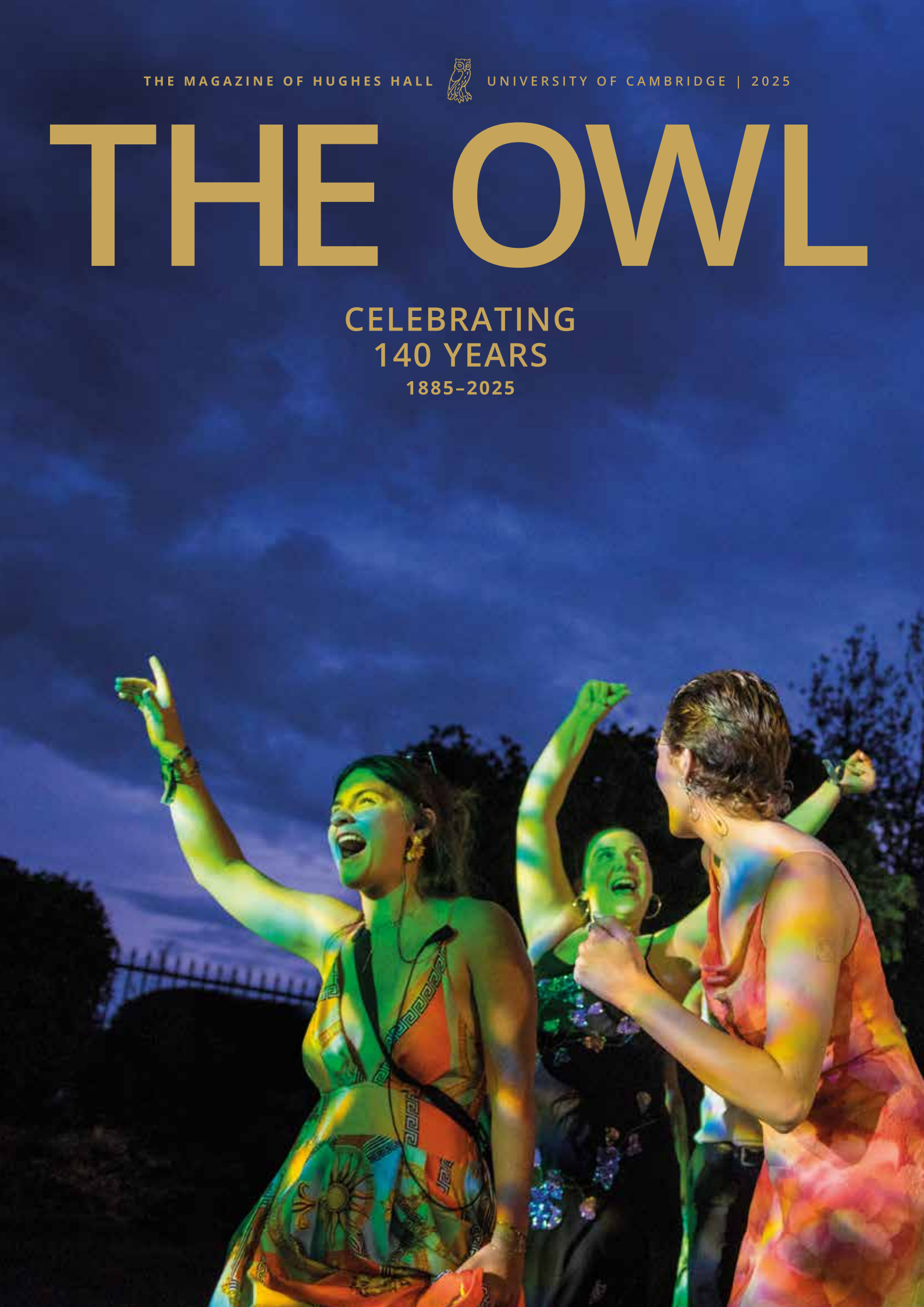
THE MAGAZINE OF HUGHES HALL UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE | 2025

THE OWL

CELEBRATING 140 YEARS

1885–2025







140 YEARS
HUGHES HALL

THE OWL

is published annually in Michaelmas Term.

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The Owl is produced by the Development and Alumni Relations Office, with thanks to the staff, Senior Members and students of Hughes Hall.

We would love to hear your thoughts on the magazine and receive your news items or ideas for future content.

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Inside cover (above): Elizabeth Phillips Hughes with the first cohort of students, 1885, Hughes Hall Archives; (below) Matriculation, 2024, courtesy of Lafayette Photography Ltd

Back cover: Elizabeth Phillips Hughes, photographer unknown. This portrait was presented to her on retirement and her family donated it to the College after her death. Hughes Hall Archives.

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FROM THE PRESIDENT

140 years ago, 14 students, a maid, a housekeeper and Elizabeth Hughes assembled at Crofton Cottages in Newnham Village. The Cambridge Training College was born.

The CTC, later to become Hughes Hall, was the third foundation for women in Cambridge. Girton and Newnham were created to make Cambridge available to women students. The CTC addressed a different but related need: training the teachers needed to educate girls.

Then as now, finding space and resources was a challenge for the College and a big feature of Elizabeth Hughes' life. The Margaret Wileman building was built thanks to the Pfeiffer bequest of £3,000, a huge sum in those days, and a great example of the impact of philanthropy.

The College has benefited greatly over the years from the generosity of our supporters. They include the well-wisher who in 1892 donated a substantial collection of stuffed birds, with the proviso that they had to be returned if the College ever ceased to exist. We are in no danger of having to hand back the taxidermy.

From its earliest days the College was supported by our alumni – the Old Student's Gild was set up in 1891. Our former students remain our very best advocates and ambassadors, and I thank you all for your commitment.

These days, Hughes Hall is very much part of the wider University. We are one of the biggest colleges, home to over 800 PhD, Master's and mature undergraduate students and researchers, as well as a large number of postdoctoral researchers on their way to becoming leaders in their field.

This year our exam results were stellar, but just as important are the achievements of students and researchers that are not measured by Tripos results – in particular those who have overcome real adversity along the way.

Our researchers are doing groundbreaking work across an extraordinarily wide variety of fields, and in the gaps between traditional disciplines. If it matters in today's world, someone at Hughes Hall is probably working on it.

And of course, Hughes Hall athletes were in three of the four winning crews in this year's Boat Race.

At the heart of all this lies the benefit to wider society of the research and learning that is done here. Our Pathways Programme, the Bridge initiatives and our Impact events are paying dividends: building the skills and networks to help people achieve lasting positive impact to the benefit of society.

And Hughes Hall is a truly global College, with students from around 80 countries represented each year. That gives us unique opportunities to learn how to work with people with very different backgrounds and outlooks.

Our past and our origins are an important part of who we are, and what we want to be.

What will Hughes Hall look like on our 150th birthday? Better resourced, I hope. You can do so much more with better resources. And certainly, we will be better housed. We are planning a major estates development of our home in Wollaston Road and will share more news in the coming months.

We live in turbulent and difficult times. Pushing back the frontiers of knowledge is part of the answer. But so too is learning how to think clearly, to work constructively with other people, to contribute to building a better world than the one we have. This sense of purpose is at the heart of our values and our scholarship.

Hughes Hall was founded to change something: the widely held view that education was only really for boys and men. What did men lose for women to access educational opportunities at Cambridge? Whatever it was, was it even worth having?

At heart, the story of Hughes Hall is about optimism – that we can change things for the better. And this is part of our message to the future: in a world of disruption and conflict, education is for everyone, and we want everyone to benefit from the learning and research that we do here.

This means addressing, with optimism and energy, the great questions of our time:

- How do we embrace new ways of thinking and creating value?
- How do we teach people from different backgrounds to work effectively together?
- How do we create the space to say: This needs to change?

Our message to the future is of a College that champions truly innovative education, learning and research; achieves outsize impact, through the people that spend time here and the work they do, here in Cambridge and after they have left; is deeply rooted in its founding value of inclusion; and where we are all part of something bigger.

Happy 140th birthday, Hughes Hall!

Sir Laurie Bristow
President



Image: Alice the Camera

Laurie Bristow at an alumni event



Image: Dasha Tendirna

Three Presidents: Anthony Freeling, Sarah Squire and Laurie Bristow celebrating the College's 140th anniversary

HUGHES HALL HEADS OF HOUSE

Principals

1885–99 Elizabeth Phillips Hughes
1899–1902 Margaret Punnett
1902–8 Helena Powell
1908–33 Mary Hay Wood
1933–45 Henriette Dent
1945–53 Marguerite Verini
1953–73 Margaret Wileman (President 1973)

Presidents

1973–78 Sir Desmond Lee
1978–84 Richard D'Aeth
1984–89 Basil Herbertson
1989–93 Desmond Hawkins
1993–98 John Dingle
1998–2006 Peter Richards
2006–14 Sarah Squire
2014–22 Anthony Freeling
2022–present Sir Laurie Bristow

YOUR LETTERS AND MEMORIES

We would love to hear recollections from Hughesians.

I remember the wonderful Housekeeper Gill Reid, later the Domestic Bursar. We all looked up to her as she ran the domestic ship with determination and the kind of strictness needed to keep unruly students in their places. She was, and is, a gem. The person who inspired me most was my wonderful personal Tutor, Anne Turner. Her teaching was effortless, inspiring, astute, wildly knowledgeable, fascinating – and I hung on her every word. I still have every piece I ever wrote for her, complete with her insightful and encouraging commentaries. Only the very best teachers still make their students feel valued years after they have left.
Jane Murphy (née Donnithorne) (1975, PGCE)

I was enchanted by the young lady sitting opposite and just to right of me at dinner in the old Dining Hall at Hughes. I next met Sian coming down the stairs by the pigeonholes, and we started talking. We've been married now for 31 years. We were married at Great St Mary's just about eight years after we first met, with one of the lecturers from my department in charge of ringing the bells for us. We'd travelled up for a service every week for about ten months to qualify to be married there, and to this day we remember the water tower part-way up the M11 as our 'wedding chalice'. Happy days.
Philip Herlihy (1985, Diploma in Computer Science)

When I was elected Social Secretary at Hughes Hall, it was on the condition that I was not to organise a May Ball! The Bursar was so insistent because previous May Balls had left the College in debt. After some discussion, he agreed that if we could raise enough funds to clear the existing debt then we could indeed hold a 'Summer Event'. It was a great event, although I felt quite overwhelmed during the evening realising that everything we'd planned was actually happening! The final question… was the Bursar happy? YES – we even left some extra funds to pass on to the next social committee!
Fiona Christie (1985, PGCE)

I have a physics degree and was on teaching practice at Mary Datchelor School in London. My examiner was the English tutor. She sat in on my lesson on 'The destructive distillation of crude oil', part of the Nuffield Science Scheme, with 11–12-year-old girls. The large quantity of distillation glassware was set up for me at the front and off I went with naked Bunsen burners and crude oil. The lab rapidly filled with smoke and toxic fumes, despite having all the windows open. The tutor at the back disappeared from sight. Neat petroleum was produced and black tar, along with evil looking residues. Reader, I passed!
Gillian Hind (1966, PGCE)

Inspired by our story about the College kitchens on p.16, we asked alumni to share their memories of food at Hughes Hall.

Mushroom omelettes on a Friday were the greatest, but all the food was very nice. Miss Marshall, the Housekeeper, was very cross when we scorched the grass with a picnic kettle!
Joan Olivier (née Davidson) (1964, PGCE)

The Dining Hall used to be on the first floor of the main building [now the Margaret Wileman Building]. You could buy meal tickets, which came off a roll and looked rather like bus tickets, in the office from the College Secretary: lunch was 30p and Hall tickets cost 40p.
Jane Murphy (née Donnithorne) (1975, PGCE)

The food at Hughes simply could not be compared to the food at my previous university, and I always signed up for the evening meal. However, you always remember the one course you did not like, and for me, it was 'Pear Conde'! Cold rice pudding with a poached pear on top in green jelly. I do not eat rice pudding often now, but when I do, I am always transported back to those meals at Hughes.
Sian Pearce (1978, PGCE)

The food was always really good, except on a Wednesday, which was salad night, and the jacket potatoes were rather solid! My friend and I would cook pasta together in the Gyp room on our floor, just chucking in anything we'd got.
Rebecca Jacobs (née King) (1993, PGCE)

I always looked forward to dining at Hughes Hall as the chef was probably the best of any other college in Cambridge. In fact, I would deliberately return to Hughes from my office just to enjoy the lunchtime food.
Kon Papakonstantinou (1997, PhD Education)

I loved the split pea soup so much that the staff served it on my birthday! Whenever I try to recreate it at home, I'm brought right back to the Dining Hall in Fenner's.
Moa Höijer (2008, BA ASNC)

One College dinner holds a special place in my heart: the Italian Night Formal Hall I organised on 23 April 2019. We adorned the Dining Hall with Italian flags. To make the evening even more memorable, the duty Fellow allowed me to read the grace.
Andrea Di Antonio (2017, PhD Chemistry)

> 'I loved the split pea soup so much that the staff served it on my birthday!'
> **Moa Höijer**

We are always thrilled to hear your news and memories of your time at Hughes. Write to the Development and Alumni Relations Office, Hughes Hall, Cambridge CB1 2EW or email development@hughes.cam.ac.uk

To anyone pondering change,

I've learned many things from my first year at Hughes Hall, some of which can be difficult to articulate. Mapping out the direction we want our lives to go in can be a daunting, sleep-depriving task, full of what ifs and worst-case scenarios. As someone who left a fulfilling and financially comfortable career to study a passion, I can tell you these mental gymnastics do not get easier. I have spent many a night staring at my ceiling wondering if moving to another continent and 'starting over' was brave, or stupid. I sometimes look around at my (younger) course mates and wonder what they think of me, then they invite me to the pub, and I am reminded that our differences are not that deep. I speak to friends from home who remind me that they are proud of me for leaning into an adventure rather than shying away from it. I am not 'starting over' but altering the course on the map, and my accomplishments have not been erased or made obsolete despite being in a new field.

FROM THE MCR PRESIDENT

Alex Zimmerman (second year, BA Archaeology & Anthropology)



Image: Dasha Tendltna

> 'We want everyone to feel welcome and included in College life.'

This year taught me the importance of letting comparisons go, especially in a place like Cambridge, where the bar is set at extraordinary. Many of us are our own most vicious critics, and seeing this so clearly at work in others has forced me to realise I must be kinder to myself if I want to thrive and enjoy my time here. Taking over as the MCR President has forced me to be more confident and exude self-assurance, because who will follow a leader who doesn't believe they can lead themselves? Jumping in with both feet in my first year reminded me why I deserved my spot here in the first place, as well as why being a bit older in this institution is an advantage rather than a hindrance.

Presiding over the MCR over the last two terms has brought me much joy, despite, I must admit, many headaches. The committee this year is determined to continue to build a positive environment and put on events for students to build lasting relationships and memories. From a visit by stress-relieving alpacas to Drag Bingo in the bar, we want everyone to feel welcome and included in College life. I feel very proud to be a part of my committee and am impressed by some of the initiative and hard work I've seen from other members.

To address anyone reading this that is currently at Hughes on a squiggly path like I am, and to recognise all the alumni who took the opportunity to pursue something new, I see you and I salute you for the challenge to which you have risen. Every extraordinary story contributes to the history and vibrant culture of Hughes Hall, making it one of the most diverse and welcoming colleges in Cambridge.

There is no rulebook telling us what the right decision is, so for the curious out there like me, take the risk, challenge yourself and know that taking the unorthodox path is not the wrong one, at any stage of life.

Prior to her time at Hughes Hall, Alex worked as a firefighter, paramedic and registered nurse in the USA, before deciding to pursue archaeology full time. She plans to focus on biological anthropology, as well as past and present people's relationship with death.

NEWS IN BRIEF

It has been a busy year at Hughes Hall. Alongside the yearly fixtures – matriculation, graduation, open days, concerts, Varsity matches, Bumps and more – we have also celebrated our 140th anniversary. Here are just a few highlights that made the past year memorable.

PEOPLE NEWS

Senior Members

Our Senior Members have been conducting life-changing research and fulfilling crucial roles across the College and University. Of their numerous achievements and publications this year, here are just a few: **President Sir Laurie Bristow** gave two talks at the Edinburgh International Book Festival; **Professor Neil Mercer**, director of Oracy Cambridge, published *Oracy: The Transformative Power of Finding Your Voice* (Bodley Head 2025); **Megan Hunter** published her latest novel *Days of Light* (2025); **Professor Bill Nuttall** published *Insights into the New Hydrogen Economy* (Springer 2024); and **James Roo**t published *The Archetype Effect: Unlocking the Six Types of Motivation at Work* (Wiley 2025).

Students

LLM student James Barrett played the bass in the winning band, Iona Luke, at the annual **Take it to the Bridge** competition organised by the Centre for Music Performance. Music PhD student David Whyatt was also a finalist in two other bands, Hot Content and PostBox.

Nowsha Farha, studying for a PhD in education, was elected as a Cambridge Students' Union sabbatical officer, serving as Women's Officer.

Engineering student **Ryan Teh** was part of this year's Cambridge University's Formula Student team, Full Blue Racing. He played a key role in the design, building and running of the team's race car for the annual competition held at Silverstone Circuit.

Take it to the Bridge competition



Image: Dik Ng

Graduation July 2025





Alpacas visiting College

COLLEGE EVENTS

To thank the College staff for their hard work, eight Hughes students swapped roles with the **Front of House** team for an evening to serve guests of a Formal Hall, including the staff team that usually organise and work the event themselves.

We hosted a range of **music events**, including the Wileman Concert Series, and the very popular 'Music Café', an open-mic event, where all College members and their guests are invited to perform in a friendly, supportive café-style atmosphere.

We held seven **congregations**, welcoming 1318 graduands and guests to celebrate the conferral of their degrees.

All staff, Senior Members and students were invited to The Plough pub to cheer on the Hughes crews in the **May Bumps**.

Five friendly alpacas visited Hughes in June during the busy exam and deadline period.

Hughes Hall's second **Student Art Festival** transformed the Dining Hall (below).



Image: Lingchen Kong

Image: Dasha Tendina



Our second **'Little Owls'** family Formal Hall (above) was open to all Hughes Hall College members, including alumni.

We hosted Hughes Hall's first ever **Literary Day**, welcoming eight world-renowned writers to read and discuss their work. Authors and poets Eleanor Catton, Carlos Fonseca, Elif Shafak, Claudine Toutoungi, Stav Poleg, Mona Arshi, Tristram Fane Saunders and Mina Gorji offered insights into their writing process and the questions that their works provoke.

The Hughes Hall 2025 **Senior Members' Research Symposium** provided a comprehensive and inspiring showcase of the cutting-edge research across College.

To mark **Black History Month**, the MCR committee and Dr Roni Ajao, Race Equality Champion, planned a special Formal Hall, a cultural exchange evening and an academic seminar.

In March, the College celebrated **Green Week** with the theme 'small actions, big impact'. Three sustainable dining initiatives were introduced alongside a clothing repair workshop, a staff litter pick and a seed-planting event to show the community how to grow their own food.

To celebrate **LGBT+ history month** in February, Hughes flew the Progress Pride Flag and held the annual LGBT+ Formal Hall, welcoming guest speaker Dr Stuart Davis.



