

# Philanthropy Report 2022/23





## Welcome

I am delighted to share our latest Philanthropy Report with you, celebrating another immensely successful year across Oxford. You and your fellow donors gave over £220 million to the University last year and it is thanks to your collective generosity that vital research and world-class teaching continue to thrive throughout this brilliant community. I hope you enjoy reading the examples contained within the report of how philanthropy is making an important difference to people across the globe.

It has been especially satisfying to have the opportunity to meet with many of our donors in person and to welcome them to the University to witness the impact of their support on the ground. It really conveys to me the power of our joint endeavour and I very much look forward to enjoying these occasions in the months ahead.

The new academic year brings with it great promise. This University is home to some of the brightest academic minds and we remain focused on supporting the development of this expertise for the benefit of the world at large.

Thank you for your support.

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# Contents

## 2 News highlights

A selection of short stories from the past year

## 4 Making flexible working work for women

Calligo Scholar Lily Rodel is taking a deep dive into the tech industry to find out what impact flexible and remote working is having on gender inequality

## 6 Revealing the tricks that parasites use to disarm us

A structural biologist fascinated by the methods parasites use to manipulate and evade the human immune system has his sights firmly set on stopping the spread of malaria

## 8 Music and mathematics in harmony

Talented musician Carmen Jorge Díaz has been able to pursue her passion for mathematical physics at doctoral level thanks to Paul Shreder's legacy gift

## 10 German in the world: a new vision

The endowment of the Schwarz–Taylor Chair is supporting a powerful vision to give the study of German greater relevance, weight and visibility across the globe

## 12 Ushering in a new era of photography at the Bodleian

With the study of photography increasing in prominence, a new curatorial post has been established to care for and develop the Bodleian Libraries' unique photography collections

## 14 Nurturing Pakistani-origin scholars at Oxford

Despite a deep connection between Oxford and Pakistan, Pakistanis and British Pakistanis remain under-represented at the University. The Oxford Pakistan Programme is working to change that

## 16 Discoveries through interdisciplinary nanoscience

Oxford's Kavli Institute for Nanoscience Discovery is the newest addition to the prestigious roll call of 20 Kavli Institutes around the world addressing some of the 21st century's most serious problems

## 18 Thanks to your support...

Find out how your donations are making a difference

## 20 Recognising our donors



## Further reading

Discover more about the impact of your support at:

[www.development.ox.ac.uk/report2022-23](http://www.development.ox.ac.uk/report2022-23)

Right, from top:  
Lily Rodel at Balliol College;  
Professor Matt Higgins in the  
Dorothy Crowfoot Hodgkin  
Building; Dr Phillip Roberts in  
the Weston Library; Minha  
Khan at Lady Margaret Hall



# News highlights



## Oxford launches new scholarship programme inspired by Japan's Chōshū Five

A generous gift from the Uehiro Foundation on Ethics and Education has enabled the creation of the Oxford–Uehiro Graduate Scholarship Programme. The scholarships were inspired by the story of the Chōshū Five, a group of young Japanese Samurai who undertook the treacherous sea journey to England in 1863. The group spoke little or no English but were determined to learn from the West, enrolling at University College London during their stay. On their return to Japan the men went on to form the heart of a new Japanese government and academic community, greatly contributing to the modernisation of Japan.

In recognition of their endeavour, the Oxford–Uehiro Graduate Scholarship Programme will provide full funding for up to five Japanese students studying at Oxford each year, with the chosen scholars to be known informally as the 'Uehiro Five'. It is hoped that, through the knowledge and experience gained during their studies, they too will go on to become leaders in their respective fields.

Mr Tetsuji Uehiro, Chairman of the Uehiro Foundation on Ethics and Education, said: 'I am delighted to be able to offer this opportunity to allow more Japanese students to study overseas and I hope that they will go on to contribute to Japan's efforts to promote peace, stability and sustainable development in the international community.'

The foundation's gift has been matched by the University, enabling the endowment of the programme. The first recipients of the scholarships, which are available to students undertaking any postgraduate course in any subject area (except for the MBA), commenced their studies in October 2023.

**Above left:** Graduate students in the Andrew Wiles Building, home of the Mathematical Institute  
**Right:** Architectural rendering of the new Bate Collection exhibition hall

## Supporting the next generation of female mathematicians

A scholarship scheme named in honour of the Iranian mathematician Maryam Mirzakhani has been endowed at Oxford thanks to a £2.48 million gift from founding and principal donor XTX Markets. The scholarships support talented female graduates to pursue doctoral studies in mathematics, paving the way for the next generation of female Fields Medallists.

The Fields Medal is one of the highest global honours in mathematics, awarded every four years to exceptional mathematicians under the age of 40. In 2014 Maryam Mirzakhani (1977–2017) became the first female mathematician to win the medal.

The Oxford–Maryam Mirzakhani Scholarships have been established to help address the disproportionately low levels of women completing postgraduate degrees in the mathematical sciences. Nationally, only 29% of postgraduate research students in the mathematical sciences are women, according to the latest figures from the Higher Education Statistics Agency.

XTX Markets' founding donation has enabled the creation of two fully funded scholarships for women of any nationality completing a standard four-year DPhil in mathematics. Their donation also led to further giving from other sources, which has enabled the creation of one further scholarship.

🗨️ We hope that this prestigious opportunity will inspire more women to pursue mathematics at the highest level 🗨️

Simon Coyle

The first Oxford–Maryam Mirzakhani Scholar, Marta Bucca, joined the Mathematical Institute in October 2023. Marta is researching string theory under the supervision of Professor Mark Mezei.

Simon Coyle, Head of Philanthropy at XTX Markets, said: 'XTX Markets is proud to be the founding and principal donor of the Oxford–Maryam Mirzakhani Scholarships at the University of Oxford. We hope that this prestigious opportunity will inspire more women to pursue mathematics at the highest level and support them to follow in Maryam Mirzakhani's footsteps.'

James Sparks, Head of the Mathematical Institute, said: 'Our first Oxford–Maryam Mirzakhani Scholar marks an important step in our commitment to widening female participation at postgraduate level at the Mathematical Institute. I would like to express my thanks to XTX Markets and our other supporters for so generously funding the scholarship scheme.'

# Funding boost to improve mental health outcomes

A gift of £785,433 from The Paul Foundation is enabling Oxford researchers to improve the mental health of children, young people and families through the development and widespread implementation of effective and accessible digitally delivered psychological therapies.

