

Spring 2024



Lincoln College
UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

The Grove

Lincoln College Murray Society Newsletter



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Report from the President of the Murray Society

The Murray Society is composed of alumni of Lincoln College and their partners who have indicated their special association with the College by remembering it in their wills. We meet twice a year, in fellowship, once in the College for lunch and a lecture, and once at an outside venue.

In 2023 the Society enjoyed a spring day at Rousham House in Oxfordshire, a place of beauty and romance, owned by the same family for centuries. No less aristocratic were the bantams – Barbu d’Uccle – who entertained the company. We enjoyed visiting the house and walking around the stunning William Kent landscape where we stopped by a cascade dedicated to Ringwood, “an otter hound of extraordinary sagacity”. Afterwards, we repaired to a local hostelry.

In the autumn, our Junior Research Fellow in Music, Dr Emma Kavanaugh enlightened us with a splendid, illustrated talk on Gustave Charpentier. She drew on her explorations in the Paris archives to tell us about his life and work.

The Murray Society continues in good heart. We number more than three hundred, but hope that by Lincoln’s sixth centenary in 2027 we will be 600, pledged to help preserve the College. We already welcome spouses and partners to the Society’s events, for we know how supportive they are of the College, but would now like to extend full membership to them.

Susan Brigden



Leaving a legacy

Leaving a legacy to Lincoln enables you to invest in the future of the College with a gift that endures beyond a lifetime. Making a bequest to Lincoln in your Will is a lasting contribution to the College, which will support the generations to come. Lincoln takes great care of the legacies it receives, recognising the trust that donors place in us. Over the centuries, bequests have had the greatest influence on the development of the College, and have supported scholarships and bursaries, funded academic posts, redeveloped rooms and buildings, and helped us grow our endowment for the benefit of future generations. As needs increase, we are grateful for every legacy, regardless of size, and the Development Office team is available to provide further information.

How to leave a legacy to Lincoln

It is easy to remember the College in your Will. Our official name is ‘the College of the Blessed Mary and All Saints, Lincoln, in the University of Oxford, commonly called Lincoln College’, but it is acceptable to shorten this to Lincoln College, Oxford. UK tax payers are advised to include our charity number (1139261).

There are a number of different ways of making a legacy.

The most common are to leave a residuary bequest (a percentage share in your estate) or a pecuniary bequest (a specific amount of money). You can also make a reversionary legacy, which will enable you to provide for members of your family in their lifetimes, and then revert to Lincoln or another charitable organisation. It is also possible to nominate Lincoln as a beneficiary of your pension or SIPP (Self Invested Personal Pension).

When making or adjusting your Will, we recommend you seek professional legal advice from a qualified solicitor. If you are interested in making a specific gift or legacy to the College, for example to establish a scholarship, we recommend that you talk to us first to ensure that we can honour your wishes. Lincoln’s solicitor is available to offer advice to your own legal representative.

Benefits to you

Inheritance tax is payable following your death if your estate is worth more than a certain net amount after the deduction of any liabilities. At present, the threshold is £325,000 (or up to £650,000 for married couples or registered civil partners), and anything above that may be taxed at 40%. If you leave 10% of your estate to a charity in the UK, your estate will qualify for the reduced inheritance tax rate of 36%.

Lincoln is recognised by the Inland Revenue as a charity (number 1139261) and pays no tax on gifts of money or property received either during your

lifetime or on your death. Bequests made to tax-exempt beneficiaries, such as the College or other recognised charities, can be deducted from the net value of your estate, thus reducing the amount on which your estate is liable to pay inheritance tax.

