

BIN BROOK



ROBINSON COLLEGE
CAMBRIDGE

Searching for Home:

Volunteering with the
homeless community

Past to Present:

From Robinson to the
International Rescue Committee

Doing It for the Girls:

Female-focused social
enterprise

We Met at Robinson:

Emily and David Kipping
share their story

Welcome:

Meet Robinson's
newest Fellows



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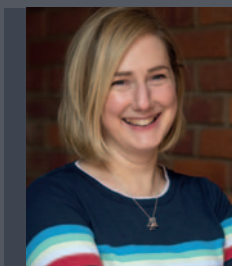
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WELCOME



As the numbers of those giving up their time to work with charities has reached a historic low, the UK faces a volunteering crisis, a trend the recent Coronation's

Big Help Out was designed to reverse. Given this context, a celebration of the fantastic work that the Robinson community does in the third sector is long overdue. Whether as volunteers or as full-time employees, Robinson alumni, Fellows, staff and students give their time to organisations that are values-driven and focused on a purpose that is bigger than any one individual, but where one individual can have an impact on multiple lives.

The stories featured in this issue of Bin Brook spotlight Robinsonians' work with charities both local and global, typically gaining more than they contribute through their experience. It's a story that resonates with me and all those who work in the service of Robinson, a charity founded through an extraordinary act of philanthropy, and many of our authors report that their charitable work, in one way or another, began in Cambridge.

The Coronation makes a recurrence in Claire Spencer's (Theology, 1991) story of representing Australia at the service in Westminster Abbey. Whatever one might feel about the institution of monarchy, it was an unforgettable event, and Claire's commentary deftly captures the solemnity and the humour in equal measure. Elsewhere in this issue you will find news of Sir Nick Clegg's (Archaeology and Anthropology, 1986) candid conversation at the Royal Society with the Warden, how two alumni found each other again years after graduating and where they are now, and notice of alumni and supporter events to come. There are lots of opportunities to join in, and I look forward to seeing you at one of them.

S. Westwood

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FRONT COVER:

Md Asif Hossain (MPhil in Criminology, 2020) with children at the Maria Orphanage Society in Bangladesh
Photo: ChitroGolpo

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We are always delighted to hear from anyone who has a Robinson-related story to tell.
If you would like to contribute an article to Bin Brook, please email development-office@robinson.cam.ac.uk

NEWS in brief

CLAIRE SPENCER AT THE CORONATION



Claire and others take a selfie with American singer Katy Perry

Robinson alumna Claire Spencer (Theology, 1991) attended the Coronation of King Charles III on Saturday 6 May as a representative of Australia alongside the Australian Prime Minister. Claire shares a longer piece on the Robinson website about her experience of the coronation – including how she snagged a selfie with Katy Perry! – and an excerpt here.

“We gather at dawn on the banks of the Thames facing Lambeth Palace. Well, not exactly at dawn, but it was early, and drizzling (of course). A bunch of slightly bemused, so-called outstanding Australians, called upon to represent our country and experience the Coronation of King Charles III on behalf of the 25 million of us back home.

For those of you who knew me at Cambridge you might indeed wonder how a very British theologian from Teddington ended up representing Australia at such a momentous event. Well, I left the UK in 1999 for an adventure. Twenty-three years ensued in Sydney and then Melbourne. In 2020, I was awarded an Order of Australia for services to the Performing Arts and Community. In 2022, I came back to London to run the Barbican Centre... The moment before the King was crowned was absolutely silent. It was weirdly like we were all holding our breath. And then the Archbishop bellowed (yes, bellowed) ‘God Save the King’ and we all bellowed it right back at him. I think he was relieved he’d got through the service. It was joyous, momentous and I think we all felt that we have been part of something deeply historic. I have never had that feeling before.”

Read the entirety of Claire’s piece in the Alumni news section of the Robinson website. ■

QUANTUM WEEK AT ROBINSON COLLEGE

Over the Easter break, Robinson welcomed a group of Mathematics offer holders from a widening participation background to the college for a two-day residential teaching event. This event is specifically designed to support incoming students who haven’t attended schools that offer extra coaching in STEP (Sixth Term Examination Paper). During Quantum Week, the offer holders were guided through a series of STEP problems by experienced Mathematics teachers and current first year students, and had the opportunity to ask the current students about their experiences of preparing for the STEP exam.

We are very grateful to the Quantum Fund for providing financial support for this event. ■

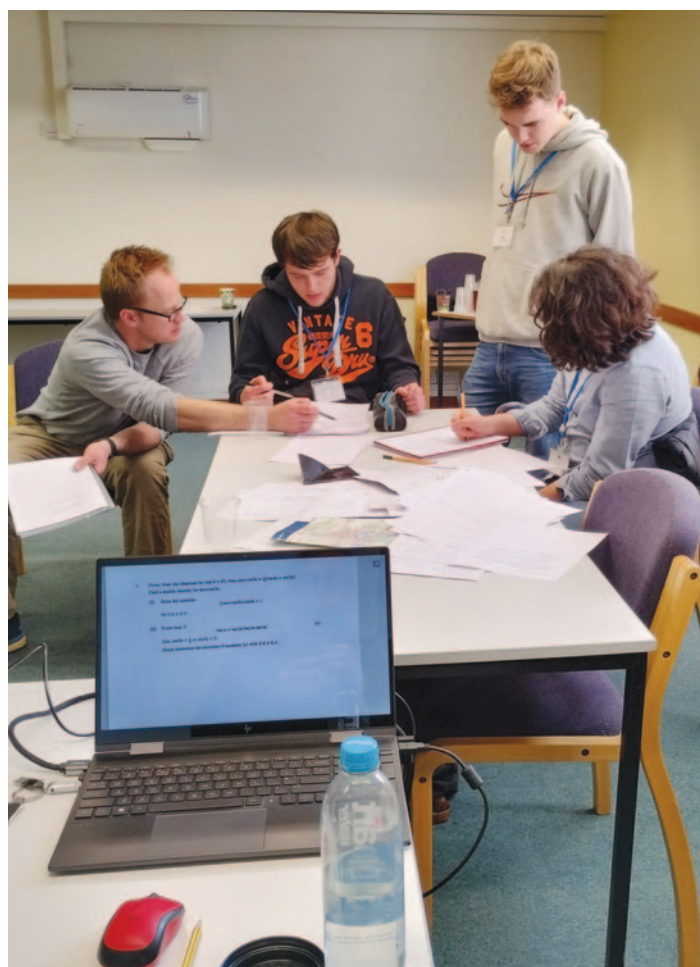


Photo credit: Dr Chris Warner

RCSA UPDATE

by James Clifford, Communications Officer



After a Lent term of extra-curricular activities and sporting successes supported by the Robinson College Students' Association, the committee was back to work. As the Easter term began and the library became increasingly busy with students revising for their exams, members of the RCSA continued their work to provide opportunities, activities and support for all those preparing for this busy term.

These events began almost as soon as students returned to College, with the welfare team, led by Isabel Dempsey, organising Wellbeing Week with Robinson's Head of Student Wellbeing and Welfare, Karen Tate. Held in the first week of the exam term, it allowed students to take a break from revision and spend some time relaxing and enjoying activities. This included meditation to practise mindfulness; sports in the college gardens, including croquet, boccia and rounders; pet therapy, where students could distract themselves from exam stress with dogs; and the Easter egg hunt. Outside of Wellbeing Week, there were also exam preparation workshops to help reduce anxiety about the upcoming exams. The welfare team worked hard to ensure that students took care of themselves during this stressful time.

The Ents Officers had a busy Lent term, organising bops every Friday night for students to have a night out from studying. Of particular note was Rainbow Robinson, a bop open to all Cambridge colleges to celebrate LGBT History Month and raise money for Mermaids: a charity that supports young transgender people. Bops returned for Easter term with the theme 'dress as your favourite college member'.

The RCSA also supported Access opportunities. In April we had another successful run of the Women in STEM residential, which gave fifty sixth form students the opportunity to stay in Cambridge and attend workshops run by the Unlock Biology group and hear talks from female PhD students in STEM subjects. In addition, the College hosted secondary school students for a shadowing programme,

led by Access Officer Tasnia Tahsin, where the students were shown around Cambridge and attended contact hours, allowing them to experience university life and ask questions to inform their applications.

The RCSA worked on introducing the option of extending tenancies so that students could stay in the college over the holidays if they needed a safe place like Robinson for personal reasons. And the RCSA began planning the Robinson Art Festival, which will take place in next Lent term in 2024. What an exciting term it's been! We look forward to next year and new projects. ■



Left: Robinson students greet furry friends as part of pet therapy during Wellbeing Week. | Right: Students do yoga outside as part of Wellbeing Week.

NEW BOAT FOR ROBINSON COLLEGE BOAT CLUB

After five years of negotiations, the Boat Club has purchased a new eight for the women's side. The women's captains, Lowena Hull (Natural Sciences - Physical, 2020) and Stephanie Taylor (Natural Sciences - Physical, 2020) named the new boat Bruce Bye, after coach and Robinson alum Bruce Bye (Mathematics, 1992). Bruce learnt to row, then cox, when he arrived at Robinson in 1992. He served as women's captain in 1995 and 1996, coxing W1 to blades in the May Bumps. Since graduating he has coached on-and-off, becoming a permanent coach in 2016. He says, "It's an honour to have my name on this boat. May she make many bumps!" ■



Photo credit: Alex Myhill

GUEST INTRODUCTION

LAURA KYRKE-SMITH ON THE JOURNEY FROM ROBINSON TO CHARITY WORK



Laura Kyrke-Smith (History, 2002) joined the IRC as Director of Communications for Europe in 2016. Prior to that she was a Partner at a communications consultancy, Portland, and before that a policy analyst and speechwriter in the Foreign & Commonwealth Office. Laura is

married to another Cambridge History graduate, Andy Cockburn, and she has three (mostly!) wonderful young children, Leina (5), Jack (4), and Henry (2).