An NHS survey in 2021 found that one in six children and young people had a probable mental health problem, an increase from one in nine in 2017. The most common mental health problems are anxiety disorders and, while there is strong evidence supporting the efficacy of psychological therapies, ensuring that those who are most in need are able to access them is a particular challenge.

The Paul Foundation's support will allow Cathy Creswell, Professor of Developmental Clinical Psychology,

and her team to expand the reach and further develop their Online Support and Intervention for Child Anxiety (OSI) programme for children aged 5 to 12. Work led by Dr Eleanor Leigh will also develop a training package for clinicians to deliver the team's Online Social Anxiety Cognitive Therapy for Adolescents (OSCA), which is tailored to those aged 11 to 18.

Both OSI and OSCA are being delivered in partnership with child and adolescent mental health services, as well as the schools-based mental health support teams that have recently been established by the UK government. Developing these early interventions, and increasing access to them, will ultimately improve mental health outcomes for children and young people. In doing so, there will be significant benefits to society more broadly.

This important gift is seen as the first step in establishing a longer-term partnership between The Paul Foundation and Oxford. A major focus of this will be the identification of strengths among neurodiverse children and young people, and the adoption of a strength-based approach to the adaptation and development of interventions for mental health difficulties.

Professor Creswell said: 'We are delighted to have received this generous gift from The Paul Foundation, whose support is enabling us to make sure families can access effective treatments for common mental health problems when they first need it, and are also very excited by the longer-term partnerships that we are discussing with the foundation.'

# Redisplaying Oxford's unique collection of musical instruments

The Bate Collection comprises more than 2,000 musical instruments dating from the medieval period to the modern day. A grant of £250,000 from the Wolfson Foundation will support the redisplay of this precious collection in a purpose-built, climate-controlled exhibition hall located within Oxford's new Stephen A. Schwarzman Centre for the Humanities. The space, which will be open to the public and free to visit, will feature permanent as well as rotating and temporary displays.

The collection is named after Philip Bate, who gave his holdings of European woodwind instruments to the University in 1968. It is a significant resource for both students and researchers, providing rich opportunities for learning, teaching and analysis. The redisplay of the collection will enhance these opportunities by enabling greater access to the instruments for assessment, study and use. The collection's location within the Schwarzman Centre – which will be home to an experimental performance lab and 500-seat concert hall – will provide an ideal venue for research-led performance and events.

The creation of a new, permanent home for the Bate Collection will also lead to wider and deeper engagement with new audiences. By making previously inaccessible parts of the



collection available to all, the new space will transform the way that music is shared with the public, enabling a greater number of people to take part in music-making and inspiring them to pursue it throughout their lives.

The Stephen A. Schwarzman Centre for the Humanities is currently under construction in the heart of the city and is due to open in 2025.



# Making flexible working work for women



Calligo Scholar Lily Rodel is taking a deep dive into the tech industry to find out what impact flexible and remote working is having on gender inequality.

Working women have long been on an unequal footing with their male colleagues: earning less, saving less and spending more hours on unpaid care and domestic work. The introduction of remote and more flexible working arrangements during the pandemic held great promise for shifting this landscape, but several years on, questions remain as to its true impact.

‘Over the pandemic there was a lot of reporting about the “she-cession”, which is the idea that COVID-19 had

disproportionately affected women and, specifically, women’s labour market outcomes,’ explains DPhil researcher and Calligo Scholarship holder Lily Rodel. ‘There was a feeling that more women than men were giving up their jobs to care for children. But when I started to do more research, I found that the opposite had happened in the UK: more women – and specifically mothers of young children – had joined the labour market full time than before the pandemic. I really wanted to understand why this was.’

6 The tech sector has seen massive growth in recent years. It has the highest level of remote work and, proportionately, has the most women joining 9

Lily Rodel

This question was a compelling jumping off point for Lily, who is now in the second year of a three-year DPhil programme exploring gender inequality and remote work. Having used her first three terms at the Oxford Internet Institute (OII) to hone her research proposal, she's now turning to mothers directly to understand their experience of work, as well as to their co-workers and bosses for broader perceptions of mothers in the workplace.

'Although a lot of people say that encouraging women into the labour market by offering remote and flexible working arrangements is a good thing and a step in the right direction for gender equality, there are others who say that just offering flexible work alone is not going to change gender norms,' explains Lily. 'And in fact there's a risk of creating a two-tiered workforce with women working from home, mothers working from home, everyone else in the office, and barriers to inclusion and progression for those who do choose to work remotely.'

Through her research Lily hopes to find out if the increased prevalence of flexible and remote working since the pandemic has led to a shift in gender and workplace norms, and provide insights that can help to create more inclusive workplaces for everybody. She is conducting interviews, focus groups, workshops and other forms of ethnographic research with participants across the tech sector in an effort to uncover the most pertinent issues. 'I want to be led from the ground up and learn from the experts, which is them,' she says.

Lily's curiosity about modern society and what it means to be human in the digital age took off while studying for her undergraduate degree in social anthropology. 'I was really interested in questions around what makes us human: why do we act in the ways that we do? Why do we rationalise certain actions and reject others?' she explains. 'I think people often have an impression of anthropology as studying small-scale societies that are far away, but I was always more interested in trying to understand and unpack our own society, and how it shapes us as individuals.'

After moving on to a master's degree in digital anthropology and, later, into a job at a public sector consultancy, Lily found her interest in technology and work-life



6 I want to work in a collaborative way with people to develop answers. I want to involve women with my research so that they feel like they're playing an active role, rather than just being observed 9

Lily Rodel

balance growing. 'I knew I wanted to do a PhD in this subject but didn't think it would be possible. I didn't know how the funding would work and so it just seemed like a far-off dream.' It was thanks to a scholarship supported by data services company Calligo that Lily was finally able to achieve her ambition. 'I would not be here without that funding,' she says, matter-of-factly.

Lily has found the OII to be the perfect home for her work. 'It's a really exciting place to be,' she says, describing it as a tight-knit community with a socially motivated focus, where research is being developed for the benefit of society. She has also found happiness in her connection with Balliol College. 'It's been great. There's an active middle common room and I've been teaching yoga there every week. It's been a really nice change from my previous experience of living in London.'

For Lily, now is the ideal time to be studying this particular topic and potentially help to bring some clarity to the debate. 'In terms of public opinion

it seems to be so split,' she says. 'One day everyone's talking about the virtues of working from home and the next day there are bosses calling people back to the office. But if you look at surveys of what workers want, women are much more likely to want flexibility. I think that's not only because it allows them to manage their schedules and be more autonomous, but it's also because a lot of workplaces are built around a masculine culture, and that is exclusive to them.'

