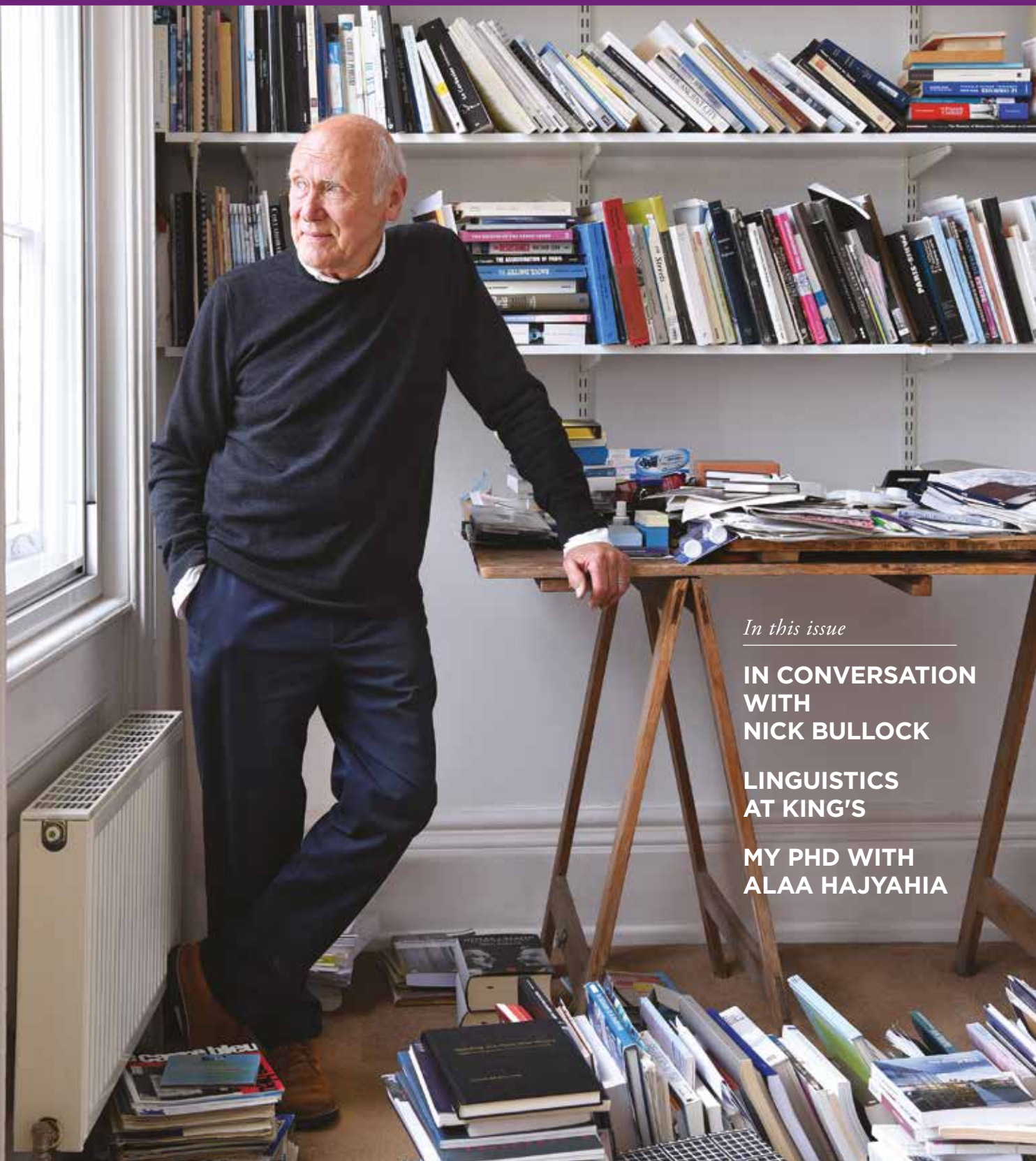


Summer 2023



KING'S PARADE

THE MAGAZINE FOR MEMBERS & FRIENDS OF KING'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE



In this issue

**IN CONVERSATION
WITH
NICK BULLOCK**

**LINGUISTICS
AT KING'S**

**MY PHD WITH
ALAA HAJYAHIA**

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IN CASE YOU MISSED IT SAVE THE DATE GET IN TOUCH



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Welcome

from the Provost, Michael Proctor



It's a great privilege to be able to write this welcome, as my ten years as Provost are almost up.

In that time I have chaired innumerable meetings of the College Council, Governing Body, and a sheaf of committees; met with thousands of King's members all over the world; read to an audience of tens of millions at the *Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols*; and eaten my fair share of excellent dinners in the Hall! I have also got to know our outstanding Fellows, a great number of students, and many dedicated staff, without whom the College would quickly grind to a halt. It has been a humbling experience for me to see how much this most unusual of Colleges, with its rollercoaster history, its famous alumni and its progressive and informal atmosphere, is so much loved by those who have come into contact with it.

The last decade has seen many exciting initiatives, supported by generous donations facilitated by our outstanding Director of Development, Lorraine Headen, that have enhanced the College experience of Fellows and students alike. The Entrepreneurship Lab is providing an entrée to the world of social enterprise and innovation; the Silk Roads Programme has become well known for its seminar programme both here and overseas; and on an environmental front, we have greatly enhanced the biodiversity of our estate with the establishment of the College's wildflower meadow and orchard, for which I have great affection.

This is Jonty Carr's last time editing *King's Parade*. He has transformed our communications during his time here and his style, and especially his brand of humour, will be much missed! We wish him all the best for the future.

Finally I am happy to say that the College will be in very good hands from October. We are fortunate to have been able to appoint Gillian Tett as the next Provost, and together with the First Bursar Ivan Collister and Senior Tutor Myfanwy Hill – both bringing enormous energy and enthusiasm to their new roles – we will see carried through a new and expanded vision for the direction of the College. Great times undoubtedly lie ahead.

