



PELICAN in BRIEF

Corpus Christi College Cambridge
Reflections on a Pandemic, Summer 2020





Introduction

Elizabeth Winter

Director of Development

As the world went into lockdown, the idea of launching a newsletter to provide a window into the College at a time when no one could visit seemed a good one. The original purpose was to have short factual pieces by Fellows about COVID-related topics. What actually happened was that the thirst for information and the desire to communicate grew as the lockdown dragged on, and the Pelican in Brief became a voice not only for Fellows but also for students, staff and alumni. We decided to stop at the end of the academic year when it seemed life was going to start returning to a kind of normality, and we decided to bind the issues into a magazine as evidence of what we did and how we all coped during these most astonishing and fearful circumstances.

So here we are, and here is the combined Pelican in Brief. The voices in it provide the echoes of life that resonated as we struggled through the greatest non-war crisis to hit the world since 1918. Some articles are factual and scientific; others are reflective and philosophical. Others still highlight the great sense of community and kindness that emerged along with the panic, confused political messaging and the despair many of us felt from time to time. This is the record of how the Corpus community coped with COVID-19.

Editing and commissioning the pieces gave me extraordinary insight into the spectrum of experiences and the research being carried out in labs from physics to neuroscience, often by a deft responsive turn away from other projects to address this new and frightening virus. They also show the term unlived, as Emma Wilson





so eloquently put it in her editorial. The silent term when the College was almost empty, the grass grew and there were no voices echoing through the buildings. As I write the students have returned, but it is to a different, carefully choreographed world of social distancing, face masks and small hubs. A vaccine is still a long way off, and none of us know the trajectory of the next few months. The College has gone to great lengths to provide a safe environment for the students and continues to work closely with the University on this.

I will be leaving the College as Development Director at the end of December, after 20 years here. During those two decades so much has happened, it would require an encyclopaedic list to describe it all. It's enough to say that for me they have been wonderful years, and that much was achieved in the College during this time. The Taylor Library, the Kho building, Kwee Court, the refurbished Parker Library, endowed Fellowships and bursaries, the annual fund and the legacies; all this and much more was made possible by the generosity and loyalty of the alumni, Fellows and friends. But that is just a list. What has meant so much more have been the relationships with Fellows, staff and alumni. Over years of travels and College visits and reunions I've got to know a great many of our 5,000 alumni and these encounters have informed and educated me as well as been extremely enjoyable occasions.

My first project with the College was to edit and produce the book *Corpus - Within Living Memory*, a collection of memories of our oldest alumni, loosely divided into decades and subject areas. As people wrote in with their recollections of life in Corpus from the 1920s to the 1950s, the book, intended initially as a small softback publication, morphed into a hardback cornucopia of the most extraordinary recollections of other worlds and academic life lived under circumstances we cannot imagine. Perhaps there is another book waiting to be written, detailing the experiences we are currently living. I hope someone writes it.

I'd like to pay tribute to my wonderful team, all of whom are moving on to new roles in other colleges and charities and of course to send my successor every good wish. The development office will change, but the mission of excellence, meritocracy, widening participation and fair access will not. I remember when I first came to the College someone told me the secret to Cambridge was disruptive thinking in unchanging ritual and environment. The bones of the place are the buildings, the ceremonies, the Latin graces, processions and gowns. The nerves are the creative processes that run through the colleges and departments like electric currents and set the world alight with possibilities. It's been a great privilege to have been able to play a part over the past two decades and watch it happen.

Floreat Antiqua Domus.

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Editorial

Professor Christopher Kelly

The Master

'Humans are by nature social animals ... anyone who cannot live as part of community, or is so self-sufficient as not to need to ... is either a beast or a god.' So rightly remarked Aristotle in his Politics, no doubt reflecting on the face-to-face society of Athens in the fourth century B.C. The challenge for any community is how to stay connected. Or better put: a community is only as strong as its connections. Amongst the many threats posed by the COVID-19 pandemic is that it will weaken the ties that bind communities by forcing us to keep a not-so-social distance from our friends and colleagues.

The Corpus community is a special case. Its coherence and communality rely not so much on face-to-face encounters (though these are always enjoyable – the Beldam and MacCurdy dinners, the summer party), as on a shared experience in an institution that has been engaged in the same purpose of education, research, learning and religion for nearly seven hundred years. In the face of the necessary cancellation of all alumni events for the foreseeable future, there seemed no better moment to assert our shared identity as members of this community than by ensuring that news and information continued to flow to those who value their continuing connection with this College.

Hence this Pelican in Brief. This is the first of ten issues which will stretch, roughly every ten days or so, to the end of the Easter Term

(so to the end of June). The core format will remain constant. Above all, I wanted to make sure that alumni were kept up-to-date with how the College is dealing with COVID-19 and its consequences for Fellows, staff and students. This also seemed the ideal moment to call on the Fellowship's expertise; so I have asked some of my colleagues to offer brief commentaries on the pandemic from the point of view of their own discipline. These promise to be fascinating in themselves, but also offer a serious counterweight to the miasma of rumour and half-truth that always swirls around any crisis.

Each Pelican in Brief will introduce one of the more recent members of the Fellowship. It will also include reflections on the College's long history of confronting and overcoming crises. A number of forthcoming issues will offer a snapshot from the extraordinary riches of the Parker Library. These reflections are reminders that this College and its community have faced – and survived – plagues stretching back to our very foundation in the mid fourteenth century.

I hope as you stay sheltered and safe that the Pelican in Brief will serve as an affirmation of a still thriving community of which you remain part – even if for the moment that community has to take on a virtual form. In this electronic version of the College, we can all remain social animals. Here, at least, there is no need to practice social distancing.



News from the College

Dr Marina Frasca-Spada

Senior Tutor

This is a difficult time for all of us, trying to reorganise our lives (our work, our modes of engagement with each other) around sudden new rules. For most of our students, the last few weeks have meant a brusque change of pace – from the typical term-time intensely socialised combination of intellectual work and the collegial daily life surrounded by your friends and peers, to the equally intense loneliness of social distance and self-isolation, and the uncertainty of the near future.

We – the Tutors and the tutorial/welfare staff – have worked hard to make sense quickly of the realities of this new situation, and have been helping our students to decide whether to stay in Cambridge or leave. We were clear from the start that we would respect every student's decision, and that we would be on their side whatever that decision might be. We made clear to all our students that, if they were to stay, they would be able to rely on a safe and secure environment in our College. We discussed all such matters personally with a large number, one by one, on the telephone or via Skype. And they know that we will do our best to alleviate any financial hardship that may result from these extraordinary circumstances. Of our five hundred or so students, undergraduates and postgraduates, at the moment around sixty remain in residence in the Old House and in Leckhampton, and our core teams are working hard to look after them.

The College now looks eerily quiet and empty; but New Court is more beautiful than ever, its golden stone gleaming in the clear sunshine of this early spring. Most of us are now working remotely from home. It was curious to see how quickly we have all adapted to spending time glued to our screens – as many hours as the

geekiest of teenagers. And it is via email and other electronic media that Tutors and Directors of Studies remain in frequent contact with students, to offer them their support and to make sure they know we are still their College, and always here for them.

We already know that there will not be a residential term at the other end of this strange Easter vacation. The University has decided that most of our teaching will take place online, and we are now getting organised for that, experimenting with different conference platforms. Since it is clear that examinations in the usual format, with large numbers crowding into examination halls, will be impossible, the University Departments and Faculties are also working hard to identify alternative forms of assessment, also to be conducted remotely. Doing everything from a distance in this way for the next weeks and months also means that our finalists will not be able to have their Graduation Dinner and their General Admissions degree ceremony this June. But we are still their College, and in due course, once the emergency is over, we will be here, as we have been for nearly seven hundred years, to celebrate them and their achievements.





Reflections from the Fellowship

Dr Qingyuan Zhao

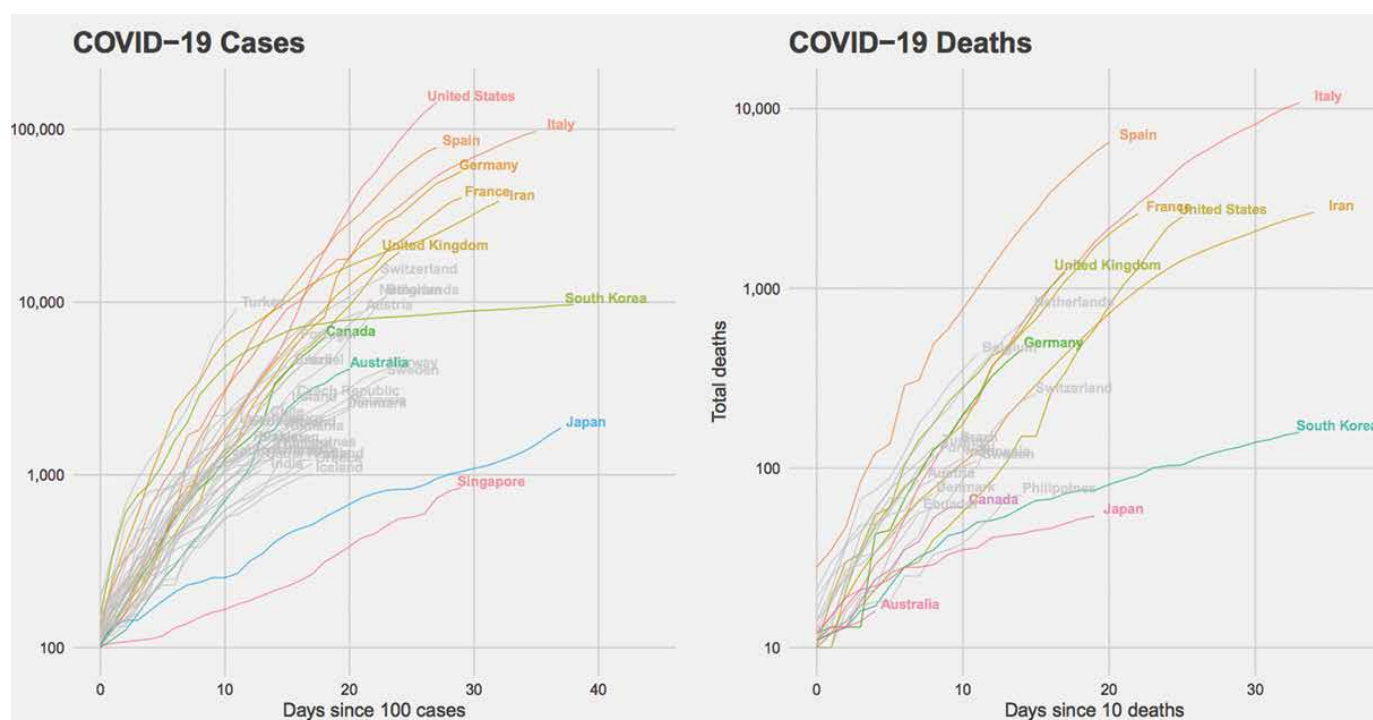
University Lecturer and Fellow in Statistics, models the impact of COVID-19 on populations

Ever since I left China for postgraduate studies in the US, I was always proud to introduce my hometown to everyone I met. But when I was admitted to Corpus Fellowship on 10 February this year, for the first time I didn't need to locate my hometown by indicating the distance from Beijing or Shanghai. Yes, I was born and raised in Wuhan, and I am writing about the coronavirus that has taken thousands of lives there, and is continuing to take more lives around the world.

I started to follow the news about this epidemic outbreak before it was called COVID-19, and even before we knew that the pathogen was a novel coronavirus. I have been through all the negative emotions – confusion, worry, distrust, shock, despair, anger – perhaps like everyone reading this newsletter, but just two months earlier. As an academic statistician, I decided that the best way I could help is by analysing the COVID-19 data myself.

I still vividly remember my dismay on 6 February, the day when I first found that the epidemic was doubling every two to four days in Wuhan before its lockdown. At the time, other studies published in the most authoritative medical journals estimated doubling at every six to seven days. By now it should be obvious that my estimate was much closer to the truth. The easiest way to observe this is from two graphs showing the cumulative COVID-19 cases (and deaths) in different countries since it passed 100 cases (and 10 deaths). It is clear that the total cases and deaths grew about a hundred times in the first twenty days in most countries. This rate is the same as doubling every three days.

Even for expert epidemiologists, it may seem surprising that the analysis I performed, using a mere fifty COVID-19 cases while others were using thousands, provided a more accurate





answer. But to me this was obvious: what matters is data quality, not data quantity. A typical epidemiological study of COVID-19 used epidemic curves in regional outbreaks to fit a Susceptible-Infectious-Recovered (SIR) model, which is a system of differential equations. But most studies failed to recognise two distinct features of the current pandemic:

- In almost all countries, a large number of COVID-19 cases were unidentified due to a shortage of testing kits;
- The reproductive rate of COVID-19 is constantly changing because governments are dynamically adjusting their public health measures.

As a consequence, key assumptions of the SIR model are not satisfied. Because of this, most early analyses underestimated the epidemic growth of COVID-19. By contrast, I decided to focus on Wuhan-exported cases confirmed in a few countries that tested COVID-19 cases aggressively. The sample size is much smaller, but the data quality is also much better. Moreover, instead of applying a standard SIR model, I started from the first principles and built a bespoke statistical model. That is how I avoided the common mistakes that plague so many other studies.

So, I would like to share with the Corpus community the one lesson I learned about COVID-19: this is an extraordinary pandemic, so we must treat it seriously. In particular, instead of following the opinions of others, more than ever we need to think critically ourselves.

Link to the report of the COVID-19 analysis:
<http://www.statslab.cam.ac.uk/~qz280/papers/covid-2019-1.pdf>





Dr Sam Zeitlin

Hong Kong Link Early-Career Research Fellow and College Lecturer in Politics, reflects on the impact of COVID-19 and the global uncertainty that results

The present situation is characterised, above all, by uncertainty—corporal, spatial, hygienic, but also political, financial and economic.

From China to Britain to the United States, persons and whole peoples have been confined to their homes. In many countries, from Iran to Japan to Spain, and not least, (writing on 25 March 2020) in Italy, the recorded numbers of infected and dead are sobering. The world over, thousands have lost their loved ones, their jobs, their life savings. In the United States, as following the tragedy of September 11 2001, primary elections have been postponed. In Britain and elsewhere, popular views of expertise have seemingly pivoted in an instant—from politicians (and publics) rejecting the rule of experts to popular leaders framed bodily by medical doctors, surgeons-general and public health officials.

In moments of uncertainty, such as the present, we are left with our sorrow for lost relatives, acquaintances and friends, as well as for people whom we did not know. In such moments, we are left with doubts and unease but also with our questions. When will there be a vaccine? How many will perish before we have one? When will we be able to leave our homes, to return to work, to rejoin our families and friends from whom we have been separated and socially distanced?

In politics, the current situation raises a question for democratic theory: is it possible for the people to assemble in a situation deemed to be an emergency? More broadly, to what extent is the present crisis a political one? To the extent that it is, are our present institutions equipped to handle it? Looking back to Aristotle's understanding of the human as a political animal in his *Politics*, is it possible

to retain something of our “politicality” and with it, our humanity, when we are no longer interacting face-to-face with others?

In politics, to what extent are we to live by the post hoc ergo propter hoc fallacy? Are incumbent office-holders in some manner responsible for the events which occur on their watch or solely for their responses, foresighted or imprudent, to events as they arise? What would accountability amount to in the present situation? What in any case are the criteria for assessing accountability in crises and emergencies? Might the present crisis serve to restore a sense of common and shared purpose, or will it lead merely to greater and retrenched partisan and factional divisions?



In our uncertainty we can experience an unawaited gratitude. When life seems more tenuous or fragile, we may feel greater appreciation merely for being alive. Amidst uncertainty, sadness, questioning and sorrow, we can be grateful for our friends, our families, our teachers, our students and for many of the blessings which we so often overlook.



New Fellows

Dr Qingyuan Zhao

Fellow in Statistics

Qingyuan was born and raised in Wuhan, which despite its current association with the coronavirus, is a beautiful city long known for its rivers, lakes and lively breakfast tradition. After high school, he went to the Special Class for the Gifted Young programme in the University of Science and Technology of China and majored in mathematics. He then went to Stanford University for postgraduate studies and obtained his PhD in Statistics in 2016. He spent three years in the Wharton School of The University of Pennsylvania as a postdoctoral fellow before joining the

Statistical Laboratory in Cambridge as a University Lecturer.

Qingyuan's research interests lie primarily in drawing scientific conclusions about causal relationships using experimental and observational data, a fast-growing area known as "causal inference". He is also broadly interested in applying statistical methods in biomedical and social sciences. Outside academics, Qingyuan enjoys cycling and skiing, and he recently started to learn to play blues harmonica.





A view from the College Chapel

The Revd

Dr Andrew Davison

Dean of Chapel, Fellow in Theology and Starbridge (University) Lecturer in Theology and Natural Sciences meditates on the challenges of prayer during a pandemic

Chapel services usually pause over the vacation but, as Lent Term ended, the world faced a health crisis unlike anything any of us had seen, so the chaplain and I carried on praying there – duly distanced, of course – for the city and College, including old members, and for the country and world. Soon, that had to move from chapel. Frustrating though it may be, for most of us the great act of charity at the moment is to stay at home to save lives.

Our focus each day is to celebrate the Eucharist, and to pray the Litany. I've written elsewhere about the place of the Eucharist in these odd times (here, in Church Times). The Litany may be less familiar. It's the Church's most solemn outpouring of intercession, composed of petitions (thirty-four in all) with communal responses: for instance, 'From famine and disaster; from violence, murder and dying unprepared: Good Lord, deliver us.' The petitions start by praying for our own growth in goodness, then move on to ask for deliverance from danger, and the welfare of others, including the Queen and Parliament, judges, families, the sick, travellers, women in childbirth and even 'our enemies, persecutors and slanderers'. There's something appropriate about repetition, piling up prayers, in a situation like this. Carol Ann Duffy captures it from her own, I think more secular, perspective in her poem 'Prayer'.

There are some Corpus connections to the Litany. It seems St Gregory the Great was an early advocate. (Gregory's Gospels, given to Augustine of Canterbury, are one of the most precious books in the Parker Library.) The Litany

is also associated with Rogation Sunday, as a prayer for crops, which is when two of the college's four Parker Sermons are delivered each year.



Some readers will be familiar with the Prayerbook Litany of 1662 (based on Thomas Cranmer's earliest venture into official English prayer writing and translation). We've been using the contemporary English version from Common Worship (2000), which I think is one of the most successful parts in the modern rite. Intriguingly, the thought of the Corpus clergy reciting the Litany provoked interest on social media. That emboldened me to ask whether the Church of England's 'Daily Prayer' app and website could be tweaked, to include a direct link to the Litany for the first time, and they were.

We are adapting to chapel life continued and coordinated online. Our first venture has been a daily live-streamed communal Litany. For that, and ongoing developments, see the chapel webpage, or @CorpusCamChapel on Twitter.



Observations from the Past

Dr Philippa Hoskin

Gaylord and Dorothy Donnelley Fellow Librarian, looks at how Matthew Parker dealt with unwanted guests in time of plague

Dealing with prisoners during outbreaks of epidemic disease has always posed a problem for governments. In 1563, as plague rampaged through London, the Privy Council turned to Matthew Parker, archbishop of Canterbury and former Master of Corpus, to help them solve the problem of providing safe accommodation for high-status, political prisoners. On 15 September 1563, the Council wrote to the archbishop declaring that it had agreed to requests from Thomas Thirleby, former bishop of Ely, and his colleague John Boxall, to be removed from the Tower of London ‘for their better safeguard from the present infection of the plague’, and that they would become his charge. The letter is the beginning of the story of how Matthew Parker dealt with this less than welcome responsibility.

Thomas Thirleby had been imprisoned in the Tower since June 1560 after he refused to swear the Oath of Supremacy to Elizabeth I in 1559, which he followed up by preaching against the changes happening in the newly reformed Church of England. He could have remained in the Tower a very long time, but when plague began to decimate London, the Privy Council decided that Thirleby – with Boxall (who had been secretary of state to the Catholic Queen Mary I) – was best released into the care of Archbishop Parker. They acquainted Parker with the good news in writing – assuring him that Thirleby and Boxall could be placed ‘in such convenient lodging as your lordship shall think meet, having each of them one servant to attend upon them’ and that the two prisoners would pay for their own keep.

Unsurprisingly, Parker was reluctant to house Thirleby, Boxall and their servants in his own house at Lambeth – then outside the urban area – since, as Thirleby admitted in another letter, he had no idea how to avoid bringing the plague with them as they travelled through the most infected parts of the city.

In the end, Parker refused to admit these guests to his own household immediately, but allowed them to use his empty house at Bekesbourne near Canterbury, believing that a spell of quarantine in clean air was in order: ‘till such time as they were better blown with this fresh air for a fourteen days’.

This particularly serious outbreak of Plague lasted until January 1564, by which time Parker was writing to his colleague the bishop of London about composing a form of thanksgiving to be read in churches. But, having seen the back of the Plague for the time being, Parker was not able to rid himself of his guests, who by this time were with him at Lambeth. He was to be a reluctant host to these adherents of the pre-Reformation church until Thirleby’s death in 1570.

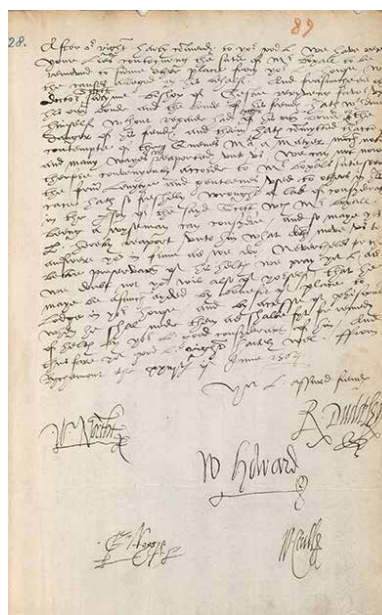


Image: Letter from the Privy Council to Matthew Parker, 15 September 1563, CCCC ms.114A, p.87.



Editorial

The Revd

Dr Andrew Davison

Dean of Chapel, Fellow in Theology and Starbridge (University) Lecturer in Theology and Natural Sciences

The image of a pelican feeding her young with her blood might seem macabre. Its message, however, is one of life, as the events of Holy Week confirm.

The Nicene Creed, the pivotal expression of Christian belief, has something arresting to say about life. The authors wanted to describe God as 'the giver of life'. The word they used doesn't refer to the life of the human soul, or the manner of a human life, but rather to life at its most universal. Their word for 'giver of life' belongs with the rising life of Spring: the life of seeds pushing through the ground, of the new-born lamb or foal, of life's extraordinary transcendence of inanimate matter, of life opposed to death.

The events of the past months have held life and death before us as few of us will have experienced before. Our labours, our economy, even our staying at home, are all now orientated towards life. We mourn this life, lost by those who have died in such large numbers. We see the force of life demonstrated in recoveries, happily more each day. We are in awe of those, especially in hospitals and healthcare, who put their own lives at risk, and some of whom have already died for the sake of life. Recalling those people – doctors, nurses, pharmacists and many others – I am reminded of Stephen Spender's poem 'The Truly Great' (Poems, 1933), in which he praises 'those who in their lives fought for life'.

Those of us following the story of Holy Week and Easter find battle and sacrifice there too: a life fighting for life. In the words of an eleventh-

century hymn, 'Death and life have contended / In that combat stupendous'. This is what the pelican represents: not an attachment to death, nor enchantment of suffering, but one who faced loss for the sake of deliverance, and was willing to die for the sake of life.

Christianity has often seen a substitution at work in the events of Holy Week and Easter, something of God standing in our place. It has not, however, always left it there, not least because the story leads on to Resurrection, and the work of a new creation. Christ's words, 'Go, and do likewise' echo down the centuries, falling for instance on the ears of our founders, faced with their own pandemic.

We see people all around us in hospitals and clinics, and in countless other places tread the course familiar to us in Holy Week. Across the whole human family, they play a part in the 'combat stupendous'. As we see in what follows in Pelican in Brief: in a college community assembled under the sign of a pelican, charged by our founders to be those who in our lives fight for life.



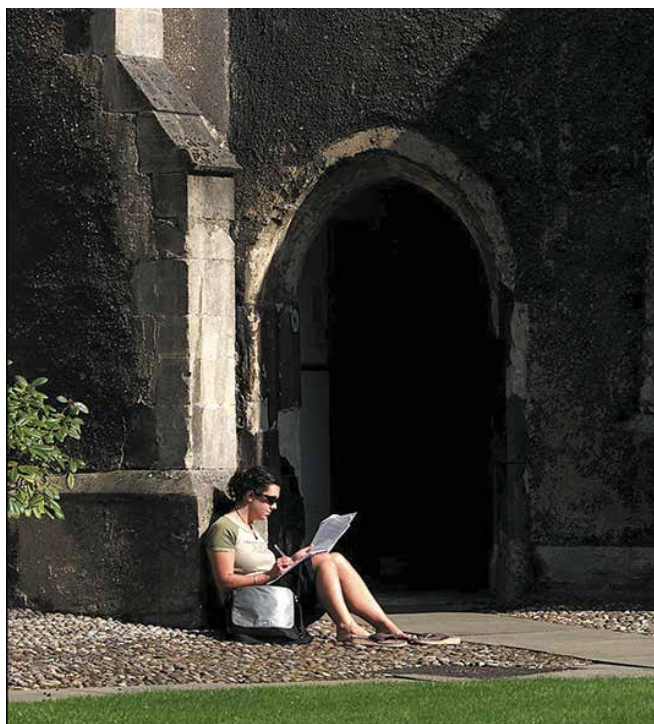


News from the College

Dr David Secher

Interim Bursar

On 2 March 2020, I gave a lecture at the King Fahd University of Petroleum and Mining (Saudi Arabia's top research university) in the seaside town of Al-Khobar. On Wednesday 3 March, I started as Interim Bursar at Corpus, having flown back overnight via Dubai. As I write this on 3 April, I reflect on how much the world has changed in a month – and how different is the job of Interim Bursar from the role I thought I was taking on.