When I was at Robinson, I volunteered with Student Action for Refugees. Once a week I would do English conversation and reading practice with a Zimbabwean refugee who lived in Cambridge. It felt like a very long cycle ride to her house, all the way past the station and down Cherry Hinton Road, though in reality it can't have taken more than fifteen minutes. And when I was there it felt like I was in a different world.

Reading the contributions to this edition of Bin Brook, I am struck by the many ways in which people's experiences at Robinson shape their charity work. For me it was academic study that helped open my eyes to charity work: I was learning about colonization and decolonization in Africa, and I was fascinated to be able to meet and talk to a refugee who had lived some of that history herself.

But for others it was Robinson's own story that inspired them: The generosity of David Robinson in founding the college, which in turn made them want to give something back to society.

Or their experience of being educated at Robinson, which made them see the transformative power of education and want to play their part in bringing this to other people.

It was their involvement in Robinson's community, which showed them the value of a strong network and encouraged them to play an active role in their communities after Robinson.

Or it was life in Cambridge more broadly. Seeing people struggling on the streets – whether that's a temporary struggle after a long and boozy night, or a more serious one – and wanting to help.

On one level charity is a simple concept: The act of giving help to those who need it, in the form of money, goods or time. But what's clear from these contributions is how much more there is to it, whether that's ensuring that individuals are treated with dignity and respect, building and strengthening the communities in which people live, or holding powerful people and institutions to account. As one contributor says: Charity is "essential to the health of our society."

What's also clear is how much the contributors have gained from their charitable work – and how anyone, whatever their skillset or background, can play an active charitable role, whether through paid work, voluntary work or partnership. I hope you find this edition as inspiring as I did. ■



With a Syrian refugee client in Amman, Jordan in 2020. She had set up her own business, selling her artwork, with a grant from IRC.



With some of our refugee clients and programme staff in the UK, and our global President and CEO David Miliband.

MY ROBINSON

PROFESSOR LAURA MACHESKY



Professor Laura Machesky joined Robinson College as a Fellow in Biochemistry in November 2022. She is the Sir William Dunn Professor of Biochemistry at the Department of Biochemistry, having moved her lab from the Cancer Research UK (CRUK) Beatson Institute in Glasgow. She was recently awarded a £1.8M programme award from Cancer Research UK to study cancer invasion and metastasis and a £1M collaborative Human Frontiers Programme to study cell migration and metabolism. Her research is multidisciplinary, involving collaborations with engineers and physicists, and she is involved in both the CRUK Cambridge Cancer Centre (Molecules and Cells Theme co-lead) and the School of Biological Sciences Interdisciplinary Research Centre for Engineering Biology (EngBio, co-Chair).

Following a PhD at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, in Baltimore, USA in 1993, I decided to move to Cambridge, UK, for a postdoctoral position at the MRC-Laboratory for Molecular Biology. The early 1990's was an exciting time for cell biology and my field of cell migration was exploding with energy, as discoveries were made revealing the molecular basis for cell migration and how it is controlled by signals. Following a short postdoctoral time in Cambridge, I moved to London to the MRC Laboratory for Molecular Cell Biology, after hearing an exciting talk by Professor Alan Hall at a conference on how cell migration was controlled by molecular switch proteins called small GTPases. These proteins are in the same family as Ras, the well-known oncogene driver of the vast majority of solid tumour cancers. The study of how small GTPases control cell migration has become a central part of my work and the relationship between normal cell functions and aberrant function in cancer is now a key part of my interest.

After four exciting years in London, I moved to Birmingham, UK, to start my own group in the School of Biosciences. My husband, Robert Insall, and I were both MRC-funded research fellows in Birmingham and this is where we established our careers and our family. Eventually, we became tenured professors in Birmingham. It was an exciting and supportive environment, with many colleagues who became long-term great friends and collaborators. We then moved to Glasgow, to the CRUK Beatson Institute, where I became fascinated by how cancer cells hijack many of the normal cell migration pathways to become invasive and metastatic. We spent 15 wonderful years in Glasgow, enjoying the highly collaborative atmosphere and lovely countryside.

Now, with our children off to University and the job market, it was time for the next adventure – somewhat unexpectedly, I was attracted back to Cambridge when a

wonderful opportunity for the Sir William Dunn Chair in Biochemistry was advertised. I joined the Biochemistry Department here in Cambridge in November and I was delighted when Robinson was one of the colleges that approached me for potential Fellowship. I had been to Robinson before, for a conference of the British Society for Cell Biology and the European Cytoskeleton Forum and somehow, I fell in love with it then! I remember thinking that Robinson was such a lovely, modern and friendly place at this conference – I think that my first impression was right! I might have also realised then that the food at Robinson is really amazing and the gardens are stunning.

Now I have been a Fellow at Robinson for just over six months and I am so delighted by the lovely colleagues that I have met and the warm welcome that I have had from everyone. I have enjoyed the January Research Day, where I had the chance to hear about other disciplines, including architecture, physics, chemistry and of course some biology too! I have had some lovely lunches and dinners and I hope to join many more of these occasions, where I always meet new people and have interesting conversations! I even had the great pleasure to live in a flat on campus for my first 4 months here, which made my transition from Glasgow so easy and pleasant. I so much enjoyed my morning walk through the gardens and my visits to the Senior Common Room, or the Red Brick Café, which are always warm and welcoming.

I am excited to keep learning more about Robinson and sharing events like lectures, concerts and activities together with colleagues. I love that Robinson cares about equal access, sustainability, diversity and has a modern, progressive, forward-looking attitude. I am looking forward to continuing to get to know more of my colleagues at Robinson and to having great interactions and adventures together. ■

→ **FOCUS ON CHARITY WORK**

VOLUNTEERING WITH CITIZENS ADVICE: 'GIVING PEOPLE THE KNOWLEDGE AND CONFIDENCE THEY NEED TO FIND THEIR WAY FORWARD'

BY JUDITH LIEU



Professor Judith Lieu was Lady Margaret's Professor of Divinity, 2007-2018, specialising in the New Testament and Early Christianity. She is an Emerita Fellow at Robinson.

One of the benefits of being an academic is that retirement does not mean leaving behind everything that shaped your thinking and life for the last decades, perhaps for all your adult life. Administration (thankfully) and teaching (perhaps with more mixed feelings) may no longer dominate your days, but if you wish you can continue to research the questions that still fascinate you, and to interact with like-minded colleagues locally and internationally. But as with other retirees, I am also free to plan my time and bring forward interests that have languished on the back-burner. In my case, I decided to find out more about the work of Citizens Advice and to volunteer with them.

Many readers will have heard of Citizens Advice, especially in recent months, in discussions about the social impact of the rise in the cost of living. Its mission is straightforward: 'to give people the knowledge and confidence they need to find their way forward – whoever they are, and whatever the problem'. A second aim is 'to improve the policies and practices that affect people's lives': this grows out of the experience and data drawn from the cases and clients who come to us, and from targeted research and campaigns, and, it is hoped, may lead to a more permanent improvement of the difficulties or obstacles that happen time and time again.

Citizens Advice is not a counselling service like the Samaritans, although people often seek advice at crisis points in their lives, and like many other such agencies the guiding principles are that the service offered is free, independent, confidential, and impartial. The tabs along the top of the website give some indication of the areas of crisis: work, debt and money, consumer, housing, family, law and courts, health. Most of these reflect areas of our daily lives, in society and in our relationships, that we have to navigate on a daily basis; some people do so with ease, others may face an unexpected crisis, while for many their personal and social circumstances present serious obstacles. The goal of Citizens Advice is not to tell people what to do, but to empower them to make their own decisions, better equipped to understand the frameworks or options available to them.

The complex webs of legislation and of local and national agencies and practices – always in flux – means that volunteering for Citizens Advice involves a commitment to mastering (or at least learning how to find one's way around) a vast array of information, technical terms, policies, principles, and procedures. For me, that meant a few months of online learning of packaged modules: a solitary undertaking since I started towards the end of lockdown, and one where it was hard to maintain any enthusiasm. Then I graduated to answering email enquiries, knowing that all my replies would be checked by a more experienced supervisor before being sent; for the last several months I have been answering calls to the advice phone-line, again with help and support on hand, and now I am on the cusp of also taking some face-to-face conversations. More than a year after I started, and after a very steep learning curve, I hope soon to receive my certificate of full accreditation!

For me this has become a deeply enriching part of my life; I have met, in person or indirectly, people with a vast array of experiences that I may never otherwise have encountered. My skills of research have found a new direction as I burrow into topics I knew nothing about. The rhetoric of politicians and social commentators, as well as attempts at support and alleviation, can be measured against a voice at the other end of the phone line, glad at last to have got through, trying to tell a stranger something of their struggles, hopes and challenges. Often, I have to direct clients to other agencies with more specialised knowledge and expertise, and in so doing I have become more aware of the network of charities and other agencies, and the volume of work they do. Voluntary bodies, local, national or international, and volunteering in them, the topic of this issue of Bin Brook, are not an optional extra: they are essential to the health of society and to the survival of many of our neighbours. ■

→ FOCUS ON CHARITY WORK

SEARCHING FOR HOME: VOLUNTEERING WITH THE HOMELESS COMMUNITY

BY ANTHONY FAWCETT



Anthony Fawcett (History, 1980) began his career in publishing before going to law school in 1989. He subsequently worked in London and New York City, where he still practices as a dual-qualified UK and US lawyer.

In 1991, I began working as a volunteer supporting the homeless community in London. It's been a long time since my first shift. I had graduated from Robinson eight years before and my life already felt very different. How did one experience inform the other? I hugely enjoyed my time at Robinson, but it felt like a very carefree existence, and somewhat at odds with the circumstances which I encountered on the street. But there was something about being at Robinson which helped to shape my vision of what a community was, and what it meant to be included within it, particularly given that I was part of the first full cohort of undergraduates. What is a community, precisely? The word "homeless" can suggest that people in such a state are outcasts but I have often been struck when interacting with people on the street by how their stories can leave me pondering the complexity of the notion of home.