SHAKESPEARE ON SCREEN

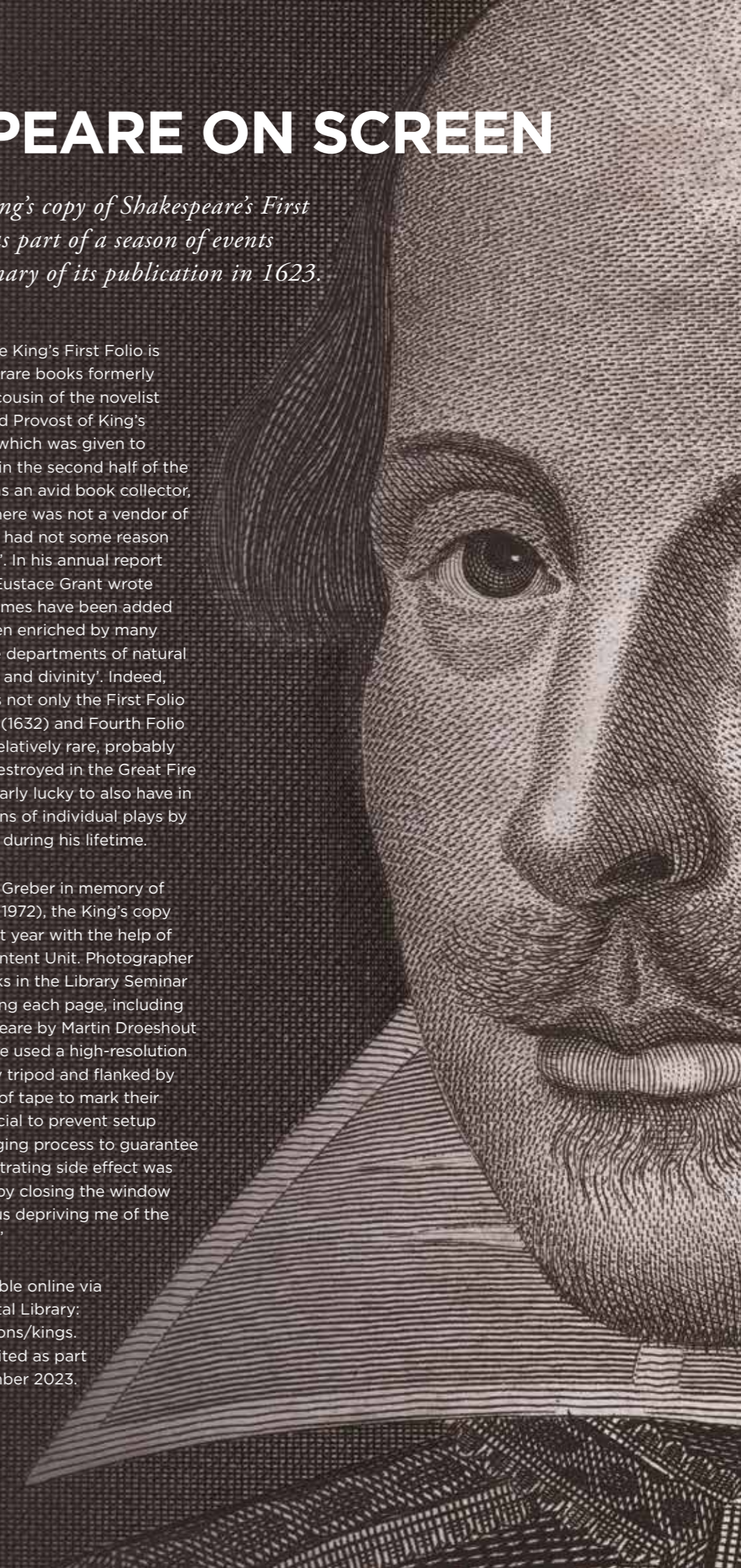
Recently digitised, the King's copy of Shakespeare's First Folio will be on display as part of a season of events marking the quatercentenary of its publication in 1623.

One of only 235 extant copies, the King's First Folio is part of the splendid collection of rare books formerly belonging to George Thackeray, cousin of the novelist William Makepeace Thackeray and Provost of King's from 1814 until his death in 1850, which was given to King's Library in two instalments in the second half of the nineteenth century. Thackeray was an avid book collector, and according to his obituarist 'there was not a vendor of literary curiosities in London who had not some reason for knowing the Provost of King's'. In his annual report of 1886, King's Librarian Charles Eustace Grant wrote 'by this bequest nearly 3200 volumes have been added to the Library, which has thus been enriched by many valuable works, particularly in the departments of natural history, English literature, classics and divinity'. Indeed, the Thackeray Collection includes not only the First Folio (1623), but also the Second Folio (1632) and Fourth Folio (1685). The Third Folio (1663) is relatively rare, probably because all unsold copies were destroyed in the Great Fire of London of 1666. We're particularly lucky to also have in King's Library a few quarto editions of individual plays by Shakespeare that were published during his lifetime.

Thanks to a donation from Fanny Greber in memory of her husband, Lloyd D. Raines (KC 1972), the King's copy of the First Folio was digitised last year with the help of the University Library's Digital Content Unit. Photographer Amélie Deblauwe spent two weeks in the Library Seminar Room, painstakingly photographing each page, including the famous engraving of Shakespeare by Martin Droeshout that forms the frontispiece. Amélie used a high-resolution camera mounted on a heavy-duty tripod and flanked by two flash lights, as well as plenty of tape to mark their positions on the floor: "It was crucial to prevent setup disturbances throughout the imaging process to guarantee a consistency of imaging ... A frustrating side effect was that I also had to limit stray light by closing the window shutters while photographing, thus depriving me of the delightful views of Webb's Court!"

The digitised copy is now accessible online via the University of Cambridge Digital Library: <https://cudl.lib.cam.ac.uk/collections/kings>. The physical edition will be exhibited as part of Open Cambridge, on 8 September 2023.

