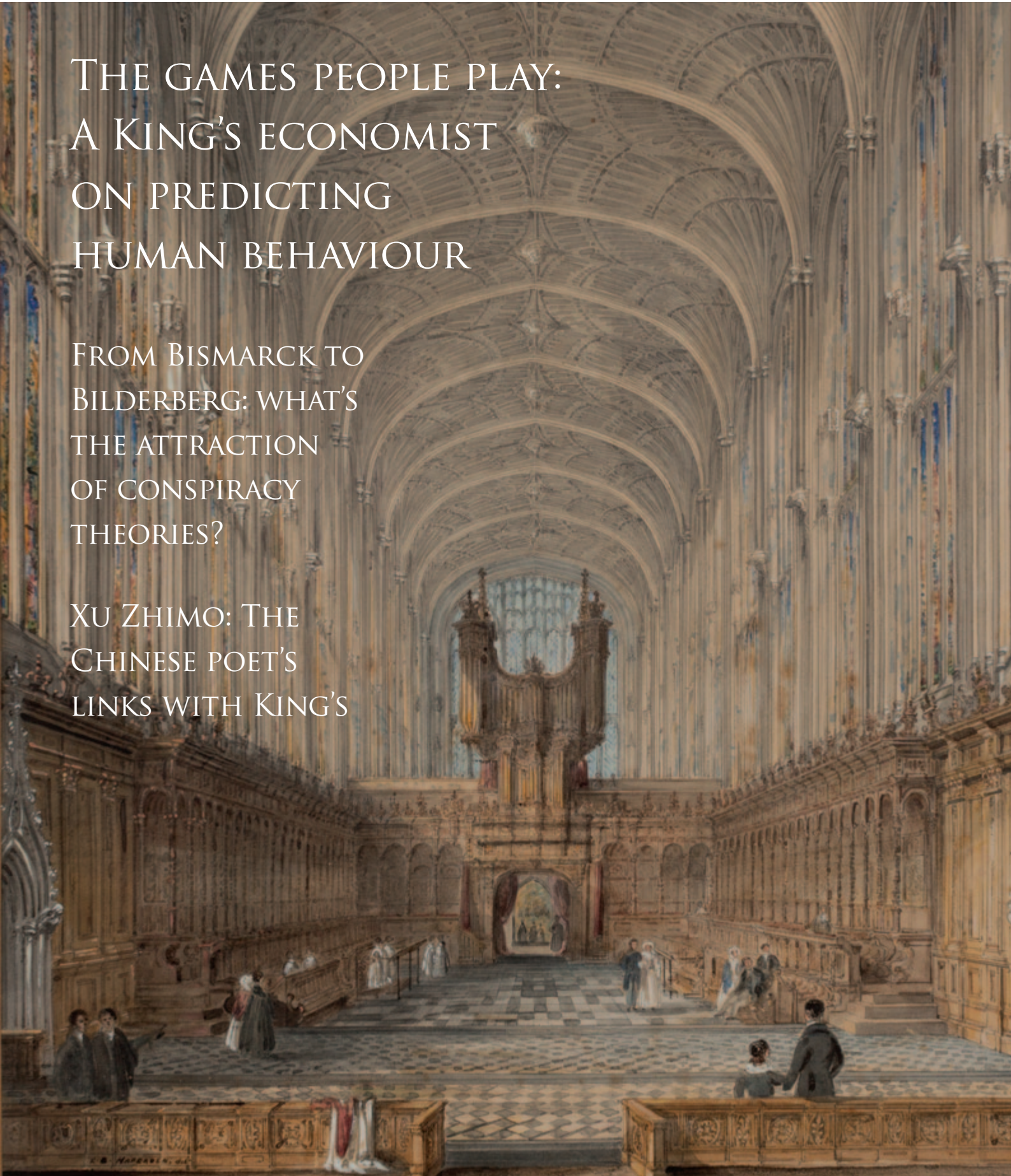


# THE GAMES PEOPLE PLAY: A KING'S ECONOMIST ON PREDICTING HUMAN BEHAVIOUR

FROM BISMARCK TO  
BILDERBERG: WHAT'S  
THE ATTRACTION  
OF CONSPIRACY  
THEORIES?

XU ZHIMO: THE  
CHINESE POET'S  
LINKS WITH KING'S





## WELCOME TO THE SUMMER EDITION

BY PERVEEZ MODY, SENIOR TUTOR

King's is pursuing a range of initiatives that are bringing students and Fellows closer, says the new Senior Tutor, social anthropologist Perveez Mody.



*"Every student at an institution like King's shapes it – and continues to shape it, no matter where they are."*

One of the things I love most about King's is its eccentricity. The College has always been an open, egalitarian and enabling place that undergraduates, graduates, Fellows and staff can and do shape in their own diverse ways. Even in terms of its governance, King's is not a closed coterie of Senior Fellows. Rather, Junior Research Fellows participate in everyday College decision-making, which brings different perspectives and energy to the way King's is run.

Having recently been appointed Senior Tutor, my principal concern is to build on these strengths by ensuring better connectivity between students and Fellows. Such connections are what make King's, and without them we are all islands. King's has always had a very strong tradition of Fellows directing studies, admitting students and then teaching them. I think it is important for the Fellowship to have students in their gaze. From an academic and pastoral point of view, that sense of an intellectual community in which ideas and problems are discussed and shared allows students the confidence to find their voices, and to be heard when they need help. To strengthen this tradition, I am in the process of reinstating a personal tutorial system so students know a tutor from the first day they arrive.

Because King's is so welcoming and intellectually vibrant, every year we also get massive numbers of graduate applications from all over the world. Our new graduate tutor is forging more links between graduates and Fellows – opening up possibilities and opportunities for collaboration and research. There are similar initiatives with undergraduates pairing up with Fellows and being mentored through summer research projects.

But funding remains a big issue. King's being King's, we are holding fast to our commitment to the provision of hardship funds and other financial support, even though it is being cut all around us. The Government cuts to, for instance, the National Scholarship Programme are hitting us hard. We are also eating into our Supplementary Exhibition Fund (SEF) which was established in 1886 to award "small sums of money to students of limited means". The SEF was set up by Fellows, Tutors, former students and recipients of SEF grants, and even former Fellows and Tutors joined in contributing to the fund. In many ways, the SEF represented the entire College community pulling together to support and improve the welfare of our students through robust hardship provision. This tradition continues today – the SEF, which benefits a great many students each year, is a key element of our annual Telephone Fundraising Campaign. At present, the SEF pays out far in excess of its income, so we are in danger of running it down if we do not replenish it to a much greater extent than we are at present. And in the coming years, we anticipate that student hardship needs are only going to grow. Our graduates are going to have it hardest of all, with many of them arriving here having already paid out huge fees on their undergraduate degree.

Every student at an institution like King's shapes it – and continues to shape it, no matter where they are. The College belongs just as much to non-resident members (NRM) as it does to those of us here. It is the choice of each NRM to remain involved in King's and in so doing, support our future.

