and Tom Kirk (2017), two DPhil students in the Department of Engineering Science, are part of a multidisciplinary team of engineers and medics from the University of Oxford and King’s College London that developed a rapid prototype ventilator in response to the Government’s Ventilator Challenge when a shortage of ventilators was forecast at the beginning of the pandemic.

The team later partnered with medical technology company Smith and Nephew to translate the prototype into a safe, reliable product. In June last year, OxVent Ltd was created to deploy the ventilator during the pandemic and beyond.

Robert and Tom also developed an app to improve the efficiency of the vaccine rollout for housebound patients. VaxiMap has so far helped find almost 28,000 optimal routes for over 300,000 patients.

We spoke to frontline health and social care workers from our community earlier this year to learn how their professional and personal lives had been affected by Covid-19.

The GP

What is your role and what are your main responsibilities?
I am a General Practitioner. Contrary to some perceptions/press we continued working throughout, but differently in view of the challenges!

Do you remember what you felt when you first heard about Covid-19? Did you have any idea about the impact it would have?
Initially, perhaps not concerned enough or optimistic denial - after all, previous potential pandemics like SARS, MERS, swine flu, etc. did not significantly disrupt the NHS or UK. However, as it started to pick up pace in Europe I did become increasingly concerned and started controlling what I could by prepping my own PPE/medical supplies from early March 2020.

What happened in the early days of the virus, how prepared were you at work?
My husband, Louis (2003) normally works in the USA. So, courtesy of various airports in March 2020, I suspect that my whole family had Covid-19 quite early on! Our youngest child was already feverish and kept home from preschool when the rule came in on the 16th March. The whole household needed to isolate together for 14 days so we were in that straight away.

Several of my colleagues were in a similar position with an unwell household member and there was no community testing at that stage to confirm infection or to end isolation.

"My NHS Trust as a whole and my colleagues within the hospital have been very supportive. There has been a real sense of shared endeavour and supporting each other."
earlier than 14 days if negative. In our household, the five of us then became ill sequentially (me last!) so my total isolation was over three weeks.

Some colleagues were also added to the shielding list so could no longer see patients face to face. So the workforce at our practice was significantly depleted straight away. We tried to switch to home working but the IT at the start was very, very slow and without full functionality (e.g. able to access medical records via VPN but not able to authorise prescriptions). Luckily, in the early days, I would say that demand on primary care dropped significantly as patients chose to only contact us for things they really thought were very urgent. As demand picked up again the home working tech had improved for shielding colleagues and fewer were in quarantine at any one time.

**How did the first lockdown affect you personally?**

We changed our ways of working significantly as the pandemic started to unfold. My practice area had a much older demographic than average and there were challenges with the old, not purpose-built premises, not being suited to viral infection control measures. Locally, practices collaborated to set up “hot hubs” where all the suspected Covid-19 patients could be seen by GPs. We swapped to remote methods of assessment first (telephone, video, or email consultations) rather than face-to-face appointments. If we felt that a patient needed a face-to-face consultation afterwards, we could choose the correct site, stagger timings so social distancing could be maintained in waiting rooms and minimise the time in a room together as we had already had a discussion. I also examined things like limb skin lesions/lumps or ears through car windows!

**How did the first lockdown affect you personally?**

It was a challenge! The message initially was to keep children home from school if at all possible, so our 3-year-old twin boys and 6-year-old daughter were home while we both juggled work. In the subsequent 2021 closures, we used some critical worker school provision and family wellbeing was much better for it.

Positive aspects included making healthier habit changes (making the most of that time out to exercise and no social events!) and taking on the distraction of completing an International Board Certification in Lifestyle Medicine.

**Did you feel supported by your work, community, country?**

Our local community was very supportive initially. I have various fancy sets of scrubs made by volunteers! My favourites are the NHS rainbow fabric ones.

As time has gone I think any challenging circumstance highlights cracks as well as strengths in a workplace. Perhaps also the nature of this has demonstrated that life can be shorter than we might hope. We have really seen the lasting impact on family members of some of these deaths. The surveys have suggested an alarming number of GPs planning to retire earlier, cut down their sessions, or leave the NHS due to occupational burnout.

I left the practice I had been working at in March 2021 for a multitude of reasons. Personally, I did not feel particularly burnt out but identify with the concept of “moral injury” with an increased discrepancy between the care I would like to provide, patient expectations, and what was possible in my NHS GP role at that time. I am also excited to do more Lifestyle Medicine work, with the root causes of disease and health - hopefully, in the future, this will become embedded in the NHS.

**Can you remember how you felt when you first heard about a possible vaccine?**

I felt it was inevitable there would be one. Although, I did have some scepticism about how much it will actually change things on an individual versus population level though, for example, what the data would be on transmission as well as the severity of illness.

**How has the vaccine affected you and your work?**

I feel it is a little too early to say, as only a few cohorts are receiving their second dose of vaccine yet after the revised UK schedule spacing out doses. We have yet to see how much the strains continue to vary and what the plans going forward will be for yearly boosters.

Then ultimately, what is deemed politically/culturally acceptable as a mortality and morbidity rate from Covid-19 as it becomes endemic, versus the desire for restrictions to be relaxed.

Although the vaccine developments have been an awesome feat of modern medicine - I have wondered whether there is an overreliance on this... with missed opportunities to also focus on “host” (patient health) factors and also healthcare delivery (particularly inequalities) that are crucial to disease mortality and ongoing morbidity.

**Do you think there will be any long-lasting effects from the pandemic, good or bad? What might they be?**

Yes. There will be a multitude. Some of the negatives include patients suffering from long Covid with ongoing symptoms.

Also, that other serious physical illnesses including cancer diagnoses have been delayed by the impact on the healthcare service and patient perceptions of it. The hospital waiting lists for specialist clinics or non-urgent operations (joint replacements, hernias, gynaecology, etc.) are significantly increased now.
Another concern professionally and personally is the impact of the disruption on critical life periods in childhood and adolescence. The number of consultations for mental health issues in young people is rising significantly with limited resources to support them. For many children school was a safe space and the impact of adverse childhood experiences on future physical and mental health will be significant.

Some other long-lasting effects are not so easily classified as good or bad. It has highlighted many things about NHS working environments, including how often staff would work through their own illnesses (often being more feverish or tachycardic than their ill patients) or leave unwell children being cared for by others. Rates of many other infectious illnesses have gone down with the measures in place - although there is a possible flip side of this on immune system development in children particularly.

It has also shown that it is very possible to organise some aspects of Primary Care at scale and with more remote assessments initially. Many patients and clinicians did find a telephone/video/email consultation initially more convenient and an efficient way to work.

However, many patients would prefer to talk to their doctor face to face even if from a clinical perspective a remote assessment would be adequate. Combined with the increase in waiting lists for hospital clinics, I wonder if this may hasten changes in how healthcare is delivered in England, with more patients/employers turning to private provision for preference of delivery method and access. I think, optimally, there would be more honest political-public dialogue about the direction and scope of the NHS for the 21st century and pandemic-endemic world, which would help to reduce stress and moral injury for clinicians.