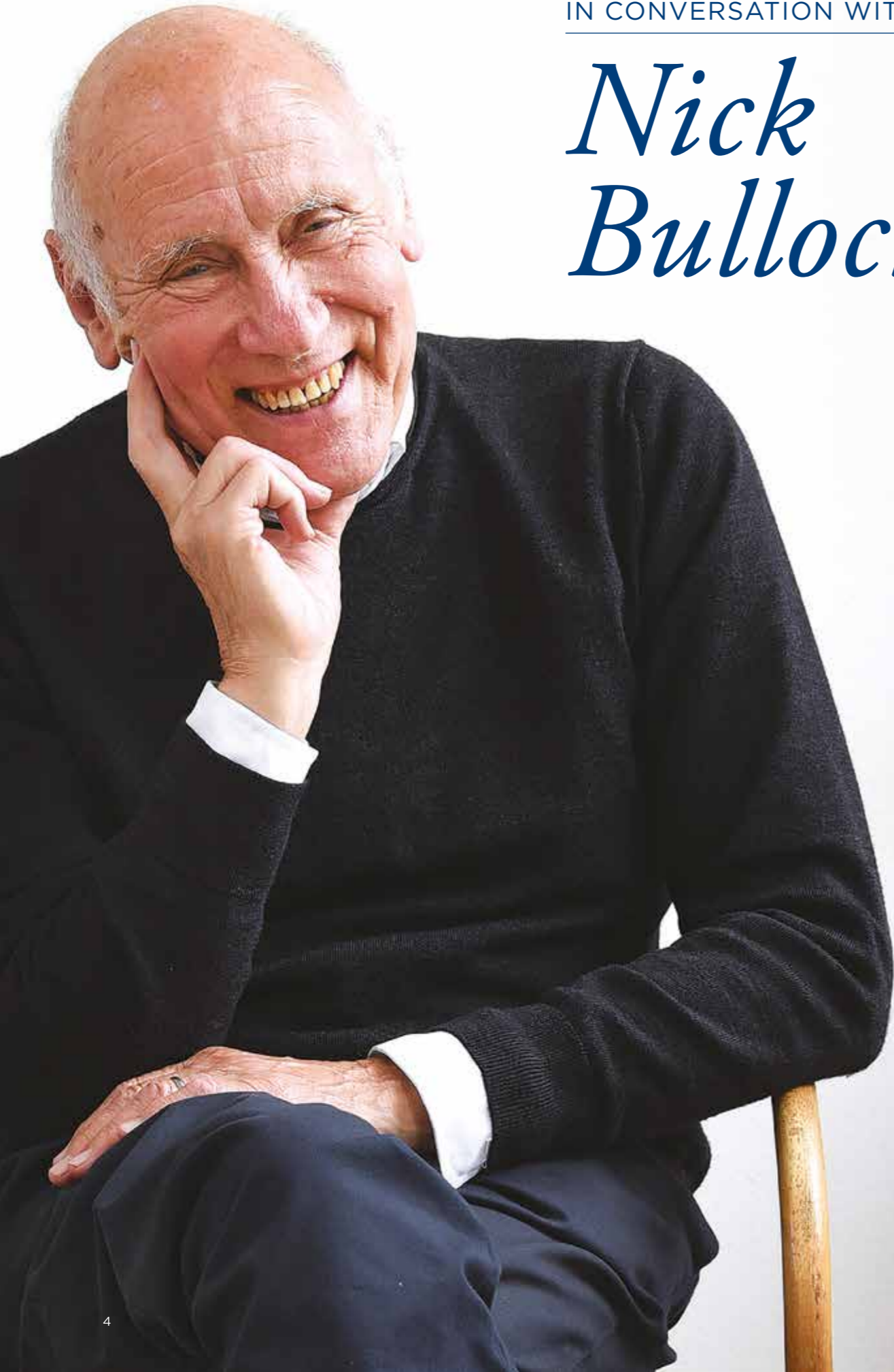
*With thanks to Librarian
James Clements.*





IN CONVERSATION WITH

Nick Bullock



Having applied for a Modern Languages degree, Nick Bullock's excursion to Argentina meant that he nearly never made it to King's. "Rather improbably I'd been awarded a Trevelyan Scholarship to Cambridge, which was intended to prepare future leaders for British industry. But having gone to Buenos Aires to seek fame and fortune, I found it to be extraordinarily exciting; the Cuban Revolution had not long happened, and the sense in which South America suddenly seemed to have its fortune in its own hands was very real."

His father's intervention persuaded Nick to return to the UK, and he arrived as an undergraduate in 1960 to begin what has become a lifelong association with the College. There was one key difference, however – having made friends with a group of young architects in Buenos Aires, Nick was allowed to switch courses with the help of his tutor Ken Polack.

"Certainly when I came up, Architecture was done by people who'd been dragged by their parents around the cathedrals, monasteries, and palaces of Europe, and across the University there was a kind of assumption that architecture was a patrician activity. Nevertheless it was a terrific course which seemed to give an extraordinary range of possibilities and opened out into art, design, technical skills – there were even people exploring sustainable architecture way back then."

Graduate research into time budgets followed, with Nick undertaking the mathematical modelling of university activities: "If you could establish, plausibly, in statistical terms, how different groups spend their time, and if you knew where various facilities for them to spend their time were, then you could help make informed decisions about the provision of services. The application of new computing techniques was very exciting, and we were able to set up a research consultancy that applied the simulations to different scales and settings. The Ministry of Transport, for instance, asked us if we could do some modelling to see what the effect of flexible working hours might be on the load imposed by people working in the civil service on the traffic network in Reading."

Undertaking graduate study hadn't been part of Nick's early thinking, but working on university planning in some form had become attractive, perhaps because of the influence of Leslie Martin, the University's Professor of Architecture who was influential in naming architects as designers for new universities: "I'd never thought I'd do a PhD, but in the mid-1960s I suppose universities as institutions seemed to point a way forward: the idea of expanding access to higher education seemed socially progressive and from an architectural point of view, there were certain new universities on the drawing board. During the summer

break one year I'd been travelling in the States and become very excited at visiting university campuses; architects at that time were exploring in university buildings ideas which might be applicable to new neighbourhoods, and thinking about the university as the town *in parvo*."

Having finished his PhD, Nick got involved with directing studies at King's in 1968 and a few years later was appointed as Graduate Tutor, a position he held for more than a decade. Still directing studies at the College today, how does he think the architecture course has most significantly changed over the past sixty years?

"In a curious way, the course is very constant – in part because it's regulated by a professional body. So the shape of the course hasn't changed dramatically but the content of the course changes all the time. If you were to compare the drawings that students are doing now to those that we did as undergraduates, they'd look completely different – such is the transformation of the architectural landscape. I was born of a generation in which modern architecture was still, as it were, clearing the decks of the past – whereas what happened in the 1970s was that architecture needed to renegotiate its relationship both to the fabric of the city and to the difficulties of contemporary society."

"If you were to compare the drawings that students are doing now to those that we did as undergraduates, they'd look completely different – such is the transformation of the architectural landscape."

A stint as Vice-Provost followed in 1990, not long after he'd published his first book, *Housing Reform in Germany and France, 1840 to 1914*, which foreshadowed Nick's interest in architectural reconstruction across Europe in the aftermath of the Second World War. His most recent work, *Modernising Post-war France: Architecture and Urbanism during Les Trente Glorieuses*, appeared in November of last year and follows an earlier work on postwar Britain:

"I suppose what's fascinating is how quickly the debate on reconstruction builds up in England: it really gets going after the Barlow Report of 1940 which addressed the southward migration of the industrial population of Britain, and falling levels of employment in the North. The Report became a starting point for a debate about planning, in part because of the propaganda skills of the Director of the Town and Country Planning Association,



Frederic Osborn. What Osborn did was to promote the idea of planning as a way of selling a visionary future, and so from 1940 onwards we can see the BBC running a whole series of programmes about the postwar future, consciously talking about how the destruction of the old could bring about something new, in a manner that was seen to be a way of reinforcing morale. Although the orchestration of this debate on reconstruction was fairly haphazard until about 1942, when it becomes clear that Britain isn't going to lose the war and the immediate wartime crises are over, the Civil Service starts assembling major committees looking at the future of the building industry, among other things."

While actions were being taken in Britain by 1940, the debates in France were markedly different at this time: "Of course, in 1940, France is defeated and the Vichy regime takes over, and the debate on reconstruction is not only predicated on what its future might be, but principally focused on how to put together a building industry which could start to address the immediate need for temporary housing. Alongside this however, there's some intense research into reconstruction under way, albeit conducted either in generally conservative terms, about the extent to which the regional voice of architecture will be heard, or in very pragmatic terms about how to go about building with the minimal material resources that they had available. And so Vichy has this rather restricted, rurally based view of a future France, while you have the young modernists such as Le Corbusier seeking to become involved in the debate from a more idealistic standpoint.