Although still in the early stages of gathering data, Lily is very clear about what she hopes to achieve through her work at the OII. As well as contributing to the sociological knowledge base, she hopes that her research will travel into everyday lives and plans to present her findings back to the organisations she has been working with at the end of her degree. 'I hope to show how the work-life balance of employees is actually a positive thing for bosses, and suggest ways that they can ensure people who work flexibly have a fair chance in the workplace.'

To help her achieve this outcome, Lily says that she will be guided by her two passions: understanding people and providing a benefit to society. 'The good thing about this subject is that women, parents, do want change, and to feel like someone is listening to them and could create something that could contribute to a change. That is what I have in my mind as the ultimate goal.'

Above: Lily Rodel in the grounds of Balliol College  
Facing page: Lily working in an Oxford café

# Revealing the tricks that parasites use to disarm us

A structural biologist fascinated by the methods parasites use to manipulate and evade the human immune system has his sights firmly set on stopping the spread of malaria.

‘The malaria parasite is a very tricky foe,’ says Professor Matt Higgins, EP Abraham Chair of Structural Biology. ‘It’s really complex. Whereas a virus, like the one that causes COVID-19, may only have ten different types of molecules, malaria parasites have thousands and thousands. They’re much more complicated organisms and they have a lot of tricks that they can use to evade the immune system.’

One of these tricks is antigenic variation. When the parasite infects a red blood cell it sends a small number of molecules to the surface of that cell – as soon as the body learns to recognise these molecules the parasite switches them, enabling it to escape immunity. This shapeshifting nature is part of the reason why the malaria parasite remains such a significant global threat. It has nearly half of the world’s population within its reach, and is estimated to cause hundreds of millions of cases and in the region of between 600,000 and 700,000 deaths a year. The vast majority of these are of children under the age of five.

As a parasitologist and structural biologist, Professor Higgins is striving to better understand – at a very detailed molecular level – how parasites interact with their human targets, and use this information to design improved therapies and vaccines. His lab investigates a range of subjects, including amoebas, helminth worms and the trypanosomes

that cause African sleeping sickness. Malaria, however, is ‘the big one among human parasitic diseases’, and a significant proportion of his team is focused on overcoming the challenges it presents.

One of Professor Higgins’ primary concerns is understanding how the parasite gets inside red blood cells. ‘That’s a great place to intervene through vaccination,’ he explains, ‘because if you can stop the malaria parasite from doing that then you block its ability to replicate and also its ability to be transmitted.’ The Higgins Lab took a step closer to this goal in 2014 when it discovered how one of the parasite’s surface molecules, RH5, binds to the red blood cell molecule basigin, an interaction that is essential for parasite invasion. Using structural biology methods the lab was able to show exactly what that interaction looks like and, just a few years later, how it can be blocked by human antibodies – information that is being used by the team to inform the design of new vaccine components.

After much work with collaborators across Oxford, the lab’s second-generation vaccine is now being produced by the Serum Institute of India ahead of human trials, which will be led by Professor Simon Draper and are scheduled to begin later this year. There are also plans for it to enter trials combined with Professor Adrian Hill’s R21/Matrix-M vaccine, which works by stopping the initial process of liver infection by the malaria parasite. The hope is that by bringing a liver-stage vaccine together with a blood-stage vaccine, it will be possible to increase efficacy even further. ‘There is an agenda to eradicate malaria, which would be wonderful,’ says Professor Higgins. ‘We’re some way from that at the moment, but a lot of people are working on different strategies and hopefully by combining them, it will be possible.’

Delving into the molecular mechanisms that parasites use to invade



our cells is not only useful for designing vaccines. Helminth worms are some of the world’s most common parasites and can cause a wide spectrum of disease in their hosts, from mild to potentially deadly. To aid their survival the worms secrete a cocktail of molecules that suppresses their host’s immune system, but which also subdues several negative effects of immune activation. ‘People who are infected with these worms are less affected by asthma or allergies,’ explains Professor Higgins, who is working with colleagues in Dundee to understand why this is. ‘Because parasites are ancient things that have co-evolved with us, they’re very good at maintaining low-level chronic infections by suppressing our immune systems – learning how they do it could help us to control our own immune systems as well.’

Huge advances in electron microscopy and AI-based protein production and design over the past decade have been crucial in enabling Professor Higgins to advance his work with parasites. He now hopes to pay this forward in his role as the





● Being in a university with so many different skills and ways of looking at the same problem is really powerful. If all of these ideas and approaches can be brought together, we can push forward and solve it ●

Professor Matt Higgins

EP Abraham Chair, a post that sits across the Department of Biochemistry, the Sir William Dunn School of Pathology and the Kavli Institute for Nanoscience Discovery. ‘One of the challenges in structural biology is that it uses large and expensive pieces of equipment,’ he explains, ‘and so part of my role is to help build facilities that can be used by all of the structural biologists across Oxford, and to ensure that our training programmes are top quality so that we can work at the forefront of these techniques.’

The EP Abraham Chair of Structural Biology was endowed in 2022 with support from the Edward Penley Abraham Research Fund and the EPA Cephalosporin Fund. Professor Edward Penley Abraham was a biochemist who made critical contributions to the development of penicillin and later led the discovery of cephalosporin, an antibiotic capable of destroying penicillin-resistant bacteria. The registration of a patent on cephalosporin generated a regular income for Professor Abraham, which he used to establish both charitable trusts in the 1970s for the support of research and education.

Professor Higgins describes the funds as having been ‘hugely powerful’ for bioscience at the University. As well as enabling the endowment of the post that he now holds, they have provided over £38 million in combined philanthropic support to Oxford since the 1980s, including for other key academic posts, scholarships, buildings and equipment. Significant research funding has also been awarded over the years. ‘Their funding is

targeted in such a way that it benefits the maximum number of people,’ he explains. ‘Because my post is endowed, there will always be someone who is working to support the structural biology community at the University.’

In addition to enabling Professor Higgins to focus on this aspect of the role, he says that holding an endowed chair will also give him ‘more time to think big thoughts’ about his research. The next big challenge for him to overcome is fully understanding how malaria parasites invade red blood cells. ‘We’re seeing bits of that process now,’ he says, ‘but to be able to see the whole cellular process as it takes place, using all of these new methods, will be really exciting.’

Above: Professor Matt Higgins working in the lab



# Music and mathematics in harmony





## Talented musician Carmen Jorge Díaz has been able to pursue her passion for mathematical physics at doctoral level thanks to Paul Shreder's legacy gift.