I hope there will be more widespread learning and interventions at an individual and population level regarding the root cause of modifiable lifestyle components of health and susceptibility to disease - this is unlikely to be the last novel viral pandemic.

“
I hope there will be widespread learning and interventions at an individual and population level.”

The psychiatrist
Stephen Potts (1979)

What is your role and what are your main responsibilities?
I’m a psychiatrist, working in the renal unit and transplant service (kidney, liver, pancreas, islet cell) at the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh

My responsibilities include assisting the transplant team in their assessment of potential transplant recipients (and living donors of kidneys and livers), their preparation for surgery, and their short- and long-term management afterwards. In a normal year, we undertake approximately 100 kidney transplants (almost half from living donors) 100 liver transplants (a handful from living donors) 15 simultaneous kidney/pancreas transplants, and a similar number of islet cell transplants. I get asked to see between a quarter and a half of kidney, pancreas, and islet cell recipients (a colleague sees the liver recipients) as well as a similar proportion of related living kidney donors, although I see all potential liver donors and so-called altruistic kidney donors (i.e. donors to recipients unknown to them).

I also see patients on dialysis, whether in the dialysis unit, the wards, or the clinics, for a wide variety of reasons (primarily depression, anxiety, cognitive impairment).

Do you remember what you felt when you first heard about Covid-19? Did you have any idea about the impact it would have?
I read the early reports from China with detached curiosity, much as a beachcomber might see something unusual, far out at sea. I followed the description of rising deaths and case numbers, first with concern, - whatever’s out there is bad, and could come this way - which turned into alarm as the first wave crashed over Italy - whatever’s out there is very bad and is coming this way. Along with colleagues and the country I braced for the impact. Of course, none of us knew how bad it would be, or how long it would go on. We still don’t. This uncertainty has consequences of its own.

What happened in the early days of the virus, how prepared were you at work?
I do not work directly in the Covid wards or ICU, but departmental colleagues do, and several caught the virus in the early weeks, despite their PPE ( all have since recovered). This made me wonder if the PPE was adequate whenever I went to the dialysis unit or the non-Covid wards. I was impressed by the speed with which service changes were made: physical alterations in ICU, staff redeployment, huge investment in new IT to allow remote working for meetings with colleagues and patients. One of the criticisms previously levelled at the NHS is the bureaucracy that stymies change: I saw none of that. Big changes happened very quickly. In retrospect, some of them may have happened too quickly,
in response to what we saw in Italy, but our ICU, A&E, and wards were never overwhelmed.

The more we learnt about the risk factors for catching Covid, for becoming seriously ill, and for dying, the more my colleagues and I worried about the impact on our dialysis and transplant patients. Some have caught it, and been ill; a few have died - but it has not ripped through these groups as we first feared it would.

**How did the first lockdown affect you professionally?**

In some ways surprisingly little. I still work the same days, and they are as long as ever. I still go to the same transplant meetings, though sometimes by dialling in. I still see patients face to face in the dialysis unit and on the wards. But where before nearly all my outpatient contact was face to face, now most of it is via video or phone consultation. In general, the kit and the software work well, and video appointments have quickly become accepted by clinicians and patients. I’m sure they will continue after the pandemic, especially for services like transplantation (the kidney service covers Eastern Scotland, all the way to Shetland: the pancreas service the whole of Scotland and Northern Ireland). I do miss the face-to-face contact, and video appointments don’t meet all clinical needs, but I think I miss more the social contact with colleagues at conferences all of which have been virtual for a year.

The transplant programmes were shut down almost completely in Edinburgh, and much of the rest of the country, for several months in the first wave. This meant that people who had waited in precarious health for a transplant now knew they would have to wait longer, though no one could say by how much. I did what I could to support them. The second wave hit other areas harder than Edinburgh, and we did not have to close. This had the paradoxical effect of increasing activity for a time, as Edinburgh was one of a small number of centres still able to use organs.

**How did the first lockdown affect you personally?**

I won’t deny I was apprehensive going into work in March and April 2020, but so was everyone else, and many were going into a work environment much more risk-laden than mine. Gradually, as we came to learn more about the virus and the risks it posed, that apprehension receded, until I feel very much in a new routine. Home life has been less routine: my wife is an academic who has largely worked from home for a year. Our children’s schooling has been affected (whose has not?). Holidays and long-planned family events have been cancelled or postponed. On the positive side, I’ve cycled many more miles on empty lockdown country roads. And we bought a puppy - though we have the excuse that we already owned two older dogs.

**Did you feel supported by your work, community, country?**

Yes, very much so. I have been very impressed by the solidarity displayed at all levels. In return, my son (now 11 and a bagpiper) played in the garden every day for six months at 1 pm, as well as every Thursday for the NHS clap-along. Twice a week he played for the residents of the local sheltered housing unit. (Of course, it is possible that our neighbours and those residents did not welcome the noise, but the feedback has been good, and he has been commended for it).

I do sense a greater awareness of and attention to the needs of others in this pandemic. I hope it lasts as we emerge from it.

**Can you remember how you felt when you first heard about a possible vaccine?**

Hopeful excitement, bolstered by pride at Oxford’s role and specifically Magdalen’s: I’m a contemporary of Adrian Hill of the Jenner Institute (a neighbour in the Daubeny Building), and Adam Finn of the JCVI (a housemate at 63 High Street).

**How has the vaccine affected you and your work?**

Given the Oxford connection, I wanted to have the AstraZeneca (AZ) vaccine but was offered Pfizer’s before AZ had been approved. I took the first dose in December. I was not concerned about stretching the interval to the second dose and had it 10 weeks later. There were minimal consequences after each, and only for 24 hours or so. The vaccine roll-out is now well-advanced in the dialysis unit and the transplant population, much to the relief of the patients and their families, by whose resilience I have been very impressed. To be immunosuppressed and afflicted by comorbidities like diabetes and hypertension, and to read that these were exactly the factors that put people at risk, made for a long and anxious year. For some dialysis patients, their only trips outside their homes have been thrice-weekly visits to hospitals for treatment, each visit fraught with concern they might be exposed to the virus. Yet they have coped.

**Do you think there will be any long-lasting effects from the pandemic, good or bad? What might they be?**

We are seeing huge social, economic, and political consequences beyond the purely medical effects, and there is no doubt they will be long-lasting. Others are better placed than me to comment on what they might be. While we need to believe that positives may emerge, they are unlikely to outweigh even a fraction of the negatives, such as a current global death toll of nearly three
million. A major concern for doctors is what we are learning about the long-term effects of the virus. Long Covid is common, distressing, and disabling. There are features in common with chronic fatigue syndrome, but also significant differences. We don’t know nearly enough about its causes, its course, or how to treat it.

Lockdowns slow the spread...but it is medical science that will get us out of this mess. We are good at it in Britain, in Oxford, at Magdalen. We should celebrate that.