"it's not that architects have lost social vision or have become disengaged, but it seems to me that they are no longer co-opted by the state as a way of transforming physically the society in which we live."

"With Vichy being such an unstable amalgam, however, the modernists are able to latch on to the component factions who believe in leadership by a technocratic elite, which they see as enabling France to escape from the hopeless confusion of parliamentary democracy during the 1930s. For the modernisers, Vichy and the technocratic ideal are not at odds, and Gaullists like Paul Delouvrier are among those who join the training programme for future leaders that Vichy sets up in Uriage, in the Isère. That all changes in 1942 as a result of the German plundering of French resources, the inability of Vichy to control that, and the

increasing German demand for manpower which leads to the requirement that the French send young men to work in German factories. At that point the idealists break with Vichy and a number of them become key *résistants*, leaving the training course to join de Gaulle in England. There, the discussion about future reconstruction is beginning, with the French able to observe the proceedings of the key British committees."

How did that period of observation inform French policy after the end of Vichy in 1944? "When the war ends you've got a group of rather clever people who've been picking up on ideas of reconstruction, and you've got a number of people like Le Corbusier who believe that they have the answer to the question of architectural reconstruction. What we find is that the state in France sets up a Ministry of Reconstruction and Urbanism and it starts to put in place a whole machinery of reconstruction, bringing large numbers of modernists into the fold, including Le Corbusier, who is toadying up to the ministers and telling them that only he can sort out the problems.

"But when reconstruction actually gets going, of course, it's absolutely not the way the idealists envisaged it, and Le Corbusier is immediately at odds with the Ministry. Nevertheless, he finally gets given a huge commission to build a great block in Marseille, which he sees as the vehicle for realising his utopian vision of a modern city, set out in a pamphlet called the Charter of Athens, which becomes the modernist credo for postwar reconstruction. And so he builds it, and as a vision of reconstruction it's enormously exciting, but it's also completely incapable of serving – as was his ambition – as a prototype for general reconstruction. It comes in immensely over budget, the space standards for each family are far higher than would be achievable more widely, and so what we find is that the radicals soon become very much opposed to the official programme of reconstruction and of the modernisation of France."

Was there a similar infusion of utopian idealism in the British reconstruction project? Nick doesn't think it reached the same extent: "No, it wasn't that strong in Britain. There were some spectacularly speculative designs published during the war itself, including a wonderfully absurd plan drawn up by the MARS Group, an architectural think-tank, which was going to transform London into a garden city and put the Thames into a tunnel that flowed through the middle of it. So there's no shortage of eccentric ideas, but in Britain the planning work is already well advanced and committees are producing key recommendations by 1944, meaning that work can quickly begin – there's a lot going on. In London, for instance, there are two major publications, the County of London plan and the Greater London plan, published in 1944 and 1945, which set out a vision for London as a whole.

"What we do see is a massive tension in Britain between those people who want to build as much as possible, and those people who say, 'well, actually we want to build something which we will be proud of in a generation or two's time'. And if you went to the London County Council, you would see that clash play out. The person who initially takes responsibility for the delivery of the LCC's housing program is the valuer. He's not an architect, he's a man whose task is to buy land, and what he does is buy cheap land outside London on which he can build as many houses as he can. No schools, no shops, no attempt to build communities – a purely pragmatic response to building housing. The architect's vision, on the other hand, is an attempt to build the town and make it work as a neighbourhood. So as in France there's a tension between people who want to get houses thrown up quickly and those people who believe that modern architecture should be creating a vision of the new town – that's going on in Britain too. And it comes to a head in the LCC, and in the end housing is taken away from the valuer and given to the architects, and one of the key progressive figures who arrives at this point is Leslie Martin. What Martin does is link the vision of the new architecture to a Swedish model – an idea of an architecture set in the service of a social democratic society. That leads to a vision of a future for the British city in the early 1950s, and a series of debates about how you construct community, and the building of exemplars such as the Alton East estate in Roehampton."

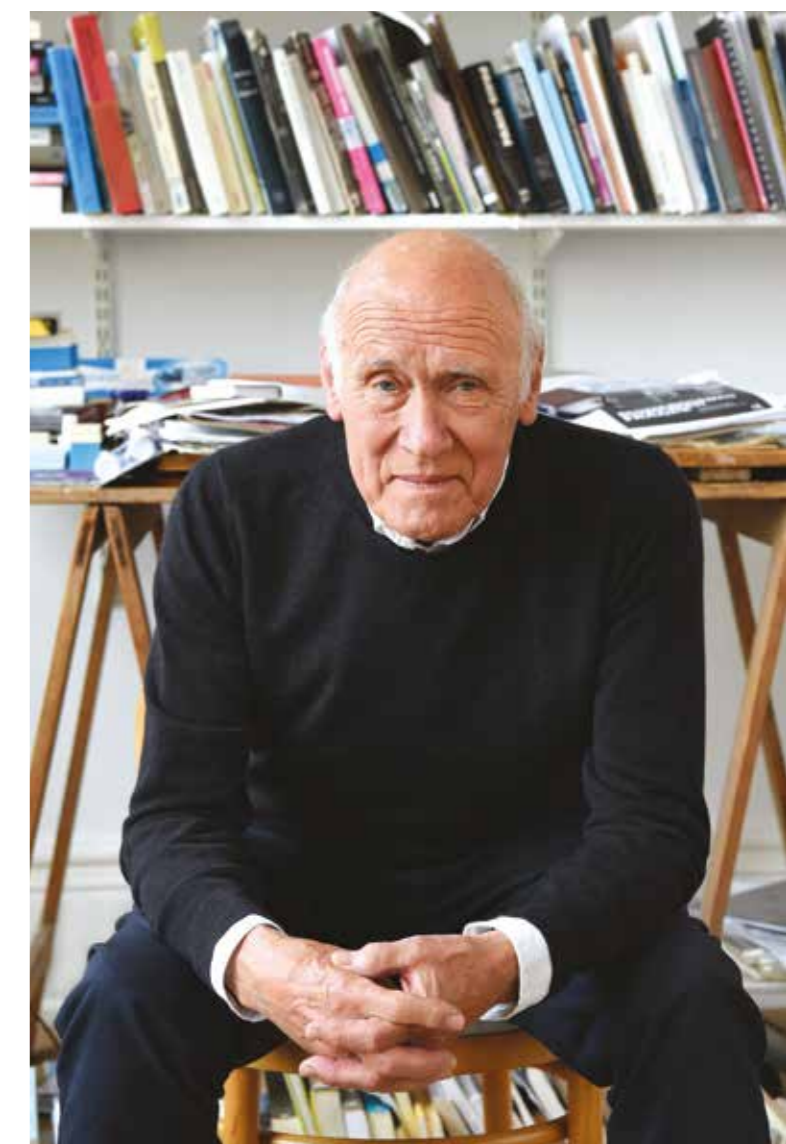
The debates and discussions of the postwar reconstruction period seem a world away from the modern construction industry. Does that point towards a dearth of vision on the part of present-day architects? "On the one hand there's the recognition that the social, the political, the economic, the educational, that the dimensions of the urban problem, are not susceptible to simply architectural treatment. The second thing that happens in 1980 is that under Thatcher, and since, the state ceases to be a patron of a vision of the city. Modern architecture can build public and prestige buildings, but essentially modern architecture is no longer called upon to build the town – that's done by developers. Various local authorities have found ways of moving around that but the old idea that the architect could plausibly have a vision which might conceivably be engaged through the state seems to me something that's gone missing or is dilute.