Music has been a huge part of Paul Shreder Scholar Carmen Jorge Díaz's life for as long as she can remember. Her mother, also a musician, would play classical music throughout her childhood and it was at the age of six that Carmen decided she would learn to play the violin. At 14 Carmen became one of the first members of the highly regarded Galician Symphony Orchestra's newly formed Children's Orchestra, and at 16 she was selected to join the Youth Orchestra. It was at this point that Carmen had some difficult choices to make.

'I didn't know if I wanted to pursue music as a career or if I wanted to study physics,' says Carmen, who, by this time, was the equivalent of a musical grade 8 in the English system and therefore eligible to pursue a music degree. 'I didn't want to leave either of them. So, I decided to do a physics degree and I kept playing with the Youth Orchestra until I was about 20, and then I joined my university orchestra in Santiago where I did my undergraduate degree.'

Carmen completed her BSc in Physics at the University of Santiago de Compostela, went on to pursue an MSc in Applied Mathematics and Theoretical Physics at the University of Cambridge, and then applied for a DPhil in Theoretical and Mathematical Physics at Oxford. Like many DPhil applicants, Carmen needed a scholarship to take up the place she was offered. Little did she know that music would play such an important part in enabling her to follow her passions. She was awarded the Paul Shreder Scholarship – the legacy of a donor who himself had a passion for both mathematics and music. His wish was to enable a gifted maths student with a love of music to pursue their educational goals at Oxford's Mathematical Institute.

'When I got the letter, I started crying,' says Carmen. 'I called my violin teacher to say: "The funding for my PhD is because of playing the violin," and he started crying as well. It was very emotional because being a musician is tough, especially when you're young and you're trying to do your schoolwork, your music work, and sometimes you don't have time for everything.'

Carmen recognises that this particular scholarship is very unusual. 'When I tell some of my colleagues about it, they can't

believe it. I wouldn't have been able to afford to do my DPhil otherwise. It was a big relief.'

There was no obligation attached to the scholarship in terms of participating in music at Oxford. 'It was just an encouragement to contribute to the music environment,' says Carmen. This has been more difficult than anticipated in some respects, as COVID-19 hit just in the middle of Carmen's first year. However, she did run a music seminar in her department. 'Every week someone would present a piece that was important to them and showed different interpretations and explained why they liked it. It was a get-together with eight or nine of us. I spoke about Jean Sibelius' *Violin Concerto*, which I really like, and then we listened to it and talked about it. That was really nice. I also gave a talk at the Oxford Science and Ideas Festival about maths, physics and music, and that was really enjoyable too.'

Carmen sees huge connections between maths, physics and music – for example, the waves that she studies in physics apply very much to the way musical instruments are tuned. She also explains that preparing to interpret a piece of music entails a lot of dissection and analysis of the different parts and how they interact. The process, for her, feels like going on a treasure hunt. 'You're aiming to understand what the composer was trying to tell us, but you're reading things into something that is not a verbal language. For maths, when you read

● There's a lot of sacrifice that comes with pursuing a commitment to music. For me, it's been completely worth it ●

Carmen Jorge Díaz



formulas or when you're trying to express something with a formula, you're looking for a translation between whatever verbal language you are using and the language of maths. It just feels familiar, like it's a similar process, and you have to be very accurate and methodical. A lot of the techniques I have learned are helpful for both.'

The other fascinating correlation for Carmen is that almost everyone she knows at the Mathematical Institute is embedded in music in one way or another. 'It's insane!' she exclaims. 'In my current office there's someone who plays classical flute, someone who has sung in classical choirs all their life and there's me with the violin. Even Professor James Sparks, Head of Department, was an organ scholar.'

She has been so impressed with the musical offerings Oxford has provided during her time here, and frequently bumps into colleagues from mathematics wherever she goes to enjoy music around the city. 'When I moved here, because London is so close, I just thought all the big musicians would go to London; then I saw that the violinist Maxim Vengerov was coming to Oxford. He is one of my childhood heroes, so I sent pictures to my violin teacher. There's a very vibrant music community – and definitely lots of mathematicians at every music event I go to!'

As part of her DPhil, Carmen has been teaching undergraduate mathematical physics tutorials at Keble College, as well as at other colleges and in her department, which she has enjoyed immensely. 'My students are very nice – all very hard-working and enthusiastic.' Her favourite part of being at Oxford is meeting people from different countries with so many interesting backgrounds and backstories. 'I'm learning so much every day. It has just broadened my horizons. And, of course, I'm so grateful for the scholarship – I literally wouldn't be here without it and on some days I still don't believe it.'

Carmen hopes that one day she will be in a position to support a scholar as she has been supported. 'My grandpa always told my mother that "what you learn, no one can take away from you." Gifting education to someone is a way of empowering people and allowing them to reach their potential,' she says. 'It's one of the most powerful ways to change someone's life.'

Left: Carmen Jorge Díaz at the Mathematical Institute in the Andrew Wiles Building

Facing page: Carmen on the roof of the Andrew Wiles Building



# German in the world: a new vision

The endowment of the Schwarz–Taylor Chair is supporting a powerful vision to give the study of German greater relevance, weight and visibility across the globe.

If ever there was a moment to champion the richness, breadth and value of studying German language, literature and culture, it's now. German is the operational language for many important global businesses and the native language of around 130 million people worldwide. Despite this, there has been a dramatic downturn in the study of German and the humanities in general over the last 20 years. Brexit has created additional challenges and university departments in the UK must now work harder not only to maintain their connections with European counterparts, but also to provide more targeted support to address the declining number of students graduating with a degree in German.


Oxford's Schwarz–Taylor Chair of the German Language and Literature is one of the oldest and most prestigious German chairs anywhere. It sits at the centre of a German department that is celebrated for being among the most active in the English-speaking world. The post was fully secured in 2022 by the Dieter Schwarz Foundation, an organisation whose future-forward spirit is very much in evidence at the University: as well as investing in German, it is supporting an ambitious programme of research and new posts dedicated to investigating the impact of AI and other game-changing technologies at the Oxford Internet Institute.

It is particularly apt, then, that embracing the future is at the top of the incumbent chair's agenda. Professor Karen Leeder is overseeing a wide-ranging new strategic vision for German at Oxford. 'We're not going to abandon our traditional strengths of close attention to history, texts and literature,' she reassures, 'but it's about looking above the parapet. This chair can bring German departments together. It gives Oxford visibility and acts as a way of networking in this country and internationally.'