I was Bursar of Gonville and Caius College for six years and really enjoyed the job. I retired eighteen months ago (age limit) having taken the endowment from £120m to £210m and produced a thirty-year estate strategy for the College's Cambridge properties, commercial and operational. So when Tim Harvey-Samuel, who had become a close colleague and friend during that time, approached me with the suggestion that I might like to consider being Interim Bursar at Corpus for seven months, I jumped at the privilege.

My initial priorities for the first month were to get to know all the staff and most of the Fellows; to familiarise myself with the exciting new building project at 23 Cranmer Road, to create more student accommodation on the Leckhampton site; and to check that the finances of the College were in good shape. As it turned out, I have met perhaps a quarter of the staff and only a handful of Fellows. My priority has been to ensure that all the staff are supported during a time of unprecedented change, as we close down the College, manage a complicated process of "furlough" for half the staff (the College will supplement the government scheme to ensure our staff receive 100% of their salaries), and continue to provide the necessary, skeleton services for those students who are unable to return to their family home.

But there have been high points too: the sun has shone on many days and I have had to catch my breath at the beauty of the buildings in the Old House and the splendour of the Leckhampton site; the welcome from those staff and Fellows I have been able to meet could not have been warmer; and the College is in good shape to survive the turmoil we are in. I have not for one moment regretted my decision and I hope that in the short time I am privileged to be part of the Corpus community, I can play a small role in helping the College to emerge even stronger than before.

It is a disappointment that I have had so little opportunity to meet students, and it seems unlikely that they will return before I hand over to my successor, but, in the middle of writing this note, I observed a small group maintaining "social distancing", enjoying their lunch on the Old Court lawn, thanks to the Dean of College, who has temporarily relaxed the restriction.



Reflections from the Fellowship

Dr Sam Behjati

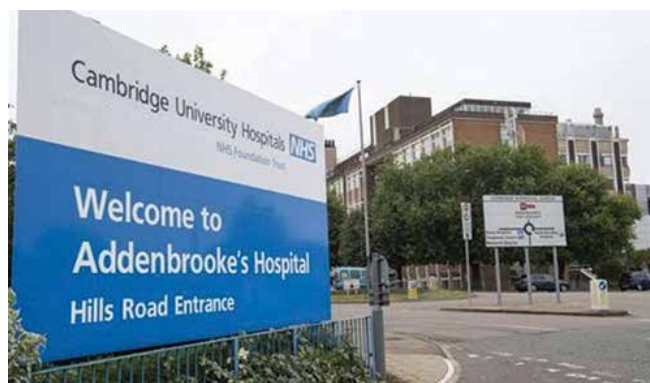
Fellow in Medical Sciences, Wellcome Trust
Intermediate Clinical Fellow and Group Leader at the
Wellcome Sanger Institute, talks about the challenges
of his work as a clinical paediatrician and research
scientist in the crisis of the pandemic

As I am writing these words, we can see the tsunami of COVID-19 on the horizon of our capital. It is unclear with what force it will hit Cambridge. There is an eerie silence at Addenbrooke's right now, whilst the entire Trust is preparing for the onslaught. Every corner of the hospital has been reorganised. Every staff member – from cleaner to consultant – is laser focused on just the one task: to care for our community in these difficult times. Academic clinicians, like myself, have come out of our ivory towers to join our colleagues on the shop floor.

As a paediatric oncologist I worry about the children that I look after. The experience of our Chinese and Italian colleagues has been that children undergoing cancer treatment do not seem particularly vulnerable to the sequelae of COVID-19 infections. If true, this would be most unusual, as our patients usually suffer severely from just the ordinary seasonal flu. However, we are not taking any chances. We have advised children under our care to self-isolate until further notice. We are making every effort to conduct consultations that cannot be postponed by phone. As paediatricians, we have little expertise in looking after adults. However, we are trying to take the workload off our colleagues in adult medicine wherever possible. For example, paediatricians are now running the paediatric A&E department at Addenbrooke's, to relieve A&E specialists who are also qualified to look after adults.

My lab has become a virtual space, connected by Webex, Zoom, Bluejeans and GoogleHangout. Luckily, we have an enormous backlog of data and projects that will see us through the drought of the next few months. My main concern is to keep the projects of my doctoral students going. The Wellcome Sanger Institute, where I am a Group

Leader, has ceased all research activities for the time being. It has made its sequencing might available to the COVID-19 Genomics UK Consortium. This consortium of NHS, Public Health Agencies and academic institutions will map in real time the spread of COVID-19 through the country by analysing the genetic code of the virus. The mission of Sanger is to 'use genome sequences [...] to improve human health'. Who would have thought that the cutting edge technology of our ivory tower could be of such practical and immediate value to the health of the British people?



One thing that has become crystal clear over the past few weeks is that only because our health service is national, are we able to mount a coordinated, national response to this global health crisis. When I look at Germany where my parents live, arguably one of the most advanced (and certainly most expensive) healthcare systems, I am shocked by the inability of the health service there to coordinate their efforts. Each practice and hospital are doing their own thing, as there are no unified plans, communication or governance structures. No number of staff, ventilators or face masks can compensate for fragmentation. Perhaps this experience will teach us to put the question of the NHS and privatisation above and beyond ideology and party politics?



New Fellows

Dr Philippa Hoskin

Gaylord and Dorothy Donnelley Fellow Librarian

Philippa Hoskin became a fellow of Corpus in October 2019, joining the College from the University of Lincoln, where she had been Professor of Medieval Studies in the Department of History and Heritage and School Director of Research. She was previously at the University of York in research, teaching and archival roles.

Philippa's research focuses strongly on the English medieval written record with a particular interest in using information about the structure and creation of formal administrative records to answer new research questions. Her recent monograph *Robert Grosseteste and the 13th-century Diocese of Lincoln: An English Bishop's Pastoral Vision*, synthesised the evidence of the bishop's administrative practice with his theological understandings of the nature of the relationship between god and people. Previous work has engaged with, amongst other things, spiritual drivers that drove the bishops of the mid-thirteenth century to engage in political revolt, Robert Grosseteste's use and abuse of Aristotle's *Ethics*, and the practicalities of record-creation for itinerant clerical households.

She has particular expertise in the scholarly editing of medieval documents, producing both print and digital editions, and in supporting the management of historical manuscript and print collections. Among other editing projects she has been the General Editor of the *Canterbury and York Society* (2006–2019) and the *British Academy's English Episcopal Acta Project* (2003 – present), and has worked with a number of digitisation projects including leading the *Andrew W. Mellon funded Cause Papers of the Diocesan Courts of York* project (church court records 1300–1858) and is currently chair of the *ARHC Northern Way* project steering committee. She is also chair of the *Lincoln Cathedral Library Advisory Board*.

Her most recent project was funded by an AHRC major research grant and explored what the incidental impressions made on wax seals at the time of their creation (finger and hand prints) reveal about who was involved in the physical acts of sealing legal documents and what this suggests about how ordinary people understood the act of legal record creation and the significance of these 'security' seals. The project involved bringing together the expertise of forensic scientists with insights from medieval art history, literature, law and history. Its outputs have included, besides the academic ones, a collection of computer games.

She would be delighted to hear from anyone interested in collaborative projects concerning either her own research interests or, more broadly, the manuscript and printed collections of the Parker Library.





Dr Charles Read

Hong Kong Link Early-Career Research and Teaching Fellow in Modern British History, and



Dr Peter Martland (m 1982)

editor of *The Record*, look at the devastation caused by the Spanish Flu pandemic in 1918 and its long term effects

In a rather sobering co-incidence of history, one hundred years ago last month (March 1920) marked the end of the final major outbreak of Spanish flu. That pandemic, which like COVID-19 today was caused by a respiratory-based virus, was the third most deadly of the past millennium. Only the bubonic plague, or Black Death, of the fourteenth century – a tragedy out of which the Guilds of the Corpus Christi and Blessed Virgin Mary founded this College – and the spread of smallpox to the Americas in the sixteenth century killed a greater share of the world population. Some five hundred million people (a quarter of the world's population) may have caught the Spanish flu, of which epidemiologists currently believe that it killed between seventeen and fifty million people worldwide. That is either more than were killed in combat by the First World War, or in the two world wars combined.

The crisis is often forgotten by the general public, and shamefully by many history books, because it came on the heels of another deadly tragedy: the slaughter in the trenches of the First World War. The disease had first emerged in the spring of 1918 and hit Britain hard in two further outbreaks starting in September 1918 (two months before the Armistice) and in February 1919. Scientists disagree where it appeared first: a crowded British army camp in France, a farm in Kansas and a bird migration route in China all provide credible explanations for its origin. However, the disease was not discussed publicly in the combatant countries until the end of the war. To maintain morale,

wartime censors across the Allies and Central Powers minimised early reports of the illness and mortality. In sharp contrast, newspapers in neutral Spain could freely report the epidemic's effects when it arrived there. The idea that Spain was the first, or hardest, hit country was fake news, but it nonetheless gave rise to the pandemic's enduring nickname, "Spanish flu".

In Britain, the first wave of the epidemic peaked in June and July 1918 and was followed by a more deadly wave which peaked in October and November, ending in spring 1919. A smaller outbreak reappeared in early 1920, before the strain faded away. In Britain, 228,900 died; in France, 166,000; in Germany, 225,330 and in the United States, 550,000. Spanish flu also cut a swathe through the developing world. Over a million died in West Africa and up to sixteen million in India.

In Iran, it has been estimated that between 902,400 and 2,431,000, amounting to some 8% to 22% of the total population, died. Worse hit still were the Pacific Islands; during the autumn of 1918, some lost up to 25% of their entire population. Unlike COVID-19, which is caused by a coronavirus, the Spanish flu was a version of the H1N1 influenza virus, a later strain of which killed up to 575,000 people worldwide during the "swine flu" pandemic of 2009. Even so, the evidence so far is that COVID-19 and Spanish flu have broadly similar mortality rates among those infected. But unlike most influenza viruses (and, indeed, COVID-19), which are most likely to kill the elderly, Spanish flu impacted more heavily on

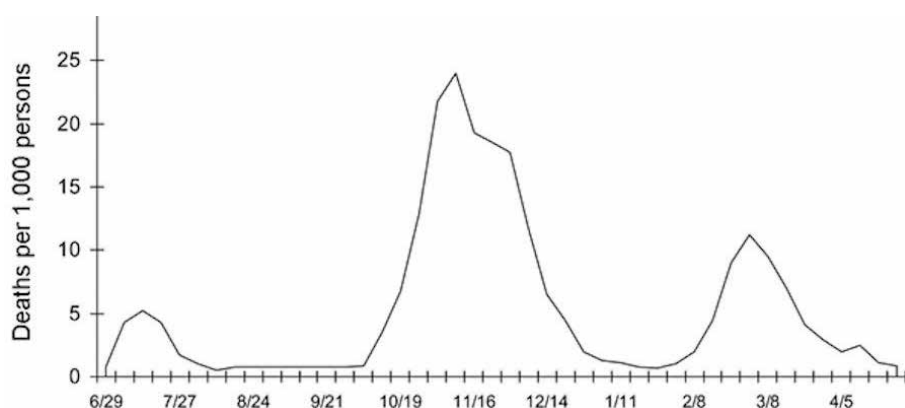
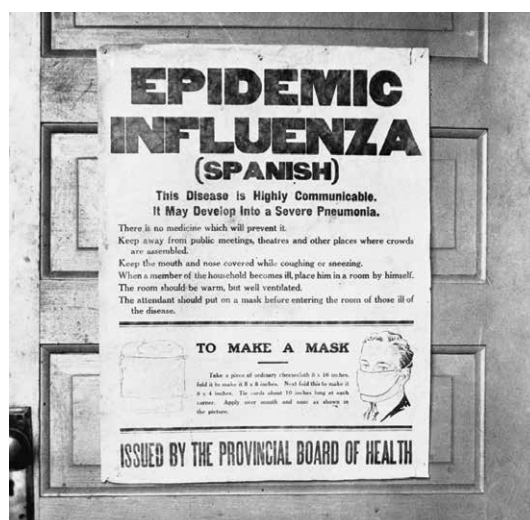


Image: UK 1918-1919 weekly combined influenza and pneumonia mortality.

children and young adults. About 25% of deaths due to the disease were aged fifteen or under and about 45% were aged between fifteen and thirty-five. The disease also spread round the world remarkably rapidly, helped by modern rail and shipping networks, as well as the movement of millions of soldiers. The Spanish flu killed more people in absolute numbers in the first 24 weeks of its appearance than HIV/AIDS, a pandemic of the late twentieth century, killed in its first 24 years.

Explanations for the flu abounded, but at the time the virus that caused it was not isolated. It had the character of a plague, so by some it was seen as divine punishment for the terrible man-made slaughter on the Western Front. Others pointed to circumstances that may have been favourable to the virus: on the home front, poor health caused by air pollution, rationing, food shortages and the impact of blockade; on the military front, densely-packed, lice-ridden trenches and army camps. Economic historians have since shown that levels of air pollution and malnutrition increased the infectiousness and mortality rate from Spanish flu. (Some recently published scientific papers also come to similar conclusions about COVID-19.) Indeed, at least one historian of the Spanish flu, Andrew Price-Smith, suggests the disease turned the tide of the war in the Allies' favour in the middle of 1918. Germany and Austria were hit earlier and harder by the disease, fatally weakening their war efforts.



In popular memory, the loss of so many more young people due to Spanish flu is often forgotten, at least in Britain, because it was deliberately buried in the pain of the First World War, with many deaths from flu included on war memorials. That concealed the full extent of the economic damage from the pandemic, particularly the destruction of human capital it caused. Robert Barro at Harvard University recently estimated that Spanish flu reduced real per capita GDP in the typical country it hit by 6.0%, compared to not much more (8.4%) for the impact of the war on each one affected. Worse still, in the longer term, some economists argue it contributed to a lost decade of economic growth in Britain in the 1920s. With COVID-19, better medical know-how and lockdowns will hopefully keep the absolute number of people infected and killed well below that of the Spanish flu. But be warned: pandemics have greater consequences than first meet the eye.



Editorial

Elizabeth Winter

Director of Development

As we enter a further stretch of lockdown the impact on our community is striking; the adaptations needed to cope with life become more demanding and the sense of isolation threatens us all. Yet the kindnesses and support shown by many people provide the emotional structure that holds us all together. We think of our alumni around the world who are experiencing COVID-19 in many demanding and distressing ways, and extend the best wishes of the Corpus community to all. In College, we are especially grateful to alumni who have stepped forward and offered help, some in the form of support for student hardship; others in practical ways. One alumna in Hong Kong, for example, has shipped masks, sanitiser and safety equipment to help staff manage their work more safely. The way all our members, both resident and external, are rallying round and supporting one another is the true measure of how we stand as a community.

Although all of us have new challenges and worries about the future to address, in College we are also dealing with the immediate need created by the change in circumstances for our students whose lives have been turned upside down by the COVID-19 pandemic. The Senior Tutor describes some of these in her article below. Some of our students can't get home; some have no home to go to; others have new expenses which added to their debt cause great

mental distress and anxiety. We are able to help them thanks largely to the generosity of the gifts you, our alumni, have given over the years and which we are now drawing on heavily. We thank you warmly for your support as we, like you, try to navigate a safe and healthy way through this crisis.

As the Senior Tutor writes here, we have been working hard on establishing online teaching so that students can continue their education as uninterrupted as possible. It is distressing for everyone that we will not be physically in residence for the Easter term. The usual fun following examinations will not take place, and I regret the loss of our alumni events, especially the reunion dinners, 1352 day, and the Summer Party which has become a highlight of our year. We are thinking constantly of ways of staying connected, of keeping you in touch with the College as life goes on in this strange dystopian world, and we welcome your emails, letters and phone calls. The College is still very much the vibrant place it always was, and I am struck not for the first time by the wonderful ability of our Corpus community to adapt to these challenging circumstances and find the strengths and friendship that bind us together. We send our very best wishes to all our alumni in this difficult time, and look forward to welcoming you back in College as soon as circumstances allow.



News from the College

Dr Marina Frasca-Spada

Senior Tutor

This week, while you are receiving and reading this newsletter, a new Easter term is starting. What kind of term this is going to be we are not yet sure: Cambridge will be now as uncharacteristically empty of students, as it has been empty of tourists during the Easter vacation. All our teaching is going to take place online. By now, even the most IT-shy among us are getting used to online conference platforms. All the meetings that prepared the University and the College for term-time on a screen have taken place online, and now we are happy even to talk to the more scattered bits of our own families via Zoom or Google Hangouts – we don't mind any longer the intensity of all those faces side by side on our screens or the impossibility of making eye-contact with anyone. And this is very good news, since now we need these platforms for our core mission – our lectures, seminars, supervisions. We have learnt how to blur our real-life background or hide it behind photographs of our offices, so that our supervisors will not be distracted by the unusual landscape in which our small group discussions are taking place.

We have known all along – in fact we have often lamented – that our students are all too familiar with virtual communication and disembodied social interactions. And yet, we are now discovering that a number of them may not have access to laptops or internet connections that are efficient enough for our present purposes – indeed, we already know that a number of them in their family homes may not even have a space where they can peacefully concentrate, behind a closed door, to do their reading and writing or to discuss their essays or their revision plans with their Director of Studies and supervisors. This is all the more a concern, since this year not just our teaching, but all their assessments, including the final-year ones for our third- and fourth-year

students, will also take place online. We really need to do our best to ensure that all our students will be properly equipped for this strange new world. So a few days ago we sent them a brief survey asking about their study space at home, their electronic devices (laptops, tablets, smart phones, cameras, scanners...), the availability of a suitably powerful web connection – and we received over 100 replies in the first couple of hours. For the moment we just need to establish how many of them will need our help with this.

In the meantime, the welfare team continues to meet daily on Zoom to discuss any new developments, and how to keep track of a variety of practical matters relating to students, whether in residence or at home. Last week we also had the first tutors' meeting of the term to discuss how to make sure that students remain aware that this is their academic home, whether here in the flesh or virtually.





Reflections from the Fellowship

Dr Ewan St John Smith

Fellow in Pharmacology and (University) Reader in Nociception, sheds light on the journey to a COVID-19 cure

I am a pharmacologist, and so the search for COVID-19 treatments interests me greatly. Prevention is better than cure. But only a global vaccination/eradication programme, like that initiated in 1958 by the World Health Organisation (WHO) for smallpox, will truly stop COVID-19. Vaccines work by exposing the body's immune system to a non-pathogenic component of the microorganism or virus of interest; the immune system then produces antibodies making it ready to deal with future exposures; when a high enough proportion of a population are vaccinated, herd immunity results. However, viruses can mutate and evolve; that is, antibodies produced against one form of a virus may not work against a different form, and hence a new influenza vaccine is developed

annually. Although we do not yet know how effective immunity provided by a future vaccine might be, one favourable factor is that unlike influenza viruses, coronaviruses have a lower mutation rate. Thus if a useful vaccine can be developed, the chances are that it should be quite effective.

Whilst we await a vaccine for SARS-CoV-2, developing effective treatment for COVID-19 is critical, especially considering the problems faced by hospitals dealing with large numbers of patients, many requiring intensive care unit support. People do not stop needing intensive care support from other causes during a pandemic. The picture here is rapidly developing, but care and attention are needed.



On 21 March, US President Donald Trump tweeted, “HYDROXYCHLOROQUINE & AZITHROMYCIN, taken together, have a real chance to be one of the biggest game changers in the history of medicine”, adding later that chloroquine could also be effective. Hydroxychloroquine and chloroquine are anti-malarials, also being used in certain autoimmune conditions, whilst azithromycin is an antibiotic. From where did Trump’s statements arise and are they true? In a laboratory setting, cell based studies have shown that hydroxychloroquine and chloroquine limit how SARS-CoV-2 infects cells and this was followed by a study (which gained intense media (and presumably Trump’s) attention) claiming that hydroxychloroquine and azithromycin cleared SARS-CoV-2 from the body more effectively than the hydroxychloroquine alone, or no treatment. However, there are several caveats, including:

- It was a very small study (42 patients).
- Patients in treatment and control arms differed in many ways (e.g. age), which introduces confounding factors.
- Analysis of SARS-CoV2 presence/absence was measured inconsistently across time and individuals.
- 26 patients started on the combined hydroxychloroquine/azithromycin treatment, but data are only provided for 20; of the six who dropped out, one died and three were transferred to an intensive care unit – removing experimental outliers provides “good” results, but is not exactly robust analysis.
- Submission and publication dates suggest that peer review of the article occurred within 24 hours...one co-author is, however, the journal’s editor.

None of the above makes the potential findings regarding hydroxychloroquine and azithromycin wrong, but they certainly raise warning flags and should prevent leaders of nations making sweeping statements. Chloroquine phosphate is used to clean fish tanks, but is not the same as chloroquine – following Trump’s pronouncement,

an Arizonan couple self-administered chloroquine phosphate, one dying within 24 hours. Hydroxychloroquine and chloroquine are also themselves not perfect drugs, their side effects making them inappropriate for certain individuals.

A randomised clinical trial is necessary to be sure of the effectiveness of hydroxychloroquine and azithromycin, or any other treatment being considered, including drugs modulating immune system function (tocilizumab, used in treating rheumatoid arthritis) and convalescent plasma (using blood plasma from recovered patients that likely contains antibodies against SARS-CoV-2). Although time is precious in dealing with COVID-19, there is no reason to abandon evidence-based medicine.





Dr Anastasia Berg

Gaylord and Dorothy Donnelley Research Fellow in Philosophy, looks at Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben's critique of the COVID-19 pandemic

No doubt of it, the costs we are paying for the sake of reducing the spread of the pandemic are high. The question of the proportionality of the response is not however a merely scientific one; it is moral. And the answer is not obvious.

The Italian philosopher and cultural theorist Giorgio Agamben has long served as a model of how philosophical reflection can help us evaluate the moral implications of catastrophes of an order the mind can barely comprehend – most famously the Holocaust. Agamben is perhaps best known for his thinking on so-called biopolitics and the effects and limits of sovereign power. He recently raised a series of objections to the draconian measures implemented across the world: the sacrifice, he insisted, is too much.

Agamben's way of addressing the problem is framed by a distinction between "bare life" – our biological survival – and something he holds in higher regard; call it social or ethical life. 'The first thing that the wave of panic that has paralysed the country obviously shows is that our society no longer believes in anything but bare life', he observes. In our hysterical panic, exerting herculean efforts to avoid physical harm, we have made ourselves vulnerable to loss of a far higher order: sacrificing our work, friendships, extended families, religious rites and political commitments. In this way, we might preserve ourselves biologically, but we will have eliminated in the process anything that gives life meaning, that makes it worth living.



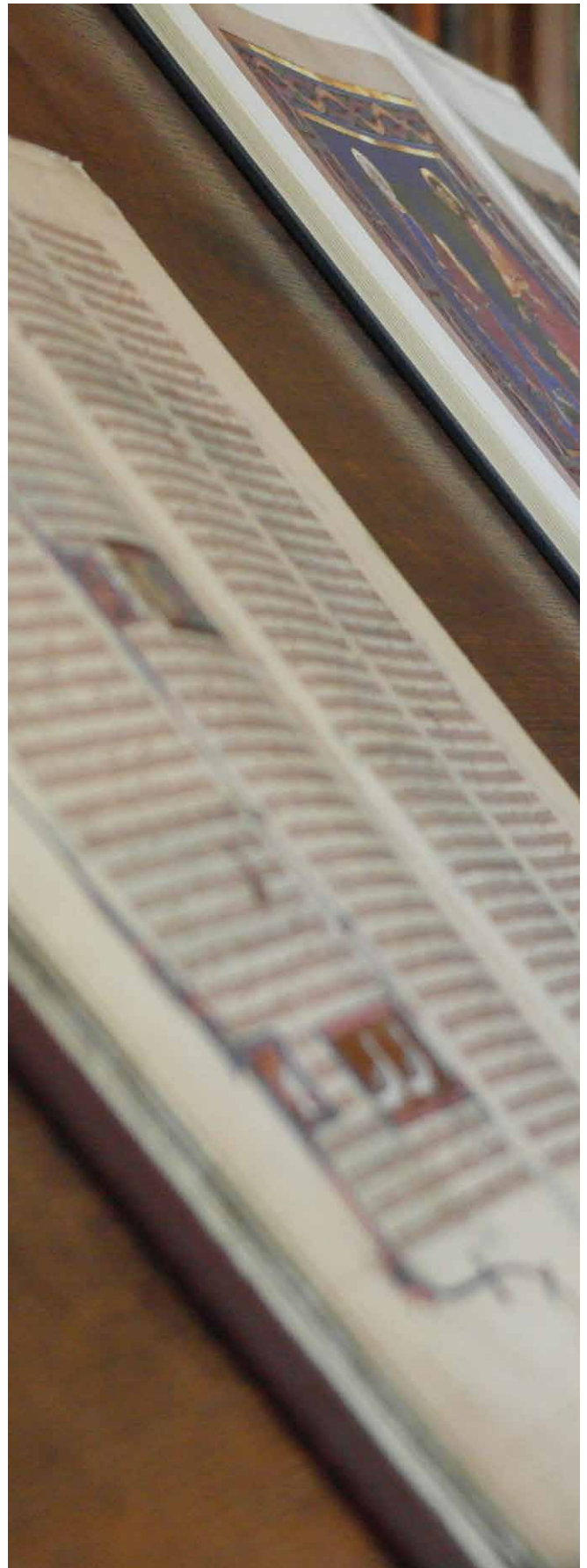
Image: Giorgio Agamben.



Agamben is right that a life dedicated solely to our own biological survival is a human life in name only, and that voluntarily to choose such a life is not merely a personal sacrifice but a form of society-wide moral self-harm. But is this really what we are doing? There are of course those (the Florida Spring Breakers in the US, the Stereophonics fans in the UK) who have shown the moral heroism Agamben is calling for here, refusing to bow to the recommendations of the authorities. But are those of us who have, with heavy hearts, embraced the restrictions on our freedoms, merely aiming at our own biological survival?