The Supplementary Exhibition Fund provides much needed hardship grants and loans for both undergraduate and graduate students. Every gift, small or large, makes a difference to a King's student. For information on how you can support students at King's, contact Adam Middleton on [adam.middleton@kings.cam.ac.uk](mailto:adam.middleton@kings.cam.ac.uk) or phone +44 01223 331313.

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Cover illustration: Richard Banks Harraden, *Interior of King's College Chapel Looking West from the Altar*, 1797, watercolour, Cambridge, King's College. To be reproduced in a forthcoming book. See page 13.

*King's Parade* spoke to the four new Honorary Fellows elected at the College's most recent Annual Congregation. The Fellowships recognise those of high distinction in their field, and there can be no more than 25 at any time.

## PROFESSOR LESLIE G. VALIANT FRS

Professor Leslie G. Valiant FRS, a world-renowned computer scientist and computational theorist, studied Mathematics at King's.

Of his Honorary Fellowship, Les says: "I'm very glad to reconnect with King's, which was very influential on my life when I was young."

"When I went to King's, I appreciated what I saw – that it was intellectually very open and tolerant. You could think what you wanted to think."

After King's, Les took a Diploma in Computing Science at Imperial College, London, and completed his PhD in 1974 at the University of Warwick.

He has worked at Leeds, Edinburgh, Harvard and Oxford Universities and published on automata theory, machine learning and complexity theory.

In 2010, Les was awarded the A.M. Turing Award by the Association for Computing Machinery, which described him as "truly a heroic figure... and a role model for his courage and creativity in addressing some of the deepest unsolved problems in science."

He is currently the T. Jefferson Coolidge Professor of Computer Science and Applied Mathematics at Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Photography: Larry Berrow



*"King's was intellectually very open and tolerant. You could think what you wanted to think."*

## PROFESSOR GEORGE BENJAMIN CBE

"I was very surprised and greatly honoured when I heard I had been made an Honorary Fellow," says George Benjamin. "I've only been back to Cambridge three or four times in the intervening years, which makes having been chosen to be an Honorary Fellow even more touching."

George conducted his most recent opera, *Written on Skin*, at Covent Garden last year – a work which has been scheduled by 20 opera houses around the world since its premiere in Aix in 2012. He also finds time to be Henry Purcell Professor of Composition at King's College, London. He arrived at King's College, Cambridge as an undergraduate, having spent two years studying with Olivier Messiaen and Yvonne Loriod at the Paris Conservatoire.

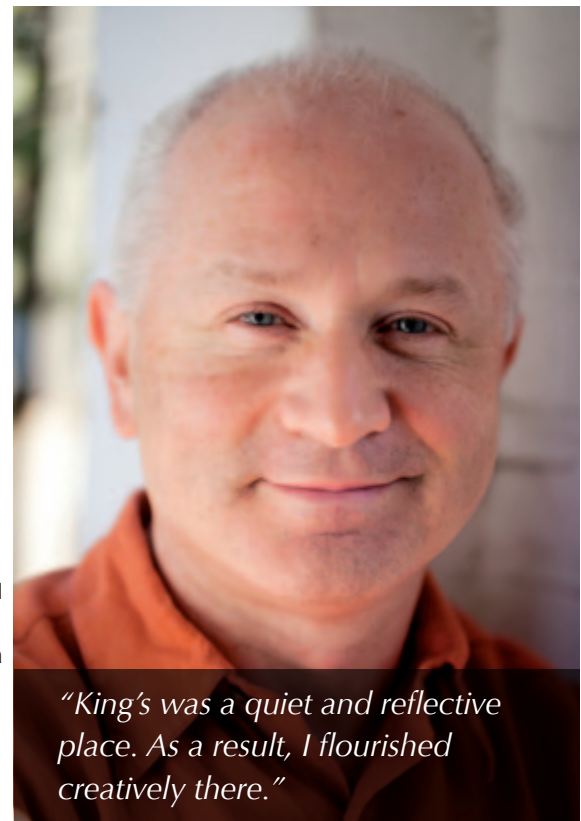
"In Paris, I'd been in the middle of an exciting international music scene. King's, in contrast, was a quiet and reflective place. As a result, I flourished creatively there. I

wrote my first three published orchestral works at King's and they're still being played today. I have the most wonderful creative memories of the place."

George found the College itself inspiring. He says: "King's is an extremely beautiful marriage of architecture and surroundings. I remember wandering freely at night through the grounds of the closed College, sometimes when covered in snow. It was beautiful and the ideal place to think creatively".

Stimulated by his surroundings, George's first orchestral work, *Ringed by the Flat Horizon*, was performed at the BBC Proms while he was still an undergraduate at King's.

"It was a place that had a huge amount of musical activity. One night I might be playing piano to accompany a silent film, and another I remember playing a Mozart piano concerto. Of course, King's had always had a vibrant musical environment before I arrived, and it will have long after I've gone."



*"King's was a quiet and reflective place. As a result, I flourished creatively there."*



## THE RIGHT HONOURABLE LORD CLARKE OF STONE-CUM-EBONY



Tony Clarke, the Right Honourable Lord Clarke of Stone-cum-Ebony, is “thrilled to bits” about being made an Honorary Fellow of King’s.

“I’d always rather hoped I would be,” he says. “But I thought it might be getting a bit late now that I’m old and decrepit.”

Today a Justice of the Supreme Court of the United Kingdom, Tony studied Economics and Law at King’s between 1961 and 1964.

“King’s had a profound effect on my career, thanks to Ken Polack, a brilliant teacher not much older than us. He taught us absolute clarity of thought – how to solve a legal problem by identifying the underlying facts and applying the principle.”

“Very few people read Law at King’s back then – there were just four of us. Rumour has it Keynes didn’t want too many Law dons around the place because he thought they’d be a pain in the neck about the

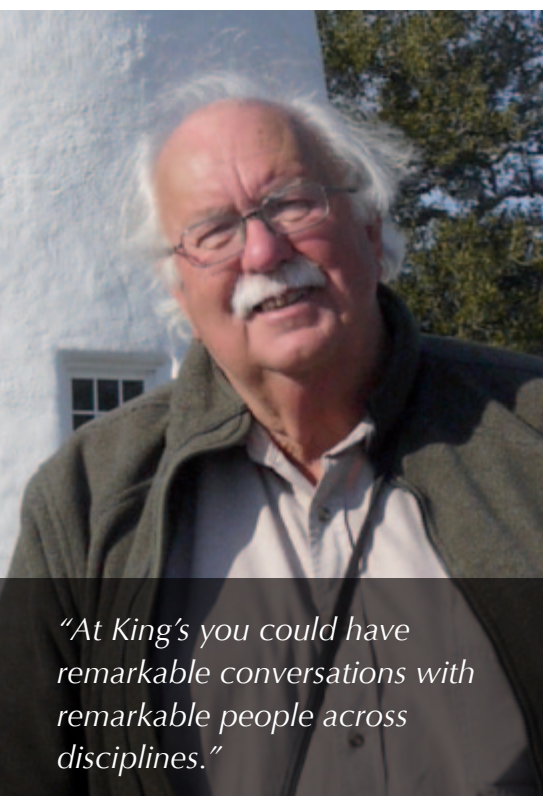
College rules.”