A 2002 decision to scrap the compulsory study of a language at Key Stage 4 in England, Wales and Northern Ireland has resulted in significantly reduced language teaching provision in schools and fewer than half of students studying a single foreign language to GCSE level. This is hitting university language departments hard. In response, Oxford now offers a German degree for students who have never studied the subject before. There is clearly demand: the capacity on this route has doubled in the last year alone and it's now also possible to study German from scratch jointly with, for example, English, history or philosophy.

Underpinning this successful development is the work of the Senior Lecturer in Beginners' German. A new donation from the Dieter Schwarz Foundation has secured the post for the next six years, while a further commitment has been made by the foundation to endow two new graduate scholarships in German. On funding master's students, Professor Leeder says: 'That one year is often where we lose people, so it's very important. People from all over the world want to come here and we just don't have enough funding.'

Access routes and scholarships form only part of the picture: content is key. 'We've got to reshape the curriculum for the 21st century and take German into



What I'd like for the future is to secure German and to support all these graduates and the brilliant people here that we need 🍷

Professor Karen Leeder

the broader creative economy,' Professor Leeder says. Her decades of experience and skills are a perfect fit to make this happen and recent activity includes visiting schools with a German poet, performance artist and rapper; bringing different writers to festivals and events in the UK; making radio programmes; and working with the BBC to encourage more German programming.

Already there have been significant moves to place present-day themes at the heart of German at Oxford. 'We have to look for the synergies with larger, urgent agendas and connect up. So, environmental humanities, medical



humanities... these are the sorts of directions we need to take the subject in to link with where the energy is,' says Professor Leeder. 'We've created a new palette of master's courses and have been very successful at attracting interest, with between 25 and 30 master's students a year – more than any other language. It's a very lively cohort, at the cutting edge of the discipline, bringing all kinds of ideas and enthusiasm.'

A new master's in creative translation is being developed, which will include adaptation, translating for film and translating for performance. 'It's a new kind of concept,' says Professor Leeder. 'It's something I said in my inaugural lecture that I wanted to do. I thought it would take me ten years and I'm really surprised. It must have just hit the right moment!'

Professor Leeder fosters an inclusive research environment that allows people to do what they want to do but also brings together people who are interested in similar things; for example, graduates, early career researchers and senior colleagues researching different periods

might present a seminar on themes that overlap. Professor Leeder herself has four books coming out in the next year, including a volume of selected poems by German national poet Durs Grünbein. She is also completing a book on spectres in contemporary German literature as well as a collection of essays about German poetry, and has two other projects in the pipeline – one on Rilke in English and one on the cultural anthropology of the stars. 'I'd like to get a research group together about the night skies. It's a great way of putting German in conversation with art, physics, environmental science and geography,' she says.

Collaboration is a hallmark of Professor Leeder's approach. She speaks proudly of the active Oxford German Network run by her colleague Professor Katrin Kohl, which interacts with local businesses, German businesses and schools; and of Oxford's partnership with BUA – the four main Berlin universities and related archives, libraries and theatres – 'a very lively platform for joint research exchanges and joint funding applications,' she says.

Professor Leeder is Humanities Lead of Oxford in Berlin, a partnership supporting high-quality joint research initiatives; and she has also secured an Einstein Fellowship with the Freie Universität Berlin, offering opportunities for outstanding thinkers to explore new fields. Oxford's exchanges with seven German universities are also central to activity, not only attracting a good number of students from Germany but enticing several to stay on for doctorates, such is their enjoyment of the Oxford experience.

For Professor Leeder, the human connection running through all these endeavours is key to creating vibrant communities that celebrate German language and culture, and developing a new generation of German-speaking graduate talent. 'I think equipping people coming out of our universities to interact in a global context is vital: upholding links, making things happen, building bridges – like the one the Dieter Schwarz Foundation is building. It's so important.'

Above: Professor Karen Leeder in the Taylor Institution Library



# Ushering in a new era for photography at the Bodleian



With the study of photography increasing in prominence, a new curatorial post has been established to care for and develop the Bodleian Libraries' unique photography collections.

'There are photographs everywhere,' says Dr Phillip Roberts, the Bern and Ronny Schwartz Curator of Photography at the Bodleian Libraries. 'We have tonnes of archives and many of them contain photographs; over the years they have seeped in without anyone really noticing. And because we're a legal deposit library, we've accidentally acquired one of the best collections of photobooks in the entire world too.'

Although the Bodleian is home to a wealth of photographic material, it has been intentionally collecting the medium for only a short time. The libraries' first major purchase in this vein was the archive of photography pioneer William Henry Fox Talbot in 2014. Later acquisitions, including the archives of photographers Daniel Meadows and

Helen Muspratt, the Llewelyn and Gaisford collections of early photographs, and Charles Chadwyck Healey's gift of 6,000 photobooks, have helped to cement the Bodleian as a key guardian of photographic heritage.

It was, however, a £2 million gift from The Bern Schwartz Family Foundation, donated alongside the archive of American portrait photographer Bern Schwartz in 2021, that really set the libraries on a new footing. The funding enabled the Bodleian to appoint a curator of photography for the first time in its history – someone whose sole focus would be to build the collection, make it accessible to students and researchers, and share it with the public through exhibitions, events and research collaborations.



Right: Angela Rippon and David Hockney, gifts of The Bern Schwartz Family Foundation, 2021  
© National Portrait Gallery, London  
Facing page: Dr Phillip Roberts in the Weston Library

● There's something really beautiful about having a collection where every single item can be seen and used. If it's stable enough to survive being looked at, I'll let someone look at it ●

Dr Phillip Roberts

When Phillip took up the post in spring 2022 there were already two photography exhibitions lined up: *A New Power: Photography in Britain 1800–1850* and *Bright Sparks: Photography and the Talbot Archive*. With both due to open in early 2023, he saw an opportunity to make a bold statement about the Bodleian's long-term commitment to photography, as well as to celebrate the progress already made towards its conservation. The idea of a photography season was born.

Running throughout 2023, the season has incorporated both pre-planned exhibitions and a varied programme of events, including a scholarly symposium, public talks and hands-on workshops. Phillip even found the time to curate an additional display called *Natural Magic: Experiments in Photography*, which invited contemporary photographers to revive the processes of the past and create new works of art.

Through all of his efforts Phillip is steadily building interest in the libraries' photographic offering, both among the visiting public and those with Bodleian reader cards. 'I'm getting many emails from people saying they would like to see the Talbot archive, people who didn't realise that it had such interesting things in it,' he says. Enquiries from researchers have also increased after one of Mary Somerville's notebooks – held by the



Bodleian for many years but only recently found to record the scientists' experiments with natural plant photography – went on display.

