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THE University is not in a healthy state. Central to our problems is the failing system of internal communication and consultation which is, in our view, leading in turn to a breakdown in trust. Council's three-yearly self-review, first announced last May with a specific remit to remedy the long-recognised and all-too-obvious deficiencies of collaboration between Council and Congregation in determining policy appears, in the absence of any subsequent communication to Congregation on Council's thinking, to be stalling and is now overdue. As it happens the consequences of communication-failure are perfectly illustrated by recent events surrounding the proposed creation of a new college. When the central administration operates, or at least appears in this case to operate, to subvert the collegiate structure of the University and diminish the University's prized Bodleian library, something is going seriously awry.

In this issue Peter Oppenheimer—following Gill Evans in our last issue—points out (in so far as this is possible given the level of detail yet available) some of the complexities that ought to have been explained to Congregation in relation to plans for a new college. The contestable case for the new college is one thing, but meanwhile it is easy to ignore the implications of converting the Radcliffe Science Library into a college for Oxford's library provision and for librarians, whose job descriptions seem set to change even if their employment remains secure. While it is obviously true—especially for the sciences—that journals and books are now routinely read online there is nonetheless a problem. According to policies being promoted by publishers online access is often only available to readers on site in the library. So scientists may increasingly need access to a library

Loss of Trust

readily available close by in the science area and, importantly, one available round the clock. But rumoured plans for the RSL actually envisage reduced hours (i.e. closure from 5p.m. each day and limited access at weekends). The plans also imply that undergraduate borrowing facilities will be moved out of the RSL and that undergraduates would be less than welcomed there. If so undergraduates could end up deprived of the educationally-invaluable open shelf browsing of the whole range of sci-

ence disciplines currently a feature of the RSL.

One of the ironies of the planning is that the new college is, we are told, intended to promote interdisciplinarity. Surely the effective dismantling of the science half of the Bodleian—a wedge driven between the two cultures—works directly against this objective. Alongside the rich splendours of the rest of the Bodleian the representation of the sciences would just become a mere afterthought.

There are a variety of ways of interpreting what is going on. At present the science divisions pay a subsidy to the Bodleian in recognition of their use of the RSL facility; but now there will be good grounds for them to argue for a cut in this widely resented tax. Or perhaps this is part of a general cost saving exercise based on consolidation right across the Bodleian estate. An even more conspiratorial interpretation is that the creation of the new college is a part of a drive by the centre to take over the collegiate system according to its own model of direct administrative control.

All of these uncertainties and concerns could potentially have been avoided if Congregation had been consulted properly in the first place and provided with more information in a more timely and unhurried man-

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...and much more

ner. The plans for the college were first announced, evidently in considerable haste after formal Congregation approval of the Strategic Plan in October, in the form of a press release and in terms which implied that the plans were already set in concrete (Editorial, *Oxford Magazine*, No. 403, 0th Week, HT 2019). Given the rapid sequence of events between Congregation approval and the announcement of the new college one has to wonder whether all the relevant University committees had been adequately consulted: we may eventually discover the answer in their minutes—if these become available and are not redacted. As presented to us so far this would not be a ‘college’ in the generally understood sense; as a department of the University financially and administratively, it would not deserve that title alongside all the other Oxford colleges.

We are all familiar with the scenario in which the planning of a major project soon becomes irreversible—even during a consultation period—due to the expense and effort already invested; e.g. HS2, the Expressway, Botley/Osney flood relief, Northern Gateway, etc. As things stand—with planning evidently already well underway and about to be virtually unstoppable—the ideal of open and honest discussion of alternative options on graduate student provision seems to have been denied to us. Which takes us back to the underlying, much more general, problem of communication breakdown and what needs to be done about it in future. As a measure of the limits to free communication in Oxford we point (in ‘Re-

mindings’ and ‘Notes from Cambridge’ below) to the extraordinary degree to which governance arrangements in Cambridge make possible the regular and robustly open expression of opinion on critical themes by individual elected members of Council, as published in the *Reporter*. Imagine anything like this in Oxford!

Even if, as seems increasingly to have been the case of late, Wellington Square’s policies get through Congregation without serious challenge—and usually by default—our administrative leaders should not take this as evidence of approval or lack of concern. This may just reflect the sense in which Congregation in its present form is not working, in large part a consequence of the fact that WS happens to avoid meaningful engagement through its management of information (see ‘Test-running Council’s Openness’ below). This situation certainly does not mean that Congregation is not deeply distrustful of what is done in its name, or would not be considerably more active if adequately informed.

Ultimately, failure to address the problems of internal communication points to a gap in leadership and a mounting undermining of trust. If University staff appear apathetic, there is in the end only one person—the Vice-Chancellor—who has the power and responsibility to change such things. Why do we have no idea what position Professor Richardson is taking on all this? Appended below are suggested ways forward.

B.B, T.J.H.

Congregation is failing to perform its function of oversight of important policy developments. We believe that this is largely due to limitations in its access to relevant information or ready means of engaging with Council. Thus:

- *More and more WS is using emails to disseminate important and urgent information—rather than through the Gazette—and this information is effectively lost to the record. (Blueprint (now electronic as Blueprint Bulletin) is essentially promotional and limited to public news items)*
- *Q and A sessions by senior University officers have in the last 2-3 years become a standard means of contact between WS/Council and staff. Welcome in itself this has real limitations; such events are time consuming and fixed in time and place; no record is kept. The end result is that few benefit and no actions necessarily follow*
- *Council minutes appear online several months after a Council meeting when policy has moved on and in any case are largely unrevealing due to the high threshold of confidentiality applied*
- *Online Council agendas are also unrevealing (brief and usually without background papers) and appear only very shortly before meetings, thus preventing Congregation members from raising issues with their elected representatives on Council*
- *The University website is simply not designed with the interests of Congregation in mind and is hard to use (anyway for the uninitiated or infrequent users); see ‘Test-running Council’s Openness’ below. Congregation is not listed in the staff-page menu*

Oxford’s Congregation operates in significantly different ways from its Cambridge equivalent, the Regent House, though memberships are roughly equivalent. Thus the Regent House as regular (usually fortnightly in term) meetings, albeit with small attendances and has only postal or (now) electronic voting. Above all the Cambridge model has features which require much greater openness (e.g. more published information (in the *Reporter*) and clarity on Council members’ individual positions).

The differing situation in Oxford is dictated by the statutory requirements of Congregation meetings in the Sheldonian. This central element must clearly be preserved. But it is poorly designed to address all the problems of time, speed and ease of

communication in policy making. We need additional elements designed to actively facilitate timely and efficient information exchange between Council and Congregation. Key features are suggested below.

A most important recent development in governance procedures has been the holding of informal discussions in WS behind closed doors with members of Congregation submitting possible resolutions for debate in Congregation. In some cases (see Editorial, *Oxford Magazine*, No. 403, 0th Week, HT 2019) this discussion leads to withdrawal of the resolution. It could be argued that such procedures subvert the proper and expected role of Congregation, and all the more so because they are secret and unrecorded. (Hence it is not known how often they have occurred). On the other hand they offer an immediate precedent for the suggestions which follow below.

Given the apparent reluctance—over many years—of Council to enter into an exchange of views on the precise nature of what is wrong with, and how to improve, internal communication we suggest the following elements as the foundation for effective action:

- *Council must provide agendas and background information, regularly and in timely fashion, to alert Congregation to policy issues currently under discussion*
- *Concerned Congregation members must have a direct and easy means of communicating with relevant University officers and/or designated Congregation-elected Council members. Concerns raised should, where appropriate, be announced on a dedicated web site so that others can choose to participate*
- *Results of such consultations should be reported back in notices to Congregation together with any recommendations for possible consequential Congregation meetings or other (postal) actions (such as opinion polls)*
- *Congregation is constituted as the University’s supreme legislative body with powers extending to veto of Council decisions. Congregation has a responsibility to speak for all staff. Provision for representation by Congregation of the interests of all University staff should be regarded as included under the above arrangements*



Reminders



The following are extracts (footnotes omitted) from a Report of Discussion held in the Regent House on 22nd January 2019 concerning published Annual Reports from Council (*Reporter* No 6535, Vol CXLIX, No.17, 2019).

Professor R. J. Anderson (Department of Computer Science and Technology and Churchill College), read by the Junior Proctor:

Deputy Vice-Chancellor, along with four Council colleagues, I signed a dissent to the Annual Report of the Council. Following the divestment petition, Council was assured that we had ‘only homeopathic quantities’ of shares in oil and gas, and it was therefore a shock to learn via the Paradise Papers that we actually owned some £30m of shares in Shell through an offshore company.

I therefore demanded to see the papers of the Investment Board. Council standing order 11(ii) empowers Council members to see all the papers of subsidiary committees, and I used this power in 2015 to investigate why the North West Cambridge project ended up about £100m over budget and more than two years late—a failure that would otherwise have been covered up (*Reporter*, 6403, 2015–16, p. 140). This led to the departure of the Director of Estate Management and in due course the Registry took early retirement. The right to see papers is both important and established; without it members of Council cannot discharge our duty as the charitable trustees of the University.

I reported to this House on 28 January last year that my demand for access to the Board’s papers was repeatedly stonewalled (*Reporter*, 2017–18, 6493, p. 371) and warned that I would be unable to sign the 2018 Annual Report unless the papers were made available. I am afraid to report that the sorry saga has continued. Despite repeated demands for access, the Vice-Chancellor has failed to comply. On various occasions he has promised to raise the matter with the Board, promised disclosure to Council shortly, and even once claimed that he thought we’d already been given the papers.

The excuse offered, when one was offered at all, was that some aspects of our portfolio are commercially sensitive, and so the papers cannot be made public. This argument was and is entirely disingenuous as at all times we sought full access in confidence, as with the papers for the North West Cambridge fiasco. In that case, following legal advice, the Council decided that my report must remain confidential until after the last of the project litigation is settled. Council members can and do receive confidential information and respect those confidences.

Professor Dame Athene Donald’s Divestment working group has had a similar experience; in her report (pp. 13–14 and recommendation 6) she calls for transparency to be improved.

I note that the Chief Investment Officer has left us, along with three senior members of his team. I hope that

this will bring about the necessary change, and I sincerely hope that our senior management team are not hiding anything untoward.

I must report to the Regent House that when the external auditors were preparing their opinion on the financial statements, they asked for assurances from all Council members that I was unable to give, because of the failure to give us access. I explained the whole story of the opacity of the Investment Office and the Investment Board’s failure to comply with our rules. The audit partner and I eventually agreed a form of words that gave him sufficient comfort to sign off on the accounts, and I did ask him whether he was sure that all the investments were present and correct. I did not receive a categorical assurance on that point.

The responsibility for ensuring that the Investment Office is properly run lies with the Chief Financial Officer as its line manager and with the Vice-Chancellor as the accounting officer. In the absence of cooperation I could do no more, and my term on Council is now over.

My final comment is this. At any time in the past fourteen months, the Vice-Chancellor could have dealt with the matter by calling a Council vote to suspend standing order 11(ii) in respect of Investment Office business. He did not do so, despite having a good working majority on Council. I find this contempt for our rules deeply unsettling. The University of Cambridge, like any charity, company, or modern nation state, is a creature of law; in our case, of Statute, Ordinance and Standing Orders. If the executive is to be held to account, then the rule of law matters. One might have thought that now the Vice-Chancellor, Senior Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Registry are all members of the legal profession, there would be some appreciation of this. Yet we seem somehow to have traded the rule of law for rule by lawyers.

Professor N. J. Gay (Department of Biochemistry, Christ’s College and the University Council):

Deputy Vice-Chancellor, I am one of five Council members who dissented from the Annual Report of the Council. I endorse the remarks made by Professor Ross Anderson and add some further observations.

The Report states that the Investment Board is populated by individuals who have ‘sympathies to the University’. Members of the Regent House may therefore be surprised that one Board member is an ardent Brexiteer who donated £3m to the ‘Vote Leave’ campaign. My friend the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research has described the impact of Brexit on the University as ‘bad, very bad or catastrophic’. So I find it difficult to understand how a Board member can be sympathetic to the University when they sponsored the pathetic lies that have placed more than £500m of research funding in jeopardy and led directly to the constitutional crisis we face presently. This state of affairs illustrates the current disjunction, lack of oversight and alignment that Council has with the Investment Board and the Cambridge

University Endowment Fund (CUEF), as outlined by Professor Anderson.

The Annual Report also states that CUEF shows a 'cumulative monetary outperformance of £300m to the agreed benchmark' in the last decade. As part of a campaign of glasnost, Council members were last week invited to a 'teach in' about CUEF at which the performance of the fund relative to the agreed benchmark was presented. When pressed a senior member of the Investment Office admitted that, far from £300m, the outperformance of CUEF was just £30m since 2008. In fact relative to other relevant benchmarks such as global equities the fund could be viewed as underperforming in this period. It seems to me that Regent House has been seriously misled and I urge the Council to investigate this matter and to correct the Report.

The departure of Mr Cavalla as Chief Investment Officer provides an opportunity for a thorough review of how the Investment Office operates. It is very much to be hoped that this leads to an investment policy that is better aligned to the values and purposes of this great and ancient University. I look forward to debating this more as a topic of concern on 5 February.