Is there anything else you would like to say about your experience over the last 12 months?
For a long time before the pandemic, I have taken quiet satisfaction in working for the NHS, and in Britain’s many scientific and clinical achievements. What our basic scientists, clinicians, epidemiologists, statisticians, clinical trials organisers, and others have delivered to the world, in record time, in response to this pandemic, should be applauded. Lockdowns slow the spread at social and economic cost, but it is medical science that will get us out of this mess. We are good at it in Britain, in Oxford, at Magdalen. We should celebrate that.

The old-age psychiatrist
Jason Holdcroft-Long (2001)

What is your role and what are your main responsibilities?
I am an old-age psychiatrist, which is a medical doctor looking after older people with mental illnesses including dementia, mood disorders, and psychosis. At the moment I work with inpatients in hospital.

Do you remember what you felt when you first heard about Covid-19? Did you have any idea about the impact it would have?
When I first heard about Covid-19 it wasn’t immediately clear whether it would pose more of a threat than earlier SARS viruses, such as the Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS), which did not unfold into a global pandemic. As the initial days passed it became clear that this was going to be something much more widespread. I went quite quickly from being fairly unconcerned about it to worrying that it wasn’t being taken anywhere near seriously enough based on the warnings from public health experts, a view that remained the same for quite some time before the Government acted.

Even once the global situation was well established, I can’t say I anticipated just how long it would go on for and how much it would restrict our lives.

What happened in the early days of the virus, how prepared were you at work?
When this all began I was working in a secure environment with high levels of physical and procedural security, and so we were able to stop visitors from coming and reduce movement within the campus very quickly. Like most hospitals, we had dealt with localised outbreaks before and so the basic measures and PPE were familiar and instigated swiftly.

How did the first lockdown affect you personally?
On a personal level, I was not as affected by the lockdown as many others were. I was able to drive the 50 miles to work in under an hour with nobody else on the roads. I took to taking regular walks in nearby countryside and my fitness improved quite a bit. In some ways, working in healthcare and thus continuing to go out to work during the lockdown meant I got the best of both worlds.

Did you feel supported by your work, community, country?
My NHS Trust as a whole and my colleagues within the hospital have been very supportive. There has been a real sense of shared endeavour and supporting each other. In my local community, there have been some nice gestures such as discounts for NHS staff, and lots of window displays. I am afraid I am rather cynical about public opinion more widely given the abuse some public health experts have experienced, and the behaviour of many people in defying lockdown, mask-wearing, and other measures to protect each other. The situation in this country and the number of deaths would have been a lot better if the NHS and the public health system had not been underfunded and partly dismantled by successive governments. Rather than banging saucepans together on a Thursday night, it would be better if people thought more carefully about their choices at the ballot box and what they mean for the National Health Service.

Can you remember how you felt when you first heard about a possible vaccine?
I was impressed with the rapid and
simultaneous development of different vaccines. As an Oxford alumnus and also a participant in the Oxford Vaccine Trial maybe I am a bit biased towards the ‘Oxford vaccine’! Certainly, the news that it was probable that at least one good-enough vaccine would be developed was very welcome, as it seemed to me that at least a semblance of normality could one day return.

How has the vaccine affected you and your work?
In purely practical terms, being fully vaccinated has not made any difference to my work. On a personal level, however, it has been an enormous boon. The roll-out of mass vaccination has been a profound relief both in terms of reduced risk to our vulnerable elderly patients and of course in regard to vulnerable family and friends. Outbreaks on our wards have now all but stopped and although we have the extra admin of arranging vaccination, it is infinitely preferable to dealing with people who are very sick with Covid.

Do you think there will be any long-lasting effects from the pandemic, good or bad? What might they be?
I tend to be sceptical about predictions that ‘life will never be the same again’. People have short memories. I think people will be more cautious more quickly when the next pandemic begins, and I hope that the government of the day will respond more rapidly, but will most people change their everyday behaviour? I can’t see it.

Prison Samaritan
Kath Qualtrough (1996)

What is your role and what are your main responsibilities?
I work in London prisons as a Samaritan, training prison residents to be Listeners, which means they are acting like Samaritans on the inside, supporting fellow prison residents with their emotional health, with the overall aim of reducing suicide in the prison environment. Currently, I am working with HMP Brixton and HMP Wandsworth, which are both medium-security men’s prisons.

Do you remember what you felt when you first heard about Covid-19? Did you have any idea about the impact it would have?
At the time, I thought lockdown would not last long. I had no idea what the impact would be. As it is, the men we support in prison have been locked down more intensely during the pandemic (due to staffing/precautionary procedures), often only getting half an hour outside their cells to do all they need to such as wash themselves and their clothes, make phone calls, get food, and socialise before going back into a one- or maximum two-person cell, often with someone they don’t get on with. The conditions for a single-cell resident are not dissimilar to conditions on death row in the States, where I also support a resident. Death row residents also get locked down for 23-23.5 hours per day in solitary conditions. We have had more suicides in the main prison we support in the past months than I can remember in the entire eight years. I have been working with the Samaritans in different men’s and women’s prisons across London.

What happened in the early days of the virus, how prepared were you at work?
We got prepared very quickly. The Governors and officers at the prisons and the Samaritans in my team followed all rules to protect each other and the men we support.

How did the first lockdown affect you personally?
It impacted my family’s health intensely, which therefore impacted me considerably as I feel for their suffering.

Did you feel supported by your work, community, country?
Work: mostly. I also work with NGOs part-time and they have been slower to support than the Samaritans and therapy clinic. Community: mostly incredibly supportive. Country: being in the worst five countries in the world according to recorded deaths from Covid-19 speaks volumes.

Can you remember how you felt when you first heard about a possible vaccine?
Positive.

How has the vaccine affected you and your work?
Well, it wiped me out for a day after having the first dose!

Do you think there will be any long-lasting effects from the pandemic, good or bad? What might they be?
I am concerned for how traumatised people will be from losing loved ones, being so isolated, having such a sudden change to their lives for so long, and for younger children how their development has been impacted. I hope to help as many people as possible with the trauma therapy we are trained in as QEC practitioners, and also as a Samaritan.

Is there anything else you would like to say about your experience over the last 12 months?
Only to send warm and positive wishes to all Magdalen alumni after such a difficult period for the human population.
The consolation of books

With book sales through the roof during the pandemic, Magdalen Librarian, Dr Lucy Gwynn, explains why so many of us read for comfort in a time of crisis.
If there is one thing a librarian knows, it is that there is a book for every occasion. The father of modern library science S.R. Ranganathan wrote in 1931 that there is ‘for every reader, his or her book’. Since the pandemic began, many of us have felt the need to rely on our books to console and sustain us. I fled to the comfort-reading of my teenage years: Georgette Heyer’s regency romances and Diana Wynne Jones’s young adult fantasy novels. Others, keen to find a fictional or historical narrative to help make sense of their experiences, turned to Daniel Defoe’s *Journal of the Plague Year* (first published in 1722), Camus’ *The Plague* (1947), or Emily St John Mandel’s suddenly relevant *Station Eleven* (2014). It’s a perennial response: we have always sought practical help, philosophical solace, reassuring empathy, and pure escapism from our books. Magdalen’s book collections include lovely examples of titles which gave consolation to past readers, a selection of which are described below.