I don't think so. In the middle of March, my fiancé and I cancelled our summer wedding. We did it so that our guests, including my partner's high-risk father, might be able at some later date to attend safely the social celebration of our decision to tie our lives to one another's. Agamben laments that we are sacrificing 'social relationships, work, even friendships, affections, and religious and political convictions' to 'the danger of getting sick'. But we are not making sacrifices for the sake of anyone's mere survival. We sacrifice because sharing our joys and pains, efforts and leisure, with our loved ones – young and old, sick and healthy – is the very substance of these so-called 'normal conditions of life'.

'What is a society', Agamben asks, 'that has no value other than survival?' Under certain circumstances, this is a good question; under these circumstances, it is a blind one. Is this the society Agamben believes he is living in? When this philosopher looks around him, does he truly see nothing but the fight for "bare life"? If so, Agamben's "clarification" may be revealing in a way he hadn't intended. We might think of it as a very lucid example of "bare theory": the dressing up of outdated jargon as a form of courageous resistance to unreflecting moral dogma. Sometimes it is advisable to hold off on deploying the heavy theoretical machinery until one has looked around. If we are after wisdom about how to live today, we would be advised to look elsewhere.





New Fellows

Dr Daniel Williams

Stipendiary Early Career Research Fellow in
Philosophy

Daniel completed his PhD in Philosophy at Trinity Hall College, Cambridge, in 2018. Before that, he completed an undergraduate degree in Philosophy at the University of Sussex in 2014 and an MPhil in Philosophy at Darwin College, Cambridge, in 2015. From 2018 to 2019 he was a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the Centre for Philosophical Psychology at the University of Antwerp.

Daniel's research draws on recent advances in the psychological and social sciences to help address highly theoretical and philosophical questions about the mind. His doctoral thesis outlined and defended a novel philosophical account of mental representation based on recent developments in neuroscience and machine learning as well as neglected insights from the tradition of cybernetics.

His current research develops the idea that many putative examples of human irrationality are

socially strategic, enabling individuals to achieve a variety of social goals that are often in conflict with epistemic goals such as truth and impartiality. He is currently working on a book in which he argues that this simple idea illuminates a large and varied body of psychological phenomena, including self-deception, confabulation, social conformity, confirmation bias, motivated cognition, ideological and religious beliefs, and more.

Daniel also has research interests in a variety of other areas, including the philosophy of psychiatry, the predictive limitations of research in the social sciences, the risks and opportunities associated with developments in artificial intelligence, and the tradition of philosophical pragmatism.

You can find out more about his research and see a list of his publications here: www.danwilliamsphilosophy.com





Observations from the past

Dr Philippa Hoskin

Gaylord and Dorothy Donnelley Fellow Librarian, shares the signs of an impending plague in medieval times

Parker Library manuscript 521 came to Corpus in the seventeenth century from the abandoned Brigittine monastery of Elbing (now Eblag in Poland). The manuscript itself is a fifteenth-century compilation of pieces dating from the 1380s onwards, including, at the end of the manuscript, a short piece titled *De signis pestilencie*: 'Concerning the Signs of the Plague'.

There are, according to this work, ten signs of impending plague:

1. Bad conjugation of planets
2. Comets and falling stars
3. Westerly or southerly winds
4. A cloudy and wet summer
5. Unusual variations of temperature
6. Hot days and cold nights
7. Increased numbers of frogs, toads, mice and fleas
8. Animals leaving their holes in the ground
9. Birds leaving their nests
10. Unseasonable weather

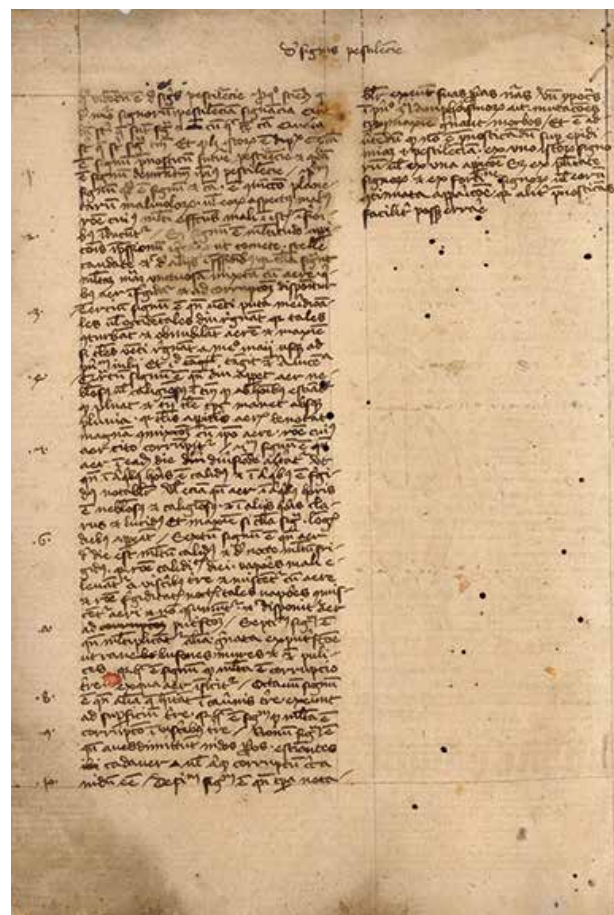


Image: The signs of the plague (CCCC ms 521, f. 176v).

The author of our tract was actually knowledgeable about these matters and the list is informed by a number of earlier texts. In the 1340s, Islamic scholars had written that flocks of birds preceded outbreaks. In 1348, the Faculty of Medicine at Paris had identified unusual conjunctions of the planets as the first cause: there had been a triple conjunction of Jupiter, which drew up hot wet vapours from the earth, together with hot Mars, which had then ignited those vapours creating poisonous fumes. Finally, cold Saturn had turned those fumes into fogs and cloud which had then hovered around the

earth. Since this had taken place in Aquarius, the effects had been intensified, and the seasons disrupted: summer had been too wet and cold, autumn had been too wet and warm, and winter continued warmer than usual. The weather had been very changeable and the poisonous mists had resulted in increases of frogs and in the deaths of other animals. Although no comets were observed during the early outbreaks of the plague, in later outbreaks they were often blamed for damaging the atmosphere, of which the writer of our tract is aware too.

Like other prophetic tracts in this manuscript – which attempt to draw together information on the possible signs of the end of the world – this was meant to be a practical guide. When it was recorded here, plague was still circulating in Europe, and people wanted warning of its arrival. Odd as some of these signs may seem to us now, they were based on observed correlations between the natural world and outbreaks of disease, interpreted through the paradigms of the bodily humours and of astrology, which underpinned medical science of the day.





Editorial

Professor Christopher Kelly

The Master

The University is shuttered. The College courts are empty. The sun still shines, eager to tease us out of our self-isolation. But there is no place for us in the sun (unless taking our daily exercise). And the world has changed – in ways we might never have thought possible – in the short space of six weeks. This small collegiate world has been turned upside down. It is Easter Full Term and our students are still at home. They are working as hard as ever; adapting to the régime of distance learning, Zoom supervisions and virtual meeting with their tutors. What has seemingly dissolved is that extraordinary face-to-face community (in Hall, in the Pelican Bar, in Chapel, in a one-to-one supervision, in a class or a seminar) – or at least it has been displaced.

This week I joined the first of a series of Zoom seminars for Corpus classicists (Fellows, postgraduates and undergraduates). One of our finalists read an excellent paper from his Part II thesis (on the first-person voice in Latin lyric poetry). Of course it was frustrating – video conferencing holds out the promise of real live face-to-face communication without it ever being realised. The experience is somehow hollowed out. More important than these petty dislikes, what struck me was how quickly and how well our students had adapted to exploit the best of this opportunity. Distance learning is no substitute for the real thing – and one day

(not too far away) the core of the collegiate experience will return. In the meanwhile we should congratulate and support our students as they continue to push forward with their studies – and perhaps especially those in their final year deprived of the rigour of examinations (so not then an utter disaster), the Lucullan delights of May Week and the applause of graduation.

Our students are a resourceful and resilient group with all the high hopes and proper ambitions of youth. Their drive for academic excellence was brilliantly captured last week by this College's remarkable success on University Challenge. Was I the only person in the (virtual) room who thought this was an unfair contest? Imperial College London has ten thousand undergraduates – so comfortably thirty times the size of Corpus. That puts our splendid achievement in proper perspective. It was a moment to cheer on the College; it was a moment to cheer us all up. It was a moment to be unashamedly proud of being part of our shared endeavour. It was a moment to remind us – even in these long and tedious days – that this College does indeed deserve a place in the sun.



News from the College

Dr Michael Sutherland

Tutor for Undergraduate Admissions and College
Teaching Officer in Physics

For Cambridge offer-holders, the month of August is usually filled with nervous anticipation, as exam boards across the UK get set to release the results of the June examinations. For some, there is disappointment when grades fall just shy of their offers. For others, there is relief and a sense of pride when offers are met, and the path is clear to matriculation in October.

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted education at all levels here in the UK and internationally. As a result, many students will not be sitting formal school examinations this year, and A-level and other grades will be awarded on the basis of internal assessments and the predictions of teachers and schools. This presents new challenges for Corpus and for higher education providers across the country.



At Cambridge, we have rightly taken the decision that all grades awarded in August will be treated in the normal way, and students who meet the conditions of their offer will be accepted to the University as usual. It is difficult however to predict with certainty how this will play out. For UK students, there may be a greater (or smaller) number achieving their offers than anticipated. For international students, there may still be barriers to travel in the autumn preventing them from studying in the UK, a particular worry for the 60% of our postgraduate students who come

from the EU or overseas countries. At Corpus we are watching the situation very closely, and are able to provide the latest advice and guidance to our understandably anxious offer-holders. As I see it, one unavoidable outcome of this situation is that the incoming cohort will likely benefit from additional help in adjusting to the rigors of university, and here there is cause for optimism. The robust teaching and tutorial support network implicit in the tightly woven Corpus community is ideally placed to assist these students. Our Bridging Course, which is designed to provide three weeks of individualised preparatory teaching to students from educationally disadvantaged backgrounds is a perfect example of this. We intend to run this as planned in September, either in person or remotely with the aim of helping students to start their university careers with confidence.

Looking ahead to future applicants, I am struck by how quickly my Corpus colleagues have adjusted to the use of new technologies to deliver our outreach programmes. Our Schools Liaison Officer, Will Moorfoot, has, for instance, opened up a hugely popular booking system for year 12 students to have online consultations about their university applications. Other Fellows have arranged to deliver remote taster lectures for prospective applicants, or record videos of themselves giving advice.

Like any organisation that measures its lifespan in centuries, one of the strengths of Corpus is the ability of its members to respond to change and to adjust to new ways of carrying out our core missions of education and research. I remain confident that we will be able to greet our new undergraduate and postgraduate students in the coming academic year with the high quality teaching and support networks for which we are known.



Reflections from the Fellowship

Professor Christopher Hann

Fellow in Social Anthropology and Director of the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology, reflects on the economic and social consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic

Arcane academic debates (in my case in economic anthropology) are sometimes overwhelmed by real-world events that grip the researcher as a political citizen, and perhaps even personally, emotionally. This happened to me at the end of the last century with the collapse of Soviet socialism, and again in recent years with global financial collapse and the European “migration crisis” of 2015. The coronavirus of 2019 continues this series.

I flew Ryanair from Stansted to Berlin on 10th March and have been unable to return. The Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology in Halle (one hour south of the capital) has been my vantage point to observe surreal sequences of events, locally and around the world. Most of our staff are in “home office” but I am able to work almost normally in my office. We subscribe to the international edition of the New York Times, which I read while eating my sandwiches at lunchtime (observing social distance, of course). The coverage and analysis of the NYT complement what I glean from the BBC and the German media. Most evenings (with the help of a satellite dish on our balcony) my wife and I watch the news on Hungarian state television.

In an earlier blogpost, reflecting on pan-Eurasian dimensions of the pandemic and perhaps clinging irrationally to the banality that every crisis should harbour opportunities for creative renewal, I tried to be optimistic. I speculated that, following macabre statistical analysis, we can surely look forward to conclusive proof of the superiority of well funded welfare states, compared with countries lacking universal health care. Economists would concede the merits of public furlough programmes, when compared with the scale of instantaneous layoffs and social polarisation in the world’s largest economy. If capitalism can only be saved (again) by massive state

interventions, perhaps neoliberal free market dogmas would be rejected once and for all? If competent political management by the coalition government in Germany undermines extremist critics, perhaps populists elsewhere would be similarly starved of their oxygen?

A few weeks later, I have become more pessimistic. In Hungary, Viktor Orbán is continuing to undermine parliamentary democracy and playing sordid games to discredit the opposition (try imagining Boris Johnson attacking the Mayor of London for the deadly spread of the virus in an old persons’ home for which the city is responsible). Not that those leading the UK or the US responses have distinguished themselves through their crisis management. Yet, in what Germans are calling die Stunde der Exekutive, even the ratings of incompetent, narcissistic leaders appear to be rising. The rancour of the Brexit debates is giving way to inclusive rhetoric invoking the spirit of the Blitz. The stock markets are already recovering. How quickly can labour markets follow? Will the improvements of decades in working hours and workers’ protection now be jettisoned for the sake of accelerating the economic recovery? Small steps to avert global ecological devastation are already being reversed, because they conflict with the interests of powerful transnational corporations.

I would like to be proved wrong but, writing these lines at Easter, I now find it hard to believe in silver linings.





Alumni Perspective

Emily Jordan

Corpus alumna and start-up founder, has launched Ancora.ai to address the Coronavirus pandemic by connecting COVID-19 clinical trials to participants

I left Cambridge in 2012, leaving the academic stresses of my laboratory studies behind for an entirely different set of challenges working in the digital health start-up world. My entrepreneurial ambitions were realised in 2019 when I cofounded a company, Intrepida, with two former colleagues. We focus on artificial intelligence (AI) solutions to address problems in healthcare. We built a product called Ancora.ai to help patients search for and connect to clinical trials, and very shortly before our first launch for oncology patients, the Coronavirus pandemic occurred.

The pandemic has brought many disappointments and challenges for start-ups. Pitch events and venture capital fundraising opportunities were cancelled or put on hold, and the clinical studies sponsored by our target customers were paused. However, we also quickly realised that our product met a key need in the Coronavirus crisis and that we could help, which has been extremely motivating in such an unsettling time.

Since the start of the pandemic, many COVID-19 clinical trials have commenced around the world. The pace is increasing: Intrepida has tracked a 389% increase in the number of new trials initiated in the past two weeks. These COVID-19 clinical trials immediately need to recruit more than 415,000 participants to be fully enrolled. Healthcare systems are overwhelmed due to the pandemic and most institutions have little spare time or resource to devote to recruiting for and conducting clinical trials. However, clinical trials represent the most effective way to generate scientific evidence on prospective testing, treatment and prevention strategies to combat the pandemic. Ancora.ai supports trial recruitment and can help facilitate clinical research during this challenging time, so we worked tirelessly over several weeks to update our algorithms, originally designed for oncology, to support COVID-19 trial matching for patients and healthy volunteers.

Currently, more than 320 COVID-19 trials are live on Ancora.ai and trial data is updated on a daily basis.

Of the clinical trials for therapeutics and vaccines, 82% are for treatments already approved and on the market for other diseases. These have a history of safety data behind them and are likely to be approved faster for COVID-19 compared with other treatments in development. You can register for free at www.ancora.ai to search for and connect to these trials, as a patient or a healthy volunteer, and could gain early access to innovative treatments and new vaccines for COVID-19.

For more information, please visit: <https://www.intrepid-analytics.com/> and <https://www.ancora.ai/> Emily Jordan (PhD alumna, 2009–2012, Neuroscience) is the COO of Intrepida, a health tech company focused on building technology solutions for healthcare, specifically using Artificial Intelligence (AI). Emily graduated from Columbia University and then earned her PhD in Neuroscience at the University of Cambridge as a Gates Cambridge Scholar.





New Fellows

Dr Han Yu

Non-Stipendiary Early-Career Research Fellow in Mathematics

Han is a postdoctoral research associate at the Department of Pure Mathematics and Mathematical Statistics. He completed a BA in Optical Engineering at Zhejiang University, Hangzhou and then a MSc in Theoretical and Mathematical Physics at Ludwig-Maximilian University, Munich. From 2016–2019, he was a PhD student in pure mathematics with Dr Jonathan Fraser at the University of St Andrews.

Han's research mainly focuses on pure mathematics, more specifically, Fractal Geometry, Dynamical Systems as well as Number Theory.

To relax, Han enjoys reading story books on Harmonic Analysis, Probability Theory and Combinatorics (together with Jazz or traditional Chinese music). Outside of mathematics, Han is an unskilled pianist, painter and BADminton player.





Observations from the Past

Dr Philippa Hoskin

Gaylord and Dorothy Donnelley Fellow Librarian, shares fourteenth-century reflections on healing the sick

Parker manuscript 218 *Le Livre de Seintes Medicines*, a late fourteenth-century volume, is the earliest surviving Anglo-Norman treatise known to have been written by a layman. That layman was Henry first duke of Lancaster (c.1310 – 23 March 1361) who applied to Edward III, on behalf of the guilds of Mary the Virgin and Corpus Christi, for permission to found the new college.

It is a devotional text in which sickness of the body is compared to sickness of the soul: Christ, as doctor, heals the senses from infection. When Henry wrote this work in 1354, plague was a familiar visitor to England (in fact, Henry died of plague himself in 1361). Not

surprisingly, then, his descriptions of physical sickness reflect experience of the disease. We learn that goat's milk drunk in May was considered efficacious, on the grounds that the vegetation eaten by goats in May had absorbed the goodness of the sun, which could be passed on to the sick. Warm rose water was used to refresh those with fevers (although, presumably only those who were rich, like Henry) and, if a fever got worse, the still bleeding body of a freshly-killed cock might be placed on a patient's head.

In particular, Henry describes the use of 'triale' – a medicine made of poison, used to drive out the other poison of infection.



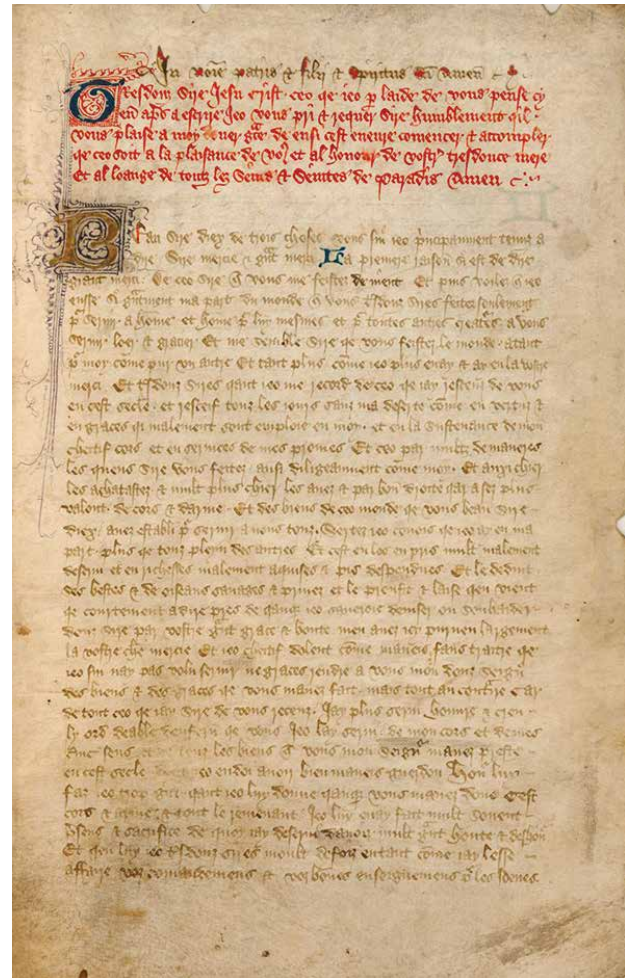


'If a man is poisoned, he has to get some medicine or else he is doomed to die quickly. And nothing is so good for him as triacle. This triacle is made and tempered with the strongest venom one can find anywhere. And, if it is stronger than the venom within the man, it expels that venom through its strength and virtue, and so the man is cured and does not die. But if the venom in the man is particularly potent and pernicious and has lingered in him for a long time, then the triacle cannot help and the man is made worse by it. For if one venom cannot expel the other, they will unite to destroy and kill the man.'

Henry tells us that this perilous medicine is made by smothering a scorpion so it disgorges its venom. In fact, we know from other sources, that it was usually made from the mashed flesh of snakes – rather cheaper and easier to obtain than scorpion venom.

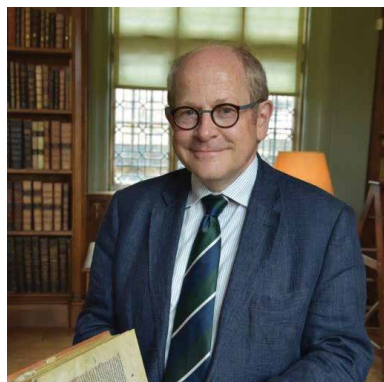
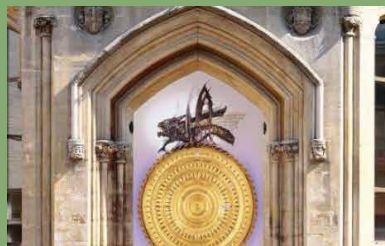
This process, he says, is like the war between good and evil fighting with each other in the human soul. Triacle is like the traps of the devil. These temptations can have a good result for the sick soul if they make a person turn to God for help. On the other hand, if the temptations are strong and spiritual sickness has gone untreated for too long, they may lead to the destruction of the soul.

There was always a tendency in the medieval mind to try and find direct, causal links between natural occurrences, particularly those that caused human suffering and death, and internal spiritual states. Earthquakes, floods, droughts and plague were commonly explained as a result of human sin. In Henry's treatise we can see how a devout individual was able to transform his own experience of physical illness and contemporary medicine into a powerful allegory about the health and wellbeing of people's souls.



Images: CCCC ms 218, f. 1v. The opening of Le Livre de Seintes Medicines.





Editorial

Professor Christopher Howe

Professor of Plant and Microbial Biochemistry,
President and Director of Studies in Preclinical
Medicine

As the Master commented in his Editorial in the last issue, our world has changed in a way that for most of us would have been unbelievable two months ago. The strength of the College in the face of that change has been truly impressive. Inevitably, one core element of our life as a community, and one that is particularly important to me as President, has been suspended for the time being. That is the act of eating together. William Wilkins, as architect of New Court, regarded the Library, the Chapel and the Hall as the essential features of a College. The purpose of the College, as defined in our Statutes as the 'advancement of education, research, learning and religion' and represented by the Library and the Chapel goes on, although in ways that our Founders could never have imagined. (If Henry, Duke of Lancaster, had simply emailed the King to seek a licence for the foundation of the College, things might have turned out less well.) Eating together, however, is very different. We may meet each other over Zoom for a cup of coffee and a chat, or maybe even a meal, but it's not the same as a full and lively Hall on a Sunday after Choral Evensong, a quiet Monday evening

with just a few Fellows at High Table, or a busy weekday lunch with people coming and going. Welcoming Old Members back to dinner in their College is another vital part of that communal eating, so it was a great disappointment that we inevitably had to cancel April's Beldam Dinner. The next few weeks will tell if we can hold any kind of MacCurdy Dinner in September. (We keep things under review and will let you know as soon as we can.) We plan to adjust the yearly schedule for the dinners as needed so no year groups miss out.

The current situation leaves me with even greater respect, admiration and gratitude for our Founders. Coming through a time that was surely even more terrifying than ours, their faith in the future was remarkable. In time, some kind of real, rather than virtual, community life will return for us, and we will share again in the privilege of eating together. I particularly look forward to seeing our Old Members back with us to join in that part of our life. Meanwhile, wherever in the world and under whatever conditions of lockdown you are, I hope you and your loved ones stay safe.



News from the College

Dr John David Rhodes

Reader in Film Studies and Visual Culture, Warden of Leckhampton and Director of Studies in Modern & Medieval Languages

I left Cambridge on 13 March. I had planned to leave it for a long-planned, and rather complicated trip to the US that was going to include giving a paper at a large academic conference in Denver, examining a doctoral thesis in Montreal, doing some work in an archive in Los Angeles and making a quick visit to see my parents in Louisiana. But by 10 March, it became clear that international travel was imprudent. Instead, on the 13 March, I had a meeting at the Fitzwilliam Museum about a show I am curating for 2024, then grabbed a few things from my flat at Leckhampton, and jumped on a train to Brighton, where I live (when not in Cambridge) with my partner, another academic, in our flat on the seafront.

I planned to come back to Cambridge on Monday for another few meetings, and then make a more considered decision about which books and which clothes to take back to Brighton for the Easter vacation. Across that weekend, however, the public mood shifted as did my own, and by Monday it seemed ill-advised to continue taking public transport. I spoke to Marina Frasca-Spada, the Senior Tutor, who said there was no point and no wisdom in returning to Cambridge for the time being. I have been here in Brighton ever since.

Most of our postgraduate students decided, for many different reasons, to leave Leckhampton, to return 'home', even though 'home' means many things to people. For some members



of the MCR, however, Leckhampton is home: there is no other obvious or better place for them to ride this out. For these students – they are about fifty in number – Leckhampton’s storied idyll of pastoral isolation has taken on a rather different resonance of late.

I know what has been going on in Leckhampton from phone conversations with those still resident and from weekly Zoom meetings with the MCR Committee and others. (Zoom, by the way, is a technology that most of us had never heard of eight weeks ago but which now dominates and mediates our waking lives). The conversations have addressed – honestly and collaboratively – the anxieties of locking down, often in a small single room, stranded in the spookily semi-deserted domain of Leckhampton’s several acres. Timothy Ekeh, the Leck Soc Secretary, has kept the Leckhampton Society gatherings going via Zoom. Helen McGowan, the MCR Secretary, sends at the beginning of each week a calendar of the distant or virtual activities for the upcoming days: virtual formal hall (in gowns, even), virtual Welfare Tea, movie nights (the movies in question watched simultaneously if apart) and so on. None of these things, however, makes up for our physical presence to one another. What Hannah Arendt calls the ‘web of human relationships’ cannot quite be fully constituted by the grids of human faces that necessarily substitute themselves for our being together in a time of crisis. But the ingenuity of these virtual, mediated, distant and distancing meetings and ‘hang outs’ testify to the longing for the life together – as scholars, thinkers, comrades, colleagues and friends – that animates the very idea of a college or a university, like Corpus, like Cambridge.

