

St Benet's News

December 2016



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First day at Benet's October 2016
(including our inaugural cohort of female undergraduates)

Front cover photos: Old & New

(top: original building 38 St Giles; bottom: new second building at 11 Norham Gardens)

Photo Credits: St Benet's Hall / Ampleforth Abbey.

MESSAGE FROM THE MASTER



Photo: St. Benet's Hall

Dear Alumni and Friends of St Benet's Hall,

As this momentous year comes to a close I wish to update you on developments in the Hall. In October 2015, the matriculation of 15 new postgraduate students (12 women and 3 men) in addition to the matriculation of the then last male-only undergraduate cohort of 16 students brought a larger than ever group of new junior members to St Benet's. And at the beginning of Michaelmas Term in October 2016, the first fully co-educational cohort of undergraduate students has joined the Hall: 9 women and 9 men who all reside in our new second building at 11 Norham Gardens. In addition, we expanded our overall intake of postgraduate students to 20 with a number of them living at our central building at 38 St Giles'.

It has been a delight to witness the smooth integration of the new students into the Hall community and around our common table. My termly Master's Collections, in the presence of the Senior Tutor and the respective Directors of Study, allow me to follow the academic and personal development of each of our students and to ascertain that all are well prepared for their respective examinations. The frequent formal and informal meetings between students and teachers contribute to the unique experience of life at St Benet's. Moreover, our diverse guests and distinguished guest speakers, among them this year the Mongolian Foreign Minister, further add to this experience.

During this year I have met up with many alumni in Oxford, London, New York, Washington and Hong Kong. In late March 2017 Oxford University alumni reunions will take place in Hong Kong and Singapore, and I shall be delighted to see our old members from Asia and beyond.

Now we must make every effort to raise the funds necessary to purchase the Norham Garden site. We have less than 12 months to succeed with this project. Please allow me to appeal to your advice, generosity and support for this great leap forward for St Benet's Hall.

With every good wish for Christmas and the New Year,

Werner G Jeanrond
Master

THE HISTORY OF 11 NORHAM GARDENS



Our new second building, located at 11 Norham Gardens (a few minutes' walk from Lady Margaret Hall) has an illustrious past. The covers of this newsletter show the front and back of the building in all its Victorian Gothic glory. Commissioned in 1866 by a local solicitor, the architect was William Wilkinson, best known for designing the Randolph Hotel in Beaumont Street.

Amongst the earliest owners was Henry Balfour, the first curator of the Pitt Rivers Museum of Ethnology & Anthropology. However, the best known inhabitant was Francis (Frank) Llewellyn Griffith, the first Professor of Egyptology at Oxford, who lived in the building from 1907-1932. Griffiths (1862-1934) had studied at Queen's College, Oxford, but refused to read for honours, preferring to teach himself hieroglyphics instead. In the early part of his career he worked on

excavations with The Egypt Exploration Fund. His particular talents lay in linguistics and decipherment and, such was his talent in his area, that in 1901, when the University decided to introduce Egyptology to its curriculum, Griffith was appointed as the first reader. He moved to 11 Norham Gardens in 1907 and that same year he married Nora, who was herself a keen student of Egyptology and had before their marriage been a conservator in the Archaeological Museum of King's College, Aberdeen. After they married, she worked closely with Frank as his assistant and recorder on a series of Oxford excavations in Nubia, the Sudan and Egypt.

Frank and Nora were known for their extensive hospitality and 11 Norham Gardens was an open house to friends and colleagues, with croquet a particular favourite (a tradition that will no doubt continue with Benet's students).



In 1924 Griffith (*photo right*) became the first Professor of Egyptology at Oxford. He retired in 1932, moving to Boars Hill, and was made professor emeritus in 1933. He died suddenly from a heart attack in 1934 and was buried in Holywell Cemetery. He left most of his substantial fortune to the University to build and endow a permanent centre for teaching and research in Egyptology.

Nora died 3 years later from peritonitis, having spent the intervening years working on her husband's unpublished works and sponsoring further excavations to Nubia. She left her estate to be added to her husband's bequest. The Griffith Institute is now located on St John Street,



Oxford and houses one of the most significant Egyptological archives in the world, containing the papers of many scholars and early travellers to Egypt, including Howard Carter's complete records from the discovery of the tomb of Tutankhamun.

In 1932, 11 Norham Gardens was purchased by the Society of the Sacred Heart as a House of Studies and hostel for Catholic female students. The Society in turn offered it to St Benet's Hall in 2015.

A century after Griffith first moved to Norham Gardens, much of the Victorian part of the house remains largely undisturbed, although the purpose of the rooms has changed: the original family dining room (*photo left*) to the left of the entrance hall as you enter is now a conference room (*photo below*), whilst the original drawing room (*photo previous page*) on the other side of the entrance hall is now the Library

(*photo previous page*). The greatest change, however, is in the basement where a large room that is now used as a dining room for out-of-term residential conferences was once Griffith's personal museum.

Additional alterations will be made as Benet's settles in to the new building but the sense of history and the spirit of the former inhabitants, both the families and the Sisters, will be preserved.



With thanks to Dr Frances Reynolds and to the Griffith Institute for their help with the background to this history. The archive photographs shown here are reproduced with the kind permission of the Griffith Institute and © The Griffith Institute, University of Oxford.

GRADUATION 2016

We were delighted to welcome back so many *graduands* this year. Graduation is a celebration of all the hard work and effort that has been put in by our students during their time in Oxford and we are honoured to share in this with our alumni and their families and friends. We were particularly pleased to have celebrated the graduation of our first female graduate student, Tina Hinchliffe, who was awarded an MSt in Jewish Studies in November 2016.