1. **The consolation of philosophy**

Boethius’s *De Consolatione Philosophia* is the first book to leap to mind: it was written as an exercise in solacing the self, and as one of the bestsellers of the medieval period provided a model for philosophical self-reliance in the face of misfortune. Boethius (c.477-534 AD) was a late Roman political leader from a good family with fortune on his side until he was arrested for conspiracy by the Ostrogothic King of Italy, Theodoric the Great, thrown into prison, and eventually executed. Whilst in prison he composed *The Consolation*, a dialogue between himself and Lady Philosophy who reminds him that Fortune, gleefully spinning her wheel, can never supply lasting happiness. Only by abandoning transitory things like fame and riches and focusing on the things that Fortune cannot take away, virtue and reason, can we find real happiness.

Magdalen has many copies of Boethius’s work, but the most interesting must be the edition printed by William Caxton. Caxton, who introduced the printing press to England, printed Boethius in his workshop in Westminster in 1478. It was a sensible commercial choice of an extremely popular text, particularly as Caxton chose to publish in English as translated by the already famous author of *The Canterbury Tales*, Geoffrey Chaucer. Caxton’s edition of Boethius is typical of his printed works, with a florid typeface based on the handwriting of Flemish scribes, and gaps left for initial letters so that a book owner could pay for illuminated or painted initials according to their purse. It is a treasure of English print history.

2. **A wealth of remedies**

Robert Burton, whose 400th birthday falls this year, also wrote to soothe himself: he said that ‘I write of Melancholy by being busie to avoid Melancholy’. His *Anatomy of Melancholy* is a huge, copious encyclopedia of information on the causes, types, symptoms, and cures of melancholy gathered ‘out of a confused companie of notes’. It is a difficult read, partly because of the sheer mass of material Burton includes, but it addresses the common experience of undirected sadness and fear with wit and sincere sympathy of feeling. It was extremely popular, going through five, ever-larger editions in Burton’s lifetime. It also has one of the most gloriously haphazard indexes ever produced.

Our contemporary copy is the fifth edition of 1638. It is sadly battered, and the distinctive engraved title page is incomplete. But the inscription suggests that Burton himself gave this copy to Magdalen in the year it was printed. He probably knew his audience: the fact that our copy is well-worn may suggest that melancholy was familiar to Magdalen’s scholars and that they sought remedy in *The Anatomy of Melancholy*. 
3. Travel by proxy
Burton lived almost all his adult life in Oxford and wrote that all his travelling had been done through travel books and printed maps and views. Very few of us have been able to travel far this year, and we may have compensated by using guides and online brochures to plan future adventures. In centuries when travel was slow and expensive, many people relied on travel narratives and books of views of exotic places to conjure up the world beyond their reach.

One of the most evocative books about a foreign region in Magdalen's collections is William Hamilton's *Campi Phlegraei*, published in Naples in 1776. Hamilton describes in it the 'flaming fields' in the vicinity of Mount Vesuvius, which he had observed first hand as Britain's envoy to the Spanish court at Naples. A scientific record of volcanic activity, the lavishly illustrated *Campi Phlegraei* includes illustrations of eruptions, but also of archaeological digs, geological specimens, and vistas across the Bay of Naples.

4. A joy forever
There is much pleasure to be gained from beautiful works of art and medieval Books of Hours are among the finest artistic productions from the Middle Ages. The artistic skill and rich materials dedicated to the Book of Hours – a compilation of liturgy, prayers, and Biblical extracts – also had a spiritual purpose. Including images with accurate perspective and immaculately rendered detail allowed the user of the book to meditate on the events depicted and empathise with the characters involved. The gold leaf and costly minerals used to make brilliant colours reminded the book's user that the book and its contents were sacred and should be handled with reverence.

Magdalen is lucky to have several Books of Hours. MS 252 is the smallest (barely nine centimetres tall), and one of the most beautiful, with its ornately-decorated borders and full-page illustrations. Each page of the tiny volume has a wide border covered in florid decoration. Pages from the beginning of the Office for the Dead depict black-robed mourners and monks around a catafalque. Praying for the dead would have offered further comfort to a late medieval user of this book, offering an active, ongoing relationship with the souls of departed loved ones now in Purgatory.

5. Et in Arcadia Ego
The pastoral genre, superficially, provides a place to which readers and writers can escape. It presents an idealised rural idyll populated with shepherds and nymphs, all engaged in a simple, contented life unencumbered by the corruption and labour of the city. Many pastoral works, from Hesiod's *Works and Days* to Shakespeare's *As You Like It* to Thomas Gray's *Elegy in a Country Church-Yard*, have more complicated things to say, revealing a tension between the ideal and the realities of rural life, and using the pastoral mode as an oblique means of political criticism. But Virgil's *Georgics*, one of the founding texts for the pastoral genre, have been a touchstone for many modern readers in times of trouble. The *Georgics* were themselves composed in the immediate aftermath of Rome's bloody civil wars (44 BCE to 31 BCE), and many of the subsequent translations point to similar periods of upheaval in British history. These include the first English translation, written by John Ogilby during the second English Civil War, and Cecil Day-Lewis's published in the dark year of 1940.

The edition shown here was published in Lyon in 1529, as Europe began a century of religious wars and social upheavals. The wonderfully animated woodcuts make this copy delightful. They were originally cut in Strasbourg in 1502, and show characters in detailed early 16th-century fashions in a richly detailed rural landscape.

6. Escaping the everyday
Finally, some novels provide us with a fictional escape – into the past, into other countries, and even into other worlds. There are many examples of such stories in Magdalen's collections, including ripping yarns by Rider Haggard and Rudyard Kipling or science fiction by C.S. Lewis. But one of the most distinguished examples of 'genre' fiction is our copy of George Eliot's *Romola* (1862-1863). *Romola* was Eliot's fourth novel, set in Renaissance Florence: the turbulent years between the death of Lorenzo de Medici in 1492 and the execution of Dominican preacher Girolamo Savonarola in 1498. Eliot spent four weeks in Florence in 1861 and researched extensively. It proved to be the least popular of Eliot's novels, its narrative weighed down by its didactic antiquarianism. But its atmosphere is exquisitely evoked: the heat of the Florentine high summer rises off its pages.

Magdalen's copy of *Romola* is outstanding. *Romola* was Eliot's first novel to be published in serialised form in *The Cornhill Magazine* then edited by the novelist William Makepeace Thackeray. Our copy is made up of the serialised text trimmed and bound together in a rich red leather binding. It is an invaluable example of a serialised novel from the age of Dickens, Gaskell, and Trollope.

All these lovely books are housed in the Old Library and have sustained Magdalen's community throughout the centuries. We continue to offer books that support, entertain, and educate. Our collection of books for welfare and wellbeing continues to grow. And our 'Blind Date with a Book' initiative – in which any member of the College can sign up to be issued with an entirely frivolous book from our collections – was a runaway success! The library continues to be at the heart of Magdalen, consoling as well as stimulating.
Magdalen Fellow in History Dr Michelle Pfeffer explains that without advancements in medicine we might not have turned to Chris Whitty for advice during the pandemic...but an astrologer.