The Rev'd J. L. Caddick (Emmanuel College), read by the Junior Proctor:

Deputy Vice-Chancellor, the Council are the charitable trustees of the University. They have, as they remind us, weighty responsibilities to promote the aims of the University as a charity. It is worrying therefore that this Report reveals that they are falling short in the discharge of their responsibilities in two important respects, both concerned with the management of the University's investments.

The eyes of readers of the Report cannot help but be drawn to the Note of Dissent at the end. Professor Anderson has repeatedly asked for access to the papers of the Investment Board and has been refused. How can the Council discharge its responsibilities if it not only does not know, but is actively prevented from knowing how the investments are managed? This is completely unacceptable and needs to be corrected forthwith. Only five members of the Council have signed this Note of Dissent. The question here, members of the Council, is what the rest of you have been doing. Can you seriously say, hand on heart, that you have been discharging your responsibilities when you have no idea what is going on?

The truth of the matter, of course, is that the University administration is terrified of the people who have been running the Investment Office and have done little to challenge them or to hold them to account. Those people have now taken their ball and gone to play elsewhere. Can the Council now reassure the Regent House that in repopulating the Investment Office they will find the moral courage to stand up to the money people and put in place mechanisms for greater openness and accountability?

The second aspect of the Council's responsibilities as trustees that I'd like to talk about has to do with their actions in response to the call for divestment from fossil fuels. The Grace calling for divestment was passed in January of 2017 but was not implemented because the Council told us that they were the trustees and as such only they could make a decision on such matters. (How

different from when they are dealing with the Investment Office). They acknowledged that the appropriate thing to do was to commission 'a report specifically into the advantages and disadvantages of the policy of divestment'. A Working Party was convened, whose terms of reference strangely did not ask the group to look into the advantages and disadvantages of such a policy. Nor did the Council's response to this published last June. Instead it spoke about almost anything else—all the other initiatives that are proposed to address climate change. The Council did not even accept the Working Party's modest proposal that 10% of the Endowment be invested in ethical funds, so terrified were they of the Investment Office.

Instead they came up with a policy of 'considered divestment'. This term is a monstrosity of duplicity and bad faith, and the members of the Council should be ashamed of themselves for allowing it to be used. Voltaire famously said that the Holy Roman Empire is 'neither Holy, nor Roman, nor an Empire'; 'considered divestment' is neither *considered* nor *divestment*. It is not 'considered' for the reasons that we have already seen. The Council are not able to consider the working of the Investment Office even if they should show an inclination to, and as we have seen they have an established record of running fast in the opposite direction when anything of the kind is suggested.

Neither is it 'divestment' because nothing, but *nothing*, has changed. The much trumpeted policy of not investing in thermal coal or tar sands was arrived at before there were any calls for divestment. The Council's response to the Grace was an exercise in doing nothing about the way the University's endowment is invested, and of trying to divert attention elsewhere by means of other initiatives.

Members of the Council, you are fooling no-one with this term 'considered divestment'. It is misleading and I can only assume that it is intended to mislead. Such disingenuous green-washing, members of the Council, only serves to harm the moral authority of our University, and to harm your standing within it. I urge you publicly to retract the term and to apologise to the Regent House.

Dr D. R. Thomas (Department of Computer Science and Technology, Peterhouse and the West Cambridge Active Travel Group), read by the Junior Proctor:

Deputy Vice-Chancellor, in the Annual Report of the Council for the academic year 2017–18 it states:

The Council also noted that the NWCD team successfully negotiated with the local authority to agree refinements to the rental model of the affordable housing for staff members at Eddington.

However, it does not mention the fact that the NWCD is projected to make a £4 million annual loss when full and hence will never pay off the loans taken on for construction. It also does not mention what proportion of accommodation is presently filled or when it is anticipated that all the accommodation will be filled....

Mr D. J. Goode (Faculty of Divinity, Wolfson College and Chair of the Board of Scrutiny):

Deputy Vice-Chancellor, I am making these remarks in a personal capacity.

Some three months after receiving an open letter on 1 October 2018 from the University and College Union (UCU) and UNISON, the Vice-Chancellor finally replied on 6 December.¹ He began that reply by saying:

The demands of the October open letter were difficult to address in a way that would have been satisfactory to the UCU and UNISON because I was not prepared to come out publicly and forcefully against a pay award, as requested.

He ended his reply by saying:

I recognise the strength of feeling among UCU and UNISON members, but am hopeful that over the coming months we can all make the compromises that will allow us to move forward.

The following week, on 11 December 2018, the University's financial statements were published, and the Notes to the Accounts for the year ended July 2018 show, on p. 2342, that the Vice-Chancellor's total remuneration for the year was £428,000.

You will recall that the Vice-Chancellor said he wants us all to make compromises. The compromises that UCU and UNISON members—and indeed the overwhelming majority of staff of the University—are being forced to make are very clear: ten successive years of pay cuts, which means that our pay has dropped by 21 per cent in real terms since 2009.

In 2009 the remuneration for the office of Vice-Chancellor was £246,000.³ After ten years of annual real terms pay cuts imposed on us, the value of the remuneration for the office of Vice-Chancellor for 2018 compared to 2009 is more than 170 per cent.

As I said, our compromises are very clear. What compromises is the Vice-Chancellor making?

Dr D. R. Thomas (Department of Computer Science and Technology, Peterhouse and the West Cambridge Active Travel Group), read by the Junior Proctor:

Deputy Vice-Chancellor, in the Financial review it states of the Eddington development:

Phase 1 involved a peak cumulative investment by the University approaching £380m in 2017–18, as the bulk of rental income streams began.

However, it does not state the original budget. It is important for transparency to include such information as otherwise an overly positive view is shown. We need to be honest about what has worked well and what has not worked so well so that we do not repeat past mistakes.

The Financial Review also states:

The high-quality and environmentally-sustainable build specification, combined with a deliberately sub-market rental model, has resulted in a net revaluation of £(50.4)m below the book value.

This glosses over many things. One of those things is that the rental income was based on a proportion of staff salary and modelling of future rental income assumed that staff salary would increase at least in line with inflation. Consequently one of the reasons for this devaluation is the failure of the University to maintain the real value of staff salaries. There were a variety of other is-

ues which unexpectedly increased costs or decreased revenues, many of which I am not privy to. The quoted statement gives the impression that the devaluation was intentional or unavoidable but I do not believe either of these to be the case.

The Financial Review later states:

While the University faces pressure on its pension schemes' costs and risks (in particular, on the USS) and on staff costs more generally given the pay restraint of recent years, it is relatively well positioned in the sector to handle these potential challenges in the short term through the reprioritisation of funds.

The phrase 'pay restraint' is offensive to staff who have been subject to it; 'given the pay cuts of recent years' would be a much more accurate statement.

One of the listed responses to the risk area of

'Inability to attract and retain the best academics and adequately resource professional and administrative staff' is 'The University is also focusing on the provision of transport, nursery schooling, and housing, with the Eddington development designed to ease pressures.' This is an admirable goal. However, I note that while there are many good or even excellent aspects to the Eddington development in all these areas, there are also aspects of these where the quality of delivery is poor.

For example, while Phase 1 of Eddington has delivered two junctions of Eddington Avenue with Huntingdon Road and Madingley Road, a later phase will have to pay to completely rebuild these junctions as they are both dangerous to cyclists. The former contains a reverse-s-curve where an HGV's rear section would crush a cyclist in the cycle lane even if the front section passed them safely. The latter puts cyclists heading straight on to High Cross to the left of left-turning motor traffic: inviting left hooks.

Hidden in the 'Notes to the accounts for the year ended 31 July 2018' there is a section on 'Remuneration and pay ratios of the Vice-Chancellors'. This indicates that our current Vice-Chancellor is receiving both higher employer pension contributions than the previous Vice-Chancellor and £37k of payments made in lieu of pension. Annual pay for our current Vice-Chancellor in his first year is £36k more than the previous Vice-Chancellor received. This is equivalent to one full time employee on Grade 8, so our current Vice-Chancellor is one whole person more productive in his first year than the last Vice-Chancellor was in his last year. I find this improvement in reported productivity rather impressive.

However I also see that the total remuneration for key management personnel is up from £1,535k to £2,025k: the key management personnel got one whole Vice-Chancellor more productive in one year. An astounding achievement.

In the same period staff on the salary spine received a real terms pay cut, indicating that the University finances are in a bad shape. Consequently it does not appear that the key management personnel are deserving of a bonus if they are requiring all other staff to take a pay cut....

Mr D. J. Goode (Faculty of Divinity, Wolfson College and Chair of the Board of Scrutiny):

Deputy Vice-Chancellor, I am making these remarks in a personal capacity.

It is extraordinary to see a Report published by the Council which is signed by only fourteen of its members, with a Note of Dissent signed by eight members. One would have thought that this, in itself, would have given the Council pause for thought; but seemingly not, the fourteen Council members have pressed on, and here we are discussing a Report of the Council which was supported by barely more than half of its members.

That the Council should be proposing to continue concealing from the University the total remuneration of all but a handful of senior post-holders, and to introduce a policy for making unspecified financial inducements to obtain external members for committees, at all, never mind at precisely the same time that members of the University and College Union are being balloted on taking action against the imposition on the overwhelming majority of staff of a tenth successive year of pay cuts—with our pay now worth, in real terms, 21 per cent less than it was in 2009—seems to me to be in very poor taste.

Test-running Council's Openness

BEN BOLLIG

IN an (admittedly unscientific) exercise, the Editors wrote to a random selection of colleagues asking them to try to access information on the University Council's webpages. We prompted them to look for information about debates on any issue of interest to them—the “expressway”, pensions, the new college, whatever it might be—and to write back about their success in accessing anything of use. Below are some responses.

Respondent 1:

“It's not obvious that if you're interested in a particular topic that [the 'Meetings' section of Council's webpages] is the most obvious place to navigate to.

—Even once you've done this, it took me a good 10 minutes to work out how to actually view the papers and the minutes.

—I'm really struck by how much of the discussion is redacted or marked as confidential/reserved.

—Almost anything of substance that I'm interested in [...] falls into this category—access and admissions, USS and the housing strategy all fall into this category.

—It's striking, compared to the style adopted in most colleges for GB meetings, how non-discursive the unreserved minutes are. They add very little at all to what's already provided in the paper and give an individual interested in governance no reassurance that a robust exchange of views has led or not led to the eventual stance taken by Council.”

Respondent 2:

“To be honest, I don't really know where I would begin searching (itself a telling fact). I've just had a look at the council webpage and can find basically nothing apart from the list of members and times of the meetings. Things are very different in Cambridge where all this is easily accessible and above board...”

Respondent 3:

[Starting with an attempt to search for information on the new college using Google]

“‘new college Oxford’ gets the 13th-century entity.

‘A new Oxford College’—BBC and *Oxford Mail* minimal articles from August, *Cherwell* at bit more info from December.

That's as far as I would have got without your prompt to try searching [for] ‘Oxford University Council’—I immediately logged in [using SSO] as advised, to access privileged content.

Nothing obviously indicating information about the new college on the home page, so I used the search box.

[A search using the term] ‘new college’ gets a list of the fellows of the old New College.

All subsequent searches, using key words from the *Cherwell* article, yielded either nothing or further lists of members of Council. I played for a few minutes looking for a pattern to predict whether nothing [but] lists of names would return, and following the comically unhelpful word-association offered by the ‘Did you mean?’ function by the search box. Then I had had enough.

A quick flick through the tabs on the home page got me to ‘strategic plan’—Aha!—but from there only to a *Gazette* article from 2013.

I'd conclude that this is NOT a site where useful information can be found about anything other than membership and schedules of Council. But if you'd asked me up front, I'd probably have guessed that that would be the case.”

It is worth noting that no one we contacted responded to say that they had been able to find out what they wanted to know. Responses have been edited only for ease of understanding and where the content might enable readers to identify the source. While the responses prove nothing, they are indicative of wider mistrust over Council's mode of operation, and point to significant contrasts with practices at Cambridge (see ‘Reminders’).

Post-truth in Wellington Square

PETER OPPENHEIMER

THE recent issue No.404 of the *Oxford Magazine* included an article (on pp. 5-6) entitled ‘A New Graduate College on the Radcliffe Science Library Site’ by a clutch of four authors (referred to below as ‘the quartet’)—Catriona Cannon, Richard Ovenden, Lionel Tarassenko and Anne Trefethen. One of them (Tarassenko) could have spoken with authority about Oxford’s central activities of teaching and research. But that was obviously not the purpose of the article. Its first paragraph set the tone as follows:

“The case for a new graduate college was made in the University’s 5-year Strategic Plan (2018-23), reflecting the ambition to increase postgraduate numbers substantially, while maintaining quality. Such an ambition cannot be realised without the creation of at least one new graduate college. The Strategic Plan was approved by Congregation without any opposition after a short debate in the Sheldonian on 30th October 2018.”

Each of these three statements is effectively misleading or downright false. In the first place, the expression “case for” implies a reasoned argument. The Strategic Plan comprised merely a string of proclamations. *Inter alia*, that postgraduate student numbers are going to be further increased and that at least one new graduate college is going to be established.