May Dr Ulrich Schmiedel, DPhil in Theology,
and Abbot Richard Purcell of Roscrea Abbey



November Top row: Tina Hinchliffe;
Second row: Tom Lambert, John O'Connor, Morgan Griffiths, Simon Whittle;
Bottom: Sergey Mosesov, Nick Scott, Cormac Connelly-Smith, Ben Lacaille;
Not shown in these photos: Zahra Latif, Sam Gomarsall, Kiera Bogues.



A FEMALE GRADUATE'S VIEWPOINT

Looking back over the last twelve months, St Benet's Hall was undoubtedly the calm in the storm of my MBA year.

It isn't easy to do justice to this special place but its common table is a good place to begin. It represents a great deal but is quiet, understated in its influence. It unites academic disciplines, nationalities, people of faith and no faith, generations, experience, ideologies, ambitions, hopes and fears at a single table.

Moments of special significance include arriving red-faced, late and apologetic to my first meal at St Benet's (the undergraduates having confusingly, *mysteriously* disappeared from the library at exactly 7:15pm); reading a passage from the Rule of St Benedict before dinner and finding out afterwards that I was likely the first woman in the history of the Hall to do so; Christmas dinner and raucous after-dinner Carol singing in the Chapel; taking part in the highly acclaimed St Benet's pantomime as Wendy, foil to Peter and the renamed "Lost People" and as Stiffy Bing in this summer's Garden Play of Jeeves and Wooster; dining beside new and lifelong friends as well as special guests of the Hall at Carnivale.

Still now, I'm reminded abruptly, *entertainingly* when a colleague from New or John's mentions our former identity as the bastion of male education at Oxford University. My experience of Benet's was always in the presence of a sensational cohort of twelve female graduates, so its intriguing to me that anyone graduating earlier than 2014 didn't have this same experience. Knowing that this was once a community where the presence of female students wasn't the norm, it is endlessly gratifying to see how effortlessly the Hall transitioned.

Naturally, the female cohort of Benetians are fabulous individuals; students of public policy, Islam and Sufism, Chinese Buddhism as well as fellow MBAs, it is a privilege to know them.

I was asked to say something about just how welcoming the men were at Benet's when we arrived. Well, from the start there was an amazing spirit of warmth, inclusivity, good humour and generosity combined with a determination to succeed, which made me joyful that the haphazard, under-researched decision to come to St Benet's had worked out in my favour.

To have had just a year at Benet's has been precious but my association with Benet's will continue for far longer: it will always be an important part of my life and, having been co-opted into the Alumni Association, I am delighted that it will continue to be significant in the future.

Connie Cha, MBA Student at St Benet's Hall 2015-16

Editor's note: We are delighted to announce that Connie gained a distinction in her MBA.



RECOGNITION AND NAMING OPPORTUNITIES

Giving a donation to St Benet's Hall will ensure that the Hall has the facilities to offer to all its students the unique climate of personal development, academic enquiry and spiritual exploration that is St Benet's.

There are naming opportunities open to donors to St Benet's Hall, including:

A chair in the Library at 11 Norham Gardens	£400
A chair in the Refectory at 38 St Giles	£600
A table in the Library at 11 Norham Gardens	£1,500
Student annual travel grant fund.....	£12,500
New Common Table in the Refectory	£32,000
The Library at 11 Norham Gardens	£150,000
Seminar rooms at 11 Norham Gardens	£150,000
Student annual bursary fund	£155,000
Library in St Giles	£250,000
Lectureship/Director of Studies.....	£2,250,000
11 Norham Gardens.....	£3,500,000 (minimum)

If you would like to discuss these or other means of supporting St Benet's Hall, please contact Katy Griffiths on katy.griffiths@stb.ox.ac.uk or 01865 280555.

*Winning photo from SBH 2017
Freshers' Photo Competition by Dom
Walker, first year Classicist*



A Huge Thank You to All Our Donors

We are extremely grateful to all those who have generously given donations to St Benet's over the past years. Without your help and assistance, we would struggle to survive.

UPDATE ON THE TRANSFORMATION OF ST BENET'S

We are delighted that Ampleforth Abbey, our parent-Abbey, are helping us with our fundraising plans by lending us the expertise and guidance of their Director of Development, Sue Fisher.

On 2nd October, 2016 St Benet's Hall welcomed nine women and nine men as first year students. We can now truly say we are a co-educational institution with a strong and vital future ahead of us, further evidenced by the growth in postgraduate students at St Benet's. However, this success presents us with two problems: a lack of space for the growing, enhanced research facilities and accommodation for female students.

You will be aware we have been fortunate enough to rent a house from the Sisters of the Society of the Sacred Heart in nearby Norham Gardens. Doing this has enabled us to expand, whilst preserving the enclosure of the monks who live and work at St Giles and whose life and values underpin our studies. Having the use of additional property is essential to the future sustainable success of St Benet's and our role within Oxford University.

The Sisters have now presented us with the opportunity to buy this property, however, that window of opportunity is narrow due to the Society's own financial needs. We have just under one year to raise the £6million needed to make the purchase.

11 Norham Gardens provides us with the accommodation needed for our female undergraduates; teaching facilities for our growing student base and research facilities expected of an Oxford University college. The property market in Oxford is such that we cannot afford not to miss this once in a generation opportunity.