The internet is awash with comparisons between life during Covid-19 and life during the Bubonic plague. The two have many similarities, from the spread of misinformation and the tracking of mortality figures to the ubiquity of the question “when will it end?”

But there are, of course, crucial differences between the two. Today, when looking for information on the incidence, distribution, and likely outcome of the pandemic, we turn to epidemiologists and infectious disease models. During the Bubonic plague, people turned to astrologers.

Exploring the role played by astrologers in past epidemics reminds us that although astrology has been debunked, it was integral to the development of medicine and public health.

The flu, written in the stars
Before germ theory, the Scientific Revolution, and then the Age of Enlightenment, it was common for medical practitioners to use astrological techniques in their everyday practice.

Compared to the simplistic horoscopes in today’s magazines, premodern astrology was a complex field based on detailed astronomical calculations. Astrologers were respected health authorities who were taught at the finest universities throughout Europe and hired to treat princes and dukes.

Astrology provided physicians with a naturalistic explanation for the onset and course of disease. They believed the movements of the celestial bodies, in relation to each other and the signs of the Zodiac, governed events
on earth. Horoscopes mapped the heavens, allowing physicians to draw conclusions about the onset, severity, and duration of illness.

The impact of astrology on the history of medicine can still be seen today. The term “influenza” was derived from the idea that respiratory disease was a product of the influence of the stars.

Public health and plague
Astrologers were seen as important authorities for the health of communities as well as individuals. They offered public health advice in annual almanacs, which were some of the most widely read literature in the premodern world.

Almanacs provided readers with tables for astrological events for the coming year, as well as advice on farming, political events, and the weather.

The publications were also important disseminators of medical knowledge. They explained basic medical principles and suggested remedies. They made prognostications about national health, using astrology to predict when an influx of venereal disease or plague was likely to arise.

These public health predictions were often based on the astrological theory of conjunctions. According to this theory, when certain planets seem to approach each other in the sky from our perspective on earth, great socio-cultural events are bound to occur.

When Bubonic plague hit France in 1348, the King asked the physicians at the University of Paris to account for its origins. Their answer was that the plague was caused by a conjunction of Saturn, Mars, and Jupiter.

Predictions from above
Astrological accounts of plague remained popular into the 17th century. In this period, astrology was increasingly attacked as superstitious, so some astrologers tried to set their field on a more scientific grounding.

In an effort to make astrology more scientific, the English astrologer John Gadbury produced one of the earliest epidemiological studies of disease.

In *London's Deliverance Predicted* (1655), Gadbury claimed his contemporaries couldn’t explain when plagues would arrive, or how long they’d last.

Gadbury proposed that if planets caused plagues, then planets also stopped plagues. Studying astrological events would therefore allow one to predict the course of an epidemic.

He gathered data from the previous four great London plagues (in 1593, 1603, 1625, and 1636), scouring the *Bills of Mortality* for weekly plague death rates, and compiling *A Table shewing the Increase and Abatement of the Plague*. Gadbury also used planetary tables to locate the planets’ positions throughout the epidemics.

He then compared his data sets, looking for correlations.

Gadbury found a correlation between intensity of plague and the positions of Mars and Venus. Plague deaths increased sharply in July 1593, at which point Mars had moved into an astrologically significant position. Deaths then abated in September, when Venus’s position became more significant. Gadbury concluded that the movement of “the fiery Planet Mars” was the origin of pestilence and the “cause of its raging”, while the influence of the “friendly” Venus helped abate it.

Gadbury then applied his findings to the pestilence plaguing London at the time. He was able to correlate the beginnings of the plague in late 1664 and its growing intensity in June 1665 with recent astrological events.

He predicted the upcoming movement of Venus in August would see a fall in plague deaths. Then the movement of Mars in September...
would make the plague deadlier, but the movements of Venus in October, November, and December would halt the death rate.

Looking for patterns
Unfortunately for Gadbury, plague deaths increased dramatically in August. However, he was right in predicting a peak in September followed by a steep decrease at the end of the year. If Gadbury had accounted for other correlates – such as the coming of winter – his study might have been received more favourably.

The medical advice in Gadbury’s book certainly doesn’t stand up today. He argued the plague was not contagious, and that isolating at home only caused more deaths. Yet his attempt to find correlations with fluctuating mortality rates offers an early example of what we now call epidemiology.

While we may discredit Gadbury’s astrological assumptions, examples such as this illustrate the important role astrology played in the history of medicine, paving the way for naturalist explanations of infectious disease.

In Oxford, up until the end of the 17th century, astrology was a central part of the quadrivium (the four basic arts subjects - arithmetic, geometry, music, and astronomy/astrology), which were taught after the trivium (grammar, logic, rhetoric).

Originally published at The Conversation
How does it feel to be the first person to achieve what you have?
Joy: Well, I never expected to become the first female Clerk, which made becoming it even better. However, there were difficulties at the beginning including being online instead of singing together at College. Also, people who weren’t big fans of me getting the position went online to say so; that was tricky. However, you have to keep your head down and get on with the work.
Dinah: Do you think there is more prejudice surrounding women singing than playing the organ?
Joy: I think so. There is an argument that the sound is different; the organ will sound the same whether a woman or a man plays it, but I will make a different sound to my male co-workers.
Anna: Did people doubt your capability?
Joy: People in the Choir have been so lovely. However, I feel a personal pressure not to let anyone have any argument against me being here. I don’t want there to be an excuse for people to judge other women.
Dinah: There can be a lot of extra responsibility on you as a woman. You’re not just you - you are seen as a symbol of what women can achieve.

There can be a lot of extra responsibility on you as a woman. You’re not just you - you are seen as a symbol of what women can achieve.”
much. It can detract from the fact that we were just the best people for the jobs.

Dinah: Yes, although I understand why people find it interesting. I remember when I was inaugurated at Magdalen I had to visit the Bishop of Winchester to make my declaration. I went to Winchester Cathedral to pay my respects to the tomb of William of Waynflete. I could imagine that he would have been pretty shocked to see a Jewish woman elected president of his college. But I always think that these things only matter up until the moment that they first happen. Then they don’t matter at all – they seem perfectly natural.

Anna: I think being female has become more of a thing since I left Magdalen. I didn’t think about being the first woman to be an organ scholar at the time. I just thought I would play the harp and play organ on the side, but Dan (Daniel Hyde former Informator Choristarum) encouraged me to apply for a bigger scholarship. I didn’t really know what I was getting myself into but I just felt it was a great opportunity. It was a big shift to go from an all-girl school to an all-male choir.

Joy: Was it difficult to deal with? Was it a different atmosphere to now?

Anna: They didn’t know how to treat me - should they treat me as a boy, as a sister...? It was odd, but we quickly got over it.

Joy: There were things in place when I started, and I had a degree under my belt, I was a bit older, and I had already gone through what they had gone through. It would have been much more difficult if I was just out of school.

Anna: How do the young boys treat you?

Joy: They are great.

Dinah: They work so incredibly hard. It’s very good for children to be part of a professional-standard choir and to be prepared to perform at that level.