"Of course, people have argued that the market will sort it, but it doesn't. I'm particularly interested in the London Borough of Newham, which has been very successfully regenerated, but what that essentially means is that the original population has been shuffled out. And as I cycle around there on my bike, I see the most fantastic Manhattan-style blocks with views out over the Thames, but no room for the original population. So it's not that architects have lost social vision or have become

disengaged, but it seems to me that they are no longer co-opted by the state as a way of transforming physically the society in which we live. On a more positive note, there's a lot of grassroots activity and there are certain local authorities which have actually become developers in their own right, which means that they're no longer required to sell – under right-to-buy legislation – the stuff that they've built. They can also construct in a more socially and environmentally conscious way and are able to respond to a very different, non-market, set of pressures."

With over 50 years of teaching at King's under his belt, what is it that keeps Nick motivated? "I just enjoy talking to students – they're intelligent, they see things differently, and really it also prevents me from becoming a kind of an old fart!"

Nick Bullock (KC 1960) was Director of Studies in Architecture at King's while Felipe Hernández (KC 2011) was on sabbatical.



Designed Intervention

Having pivoted from a senior communications role in the Bahraini government to a Master's degree in Psychology in California, Luma Bashmi's life took another significant turn in August 2020 after the devastating port explosion that rocked the city of Beirut, where she had studied as an undergraduate.

In response to the tragedy, which left hundreds of thousands displaced, Luma quickly teamed up with a clinical psychologist and a community worker to form Elaa Beirut, an organisation designed to provide support to those suffering in the aftermath: "Lebanon was already going through multiple crises, from the pandemic to currency inflation, not to mention hosting the largest number of refugees per capita in the world – many of whom were directly affected by the explosion. International donations were coming in for a short while but that wasn't going to be sufficient in the long-term, so I was keen to use my training to assist in any way I could."

"We knew from the research that providing specific trauma-related therapy within the first three months of an event can cause the trauma to be re-triggered, so we decided initially to give psychosocial support, collating resources for people on the ground so that they could access medical help, shelter, food and veterinarian support for their pets. We then partnered with an NGO already providing counselling support in Beirut and took on their waiting list, offering free one-to-one sessions, group sessions and also training for frontline aid workers."

Gathering a network of licensed therapists in different countries, with wide-ranging expertise and able to speak a variety of languages, Luma and her team were able to offer over 200 hours of online therapy sessions to more than 40 individuals in Beirut. Conducting the sessions online meant practitioners all over the world could volunteer their services, while avoiding some of the complexities of regulatory policy. "It was really an ideal network; our therapists had different backgrounds and specialties, but we ran an induction to ensure we were all adopting the same methods and offering the same services."

After providing support for two years, in 2021 Luma arrived in Cambridge to embark on a doctorate in the Department of Psychiatry, funded by King's and the Cambridge Trust. "The PhD in a sense became an extension of Elaa Beirut because it's looking at the kinds of psychosocial

interventions that have been happening in post-crisis situations, examining what has or hasn't worked. We're not only trying to evaluate our own effectiveness but also investigate what's been done before, and to explore ways of creating more sustainable systems that empower communities to access training programs, in order that they can take a greater degree of ownership in a post-crisis response. The overarching model I'm looking at is called IC-ADAPT, which combines the idea of "integrative complexity" – a framework that's been implemented for several decades, often to combat prejudice and discrimination, as well as in counterterrorism strategies – and the ADAPT model specifically designed for those suffering from persecution and trauma."

Following a systematic literature review covering mental health and psychosocial interventions that have specifically targeted Middle Eastern and North African populations, Luma will be running focus groups with female Lebanese nationals and Syrian refugees with a view to assessing their experiences and perceptions of mental health, as well as conducting interviews with experts and policymakers in the region. "It's really important to recruit local stakeholders to develop a relevant and robust community readiness assessment and to understand whether existing models are applicable to a particular scenario or circumstance. The majority of evidence-based literature is published in the UK, US and Europe, with a very low percentage of psychological studies taking place outside of urban, English-speaking communities. As a result there can be an assumption that the symptoms and disorders that we find in the American Psychiatric Association's essential diagnostic manual *DSM-5* – effectively the psychiatrist's bible – can be applied to all contexts and communities. That's not necessarily the case, so once I have all the data I can hopefully synthesise that into a framework that matches both the existing literature and the specific needs of the community. Then, rather than necessarily running and implementing it as we did in Beirut, I'm hoping that the framework could be applied to a range of post-crisis settings and handed over to countries experiencing the consequences of conflict or traumatic events."



Q & A with Janeska de Jonge

Having never rowed before coming to Cambridge, PhD student Janeska de Jonge was part of the victorious Blondie crew at this year's Boat Race.



Training for the University Boat Club is notoriously demanding – could you give us a sense of what's involved?

We train twelve times a week – twice a day with Monday and Thursday mornings off. Each session is usually around an hour and a half long, but with travel time it can take a large chunk out of the day. In the mornings we take the 5.57am train to Ely and get back to Cambridge at around 9am, at which point I go straight to the lab to conduct my experiments. In the evenings we train at the University boathouse here in Cambridge, rotating between sessions on the rowing machines and weight training, which not only helps us get stronger but also helps prevent injuries. But being on the water is still the most fun!

You're in the final year of your PhD in Medical Science; how difficult has it been to balance the competing demands of your studies and your training?

I think it's actually just made me more efficient. When you're training in the mornings and evenings, you have very limited hours in the lab so there's no option of leaving jobs until later in the day, and it's essential that you don't waste any time. As a result I feel like I've been more focused and been better at planning my experiments in advance.

When you're competing within the crew for a seat in the boat, does that affect the camaraderie?

It's vital that the whole crew goes through the same program of training, testing and seat-racing. In the end, those who aren't selected for the boat might be called the 'spares' but they're still as important as anyone else in the team – if anyone gets ill or injured for a training session or a race you need to be able to bring in someone who's just as good as the person dropping out. So we'd make sure that everyone was included, attended the same meetings and the same training sessions. It's a unique journey and one that creates very strong bonds and incredible friendships.