When you remember the College in your Will, you will be playing a part in the future of Lincoln. In recognition of this, you will be invited to join the Murray Society. As a member, you will receive the following (subject to change from time to time):

- Invitations to exclusive Murray Society events, including the annual Murray Day luncheon and talk.
- An annual issue of this newsletter, *The Grove*
- An exclusive Murray Society tie and/or scarf in Lincoln colours

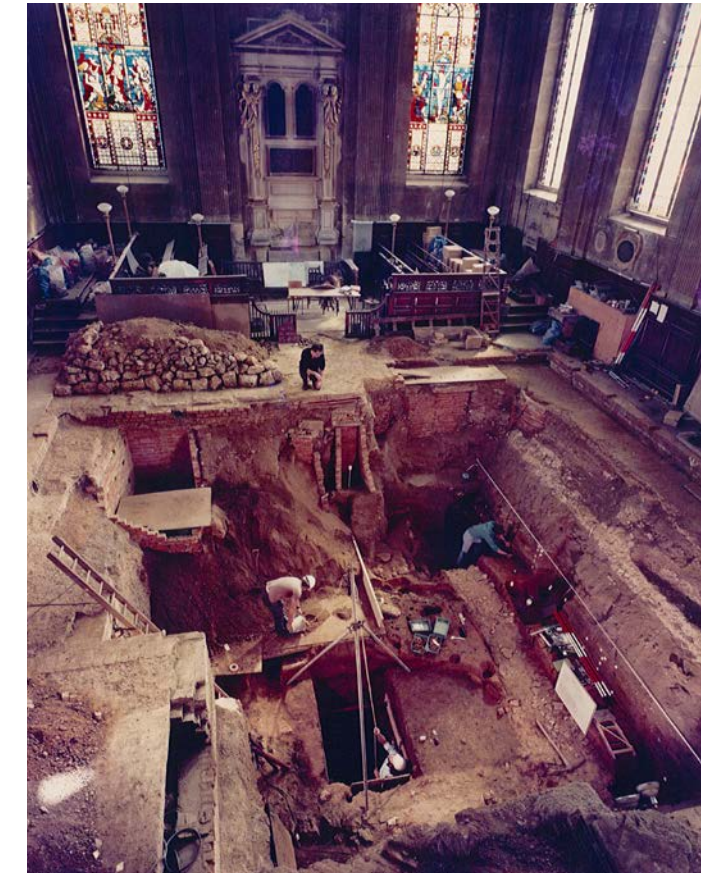
For more details and information about legacies or planned giving, please contact [Susan Harrison](#).

50th anniversary of the Library

As we approach the 50th anniversary of the opening of our library in All Saints' Church, Nigel Wilson offers his reflections on this very complex conversion project.

The story of how the College acquired and converted All Saints' Church to become the current library begins with a conversation that I, as Fellow Librarian, had with Rector Oakeshott. We had visited what was then the library – located where the Berrow Foundation Building is now – and in the course of conversation I expressed the hope that in the long term the College might acquire the Church, a notion that had occasionally been floated in casual conversation in the SCR. Walter said that an unsuccessful approach had been made, but added “But now there is a new archdeacon”. I immediately replied, “Why don’t we ask him, in case policy has changed?” A letter was duly sent, and this time the reply was positive. This made good sense from the point of view of the church authorities, since the only service regularly held there was an annual one for the mayor and city council.

We were lucky in the timing of our request. A change in the law was being considered (which came into





force a few years later), whereby the diocese would have had the right to sell the building, no doubt for a substantial sum. But as it was, they could only insist that the building be used exclusively for the purpose agreed between the two contracting parties. Once the agreement had been reached, a committee was appointed to oversee the conversion, involving many long and sometimes exhausting meetings. We had the good fortune to obtain the services of Robert Potter, who had earned a good reputation for his work on

churches in the City of London. A positive factor in the discussions was the contribution of my extremely gifted colleague Donald Whitton, who had very good judgement in all matters architectural. (I sometimes felt that his undoubted talent would have been at least equally suited to a career as an architect).