By way of illustration, I'll tell the story of Brian Edgeley, whom I helped to care for. Brian lived on the streets in London for over 30 years. He resonated with a quiet sense of fatalism which I always found arresting on the evenings when I saw him. He never seemed bitter; he never blamed society; he was always civil and polite. In the summer of 2002, the social workers with whom I worked telephoned me to say that he had died. The funeral was to be in St. Bride's Church in Fleet Street, a stone's throw

from my office, in the middle of the week. Initially I wondered whether I would be able to make it. I made excuses to myself: I was too busy, it was the wrong time of day. But Brian passed his life here on my doorstep in the City, drifting by day among those who filled the myriad roles which the financial services industry had spawned and by night moving between two of Christopher Wren's churches in order to sleep. I was a lawyer: surely I could make the time to attend, not least to honour myself and the wider business community as well as him.

So, I attended. There were no relatives – only myself and the social workers as well as some officials from the City of London Corporation, the vicar, and the local newspaper. I suppose you could call us an extended family of sorts. For me, the most potent moment was when they brought in the coffin. It was the first time that I had attended a funeral since my father had died about six months earlier. On that day my family had stood around the grave, numb and tight-lipped. Before his death, my father had forbidden my mother to cry and she honoured his wishes, although it seemed to me like a perverse symptom of the suppressed culture in which we had been brought up. At Brian's funeral I found myself crying the tears that I could not cry on that day, for a man who had no family except the motley improvised group which had gathered for the occasion.



1. Anthony (L) with another Coalition for the Homeless volunteer

2. The back of the van, piled high with supplies

3. Anthony posing in front of the Coalition for the Homeless van



The choristers sang Nessun Dorma at the close of the service. I had never heard this aria in a church before, let alone at a funeral. It was so haunting. I never hear it now without thinking of that day and how in some strange sense Brian's story found its way into my own.

My own story would ultimately take me to New York City where I currently volunteer as a driver on the Grand Central Food Program, an operation run by the Coalition for the Homeless which distributes between 800 and 1200 meals per night on three routes across the city. If you're based in New York and are interested in finding out more, feel free to contact me at ajfawcett@yahoo.com. ■



→ **FOCUS ON CHARITY WORK**

FROM COLLEGE COMMITTEES TO CHAIR OF THE ASSOCIATION FOR SCIENCE EDUCATION

BY HELEN HARDEN



Helen Harden (née Ashley) (Natural Sciences, 1993)
is a freelance science curriculum specialist and educational resource developer. Helen is currently the 2022-23 Chair of the Association for Science Education.

In many ways volunteering is part of my DNA. My father, a former head of mathematics, was an active member and eventual President of the Mathematical Association here in the UK. I have childhood memories of him travelling to the MA conference and returning with mathematical gifts, like an “I’m a sumbody” mug and a variety of badges with mathematical puns. My mother, a former languages teacher, spent many years volunteering at our village primary school supporting children to learn how to read.

When I was a student at Robinson, I joined the RCMS committee helping to organise various concerts and recitals. I learned about the structure of committees and how to run them – including, while treasurer, how to keep basic accounts. I developed skills in organisation, logistics (how to get a set of tubular bells from West Road to the college chapel!) and persuasion, most notably when trying to convince some Fellows and staff to let off party poppers in lieu of cannons in the 1812 overture. The behind-the-scenes work of college committees should never be underestimated. The legacy of some committees can bring long lasting and benefit to generations of Robinson students. The now annual freshers’ week activities, for example, were first established by the RCSA committee of my second year.

In my post-Robinson life, I work as a freelance science curriculum specialist and educational resource developer. The very nature of being a freelancer has led to me working with a wide range of organisations including commercial publishers, learned societies,

examination awarding bodies, governmental departments of education and educational charities.

Although from a financial perspective my educational charity work may be less profitable, it is this sector to which I am most drawn. The organisation with which I have greatest involvement is the Association for Science Education (ASE). Subject associations, such as ASE, advocate for and support teaching of a specific school subject. Although they have a core of paid staff, these charities also rely on the voluntary contributions of their members. I think the experience of being an active participant in the fabric of life at Robinson meant that being a passive member of the ASE didn’t feel like I was doing enough. I joined ASE’s national 11-19 committee during my first year of maternity leave and later went on to become chair of this committee.

Roll on a number of years and in this academic year of 2022-23 I am now Chair of the ASE. A key priority for my year has been re-invigorating our national committees. As with many charities, the Covid-19 pandemic has taken its toll on ASE. The world we emerged into has changed, but it has also brought opportunity: for example, attendance at our national committee meetings used to mean travel, but with most meetings now on Zoom, this has removed the geographical barriers to committee membership. The persistence and drive needed to encourage more of our members to get involved has really brought home to me how my own family background and experiences at Robinson have shaped



Helen (far left) speaking at the Association for Science Education Members' Reception



Attendees of the January ASE Conference

me and made me recognise the need to develop a culture of volunteering and to spread awareness of the rewards.

My time as Chair of ASE has prompted a degree of personal reflection on my own motivations for my voluntary involvement with the association. I miss the camaraderie of the face-to-face meetings, and even though the motivation of working for a common aim is still there it is harder to build relationships and friendships. So, it's with great excitement that I am looking forward to welcoming many of our dedicated volunteers to our national committee away day in May.

So, a final plea to any alumni reading this: consider supporting a local school as a governor or acting as a volunteer or trustee to a charity that has a cause close to your heart. Like me, I expect many of you will have juggled academic work with running a college society, and in many ways volunteering beyond university is very similar. Time is precious but volunteering can bring rewards that you may not expect. ■

→ FOCUS ON CHARITY WORK

DOING IT FOR THE GIRLS

BY JEN TOLL



Jen Toll (née Rolfe) (Natural Sciences, 2003), runs resilience consultancy Practically Positive and two social enterprises, Not Just A Princess and Festival of The Girl. She lives in Oxfordshire with her husband and two daughters.

If you woke up tomorrow and found you were the opposite gender, how would your life be different? For cisgender people who haven't thought about this question before, I'd wager the answer is revealing. How many of you are now parents and seeing the impact of gender-based stereotypes as your children grow up? Let's rewind to 2003 before I get to why these questions are important, and how you can help change things.

The impact of my gender was not something I ever thought about, and certainly not while I was at Robinson. I just accepted that men and women were different and didn't question it. In fact, I recall that part of my NatSci Part 1B neuroscience lectures actually covered the biological (implying that this is naturally-occurring) differences between the male and female brain in areas such as spatial awareness – findings that I've since discovered are a (reversible) result of stereotyping, not the root cause.¹

I'm proud that Robinson was the first Cambridge College to admit both men and women, and I do think it is probably the most inclusive College. That said, back then most of my tutors, lecturers and supervisors were men, even in psychology, and there were definitely notable stereotypes in place when I was a student that would be considered questionable by today's standards. I look back on them now and think, why didn't I question them then?

After graduation I had continued to use my Part II Psychology, working as a learning designer and consultant for a specialist behavioural training company. I went on to do an MSc in Applied Positive Psychology and set up my own learning consultancy, Practically Positive Ltd, in 2011. And still the gender issue hadn't bubbled to the surface, although the more leaders I worked with in fields such as resilience and confidence, the more I noticed that many brilliant women didn't seem to realise how brilliant they were.





The real trigger was the birth of my first daughter in 2016 – suddenly there were pink princesses everywhere and she was just a baby. Where were the presents with scientists on them? Or doctors? Or farmers? What's with all the pink? And why do clothes for girls say things like “perfect” and “beautiful” when the boys’ section has “cool” and “strong”? The more I looked into it the more I could see the connections between how the world influences our children and how stereotypes change us as we grow up.

So, what was I to do about it? First, I read as much as I could about it (young baby permitting) – and found the work of Cambridge friend and alumni Laura Bates extremely powerful.² I started my first social enterprise, Not Just A Princess, in 2017. We shared the career stories of women in typically male-dominated roles (from pilots to soldiers, vicars to electrical engineers). We also created a small range of children's t-shirts that challenged the existing dialogue around gender.

The growing popularity of the first brand led me to meet the co-founders of Festival of The Girl in 2019. Our mission is to help primary school aged children challenge the everyday stereotypes associated with their gender – to do this, we're aiming to make International Day of the Girl as big as International Women's Day, highlighted by our annual festival event in October. Let's stop many problems before they start and help all children (yes, boys too) understand how societal influences limit them.

Now in its fifth year, our soon-to-be-charity has expanded faster than we can keep up, even after two pandemic years of virtual festivals, and with three of us volunteering to run it alongside our day jobs and young families. On 21st October 2023, we are taking over the Business Design Centre in London for the second time, and inviting over 1000 children and their families to enjoy the festival. We will open their minds and inspire them to think beyond gender stereotypes. And if you or your organisation are interested in joining us in our mission, my email is jen@festivalofthegirl.com – please do get in touch. ■

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1. *The Gendered Brain: The New Neuroscience That Shatters the Myth of the Female Brain* by Gina Rippon
2. *Everyday Sexism; Fix the System, Not the Women; Girl Up* by Laura Bates

All photos by Bronac McNeil



→ FOCUS ON CHARITY WORK

THE MARIA ORPHANAGE SOCIETY: HELPING CHILDREN IN BANGLADESH

BY MD ASIF HOSSAIN



Md Asif Hossain (MPhil in Criminology, 2020) was born in Bangladesh, moving to Canada in his early twenties to pursue a degree in law enforcement studies at the Justice Institute of British Columbia (JIBC). Having developed a passion for public safety and police education from early experiences in Bangladesh, Asif volunteered with the Vancouver Police Department, and with the JIBC Policy Academy during his studies. In 2020, he received a Wakefield Scholarship from the Cambridge Institute of Criminology to undertake an MPhil in Criminology at the University of Cambridge, and was at Robinson from 2020-2021. He returned to Canada after his MPhil, and is now employed as a special constable with a police agency in the Metro Vancouver area, also teaching courses in criminology and policing at Columbia College and Douglas College.