What was the preparation like ahead of The Boat Race this year?

We do a few other races throughout the season, but obviously The Boat Race is the one that really counts. Later in the season we have multiple fixtures against other universities, which are side-by-side races to practise on The Boat Race course in London. But we don't race against Oxford until The Boat Race itself. When the crews are announced it starts to get a bit more real, then with about a week and a half to go we

relocated to London and trained there every day. That was really useful because every day was almost like a rehearsal for the race: we'd repeat our warm-ups, row on the course, and practise our starts. In the evenings we'd have crew dinners, talk to previous Blondie rowers about how they felt before the race, and have meetings about what to do in the event of equipment failure, a crew member falling ill, or if the race was stopped. Walking through all those eventualities helped us feel that we were as prepared as possible for the race itself.

On the day itself, was it more a case of motivating yourself or trying to stay calm?

I don't think motivation was an issue for any of us! No, the biggest message was just to concentrate on our own race, to take confidence in our preparation, and have trust in the coaches, the crew, and ourselves. For me, I can especially feel the nerves at the start of a race, sitting still with the other boat next to us. This year we got to the start line just after Oxford, and seemingly within seconds of being at the launches we'd already been started. For me that was the best-case scenario because I didn't have time to be nervous!

What do you remember actually of the race itself?

We got a quick start, followed by a lot of clashing of blades – it seemed like the whole oars were intertwined but the umpire didn't intervene. I felt like Oxford came out of that a little better than we did, but our cox immediately asked for a push from all of us, and we managed to get a lead and hold onto that advantage. The first few minutes were the most intense but even though we were in a good position, the race isn't over until you cross the finish line – so when we got there we were so relieved and happy!

What was the atmosphere like afterwards?

It really couldn't have gone better – Cambridge won all the races across the men's and women's categories: the openweights firsts and seconds races, the lightweights races and 'spares' races. So everyone who could have won did; it was a good day to be Cambridge Blue!

Will you continue rowing after finishing at Cambridge?

Right now my focus is on completing the PhD, which I'm currently writing up, and after that I'm planning to go back to the Netherlands to find a job in industry. But Netherlanders are quite keen on rowing, so I'm sure I'll find a club there!



BEYOND WORDS

LINGUISTICS AT KING'S

Despite being one of the smallest subjects by student numbers in the University, Linguistics offers a wide range of directions. We talked to undergraduate Alex Provost, PhD candidate Kerri-Ann Butcher, and Bert Vaux, Director of Studies at King's since 2007, about the many directions that the subject offers.

Kerri begins by explaining how she first got into the field of Linguistics: "When I was at school all I wanted to do was to play football and gig with my band, but I went to the University of Essex and it was there that I was introduced to phonetics and phonology, which allowed me to use my abilities as a musician. That led to an interest in language variation and change in Suffolk, where I grew up, and for my undergraduate dissertation I studied what's known as "yod dropping" – how words like 'moosic' or 'coocumber' are becoming 'music' or 'cucumber', something which is particularly prevalent in Ipswich."

"For my PhD I've developed on that to look at the East Anglian phonemic distinction between words like 'toad' and 'towed', which would have been pronounced differently

until the sixteenth or seventeenth century, at which point the pronunciations begin to merge into the same thing. But even today you still find these pockets – particularly in East Anglia and near Manchester – where the distinction still exists 400 years later. The area I'm focusing on is Lowestoft, the easternmost point of the UK and right on the isogloss where this linguistic divide runs. There are a number of sociolinguistic reasons why that might be the case, and why we started seeing more significant linguistic change from the 1980s onwards – including the decline of the town's fishing industry and the counter-urbanisation and growth of tourism in the area."

Alongside conducting interviews, Kerri has branched out during her doctorate into experimental linguistics, asking participants to read out near-homophones, or 'minimal pairs', and ascertaining whether they believe they're producing the same sound or not. The approach had its limitations, however: "It's obviously impressionistic and we don't always hear what we think we hear, so to complement that I've also implemented a vowel continuum task, in which I resynthesised some speech that gradually moved along the spectrum of different pronunciations of "toad" to "towed", and asked participants to click at the point that the sounds switched from one to the other. It's less common in sociolinguistic studies to collect data around both production and perception, so it's made my results more robust and challenged some existing theories."

Is Kerri concerned about the loss of these kinds of dialectal distinctions in East Anglia and beyond?

"There's an inevitability about the loss of particular variations, but I think there'll always be regional differences rather than one homogeneous society which all speaks the same. As a dialectologist of course I think it's sad to lose distinctive features of language; whereas some people in the field are interested in studying new linguistic features, I'm definitely more obsessed with capturing the old before it disappears. And I think Bert's into that too – he goes to the middle of nowhere in Armenia to record the last living speakers of certain dialects."

Does Bert think that's a fair characterisation? "Definitely – I like trying to document things before they're gone forever. When I started studying linguistics in high school I was doing Indo-European linguistics and it was really fun to study Sanskrit and Hittite with the professor down the street, but I kept wishing I could ask an actual speaker of those languages questions about how this or that worked. So I certainly enjoy that aspect. But there's another more intellectual component which is related to Peter Trudgill's theory that the larger a language community is, the less grammatical complexity it can retain. Because when you're having to interact with many different kinds of people in your community, that makes it really hard to preserve more

than the basics, so it creates a sort of uniformity. In smaller language communities you can find linguistic systems that are much more grammatically complex, and the ultimate in that is Abkhaz, a language spoken in the Caucasus area. In one variety of Abkhaz that I've worked on you have 59 consonants but only two vowels, and 17 positions in a verb for signalling different arguments in the proposition you're making. So it's completely alien to what we come across in the West."

Bert researched that particular variety of Abkhaz until the death of its sole surviving speaker, and among the hundreds of Armenian dialects he has worked on, many are now gone. What are the primary causes of the demise of these dialects? "There are two main reasons that leap to mind – the first is by attrition and social forces, where communities choose to shift to a more dominant, economically viable dialect or language. The other main mechanism that's at work right now with the surviving Armenian dialects is that people are literally being killed off. I've done a lot of work in the Artsakh, or Karabakh region and the recent Azerbaijani takeover will likely lead to the death of 50 or 60 Armenian dialects that were spoken there."

"In smaller language communities you can find linguistic systems that are much more grammatically complex, and the ultimate in that is Abkhaz, a language spoken in the Caucasus area."