Conversion of historic buildings is inevitably expensive, and the Church had been neglected. It turned out that there was a local charity whose objective was its maintenance, but in recent years the trustees had done absolutely nothing. We therefore had to approach the Charity Commissioners, who awarded us the accumulated funds. But a vastly greater sum had to be raised by an appeal to old members and grant-giving bodies. One very generous donation is commemorated in an inscription over the door that used to open onto High Street.

What the builders, assisted by the archaeologists, had to do is shown in the illustrations, which speak for themselves. A not wholly welcome surprise was the discovery of several skeletons. An important incidental result of the conversion was the realisation that the Senior Library could be accommodated in a semi-basement at the east end, which is now its third and permanent home.

Nigel Wilson, Supernumerary Fellow

Supernumerary Professor Stephen Gill, who was a new Fellow when the construction project started, recalls, “How gloomy All Saints was, with its large balcony and, I think, stained glass windows. I went in once during the construction and marvelled at the contrast of work going on. A digger was gouging out what was to become the lower floor, while above someone was gilding the ceiling. The digger unearthed a charnel pit containing many bones. The library became a light and lovely place in its stead.”

Bernard Donoghue (1953) recalls, “I got attached to the old library because of climbing into the College – over the wall near the Rector’s house and old library – after the gates closed at 10pm! I remember that the old library was well stocked with history books. Vivian Green – History Fellow, Chaplain and Senior Tutor at the time – was very influential in the purchase of books. I was always conscious that the old library wasn’t big enough, and the move to the Church was a very smart one. I was very impressed by the new library because it was so much bigger and more spacious.”

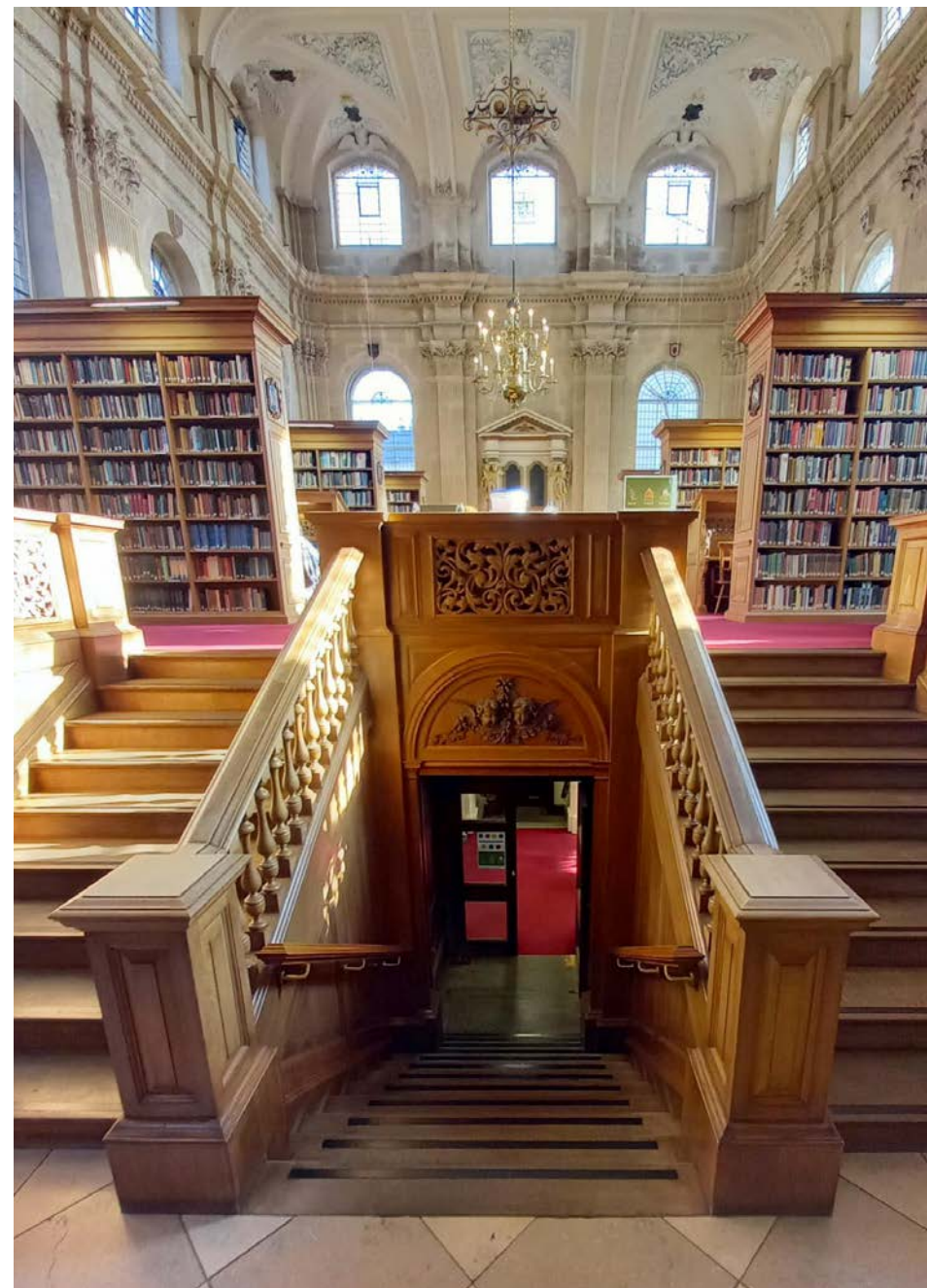
Improving accessibility across the College: The Library and beyond