Image: AlicetheCamera

Megan Hunter interviews Booker Prize winning author Eleanor Catton at Hughes Hall's Literary Festival



Image: Catherine Jaskowiak

THE BRIDGE INITIATIVES

In 2025 Hughes Hall announced a new Bridge programme: **The Innovation Policy Ignition Programme (IPIP)** is designed to empower regions worldwide in cultivating entrepreneurship and innovation strategies for inclusive economic growth and long-term resilience.

Cambridge Digital Innovation (CDI) collaborated with HMD, a Finnish independent mobile phone manufacturer leading The Better Phone Project to help people find a more balanced relationship with technology. Professor Michael Barrett and Dr Karl Prince co-led a global webinar on 'Attention, Balance and Other Coping Strategies', part of a series of product development webinars, to explore the impact of mobile phones on the lives of young people and their families.

The Digital Education Futures Initiative (DEFI) has launched a collaborative research partnership with EdTech company Twinkl to explore inclusive pedagogy and digital tool innovation; hosted EdTech showcases and a cognitive futures workshop at ED2125; and is contributing to UNESCO's Futures of Education Observatory, with Dr Kevin Martin recently visiting UNESCO's Paris office.

In the academic year 2024–25, **Oracy Cambridge** provided professional development sessions for over 800 teachers, in the UK and abroad.

In July **Camtree** hosted four innovative academics from Japan to explain their ground-breaking approach to improving schools. For 30 years Professor Manabu Sato's approach, increasingly adopted in Japan and East Asia, has shown how to improve education from the classroom up. Fifty UK and international educators attended the successful two-day event.

The Centre for Climate Engagement (CCE) marked a milestone year, supporting the Climate Governance Initiative's transition to an independent charity after hosting it since 2020. The CCE launched the US edition of the *Law and Climate Atlas* with the Net Zero Lawyers Alliance; developed a Locally Determined Contribution (LDC) framework for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough to guide local net zero planning; and co-launched the Cambridge University Press journal *The Cambridge Forum on Corporate Climate Governance.*

Camtree's event in July



THINKING OUTSIDE THE BOX

Hughes Hall is trialling innovative approaches to reaching candidates with the potential to thrive at Cambridge, who would not otherwise apply. Deputy Senior Tutor (Teaching and Outreach) **Dr Joe Ellis** sets out the College's investment in expanding university access for post-21 students.



Joe Ellis

REACHING THE STUDENTS

Mature students are hugely diverse, and our outreach strategy has to resolve the problem that our potential applicants could be anywhere. Many of them have encountered some kind of disruption to their education; others are changing careers and are coming back to education after a period of working. We're one of the few places that can offer a route into 'elite' education for people from all sorts of backgrounds, and we're very good at assessing potential and being pragmatic about someone's previous experience.

We have always celebrated providing a path into Cambridge, but sometimes we've done that almost by accident; we wait for candidates to find us, and of course many don't. I was a mature student myself and Oxbridge was just not on my radar. We need to be much more systematic about finding talent. Together with Molly Wilson-Smith, Student Recruitment and Outreach Officer, we've been able to start some exciting projects to identify potential target groups.

ENGAGING WITH FURTHER EDUCATION COLLEGES

Further education (FE) colleges in the UK offer one-year access to higher education diplomas specifically designed for people over 19 without A-levels or with grades they wish to improve. If they do well enough in those courses, they would qualify to apply to Cambridge, and at Hughes we have a history of accepting people with this qualification.

So, we have started engaging directly with local FE colleges, to convince them that Cambridge is a realistic place for their students to apply. We're already involved in open days and university fairs, but we want to get to a much deeper form of collaboration where we work with FE colleges to recruit people into their courses. That means we are widening our potential applicant pool by getting more people to take that initial qualification.

What is key is persuading the University to take FE colleges much more seriously. As a College we are trying to lead in this area and show others that this works. We have embarked on a much wider initiative with the other four mature colleges to increase the number of mature undergraduates at Cambridge and improve our current 3–4.5% intake against a sector average of 29%. When we talk to FE colleges in the region, we come up against an assumption that Cambridge isn't interested in them, or resentment because their students never get in. Now, Molly and I speak to FE staff regularly to design our outreach in the interest of their students, and this is a proper attempt to build far more collaborative partnerships.

Part of the benefit of working with FE colleges is how much we are learning from them about what the students need. For example, summer residentials are at completely the wrong time for their students: either they haven't started their courses yet, or they should have already applied to university. So, we're now offering a new residential in December, targeting people on access to higher education courses.



Image: Dasha Tenditna

Joe Ellis with students

Staff in FE colleges who teach both A-levels and access to HE courses are experts in helping students with the transition from school-level to university-level skills. This is something we can also benefit from hugely in learning how to support our undergraduates better. It matches up with Hughes as a hub of education research; we have a chance to go into these places and learn from what they're doing.

In fact, my role has an academic research component, and that's what attracted me to it, alongside my passion for widening participation. I'm an anthropologist by training, and I'll be doing long-term qualitative research, because very little sustained work has been done on outreach for adult learners. I'll be observing and participating in teaching at Cambridge Regional College, seeing what methods work best for people from certain kinds of backgrounds. I'll also be doing semi-structured interviews to understand the profile of the students who are entering further education. This will help us understand the barriers and inequalities our candidates have faced and the best ways to communicate the opportunities that are out there to them.

'We're committed both to opening the doors for more people to come here, and to giving back to the ecosystem we're a part of.'

OTHER INITIATIVES

In 2025 we are starting to take applications for the University's Foundation Year programme. It is designed to target people with educational disadvantage, and fits in well with the Hughes strategy, also because it's a great route in for FE students.

At the postgraduate level, we hosted ten research internships aimed at undergraduates who have been classified as coming from backgrounds that are underrepresented in the postgrad community. Over the summer, they spent eight weeks working with the Faculty of Computer Science getting a taster, and we're encouraging them to apply for research degrees.

Finally, we have plans to address the challenge of widening participation internationally. Most international students in Cambridge have the resources and received the right support to apply. It is much harder to reach candidates from disadvantaged backgrounds. We will be working around the world with organisations and charities who can determine scholarship eligibility and who, crucially, can also support students in their application and provide funding for those students to come here.

Hughes Hall is not one of the wealthy colleges with extensive resources, but we need to recognise the privileges we do have. We're committed both to opening the doors for more people to come here, and to giving back to the ecosystem we're part of, in helping more people into further and higher education. It's part of our history and our ethos to act in accordance with those values. I look forward to keeping the alumni community updated as we start to see the results of these projects in future years.

‘HUGHES FEELS LIKE A PLACE THAT VALUES DIFFERENCE AND WELCOMES LATE BLOOMERS’

Current and recent students shared their experiences of studying at Hughes.



OLIVIA ROBINSON
MUSIC (2022)

I have loved music since I was a child, playing piano, saxophone, piano accordion and clarinet, performing with the National Youth Folk Ensemble and the Harrogate Philharmonic Orchestra. But alongside my passion for my subject, coming to Hughes Hall has given me the opportunity to try new things. As MCR Communications Officer, I was one of the first ports of call for new students before they arrived. I also photographed graduation days and other events, and being asked to do this allowed me to develop a pre-existing hobby alongside my studies.

I’ll never forget performing on the piano on the night of the 140th anniversary celebrations of the College’s founding. I was also the accompanist for the joint winner of the Cambridge University Concerto Competition 2025, which was a very memorable way to end my time at Cambridge. None of these would have been possible without coming to Hughes Hall.

Hughes is so friendly at every level. The College would virtually cease to exist without the porters, tutorial, admin, conference, library, development, kitchen and housekeeping teams, to name a few, and all of them had a positive impact on my time studying here, and I will miss them greatly. What strikes me as the most important characteristic of Hughes is a sense of community and diversity. No matter who you are or what your interests are, you will find like-minded people here.

BHUVANESH SERENE-BLAKE
HUMAN, SOCIAL AND POLITICAL SCIENCES (2024)

I grew up near to Cambridge, in Hitchin. Prior to university, I was a civil servant working within foreign policy for the Department of Health and Social Care. The transition from a 9–5 job to Cambridge undergraduate life has had its challenges, but coming to Cambridge has been especially challenging given my background of foster care.

Joe Ellis, my Director of Studies, my personal Tutor Evelyn Brealey and the head of welfare Ben Marshall have all worked together in their different departments, making sure all the practical and welfare challenges were tackled together; rather than on my own. It means a lot that that they are not only able to acknowledge but also understand the challenges I, in particular, face as a care leaver.

As a result, they have provided me an environment in which I can be a ‘Cambridge’ Student. Alongside working towards a First, I do athletics, in which I hope to go to nationals at some point during my degree, I’m part of the Union, as well as exploring interests across Politics and Entrepreneurship.

There are many practical challenges that come with not having a family and doing a university degree; however, after a bumpy start, I’m hoping the smoothness continues and I continue to be pushed towards my dreams and goals.





CHARLIE MORGAN
ENGLISH (2022)

I was educated in Welsh and left school before taking A-levels. I worked in sales, copywriting and fundraising, but during the pandemic I began reading much more and became eager to go back into education. On my Access to HE Course at City Lit in London, to my surprise, I started getting top marks – and really enjoyed writing essays. Even though I have graduated with a First, getting that offer still sometimes feels like a dream.

Being able to come to Hughes is probably the biggest turning point in my life so far. I’m the first in my immediate family to go to university, and getting into Cambridge has changed how I see myself: my capabilities, where I belong and what my future could look like.

My favourite involvement in College life, as well as being on the MCR committee, was running the film club. We’d screen a classic film every Sunday evening and then head to the bar to discuss it. I met a lot of great people through that, and it was the perfect way to reset at the end of Cambridge’s intense weeks.

I chose Hughes for a small but meaningful reason: Elizabeth Hughes was Welsh, and spent her final years establishing a training college for women teachers in my hometown of Barry. That connection made the College feel instinctively right. But Hughes came to mean even more over time. It feels like a place that values difference and welcomes late bloomers. I’m very grateful for that.

‘No matter who you are or what your interests are, you will find like-minded people here.’
Olivia Robinson

IJEOMA OGBUJU
(2021, BA LAW AND MPHIL CRIMINOLOGY)

As the eldest child of Nigerian parents, I was always expected to go to university. I fell in love with Cambridge on a day trip in Year 11 with my state school, and later took part in Target Oxbridge, a programme that helped Black African and Caribbean students increase their chances of getting accepted into Oxbridge. These opportunities enabled me to envision myself as a student at Cambridge. Although I was pooled to Hughes Hall and given a deferred offer as I was not yet 21, this ended up working out well. It meant that, thanks to money that I earned and saved during my gap year, alongside student finance, in addition to the Jack Merritt Scholarship, I have also been able to pursue a Master’s degree at Hughes.

I have been an active member of the College community through a range of positions throughout my undergraduate and postgraduate years: from rowing and coxing in our boat club, being the Vice President of the Hughes MCR, playing and captaining our mixed netball team and working in the College bar.

For me, Hughes Hall is the place where I was able to develop my academic curiosity and push myself, with endless opportunities to try new things. My favourite thing about studying at Hughes has definitely been the people, who have been warm and welcoming. I have made lifelong friends that I will continue to remain in touch with beyond my time here.



SENIOR MEMBER APPOINTMENTS 2024–25

HONORARY FELLOW

Mr Yu-Ting Kuo
Corporate Vice President, Microsoft

GOVERNING BODY FELLOWS

Mr James Bowers (Bridge Fellow)
UK Director, Development & Outreach at Human Rights Watch

Dr Alicia Gonzalez Diaz (Henslow Fellow)
Postdoctoral Research Fellow in the Department of Chemistry

Mrs Jane Mann
Managing Director of the Partnership for Education and Education Director of the International Education Group at Cambridge University Press & Assessment

Dr Gosia Marschall
Director of Studies in Education, Assistant Professor in Teacher Professional Learning at the Faculty of Education

Ms Amy Mollett (Bridge Fellow)
Head of Social Media, Video and Photography at the University of Cambridge

Dr Sally Raudon
ESRC Postdoctoral Fellow in the Department of Social Anthropology

Dr Zhiwu Wei (Research Fellow)
Leverhulme Trust and Isaac Newton Trust Early Career Fellow in the Department of Land Economy

Dr Emmanuela Wroth (Research Fellow)
Leverhulme Early Career Fellow in the Faculty of Music

RESEARCH BY-FELLOW

Dr Ying Ji
Research Associate at the Cambridge Teacher Research Exchange (CamTree)

BY-FELLOWS

Ms Kate Arhel
Hughes Hall Library Services Manager

Dr Bridget Bannerman
Member of the Operations Board for the Alliance for Cancer Early Detection (ACED), a member of the Early Cancer Institute steering committee, and the Programme Manager for the ACED cohort

Dr Jennifer Barnett
CEO of Monument Tx and CSO of Five Lives

Dr Emanuela Davey
External Director of Studies in Modern and Medieval Languages

Dr Robert Dillon
Director of Studies in Natural Sciences – Physical

Dr John Fawcett
Director of Studies in Computer Science

Mr Simon Glynn
Researcher, writer and advisor on climate strategy. Founder of Zero Ideas

Dr Joanna Haywood
Director of Studies in Chemistry

Mr Adam Igra
Director of Innovation at Cambridge University Hospitals

Ms Eleanor Jain
Hughes Hall Head of Education Services

Ms Zahra Joya
Afghan journalist and founder of Rukhshana Media

Dr Ewa Marek
Director of Studies in Chemical Engineering and Biotechnology

Dr Ben Marshall
Hughes Hall Head of Student Wellbeing and Welfare, Disability Liaison and Safeguarding Officer

Dr Kevin Martin
Managing Director of the Digital Education Futures Initiative

Dr Sonya Nevin
Contributes to the PGCE Latin with Classics and supervises on the Education Tripos

Ms Topsy Page
Member of the management team for Oracy Cambridge (Bridge Centre)

Dr Barry Phipps
Director of Studies in History of Art

Dr Noel Rutter
Director of Studies in Natural Sciences

Dr Harry Samuels
Supervisor in Law

Ms Gillian Secrett
Director of Leadership and Culture at the University of Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership

Dr David Sutton
AI scientist, Chief Innovation Officer at Featurespace

Dr Andrew Wright
Primary Care Dean for the East of England region of NHS England

THE HUGHES HALL 30+ NETWORK

PhD student and MCR Vice President **Ben Chester Cheong** set up a new group for more mature students, with socials and networking opportunities to make sure undergraduates and postgraduates of all ages make the most of their College experience.

When I started my PhD at Cambridge, it had been ten years since I completed my LLM as a student there. Having worked as a finance lawyer and legal academic in Singapore, I recognised that coming back to student life can be a challenge, if you don't fall into the age groups the University was set up to cater for. It was such a shame, I felt, that 30+ students often kept to themselves, missing opportunities for integration into College life.

In the summer of 2024, I decided to set up a group to bring students aged over 30 together. We launched with an inaugural networking event and potluck in Hughes Hall's Pfeiffer Room on 28 October. The Cambridge Mature Student Society also took part, allowing our students to meet others from across the University. This proved a resounding success, with over 40 participants from multiple colleges. Throughout the academic year, we've hosted regular events including lunches and nights out in local pubs, and lots of events at Hughes Hall: brunches, Formal Halls and networking events.

A core team of six has helped me organise the group, and we now have over 500 mailing list members representing diverse professional backgrounds, from economists and medical doctors to management consultants and school principals. Thanks to strong support from Hughes Hall staff and MCR, we've created a self-sustaining community that breaks traditional university demographics, while fostering meaningful connections among like-minded mature students committed to lifelong learning. Alumni have already been in touch to express their delight that our group has got off the ground, and we would love to keep in touch with 'more mature' College members as the network gears up for another year of fun, supportive events.



'Coming back to student life can be a challenge, if you don't fall into the age groups the University was set up to cater for.'

Image: Dasha Tendina

THE SPORTING YEAR

Continuing our long history of excelling in sports, Hughes Hall students impressed in Varsity matches and College fixtures, thanks to determination, teamwork and a lot of talent.



The Women's Blue Boat celebrate their victory

Image: Row360

ROWING: WINNING PERFORMANCES

On Sunday 13 April, the Light Blues claimed the fourth 'clean sweep' in Cambridge University Boat Club history, winning the Men's and Women's Boat Races, Reserve Races and Lightweight Races. The victories were powered by four Hughes students. **Sophia Hahn** (MPhil Sociology) and **Samantha Morton Van Eybergen** (MPhil Bioscience Enterprise) rowed in the Women's Blue Boat. **Noam Mouelle** (PhD Physics) – CUBC President for 2025–26 –rowed his third consecutive race in the Men's Blue Boat and **Conor Attridge** (MPhil Education) raced in *Goldie,* the Men's Reserve Boat.

Hughes Hall Boat Club also had an excellent year. After starting Michaelmas term with over 100 sign-ups for novice taster sessions, and performing consistently in races throughout Lent Term, the Hughes Crews impressed in May Bumps with W1 earning Super-Blades, while W2 bumped up into Division 4. M1 maintained their spot in Division 1, despite a tricky campaign, and M2 pulled together for a very strong performance.

RUGBY: A MEMORABLE YEAR

Continuing the tradition of Hughes Hall's rugby prowess this year were **Daniel Hide** (Graduate Medicine), playing in the Men's Varsity Match, and Women's Varsity Match player **Morgan Warner** (MPhil Polar Studies). Summing up the year playing for the Women's Blues, Morgan said, 'From hours on the team coach, to trainings in the pouring rain, to the Lent term Amsterdam tour, to finishing the season at StoneX Stadium wearing a light blue blazer, the experience has been nothing short of memorable.'

Meanwhile, the **All Greys**, the rugby team made up of players from Cambridge's mature and graduate Colleges with Hughes, Wolfson, Darwin and St Edmunds joining forces, held the annual Jack Merritt Memorial Match, celebrating Jack's life and raising over £2000 for the charity Break. Adding this to the total of £1500 raised for Movember, the team's charity fundraising was a great success this academic year.



Image: Dik Ng

Daniel Hide



Morgan Warner

FOOTBALL: CHALLENGES AND GOALS

Law undergraduate **Thomas Musie** played in the winger position for the 151st Varsity Football Match. He said, 'Balancing sport and university studies can be challenging, but it's possible with good time management and discipline. Football provides a great outlet from academia, and the structure of weekly training helps me stay efficient with my studies. The support system within the team and College also makes a big difference – everyone understands the commitment required, so there's a strong sense of camaraderie.'

Image: Ben Phillips



Thomas Musie



Joseph Hee

TABLE TENNIS: A SPECTACULAR FULL BLUE

Psychology and Behavioural Sciences student **Joseph Hee** wowed in table tennis this year. Having played competitively at national and international level since he was young, Joseph was undefeated throughout this year's Varsity competition, helping the Cambridge First team to secure victory. As a result of his stellar performance, he was awarded a Full Blue, despite table tennis being a Half-Blue sport. Reflecting on his spectacular sporting year, Joseph said, 'One of the things I cherished the most was the friendship and support we gave each other as a team. It inspired me to set up a Hughes Hall Table Tennis Society.'

SWIMMING: A PROUD CAPTAIN

Graduate Medic **Sarah Chapman** was the Women's Seconds Captain for Cambridge University Swimming and Water Polo Club this year. She swam in the women's medley relay in the Marlins vs Dolphins team, where the Seconds teams from Cambridge and Oxford go head-to-head. 'University sport provides so much more than just exercise,' Sarah said. 'I'm already seeing how the skills I've picked up can be transferred into my day-to-day life as a medical student. I've truly formed friends for life, and am so grateful for the opportunity, and for the generous funding from Hughes Hall to make such an opportunity possible.'