I was born in Bangladesh in 1992. My parents, Akbar and Farhana, were strong believers in the power of education. I moved to Canada in 2013 to pursue post-secondary education, with the goal of becoming a police officer like my father. After attending the Justice Institute of British Columbia (JIBC) in New Westminster, I set my sights on attending one of the most prestigious universities in the world.

In 2020, amidst the pandemic, I was accepted into the MPhil in Criminology Program at Cambridge University, where I was awarded the Wakefield Scholarship. While studying at Robinson College my passion for education grew, and I was inspired to make a difference in the lives of underprivileged children.

Prior to joining Cambridge, in January 2020, I returned from a visit to Bangladesh with news that I had adopted 24 children. This surprised my JIBC mentors, Steve McCartney and Marjory Jardine, who knew I was a young single man living in a small apartment in Surrey, BC. While in Bangladesh, I had visited the Maria Orphanage, which was founded by my father in 2004 with the goal of providing children in the Natore District with food, shelter, and education. I was keen to help my father and had an idea: to establish a non-profit society in Canada to raise funds for the orphanage.

And so the Maria Orphanage Society was created, and Steve McCartney, Marjory Jardine, Mark Wilson, Catherine Wilson, and Shirley Vriend

became the Board Members. In August of 2020, my father passed away due to COVID-19. After my father's death, I took on more responsibility for the Orphanage, along with my mother, Farhana, and my brother, Ashique.

Since its creation, the Maria Orphanage Society has raised funds to complete several projects, including providing food, clothes, blankets, building improvements, water wells, desks and benches, fire stations, sporting goods, and creating a website. Once these basic projects had been accomplished, the society turned its focus to the children's education. In consultation with the Maria Board in Bangladesh, several computers were purchased, and internet access was established.

Through my mother's connections, I arranged for eight orphans to be registered in the Farhana School, located 10 km from the orphanage. The children are transported to Farhana School on an electric-style van, which is actually an electric three-wheel bicycle with a trailer on the back. The van driver, Chandu, makes this trip with the children five days a week.

Farhana School focuses on secular education, and funds from Canada help with registration fees, uniforms, and school supplies. Most recently, computers and large screen monitors have been purchased for the classrooms. The next projects for the Maria Orphanage Society include a campaign to encourage girls' education and the start of a small library in one of the classrooms. The books will be purchased from the Nilkhet Book Market in Dhaka.



All photos by ChitroGolpo

The Maria Orphanage Society is a volunteer organization. The bulk of each donation goes directly to the children, with the only administration costs going to maintaining the Society's website. To date, the Society has relied on donations primarily from friends and families of board members. Expanding the donor base, however, will ensure a steady source of funds to provide greater educational opportunities for the children. It is inspiring to watch the children become excited about learning.

If you want to be a part of the children's journey, consider following the Maria Orphanage Society on Facebook, or send me an email at hossain_asif@outlook.com. ■



Anas, an IRC Reach Up & Learn volunteer and Syrian refugee, reads and plays with Rashid, 2 years old, at Rashid's parents' home. The Reach Up & Learn program provides early child development to Syrian refugees in Jordan by teaching parents methods of constructive play in order to give their child a head start in school. Anas currently works with 22 families, seeing them each one a fortnight and he walks to all their appointments, no matter how far away they are. Photo by Andrew Oberstadt for the International Rescue Committee

→ **FOCUS ON CHARITY WORK**

PAST TO PRESENT: HOW STUDYING HISTORY AT ROBINSON LED TO MY WORK WITH THE INTERNATIONAL RESCUE COMMITTEE

BY LAURA KYRKE-SMITH



Laura Kyrke-Smith (History, 2002) joined the IRC as Director of Communications for Europe in 2016. Prior to that she was a Partner at a communications consultancy, Portland, and before that a policy analyst and speechwriter in the Foreign & Commonwealth Office. Laura is married to another Cambridge History graduate, Andy Cockburn, and she has three (mostly!) wonderful young children, Leina (5), Jack (4), and Henry (2).

I graduated from Robinson in 2005, after spending three years studying History, always picking the modern history modules when I could! I am now the UK Executive Director of the International Rescue Committee (IRC), and so many of the dynamics and trends that I studied – from Arab nationalism in the First World War, to the Cold War and the genocide in Rwanda – remain relevant in the contexts where the IRC tries to make a difference today.

The IRC is a global humanitarian organization that helps people affected by conflict and crisis to survive, recover, and rebuild their lives. We work in 40 countries worldwide, responding quickly when crisis hits, like in Ukraine, but also standing by people who have been displaced from their homes for decades, in places like Afghanistan and DRC. We work across many sectors, including health, education, and economic empowerment, with a focus on women and girls. We also work here in the UK, helping refugees to adapt to their new lives.

Since I started working at IRC seven years ago, we've grown rapidly for all the wrong reasons. There are now 340 million people in need of humanitarian assistance in the world. Conflicts last, on average, nine years and cause 80% of humanitarian needs, but the conflict-driven needs have been compounded by climate change and economic turmoil. 100 million people were displaced from their homes in 2022 – a number that has doubled in a decade – and most are living in developing countries with their own challenges.

IRC has scaled up its programmes accordingly, often in partnership with local organisations, and we're constantly innovating to deliver greater impact. For example, cash assistance has grown rapidly as a form of humanitarian assistance, on the principle that our clients know their needs better than we do. I met a Ukrainian woman in Poland, whose 5-year-old son had a bad case of chickenpox when she was forced to flee fighting in Kharkiv. Upon arrival in Warsaw, she needed shelter and food but also chickenpox medication for her son, which I really sympathized with having had a run of chickenpox in my own kids! IRC wouldn't have planned a chickenpox medication programme, but our cash programme gave her the flexibility to look after her family in exactly the way she needed to.

When I left Robinson. I went on to do a Masters in International Relations at the London School of Economics (LSE), and then was fortunate to get a job in what was then the Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO). I worked there at a time of great ambition for British foreign and international development policy. Now IRC is on the receiving end of drastic cuts to the UK aid budget and the reallocation of what's left to domestic refugee costs. In 2021 the UK Government spent more on hosting refugees and asylum seekers in the UK (primarily on hotel bills) than it did on humanitarian aid. IRC is fortunate to have strong relationships with philanthropists, corporate partners, trusts and foundations, and support from the generous British public, all of whom are stepping up support at a time when the Government is stepping down.

I am also very concerned by the Government's dangerous rhetoric about refugees and asylum seekers in the UK. Our refugee clients tell us they feel unsafe. The Illegal Migration Bill, being pushed through Parliament at the time of writing, would remove the right to seek asylum that has been in place since the Refugee Convention was signed in 1951, with Britain a lead signatory at the time. If Britain wants to maintain some global standing and ensure an effective and compassionate response to the global challenge of growing migration, then we have to take some responsibility and play our part.

Sometimes the context IRC works in can be disheartening. But I am always uplifted by meeting the refugees that we work with. Without fail they are brave, resilient, and ambitious, despite being in the toughest of circumstances. I recently spent time with a group of Afghan refugees that included a former regional governor, a journalist, and a lawyer, all fluent in English. They'd spent a year living in crowded hotel rooms in the UK, unable to put their expertise and talents to good use. IRC helps refugees like them to identify job opportunities, write CVs, practise job interviews, and understand employment contracts. This makes all the difference: 70% of our clients go on to find work within 90 days of completing our course, and they will go on to make great contributions to the economy and society.

I am always interested to hear from Robinson alumni working in similar fields or interested in partnering with us at the IRC, so please do get in touch via laura.kyrkesmith@rescue-uk.org ■

→ FOCUS ON CHARITY WORK

BUILDING BETTER LIVES: GIVING BACK THROUGH HABITAT FOR HUMANITY

BY TALBOT STARK



Talbot Stark (Management Studies, 1992) is the CEO and Founder of ExecPathfinders, an innovative executive coaching and strategy consulting firm working with rising talents, experienced managers and executives seeking to compete at the elite level of their chosen industry. Talbot has developed a methodology based on three core career pillars, drawing from lessons learned and tools developed during his 40 years of experience at senior roles at leading global financial firms, Fortune 500 technology companies and in the US Army as a helicopter pilot.



Talbot and Luke Stark

I attended Robinson College from 1992-1995, while studying for my MBA at The Judge Institute of Management Studies. My time at Robinson had a profound effect on my life: I formed lifelong friendships, I built the foundation for my career in finance, and studying at the College provided the gateway for a long-distance relationship with my then-girlfriend, Melissa, who became my wife in 1994.

All this – the friendships I made, the education I received, even my room and board – were made possible by the College's founder, Sir David Robinson. Sir David's significant donation to the University of Cambridge enabled the establishment of the University's newest College, named for the its founder. And, in turn, my time at Robinson inspired me to give back.

Recently, I've moved back to California, and this transition has allowed me the opportunity to get involved with charity work. I wanted to find something that would be hands-on, focused on giving back to the local community, and an opportunity to work directly with the people that would benefit from the charity's efforts. I also wanted to find something that my fifteen-year-old son, Luke, and I could do together.

I found everything I was hoping for with Habitat for Humanity – an amazing non-profit organization that helps families build and improve spaces to call home. And I share Habitat for Humanity's ethos that affordable housing plays a critical role in strong and stable communities.

