



THE Darwinian



Solutions across boundaries

Meet the Darwinians taking interdisciplinary approaches to respond to the world's challenges

Also inside:



Through the Global History Lab, Professor Jeremy Adelman provides an educational passport to students in the world's most challenging circumstances



PhD student Joycelyn Longdon uses justice-led conservation technologies to engage with the communities facing the impact of the climate crisis



Alumnus Simon Glenister explains how music holds the key to connecting with children disengaged from education

A Message from the Master

Dr Mike Rands



As another busy and productive academic year draws to a close, it is timely to reflect on what we have achieved at Darwin and what makes this College distinctive.

Once again we are very proud of our students, with a total of 374 successfully graduating this year including 123 who received their doctorate. Alongside their academic work four of them managed to reach the semi-final of the BBC's *University Challenge* following breathtaking and brilliant performances against teams from across other universities in the UK. And I'm delighted to say we have another team who have qualified to appear in the next annual round of this competition.

We also had two students compete successfully in the annual Boat Races on the River Thames against Oxford, and a number whose academic and social contributions were rewarded with prizes and awards as highlighted in the News section of this issue. Stories of Darwinian achievements are also regularly shared on our website and social media platforms, so do follow us.

Equally impressive are the achievements of our Fellows. Alongside alumni and students, several have written and published books – ranging from heavy academic tomes to novels – as highlighted on page 18, and most have published new research findings in peer-reviewed papers. Our Emeritus Fellow and Professor of Computer Sciences, Andrew Pitts was elected as a Fellow of the Royal Society, while Professor Jeremy Adelman was elected as a Fellow of the British Academy. And our Fellow Professor Emily Shuckburgh, Director of Cambridge Zero, was recognised with a CBE in the King's Birthday Honours for services to Climate Science and to the Public Communication of Climate Science.

Fellows also made outstanding contributions to our 40th anniversary Darwin College Lecture Series on Codes which attracted in-person audiences of up to 600 and all of which have been watched by thousands on YouTube (@DarwinCollegeLectureSeries). Others presented their work in our Erasmus Seminar series or at the lunchtime research seminars in College, demonstrating the breadth and diversity of scholarship we are lucky to provide a home for and be able to share with our students.

Alumni have been no less active and successful and it has been a personal pleasure for me to meet many in person this year, not only in the UK but also on visits to China, Singapore and the United States.

Several alumni have been awarded prizes for their academic work and two were recognised in His Majesty the King's Birthday Honours this year: Fred Perry, who completed an MPhil in Development Studies at Darwin in 2012, was awarded a CBE for services to Business and Trade; and Dr Bryony Livesey, who completed her PhD in Materials Science at Darwin in 1983, was awarded an MBE for services to Industrial Decarbonisation, Carbon Capture and Storage and Net Zero.

Within Darwin itself, this year has seen detailed plans approved by the local authorities to transform the College site. These will enable us to transition to renewable energy through the installation of a water-source heat pump alongside the river, as well as refurbishing the Hermitage Building and creating a Garden Room beneath the Dining Hall. Work begins in earnest this summer and will lead the College towards carbon neutrality while providing new spaces for the whole community to work, socialise and innovate.

“The commitment by Darwin to act on and promote solutions to some of these challenges is inspiring and promises to deliver some exciting innovations in the years to come.”

To me, all of the above and the articles that follow showcasing the work of our Fellows, students and alumni, demonstrate what is distinctive about Darwin College. Firstly, it is our community – which is by its nature interdisciplinary, international and diverse. Secondly, our scholarship, visible from the academic record of so many across the community and experienced daily in the Dining Hall, at lectures and seminars and even in the garden and DarBar! Thirdly our culture: informal, inclusive and egalitarian. We are a multi-generational extended family who come together in a series of former family homes in Cambridge but then spread across the globe while remaining Darwinians for ever. And finally, while I am sure we can all point to additional distinctive characteristics, I would highlight our commitment to addressing global challenges. This year has demonstrated once again how difficult it is for humanity to live peacefully, prosper and thrive without destroying the planet’s life systems upon which we all ultimately depend. The commitment by Darwin to act on and promote solutions to some of these challenges is inspiring and promises to deliver some exciting innovations in the years to come.

I’d like to end the academic year by recording my enormous gratitude to everyone who has contributed to making our College so distinctive and special. This year we launched a major fundraising campaign to secure £60 million to support students, to enhance and decarbonise our estate and to address global challenges. To date we have raised a total of over £11 million in gifts and pledges towards this goal, thanks to major contributions from our newly appointed Sir George Darwin Fellow Benefactors and gifts from alumni, Fellows, students and staff. I am deeply grateful to everyone who supports Darwin College – your gifts enable us to make a real difference to all future Darwinians who in turn play a vital role in making the world a better place for future generations.

College News

Sustainability update

2025 has seen Darwin College continue to prioritise environmental considerations across both its strategic planning and daily operations. In addition to maintaining successful existing initiatives, such as encouraging the uptake of plant-based meals through subsidies and prioritised positioning in the servery, several new initiatives have been launched to support the Darwin community in working and living more sustainably.

First, with academic travel often providing important opportunities for early career researchers, a new Sustainable Travel Grant was launched this year to help members of the College community choose lower-carbon transport options when travelling for conferences or other academic activities. The grant provides financial support for travel by train, bus or other more environmentally friendly means, and aims to make these choices more accessible to students and researchers.

Additionally, the College has worked to communicate more proactively with the community about our sustainability efforts. Sustainability has now found a regular place in the College newsletter, with a dedicated sustainability segment highlighting different initiatives, new developments and opportunities to get involved. This new feature is part of our broader commitment to engage the whole community – including students, Fellows, staff members and alumni – with this important topic.

Looking ahead, preparations are under way for building works associated with the planned river-source heat pump system, which will supply renewable heating to the College site. While this project represents an exciting step towards reducing the College’s carbon emissions, we are actively engaging with students, staff, and Fellows to minimise any disruptions during the associated works.

We look forward to sharing more updates as these initiatives develop.

Miriam Remshard

Project Manager (Sustainability)

Continued overleaf...

Pump House and Garden Room given go ahead



Darwin is embarking on an ambitious programme of development after its plans received unanimous enthusiasm from Cambridge City Council's planning committee in April.

The project will underpin the College's goal to achieve carbon neutrality over the next decade, while also creating much-needed social spaces. The plans bring together two separate but connected bodies of design work developed by 5th Studio Architects and Caruso St John Architects, to take advantage of the College's riverside location to harness innovative river-source heat pump technology, and introduce a multi-purpose Garden Room beneath the existing Dining Hall.

The 5th Studio proposals include the construction of a Pump House, next to the river, which will house the technology required to harvest from the River Cam low-carbon heating and hot water for the Silver Street site. A network of pipes will distribute heat to individual buildings, in the first river-source heat pump at this scale planned for central Cambridge.

Simultaneously, the College has commissioned Caruso St John to design a new social space beneath the existing Dining Hall. The Garden Room will enable College members to meet and engage with one another in a casual, light-filled setting which enjoys the surrounding aspect of the gardens.

5th Studio and Caruso St John between them will also oversee refurbishment measures across the site, to support its decarbonisation. These measures principally comprise improved glazing and insulation, sensitively incorporated into the historic fabric.

Official portrait of the Master unveiled

Fellows, students, staff and the Rands family gathered in the Bradfield Room on 14th May to celebrate the unveiling of the Master's official portrait.

Professor Sara Baker, who oversaw the process of commissioning the work, welcomed attendees to the first opportunity to view the painting, which will commemorate Dr Rands' time in office.

While, according to standard Cambridge practice, a committee had been convened to select the artist, in the event the College was fortunate in being able to secure the Master's own first choice. **Rosalie Watkins**, whose portrait of Sir David Attenborough had been admired by Dr Rands, came to Darwin for a week last summer, and for regular subsequent sittings. Dr Rands described the experience of sitting for the portrait as "an extraordinary process," explaining that Rosalie asked numerous questions about his life, career and background to keep him engaged and animated, and to ensure a sense of his personality was reflected in the finished picture.

"It absorbed the atmosphere of the College, and of people stopping to look and ask questions," he said.

Rosalie agreed. "It felt instinctive to set Mike in the gardens – he seemed to completely belong there. It's difficult to articulate how special the atmosphere is at Darwin in the quiet evenings in mid-August. Thank you to the College community for making me so welcome."

The portrait has now joined those of Dr Rands' predecessors in the Dining Hall, providing a visual history of Darwin leadership.



Professor Maria Leptin sworn in as Honorary Fellow



Professor Maria Leptin, developmental biologist and President of the European Research Council, was welcomed to Darwin on 25th June as the College's newest Honorary Fellow. Professor Leptin was sworn in by the Master, Dr Mike Rands, following a ceremony in the Senate House at which she was honoured by the University, which conferred on her an Honorary Doctorate in Medical Science.

Professor Leptin currently holds one of the most important and visible positions in European science. Before taking up the Directorship of the ERC in 2021, she spent 11 years as Director of the European Molecular Biology Organisation, strengthening cooperation among molecular biologists across Europe.