Sarah Chapman



FEEDING HUGHES

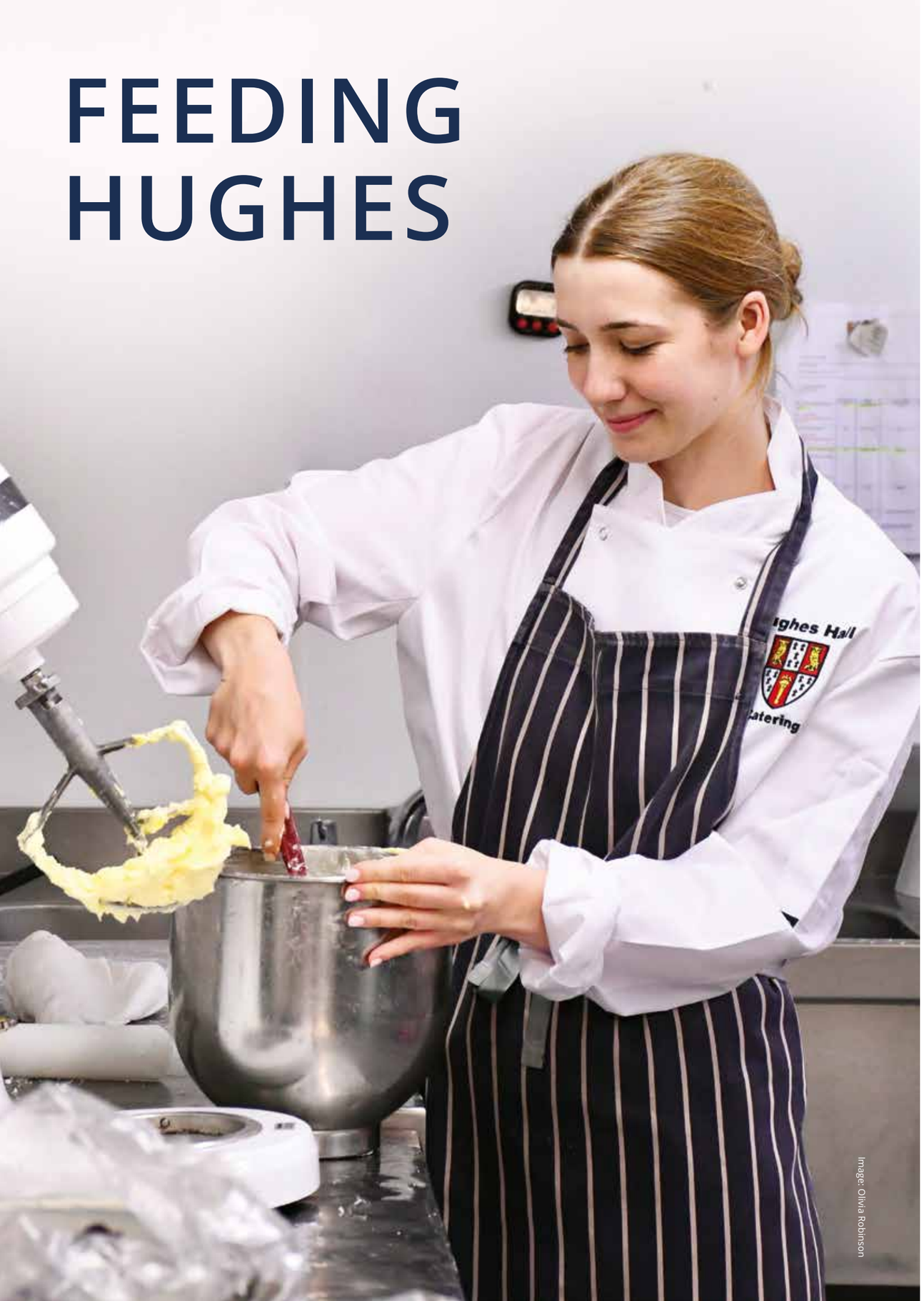


Image: Olivia Robinson

Serving over 1,000 meals per week, using 1,080 free-range eggs, 18 pineapples and 340 bread rolls, the Catering Team is one of the busiest departments in College. Hughes Hall has long had a reputation for having some of the best food in Cambridge, and with students, staff and Senior Members coming together daily for food and conversation, the Dining Hall is at the heart of the College community. Alumni Relations and Events Officer **Chloe Lambdon** went behind the scenes in the kitchens to find out more about the chefs who manage the mammoth task of keeping Hughes Hall fed.

One of the best parts of working at Hughes Hall is the delicious lunch I get to enjoy with my colleagues. Every time I queue up with my tray surveying the array of options on offer, I can't help but peek behind the counter in the hope I will get a glimpse at the work going on in the kitchen. When I managed to convince Dave Stannard, Head Chef, and Mark Harrison, Head of Domestic Operations, to let me do a taster shift, I was beyond thrilled.

After being given my Hughes Hall chef's whites, I took my first tentative steps into the unknown. A far cry from the chaotic scenes of *Hell's Kitchen* or the nail-biting challenges of *MasterChef* I am used to seeing on TV, the Hughes kitchen is calm and organised, lightly soundtracked by the radio. Everything has its place and everyone has their station. It is clear that Dave, who has decades of catering experience and has worked across collegiate Cambridge, runs a tight ship. To-do lists and recipes are pinned around the workstations to ensure the day's carefully planned menu selection is flawlessly prepared.

I was paired up with Commis Chef Apprentice, Louie Thompson, who joined us in October 2024. Working four days at Hughes and spending one day a week at Cambridge Regional College, Louie has completed modules on knife skills, food safety, fish, sauces, vegetables, pastry and more over the last 12 months. He was an excellent mentor and extremely patient as I discovered just how different cooking on such a large scale was to the meals I make at home. He endured my deluge of questions, while keeping up with all his prep jobs, with a skill and confidence that showed how at ease he was with the demands of a busy College kitchen.

Our first task was preparing the cakes for staff coffee. This is a weekly all-staff meeting which offers us the chance to catch up with colleagues in different departments and hear important announcements over coffee and cake. I was tasked with making the cream cheese icing for a carrot cake, while Louie undertook the delicate job of icing and decorating a special cake to celebrate the College's 140th anniversary. I was shocked by the amount of elbow grease needed to fold cream cheese icing for a cake designed to feed 40.

The kitchen team are constantly balancing regular meal service with catering for conferences and events. On top of the selection of meals available for lunch and dinner, they also produce sandwich selections, hot fork buffets and dessert selections for over 100 events per year. So once the cakes had been served, Louie and I moved onto preparing fruit platters for an event in the Margaret Wileman Building. I learnt several new and interesting ways to cut fruit and watched as Louie transformed pieces of melon and pineapple into an elegant display. Meanwhile, sous-chef Nathan expertly roasted five joints of pork, alongside roast potatoes and vegetables ready for lunch service, which, on a

'I'll enjoy my College lunches even more knowing the creativity and teamwork that goes into every single dish.'



Image: Dasha Tenditna

Commemoration Dinner in the Dining Hall

‘Dave checked in on me regularly to make sure I still had all ten fingers.’

Wednesday, is usually a roast dinner. Dave took charge of the vegetarian options – halloumi and pea fritters and coconut chickpea curry with jasmine rice – checking in on me regularly to make sure I still had all ten fingers.

Twice per week during term time, the team also prepare a three-course meal for Formal Hall. At Hughes, we hold several special themed Halls every year and Dave impresses with a range of creative menus. In March, as part of Green Week, we held a ‘Zero Waste Formal Hall’ which championed innovative cooking techniques to minimise food waste, featuring dishes like carrot-top pesto and broccoli-stalk rosti. ‘The preparation for Formal Hall is pretty similar to the regular meals,’ Louie said, ‘but the presentation is very different. We use sauce guns to serve the soups and garnishes are much more important. The busiest time in the kitchen is when there is a big conference and a Formal Hall on the same day as well as normal cafeteria service. That’s when it can get a bit hectic.’

While the Catering Team are busy behind the scenes, the Front of House Team are essential to the smooth running of every meal service. From setting up the Dining Hall ready for Formal Hall, to ensuring all dietary requirements and allergies are catered for, the Front of House Team are the glue that holds the whole operation together.

Both teams’ efforts certainly don’t go unnoticed: the Dining Hall is always buzzing with students, staff, fellows and visitors. As one of our key communal spaces, the Dining Hall forms the backdrop of many student memories: rowers debriefing over brunch, the MCR committee planning next term’s events over lunch, friendships blossoming during candlelit Formal Halls. In the offices in the Margaret Wileman Building, whisperings about the day’s lunch menu – hopes that Louie’s highly sought-after tiramisu might make an appearance in the dessert cabinet – can be heard from the moment staff log on to their computers to start the day. And none of this – the connections we make over the meals we enjoy – would be possible without our amazing Catering Team. After my day in the kitchen, I’ll enjoy my College lunches even more knowing the creativity and teamwork that goes into every single dish.

Louie icing the cake



Image: Olivia Robinson





Left to right: Ilse, Chloe, Claire, Kerry, Caroline, Rhiannon

FROM THE DEVELOPMENT AND ALUMNI RELATIONS TEAM

This year, we marked 140 years of rich heritage, academic excellence, creativity and transformational impact that define Hughes Hall. We have hosted lectures and concerts, reunions and parties, and assisted as others gathered alumni around the world, engaged with our community for a fabulous Giving Day and enjoyed delicious anniversary cake.

In our milestone year, our President, Senior Members and Development team have hosted gatherings in London, Cambridge, San Francisco, Hong Kong, Bermuda, Mexico City, Edinburgh, Brisbane and Melbourne. Hughesians have shared news of interesting conversations, renewed friendships and made new connections. Teaching Tales and Tea, a reunion for all those who studied education at Hughes Hall, was reprised, much enjoyed and confirmed with an annual place in our calendar.

We continue to seek ways to connect our global community and welcome your input; we very much hope you will join us. The monthly e-newsletter, along with the College website and social media posts, continue to be the places for news; do ensure you are receiving our regular updates. There is a great deal on offer. And more to come.

Based in the Margaret Wileman Building, the Development and Alumni Relations team is working on plans to fund the transformation of our fabulous College and the Wollaston Road site. Our task is to align College priorities with those philanthropic interests of alumni, supporters and friends, and to engage our community in a major fundraising campaign that will put Hughes Hall in the best possible position as we approach our next milestone anniversary in 2035.

Generations of Hughesians have benefited from the generosity of those before them. The growth of bursary and scholarship provision, widening access and ensuring our College will be available to all talented students irrespective of financial means will be central to our planning. The student experience will be further enhanced with access to travel, our flagship Pathways programme and excellent co-curricular activity. And the development of our campus will ensure that Hughes Hall offers a first-rate environment in which students will flourish.

Another remarkable gift reminded us again of the value of legacies. Emeritus Professor Masao Takano joined Hughes from Japan in 1988, staying for two years as an Associate Member. It seems his time was happy and the research fulfilling. We have been so grateful for the generous gift of his house, left to the College in his will. Over the coming months we will be seeking ways to engage more members of our community with the College's philanthropic priorities and as future legators.

We hope you enjoy our special anniversary edition of *The Owl*. Please tell us what you like most. And do please share your stories, recollections and any memorabilia for the College Archive, along with your professional news and successes. We would be so pleased to hear from you over the next year and perhaps see you at one of our many reunions and events.

Kerry Wilson
Development Director and
Governing Body Fellow

A DIFFERENT KIND OF CAMBRIDGE

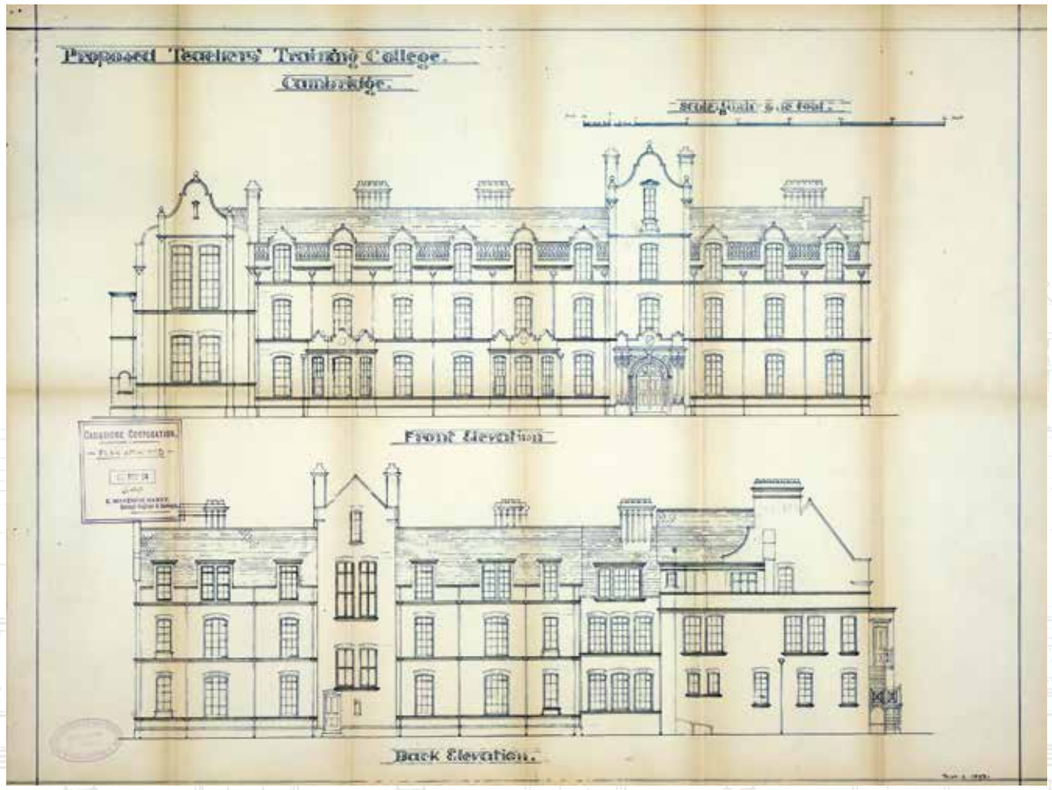
Words Dr Ged Martin, Honorary Fellow

CTC TO HUGHES HALL: THE EARLY DAYS



An 1899 sketch shows Crofton Cottages (left)

Hughes Hall began life in 1885 as the Cambridge Training College for Women Teachers (CTC). Its founders hoped for an association with Newnham, the college of its first Principal, Elizabeth Hughes, and CTC began close by in two small houses near Grantchester Meadows, Crofton Cottages (marked today by a blue plaque). We don't know why Newnham said 'no' to 'the scheme' (as it was originally called), but it may have been for fear of losing ground to its rival college, Girton. Girton insisted that its students spent three years studying to Tripos level; Newnham was more flexible, allowing shorter periods of residence and less focused courses of private reading. Sponsoring a teacher-training programme might label Newnham as a college for dainty lady governesses rather than determined women graduates. Anne Jemima Clough, the Principal of Newnham and owner of Crofton Cottages, showed her support for the project by becoming its genial landlady, but she could not persuade Newnham's (mostly male) College Council to share her enthusiasm.



Front and back elevations of the Fawcett Building, designed by William Milner Fawcett

Image reproduced with permission of Cambridgeshire Archives

Hoping for a change of mind, CTC optimistically commissioned a local architect, W. M. Fawcett, to design a Newnham-like building, no doubt for erection somewhere near Sidgwick Avenue – but the plans were filed away and CTC found itself pulled across town. Its students were allowed to attend lectures in education which the University provided for its young men (who were not very interested). Teaching practice was undertaken in local schools – thirteen of them by 1895 – spread through the dense suburbs around the east and south of Cambridge. Parker's Piece was the logical central point, and in 1888 CTC moved to two (almost) adjacent houses in Queen Anne Terrace. Five more scattered premises on Warkworth Terrace were soon occupied. The dispersal was inconvenient, the rents were scary. Eventually, in 1894, enough cash was scraped together to start turning Fawcett's blueprint into red brick alongside a back street called Wollaston Road. CTC had looked at the site nine years earlier, describing it as 'immediately behind the gardens at the back of Mortimer Villas'. Today we know the result as the Margaret Wileman Building.

The official opening ceremonies on 19 October 1895 passed into Hughes Hall legend. The still-suspicious all-male University was not massively represented (although the Vice-Chancellor did turn up) but the event attracted around 200 supporters from afar – former students and luminaries from the world of education. Two friendly colleges helped with catering: visitors 'were hospitably entertained to luncheon at Christ's and Emmanuel, and the dining halls of these colleges presented the unusual sight of a gathering chiefly composed of ladies'. A marquee was pitched behind the new building where distinguished guests would deliver speeches, but so many visitors crowded the tent that the platform party could not gain access. Instead of forming a solemn procession, they had to creep in through a flap at the back. Miss Hughes planned to reward the VIPs with a special afternoon tea after the ceremony. Scones and creamy cakes were laid out in the library, but she forgot to lock the door. The crowd got there first and scoffed the lot.

The new building contained 50 study-bedrooms, a dining room, classrooms and a library. A local newspaper was not impressed, describing the edifice as 'primarily utilitarian and of no architectural pretensions', although it grudgingly conceded that 'it has a good frontage of red brick in Queen Anne style'. Throughout the day, the teaching areas were used to demonstrate the CTC curriculum. Since Victorian schools had few visual aids, Miss Hughes trained her students to produce 'lightning sketches' for classroom use: half a dozen women showed off their skills in producing rapid-fire landscape sketches and watercolours of flowers. Practice lessons were delivered to imported local children, on subjects as varied as logarithms and the life cycle of butterflies. 'The crowd of guests swayed hither and thither among the classrooms to hear the performances of the young teachers.' The visitors refused to be silent spectators. A student from Aberystwyth gave a geography lesson about her hometown. 'The guests suddenly developed the most exacting curiosity as to all the affairs of the place', bombarding the hapless trainee with searching questions and 'heckling their victim upon the minutest point'. There were also musical performances by students and a historical drama acted by schoolchildren.

The orations in the marquee rightly praised CTC's founder. Elizabeth Hughes had proved herself to be 'a financier who for ten years could carry on a public institution without capital'. Everyone hoped that she would 'rule over the institution for many years to come, and see the work which had grown up under her hand placed on a permanent footing of prosperity'. Miss Hughes herself defined CTC's cashless capital as 'Infinite Faith', but in truth its chief investment was the Principal's personality: one ex-student recalled 'her superb vitality and her power of engaging others'. Sad to say, just four years later, burnout forced her resignation. When CTC became part of the University in 1949, a new name for the institution was required. Half a century on, the founder's memory remained vivid, and the College became Hughes Hall.