Aside from the year he ran the May Ball – “it poured with rain and I spent the evening trundling the musicians’ instruments around in a rickety old barrow” – Tony’s most vivid memory of King’s is of E.M. Forster.

“He always seemed about 94 and I can picture him shuffling across the court,” recalls Tony. “He was a pillar of the College as well as a pillar of literature.”

On leaving King’s, Tony was called to the Bar at Middle Temple in 1965 and spent 27 years specialising in maritime and commercial law. He became a QC in 1979, was appointed to the High Court Bench in 1993 and became the Admiralty Judge in April that same year. Like his friend and fellow Kingsman Nicholas Phillips, Tony has served as Master of the Rolls. He was also Treasurer of Middle Temple in 2012 and is a non-permanent Judge of the Court of Final Appeal, Hong Kong.

*“King’s had a profound effect on my career, thanks to Ken Polack, a brilliant teacher not much older than us.”*



## PROFESSOR JOHN BARRELL FBA

A scholar of British literature, history and art in the 18th and early 19th centuries, Professor John Barrell FBA was a Fellow of King’s between 1972 and 1985.

“I’m delighted to have access to that world again,” he says of his election as an Honorary Fellow. “Whenever I went back to Cambridge I always felt like a bit of a revenant, so it’s good to have a reason to be reunited with old friends.”

John graduated in English from Trinity College, Cambridge, in 1964 and completed his PhD in 1968 at the University of Essex, where he spent four years teaching English Literature before coming to King’s. Since leaving King’s, John has been Professor of English at the Universities of Sussex and York, and is

currently Professor of English at Queen Mary University of London.

“King’s was a magnificent institution when I was there, as I’m sure it is now,” he says. “It was full of wonderful scholars and you could have remarkable conversations with remarkable people across disciplines. It’s much harder to have those kinds of conversations in academia today, so it’s a terribly strong draw.”

But perhaps John’s best memory of King’s is meeting his wife, Harriet Guest, who was a student at the College and is now a Professor of Eighteenth Century Studies at the University of York.

“I declared my feelings the day after she graduated and we’re still together today,” he says.

*“At King’s you could have remarkable conversations with remarkable people across disciplines.”*

## KING'S GETS A NEW DEAN

The College's new Dean, Dr Stephen Cherry, was elected on 29 April at a meeting of the College's Governing Body and will take up his appointment on 1 October 2014. Dr Cherry will succeed the current Dean, Revd Dr Jeremy Morris, who is leaving to become the Master of Trinity Hall. Dr Cherry is a former Chaplain of King's, having served at the College from 1989-1994. He is currently a Residentiary Canon of Durham Cathedral and Director of Ministerial Development and Parish Support for the diocese of Durham.

Before moving to Durham in 2006, Stephen was a parish priest in Loughborough for 12 years.

He said about his appointment: "I feel unbelievably fortunate to be returning to a place where I learnt so much in the past and have met so many wonderful, inspiring and challenging people."

"As I have explored the possibility of this move, I have realised how much things

have developed over the last 20 years, but I have also gained a keener sense of the timeless qualities of the Chapel and deeper virtues of the College."

The Provost of King's, Professor Michael Proctor, said: "I am delighted that Stephen Cherry is to join the College as Dean. He is well known to many Fellows from his time as Chaplain 20 years ago, and brings to the position a huge amount of experience from his work at Loughborough and Durham."

"I much look forward to working with him in maintaining and developing the Chapel as a central part of the College's activities."

Dr Cherry has degrees in Psychology and Theology and is active as a writer and speaker in the areas of Christian spirituality and practical theology. He is currently writing a book about sin, as a follow-up to his book on forgiveness (*Healing Agony*, Continuum, 2012).



Photography: Keith Blundy

## NOT MENTIONED IN DISPATCHES?

The recent film *The Monuments Men* became the subject of controversy by neglecting to include Kingsman Ronald Balfour, a member of the unit whose exploits the film portrays. The Monuments Men were tasked with saving historical monuments and works of art during the last months of the Second World War.

Ronald, who had been appointed a Fellow and Lecturer in History for the College in 1930, enlisted in the British army shortly after the start of the war. It was only in 1944 that Geoffrey Webb, Cambridge University's Slade Professor of Fine Art, saw that Ronald's academic knowledge could be put to better use and recruited him to the Monuments, Fine Arts and Archives section of the Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force.

Ronald then spent the final months of the war rescuing as many items of artistic and cultural importance as he could. Furthermore, despite the dangers, it appears he thoroughly enjoyed his new

role. A letter from Ronald to Geoffrey, reported in *King's Parade* by King's archivist Patricia McGuire in 2006, attests to the satisfaction Ronald derived from his rescue work: "It has been a grand week, certainly the best since I came over. One has the tragedy of real destruction, much of it quite unnecessary, but the compensating feeling of getting something concrete done oneself."

Ronald was killed in action in 1945. Despite receiving no recognition in the film, Ronald's achievements are greatly appreciated by those whose cultural heritage he bravely risked his life to save. In 1954, his photograph was placed in the city of Cleves' restored archives building beside a plaque reading, "Major Ronald E. Balfour, Lector in King's College of the University of Cambridge, died in action March 1945 near Kloster Spyck. This gentleman saved as British Monument Officer precious medieval archives and items of lower Rhine towns. Honor to his memory."



# BIG GAME HUNTER

Hamid Sabourian says there's no point expecting economists to forecast the behaviour of complicated systems like the financial markets. Still, much of his work has improved economists' predictive power – by making the complex simpler.

*"A lot of people treat economics like they treat football . . . everyone has an opinion about it."*

Hamid Sabourian often doesn't like what is written about economics in newspapers. Even some of the commentaries in the *FT* – required reading, one assumes, for an economist – can frustrate him.

What galls the King's Fellow and Professor of Economics and Game Theory is the lack of nuance in popular and political discussion of his topic. Take the question of whether austerity or Keynesianism is the best solution for the UK's economic woes: every pundit, it seems, knows exactly where they stand, and why.

"A lot of people treat economics like they treat football," says Hamid. "During the World Cup, for example, everyone has opinions about selections, tactics etc. It is similar with economics. This doesn't happen in other subjects – you take scientists at face value and you accept their expertise. But not with economics."

"There's a degree of overconfidence on all sides about things that are very, very complicated. People and policymakers want answers, and if you give answers you're actually rewarded, so there's an incentive for commentators to come up with answers. As an economist, I get criticised for not expressing very strong opinions, and that's what differentiates economists."

Hamid contrasts the lot of the serious economist with that of the geologist. Few lay people, he points out, would argue with a geologist's view on the likelihood of an earthquake. But there seems to be the expectation that economics should be able to predict imminent financial crises or near-term violent changes in asset prices. Even the usually circumspect Her Majesty the Queen felt compelled to express bemusement at academics' inability to see the recent financial crisis coming.