However, unlike many other Oxford colleges, St Benet's Hall is not wealthy. We do not have the advantage of an Endowment fund and nor do our partners at Ampleforth Abbey. Therefore we have to rely upon the generosity of those who understand and have an empathy with St Benet's: our work and our future aspirations.

Whilst we have secured some funds towards this purchase, we still have a long way to go and need just over £5million to secure 11 Norham Gardens. If you are reading this and feel as strongly as we do about the need to continue our transformative plans and you think you may be able to help, either financially or in other ways then please do get in touch.

If you would like to make a donation now, you can do so via the Oxford Thinking campaign website at: <https://www.campaign.ox.ac.uk/page.aspx?pid=2845>



Photo: Ampleforth Abbey

THE MASTER'S TRAVELS

In 2016 the Master, Prof Werner G Jeanrond, was invited to give lectures and seminars on his research at the University of Lund (Sweden), the Chinese University of Hong Kong, the Baptist University of Hong Kong, Beijing Normal University, Renmin University in Beijing, Tsinghua University in Beijing, and Ripon College Cuddeston. He has also contributed to a theological conference on *How to talk about God today* in Stockholm, to a conference on *Love in Religion* at Regent's Park College in the University of Oxford, and to an ACTA conference on *Church Renewal* in London. He was guest speaker at the Dominican Priory at Lund (Sweden) and Trinity College Dublin, and external examiner of a doctoral thesis in theology at the University of Cologne (Germany).

The Mater's lecture at Renmin University of China, Beijing, September 2016



The Master was delighted to have the opportunity to meet so many US alumni and friends of Benet's at the University's Alumni Weekend in Washington DC in April 2016 and at a joint Ampleforth/St Benet's reception in Hong Kong in September 2016..

In 2017, the University's Alumni Weekend will be in Singapore in late March, preceded by a series of events in Hong Kong. We will send out details of planned University and Benet's events early in 2017.



FELLOWS NEWS

Newly Appointed Research Fellow

The Trustees of St Benet's Hall have appointed **Dr Pieter Francois** to the position of Research Fellow in Anthropology from 1st September 2016.

Dr. Pieter Francois is also a Senior Lecturer in Digital History and director of the Cliodynamics Lab at the University of Hertfordshire. At Oxford University he is the research coordinator of the Cultural Evolution Lab at the Institute of Cognitive and Evolutionary Anthropology, in addition to being a Fellow at St Benet's Hall. He is a Founding Editor of the Seshat: Global History Project. His research uses historical and archaeological Big Data to explain the evolution of social complexity, prosocial behaviour, ritualistic behaviour, warfare, and inequality. He is a leading scholar of research design for large scale collaborative digital humanities projects.

Photo: Dr Pieter Francois



Oxford Recognition of Distinction

Dr Sue Doran, Fellow of St Benet's Hall and Jesus College, has been promoted to Professor of Early Modern British History at the University of Oxford



Publications, Lectures, Tours & Awards

Dr Frances Reynolds, Shillito Fellow in Assyriology, was a guest on Radio 4's In Our Time, hosted by Melvyn Bragg, on 3rd November, talking about the Akkadian poem, The Epic of Gilgamesh.

Dr Nadia Jamil's book in 'Ethics and Poetry in Sixth-century Arabia', will be published by the Gibb Memorial Trust in 2017.

Dr Brian Klug, Senior Research Fellow in Philosophy, was the Keynote Speaker at the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights' Forum in Vienna in June 2016. In January, the London Review Bookshop held a very successful book launch for his publication: *Words of Fire: Selected Essays of Ahad Ha'am* (ed. Brian Klug).

Dr Mary Marshall was a finalist in the 'Most Acclaimed Lecturer' category of OUSU student-led 2016 Teaching Awards.

THE MONASTIC PRESENCE AT ST BENET'S



Report by the Prior, Fr Oswald McBride

The monastic community at St Benet's this year numbers three, consisting of: Fr Oswald as Prior and Chaplain; Fr Gabriel as Librarian, and Br Jaroslaw (Jarek) Kurek, a monk of Glenstal Abbey in Ireland who is with us for two years to do an MPhil in Theology.

We have reviewed our liturgical life this year, making some developments. Midday Prayer was reintroduced last year and continues to give a sense of balance to the monastic day. Vespers continues to be sung in Latin on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Sundays, but we now also sing English Vespers each day, still based on the Roman Office, but using the Downside "2-line" English plainsong tones for the psalms. The *Te Deum* is now sung at Sunday Matins, and Sunday Lauds is also now sung. Br Jarek's contribution as a cantor has been significant, and the new arrangement means we can sing even when only 2 out of 3 monks are present. Compline is sung every night, and continues to be the most popular of the Offices for student attendance – especially in the run-up to Schools! Members of the Companions of the Order of Malta attend as a group on alternate Saturdays during term.

Our daily Mass continues to be an important contribution to Oxford life. Members of the de la Salle community normally attend each weekday, along with other regulars and some students. Sunday Mass continues to be popular, with numbers this year higher than last and a higher proportion of students, now including a substantial body of Polish students.

Relations between the Community and students are strong: many of the students will turn to one of the monks when problems arise, whether academic, pastoral or personal. This has proved to be important on a number of occasions this term and is a real strength for the Hall.



Benet's Carol Service December 2016. Photo: Gemma Robson

Fr Oswald gave a short induction talk to the Freshers during Freshers' Week for the first time this year. The talk introduced new students to the Chapel and what happens there, extending an invitation to "Come and See". It also provided an opportunity to talk about basic welfare issues, especially with regard to stress and mental well-being.