Professor Leptin studied Mathematics and Biology at the University of Bonn and the University of Heidelberg, before completing her PhD at the Basel Institute for Immunology. She then moved to Cambridge, where from 1984–87 she worked, first as a post-doctoral Fellow and latterly as a staff scientist, at the Laboratory of Molecular Biology. In 1994 she was appointed as a Professor of Genetics at the University of Cologne.

Dr Rands said: "Maria has a stellar record of scientific work in the life sciences, and her international status has been recognised by several bodies, including being a Foreign Member of the Royal Society. We are delighted that she has accepted the offer of an Honorary Fellowship and look forward to having her amongst our most distinguished members."

Katie Taylor elected as DCSA President



Congratulations to **Katie Taylor**, who has been elected as DCSA President for the 2025–26 academic year.

Katie is a PhD student in Theoretical and Applied Linguistics. She has just completed her first year of study, focusing on Forensic Phonetics, or the use of speech recordings in criminal investigation, with a particular interest in the accuracy with which we can determine a speaker's gender identity from a sample of their speech.

Having previously completed her undergraduate and Master's degrees at the University of York, Katie initially chose to apply to Darwin because a friend from York was also Darwin-bound. A visit to the College cemented her choice, with the gardens and the immediate sense of community combining to make her feel at home.

Katie served as Co-President of this year's May Ball, an experience which sharpened her appetite for greater involvement.

"As part of my role, I worked closely with a number of different teams in Darwin, as well as the rest of the May Ball committee made up of other students. I saw how much the DCSA had to offer, and how hard everyone works behind the scenes to make the College such a lovely place to live.

Her prospective schedule sounds busy already.

"I plan on continuing to work with the DCSA to run events throughout the year, from coffee mornings, welfare dog visits and the famous Darwin BOPs, to salsa classes, yoga sessions, and wine and cheese tastings! Additionally, I hope to continue working on some of the projects that the 2024/25 DCSA committee began, including working with the College to ensure that we are helping to improve student experiences amidst a cost-of-living crisis, and to achieve their goal of becoming carbon neutral by 2032."

Good luck to Katie as she takes up her new role, and thank you to outgoing President **Joshua Bickler** for all his hard work on behalf of Darwin over the past year.



Charles Darwin Archive Recognised by United Nations Agency

The Charles Darwin Archive has been recognised on the prestigious UNESCO International Memory of the World Register, highlighting its critical importance to global science and the necessity of its long-term preservation and accessibility.

The UNESCO Memory of the World Programme serves as the documentary heritage equivalent of UNESCO World Heritage Sites, protecting invaluable records that tell the story of human civilisation.

A collaboration between Cambridge University Library, the Natural History Museum, the Linnean Society of London, English Heritage's Down House, the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew and the National Library of Scotland, the Charles Darwin Archive provides a unique window into the life and work of one of the world's most influential natural scientists.

The complete archive, comprising over 20,000 items, includes Darwin's records illustrating the development of his ground-breaking theory of evolution and extensive global travels. His inscription marks a significant milestone in recognising Darwin's legacy, as it brings together materials held by multiple institutions across the UK for the first time, ensuring that his work's scientific, cultural, and historical value is preserved for future generations.

Dr Jessica Gardner, University Librarian and Director of Library Services at Cambridge University Libraries (CUL) said:

"For all Charles Darwin gave the world, we are delighted by the UNESCO recognition in the Memory of the World of the exceptional scientific and heritage significance of his remarkable archive held within eminent UK institutions. Cambridge University Library is home to over 9,000 letters to and from Darwin, as well as his handwritten experimental notebooks, publications, and photographs which have together fostered decades of scholarship and public enjoyment through exhibition, education for schools, and online access.

We could not be prouder of UNESCO's recognition of this remarkable documentary heritage at the University of Cambridge, where Darwin was a student at Christ's College and where his family connections run deep across the city, and are reflected in his namesake, Darwin College."

University Challenge

Monday evenings for much of the first half of this year were a nerve-wracking experience, as Darwin battled through round after round of *University Challenge*. The team, consisting of **Harrison Whitaker, Rebecca McClelland, Sophie Willis** and **Rowan Stewart** reached the semi-finals of the BBC quiz programme, equalling Darwin's previous record, and eventually losing out to Warwick by the narrowest of margins.

Team captain Harrison Whitaker completed his PhD in Film Studies just in time to accept the offer of a job researching questions for the programme, a role which found him in the bizarre position of setting the brainteasers for the next round while his own efforts were still being broadcast. Among the teams coming up against Harrison's questions was another group of Darwinians, whose first-round match will be screened in the autumn. We look forward to cheering on **Louis Cameron, Jon White, Lewis Strachan** and **Ruth Ní Mhuircheartaigh**, and the team reserve, **Ben Rudd**.



Research News

Guardian launches new technology to protect sources, developed by Darwinian

Whistleblowers will be able to communicate with journalists more securely, thanks to new anonymous messaging technology developed by Darwin alumnus **Dr Daniel Hugenroth**.

Daniel, who completed a PhD in Computer Science at Darwin in 2023, is now affiliated with the College as a Postdoctoral Research Associate at the Department of Computer Science and Technology. He co-led the development of CoverDrop, which encrypts outgoing messages between the source and their named contact; provides digital 'dead drops' where messages are left for journalists to retrieve; and pads all messages to the same length, making it harder to distinguish real messages from decoy ones.

The *Guardian*, whose software engineers worked alongside the Cambridge researchers, has built on the technology to launch Secure Messaging, a module within its mobile news app. Although the *Guardian* helped to take the idea from prototype to reality, the technology will be fully available for use by other news organisations.

"All the CoverDrop code will be available online and open source," said Daniel. "This transparency is essential for security-critical software and allows others to audit and improve it. Open-sourcing the code also means that other news organisations, particularly those with expertise in investigative journalism, could also use it. We would be excited to see them do so."

Women's personal data 'commodified' by menstrual tracking apps

Women are being encouraged to share enormous amounts of intimate information with menstrual tracking apps, providing a 'gold mine' for consumer profiling, according to research by Darwin alumna **Dr Stefanie Felsberger**.

Stefanie's report, *The High Stakes of Tracking Menstruation*, was published by the Minderoo Centre for Technology and Democracy, where she is a Research Associate. She completed her PhD in Multi-Disciplinary Gender Studies at Darwin last year.

"Menstrual cycle tracking apps are presented as empowering women and addressing the gender health gap," Stefanie says. "Yet the business model behind their services rests on commercial use, selling user data and insights to third parties for profit."

There are real and frightening privacy and safety risks to women as a result of the commodification of the data collected by cycle tracking app companies."

She argues that the NHS is ideally placed to develop its own trustworthy alternative to apps created by private companies, with guarantees that data will not be sold on.

"Apps that are situated within public healthcare systems, and not driven primarily by profit, will mitigate privacy violations, provide much-needed data on reproductive health, and give people more agency over how their menstrual data is used."

Appointments and awards

Darwin Emeritus Fellow **Professor Andrew Pitts** has been elected as a Fellow of the Royal Society, in recognition of his impact in the field of Theoretical Computer Science.



Andy's research makes use of techniques from category theory, mathematical logic and type theory to advance the foundations of programming language semantics and theorem proving systems. His aim is to develop mathematical models and methods that aid language design and the development of formal logics for specifying and reasoning about programs. He is particularly interested in higher-order typed programming languages and in dependently typed logics.

The Royal Society is the oldest scientific academy in continuous existence. Andy is one of nine outstanding Cambridge scientists elected to the Fellowship's newest cohort.



Darwin Fellow **Professor Emily Shuckburgh** has been recognised with a CBE in the King's Birthday Honours for "services to Climate Science" and to the Public Communication of Climate Science. Emily has also been appointed as an Honorary Fellow of the Energy Institute – their highest form of membership.

A renowned climate scientist and Director of Cambridge Zero, which aims to maximise the University's contribution towards a sustainable, zero-carbon future, Emily was described by the Energy Institute as "one of the UK's foremost climate science experts and communicators".

Congratulations to Darwin Fellow **Professor Jeremy Adelman**, who has been elected as a Fellow of the British Academy, the UK's national academy for the humanities and social sciences. Founded in 1902, the Academy's purpose is to "deepen understanding of people, societies and cultures, enabling everyone to learn, progress and prosper."

Jeremy is a historian and Director of the Global History Lab.

News

Dr Bryony Livesey, who completed her PhD in Materials Science at Darwin in 1983, has been awarded an MBE for services to Industrial Decarbonisation, Carbon Capture and Storage and Net Zero. Bryony is Industrial Decarbonisation Challenge Director at UK Research and Innovation.

Fred Perry, Director of the Industrial Strategy Unit at the Department for Business and Trade, has been awarded a CBE for services to Business and Trade. Fred completed an MPhil in Development Studies at Darwin in 2012.



Dr Fabian Eichberger has been awarded the Dispute Resolution Interest Group (DRIG) Prize for Best Article in International Dispute Resolution, awarded by the American Society of International Law. Fabian's article was selected from 34

submissions based on depth of research; sophistication of analysis; originality; quality of writing; and potential impact on the field of international dispute resolution.

Fabian is the Charles and Katharine Darwin Research Fellow at Darwin College, and a Fellow at the Lauterpacht Centre for International Law. His research focuses on international dispute settlement, international investment law, and the law of state responsibility.