I miss our community at Corpus: talking political theory or talking movies at lunch; supervising my students on aesthetic theory in a room overlooking Old Court. Even more frivolously, given that it is the Easter Term, I resent that I will not see the lupins come up



in Leckhampton’s prairie-like expanse, or be able to take my daily dip in our notoriously frigid pool at the bottom of the garden. What is happening everywhere around us – death and suffering and the heroic efforts to thwart them – is so grave, in part, precisely because of the way in which death deprives us of the small pleasures and practices that make up a life, that make up life itself. The bravely modest attempts to keep things going at Leckhampton demonstrate a confidence in the value of that life, and a willingness to continue inventing and reinventing its rituals and pleasures during and – we pray – after the trial of the present moment. I am not, by nature, an optimist, but I enjoy doing what I do, what we do – that is, I enjoy participating in the life modelled by Corpus and by the University: a life of writing, making, inventing, thinking, talking, disagreeing, eating together, coming and going, etc., etc. All of this will be somewhat different in the time ahead, I suppose, and maybe some things we are learning right now will not necessarily make them better, but will make them seem all the more important when we meet again in the radical physical proximity that we once took for granted but that we now know is so precious.



Reflections from the Fellowship

Dr Paul Kattuman

Reader in Economics, Fellow and Director of Studies in Management, discusses the Judge Business School's work with the NHS and Public Health on the pandemic

All through February I nursed a lament that the Lent Term was far too frantic. It was, it turns out, idyllic!

As the pandemic gathered strength, the health systems research centre at Judge Business School decided to rest some research programmes and reach out to the NHS and Public Health England, offering help with the extensive analysis that would evidently be required. I have no specialist knowledge of the systems and processes in healthcare delivery, but as an applied econometrician I was very happy to segue into this initiative. Our focus

has been on the East of England region with its population of 6.5 million.

My particular focus over the last five weeks has been on generating daily forecasts of the expected demand across the region, for care pathway resources such as ICU beds and mechanical ventilators, looking up to two weeks ahead. Randomness is inherent in data of this type, with sharp day to day changes, and the purpose of time series modelling is to uncover the evolving trend. From early on, the challenging question posed by public health managers concerned the timing and

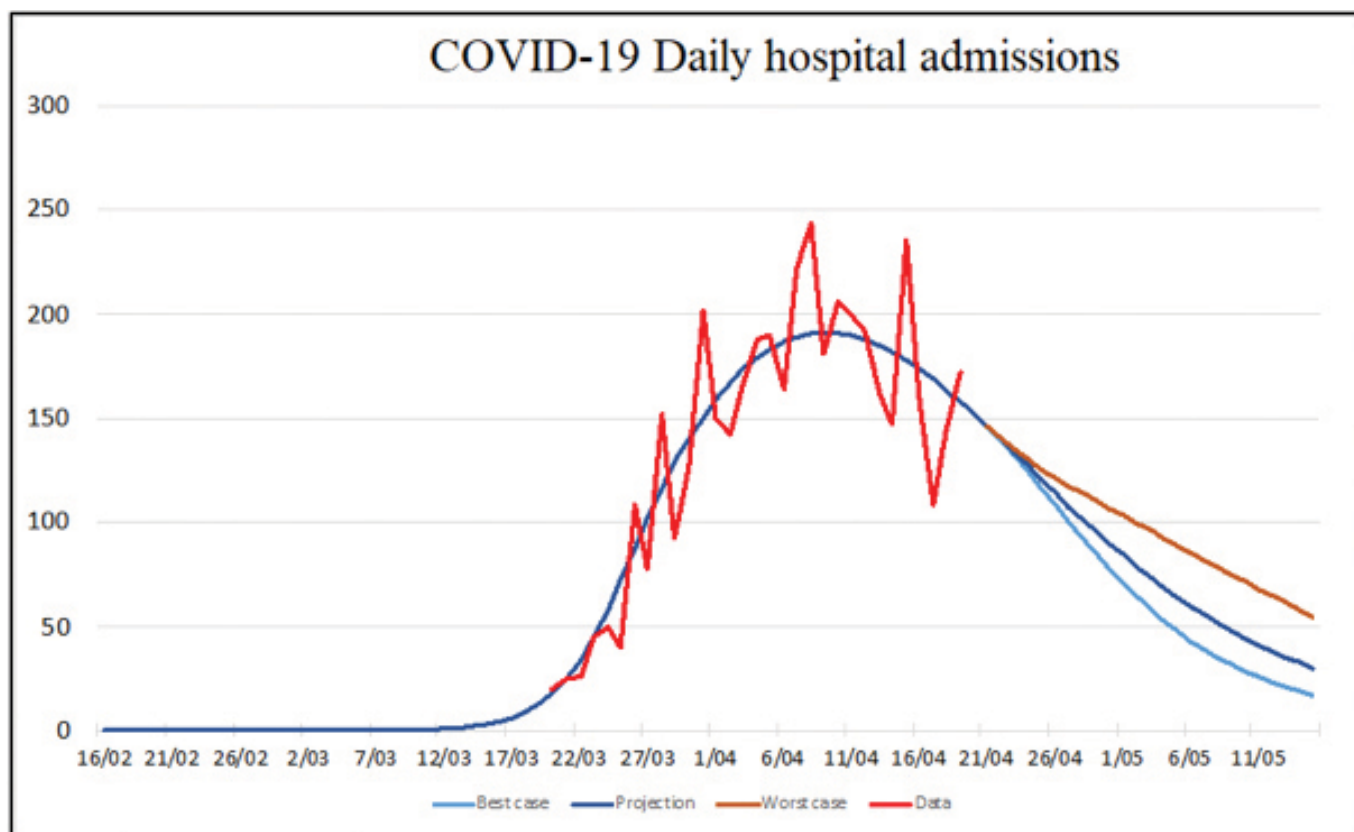


Image: System Dynamics model projections on April 20 2020 of the immediate future daily demand for hospital beds dedicated to COVID19 in the region.

the amplitude of the “peak”. The last time I was even half as anxious about assessing when a peak would arrive was decades ago while trekking in the foothills of the Himalayas.

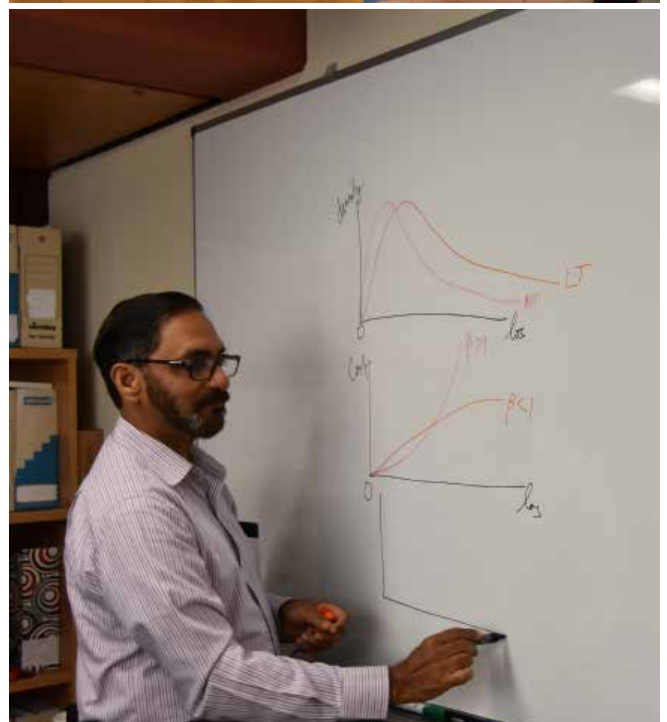
We use an ensemble of models to predict demand up to fourteen days ahead. Using a combination of models, it has been possible to offer reasonably accurate projections, uncovering an initially exponential growth path which tempered into a pattern that is characteristic of epidemics. Happily I have had the benefit of frequent counsel from Professor Andrew Harvey, Life Fellow. Andrew pioneered a family of time series models that have become very useful for epidemic modelling.

With the first peak negotiated, the policy focus is on the staged revival of the flagging economy. The policy challenge is of course to ensure that the NHS would be able to cope with the anticipated second peak. An epidemiologically based modelling approach has been brought on stream for this. This approach, which goes by the name of System Dynamics, directly tracks the diffusion of the virus through the susceptible population, and has been used with success to trace and understand all major epidemics in the recent decades. I had come to study System Dynamics a few years ago in order to understand the diffusion of innovations – it turns out that the diffusion of an infectious disease through a population has many structural elements in common with the diffusion of an innovation through a population of potential adopters. I had no idea then of how this modelling approach would come to be so useful in practical, day-to-day, sense.

Its advantage lies in its ability to go beyond delivering projections, to address counterfactual questions related to aspects of easing the lock-down. The variables that are increasingly important to assess, as the NHS looks ahead, go beyond the hardware of ICU beds and ventilators, to the stretched

capacities of front line health care workers as they confront the virus relentlessly, shift after shift, day after day.

I am lucky to be working with an exceptional team of students and faculty, and collectively we are fortunate to be working, though far behind the frontline, with public health professionals of extraordinary calibre and commitment.





Student Voices

Helen Magowan

MCR Secretary and first-year PhD student in Asian & Middle Eastern Studies, describes what life is like at Leckhampton under the lockdown in conversation with Liz Winter

'The silence is unexpected. You can hear the birds singing in a way you never could before. And the streets are so empty and peaceful I am seeing Cambridge in a new way.' Helen Magowan, first-year PhD student in Japanese studies and MCR Secretary, remains in residence at Leckhampton along with about 50 other graduate students. Although perhaps less has changed for graduate students than for undergraduates since they live in throughout the year, those remaining are now fractured into small groups for safety and obedience to the COVID-19 regulations and that has had the effect of dividing up the community they usually enjoy. 'It's very different,' she explains. 'We formed ourselves into small 'households' so as few people as possible have to share a bathroom or kitchen, and we don't use the communal areas at all.' Despite this, the sense of support is strong. 'We stay in touch, keep an eye on one another and if someone needs some shopping or help, we provide it quickly. This experience has had both the effect of splitting us up physically and bonding us together emotionally.'

Helen, whose PhD is on seventeenth-century Japanese women's calligraphy, finds the great redeeming feature of living at Leckhampton in these dystopian times to be the outside space. 'I walk through the garden daily,' she says. 'I always loved it but now I really notice it and enjoy the gradual changes. The tulips, then bluebells, then apple blossom, and now lilac. It is an excellent way to shake off the stress we all experience.' At first, she explains, the students were worried about what would happen and the uncertainty was hard to deal with. But the College was quick to reassure them they could stay in residence and would be supported by the Fellows and staff and now, she observes, people are largely settled and focused on their work. 'We all miss the normal socialising

and very strong sense of community that is such a part of life here; anyone who has lived at Leckhampton will recognise that. But at least we still have a sense of being together even if we can't do things we used to do.'

The support they have had from the Warden and the Senior Tutor and her tutorial team, has made an enormous difference. 'They made huge efforts to reassure everyone and help us sort out problems. One of the best things about all this is the way I've got to know people I wouldn't have otherwise, and I really appreciate that.' The situation, despite its challenges and the loneliness caused by isolation, has revealed some unexpected benefits: 'The vegetable patch was completely abandoned, but now it's been dug over and planted, and different people have their own beds. It's thriving – we've run out of space and need to expand.' The graduate community has had to develop new levels of creativity to maintain the sense of togetherness and Helen has been instrumental in organising social events remotely. 'We had an online formal last week on Zoom,' she says. 'We set our background images to pictures of Hall and wore gowns; some people dressed up, and everyone cooked two courses. We found a video of the gong being struck and played that. It was hilarious and the couple of hours of fellowship and fun in the middle of such a difficult time made our formal feel very special.'





Reflections from the Staff

Simon Harding

Head Porter, reflects on the current environment at Corpus in conversation with Liz Winter

'When I walk around the College it feels like the world has stood still. Even the Chronophage stopped this morning.' Simon Harding, Head Porter, is reflective as he describes his daily routine during the shutdown. 'We only have eight undergraduates in residence at the moment, and fifty postgraduates at Leckhampton, so most of the rooms are empty but we still have to check them.' The checking part is easy, but there is an eerie feeling when he opens a door and sees the personal possessions still in the rooms. 'It feels a bit like the Marie Celeste.... the occupants left unexpectedly and we are waiting for them to come back.' Simon remains on duty along with most of his colleagues, providing round the clock coverage between them for the College sites and the few occupants who remain. There's plenty to do; apart from manning the Porters' Lodge and checking the buildings, they help the maintenance team with the regular process required to prevent Legionella by running the water supplies. It's also part of their duty to make sure fire safety equipment is working and they deal with the post and administration that comes through the Porters' Lodge.

Simon came to the College after a long career in the police force where he was a Detective

Inspector. He did a year at Trinity Hall as deputy head porter and then took up his role at Corpus. 'I've always lived in Cambridge or nearby and when I retired from the police I wanted something that used my skills, was local, interesting and worthwhile. This fits the bill on all fronts (though I don't expect to do any detecting, I hasten to add)!' But people skills, good oversight of buildings and their operation, keeping a vigilant eye out for potential problems and perhaps most important of all, the ability to make decisions on the spot if necessary to avoid problems escalating are all essential components in a head porter's job description and Simon thrives on them. 'I've really enjoyed my year at Corpus,' he declares. 'Obviously this is a very unusual situation and I do miss the buzz of the students, Fellows and staff being around. But there are some compensating factors; it's very peaceful, and you can hear sounds you wouldn't normally hear, like birds singing. I've got used to the sound of no traffic....and it's very nice to be able to park easily at Newnham House. I will miss that when everyone comes back. But I won't miss the emptiness. It will be good when people return and life goes back to normal.'





Pelican Poets and Writers Society

Catherine Olver (m 2011)

alumna and current PhD candidate at Clare College in Children's and Adolescent Literature, writes about how the Pelican Poets and Writers Society brings the international Corpus community together through weekly studies on poetry and prose

The Pelican Poets and Writers Society is airborne again, Zooming through the clouds and down ethernet cables with poems and prose in its beak. Naturally, we miss the convivial spirit of D4's comfortable sofas, but our virtual meetings have thrown open the doors of sociability to the alumni who have flocked to join us. It is remarkable to hear the familiar voices of Pelicans from across the society's foundation in 2009 mixing together in discussion even when their wingspans at Corpus didn't overlap.

Elizabeth Stephan (Teacher Fellow, 1996) led our opening meeting on 'Time', which has been moving strangely during lockdown. We debated the apocalypticism of the "red wing" rising at dawn in Czesław Miłosz's Encounter and savoured the recording of the author reading his work, before enjoying the colloquial repetitions of Seamus Heaney's Postscript and puzzling over who is guilty of Decades of Arrogance in Emily Dickinson's A Clock Stopped: the humanlike clock or the godlike man repairing it? To finish, Elizabeth contextualised T S Eliot's Burnt Norton by revealing that Eliot's love letters to Emily Hale, the woman with whom he walks the garden, were opened only this year.

Defying time zones, Elena Kazamia (m 2004) led our second meeting, on 'Beauty in Absence,' from California. Opinions were divided on Anne Carson's Sappho translations, which employ square brackets to convey "the drama of trying to read a papyrus torn in half or riddled with holes" and to "imply a free space of imaginal

adventure," as she explains in the introduction to *If Not, Winter*. After musing on the depersonalisation of consciousness in Virginia Woolf's *The Waves*, we were struck by the bleak but determined vitality in e e cummings' "what if a much of a which of a wind". The poem ends with the thought-provoking line "the most who die, the more we live."

We look forward to the next session (Tuesday 19 May, 8-9pm) on the intersection of writing with visual art and beyond that to considering how generational crisis manifests in writing (2 June), before concluding the term with poetry and prose written by our own members (16 June). New attendees are warmly welcomed for any meetings that appeal; if you would like to be sent the readings and Zoom link, please email Catherine at co322@cam.ac.uk



Image: A pre-lockdown meeting of the Society.



Delivering the Parker Sermons virtually

The Revd

Dr Andrew Davison

Dean of Chapel, Fellow in Theology and Starbridge (University) Lecturer in Theology and Natural Sciences explains how technology enables him to deliver the Norfolk Course this year

The will of Matthew Parker is a cunningly devised thing. Although he thought that his College, where Parker (1504–1575) had been a student and later Master (1544–1553), was a more stable recipient of his extraordinary collection of manuscripts than either the Church or Crown, his bequest nonetheless placed the College under strictures: his famous audit, whereby everything is forfeited if more than a certain number of manuscripts or books are lost. Less well known is that he also required the College to arrange for four sermons to be preached each year: the ‘Parker Sermons’ or – because of their location – the ‘Norfolk Course’. The cycle runs back to the sixteenth century. This year, it is part-suspended, and part online.

Two sermons are delivered in Norwich, one at the cathedral and one at St Clement’s, where a prayer is said for Parker’s parents at their tomb. These were to be given by the priest and celebrated librettist Alice Goodman, rector of Fulbourn and the Wilbrahams (Corpus being the patron of Little Wilbraham). If I can travel to Norwich in the year ahead, I will make sure that the prayer is said at the graveside, in Alice’s stead.

As far as I know, a history of the Parker Sermons remains to be written, so I cannot say if there have been other intermissions, for plague or war. Parker’s Sermons have definitely not been delivered over video before now, as they will on 17 May, ‘in’ Thetford and Mattishall. I will be the preacher, and it will be a welcome opportunity for me to get to know these parishes again as

Dean of Chapel. (I preached the Norfolk Course once before, in 2007.)

As with College and Faculty work, the use of video links in church takes some getting used to as the default way of working, but the technology has proved to be there when it was needed. For Chapel Compline and Sunday evening prayer, I have been gathering a group on Zoom, and livestreaming it to FaceBook Live. Information is on Twitter.

Nationally, initial research suggests rather an extraordinary level of participation in communal prayer and worship mediated online, not least among younger people, although that will certainly be the study of many a valuable PhD in the years ahead. Of course, not everyone has easy access to the internet. At a local level, clergy are mailing out weekly service booklets to parishioners without a computer, and last month saw the launch of a national telephone service (Daily Hope) to allow people to join in the daily prayer of the church without a computer.

Online services are not the whole story, however, although they get most coverage on social media. Churches are joining others in providing food banks and homeless shelters. In the Church of England alone, a survey from two years ago counted 33,000 social projects. Last term, chapel collections went to Cambridge City Foodbank: not particularly a church charity, although it does have Rowan Williams as its patron.



So, in 2020, despite half the Norfolk Course being suspended, and the other half taking place over a video link, I hope we satisfy our obligation under Parker's will. English law is quite good at taking circumstances

into account, and the oddness of those circumstances, and an attempt to work within them, will serve only to strengthen, I hope, the historic links of the College to a Norfolk town and village.



Image: Matthew Parker (1504 – 1575).



Editorial

Professor Emma Wilson

Vice-Master, Professor of French Literature and the Visual Arts, College Tutor and Director of Studies in Modern and Medieval Languages

My strongest memory of March 2020 is of being on the phone with students. One working on Latin-American materials had arrived in Argentina just a week previously. From quarantine, he made arrangements to take a flight to Brazil, and on from there to the UK. He had the shortest chance to explore Buenos Aires. Then there were conversations with our international students who had travelled long distances home to Poland, Romania, Singapore, Canada, New Zealand. The College nurse, and tutorial team, gave them invaluable advice about staying safe in transit. The students' maturity in facing all this, despite worry about their families, and then, once home, their readiness to get back to revision for Tripos, have been awe-inspiring.

A handful of undergraduates have stayed in Cambridge. One has kept a very beautiful illuminated plague diary, sharing its watercolour images by mobile. Others have enjoyed socially distanced conversations with the porters, the chance to use New Court as a running circuit, and time for elaborate cooking. These are lonely days for all of us, something I've felt even as someone who tends to self-isolate by temperament. I'm hoping so much that the one-to-one and small group teaching we do here, and the conversations that ensue, can give students some extra feeling of live connection.

I've stayed in Cambridge with my partner Ioana, still closely following what has been happening in France and Italy where we have ties. I've been watching cellist Sonia Wieder-Atherton perform each day from her flat in Paris. In the New Yorker, Maggie Nelson's account of the justness of Natalia Ginzburg's writing for these times particularly struck home. I've been wondering whether the European literature I teach is offering students resources as they live this era. It seems apt that they have already thought about humanity in Camus' *The Plague*, and about Marguerite Duras' ideas on destruction, on a new world order after trauma, in her wartime journals. Among the many losses now, a particular sadness has come with the COVID-related death of Hélène Châtelain, a documentary filmmaker, in Paris on 11 April 2020. Her face appears in Chris Marker's short film *La Jetée* (1962), variously streaming currently, about an underground existence in Paris after WW3. The time traveller hero cherishes an image of a woman's face, a memory that is 'a tender moment to prop up the madness to come.'

I have come to associate Corpus, the Old House, with momentous events and with the passing of time, the solar eclipse in 1999 which I watched from the New Court, the funeral of Oliver Rackham, and the joyous christening of the Master's new son, Augustus, so recently. The pandemic, its grip and tragedy, and also its moments of reprieve and consolation, now feels part of this history and narrative.



News from the College

Dr Andrew Sanger

University Lecturer in International Law, College Tutor
and Director of Studies in Law

The supervision system is at the heart of teaching and learning at Cambridge. The best supervisions are creative, dynamic and enjoyable (for the supervisor – if not always for the student!). In these extraordinary times, when we are scattered around the world and largely confined to homes, how can we capture this personalised, face-to-face experience digitally? Screen supervisions are certainly different and can sometimes be difficult. For some, they are too distant and impersonal (simulating life is no substitute for the real thing); but for others, they are an awkward intrusion of study life into a private space. For me, I miss the easy give-and-take that comes with a small group comfortable with discussing ideas with one another: the quick laugh, the interjected joke, the subtle signal, and the moments of relief when a point has landed or a comment has been clearly received. This warm rhythm of human interaction can easily suffer from technological limitations, resulting in delayed and staccato conversations. Screen conversations can sometimes be draining, not everyone has access to the same technology and differential circumstances mean that some face greater challenges than others. Yet there are lighter moments too – a comically frozen face, an accidentally forgotten ‘mute’ or a rogue household member wandering across the screen.

There are other positives and useful lessons to be learned from the digital format. One is that we find ourselves thinking more critically about how we communicate and how we are received. In some ways, the Socratic method translates relatively well to screen supervisions, but it is more than just asking questions; it is also about reading the response. For teaching, this means

being more attentive to facial expressions (now often closer and clearer); ensuring that everyone in a group takes part (avoiding monologue mode!); and thinking about how to communicate non-verbal cues and signals effectively when we are all shoehorned into digital boxes. Teaching remotely is hardly an ideal substitute for being present in person but when we eventually emerge from this strange world into another, perhaps more familiar one, there is the promise that our senses will have been heightened and we will have become better communicators.

Where does that leave research? Admittedly, it has been a challenge to find sufficient time and space. If international law is responsible in part for the harmful impacts of globalisation and for deep structural inequality, then it can also facilitate human kindness and it can be a place for hope and aspiration. The COVID crisis underscores the reality that we are all intimately connected, but it also brings into sharp relief the inequalities created by that connection and the urgent need for global cooperation. Before the lockdown, I was working on a project that explores the challenges faced by democracies in addressing the spread of disinformation on digital platforms. The crisis has exemplified these challenges and heightened the need to find solutions that remove or suppress dangerous information while still protecting the democratisation of expression that decentralised control over content has brought. Borders may largely be shut now but we are likely to emerge evermore connected. So the question remains: how do we ensure that this connection serves us all, equally, now and in the future?



Reflections from the Fellowship

Professor John Carr

Vice-President, Professor of Plant Virology, Tutor and Director of Studies in Biology, discusses the interaction of viruses and their impact on humans

What is SARS-CoV-2? Viruses are parasites that only reproduce inside suitable host cells. The severe acute respiratory syndrome-coronavirus-2 (SARS-CoV-2), responsible for the pandemic of coronavirus disease discovered in 2019 (COVID-19), is in several ways a typical animal-infecting virus. For example, SARS-CoV-2's genetic material is a single strand of RNA (in contrast to human genetic material, double-stranded DNA), and each RNA molecule is protected within a virus particle or 'virion'. SARS-CoV-2's virion comprises one genomic RNA molecule, a lipid envelope, and several 'structural' proteins. 'Spike' proteins project from virions, making them resemble old-fashioned naval mines. Coronavirus spikes bind 'ACE2', a protein occurring on the surfaces of cells lining the lung. Coincidentally, ACE2 regulates blood pressure and inflammation – suggesting a possible link to some COVID-19 symptoms. Spike-to-ACE2 attachment promotes entry of virions into host cells, and release of viral RNA. Coronavirus RNA directs infected cells to make viral structural proteins, a protein that reproduces viral RNA, and factors that subvert antiviral resistance (e.g. the interferon system). Other proteins over-stimulate inflammatory responses leading to fluid accumulation in the lungs and pneumonia.

Most coronaviruses do not infect people but many cause serious diseases in domestic and wild animals. Human coronaviruses were discovered by the UK's Common Cold Research Unit in the mid-'60s and shown to be one of several virus families causing 'colds'. Unlike many animal coronaviruses,

human coronaviruses rarely engender serious complications like pneumonia. The research unit was closed in 1990 to save money and because of the perceived difficulty of curing 40 different 'cold' viruses. Human coronavirus research languished until SARS-CoV emerged in Guangzhou, China in 2003, and the 2012 appearance of Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus (MERS-CoV) in Saudi Arabia. SARS-CoV and MERS-CoV spread to other countries but both appear to be controlled. This is fortunate; SARS-CoV and MERS-CoV kill, respectively, 10 to 30 per cent of patients.