Both Fr Gabriel and Fr Oswald combine their duties at St Benet's with other major responsibilities at Ampleforth Abbey, as Master of Studies and Vocations Co-ordinator respectively. Both continue to teach courses at the Abbey for the junior monks, and both are members of the Abbey Trust, requiring monthly returns to Yorkshire.

Notable Events

Br Maximilian Toczylowski completed his studies for ordination at the end of Trinity term and returned to his home abbey of St Louis in Missouri. He is much missed: he preached regularly during the year at Sunday Mass, producing homilies of excellent quality and thoughtfulness. His ordination as deacon in July 2015 is believed to be the first ordination ever to take place in the Hall.

In late September, Fr Gabriel and Fr Oswald attended Br (now Fr) Maximilian's priestly ordination at **St Louis Abbey**. In Missouri, USA. It was a joyous occasion, and it also provided the opportunity to catch up with *alumnus* and ex-Captain of Boats, Fr Cuthbert Elliott (now Junior Master at St Louis).

Other significant Hall events have included the **Blessing of the new St Benet's Boat** (see Boat Club news for more information) and the **Baptism** of the son of one of our Fellows.



Photo: Ampleforth Abbey

Fr Maximilian Toczylowski's priest ordination at St Louis Abbey, USA, September 2016

Baptism ceremony March 2016 (including happy family & Hall staff).



Blessing of the new Boat outside the boathouse at the Christchurch Regatta, November 2016



SPORTS UPDATE

ST BENET'S HALL BLUES

When it comes to Blues and Half-Blues, St Benet's punches well above its weight. According to the latest Vincent's Club Newsletter (January Blues News 2016), Benet's has a greater percentage of Blues and Half-Blues than any other college or PPH.

Benetians who have been awarded Blues in the past year include: Sam Gomarsall (football); Andy Fanthorpe (hockey) and Thais Rocha da Silva (first team colours for Tae Kwon Do).

Other players of note include: James Calderwood, who played in the Under 20's Rugby Football Varsity Match this year, and Rory Farquharson, who played for the Maroons in the University Rugby League squad.

In Michaelmas term, two new members of the Hall were selected for the Varsity squads: Gemma Robson, one of our new Junior Deans, in Women's Rugby and fresher, Dom Walker in Swimming.

*Stop press: As a result of Gemma Robson's role in December's Women's Rugby Varsity match at Twickenham, she will be awarded a Half-Blue early next year.

It has been another successful year of sport for Benet's. Looking beyond the success of individual sportsmen and women, sport at Benet's has made great progress; Michaelmas term saw our inaugural participation in the highly competitive Football Cuppers tournament. We managed to beat two teams (from much larger colleges) before succumbing to Keble in the third round. For Benet's to be even participating was a victory in itself but actually winning some games made that victory even sweeter! Similar performances in the 5-a-side tournament in Trinity term have firmly established Benet's on the footballing map, and I am hopeful that this will continue to flourish next year.



The departing Lance Baynham also organised for Benet's to take part in the Rugby 7s inter-college

tournament. Though we did not progress beyond the group stages, we nonetheless soundly defeated a strong Oriel side in the group stages and it was a highly enjoyable day all round. Finally, what other way would there be to round off our sporting calendar than in a traditionally strong outing in the croquet cuppers tournament. This year was a particularly special one for Benet's and croquet as we had our first women competing in the tournament.

Andy Fanthorpe (JCR Sports Secretary & 3rd year Classicist)

Tae Kwon Do Varsity match.



Photo: S Rumpf

Inter-College Rugby match (St Benet's won!)



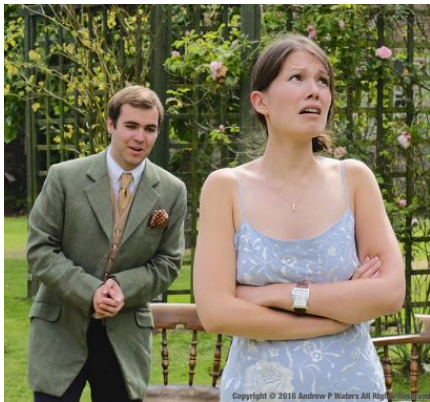
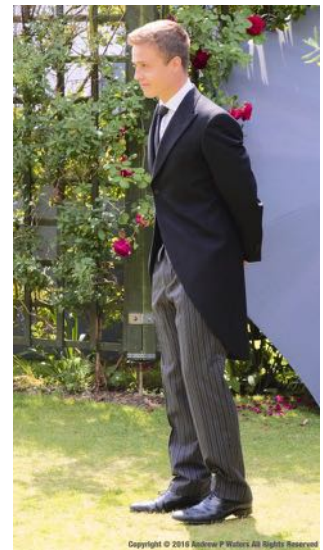
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ST BENET'S GARDEN PLAY



Continuing the much-loved tradition, this summer's Hall Garden Play was *Jeeves & Wooster in Perfect Nonsense*. The director, first year classicist, Ed McGovern (left), showed himself to be exceptional in his ability to direct a discordant group of actors—including finalists, a member of staff and even the College dog—without ever raising his voice. Such was the popularity of the production that the two proposed performances became three, and all were sold out. Encouraged by very enthusiastic audiences (helped no doubt by the free Pimm's that was liberally given out on arrival), the production was slick and highly entertaining. With such a small pool of potential cast 'in-house', actors from other colleges joined the cast. Special

mention must be made of the following: Hugh Rowan from Oriel, who played a bumbling yet endearing Bertie Wooster, Cormac Connelly-Smith, as a bombastic Uncle Watkins, Connie Cha, by turns winsome and conniving as Stiffy Bing, and Marco Hughes as Sir Watkyn Bassett's butler, Seppings who, although he had a small part, stole the show with his particularly menacing interpretation. Special mention must also be given to Boffin, the black Labrador and unofficial mascot of Benet's, who played the role of Stiffy Bing's terrier, Bartholomew with insouciance.