Alongside his fieldwork, Bert has also found a use for his knowledge of these rare dialects in helping assess the asylum claims of those who fled the villages in the de-militarised zone around Karabakh after the civil war of the early 1990s: "After the conflict, applications for political asylum in Europe started to surface, and I was one of a number of linguists involved with a group in the Netherlands who would review suspicious governmental decisions about those claims. Often what would have happened is that the government-appointed linguists would have interviewed the claimants in Persian or Russian, and based on their conversation come to a rudimentary judgment that basically boiled down to saying 'no, this person speaks Russian, so they're from Yerevan', and then rejected the asylum claim. What I would do was to talk to them in the dialect of their village, listening to what were often incredibly upsetting stories of how they fled their homes, and analyse how, for instance, they formed the aorist tense of this set of verbs, or how they used this





lexical verb for 'pile of shit' which is specific to a localised part of Azerbaijan. From there, if there was evidence to defend their claim, I would assemble a ten-page case to critique the arguments used by the experts employed by the government, none of whom ever actually tried to ascertain whether the person could speak in the dialect of the region they claimed to be from."

For Alex, the opportunity to branch out in different directions has been particularly exciting: "In the first year in Cambridge you get a crash course in everything from historical linguistics to language acquisition, and from experimental psychology to more mathematical approaches. For my dissertation I looked at lexical variation in Alzheimer's patients, using a measure called a type-token ratio to measure how much diversity there is within someone's speech, and how frequently the same words are repeated. I'd been inspired by the work of a PhD student here in Cambridge, Ulla Petti, who had been using computational techniques to detect Alzheimer's through people's language. With Ulla's dataset I was able to apply algorithms which would count how many times particular words were being said, over a period spanning several decades. That kind of longitudinal data is so rare and it's been really fascinating to see what language can tell us about cognitive impairments, and how early it can indicate the onset of cognitive decline – often more than a decade before the point of traditional clinical diagnosis."

Having just graduated, Alex is now hoping to undertake an MPhil degree in the Faculty of Philosophy, looking at the ethics of AI, data and algorithms: "It was something which piqued my interest last year when I was doing the computational paper in Linguistics, where we were looking at dialogue systems, chatbots, n-gram predictive text models – all very abstract ideas which were then thrust very quickly into reality with the explosion of ChatGPT and this huge interest in large language models, which previously had just been a term used in lecture notes."

"The ethical dimensions are enormous, whether in terms of discrimination, bias, or privacy, and that's before you even get on to the whole apocalyptic and existential concerns surrounding AI. It's a really fast-changing field and feels like something that's at a very good intersection of my interests in linguistics and language models, and I'm looking forward to getting started – pending exam results and funding!"

For Bert, the rise of generative AI offers both possibility and danger: "ChatGPT has made some insane advances in syntactic sophistication in terms of sounding like a native English speaker. It's not my bailiwick but it's completely changed the game, albeit in a way that I'm not sure we can fully comprehend – it's very difficult to look inside the black box that we've created."

Bert's own next project – a large-scale study into overtones, the frequencies at which more energy gets through one's vocal tract during speaking or singing, will make significant use of machine learning. He explains: "The frequencies at which we create sound vary depending on the shape of your vocal tract, and humans are very highly attuned to how the variations in overtones reveal what sound you're intending to make, as well as things like how big you are and how old you are. My colleague James Burridge and I are trying to use a mathematical model to extract information from masses of acoustic information stored in large databases of digitized speech, in order to identify what the statistically most informative and most reliable components of the speech signal are. We're hoping that by doing that we can then generate automatic mappings between the acoustic signals and the transcription of them that will work for all languages. So far the results are promising, but we're still in the initial stages of the project."

What particular challenges does Bert envisage along the way? "Because vowels are the main conveyors of information, languages that have mutated vowel systems are likely to present some difficulties. In your average human language, when you look at a spectrogram of a vowel sound you see a level trajectory across the whole thing. But in other languages, the vowel is diphthongised – even sometimes or triphthongized – which means there are several different parts to it and the sound changes with the shape of the vocal tract. A lot of the Armenian dialects I work with in Syria are like that, as are some of the Germanic varieties."

"Another challenge is with a language that has, say, 250 consonants, such as some of those in southern Africa. Consonants don't have much of an acoustic signal, because during a lot of them your vocal tract is closed, so there's technically no sound during it – you have to infer what you're hearing from how they affect the vowel on either side of them. Those kinds of languages I would expect to be particularly difficult too."

For Kerri, a move to the University of Leeds is on the cards, where she'll join the Dialect and Heritage Project to undertake analyses of a recent survey of English dialects: "It's a follow-up to the original Survey of English Dialects of the 1950s and 60s, the most comprehensive survey of its kind undertaken to date. In the recent study, the fieldworkers have returned to the same locations and, in some cases, even interviewed the grandchildren of those who were recorded for the survey the first time around. All the handwritten notes from that original report are housed at the University and I can't wait to get my hands on them!"

50 Portraits: An Exhibition

An exhibition of 50 photographic portraits of King's women, by award-winning photographer Jooney Woodward, was launched in the Chapel on 24 June.



The *50 Portraits* exhibition reflects a broad cross-section of the King's community: from the trailblazing women who first arrived at the College in 1972 to the most recent cohort of undergraduates. Subjects include current Fellows and students of King's, alumnae from an array of different disciplines and careers, and the staff working behind-the-scenes to keep the College ticking.

All 50 portraits in the series were photographed between March and May 2023 on a Mamiya RZ67. Photographer Jooney Woodward explained: "I love the process and physicality of shooting on film, which has a beautiful warmth and depth of tone. I use a medium format camera and prefer to shoot in natural light in order to give the images a painterly feel. Shooting on film is a much more considered process and with only ten frames per film, I really evaluate the scene and composition in front of me before pressing the shutter."

Among the subjects photographed was alumna Mahlet Zimeta, an expert in data and digital technology whose portrait was taken near King's

Cross. After seeing her portrait for the first time at the Festival, Mahlet commented: "I loved the exhibition! The inclusion of women from the College staff community of different levels of seniority and the descriptions of their roles ... it really felt like an exhibition about the life and story of the College, and where the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. It works as both an art collection and as a snapshot of a point in history. And of course I cherish the portrait of me, and the whole experience of it being made."

The exhibition will return to the Chapel on 22 July and remain in place over the summer, before the portraits are put on long-term display elsewhere in the College, and become part of the permanent art collection at King's. Curator of the exhibition, Jonty Carr added:

"The link between environment and identity should not be understated. Who and what we choose to display on our walls is both a reflection of our present – our values and priorities – and the projection of a time still to come. The lasting presence of these women will, we hope, serve to encourage and inspire long into the future."



MY PhD

with Alaa Hajyahia

In today's world, discussions surrounding state and police negligence have reached a critical point. Movements like Black Lives Matter, Hong Kong's pro-democracy demonstrations, and the recent protests in Iran have sparked widespread debate on the role of the police and institutionalised means of punishment and surveillance.

These events raise questions about direct and indirect state violence, excessive law enforcement practices, and their impact especially on the marginalised communities who often suffer from inadequate protection.