Whether, in the second place, the “ambition” (or “aspiration”—the more precious term used later in the article) to continue expanding postgraduate student numbers is widely based across the University was not investigated. The article professes concern not to “upset the balance between undergraduate and postgraduate student numbers in mixed colleges” or to “impose unrealistic targets for growth in the existing graduate colleges.” It completely ignores the much bigger questions of balance between undergraduate and postgraduate numbers in the University as a whole, and of the total size of the University. If in fact the overall growth objective represented a broad consensus, existing colleges would be seeking, jointly and severally, to contribute in one way or another to its realisation. But old-fashioned Oxford notions of shared, grass-roots governance or academic sovereignty are precisely what Wellington Square aspires to throttle.

Accordingly, in the third place, the Strategic Plan was brought to Congregation after lengthy delay and with the air of a mildly tedious *fait accompli*. Attendance and, by the same token, debate at the relevant occasion were duly minimized. Whether intentionally or not, delay and tedium had both been previously fostered by a series of “consultation” meetings between the Plan’s authors—who were scarcely familiar with Oxford—and any-staff-who-cared-to-attend. (Not many.) Despite all this, the claim of the quartet that Congregation approved the Plan “without any opposition” is blatantly false. On the contrary, the only speech in the Sheldonian that had not been pre-arranged voiced opposition to the growth objective and scepticism as to the consensus behind it.

The same technique is now being applied to the specific item of Parks College (as the institution is initially named): “*A number of Q and A sessions are planned later this term, the dates of which will be announced shortly. We hope that these sessions will provide a useful forum to discuss the proposals in more detail....*” (*loc. cit.*) Q and A sessions are a most useful device, not of course for discussing anything, but for cutting discussion short before it can get under way and risk affecting outcomes. Many central officials of the University have time to spare for such theatricals. The overwhelming majority of academic staff do not.

In its decision to make the RSL the central site for Parks College, Wellington Square has, as a matter of fact, casually departed from the priorities laid down in the Strategic Plan. There, the commitment to a new graduate college was founded on, and specifically incidental to, a declared need for additional student accommodation. The quartet comes close to simply shrugging off this requirement: “*There is a need for student accommodation—although a lack of space means that it will not be located in the Science Area.*” In other words: ‘Not our problem, mate’. This and other discrepancies are documented in the Appendix to the present article.

The choice of RSL stemmed presumably from a belated recognition of cost-savings (“Two for the price of one”) realisable because the place was already being modernised and restructured for other purposes, namely as a digital-era University (not mere college) Library and as a focus for tourism, aka “public engagement activities”. The new college was as yet unmentioned in the Bodleian Curators’ Annual Report for 2017-18, whose publication in the *Gazette* (23 January 2019, Supplement (1) to No. 5227) happened to coincide with the article by the quartet. The latter, obviously written later, contrives to devote several paragraphs to selling the notion that the two projects are entirely compatible and integrated:

“The principle of re-configurability”, they loftily declare, “will be applied to as much of the space as possible, so that both the college and the science library may make optimal use of it at different times of the day on different days of the week....” For example, “*the college will function as a Science Area hub for interdisciplinary exchanges, mainly at lunchtime and in the late afternoon or early evening.*”

In short, a part-time college! The term ‘hot-desking’ between college and Library comes to mind. But carefully regimented, and with the now usual nod to the latter-day fetish of ‘interdisciplinarity’. While many details have yet to be settled, one wonders what further application of these principles the authorities may suddenly hit upon. Most obviously in the so-called Radcliffe Observatory Quarter, replete as it is with extravagant, up-to-the-minute, under-utilised University spaces. Andrew Wiles College, Blavatnik College, even Radcliffe Humanities College—the prospects are eye-watering. And of course, miscellaneous premises on the Old Road cam-

pus in Headington may be enlisted to house one or more part-time medical colleges.

But hold on a moment. Health warnings are in order. A re-labelled University space is not a genuine, autonomous college with its own self-governing authority (laid down in Statutes approved under Royal Charter by the Privy Council). It remains basically what it was before, namely a department of the University, albeit now functioning as a ‘Society’ or would-be-college. The constitutional distinction is fully treated in the Appendix. Parks College is currently scheduled to become the third such institution at Oxford, alongside St. Cross and Kellogg.

The point is acknowledged in passing by the quartet, but without appreciation of its significance. Going back to their objectionable opening paragraph, what exactly was promised in the Strategic Plan (2018-2023) and voted on by Congregation on 30th October 2018? The text referred not to a change of use of University property but specifically to a ‘college’, implying acceptance of a new foundation with external funding. No doubt the matter will soon be sorted with further resolutions foisted on Congregation. But one can see, to put it generously, the bumbling amateurishness with which Wellington Square hierarchs conduct their business.

Amateurish, unfortunately, does not mean harmless. The distinction between the two types of establishment was actually discussed at length by Gillian Evans in an informative adjacent article, “When is a College not a College and Does it Matter?” (*loc. cit.*). To the last part of that question the answer, though complicated in detail, is clear-cut in principle. A ‘Society’s’ employed staff are employees solely of the University, never employees of a separate, autonomous body whether singly or in conjunction with the University. This may affect conditions of employment including remuneration, code of discipline and so forth. More important, a ‘Society’ through its functions effectively replaces, or substitutes for, a genuine college. It therefore signifies, or at a minimum facilitates, increased uniformity and centralisation in the operation, and the culture, of the University. Academic autonomy is narrowed. The power of the Wellington Square octopus is widened. The more ‘Societies’ proliferate, the greater the threat.

Looking at present no further than the embryonic Parks College, Wellington Square appears already poised to use its “principle of re-configurability” as a pretext for sneakily enhancing the relative status of administrative personnel. As put by the quartet, “*Early-career researchers at the post-doctoral level will be Research Fellows of the college. Together with the GLAM staff working in the library, in the museum or on public engagement activities (sic), they will play a key role in college life.*”

Even at this stage, the case of Parks College offers a striking illustration of the University governance defects whose nature I outlined in *Oxford Magazine* No.403 (Noughth Week, Hilary Term 2019–‘The Climate of University Governance’). The North reforms of 20 years ago caused the University’s machinery of public choice to crumble. Some elements of it have been misappropriated by central administration, others abandoned to unco-ordinated decision-taking by sectional (departmental) interests. Not the least distressing aspect of the process is the cynical use of flawed arguments in pursuit of questionable objectives.

Appendix: Constitutional issues arising

In the following notes quotations are taken from the article by Catriona Cannon et al. in the last issue of Oxford Magazine.

1. What has Congregation bound itself to do?

“The Strategic Plan was approved by Congregation without any opposition after a short debate in the Sheldonian on 30th October 2018.”¹ Under Statute IV, 2 (1) ‘Any resolution passed by Congregation or other act done or decision taken by Congregation in accordance with the statutes and regulations shall bind the whole University’.

2. Is the proposal being made the one described in the Strategic Plan which Congregation approved?

“The case for a new graduate college was made in the University’s 5-year Strategic Plan (2018-23), reflecting the ambition to increase postgraduate numbers substantially, while maintaining quality. Such an ambition cannot be realised without the creation of at least one new graduate college.”²

(i) The *Strategic Plan* mentions a new ‘college’ only under Commitment 1 which is ‘to attract and admit students from all backgrounds with outstanding academic potential and the ability to benefit from an Oxford education’. That can only be read as referring to the requirements of the Access and Participation Plan, which relates to undergraduate applicants only. OfS Guidance states that ‘Postgraduate students (apart from postgraduate initial teacher training students) should not be included in your access and participation plan’.³ Oxford is currently subject to a Specific Ongoing Condition of its Registration by the Office for Students in connection with its Access and Participation Plan.⁴ *Can Commitment 1 be read in any other context and if not did Congregation agree under this head to the creation of a post-graduate college?*

(ii) The *Strategic Plan* undertakes (at para. 7) ‘by 2023, in partnership with the private sector, to have started the construction of 1,000 additional graduate rooms including the establishment of at least one new graduate college.’ So the *Strategic Plan* (s.7) links the creation of a new college specifically with the provision of new purpose-built student accommodation by 2023, expressly ‘including’ it as part of the building project. The article makes no such connection and indeed does not explain where the additional students are to live:

“There is a need for student accommodation—although a lack of space means that it will not be located in the Science Area.” *If the building of additional graduate accommodation is a prerequisite of the creation of a new college did Congregation agree to the creation of a college without that provision?*

3. Did Congregation bind itself to the creation of new ‘Societies’?

“The case for a new graduate college was made in the University’s 5-year Strategic Plan (2018-23), reflecting the ambition to increase postgraduate numbers substantially, while maintaining quality. Such an ambition cannot be realised without the creation of at least one new graduate college.”⁵

“the new college ... will be a University society like St Cross College or Kellogg College.”⁶

What is proposed is not a College but a ‘Society’, and the ‘Societies’ (so far only Kellogg and St. Cross) are not autonomous bodies with their own charters and statutes but departments of the University.

Has Congregation in approving the Strategic Plan knowingly bound itself to set aside a portion of the University for this purpose as distinct from approving the founding of a new independent college?

4. Are any further consents by Resolution of Congregation required?

(i) Societies can be created only by Congregation under Statute V.6. 'The University may add further institutions to those listed in section 5 of this statute'. That would require specific further Congregation approval.

(ii) Congregation's consent will also be required under Statute XVI, A, 4 for the change of use of the Radcliffe Science Library: 'No allocation for University purposes of a site the area of which exceeds 1,000 square metres, or of a building the overall floor area of which exceeds 600 square metres, shall be made unless approved by resolution of Congregation under section 1 of Statute IV.'

(iii) Congregation's consent would also be required under Statute XVI, A, 4 for a further change of use suggested in the article, namely that the:

'western wing of the Inorganic Chemistry Lab (aka the 'Old Chemistry Teaching Lab') could be turned into a modern college dining hall.'

5. How does the University's running a Society as one of its Departments affect students and staff?

There can be no college Statutes for a Society. It may make only By-Laws, subject to the approval of the Council:

*'The governing body may from time to time make by-laws which, when approved by Council, shall be binding on all Fellows of [the stated Society].'*⁷

(i) The students of a Society lack the protection of having domestic College Statutes approved by the Privy Council. St. Cross has a *Handbook for Junior Members*,⁸ and a Constitution with *Common Room By-Laws* (though these are not stated to have been approved by Council as required).⁹ There is a vestigial Complaints procedure.¹⁰

(ii) Ben Bollig pointed out in an accompanying article (*'Conversations about Pay'*) that 'the appointee to the Associate Professorship of Archaeological Science in the School of Archaeology in association with St Cross College, Oxford enjoys "no additional stipend." That is to say, the recognition of distinction award is wiped out—and some—by difference in college allowances.' There are of course no 'college allowances' for academic staff in the Societies because there can be no conjoint appointments. Academic staff are simply and solely University employees, though they may depend on a University post elsewhere for entitlement to become a Fellow of a Society.¹¹

(iii) There are reasons for concern about the adequacy of the current University Statutes and Regulations as drafted for University-only employees of the 'Societies'. There are gaps in the provisions under Statute XII which refer to the Societies only obliquely as 'other relevant area' or 'similar area' and do not always make it clear how the hierarchy of line-management authority should work in a procedure under that Statute.

The Redundancy section of Statute XII leaves apparent uncertainties about what applies to a Society at (13) and (14). In the Disciplinary procedure under Statute XII a Head of Department as line-manager may issue an oral or written warning. This person may be 'the head of the relevant department or other institution of the University'. In the case of Kellogg and St. Cross that would be the 'Head of House'. An Appeal against a written warning would go to a Pro-Vice-Chancellor, chosen

at the Registrar's discretion. That might not be straightforward if the conduct complained of would in a College be deemed an internal 'college' matter.

Taking a disciplinary process onwards under ss.22-3 would bring things to the Vice-Chancellor and in due course to the Visitation Board or the Staff Employment Review Panel and so on. If the end result was recommendation to dismiss would the Vice-Chancellor or the Head of House be the 'appropriate person' to take the decision?

At (13) it is not clear when a decision of Congregation would be required if a Society decided (for example) to halve its Fellowship, or when at (14) 'a Divisional Board or equivalent University authority for a department, institution, or body proposes a reduction in the academic staff in a department, institution, or body'?

The authority for matters concerning the two existing Societies to go to the General Purposes Committee is to be found in Council's Standing Orders, Annex C, 1.2, namely:

'(iii) the removal of anomalies in existing regulations, and the making of consequential amendments to existing regulations which have been overlooked in earlier legislation.'

That gives the GPC authority to approve certain matters relating to Kellogg College and St Cross College.

The GPC's general power to amend Regulations is clear but it is subject to approval by Council.

Would the proposal for this new 'Society', with others to follow, require an overhaul of Statute XII and the other arrangements for the direct governance of Societies by the University?

¹ *A New Graduate College on the Radcliffe Science Library Site*, under the joint authorship of Catriona Cannon, Richard Ovenden, Lionel Tarassenko, Anne Trefethen (*Oxford Magazine* No. 404, 2nd Week, HT 2019).

² *Ibid.*

³ https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/media/1093/ofst2018_03.pdf.

⁴ <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/media/83175bee-1a4e-478a-88e5-20470a21a2a9/10007774-oxf-sc.pdf>.