It proved hard to replace Elizabeth Hughes, and in the decade following her departure the closure of CTC was twice considered. It was probably the fact that it now had its own building that kept the place alive. But the project bounced back. A major Education Act in 1902 expanded the secondary school system, requiring more trained specialist teachers. The founding of new civic universities broadened opportunities for the higher education of women. From 1910, only candidates who had studied to degree level were admitted, making Hughes Hall Cambridge's oldest graduate college. In 1895, a local newspaper had explained that CTC did not set out to fill its students with 'knowledge of history, literature, or the sciences, but to train them to impart that knowledge to others'. Of course, those who taught teachers needed to keep up with educational research, and it was difficult to assess what happened in the classroom without taking account of wider issues in society. Hence, by seamless steps, a training college would develop into a postgraduate powerhouse. Hughes Hall also battered its way into the male bastion of Cambridge University, helping to win the battle for women's rights in higher education. Paradoxically, victory created a new existential challenge. From 1972, the ancient colleges began to go co-ed: Cambridge women no longer needed, and some no longer welcomed, a gender-protected environment. In response, the following year, Hughes Hall admitted its first men – just six of them – setting the foundations for the mature community of today. Elizabeth Hughes would have approved. She believed that ideally women and men should be educated together, but perhaps she would have reminded modern-day Hughes Hall that it retains a historic responsibility to support the career needs of women. Miss Hughes herself retained one frivolous and slightly embarrassing memory of that glorious day when her new building had been inaugurated with such celebration. She had become so exhilarated that she actually ran across the grass. In 1895, heads of colleges did not skip across their sacred lawns. The humble institution half-hidden off Mill Road foreshadowed a different kind of Cambridge.

Clockwise: The Library, *c.* 1900; Queen Anne Terrace, *c.* 1907, where CTC rented nos. 6 and 12 from 1888 to 1895; the Dining Room, 1900
Hughes Hall Archives



140 YEARS OF HISTORY

1885

Cambridge Training College for Women Teachers (CTC) is set up, with founding Principal Elizabeth Phillips Hughes. CTC's first home was at Crofton Cottages in Newnham.

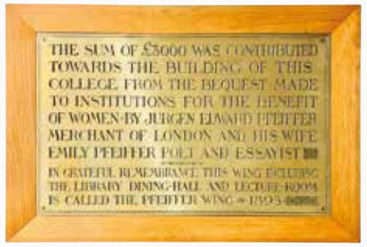
1888

CTC moves across Cambridge to two rented houses in Queen Anne Terrace.



1892

The Pfeiffer Trust – arising from a legacy bequest left by Jürgen and Emily Pfeiffer – grants £3,000 to CTC, enabling the College to build its first permanent home and thus securing its future. A brass plaque and the Pfeiffer Room in what is now the Wileman Building commemorate this.





1895

CTC moves to a purpose-built home on Wollaston Road with the opening of the Fawcett Building, later extended and now known as the Margaret Wileman Building.

1949

One year after women were finally allowed to receive degrees from Cambridge, the College becomes a Recognised Institution of the University and is renamed Hughes Hall, in honour of Elizabeth Phillips Hughes.

1968

Hughes Hall becomes an Approved Society of the University of Cambridge.

1973

Six male students are admitted, making Hughes Hall the first women's college to admit men.



1979

The first Hughes Hall rowers participate in the May Bumps.



Courtesy of the 1979 men's VIII, who nicknamed themselves 'Ship of Fools'. Photo provided by Juergen Brautmeier

1985 – CENTENARY

Hughes Hall becomes an Approved Foundation of the University of Cambridge.



1992

Chancellor's Court is opened by then University Chancellor, HRH Prince Philip (pictured here with President Desmond Hawkins)

2005

The Fenner's Building officially opens, affording the growing College much-needed student accommodation, a larger Dining Hall and new convening space. In 2017 the Dingle Terrace at the top of the building is named by Honorary Fellow Kern Wildenthal to honour John Dingle, President 1993–98; the lower terrace is named after Kern and his wife Marnie.





2016

Gresham Court opens providing student accommodation. The marsh marigolds on the gate represent all the countries from which our students come.

2019

The Maletin Room is named by donor Zarko Maletin (2008) and his mother Bozana.

The Suzanne Ziegler Garden Room is named in recognition of a gift by Jeff Ziegler (1993) in memory of his late wife, Suzanne (1992).

Image: Martin Bond



1989

The Pavilion Building opens.



1997

The Centenary Building is opened, marking 100 years at Wollaston Road

2006

Hughes Hall gains full College status in the University of Cambridge.

The main building is renamed after Margaret Wileman, the last Principal and first President, 1953–73, and the combination room in the Fenner's Building is renamed the Peter Richards Room, after the then President.

2009

A new purpose-built library opens its doors, named the 'Learning Resources Centre'. In 2019, it was renamed the Edwin Leong Library after Pfeiffer Fellow Dr Edwin Siu Hung Leong, benefactor and friend of the College.



Image: Dasha Tendina

2018

The first Porters' Lodge opens.

2020

Covent Garden Hall is acquired and is used as a drama studio and by the local community.

2024

Hughes Hall acquires two small parcels of land adjacent to the cricket field at Fenner's.

2025

Hughes Hall celebrates its 140th anniversary and looks to the future for the whole College community.

HUGHES IN NUMBERS

The Hughes Hall of today is a busy, international and thriving college, with one of the largest student bodies in the University and a reputation in teaching, research and sport that belies its youthful 140 years within collegiate Cambridge. Here we share some facts and figures from the academic year 2024–25 and thoughts from students on the profound impact the College has had on them as they prepare to leave.



STUDENT NUMBERS

925
Total current students

Undergraduate: 169

Postgraduate:
full time: **509**
part-time: **128**
intermitting or writing up: **119**

80
countries represented in the student body



PATHWAYS STUDENT SKILLS PROGRAMME

579
views of online resources

403
students attended events

77
small-group workshops

67
one-to-one student meetings

'As a student from a low-income household who had dreams of going to Cambridge, I never expected to be awarded any prizes. This has boosted my confidence tremendously as I start my teaching career. I am going to use this prize to build a second-hand book collection for my first classroom, to encourage all students to read for pleasure, as I have championed throughout my course.' Neve Pullan, PGCE Secondary English, 2025 prize winner



LIBRARY

57,939
visits to the Library

4,402
book loans and renewals

116
archive boxes catalogued

'This scholarship has given me the invaluable opportunity to dedicate myself fully to my research without the financial pressures that often accompany graduate study.' Scholarship holder



SCHOLARSHIPS, BURSARIES AND GRANTS

255
students received financial assistance

96
Academic-related travel grants

45
undergraduate bursaries

44
awards for sports and languages opportunities

25
hardship grants

23
Postgraduate scholarships

4
undergraduate scholarships



PRIZES

62
Students received prizes for academic success

Postgraduate: **32**

Undergraduate: **30**



WIDENING PARTICIPATION AND OUTREACH

46
people attended our programme of 5 residentials

4
webinar series hosted for prospective mature students

10
research internships hosted for recent graduates from backgrounds that are underrepresented in the postgraduate community

'Just gaining admission into a graduate programme, from outside the small town of Aligarh (in Uttar Pradesh, India), felt like an unimaginable stroke of luck. Even now, I sometimes find it difficult to fully comprehend that I made it to Cambridge, let alone that I am part of its student body. Simply put, the research I am doing would have been unsustainable, perhaps even impossible, without the support and infrastructure provided by this institution.' Scholarship holder

'This funding has not only enabled me to pursue novel approaches to understanding biological processes, but also allowed me to fully experience life in Cambridge – both as a place of learning and as a vibrant community. I've had the chance to grow as a researcher, explore new ideas and form friendships that will last a lifetime.' Aurora Xu, PhD student in Biological Sciences from China, scholarship recipient



ALUMNI AND EVENTS

13,306
alumni living in **137** countries worldwide

557
alumni, Senior Members and friends attended our alumni events

18
events held in College

14
overseas alumni events held in **11** countries



DONORS AND DONATIONS

545
donors this year

118
donors giving for the first time

39
alumni and friends who have told us of their pledge to leave a gift to Hughes Hall in their will, joining our Marsh Marigolds legators circle

£2,574,538
total donations to the College, including philanthropic funding for Bridge Initiatives

£493,328
total donations for student related activity

MAKE AN IMPACT

Over 140 years, Hughes Hall has benefited from the philanthropic commitment of alumni, senior members, staff and friends, delivering impact for the whole community. If you would like to make a donation, you will be investing in the future of our people who come here to teach, learn and do research and, through them, in the future of society more widely. Please visit our website to make a gift online or contact the Development Office for more information about donations and how you would wish to direct your gift.



Image: Hughes Hall Archive

Tetsu Yasui at Cambridge Training College, 1898, front row, three from the left. Elizabeth Hughes sits in the centre in the row above her

HUGHES HALL AND JAPAN: AN ENDURING CONNECTION

What do Japan's first female university president, a decorated sumo commentator and a remarkable collection of rare books have in common? They're all part of the century-spanning relationship between Hughes Hall and Japan, from its early years as Cambridge Training College for Women Teachers (CTC) to the present day.

Words Jess Hollerton, Senior Library Assistant

The story of the many exchanges between Hughes Hall and Japan starts early in our 140-year history. In her summer 1897 letter to the Old Students' Gild, Elizabeth Hughes writes that it 'seems probable that our college will be more international than ever next term' – a prediction which would prove accurate. Just 12 years after its foundation, CTC had cemented its reputation as a pioneer in education studies beyond the United Kingdom, and admitted students from across Europe and, notably, from Japan.

The earliest connection with Japan was with Utako Shimoda, who is believed to have visited CTC before returning to Japan to set up her own institution. The first CTC student from Japan, Tetsu Yasui received a scholarship from the Japanese Ministry of Education in 1897 to study education and psychology for two years under the tutelage of Elizabeth Hughes. Hughes' cutting-edge approach to teacher training was of interest to educationalists in Japan who were trying to improve women's educational opportunities and modernise the Japanese education system. While studying at CTC, Yasui was the personal guest of Elizabeth Hughes and accompanied her on visits around Britain and Europe in addition to her schooling, and Yasui records in her memoirs the enormous impact that studying at CTC and the support of Elizabeth Hughes had on her career.

On her return to Japan, Yasui continued to work towards a new education system, eventually becoming the first Dean of Tokyo Woman's Christian University (TWCU) and later, in 1925, their second President – the first woman in Japan to achieve this position.

Yasui also hosted Elizabeth Hughes during her tour of Japan in the early 1900s, which included educational institutions such as Japan Women's University, the Higher Normal College for Men and the Higher Normal College for Women, and she acted as interpreter for some of Hughes' lectures. Hughes also lectured at the institution now known as Tsuda College, founded in 1900 by Umeko Tsuda based on her experiences of the education systems of the USA, Europe and Britain. Tsuda was a prominent Japanese educator devoted to higher education for women. She is now recognised on Japan's 5,000-yen bank note.



Image: Iordache Ovidiu Daniel

Umeko Tsuda's portrait on the 5,000 yen bank note

ESTABLISHING A FUTURE OF EXCHANGE

The connections which emerge between these remarkable women show how intertwined the worlds of Japanese and British women's education were in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. To recognise this, in July 2024, Hughes Hall signed a historic agreement with Jissen Women's University in recognition of the connection between our institutions, through their founder Utako Shimoda. The new partnership encourages student exchanges, collaborative research and supporting participation in the UCL Japan Youth Challenge.

With help from the late Professor Masatsugu Ohtake, Honorary Fellow of Hughes Hall and former Professor of English Literature at Waseda University, our ties with TWCU were also renewed in the form of exchange summer schools. Professor Ohtake also donated a magnificent collection of rare books to the College over his more than 30-year association with Hughes Hall. The Ohtake Collection, which includes first editions of Edward Thomas and Ted Hughes, and stunning fine press books, forms the heart of the library's rare books collection.



Image: Tony McNicol

Doreen Simmons with sumo wrestlers

THE WORLD OF SUMO

Nottingham-born Doreen Simmons joined Hughes Hall in 1953 to study for her Post Graduate Teaching Certificate. She had gained a degree in Latin and Theology from Girton College and was preparing to become a teacher, initially of Latin and Classics. However, in 1973, Simmons moved to Japan to teach English, setting her life on an unexpected path.

On a previous trip to Japan in the 1960s, Simmons had been introduced to the world of sumo wrestling. She became fascinated by it: the history, the costumes, the ritual. She began to study sumo and write articles and pamphlets about it for English-speaking audiences. It was this work which drew attention to her growing expertise and landed her a job providing English commentary for Japanese broadcaster NHK and bringing her beloved sport to a wider non-Japanese audience. It was for this work that in 2017, at the age of 85, Simmons was awarded one of Japan's highest honours, the Order of the Rising Sun, in recognition of her contributions to Japanese culture.

For historical detail, I am very much indebted to the article by Life Fellow and former Honorary Archivist, Dr Jean Lambert, 'Japan and Hughes Hall', published in Hughes Hall Magazine 21. This article can be considered a follow-up to her work.



Image: Hughes Hall Archive

Professor Masatsugu Ohtake on a visit to the college in 2006 with a book from the Ohtake Collection

Were you a student or visiting scholar from Japan at Hughes Hall? We'd love to hear from you! Please contact development@hughes.cam.ac.uk

THEN AND NOW

Reflections from some of our longest-serving members of staff.

CLAIRE DICKENS
PROSPECT RESEARCH OFFICER SINCE 2012

I can't quite believe I've worked at Hughes for 13 years. I'm sure the tasty free lunches and friendly atmosphere have a lot to do with it. During my time here I've seen lots of changes. When I first arrived, the Development Team functioned largely as a College support office. There was no Conference Team, HR Team or Research Centres.

As the College developed, I also benefited from new opportunities and experiences. Over the years, I've been lucky enough to attend all kinds of events, I've met fascinating alumni and I've worked with some inspiring people. As a team we've raised money for new buildings and helped improve the student experience.

I've always found Hughes to be an inclusive place to work, and thanks to this, I've been able to balance childcare and my own studies in counselling, alongside work. Recently, I was grateful for the opportunity to become a Tutor, giving me valuable experience providing pastoral care to students.

I've seen many iterations of the College and the Development Team, and I can happily say that I think we're in a great place. I'm looking forward to seeing what the future holds for Hughes Hall!



Image: Dasha Tenditna



Image: Olivia Robinson

MICHELLE DINNING
ASSISTANT HOUSEKEEPING MANAGER SINCE 2005

It seems incredible that I've spent almost half my life working here, and seen the College grow from around 35 staff to over 150 now. There were so few of us, it really was like a family, and it still is – just a very big one! We all mucked in to get things done.

I started as a part-time cleaner and am really proud to have worked my way up to Assistant Housekeeping Manager. At the start, we were a team of seven plus the Housekeeper and Domestic Bursar; today, we need 14 housekeepers, two supervisors, me and our Manager, Tomasz, to keep on top of it all. The staff room was a portacabin around the back. Things have definitely improved in that respect!

A particularly special memory is helping to look after the former Principal (and first President), Margaret Wileman, until she passed away at 106 years old. She was a wonderful woman, and I was very fond of her. She lived totally independently until she broke her hip and needed extra care and support in place. As a trusted member of staff, I helped her at home and with various chores, like doing her laundry.

I've got no regrets about coming along to that interview 20 years ago. I've met some brilliant students and lovely colleagues and heard some funny stories along the way.

CLARE EVANS
FINANCE OFFICER SINCE 2008

When I joined, the 'Bursary Office' was a team of two, reporting to the Bursar. We did not have the technology we have today, so we would meet every new student individually at registration, and every day we had a stream of students topping up their meal cards with cash. Rush hour was 4.30 to 5 p.m. as the PGCE students returned to College. I enjoyed the interaction with students, and we always got to know everyone. The new UPAY system is more remote and I do miss the 'buzz' in the office.

Over the years the student numbers have grown and the Finance team is now seven. Most of us have worked here for a number of years, which is a good sign that it is a great place to work.

There are many happy memories and funny stories. I remember in 2018, one of the hottest years on record, my desk thermometer topped 35°C. We all marched into the garden and stood under the sprinklers – even the (then) Bursar came to join us!

For several years I have enjoyed being the May Ball Treasurer, supporting and guiding each year's committee with experience gained over the years. I have been lucky to attend a number of Balls and have made at least five survivors' photos, which at my age is quite a feat!



Image: Dasha Tenditna



Image: Dasha Tenditna

PAUL PARRISH
MAINTENANCE MANAGER SINCE 2005

I came to Hughes Hall from Downing, and it was like a breath of fresh air working with more mature students. Obviously our students still like to have fun, but it's all a bit more grown-up and respectful here. They've lived a bit and are more down to earth.

People here are genuinely really nice – students, staff and Fellows, and because everyone sits together you get to know people over lunch.

I love helping the students – getting to know them is the best part of the job. I'm the first response for out-of-hours callouts so I've dealt with all sorts of issues from homesickness to College rules, flooded bathrooms, smoke-filled kitchens, students stuck in places they shouldn't be. I suppose I feel a bit like a big brother to lots of them – they enjoy a chat, appreciate a bit of advice and often remain friends well beyond their time with us.

My office is full of Christmas cards, photos and postcards from so many brilliant people all over the world. I'd never have met them if it wasn't for Hughes Hall. One former student still donates money to the College to pay for cakes for the staff! That appreciation makes the job very worthwhile.

'We all marched into the garden and stood under the sprinklers – even the (then) Bursar came to join us!' Clare Evans

ANNIVERSARY EVENTS

To mark Hughes Hall's 140th anniversary, the College organised many fabulous events where students, alumni, Fellows and staff came together to celebrate 140 years of rich heritage, academic excellence and forward-thinking spirit that define Hughes Hall.



Hughes Hall's Director of Music Nigel Yandell and violist Otoha Tabata

WILEMAN CONCERT SERIES

Hughes Hall Music launched the Wileman Concert Series in honour of the anniversary, hosting a number of concerts over the course of the year. The series was a testament to the belief that the arts are integral to the tapestry of academic life here at Hughes Hall, and beyond – at a time when arts and culture feel the strain of limited resources.

HHBC ERGATHON

Hughes Hall Boat Club took part in a non-stop 24-hour ergathon (rowing machine marathon), setting their goal at 140 miles to mark the anniversary and to raise funds for a new boat. They smashed their goal, rowing a total of 386 miles and raising £3000!



140TH ANNIVERSARY RICHARD BERG RUST LECTURE

In January, the College welcomed distinguished writer and historian Jenny Uglow, OBE, FRSL to give a special anniversary edition of the annual Richard Berg Rust Lecture.



The panel and event organisers (from left to right) Dr Derya Cavga, Lucy Rogers, Professor Nidhi Singal, Annemarie Young, Dr Oriane Chausiaux and Dr Ariadna Albajara Saenz

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

By-Fellows Dr Derya Cavga and Dr Ariadna Albajara Saenz organised a panel discussion with the inspiring women of Hughes Hall's past and present. They discussed the reciprocal influence between Hughes Hall and the panellists' lives, discussing challenges women face, celebrating women's strengths and what Hughes Hall has meant for women over the years.



Image: Dasha Tenditna

COMMEMORATION DINNER

On the 140th anniversary of the founding of CTC on 9 May 1885, the President and Fellows gathered for a dinner in commemoration of Hughes Hall's Founders and Benefactors.



STAFF CELEBRATIONS

A memorable staff gathering in May was made more special with delicious anniversary cakes.



ANNIVERSARY FORMAL HALLS

Two anniversary Formal Halls were held in early May, with students, Fellows and alumni attending. The menu featured Welsh food and wine in honour of our founding principal Elizabeth Phillips Hughes.



GIVING DAY

Hughes Hall held its first ever Giving Day, inviting our worldwide community of alumni and friends to come together to make a huge impact on student lives at Hughes. Over 36 hours there was much fun, huge generosity from over 300 donors and a special Hughes Brews with Reuben the golden retriever.