As well as facilitating access to the libraries' archives, Phillip has been working over the past 18 months to give the Bodleian a clear identity and direction for its photographic collecting. 'We're not a museum or gallery, we don't have a permanent photograph gallery where I can show these things,' he explains. 'What we do is collect items to put them in front of our readers so they can learn new things – and that might be to write a book or a dissertation, or it might be learning how to do the process themselves, to become a photochemist or an artist. We're about facilitating active creation and learning; that's what the archives are for, that's our remit and that's what distinguishes us from others.'

Phillip is currently working on the acquisition of several major archives, as well as smaller collections and single items. As might be expected, the focus will be on things that can be learned from or that will connect well with the libraries' existing holdings. One such acquisition concerns the work of Mohamed Amin, an African photojournalist who documented many of the continent's political crises – it promises to be a key addition, providing a new perspective on the Bodleian's

existing African collections. The libraries will also soon acquire the archive of Paddy Summerfield, Oxford's greatest photographer and creator of a surreal and deeply moving vision of the city.

In addition to seeking out new items, the libraries are now also receiving many more offers of photographic material. 'Now when photographers are wondering what to do with their archive, quite often someone will tell them to go to the Bodleian,' Phillip explains. 'We can only take a fraction of those that are offered, but I think it's a sign that we're doing a good job, that people trust us to manage the history of this medium, and how hungry a lot of people are for a place like the Bodleian to take part in photographic collecting.'

Although the libraries' photographic reputation was growing before his arrival, Phillip says that the new curatorship has provided a crucial point of contact for those interested in the field. 'My email address is now flying around the world of photography,' he notes. It is a benefit that will continue long after his tenure comes to an end. 'The foundation gave enough money to endow the post and that is key because it allows someone to be here permanently who can commit to photography. That sustained focus is what changes things, and it means we can afford to announce ourselves as a player in the photo-heritage world.'

As well as enabling the endowment of the curatorship, the foundation's decision to also gift the archive of Bern Schwartz has been a major boon for the Bodleian. The archive is rich in original prints, contact sheets and negatives, as well as documentary material that brings life to the compelling work that Bern, alongside his wife Ronny, undertook in the 1970s. 'Portraiture is about relationships with people,' says Phillip, 'and so to have Bern's relationships with his sitters spelled out in the archive is really important.'

Being able to use photographic archives to better understand and inspire people is one of the joys of Phillip's role at the Bodleian. 'Photography is about life, it's just a way of recording all of the things that people have experienced and that's really what I want to pull out of these archives, because that's the material that draws people in,' he says. 'I want an undergraduate to see their dissertation topic on the wall of one of our exhibitions and think: that's what I'm going to do, that there – and it could change their whole world.'

# Nurturing Pakistani-origin scholars at Oxford

Despite a deep connection between Oxford and Pakistan, Pakistanis and British Pakistanis remain under-represented at the University. The Oxford Pakistan Programme is working to change that.

When graduate student Usama Salamat was awarded one of the first Oxford Pakistan Programme Graduate Scholarships to study for an MPhil in Development Studies at Lady Margaret Hall (LMH), he was immediately aware that he was following in the footsteps of some of the most renowned figures in politics in Pakistan: six prime ministers and two presidents have studied at Oxford, including Benazir Bhutto, the first female Prime Minister of Pakistan. This being the case, one might conclude that representation from the Pakistani and British Pakistani communities at Oxford is strong; in fact, only 65 students from Pakistan attended Oxford in 2021. This is particularly stark considering that 60% of the population of Pakistan is under the age of 30. Meanwhile, British-Pakistanis are especially under-represented at graduate level at Oxford.

The Oxford Pakistan Programme (OPP) was conceived only three years ago but it is a movement in a hurry to create change. Its dedicated co-founders include Professor Adeel Malik, a development macroeconomist and Research Fellow at St Peter's College; Jurisprudence alumnus and corporate lawyer Haroon Zaman; and Dr Talha J Pirzada, Junior Research Fellow at Linacre College and Lecturer in Materials Science. Dr Fiona Spensley, Tutor for Graduates at LMH,

and Dr Elizabeth Kiss, Warden of Rhodes House, are also members of the OPP academic body. Their mission is simple: to create new opportunities for scholars of Pakistani and British Pakistani origin, and to support Pakistan-related activities at the University of Oxford.

The OPP community has been instrumental in creating an environment at Oxford whereby Usama and fellow OPP Graduate Scholar Minha Khan experienced a profound sense of belonging from the moment they arrived.

Every Pakistani student knows what the OPP is and people around Oxford get involved just to help out and come for talks. It makes a massive difference. It unites everyone in Oxford very, very nicely 🍷

Usama Salamat







Most of us who have received this opportunity wouldn't have been here without it. Any success that follows is dependent on this crucial moment of even being able to accept your offer

Minha Khan

Left: Minha Khan in the grounds of Lady Margaret Hall  
Facing page: Usama Salamat

being Pakistani. And that's a moment that changes everything.'

Both Minha and Usama fully grasp how the Oxford name can help launch their plans for the future. Usama is studying blasphemy laws within Pakistan and globally. He has ambitions to do further research on the nexus of religious, political and cultural rights and how this is all too often weaponised to oppress the most vulnerable in society. Minha plans to continue to work with an NGO in Pakistan that has vast knowledge of the education system there, as well as manifold ideas to improve it. She says: 'These people never get a platform because they don't have names like Oxford affiliated with them. It's unfortunate because they know so much more than me. I don't need to solve anything, I just need to use the capital I've got from these experiences, the platform.'

The headway the OPP has made in terms of connections and fundraising to date bears testament to the team's commitment, and their efforts have inspired donors to invest in scholars and researchers to make Pakistan more relevant. Communicating the OPP vision to multiple stakeholders in Pakistan who care about improving the world – and specifically their country – in some capacity is a fundamental part of what the OPP does. 'When you bring together those kinds of people on the common ground of saying "we care about our country" it makes such a difference,' says Minha, 'because no one else is doing it.'

Usama says: 'When you've applied to Oxford and you haven't been there yet, you have very different preconceptions of what it's going to be like. The first event I went to was an OPP introduction for scholars and it had such a close-knit family kind of feel. We pretty much met everyone who was involved in the programme. It was amazing.'