⁵ *A New Graduate College on the Radcliffe Science Library Site*, under the joint authorship of Catriona Cannon, Richard Ovenden, Lionel Tarassenko, Anne Trefethen (*Oxford Magazine* No. 404, 2nd Week, HT 2019).

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ Council Regulations 10 of 2002, 3(2) for Kellogg and Council Regulations 11 of 2002, 4(1) for St. Cross.

⁸ https://weblearn.ox.ac.uk/access/content/user/139682/Handbooks/Junior%20Members_%20Handbook%20Final%202021.09.pdf

⁹ <https://www.stx.ox.ac.uk/current-members/common-room-committee/common-room-laws>

¹⁰ <https://www.stx.ox.ac.uk/current-members/common-room-committee/constitution>.

¹¹ *'The holders of university appointments who are entitled to fellowships under the provisions of any statute or regulation, or who will become so entitled if their university appointments are confirmed to retiring age'* (Kellogg) Council Regulations 10 of 2002, 5 (1) (a) and (St. Cross) Council Regulations 11 of 2002 (7).

NOTICE

Lucy Newlyn, literary editor of the *Oxford Magazine*, will be pleased to read literary submissions of any description—e.g. verse, critical prose, very short stories, segments of dialogue, reviews of new dramatic productions and books, etc. Submissions should be no longer than 750 words, and where possible should be sent by email attachment to lucy.newlyn@seh.ox.ac.uk together with a two-sentence bio.

Expansion, Diversification and Rationalisation

– UK Higher Education Since Robbins

ROGER BROWN

THIS short paper argues that the history of UK higher education since the 1963 Robbins Report can be seen largely in terms of three core themes: expansion, diversification and rationalisation.

Expansion

This is the clearest part of the story and the easiest to tell. We now have a higher education system that is far larger than could have been imagined at the time of Robbins in the following respects:

- *The number of students in the system*
- *The proportion of the age group in higher education*
- *The number/proportion from overseas*
- *The number/proportion of women*
- *The number of providers, and especially the number of universities*
- *The expansion in the levels, with a huge increase in postgraduate numbers*
- *The number of staff*

Partly because of the expansion, and partly because of the difficulties of paying for it, higher education is now of far greater interest to the public generally, the media and, perhaps regrettably, politicians (see below, Rationalisation).

It should also be noted that:

- *The expansion has not been uniform: there was a big (and unforeseen) increase in the late 80s/early 90s, other smaller increases and some periods of stagnation (we may be entering one now)*
- *The expansion has not benefitted everyone equally: certain groups continue to be heavily underrepresented*
- *The expansion has not been uncontested: the ‘more means worse’ argument has never gone away*

Diversification

Diversification is often associated with expansion. The system is certainly more diverse than at the time of Robbins. But even then there was a significant if largely unnoticed amount of Advanced Further Education outside the universities. Government recognition of this provision began with the White Paper *Technical Education in 1956 (the Colleges of Advanced Technology)* and continued with the designation of the thirty polytechnics from 1970, the incorporation of the polytechnics in 1989 and the granting of university status in 1992, and the creation of the ‘new, new’ universities (universities without the full range of degree awarding powers) in 2004. Over the same period, what have remained FE colleges have developed their post-A level work, with Degree and Diploma courses there typically amounting to about 10% of overall HE provision. There has also more recently been an increase in the (small)

share taken by fully private providers, though whether this amounts to a genuine and significant diversification is highly arguable.

Other forms of diversification have included:

- *The range of qualifications now accepted for university entry*
- *The range of subjects offered*
- *The variety of curriculum structures*
- *The range of levels and modes of study*
- *The composition of the student body*

There has also been a substantial diversification in sources of funding. At the start of the period higher education—both teaching and research, and both student tuition and living support—was almost wholly state (i.e., taxpayer) funded. Now however direct public funding has been reduced to about 17 per cent, with UK and EU undergraduate fees (supported by public loans) accounting for a further 48 per cent of teaching. Institutions have developed significant flows of revenue from business and commerce, although the biggest source of genuinely private funding remains international (non-EU) student fees, which account for some 23 per cent of teaching income.

However all this diversity may be more apparent than real.

One view would be that there has been a progressive legitimisation of forms of higher education that were previously seen as inferior, or not even as higher education at all: non-residential, not full-time, applied, more directly linked to the economy, underpinned by scholarship or professional practice rather than research. On this view, ennobling the polytechnics was a redefinition of what is meant by ‘university’ in the 20th/21st century.

Another view is that there has been a process of convergence where the former ‘public sector’ institutions have aped the existing universities by developing research programmes and degrees and dropping part-time and sub-degree work. At the same time, the universities have copied the polytechnics by developing modular programmes, vocational subjects like business, links with industry and commerce, etc. This was what the Committee of Vice Chancellors and Principals (now UniversitiesUK) spokesperson famously (or infamously) meant by saying, in response to the 1991 White Paper announcing the Government’s intention to offer the polytechnics a university title: “*it isn’t a matter of the polytechnics becoming universities but more a matter of the universities becoming (more like) polytechnics*”.

A stronger reputational hierarchy may in fact have been the price for the abolition of the formal distinctions between different categories of institution. This brings us inevitably to the third theme, rationalisation.

Rationalisation

Rationalisation is perhaps the least familiar of our three themes. But it has been the almost inevitable corollary of the huge expansion. It is also a threat to diversity, as we shall shortly see. In the period since Robbins such rationalisation has taken two main forms.

First, there has been a ‘macro’ rationalisation in the shape of the reduction in the unit of resource, the amount of money available to educate each student. In the author’s 2013 book with Helen Carasso *Everything for Sale? The Marketisation of UK Higher Education*, we estimated that whilst the overall student population had risen by 320 per cent between 1979 and 2011, public expenditure on higher education had grown by (only) 165 per cent. In other words, we were now spending on each student only about half of what had been spent previously. Since 2011 the position has improved but the level of grants and fees (plus capital grants) means that the ‘Government publicly planned unit of funding’ is still well below 1989 levels, let alone 1979 or 1963. This is a huge implied efficiency gain.

Second, there has been an almost constant rationalisation of institutions. In our book, we described the waves of restructuring from the 1980s onwards, beginning with the teacher training colleges, and continuing with the London medical schools and most of the art and other specialist schools and colleges. These institutions—some, but by no means all, of them also quite small—have been absorbed into larger, multi-faculty universities. This is a considerable loss of diversity in student experiences as well as a reduction in student choice. The recent acquisition of the London Institute of Education by University College London shows both that this trend is continuing and that no specialist provider, however large and prestigious, is immune from the competitive pressures that now mark the sector. The same pressures are leading to a rationalisation of subject and course provision within institutions, as well as a reduction in the available modes (notably, part-time), as the ability of institutions to continue to cross-subsidise ‘weaker’ areas diminishes.

There has also been an important change in the way in which such rationalisation has been managed. In the pre-market days of the 80s the University Grants Committee had an almost free hand to close

or re-engineer institutions—most notably, University College Cardiff, which was rescued from a financial crisis that brought it to the brink of insolvency and closure. Although the successor funding councils were only supposed to be ‘buying’ funded places, in practice they devoted a good deal of effort to helping ‘failing’ institutions, with London Met being a very recent and successful example. They were also responsible for a number of initiatives to rationalise or support individual vulnerable subjects, on top of the rationalisation of research funding through the RAE/REF since 1986 (the TEF may also have this effect).

However, now that the market is exerting the fiercest competitive pressures we have yet seen, with a wholly predictable ‘flight to quality’ in a status-driven ‘market’, the Office for Students has neither the powers nor the capacity nor the appetite for such interventions. And this is in spite of the fact that such pressures are actually likely to lead to a further reduction in consumer choice, when the extension of student choice is the main argument the Government uses to justify its laissez-faire attitude!

You really could not make this up.

The Future

How far will these themes still be relevant in future? For the moment at least *expansion* has halted and it is not at all clear when it will be resumed. However *rationalisation* can be expected to accelerate as the sector’s unit of resource comes under pressure, if not from the Augar review then from other claims on public (and private) expenditure, not to mention the slowing of student demand and the ‘flight to quality’ that is already hitting a number of (mostly) post-92 institutions. This in turn can be expected to reduce further the degree of genuine *diversification* in the sector as institutions play safe and avoid unnecessary risks.

The fact that in higher education the intensification of competition produces outcomes—lower quality, less choice, less innovation, poorer value for money—that are the polar opposite of those postulated by market theory is an irony that our political masters have yet to appreciate.

We shall all be the sufferers.

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&

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Literary Editor

Lucy Newlyn at St Edmund Hall

Oxford Housing and the Survivor Syndrome

DANNY DORLING

You read this *Magazine* and because of that you almost certainly know how the start of the story goes, but please bear with me, the ending is different. I am assuming that you have lived in or near Oxford for some time. By near, I include London.

You are at a social function. It could be a gathering for new postgraduate students who have just rented their first room in a shared flat. It could be a college dinner and you are sitting next to the newly appointed associate professor. It could be a garden party, or a carol concert, or at drinks after a lecture, or a rather convivial event organised by a head of house, school, faculty or department. Old staff may well carry on working to their retirement, and a few wish to extend their tenure long beyond that; but as the turnover of new staff in this university is so high and you have been around for some time, you will know that the following scenario almost inevitably repeats itself again and again.

You make the mistake of asking how they are settling in. It is a better opening gambit than the predictable ‘so what do you do?’. They look a little wary, and then they tell you. They think they have made a mistake in their housing choice. The bus into Oxford takes well over an hour and they are spending three hours a day commuting; or the rent in Oxford is astronomical and the quality of place they are renting is atrocious; or they cannot get their offer on a home accepted despite it being in the catchment of one of ‘those bad’ schools and despite being told house prices are falling due to Brexit.

You give them the look, the Oxford look. It is the Oxford way, to give the Oxford look, and you have slipped into the way. You are on autopilot because you have been in this situation so many times before. Your brow furrows, you change your stance to appear to be listening intently, you look concerned, sympathetic, you ooze apparent empathy. You say, “where are you living now?”

Their story unfolds. They are hesitant at first, but they want to know if they have made a mistake. Their implicit question: “What is the secret to being well housed in or near Oxford?” They are new. They do not know.

It is all a little embarrassing. After all, if the young woman you are talking to is a DPhil student her problem would be far less of a problem if she had parents who could help her out. The University has been so generous in offering her a place to study, and she has been so fortunate to receive research council funding for her fees and a stipend to live on; the only problem is the rent and the fact she needs to eat as well as sleep.

It’s so much rent every month for such a squalid room. The evening bar job in the White Rabbit helps, but is tiring. She worries about the insecure contract with her landlord, about her friend who is illegally sub-letting the sofa and what should happen if that is discovered. She worries that the rent will rise. She is looking into house sitting for people who go away in the summer. You tell her that a mortgage on that property would only cost

half as much as what she and her legal and illegal co-tenants are all collectively paying in rent. It does not cheer her up to know just how much money her landlord is making, enough from just this one letting to spend all his days on cruise holidays. It’s ‘the Oxford housing market’.

“What is the University doing?”, she asks you. “Well it built some blocks of flats at the south end of Port Meadow” you reply. “Some even have a little kitchen in them and an oven! But because there was so much uproar about how the flats spoilt the view, when the old paper mill site at Wolvercote was to be developed the University bottled it and sold to a private developer,” you tell them, knowingly, showing off your detailed knowledge of all things Oxford, while not actually being at all impressive.

You continue: “I would have built an Italianate mock village, looking a little like Portofino or Portmeirion”, you joke, “in front of those new blocks of flats. Imagine how much better the view south across Port Meadow from Wolvercote would have been then? They could have been built to be let to University key workers”, you suggest. The bursar, who used to work in the City of London, overhears you and inwardly sighs. ‘There you go again, displaying your complete ignorance of the way money markets work’ he thinks as he smiles pleasantly and wanders away towards a potential donor, glass (for them) in hand.

A week later the new Associate Professor tells you of his problem renting. Your brow furrows and you look concerned and shift your stance to appear to be interested. His partner is expecting a baby and no landlord will rent the couple an apartment in Jericho, or anywhere nearby where they want to live. Why rent to a family with a child and risk the inevitable extra wear and tear? But they have finally found somewhere to live on the eastern edge of the city, and it will work until the child is aged four. As you talk there is, as always, the potentially embarrassing issue that might be raised of money. He is American so the risk is higher. He has not yet been in Oxford long enough to know that you can talk about anything, sex, politics, whatever, as long as you don’t mention inherited wealth or where the children go to school.

“My college doesn’t help”, the new professor tells you, as if the city’s problem would be solved if only all the colleges helped all their associate professors to buy a house. That would be a little like going back to the days when the dons lived in college, you think to yourselves. Where if you left your job you also left your home. You quip about how Oxford initially expanded only when the dons could finally stop having to pretend that they were celibate. Only then could they build grand houses for themselves on the Woodstock and Banbury Roads; town houses with a basement for the male servants and an attic for the females ones. The quip doesn’t help, but to quip is the Oxford way.