Double congratulations to Darwin Fellow **Professor Chris Sandbrook**, who has been awarded the Royal Geographical Society Cuthbert Peek Award 2025, and has also been appointed as Director of the Conservation Research Institute.

The award recognises those who *advance geographical knowledge of human impact on the environment through the application of contemporary methods, including those of earth observation and mapping.*

Darwin student **Ben Bilefield** was presented to His Majesty The King at a celebration for Civil Service Award recipients in February. Ben, who has taken a career break from the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero to pursue an MPhil in Environmental Policy, received a Developing and Supporting People Award in recognition of his mindfulness sessions, Zen with Ben.

Zen with Ben began as a informal wellbeing and mindfulness session led by Ben for his team in September 2021, but has now expanded to reach over 1,500 people across 25 government departments, as well as occasional sessions in Darwin.



Ben Bilefield meets His Majesty the King



Beau Roberts

The Civil Service Awards is a cross-government programme intended to recognise and celebrate inspirational individuals and innovative projects within the Civil Service, helping to spread best practice while sharing innovation, learning and leadership.

Congratulations to Head of Student Wellbeing **Beau Roberts**, who was a finalist in the 'Drama Inspiration' category at the Music & Drama Education Awards.

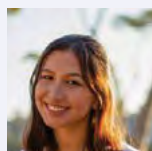
"It was a privilege to represent Dramatherapy at this prestigious event and to see the growing recognition of the arts in supporting mental health and well-being," she said.

Darwin Masters student in Architecture **Julia Wlodarczyk** has been awarded a scholarship by the RIBA Wren Insurance Association. The awards are given annually to final year Part 2 students who have the potential to make a significant contribution to architecture.

Julia's project explores the role of architecture in social and political transformation, through the study of her hometown in Belchatow, Poland, as it transitions away from coal dependency.

Darwin student **Rebecka Mähring** has been awarded the Rausing Prize by the Department of History and Philosophy of Science.

The prize, given annually for the best performance in the dissertation component of the MPhil in History and Philosophy of Science and Medicine, was awarded for Rebecka's dissertation *Breakable knowledge: the craft of photography on the 1919 eclipse expedition to Sobral*.



Sydney Haupt, Darwin MPhil student in History, Medicine and Society, is the winner of this year's Habib Prize for the best performance in the essay component of the course.

The prize was awarded for Syd's essays, *Through the Looking Glass: An Examination of Kinship Structures and ART* and *A History of Psychological Follow-Up for IVF Children*.

Obituaries

Professor Ekhard Salje



The Darwin community is saddened to learn of the death of Professor Ekhard Salje, who was a Fellow and valued member of the College community from 1986 until his appointment as President of Clare Hall in 2001. He was subsequently elected as an Honorary Fellow in 2002, in which capacity he maintained a close connection to Darwin.

Born in Germany in 1946, Professor Salje began his career at the University of Hanover, where he held the role of Head of Department at the Institute for Crystallography and Petrology, before his relocation to Cambridge in 1985. Over the course of a long and highly distinguished career he developed the field of Mineral Physics at Cambridge.

His research focused primarily on the stability of minerals and the transformation processes occurring within them.

Professor Salje served as Head of the Department of Earth Sciences for a decade, as well as chairing the Cambridge eScience Centre at the Cavendish Lab and overseeing collaboration with MIT as Programme Director of the Cambridge-MIT Institute.

His work received widespread international recognition. He was a Fellow of the Royal Society, as well as of Germany's Leopoldina and the Spanish Academia Royal, and Chevalier dans l'ordre des Palmes Academiques (France).

In 2007 Professor Salje was awarded the Cross of the Order of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany, and last December he received China's highest civilian honour, the Friendship Medal.

Professor Kostya Trachenko



The College was saddened to learn of the death of alumnus and theoretical physicist Professor Kostya Trachenko, who has died from cancer at the age of 54.

Originally from Lviv, Ukraine, Kostya studied Physics at Lviv University before completing a PhD in Earth Sciences at Darwin from 1997-2001. He then held a Research Fellowship at the College from 2003, before being appointed Professor of Physics at Queen Mary University of London, where he led the PhD programme in the physical sciences. His research reshaped understanding of the behaviour of liquids.

Darwin College Boat Club



This year's May Bumps, in which M1 and M2 both won their blades, brought to an end an excellent year for Darwin College Boat Club.

Darwin rowers were the only Cambridge representatives invited to Busan, South Korea, for last summer's World Class University Rowing Festival, where they will return later this year. In April's Boat Races against Oxford, **Ben Rutherford** (MPhil in Planning Growth and Regeneration) kickstarted Cambridge's success on the river in the Spare Pairs race, while **Mia Freischem** (PhD Surgery) was part of the triumphant Women's Reserve crew, Blondie. Mia also rowed in this summer's Henley Royal Regatta.

Thank you to the coaches and team captains for their effort and dedication, as well as to everyone who has represented the College on the river this year.

Rowers and Boat Club alumni celebrated the end of the year in style, at the annual Boat Club dinner in June.



Alumni benefits and services 2025



Informal Dining

You are welcome to eat in the College Dining Hall or Café at members' rates (student prices plus VAT). Alumni may bring up to three guests, who will be charged at the guest rate.



Formal Hall

You are welcome at any Formal Hall, subject to availability. To book, please email the Development Office directly. You will be able to pay on the night by bank card at the Porters' Lodge. Please note that alumni spaces may be limited or unavailable on certain occasions, such as Welcome Dinners and Christmas Formals.



Accommodation

If you wish to stay overnight in College, there are two guest rooms available, each with a double bed and en-suite bathroom. These can be booked by alumni for up to seven nights at a rate of £96 per night (Old Granary) or £114 per night (Newnham Grange). Bookings cannot be made on behalf of guests who are not themselves alumni.

To book, please contact either the Development Office or the Accommodation Office. Rooms may be reserved up to a month in advance.



Punting

The College's punts, kayaks and paddle boards are available to all members of the Punt Club, for an annual membership fee of £30.

To join, please visit www.dcsa.darwin.cam.ac.uk/punts/booking. Once you are a member, you can book your outing by contacting the Porters' Lodge. Punts are available for a maximum of three hours.



Event/Conference Bookings

You are welcome to book College rooms for meetings and events, including the Richard King Room, John Bradfield Court, and the Old Library. Fees vary depending on the room and the services required. To book, please contact either the Development Office or the Catering Manager.



College Access

Most of the College's shared spaces, including the Parlour, Café, gardens, and the Reading Room, are available for alumni to use without prior notice for work or socialising. The Library and Study Centre is reserved for the use of current members only.



DarBar

The DarBar is open from 9pm to midnight on most days in full-term. You are welcome to use the bar, but will be asked to present a valid CAMCard to the Porters or bar staff to confirm your alumni status. You may bring up to three guests, all of whom must be signed in. After 9pm you will need to ring the front doorbell to gain access to the College.

For special events at DarBar, please book your tickets in advance by emailing the DCSA events officer at dcsa_events@darwin.cam.ac.uk.



CAMCard

With a CAMCard, you can visit all the Colleges when they are open to the public, and claim multiple discounts around the city. To request your CAMCard, please visit www.alumni.cam.ac.uk/benefits/camcard

For further enquiries please contact the University alumni team.



Cambridge University Library

You can visit the University Library by presenting your CAMCard and photo ID. If you would like to study in or borrow from the Library, you'll need to apply for a reader's card, which you can request free of charge here: www.alumni.cam.ac.uk/benefits/university-library.



Cantab Email Address

To register for your free @cantab email address, which includes 50GB of storage, please visit www.alumni.cam.ac.uk/benefits/alumni-email. Student @cam email accounts are closed once you are no longer registered as a current student.



Merchandise

College merchandise is available for sale from the Porters' Lodge, the Café, or through the online shop.



Oxford and Cambridge Club

To apply for membership of the Oxford and Cambridge Club please email Tim Mooney at membershipassistant@oandc.uk. The Club will then contact the Development Office to confirm your alumni status.



Transcripts and certificates

If you need confirmation of your awards, transcripts, or certificates please contact the University Registry at www.student-registry.admin.cam.ac.uk.

History without borders

Canadian historian and Darwin Fellow Professor Jeremy Adelman came to Cambridge to accompany his wife, Professor Deborah Prentice, who took up the role of Vice-Chancellor in 2023. He talked to the *Darwinian* about the evolution of his groundbreaking education platform, the Global History Lab, and how it made the move across the Atlantic.



When Professor Jeremy Adelman swapped Princeton for Cambridge, he brought the Global History Lab with him. The programme, which he had developed as a Professor of History at Princeton, works across global divides to teach history collaboratively, supporting refugees and displaced people as part of an international ecosystem of knowledge exchange. From a pipeline programme towards further education for asylum seekers at Paris's Sciences Po, to teams of Ukrainian and Russian students working together, it has built extraordinary links across borders, broadening the perspectives of participants across the world.