Despite being made up of a large assortment of listed buildings, Lincoln strives to be as accessible as possible to ensure our diverse members can enjoy all of our spaces. Much work has been done already, but other projects are underway, including improving accessibility within our main Library and to the MCR.

The Library

Our vision is that our Library will be able to be fully enjoyed independently by all members of Lincoln College, both as a source of reading materials and as an inspiring place to study.

The ground plan of All Saints' Church in 1971 did not provide sufficient space to house all the College's books. The ingenious solution was to dig down and raise the floor level by 4.5 feet to provide two floors connected by staircases. While this problem was solved, however, another was created: the Library's staircases, whilst elegant, are a barrier for those with mobility impairments to accessing our books and all but one of our desks.



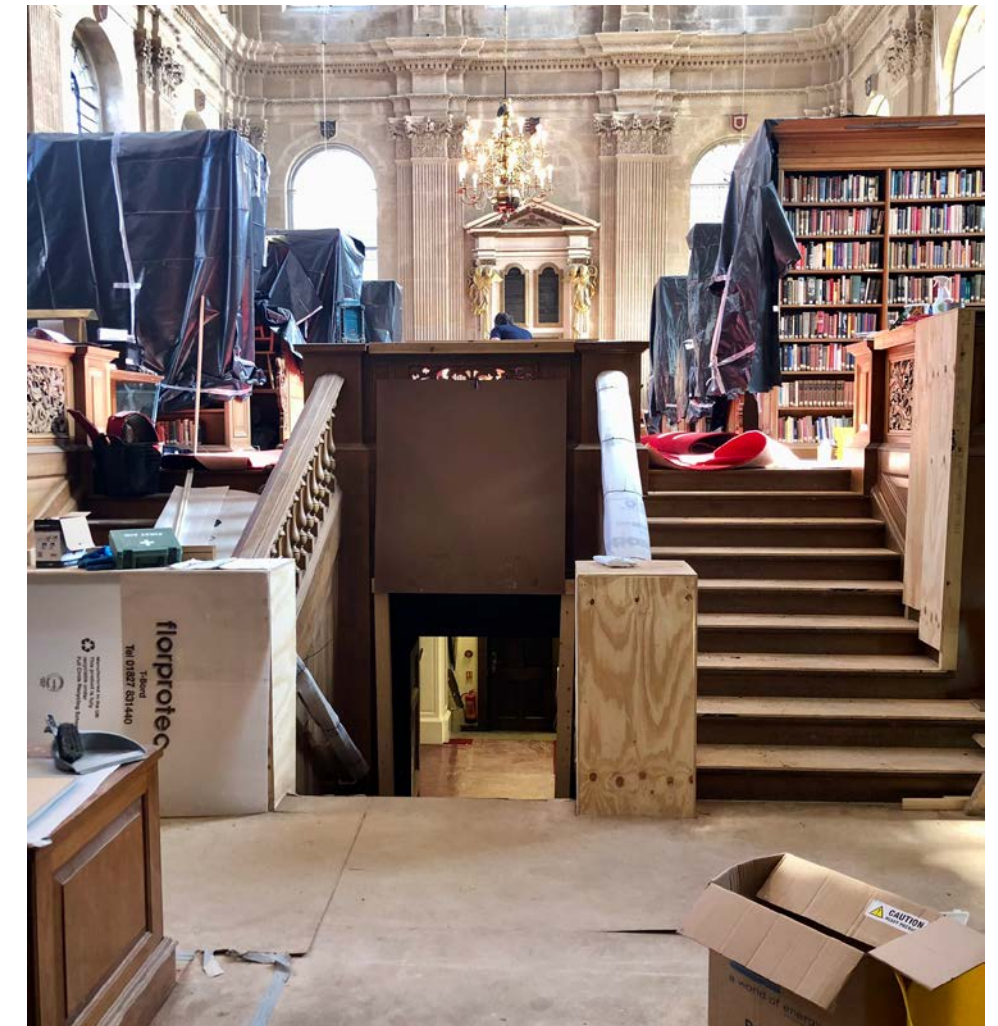
The Library Accessibility Project, started in August 2023, will remove this barrier by providing a platform lift. The aesthetics of the building meant that a fully-enclosed, full-height lift would not get the necessary consent of the Diocesan Advisory Committee (the Church of England still own the building), but a platform lift, being half-height, does not intrude upon the view down Upper Library from the entrance level, as it is shielded from view by the balustrade. As this lift cannot reach the level of the current WCs, an accessible WC has been built in the Lower Library.

Fire regulations require a fireproof lobby where a wheelchair user may wait for assistance in case of fire. This has been built around the lift and accessible WC, making the latter more discreet, but also providing acoustic buffering between all the WCs and the reading room – a much-needed improvement!