An older member of staff tells you of a problem with their children's primary school. The staff keep on changing every year, often during the school year, and "they are all so young and inexperienced", she says. "The last head teacher they appointed was incompetent and has already resigned. It is as if they can't find someone who wants to do that job for any length of time who can also live in or around Oxford." You tell them you once saw a series of maps of how Oxford expanded over time. The light grey areas on the map were what had been newly built. The maps showed that the city abruptly stopped expanding after the 1970s. "The reason" you say, to show (in the Oxford Way), just how very clever you are, "was not because of the green belt, but because the car factory was no longer taking on any new staff".

You warm to your theme. "Tens of thousands of men used to work in the factory in Cowley. Almost all were married and had children. When their jobs were not replaced it was mostly people from the hospitals and universities that took over living in their homes. Just a few thousand people work in the factory today. Oxford did carry on expanding outwards in the 1970s, 80s and 90s; but into other peoples' neighbourhoods and communities, not onto green fields. That is why we have such a crisis now, much worse than before".

It doesn't help to explain. They know that your children don't go to a school like their children's school. They know that somehow you managed to navigate the Oxford way. They don't know how. You change the conversation.

Is there another way? The University has plans, but they mostly involve bringing in more students and staff to the city, a new graduate college and a new trunk road so that those without some financial advantage can commute in from further and further away each morning. The high turnover of young academics makes the snapshot at any one time look particularly impressive. So many amazing CV's to hand at any one instance in time for the smiling snapshot picture that is the Research Excellence Framework, like baubles on a Christmas tree. Those who have made it are not unduly concerned. The most pressing perennial issue in the *Oxford Magazine* is why invitations to the grandest of summer garden parties were not given out this year to some of the retired academics who still live in the city.

Two local people died homeless in Oxford in late January 2019. As children they had both been pupils at Cheney school, then the average school in the city. Most of the homeless people who have died recently in Oxford grew up in the city or nearby.

The government has plans. A million new homes in the countryside between Oxford and Cambridge, along the route of the first quarter segment of the new M25+. Initially they will just label it an 'expressway' to imply it will not be gridlocked. It will feed into the M40, and on to London. And, if ever built, it will be gridlocked as it approaches Oxford. Their plans will not solve the housing problem.

In great contrast, her majesty's opposition have plans, including a commitment to the compulsory purchase by the state of agricultural land on the edge of those cities in which there is the greatest housing need, and no support

for the new expressway, just for a better rail link. The rail link would not be gridlocked; and much of the new housing would be allocated on the basis of need, not to make profit for greed.

The governing bodies of colleges with land around the edge of Oxford prick up their ears. Someone had told them that the Oxford way means it is their duty to do whatever they could to maximise the growth of the college endowment. To do less would be a dereliction of their duty as a trustee of an educational charity. Education is, apparently, all about amassing enormous wealth.

Key members of the governing body hold confidential talks with property developers who wanted to build detached homes on the edge of Oxford, large houses with double garages for the most affluent of London commuters. These will be "homes for your children" the oily executive from the property company lied at the public meeting held in Old Marston back in 2018, as he looked the scruffy man who had asked the question directly in the eye. He assumed the man knew little about housing. That man was me.

The bottleneck will be broken. It was broken before, between 1930s and the 1960s. The homeless have been well housed before, many decades ago. The University and its colleges have never played a progressive role in this story, that may just be their way. It is a very long and old story. One day, when I am a very old man, I may still be here. I don't want to end my days clogging up a family house in New Marston for years after my children have finally left home. If I fail to escape this city in retirement I would like to end my days in an apartment with a lift and no stairs that had been carefully built into one of the hill sides overlooking the city. I don't need much space, moving recently to Oxford has taught me how few material possessions you really need to retain. But you would be amazed just how many apartments could be built into those hillsides, especially if very little space were reserved to park cars.

I would hope that a new family were living in the house I now live in, and that they could then walk to work or school. A family of five last lived in it in the 1930s. I would hope that all around me were cycle lanes, students, primary school teachers, head teachers, and associate professors. And I would hope that the biggest worry I had would be whether the invitation to the summer garden party would arrive each year, so that I could set off in my gown in my electric buggy down into the city where the University now funded itself on the back of the tourist trade, rather than relying on arms dealers or plutocrats attempting to white wash their reputations. In my ageing regalia, I would continue to play my part in the entertainment.

I imagine a conversation with a newcomer and confide in them, annoyingly, "in my day you know, it was almost impossible to afford to live in this city, the roads were choked with cars and the colleges were choked with the lingering scent of bigotry. There were people sleeping on the streets, locals were considered to be miscreants, and the tourists were resented". And they will listen politely, without a care in the world over the truly affordable rent they pay for the home on the hillside that they too have right to live in for as long as they wish, regardless of who they work for, or if they work.

1750
Population: Unknown



In 1750 Oxford consisted largely of medieval city; outlying villages such as Headington were still separate entities.

1830
Population: 24,000



In 1830 there were 24,000 people living inside the modern Oxford boundary. The period saw housing built to the north of the city.

1900
Population: 57,000



Between 1830 and 1900 there were major urban extensions into St Clement's and North Oxford.

1939
Population: 94,000



The interwar years saw large numbers of houses built in what are now the suburbs of Cowley, Headington and Marston.

1970
Population: 125,000



Council housing estates including Blackbird Leys were built in the postwar period. The green belt was introduced from the 1950s.

2001
Population: 134,000



The urban footprint of Oxford has changed little since the 1970s. The most recent urban extension at Greater Leys was built in the 1990s.

2011
Population: 152,000



The rapidly growing population since 2001 has been accommodated by increased housing density within the existing urban footprint.

2021
Population: 165,000



With the city still growing but confined by the green belt, developments are planned at Northern Gateway and Barton.

Source: Oxford City Council

Hinksey Hill Wander

MARK LEECH

It was a fresh autumn day, the air cool but green still in the leaves. We had crossed the ever-fumy A34 at the South Hinksey footbridge, and soon were treading a familiar trail along the hedge line. Even in late September the grass stands hip high beside the path, all banners of spent seed in varying shades of gold. The field beside us was mostly bare earth. Scattered across the grey-brown expanse were flints was a peculiar harvest: fossils.

On this side of Hinksey Hill the clay has recently been disturbed. This has brought to the surface the cracked shells of oysters, conglomerate stones filled with bivalves and occasionally single discs of shells, all dating from the Jurassic when the county was covered by a rich tropical sea.

My favourites are the oyster shells, a centimetre or two thick. Complete, they would be more than a hand's span across. Broken, they reveal their own sedimentary layers, one for each year of the oyster's life. It can take quite a time to reach the top of the hill.

Eventually – also being distracted by a kestrel flying ahead of us – we reached the duckboards that lead through the fens of Happy Valley. Unlike the open field, the first part of the fen is quite closed in. There were a few butterflies and bees drifting about, all with an autumn drowsiness. This fen is a very rare habitat, home to species very close to vanishing from the UK.

We cross a little stream in the channel it has bored through thick vegetation. Long-fingered mosses stretch themselves out into the striated surface of the water, shifting between shadow and streaks of light. Then we are into the trees.

They are a mix, oak, lime, hawthorn, willow. Some stand tall, spreading canopy high over our heads, creating a cool, moist realm where the path is always muddy and fuzzes of moss cover the sides of thick trunks. Below the high branches the slopes of the valley angle down to the stream, where sandy patches among the leaf litter show deer, badger, fox, dog and human prints.

Fallen trees lie here and there across the channel, excellent bridges for the adventurous to go exploring. Others might like to crouch among the stones on the

stream bottom, picking out ones that have been polished to gleaming brilliance and shine with wetness – almost jewels compared with the dusty, muddy grey fossils of the field.

Fallen branches are patterned with fungi and mould, giving up their shapes to the knobbliness of decay. More extravagant forms are presented by trees that have fallen and risen again, arcing down into the ground, then up, sprouting etiolated side branches crowned with fragile leaves, dappled with galls and other strange blotches. It's as easy to spend time in the woods as picking over the fossils outside.

We passed out into the open air again, felt its warmth, heard the chatter of jackdaws and the high call of a red kite, but our minds were half back in the damp under the trees. We ought to have been admiring the rosehips red like a shock, and the last remaining yellow flowers by the side of the path. We did enjoy sticking burrs to each others' clothes. The seeds, presumably, were scattered in our wake.

We passed under a great oak, stretching up over us, and shortly after the path turned almost back on itself, sloping up from the valley bottom. The ground was soft, but many crab apples had fallen, brown and squishy at the core but staying crunchy outside. A faint appley smell hung around us as we made our way over this excellent harvest for mice and birds stocking up for the winter.

The path soon flattens out to a broad track between big sloe bushes and the sharp slope down to the stream. The skeletons of blooms hung as from gallows over the yellowing grass. It was only at first glance that it seemed macabre. This is a healthy meadow and this was simply one of the stages in its annual cycle. It always pays to linger and look down over the sward into the trees. This time, a green woodpecker launched loudly and iridescently past us.

We came to the gate that took us back out to the fossil field. We looked out over Oxford, seemingly cupped in the palm of the wider valley, and from this distance, quite still. But the path home heads down towards the A34.

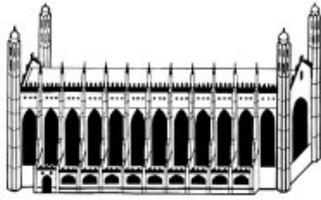
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Notes from Cambridge

The following speech was delivered at a Discussion held in the Regent House on 22nd January 2019 (*Reporter* No 6535, Vol CXLIX, No.17, 2019).

Deputy Vice-Chancellor, it would be perverse of me not to welcome this Report for it endorses the suggestion I made in the Discussion in December 2010 of the *Report of the Council on membership of the Regent House (age-limit)*. The Council had proposed extending the membership of the Regent House to a class of former members continuing in University employment beyond the age of 67 and quite probably beyond 70. Because of the age-limit of 70 it also proposed that, like Heads of Houses, the new class should be exempt from the limit.

I made no objection to the extension, observing only that what was sauce for the goose was sauce for the gander, and that there were some qualified Fellows of Colleges over the age of 70 who should then be exempted in the same way. But in the light of changing attitudes to age discrimination (the Equality Act was also 2010) I proposed the simple solution of removing the age-limit for all classes anyway. It had been introduced as recently as 1996.

There is no need to recite how successive Councils managed to spend eight years getting from there to here, for in a sequence of 'Notes from Cambridge' in the *Oxford Magazine* I have described it. To be specific, in numbers 386, 388, 394, 395, 399 and the current one 403.

Though I shall have one comment to make on the draft regulations, my main reason for speaking today is to view any consideration of the membership of the Regent House in the context of its long-term decline as an appropriate governing body for the University of Cambridge.

The Regent House was created in 1926 by the Statutory Commissioners appointed under the Oxford and Cambridge Act of 1923. Its primary purpose was to end the constitutional arrangements going back to the Act of 1856 under which the Senate, consisting of all Masters of Arts, wielded the power of voting on Graces, all the University's decisions being taken by Grace. A Council of the Senate with the sole power and function of authorising the submission of the Graces was elected by the resident members of the Senate listed in an Electoral Roll.

But times were changing and financial pressures on the University were growing. A reform movement, started before the First World War, culminated in the Royal Commission of 1919 followed by the 1923 Act and the essentials of our present constitution. My contention is that the Regent House, the Senate's successor as the governing body, is itself now too large and too widely-constituted for its present purpose. But to hold this view is not to oppose a particular change such as is proposed in this Report which is to be welcomed. Rather it affords an opportunity for a look at the causes of the expansion.

The Regent House has grown from an original 544 members to 5670 on the 2018 Roll. Established

in the 1926 Statutes it consisted principally of two constituencies, the Heads and Fellows of the Colleges on the one hand, and the combined University Administrative and Teaching Officers as defined by the new Statutes on the other. The national interest was reflected in the fact that the University could only change Statutes subject to their approval by His Majesty in Council after having been laid before Parliament.

But the Statutes leaked. They stated that further Administrative Offices could be created by Ordinance as the need arose. So when in 1932 it was felt necessary to include in the Regent House the first two Assistant Directors of Research (ADR), Chadwick and Kapitza, and others similarly appointed on outside funds, the post of ADR, not being a University Office by Statute, was declared to be an Administrative Office by Ordinance. In 1934 the Statute itself was then changed so that not only Administrative Offices but Teaching Offices could henceforth be created by Ordinance. The post of ADR was subsequently joined by those of Assistant in Research (AR) (1938) and Senior Assistant in Research (SAR) (1952).

Although it was the custom to Grace each individual Teaching Office as the need arose, there was no such restriction for Administrative Offices, and by the time the two classes were combined into the single class of University Office in 1974 the Statutes had lost control of the membership of the Regent House. Today the Council can create as many administrative University Officers as it likes. In the 2017–18 Officers Number of the *Reporter* there were 426 administrative officers in the University offices (small 'o'). The General Board can similarly add to the numbers.

It should also be mentioned that further opportunities for growth were built in from the start with particular categories, most importantly the teaching members of Faculties who were members of the Senate but neither University Officers nor College Fellows.

But the problem of research workers on outside grants would not go away. By 1977 they numbered about 450, and the General Board set up an *ad hoc* 'Committee on research assistants' to advise them what was to be done. Its members were Professor Sir Peter Swinnerton-Dyer, Professor Sir Brian Pippard and Professor Zangwill. They observed "Research assistants have no mention in the *Statutes and Ordinances* of the University, and the Committee consider that this is an anomalous situation for so large a body of people employed by the University, albeit in an unestablished capacity".