Image: Alice the Camera

TEACHING TALES AND TEA: AN EDUCATION REUNION

We were delighted to invite PGCE and Education alumni who matriculated before 1995 back to Hughes Hall in June for an afternoon tea dedicated to honouring our heritage as a teacher training college and celebrating the profound impact of Hughesians on the field of education.



Image: Dik Ng

HUGHES HALL JUNE EVENT

Students marked the 140th Anniversary at the Hughes Hall June Event, hosted on the summer solstice.



Clockwise:
Eunice Prosser in her Lady Literate in Arts sash;
Eunice with her family in 1927; the Browning Calendar





TALES FROM THE ARCHIVES

I was recently delighted to receive an enquiry from **Alan Lawrie** about his great-grandmother Eunice Hillman (née Prosser), who studied under Elizabeth Hughes at our founding institution, the Cambridge Training College, in the 1890s.

Words Kate Arhel, Library Services Manager and By-Fellow

Born in Limerick in 1864, Eunice was educated by Alice Oldham – one of the 'Nine Graces', the very first women in Great Britain and Ireland to be awarded university degrees. Perhaps thanks to this, Eunice's education did not end there: at the age of 12 she was sent to school in Switzerland and in 1880 returned to the UK to take up a post as a 'pupil teacher' at the Duncan House School in Bristol. While there she continued her studies, passing the University of Edinburgh local examinations 'with honours in French' and gaining her 'L.L.A.' (*Lady Literate in Arts*) in 1891 from St Andrews University.

Eunice arrived at the CTC in 1891 as a well-educated and well-travelled woman of 27. Details of her time at CTC are limited, but her diary records that within a month of starting her course she had become engaged to Cecil Hillman. Romance did not distract her from her studies, however, and she left CTC with a distinction, then took up the post of fourth-form mistress at the prestigious North London Collegiate School for Girls. In 1894, Eunice married Cecil; not long after, he was employed by the São Paulo Railway and relocated to Brazil.

Before setting off across the Atlantic to start her new life with Cecil in São Paulo, Eunice spent the summer of 1896 'visiting old friends – Miss Hughes at Cambridge'.

Eunice lives on not only in the memories of her family but in our College archives: her signature can be seen in the testimonials book presented to Elizabeth Hughes on her retirement in 1899; we also hold a unique 'Browning Calendar' dated June 1892: a gift from Eunice's cohort to Elizabeth Hughes, which is full of beautiful illustrated handwritten copies of poems. Most entries are anonymous, but I am certain Eunice's contribution is among them: an illustrated copy of 'Parting at Morning' by Robert Browning makes me think of a young Eunice bidding Cecil farewell as he left for Brazil.

With thanks to Alan Lawrie for information and images



Image: Alice the Camera

College Vice President **Professor Nidhi Singal** looks back at 25 years of change.

HUGHES HALL HAS BEEN MY ANCHOR

Hughes Hall has been home since I first arrived in 1999 as a Cambridge Trusts scholar from India. It was my first time being so far away from my family, knowing no one, and with much growing up ahead. I still remember walking across Parker's Piece on a crisp autumn day and feeling overwhelmed with gratitude. I thought, 'I have 11 months – I'm going to make the most of it.' Even now, 25 years later, as I cycle through Parkers Piece, I relive that moment. It shaped everything that followed.

Cambridge is where I have built my life – shaped not just by academic pursuits, but by community, friendship and shared purpose. Hughes Hall has been my anchor: it is where I found lifelong friends, generous mentors, inspiring colleagues and even my husband. Arriving as a nervous student, I never imagined I would stay – let alone become a Professor in the Faculty of Education and Vice President of the College.



Nidhi and her research group in 2023

‘I understand what it feels like to come from the margins. Representation truly matters.’

As a Cambridge Trusts scholarship recipient (later becoming a Trustee of the Cambridge Trusts), I carry not just deep gratitude, but a strong commitment to justice and equity. I understand what it feels like to come from the margins – to enter spaces where you might question your visibility or sense of belonging. Representation truly matters. When students, especially those from under-represented or historically excluded backgrounds, share that seeing someone like them here has helped them believe they belong too, I’m reminded of how meaningful that visibility can be. It is humbling, and it underscores a simple truth, this kind of presence isn’t incidental – it’s essential. It carries with it a responsibility, which cannot be taken lightly.

INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

The key focus of my research is building inclusive education systems, particularly for children most at risk of marginalisation due to disability, poverty, gender or geography. Grounded in principles of social justice, my work examines how exclusion operates within education systems and identifies meaningful, context-specific strategies to address it. Much of this work is in South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, across all levels of education – from students, parents and teachers at the grassroots to collaboration with ministries and international bodies. As a research group, we prioritise qualitative, participatory and collaborative methods, working closely with local researchers and communities to ensure relevance, sustainability and impact.

My research group is centrally focused on impact and advocacy at the international level. Beyond Cambridge, we have built strong, collaborative research networks worldwide. Last year, we hosted the Global Disability Summit workshop at Hughes Hall, bringing together 50 high-level stakeholders from 32 countries. The resulting statement of action was a significant milestone in global advocacy for inclusive education and formed the basis of my keynote speech at the Global Disability Summit earlier this year. We were invited by the Qatar Foundation to lead the drafting of the National Plan of Action for Education and Employment of Persons with Disabilities. Our most recent report amplifies the voices of teachers with disabilities, and is already informing advocacy by teacher unions nationally and internationally.

For me, research is not simply a profession; it is a deeply personal and enduring commitment. It informs not only the questions I pursue but also how I engage with communities, policy and systems, always centring voice, context and the power of storytelling.

My research group is a key part of my identity (many choose to come to Hughes as students). In recent years, we’ve explored pedagogic engagement in higher education. As a supervisor, there has been much unlearning and discovery. The kind of PhD supervisor I am now is more closely aligned with my values – centred on empathy, equity and social change. My research group reflects these values: my students’ work challenges whose knowledge counts in international development, questions ‘one-size-fits-all’ education solutions and offers contextually embedded paths forward, building on strengths within education systems. The PhD is not just about a research output; it is also a deeply personal journey, and honouring these journeys matters. These experiences inspired our latest initiative, *PhD@Cam: what it takes, breaks, makes?* – focused on understanding and supporting the diverse lived experiences of PhD students from the Global South.

INCLUSIVITY ACROSS THE BOARD

Not only do I research marginalised groups; in many ways, I belong in the margins within the institution I inhabit. In my faculty, I was one of the first non-white women to hold a personal Chair, and in the College, the first non-white woman on the Senior Leadership Team. Looking back, it is evident how cultural assumptions can shape the way some individuals are perceived and the standards they’re held to. There is often an unspoken expectation to work harder and achieve more to be seen as equal. My 25 years at this University have been a process of recognising these patterns and increasingly speaking out about them.

Hughes has a warm, collegial, international and inclusive spirit – something I deeply value. It is a college with a vision for the 21st century, and I have seen it evolve. Today, Hughes prides itself on being a diverse community – in background, ethnicity, gender, age and subject areas. Inclusivity is not just about appointing more people of colour at different levels, but about ensuring fundamental change so that everyone can thrive. It means being open to diverse voices, opinions and ideas. Inclusion is an ongoing process of reflection, learning and action. As an organisation, we must continually evolve, because real inclusion is never ‘job done’. It requires us to keep asking vital questions: Do our students and staff feel a genuine sense of belonging? How are we addressing moments of exclusion, and how can we do better?

‘Research is not simply a profession; it is a deeply personal and enduring commitment.’

KEEPING THE HUGHES SPIRIT ALIVE

It is a great privilege to serve as Vice President and play my part in keeping the Hughes spirit alive. College gave me opportunities to take on strategic senior leadership roles and shape this place that means so much to me personally. As we grow as an organisation, with people leaving and arriving, the challenge will always be staying true to our values. A college’s culture is defined by its people – students, staff and fellows.

Students are at the heart of it all. One of our most important responsibilities is to nurture future leaders and create equitable opportunities – especially for those who may not have traditionally seen themselves at Cambridge. This is vital to me, because I know the difference College can make.

It is humbling and inspiring to reflect on the fact that this College has stood for 140 years and will continue to thrive very long after my time. My contribution is but a small chapter in its long history – yet making that contribution meaningful is a deeply personal commitment.



Nidhi (right) and friends in College, December 2002

All alumni will have seen the Proctors at graduation: those people in long robes making sure University ceremonies and committees run smoothly. But what do they actually do? In 2024–25, a Hughes Hall Fellow served as Senior Proctor for the first time. **Professor Markus Gehring** reveals the inside story of one of the University's most ancient positions.

A UNIQUE OFFICE

The Proctorship is one of the oldest offices in the University, even older than the Vice-Chancellorship, and it's historically been such a powerful position that it is the only department that doesn't report directly to the VC. The Proctors have been the chief law officers of the University since the 14th century; their mandate is still to uphold the Statutes and Ordinances and to maintain order. The Senior Proctor oversees graduations and protects free speech, for example managing protests; the Junior Proctor is in charge of student societies and other issues relating to student life. While discipline is handled by the Office of Student Conduct, Complaints and Appeals (OSCCA), the Proctors play a role in any appeals to OSCCA's decisions. Every college has a Proctor every 16 years; having been granted full University College status in 2006 (the royal charter was conferred by the Chancellor in April 2007), it was Hughes Hall's turn in 2023 to nominate a Pro-Proctor, to be trained up before serving as full Proctor the following year.

Hughes Hall's first permanent teaching Law Fellow and then University Lecturer, Markus Gehring joined the College in 2012 after having worked and studied at Hamburg, Yale and POLIS in Cambridge. He teaches and researches environmental law and sustainable development law, in both EU and international contexts. 'I love the widening participation ethos at Hughes Hall, being allowed as Director of Studies to take chances with students,' says Markus. 'I didn't join academia to make privileged kids more privileged; my goal in life is actually – on a very small scale – to change the world, and you can do that here at Hughes Hall better than in any of the "High Street" colleges, in my view.'

Markus's credentials seem made for the completely unique role of a Cambridge Proctor. He has acted as Deputy Praelector since 2012 and Praelector since 2016, making sure all Hughes Hall students are appropriately dressed and correctly presented at graduation. At the same time, he became involved with the work of OSCCA. 'It's a nice contrast because in OSCCA we see students at their worst. The plagiarism and misconduct cases are horrible to deal with, but then I also get to manage graduation, which is such a happy occasion. Knowing what struggles some students had to even come to Cambridge, then to see them do well, graduate and flourish, makes my day every time.'

Markus was asked to become Praelector partly because of his fluency in Latin, acquired as a schoolboy in Germany and as member of a Latin theatre group. Having a legal background also helps, he admits: 'I don't get flustered in tricky situations.' And finally, Markus has a fondness for the quirky aspects of the role: the annual Oxford–Cambridge Proctorial bowls match, the invitations to feasts and garden parties, and the early 19th-century uniform of gown, cassock, hood and ruff. But while this is very cosy in winter, by the time summer graduations come round it's an uncomfortable business. 'One of my colleagues would wear shorts underneath,' Markus smiles, 'but I don't think that's for me.'

The Proctor role is part-time on top of existing teaching and research, and the workload can be challenging. 'The meetings just add up,' says Markus, 'but it's fascinating and such an honour to do it. And this year I've been so lucky that the election of the Chancellor coincided with my Proctorship. We ensured the smooth running of the in-person voting at Senate House. It was a truly historic occasion.'

The list of Proctors is an unbroken line since 1314. That's not to say nothing ever changes. 'In such a historic role, you're not elected to make sweeping reforms, but there are things that I have been able to help improve. For example, we have found a formula to present students who identify as trans at graduation, by allowing them to choose the Latin wording "I present to you this scholar", rather than "this man/this woman". An important, inclusive move. We've also relaxed some of the dress codes, so we allow graduands to define their own national dress, and we're working on some of other rules, such as the previous ban on black shirts. These things are all part of making the ceremonies as relaxed and joyful as possible, within the conventions we have. In other cases, we sometimes have to impose new rules. We stopped champagne being sprayed around in post-exam celebrations, which is inappropriate in the very unequal city we live in.'

Professor Markus Gehring



Image: courtesy of Tempest Photography

CHAMPIONING MATURE STUDENT COLLEGES

After a very intensive time as Senior Proctor, Markus will serve as Deputy Senior Proctor, then take a year of leave, and hopes to take up the College Praelector role again in future. He looks back with pride at a successful Proctorial stint. 'The very fact that Hughes Hall has now had a Proctor is another symbol that the College has arrived in the midst of the University. This is especially important because sometimes the interests of the mature colleges are not taken seriously. I've had several occasions to remind some of the decision-makers that not all students are 18, and not all the colleges have large endowments to draw on. Representing Hughes Hall with my little pin on my suit has been fantastic, because even though we've been around for 140 years, I still get asked where we are. Having every Proctorial notice posted up across the University signed "Senior Proctor Markus Gehring, Hughes Hall", I think that was very good.'

'I've had several occasions to remind some of the decision-makers that not all students are 18, and not all the colleges have large endowments to draw on.'



Image: Billy Wilson (CC BY-NC 2.0)

Markus is not the only Hughesian to have served in a senior role in the central University administration:

Dr Anthony Freeling, Former President (2014–22), served as Acting Vice-Chancellor of the University for the academic year 2022–23.

'No other Hughesian has ever led the University, and this was an enormous honour for me personally and for the College. While my role probably helped bring Hughes Hall to the attention of a wider audience, I think it was the five years I spent previously as Deputy Chair, and then Chair, of the Colleges Committee that provided the greatest benefit for the College. That committee consists of the Heads of all 31 colleges (including assorted Lords, Knights, Dames and one Archbishop) and is tasked to coordinate academic and pastoral initiatives across the University. As the first Chair from a mature student and graduate college for a very long time (probably ever), I was able to ensure that the distinctive voice of the graduate colleges was heard more loudly. Inter-collegiate committees tend to focus their work on standard-age undergraduates, simply because they are in the majority in the largest and richest colleges, and I was able to reduce that natural bias.

I also served on the University Council (the Trustee body of the University) for six years, chairing it in 2022–23, which again ensured the voice of the graduate students and mature undergraduates was heard in the major strategic and financial discussions.'

Sarah Squire, Former President (2006–14), is Deputy High Steward of the University.

'I am often at a loss to explain what exactly this role is. It has not been defined since 1561, when its duties included "jurisdiction over members of the University and privileged persons arrested within the county for treasonous insurrection, felonies, murders or Mayhem…" It is extremely doubtful that the Stewards have ever had to exercise any such duties – there were perfectly adequate alternative channels for dealing with law, order and Mayhem – but the Deputy Steward is still a member of the small "court" of the Chancellor of the University, with the High Steward, currently Lord Watson of Richmond, and a legal expert, his Commissary.

The office of Deputy High Steward today is purely honorific, formal and symbolic – and enormously enjoyable. I've played my part in a whole series of splendid occasions, at degree ceremonies, induction of the Vice-Chancellor, University sermons, remembrances and commemorations; and, wider afield, helping to represent the University in the city, the diocese and the county.

It is perhaps slightly sad that as the "duties" have fallen away over the centuries, so too has the exotic academical costume sported by earlier Deputy Stewards. But the comradeship with the officers and officials of the University and the sheer interest of the people met in the course of "duty" are more than adequate compensation.'

Dr Martin Steinfeld, Governing Body Fellow, is the University Advocate.

'I have held the position of University Advocate since 2019. When I started, I presided over two significant and very different areas: student discipline and tenured University staff discipline. I had to manage the biggest change in the role since it was created in the statutes: the move of student discipline to a new system in which the University Advocate is not involved.

Being the University Advocate has never been an easy role. In addition to the numerous hours spent simply evidence gathering and preparing for a case, I also fulfilled my role as College Associate Professor in Law as well as Dean of Discipline for the College. However, I particularly enjoyed making submissions in cases: it reminded me of my time at the Bar, which I very much miss! Fundamentally, I took on the role because it was the right thing to do, because it facilitates, in its own small way, the public good, something that all the law Fellowship at Hughes Hall are committed to.

Throughout my time as University Advocate, I have keenly felt the responsibility of being a representative and flag bearer of the College, given that law is one of our enormous strengths, and I have been proud to help make this more visible to the wider University.'

MEANT TO BE HERE

Kudzai Chivenga (2021, BA Land Economy) reflects on her time at Hughes as a Stormzy Scholar and the first Black female President of the MCR.

'Black kids not only go to Cambridge, but we flourish, excel and make the world a better place.'

My journey to Hughes Hall began on 16 April 2021 when I received my offer. When I was thinking about applying to Cambridge, my mum said, 'You can do this. You can get in.' Those words lit the fire that carried me through.

I vividly remember Freshers Week. From matriculation dinners to buying a gown, living in Chancellor's Court and spending countless evenings in the MCR surrounded by brilliant and kind people, Hughes became a second home. Becoming MCR President was one of my proudest chapters.



Image: Olivia Robinson

My time at Hughes was full of highs and lows. The highs were very high, and the lows taught me resilience. Through it all, the College staff were my anchors. When it all felt overwhelming, the porters were always there for me as a shoulder to cry on. My Tutor, Annemarie Young, was very much my anchor of support. Her kindness, encouragement and unwavering presence made all the difference. Carole Sargent was another constant light. She always reassured me whenever imposter syndrome crept in.

But behind it all, I was in a 'secret family' with my fellow Stormzy scholars. Meeting Stormzy himself at Trinity College was surreal. Now, when I reread my scholarship application, I think of my 16-year-old self who dreamed of Cambridge. I remember visiting the University and my dad telling me I was more than capable of making it here. He later passed away from cancer when I was 19, but his words carried me through some of the toughest terms.

Through the tears, laughter, late-night essays and glasses of wine, I always knew I had a loving community and a College team who truly cared. I will forever be grateful to Hughes Hall for this extraordinary opportunity to learn, grow and thrive. I am endlessly thankful to 'Big Mike' aka Stormzy for proving that Black kids not only go to Cambridge, but we flourish, excel and make the world a better place. Sitting in the audience as he received his honorary doctorate from Cambridge was one of the defining moments of my journey. To watch the very person who helped me step through these gates be honoured by the same institution felt like a full-circle moment, a quiet reminder that our stories are powerful, that we belong and that we are rewriting what excellence looks like.

Now, when I am working late as a Management Accountant, I look back on these memories and think: we were never just passing through, we were always meant to be here.

**UK rap artist Stormzy and HSBC UK sponsor scholarships for Black British undergraduates from low-income and/or disadvantaged backgrounds. These awards are administered by the Cambridge Trust.*

FROM CLOSED DOORS TO A ROOM OF ONE'S OWN

For Afghan journalist and *Time* magazine's Woman of the Year 2022 **Zahra Joya**, Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own* has been an inspiration throughout her life.

Words Zahra Joya (By-Fellow)



Image: Anselm Ebulue

'I have found an intellectual "room of one's own" at Cambridge, but I know that many women around the world are still left standing outside the door.'

Last winter, when I received a By-Fellowship offer from Hughes Hall, extended by the President, Sir Laurie Bristow, it was a deeply moving moment. On the one hand, I felt a strong sense of joy, knowing this was a major step in my professional and intellectual path. On the other hand, my mind immediately went to the history of this space, to a time when women were either entirely excluded from such institutions or their presence was met with scepticism and resistance. That moment brought me back to the writer who has long illuminated my path: Virginia Woolf.