The College is particularly grateful to the Trustees of Lord Crewe's Charity for their generosity in supporting this project. Lord Crewe was himself a major donor to the original construction of All Saints' Church, which was completed in 1720. It was therefore quite appropriate that, on the occasion of the tercentenary of Lord Crewe's death, his Charity supported this new project to increase the accessibility of the Library, and the contribution has covered much of the cost of this project.

We are also making the Library a more welcoming place for neurodivergent Lincolmites plus improving the disability aids by:

- Relocating assistive equipment, the doorswipes and the pneumatic door opener to make them more reachable for wheelchair users;
- Providing more suitable and better sited handrails and contrasting nosings on the stairs to improve accessibility for people with mobility and visual impairments;
- Improving the lighting for visually impaired and neurodivergent people by changing fluorescent lights to high-quality LED lighting with even illuminance, avoiding flicker and glare, and providing dimmable, warmth-adjustable lamps;
- Adding UV film to the secondary glazing to reduce glare for readers at the main table (and reduce sun damage to the books);
- Providing height-adjustable desks designed to complement the existing furniture, which will benefit many people, not only wheelchair users. These have already proved popular in the Bear Lane Reading Room, which has been our primary library during the building project.
- In addition, we are taking this opportunity to address another issue created over the years, as Library staff moved individual subjects downstairs to provide room for growth. This has led to an



illogical ordering, which makes the collection hard to navigate unaided. The most challenging part of the whole project for Library staff will be re-ordering some 36,000 volumes back into numerical order, so that readers will be able to find their own way around more easily.