They recommended the adoption of titles for research assistants, 'Senior Research Associate' at the level of ADR and 'Research Associate' at the level of SAR and AR together.

In most respects these 'appointments', as they were called, were just the same as ADRs, etc., had been before they were absorbed into the University Office category,

but they differed in one vital respect: they were not approved by the University by Ordinance. When the recommendations of the Committee were approved by the General Board they were modified on the recommendation of the Secretary General by the removal of the draft Regulations through which the proposed new titles would have entered *Ordinances*.

The resulting Notice that appeared in July 1977 proposed no legislation at all: the Board had created the titles of ‘Senior Research Associate’, ‘Research Associate’ and ‘Research Assistant’ without authority. And the Board was of the opinion that ‘it would be wholly inappropriate to propose changes in the Statutes to give research workers automatic membership of the University, or membership of the Regent House’.

The matter could hardly rest there. A class of University employees who were graduates and who held ‘appointments’ which appeared to have official titles was unlikely long to remain silent, and early in 1985 five members of the Regent House requested a Discussion in the Senate-House on the ‘Structure of the academic profession: terms and conditions of employment and status of contract research staff’. Dr T. D. Lamb was the lead speaker, and, addressing the question of status and the desire for membership of the Regent House, he suggested the creation of ‘one or more classes of University office ... into which to appoint academic research staff’ and he observed that this could be achieved by Ordinance.

The Council took nearly a year to reply, and when they did they would go no further than distancing themselves from the General Board’s 1977 opinion to the extent of suggesting that perhaps just the Senior Research Associates might be granted membership of the Regent House, and they promised to prepare a short Report. This appeared on 30 April 1986, proposing an ingenious route for admitting SRAs to the Regent House without actually mentioning them in *Statutes and Ordinances*.

The Council’s Byzantine scheme was to add a new class to Statute A, II, 3 (Membership of the Senate) and a new Ordinance about the Status of Master of Arts giving SRAs that status and thus membership of the Senate, contingent on SRAs being approved by Grace as appointments for the purpose of the new class. As members of the Senate, they could then be made members of Faculties and thus of the Regent House.

I pointed out in the Discussion that this would not work, because the Grace was legislative and not just an Order, and therefore would be an Ordinance for SRAs, which was what the Council was trying to avoid. SRAs were only to be mentioned in footnotes saying they had been approved under this scheme. Like Dr Lamb, I suggested that SRAs should be made University Officers instead, in their case ADRs, the post which, sixty years earlier, had been created precisely for this purpose.

Of course my fear was that from this small beginning a new class would grow consisting of people in unestablished posts who, it seemed to me, should not be members of the Regent House because of the large numbers likely to be involved in the future. The November 1985 Roll already had about 3,080 members.

The Council was unmoved. SRAs ended up in a footnote in *Ordinances* as planned (with the ultimate status symbol, an entry in the index). In the 1995 *Statutes*

and *Ordinances* there was further progress: the footnote in *Ordinances* was replaced with a footnote which referred to a new footnote in *Statutes*: SRAs had finally achieved the status of a statutory footnote by an editorial adjustment.

Meanwhile, the General Board had been quietly promoting Graces adding to SRA in the footnote. By 1991 ‘Lecturer (unestablished)’ and ‘Assistant Lecturer (unestablished)’ had been added, and by 1995 the new footnote in *Statutes* included ‘Research Professors’ and ‘Research Associates’, duly indexed. The next year, 1996, ‘Reader (unestablished)’ appeared. In November 1995 the Roll contained 3,521 names, and the following year, with the new age-limit in force, 3,299.

As we have seen, it is now 5,670, too large to be an effective and responsible governing body. Just as the reforms of the 1920s replaced the Senate by a Regent House a fraction of its size, now once again a smaller body is necessary. Nor can the present size be held since the processes for adding further members and categories of member are quite out of Statutory control. No argument is ever advanced as to why a new category should join the governing body. If being employed by the University seems now to be justification enough, what about the Assistant Staff?

Before the advent of postal and then electronic voting senior administrators would sometimes voice their fear of an ambush in the Senate-House by a determined group of voters. But it never happened. With electronic campaigning and voting and an oversize Regent House it certainly can and probably will. I made this point in ‘Notes from Cambridge’, *Oxford Magazine*, Fifth week, Michaelmas Term 2014, in connection with proposals for introducing electronic voting for the Senate’s election of the next Chancellor:

“[it] would make it too easy for a determined and computer-literate group to mount a politically-motivated campaign for their chosen candidate whilst most of the ‘international alumni’ expressed no interest”.

Sounds familiar? The danger in the present Regent House is that this process can accentuate the ease with which a particular interest-group gets its way, which may not be in the interests of the University.

Finally, a comment on the phrase ‘active participants in the University’s affairs’ in the draft Special Ordinance. It first appeared in the notorious proposal to remove from the Regent House the Fellows of the Colleges qualified qua Fellows. It was supposed by many, including me, to mean actively participating in University governance (‘the University’s affairs’). The flysheet arguing against the amendment that had introduced it remarked on this and the lack of a definition. But eventually it became obvious that in the minds of the Council it meant ‘working for the University’. Moreover it evidently included those College officers who were doing work that in another university would be a university responsibility. It was as if the ‘work’ of the Oxford and Cambridge Colleges was contracted to their Universities.

Caveant collegia.

A.W.F.EDWARDS

Climate Change

Sir – While I agree with Danny Dorling (*Oxford Magazine*, No. 402, 8th Week, MT 2018) that the inevitability of disaster from climate change is “almost certain”, I do not share his view that “reducing economic inequality is key to facing up to climate breakdown.”

Of course the elimination of income inequality is important for many reasons; however, it would make no contribution to reversing the process which is causing the ice caps to melt and sea levels to rise. This can only get worse and worse as average global temperatures increase.

Key to mitigating the effects of climate change is the unlikely goal of achieving zero carbon emissions speedily in order then to hope that a credible breakthrough will be found to reduce their concentration in the atmosphere.

Yours sincerely
MAYER HILLMAN
Oxford

A new College

Sir – I notice that an article in your last issue (*Oxford Magazine*, No. 404, 2nd Week, HT 2019) states that the proposed new ‘college’ will be a ‘Society’ of the University like Kellogg and St. Cross. The Colleges are required to publish their Financial Statements. The Permanent Private Halls must make their annual returns to the Charity Commission. But the University’s Financial Statements appear to provide no details about what the ‘Societies’ as its departments are costing the University.

May we know what size of dent the new Society and its proposed successors will make in the University’s budget and how the risks have been assessed? (And some figures for the two which exist at present would be welcome too.)

Then there is the question of Resource Allocation. The RSL lies within GLAM alongside gardens and museums, and its funding is allocated on that assumption. Precisely how will that distribution be affected by the part-time take-over of building, collections and apparently staff by ‘Parks College’?

The University’s web pages relating to Resource Allocation appear not even to have noticed the disappearance of HEFCE. Perhaps some updating is due and perhaps it could explain to Congregation how funding is to be shared out between GLAM and the new Society?

Yours sincerely
G.R. EVANS
Oxford

TO THE EDITOR

Sir – On 7 December 2018, the University announced imaginative and ambitious proposals for the location, character and leadership of a new (graduate) College, the 39th. The new College could add to the University’s research capacities to explore two challenges, Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning, and Environmental Change. Presumably, its research focus might in due course be broadened to other challenges of continuing international significance. The proposals are far-reaching and raise a number of questions for the University to consider first.

The first questions are constitutional. Congregation is the University’s sovereign body. It may be sensible for the proposals to be the subject of a Discussion and amended in the light of that. Council must put the final proposals to Congregation.

Oxford Colleges are Colleges of the University, often referred to (wrongly) as the ‘collegiate University’. The creation of a new College may have implications for other Colleges, which will presumably be considered by their Governing Bodies, and be put to the Conference of Colleges. The elaboration of the proposals will be communicated to all members of the University so that they are not confronted by a *fait accompli*.

The next question follows. Why do we need new Colleges at all? In the last three decades, the Said Management School and the Blavatnik School of Government have been created and found space within the Social Sciences Division. Institutes have flourished. The proposed areas of research could appropriately be situated within the Divisions of Life Sciences and Natural Sciences. It would be desirable to bring more balance to the proportions of research students in the Natural Sciences and Life Sciences in the University but Humanities Division must protect its claims.

As Peter Oppenheimer has pointed out the University has expanded its recruitment of postgraduates vastly, by increasing the number of students taking taught graduate courses, particularly in the social sciences (in some cases this is a possible or required route to a research degree). Will this be done, as in recent years, by adding more students to our present number: in a fourth year, 450 per year would amounting to 1,800 students?

This would make further changes to the balance between undergraduate and graduate students, which may or may not be desirable. Opinions will differ. Will the proposed College make an exclusive claim to students (including Oxford graduates)

in its own areas of specialization?

The next questions are financial. Bluntly, who will be stumping up? There are three questions here. What is the anticipated cost of setting the College up? Development costs are notoriously vulnerable to cost overruns. Will the University bear responsibility for them? Research funders will in any event be expected to pay large overhead costs. What possible range of recurrent costs are expected to be met? They might be met by student fees. Who will pay them? The largest share is normally taken by the University. Will the University provide some or all of it to the new College? Will the University extend the funds it is now able to provide for graduate students to meet additional claims from those admitted to it?

The existing Colleges will not be keen to compete for donations from prospective alumni. It is obviously important that a College establishes claims to its own intellectual property rights and that the University, which brought it into existence, shares the benefits, and that legal agreements are made before a College is established and any research contracts approved. The prospective legal fees do not bear thinking about.

The University website continues to advertise the opportunities for students to come to Oxford to take undergraduate degrees. A rise in the share of undergraduate admissions to Oxford who are not ‘white’, relatively disadvantaged, and from outside the south-east of England needs Oxford to increase and not to decrease their numbers. These aims can self-evidently not be realised if the total numbers of students remain as at present, and graduate numbers increase.

The final problem is that students need beds while residents of Oxford need places to live. Adding more students to the demand for accommodation by students and academic and other employees of the University and Colleges is surely irresponsible. The University’s most recent venture into building a modest addition to our graduate accommodation has proved contentious within the University itself.

As the Vice-Chancellor says, ‘One essential attribute of the proposed college is yet to be considered – its name.’ More essential, surely, is who is the prospective donor? The College, we are told, will recruit students in the coming year for admission in 2020. It would be irresponsible to proceed without a substantial up-front commitment. Will a donor wish to be associated, even named after, a College rather than just a School or an Institute?

The proposals provide some of the answers but have not yet told us what the questions are. This may be the wrong way round.

Yours sincerely
GAVIN WILLIAMS
St Peter’s

Discrimination at Stellenbosch University

Sir—It is quite valuable to both Oxford and the broader international academic community to have highlighted the unacceptable bias against Israel particularly in academic conferences (*Oxford Magazine*, No. 404, Second Week, HT 2019, p. 13). The article furthermore clarifies well that attempts to mask such bias with presumably justifiable language, just like

Stellenbosch tried to do, just brings further shame on the institution whose real intention is to evidently discriminate against Israelis. May the article by Drs. Yudkin and Noble help prevent such tragedies in future.

Yours sincerely
ANNA SINCLAIR
Wadham

The next issue of
Oxford Magazine
will appear in
eighth week of
Hilary term

REVIEWS

Jazz at Woodstock

Woodstock Jazz Presents Simon Spillett*

2019 has come in complete with the start of a new Oxfordshire jazz series. Based in Woodstock, the monthly programme kicked off on Friday 18 January with the Simon Spillett Quartet, featuring Alex Steele on piano, Paul Jefferies on bass, and Charlie Stratford on kit.



The newly refurbished St Hugh's Centre serves as the venue for Woodstock Jazz, its café-style seating fitting in a small audience of around 100. The series website's description of it as 'candle-lit, intimate and friendly' could almost come good were it not for the bare white of the walls and the neon purple of the stage lights. But they certainly got the friendly bit right, with the relaxed atmosphere helped along by a 'bring your own drinks' policy.

The bassist Paul Jefferies and his wife Jane are behind Woodstock Jazz, and they did well to open the series with tenor sax player Simon Spillett, whose gigs tend to be both sold out and gushingly reviewed (Humphrey Lyttelton once described him as 'formidable'). A high level of energy was kept up throughout the evening's mix of ballads, bossa, and the hard bop that Spillet is known for. Introducing the series, the Jefferies styled it as a 'jazz concert club' focused on music from the 1940s-60s. Pitching it at a general audience, they reassured them that it was 'not going to be scary jazz'. Whilst the concert-club feel they were going for definitely came off – with the audience raptly attentive to the music but lively in their applause – the lack of 'scary jazz' is a matter of opinion. It might not be every general audience that would warm to the frenetic 600 notes per minute of Spillett's bebop.

That said, it certainly seemed to work for Woodstock.