In 1928, Woolf gave two lectures at the women's colleges of Cambridge University, later published as *A Room of One's Own*, one of the most influential feminist texts in history.

I read her book during a time in Afghanistan when women still had freedom and the right to an education. Woolf argued that for a woman to write, to think, to create and to contribute to culture, she needs two essential things: her own money and a room of her own.

Having grown up in a traditional, patriarchal society, I understood all too well the importance not just of writing space, but of mental space for independent thought.

Years later, after the Taliban's return to power in 2021, so many things had changed for me, with the total erasure of Afghan women's basic human rights. I lost my home and my country, but instead I entered one of the world's most prestigious academic institutions. In a world of male domination, even Cambridge, with all its intellectual grandeur, has a complicated history with women. For decades, women were barred from joining or even entering many colleges, let alone holding academic positions or Fellowships.

Virginia Woolf recalled how, upon approaching a college library at Cambridge, she was stopped by a porter, as unaccompanied women were not allowed to go in.

And yet, less than a century later, here I am, a woman, not just present at this university, but engaging in reflection, dialogue and creation here, as a Fellow.

Of course, this is not just a personal success. My presence in this space is the result of generations of women who stood against silence, who wrote, who protested and who pushed against closed doors so that we could walk through them. Virginia Woolf may never have imagined so many young women studying at Cambridge, but her voice and that of many others helped make it possible.

Today, I am based at Hughes Hall, one of the first institutions founded for women in Cambridge. That fact is not just a historical detail to me; it's a deeply felt sense of continuity. If I have a voice today, if I can write, I owe it in part to the women who came before me and cleared the path – to Woolf and all the women who spoke up for their rights.

I have found an intellectual 'room of one's own' at Cambridge, but I know that many women around the world are still left standing outside the door. Especially the women and girls of my country, Afghanistan, who are now entirely banned from education.

In recent years, the world has witnessed at least three major wars that have kept the attention of international media. But the story of Afghan women is unfolding quietly, in the shadows, largely unnoticed.

We often say that authoritarian regimes kill people in three ways: they kill their hope, they kill their spirit and they kill their bodies. Afghan women are dying in another way, slowly, silently and without justice.

The war the Taliban has launched against women is among the most dangerous, precisely because it happens quietly. Behind closed doors. Through laws, fear and erasure. But silence does not mean safety. It is a war, and it is deadly.

For me, being at Hughes Hall feels like a kind of rebirth in many ways. The university is full of brilliant, vibrant young men and women. Here, I have had the opportunity to meet people from a wide range of cultural, social and national backgrounds. This diversity has broadened my worldview and deepened my understanding of mutual respect and human difference.

Among the most valuable parts of this experience is the deep respect shown to everyone in this community, from scholars to those who help prepare food or organise events. This respect reminds me of the importance of humility and the dignity of all people, in every role.

Today, alongside being involved in Hughes Hall, I'm running a media outlet focused on the stories of women and girls in Afghanistan. Our mission at Rukhshana Media is to create space for women to think, to write, to be heard. We understand, deeply, that the voices of women are still locked out in many places.

History has repeatedly silenced women's brilliance. Too many women never had the chance to fulfil their potential. But when women write, when they reflect and document their own experiences, we move closer to a richer, more equal and more humane literature – and a fairer world.

For more information about the work of Rukhshana Media, visit https://rukhshana.com/en

CARE IN THE WORLD

What are caring actions? What does it mean to have a duty to care for someone? And given that caring is something we all do, how should the duties of healthcare professionals be handled in ethics and law? Research Fellow **Dr Ira Chadha-Sridhar** is working at the interface of law and philosophy to develop a new account of the ethics of care.

‘Caring is such a central part of our lives, but it hasn’t received the kind of serious attention you might expect.’

‘My research is focused on philosophical questions around care, and that’s as big and as abstract as it sounds,’ says Ira. ‘How is caring morally valuable? Why do we have responsibilities to care? I bring those questions into conversation with the law. I explore how care is perceived in our daily lives, in society and in politics. In this way, the social and political dimensions of care inform the conceptual analysis, which in turn shapes the legal interventions I make in my work.’

Ira started law school in her home country, India, expecting to practise law afterwards, but was soon pulled towards broader issues. ‘I found myself grappling with many questions – about the nature of legal practice; the relationship between law, politics, morality and justice; and the normative foundations of different areas of law.’ Instead of a conventional legal internship, she chose to shadow a moral philosopher. ‘She mentioned the ethics of care to me in passing, and I immediately felt it resonated with me personally. That was more than a decade ago, and I have stayed in this intersection of law and philosophy ever since.’

It was a book that shook up Ira’s ways of thinking. Carol Gilligan’s *In a Different Voice*, first published in 1982, is a psychological study looking at how young women and girls think through moral problems. ‘I recognised myself in the participants’ responses: a voice marked by hesitation in the face of complex dilemmas; a scepticism toward rights- and justice-based reasoning; and a strong imperative to consider others’ feelings and needs, and care for them. Hearing these voices – so reflective of my own – was a very powerful experience.’

In her PhD, supervised by Hughes Fellow and Professor of Jurisprudence Lars Vinx, Ira developed an account of what it means to perform a caring action: ‘My definition is that caring is to perform an action to meet the need of someone else. But of course, determining the needs of others is a very subjective assessment. You might carry out an action to fulfil a need you perceive, but the action actually harms the other person.’

DOCTORS’ DUTIES OF CARE

An understanding of the ethics of care can help decide cases of medical negligence, where professionals have not carried out their duties of care towards a patient. This is the focus of Ira’s postdoctoral research as the Hatton-WYNG Junior Research Fellow, working alongside Hughes Fellow and Professor of Law, Jeffrey Skopek and colleagues at the Centre for Law, Medicine and Life Sciences at the Law Faculty. ‘The book I’m writing offers an account of the moral duties to care for others that we all have in our personal lives,’ Ira explains. ‘I argue that the legal duty that the law imposes on healthcare professionals is similar to the moral duties that we all have. It too is a duty to care *adequately,* or to an adequate standard. This brings the philosophical questions into a real-world context. What should medical professionals be held accountable for doing or not doing by the law? When is it fair to hold them accountable for poor patient outcomes? Those are really tough questions in healthcare law.’

Often, medical negligence cases are referred to a peer panel of doctors to decide. Ira’s work aims to determine for which cases this is the most appropriate action, and which cases should be decided by a judge instead, with expert witnesses providing information only. ‘But looking even more broadly, are negligence cases the best way to deal with poor standards of care, or should we be focusing on systemic reform?

‘Caring is such a central part of our lives: we’ve all been cared for as babies, and we will all at one time or another care for somebody else. But despite its importance in human life, it hasn’t received the kind of serious attention you might expect within philosophy – or within law. In many cultures, caring duties have been carried out by women, and particularly women from marginalised groups, and perhaps that is one of the reasons that it hasn’t received the recognition that it should. I think that’s increasingly changing. People are realising that it is really important to understand the burdens of caring and to divide them equitably. As a society, we need the resources to care for each other, to ensure we have a public healthcare system that works and to improve recognition for carers.’

Alongside her research, Ira is part of the law teaching team in College and particularly enjoys discussing thorny jurisprudence issues with the students. ‘In the coming years, I see myself teaching law students and building a research career at the intersection of law and philosophy. There is so much more exciting work to be done in care ethics. I hope to clarify some of the core issues in the field, collaborate with other care theorists and ensure care ethics is taken into account in healthcare and medical law.’



Image: Dasha Tenditna

LEADERSHIP FOR THE FUTURE

'Uncertainty is systemic in our world, and we've got to train new business leaders to adapt.' **Professor Gishan Dissanaike** spoke to *The Owl* about how fast business education is changing, and his priorities in his new role as Dean of the University of Cambridge Judge Business School.



The University of Cambridge Judge Business School

Image: David Amann

Gishan was appointed Dean of the Judge in December 2024, and he was the last person to be persuaded that he would make the perfect Dean. After a stint as Interim Dean in 2023–24, he expected to play a supportive role in the transition to a permanent Dean, then return to his teaching and research responsibilities as Adam Smith Professor of Corporate Governance. His colleagues had other ideas. 'I had no intention of actually being in the race,' Gishan says. 'I felt a sense of loyalty to the institution that had been my academic home, but I came in to be a nightwatchman and hand over to somebody else. But some colleagues were terribly disappointed that I hadn't applied, and ultimately persuaded me to change my mind.' After a global search and robust interview process, he was appointed as the Judge's first home-grown Dean, having been part of the School since coming to Cambridge as a lecturer in 1994.

Back then, the Judge Institute of Management Studies was a pioneering institution in Cambridge, founded in 1990. It takes its name from benefactors Sir Paul and Lady Anne Judge, who funded the adaptation and extension of the old Addenbrooke's Hospital into the present premises of the School. 'It was an entrepreneurial venture at the beginning,' Gishan recalls, 'and if we had known then what the Judge has become, we would have been very happy. But the challenges of leading it now are different; it's a much more mature operation.'

HIGH EXPECTATIONS

Today, the Judge is a globally renowned business school with close ties across the University and around the world. Gishan oversees an organisation with around 1,000 students, 80 faculty, 30 research staff and 240 professional staff, with another 75 staff employed by its affiliated executive education company. 'I would like to see the entrepreneurial mindset remain even in the next phase as we scale up further. Expectations are high: students paying high fees expect high-level services.'

In his five-year term as Dean, Gishan is determined to work with colleagues to ensure the next generation of business professionals are ready for what is going to hit them. 'The leaders of many large companies may have gone to business school 20 years ago, with a traditional curriculum covering finance, accounting, marketing and strategy. Today they are having to make decisions requiring knowledge that goes far beyond that: they must deal with supply chain disruptions, geopolitics, cybersecurity… The nature of the uncertainty we have now is almost systemic with many unknown unknowns, and our students must learn to navigate this world. On the other hand, the history of humankind has shown that through great crises come the best innovations, so I also want to make sure we champion innovation and responsible leadership that can embrace both the risks and the opportunities.'

EMBRACING INNOVATION

Innovation is Gishan's great passion. 'I feel that innovation and entrepreneurship in all its forms will continue to be important to the Judge, including technological, digital, financial and social innovation, but also the human, behavioural and organisational responses to such innovations: what does the future of work look like?' And rather than getting caught up in doom-laden thinking about AI, business students are trained to approach it with an open mindset. 'We have ChatGPT licences for academics and PhD students and are experimenting: on some courses, students are set tasks to learn how to use it thoughtfully. We need to be curious, test things out and stay informed. Avoiding AI would only mean that we would become redundant sooner. It's part of the uncertainty students must deal with in a very uncertain world.'

'Having come up through the ranks means I have a great passion for my role, because for me it's more than a job. I really want to contribute to the institution that has been so good to me.'

GLOBAL RESPONSIBILITIES

From the very beginning of the Judge, it was emphasised that while it engages closely with the corporate world, it retains a certain distance and critical moral voice. So, alongside innovation, Gishan's second priority is responsible business: sustainability, the circular economy, the Women's Leadership Centre and energy policy. And the third strand that connects everything is international leadership and cooperation. 'As a university, we are second to none in terms of our close links with emerging economies in Asia, Africa and South America, and global leadership is key in an uncertain world. That seems to resonate when I talk about it in New York as well as in Beijing.'

Dividing his time between the UK and his home country, Sri Lanka, Gishan also has two colleges he calls home: alongside his Fellowship at Hughes, he is also Director of Studies at Trinity, where he was a postgraduate student. Gishan feels equally at home in both these very different institutions. Hughes Hall is home to a lot of MBA and Executive MBA students, and Gishan was approached about a decade ago as a senior representative of the field in the Fellowship. 'Hughes is where I get to socialise with my students and colleagues, and when we meet in the Dining Hall, I really enjoy hearing about their diverse paths to Cambridge.' And for cricket fan Gishan, overlooking Fenner's is a bonus. 'Hughes is a great college on the up,' he says, 'and I'm excited to play my little role in that and see where it will go in the next decades.'



Image: David Amann

Hughes Hall Fellow and Professor of Learning Sciences in the Faculty of Education **Riikka Hofmann** studies how change happens, and why it doesn't happen, in educational and hospital settings. Most recently, a study co-led by Riikka investigated why many doctors are not using life-saving bedside ultrasound technology, despite being trained to do so. *The Owl* caught up with her to find out more about why this is the case and how her team of researchers plan to tackle it.



Image: Royal Papworth Hospital NHS Foundation Trust, courtesy of Mindray

HOW CAN NEW TECHNOLOGIES SAVE LIVES IN OVERBURDENED HOSPITALS?

Point-of-care ultrasound (POCUS) is a portable device doctors can use to perform bedside scans that can quickly reveal life-threatening conditions. It is a tool with huge life-saving potential that is also inexpensive and quick to use. The value of POCUS is internationally recognised and training in its use has been successfully implemented into undergraduate and postgraduate medical education curricula across the world. Why, then, are newly qualified doctors, known as resident doctors, abandoning its use after their initial training?

'After conducting in-depth interviews, focus groups and expert discussions, we uncovered several interlinked challenges which tended to reinforce one another in clinical settings, creating what we call vicious cycles or "closed-loop" learning barriers', says Riikka.

'For example, we found that trainee doctors lacked the support they needed initially to use POCUS in real clinical settings. There weren't enough senior colleagues present with the time to offer their expertise. As a result, new doctors were not progressing to a more advanced level with their POCUS expertise, meaning the pool of people who could help future resident doctors was not growing. The problem got worse and worse. If there had been some initial input to support those first cohorts, it could have mitigated the whole issue. The research also found that in busy ward life, even when experts were present, their ways of thinking when utilising POCUS were not visible to resident doctors, slowing down POCUS learning and use, and creating unhelpful communication gaps.'

This is just one example of a widespread problem in the NHS. A significant challenge currently facing hospitals in the UK is balancing the care needs of an ageing population with the training needs of new doctors. 'At the same time,' Riikka explains, 'we have a system that is losing staff because of issues of wellbeing. In a healthcare system where staff and resources are already extremely stretched, the challenge becomes not just how to solve the problem, but how to do so without causing extra strain.'

Finding innovative ways to expand hospitals' capacity to train doctors is a key concern across Riikka's research. In 2022, she led an analysis of the use of the world's first hologram patients as a teaching and learning resource. Hologram patients, generated by Microsoft HoloLens mixed-reality headsets, enable true-to-life and safe-to-fail immersive learning without the need for traditional simulation involving actors or medical manikins, which are expensive and require extensive set-up and space to use.

While the development of new technologies and training courses in medical education are a positive step towards expanding training capacity for new doctors, how their implementation is managed is key to ensuring the investment in these new resources does not go to waste. As we can see with the underutilisation of POCUS, despite high-quality resources and training, it can be challenging for resident doctors to use developing skills once they are in a busy hospital ward.

This is where Riikka and her team come in. What are the solutions to these 'closed-loop' learning barriers in hospital settings that are preventing doctors from using life-saving tools such as POCUS? For Riikka, it is essential that solutions are sustainable and scalable. This means finding opportunities within existing daily structures and processes in hospitals, keeping the need for additional resources to a minimum. 'Small changes can have a big impact when you notice the right opportunities,' says Riikka. A shared, international image bank of scans, for example, would help to give resident doctors access to a wider variety of conditions and support them to develop their skill in analysing POCUS results. Hospitals could also be using existing forums, such as quality-assurance meetings where clinicians routinely explain and debate scan results, as learning spaces.

An interdisciplinary and collaborative approach is also required. Riikka is currently training doctoral and early-career researchers in learning sciences who also have clinical training. 'That's part of the contribution we are making to capacity building and sustainability. We think that's the way forward: having a pool of academics and practitioner researchers who have training in both fields.'

Riikka is currently collaborating with Papworth Hospital in Cambridge and Director of Medical Education Dr Nicola Jones on an innovation project to bring her results and recommendations on POCUS utilisation into clinical settings. It will also inform her role as a scientific advisor to the government. Holding a range of advisory positions across government departments over the last decade, Riikka is at the forefront of policy evaluation and development. 'It is really rewarding when you can feel you can make a contribution at a much, much bigger level than we ever could through research alone. And that is why I am so proud to be at Hughes. As a collective, our focus is on maximising the real-world impact of our research.'



Image: Dasha Tenditna

'Small changes can have a big impact when you notice the right opportunities.'

THE POWER OF THE HUGHES NETWORK

Elena Proca (2018, MSt in Entrepreneurship), founder and CEO of social enterprise R-ainbow, has mentored **Yizhou Yu** (2019, PhD in Biological Sciences) since the start of his company Healthspan Biotics. The two entrepreneurs, working in very different fields, reflect on the benefits of sharing experience and expertise.

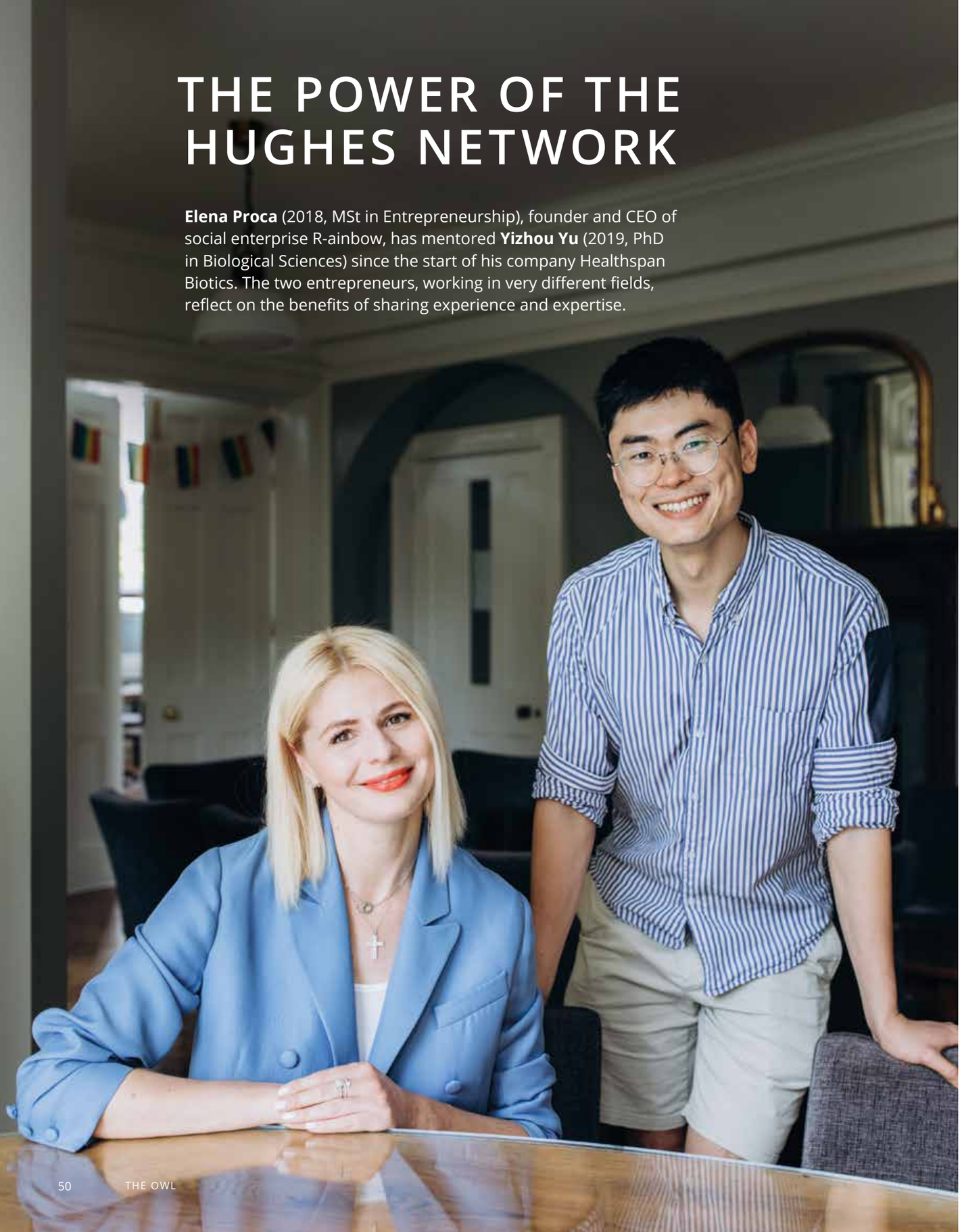


Image: Dasha Tenditna

'What unites us is purpose-driven entrepreneurship, and that's what enterprise at Hughes Hall is all about.'
Yizhou Yu

Elena
I started my first company when I was 16. It was a very small venture in fashion retail that did well and was eventually acquired by a German group. So, the fact that Hughes Hall had an Enterprise Society was a big draw for me in choosing the College. Unfortunately, my Master's coincided with the pandemic, and I missed out on a lot of the student experience. It was some years later that I reconnected with the Hughes community at an alumni event, and Anthony Freeling, then President, asked me to come and mentor one of the teams entering the enterprise awards. That's how I met Yizhou.