REVIEW BY STEVEN SPISTO, JCR PRESIDENT 2015-16



Students at St Benet's continually play a part in the wider University, a part which greatly belies our size. This is particularly noticeable in the fields of music and sports. For example, Gus Streeting, now in the third year of his philosophy & theology degree plays the cello for the university philharmonic orchestra.

The annual Benet's smoker was a roaring success this year thanks to performances from Benetians across the years. Our very own Dr Nick Waghorn (*right*), tutor in Philosophy and director of studies for PPE performed some stand up comedy to great acclaim. Two of our second years, Sam Hodson and Sam Cheney, who've already garnered a reputation for musical prowess added to a glittering portfolio of appearances. The whole event was organized and presided over by Cormac Connelly-Smith, who continued to exceed himself even in his final year.



The success of our Gerard's ChariTea events continued this year. Students were encouraged to submit charities they wished to support and for Hilary, we chose Send A Cow, nominated by one of our Finalists, Ben Lacaille. Send A Cow is a fantastic charity that helps poor communities in east Africa which have the land but not the means or knowledge to sustain themselves by providing livestock and training.



One of the most popular events of the year is Burns Night. The Hall celebrates the black tie supper with the traditional haggis, neeps and tatties, and Cranachan pudding. This year our resident thespian, Cormac Connelly-Smith, read the Address to a Haggis and led the toast, while the Haggis was paraded round the table to the tune of bag-pipes played by a fourth year Orientalist Rory Farquharson. Enthusiastic Highland dancing in the Calefactory followed the meal.



Every term ends with customary style with the JCR Party on the Thursday of 8th Week. This year, the themes included Venetian Masquerade, so the Hall and its guests were suitably dressed in black tie and mask combo. Entertainment was provided by a six-piece jazz band, which played throughout the night. They set the tone for the evening starting out with smooth numbers that enchanted the crowd, then slowly building the melodies that transformed the party into a swing furore by the end of the evening.

I hope this has given a taste of some of the things that students get up to. It is just a snapshot, and does no justice to just how active members of our JCR are. But as St Benet's moves forward, our connections with alumni, from current student to former student, will become ever more important. I trust that that relationship will thrive in the future. On that note, I would like to thank you, on behalf of the outgoing JCR committee and the JCR as a whole for your continuing support.



ST BENET'S BOAT CLUB

WELCOME FROM THE CAPTAIN, MARCO HUGHES (2ND YEAR HISTORIAN)



This year has seen an historic occasion for the Boat Club; for the first time, a women's eight took to the water for Christ Church regatta. With decent performances put in by both the men's and women's eights at the regatta, we now look to Torpids, taking place towards the end of Hilary Term.

I am also delighted to report of the incorporation of St. Stephen's House (Staggers) under the St. Benet's banner, and that they have become an integral and monumental part of our current Boat Club.

FRIENDS OF THE BOAT CLUB

The St Benet's Hall Boat Club survives entirely on donations. We take great pride in being the only Oxford college boat club not to charge our members to row with us, costing us valuable income but keeping our wonderful institution as open and as inclusive as possible, well in keeping with the Benedictine ethos of the Hall.

With the purchase of the new women's boat, our costs have increased substantially as we now must rack and insure two boats, and pay for twice as many coaching sessions as before as we now have two racing crews. Costs are saved wherever they can be, but now more than ever we rely on the generosity of our alumni and our other kind donors. Please email the President, William Frost, at sbhbcommittee@gmail.com to find out how you can help. On behalf of the whole Boat Club and St Benet's Hall, thank you most sincerely.

St Benet's Hall underwent its most radical change in admission process with the class beginning their studies in October 2016: for the first time ever, undergraduate women would study alongside the men in our glorious institution.



This was made possible by the acquisition of 11 Norham Gardens. Although fundraising is well underway and proving extremely successful, all of us students at St Benet's Hall are worried for the Hall's long-term future and thus keen to see the purchase of the building solidified as soon as possible. If you think you may be able to help, please do get in touch with the Hall.

Will Frost, Boat Club President



BENET'S NEW BOAT

By unanimous vote, perhaps everyone's favourite new member of the Boat Club, our new women's eight! Purchased from LMH Boat Club for the tidy sum of £1,500, we are currently launching our biggest ever fundraising drive.

To the left is a picture of the blessing, conducted by Benet's own Fr Oswald, of our new boat (still yet to be named), that happened barely an hour before the women's first race.



First-years, Jenny Kirkpatrick (Arabic and Islamic Studies) and Josie Gilbert (Classics), talk about their rowing experiences

Photo: St Benet's Boat Club



We are freshers in the first co-educational Undergraduate year group at St Benet's Hall. We have both really enjoyed our first term, having become involved with the first Benet's Women's boat. In a typical week, we have two water sessions, one at the crack of dawn on Thursday, when the view of the river is at its most insta-worthy, and the other, when the sun typically sets around 4 on a Saturday. Josie, as cox, has been responsible for safety, encouragement and steering, and Jenny, as a rower, has been learning the correct rowing technique, and most recently, good race strategy. We rowers also have one supervised land session coached by the lovely Lucy Mason on Tuesdays, which always results in sore limbs for a few days. It's been great gaining these new skills, and without the encouragement of the older years, we would never have become so enthusiastic about this sport.