Besides being well known for his exceptional musicianship and technical prowess, Spillett also has a reputation for writing (his biography of Tubby Hayes is particularly highly regarded), and it's easy to see how this translates to his aptitude on the mic – his patter was easy-going and informative, with a dry wit that managed not to come off as arrogant. Onstage in his signature dapper suit with red tie (and bearing an uncanny resemblance to his biographee), Spillett opened his set with Count Basie's 'Broadway'. Taking it at an extra-fast tempo, the band came in with a powerful hit and some really physical playing from the get-go, letting Spillett show how well he can do the Coltrane-esque sheets of sound while still knowing where and when to step back and give you a brief breather. Following a set of ever more heated solos, the return of the head managed to finish things off calmly and well under control. I would say that Jefferies could have been stronger – perhaps even more aggressive with his strings – in his solo, but his slightly tentative sound can probably be put down to the ropery PA system, which unfortunately also gave the keys a plasticky quality and killed Spillett's mic off partway through the first half. Not that he really needed it.

'Broadway' was followed by some more Count Basie, but with a more relaxed feel and slower tempo for his 1958 tune 'Shiny Stockings'. An untidy ending was light-heartedly brushed aside by Spillett's comment, 'we played that ending just to prove this was live', and the tune came off none the worse for it. Next we heard some Erroll Garner with a playthrough of 'Misty', showing that Spillett can also handle expansive and lyrical in a ballad. He still played hard though, whereas the rhythm section really pared things down here, with some more angular playing only coming back in from

Steele in his keys solo. The Quartet then re-upped the tempo to finish off the first half with Duke Ellington's 'Cottontail'. It came prefaced with a caution: 'This is the twiddly bit'. Stratford's fast swing underpinned driving solos all round, and while their 'Broadway' might have been tighter, this 'Cottontail' was really exciting.

The second set started off calmer, but solid playing took us through Sonny Rollins' 'Doxy' and on to Coleman Hawkins' tenor test piece 'Body and Soul'. 'Doxy' was again taken up-tempo, but with a really heavy, digging in swing (that actually teetered on digging in a little too much and becoming laboured). Then after 'Body and Soul' came some bossa nova with Luiz Bonfá's theme from the 1959 Brazilian film *Black Orpheus*. Now a ubiquitous jazz standard, it's notable how much the bossa feel can fall out of this piece, and Stratford's drumming, although excellent, didn't quite sit comfortably in the samba groove. That didn't stop him letting loose in his 8s with Spillett (which featured a cheeky quotation of 'These Are a Few of My Favourite Things'), but the piece could have taken more of the character he showed in his 8s throughout.

Finishing up the second set with 'Blue Monk', the band built the excitement right back up to where it had been at that first note of the gig. Monk's blues finally gave Alex Steele a chance to really open things out and show off what he could do, and this time we also got some creative playing from Jefferies in his bass solo, which started off coyly with lots of high register and ended up catching a meatier sound than his previous solos had. Stratford also had a whole solo to himself at last, which he used to unleash a torrent of sound, only wrong-footing us all with the briefest moment of complete silence in the midst of it. As was the case throughout the gig, the solos were all the better for being thoughtfully constructed and forsaking gimmicks.

Following the demand for an encore hot on the heels of 'Blue Monk', Spillett joked, 'we'd love to play one more, but that last one featured all the notes we know!' But they certainly managed to pull a few more notes out to round things off with an entertaining sprint through 'Secret Love'. Throughout the evening, the whole Quartet gave a great performance, but it was really Spillett's show and he was consistently a cut above. Whatever the speed and whatever the tune, he managed to keep his sound incredibly clear, matching a stunning agility with unswerving power.

Woodstock Jazz is set to continue on the third or fourth Friday of every month, with upcoming performers including Ben Holder, Craig Milverton, and Alan Barnes.

*Website: www.woodstockjazz.co.uk
Tickets: £12 advance, £15 on the door

ROSIE MCMAHON

The Revolting Students of the 1960s



SOME of the OM's more ancient readers will have once been revolting 1960s students. This book is about you—well, if you went 'to college' in the

USA: 'Going to College in the Sixties', J.R. Thelin, The Johns Hopkins University Press (h/bk, 2018, 200 pp).

It is a story of massive HE expansion, of the Government/State (especially enshrined in the sunny optimism of the very grand and costly 'California Master Plan') envisaging free and quality HE for all, of the University becoming part of what was then called 'The Knowledge Industry'—under the firm control of an all-powerful 'Higher Education Establishment' until challenged by Student Activism and Counterculture in 1968/69, which brought down even the very grand Clerk Kerr as the President of the University of California and designer of the CMP.

Let's focus on this collapse of stout party top administrators like Kerr. The 1950s 'benign paternalism' of presidents, provosts and deans towards students continued well into the '60s; there was 'little tolerance for dissent'; but 'little by little there emerged signs of increasing flash points' that culminated 'in fireworks and upheaval' by the final two years of the decade.

And Kerr's big error had been in 1964 to make a public speech to corporate executives and donors belittling student 'outrage and protest' as a tedious 'ritual of hackneyed complaints' rebashed by each batch of 18-22 year olds. This was not forgotten—he was never forgiven and

was duly toppled by the mob which had moved on from grumbles about campus life to civil rights, racial equity, free speech, gender issues, and eventually the Vietnam War.

Thus, 'a generation of university leaders were caught off guard' as protesting became occupying and then became violent, with shooting by security forces and student deaths. The 68/69 scuffles at LSE, Warwick and Essex (and even here in Oxford to the bewilderment of the Proctors) were trivial by comparison, but rather more violent in Rome and Paris. (For a comparative review see Marwick's 'The Sixties', OUP).

DAVID PALFREYMAN

Taking a shine to art

Jeff Koons at the Ashmolean. Until 9 June



It seems almost inconceivable now, but in the early 'sixties Edgar Wind would fill the Playhouse with undergraduates across all the disciplines who

wanted to hear about Michaelangelo's Prophets and Sibyls. His performances have remained for me the Gold Standard of lectures ever since, which neither I, nor any lecturers I have heard, have been able to live up to. He used to rehearse them, and made his projectionist so nervous that he shook the projector. 'Samuels, the image is trembling!' he shouted at one point. His *Pagan Mysteries of the Renaissance* is a classic, and I recall him saying of the German Expressionists, 'You can blow the trumpet of the Last Judgement once; you must not blow it every day.' He told me that he did not like Roger Fry's translation of 'absence éternelle de lit' in Stéphane Mallarmé's 'Une dentelle s'abolit' as 'bedlessness'. This was when I was being vetted to join his exclusive seminars with Austin Gill (Magdalen College) on French Impressionism.

He gives his name to the Oxford Art Society, which made Jeff Koons an Honorary Member and invited him to Oxford. He came, and thus the idea of the exhibition at the Ashmolean was launched. He said, 'I couldn't think of a better place to have a dialogue about art today and what it can be.' Koons was present at the press day, and was very generous with his time, and approachable in an exemplary manner. I said to him that 'one wants to touch some of the sculptures, but wasn't allowed. Wasn't there a case for having an exhibition for the blind?' He made a very intelligent reply, saying that the act of looking often generates the imagination of touch, and creates a 'sixth sense'. So by implication a blind person feeling a sculpture imagines its visual form.

The exhibition is accompanied by a beautiful shiny catalogue, with an essay

by the curator Norman Rosenthal and an interview with Koons by Alexandra Sturgis, the Director of the Ashmolean.

* * *

What would Wind think of Koons? One's immediate reaction is that a professor who valued the High Renaissance and austere elitist scholarship would be absolutely horrified, but I'm not so sure. He had a comprehensive, wise, over-arching view of art history, and the way in which images are stolen, modified and recycled and he would perfectly have understood where Koons is placed in the evolution. Were he to return to the Playhouse to lecture as a revenant on Koons he would probably fill it again, helped by the name too. He would have some intelligent things to say about art and mechanization, the subject of his fifth lecture in *Art and Anarchy* (1960) (which one can hear on YouTube). He was slightly sympathetic to Federico de Montefeltro, sitting on 'Urbino's windy hill' and hating printed books: the fear of mechanization in extreme form. And likewise Wind was slightly sympathetic to Ruskin, despising 'vile manufacture' (letter to Henry Acland, 14 March 1871). However he would have the flexibility to see that one has to appreciate the part played by the new dispensations, as did Henry Adams in 'The Dynamo and the Virgin' (1903). And he would have understood that mechanization is a dominant theme and method of production in much modern art.

* * *

Alexander Sturgis is probably right to say that Koons is the most influential figure in art for the last 50 years. He is up there with Andy Warhol. The exhibition has seventeen works, fourteen of which have never been exhibited in Britain before. The star is *Balloon Venus (Magenta)*, an enormous fifteen ton glossy version of the Willendorf Venus. Which I don't like. Mind you, I don't much like the Willendorf Venus either; I much prefer the two graceful female nudes in the Grotte-abri de la Magdaleine des Albis (Tarn)—to which my partner alerted me. There is a room dedicated to the blue gazing globes attached to venerable works of art. They do nothing for me, and one is thankful that these shiny objects were not attached to Ucello's *The Hunt in the Forest* and Piero di Cosimo's *Forest Fire* downstairs. Paintings of classical sculptures in the Antiquity series have obscene symbols overlaying them. One shows the actress Gretchen Mol impersonating the 'fifties pin-up Bettie Page astride an inflatable dolphin. A phrase from Auden's 'Schoolchildren' was running through my head: 'An improper word/ scribbled upon a fountain.'

Always reviewing an exhibition I identify which work I would steal if I had the opportunity. It would be *The Ballerina*. However it does not look particularly good indoors, and the beautiful flowing colours one sees on the big banner outside the

Ashmolean disappear. A number of Koons pieces are best seen out of doors, such as *Pluto and Proserpina*, set up in the Piazza della Signoria in Florence. It is, unlike the adjacent stone Michelangelo's *David*, made of steel and covered with gold leaf, so that it shimmers and threatens to dissolve its competently conceived form. Perhaps he does not demand that we are familiar with the Proserpina and Pluto myth, and recall

*that fair field
Of Enna, where Proserpine gathering
flowers,
Herself a fairer flower, by gloomy Dis
Was gathered, which cost Ceres all that
pain
To seek her through the world;*

That would really frighten the horses and bring on a fit of anxiety, resentment and incomprehension.

This sculpture makes a much more powerful and comprehensive statement in the Piazza della Signoria than it would in a confined museum. It works opposite the Loggia dei Lanzi, which for E.M. Forster was 'the triple entrance of a cave, wherein many a deity, shadowy, but immortal, look[ed] forth upon the arrivals and departures of mankind.' And unlike some shamefully jejune pieces of modern art it survives as craft-work alongside the great Renaissance products. The Mayor of Florence Dario Nardello must have realised this when he gave the green light for the installation. Some of his works are very beautiful, such as *Coloring Book* shown in the courtyard of Royal Academy in 2011.

I did say to Alexander Sturgis that a more interesting exhibition would have involved Koons works scattered throughout the museum. This is what happened in the *Liebieghaus Skulpturensammlung* in Frankfurt (2012), when one could see *Woman in Tub*, complete with a snorkel, cheek by jowl with Della Robbia's *The Madonna della Cintola* (girdle). Which would have given Walter Pater (who wrote on Della Robbia) terminal apoplexy. Sturgis said that the logistical complexities of such a display don't bear thinking about. It would though have created a more vivid 'dialogue' between past and present—except that the past can't answer back. Although we can answer back on behalf of the past.

* * *

Koons is deeply implicated in all the features of modern art which are so baneful for many, especially the commercialism, the commodification and the way in which those forces over-ride taste and expertise. We can't be one hundred percent sure that he means what he says when he says that his ambition is 'to relieve the viewer of his burden of cultural guilt and shame.' (Add her to that). Certainly it is financially convenient to espouse that view.

Some of his most famous productions are breath-takingly dreadful, as if Disney and all that it stood for has become enthroned. One thinks of the enormous shiny purple

dog, made of metal yet imitating the shapes of a balloon. Jed Perl in *The New York Review of Books* described his art as 'the apotheosis of Walmart.' He has moved kitsch, which ought to be marginal, to centre stage, but he is exploiting kitsch so that Roger Scruton's phrase 'pre-emptive kitsch' operates. Koons thinks a softer word is 'banality'. A Whitney Museum exhibition in 1988 was called *Marshalling Banality*.

One of the products depicted a pig dressed with a green garland being led in a procession by a couple of cherub angels and an infant Koons with a red headband. This is one of the show-pieces of the Ashmolean exhibition. Is it a cousin of Keats's lowing heifer 'coming to the sacrifice'? Who knows. Banality has traditionally been the enemy of art and the enemy of social existence at its best. It is realism in its most aggressive, depressing and uncompromising form. Although having said that it has had a kind of endorsed presence even in high art. One thinks of Ben Jonson, one thinks of Pope, unable to exclude the bathos of Grub Street from his Apollonian vision. One thinks of my favourite poet, Louis MacNeice speaking up for it in *Autumn Journal* (XXII). Certainly the banal is there to be recorded, wandering by 'vulcanite tables' (the kind of texture Koons would love) in Paris, where he almost lovingly records 'banal women with feathers in their hats and halos/ Of evanescent veils.' And there is his poem 'Homage to Clichés' (1935), a strange and mysterious work, in which the inexorable forces of death and high art, exemplified by Rameses, eight bells in a tower and a panther, ultimately threaten the familiar and comfortable ritualised security of a world, the world at the bar of a pub say, where all is known and foreseen: 'This whole delightful world of cliché and refrain.'