Launched in 2012 as a MOOC (Massive Open Online Course), the Lab emerged

from Jeremy's role as Princeton's Chief International Officer, in charge of global and strategic planning, which he juggled at the time with teaching a general course on the history of the world. When Princeton became one of the co-founders of Coursera, an online open course provider, in 2012, it became clear that the platform opened up new possibilities for international collaboration between students.

"We launched the Lab as one of these courses, with the goal, originally, of bringing the world into a course about itself," he explains.

"So that my students at Princeton could learn about the origins of World War One, or the causes of the Taiping Rebellion, or

whatever it might be, in a global context, in a dialogue with students from other places in the world. The original inspiration was how to get the world into this course, so that students could get out of their bubble."

From the beginning, the benefits were seen as reciprocal, with international participants both enjoying access to a Princeton education, and themselves broadening the horizons of Princeton's own students through their engagement with the programme.

Jeremy is open about how this trade-off functioned from the institution's perspective.

"The only way to make this sustainable for higher education – this was part of the experiment – was if you had a self-interest in doing this. The global exchange, if it's just for "charity purposes" is not sustainable."

However, the balance has tilted, in the 13 years since the Global History Lab launched. Now active in 22 countries, it reaches 500 students a year in some of the world's most challenging contexts. Their engagement with the course not only provides a diversity of viewpoints within the Lab itself, but, crucially, can be their passport to continuing education.

Jeremy has a clear memory of how this began, when the course's early incarnation as a MOOC coincided with the outbreak of the Syrian civil war.

"A group of Syrian students from the University of Aleppo were in Vienna, in

exile. They were part of the opposition coalition, very active politically, and happened to be taking my course. And they reached out and said 'Professor Adelman, when in world history have civil wars ended democratically?'

Struck by what he describes as "the pathos of the question – the assumption that they were fighting a war and that they wanted everyone to learn from history how not to repeat certain mistakes," the exchange led to the Lab's first partnership, with a Beirut-based NGO. They began working with different communities to consider world history, bring students together, and engage with the idea that the humanities could provide the means to thinking about alternatives to the present. Through its global partnership, the Lab provides 'Princeton-quality' higher education at scale.

"Making it accessible to students in really complicated circumstances like refugee camps or war zones, or if they've gone underground in Russia or Myanmar. We began to work very hard to get to the areas of the world where higher education was being shut down, or simply not available."

The Lab now partners with universities which have been forced into exile by war, or underground by political constraints, as well as with NGOs working to deliver pathway programmes to people who are displaced.

"We've got a great programme in Uganda, where the majority of the students who have gone through the Lab curriculum have gone on to community colleges and universities in Uganda. These are mainly South Sudanese refugees, and they don't have high school certificates from South Sudan because they had to flee. So these certificates, and letters of recommendation from their teaching assistants, really gave them a passport."

The programme now includes a 12-week course on general history, which is then built on by a second 12-week course focused on research skills. Students then

pursue applied research in their own locations, connected somehow to the fieldwork undertaken by their fellow learners. Over the years that the course has been running, these projects have resulted in almost a thousand written pieces of research, published on the website Global History Dialogues.

"That's now turned into several anthologies of essays, often by refugee learners writing in their own voice, with their own skills, histories of their locations in global contexts...The idea is to expand what's called the right to research. A lot of them may be refugees and asylum seekers and stateless, and they may not have political rights, but we can work on their rights to be knowledge producers."

In 2023 Jeremy, and the Lab, made the transition to Cambridge, on the coattails of the Vice-Chancellor. He is warm and open about both the pleasures of the shared aspects of the role, and what he sees as his primary function – to provide emotional backup.

"I meet wonderful people, and support Debbie. It's a challenging job – sometimes she just needs somebody to rant with. So I do what I can. I do go to a lot of formal things; it's important that I be there and be seen to be present. Because it's a personal commitment on her part, and she's a whole person, and I'm part of that wholeness."

The global structure of the Lab remained unchanged in the relocation, but the difference between Princeton's broad undergraduate curriculum and Cambridge's tightly focused subject specialism meant that there was no way to maintain the original concept of involving home students. As a result, Cambridge does not fund the programme, which is now supported by an external grant. It is nevertheless acquiring a Cambridge flavour, not least through the eight PhD students, several of them Darwinians, who are hired each year to act as instructors. In addition, the latest phase of the programme provides its alumni with opportunities to create rapid response

history, in an approach termed 'narrative observatories'.

Overseeing the Lab, and the role of Vice-Chancellor's consort, may occasionally disrupt deadlines and the opportunities for his own research, but they also feed into it. When we speak, Jeremy has just completed his latest book, *Making the Modern World: A History of Love and Fear*, ten years after signing the original contract.

"They're all trade-offs. But I learn so much from the conversations with colleagues and students from all these places, that really changed how I thought about the global narrative, and that's gone into it. It would have been a very different book without this relationship I have now with all these wonderful people over the years."

As universities come under increasing pressure to defend their role as knowledge-creators, Jeremy sees the Lab's existing partnerships as the prototype for the impact of educational collaboration, where universities can play an active role in social reconstruction. In Ukraine, for instance, where the Lab partners with the Catholic University of Ukraine in Lviv, he sees an existential threat to the country if the thousands of young men whose lives have been interrupted by war leave once they are able to do so.

"If that happens, Ukraine will be permanently vulnerable, unstable, impoverished. Universities have a special role to play in preventing that from happening. By saying to young men and women 'stay here – you'll get good quality education, stay home, contribute to the rebuilding of Ukraine while connected universities provide opportunities to participate in global exchanges.' But if we don't do that, they'll leave; Ukraine will lose the talented youth it needs. So in reconstructions and social welfare the universities are essential players."

Noise Solution

Darwin alumnus Simon Glenister explains how working with disengaged children through music technology led him back to education - and how Darwin reshaped his approach.



Simon Glenister's affinity for young people alienated by the education system comes from first-hand experience. In the 1990s he was a school-leaver with no qualifications or prospects, "hanging out in a post-industrial Midlands town."

Music came to his rescue. He moved to London, joined a band, achieved multiple record contracts and toured the world, playing at world class venues from Glastonbury to the Royal Festival Hall. But despite this, his lack of qualifications nagged at him.

"The world values academic attainment," he explains. "I felt I was always playing catch up."

Volunteering with young offenders in East London, an experience he found "terrifying, but I loved it," gave him an insight into the ease with which young people can fall through the cracks, if not presented with positive alternatives. His then partner's involvement in social enterprise provided another strand and, combined with his musical expertise, led to the creation of Noise Solution.

Initially working on his own, in 2009 Simon launched the concept of pairing young people with music producers to build collaborative relationships and create music together. The initiative now employs 27 musicians to deliver over 700 hours a month of one-to-one mentoring. Its impact is transformational, leading to behavioural changes which, according to independent estimates, saved families and local authority services £6.5 million in 2024 alone. Since 2019, it has been recognised as a winner or finalist by 25 national awards.

“In 2024 the organisation beat Microsoft to win the ‘Innovation in AI’ category at the National Digital Revolution Awards.”

Participants are referred to the programme by schools or local authorities.

“They’re children professionals are struggling to engage with, often facing challenges around mental health or education,” says Simon.

Mentoring takes place face-to-face, in the child’s home or school. In addition, through a secure digital platform, families and key workers can engage with multimedia highlights from each session, where participants share both the music they’ve created, and how the experience makes them feel. It creates opportunities for them to feel successful, while recording the effect of that success.

Central to Noise Solution’s approach is its focus on gathering data, building a constant bank of information on both individual progress and its overall impact. In 2024 the organisation beat Microsoft to win the ‘Innovation in AI’ category at the National Digital Revolution Awards. Their AI application is used to understand changes in well-being in the weekly reflections shared by participants.

“They’re generally experiencing a deficit-based system. Having a space to create a positive relationship and share it with trusted adults creates a successful feedback loop. Being able to quantify how that changes feelings (via AI analysis) means we can quantify whether we’re having impact on those feelings, something that charitable organisations have always struggled to do at scale.”

Noise Solution had already been running for seven years when it provided the launchpad back into education for its founder. After giving a presentation, Simon was approached by Pam Burnard, Professor of Arts, Creativities and Educations at Cambridge. Suggesting that he should come and formalise his research, she encouraged him to pursue a Masters in Education.



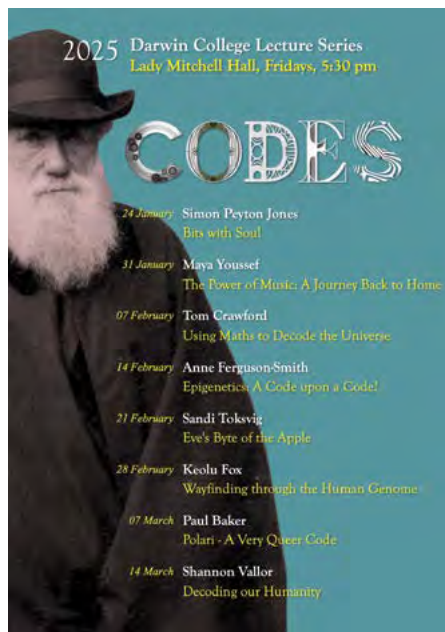
“Pam was fascinated by what we were doing and the data we had accumulated, and was instrumental in helping someone without a first degree navigate the application process.”