Joy: It is the best musical training you can get as a child. You also learn about how to deal with pressure. It would be great barrister training! Ha!

They didn’t know how to treat me - should they treat me as a boy, as a sister...? It was odd, but we quickly got over it.”
Dinah: Yes! You learn self-discipline and teamwork.
Anna: And you have the opportunity to work alongside 18-19- and 20-year-olds as equals.
Dinah: I found it striking on May Morning that all the boys were clamouring up the tower before dawn, incredibly excited, and then Mark (Mark Williams Informator Choristarum) went *spreads fingers out as if casting a spell* and they all went *pulls serious face*. They are extremely focused.

Joy: I have had people who have helped me. My singing teacher as a child instilled in me a sense of, ‘You can do it!’ He was very pro-women singing. I also get my competitiveness from him. He was a brilliant role model. I know that he follows the Magdalen College Choir Facebook page to see how I’m doing.
Anna: Roger Spikes the Director of Music at my old school, Oxford High School, was an important figure. He believed in me, even in year nine. He would let me conduct chamber choirs. I’m still in touch with him. He is one of those people who has been so important to my development as a human being.

Also, Assistant Organist Tom Allery, who held my hand every step of the way at Magdalen. I remember one performance where I was so...
nervous about using a swell box he put his hand in the organ and operated it manually. He did it for about 10 minutes, which meant he got cuts on his wrists. It symbolised how much he was willing to do to support me.

Was there anyone - naming no names - who was a hindrance?
Joy: Dealing with the trolls was difficult. Nothing more than that. I haven’t had anyone say anything to me, face to face.
Dinah: That’s social media. It’s just one or two sad people being unpleasant.
Joy: The first [negative online comment] I saw, I took personally. But you get tired after a short time and your reaction is just an eye roll and a sigh.
Dinah: There is a lot of hate out there.
Anna: At Magdalen I was fine. It was when I moved to Cambridge that I encountered a little more resistance. Some people said that hiring me was just a box-ticking exercise because I was a woman. At first, I took it personally, but then you realise that it’s political, not personal. You develop a thicker skin. As long as you know you’re doing it for the right reasons, it’s fine.

Is there any advice you would give yourself as a young woman?
Anna: If you don’t hand in an essay it’s not the end of the world. Ha!
Dinah: Outrageous. Ha!
Anna: In my final year we had four or five essays a week alongside an organ scholarship. It wasn’t planned to be like that - it was impossible. At one stage, there was a big service coming up and an essay to hand in. I had to decide between public and private humiliation, so I didn’t hand in my essay.
Dinah: What did your tutor say?
Anna: He understood.

What advice would you give to anyone who would like to follow in your footsteps?
Dinah: There is a tendency to believe that everyone else is confident and together and only you feel anxious insecure and inadequate, but the reality is that everyone feels the same inside. It helps to acknowledge and accept your own feelings and

“Sometimes gender is hyped too much. It can detract from the fact that we were just the best people for the jobs.”
vulnerability. Learning to do this has been a source of strength for me. Be kind to yourself.

When I was an undergraduate I would get free tickets to balls by reading tarot cards. It was quite easy because it was 1986 so what you could do is just say to everybody, 'I see a future for you in management consultancy' and they all thought you were amazingly prescient. I would also say, 'Everyone thinks you’re confident, but inside you feel insecure.' And everyone would say, ‘That’s me!’ Whether they’d been to public school or state school, however popular or successful they were … everyone feels like that.

Joy: I’ve learnt that the boys hide it a bit better. One change I’ve made is to cut out self-deprecation. I want to be taken seriously.

Dinah: In my experience, boys can often express insecurity as bravado where girls express it as self-deprecation.

Joy: So my advice would be to mimic the boys and how they do things. You don’t have to be the loudest in the room, but having that calm self-belief is going to get you far.

Anna: One of the biggest barriers to women and girls in the organ world is that they start later. They come in at a disadvantage.

Dinah: Why?

Anna: Because they often haven’t been able to be a chorister and that’s one of the most common routes into the organ. However, we are starting to see big changes. Joy, when did you start choral singing?

Joy: At Ripon Cathedral, when I was a chorister, there was a girls’ choir with one or two services a week. I was lucky. I was in the minority nationally. The boys sang five times a week.

Dinah: Interestingly, you say that you were lucky, when you were allowed to sing twice a week when what you are describing is structural discrimination.

Joy: But then again, if I didn’t have that I wouldn’t be here. It is becoming less of a thing. Most cathedrals have a girls’ choir now. Girls have an opportunity to sing.

Dinah: What about a mixed choir?

Joy: There is a question about sounds. I don’t hear too much of a difference myself. Some people are also concerned about what will happen to the boys?

Anna: I think that we should encourage boys to sing. Gendered spaces are a good thing – a boys’ choir is a good thing. In my experience, boys and girls respond differently in a choir.

They need encouragement in different ways.

What are you most proud of achieving?

Joy: I’m most proud of getting through Covid and managing my ambitions and expectations, and ensuring they are still intact. I’m also proud to promote the music I love.

Anna: I am most proud when I hear the girls in the girls’ choir. They come to me very shy and then they do a big solo. I find it very emotional. I hope they look at me conducting and think ‘maybe one day I could do that.’

Dinah: I’m hoping that the thing I will be most proud of is something I haven’t done yet.

Dinah Rose QC (1984) is a barrister, and the first woman to be President of Magdalen College. Dinah read Modern History at Magdalen.

Anna Lapwood (2013) is an organist, conductor, presenter, and the youngest person to become the Director of Music at Pembroke College, Cambridge. She conducts the Chapel Choir at Pembroke and founded the Pembroke College Girls’ Choir. Anna was the first woman to be an Organ Scholar at Magdalen College.

Joy Sutcliffe is the first woman to be a member of the Choir of Magdalen College. She is a stipendiary clerk who sings alto. Before coming to Magdalen, Joy made history at Durham Cathedral as the first woman to be a choral scholar.
State of the art

Magdalen Fellow and Associate Professor of Fine Art Professor Samson Kambalu has just secured one of the most famous public art commissions in the world - the fourth plinth at Trafalgar Square.

We learn more about Samson and his work and meet two students studying Fine Art at Magdalen.
As well as a teacher, he is an artist, writer, translator, cultural consultant, and actor - the last three were for the recent Chiwetel Ejiofor’s film *The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind*.

He received his most recent metaphorical hat when his piece ‘Antelope’ was chosen by the Fourth Plinth Commission earlier this year.

As a fourth-plinth artist, Samson will join the ranks of some of the most recognised and respected artists working today, including Sir Antony Gormley OBE, Yinka Shonibare CBE, and Marc Quinn.

Samson’s piece is a restaging of a photograph from 1914 showing the pan-Africanist Malawian Baptist preacher Reverend John Chilembwe outside his church in the village of Mbombwe, Malawi, with the British missionary John Chorley.

In the piece, Reverend Chilembwe will be shown with his hat on, defying the colonial rule that forbade Africans from wearing them in front of white people. Chilembwe died in a rebellion against colonial rule a year after the photograph was taken and his church was destroyed. Reverend Chilembwe is commemorated in Malawi with a national day and was formerly depicted on banknotes.