* * *

This is all part of a conversation that has been going on for a long time on art and public taste. Baudelaire and Henry James took as their yard-sticks the comparisons between Delacroix and Meissonier. Delacroix, one of Baudelaire's 'phares' (lighthouses), was brilliant; Meissonier, with his high finish and ready appeal to boobies (negauds), was lamentable. In a memorable image James said that the difference between them was 'like the difference between plate glass and gushing water.'

Koons is also part of modern art world which many of us hate, where traditional skills have been thrown into the dustbin, and the diktats of 'conceptual art' dispense with the challenges of the makers. Just forget Ruskin's *Elements of Drawing*. It's perhaps futile to wish that an artist whom I shall not name had not espoused bedlessness. Koons's works are produced in factories by underling artisans—120 in New York. Still, Henry Moore had assistants, what Edgar Wind would have called 'delegated chisels'. And Rubens had them. The problem with conceptual art is, often, not that the Emperor has no clothes,

but too many clothes, and certainly Koons's prolific patter throws a rich sheen over what he does. Most of Koons's comments are intended to make us feel good about ourselves, although when some of his explicators talk about vanitas themes the optimism is compromised somewhat. Speaking about his art, and especially the inflatables, Koons places great emphasis on breath; not as powerful though as the life-giving breath in Shakespeare's Sonnet 18.

There are positive judgements to be made though. Edgar Wind would have had incisive things to say about Koons's relationship to the history of art. Unlike some artists who have espoused willed amnesia he has not forgotten his predecessors. Here he goes against some of his statements about the guilt and anxiety much of the public feels about art, because he puts himself into witty relationship with those predecessors. Perhaps the visitors to the Koons exhibition will go downstairs and take a glance at the Arundel Marbles, mercifully free from blue glass balls.

Another relief Koons offers to a tolerant public is freedom from guilt in drooling over porn, since he is marketing it as art. There are those notorious performance-art photographs and sculptures of him and his then wife Ilona Staller (La Cicciolina) in *flagrante*. They have since been divorced—not a marriage made in heaven. Koons's *Ilona's Asshole* (1991) is acceptable, perhaps, because of its intertextual reference to Courbet's *La Source*.

Koons has also managed to free many of his clients from the guilt of the association between art and money. The enormous prices paid for his works become part of the experience of encountering them. If you have colossal amounts of money you can make colossal sculptures and replicas of sculptures, which sometimes almost seem to bypass questions of taste. Examples are the elaborate Damian Hirst sculptures at the Venice Biennale in 2017, 'Treasures from the Wreck of the Unbelievable'—ostensibly the drowned collection of Cif Amotan II (an anagram of 'I am Fiction'). This exhibition was described by one critic as 'undoubtedly one of the worst exhibitions of contemporary art staged in the past decade' and by another as 'the most expensive art flop in living memory'. And yet one's feelings encountering it are not so unlike the feelings when one encounters Koons sculptures.

* * *

This exhibition gives us a glimpse of Koons's very large oeuvre. Many aspects are not covered. For instance his appropriation of Old Masters to decorate Louis Vuitton handbags. This is a large-scale kitschifying process, and art of the past has a hard time accommodating itself to it. There is though in these products not the wicked hard edge of Dame Edna Everage's dress adorned with Edward Munch's *The Scream*. Koons has appropriated Turner's *Ancient Rome*. He is not alone. There was a bit of bover not long

ago when Dr Marten reproduced Turners on boots.

Will Koons stay the course? Possibly, although it's worth recalling that the BMW M3 to which he gave a paint job retired after 53 laps at the 2010 Le Mans. And not even that was original mobile art: BMWs had been painted by Alexander Calder (1975, didn't finish at Le Mans), Frank Stella (1976, didn't finish at Le Mans), Roy Lichtenstein (1977, 2nd in its class at Le Mans), Andy Warhol (1979, 6th at Le Mans) and David Hockney (1995). Back in 1925 Sonia Delaunay decorated a Citroën B 12, colour-coordinated with her clothes. One wonders what colour would be registered if these vehicles had to appear on DVLA log books or French *Cartes Grises*.

Jeff Koons is going to be in conversation with Martin Kemp in the Sheldonian Theatre on May 8th.

BERNARD RICHARDS

Oxford at War

A Provost's War: John Stevenson, Rob Petrie, Oriol, £25; *An Oxford College at War*: Harriet Patrick, Profile, £12.99; *Oxford: The War and the World, 1914-19*, various venues to July 2019.



THE year 2018 saw a host of events held, books and articles published, TV programmes screened, about life and death during what became known as the 'Great' war—the first major continent-wide conflict where the spread of literacy and reliable postal services resulted in a sea of day to day correspondence into which the intrepid historian may dive. Archives of Oxford colleges, unsurprisingly, contain much material of this kind and the two books reviewed here derive from it.

At Oriol, John Stevenson and archivist Rob Petrie have put together a collection of letters between the college's Provost, Lancelot Ridley Phelps, former students serving in the armed forces and the families of those killed: out of 700 Oriol men identified from college records as serving during the war, 173 are known to have lost their lives.

The book's title might be said to be—unknowingly—misleading, the Provost perhaps having less claim to 'ownership' of the war than those who fought, suffered, starved and perished as a result of the falling out among the so-called 'Great' Powers. We get little of Phelps's own feelings about the war, his activities, problems and

opinions. What we read comes, on the whole, from former students, their families and friends; between them they illustrate the terrifying and dehumanising effect of war—especially trench warfare.

It was, however, Phelps who instigated this epistolary activity and doggedly kept it up throughout the war. The letters give us a good idea of the emotional and intellectual link between former students and their college, personified by the Provost. Phelps, a lifelong bachelor, lived in college for half a century, becoming 'the very model of the eccentric don . . . bearded and wearing a black straw hat on his incessant walks', it is said that he not only knew the name of every Oxford 'down-and-out' but was frequently mistaken for one himself. Harrowing though many of the letters are, this collection makes a useful addition to the history both of a college and the life and death of WW1 servicemen and the final few letters give readers a glimpse of life after Armistice, 'Spanish' flu and the so-called 'khaki' election, in which Phelps endorsed the (unsuccessful) Liberal candidate.

Across the road, archivist Harriet Patrick has done a similar service for Corpus Christi. She too draws on surviving correspondence from and to 'Corpuscles', together with other substantial evidence held in the college's 'Roll of Honour'. The numbers may be small—Corpus was the smallest of the established colleges—but the individual stories are every bit as vivid, painful, occasionally odd, or quirky. William Henry Wells, for instance, graduated from CCC in 1900, became a lecturer in English at Munich University, took Bavarian citizenship (while remaining a British subject), was probably conscripted to fight for the central Powers, and then vanishes from the records, almost certainly killed by his own countrymen. Sir Edward Hale, by contrast, a Tonbridge school pupil who, wrote the 'Pelican Record', survived, returning in 1919 to take up a place 'still on crutches but ready to attack Honours Moderations as dauntlessly as he did the enemy'.

The Corpus book has two rather less common but welcome features. First there is the case of 'the Corpuscle who refused to fight'. This was Thomas Attlee, brother to the future Prime Minister. Thomas graduated from CCC in 1902 and when conscription was enacted in 1916, refused to sign up, was offered non-combatant service but (unlike the reviewer's father, who accepted work at an Oxfordshire agricultural school) refused and was imprisoned, declaring that 'war

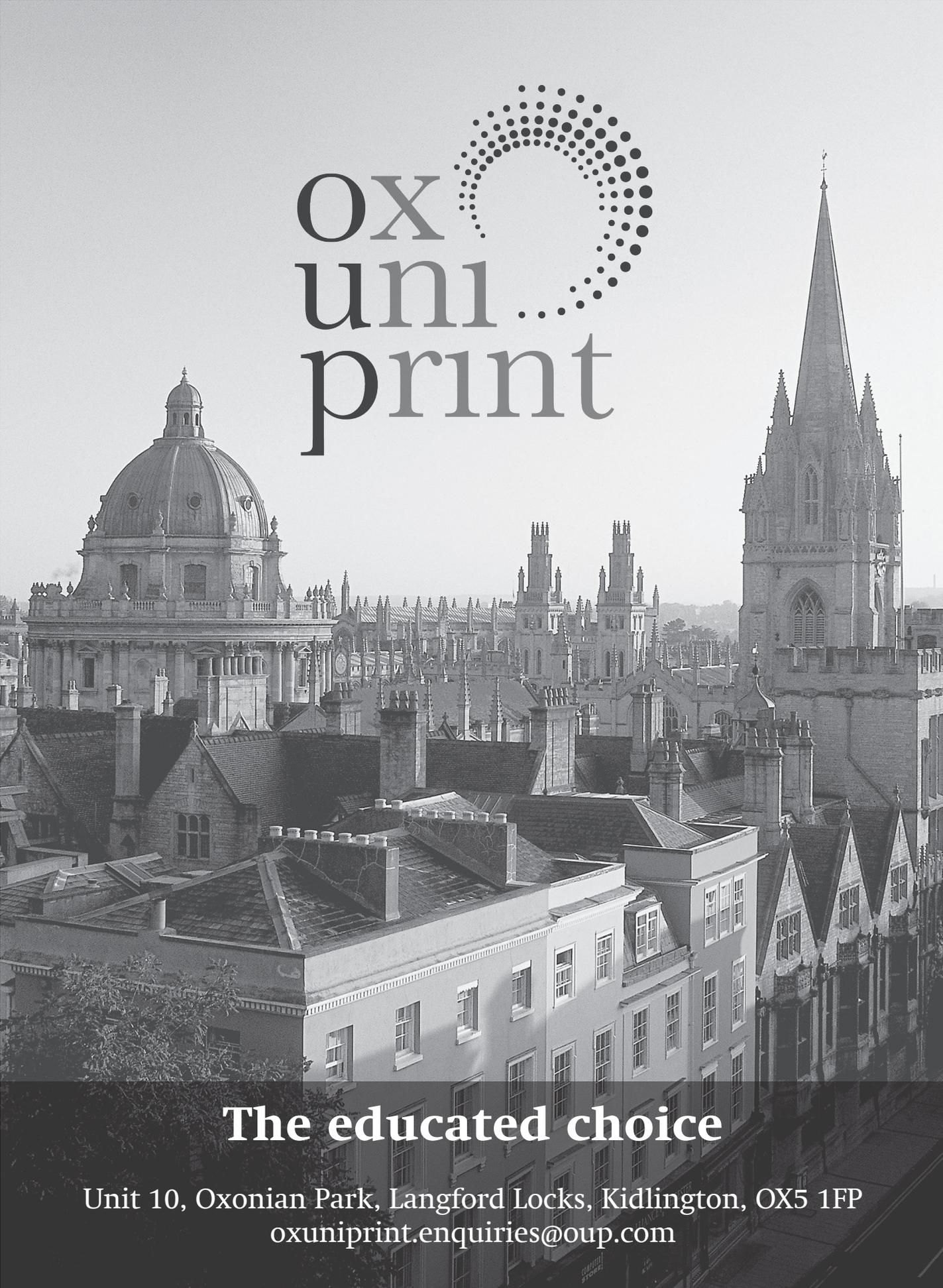
is not a worse way—it is no way at all. [original emphasis]. Secondly, *An Oxford College at War* includes a section on the role of college servants—'Scouts' and the rest—during and after the war, picking up on earlier work by Brian Harrison (see e.g. 'Pelican Record', December 2010) in this otherwise sadly untilled field.

For the general reader, interested in what life was like for servicemen, their families, and the public at large during those war years, these two books provide plenty of well-documented, readable and sometimes heart-rending evidence. For the sake of completeness, it might also be worth reminding readers of an earlier work by Margaret Bonfiglioli and James Munson—*Full of Hope and Fear*, a collection of WWI letters of an Oxford family (1914, OUP). Other colleges, too, include useful references in their more general histories (to avoid sniper fire from the other side of Oriol Square, I cite Judith Curthoys' 2012 Christ Church history, *The Cardinals College*, in which she assures the incredulous reader that House dons willingly gave up alcohol between 1914-1918).

Away from books, the self-styled 'mini-exhibition' *Oxford, The War and the World 1914-19* is well worth catching. It brings together contributions from a multitude of organisations and individuals to illustrate the impact of the war on Oxonians and others in the city during the conflict, centering on ten of them, a couple of whose names will be immediately familiar: T.E. Lawrence, former pupil at Oxford High School for Boys, and Rajani Palme Dutt, undergraduate, pacifist and founder of the British Communist Party. Others are less well known, and not all military; Violet Oakeshott Slater, for example, who promoted pacifism on Oxford's streets and was severely harassed. Many of her letters also appear in *Full of Hope & Fear*.

After its initial run at Somerville College, the exhibition moved to Cheney School's quirkily named Rumble Museum; Cheney's diligent pupils have also produced a handsome booklet encapsulating the stories of those same ten characters, available at www.rumblemuseum.org.uk. The exhibition is at Cowley library until the end of January, then throughout February at the Westgate library, and from 19 March to 31 July at the Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum in Woodstock.

CHRIS SLADEN



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