There's a certain camaraderie at lunchtime around the Benet's common table when we moan about being up for 8 hours already to all the non-rowers, and need to nap in the JCR before dinner, but the lack of sleep (at times) has definitely been worth it. The sense of community we have felt through rowing, not only when training, but also at our first Regatta with all those who came to support, is something really special, particularly in such a small college. It's been great to put down the books and de-stress in the fresh air, helping us to keep sane through the deadlines and essay crises associated with our two subjects, Classics and Arabic with Islamic Studies. We are very proud to have managed to put out a full boat for the Christ Church Regatta and to have represented a college that we both love.



PUBLIC TALKS & WORKSHOPS



THE WILLIAM E SIMON FOUNDATION LECTURE WITH SPEAKER FR KLAUS MERTES, SJ

Fr Klaus Mertes, SJ (*right*), delivered the second **William E Simon Foundation Lecture** at St Benet's Hall on 1 November 2016 on the topic of *A Traumatized and Traumatizing Institution: Reflections on the Sexual Abuse Crisis in the Catholic Church*.

The lecture and lively question and answer session were chaired by the Chancellor of the University of Oxford, **Lord Chris Patten of Barnes**. The topic of this lecture raised considerable interest in and beyond Oxford in view of the ongoing revelations of sexual abuse

in many parts of society. Many people have asked us to make this most impressive and thought-provoking lecture available to the wider public. It can be found at: <http://www.st-benets.ox.ac.uk/uploads/files/Mertes.pdf>

BENET'S IN LONDON TALK BY AWARD-WINNING DOCUMENTARY-MAKER & PRO- DUCER, ANTHONY GEFFEN

The second St Benet's in London talk took place at the Institute of Contemporary Arts in The Mall in May 2016. The speaker was one of the world's leading documentary filmmakers and producers, Anthony Geffen of Atlantic Productions. We are also very proud that Anthony is an alumnus of Benet's ('80) and a member of our advisory Board of Regents.

Anthony gave a fascinating talk, accompanied by clips from many of his multi BAFTA and Emmy award winning productions, starting with his earliest efforts at school and at Benet's. His career includes his highly successful collaboration with David Attenborough and his most recent ventures into Virtual Reality, CGI and 3D.



We were delighted to welcome so many alumni to the occasion and the event was evidently much enjoyed. Feedback included: "I didn't know we had such interesting alumni" and "We would never have imagined Benet's could put on a cool event like this". *What can we say but 'Watch This Space...'*

BILL SIMON BOOK LAUNCH

In October, St Benet's Hall were delighted to host the book launch of Professor William E Simon, Jr's *Great Catholic Parishes*, published by Ave Maria Press.

The book, , looks at what is happening in the Catholic Church in North America and whether parishes are thriving or dying; whether dissatisfaction among Catholics is growing or whether they are they becoming more engaged in the evangelizing mission of the Church.



Prof Simon is CEO of Parish Catalyst, which he founded to provide support for parish life. He also Adjunct Professor at the School of Law and at the Department of Economics at University of California, Los Angeles, and a great friend and supporter of Benet's.

PARISH RENEWAL WORKSHOP OCTOBER 2016

A second public event in October was a Study Day to discuss successful approaches to Parish Renewal in the United States of America and to consider the potential for Parish Renewal in the United Kingdom. Practitioners from both sides of the Atlantic shared their experiences and inspired general discussion.

Speakers included Professor William E Simon Jr and Claire Hemming from the USA, and Fr Robert Hill and Claire Smith from the UK. The event was chaired by Caroline Hemphill from the USA and Prof Werner G Jeanrond from the European perspective.



OUTREACH: LAUNCH OF THE ST BENET'S HALL ESSAY PRIZE FOR SCHOOLS

Over the summer Benet's launched two essay-prizes for schools, one Senior (for the 15-18 age group) and one Junior (for the 11-14 age-group).

Whilst several Oxford colleges run essay competitions for students in the Lower Sixth, Benet's own access work has convinced us that outreach from Oxford University needs to begin with much younger age groups.

The Essay Prize judges set open-ended, general questions, providing an opportunity for wide reflection, encouraging the kind of 'thinking outside the box' that is required of people who might consider applying to Oxford.

We received a pleasing number of entries and the two prize-winners will each be attending a formal meal at St Benet's in First Week of the Hilary Term.

This enterprise is the brain-child of alumnus and experienced teacher, Robert Pepper, ('05) who, together with his wife Helen, (a teacher at Ampleforth), and alumnus, Greg Scannell ('05), (now one of the chief trainers for Teach First), marked and judged the entries. We are immensely grateful to them for their dedication and energy in getting this project off the ground.

Dr Santha Bhattacharji, Benet's Senior Tutor

Photo shows 2015/16 MPP student, Zahra Latif in the new library at Norham Gardens



CALLING ALL AUTHORS: REQUEST FOR ALUMNI TITLES



A search through the Bodleian Libraries' catalogue suggests that over 10% of our alumni are published authors. The range of subjects is also impressively broad: alongside the humanities there are also law, medical ethics, freight transportation, music and asset management titles, not to mention biographies and autobiographies, novels, children's books and even cook books.