From 2016-18, Simon combined Noise Solution with an MEd at Darwin, gaining a new perspective which changed his approach to the organisation.

“Studying for my MEd at Darwin was massively validating for myself but more importantly it gave me the academic foundation to underpin Noise Solution’s work with robust theory,” he says.

“It helped me connect the dots between personal experience, practice, and research, particularly around well-being and motivation. It’s given me the language needed to be able to advocate for creative approaches and solutions to really serious challenges we’re all facing around youth mental health and the negative experiences of many children in education.”

40 Years of the Darwin Lecture Series



An exploration of Codes marked the 40th series of the Darwin College Lectures, which launched in 1986. Ranging from Syrian music to mathematical modelling; the ethics of AI to the misogyny of algorithms, the eight lectures of 2025 attracted 4,300 people to the Lady Mitchell Hall, while over 110,000 have so far viewed them on YouTube.

Now established as a fixed point in the Cambridge calendar, the series is unique in the University for spanning the whole academic term. At least two years in the gestation (with potential organisers already jostling for position for 2028), a theme is put forward by Fellows wishing to curate a series, and approved by the Education and Research Committee. Eight speakers from a diversity of disciplines and perspectives are then invited to interrogate the topic.

From the beginning the speakers have combined the local and the global, giving a platform to Cambridge academics and world figures – and those who combine the two.

The first series began with Lord Rees, at the time Plumian Professor of Astronomy at Cambridge, in which role one of his predecessors was Sir George Darwin, former occupant of Newnham Grange. Having served as both Astronomer Royal and Master of Trinity since then, Lord Rees, now an Honorary Fellow at Darwin, will give next term's Erasmus Seminar.

Astronomer and Emeritus Fellow Professor Andy Fabian, who devised the series, says:

"I am thrilled that the Darwin College Lecture Series continues to flourish after so many decades and is still so popular. The original format is maintained and there are still many excellent single word titles left unused for future series. I organised the first and tenth series, co-organised four more over the later years and have attended most of the lectures in person or, more recently, caught up with them online afterwards. Hearing an enthusiastic expert expound accessibly on their subject is a delight and there are many such experts continually emerging around the world."

The full list of former speakers over the past four decades is a glittering accumulation of the collective intellectual power of the past half century. From Nobel Laureates to Archbishops of Canterbury, Members of Parliament to Booker Prize-winning novelists, to read the names in their entirety is to be torn between envy of previous audiences and gleeful anticipation at being part of future ones.

The audiences themselves are a key component of the series' success. Designed from the beginning as a public forum, the lectures attract both College and University members and people with no association with either. Attendees travel from across the country and further afield, with at least one regular audience member making an annual pilgrimage from Norway. Similarly, a talk by an acknowledged expert in their field will attract both Cambridge professors in the discipline, and series loyalists who may know little about that particular subject.

To Darwin Fellow John Nilsson-Wright, who co-convened both last year's series on Revolution and the 2022 exploration of Food, this blend is part of the point.

"The challenge for the speaker is always to be able to communicate both to a specialised and a generalised audience. The art is not to talk down to people, not over-simplify but at the same time to capture the complexity of the issue," he said.

This opportunity to hear from leading thinkers without being either patronised or overwhelmed with jargon has created a striking loyalty in series attendees. Many return week after week, year after year, irrespective of subject or speaker, and while the fact that many have been coming since the 1980s may give an indication of the average age, a new generation of fans is being inculcated.

Andrew Harmsworth, Head of Physics at the Leys School in central Cambridge, has been bringing students to the series for many years.

"The Darwin College Lecture Series is one of Cambridge's hidden gems!" he declares. "Once I found it, I became a regular. As a teacher, being able to bring along diverse groups of pupils is a great pleasure. They are often the youngest in the audience by a large margin, but they gain so much from the experience."

Janet Gibson, as College Registrar, inherited the administration of the series from her predecessor as Master's Secretary Joyce Graham. For the past 19 years she has liaised with speakers and overseen the organisation and promotion of the event, which she describes as "a highlight of the College calendar".

"It is a unique event in the University and I am privileged to have been included in its organisation since I joined the College just prior to the 2007 series," she says.

"It is quite a logistically complex event to put together but College staff, community and volunteers provide plenty of enthusiastic support. We have stewards, IT, reception guests, catering and the entire College framework to ensure that we give our speakers and audience the optimum experience. It is very special to see the College team all welcoming the audience warmly to the lecture hall on a Friday evening.

One of the attractions of the lecture series is meeting new people, including those speakers you may have admired and wanted to meet for some time, but whose paths you might not otherwise have come across. Similarly, working with a new team of organisers each year is a delight."

The College has resisted calls to livestream the events, except into a spillover space when the Lady Mitchell Hall is full. Despite concerns that audiences would dwindle in the wake of the pandemic, week after week people turn out in their hundreds, braving cold, dark winter evenings for the joy of a live experience.

They are, however, shared after the event on YouTube, where they have a separate, far-reaching fan base. But recordings far predate the internet, and exist in audio form for all 40 years, with a project to digitise them under consideration.

The lectures are also preserved for posterity in the form of the book which follows each series, with an essay version of each lecture submitted by the speaker. These provide a written record of the past four decades, and a continuing publication contract with Cambridge University Press will take them forward into the future.

Assistant archivist Rosalind Henderson, who has listened to all the recordings, has a unique grasp of their value to the College.

"The recordings of past talks in the Darwin College Lecture Series provide so many avenues for historic insight," she says.

"The overarching theme, lecture titles, and the speakers chosen each year capture the interests of the Darwin College community and the global zeitgeist. The recordings set themselves apart from the series' published volumes in providing examples of each speaker's differing lecturing styles as well as the impromptu moments that do not exist in carefully edited text. More off-the-cuff moments in the form of the Master's concluding remarks give an insight into how subsequent Masters have played their part in influencing the character of the College."

The current Master, Dr Mike Rands, has relished this aspect of his role, as well as the opportunity the series offers for more junior academic colleagues to step forward.

"Having been Cambridge based for almost 40 years, I have always admired the Darwin College Lecture Series and enjoyed many of them throughout that time. But, since becoming Master, I've had the privilege of hosting over 30 eminent speakers and supporting five co-organising groups of Fellows. Many of the latter have been our

early career Research Fellows for whom the experience of planning, organising and following up with a published output has been an invaluable part of their career development. It has been inspiring to see how much these Research Fellows contribute to the College and how co-organising a Darwin Lecture series builds their confidence and global networks."

From the IT support provided by Espen Koht to the sequence of celebratory dinners supplied by the catering team, the Lecture Series sets the rhythm of the Lent Term for the College as a whole. It has become an indelible aspect of Darwin life, in which the community takes a collective pride.

Alan Blackwell, Darwin Fellow and Professor of Interdisciplinary Design, who co-convened this year's series on Codes, reflected on the purpose of the series ahead of the first lecture.

"What do we hope audiences take away? Inspiration, enjoyment, and a new curiosity for further exploration based on what they hear. Whether they come to just one lecture on a topic that has always fascinated them, use this as a chance to get a taste of areas they have never considered studying, or treat it as a winter feast of intellectual smorgasbord, all are welcome!"

The Darwin College Lecture Series 2026 will explore the topic of Song.

23 Jan: Professor Hans Slabbekoorn

30 Jan: Dr Carole Pegg

6 Feb: Dr Ibrahim Baltagi

13 Feb: Dr Matthew Gordley

20 Feb: Dr Carola Darwin

27 Feb: Professor Conny Aerts

6 Mar: Dr Issa Boulos

13 Mar: Mr Richard Morrison

“The research that’s happening here is making a huge difference to the world.”

As he takes the reins at the Conservation Research Institute, Professor Chris Sandbrook talked about how sustainability demands interdisciplinary solutions, and how he holds onto hope.



As an advocate for interdisciplinarity, Professor Chris Sandbrook has an appropriately varied academic background. Where he perhaps goes further than most is in being a Professor within a discipline which he dropped at the earliest possible opportunity.

“I don’t even have a GCSE in Geography!” he laughs. “I left it at the end of Year 9, just before you could start to get a qualification, and came back as a post-doc.”

When we speak, he has just received the Royal Geographical Society’s Cuthbert Peek Award for advancing geographical knowledge of human impact on the environment, and is delighted.

“I finally have a certificate with my name on it with the word Geography!”

Chris has just been appointed as Director of the Conservation Research Institute, the latest role in a career which, for the past 25 years, has centred the value of collaborative research to conservation. One of the University’s 15 interdisciplinary research centres, the CRI facilitates conservation-focused collaboration across Cambridge’s schools and departments. In addition, it creates connections with its stable-mate in the David Attenborough Building, the Cambridge Conservation Initiative, a partnership between the University and ten international conservation organisations, whose inaugural head was the current Master of Darwin, Dr Mike Rands.

“One of the things that I’m really keen on doing is recognising that the conservation charities with whom we share this building have got amazing researchers and research activity and capacity. It’s not at all the case that within the CCI partnership the University brings the research and the NGOs do the policy and practice, or anything remotely like that. So I’m really keen to create a sense of a shared research environment, where it doesn’t really matter which organisation you happen to work for – it’s part of the benefit of coming to work in this building, that you can participate in that research culture.”