Minha, who is studying for an MPhil in Evidence-Based Social Intervention and Policy Evaluation, echoes these sentiments and particularly appreciates LMH's active fostering of its close connection with the OPP. 'LMH feels like a place that can be yours and I think that's so special,' she says. 'There aren't spaces like this in other places. You feel welcome, grateful. All the food is halal, which means you're always feeling like you're being seen. So, I think LMH – and specifically the OPP – has been fantastic.'

Opportunities abound for the scholars to get involved in the OPP throughout their time at Oxford and beyond. In his first term, Usama was approached to be part of the delegation for an OPP fundraising trip to Pakistan, along with LMH Principal Stephen Blyth, Linacre College Principal Dr Nick Brown and LMH alumna Malala Yousafzai. 'The experience was surreal,' says Usama. 'I got to know the team so well on the Pakistan trip and when I came back, I was involved

in absolutely everything.' This included an access programme for schools in the UK with a high proportion of students of Pakistani origin, as well as schools in Pakistan, delivering year-round talks and workshops to encourage and assist applications to Oxford. Usama and Minha are also mentors for applicants to the graduate programme.

In addition to running access programmes, funding scholars and researchers, and nurturing academic networks between Oxford and Pakistan, a fundamental aim of the programme is to accord Pakistan the status and relevance that it deserves in terms of academic output. Minha references the meagre appetite among journals to publish research with Pakistan as its sole focus. She notes that an 'anthropological' approach is perceived as more palatable but is often also 'othering', as opposed to the more sociological, self-analytical model that is accepted for research submissions with a focus on Western cultures.

'I've been told in the past that Pakistan alone is not enough to study,' says Minha. 'Unless you're comparing Pakistan to the UK or the US or some other global superpower, there's no inherent value to your work. What the OPP has done is change that narrative, so that you're not chosen *despite* being Pakistani, but *for*



# Discoveries through interdisciplinary nanoscience



Professor Dame  
Carol Robinson at  
the Kavli Institute  
for Nanoscience  
Discovery

## Oxford's Kavli Institute for Nanoscience Discovery is the newest addition to the prestigious roll call of 20 Kavli Institutes around the world addressing some of the 21st century's most serious problems.

'Antimicrobial resistance, cancer and brain health... these are all things that people care about – especially brain health, brought on partly by the pandemic,' says Professor Dame Carol Robinson, Director of the Kavli Institute for Nanoscience Discovery in Oxford. The institute is an interdisciplinary research centre working to solve some of the great challenges of our times. 'We bring physics and chemistry together with biology to try to understand what we can learn about something that's very natural using physical techniques. We don't see many institutes like this one. I'm very happy to be part of the Kavli family.'

Although Professor Robinson – a chemist – didn't previously consider her research to be 'nanoscience', she was soon convinced by the Kavli Foundation. 'It was actually a great way of bringing together all the different departments behind this common theme,' she says. 'I wanted to show how physics, chemistry and engineering can influence biology and help us to understand at the molecular level what is going on.'

Professor Robinson established the institute in 2021 thanks to an endowment by the Kavli Foundation. She now has two co-deputy directors – physicist Professor Achillef Kapinidis and, most recently, bionano engineer Professor Molly Stevens – evidencing the institute's absolute commitment to interdisciplinarity. 'We cover a very broad range of topics and skill sets in this building,' says Professor Robinson.

'Bringing the physical sciences into the living cell' is the institute's strapline and researchers there are working on the premise that by understanding the cell,

● I measure how many interdisciplinary projects we have, how many applications we get for our seed fund – these kind of very physical things – but also the growing community spirit ●

Professor Dame Carol Robinson

it's possible to understand it in disease situations. This allows the Oxford Kavli scientists to exploit their knowledge in different ways. For example, one of multiple projects on antimicrobial resistance at the institute is tracking the movement of bacteria to try to identify them as quickly as possible. Their goal is to do so within an hour. Another group is looking at how bacteria die in order to help design new antibiotics.

Brain health is a big theme at the institute, from Parkinson's and Alzheimer's to depression. There are projects looking at depressed brain tissue versus healthy brain tissue. By trying to understand what is happening at the blood-brain barrier, the team is aiming to improve diagnostics and provide more 'intelligent prescriptions,' avoiding the current, unsatisfactory 'try this and see if it works' approach. 'This is a brand-new way of looking at the brain where we hope that we will be able to learn from the post-mortem brain to feed back to what's happening in the living brain,' says Professor Robinson.

Referencing research areas such as antimicrobial resistance and cancer that are being tackled by her own team, Professor Robinson says: 'You give drugs and then after a while they stop working. What is the chemistry behind that mechanism that is stopping them working? We've just started looking at how cells change as cancer progresses – not in a physiological way, but more in a chemical way. What are the changes that are happening on the cell surface that mean that cancer cells can become resistant to drugs?'

There is also a great deal of innovation happening at the Kavli Institute in terms of the design of exciting new technologies. 'We have a great example in the building: mass photometry – a new way of measuring protein interactions. We also have new ways of looking at antibodies and how proteins work with viruses, which means we can hope to stop them in their tracks,' says Professor Robinson.

Mass spectrometry was originally located in the chemistry laboratory but here it is available for use by everyone in the building. This has had a major impact as researchers trying to solve specific problems are now accelerating the development of new technologies.

Interdisciplinary collaboration and team building are firmly embedded in how the institute operates. 'Being in one building has huge advantages,' says Professor Robinson. 'Collaborations spring from speaking to each other face to face, bumping into each other for coffee and striking up ad hoc conversations. Those are the very interactions that the institute is trying to promote and so one of the first things we did was to set up a culture – or 'community building' –

● It's important to remember that everybody matters, everybody buys into the success of the institute, and everyone is a part of it. And I think because of that it becomes more successful ●

Professor Dame Carol Robinson

programme to encourage people to mix. We had away days, introduced coffee- and tea-times, and we have three-minute thesis presentations that everyone can attend.'

Professor Robinson thrives on people-matching and facilitating. 'It's got to be better than the sum of its individual parts. I'm trying to get across the excitement of science and working with people you don't at first understand. It's often at the interfaces of different disciplines that new discoveries are found.'

The Kavli Institute is now oversubscribed – which is exactly what Professor Robinson wanted. 'I thought that if it was successful, everyone would fight to come in,' she says. 'We are at capacity. We have to offer 'affiliation' because we can't offer a physical space anymore, so affiliation means, for example, having access to the seminars and being part of the away days.'