The idea that turned into Habitat for Humanity first developed on a community farm outside of Americus, Georgia, founded by farmer and biblical scholar Clarence Jordan. Jordan, and Habitat for Humanity's



Talbot and Luke Stark work on building a home in New Mexico with Habitat for Humanity

eventual founders Millard and Linda Fuller, developed the concept of “partnership housing” while working together at the farm – they envisioned people in need of adequate shelter working alongside volunteers to build affordable houses at no profit. A “Fund for Humanity” would then be created through a combination of fundraising, the new homeowners’ house payments, and no-interest loans given by supporters, with the Fund used to build more homes.

The Fullers took the Fund for Humanity to Zaire (now the Democratic Republic of Congo) in 1973, and after three years of hard work launching a successful house-building programme in Africa, returned to the United States and founded Habitat for Humanity International in 1976. The charity now works in all fifty states in the US, and in more than 70 countries, and has helped more than 46 million people achieve strength, stability, and independence through safe, decent and affordable shelter.

Luke, and I chose Taos, New Mexico as the Habitat for Humanity location we would volunteer at. The most valuable part of the programme, for us, is that you work side-by-side with the families that will eventually live in the home you are building.

Last summer, we worked to build a home for a single working mother with two young sons. We worked through June in the heat of the New Mexico desert, digging ditches by hand, assembling kitchen counters and cabinets, installing appliances, and installing baseboards. Every day was hard work, but Luke and I went home with a smile every evening. We will return to Habitat for Humanity in Taos this summer. I would encourage everyone to get involved, and to see if there is a location that suits you: Habitat for Humanity is about changing lives, both those of the families you’re building shelter for, and your own. ■

→ FOCUS ON CHARITY WORK

ANGELS OF THE STREET: VOLUNTEERING WITH CAMBRIDGE'S STREET PASTORS

BY ROSALIND LOVE



Professor Rosalind Love is Elrington and Bosworth Professor of Anglo-Saxon and has taught and researched in the Department of ASNC (where she was also a student) since 1993, which was also the year she joined the fellowship at Robinson. She works on the Latin literature of early medieval England, especially on texts written about the saints of England, but also the writings of the Venerable Bede, on glossed manuscripts (that is, books that have scribbles in the margins) as windows into the minds of medieval readers, and currently also leads a project on Arthurian literature in Latin.



'YAAAAAY, STREEET PAAA-STORS! Luv Ya! You's ANGELS come down from HEAVEN!' Unexpected words heard outside Lloyds Bank at 3am, as I hand pink flip-flops to a 50-something who has carried her tipsy shoeless 21-year-old piggyback all the way from Mash, one of Cambridge's nightclubs: this is the bright side of the work of the Cambridge Street Pastors, making a small difference to someone. Darker memories are crouching in Market Passage in hammering rain, jostled by clubbers out for a smoke, trying to prop up a young guy so he doesn't slump into a pool of his own vomit. Or my first encounter with the horrors of a K-hole (a ketamine high), struggling with a girl by turns manic and terrifyingly comatose.

In 2003, a pastor called Les Isaac started a scheme in Brixton that he called Street Pastors – groups of volunteers from churches of all denominations who walked the streets on Friday and Saturday nights to offer practical help to the people they met. Since then, the Street Pastor network, supported by

the Ascension Trust, has spread across the UK and beyond, training thousands of volunteers to go out and engage in a non-judgemental way with folk who are on the streets at night – be it people around pubs and clubs on an evening out, doorstaff and other members of the night-time economy, or those who are sleeping rough.

A few years ago, I heard Les Isaac speaking about Street Pastors at Great St Mary's as part of an event run by Hope Cambridge. Afterwards there was a call for volunteers to join the Cambridge Street Pastors and somehow, although of wavering faith and terrible at prayer, I felt that the call was addressed to me, that it was finally time to give something back to a city I've lived in and loved for nearly forty years. Despite my job (i.e. a lot of sitting still at the desk to read things and write them!) I'm a restless person that prefers doing to stillness, and the idea of something practical, unconditional love in action, appealed strongly. To use a biblical image,



Rosalind (middle) and other volunteers with Street Pastors out in Cambridge

I'm more of a Martha than a Mary. So I filled in the form, went along as an observer, did the training that the Ascension Trust asks all Street Pastors to undertake, and have never once regretted it.

The Street Pastors' motto is 'Caring, Listening, Helping', pretty simple really: meeting people where they are, without judgement or discrimination. Cambridge Street Pastors has historically had enough volunteers to be able to run not only teams on the streets on Saturdays from 10pm till 4am, but also, as often as possible, NightLite, a café in a room in Downing Place Church, which serves as a safe place for people to come into the warm for a chat or a cuppa and something to eat, wait if they've got separated from their friends, use the loo, or recover from the evening's drinking sufficiently to get home at the end of the night.

Then if the Street Pastor team comes across someone in difficulties, there's somewhere they can take them to be helped away from the dirt and bustle of the pavement.

I've found it hugely instructive to realise how far people will travel for a night out in the clubs of Cambridge (not always thinking ahead too well about how to get home again when they are too sloshed for a taxi-driver to accept them!), or to see concretely the massive gulf between the privilege of the University and the Colleges, and the people who are driven to beg or surf the bins, or are coping with dependency of some kind, or are just plain lonely. Street Pastors wear a blue uniform with a clear white logo; we carry

sickbags and wetwipes, water, lollipops to provide instant blood-sugar, blankets, flip-flops for those whose shoes – so elegant at 6pm – become killers at 2am, and a dustpan and brush to deal with broken glass.

We pick up bottles so they can't become weapons, straighten fallen bikes that are trip-hazards. Most importantly we're present and alert in the city centre, listening friendly faces, connected by radio to the city's CCTV that can spot people in difficulties and to the doorstaff of the clubs and the Police, who all know they can call on us.

A bonus of joining the Street Pastors has been getting to know the other wonderful volunteers, from churches across Cambridgeshire, of all ages and walks of life. Heading to my very first SP training session I was asked to give a lift to two other trainees I'd never met – the first one turned out to be a Robinson undergrad, and the second the bracingly down-to-earth grandfather of someone I used to teach, which made the whole thing feel like it really was meant to be.

Walking slowly round the centre of Cambridge once a month from 10pm until 4am is killing for 56-year-old knees, and makes the following Sunday morning rather bleary-eyed and distinctly unangelic, but it never fails to feel a privilege.

For information about what the Street Pastors do, see the website: www.cambridgestreetpastors.org.uk ■

THE UEFA WOMEN'S EUROS TOURNAMENT 2022:

TRIUMPH AND LEGACY

BY LEE CHAN



Lee Chan (Social and Political Sciences, 1989) is a specialist in strategic insight and a trustee of the Social Research Association. Earlier this year, Lee was the interim Behavioural Insights Manager at The Football Association (The FA), where she led several strategic projects including the consumer insight workstream of the UEFA Women's EUROs 2022 impact evaluation. Lee is also an advocate for widening access to the social research sector, to increase the diversity of professionals working within it. A profession that more accurately reflects our communities will give us a better chance of producing social and policy research that considers differing perspectives – including those which are seldom or less heard.

Even if you're not a sports fan, you couldn't have avoided the celebrations that took place across England on 31 July 2022, when the England Senior Women's Football Team (aka the Lionesses) 'brought football home' by winning the UEFA Women's EUROs 2022 final. That day and for many days afterwards, fans celebrated the end of the 56-year wait to hold an international tournament winner's trophy, and photos of Chloe Kelly's sports bra – worn as she came off the subs bench in the final game to score the winning goal – made the rounds. No one could deny that the Lionesses had performed incredibly throughout the tournament, and beyond. At the time of writing this piece the Lionesses have remained undefeated and, according to FIFA, rank 4th in the world.

Beyond the success of the team, surveys conducted during and after the Women's EUROs were overwhelmingly positive. England's hosting of the tournament (across nine locations) was cited as creating a sense of community pride and closeness, mainly through the various sporting, cultural, arts and heritage, and volunteer activities that took place. The tournament was the perfect summer follow up to the cultural touchstone of the Platinum Jubilee earlier in the year.

The tournament was also a massive operational success, surpassing many of the set targets for attendance, broadcast, and economic impact. Some of the record-breaking figures include:

- **574,875 total match attendance across the tournament, including 110,555 international spectators from 104 countries.**
- **Record breaking final at Wembley with 87,192 attendees, and an average match attendance of 18,544.**
- **The most watched Women's EUROs ever, with a projected global live viewership of 365m, across 195 territories.**
- **Host cities received a £81m boost in economic activity as a result of the tournament.**

Remember, this is women's professional football. Let those numbers sink in. But the stats are only half the story: when The Football Association (FA) bid to host the tournament, the organisation was clear that it wanted to leave a tangible legacy, both to increase physical exercise and to grow the women's and girls' domestic game.

The FA's post-tournament evaluation shows that so far we have created over 416,000 new opportunities in England to engage women and girls in grassroots legacy football activities across the host cities. This includes opportunities to play, coach, officiate, and volunteer. And more than half of residents in the 9 host cities and 2 in 5 tournament spectators and volunteers have been inspired to do more sport and physical activity generally, as a result of UEFA Women's EURO 2022.

The FA wants to continue to build on the positive impact of the tournament by redoubling efforts to create a sustainable future for women's and girls' football across England, as set out in its four-year strategy 'Inspiring Positive Change' (which is available to view on The FA website).