With our new second library in Norham Gardens, we have much-needed space at last and our Libraries would like to include a display section of alumni books. Thank you to all those who have already given us copies of their publications. If anyone else has any titles that you would be prepared to donate, we would be delighted to receive them and will ensure that they are featured prominently. Please contact alumni@stb.ox.ac.uk if you can help.

DINNER GUESTS AT BENET'S

VISIT BY THE NEW VICE-CHANCELLOR PROFESSOR LOUISE RICHARDSON

We were delighted to welcome Professor Louise Richardson to dinner at Benet's in February of this year, just weeks after she had been installed as the new Vice-Chancellor of the University.



TUESDAY NIGHT SPEAKERS

Tuesday night formal dinners are greatly enhanced by our tradition of inviting illustrious speakers to dine with the community and give a short speech on a subject in which they have an in-depth knowledge or a passion. Among our speakers this year were alumnus Damian Collins ('93), MP & author; business woman & broadcaster Saira Khan; Amnesty International

spokesperson for the Middle East, Philip Luther; QC Andrew Sutcliffe; China expert, Prof Rana Mitter; MP Dominic Grieve; Prior of Ampleforth, Fr Terence Richardson, and Mongolian Foreign Minister, Mr Lundegiin Purevsuren (left).



We are grateful to all who gave up their time to come and dine with us and to give us entertaining and thought-provoking talks.

2016 BOAT CLUB ALUMNI RACE & LUNCH

2017 BOAT CLUB ALUMNI RACE & LUNCH

Our annual alumni lunch, held this academic year on Saturday 3rd June 2017, will be our largest ever. With up to thirty active members of the Boat Club, the fifty-five seats of the famous Benet's one common table will likely fill up fast. Likely to be priced around £30 (which includes a small donation to the Boat Club), spots can be reserved by emailing alumni@stb.ox.ac.uk or sbhbccommittee@gmail.com as soon as possible.

CALLING ALL PAST ROWERS

Our Boat Club records are incomplete and we are trying to compile a definite list of everyone who has ever rowed for Benet's.

We are reconstructing lists of old members from official team photos and word-of-mouth but we still have gaps. So, if you rowed for Benet's in the past, please let us know by either email or post.



The SBH Boat Club 2016 race was a great success and very enjoyable for both participants and spectators. An impressive number of alumni volunteered, or were coerced, into rowing. Some had not taken to the water for decades but we counted them all out and we counted them all back again. The two teams were mixed to include both current students and alumni, thus providing two evenly matched teams and, cheered on by a good crowd, the race was hard fought. The formal lunch that followed in the Refectory was much deserved by the rowers and enjoyed by all. The Annual Boat Club alumni is a hugely enjoyable occasion, an opportunity for alumni and friends of Benet's to return, catch up with old friends, make new ones and actively support the Boat Club (*please see page 18 for further details on Friends of the Boat Club*).



ALUMNI ASSOCIATION



For St Benet's 2016 has been a major year. At the beginning of Michaelmas Term 2016, we took over 11 Norham Gardens providing additional accommodation and space for teaching and research. At the same time, St Benet's admitted for the first time female undergraduates, bringing to completion the Master's vision for a fully coeducational community.

With our growing community, 2016 also saw 15 graduate from the Hall. On behalf of the Alumni Association I am pleased to welcome the 2016 graduates to our alumni community.

The Association was formally established in 2007 to promote a close relationship among members of the Hall. The principal way in which the Association has done this over the last 9 years has been to organise events, including the formal Gaudies which take place every two years. These events have provided an excellent way for alumni and current students to meet and to foster ongoing relationships. This has been the key aim of the Association since its inception.

It has been a year of change for the Association with a reorganisation within the Association Committee. The Committee now comprises The Master, Fra' John Eidinow (Fellow Member), Ms Katy Griffiths (Alumni Relations Officer), Nicholas Kazaz (2004), Rahul Ahluwalia (2009), Tom Harrison (2008), Nicholas Wingfield Digby (2006), and Connie Cha (2015). If you are interested in joining the Committee, please contact Katy Griffiths in the Alumni Office.

It has been a busy year in the Hall with alumni dinners held in Washington DC in April, a very well-attended talk by Anthony Geffen at the Institute of Contemporary Arts in London in May, the annual Boat Club Race and Lunch in June, a drinks party in Hong Kong in September, among other events.

2017 will be another important year for St Benet's, being the 120th Anniversary of the foundation of the Hall. The focus of the year will be a Gaudy to celebrate this anniversary, which will take place in November 2017 (please see the final page of this newsletter for breaking news on the date and venue). We also plan in the first quarter of the year to host a wine tasting for alumni in London, to host a talk by Lord Green of Hurstpierpoint, Conservative politician and former Group Chairman of HSBC Holdings plc, and later in the year to participate in the University alumni weekend between 15 - 17 September 2017.

A key initiative for 2017 is to set up a network of alumni who are willing to give careers advice or guidance to current students who are embarking on their decisions as to life after St Benet's. If you are willing to be part of this network, we would be pleased to hear from you.

In future newsletters we would like to include a regular column featuring news from our alumni. Please do send any news and updates to us by writing to alumni@stb.ox.ac.uk

All good wishes to you and to your families this Christmas and for the New Year.

Nicholas Kazaz (2004 - 2007)

On behalf of the Alumni Association

nicholas.kazaz@gmail.com

ALUMNI NEWS

BENET'S NEW ALUMNI RELATIONS OFFICER



Having now been in this role for a year, it has been a joy to have had the opportunity to meet and correspond with so many Old Benetians. Almost

everyone I have spoken to has said how much they look back on their time at Benet's with pleasure, and how they came away with not only a first-rate education but a sense of belonging.