The endowment model works well for Professor Robinson as, in addition to the security it offers, it's possible to build on the endowment fund through further donations. This additional endowment income finances a seed fund that supports in-house projects, enabling bold exploration of innovative ideas. The seed fund is only available to interdisciplinary projects, so it's another way of sparking new interactions and is something of a passion for Professor Robinson. 'Currently we have at least tenfold more applications than we can actually afford to fund but these projects are amazingly valuable and more funding would allow us to be more ambitious. I'd like to have lots of these bottom-up projects from the younger generation that we can try for six months or a year in established labs.'

Professor Robinson is pleased with the Kavli Institute's progress to date: 'It does feel to me as though it's going very well,' she says. 'I've heard from other people that there's a growing excitement and they like working here and others would like to work here, so that's how you really know.' However, she is constantly looking to the future, adding: 'It's the young people who we really need to nurture. What could we do if we could fund that next generation of scientists at an early level when they're having all their creative ideas? I think it could be amazing.'



# Thanks to your support...



## ...a new woodland can thrive at Wytham Woods

Owned and maintained by the University since 1942, the Wytham Estate is home to a range of habitats and continuous ecological research and teaching programmes. The wooded parts are populated with ancient semi-natural woodland dating to the last Ice Age, secondary woodland dating to the seventeenth century, and modern plantations from the 1950s and 1960s.

Wytham Woods' status as an important ecological research station is widely appreciated. Wytham also provides an important resource for public benefit, such as boosting wellbeing through the power of nature, hosting an array of artistic and school education projects, and encouraging citizen scientists to engage with research.

Last year the Wytham Woods team revealed plans to create a new woodland area to increase the positive environmental impact of the estate and create new opportunities for research and public engagement. Almost £50,000 was given by 740 donors to help establish Bear Wood and in return they were offered a heritage acorn from one of Oxfordshire's ancient oaks. In 2024 donors will be invited to bring their oak saplings back to be planted in Bear Wood and thereby make a further lasting contribution.

Nigel Fisher, Conservator of Wytham Woods, said: 'This support will have a long-term impact on the Wytham Estate and will help to ensure that the benefits of the natural world can be enjoyed by the public, researchers and students for generations to come. We could not do this without the generosity of our donors.'

## ...Oxford is making advances in cancer research

Cancer is a major global health challenge, accounting for nearly 10 million deaths worldwide in 2020. Half of the UK population will be diagnosed with the disease in their lifetime, underscoring the urgency of work being undertaken by researchers and clinicians to develop solutions and improve patient outcomes. As a world-leading institution for cancer research, Oxford is in a strong position to help alleviate the burden of cancer on individuals and families, healthcare systems and society.

The Oxford Cancer initiative comprises over 900 researchers from more than 90 countries, working together to better understand how to prevent and treat cancer. As well as connecting people working in a range of disciplines, the initiative convenes industry and government partnerships and carries out trials to test new clinical strategies.

Thanks to the generosity of over 160 donors, almost £95,000 was raised following an appeal at the end of 2022. This support will go towards improving early cancer detection,

better understanding the most appropriate interventions and helping to develop better targeted, less toxic immunotherapies.

Tim Elliott, Kidani Professor of Immuno-Oncology, said: 'Oxford is uniquely placed to develop novel solutions to cancer because of our ability to bring together world-leading researchers from across disciplines. Donors have an important role to play in boosting our capacity to conduct this crucial research for patient and societal benefit globally.'



900+ researchers



90+ countries

Above: Conducting research in the Department of Oncology

## ...opportunities for young people to engage with history are increasing

Studying a history degree at university equips young people with a range of key skills, benefitting them in their careers and preparing them for changes and uncertainty through a deeper understanding of the past. Advocating for a better appreciation of history in a complex, fast-paced global environment is of great importance in seeking to improve the present and inform the future. Oxford is committed to providing opportunities for talented students, regardless of their background, to have insight into what it's like to study history at Oxford and to encourage the next generation of thought leaders.

Donor support has played a key role in enabling the University to deliver a variety of history outreach activities, including Oxford admission interview workshops and UNIQ summer schools, which allow the brightest students from under-represented or disadvantaged backgrounds to experience what it is like to study history at Oxford. These initiatives are a crucial part of the University's efforts to inspire young

students and help them to realise their potential.

To continue programmes like these into the future, an appeal was launched last year that raised almost £70,000 from over 135 donors. This support will help to deepen engagement with talented students in schools across the UK and provide them with unparalleled opportunities to pursue their passion for history.

Dr Callum Kelly, a former UNIQ summer school participant and Oxford history graduate, said: 'My story began with UNIQ. Coming from a state school with no history of Oxbridge applications, I believed that maybe university wasn't right for me. UNIQ dispelled my preconceptions about Oxford – it was a dynamic, welcoming place where I could share my passion for history. It showed me that not only could I aspire to Oxford, I could thrive here as well.'

Below: Students talking in a college dining hall



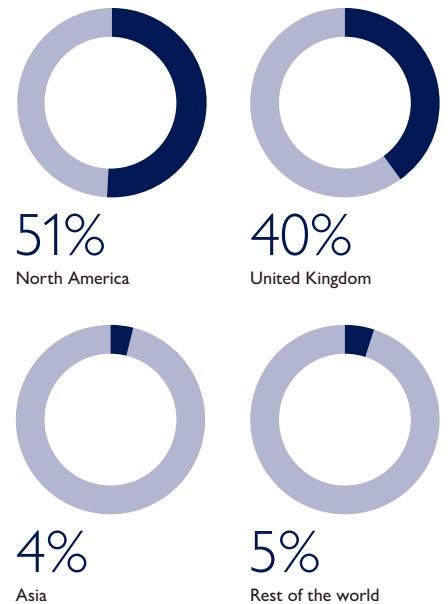
## Philanthropy in numbers 2022/23

Amount raised this year  
(University only)

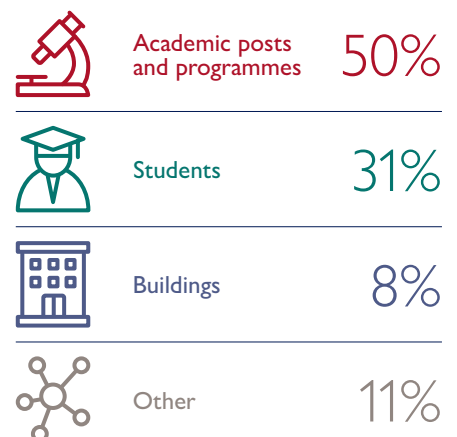
# £222 million

1 August 2022 to 31 July 2023

Where donations come from  
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What donations are supporting by area  
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