"The problem is that we are not good at predicting," Hamid says. "But prediction is not the only activity: understanding and explaining economic phenomena are very important tasks and we are good at them. Serious economics has actually been extremely successful in terms of explaining events since 2007. But prediction is a very difficult thing because we're dealing with a system that is extremely complicated."

Explaining complex systems – and, indeed, trying to find better ways to predict how they will behave – is exactly what Hamid's work is all about. And because of it, he was recently elected a Fellow of the British Academy, an accolade given to UK-based scholars who have achieved distinction in their research.

"Broadly, I work on any question in economic theory that excites me," he says. "As you get older you end up with a backlog of different work, but it never really finishes."

One project Hamid is working on at the moment is an examination of "social learning". By that he means people learning from each other. One example of social learning is herd behaviour – among regulators, governments and those in the financial markets (bank runs being the most obvious example). Hamid's thesis is that contrary to the popular view, herd behaviour can actually be rational.

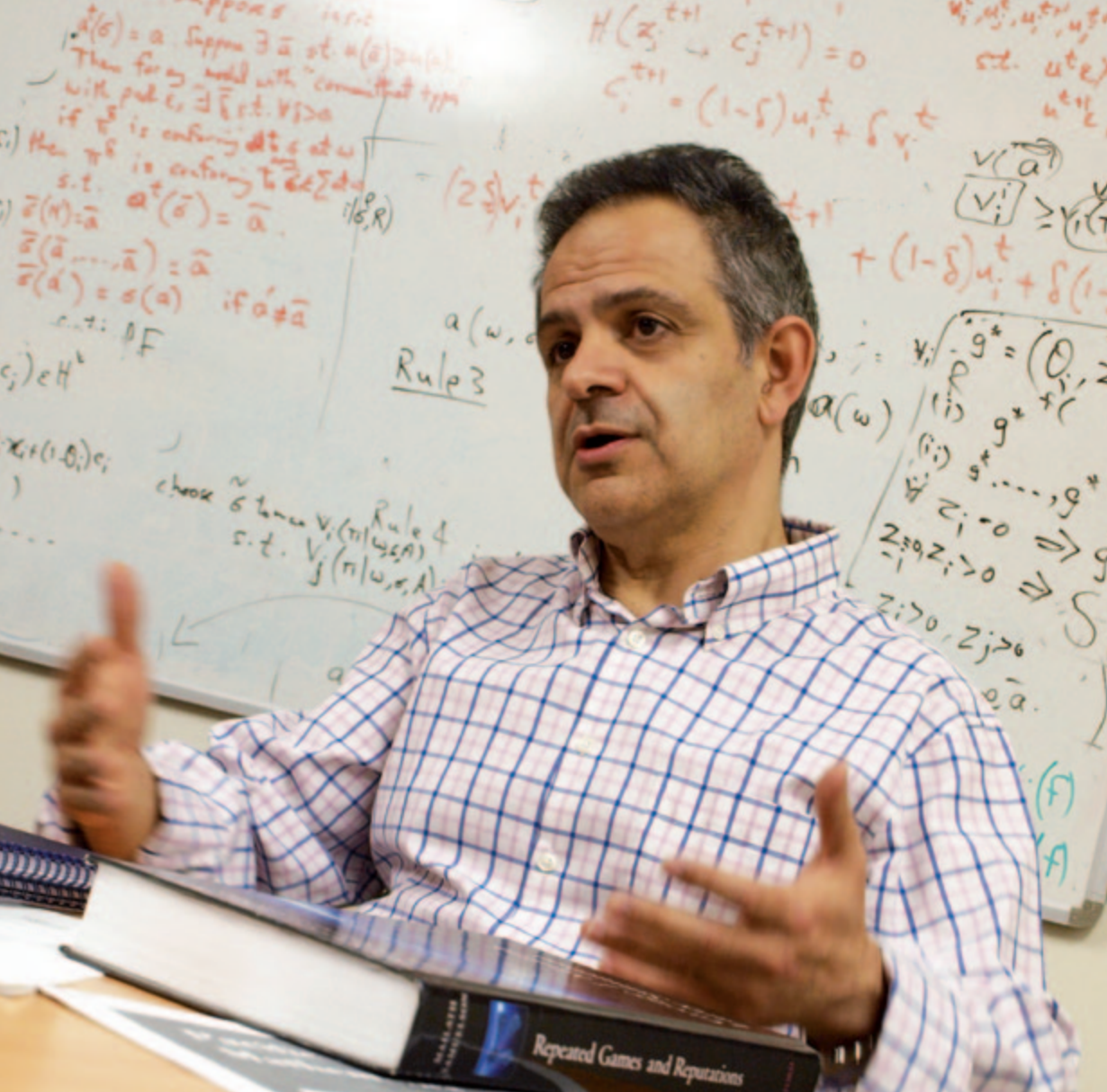
He cites the example of a tourist visiting a village with two restaurants, A and B. All the guidebooks the tourist reads say restaurant A is better than restaurant B, but when the visitor arrives, they see ten people sitting in B and no one in A. The visitor then goes against the advice of the guidebooks on the assumption the ten diners have better information.

"It's perfectly rational behaviour to go to restaurant B, even if it's no good," says Hamid. "By the same logic, tourists that arrive later can also end up in restaurant B. This process can continue until restaurant B puts up its prices so much people start going to A, and then they discover A was better."

"Similarly, in the financial markets, we can have volatility in asset prices that is nothing to do with irrational behaviour. It's to do with people learning from each other."

From an economist's point of view, a lot of human behaviour appears, on the face of it, bizarre. An obvious example is the fact that people often co-operate when it's not in their immediate interest to do so. One of the big successes of recent economics and game theory, says Hamid, has been to explain conundrums like this.





*"I'm astonished at the high quality of the students. I'm sure if I applied now I wouldn't be able to get in."*

Now, with a colleague in Japan, Hamid is trying to build on those discoveries by finding ways to better predict the outcome of such interactions. In particular, the pair are developing a theory of negotiation in the context of repeated games.

Hamid explains: "If I don't co-operate with you, you may not be nice to me in the future. Or you may never talk to me again. Or you may not talk to me for two months, but after that the relationship will resume. We're trying to set up a framework to discover if one of these punishments is more likely than the other."

"It has a very wide application – it could be applied to relationships between friends, or between employer and employee, or between people trading with each other."

The fundamental assumption of such work is that individuals are rational. But, says Hamid, defining rationality is problematic for a game theorist. Firstly, games are interactive, requiring each rational individual to think about what other rational individuals are doing and thinking about them. Secondly, in such a complicated environment, the individual needs enormous memory power.

"As economists, we were putting too many demands on rationality," says Hamid. "So I have worked for many years on models with 'bounded rationality',

where there are restrictions on the memory and computational abilities of economic agents."

Hamid starts with the idea that, all else being equal, people prefer simple rules of behaviour to more complex ones. This idea, which Hamid is continuing to explore and is probably the one he's most proud of, has, again, allowed him to improve the predictive power of game theory.