Can we prevent novel virus outbreaks? Comparing RNA sequences between SARS-CoV, MERS-CoV, SARS-CoV-2 and other coronaviruses showed they are related to bat-infecting coronaviruses (Figure 1). The specific bat reservoir species for SARS-CoV-2 is unknown. No intermediate host has been confirmed, although it is probably one of the wild species sold for consumption at Wuhan's Huanan market during November 2019.

China's rapid sequencing of SARS-CoV-2 accelerated development of detection assays, therapeutics and (we hope) vaccines. But arguably, these technical solutions should never have been necessary. COVID-19's emergence should not have surprised anyone and was, perhaps, avoidable. This century's most lethal epidemics have been viral 'zoonoses' (diseases that jump from animals to humans): avian and pig influenzas, SARS and MERS, Ebola and Nipah. The influenzas arose in farming systems, the others from bat reservoirs.

The earlier epidemics showed that natural habitat disruption, insanitary farming practice and bushmeat consumption all risk fostering novel zoonoses, and that our world's interconnectedness easily converts local outbreaks into pandemics. The magnitude and duration of the COVID-19 catastrophe owes much to neglect of lessons provided by these previous twenty-first-century outbreaks.

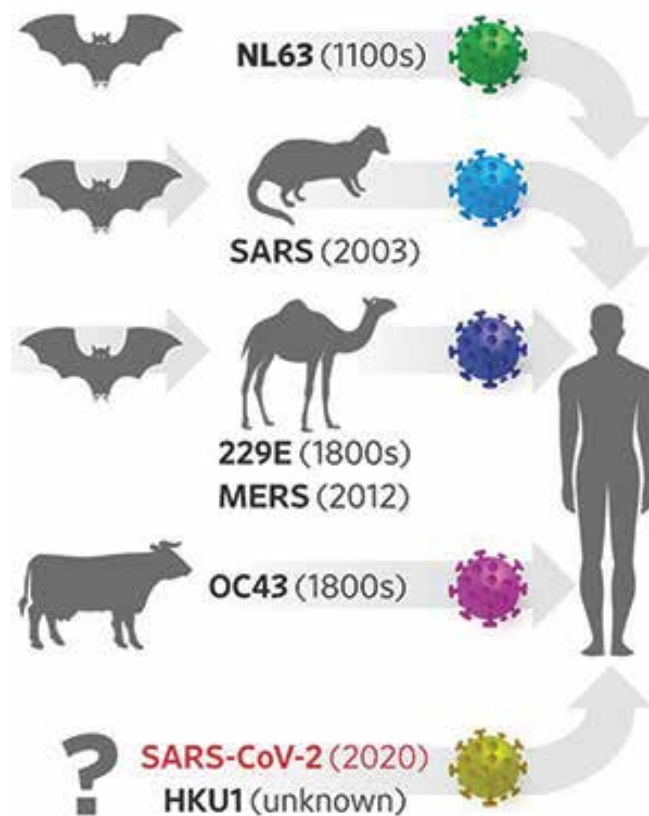
SAR-CoV present in horseshoe bats living in caves in Yunnan jumped to masked palm civets which acted as intermediate hosts for transfer of the virus to humans 2002–2003 who came into contact with civets transported 1600 km to Guangzhou. MERS-CoV jumped from bats to camels to man (first report in 2012) and although under control infects a few hundred human patients each year. SARS-CoV-2 causes COVID-19, which has reached pandemic levels of spread. SARS-CoV-2 is closely related to bat-infecting coronaviruses and exploits the

same receptor, ACE2, as SARS-CoV to attach to host cells. The bat primary host species is unknown, as is the intermediate host that provided the transmission bridge between bats and humans.

Image: Example of bat to human transmission of coronaviruses.

Epidemic Potential

Coronaviruses are jumping increasingly from animals to humans, creating new threats



Source: Timothy Sheahan, University of North Carolina



Professor Karol Sikora (m1966)

Honorary Fellow, looks at the impact the COVID-19 pandemic has had on cancer treatment and the NHS

I left Corpus in 1969 and have really enjoyed my career as an oncologist. It's been varied and challenging. I've been a bit controversial and I know I'm like marmite – some like me, others hate me. After five years as a young consultant at Addenbrookes, I became director of cancer services at Hammersmith and Charing Cross Hospitals – Imperial College. I've edited the main postgraduate textbook *Treatment of Cancer* for seven editions. I'm now 71 and never been busier running a network of proton treatment centres. So after 40 years, along comes a small piece of RNA with only 31,000 bases (the building blocks of our genes discovered by Watson and Crick in 1953 in the building behind Corpus on Free School Lane) surrounded by the now familiar spikes and a nice shiny coat. The coronavirus has affected us all. Markets have plummeted. International borders are shut. Planes are empty. The world has simply ground to a halt. All this caused by the simplest of life forms. The philosophers are in their element – why does it exist, was it created by God or man, does it have a soul? Why are they so quiet? It's all fascinating stuff. And SARS-CoV-2 has now been found to contain HIV sequences – perhaps deliberately inserted. Conspiracy theories abound.

I've completely avoided social media until a month ago when I was persuaded to open a Twitter account for the first time (@profkarolsikora). It's a strange medium but compulsive. Now I know why everybody is glued to their phones on the train. I began tweeting messages about cancer patients not getting through the system. Both the NHS and the independent hospitals have been completely overtaken by COVID-19. But the

numbers are now thankfully dropping – we are through the pandemic. We need to turn on the taps for cancer, cardiac and other serious illnesses which need urgent care.

And society, including schools and universities, needs to get going again. Hopefully by the time you read this we will be there. Our government has done its best but not entirely covered itself in glory. It failed on the provision of adequate protective clothing for NHS staff. It's almost laughable in a Yes Minister sort of way. The tragedy is that staff feel vulnerable – even the cleaners in our hospitals are scared. It also failed on testing both for the presence of the virus and the antibody to it that stays around after infection – the footprint in the sand – Corona's calling card. Other countries did both much better and were better prepared. Operation Cygnus was a secret pandemic preparedness exercise carried out by the NHS in 2016. We failed miserably in this, yet the results were never released.

How is it all going to end? Well, I'm an optimist so my view is that the swirling virus will just leave us alone now. The mass hysteria will soon disappear and things will move on. Even Heathrow will get painfully busy again. The shattered NHS and economy will slowly return to normal. But the post-COVID world will be different. Entrepreneurs will find ways of making more money, management consultants will continue to borrow peoples watches and tell them the time, churches will be full again and cancer patients will restart their treatment pathways. Maybe it will reset society in a very positive way. It's strange but the pandemic may have brought us all much closer together. I really hope so.



Dr Kai Ruggeri

former Fellow in Psychological and Behavioural Science, discusses his global replication study in which Corpus undergraduate, Charlotte Rutherford, was a junior researcher

Just as lockdowns began, we were informed the study I described in the 2019 edition of *The Pelican* would be published in *Nature Human Behaviour*, which is one of the most influential scientific journals in behavioural science. The timing of such a critical study related to how humans make decisions with risk and uncertainty could not be more relevant – beyond the relevance of COVID, behavioural science has faced a reckoning with widely report failed replications of well-known experiments. The driving force behind the work were early career researchers from the Junior Researcher Programme, which I have directed since 2011. For the first time in our history, I am delighted to say that a Corpus student (for whom I was Director of Studies) was part of the JRP.

During one of the Corpus Open Days in 2017, I had the great fortune of meeting Charlotte Rutherford and discussing the prospects of her coming to Cambridge to read Psychological and Behavioural Sciences. The intensity to which she wrote (nay, CARVED) every concept she might want to explore or book she might enjoy reading is forever burned into my memory – as was my (unsurprised) delight several months later at her interview when she informed me that she had read them all.

Charlotte's roles in the project involved technical checks on the data collection tools prior to circulation as well as support for data collection in both the UK and Australia. Everything about her accomplishments in this project comes down to her tremendous intellect, commitment and proactive approach. This was an opportunity she sought out herself, and I could not be more thrilled for her. I was delighted to find out her interests overlapped with my research, and am sure all of College shares in my excitement for her accomplishments at such an early stage in her academic career.

Only days before, coincidentally during the Corpus gatherings in New York, I was informed by my superior officers in the New York Guard that I should be prepared to deploy as part of the COVID mission. As you likely read, New York City was hardest hit in the earliest days of the US outbreak. As a state, New York has a unique military structure that allows me to continue making an impact in my professional



Image: Charlotte Rutherford (m 2018), current undergraduate in Psychological and Behavioural Sciences Tripos.

research career while also being able to serve community and country. COVID brought unprecedented mobilisation to this structure, and my role has required substantial adaptation and a rapid escalation of responsibilities. Soon after the lockdown began, I was asked to move into an acting command position, becoming responsible for the coordination, training, and oversight of an entire detachment (approximately forty soldiers). Those duties

have mostly now eased, but they have told us to prepare for a long mission.

While still able to continue with most of my professional academic responsibilities, the past sixty days have meant working almost two parallel jobs. While it is too early to say, my hope is that we will be back soon, running the next major study with JRP, and I will look forward to seeing everyone in Hall then.





Observations from the Past

Professor John Hatcher

Emeritus Professor of Social and Economic History, and Life Fellow, discusses the Black Death and compares its social effects to those of today

It is understandable that some of us, facing the continuing threat of a mysterious disease that is rapidly spreading across the world, exposing the limits of medical and scientific knowledge and especially of mathematical modelling, and challenging the ability of society and institutions to respond swiftly with appropriate counter measures, should use part of the spare time granted by enforced lockdowns and social isolation to reflect on major epidemics and pandemics of the past. Within just the last two decades the world has experienced a succession of new viruses, including Ebola, swine flu, avian flu and SARS. None of which, thankfully, has caused mortality to surge world-wide on anything like the scale that many experts had been predicting. More arresting for those of an apocalyptic disposition is the so-called 'Spanish Flu' of 1918-1919, which swept across the world killing anywhere between 20 and 100 million, of which an unusually high proportion were the young and those in the prime of life.

If real diseases are not fascinating enough there are those that might emerge, as evidenced by the huge spike in the popularity of the 2011 thriller, *Contagion*, a film about the devastation to the contemporary world and the pillars of civilisation wrought by a novel killer virus that was also portentously passed onto humans from bats. Having languished in 270th position in December 2019 on the Warner Bros list of downloads, this film is now second in popularity only to the Harry Potter franchise. Clearly a substantial proportion of us are not seeking escapism, but instead searching in the darker

reaches of what happened in history or what might happen in the future. Even so, the scale of the recent surge of interest in the Black Death of the mid-fourteenth century is surprising. Sales of books on what was undoubtedly the worst catastrophe ever suffered in recorded history have multiplied, radio and TV stations across the world have devoted programmes to covering its characteristics and impact, leading newspapers have featured articles seeking to draw parallels with the current COVID-19 pandemic and its likely aftermath, and podcasts, professional and amateur, from the terrifying to the titillating, have proliferated on the web.

Fortunately, the parallels between medieval plague and COVID-19 are not at all close. For not only was the Black Death a bacterial rather than a viral disease, it was far, far more lethal than COVID-19. As it swept across the known world between 1345 and 1353 the plague wiped out between 30 and 50 per cent of the total population, with at least two thirds of those who contracted the bubonic form dying from it within a week and none of those who contracted the pneumonic and septicaemic surviving for more than a day or two. Yet, as we are often told, every cloud has a silver lining. As a result of the massive reduction in population the great majority of survivors and their successors benefited from easier access to land, cheaper food, higher wages, and the loosening of the bonds of serfdom. And, of course, the Black Death led directly and promptly to the founding of our College.



Reflections from the Staff

Tim Rhodes

Corpus Boatman, shares his experience as an NHS volunteer during the lockdown.

The last time I had heard the word 'furloughed' used quite so much was in the re-runs of Sgt Bilko I used to watch. However, as many others are finding at the moment, that is what has happened to me from my role as College Boatman at Corpus.

So when the call for NHS volunteers was put out, I signed up immediately. After a delay of a few days I was accepted as one of the team. I received emails telling me what was and to some degree wasn't expected of me – including to please not make my own uniform. I cleaned and even hoovered my car, ready to help transport people or shopping or medication to wherever it was needed. But days passed and no call came. My enthusiasm was still in place but there appeared to be no outlet for it. However, an email did come from Dr David Secher, the Interim Bursar, who had heard of my volunteering effort. He passed on the suggestion of another volunteering group; Scrub hub. This brings together people who can sew gowns, masks and hats which are collected at a 'hub' and are then taken by bicycle to be delivered to the NHS hospital at Fulbourn and distributed as needed.

It sounded just the thing for me. I made email contact with the extremely efficient Tricia who organises the volunteers and was quickly given my first assignment. This was a collection of gowns from Bishops Stortford, or at least a farm on the outskirts. I attached my panniers to my bike, and an extra bag just in case, and set off. The weather was perfect; sun, blue sky and a breeze that was just the wrong side of ideal. My journey took me out of Cambridge through Shelford, Duxford, and over the higher ground from Ickleton to Littlebury Green, where sky larks were making themselves heard above. After a while, though, I wondered if that had anything to do with the kestrel circling and swooping around the area.

Further towards the border of Hertfordshire I pedalled through Arkesden, Clavering, the almost picture perfect Manuden and finally to the farm

where I was to meet Suzy. I cycled into a very quiet farmyard and phoned Suzy to let her know I had arrived.

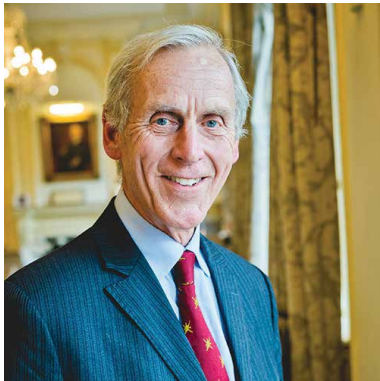
Two large packages of sewn garments, double wrapped in plastic, were stowed in my panniers and after a chat and a glass of water I set off on the return journey.

My route was exactly the same in reverse. My only challenge was a police car that overtook me, slowed down and then put his flashing blue lights on. I thought, hopefully, mine was a legitimate reason to be out and about this far from home. However, it turned out I did not need to give a reason; the police officers had slowed down to wave and turn their lights on for the children of a young family coming in the opposite direction.

Eventually, Cambridge came into view and my first collection and delivery was safely delivered to the NHS hospital at Fulbourn.

So, although coaching the College's crews and seeking a hundred ways to say 'try to engage your legs a little more' may be on temporary hold, I'm hoping to put my own legs to good use for the foreseeable future.





Editorial

Stuart Laing (m1967)

Honorary Fellow and former Master

I'm most grateful to the Master and Liz Winter for inviting me to write for this issue of Pelican in Brief, and I congratulate them and the College for this lively way of maintaining communication in the Corpus community. I've much enjoyed, and found most interesting, the selection of articles kindly contributed by our Fellows and others. And, from Pelican in Brief and also from chats and emails with others in Cambridge, I have been very impressed with the way that the University and the College have adapted to the crisis and kept going with research, teaching and learning.

Sibella and I are spending lockdown in our house in Wiltshire, where we have been living since leaving the Master's Lodge in August nearly two years ago. During lockdown we have begun to think the virus came to force us to focus on the house and garden, somewhat neglected during the twenty years we have owned it but not lived in it. Like many others, we have invented Corona projects; clearing the cellar, growing veg, building compost heaps, etc. Once a fortnight our car (otherwise static) gets an outing to our local Tesco, for us to navigate carefully round the aisles, respecting the two-metre rule. We both have charity trusteeships and other jobs entailing meetings by Zoom or Teams, and like everyone else we use the computer or phone screen to stay in touch with friends and family. Being blessed with good health, we are frustrated by the

limitations of what we can do to help others affected by the crisis; I do a round on my bike to deliver prescription medications to people in our village, and Sibella, as a Licensed Lay Minister, supports the Rector in the church's continuing virtual ministry. Overall, we are very fortunate, having access to wide open spaces in the Wiltshire downs for walks to exercise with Jack.

This way of life in the lockdown prompts me to reflect on the effects of distance. In one sense, we dismiss its impact by our virtual meetings and chats, but at the same time this screen interaction emphasises what we are missing; the immediacy of face-to-face contact. We have school teachers in our family, and they remind us of the difficulties and differences in teaching and learning remotely – problems by now familiar to all of you in the University context.

We also think of the less visible effects of extended isolation, particularly for those living on their own. This Pelican in Brief issue touches at various points on questions of mental health and stress, including – at a tragic extreme – the sad story of Dr Butts, on his own in a deserted Cambridge during a plague outbreak. As restrictions are lifted, there may be more ways for us to support those who have suffered from our current crisis.



News from the College

Professor Pietro Cicuta

Professor of Biological Physics, Fellow and Director
of Studies in Physics

What a dramatic six months it has been. Having kept myself out of Addenbrookes for twenty years, I spent five weeks in the neonatal intensive care unit at the end of last year, thankful for the extraordinary care by the NHS of our premature baby (who is now doing well!). I became aware of COVID-19 around Christmas time; my parents had come over from Italy, and we were hearing the news coming out of China, commenting how unthinkable the lockdown of a large city and the loss of freedom would be anywhere in the West.

Early in March, I realised that what was by then happening in Italy would almost certainly happen in other European countries. With a delay of roughly two weeks, there was a similar trend of cases in Spain, Germany and France and soon after in the UK.

I was not surprised when on 20 March the University decided to lock down completely. My thoughts during the week before shutdown were conflicted between the desire to keep everyone safe and infection rates as low as possible, and the desire to do something useful. After all, universities contain a lot of creative people, many of whom are great problem solvers. Shutting down was an extreme reaction; I felt it was not the optimal solution. Researchers were being forced out of their labs when they might have something useful to contribute. Research in the University has only been allowed on projects very strictly related to COVID. Everybody else has had to redefine their work from home.

To encourage people to think creatively I set up an online bulletin system using a

software called Slack. I defined various initial topics to focus on, and allowed access to all the academics from Cambridge and their collaborators. Very quickly we attracted about one thousand researchers, contributing knowledge and sharing ideas in a structured way. This served, for example, rapidly to coordinate efforts around the ventilator designs that various teams had started thinking about, and also to share instructions on how to make various kinds of cheap masks, and we shared information about modelling approaches for the epidemic. This Slack platform is still being actively used across the University.

In addition to focusing on my graduate students and post-docs, I got involved in two new COVID-19 related projects. In a very minor way, I tried to help the open source ventilator ovsi.org, which was built in the Whittle Laboratory, part of the Department of Engineering. My interest in that project is connected to work that we do with biomedical technology in developing countries. I wanted to see if simple designs could be followed through to produce medical instruments.

I had a more significant involvement in another project, together with Professor Cecilia Mascolo in the Computer Science Laboratory, where the idea was to see if the sounds of voice, coughing and breathing, recorded in a simple way through smartphones, could be enough to diagnose the COVID-19 condition, its severity, and perhaps even distinguish it from other types of airway diseases like the common cold or flu. This project covid-19-sounds.org is going well. We are still in the initial phase



Volunteer your voice

The app will collect some voice samples (while you read text on the screen), and a few seconds of breathing and coughing.



Contribute to science

We need many participants in order to build predictive models and contribute to the early diagnosis of COVID-19.



No tracking

The app won't be tracking you and it will collect data when you actively interact with it.

of data gathering sound samples and are still looking for more people to join! Having promoted the idea through social media and our personal networks, we also managed to get coverage in the mainstream press. I even appeared on national television. So far 8,000 people have donated their sounds, the largest such data set globally, and we're in the process of seeing to what extent these sounds can be used to diagnose the disease using signal detection and machine learning algorithms. If this project turns out to be successful it could serve as an automated filter, perhaps as part of an NHS 111 response, helping the health system manage the demand for advice, and to work out who should go to hospital and who should safely wait at home.

The pandemic has already had a huge impact on us, including speeding up, for better or worse, many trends that were perhaps about to happen anyway. By changing our daily life and our habits so suddenly, and by preventing us from doing a whole set of things, it has opened up for some people a window of free time. For me despite being busier than ever, it's given me a chance to consider, with a little bit of detachment, how to use my time and expertise for something immediately useful.

A longer version of this article can be found at <https://softandbio-physics.blogspot.com/>





Reflections from the Fellowship

Professor Andrew Harvey

Professor of Econometrics, Life Fellow and previous College President, describes the landscape of stock markets as they face the challenging times of COVID-19

During the early part of the coronavirus crisis the newspapers were full of headlines about stock market crashes. From the third week in February until the third week in March, markets fell by about 30 percent. However, large downward movements are often followed by upward movements a few days later. Upward movements are somewhat less newsworthy – we apparently all love stories of doom and gloom – but they point to an important feature of stock markets: they exhibit increasing volatility in times of uncertainty. Big changes are usually a response to news, such as restrictions on movement or a new economic package.

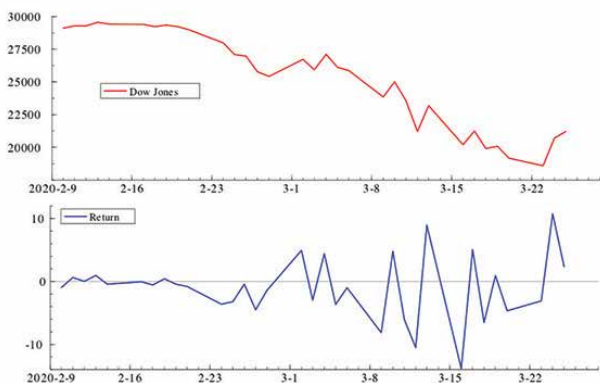


Figure 1: Dow-Jones index and returns in February and March 2020.

Figure 1 shows the daily closing price for the main US index, the Dow-Jones, starting on 9 February and ending on 25 March. Very little happens until the third week in February when the index starts to fall. It then appears to stabilize at the beginning of March but after that there are much larger falls. The corresponding increase in volatility shows up in the lower graph, which plots returns, that is the change in the day divided by index.

The size and direction of stock prices is unpredictable, for the simple reason that, if they were predictable, people would act on this information thereby immediately wiping out any predictability. The same is not true of volatility. If there is uncertainty today it is highly likely that there will be uncertainty tomorrow. There are some exceptions to this rule. For example after 9/11 the Dow-Jones fell sharply but it didn't take long for people to realise that there had been no fundamental effect on the economy and within days it was back to its earlier level. But what of the financial crisis of 2008? This is a much better guide to what we are currently experiencing. Figure 2 shows the Dow-Jones index and returns for the period before and after Lehman Brothers filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection on 15 September. The market fell by 30 percent while volatility exploded but then gradually subsided.

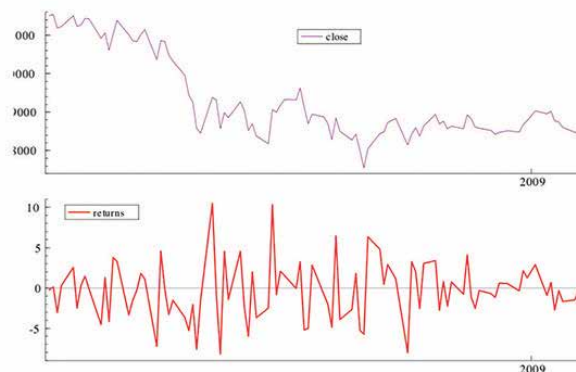


Figure 2: Dow-Jones index (at the close) and returns around the time of the 2008 crash.

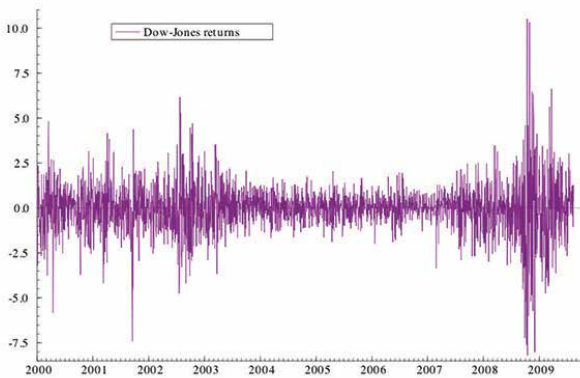


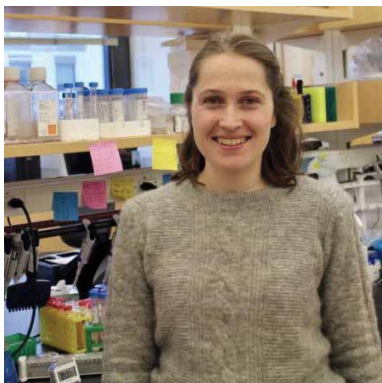
Figure 3: Dow-Jones returns.

Figure 3 which shows the Dow-Jones returns from early 2000 to end of 2009 puts this in a wider historical context. As can be seen, volatility was gradually increasing prior to the Lehman collapse. It was becoming increasingly apparent that something was wrong, but few realised exactly what it was and what the implications were. Of course, some did. (For those of you who are wondering how to pass the time without

the delights of Corpus high table, the film *The Big Short* provides an excellent and, in some places, very funny guide to what was happening.) The interesting point about the recent crash is that it was very sudden. We had known about Coronavirus for some time but it was only at the beginning of March that the full economic implications started to become apparent. In contrast to what happened in 2008, the volatility in the weeks prior to the first big fall was low.

What happened next? Well, over the last two months, the markets have recovered much of the ground they lost in March, but of course that hasn't made the headlines. Volatility is down, but it is still on the high side and will remain so until the full implications for the economy start to become clearer. We can then wait for the next unexpected shock and watch as volatility goes up once again: a predictable element in an unpredictable world.





Student Voices

Isabella Ferreira (m 2019)

Gates Scholar and first-year doctoral research student in Medicine, talks to Somer Ann Greene about adapting her research to support COVID-19 testing

'It's the most surreal experience going through something like this, especially at Cambridge.' Isabella Ferreira, Gates Scholar and first-year doctoral research student in Medicine, did not expect her first year at Corpus to look quite like the scene set before her now. Along with around fifty students, Isabella is currently living at Leckhampton and the grounds have revealed some of the most peaceful parts of themselves during this time of quietness – from the songs of new birds to the faces of new flowers. Friendships are also being strengthened: 'The students have formed a sort of survivors group where we all support one another,' she explains.