Alongside this new appointment, Chris maintains his role as Director of the Masters in Conservation Leadership, a position which he has held since 2018. Prior to that, he spent eight years as the course’s Deputy Director, joining at the programme’s inception in 2010. Delivered through CCI, by both the University and the partner NGOs, the Masters accepts around 20 students a year, and is designed for participants with at least three years professional experience.

“It’s very deliberately open to people from all around the world, and seeking a diversity of students. Part of the rationale for the course is that there’s a great need for leadership capacity development in the places where the biodiversity conservation action is often happening. So we’ve been absolutely thrilled to have students from all over the world. However, I will say that over the last few years we have not had as many

British students as I would like. There are conservation things happening locally in the UK that also need strong capacity and leadership.”

Chris’s own interest in sustainability was born of academic curiosity rather than a lifelong focus.

“I wasn’t obsessively trying to identify beetles as a six-year-old. I just found the courses really fascinating at university.”

So fascinating, in fact, that he ended up attending sustainability-related courses in a completely different subject to his own. As an undergraduate studying Natural Sciences at Sidney Sussex, he compared notes with his then girlfriend, a Geographer, and was intrigued by the discrepancies in what they were being taught.

“I was being told that conservation was all about how to design a really efficient network of protected areas that would represent all the species that you wanted to conserve. And she was doing courses on the same topic, but she was being told that conservation was all about power, history, colonialism, poverty and injustice. We had these mutually exclusive reading lists and topics. So after discussing that with her I ended up actually going along to some of her lectures in Geography just to see what they were all about. Roll forward about 25 years, and I now give those lectures!”

After a Masters in Integrative Biosciences at Oxford, Chris made the leap away from the natural sciences, completing a PhD in Social Anthropology at UCL in a move he describes as “a total world-view shift.” His research focused on the tourist industry around mountain gorillas in Uganda, and the impact of that tourism on local people living around the national park, an inquiry which led to several years of living in Uganda before his return to Cambridge to take up a post-doc with

the then Moran Professor of Conservation and Development, Bill Adams.

“That was incredible, partly because I got to work with Bill, and we’ve had a long-running research collaboration and friendship since then, but also because I discovered Geography, which was just a brilliant place to be. I think it’s a wonderful discipline; it’s so broad and open and holistic and engaged with things that matter in society. I’ve been very happy in Geography ever since.”

His own research, ever since the Ugandan mountain gorillas, has focused on the relationship between wildlife conservation and society. Most recently, this has included the social implications of the global plan to increase the coverage of protected and conserved areas to 30% by 2030; and the impact of the use of digital technologies by conservation organisations. But the dual directorships reflect his shifting priorities.

“While I’m a successful researcher in my own right, I feel like probably the biggest impact I can have is in trying to enable others, particularly to work across disciplines and across sectors.”

Chris’s ambitions at CRI include trying to broaden the intake of the professional conservation sector to include more people with backgrounds in the humanities, arts and social sciences, as well as establishing a formalised approach to the kind of cross-curricular curiosity which kickstarted his own career. If this vision comes to fruition, third-year undergraduates in any subject which touches on conservation will be invited to sit in on each other’s lectures, creating a sense of participation in a much wider conservation community.

“We’ll get them all to come here, into the David Attenborough Building, have a welcome event and show them what’s here. Because I teach some geographers

who halfway through their third year don’t even know this building is here. Many of them are desperate to have a career in conservation but don’t realise that they’re literally in one of the world’s great hubs for this sector.”

Working in conservation means constantly being confronted with realities and predictions which the rest of us can, perhaps, only bear to look at briefly. While the passion and talent of his colleagues and students provide cause for optimism, they do so against an increasingly bleak backdrop.

“I certainly get a lot of hope from the students that I teach. The Conservation Leadership students are an incredibly inspiring bunch of people, who are doing amazing work, and our alumni are doing brilliant things. Some of the research that’s happening here is making a huge difference to the world in various different ways. Unfortunately none of that, in a big way, shifts the background context, which is that things are on a very bad trajectory. And it’s a genuine challenge of working in this space, that you feel you know a lot more than most of our fellow citizens about just how bad things are going to be.”

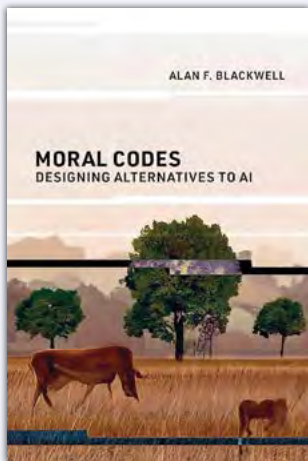
His own young children provide both balance, and a statement of faith that humanity will find its way to a liveable future.

“Humans are good at overestimating how much things will change in a year, and underestimating how much they’ll change in a decade or more. And so there are going to be some really big changes coming along, but some of those will be changes for the better. There are great ideas out there that could be implemented, and some of the seemingly intractable barriers will go, over time. So you have to kind of cling on to that.”

Books

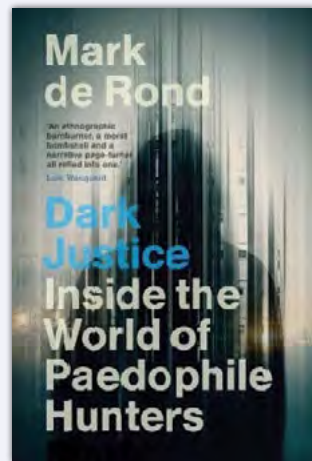
Putting pen to paper

Congratulations to all members of our community who have published books in the past year, and apologies to any we may have missed!



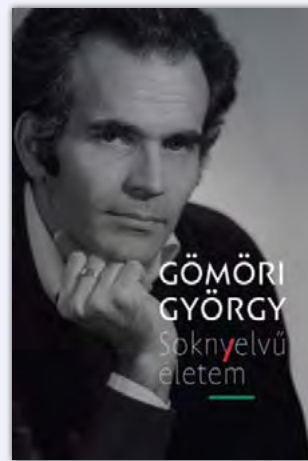
Moral Codes: Designing Alternatives to AI

Alan Blackwell,
Darwin Fellow and Professor of Interdisciplinary Design



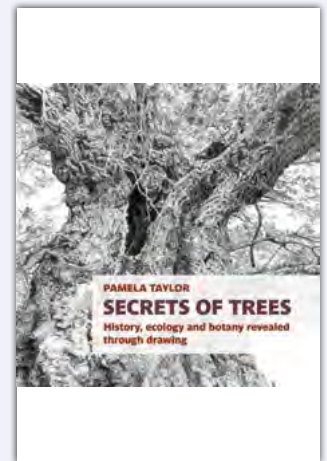
Dark Justice: Inside the World of Paedophile Hunters

Mark de Rond,
Darwin Fellow and Professor of Organisational Ethnography



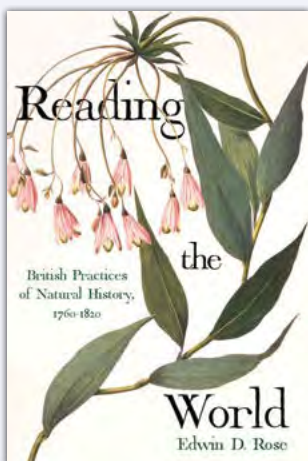
Soknyelvű életem (My Life in Many Languages)

George Gömöri,
Emeritus Fellow, poet and translator



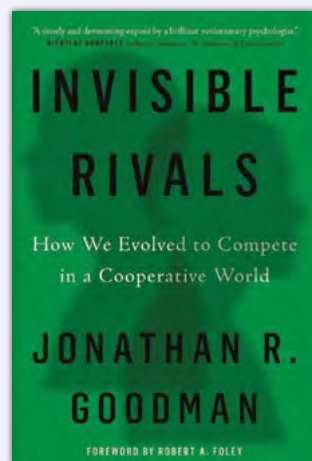
Secrets of Trees: History, ecology and botany revealed through drawing

Pamela Taylor,
Alumna, PhD Botany (1983)



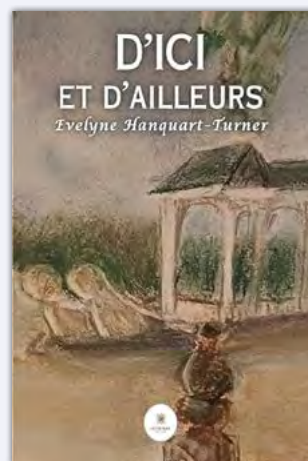
Reading the World: British Practices of Natural History, 1760-1820

Edwin Rose,
Darwin Bye-Fellow in the History and Philosophy of Science



Invisible Rivals: How We Evolved to Compete in a Cooperative World

Jonathan R. Goodman,
Alumnus, PhD Biological Anthropology (2023)



D'ici et d'ailleurs (From here and elsewhere)

Evelyne Hanquart-Turner
Alumna MPhil English (1972)



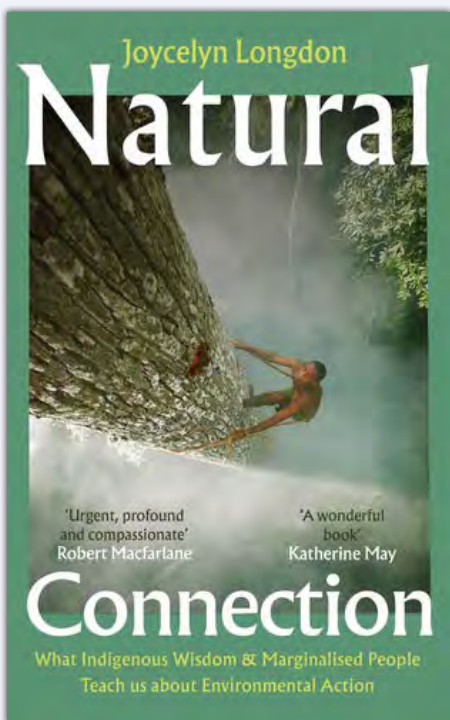
Hard Drive

Paul Stephenson,
Alumnus PhD History (2003)

Making global connections for environmental action



Congratulations to Darwin PhD student Joycelyn Longdon on the publication of her first book, *Natural Connection: What indigenous wisdom & marginalised people teach us about environmental action.*



Published by Penguin on 17th April, the book is an invitation to approach environmental action as a shared goal, bringing together global perspectives, practices and teachings.