We look forward to re-opening the Library for Trinity Term!

Lucy Matheson, Librarian



The MCR

The route through the main College site to the MCR is accessible, the Berrow Foundation Building is fully accessible with a lift and accessible toilet, and the MCR common room itself is easily negotiable by someone in a wheelchair or with otherwise limited mobility. However, the door into the MCR is heavy and does not have a push

pad or any means of opening it other than manually. This makes getting into the MCR difficult not only for students in wheelchairs, but for those who use other walking aids or who have limited strength and/or mobility.

To make the MCR door more accessible, Maintenance staff are in the process of

installing an electric device that makes it easier to open and close the door. This will improve access for all and help those with physical disabilities to feel less 'apart' from other students.

Michele McCartney, Domestic Operations Manager



A fresh start for a graduate scholar

What brought me, a 37-year-old career journalist, to Lincoln in October 2021 to do a master's degree in ancient history? I think the honest answer is a combination of academic success and professional failure. Rejected by Oxford, I had done quite well as an undergraduate at my second-choice university, but my subsequent attempt to build a glittering career in journalism hadn't worked out as I'd hoped. My work was neither stimulating nor well-paid, and I had lost the drive to improve my situation. I was ready for a change, something intellectually demanding to test myself. The dreaming spires were calling to me once again.



René with the giant spreadsheet of data he gathered for his dissertation

Even if I was deemed academically worthy of a place, there was a problem: money. My savings were not enough to cover even the fees for one year's study, let alone the two-year MPhil degree I hoped to do. Thanks to government policy, masters' funding in the humanities was essentially non-existent, I was warned. Still, a visit to a graduate open day at the Oxford Faculty of Classics cheered me up. Friendly students and staff told me that, yes, it was possible to get funding if your application was strong enough. I went away armed with advice and full of determination. I planned my masters' application like a military campaign, trying to show how my background made me the right candidate. Drawing on my experience as a financial journalist, I hit on the idea of writing a research proposal about the culture of debt in the ancient Greek world.

I was thrilled when the Senior Tutor told me that I had been awarded a Kingsgate Masters Scholarship by Lincoln College.



The Kingsgate awards given out by the College have the virtue that they can marry with funding from elsewhere to make up a fully-funded scholarship. In my case, the College and the Faculty of Classics clubbed together to provide funding.

The next two years passed by in a stream of... well, hard work mainly. I never went punting and hardly ever partied. I'm sure my degree was no harder than anybody else's, but I seemed to feel the pressure more than most. Producing original research in a year or two is extremely taxing – much more so than most “real world” jobs – and I wanted to do well academically. Fortunately, college life prevented me from being too reclusive. I met many friendly people at

Lincoln, and I'm particularly grateful to my housemates at Bear Lane Staircase 20, who brightened my days in the final struggle to finish all my coursework. My efforts were rewarded when I emerged with a Distinction and a prize for my dissertation.

What have I got out of all this? I will try to publish my research and make a contribution to the field. More generally, I hopefully have renewed confidence about what I can achieve, whether in academia or elsewhere. Past disappointments no longer define me. I remain deeply indebted to the benefactors and the assessors, at College and the University, who made it all possible.

René Lavanchy (2021)

Events 2024

To see the full list of events, please visit our [website](#).

Thursday 11 – Tuesday 25 April

USA Alumni Tour to DC, Philadelphia, NYC, Boston and Chicago

Thursday 2 May

Spring Murray Day (London)

Wednesday 3 July

Rector’s Farewell - House of Lords

Thursday 10 October

600th Anniversary Campaign Launch - Tate Modern

Saturday 25 May

Lincoln Society Eights Week Garden Party

Saturday 10 August

Rotherham Circle Lunch

Saturday 7 September

1961 and before Year Gaudy

Saturday 14 September

Lincoln Society Dinner

Friday 20 September

1969-1971 Year Gaudy

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