Yizhou
Elena's help kick-started my business. At that original event, we pitched an app to record sleep data. Unfortunately, we didn't win, but Elena encouraged me to be more ambitious in leveraging my PhD research on Alzheimer's disease to contribute to the wider world.

Elena
What stood out in Yizhou was his determination and passion about his field. I'm really honoured to have been chosen as his mentor, because I feel that Yizhou has what it takes to develop a real solution to a big global problem. When he was the runner-up in the Trinity Bradfield Prize for 2025, I was so proud, happy and moved.

Yizhou
My PhD was on pathways that help neurons defend against the damage caused by Alzheimer's disease, known as resilience pathways. Understanding these and boosting them could contribute to better outcomes for patients. When I finished the degree, I really wanted to translate this work to help people, because it had been proved to work in cells and animal models. The goal is to develop a safe, effective and affordable supplement that can slow down the progression of Alzheimer's pathology. We were very grateful to receive funding and I kept in contact with Elena, who very graciously offered her help and her guidance. Now we're here, still at the start, but making real progress.

Elena
Our collaboration has worked so well because of our very different fields and backgrounds. Yizhou and I are both really mission-driven. We want to make the world a better place.

Yizhou
Yes! What unites us is purpose-driven entrepreneurship, and I feel that's what enterprise at Hughes Hall is all about.

Elena
My own company is a digital platform allowing smallholder farmers to sell to customers directly, locally and then nationally. Growing up, I saw the challenges of local farmers in finding a market, particularly in trying to sell their produce without middlemen, and I was determined to solve this. I'm not doing this for any monetary purpose. I'm really working on it to create an impact. I want to stay closely involved with individuals, developing it and learning as we progress.

Yizhou
There were many areas of being a startup where Elena's encouragement and guidance have been vital. For example, we caught up a few days ago to talk about the specifics of the clinical trials that we're planning and she's been able to help guide me, with her connections and experience.

Elena
Sometimes we need a bit of a push to believe in ourselves. When I first started, there were many setbacks along the way. Failure is part of the journey, and how you learn. If I was just doing it for myself, I would have thrown in the towel many, many times. But I know that someone in the middle of nowhere could have their life changed because of the opportunity my platform gives them to earn a living and support their family. That keeps me going every time.

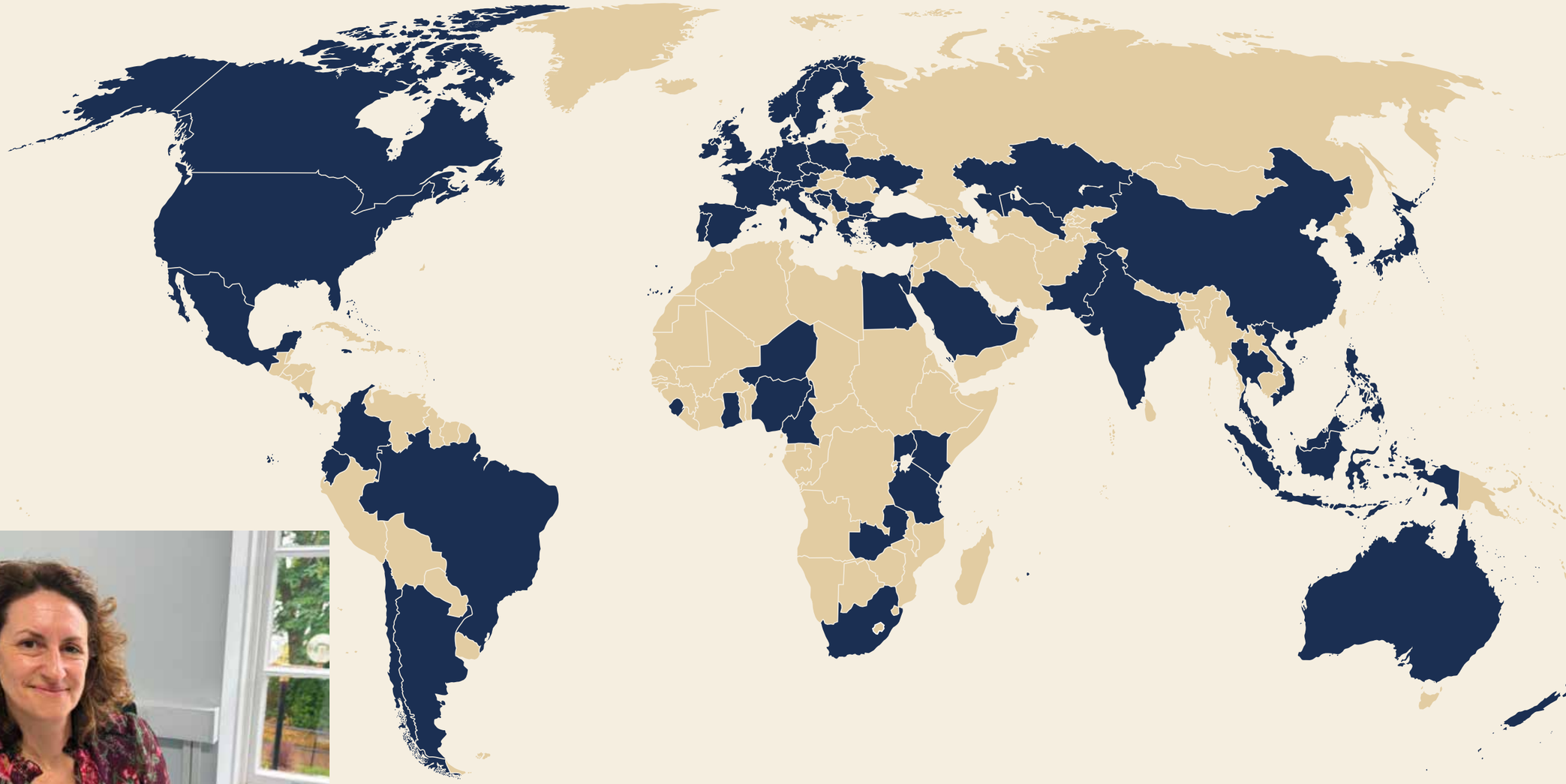
Yizhou
Yes, setting up a business is so challenging, but it's really reassuring to have someone like Elena championing the project with so much enthusiasm, and keeping in close touch with a LinkedIn post or a text. We're at an exciting point just now: I've been travelling around China to visit possible manufacturers for my probiotic supplements. We now want to show this works in human trials, so I've also been meeting with patient groups to determine the best delivery method for the supplements and to start testing them in people with neurodegenerative diseases. I'm very much still developing my entrepreneurial skills, and I hope to become more like Elena, that's my aspiration. And then eventually mentor people myself.

Elena
Yizhou is being too kind! He's absolutely ready to be a mentor. My mother always told me you have something to learn from every single person you meet. That mentor–mentee relationship goes both ways. I've learned a lot from Yizhou, too. We both want to inspire others to keep going with their entrepreneurial ventures and turning their dreams into careers.

Lorna MacLean (2018, MPhil History) was the winner of the 2025 Trinity Bradfield Prize, when Yizhou was the runner-up. The prize is awarded to the best companies founded by Cambridge students and alumni, translating research into real-world products and applications. Lorna is CEO and founder of Demetria, which uses cutting-edge AI technology to reduce the time it takes to get an endometriosis diagnosis from nine years to nine minutes. Lorna's personal experience of the difficulties caused by slow diagnosis of the condition fuelled her passion for improving healthcare outcomes and addressing health inequalities.

Global reach of The Bridge

Across 2023–25, Hughes Hall's Bridge Initiatives collaborated with researchers around the world (countries shown in blue).





THE IMPACT AGENDA AT HUGHES

Words Dr Alexis Willett,
Impact Director and Governing Body Fellow

When I was growing up, I didn't know I wanted to be an 'Impact Director' – not least because there was no such role in the 1980s. But looking back, it feels like my varied career was leading towards this point.

I started out as an archaeologist, before pivoting to a PhD in Biology at Cambridge that combined biochemistry, genetics and statistics to explore bone health. During this time, I had the good fortune to work with prominent academics who were shaping government policy and deeply engaged in science communication. That experience sparked my interest in what's required to successfully translate knowledge into practical outcomes that improve people's lives. Since then, I've spent the last two decades working in policy, strategy, external affairs and partnerships to influence change. Incidentally, one of our By-Fellows, James Root, recently wrote a book about what motivates people at work, which prompted me to reflect upon what drives me. I've realised that I'm motivated by the desire to contribute to something meaningful that somehow makes the world a better place. In short, impact.

You may wonder exactly what I mean by impact. In its truest definition, an impact is simply the observable effect of an action, but there's no single definition that covers all situations. Ultimately, impact depends on context. For our diverse community, it is best thought of as anything we do, either as a College or as individual members, that results in an effect on, change or benefit to wider society. Hughes Hall aims to be a forward-thinking, globally engaged College by placing real-world impact at the heart of its mission, and as far as we know is the first Cambridge college to appoint an Impact Director.

Somewhat ironically, the person least likely to make a direct impact here is me! As Impact Director, it's my job to amplify Hughes Hall's impact by equipping, connecting, supporting and promoting the College's initiatives and its community. I'm here to help our people to employ their brilliance effectively to make the impact society needs, and to tell the story of the difference we make collectively.

THE BRIDGE

Supporting our impact agenda is **The Bridge**, a multidisciplinary research translation hub founded in 2018 that connects academic expertise with practitioner insights to address critical problems. Comprising five centres and one programme, The Bridge serves as a catalyst for ideas that drive change, with its work reaching over 65 countries.

Among these initiatives is the **Centre for Climate Engagement**, which incubated the global **Climate Governance Initiative,** now reaching 100,000+ directors in over 70 countries. The Centre also developed the digital **Law & Climate Atlas**, making the intricacies of climate law accessible to thousands of law practitioners globally. Our **Digital Education Futures Initiative** has advised UNESCO in designing their education vision and helped reshape teacher training in the UAE, while **Cambridge Digital Innovation** co-led global discussions on the impact of smartphone use on young people's wellbeing, and informs business improvements across sectors. **Camtree** supports teachers to carry out classroom-based research and publish their findings, fostering a worldwide community of practice. Its library platform hosts 500+ teacher-authored reports from 31 countries, with its numbers rapidly growing. **Oracy Cambridge** has played a critical role in embedding spoken communication into the national teaching curriculum, while our newest pilot initiative, the **Innovation Policy Ignition Programme**, will empower regions globally to drive economic growth through inclusive innovation.

Each initiative in **The Bridge** demonstrates that knowledge shouldn't sit in silos but should be applied collaboratively across disciplines to transform theory into practice.

MOBILISING PEOPLE

The critical foundation underpinning Hughes Hall's impact is its people: mature students, world-class academics and professionals, including doctors, lawyers, scientists, educators, entrepreneurs and many other purpose-driven individuals who come to Cambridge to hone their expertise to form the future. The College is also filled with staff whose extraordinary experience and passion for doing good further enriches our community. We showcase the expertise of those already making a difference and support others to make their mark. We offer expert masterclasses, sharing insights into how to translate research into societal impact (such as shaping policy or commercialising innovation), and host clinics for those with ideas in mind. We've also developed **Impact HQ**, an online hub that guides users toward relevant resources and opportunities, to support them to maximise their impact.

One of our greatest strengths is bringing people together from different disciplines, sectors and perspectives to exchange ideas, confront challenges and find opportunities to collaborate.

We provide space for meaningful conversations and thought leadership on important global issues. Take our **COVID Reflections** event, in February this year. Marking five years since the UK's first lockdown, we invited a distinguished panel of experts, including Dr Rachel Clarke (palliative care doctor and author of *Breathtaking*, an account of working inside the NHS during the UK's first wave of COVID-19), Professor Sir John Aston (former Chief Science Officer at the UK Home Office during the pandemic) and Cambridge University's Vice-Chancellor, Professor Deborah Prentice, alongside academics from Hughes, to examine the lasting effects of this global crisis, exploring how we can leverage the lessons learned to better prepare for the future. The audience was rapt by the weight of the discussion – you could almost hear a pin drop! The event served as a reminder of the importance of taking the time to pause, reflect and learn from our collective experiences, and the extensive feedback was humbling.

CONNECTING THE ECOSYSTEM

We also initiate opportunities for people to connect around shared goals and interests. This year, we created the University's first-ever **Impact Expo**, showcasing 18 research translation organisations and drawing visitors from across Cambridge and beyond. We've cultivated a network of relationships, identified opportunities for engagement and strategic partnerships, and recruited dynamic Fellows from diverse professions to bring in external perspectives.

Every event, dialogue and collaboration extends our impact potential, and our efforts are being noticed. Hughes Hall is strengthening its reputation as a college that holds conversations that matter, nurtures and tests innovative ideas, and convenes the right people to find solutions to issues of relevance. And people are keen to talk to us and get involved. We aim to lead by example, not only in what we achieve individually, but in the difference we make together.

But our story is only as good as the stories we gather, and we know that many of our alumni have gone on to make a big impact. So, we're keen to hear your story and invite you to tell us how your time at Hughes helped you make a difference in your field or community. And if you're nearby, please join us at one of our impact events. I'd love to meet you.

Email: impact@hughes.cam.ac.uk

2024–25

10 impact-focused events held

50 expert speakers and panel participants

350 attendees

18 research translation organisations represented

Leading to numerous conversations started and connections made

IN MEMORIAM

ELIZABETH PATRICIA (PAT) STORY (1931–2025)

LIFE FELLOW



Hughes Hall made a fortunate decision in 1953 by offering a place to 21-year-old Miss Patricia Story, recently graduated from London in Classics, to study for the PGCE. The College then had 70 student members, all British women graduates, all training to be teachers in a variety of subjects.

We know Pat said 'I certainly enjoyed my PGCE year' – though in a letter she wrote to her mother in October 1953, she was typically critical of furnishings in her room. None of the furniture matched; she had 'an ancient Morris chair with the most awful tawny striped cushions...' Much later, however, she reminisced that 'Cricket registers strongly in my student memories. When the West Indies came to play at Fenner's we met the team, and I got to speak to the legendary Gary Sobers – a charming and unassuming man.'

We can wonder if Pat imagined then that after 13 years teaching Classics in Cheltenham and Oxford, she would be back in Cambridge, first with the Cambridge Schools Classics Project and soon as a University Lecturer in the Faculty of Education. She was invited to rejoin Hughes Hall and became one of its first Fellows and a Tutor. Later she was appointed Senior Tutor with responsibilities for overseeing student admissions and welfare. When the Fellows decided the College needed Vice Presidents, Pat was the first, elected in 1982. She served for eight years – longer than any other since.

While Pat was Senior Tutor, Hughes Hall was in the early stages of opening admissions to postgraduate students in a much wider range of subjects. Pat strongly supported this process and admitted the first students studying and researching for Master's and PhD degrees. The small, 1970s College became much larger and internationally diverse. Pat always said how proud she was of how the College has grown and changed over the years.

Apart from her association with Hughes Hall, Pat is celebrated for her important contribution to Classics education. Her PGCE students made up a high proportion of the teachers of Classics in the UK. She is probably best known for her many years involved with the development and publication of the Cambridge Schools Classics Project, which is now used around the world.

When Pat and her husband John Deakin retired from their University posts, Pat was elected to a Life Fellowship of Hughes Hall. Later, we asked her to take on the relatively new and busy role of Admissions Tutor for Undergraduates. Pat's work for undergraduate admissions, during years when she was supposed to be fully retired, was significant and influential for Hughes Hall.

Ged Martin, writing about the 1996 move into undergraduate admissions, paid tribute to Pat as a 'College stalwart, since the success of the initiative would be hard to comprehend without describing her input. … All will agree that there is only one person whose Hughes Hall career is emblematic of the institution's transition from its origin as a training college to its destiny as a wider graduate society…'

Those of us who worked with her always admired Pat's impeccable standards and manner of calm authority. These were particularly helpful when dealing with misbehaving students or colleagues – regrettably necessary on occasions. And we've heard many more recent tributes: 'She had a lovely sense of humour and was always even-tempered.' 'She was kind ... she was generous ... wise ... wonderful ... witty...'

Pat was stylishly dressed, bright and cheerful to very near the end of her 93 years but, alas, is no longer with us. Now we honour her immense contribution over many, many years and, of course, we miss her greatly.

John Raffan, Life Fellow

IN MEMORIAM



TONY LEMONS MBE
LIFE FELLOW
(1948–2024)

Tony Lemons was elected a Fellow of Hughes Hall in 1985. Over the years he served as Senior Treasurer of the MCR, Chair and Member of the Finance Committee and as Vice President of the College. He was a founder member of the Audit Committee. In recognition of his contribution to Hughes Hall, Tony became a Life Fellow in 2015. He was a well-respected colleague and friend to many members of the College.

Tony was the former Director of Physical Education and Sport at the University of Cambridge. Prior to this he held lectureships at the University of Liverpool, the University of Edinburgh, and was a Fellow and visiting lecturer at the National Institute of Sports in Paris.

He was a great supporter of University Sports Clubs. Until 2005 he was a coach and team manager at Cambridge University Rugby Union Football Club and a member of the Club Committee. He also helped to establish the Eric Evans Fund to provide financial support to student athletes, coaches and officials and was a Director of the University Cricket and Athletic Club. In 2013, Tony was appointed a Member of the Order of the British Empire for his services to University sport.



ALAN FARROW
ASSOCIATE MEMBER
(1931–2025)

Alan Farrow became a Senior Member of Hughes Hall in 1974 and appreciated his membership of the College very much. He was the former Headmaster of Roger Ascham Special School in Cambridge. Beloved husband of Isobel, he passed away peacefully on 7 August aged 93.