Against this backdrop, my PhD project in social anthropology focuses on the Palestinian community in Israel, aiming to shed light on life within the carceral state by offering an ethnographic account of how Palestinian citizens of Israel engage with (or disengage from) Israel's legal authorities and law enforcement mechanisms in their everyday lives. In doing so I'll be exploring the contradictions, tensions and complexities that surround these moments of engagement/disengagement, and looking at the contexts in which Palestinian citizens advocate for or proactively engage with the Israeli legal and penal mechanisms, despite their generalised scepticism towards them.

Secondly, my project looks at carceral practices within Israel and how these practices might intersect with questions of capitalism and settler colonialism. In recent years, scholars have increasingly emphasized how economic systems are embedded within the organization of societies, observing how certain states adopt agendas where racialised exploitation and capital accumulation become mutually constitutive forces.

In exploring these questions, I plan to focus on all-Palestinian criminal cases – that is, cases brought by a Palestinian citizen litigant against a fellow Palestinian

– that have entailed direct engagement with the Israeli authorities such as the police or criminal justice system. The cases I plan to focus on are those that involve either gender-based violence perpetrated on Palestinian women or LGBTQ+ individuals; the murder of a Palestinian citizen at the hands of another Palestinian citizen; or the possession of illegal weapons by Palestinian citizens.

Alongside this, I plan to investigate the ways in which state-sponsored violence, especially under the auspices of the carceral state, has adversely affected the economic potential and political power of Palestinians. This aspect of my research will involve interviews in which I will ask participants about the often destructive economic implications of incarceration on their families.

My research aims to provide an ethnographic account of how Palestinian citizens of Israel cope with and negotiate the Israeli legal system, an approach that has received little scholarly attention. The majority of ethnographic studies focusing on the occupation's bureaucratic elements have been conducted in the West Bank among non-citizens of Israel, whereas by foregrounding the lives of Palestinian citizens of Israel I hope to provide an in-depth and nuanced picture which fills an important void and adds to or challenges our understanding of concepts such as legal cynicism, economic harms, agency, colonial citizenship, and the carceral state.

I began my PhD here in Cambridge after a decade-long exploration of the world of law, in which I've been delving into the complexities of legal theory, practice, policymaking, and human rights. After a law degree at Tel Aviv University, I subsequently pursued graduate studies at Yale Law School, and have had the privilege of completing a legal clerkship at the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg, where I witnessed firsthand the application of international human rights law in practice.

However, my passion for unravelling the intricate cultural tapestry of human existence has led me to venture beyond the realm of law and to bridge the gap between legal frameworks and the realities they operate within. Taking a more interdisciplinary path allows me to explore the interplay between law and anthropology, and by merging these fields, I aim to illuminate the multifaceted dimensions of how legal systems intersect with cultural norms, historical narratives, and power dynamics. Ethnography and anthropology play a crucial role both in giving a voice to the voiceless, and in enabling us to strive for a more just society. These kinds of ethnographic studies are paramount in capturing the intricacies of daily life, unveiling the less visible aspects of human experience that may be overlooked in other forms of research.



FRONT OF HOUSE

with Ralf Masch

As the ever-friendly face of King's, Visitor Guide Ralf Masch helps ensure the daily stream of visitors flows effectively through the College grounds and Chapel.

Growing up in Germany, Ralf ran a small local newspaper in his early twenties before moving to San Francisco and saving up to fulfil his dream of owning his own coffee shop, which he named the One World Café. "I've always loved to travel, much like my dad who emigrated to the States when I was a child. I've always been drawn to multicultural places and the name of the café was very much a reflection of that; my friend painted a huge mural of a market scene on one of the walls, based on all the travel photos I'd taken up to that point."

Although Ralf enjoyed the role of proprietor, interacting with customers and setting the tone, the daily grind of running the coffee shop soon became unappealing. The year he gave up the

business, the course of his life was altered by a chance discovery of an article in a local paper about the Vietnamese Buddhist monk Thích Nhất Hạnh, who was visiting the Bay Area to give a retreat. "I wasn't really in the Buddhist realm at that point but among my generation in Germany there was strong interest in Eastern spirituality, which I'd dabbled in before. So I went to the retreat, and from then on became a practising Buddhist, as well as being entrusted with running what was at the time a very small publishing sideline that Thích Nhất Hạnh had established to print his books in the English language. And so I did that for almost 20 years, growing the press to become one of the largest Buddhist publishing companies in the United States; one of our main achievements was bringing the word 'mindfulness' into popular consciousness, as a secular term for an attitude to life."



Ralf eventually turned to Christian contemplative practice, which makes it no surprise that he is such a calm and welcoming presence at his stations on the Front and Back Gate, and in the Chapel. "I really enjoy working with people, and feel like I can fully focus on my core competencies of being part of a team and engaging with visitors from all over the world and from all walks of life. I love finding a way to make everybody have an enjoyable visit, whether that's through the way that I greet them, telling a story, or showing them something that they may not have seen – it all enhances the experience of visiting King's."

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT...



On Saturday 24 June the College saw the culmination of a year-long programme of events to mark the 50th anniversary of the admission of women as students to King's, with a Festival of talks, conversations, music, activities, tours and exhibitions.

Bringing together scholars, writers, musicians, poets and changemakers for an inspiring and life-affirming day, the Festival represented a fitting end to the anniversary year by celebrating the impact of King's women and addressing the inequalities that still remain.

A jam-packed programme began with a fascinating talk from historian Lucy Delap and Fellows Tess Adkins (pictured left), Rosanna Omitowoju and Stephen Hugh-Jones on the history of women at King's and the landmark decisions that led up to 1972.

Throughout the day we were inspired, informed and entertained by the more than 80 King's students, staff, Fellows and alumnae who participated in over

40 different events, ranging from tours of the College with Bye-Fellow Sophie Pickford, looking at works of art both by and of women, to tall tales from storyteller Lara McClure (also pictured) based on the work of the former Provost of King's, M.R. James. Topics of talks ranged from why music matters and why art is vital in times of crisis, to how society's epidemic of loneliness can be addressed, with speakers including Judith Weir, Frances Morris, Noreena Hertz and Diana Barran.

In the early evening, the event was rounded off by a session where we asked "what's next for gender equality at King's?", with contributions from Senior Tutor Myfanwy Hill, Fellows Gillian Griffiths and Anne Davis, and recent graduate Brenna Salkin.

Save the Date

2023

12 August

50th Anniversary Reunion

16 September

35th, 40th & 45th Anniversary Reunion

23 September

1441 Foundation Dinner

26 November

Procession for Advent

24 December

A Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols

25 December

Christmas Day Eucharist

2024

16 March

Foundation Lunch

23 March

20th, 25th & 30th Anniversary Reunion

April (date tbc)

Alan Turing Lecture

18 May

King Henry VI Circle Event

1 June

10th Anniversary Lunch

22 June

Members' Afternoon Tea

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For up-to-date information about events:
www.kings.cam.ac.uk/events/calendar