"The famous economist Hayek said competitive markets are good because they are simple," he says. "My work implies that it can be the other way round – the competitive outcome is driven by people's preference for simplicity."

Despite his reluctance to overstate economists' ability to predict, Hamid is very upbeat about the future of his discipline, and about economics at King's. Having remained at the College since arriving as a 17-year-old Keynesian 37 years ago, he's witnessed economics go through various ups and downs over the years. But, he says, "the team we have at the moment is terrific". Perhaps what most excites him, however, is the next generation of scholars.

"I've just returned to teaching after a break for a couple of years and I'm astonished at the high quality of the students. At interviews this year, they handled anything we threw at them. I'm sure if I applied now I wouldn't be able to get in."



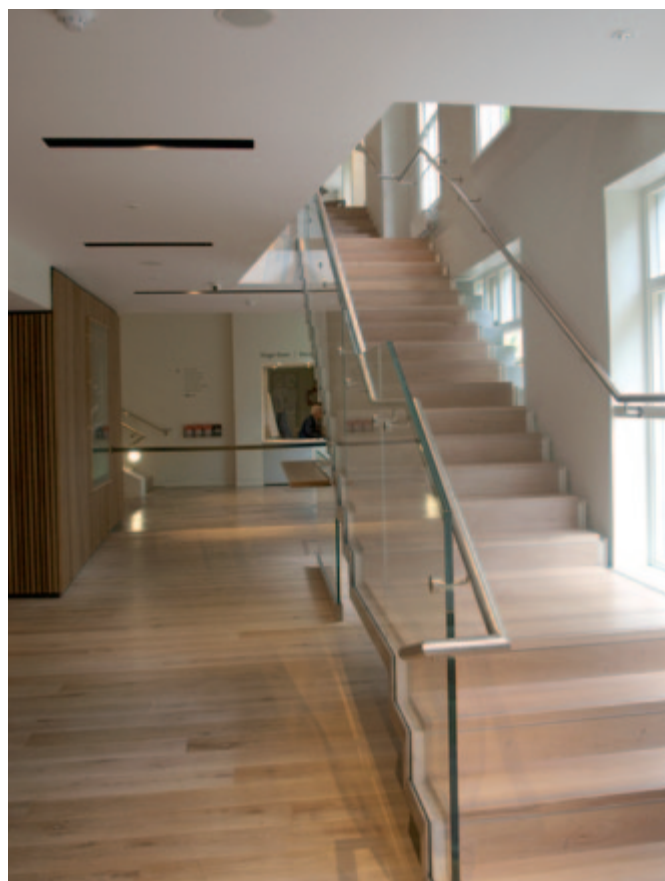
# CURTAIN UP

*King's Parade* talks to Dave Murphy, chief executive of the Cambridge Arts Theatre, about the theatre's recent facelift and the continued close relationship it enjoys with the College.

*"The College's support has enabled us to get other parties involved and to raise more funds than we would otherwise have been able to do."*

When we think of John Maynard Keynes' contribution to the world, we naturally think of economics. But many may be surprised to learn that his legacy also includes theatre: in particular, the Cambridge Arts Theatre. Keynes was the driving force behind its founding, putting a lot of his energy and resources into the project.

As the theatre's landlord, the College maintains its ties with the recently renovated theatre to this day. However, there's far more to the relationship than that of landlord and tenant, as Dave Murphy, the theatre's Chief Executive, explains: "We couldn't have completed the renovation without the College's support and I regard the College as a great friend. It's not a normal arms-length commercial landlord relationship. The Provost, Bursar and many of the Fellows take a keen interest in the theatre and evidently have a great fondness for it. The College's support has enabled us to get other parties involved and to raise more funds than we would otherwise have been able to do. This, combined with careful management of the project, has enabled us to build even more support for the future."







"The theatre didn't really have a foyer," says Dave. "It had a narrow corridor which went around the side of the auditorium from St Edward's Passage to Peas Hill. The bars weren't in practical locations. And the entrance and exit were far too narrow for the size of audience that we now have."

"So the priority was to create a more open foyer in addition to opening up the space so that people could get a drink more easily and have more room to enjoy themselves."

Is the new-look theatre everything Dave had hoped for? "It's early days but my initial impressions are that it has been very successful. It looks beautiful, our audiences are delighted with it and they think it's a revelation"

The theatre's recent success has thankfully put a lot of distance between it and the dark days of the early 2000s when its future was on a knife edge.

"The improvements in the theatre's fortunes are largely due to sustained excellence in the strength of our artistic programme," says Dave. "It's very strong and recognised to be so. For instance, we're hosting Julian Mitchell's Olivier Award-winning play *Another Country* this June, and Alison Steadman will be appearing in an adaptation of Emile Zola's novel *Thérèse Raquin* in August. It's the success of programming like this that allows us to reinvest and create a sustainable future for this Cambridge institution."

Keynes' vision was to build a theatre that served both the city and University of Cambridge. The Cambridge Arts Theatre's growing success, its continued close ties with the College, and its improved facilities now ensure it matches that vision. It's a theatre of which the city and King's can be proud.

*"It looks beautiful, our audiences are delighted with it and they think it's a revelation."*

# XU ZHIMO, CAMBRIDGE AND CHINA



Xu Zhimo when he was at Clark University

A photographic exhibition celebrating the relationship between King's College and the poet Xu Zhimo will be held in the Ante-chapel of King's between 1 July and 31 October, 2014.

Xu Zhimo (1897–1931) was an early 20th-century Chinese poet. As one of the most renowned romantic poets of 20th-century Chinese literature, he is known for his promotion of modern Chinese poetry, and made tremendous contributions to modern Chinese literature. Xu Zhimo was at King's as a research student reading literature and moral science in 1921–2 and was tutored by both Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson and Dadie Rylands. He also had life-long friendships with H.G. Wells, Roger Fry, Bertrand Russell, Rabindranath Tagore and many other important thinkers.

Xu Zhimo was born in 1897 in Xiashi Town, today part of Haining City in Zhejiang Province, China. He obtained his first degree in Political and Social Science with first-class honours at Clark University and a master's degree in Economics at Columbia University in America. He became interested in literature and art after he came to Cambridge and his literary achievements owe a lot to his time in King's. In a letter to Roger Fry, he wrote: "I have always thought it the greatest occasion in my life to meet Mr. Dickinson. It is due to him that I could have come to Cambridge and been enjoying all these happy days; that my interest in literature and art began to shape and perpetuate itself."

In his 1926 essay *Smoking and Culture* (1926), Xu Zhimo wrote: "My eye was opened by Cambridge, my thirst of knowledge was stirred up by Cambridge, my self-consciousness was seeded by Cambridge."

In her study of the links between Bloomsbury, Modernism and China entitled *Lily Briscoe's Chinese Eyes*, Patricia Laurence noted: "Xu was drawn, as his British mentors were, to the intellectual and artistic possibilities of another culture. Cambridge was peace to him; an escape from the turbulent period of the warlords and post-Republican cultural conflicts between traditionalists and iconoclasts in China". Xu Zhimo died in 1931 in an air crash.