It is a tenet of Benet's that our students are Benetians for life, not merely for the years of their studies. We are always delighted to welcome alumni back to Benet's (though would ask that you let us know in advance whenever possible).

We are looking at providing you with more opportunities in the year ahead both to come back to Benet's but also to meet up in other cities and indeed in other countries.

One of our major tasks this year has been to overhaul the alumni database and reconnect with those with whom we have previously lost contact. Thanks to word-of-mouth and social media, we are now back in touch with over 100 'missing' Benetians.

We would also like to extend the section of Alumni News for future editions of the newsletter so please do let us know of any significant events in your lives or careers.

With very best wishes for 2017,

Katy Griffiths: *Alumni Relations Officer, Communications Officer & PA to the Master*

CONGRATULATIONS

- Fr Henry Wansbrough (ex-Master of SBH) was celebrant at the marriage of **Martin Tomaszewski** ('98) to Georgina Christie in Elgin, Scotland, in April this year. Fr Henry reports that the day was glorious, not least because of the sizeable number of Old Benetians amongst the congregation.
- **Daniel Ho** ('10) married Charlize Thoo in Singapore in January of this year.
- **Morgan Griffiths** ('15) became engaged to Ruby Tuesday in October.
- In October, the Most Rev **Don Bolen** ('94) was installed as Archbishop of Regina, Canada, having previously been Bishop of Saskatoon, Canada.
- **Colin Hegarty** ('00), founder of HegartyMaths, was a finalist in the Varkey Foundation's million dollar Global Teacher Prize 2016, the only person from the United Kingdom to be shortlisted.

R.I.P.

We are sorry to report the deaths of the following alumni:

- **Abbot Patrick Barry OSB** ('38), Ampleforth, died February 2016, aged 98.
- **Right Revd Dom Jerome Hodgkinson OSB** ('49), Titular Abbot of Shrewsbury (also Belmont Abbey), died July 2016 aged 86.
- **Fr Killian O'Mahoney OSA** ('47), died May 2016 aged 92 in St Joseph's Home Birmingham.

FURTHER NEWS

- **Dr Rory Fox ('92) and Fr Fulgence Cuchet ('94)** have set up the charity, Edlumino, to help provide education for refugee children in France, and now Greece. Rory and Fr Fulgence have themselves built make-shift schools in an attempt to create safe education centres and are running classes in the camps at Calais and Dunkirk.
- **Fr Henry Wansbrough** ('56 & Master '90-'04) is editing a revised version of the New Jerusalem Bible that will be published in 2017.

NEW ST BENET'S MERCHANDISE

By popular demand, we have included several new lines of Benet's merchandise, including cufflinks in a presentation box at a cost of £22 (plus p&p at cost) and a 20cm tall teddy bear in a



St Benet's branded t-shirt (christened 'Baby Ben') priced at £9.50 (plus p&p).

Other merchandise includes: hooded sweatshirts, woollen and fleece scarves, ties and bowties, lapel pins, and bone-china mugs.

For further details or to place an order, please contact: alumni@stb.ox.ac.uk

BENET'S AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Over the past 12 months we have worked hard to increase our presence on social media. For all our latest news, you can now follow us on Facebook, twitter and LinkedIn, all of which are available through plugins on the front page of the St Benet's Hall website <http://www.st-benets.ox.ac.uk/> We are in turn discovering what many of you are up to, particularly through twitter and linkedin, and are sharing good news wherever we can.

You can also link up with old classmates and friends through the University's new online Oxford Alumni Community network, which is similar to LinkedIn but open only to authenticated University of Oxford alumni and staff. It enables you to search for by college, course or year; also to offer or seek support, such as mentoring. Please note that this is a new innovation and numbers are still small but are growing rapidly.

PHOTO CREDITS

A huge thank you thank you to Andrew (Roo) Waters (of roowatersphotography.com) for donating so much of his valuable time and expertise in photographing a wide range of activities and events at St Benet's over the past year.

All photos in this newsletter are the copyright of Roo Waters , unless otherwise indicated.



FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Alumni Dinner, Hong Kong: Thursday 23rd March 2017

Alumni Dinner, Singapore: Friday 24th March 2017

Benet's in London Lecture by Lord Green of Hurstpierpoint—date & venue *TBC*

Alumni Wine Tasting in London— date & venue *TBC*

Torpids: Wednesday 1st March 2017 – Saturday 4th March 2017

Summer Eights: Wednesday 24th May 2017 – Saturday 27th May 2017

Newman Lecture, Oxford: Wednesday 31st May 2017

Boat Club Alumni Race & Lunch: Saturday 3rd June 2017

Alumni Weekend in Oxford: Friday 15th—Sunday 17th September 2017

Joint Ampleforth/Benet's Drinks at SBH—Thursday 14th December 2017

2017 GAUDY

We are delighted to announce that the 2017 Gaudy will be held in the House of Commons on the evening of Friday 3rd November (with many thanks to Damian Collins MP). Please save the date, as numbers will be limited and demand is bound to be high. Further details will be announced in due course.



ST BENET'S HALL
UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

38 St Giles
Oxford
OX1 3LN

Tel: +44 (0) 1865 280556
Email: alumni@stb.ox.ac.uk

Phone: 555-555-5555
Fax: 555-555-5555
E-mail: someone@example.com