The primary strategic aims are:

- **Equal access for all girls to play football in school and clubs.**
- **Diverse workforce of coaches, referees, and local leaders delivering and organising football for their communities.**
- **Inclusive, safe, and welcoming environments for every woman and girl to play competitive or recreational grassroots football irrespective of ability or ambition.**

Meanwhile, The FA is bidding to host the 2028 Men's European Championships in the UK and Ireland, spreading the benefits more widely across England, Wales, Scotland, Ireland, and Northern Ireland. I'm excited at the prospect of my hometown, Newcastle upon Tyne, possibly being selected as a host city. Having worked at The FA this year, and having seen the impact of the Lionesses' win, I know a football tournament like this can deliver so much for local residents. ■



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NEWS: ALUMNI EVENTS

RETURNING TO ROBINSON, MARCH REUNION, SATURDAY 25 MARCH 2023

On Saturday 25 March, Robinson played host to one of the highlights of the Robinson calendar: The Alumni Reunion weekend, when we welcomed back alumni who matriculated in 1977, 1987, 1997, and 2007, as well as alumni from other matriculation years, for a special Reunion dinner in Hall. We were also delighted to host a special table of alumni and students from the Master of Studies in Sustainability Leadership. Thank you to all those who joined us for a wonderful evening of delicious food and great conversation with old friends. ■

ROBINSON IN ASIA: HONG KONG, SINGAPORE, AND MALAYSIA, 27 MARCH – 5 APRIL 2023

The Warden, Sir Richard Heaton KCB, and Development Director and Fellow, Ms Sarah Westwood, were delighted to return to Asia for two weeks in March to visit Robinson alumni, especially after a four-year break due to Covid. This was Richard's first trip as Warden of Robinson, and he and Sarah enjoyed meeting and reconnecting with alumni, especially over three fantastic dinners organised by local alumni. We are very grateful to Dr KK Chan (Electrical and Information Sciences, 1986), Stanley Ng (Law, 1992), and Hamel Shah (Economics, 1994) and his wife Ms Meredith DePaolo, for hosting and for their help and generosity in arranging the dinners. Sarah and the Warden look forward to seeing everyone again next year! ■

CRAUSAZ WORDSWORTH SOCIETY LUNCH, SATURDAY 22 APRIL 2023

On Saturday 22 April, we had the pleasure of welcoming members of the Crausaz Wordsworth Society back to Robinson for the bi-annual CW Society Lunch. Head Chef Gary Dougan prepared a delicious three-course meal using sustainable locally-grown ingredients – including herbs

from Robinson's very own Gardens! After lunch, Society members were treated to a private performance by first-year student Nicholle Montevalde (Education, 2022), who sang a selection of songs accompanied by Robinson's Director of Choral Music, Will Sims. The event concluded with a fascinating talk by Professor Lord Martin Rees, Baron Rees of Ludlow, Astronomer Royal and former President of the Royal Society. Lord Rees is an Honorary Fellow at Robinson, and was interviewed by Calvin Preston, one of our PhD students in Astronomy. Thank you to all members of the CW Society who attended the event, and we hope to see more of you soon to thank you for your continued support of the College. ■

THE WARDEN OF ROBINSON COLLEGE IN CONVERSATION WITH THE RT HON SIR NICHOLAS CLEGG, THURSDAY 4 MAY 2023

The Warden sat down with the Rt Hon Sir Nicholas Clegg (Archaeology and Anthropology, 1986) for a wide-ranging conversation on 4 May 2023, at a special event held at London's Royal Society. The lively discussion – which covered Sir Nick's time at Robinson and beyond – was followed by a Q&A session, and the evening concluded with drinks and canapés. It was a pleasure to host this event in London, and to catch up with our alumni living and working in the city. Our thanks to Sir Nick for taking the time to chat with the Warden, and for speaking so candidly about his life and work. ■

1. Alumni at the March Reunion dinner. Photo by Nic Marchant.
2. Robinson alumni join Sarah and the Warden for dinner in Hong Kong.
3. Calvin Preston (PhD in Astronomy, 2022; Natural Sciences, 2018) speaks with Professor Lord Martin Rees, as part of the CW Society Lunch.
4. The Warden interviews the Rt Hon Sir Nick Clegg at London's Royal Society.

NEWS: ALUMNI

1980



Photo credit: Bloomsbury

Professor Timothy Luckhurst (History, 1980) writes, “My book, *Reporting the Second World War - The Press and the People 1939-1945* was published on 9 February 2023 by Bloomsbury Academic. It is the product of three years research in newspaper archives physical and digital. I am particularly grateful to the staff in Cambridge University Library who located for me wartime editions of Tribune Magazine, and to my colleagues and students in South College, Durham University who have done so much to support and encourage their Principal's research.”



After over twenty years of bringing improv and other theatre skills to organisations large and small, **Neil Mullarkey (SPS, 1980)** has put all he has learned into a business book, *In The Moment*. Deciding how to prepare and when to go with the flow is something all of us have to do every day. Neil's journey started at Robinson, where he studied Economics then Social and Political Sciences while being president of the Footlights.



Photo credit: Jernkontoret

Rachel Pettersson (née Lowson) (Natural Sciences, 1980) has been appointed for a further (final) three years as adjunct professor in Corrosion Science at KTH Royal Institute of Technology in Stockholm. At the 275th anniversary of Jernkontoret in November 2022 she was awarded a silver medal for contributions to steel research.

1984



Professor Kate Pickett (Archaeology and Anthropology, 1984) was awarded an OBE for Services to Societal Equality in the New Year's Honours list. Kate is Professor of Epidemiology at the University of York, and her recent work has documented how health inequalities in the North of England have been exacerbated by the pandemic. Kate co-authored *The Spirit Level: Why More Equal Societies*

Almost Always Do Better in 2009, named one of the Top 10 Books of the Decade by the New Statesman and which has since been translated into 25 languages. Along with her husband, Professor Richard Wilkinson, Kate co-founded The Equality Trust, which works to improve the quality of life by reducing socio-economic inequality through campaigning for change. She is a Fellow of The Royal Society for Arts, a Fellow of the UK Faculty of Public Health, and was elected earlier this year as a Fellow of the Academy of Social Sciences.

Councillor Anthony Toole (Management Studies, 1984) has produced a Consultation Paper for the Bank of England, which details the next stage in the post-Brexit reforms of the Regulatory Returns that insurance companies are required to make.

1986

Richard Davis (Engineering, 1986), Hogarth Chambers was appointed as new King's Counsel (KC) in England and Wales in early 2023. The title of KC is awarded to those who have demonstrated particular skill and expertise in the conduct of advocacy.

1988

Katie Barnes (MML, 1988) writes: “I have been involved with Setpoint London East, an education charity in Tower Hamlets, East London, since 2011, joining Peter Boorman, a fellow Robinson alumnus, who is Chair of Trustees. Known as the 'Soanes Centre', the charity uses the deconsecrated cemetery park in Tower Hamlets as an outdoor classroom. The site has

been left to return to nature and is now classed as urban woodland. The Soanes Centre provides hands-on science and nature workshops for classes of primary school children in the Borough. The goal is to help children from the most disadvantaged backgrounds to see themselves as budding scientists and to help them get in touch with nature (most of the local schools don't have green spaces). After 10 years as a trustee, I took on the role of Interim CEO and have spent the last 18 months re-focusing the charity on the needs of the schools in the area, expanding our Forest School offering, which became vital for local children during the Covid lockdowns, and re-shaping the staff team to make better use of our precious (and hard-to-come-by) funding.

Alongside this voluntary work, I recently changed my 'day job' to become Executive Director of the National Preparedness Commission (NPC). NPC's ambition is to facilitate policy and structural change that will see the UK better prepared for major shocks. Committed to helping with pragmatic problem-solving, we draw on a wide network of Commission members and experts, to provide a 'go to' source of information on preparedness. In my spare time I still manage to fit in a decent amount of choral singing."

Martin Rajesh Pabari (Mathematics, 1988) married Rena Morjaria (St Catharine's) on 12 November 2022 at Goodwood House, West Sussex.



1989



Lee Chan MMRS (Social and Political Sciences, 1989) has (with great reluctance) left her glorious interim post at the Football Association. She has now joined a new Government body called the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) as Insight Lead, within the Behavioural Sciences and Consumer Insight Unit. The UKHSA is responsible for protecting the public from the impact of infectious diseases, chemical, biological,

radiological and nuclear incidents and other health threats – and yes, that includes pandemic readiness and planning among other things! It's Lee's (formerly known as Debbie Lee) first time in a civil service role, so please get in touch if you are a Civil Servant working around Smith Square, Parliament or Whitehall and have hints/tips for success.

1992

Dorothea Gartland (MML, 1992), 4PB was appointed as new King's Counsel (KC) in England and Wales in early 2023. The title of KC is awarded to those who have demonstrated particular skill and expertise in the conduct of advocacy.



Vasilis Kapsalis MEng (EIST/Engineering, 1992) has been working with Government at a senior level to promote investment in research computing. Most recently, he has been supporting the Government's Future of compute review and promoting the review through techUK. He has also promoted work with the Prime Minister and Chancellor of the Exchequer.



Mauro Galetti Rodrigues (Anatomy, 1992) was awarded as the 1% most cited scientist by Clarivate in 2022. Mauro spent the last 2 years at the University of Miami (USA) and now is back to the São Paulo State University (UNESP) as a full professor. He is also the new editor of Global Ecology and Conservation.

1995

Cornelius Grupen (Philosophy, 1995) writes: "In 2022, my short fiction won a few minor awards and was published in a number of obscure anthologies, including Wunderwerk Text in Germany and Vigilius Mountain Stories in Italy. In collaboration with photographer Robert Goetzfried, I published a trilogy of speculative fiction inspired by found objects – a bike pedal, the cap of a gas tank, a stuffed toy animal. I also collaborated with my father, Claus Grupen, a distinguished particle physicist, on multiple articles exploring topics at the intersection of physics and philosophy, such as general relativity, gravitation, and dark matter. In my day job as a ghost-writer for executives, politicians, and thought leaders, I have started working on a new book in collaboration with Harvard Business School. Drawing on the example of Socrates, the book will explore the power of simple questions to challenge prejudice, uncover hidden knowledge, and help readers focus on what really matters in their jobs and in their lives."

NEWS: ALUMNI

1996



On 28 January 2023, **Ben Moss (History, 1996)** and his wife Vicky welcomed Alexander Hadley and Joshua Ethan into the world. They arrived earlier than expected and the NHS took incredible care

of them until they were ready to come home. We look forward to visiting Grange Road with them one day!