More than a change of pace and atmosphere however, the direction of Isabella's work has also altered due to COVID-19. She was originally studying infectious diseases, specifically HIV, and how different cells that make up the cellular HIV reservoir interact and become permissive to HIV infection. However, with the urgent need of diagnostic COVID tests, Isabella's research shifted. She now examines immune cell interactions, but in the context of COVID rather than HIV. Working under the supervision of Professor Ravi Gupta, Isabella is a member of the lab that is developing the widely-praised new 'SAMBA II' test, which can obtain a COVID diagnostic in under 90 minutes. 'I focus on the basic science research, the immune responses behind all this. I look at how to best understand the actual mechanisms and structures before we can apply research.' The SAMBA II test is not only ground-breaking in its ability to detect active infections, but also in that it requires minimal training to employ — increasing access and therefore helping reduce the risk of infection spread.

Isabella is also the MCR Vice-President and her experience in this role has changed as she learns the organisational skills required in a time of crisis. 'Being on the MCR committee and liaising with the College to make sure everyone feels

secure has been really rewarding — it's a lot to learn.' From the group residing at Leckhampton, to the international community of postgraduates currently working from home, she observes how relationships have grown stronger since being faced with the unprecedented: 'When I speak with students now, it's like seeing people's raw selves: how they cope with this, seeing what their thresholds are and hearing them be so honest with their feelings has been really amazing.' She's worked closely with the Senior Tutor and Warden of Leckhampton as well, ensuring that Leckhampton remains an encouraging place in the middle of a difficult time. 'It's been very constructive to discuss outcomes with the College and see how working relationships develop when you open channels of communication to ensure support. We're all collectively trying to make the best scenario for those who remain in residence.'

Looking to the future, she summarises the positive things the pandemic brought. She has hopes her research can 'further uncover ways global health reacts to infectious diseases that affect certain parts of a population,' and as Vice-President, she and the MCR committee have used this moment as a gateway for further connection among students and staff. 'This has taught me about leadership, crisis management and how to communicate with different parties. I think that's a really amazing skill I'm starting to gain from this.'





Reflections from the Staff

Sarah Winder-Worsley

College Nurse Sarah Winder-Worsley explains what it is like to support students and what they experience during COVID-19

I've been nursing for twenty years now both in the UK and Canada and last June saw me joining the Corpus family, looking to take my nursing career in a new and exciting direction. The challenge laid down, which I gladly accepted, was to set up a College Nurse service to support and promote the health of all Corpus students. I began with a small ex-guest room in New Court and a computer. By September, just before the start of the Michaelmas term, the bedroom had been transformed into a clinic, complete with treatment couch, diagnostic equipment and a substantial selection of medical supplies for treating a wide range of minor illnesses and injuries.

There are well-established college nurses at twenty-five of the Cambridge colleges and there are many opportunities for sharing best practice, but no two services are identical. An effective nurse practice should be structured around the needs of the intended population. One of my first tasks was to learn about the health needs of my new student population so I invited them to share their medical history via a confidential questionnaire. Their fantastic response to this helped to prepare me for providing the right support and advice when they have needed it.

It's not unusual for students to arrive in Cambridge with additional needs as a result of ill health and an important part of my role is to reduce the impact of chronic ill health on their Cambridge experience. Of course, acute ill health also strikes regularly, including mental illness such as anxiety and depression, so my clinics are always varied and I spend a good deal of time signposting students to the services best suited to help them.

At the beginning of the Michaelmas Term, I decided to highlight my presence in College by giving each student a free bottle of hand sanitizer – after all flu season was almost upon us! Little did I realise what a valuable commodity it was to become. By

the beginning of the Lent Term, increasingly loud rumblings were to be heard, warning of the potential impact the newly discovered virus in China might have on our international community. As the term progressed, so did the passage of the virus and with two weeks still to go, we made, in consultation with the wider collegiate University, the difficult decision to ask our students to return home. Most have been able to go, but we currently have some sixty students still resident in College, the majority from the postgraduate population living at Leckhampton.

The College is now closed and with the national lockdown, only a skeleton staff of essential workers remain onsite. However, I am still supporting students remotely via telephone calls and online meeting platforms. Over the Easter vacation, my focus has been largely on the students who remained in residence, but as the Easter Term began, I continued to be available to the student community wherever they are in the world. All appointments will be carried out remotely for the time being, and these can be booked on my Moodle site. The students face a challenging term, adapting to new living arrangements and methods of assessment, but I encourage any who are struggling to get in touch – support is most definitely still available!





Observations from the Past

Dr Philippa Hoskin

Gaylord and Dorothy Donnelley Fellow Librarian, reflects on the life of Henry Butts, Corpus Master 1626–1632, and his turmoil during the time of the Plague

Henry Butts, Master between 1626 and 1632, is remembered as one of the most unfortunate of masters. As was usual at the time, Henry Butts also served as Vice-Chancellor for part of his Mastership and so, when Bubonic plague came to Cambridge in April 1630, he found himself needing to manage a huge crisis on behalf of the University. As formal University teaching ceased, and the vast majority of students and fellows fled the town to places they hoped were safer, Butts stayed in Cambridge, working alongside the civic authorities, to deal with the immediate problem of containing the epidemic, relieving the suffering of the sick and supporting those who had lost their livelihoods. University records show strategies for containing infectious disease that are still familiar to us: infected households were required to self-isolate, gatherings of people were banned, and the pubs were closed.

In this period Butts remained living in the Master's Lodge, 'alone ... a destitute and forsaken man, not a scholar with me in the College, not a scholar seen by me without'.

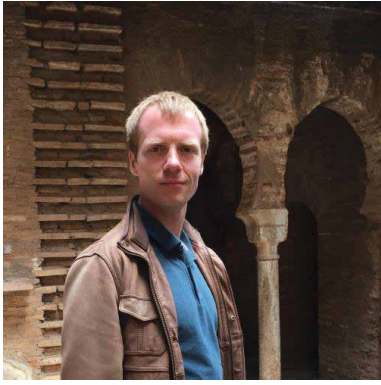
This image of a solitary man, struggling to live with memories of terrible suffering has tended to influence popular interpretations of Butts's suicide on Easter day 1632 when, having failed to turn up to preach at Great St Mary's, he was found hanged in his room in the Master's Lodge. Although there are reports that during the crisis he was in poor health and behaving oddly, Butts had many other subsequent worries. Contemporaries and historians have suggested various reasons for his despair including that he suffered overwhelming shame arising from some part of his conduct as Vice-Chancellor: financial misconduct, the granting of honorary degrees to people



Image: Henry Butts (d 1632), Master (1626–1632).

who were not properly qualified, and the mishandling of the entertainments for a royal visit to Cambridge in 1632. A contemporary Catholic polemicist even suggested the heart of the problem was Butts's belief in the Protestant doctrine of predestination, asserting that such beliefs would inexorably draw people to suicidal despair.

Exactly what troubled Henry Butts so much we will never know, and we know only a limited amount about Corpus at this period since the College chapter book for the period has long been lost. We know much more about his actions as Vice-Chancellor from University records preserved in the University Library. A picture of Henry Butts, painted in happier times shortly after he became Master, hangs in the OCR.



New Fellows

Dr Rory Naismith

Fellow in Anglo-Saxon, Norse and Celtic, and Lecturer in the History of England before the Norman Conquest, Department of Anglo-Saxon, Norse and Celtic

Rory Naismith is returning to Cambridge after four years lecturing in the Department of History at King's College London. Before that, he was an undergraduate and graduate student in Anglo-Saxon, Norse and Celtic at Trinity College, Cambridge (2002–2009), and subsequently pursued postdoctoral research in ASNC, History and at the Fitzwilliam Museum while based at Clare College (2009–2015).

His research focuses on economic and social developments in Anglo-Saxon England.

He is interested in the cross-fertilisation of material and written sources and has worked particularly closely with coinage. At present he is preparing a major study of the social impact of monetisation in early medieval England and its neighbours, to be published by Princeton University Press. He has also recently written about the development of Anglo-Saxon London, early medieval guilds and the land market in Anglo-Saxon England. He currently lives in Cambridge with his wife and daughter.





Next term in Cambridge

Joint letter from all Cambridge College heads of house published in *The Times* on 22 May

As heads of Cambridge colleges we have been concerned in recent days to see headlines around the world making the claim that Cambridge will be moving entirely online next year. These claims have caused unnecessary alarm to students and our wider community. We are a collegiate university, and our strength is that so much student activity takes place in colleges, from small group teaching and pastoral care to music and sport.

We will always take the latest public health advice and clearly there will be challenges in providing all this in the next academic year. Online lectures will make a key contribution. But we are determined to do our best to bring the colleges and the university back to life with intensive in-person learning in the traditional locations and the widest possible range of activities.

Jane Stapleton, Master, Christ's College; Athene Donald, Master, Churchill College; Anthony Grabiner, Master, Clare College; David Ibbetson, President, Clare Hall; Christopher Kelly, Master, Corpus Christi College; Mary Fowler, Master, Darwin College; Alan Bookbinder, Master, Downing College; Fiona Reynolds, Master, Emmanuel College; Sally Morgan, Master, Fitzwilliam College; Susan Smith, Mistress, Girton College; Pippa Rogerson, Master, Gonville & Caius College; Geoff Ward, Principal, Homerton College; Anthony Freeling, President, Hughes Hall; Sonita Alleyne, Master, Jesus College; Michael Proctor, Provost, King's College; Madeleine Atkins, President, Lucy Cavendish College; Rowan Williams, Master, Magdalene College; Barbara Stocking, President, Murray Edwards College; Alison Rose, Principal, Newnham College; Chris Smith, Master, Pembroke College; Bridget Kendall, Master, Peterhouse; John Eatwell, President, Queens' College; David Yates,

Warden, Robinson College; Mark Welland, Master, St Catharine's College; Catherine Arnold, Master, St Edmund's College; Tim Whitmarsh, Vice-Master, St John's College; Roger Mosey, Master, Selwyn College; Richard Penty, Master, Sidney Sussex College; Sally Davies, Master, Trinity College; Daniel Tyler, acting Vice-Master, Trinity Hall; Jane Clarke, President, Wolfson College; Michael Volland, Principal, Ridley Hall.

Published: 22 May 2020





Editorial

Professor Christopher Kelly

The Master

Personal message from the Master on Corpus Christi Day 2020

Our College of the Corpus Christi and the Blessed Virgin Mary was founded in 1352 by the townspeople of Cambridge who, in the aftermath of a devastating plague, moved to establish a society of scholars dedicated (in the words of our statutes) to 'education, research, learning and religion'. This Corpus Christi Day issue of the Pelican in Brief again offers a prismatic view of the College as it deals with the challenges of COVID-19. It also celebrates our founders, most especially Margaret Andrew, the College's first known benefactor and explores the history of our very name – Corpus Christi.

On Corpus Christi Day, it is right and proper that we should reflect on our foundation, on the generosity and vision of our benefactors that has enabled this College to survive nearly seven centuries and on the faith of our founders in the strength of their new collegiate community. Our College was founded by a small group of radical reformers recovering from the near collapse of their own society. I often reflect on them, and on what they might demand of us 668 years later as we face our own problems, and as I think long and hard about what sort of future I should try to shape for my own son (who turns one-year-old this weekend). It is that spirit that I want to share with you a statement that I have today published on the College's website. It is a frank, open and very personal reflection on the events that have dominated the last fortnight.

Black lives matter. This is a simple and powerful truth. It is important that we listen to – and amplify – the cry that went out from George Floyd in Minneapolis and has resonated around the world. It is important (uniquely so in a university) that we seek to educate ourselves about the history of racism and its living and lasting manifestations. The assertion that our society is fair and equal is one of the most offensive exercises of white privilege. To counter it is our duty. But words can only go so far – hence why this statement is brief. What matters is change. A lament that does not move us to take responsibility is hollow. The challenge that now confronts every institution, and in particular, every Cambridge college, is to transform the anger and outrage of the last few weeks into action. I look forward to educating myself further, to listening to a rich diversity of voices – and to translating advice into material change. This small College should mirror in miniature the pressing concerns of our society. There is much work to be undertaken, and I know we all could have already done more than we have. We will do more, in both the long and short term, with urgency and with deliberation.





News from the College

Dr Fumiya Iida

Fellow and Reader in Robotics,
Department of Engineering

We engineers are always looking for challenges to solve with our knowledge and skills. This attitude, however, is too often misguided as we realise the challenges are bigger than we thought! Our aspirations for what technology can achieve are so high that our ideas are often swept away before becoming reality.

When COVID-19 hit us in March, I thought the pandemic was a challenge for medics, biochemists and pharmacists, and that there was little engineers could contribute to help. The development of medical devices and pharmaceuticals is a hugely active field of research, but it requires a great deal of background knowledge to make progress, and even if development of a product or drug is successful, it takes years of testing and approval before it reaches those who need it.

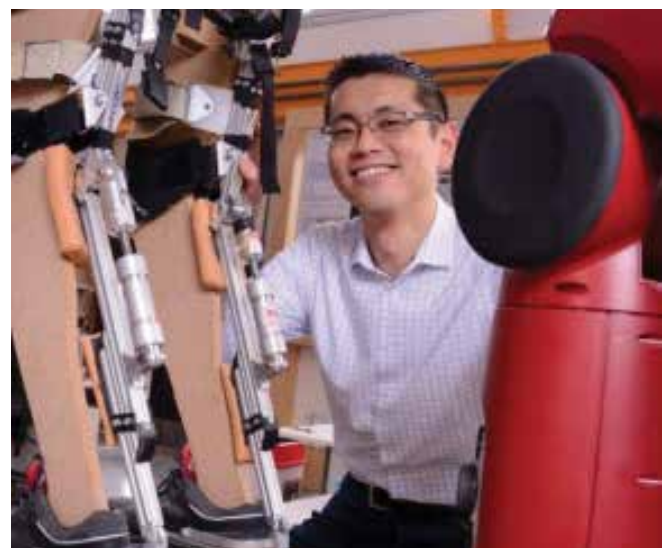
However, my view of the limitations we faced was challenged robustly when COVID-19 hit us. When the University was about to close down, one of my postgraduate students asked me if he could take some of our lab's portable 3D printers home with him. I told him to go ahead, since we couldn't use them in the lab during lockdown and he was welcome to experiment with them at home. What emerged was rather delightful. The student found a local Facebook group receiving and distributing 3D printed face shields, and he programmed our lab 3D printers to print as many of them as possible. He is now printing twenty-four head clips of face shields every day, and over four hundred of them have so far been shipped to a distribution hub. These masks were first sent to front-line workers like cleaners and carers in Cambridge, but now the distribution has been expanded to many other places across the UK.

Another postdoc co-worker in my group whose work had more or less been stopped by the lockdown reported to me that she had become involved with a ventilator development project to supply ventilators for African countries. She joined a group of Cambridge mechanical engineers,

who are attempting to rapid-prototype low-cost ventilators, and her rapid-prototyping skills in electronics helped them to complete the first prototype in a matter of a few weeks. It is now undergoing performance testing, before being mass-produced and delivered to countries where it is desperately needed.

These projects are not the big high-tech research projects we usually work on, but they reflect our students' willingness to contribute and help in this unprecedented situation. On reflection, what makes cheap and fast prototyping useful is the power of community. Each of us has very limited capacity alone, but together we are very powerful, especially when we work in structured communities such as the Facebook group or the mechanical engineering student group. This lesson I believe will guide us not only in how to collaborate in ways we had not expected but also how to make ourselves resilient and prepare for the next big challenges ahead.

Dr Iida and his lab were also featured in the news for designing an open-source ventilator with local clinicians, engineers and manufacturers across Africa that is focused on addressing the specific needs for treating COVID-19 patients, yet is a fully functioning system for use after the pandemic.





Reflections from the Fellowship

Dr Shruti Kapila

Fellow, Tutor and Director of Studies in History examines the impact of the Bubonic plague that devastated Bombay and western and northern India in 1896

Ever since the pandemic was declared in March, I've been thinking about global epidemics and their relationship to politics. Commentators and philosophers were somewhat quick to opine that our current moment of suspended animation will work as a much-needed pause that would usher in a new and better age for humanity and that would 'heal' nature.

As a historian, and due to habit and training, I turned to the past in the hope of gaining insight into what has been the single most challenging human event in several decades. In doing so, I found the history of India especially instructive. I say this not out of native attachment but rather as its scale and story of imperialism and freedom have had a long and enduring impact on twentieth-century world history.

The key event here that has helped me think about the pandemic is, without a doubt, the Bubonic plague that rocked Bombay and western and northern India, and which started in 1896. Within two decades, twelve million Indians were killed by it, just two million short of the fourteen million who died due to the Spanish flu that came soon after the plague.

Appearing as it did at the height of the British Empire in India, the plague emerged as a defining watershed as it inaugurated mass anti-colonial and nationalist politics. At the same time, the plague and its management paradoxically created widespread consensus for western medicine in Indian society, which had been largely resistant to it for nearly a century.

The plague was first detected in the city of Bombay. The city was the heaving and densely populated capital of the world cotton trade. It

was also a key node in global sea routes into the Suez as well as the port of choice for pilgrims for the Hajj. Bombay was also the central point of internal migration and for the railway network in the subcontinent.

The so-called 'patient zero' of the plague was an inhabitant of one of the thickly packed neighbourhoods of mill workers that dotted the city. Bombay was segregated along racial lines. This racial line had been policed as a line of contagion since the start of the nineteenth century as infectious and venereal diseases periodically caused death and devastation. To that end, ambitious vaccination programmes in colonial India had faced social and cultural resistance, as these were identified with the imperial project to 'colonize the Indian body'.*

The plague incited changes in the three related areas of the state, medicine and politics. A draconian Epidemics Control Act enacted in 1897 empowered the state to conduct widespread surveillance and segregation of Indian populations that was accompanied by the aggressive deployment of policing and coercion. Secondly, much like today, the epidemic occasioned great medical innovation that was funded not by the imperial state but by the Aga Khan, the leader of the Ismaili Muslims and a wealthy philanthropist. The successful vaccine that is still in use today was produced by Waldemar Haffkine, an early Zionist and Jewish émigré from Russia who made his way to Bombay via the Pasteur Institute. And finally, under the leadership of the Indian nationalist leader Bal Gangadhar Tilak, mass anti-colonial politics were mounted that took to the street as the site of mass protest. Strikingly, the Plague



A hospital in India during the plague (1896/97). Image source: Wellcome Library / Public Domain.

Commissioner in neighbouring Pune, WC Rand and his lieutenant were assassinated by young Indian radicals who, like anarchists in Europe, followed the cult of the bomb.

Draconian measures that included forcible entry into houses, violent spraying of disinfectants by the police in neighbourhoods and on people alike, who were forced to congregate and submit to it, and above all, the segregation of women and children in camps, incited mass resistance and political restiveness. Informed by pragmatism, the imperial state changed its policy and opened the doors to Indian doctors of the elite Medical Service that had hitherto been organised on racial lines. Indianisation of the medical profession thus created a new consensus and acceptance of western medicine in Indian society.

A little over a century later, and today, India is the world's largest producer of generic drugs and the country exports medical doctors worldwide

even as India has become a destination for medical tourism. The plague wrought the greatest transformation, however, on the political remaking of India and Indians as it triggered and laid down the foundations of mass anti-imperial nationalism.

Now, a little over two months into the pandemic, I am captivated by #BlackLivesMatter and the American protests against racism. I wonder if this moment of pause will in fact, become the greatest moment of political change in our times.

*David Arnold, *Colonizing the Body: State Medicine and Epidemic Disease in Nineteenth-Century India* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993)

Shruti Kapila's interests include modern Indian history and politics, empire and global political thought. She also contributes to print media and television, Twitter: @shrutikapila.



Student Voices

Dominic Bielby

JCR President and second-year undergraduate in Law, describes what life is like at as a student during COVID-19

It would be a bit of an understatement to say that life, for many of us in Corpus, has changed. The world has been turned upside down to a degree which would have been simply impossible to imagine at the start of the academic year. It is surreal to recall those final weeks of Lent Term; the conviviality of the Nicholas Bacon Law Dinner; procrastinatory pub trips; and the anticipation of heading home to enjoy a few days of rest and relaxation, before returning for Easter. Before we knew it, however, this comforting normality had morphed into our new reality of lockdowns, social-distancing and alertness, the pressure of which is only now, tentatively, starting to lift. For a while I was stuck in Newnham House, confined to my room, only venturing outside for a walk every evening. In any other circumstances the stillness of Silver Street and the Backs would have been calming, a foil to their usual bustle, but in those early nights of the virus, it was intensely unsettling. On my last night in Cambridge, I walked to the UL and Sidgwick site to say goodbye to the places which have been my home for the last year and a half. It was as if a quiet apocalypse had descended, Faculties which I knew best when full of life, now eerie in their silence. The next day, it was time to head back North, homeward bound, where I entered into the daily routine which continues today; a mixture of working, sleeping and regulation-compliant walking across days which have blurred into each other, one after the other.

On reflection, I have been affected at three different levels, as have many of my peers. At one level, as a UK citizen, we have had one of our most basic rights – that of freedom of movement – drastically curtailed, rightly so, in the name of public health and we

have all been pushed towards a collective responsibility to keep ourselves and the nation safe, the likes of which are unparalleled in this century. Closer to Cambridge, as students of the University, our supervisions have migrated to Zoom, whilst our Tripos exams have either been scrapped, delayed or transformed into virtual variations. Perhaps, however, the most potent change has been the impact to our lives as members of the Corpus community; spread across the country and the world, that friendly, lively atmosphere that we know and love about our College has dissipated from its base in Old House and with it the prospect of post-exam rewards – May Balls, punting and trips to Grantchester – lost, the unattainable dreams of a time which feels years in the past. Whilst these general privations have been difficult for many of us to accommodate, as we feel that we have lost key aspects of that which makes our University experience so special, they pale in comparison with the particular burdens shouldered by some members of our community dealing directly with the effects of the Coronavirus, be it through their work to keep us safe; managing the consequences of infections within their own family; or dealing with the strains and stresses that a pandemic can cause to mental health.

In any case, it often feels that the days in which we lived pre-COVID-19 will never return, however, in many ways strands of normalcy have remained, linking us still with Cambridge and Corpus. Those Zoom supervisions, even with their technical constraints and annoying glitches, have allowed us to keep up the academic discussion which attracted us to the University in the first place, reminding us of the need for thought and contemplation in the face of grave circumstances, to allow better ideas to



thrive in the aftermath. For some, the prospect of exams, although as nerve-wracking as they have always been, has provided a welcome structure through which to focus their energy, as well as reminding us of our original goal when we came to Cambridge and where we may wish to take ourselves afterwards. Even with the pressures of dispersion on the fabric of the Corpus community, Corpuscles have still managed to stay close, metaphorically, of course: undergraduates are as talkative on their group chats as ever and even some JCR-organised events have occurred in earnest, the Committee meetings as thrilling for members as they were in person. Although, ultimately, these experiences are not the same as we would be having without the pandemic, they offer at least glimmers of the world to which we belonged and will, eventually, return.

When, in due time, we travel back to Cambridge, I have no doubt that those first few days will be as surreal as the immediate days post-lockdown were, the fact of our return evidencing the resilience of our College, an institution whose origins lay in the embers of another epidemic over 650 years ago. With time however, our memories of life in this extraordinary chapter of our world history and our personal stories, will be pushed to the back of our minds as new experiences are had and better times enjoyed, to exist in the same ephemeral state as our memories of Michaelmas and Lent do now. Nevertheless, I am sure that in years to come we will, on occasion, be reminded of this period, for better or for worse, and the part that we all played in the history of Corpus, and our role in shaping its future when we returned.



Sarah Rafferty

Corpus postgraduate Sarah Rafferty shares how the College Boat Club is maintaining its sense of community, whilst keeping its members fit and raising money for an important local cause through the CCCBC Charity Challenge.

This week, the Boat Club should have been competing in May Bumps, building on the huge success of the Lent Bumps campaign. Instead, CCCBC has been adapting to life where rowing in our usual eights is not possible. Although geographically dispersed, CCCBC has managed to maintain its sense of community, whilst keeping its members fit and raising money for an important local cause.

Over the course of Easter Term, the Men's and Women's Captains have organised successful virtual circuit training sessions and our Social Secretary has hosted pub quizzes on Zoom (including a round testing our knowledge of college blade colours). We are also preparing for Virtual Bumps whereby crew members will be trying their hands at running 800m, rather than rowing the usual bumps course. This will be celebrated with a virtual black-tie Boat Club Dinner, to try and keep some normality to this most abnormal Easter Term.

To channel our efforts towards a worthwhile cause, the Boat Club has coordinated a charity fundraiser.

CCCBC has taken on the challenge to walk, run, cycle and erg the distance from Corpus to Figueira

da Foz, Portugal – where our annual training camp is held – over the course of a week. That's a 2020km collective effort. We began our challenge on Saturday 6 June and it will be concluding on Friday 12 June. Over thirty current members and alumni have been participating in the challenge so far. Tim Rhodes – the College boatman – has also been adding his cycling kilometres to our total.



It was important for us to support a local charity, helping with the indirect impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. We are therefore raising money for Wintercomfort, which is a charity providing essential support and services for the homeless in Cambridge. Wintercomfort has put out an Emergency COVID-19 Appeal in order to receive the funding it needs to adapt and continue its work during the pandemic. Since the closure of its usual activities on 25 March, the charity has supported 292 people through emergency food vouchers; a laundry service; providing mindfulness packs and

ensuring all rough sleepers are verified by the appropriate services, amongst other initiatives.

At the time of writing, we're at the end of Day 2, and have managed a distance of 950km with 1,070km remaining. That's the equivalent of travelling from Corpus to 50km south of Bordeaux, France. Activities so far have included a half marathon, multiple >50km cycle rides, erging in the rain and a walk along the river in Henley-on-Thames, which would usually be preparing for the annual Henley Royal Regatta.





