

KING'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE

presents

MODERN INQUIRIES

into the

*Nature and Causes*

of the

WEALTH OF NATIONS



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INTERNATIONAL PROSPERITY AND DEVELOPMENT  
250 YEARS AFTER ADAM SMITH

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A two-day conference marking 250 years since the publication of Adam Smith's *The Wealth of Nations* (1776). Leading scholars will reflect on the history and theory of long-term economic growth and development, concluding with a public forum exploring key issues in future global development, comprising Sir Tim Besley, Matthew Agarwala, Jane Humphries and (in the chair) Gillian Tett. This gathering will be followed by the University of Glasgow's major commemorative conference in October 2026, which will launch an accompanying volume published by Cambridge University Press.

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KEYNES HALL, KING'S COLLEGE & THE SIDGWICK SITE

5–6 March MMXXVI

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Convened by GARETH AUSTIN (Cambridge), ALEX TREW (Glasgow) and TOKE AIDT (Cambridge)

Supported by KING'S COLLEGE CAMBRIDGE & THE ELLEN McARTHUR TRUST

## Day 1: Thursday 5 March 2026

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*Keynes Hall, King's College*

### 9.15–9.25 Welcome

**Gillian Tett** (Provost, King's) & **Gareth Austin** (Research Director of King's College)

### 9.25–10.45 Session 1: The Wealth of Nations

*Chair:* John Dunn (Cambridge)

**Alex Trew** (Glasgow)

'Adam Smith's Economic System at 250: Imaginary Machines for a Transformed World'

**Craig Smith** (Glasgow)

'The Principles which lead and direct Philosophical Enquiries illustrated by the Wealth of Nations'

### 11.00–13.00 Session 2: Adam Smith's World

*Chair:* Sriya Iyer (Cambridge)

**Jane Humphries** (Oxford)

'The Invisible Hands of Women and Children in Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations*'

**Simon Szreter** (Cambridge)

'The Poor Law, Settlement and the Division of Labour'

**Regina Grafe** (Cambridge)

'Thinking with Adam Smith: Factor Prices in Colonial Latin America'

### 14.00–15.20 Session 3: From the Colonies to Religion

*Chair:* Toke Aidt (Cambridge)

**Pat Hudson** (Cardiff)

'Growth and Development: Smith and the Colonies'

**Sascha O. Becker** (Warwick)

'Religion and the Wealth of Nations'

### 15.35–16.55 Session 4: Long-Term Perspectives on British Economic Development

*Chair:* Martin Daunton (Cambridge)

**Leigh Shaw-Taylor** (Cambridge)

'Smithian growth in England and Wales 1415-1820'

**Eoin McLaughlin** (Heriot-Watt)

'The Inclusive Wealth of Nations: the Case of the UK, 1760–2020'

## Day 2: Friday 6 March 2026

*Morning: Keynes Hall, King's College*

### 9.00–11.00 Session 5: Finance and Economic Development

*Chair:* Charles Read (Oxford/Cambridge)

**Craig Muldrew** (Cambridge)

'The Importance of Finance Capital for the Wealth of a Nation'

**J. Vernon Henderson** (LSE)

'Adam Smith and the City (tentative title)' (*with Leigh Shaw-Taylor & Jacques Thisse*)

**Tiago Cavalcanti** (Cambridge)

'Financial Intermediaries and Economic Development'

### 11.15–12.45 Session 6: From Moral Sentiments to Global Economic Development

*Chair:* Nuala Zahedieh (Edinburgh/Cambridge)

**Tim Besley** (LSE)

'Moral Sentiments in Market Economies' (*with Maitreesh Ghatak*)

**Gareth Austin** (Cambridge)

'Causes of the Wealth of Nations: Economic Development over Time and Space'

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▷ **Venue Change** ◁

The afternoon session takes place at the **Sidgwick Site**, approximately 10 minutes' walk from King's College. Please allow adequate time for the transition.

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*Afternoon: LG19, Arthur Goodhart Lecture Theatre, Faculty of Law, Sidgwick Site*

### 14.00–16.00 Public Forum: The Next 25/250 Years

*Chair:* Gillian Tett (Provost, King's)

**Panellists:** Sir Tim Besley (LSE), Matthew Agarwala (Sussex), Jane Humphries (Oxford)

A forward-looking discussion on the prospects for global prosperity and development.

*Free and open to the public. Students especially welcome.*

## Practical Information

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### Venues

**Keynes Hall, King's College**

King's Parade, Cambridge CB2 1ST

Day 1 (Thursday) and Day 2 morning sessions.

Main entrance via the Porter's Lodge on King's Parade.

**Arthur Goodhart Lecture Theatre (LG19)**

Faculty of Law, Sidgwick Site, West Road CB3 9DZ

Day 2 afternoon Public Forum.

Approx. 10 minutes' walk from King's College.

### Registration & Attendance

**Registration**

Attendance is free. Please register via the [Eventbrite page](#) to secure your place and receive programme updates.

**Public Forum**

The Friday afternoon session is free and open to all. Students are especially welcome. No registration required, but please arrive early to secure a seat.

**Recording**

The Public Forum will be recorded and made available on YouTube following the event. Earlier sessions will not be recorded or live-streamed.

**Accessibility**

Both venues are wheelchair-accessible. Please contact the organisers in advance if you have specific access requirements.

### Contact & Organisation

**Enquiries**

Professor Gareth Austin: [gma31@cam.ac.uk](mailto:gma31@cam.ac.uk)

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**Organising Committee**

Gareth Austin, Alex Trew, Toke Aidt, Caro Schade, Christoph Hess, Nick Fitzhenry

**Acknowledgements**

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**Related Event**

This gathering precedes the University of Glasgow's major commemorative conference in October 2026.