EMERITUS PROFESSOR MASAO TAKANO
ASSOCIATE MEMBER, 1988–90
(1946–2025)

Masao Takano was born in Tokyo and studied English and American Literature at Komazawa University, graduating in 1972. He joined the community of Hughes Hall as an Associate Member for a year in 1988 – a visit that was subsequently extended. Professor Takano's application to Hughes was made to the then President Sir Basil Herbertson and Vice President Pat Story. He wrote of his work on the English Romantic poets and his preference for Keats, Wordsworth and Blake – especially his passion for Keats, whom he was very keen to study in Cambridge. It seems it was a formative, memorable and important period of academic research.

As Professor in the Faculty of Letters at Komazawa University, he conducted research on Auden, Keats, Wordsworth and Blake, focusing in later life on Philip Larkin. He served as a councillor of the Japan English Literature Society. His books include *A Feast of Sense: Keats, Wordsworth, Blake*, *The World of Philip Larkin: Love 'More Than Words'*, *Philip Larkin: A Life of Love and Poetry*, and *Sun, Twilight and Night: Poetic Landscapes.* Upon retirement in 2017, the honorary title Emeritus Professor was conferred by Komazawa University.

Margaret Herbertson, the widow of our former President, remembers the beautiful Japanese prints he gifted to her and Sir Basil upon a fond departure when he left Cambridge to resume his academic work in Japan.

There were many Japanese visiting scholars at Hughes in the late 1980s and early 1990s; we feel sure some may have known Professor Takano and perhaps were persuaded by his enjoyment of Hughes to follow in his steps.

His recognition of the happy connection to Hughes Hall through the bequest of his London property to the College is extraordinary and we are enormously grateful for his generosity.

With sadness, Hughes Hall records the deaths of its alumni, Senior Members and staff.

You can send notifications of passing to the Development and Alumni Relations Office at **development@hughes.cam.ac.uk**

While we make every effort to verify the information here, we cannot guarantee its accuracy.

ALUMNI

DR MARGARET WILKINSON
1951, CertEd EDUCATION
(1930–2024)

Margaret Wilkinson began her teacher training at Hughes Hall in 1951, later going on to complete a PhD at Newcastle University in Politics and Education. She was an active member of the Northumbrian Cambridge Association, serving on the committee for 10 years.

HELEN ASQUITH (née Drewery)
1972, PGCE
(1950–2025)

Helen grew up in Worthing, Oxford and Bramhall, Cheshire, from where she attended Manchester High School for Girls. She studied Classics at Newnham College Cambridge from 1969 and then trained as a teacher at Hughes Hall. She married Leslie Asquith in July 1971 in Bramhall and they moved back to Manchester in 1973. She had two daughters, Emily Louise and Abigail Lesley. In December 1978 they moved to Littlemoss, Droylsden, Manchester, where she remained for the rest of her life, teaching at Fairfield High School for Girls until retirement in 2005. She enjoyed gardening, reading and taking holidays, mainly to the Greek Islands, Spain and Devon.

JOHN MARVEN
1974, BEd EDUCATION
(1928–2024)

John started out as a farmer in Bedfordshire, having studied at Moulton agricultural college near Northampton after the war. In the early 1970s, he made a successful career change to teaching. After obtaining his BEd at Hughes Hall, he taught for many years at Margaret Beaufort Middle School in Riseley, Beds., eventually becoming Head of Maths. On retirement, John and his wife Joan lived near the Norfolk coast, where he spent a lot of time in his vegetable garden, tinkering with machinery or walking their dog. John and Joan were married for 72 years until John passed away at the age of 96.



Image: © John Mathew Smith. Creative Commons CC-BY-SA

DAME CLEO LAINE
HONORARY FELLOW
(1927–2025)

Dame Cleo Laine was elected to an Honorary Fellowship of Hughes Hall in 2004. Although best known as a talented and creative jazz singer, she was also an accomplished actress in her early career, playing at the Royal Court Theatre and starring in *Show Boat* at the Adelphi. In 1964, her collaboration with her husband Sir John Dankworth, the musician and composer – also an Honorary Fellow of Hughes Hall – produced a noted album, *Shakespeare and All That Jazz*. A solo performance at New York's Carnegie Hall in 1983 earned her a Grammy. She became a Dame in 1997.

MARY TAYLOR
1988, LLM
(1954–2024)

Mary studied Business at the University of Alabama, then graduated from Cumberland Law School in 1981. She served as a Law Clerk for US District Judge Clarence Allgood, in the US Attorney's Office and the civil division for the Northern District of Alabama. She obtained her first Master's of Law degree at Hughes Hall in 1989, and her second from George Washington University in 1991. She practised law in Birmingham, Alabama, specialising in Construction and Real Estate matters, then joined her family's residential construction business. With her husband, Bert P. Taylor, she formed a law partnership in Orange Beach. She is survived by her husband, daughter and grandchildren.

DAWN COX
1999, PGCE
(1977–2025)

Dawn began her PGCE at Hughes in 1999 before embarking on a career teaching RE, touching the lives of many pupils and colleagues.

ALUMNI NEWS IN BRIEF

We are incredibly proud of the achievements of our alumni community. We welcome all news of personal milestones and professional success. If you would like to be included in our next e-newsletter 'News from Hughes' or future editions of *The Owl*, please email a short submission to development@hughes.cam.ac.uk.



Tufyal Choudhury

Tufyal Choudhury (1997, LLM) was appointed Vice Chair of the John Ellerman Foundation. As a trustee since 2018, he has been instrumental in supporting the design of the Foundation's current and upcoming strategies to advance wellbeing for people, society and the natural world.

Yusuke Shimizu (2003, MPhil Modern Chinese Studies) was appointed as the Head of the World Bank's New York Office and its Special Representative to the United Nations, responsible for managing the relationship between the World Bank and the UN.

Raoul-Gabriel Urma (2011, PhD Computer Science), founder and Group CEO of Cambridge Spark, funded a PhD studentship in the Department of Computer Science, helping to support research into computing education.

Nalin Mittal (2017, MBA) won a Study UK Alumni Award for Business Innovation. He is currently Director of Corporate Finance and Investor Relations at PhonePe. He said, 'PhonePe's platform is democratising progress, allowing people across the country to access financial services, often for the first time. The ripple effect of this is enormous, from empowering small businesses to fostering financial inclusion for millions.'

Patricia Mato-Mora (2017, MPhil Architecture and Urban Design) was appointed Cambridge Design Teaching Fellow in the Department of Architecture. Her recent article, 'Gi:iko Ce:mo'oidag' (*ARENA Journal of Architectural Research*) presents the Indigenous Akimel O'Otham community of the Sonora Desert as key agents of sustainable urban change and sets out a design proposal for the Akimel O'Otham to complement their irrigation plans.

Stephanie Adeyemo (2017, PhD Engineering) was among the first cohort of Career Development Fellows announced by the Royal Society. The four-year postdoctoral research fellowship aims to support talented STEM researchers from underrepresented backgrounds to conduct high-quality research.



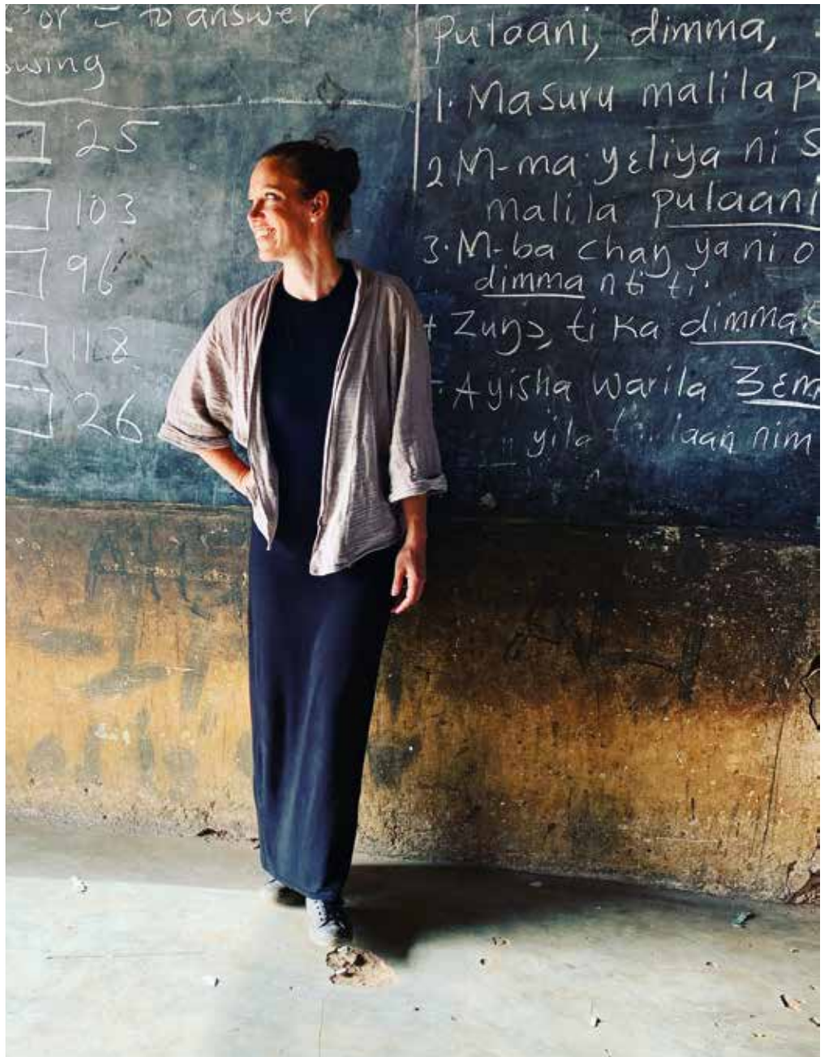
Stephanie Adeyemo

Jonah Zankl (2018, MPhil Innovation) published 'Taming unicorns: Toward a new normal of responsible entrepreneurship' in the *Academy of Management Review*. The paper theorises the social institutions that have led to the current field of startup activity and seeks to understand the systems of change needed to transition toward a responsible entrepreneurship ideology.

Kevin Tai (2018, PhD Education) was recognised as one of the world's top 2% most cited scientists in the field of languages and linguistics, according to Stanford University's List of the World's Top 2% Scientists 2024.

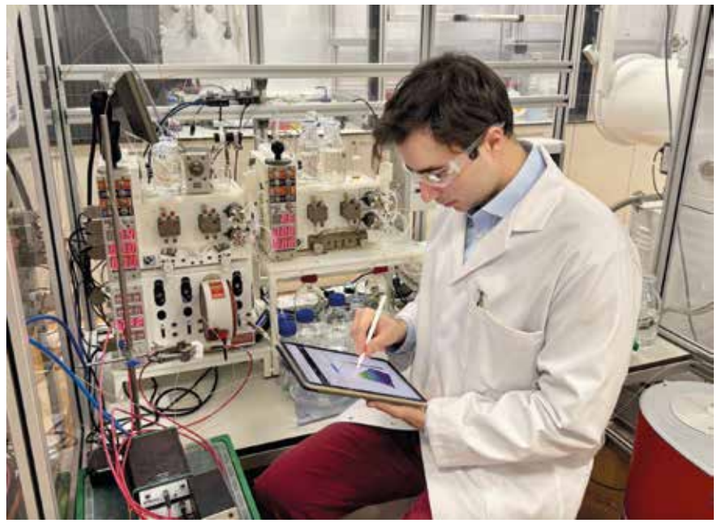
Deborah Spindelman (2018, PhD Education) published a pair of articles in the *International Journal of Educational Development*: 'Borrowing policies better versus borrowing better policies? Lessons from the histories of Korea and Japan' and 'Purpose of education in former British African colonies: From contestation to bureaucratisation'. Together, the papers explore the role of purpose in education policy reforms and inform her ongoing work with the World Bank's Global Education Practice.

Deborah Spindelman



David Ireland (2019, MSt Social Innovation) won the Study UK Alumni Award for Social Innovation, which recognises alumni who have made an exceptional contribution and commitment to creating positive social change and improving the lives of others. David is the founder and CEO of Belong Group and the CARE Center of New Jersey, which has redefined social impact through a groundbreaking hybrid model that seamlessly merges corporate consulting with transformative nonprofit initiatives.

Alexander Pomberger (2020, PhD Chemical Engineering) is co-founder of Reactwise, a software company building an AI co-pilot to accelerate drug manufacturing and help medicines reach patients faster. The company recently secured $3.4 million in pre-seed funding, including a competitive Innovate UK grant.



Alexander Pomberger

ALUMNI BOOKSHELF

Julian Francis (1999, BA Law) published *On His Majesty's Service* (Biteback Publishing, 2025) showing how past monarchs have prevented constitutional crisis in Britain in their role as guardians of our constitutional system.

Deborah Bowen (1970, PGCE) collated and published an anthology of environmentally focused poetry, *Poetry in Place: Poetry and Environmental Hope in a Southern Ontario Bioregion* (Guernica Editions, 2025). Forty-three poets feature, all of whom were interviewed over Zoom during COVID about their relationship to the land, their spirituality or worldview, and the reason they write poetry about the environment.

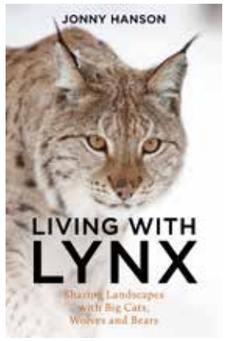
Dr Arshin Adib-Moghaddam (2000, PhD International Relations), Professor in Global Thought and Comparative Philosophies at SOAS, published *The Myth of Good AI* (Manchester University Press, 2025) which explores the extent of AI's impact on society.

Pierre Caquet (2008, BA History) published his fourth book, *The Invention of Realpolitik, 1848–1871* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2024), exploring the origins and meaning of a core precept of international history and politics.

Jonny Hanson (2012, PhD Geography) published *Living with Lynx* (Pelagic Publishing, 2025), which tackles what it would mean if lynx, wolves and bears were reintroduced in Britain and Ireland. He draws from his unique experience in snow leopard conservation, the subject of his PhD here at Hughes Hall.

Diya Mehta (2021, LLM) published a guide to the legal intricacies of the fashion industry. Drawing on her expertise in intellectual property and fashion law, the book explores key issues such as counterfeiting, sustainability regulations and influencer contracts.





HUGHES AND YOU

Alumni benefits and useful information

THE DEVELOPMENT AND ALUMNI RELATIONS OFFICE

As an alum of Hughes Hall, the Development and Alumni Relations Office is your first point of contact for staying in touch with College.

The team can be reached by email at **development@hughes.cam.ac.uk**, phone at +44 (0)1223 334895, and by post at **Development and Alumni Relations Office, Hughes Hall, Cambridge, CB1 2EW, UK**.

YOUR CONTACT DETAILS

Please keep us up to date with your contact details to stay in touch with the Hughes Hall community. Either complete the online form at **www.hughes.cam.ac.uk/alumni/contact-us** or contact the Development and Alumni Relations Office.

STAYING IN TOUCH

News

We are always delighted when alumni share their news with us, whether professional, academic or personal achievements, or memories of your time at Hughes. Please contact the Development and Alumni Relations Office.

Publications

The Owl is published online every Michaelmas term. Printed copies are sent out to all those living in the UK who are not in touch via email, and all those who specifically request a paper copy.

Newsletter

'News from Hughes' is the monthly alumni e-newsletter. To join the list, please contact the Development and Alumni Relations Office.

Social media

To keep in touch with us, please search for Hughes Hall on Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and X and follow us for news and updates.

COMING BACK TO COLLEGE

Alumni are lifelong members of Hughes Hall, and we are always delighted to welcome you back to College.

Visiting

When planning your visit to Hughes Hall, please contact us in advance so that we can ensure there is a member of staff available to welcome you. You can view our alumni visit policy at **www.hughes.cam.ac.uk/alumni/alumni-benefits.**

Staying in College

We have a limited number of double ensuite guestrooms on the ground floor of the Centenary Building, available for alumni to book. A booking request form can be found at **www.hughes.cam.ac.uk/alumni/alumni-benefits**.

Dining in College

Alumni can book into any normal Formal Hall, on Tuesdays and Fridays during termtime. This is subject to availability and excludes themed Formal Halls. To check upcoming Formal Hall dates, please refer to **www.hughes.cam.ac.uk/academic/college-calendar**.

Events

The College holds regular events for alumni, including lectures, garden parties, global meetups, virtual events and more; alumni are also welcome to attend many talks and concerts held by the College. Please see the full schedule at **www.hughes.cam.ac.uk/about/events**.

GLOBAL ALUMNI GROUPS

There are active Hughes groups in Hong Kong, Pakistan, Singapore, the UK and the USA. For more information about your nearest alumni group, or to become a regional representative, please contact us.

WEDDINGS

Hughes Hall alumni are eligible to hold weddings or partnership blessings in the Emmanuel College Chapel. Please refer to **www.emma.cam.ac.uk/conferences/weddings** for more information and contact details.

We are also able to host wedding receptions here at Hughes Hall. If you would like to find out more, please email **conference@hughes.cam.ac.uk**.

MA DEGREE

If you took your BA degree at Hughes, you will become eligible for an MA degree not less than six years after the end of the first term of residence, provided it has been at least two years since your BA was conferred. Please see **www.hughes.cam.ac.uk/student-centre/academic/graduation** for more details.

UNIVERSITY ALUMNI BENEFITS AND CAMCARD

As a member of Cambridge University, you can enjoy a number of benefits, such as lifetime access to the University Library and a range of digital resources available for free online. For this you will need a CAMCard, which can be obtained from the University at **www.alumni.cam.ac.uk**, where you will also find details of all the current benefits.

EVENTS 2026

The 2024–25 academic year has been packed full of interesting and memorable events, at Hughes, around the UK and across the world, bringing Hughesians together to celebrate our College's rich heritage and to mark our 140th anniversary.

We look forward to offering more chances to stay connected in 2025–26, including our annual Christmas Drinks Party, a third edition of Teaching Tales and Tea: An Education Reunion, an all-alumni celebration hosted at Hughes Hall, chances for our MBA and EMBA alumni to return to College and a 50-year reunion. We will also be hosting a range of regional events in towns and cities across the world. If you would like to host an alumni event in your city, please do get in touch.

We will be circulating a schedule of 2026 events early in the new year.

Further details on all events will be published in 'News from Hughes', the monthly alumni e-newsletter and on the College's website. If you are not currently receiving this mailing and would like to, please email **development@hughes.cam.ac.uk**.

FEEDBACK FROM ALUMNI ON THE OWL 2024

'I just regret that it is now 50 years since I was a Hughes student . . . and the Owl has only just been published . . . '

'I really liked the 'people focus' of The Owl, it really matched the lovely community feeling I remember back from my days in the College!'

'More of the same, please!'



140TH ANNIVERSARY MUG

We have been delighted to celebrate Hughes Hall's anniversary this year with our commemorative mug. This unique keepsake, which encapsulates the College's heritage and growth, will be available to purchase until mid-December 2025. We have limited stock available but if you would like a mug, be sure to place your order as soon as possible and by 12 December at the latest.

Cost: £23.50
+ £6 P&P (UK)
You can order a mug by scanning the QR code or visiting **tiny.cc/ymbwzz**

For overseas shipping or bulk orders, please contact the Development and Alumni Relations Office at **development@hughes.cam.ac.uk** or call **+44 (0)1223 763124**.



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