*Antelope* will be exhibited in Trafalgar Square in 2022.

You can see much of Samson’s preparatory work, including maquettes of the statues, in the Old Library, which is open to the public every Wednesday until October 17 and then again next year.

Samson was born in Chiradzulu in the Republic of Malawi in 1975, 11 years after the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland was dissolved and Malawi, formerly Nyasaland, became independent from Britain.

He completed a BA in Fine Art and Ethnomusicology at the University of Malawi, an MA in Fine Art at Nottingham Trent University, and a PhD at Chelsea College of Art and Design.

His work is autobiographical and fuses aspects of the Nyau culture of the Chewa (an ethnic group of the Bantu peoples from Central and Southern Africa), the anti-reification theories of the Situationist movement, and the Protestant tradition of inquiry, criticism, and dissent.

Samson’s work can be found in the national art collections of the Tate, the British Council, and the Contemporary Art Society. His work has been exhibited around the world, including at the Dakar Biennale, Tokyo International Art Festival, and the Liverpool Biennial. He was included in All the World’s Futures, Venice Biennale 2015, curated by Okwui Enwezor. Samson’s book, *The Jive Talker: Or, How to Get a British Passport*, is based on his early life growing up in Malawi.
I discovered a very warm and inspiring community allowing endless opportunities for creative stimulation.”

Hugo Max
BFA Fine Art 2020
Where did you grow up?
I was born and grew up in London.

Have you always been interested in art? Do you remember a time when you knew that art was what you wanted to focus on?
Both my parents are classical musicians and exposed me to music and art from a very young age. After a Sunday afternoon walk with my family, we would come home and play with poster paints or carve and print linocuts. It wasn’t until I was ten years old that I first experimented with acrylics and then oils, and painting became integral to my perception of the world.

It was a very difficult decision for me to choose between studying music or art. I went to a specialist music school for Sixth Form which was a very rewarding experience. For me, choosing to go to art school meant journeying deeper into the unknown. Both art-making and music-making are appreciative processes requiring an awareness of a craft and its history and a generosity towards your collaborators. While music-making is often re-creative, I am more drawn to creative processes. My biggest desire is to interrelate contrasting mediums and dissolve the boundaries between different creative disciplines and expository/performance spaces.

Has there been someone in your life who has been particularly supportive of your art: a teacher; a friend; a parent etc?
I feel privileged to have such supportive close family members and friends. My siblings Noah (composer/conductor) and Sophie (actor/writer) are my greatest inspirations. They work tirelessly and are braver than anyone I know.

I have had many teachers and mentors who have fuelled my passion for art. Marie-Thérèse Ross is a London-based artist who broadened my exposure to contemporary art and art history. She always has time to listen and give positive, productive advice. My violin teacher, Michał Ćwiżewicz, Professor at the Royal College of Music, instilled in me the discipline required for making art by way of organised practice and consolidating technique.

Which artist/artists inspire you?
My painting is largely inspired by Abstract Expressionism and the work of the ‘School of London’ painters, particularly Frank Auerbach. Recently I have found Jasper Johns’ Cross-Hatching works hypnotic and addictive and they have deeply influenced my current paintings based on Fugal structure.

One of my favourite filmmakers is Nicolas Roeg whose observant cinematography and visionary attitude to temporality in the edit shaped an oeuvre of films that are empathetically human and mysteriously unknowable. I am also interested in Roeg’s use of musical performers rather than actors in his films (Jagger in Performance, Bowie in The Man Who Fell To Earth, and Garfunkel in Bad Timing), instilling his work with collaborative spirit. Over the last few years I have been drawn to the bold cinematic language of films from the Japanese New Wave, recently those by auteur Akio Jissôji. Profound and experimental with narratives clearly inspired by the literature of Bataille, Jissôji’s works are beautifully stylised, provocative for their explicit content with visionary, captivating cinematography and brilliant utilisation of Western Classical music as a soundtrack.

Why did you choose to study art at Magdalen/Ruskin?
I went to the Ruskin Open Day and felt an incredible energy on campus that I hadn’t felt anywhere before. Walking around Magdalen, with its majestic architecture, beautiful grounds and deer park, exciting extra-curricular programmes, and beautiful library, I discovered a very warm and inspiring community allowing endless opportunities for creative stimulation.

What makes the course at Ruskin such a good option?
The Fine Art course is very liberating and allows you the freedom to pursue your personal practice with nurturing guidance from tutors. Unique to the Ruskin, the anatomy course provides the opportunity to hone craft skills whilst gaining an enriched and more abstract understanding of the workings of the human body; I have found that this greater awareness has strongly affected my viola improvisations, the connective tissue between my music-making and action painting.

I feel incredibly lucky to have two families in Oxford: my fellow art students who come together to share ideas and energy at the Ruskin and those living with me at Magdalen.

What are your ambitions for your work?
I hope that people will emotionally engage with my work. I believe that the power of storytelling can bring people together and I am looking forward to future collaborations that will provide opportunities for sharing ideas and experiences with others.

Over the last year, the instinctive qualities of my practice have been challenged, paving the way for more informed creative decisions and also playful discovery. This has enabled me to explore a new painting and film language and also the importance of ducks throughout my life and their significance in my current work across all mediums, a vessel through which to explore regression and nostalgia.

For the time being, I hope to follow the ducks and see where they take me.
Where did you grow up?
Living in southeast London has been essential to my practice, community is the soul of all my artwork, the experiences I have gained from living within my communities, it is what drives my creativity. I love to explore people in different spaces, particularly people from my local community Peckham.

Have you always been interested in art? Do you remember a time when you knew that art was what you wanted to focus on?
I remember always having this thing called art around me since I can remember, my family are all very creative. Art has stuck around because it has always been a mystery to me, which I'm still working out. It's hard to put into words. To me art is a manifestation of life, it's a projection of my inner consciousness. It allows me to express myself in ways I couldn't with words or any other form of expression. It allows me to understand myself more and look into who I am as a person. My culture/spirituality. It forces me to look at myself and the world around me and reflect deeply and appreciate all my experiences in life.

Has there been someone in your life who has been particularly supportive of your art: a teacher; a friend; a parent etc?
My whole family is very creative, especially my three older sisters and my mum, which has really influenced me and given me the motivation to be creative. When you grow up with an immigrant parent, there is often this pressure to be within fields that are more financially secure like medicine, finance; to take the safe route. Having siblings before me that decided to veer away from that path and go down their own creative route, that inspired me to do the same.

Tell us about your work.
My paintings are about black figures in blue spaces, the intention for the work is to evoke dream-like emotions of peace and reminiscence, I use the subject matter of old family archives intertwined with my immediate environment. It's important that my paintings work with transparency and softness, this is translated through the materiality of wood, charcoal, acrylic, and oil paints

My painting conveys connection and relationships, exploring people in different spaces. Currently, many of us are in the space of our homes separate from our communities and longing for connection again, this is what my work recently has revealed to me.