To commemorate Xu Zhimo, a stone of white Beijing marble was installed at the Backs of the College in July 2008 and it is a symbol of the continuing links between King's and China. On it are inscribed the first and last two lines from Xu's best-known poem *A Second Farewell to Cambridge*. The poem is taught to every middle-school student in China and many feel deeply moved by it. Since 2008, the number of Chinese visitors to King's has swelled, and many of them come especially to see the stone.

The photographic exhibition will feature more than 80 images and is being hosted in association with the Haining International Cultural Exchange Association (Haining is the city from where the Xu family originates), King's College Archives and Xu Zhimo's family. It is being managed by Professor Alan Macfarlane (King's Fellow) and Zilan Wang, his colleague in the Cambridge Rivers Project, with Dr Tony Hsu (Xu Shanzeng), the grandson of Xu Zhimo, as an advisor. Some photographs in the exhibition have never been seen by the public before. An accompanying catalogue and an online digital archive with a set of wider materials will be available for both Chinese and English audiences later in the year. It is also hoped the exhibition will go on tour in China.



Xu with Rabindranath Tagore in China

Xu Zhimo Photographic Exhibition.

King's College Ante-chapel. 1 July to 31 October 2014



# MY KING'S: MARK SMITH, BUTLER

The King's butler, Mark Smith, has been with the College since 1982. Here, he tells *King's Parade* about his working life.

**Cambridge colleges don't change,** but my job has changed a lot over the years. The butler used to look after all the food service and work as part of a team. Now I work on my own and mostly just look after the wine.

**My job varies from day to day.** I manage the wine cellar, take deliveries and prepare for evening events. As well as College dinners, we supply wine to the student bar, conferences at King's, and any member who wants to buy a bottle from us.

**It's my sense our range is broader than at other colleges.** We've got wines in the cellar from every region in the world, and for every budget. As well as some of the grander things, we've got lots of great wines for under ten pounds.

**Years ago, I did a course at the Wine and Spirits Education Trust.** But I've mostly learned by tasting. I do get to try some very fine wines that would normally be beyond my pocket.

**I'm not in charge of the buying decisions.** That's the responsibility of my boss, the wine steward, who is one of the Fellows. We do go to wine tastings together though.

**I couldn't tell you what my favourite wine is.** It's like being asked what your favourite record is – it changes from week to week. That said, I generally prefer red to white.

**My job is hard work,** but the people are great. Everyone I deal with is pretty accommodating, although you do need the ability to not be fazed by some of the idiosyncrasies of College life.

**The food here has changed dramatically in the last ten years.** It's much more modern and innovative than it used to be, and we always try to pair it with a suitable wine.

**There's a very laid-back atmosphere at King's.** It's still a Cambridge college and has all that comes with it, but I think it's perhaps less traditional than some.

**When I'm not at work I like to walk up hills.** I go to the Lake District because unfortunately I live in the flattest part of the country.

**Members can order wine from the King's cellar throughout the year. The Pantry also has sales in the summer and at Christmas, as well as other occasional offers. To order wine or sign up for the Pantry's mailing list, email Mark at [mark.smith@kings.cam.ac.uk](mailto:mark.smith@kings.cam.ac.uk) or call him on +44 (0)1223 748947.**





# CONSPIRACY AND DEMOCRACY

King's History Fellow Rachel G. Hoffman on an ambitious interdisciplinary research project that's exploring the puzzling phenomenon of the conspiracy theory.



*“There is a massive public interest in conspiracy and conspiracy theories and their relation to government. One BBC coverage of our project on the topic generated more than 1,500 comments in less than 24 hours.”*

When and why do conspiracy theories emerge? Do they undermine democracy, or are they a necessary part of democratic discourse? And has the internet taken the conspiracy theory into new territory?

These are just some of the questions I and a group of other researchers are grappling with in “Conspiracy and Democracy: History, Political Theory and Internet Research”. It is a five-year, interdisciplinary, Leverhulme-funded project at the Cambridge Centre for Research in the Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities (CRASSH).

My contribution to the project entails exploring why revolutions – and counter-revolutions – seem to be breeding grounds for conspiracy theories. In Europe, for example, the period between the French Revolution and the First World War was one of general anxiety, in which conspiracy theories exploded. Everyone – police, politicians, bureaucrats, journalists and the general public – was fearful of violent popular revolt and public displays of opposition more generally, and quick to explain events by reference to conspiratorial intrigues.

The work builds on my doctoral dissertation, which examined political murder plots and assassination attempts in Germany from the middle of the nineteenth century to the outbreak of the First World War. In the summer of 1878, for example, two independent attempts within weeks of each other on the life of Kaiser Wilhelm provided the political pretext for the dissolution of the recently unified German Parliament and the eventual passing of laws that limited the political activities of the Social Democratic Party. The suspicion spread that Chancellor Otto von Bismarck, who supported the new laws, was behind the murder attempts. The notion was found in the mass press as well as political cartoons and popular rumours.

One aspect of conspiracy theories the research group is exploring is the extent to which they have shifted from involving groups of mass society to involving the

government itself. Some scholars have observed that in the past 200 years, conspiracy theories indicted Catholics, Jews, Freemasons or anarchists. Today, it seems, conspiracy theorists tend more likely to accuse the state of a plot against the people – for example, the Bilderberg group or 9/11.

What's particularly special about the project is its highly interdisciplinary nature. We are six post-docs, led by three principal investigators: internet specialist and Vice-President of Wolfson College, Cambridge, Professor John Naughton; Cambridge political scientist Professor David Runciman; Regius Professor of History at Cambridge and President of Wolfson College, Cambridge, Professor Sir Richard J. Evans. The latter was a lead expert witness for the defence in David Irving's unsuccessful libel action against Professor Deborah Lipstadt over allegations of Holocaust denial.