Joycelyn is in the final stages of a PhD in Computer Science, in which her research has focused on creating justice-led conservation technologies, conserving ecosystems through engagement with communities often excluded from conservation and technology research.

She is also the founder of Climate In Colour, an online education platform and community which aims to make conversations around climate more accessible, diverse and hopeful. In 2022 Joycelyn was named as winner of the Emerging Designer London Design Medal, and in December 2023 *Vogue* magazine featured her in their 'Forces for Change' issue.

"The book was a way to bring together work I'd been doing with different community groups," she says.

"It's not about the technology aspect of my research, which is quite niche, but it came out of the work I'd been doing beyond my PhD on conservation education, and from talking to communities that live intimately with the natural world in various contexts."

The book presents a diversity of perspectives on environmental action and its legacy, sharing case studies from all over the world, under the themes or 'roots' of rage, imagination, innovation, theory, healing and care.

"I wanted to move away from the idea that you're either an activist all the time, or you don't do anything," says Joycelyn. "It's something for people to return to, as they feel more or less connected to the different roots."

Creating a West African template for paediatric psychiatry

Assessing children's mental health is more culturally specific than we might imagine. For Kwabena Kusi-Mensah, a move to Cambridge provided the space to think about how Ghanaian children tick.



Long distance relationships can be hard. So when Kwabena Kusi-Mensah's wife took up her place at Cambridge shortly after their marriage, he decided there was nothing for it but to apply for a PhD himself.

"I'd always been curious about doing a PhD at some point, maybe much much later in life. I had a clinical problem that I'd been wrestling with, which was the academic question that set me on the path of 'why don't I equip myself with the skill to be able to answer this question'. But in terms of the timing – basically I was missing my wife."

The couple had met in Nigeria, at the University of Ibadan, where Kwabena had completed an MSc in Child and Adolescent Mental Health, following medical school back home in Ghana.

"I did my psychiatry residency training, and that's when I discovered child psychiatry. I'm from Ghana originally, but we have no training programme and virtually no child psychiatrists in the entire country. So I had to find the nearest place where they had a training programme, which was Nigeria."

Understandably, after the long years of training, Kwabena wasn't in an immediate rush to return to academia. But when the opportunity presented itself, he knew exactly what he wanted to research.

"The assessment tools that we normally use to assess children for various things, I found they were quite problematic in my environment. When it comes to measuring psychological constructs, there's a lot of nuance and layers that the global south has to wrestle with, that don't even enter the minds of most researchers in the global north."

Although he was clear from the beginning of the necessity and value of what he was working towards, Kwabena's goals sometimes felt out of kilter with the atmosphere of technological ambition he was surrounded by. But he remained committed to the impact he knew it could have.

"My department was very "sciencey" – very heavy on neuro-imaging, genetics, cutting edge biological psychiatry stuff. Everyone was looking into really amazing things, and it reinforced my imposter syndrome, because it felt like, these are the guys doing the real science, and you are here trying to figure out a problem that has been solved 50 or 60 years ago. But it's still a major problem for most populations in the world."

“My favourite place in College was the study room looking over the river. That was my zone; that was where I’d do a lot of my thinking.”

Having begun his research with the aim of creating a workable diagnostic tool, he found that he needed to approach the subject by taking a step back.

“I realised that even very fundamental questions, like how do people in West Africa conceptualise executive function, very basic questions have not yet been tackled or defined. So I had to go down that rabbit hole for four years and try to get some answers, before feeling, with that foundation laid, I can build on that and advance the work forward and now come up with practical tools, which is where I started from. I’m a clinician – I’m all about the patient sitting in front of me.”

Kwabena has now returned to his hometown, Kumasi, where he has taken up a post at his alma mater, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology. The role combines running a clinic with capacity for research, and when we speak he is delighted to have just been shortlisted for a Wellcome Award which he hopes will enable him to make the concept of a localised assessment tool a reality.

With, he estimates, around four child psychiatrists serving a national population of around 35 million, Kwabena sees it as a crucial step to equip primary care workers such as nurses and GPs with the ability to assess and

diagnose mental health conditions and neurodevelopmental disorders. Currently dismissed as “a character flaw, or maybe it’s witchcraft”, conditions such as autism and ADHD are rarely recognised as such, denying children the chance to benefit from interventions.

“If the real foot soldiers of public education, which is the primary care workers, have the tools to assess kids in their communities, then we can begin to really bridge the gap and identify them. Then we can start worrying about referral pathways. Otherwise, we are just basically conscribing all these children to really bad outcomes.”

A recent investigation which Kwabena was involved with illustrated this neatly. A study of tro-tro drivers, the shared minibuses which are central to the country’s urban transport, found that almost 20% of them had attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).

“That’s four or five times the adult average. It shook me, to think, if we do not pick these problems up and tackle them at the time when they need it, generation after generation, a whole swathe of perfectly intelligent young people are ending up performing less than they potentially could have.”

One couldn’t accuse Kwabena of failing to meet his own potential. While

completing their studies at Cambridge, he and his wife had a baby daughter, tag-teaming the childcare while both pursuing PhDs. Living in Trinity accommodation, he made regular use of the Darwin gardens and punts, as well as attending Formal Halls. But the Study Centre was the focus of his College experience.

“My favourite place in College was the study room looking over the river. That was my zone; that was where I’d do a lot of my thinking.”

Having squeezed two PhDs and a baby into their first few years of married life, the couple are enjoying establishing a more settled routine back home. But a shared graduation weekend this summer provided a welcome opportunity to tick a few Cambridge boxes.

“I do miss Cambridge. It’s interesting – you spend four years there and then you realise how quickly the time goes by. So when we come for this graduation we’re going to go to the Fitzwilliam Museum, do some more punting, and cram in all the touristy stuff that we didn’t do. And I’m going to show my family the Darwin gardens.”

Student stories

Recent graduate Dr Alina Utrata explains how the politics of tech has taken off



It's not unknown for research topics to acquire greater contemporary resonance over the course of a PhD. But for Alina Utrata, the past few months have seen her interests go from niche to era-defining.

"I look at the political theory of tech companies," she explains. "When I started, people were like 'Elon Musk, who's he?'"

As a subject, it's close to home. Alina grew up in Silicon Valley, and attended Stanford as an undergraduate, majoring in History with a minor in Human Rights. She was awarded a Marshall Scholarship to study at Queen's University, Belfast, where she completed an MA in Conflict Transformation and Social Justice.

"I was in Belfast when the Cambridge Analytica stuff started happening, and there started to be reflection on the part of Silicon Valley. I was away, watching my friends who are part of the tech industry and this community I'd grown up with re-evaluate their own role in the world and whether they really are political and how they affect politics."

At the time, the industry appeared solidly left-leaning, a transformation which Alina has witnessed from a distance while completing her PhD at the Department of Politics and International Studies (POLIS).

"It's been interesting to study my home from afar," she says.

Alina came to Cambridge as a Gates scholar, having returned to the United States after her studies in Belfast while deciding on the next stage of her academic career.

"I was trying to figure out law school versus a PhD, and then ultimately decided on a PhD and went back to the States for a year or two in between. And then, because I wanted to do a qualitative, theoretical kind of politics degree, Cambridge – and POLIS – was really the place to do it."

Darwin was central to her Cambridge ambitions from their inception.

"One of my advisors at Stanford, David Cohen, had gone to Darwin for his PhD. Moses Finley (American classicist and Master of Darwin from 1976–82) was his supervisor, and when David asked what College he should apply to, Moses told David Cohen 'you will come to Darwin'. And so David Cohen said unto me 'you will go to Darwin! So every time I see Moses's portrait in the Dining Hall I think 'this is the trajectory of why I'm here.'"

Alina proved more than worthy of the lineage, winning POLIS's Lisa Smirl Prize for the best PhD thesis of 2024 for her dissertation *Silicon Valley and the State: Towards a Political Theory of Technology Corporations*. And the College proved the right fit.