1997



After **Ben Whitaker (Manufacturing Engineering, 1997)**'s first unsuccessful business started while at Robinson studying MET closed down, he started a new business, Masabi, with Tom Godber (1997, Corpus Christi) which has now grown to be a global provider of modern public transit ticketing systems, selling over \$1bn of tickets per year from Australia to Alaska,

saving public sector agencies from death-march custom software builds and getting them all to share the same platform and be more sustainable. Ben has now moved down to Chichester with his family and started a new sustainability business, Kerbo Charge, a safer way for EV charging cables to cross the pavement to help people switch to EVs and use more sustainable off-peak charging right outside their own homes, even if they don't have a driveway.

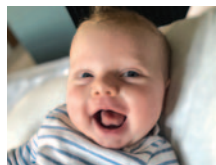
2000



Professor Neil Beattie (PhD in Natural Sciences, 2000), now a physicist at Northumbria University, has been appointed as a Fellow of the Institute of Physics (IOP), an accolade that signifies the highest level of membership attainable within the institute. The IOP is the professional body and learned society for physics in the UK and Ireland,

with an active role in promoting co-operation in physics around the world. Founded in 1874, it has a membership of over 21,000 physicists and strives to make physics accessible to people from all backgrounds. Fellow is a title awarded to those who have made a significant impact on their sector through their accomplishments in physics. After completing his PhD in physics at the University of Cambridge, Professor Beattie worked as an Innovation Consultant with household names such as Shell, P&G, Rolls-Royce and Boeing. He then joined Northumbria in 2009 and led the establishment of physics as a discipline at the University, designing and implementing a range of undergraduate and postgraduate degrees, together with associated laboratory infrastructure. Passionate about diversity and inclusion, especially in STEM subjects, he is committed to making physics accessible for all, particularly those from traditionally under-represented groups.

2002



Fiona Slinn (English, 2002) and husband Tom Stansfield welcomed Alexandra Grace on 9 December 2022. A welcome addition to their walks with Keith the Lagotto Romagnolo puppy in the Surrey Hills.

2003



Chris Coomber (Economics, 2003) and his wife Rachel are pleased to announce the arrival of their second son, Zachary Taylor Jack Coomber, on 6 February 2023. Big brother Ezra is enjoying helping out and they are all in love with the gorgeous addition to their family.



Mark Ferguson (SPS, 2003)

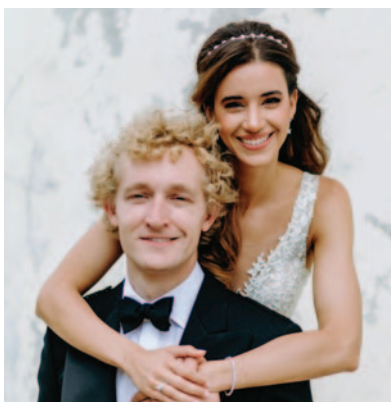
and Helen Jamieson (Homerton) welcomed their first child Joshua on 13 February 2023.

2006



On 2 December 2022, **Dr Jasmine Lee (Medicine, 2006)** and Dr Matthew Li Kam Wa welcomed their son Thomas Ryan Li Kam Wa at St George's Hospital London, weighing 3.3kg. They have enjoyed Christmas, Chinese New Year and Easter as a new family and are looking forward to spending their first summer together this year.

2011



Mimi McKinnon-Kyprianou (née Kyprianou) (Law, 2011) married Callum McKinnon-Kyprianou in Cyprus on 10 September 2022. Apart from now sharing a potentially unique Scottish/Cypriot surname, Mimi and Callum also share a career as Tax lawyers and will hopefully share a happy life together!

2014



After finishing an MPhil in Philosophy in 2015, **David Pejić (2014)** returned home to Croatia and started running Zrno, the oldest organic farm in the country. The farm makes over 150 certified organic products with an emphasis on artisan and small batch production using their own crops as raw materials, which result in a true farm-to-table experience. Last

September, the EU commission recognized his work, naming David the best organic farmer in the EU.

2019



Henri Eliot (MSt in Sustainability Leadership, 2019) has published a new revised edition of his book *Board Shorts: The Next Wave*, a very successful next generation book on effective governance education. Henri, the founding director of Board Dynamics, has distilled his many years of boardroom experience into one collection of invaluable insights. Board Shorts has

become a recognised, easy-to-read and indispensable guide for aspiring and current directors looking for perspectives and lessons on all aspects of governance from establishing a Board, Reviewing Performance to what key issues should be top of mind inside the Boardroom.



Anna Trofimtchouk (Geography - Conservation Leadership, 2019) and **Aaron Fritzler (Law, 2019)** are delighted to announce the arrival of their daughter Agata Rimma Fritzler, born 7 January 2023.

Max Willis (Law, 2019), Stanley Evans (Philosophy, 2019) and **George Pugh (Philosophy, 2018)** have been volunteering on-site for the Alsama Project since February 2023, an NGO operating out of refugee camps in Beirut, Lebanon. The Alsama Project provides full-time education, including extracurricular and sporting opportunities, for young Syrian and Palestinian refugees who have fallen outside of the mainstream education systems. Founded in 2020, the Alsama Project already has 400 students attending its secondary education institutes, with more attending regular cricket hubs on weekends. The students are educated in a core-curriculum of Maths, English and Arabic, but have also created their own art exhibitions, opera performances, and much more.

“Beirut is an incredible, vibrant place,” says Max. “However, a civil war, massive explosion and now an impending economic crisis make it a very troubled environment. The refugee camps are fascinating but quite dangerous: low-hanging wires, rubbish piles and gunshots are a constant feature of life in the Shatila and Bourj camps.”

On weekdays, Max is teaching poetry and Stanley critical thinking, whilst George is delivering lessons in chess. Max’s poetry sessions focus on tackling broad and relevant themes (such as empowerment and refugee status) through reading and writing. On critical thinking, Stanley reported that, “In our lessons I’ve been aiming to give the students a rare chance to think for themselves and question their own and others’ opinions. It’s been so rewarding to teach students who are so friendly and excited to learn. They are philosophers in the making!”



“The students have been obsessed with chess from lesson one, and are extremely competitive about it,” says George. “Knowing my students are now playing chess together after school, I feel proud to have introduced a game which has become such a constructive and enjoyable way for them to spend their spare time.” On weekends, Max, Stanley and George get involved with the cricket hubs that Alsama has set up across Beirut. All three agree that the students’ focus and commitment to both academia and cricket is extraordinarily inspiring. Alsama provides a source of hope and ambition to the incredible students that it supports. Max, Stanley and George feel very lucky to contribute to the organisation’s journey. If you’d like find out more about the charity, email comms@alsamaproject.com

NEWS: FELLOWS/SENIOR MEMBERS/BYE-FELLOWS



We are delighted to announce the appointment of Dr Scott Annett as Senior Tutor, to succeed Dr David Woodman. Dr Annett's research explores the interconnections between Italian and English literature, with specific focus on the writings of Dante, Geoffrey Chaucer, and Samuel Beckett. Of the news, Scott said: "I'm very much looking forward to contributing to the College community in the

role of Senior Tutor over the coming years, working to ensure that student welfare and academic opportunity remain at the forefront of the College's agenda." Scott is currently Robinson's Admissions Tutor for Sciences and will start his new role in Autumn 2023. The Warden, Sir Richard Heaton, said of Scott's appointment: "Dr Annett's record as a teacher and a scholar, his participation in every aspect of College life, and his profound understanding of pastoral issues make this an exciting appointment to Robinson."



Cambridge's Experimental Cancer Medicine Centre (ECMC) announced at the end of January that they will receive a major funding investment of around £3 million over the next five years. Dr Bristi Basu, Robinson Senior Member and ECMC lead, spoke to the importance of the extra funding: "It clearly demonstrates recognition of our research excellence in experimental cancer medicine and is a credit to all our

research teams working in alliance with our patient and public involvement group, and our academic and industrial partners. Clinical trials are crucial to new and improved treatments becoming adopted as standard treatments by the NHS, and this funding will allow us to advance how we can diagnose and treat cancer effectively." Cambridge will also see a new Cancer Research Hospital, due to open in 2026/2027.

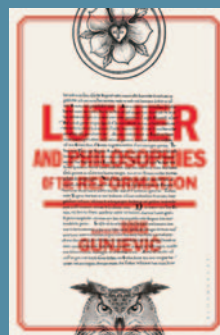


Congratulations to Dr Laura Machesky, Robinson Fellow and Sir William Dunn Professor of Biochemistry, who has received a five-year Discovery Programme Award from Cancer Research UK. The grant, of approximately £2 million, will fund a team of postdoctoral research associates and a PhD student, and aims to explore the basic principles of how cancer cells sense their environment, and how that can lead to metastasis.



Robinson's Director of Studies in Music, Dr Jeremy Thurlow, saw the world premiere of his work *After Seven Thunders* at a concert on Saturday 4 March at Clare Hall, alongside Poppy Beddoe (clarinet), Henry Chandler (violin), and Tim Lowe (cello). The four musicians, with Jeremy on the piano, also performed Messiaen's *Quartet for the End of Time*, one of the defining chamber works of the 20th century, and

Jeremy's inspiration for his own piece, written using similar biblical references. According to the *Cambridge Critique*, the concert was so packed that there was no chair for the cellist, and Jeremy's work was "exquisite, polished" and "had a satisfying coherence, an enjoyable integrity."