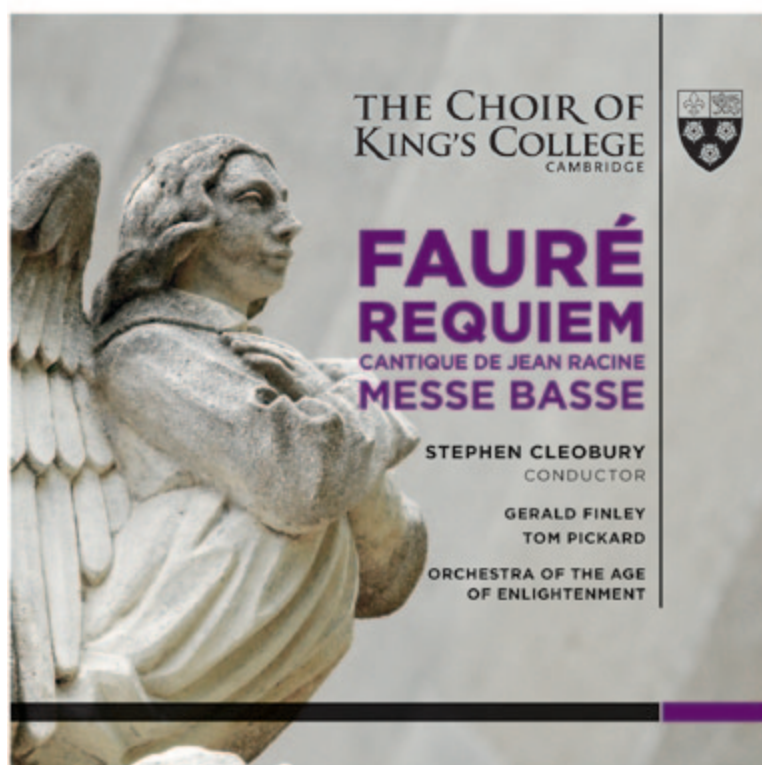
As well as weekly seminars for the group, we run regular public events, including lectures by visiting speakers such as Lipstadt herself. We also recently held a film season at the Arts Picturehouse, with screenings of films such as *The Manchurian Candidate* and *All the President's Men*, each preceded by a talk. There is massive public interest in conspiracy and conspiracy theories and their relation to government. BBC coverage of a presentation given by Evans, Naughton and Runciman at the Cambridge Festival of Ideas in Michaelmas 2013 generated more than 1,500 comments in less than 24 hours.

Being part of a multi-disciplinary project like this is both challenging and exciting. Like the community at King's, which has a very strong historical, political dimension, it's a great platform for a young historian. It also offers a wonderful opportunity to engage with the wider public.

**For more information about the project and details of upcoming events visit [www.conspiracyanddemocracy.org](http://www.conspiracyanddemocracy.org)**



## THE COLLEGE'S OWN LABEL LOOKS FORWARD TO THIS YEAR'S BUMPER CROP OF RELEASES



Now in its third year, the College's own recording label is going from strength to strength in 2014. The year began on a high with the critically acclaimed release of Benjamin Britten's *Saint Nicolas*, described by International Record Review as "the best recording [of the work] since Britten's own mono recording".

As the in-house label gains momentum and prestige, its release schedule gets increasingly busy. Alongside the Britten CD in the category of large-scale orchestral recordings, the Choir has recorded Fauré's *Requiem* with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, scheduled for release this summer. Joining this is an album of hymn anthems, including music by Parry and Vaughan Williams, in which the Choir is joined by the renowned trumpeter Alison Balsom. There is also a recently recorded collection of traditional Christmas carols and an organ disc by Stephen Cleobury. Finally, due for imminent release, is an album of close-harmony by the King's Men, the choral scholars of King's.

In addition to all this are the daily services in the Chapel. These are also recorded and one is made available on the College website each week at [www.kings.cam.ac.uk/choir/webcasts.html](http://www.kings.cam.ac.uk/choir/webcasts.html)

All these titles will be available from The Shop at King's at [shop.kings.cam.ac.uk](http://shop.kings.cam.ac.uk)  
+44 (0)1223 769342

## KING'S COLLEGE CHAPEL 1515-2015 ART, MUSIC AND RELIGION IN CAMBRIDGE

Editors Jean Michel Massing and Nicolette Zeeman (Harvey Miller, 2014)

Produced in celebration of the 500th anniversary of the completion of the fabric of the Chapel, this will be a lavishly illustrated and interdisciplinary volume encompassing many aspects of the Chapel's history from its foundation to the present day. The essays all represent new research, with a particular emphasis on aspects of the history and life of the Chapel that have not been investigated before. It will include Chapel furnishings and art; the architectural engineering of the building and current state of the glass; the history of the Choir; and what has actually gone on in the Chapel, not least in recent centuries. Essays will engage with religion, politics, drama, music, iconoclasm and aesthetics. This will be a serious academic book, as well as a visually stimulating and beautiful one. It will contain many colour images of the Chapel, its furnishings and relevant documents and objects, as well as pictures of those who have worked there: prints, watercolours, oil paintings, photographs, architectural drawings, plans, maps and even postcards. Like the essays, these will reflect the many varied responses that the Chapel has elicited over time.

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# MY PHD: MAYA FEILE TOMES

Colonial-era America produced a rich body of Latin literature, which doctoral student Maya Feile Tomes is shedding new light on.

A year into her PhD and classicist Maya Feile Tomes has already made a discovery she describes as “absolutely thrilling”.

Maya is particularly interested in the role of Latin learning during the colonial occupation of the Americas. For years, scholars in this field had known of five “Columbus epics” – Neo-Latin poems of the colonial era that were written about the “New World”.

Now, thanks to Maya, a little-known sixth epic has come to light: “On the Discovery of the New World”, which was composed by José Manuel Peramás, an 18th-century Spanish Jesuit, and printed in Faenza, Italy, in 1777.

Maya learned of Peramás from an Argentinian academic while she was working as a teacher and translator of novels in Buenos Aires. While there, she had been “moonlighting as a classicist” in a region where Latin was taught extremely widely from the early days of the colonisation.

“I was always looking for something that would combine classics with Spanish, and I had an inkling Argentina was the place to find it,” says Maya. “But the whole of Latin America is brimming with undiscovered material, from the southern cone to the Caribbean. You’re as likely to find Latin texts in Bolivia as you are in Italy or Spain.”

*“I’ve done that legwork and no one need ever be confused again.”*

Having been tipped off about Peramás, Maya went on to discover that one of his little-known works was a Columbus epic that deserved to be included in the existing five. But during her research, she came up against a conundrum: all the reference books on the topic recorded the names of two Peramás epics, raising the possibility that one had disappeared. Eventually, Maya figured out that an early biographer of Peramás had misconstrued the epic’s title and so both names referred to the same work.

“I’ve done that legwork and no one need ever be confused again,” says Maya. “Now, my focus is literary. The classical conception of the world doesn’t include America, and I’m interested in how the tropes and metaphors of the Roman literary tradition get used and reinterpreted in a post-1492 world.”

“For example, in a description of the underworld it’s said that Augustus will extend the empire beyond the stars, a non-descript reference that gets concretised by neo-Latin writers to mean America.”

Another aspect to consider is the extent to which the Columbus epics were used to legitimise empire. Maya says Peramás is particularly interesting because he was the only Columbus epicist to have visited the New World (the others, who were variously German, Italian and Bohemian, had merely read reports of the place).

“I would love to be able to read Peramás from a post-colonial perspective, but these poems were written in a colonial world and are very explicitly pro-imperialist and triumphalist. How far can you argue that a Jesuit like Peramás might be subversive? I’d like to believe it, but I fear you can’t.”





# KING'S REVIEW NOW AVAILABLE IN PRINT

*King's Review*, the online magazine launched last year by graduate students in the College, is now available from the King's Shop in a print version. Meanwhile, the online edition is going from strength to strength: in March alone, the site received 56,000 visits from 45,000 unique users, many of them coming via Twitter and Facebook.