"It was definitely the right choice – no regrets! It was so lovely and friendly and welcoming, it felt like such a home. And I love the history of it. I'd read Gwen Raverat's memoirs, where she talks about growing up in the house, so I love the layered history of it, but it's also so cosy, safe and warm."

She is now a Research Fellow at St John's College, Oxford, where she is continuing her research into the political power of tech corporations.

"I have the Career Development Research Fellowship, which was previously the Junior Research Fellowship. So it's really nice, because I get to focus on my own research."

That research currently involves working on a book on Elon Musk, Jeff Bezos, and the colonisation of outer space.

"I'm also thinking about how we can democratise corporations, how we can keep them in check. How do we make sure we have this kind of vibrant ecosystem of all sorts of corporations, like universities for instance, that are established for and governed by some sort of social good or collective purpose? And governed collectively rather than dictatorially where, you know, Mark Zuckerberg can tell you what to do."

Thinking about how to conceptualise technology corporations as political actors is perhaps an easier academic pursuit to explain than it was when she started out.

"In 2016 this was a harder pitch than it is today. In 2025, everyone's like 'yeah, definitely!'"

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A year after celebrating our 60th anniversary and the simultaneous launch of a transformative new fundraising campaign, we are grateful for the generous response of the Darwin community. We have seen widespread support for our initiatives to welcome new students, lower our carbon footprint, and create new gathering spaces to study and socialise.

Financial support for these projects comes in various forms, and one of our goals for this campaign is to raise the profile of legacy giving and seek pledges for the future of the College.

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Medical Science

Jose FRANCO ALVAREZ

Deciphering genomic evolution - from early breast cancer stages to invasive carcinoma: a comprehensive genomic analysis of patients with DCIS.

Multi-Disciplinary Gender Studies

Stefanie FELSBERGER

Data flows & menstruation: how users of period trackers navigate the datafication & commodification of their menstrual cycles

Oncology

Charlotte CASSIE

The use of 2D and 3D models to study competition in the context of Barrett's oesophagus and oesophageal adenocarcinoma

Pathology

Toby George BRANN

*Mobile genetic element contribution to the genome architecture of the human parasitic flatworm *Schistosoma mansoni**

Christina Johanna Felicia COURREGES

The role of the class III phosphoinositide 3-kinase VPS34 in regulatory T cells and activated CD4+T cells

Akashaditya DAS

Cas protein diagnostics for pathogen nucleic acids

Physics

Haoxin GONG

Influence of structural disorder on charge transport and stability in organic field-effect transistors with molecular semiconductors

Megan Jessica GROOM

Operando fibre-Raman sensors for Li-ion battery chemistry

Lianglun LAI

Thermoelectric properties and transport of semicrystalline conjugated polymer and single-wall carbon nanotube composites

Tian WU

Charge transport physics in coordination nanosheets (CONASHs)

Youcheng ZHANG

Charge and thermoelectric transport in metal halide perovskite semiconductors

Physiology, Development and Neuroscience

Alyce Miranda MCCLELLAN

From genomics to function: canine genetics highlight novel mechanisms of obesity and related traits

Plant Sciences

Alice Liberty Morris FAIRNIE

*Understanding the development, evolution, and function of bullseye pigmentation patterns in *Hibiscus trionum**

Breagha MAGILL

*The role of TOR in regulation of *Arabidopsis* circadian oscillators*

Alfonso TIMONEDA MONFORT

Strategies to increase production of betalain pigments and their use as SynBio tools

Politics & International Studies

Hanna CORSINI

Populists in power: a comparative analysis of the impact of populism on the foreign policy of Italy, Austria, and Hungary

Alina Petra UTRATA

Silicon Valley and the state: towards a political theory of technology corporations

Psychiatry

Ben BARUCH

The roles of differentiation and integration, metacognition and emotion regulation in increasing cognitive complexity

Lucie Kei DANIEL-WATANABE

Just add monsters: stressful biofeedback games for improved physiological control

Kwabena Poku KUSHI-MENSAH

Conceptualisation and culturally appropriate assessment of executive function in children in Ghana and Nigeria

Public Health & Primary Care

Richard George MERRICK

Gender differences in risk of neuropathology, cognitive decline and dementia in the Cognitive Function and Ageing Study (CFAS)

Social Anthropology

Erin Michaela WIMMER

Hope in the untenable: seeking asylum in Samos, Greece

Sociology

Deniz ÇİFÇİ

Context, opportunities and threats: a comparative analysis of the KDP and PUK in the Kurdistan region of Iraq

Stem Cell Biology

Aristi DAMASKOU

Molecular characterisation and therapeutic targeting of NPM1-mutant acute myeloid leukaemia

Alicia GARCIA GIMENEZ

Modelling the effect of loss of function CREBBP mutations in the evolution and treatment of B cell acute lymphoblastic leukaemia (B-ALL)

SynTech (Chemistry)

Mia KAPUN

Azobenzenes for the development of therapeutics

Darwin College Register

Theoretical and Applied Linguistics

Joe COWAN

Minding our manners: investigating the nature of Gricean manner implicature using psychological priming techniques

Zoology

Christopher Ian Macdonald DUNCAN

*The acquisition and maintenance of dominance in male and female cooperatively breeding meerkats, *Suricata suricatta**

Aaron HICKEY

Evolution and development of pigmentation patterns in East African Cichlid fishes

Eirlys Elizabeth TYSALL

The genomics of divergence and adaptation in sister reef fishes separated by the isthmus of Panama

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

Louise Elizabeth WALTER

'No one reads in our house': exploring the challenges faced by parents with limited literacy skills when helping their children with school-based reading activities at home

MASTER OF ARTS UNDER STATUTE B II 2

Nathaniel ANDERSON

Sandra PETRUS-REURER

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Krishna AGARWAL

Madhawi AGARWAL

Emono Emmanuel BWACHA

Varun Venkatesh DHOND

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Barbora HOREHAJOVA

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Jessica Lindsey MORTIMER

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Pichaya RUAMSUB

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Beryl Awuor OTIENO

MASTER OF CORPORATE LAW

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Sama SAEED

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Cancer Biology

Rebecca WRAY

Graphene Technology

Lauren Liam Robert BIRD

Mathematical Genomics & Medicine

Oluwatobi Babatunde Bamidele ALEGBE

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Toluwalase Mohammed Namir AGORO

Physical Sciences: Environmental Data Science

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Gratsiela Krasimirova KOSTOVA

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Nicole Helen WILSON

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Elvire DETHOMASSON

Aleksander KLIMCZYK

Biological Sciences (Psychology)

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Biological Sciences (Veterinary Medicine)

Theo Alexander FARMAN

Biological Sciences (Zoology)

Oi Ki Miranda LAM

Conall STANFORTH

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Richard Ludo DE FALBE

Zhongyi LIANG

Ava TRUE

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Zhenjun XU

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Megan Elysa PENROD

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Campbell ROSENER

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Shiv SAKTHIVEL

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Tambudzai Radoka MATENGA

Robert Ochieng NYANDIRE

Ivanny Lorely OLIVA

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Ormon SULTANGAZIEV

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Emma Ruth JESPERSEN

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Neha PARMAR

Joseph Nicholas PEARCE

Alexa URIOSTEGUI

Madeleine Louise VALLIER

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Andrej JOVANOVIĆ

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Julian Rudolf Christian Herbert Severin WINDECK

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Jingyao XU

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Jessica Ann BERESFORD-WEBB

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Sixuan ZHANG

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Bahoz MIRWEIS

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Nicholas Jon IRONS

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Maxwell YE

Theoretical Physics

Ajinkya Jayant NAIK

Tomas Gerard O'SHEA

Shen YAN

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Susanne Nicole ANDRESEN

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Ishika BANSAL

Ayesha BEDI

Soumya BHASKARAN

Anandita Naveen CHANDRA

Jinxiang CHEN

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Waroon Jag Mohan CHHABRA

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Vir Srujalkumar GANDHI

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Boon LIMTRAKUL

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Michael Francis VARLEY

MASTER OF STUDIES

Entrepreneurship

Li LI

Social Innovation

Ka Pui CHAN

Lauren Hannah GOMERSALL

Sustainability Leadership

Prince ANANE-ACHEAMPONG-OSISIADAN



Alumni Events

2025

27 September	The Years '05 Reunion Dinner
28 September	Celebrating Your Impact: A Thank You Luncheon
7 November	Alumni and Fellows Formal Hall
3/4 November (tbc)	Annual London Christmas Drinks
December (tbc)	Family Formal Hall

2026

19 March	Online Careers Network Event
20 March	In-Person Careers Network Event
20 March	Alumni and Fellows Formal Hall
22 May	Alumni and Fellows Formal Hall
26 June	May Ball

Erasmus Seminars

29 October 2025	Lord (Martin) Rees
4 February 2026	Professor John Nilsson-Wright
13 May 2026	Professor Fiona Karet

We look forward to welcoming you back to Darwin. For full details of events and reunions, please see darwin.cam.ac.uk/alumni-and-supporters/alumni-events

Editor: Laura Kenworthy.
 We welcome short articles, pictures and news from all alumni.
 Correspondence to: communications@darwin.cam.ac.uk

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