View from the College Chapel

The Revd

Dr Andrew Davison

Dean of Chapel, Fellow in Theology and Starbridge
(University) Lecturer in Theology and Natural Sciences

explains the origins of the Guild dedicated to 'Corpus Christi'

Later in this edition of Pelican in Brief, Dr Philippa Hoskin will relate the story of how our College was founded, and its relation to two Gilds dedicated to Corpus Christi and the Blessed Virgin Mary. But how did it come to be that there was a Gild dedicated to 'Corpus Christi' – the Body of Christ – in mid-fourteenth century England?

The story takes in academic theology – indeed Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274), a giant among theologians – popular piety, and an interconnected Europe that saw the Archdeacon of Liège become Pope Urban IV. It was Urban's solemn decree in 1264 that instituted a feast day in honour of the Eucharist, or sacrament of Holy Communion, to be observed each year on the Thursday after Trinity Sunday: which is to say, today.

As with much that makes its way into the calendar of the churches, the commemoration started small and local. In the North of Europe, a nun born in what is today Belgium, St Juliana of Liège, held the Eucharist in particular veneration. Before she died in 1258, she had impressed that devotion upon her local bishop, Robert de Thorete, and upon a more junior cleric, Jacques Pantaléon. Robert would institute a local day of celebration in the calendar of his diocese, but Jacques was to have the greater impact, ascending to become Pope Urban IV in 1261. He died not long after, in 1264, but not before he had proclaimed, in the year he died, that a Feast of Corpus Christi should henceforth be marked throughout the Church.

That is not the end of local detail however. It may also have mattered that in Urban's time (and indeed, from Urban's time, and for the next forty years) the papacy was based not in Rome but in

Orvieto (an Italian town I urge you to visit if you have the opportunity). Not much further than a dozen miles away, in Bolsena, a miracle was held to have taken place in 1263, with the bread of Holy Communion bleeding upon the fair linen cloth that was laid upon the altar: confirmation, it was thought, of the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist. Urban's declaration of Corpus Christi does not mention the miracle, but if the dating to 1263 is correct, it is also a likely provocation. And as it happened, Thomas Aquinas was resident theologian in Orvieto, at the service of the papal court, in the early 1260s, and a writer at the height of his powers. So, Urban could call upon him to compose material, especially hymns, for the new feast. Those hymns are still sung around the world, and in Corpus Chapel, including Adoro te devote ('Thee we adore, O hidden saviour') with its salutation to the 'Pius pelican', which might raise an approving smile among members of the College, encountered perhaps in Gerard Finzi's anthem 'Lo the Full Final Sacrifice', based – in a round-about way – on Thomas' verse.

Popes could not exactly snap their fingers and get what they wanted in 1264, if they ever could, as is witnessed by the efforts of subsequent Popes (Clement V and John XXII in particular) to make sure that the new feast actually caught on. Not until the start of the fourteenth century does it seem to have become part of the order of things in Germany, and in England even a little later. But eventually it did. And that is how devotion to the Eucharist – and to the Eucharistic elements, and especially the consecrated bread – would be part of the religious constitution of the townspeople of Cambridge, wanting to found a Guild.

The Feast was abolished in England in 1548, when Thomas Cranmer was Archbishop (and, not unrelated, our College would eventually be known as 'Benet College' for a while). Celebration of Corpus Christi Day was revived here and there, somewhat rebelliously, by the Oxford Movement. There is a story – I am not sure if it's true – of a distressed Bishop of London writing to the vicar of All Saints', Margaret Street (a shrine of Anglo-catholic devotion) asking him to explain why he was to be seen 'walking down Oxford Street on Thursday last behind the Holy Communion'. Such joyous processions of the Eucharistic bread have been part of the celebration of Corpus Christi day since its inception. A procession from St Bene't's Church to Little Saint Mary's (founded the same year as our College), or vice versa, is to be seen and heard passing by the front of



the College each year (see left), perhaps with a brass band, certainly with congregation in full song, and ideally preceded by children throwing rose petals.

In the fullness of time, the Church of England would characteristically reintegrate much that, for a while, it had done without. The Alternative Service Book of 1980 noted, at the end of its calendar, that 'The Thursday after Trinity Sunday may be observed as a day of Thanksgiving for the Institution of Holy Communion.' Finally, in 2000, with Common Worship, the name of our College would come back in full: the Thursday after Trinity Sunday being 'The Day of Thanksgiving for the Institution of Holy Communion (Corpus Christi)'. One day, perhaps, it will even make it out of parenthesis.

Image: Rowan Williams, Baron Williams of Oystermouth, carrying the Blessed Sacrament on Corpus Christi Day past Corpus Christi College 20 June 2019.

Image credit: Martin Bond, A Cambridge Diary.



Observations from the Past

Dr Philippa Hoskin

Gaylord and Dorothy Donnelley Fellow Librarian, explains the important will of Margaret Andrew of Chesterton and how it provided the grounds of College today

The College gives pride of place in its list of benefactors to Margaret Andrew of Chesterton who, by her will of 7 May 1349, gave lands to both the gild of St Mary and the gild of Corpus Christi, which just three years later were to merge into the joint gild in which Corpus Christi College has its origins. About Margaret we know very little: she had a small amount of land – she gave one and a half acres in Chesterton fields to Corpus Christi gild and a tenement 'in St Andrews parish next that of St Radegund, and abutting on the King's way', to St Mary's gild. The gift to the Corpus Christi gild is significant because it is the very earliest documentary evidence of its existence. Apart from that, Margaret left a collection of domestic goods that suggest that she'd had oversight of a relatively large household, including fourteen bowls and basins of various sizes.

Gilds were a key part of the lives of medieval men and women. The gilds which founded our College were what is know as religious gilds and they provided mutual social and religious support for their members. In return for gifts of cash, goods, or rents or land, members received the support of other members and the guarantee that after their deaths, their souls would be aided on their way to heaven by prayers and masses paid for by the gild. Gilds kept lists of their deceased members and we are fortunate that in our College archives we not only have a copy of Margaret Andrew's will but also a list of the people that the gild of St Mary kept in their prayers and memories. If Margaret's motive for her charitable bequest was to be remembered, then she has had her wish granted.

Our corporate life has been made possible by the collective good will of previous generations of men and women who for nearly seven hundred years have not only joined together to support the scholarly endeavours of College members of their own times but who have also had an eye to supporting the work of the future College and its members.



Images: Margaret Andrew's will, 7 May 1349, CCCC 1/G/1/34.



Editorial

Professor Emma Wilson

Vice-Master, Professor of French Literature and the Visual Arts, College Tutor and Director of Studies in Modern and Medieval Languages

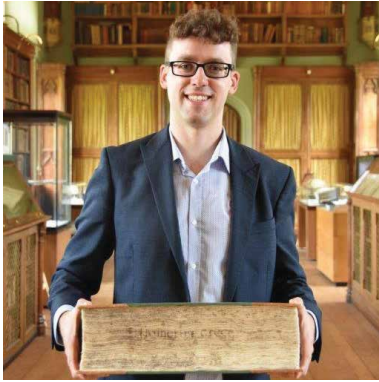
Exams are mostly over now. One of my students told me the time flew by. Another, one of the ones who stayed, said that she has cycled round Cambridge, seen the Cambridge Central Mosque (Europe's first eco-friendly mosque) and shopped in the delis on Mill Road. She told me she felt for the first time that she has roots here in Cambridge and that this is the place she lives in now.

This week in Corpus, undergraduates have begun to return to collect their possessions, often left at short notice sometime in March. Sarah Wordsworth, Sandra, the head housekeeper, the porters, and Wendy and Emma, the tutorial administrators, have miraculously made it all work. Timing has been smooth, lives here packed up in half a day. The year has been arrested, no spring or summer here for most students, no warm, long evenings or flowers in the gardens at Leckhampton. The glimpse of College, a quick return, has been precious. For the students abroad, Sandra and her team will take over the packing, and boxes will be shipped.

At home, I'm starting to work on pieces that are overdue. One is an essay on the work of a young woman photographer, Kadie Salmon, who was to have an exhibition in London this June. Her work references French eighteenth-

century painting and nineteenth-century photography. In hand-coloured, long- and multiple-exposure photographs, Salmon finds a visual form for wishfulness, the shadowy happenings of the imagination. Another is on the exhibition Linderism that is currently held suspended at Kettle's Yard. There is a surreal Pompeii aspect to the empty galleries, and to the student rooms, the un-lived term. The connections we still have somehow mean something more.

To mark Corpus Christi day this year, in a moving virtual meeting, the Master invited the Donnelley Fellow Librarian to talk about the early years of the College, and the Dean of Chapel to say a prayer by Matthew Parker. Then the Master proposed four toasts. He mentioned the people who have helped all of us come through this. He toasted our Senior Tutor, Marina Frasca Spada and Interim Bursar, David Secher. And he toasted the College staff for their exceptional work and care. He went on to toast the finalists and the MPhils, the students who are leaving. Then, as we prepared to raise glasses of wine in front of computer screens, he proposed the toast to the College in its traditional form: FLOREAT ANTIQUA DOMUS.



Reflections from the Fellowship

Dr Thomas Nelson

Research Fellow in Classics

When lockdown began back in March, I decided like many others to hunker down with a good book. I figured this was a good opportunity to re-read Homers Iliad in its entirety and to escape from the bleak present through the distant world of myth. But I should really know by now that the ancient world never gets you far from the concerns of the present. From its opening lines, this ancient epic resonates with our contemporary circumstances in new ways.

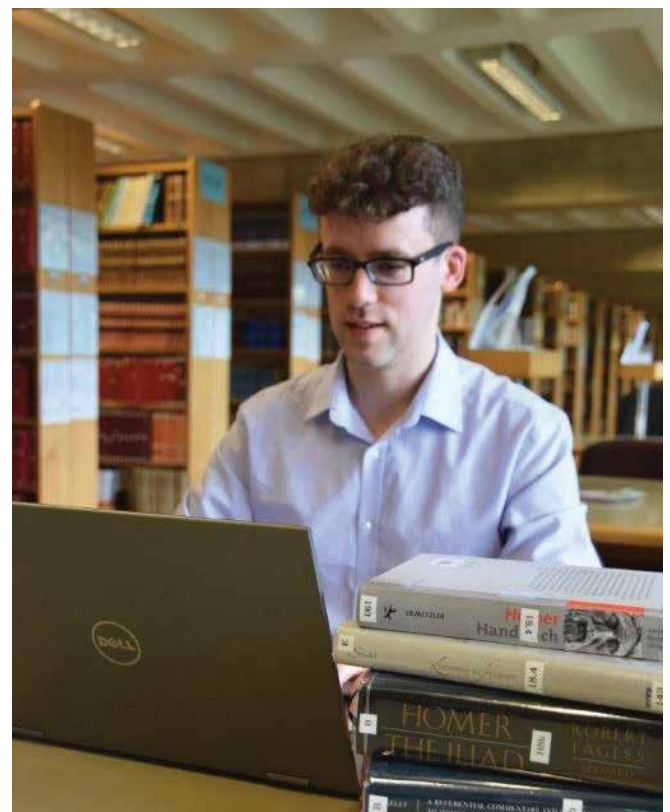
The Iliad begins with a plague afflicting the Greeks, sent by the god Apollo to punish the misdeeds of their leader, Agamemnon. The king refuses to return a female captive to her supplicating father, who happens to be a priest of Apollo. In anger, Apollo rains down a plague which ravages the Greek camp for nine days until the Greek warrior Achilles calls an assembly and asks a seer how to resolve the crisis. It is only by returning the captive and performing a lavish sacrifice that the Greeks appease Apollos anger and avert further ruin.

This myth may be millennia-old, but it has much to teach us about our current situation. First, the notion of divine punishment. Over the past months, many people – from the Dalai Lama to the UN’s environment chief – have represented the pandemic as a warning or punishment sent by ‘Mother Earth’, a quasi-deified power akin to Homer’s Apollo. In the broader Trojan war myth, too, the whole conflict over Helen was conceived as part of Zeus’ grand plan to relieve an overburdened earth. The COVID-19 outbreak is similarly seen as an opportunity for nature to heal itself, but also as a preview of the potential climate chaos ahead. Apollo had to be appeased – and so too does Mother Earth. Humankind can’t simply go back to how things were before.

The story also offers an object lesson in political leadership. Plagues in Greek myth frequently follow after the faults and flaws of political

leaders – think of Oedipus’ unwitting crimes in Thebes which similarly bring down a plague on his people. In the Iliad, Agamemnon’s haughty arrogance and initial inaction cost the lives of many Greeks, setting a pattern for his weak leadership throughout the epic: a recent monograph aptly characterises him as a ‘pathetic despot’. His negative example is perhaps one which some world leaders could have heeded a little more carefully in recent months.

Beyond academia, Thomas is passionate about dance and music. As a Ballroom and Latin dancer, he has represented England and Cambridge internationally and as a member of XS Latin Cambridge, he is a UK Champion and WDSF World Championship Semi-finalist in Latin Formation Dancing. His dance team has produced a socially distanced performance of their Time routine which is available to view online.





Alumni Perspective

William Kendall (m 1989)

a serial entrepreneur and investor in food and drink businesses, highlights the impact of COVID-19 on the food production industry

One in seven British employees are somehow involved in feeding the nation. Unless they work directly in the hospitality industry they will have been very busy over the last few months – an army of farmworkers, factory staff and delivery drivers often working in just as risky conditions as our NHS heroes but less on everybody’s mind as we clapped from our doorsteps on Thursday evenings. Social distancing isn’t always easy if you are preparing ready meals in a labour-intensive factory or delivering groceries to a sick customer. Many smaller businesses have reported much higher sales during the crisis. Smaller outlets, like farmshops, have perhaps seemed safer and more welcoming than supermarkets. Often what they sell seems fresher and more nutritious, and customers have felt that they are supporting something worthwhile by visiting them. A local butcher told me that it felt like a return to the High Street of a generation ago. He was coping with a surge in demand for deliveries and found customers valued an informative and friendly chat and often asked why his meat tasted so much better than what they usually buy elsewhere. Will this new interest in taste and provenance last?

Food industry lobbyists are reporting that the fact Britain has not experienced a shortage during the lockdown is in some ways unhelpful. The government has been able to relegate this vast and vital part of the economy to low priority. We are used to this status as the nation has become complacent about its food supply ever since we abandoned rationing in the 1950s. We enjoy food cheap and convenient, and give little thought for the wider implications to the industry which produces it. There is growing evidence that basic produce contains far fewer nutrients than it did decades ago. When not dealing with COVID-19 complications, our health service is fighting multiple, deadlier, diet-related conditions. A

recent report from the USA suggested that the cost of treating the consequences of poor diet exceeded the entire profitability of the US food industry. Back on British farms many of our soils are depleted of what makes healthy food, yet farmers face an uncertain future as Brexit takes us out of the CAP and our financial life-support. Concerns over our economic future combine with the possibility of the reintroduction of substantial tariffs on trade with the EU, our biggest trading partner. And then there are fears over new deals, hurriedly put in place, which might threaten UK quality standards.



William Kendall (m 1989) grew up on a College-owned farm in Bedfordshire. In addition he now farms organically in Suffolk. He has been behind food and drink brands like New Covent Garden Soup Co., Green & Black’s and Cawston Press. He is a director or trustee of several international food and farming businesses.

As an undergraduate at Corpus in the 1980s I witnessed the accelerated dismantling of another great industry, coal. The wider implications of this policy were not understood and great harm was done. We could though, even then, anticipate a future without coal. Sometimes it feels like we are contemplating a future without good food and, it goes without saying, it is unattractive.



Student Voices

Harry Taylor

third-year undergraduate reading History (and former President of the JCR), describes his experience of learning in lockdown

After leaving Cambridge in a hurry a week earlier than expected, I was stuck at home refreshing for the daily updates from the central University. Moving through the scales it rapidly became apparent that what had been unthinkable only a couple of weeks previous was happening. Easter Term was cancelled. As my dissertation supervisor told me the next day, this was the first time that his College, Peterhouse, had been closed since the Black Death. As a finalist looking forward to their last hurrah this was quite the blow, for despite its detractions, Exam term has provided many of my fondest Cambridge memories in the past.

Being an historian I am not as affected by the disruption as many. This term was set to have only a few supervisions and revision lectures – nothing compared to the dense schedules of many other courses. The closure of libraries is making life very difficult, though. When I was

making the last changes to my dissertation, the inability to pop to the UL to consult some obscure volume made itself painfully felt. Though fortunate in that I have somewhere to work, and can access online materials, this is still a radical departure from everything that I had become used to over the last couple of years.

There are some silver linings to this. I for one am grateful at not having to go into a very large hall full of lots of other stressed people to do my finals. Despite this, I'd definitely still rather be in Cambridge, sipping cordial in the sun on Old Court and contemplating our next cricket match. Though we are staying in contact in our various ways – I've even joined a letter writing circle – it's this loss of the camaraderie of College life that is most striking about studying from beyond the Fens. And for those of us set to leave at the end of this term, we will miss it.





A Tribute to The Revd Canon Jeremy Davies The Revd

Dr Andrew Davison

Dean of Chapel, Fellow in Theology and Starbridge (University) Lecturer in Theology and Natural Sciences pays tribute to Canon Jeremy Davies and introduces new chaplain Revd Dr Matthew Bullimore

Over the summer, our acting chaplain, Canon Jeremy Davies, will be leaving us. Over the past year and a half, he has contributed a great deal to College life. As Jeremy leaves, we are delighted to be welcoming Dr Matthew Bullimore as our new chaplain.

Jeremy has been with us since January 2019, and had helped us out as acting chaplain for a term earlier on. He is no stranger to the College, having read English at Corpus (m. 1965).

Jeremy was a choral scholar, and has maintained a life-long involvement in music. He would later study theology, in preparation for ordination, and the combination of English, Music and Theology has served him well over decades as a priest that have seen him as both a university chaplain (Queen Mary College, Cardiff University, and now Corpus) and responsible for the liturgical and musical life of Salisbury Cathedral as precentor.





One of the joys of having Jeremy with us as chaplain has been his great affection and long-standing membership of the College, and his recollection – warm rather than nostalgic – of scenes from Corpus in the second half of the 1960s, and since. We also say farewell to Simon, Jeremy's husband, who is an opera singer and teacher. His hospitality towards the choir and chapel team has been much appreciated, as has his company at dinner.

Jeremy returns to 'retirement' in Salisbury, if his energetic combination of spiritual direction, and of lecturing and preaching around the world can be called retirement. We look forward to his return to College as old member and former fellow in the years to come, and offer our thanks for all he has given as acting chaplain.



The Revd Dr Matthew Bullimore

Matthew comes to us from Churchill College, where for the last two years he has been the Widening Participation Officer. Prior to that his background was in theological education and parish ministry. He has spent most of his working life on the border of West and South Yorkshire, in communities suffering from long-term deprivation.

Matt, as he is likely to be known, studied theology as an undergraduate at Cambridge, before receiving a scholarship from Emmanuel College to spend a year at Harvard University, working mainly in the Divinity School. After an MPhil at the University of Manchester, he came to Westcott House in Cambridge to prepare for ordination. While there, he completed a doctorate under the supervision of Professor Catherine Pickstock (Emmanuel) and Professor William Horbury (Corpus). He served his curacy in the Diocese of Wakefield, after which he was the Bishop of Wakefield's chaplain.

Matthew's academic interests are principally in political theology and social ethics. He is currently the Assistant Editor for *Crucible: The Journal of Christian Social Ethics*. He also writes on ecclesiology (the theological study of the Church), vocation, and philosophical theology. In 2016, he edited *Graced Life: The Writings of John Hughes*, the collected essays of the late Dean of Jesus College, Cambridge, with whom he had trained at Westcott. During his time at Churchill, Matt was secretary to the University's Black Access Working Group, and helped to establish a project for black pupils in year 9 from Croydon. The focus of the project is aspiration, leadership and community, and it works with black leaders from Croydon and beyond to help pupils discern how they can be agents of change, and community leaders themselves.

Matthew will be taking up his post as chaplain on 1 August, working closely with me as Dean of Chapel. He has three children, aged twelve, ten and five.



Reflections from the Staff

Wendy Klein

Senior Tutorial Administrator, shares the experiences of the Tutorial team as they work to ensure the best for Corpus students

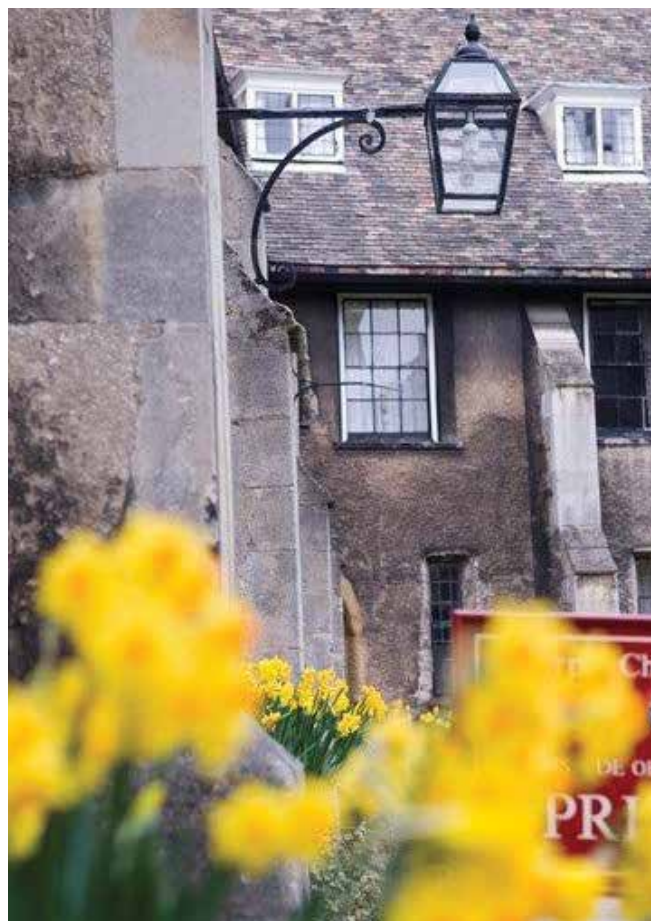
Rewind to 13 March – I was wringing my hands about whether or not to fly to Canada the next day for a two-week holiday, and then at the eleventh hour decided not to go – phew! What a different world that was. Now here we are, twelve weeks into working from home, and everything around us has changed dramatically. First and foremost, all of the undergraduates are being taught and are sitting examinations (or assessments) from home AND online AND there will be no in-person General Admission in June.

We are housing seven undergraduates and 50 postgraduates who were unable to return to their homes.

Zoom has become an invaluable daily tool. The Tutorial team meet every day which has been extremely helpful in keeping us sane. Our new Tutorial Administrator, Emma has now worked more time at home than she has in the office, as she began with us mid-February. We also meet bi-weekly with College Tutors and also with the JCR. Seeing those lovely JCR faces on my screen the first time brought tears to my eyes as I realised how much I missed them all! We even had a Zoom leaving coffee for Admissions Coordinator, Janet Rogers, as she retires after fifteen years of service.

In the Tutorial Office, we have had to learn novel ways to say “I don’t know yet” to the many queries that arrive in our email boxes; this is difficult when we pride ourselves on finding answers for and assuring our students. At the time of writing, we don’t yet know what the 2020-21 academic year will look like, and I certainly do feel for both the graduands and offer-holders of 2020.

Bravo to all levels of the University and College for the incredible amount of work that continues to go on behind the scenes. I’m also grateful to College donors, whose donations, in addition to continuing to provide much-needed hardship awards, are providing financial help for items such as laptops, printers, and so on, to help teaching and assessments online to be fair and accessible to all of our students.



One thing can be said, my job is anything but dull! I’ve just been asked to be a judge for the Lockdown Corpus Bake Off. Just another day in the life of this Tutorial Administrator.



Jenny Reavell

Corpus's Project Accountant, discusses the College's achievement of the Platinum Award for the fourth consecutive year in the University's Green Impact Awards

It started with humorous segments on wildlife creeping back into our towns – the goats in Llandudno, the peacocks perusing the shop windows of Ronda. But as lockdown progressed around the world we began to see headline pictures of cities looking ever cleaner and greener – jellyfish in the Venice canals, skylines without their smog clouds. And people started to talk about the environmental benefits of lockdown. Will it last? I suspect not, but I hope that these glimpses of an alternative environmental future will be powerful enough to prompt new conversations and new efforts to protect our planet.



Jenny works in our Finance team and as a member of the Green Committee leads on our submission each year to the University's Green Impact awards. Before joining Corpus she worked as Global Head of Risk for a large humanitarian organisation, where she spent a large amount of her time working on pandemic planning and disaster preparedness.

The University itself has a target to reduce to zero its energy-related carbon emissions by 2048 (though is hoping to achieve this ten years before that). At a College level, we've been working hard to reduce our own environmental impact over a number of years. We participate in the University's

Green Impact scheme and are delighted to have again won their Platinum Award. This level of award was introduced four years ago to recognise Departments and Colleges that really step up to the challenge of the scheme. Corpus Christi is the only College to have won a Platinum Award in each of those four years – a testament to the dedication of the College's Green Committee, students, Fellows and staff.

The scheme focuses on environmental areas such as waste, energy management, sourcing of food and bio-diversity. Last year we completed nearly 100 actions and were one of 150 teams taking part across the University. My time at Corpus has seen us significantly reduce our use of single use plastics, introduce vegan options for meals, recycle industrial equipment, reinstate native planting and install LED lighting in the libraries. The new kitchens were designed to minimise energy usage, and the installation last year of irrigation under the New Court lawn helps us reduce our water consumption. Of course, those decisions aren't driven only by Green Impact so, whilst I am proud of the College for achieving the award, I'm more proud of the significant investments we're making, and the fact that reducing our environmental impact informs College-wide decision making.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) recognise that ending poverty and reducing inequality have to happen whilst addressing climate change. The recognition in the SDGs of those interdependencies is crucial: it is those who are already most marginalised who will suffer more in the worst climate change scenarios. As members of the College and the University lead on research to find solutions to these environmental issues at the macro level, the Green Impact scheme is our opportunity to live out those ideals every day within our community.