What are your ambitions for your work?
Humanity captivates me, it is the source of all my inspiration and passion. How people exist in the same reality on a global scale and how different cultures and communities evolve from people existing in a space. I’ve been obsessed with the term diaspora as it resonates intensely with my own experience. The plethora of artists who have migrated from one part of the world to another (or whose families have) comforts me, it helps me realise I am not alone. I hope to express alternative narratives and challenge the ideas and structures of the established world.

Representation is one of my ambitions. I am British Nigerian living in today's world. I'm always searching for people I see myself within. Representation in the art world is needed. I want to be someone navigating this space, in which someone may use me as a vessel, inspiration, and mirror for their creative endeavours.

You can see one of Paul's pieces on the inside back cover.
I’m always searching for people I see myself within. Representation in the art world is needed.”

Paul Majek-Oduyoye
BFA Fine Art 2020
Changing rooms

If you’re planning a visit back to Magdalen, you might notice one or two changes. Here are our new, repurposed, and renamed rooms at College.

1. The Sophia Sheppard Room
   This room is above the ante-room to the newly-dubbed Terry Newport Room and is named after one of the College’s most important, yet unsung, benefactors. Sophia was the youngest sister of President Martin Routh and lived with him in the Lodgings until she married.
2. The Cardinal Wolsey Room
This room is next to the steps to the Hall and is named after one of our famous alumni. After studying here, Wolsey became a Fellow of Magdalen and Master of Magdalen College School. Despite not having any windows, the room includes a beautiful lit panel of stained glass found in a tunnel under New Building.

3. The Richard Rive Room
Previously known as the Longwall Seminar Room, the Richard Rive Room celebrates the life and work of the South African Magdalen alumnus, writer, and scholar who spoke out against apartheid. Rive left his library to Magdalen College.

4. The Terry Newport Room
This room was previously known as the New Room and is named after Terry Newport who retired as butler after almost 50 years at Magdalen in 2019.
Inside job

Robert Posarsek is Deputy Head Porter at Magdalen College. His duties are wide-ranging but include welcoming and assisting visitors to the College, overseeing College security matters, and acting as a contact for students in an emergency.

How long have you been at Magdalen?
July was my 15th anniversary. I remember coming for the interview with Bob the Lodge Manager, Bill his Deputy, and Mark the Home Bursar. I wasn’t nervous; they put me at ease. I’d worked at another university before coming to Magdalen, but the students were totally different there. It took me a while to get used to the polite students at Magdalen.

What do you most enjoy about your job?
Everything, because every day is different. But if I had to choose one thing, it would be dealing with the students – helping them out.

What has been the biggest challenge?
Taking on the job of Deputy Lodge Manager when Bill the Lodge Manager left about five years ago. It was a steep learning curve, but I soon got the hang of it.

What has been a highlight?
Having my portrait in the Hall (opposite). It was particularly nice to know that students, staff, and the Fellows had voted for it to happen.

What is your favourite part of College?
Addison’s Walk. I walk it every evening after I finish my shift. I particularly like it when it’s misty – it’s so beautiful.

What does Magdalen mean to you?
I love Magdalen. I’m dedicated to keeping the traditions going, to be polite, and to represent the College in the best possible way. The porters are the first people that visitors, students, or new staff and Fellows meet at Magdalen, so it’s an important job.

Tell us something about yourself that not many people know.
I was a corporal in the Parachute Regiment, the airborne infantry regiment of the British Army, for 22 years. I served all over the world including Aden in Yemen in 1969 when the Regiment was tasked with protecting the oil refineries. Every September I go to Oosterbeek in Holland to meet up with the Regiment, past and present, as well as other regiments from France, Germany, Poland etc. I still parachute regularly; I’m hoping to go parachuting with Heath (the porter) soon.

If you could go back in time where/when would you go?
I would go back to my time in the army. It was a brilliant time in my life.

How do you relax?
I enjoy working on classic cars in my workshop. I currently have an MG Midget I’m working on as well as a Lancia Fulvia I’m working on for Professor Hugh Dickson. My dream car would be an Aston Martin. I learnt the trade at Pressed Steel when I worked on the Rolls Royce Silver Spirit.

How would you describe your perfect day?
Everything going to plan at work, or in the workshop with the Midget.

I still parachute regularly; I’m hoping to go parachuting with Heath (the porter) soon.”
Crossword
Set by Professor Simon Horobin

Across
1 Backward look containing hostility from bowler with muscle (6)
4 Setter's old writer, using Chaucerian verse form (6)
8 Face rub I concocted's somewhat stinging (7)
9 Rapidly losing heart after being summoned by College officer to official residence (7)
11 Catch a train, changing in freezing location (10)
12 Student getting in a panic failing to finish: one that's very jumpy (4)
13 Bloomer in Latin speech getting cheeky response (5)
14 Worry about Nick getting thirds in French and Czech: he's a sloth! (8)
16 Queen's ball is regularly located all over the place (8)
18 Young man is discontented after degree in sport (5)
20 Bubbly liquid emanating from chemical vapour (4)
21 Hellishly stinky after Oxford University second year gets 16th in the table (10)
23 Jam's covering article of sub-fusc? (7)
24 Head to cut American community charge (4,3)
25 College fellow gets a favourite in trouble (6)
26 Skewer with point on wooden stake (6)

Down
1 Club meeting to study philosopher (5)
2 Cut short with brusque greeting (7)
3 Star pair in clip that's been edited (9)
5 Beat hasty retreat after ear bashing in debating chamber (5)
6 Find beet farming produces profit (7)
7 Complain about buckled railway: it's done using wood! (9)
10 Draw Middle English story about origin of Britain in Lecture list (9)
13 Barriers to love: empty boasts, endlessly lacking in consideration (9)
15 Angrily war with mother and leader of JCR: it's spineless! (9)
17 Second eleven's opener wearing straw hat is a show off (7)
19 Thug's attempt catching crook with stick (7)
21 Drop off in trade record (5)
22 Getting back chat in a French practice (5)

The wordplay of each clue indicates the answer with an extra letter that is not entered in the grid. These letters, in clue order, spell out a quotation from a work by an Old Member and the author's surname. Solvers must highlight the name of the person to whom the quotation is attributed in the grid.

Please send your completed crossword along with your name and year of matriculation to: Development Office, Magdalen College, Oxford, OX1 4AU or email it to alumni.office@magd.ox.ac.uk

The first correct entry drawn on Friday 15th October will receive a copy of Bagels, Bunf, and Buses: A day in the Life of the English Language by Professor Simon Horobin.

Last words

Inkling 'suspicion, hint' is from Middle English inkle 'communicate in a whisper'.

Follow @SCPHorobin on Twitter for more

Flummery 'insincere flattery' is from a 17th century name for a dish made with oatmeal boiled to a jelly, from Welsh llymru, perhaps related to llymrig 'soft, slippery'.

Shaftment an obsolete term for a measure based on the distance from the end of the extended thumb to the opposite side of the hand, from Old English sceaf 'shaft' + mund 'palm of the hand'.
'I lost my heart’s... ease' by Paul Majek-Oduyoye