These successes reflect a clear thirst among readers for commentary on world issues that combines accessible writing and academic rigour. The magazine seeks to revive the King's reputation for producing academic journalism and maintaining strong links with the outside world, including public figures. For a flavour of its approach, see the extract below.

Fellows, alumni, students from Cambridge and other universities and even professionals with no link to the College are all invited to submit pieces for publication in the *King's Review*.

The *King's Review* editorial board, which comprises graduate students and Fellows, is seeking funds to promote the next stage of the magazine's growth. It is launching a crowdfunding initiative through [patreon.com](https://www.patreon.com/kingsreview), and alumni can already donate through [kingsreview.co.uk/magazine/support](https://kingsreview.co.uk/magazine/support)

To submit a piece to *King's Review*, request a copy of the print publication, or discuss how you might support the magazine financially, email [editors@kingsreview.co.uk](mailto:editors@kingsreview.co.uk)



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## AN INTERVIEW WITH ALAN RUSBRIDGER

In this extract from a recent piece published in *King's Review*, PhD candidate Josh Booth speaks to the *Guardian's* editor Alan Rusbridger about press freedom, spies, and politicians' "amateurish" oversight of the intelligence services. Read the full interview at [kingsreview.co.uk](https://kingsreview.co.uk)

Following "the journalistic imperative" in its treatment of the Snowden leaks has already won the *Guardian* accolades: first a European Press Prize and now a Pulitzer. But Rusbridger tells me that the debate ignited by the Snowden revelations has only just begun. "It's too easily portrayed just as national security versus freedom of speech," he said. The nub of the issue for Rusbridger is not primarily the villainy of the intelligence agencies, nor is it necessarily the duplicity of politicians. Instead it is fundamentally a problem of technological advances outstripping the capabilities of democratic institutions. Technology has not only made running a newspaper a far more complex business than it was

when Rusbridger became editor of the *Guardian* in 1995; it has also left legal and political oversight of the surveillance apparatus running – and failing – to catch up.

Understanding the Snowden affair from this perspective imbues Rusbridger's attitude with pragmatism, and little desire to cast blame. His take on the intelligence agencies' bureaucratic expansion is Weberian, with a 21st-century twist: "I think you've had extremely talented engineers saying 'we can do more and more of this' [and] if you've got the technology and you've got the budget you're bound to use it – particularly if there's no political check." Politicians are reluctant to provide this check because

they don't want to be held accountable if something goes wrong; and laws "mainly designed for the analogue age" present no effective restraint either. In the UK the result is "really a sort of amateur oversight regime" that Rusbridger describes in farcical terms: a "committee of MPs and peers, most of whom have very limited technological experience who meet once a week, Thursday afternoon, are also responsible for the entire auditing of three intelligence services, have been asked to look into the entire rendition inquiry and were running a parallel inquiry into the murder of Lee Rigby. To do all that on a Thursday afternoon with a budget of 1.2 million – I mean it's just not adequate".

## SAVE THE DATE MEMBER AND FRIEND EVENTS

**22 June 2014**

Fellows' Garden National Gardens Scheme Open Day

**25 June 2014**

General Admission

**1 July 2014**

King's and St John's Joint Evensong

**1 July–31 August 2014**

Xu Zhimo Photographic Exhibition. King's College Ante-chapel.

**6 September 2014**

Legacy Lunch (by invitation)

**26–28 September 2014**

Cambridge Alumni Festival

**26 September 2014**

50th Anniversary Dinner (1964)

**27 September 2014**

Members' Lunch

**27 September 2014**

35th, 40th & 45th Anniversary Dinner (1979, 1974 & 1969)

Further events may be added throughout the year.

Please visit [www.kingsmembers.org](http://www.kingsmembers.org) for full details.

## CONCERTS AND TOURS 2014

**16 June**

May Week Concert, Chapel, 7pm  
King's College Choir, King's Voices, KCMS, Stephen Cleobury

**1 July**

Joint Evensong Service, St John's College Chapel, 6pm

**19 September**

Concert at St Marien Church in Marienberg, 8pm

**27 September**

Chorister Voice Trials, King's College School

**28 September 6pm**

King's College Choir Concert, Stephen Cleobury, Conductor, All Saints' Church, Weston Green, Esher, Surrey

To buy tickets for concerts at King's,

contact The Shop at King's

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For more details, please visit [www.kings.cam.ac.uk](http://www.kings.cam.ac.uk) or follow the Choir on Facebook

## THE 2014 ANNUAL TELEPHONE FUNDRAISING CAMPAIGN

Many thanks to those of you who responded to a call from a King's student during the recent Telephone Fundraising Campaign. King's led the Cambridge colleges with a record-setting 72% giving rate! Eleven student callers raised over £250,000 for student support, teaching and supervisions and in unrestricted funds for general college purposes. If you haven't yet made a gift or pledge to the campaign, simply visit [www.kingsmembers.org/tfc](http://www.kingsmembers.org/tfc), or send us an email. Please get in touch if you need more information about making a current gift, a multi-year pledge or a planned gift by emailing [julie.bressor@kings.cam.ac.uk](mailto:julie.bressor@kings.cam.ac.uk).

We deeply appreciate your support – every gift makes a difference.

## APOLOGIES AND THANK YOU

Thank you to readers Muhammad Isa Waley and Phillip Mallett, who pointed out that we had incorrectly captioned the photo of Adrian Munsey and Andrew Powell in our article 'The wheel is come full circle' on page 10 of the last issue of *King's Parade*. Apologies to Adrian and Andrew for the confusion.



*Full Circle* by Adrian Munsey and Andrew Powell.

Performed by The Philharmonia Orchestra.

Featuring Elin Manahan Thomas.

Available from Amazon, iTunes and good music retailers.

Have you moved recently, or taken a new job? Please keep the College records up to date by sending an email with your new details to [members@kings.cam.ac.uk](mailto:members@kings.cam.ac.uk) or phone +44 (0)1223 331313

The Development Office is happy to help you with questions about events, giving to King's or planning a visit to the College.

You can reach us on [members@kings.cam.ac.uk](mailto:members@kings.cam.ac.uk) or +44 (0)1223 331 313

We look forward to hearing from you!

## SIMON GOLDHILL: INAUGURAL JOHN HARVARD PROFESSOR



King's Fellow Simon Goldhill is taking up a new research chair, the John Harvard Visiting Professorship at Cambridge.

Simon was awarded the inaugural five-year professorship in 2010, with the project set to begin this year. The professorship enables the postholder to conduct interdisciplinary research into a problem of pressing modern relevance in the Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities.

Simon's project, "Topographies of Citizenship", will explore three interlocking problems in the contemporary Middle East: urban economic apartheid manifested in man-made boundaries such as walls and gated communities; littoral politics: the sea coast as a major natural boundary politicised by issues of access to resources; and the closely related issues of democracy and participation.

Simon holds the John Harvard Professorship concurrently with his chair in Greek and his directorship of the Centre for Research in the Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities.

**KING'S COLLEGE** CAMBRIDGE

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