Observations from the Past

Dr Philippa Hoskin

Gaylord and Dorothy Donnelley Fellow Librarian, reflects on Matthew Paris' flawed prediction of the end of the world

When passing through difficult times it is impossible to predict what the future might look like – although that doesn't stop people from trying. Matthew Paris, monk of St Albans Abbey and writer of one of the most famous chronicles of the thirteenth century (Parker CCCC MS 16 & 26), made one of the most embarrassing sorts of errors that an historian or political commentator can make. He used evidence he had collected over twenty years to predict the imminent end of the world – and then had to pick himself up again when he was proved wrong.

Matthew was not alone in believing that the world was coming to an end: in the first half of the thirteenth century there were many such predictions. Matthew chose the date 1250, persuaded by a combination of observations about the natural world and the social and political state of humankind. His work recorded unusual weather events – terrible storms and droughts – and other apparently miraculous phenomena including rivers flowing backwards, visions of ships in the sky and sea monsters in English rivers. He also noted the fulfilment of prophecies: the attacks of the Tartars, earthquakes, eclipses and meteors, the deaths of princes and popes, the lives of men and women of great holiness but also the rise of great wickedness and terrible heresy. All of these he used as evidence, that the end was nigh. 1250 was, he thought, the culmination of the worst fifty years since the time of Christ.

Bringing his life's work to a conclusion he pens this verse:

“Matthew, here your toils are o'er
Stop your pen and toil no more
Seek not what the future brings
What comes next brings other things”

When Matthew realised that he was wrong, he had to start again – although he seems to have waited over a year to do so. But it was his job to record the events of his day – local, national and international. He chose (as commentators and pundits tend to) to pass over in silence the inaccuracy of his former predictions and began his next entry very simply, “In 1251, the thirty-fifth year of the reign of King Henry the Third, the king spent Christmas at Winchester”. And for the next nine years, until his death, he continued to write about political life and financial affairs, still retaining his fascination with extreme weather events and strange and miraculous occurrences.

Fortunately for future generations, Matthew realised that despite its flaws, his work still had value and instead of concealing his errors he let them stand, serving as a reminder that we, too, can get beyond our errors and that in the work of others we must look for value even amidst mistakes.

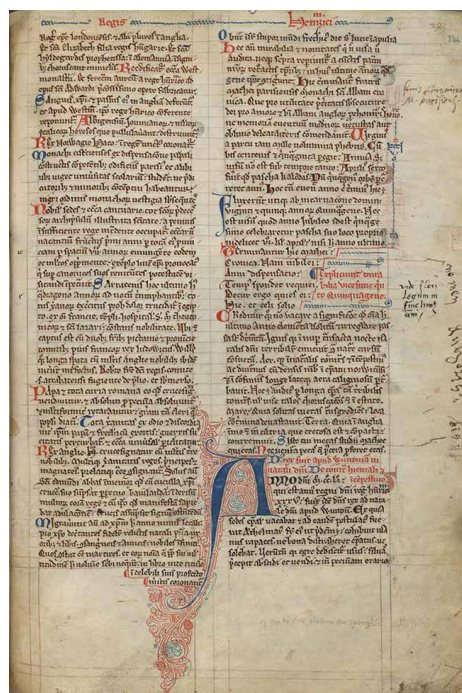


Image: CCCC ms 16 f. 246r.



Corpus Boat Club Charity Challenge Success

Congratulations to the Corpus Boat Club on their successful #2020IN2020 Charity Challenge.



From 6-12 June, 41 members of students, alumni and coaches participated in 200 activities and raised £1,050 for the charity Wintercomfort.



Editorial

Elizabeth Winter

Director of Development

This is the last Pelican in Brief. PinB (as it is now affectionately known) was started as a way of communicating with our worldwide community during lockdown, keeping alumni and friends informed about the College, the Fellows, staff and students – wherever they might be living and working. As the weeks went by, we added new voices, including those of alumni and PinB has been the richer and more fascinating for it. I know from the feedback I receive with each issue that these snapshots of Corpus, its academic narrative and the social braiding of the place with its members, resonate warmly with alumni. The strange, dislocating times in which we've all been living have prompted many to talk about personal experiences, unexpected hardship or loneliness, or illness and problems with mental health.

Sometimes the experiences of isolation have resulted in positive outcomes; who knew that a Zoom call could be the breeding ground for love? Getting to know neighbours and strengthened community is a common story. But many have also spoken of the enduring importance of the College in their lives. We are extremely grateful to all those who have been generous both financially and in practical things; these are hard times for many and all support is being put to good use. If one dominant theme has emerged over these past four months it is the way the Corpus community has drawn closer together. Perhaps a sense of belonging to a place which cannot be destroyed either physically or intellectually by a global catastrophe is a reassurance sought and found within these familiar, ancient walls.





This final issue offers two fascinating stories about the challenges of opening up research labs after lockdown from Professors Judy Hirst and Chris Howe, and the voice of Dr Maria Rostovskaya, a stem cell scientist at the Babraham Institute and Praeceptor at Corpus, who volunteered to work in one of the government's national COVID testing centres. Interim Bursar Dr David Secher describes how the College is preparing for the return of students in Michaelmas, and Dr Philippa

Hoskin talks about how the Venerable Bede illustrates the meaningful bridges we should draw between the past and present. Finally, we introduce the new Bursar-elect, Ms Jenny Raine, who will be joining the College in September.

I hope there is something here to inspire you, and that you have found the ten issues of PinB a useful diversion from the more difficult challenges of isolation, dysfunction and anxiety. May we all meet up in College soon.



Floreat Antiqua Domus.
Photograph taken before lockdown restrictions.



News from the College

Professor Christopher Howe

Professor of Plant and Microbial Biochemistry, President and Director of Studies in Preclinical Medicine

Today was a very ordinary day for me. It was also an extraordinary day. It was ordinary in that I went into my lab in the Biochemistry Department. It was extraordinary in that I went into my lab in the Biochemistry Department. Almost all University labs were closed in late March as COVID-19 hit. If you are an experimental scientist, as the people in my research group are, it is very difficult to carry on with much research work if you can't access your lab. So it is a tremendous relief that we are now being allowed back into our labs, although with tough restrictions on numbers at any time. Biochemists typically share lab space and specialist equipment, and it is impossible for the usual number of researchers to be in the lab together while maintaining the expected degree of social distancing. Planning how to manage this for a large Department has been complex. We have to control the number of people in at any time, as well as minimise the number of people with whom any individual interacts, down to the detail of having one-way systems on staircases. Closing the labs in an orderly way was quick, done within a few days. The partial reopening has taken weeks to plan, with careful work from administrative and support staff as well as academics.



Some staff in my Department are working on projects to do with the COVID-19 virus, and they have been able to continue work, although

again with careful control on numbers. It's been impressive to see how effectively colleagues have been able to apply their knowledge from other projects to tackling this virus. Some are working on how to make antibody tests more specific. A test may be able to identify everyone who has had the infection, but if it also incorrectly reports as infected many people who have not actually been infected ('false positives') it may be counterproductive, so it is important to ensure good specificity for a test. Other colleagues are using knowledge of the detailed biochemistry of coronaviruses to see if some of their molecular quirks can be used as targets for new drugs. All these projects are powerful demonstrations of the fact that scientific research in one area can very rapidly have huge but unforeseen implications for important work in other areas.



Although there is great relief as the rest of us start to come back to our labs, the return won't be straightforward. The restrictions on numbers will limit the pace of our work, and it is very possible that future infections will mean we have to put down our pipettes again and leave with very little notice, and the pandemic will certainly have a major effect on the research funding climate for some time to come. At least we can now make a start.



Reflections from the Fellowship

Professor Judy Hirst

Dean of College and currently Interim Director of the Medical Research Council Mitochondrial Biology Unit describes the challenges of closing – and opening – a research department

March was a month of drastic changes in perspective in the Director's Office. Starting with disbelief (hold the line, business as usual) followed by a dawning realisation and uncertainty (normality beginning to break down), and finally the relief of a clear direction: close the building. Not in itself difficult – we do it every Christmas. But then Christmas is planned, and doesn't last for months. This time it was a mass evacuation as the enemy advanced: get everyone out to where they wanted to be, equipped to work from home as effectively as possible. Experiments, some of which had been running for weeks, had to be simply switched off, while our IT guys rushed around enabling our computers to work from home too.

I naively thought that calm might then descend and I'd have the perfect opportunity to catch up on writing all those papers – but I was wrong. It turns out that running a closed department is just as much work as running an open one (if not more). My dining room became the command centre, and we all learned the joys of Zoom. Meetings of my Management Group, now endowed with the illustrious title of 'Gold', became a surprising highlight of each week. Mitochondrial research hasn't got much to offer in the fight against COVID-19 – but we gave our PPE to the NHS, and seconded staff to testing centres. We continue to do our best to maintain our community, support those who've found the lockdown conditions hard – and keep our research going. But just when I thought I'd got working from home sorted, the Prime Minister opened the door to returning to research. Immediately, from principal investigators to postdocs to students, the researchers wanted to get back to work. This was no surprise – it's one of the characteristics for which the system selects. But it wasn't that simple: the building had to be prepared, rules had to be written, risk assessments completed, forms filled in and students relocated. And so the month leading up to 15 June (when I finally opened the doors) was the hardest for me, trying to reconcile frustrated scientists with University

operational requirements, and enable research without compromising safety. Now we've struck an uneasy balance, operating under heavy restrictions with the freedom to research severely curtailed. With the next relaxation of government guidelines about to happen, I hope I'll be rewriting all those rules again shortly... I really miss informal interactions these days, whether chatting to students I encounter by chance in the corridor or court, having coffee with my research group, or shared observations and discussions with colleagues after a meeting or lecture – they all add huge personal and scientific value. Scientific conferences aren't half so productive if you don't frequent the bar (or so I've been told). In the longer term, being present in the lab and in College, in the physical space and in the community, is a crucial way for us all to feel connected and part of the wider endeavour, and a forum where we share and exchange ideas and experiences. Lockdown has demonstrated that we're capable of controlling and managing this current challenge to our ways of life. As a scientist, I'm holding to the faith that our collective research efforts will eventually work out how to deal with it for good.



Image: Dean of College during the lockdown: familiar with PPE at home as well as at work.



Dr David Secher

reflects on his time as Interim Bursar during these new and interesting times

As you read this I shall have done more than half of my time as Interim Bursar and Corpus has just appointed a new permanent Bursar (see the announcement at the end of this newsletter). The work I have been doing is not at all what I was expecting and the perks – High Table and other social events – all stopped within a fortnight of my arrival. But I expect no sympathy; others have had far greater turmoil in their lives as a result of COVID-19.

My priorities during the past three months have been to shut down the College in an orderly fashion; to furlough those staff who cannot work from home; and to prepare for the return of students to a safe environment that complies with ever-changing guidance. It has been challenging, but rewarding too, thanks to the expertise and loyalty of the wonderful staff of the College. Most staff (around 70 per cent) are on furlough and, of the remainder, all but a handful are working from home. For the skeleton staff in College, it is eerily quiet (though very beautiful in the emptiness and the sunshine). Those at home have struggled with turning bedrooms into offices and learning new virtual ways of working. For those on furlough, the novelty of being on indefinite ‘holiday’, but unable to travel, has long since worn off. We all long for a return to normality.

Despite the physical separations, the 120 or so staff of Corpus remain a cohesive community. I have been really impressed how the Heads of Departments and their staff have pulled together and worked out how to collaborate to keep the College alive. No sign of the silos that some colleges suffer from. Staff have shown flexibility in their working hours and practices. We have introduced matrix management techniques (perhaps for the first time in 668 years?) to set

up a cross-departmental Task Force to manage the return of students to College, by-passing normal communication channels and delegating authority to speed up timelines. We keep in touch with those on furlough, caring for their physical and mental wellbeing by suggesting training or volunteering opportunities.

The Easter Term is over. It is May Week and we should be celebrating the students’ achievements. Instead we are deep in preparation for their return – or their beginning – in October. It won’t be back to normal, but the Corpus staff are doing all they can to plan for students to be able to return to an environment where they can study in safety and enjoy the experience that is uniquely Cambridge.





Praeceptor's Story

Dr Maria Rostovskaya

stem cell scientist at the Babraham Institute and Praeceptor at Corpus, volunteered to work in the national COVID testing programme

The COVID-19 crisis brought a feeling of uncertainty and fear for the future to everyone. However, for me, a laboratory-based stem cell biologist, it also added frustration over not being able to use my skills to help the situation. I could stay at home working on computational analysis without much damage to my project, but I could not escape a bitter feeling that at that moment my skills were needed much more to fight the crisis.

Life changed in just one day with the heart-breaking news that our Institute Director, Michael Wakelam, died of suspected COVID-19. We all felt utter shock and disbelief. Everything feels different when trouble is so close to home. And by an extraordinary coincidence, just two hours later another email arrived, with a call for volunteers to work at the National COVID Testing programme. There were no doubts about what to do. This sense of duty to contribute was even stronger because one of the last of Michael's emails to the Institute was to encourage us to join volunteering programmes to fight the COVID pandemic.

The next events were surreal. In less than 24 hours after my application, I was contacted and asked to arrive at the Milton Keynes Biocentre the next day at 10 a.m. and stay there for a few days for training. It was like recruitment in a war. On April 2 I packed my suitcase and did not unpack it for the next two and a half months. The testing programme began in the second half of March with the announcement of the government's goal to achieve 100,000 tests per day by the end of April. The centre was up and running in just two weeks. The first group of five volunteers arrived on March 27; I was among the second group. It was exciting to witness how this testing centre was built from scratch, in an empty hangar space, using equipment donated by shut down research institutes. There was an amazing pulling together of effort, including the British Army who helped with the logistics, Amazon who agreed to deliver the test samples for free, and all the volunteers. By the end of April, about two hundred volunteers worked in the programme, including undergraduate and PhD students, post-docs, junior and senior group



Image: Milton Keynes volunteers.



leaders, from all over the UK – Cambridge, Oxford, London, Bath, Leicester, Sheffield, Nottingham and many other places.

The centre operated around the clock with volunteers working in twelve-hour day and night shifts. The momentum was phenomenal. We could perform just five hundred tests a day at the beginning of April, but by the end of the month this had expanded to more than 20,000 tests a day. The devotion and drive of the whole team made it happen. In one of my last shifts, we broke a record of nearly 30,000 tests in 24 hours. In the early hours on June 9, the centre passed 1,000,000 samples processed in total, and there is a real person behind each sample.

It was an extraordinary period in my life, living half-time in Milton Keynes and half-time back home, doing twelve-hour shifts COVID testing, still working on the projects and grants, and supervising students of all my eight colleges from home on so-called “days off”. For the first time in my life, my skin peeled off my hands from pipetting all day long. For the first time in my life, I had to take painkillers to relieve the aching in my finger joints from opening tubes all day long. I was driving back and forth on empty roads between Milton Keynes and Cambridge, passing the signs saying “Essential

travel only” and thinking that all I want is this pandemic to be over.

It is finally reassuring to watch how life is slowly returning back to our cities, step by step. It makes it feel as though the effort was worth it.

I served my last shift on June 12. I felt extremely emotional to say thank you and goodbye to the amazing people I worked with, who all became like a big family. I am grateful to have been part of this unimaginable experience, which has definitely changed me and which I will never forget.





Observations from the Past

Dr Philippa Hoskin

Gaylord and Dorothy Donnelley Fellow Librarian, reflects on what Bede has to teach us about drawing lessons from the past

When the world seems to turn upside down, and old certainties evaporate, many people find themselves taking stock of the old, assessing what should usefully be kept, and making plans for a new and uncertain future. For a historian, this often prompts reflection about what is in danger of being lost or forgotten, and inspires them to draw meaningful bridges between the past and the present.

Bede (c.673–735 C.E.), sometimes known as the “Father of English History”, was surely influenced in his work by the dramatic events of his childhood. Towards the end of his most famous work, the Ecclesiastical History of the English People, Bede provides the only information he ever gives his reader about himself:

“Bede, the servant of God, and priest of the monastery of the blessed apostles, Peter and Paul, which is at Wearmouth and Jarrow; who being born in the territory of that same monastery, was given, at seven years of age, to be educated by the most reverend Abbot Benedict, and afterwards by Ceolfrith.”

This connection with the abbot Ceolfrith provides us with a significant clue about Bede’s life and underlying motivation for his life’s work. In the life of Ceolfrith we’re told that in the great plague of 686 C.E. only Ceolfrith and his young pupil (long identified as Bede) went unharmed. They carried on the services together and as lone survivors they refounded the monasteries, maintaining the reassuring continuities of former times, but also going on to forge a new scholastic outlook.

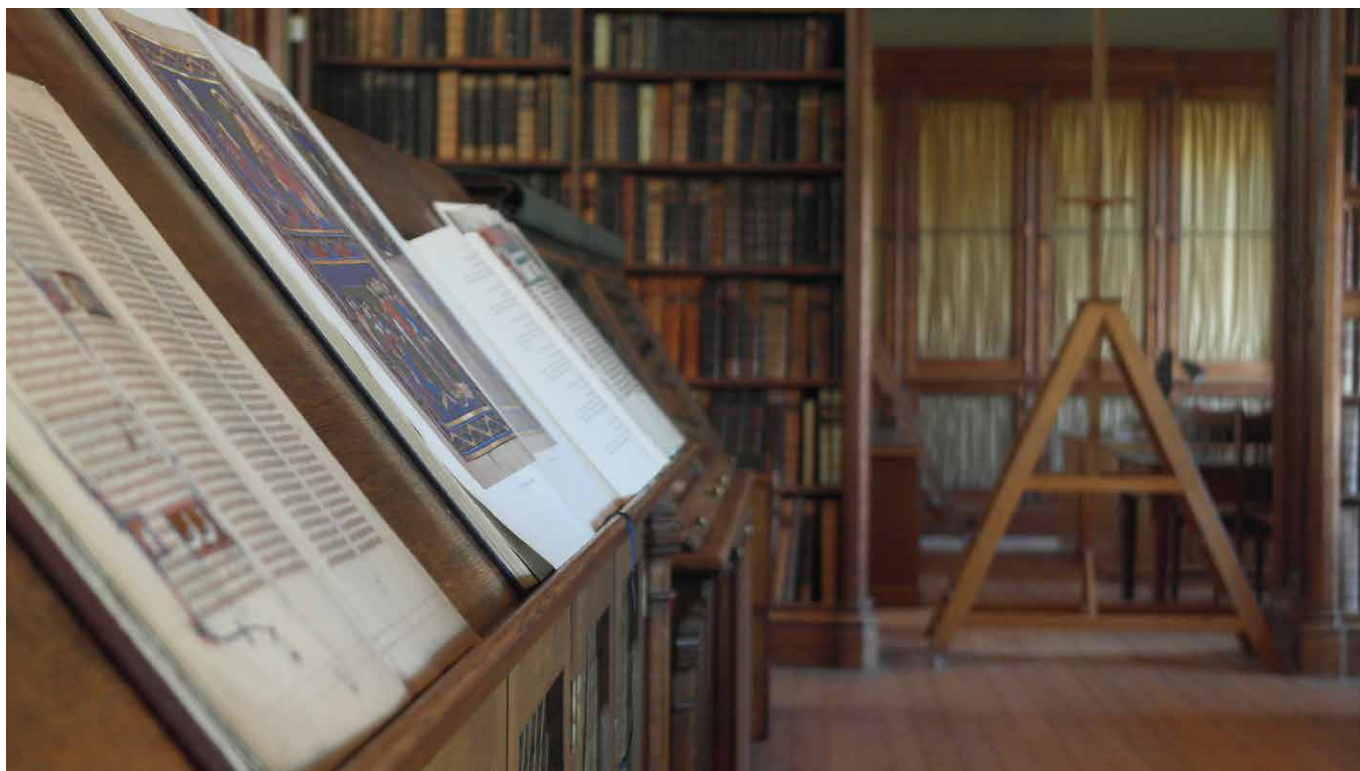
Amongst Matthew Parker’s manuscripts at Corpus are three copies of Bede’s Ecclesiastical History of the English People. One is an eleventh-century version in Old English, the translation made at King Alfred’s (848/849–899 C.E.) instruction, and the other two are fourteenth-century Latin versions. Interestingly, Parker himself found Bede’s work useful when he came to write his own version of the history of the English Church, one which attempted to cast the upheaval of the Protestant Reformation in England as less of a rupture or innovation and more of a returning to the old ways of doing things.



Image: CCCC ms 159 f. 69v.

Evidence of Parker's close engagement with these works is plain because we can still see where he marked up the text. One thing that particularly seems to have appealed to Parker is the discovery that Bede, like himself, supported his scholastic work by

the collecting of books. In the medieval manuscript biography of Bede (MS 159 f. 69v) Parker has carefully underlined in his distinctive red pencil the phrase "Moreover, he gathered together a most famous library".





Jenny Raine

Corpus Christi College announces appointment of new Bursar



Corpus is delighted to announce the appointment of Ms Jenny Raine as its next Bursar. The Bursar is an ancient position in the College, responsible for all the financial and other non-educational aspects of the College's operations. Jenny is an experienced Finance and Operations Director, who has held a variety of posts in public sector and not-for-profit organisations. For the last fifteen years she has held director-level posts in the NHS and as Bursar at Newnham College. Jenny has also held trustee positions on the boards of several charitable organisations in and around Cambridge. Jenny is a chartered accountant and a graduate of the University of York in Biochemistry. She will take up the post on 1 September 2020.

Jenny lives in Stetchworth near Newmarket and when not at work enjoys listening to, and participating in, music as well as taking part in a wide variety of outdoor activities with her family.

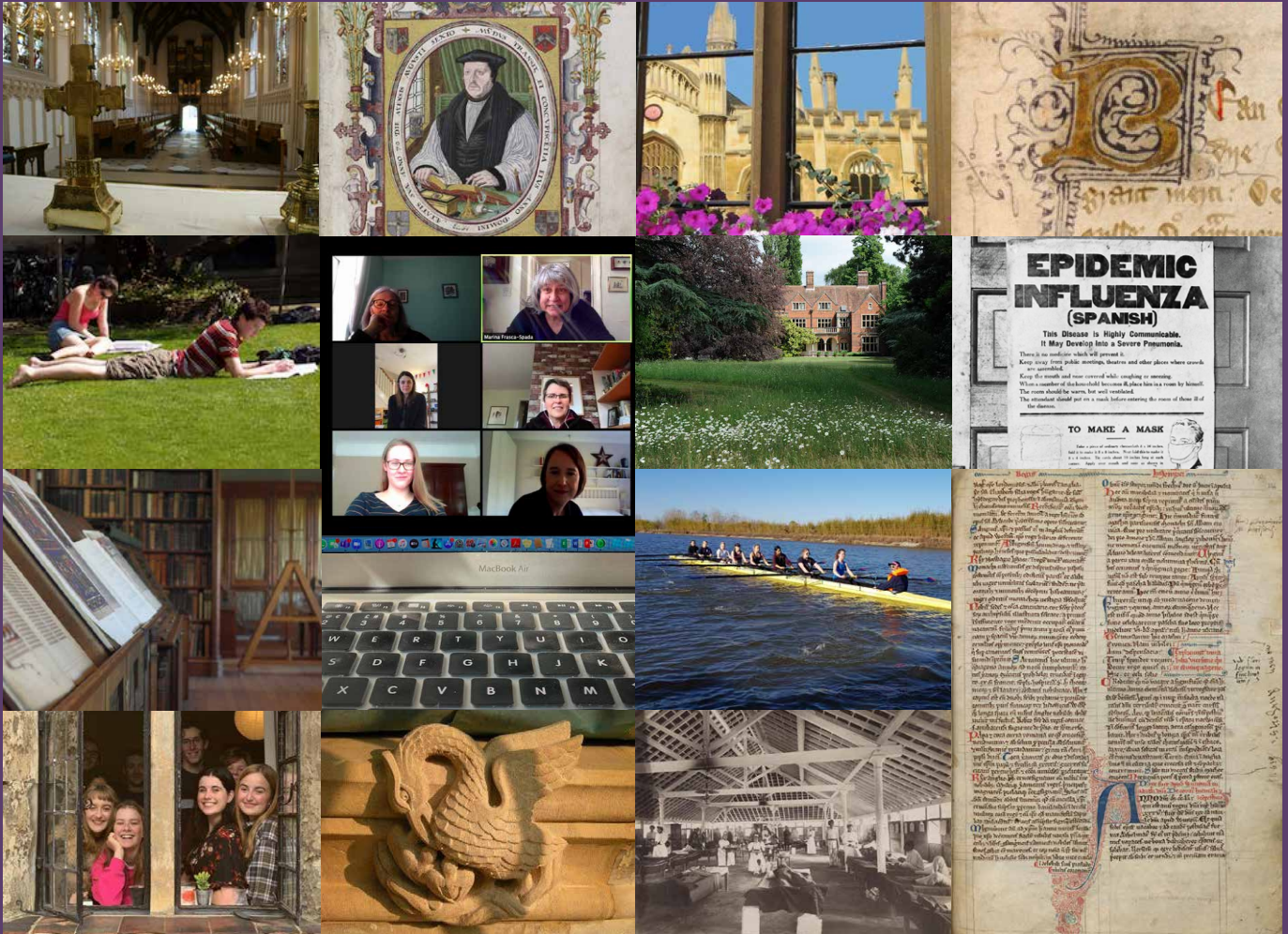
The Master of Corpus commented, "We are delighted to welcome Jenny into the Corpus community. Jenny was selected following an exhaustive global search involving discussions with more than two hundred people. The three best were selected for final interviews (by Zoom) following visits to the College and meetings with key Fellows and staff. Jenny was the unanimous choice of the appointment committee."

Jenny added, "I am absolutely delighted to be joining Corpus. I am very much looking forward to supporting the College to continue to thrive as an academic community through these challenging times and into the future."



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