Bloomsbury has recently published *Luther and Philosophies of the Reformation*, a multi-disciplinary critical assessment on the Reformation discourse for the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation. The book is hailed as the first time that seven world-renowned scholars have come together to reflect on the major contributions of Martin Luther's thought: and many of those scholars are well-known in College! *Luther and Philosophies of the*

Reformation is edited by Rev'd Dr Boris Gunjevic, a Robinson Senior Member; the Preface is by Robinson's Chaplain Rev'd Dr Simon Perry; and Professor Morna Hooker and Professor Robin Kirkpatrick, both Life Fellows, each contributed a chapter. ■

WE MET AT ROBINSON

EMILY AND DAVID'S STORY



Mrs Emily Kipping (née Grange) (Archaeology and Anthropology, 2003) and **Professor David Kipping** (Natural Sciences – Physical, 2003)

Emily knocked my door in fresher's week of 2003 and I remember being a little shell shocked as I opened the door. But she wasn't even looking for me, rather the guy who I shared a bathroom with so that she could watch *Neighbours* on his telly. Ever since she awkwardly shuffled past me in that doorway, I wanted to know more about the Essex girl with terrible taste in TV shows. We were ships in the night at Robinson; Emily was up each day to row at 6am whilst I was often still larking around with my friends (the infamous "Q lounge"). It wasn't until a party in London after college that I finally had the nerve to ask



her out and we've been together for the sixteen years since. We've travelled the world together and eventually

settled upon New York City, with two American kids (Rosie and Jackson) who refuse to speak proper English. We both loved our time at Robinson, forming lifelong friendships that still persist. Whilst my days of comedy skits and bopping might be behind me, I can safely report that Emily's taste in television has not improved. ■

WELCOME/FAREWELL

NEW MEMBERS OF THE FELLOWSHIP



Dr Stephanie Archer is Robinson's new Fellow in Psychological and Behavioural Sciences. Steph is a HCPC registered Practitioner Health Psychologist and works across the Department of Psychology and the Department of Public Health and Primary Care. Steph's research career has predominantly focused on psycho-oncology. At the moment, she is working on a programme of work funded by Cancer Research UK that looks to design, develop and implement risk prediction tools for breast and ovarian cancer.



Professor Peter Bossaerts is Leverhulme International Professor of Neuroeconomics at the University of Cambridge. He pioneered the use of controlled experimentation in the study of financial markets. He also helped introduce decision and game theory in cognitive neuroscience, which led to the new fields of neuroeconomics and decision neuroscience. Recently, he has started to use computer science to study human and market

behaviour under computational complexity. Peter graduated with a PhD from UCLA. Prior to Cambridge, he spent most of his career at Caltech. Peter is elected Fellow of the Econometric Society, the Society for The Advancement of Economic Theory, and the Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia.



Dr Andrej Čorović first studied Biological Natural Sciences (2004-2007) and then Medicine (2007-2012) at Robinson, where he was an undergraduate Scholar, and has subsequently remained in the East of England region for his postgraduate medical training. He was appointed to a specialty training programme in Cardiology in 2017 and is currently engaged in full time research – taking time out of his clinical training

programme – as a BHF Clinical Research Training Fellow based at the Heart and Lung Research Institute on the Cambridge Biomedical Campus. Having been a College Teaching Associate and Bye-Fellow in Physiology at Downing College since 2013, Andrej was delighted to be appointed Director of Studies in Pre-Clinical Medicine (1B) at Robinson in 2020, in which capacity he now continues as a Fellow of the College.



Professor Laura Machesky

was elected to the fellowship in November 2022. She explains her path to Cambridge and her research in the My Robinson section on page 6.



Dr Peter Newton is Robinson's new Fellow in

Physics. He studied for his undergraduate degree in Natural Sciences here at Robinson between 2008 and 2012. He then continued at Robinson for his PhD, investigating the properties of electron and hole transport in germanium and germanium/silicon heterostructures in order to evaluate their potential

applicability to next generation devices such as the spin field effect transistor. In his current projects, he is developing an experimental system to optically measure the magnetic properties of materials at low temperature and high pressure, and is investigating nanostructures found in nature, particularly those present in butterfly wings. Peter has been supervising undergraduate Physics at Robinson since 2012.



The Revd Dr Simon Perry has served as Chaplain to Robinson College since September 2011.

After seven years in the Royal Air Force, Simon had a succession of posts as a carer, a scaffolder, a security manager and a parker of gigantic seafaring oil tankers. He trained for ministry in the Baptist Union of Great Britain, studied Theology at Regent's Park College, Oxford and embarked on

postgraduate studies at the University of Bristol. Before Cambridge, Simon served in a small village church in Somerset, as Chaplain to Fitzwilliam College, Cambridge, and as minister of Bloomsbury Central Baptist Church – one of two senior posts in the Baptist Union of Great Britain. He has also been President of the South Western Baptist Association, Head of Worship Initiative at the Baptist Union, and member of the Joint Liturgical Group. His PhD worked at the interface of Philosophy and Biblical Studies, focusing on Technology and Hermeneutics. His research today is on Ideology and Biblical Studies, and he is currently preparing the Black's New Testament Commentary on the Gospel of Luke.

OBITUARIES AND TRIBUTES



Dr Susan Drucker-Brown (1936 – 2023)

Prof. Mick Brown acknowledges with deepest gratitude the overwhelming messages of sympathy he has received from Fellows and staff expressing their appreciation for his late wife, Susan. Susan passed away on 1 May 2023, aged 87. She experienced with him the foundation of the College, choosing the first set of library books

appropriate to social sciences, particularly social anthropology. Her participation with him in college social events exemplified one of Robinson's founding principles, namely that partners of Fellows should be welcomed at dinners and other functions of collegiate society.

Fellows may be unaware of Susan's background. Her family was exiled to Mexico as a consequence of Senator McCarthy's anticommunist purges in the USA of the 1950s. She was then a teenager and suffered traumatic interruption of her education and family life. She studied anthropology at the Escuela Nacional de Antropología e Historia de México. Her thesis 'Cambio de Indumentaria' was published in Spanish by the Instituto Nacional Indigenista. Perhaps appropriate to her own forced transformation from American to Mexican, she described the change in clothing style worn by villagers as they left traditional dress for 'mestizo' style, that is, more urban western garb. Prof Meyer Fortes on a visit to Mexico spotted her talent and invited her to apply to do a PhD in Cambridge. The result was field work in Ghana and eventually another book, *'Ritual Aspects of Mamprussi Kingship'*, which describes the nature of chiefly office and the installation ceremonies which initiate its holders.

Susan's enthusiasm for social anthropology as a preeminent social science served her well as a longstanding editor of *Cambridge Anthropology*, from its inception as a kind of lively house journal to its transformation into a professional journal *The Cambridge Journal of Anthropology*, published by Berghen Press. She was an active undergraduate supervisor, participant and Chair of the West African Seminar for many years, and before retirement, a Senior Lecturer at the University of Hull.

Susan's work displays the lively intelligence and human warmth which was evident in her conversation, as well as in her roles as a wife, and mother to Sarah, Isabel, and Toby. She occasionally enjoyed lunches with her grandchildren at Robinson, as well as the pleasures of the College gardens. She always suffered vulnerability related to her teenage trauma, but with her family overcame it to yield such a productive life in the service of others and indeed of larger society.

As of now there is an exhibition of her Mexican work in Oaxaca. There will be a celebration of her life in Cambridge, at a date to be announced. Meanwhile her family privately mourn her, and are deeply grateful for the widespread sympathy they have been shown.



Reverend Dr Anna Matthews (1978 – 2023)

The late Reverend Matthews, a much beloved member of the Cambridge community, passed away on 8 March 2023. She had been the Vicar of St Bene't's Church in central Cambridge since 2012, having studied theology at Robinson, and was ordained in 2003.

Reverend Dr David Cornick, Robinson Fellow and Director of Studies in Theology and Religious Studies, had Anna as one of his first students. "Anna was a fine student of theology: lively, intelligent, thoughtful, diligent. Supervisors enjoyed teaching her as her enthusiasm for the subject was obvious. That passion was undergirded by a deep Christian faith and a love of church music. It was no surprise that she later trained for ordination in the Church of England, and it was a matter of quiet pride to see her flourishing as the Precentor of St Alban's Cathedral, and latterly (since 2012) as the much loved and respected Vicar of St Bene't's here in Cambridge. Anna was a priest of singular distinction."

Image credit: St Bene't's Church



Amy Kendal Smith (1995 – 2022)

Amy, a Robinson student working for a PhD in the Department of Plant Sciences, died peacefully in the presence of her family in November 2022 after a long illness. Although Amy was just 27, she had already laid the foundation of a potentially outstanding career in plant and pollinator biology.

Her passion for both field and lab work was infectious, and the photograph of Amy collecting bumblebees illustrates this wonderfully. She was a warm, generous, optimistic and very funny person, and enjoyed sailing, rock climbing, painting, clothes making, soft toy making and caravanning in her spare time. She was an enthusiastic member of the Robinson Gardening Society and worked as a volunteer guide at Sherwood Forest. Her supervisor at Kew, Professor Phil Stevenson, reminisced that "she made a big impression and was a ray of sunshine in the lab."

From an appreciation of Amy by Professor John Carr, her PhD supervisor.

Image credit: Professor Phil Stevenson, Kew

Nicole Ann Weiner (1973 – 2023)

Nicole (Architecture, 1993) died of cancer on 9 May 2023. A longer tribute to her will be published in the next edition of Bin Brook.

Keeping in touch

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Robinson College
Cambridge
CB3 9AN

If you think we may not have your current contact details and you would like to update these, please get in touch to keep in touch:
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Dates for the diary

05/07/2023

Annual Reception,
No. 11 Cavendish Square, London

23/09/2023

Reunion Dinner (Matriculation Years 1982, 1983, 1992, 1993, 2002, 2003, 2012, 2013),
Robinson College

05/11/2023

Commemoration of Benefactors' Service
and Supper, Robinson College

30/11/2023

City Drinks, 1 Threadneedle Street, London

02/12/2023

Christmas Concert and Freshers' Parents' Lunch,
Robinson College

05-19/12/2023

Telephone Campaign



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CAMBRIDGE