Winter 2021

KING'S PARADE

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

In this issue

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Welcome

from the Welfare Tutor, Rosanna Omitowoju

When I first arrived at King's as an undergraduate from a northern state school, I arrived with a limited sense of what life at university would be like and could largely take the experience on its own terms.

Students today come with so many more pressures of expectation – partly because many more of their parents will have been to university themselves, and partly because of the idealistic portrayals of student life that they're presented with through social media.

Added to this is the financial burden of having to justify the price tag of tuition fees, and the millstone of debt that students come out with at the end of their course. Will their expensive degree translate into a job that makes it worthwhile? Will they be able to pay off their debt in a way that doesn't impact other aspects of their lives? These are the kinds of questions today's students – having been through an increasingly commodified schooling system and treated as recipients of an educational *product* – are grappling with throughout their time here.

All these pressures have an enormous impact on mental health, and it's my role as Welfare Tutor to help students navigate any ups and downs they might meet along the way. In doing so I have the support of a team of Side Tutors, the College Nurse, Chaplain, and two mental health practitioners. The kind of in-house specialist provision that we now have is testament to both a growing understanding of the importance of emotional welfare and an increasing strain on the University's centralised mental health provision.

Much of the work we do within the College is to help our students develop coping mechanisms and build *resilience* – something of a watchword in recent years. As academics, we're similarly under greater strain, with the pressures of an ever-increasing administrative workload, a less stable job market, and assessments like the Research Excellence Framework to consider. Supporting our students isn't easy and requires us all to find more space in our collective lives to pause for breath, but it's hugely rewarding to know that we've helped make students' experiences more manageable, enjoyable, and ultimately fulfilling.

SENDING IN THE HEAVIES

Back at the beginning of August we were treated to the delightful sight of a pair of heavy horses working in the shadow of the Chapel to harvest the wildflower meadow at the end of its second year of flowering.

Shire horses Cosmo and Boy, from the nearby Waldburg stables, not only cut the meadow but also turned and carted the hay on a traditional wain, with the bales being used to create more wildflower meadows across the city of Cambridge.

From a biodiversity perspective, this traditional method of harvesting affords the animals within the meadow time to leave the area, whilst the mowing is an important long-term process to keep fertility low and create space for the wildflowers to regenerate.

The involvement of the Shire horses was thanks to an initiative involving the head gardeners of Christ's College and Murray Edwards College. The resultant bales have been given to other gardeners around the city and within the University, encouraging others to follow suit and similarly turn their lawns into wildflower meadows.

Head Gardener Steven Coghill said: "We were absolutely thrilled to bring in these magnificent heavy horses to harvest the wildflower meadow. Not only do they have a far lower carbon footprint than using a rotary mower, the sight of these wonderful creatures at work in the College made for a remarkable, bucolic scene and brought a bit of Constable to Cambridge."

Emission Impossible?

with Shaimerden Abekov

One of the most stubborn challenges in the global drive to tackle climate change remains how to eliminate CO_2 emissions from the airline industry, and to radically lessen the environmental impact of human flight. With aviation among the fastest growing sources of the carbon emissions that are driving the climate crisis, vital work is under way to usher in a new generation of aircraft that embrace cleaner forms of energy.

It's in this context that fourth-year Engineering student Shaimerden Abekov spent his Long Vacation undertaking a 10-week project as part of the College's new Summer Research Programme, designed to give undergraduates the chance to gain hands-on experience within a research environment. Based at the Whittle Laboratory under the supervision of King's Fellow James Taylor, Shaimerden's project was part of a wider initiative to design and test electrified propulsion systems in aircraft, in a bid to make transportation more environmentally sustainable.

"The Whittle Lab was challenged to find out what kind of propellers could be fitted to a manned, airborne electric vehicle – how to get the most optimised and cost-effective design. Two PhD students had already been doing a lot of computational work to ascertain the best shape and geometry of the propeller, so I was able to inherit their designs and translate their simulations to real-world conditions."

To do that, Shaimerden has had to learn manufacturing techniques which were previously unfamiliar to him: "A lot of my work has been 3D printing the parts of the propeller – 9 large pieces and 13 smaller pieces – from bioplastic filaments. The parts are quite complicated curved shapes and at the beginning it was quite difficult to manage multiple printers at the same time – the filament would need replacing with a new reel, it might get stuck or knotted, a nozzle might break or the printing bed become miscalibrated by half a millimetre."

After overcoming these hurdles, Shaimerden completed the manufacturing of the propeller and began CNC machining a metal wind tunnel, within which the aerodynamic testing could be carried out: "We have a wind tunnel available but in order to reduce the flow I've had to construct a smaller casing that can sit within the larger tunnel. This allows us to focus more specifically on the efficiency of the diffuser."

"Ultimately we've been trying to establish the most efficient ratio of the areas at the front and back of the propeller. That ratio matters because it defines the shape of the stream of air that runs through the engine, so is crucial to its performance. The computational simulations are very complex – involving millions of computing operations running over several days – but they can't accommodate for all the intricacies of real life."

Shaimerden continues: "We had a number of hypotheses to try, and now the challenge is working out why we might have had different results between the computational and real-world tests, and where bias may have crept into the physical experiments. Eventually we should come to a reliable conclusion about the most efficient area ratio and be able to present those findings with confidence."

Having completed his part of this cutting-edge project, how optimistic does Shaimerden now feel about the likelihood of electric air travel becoming a reality in the near future? "My feeling is that electric air travel could be plausible for the majority of short-haul flights quite quickly, but it's much more difficult for long-distance or trans-oceanic journeys because of the need for such a large amount of fuel; the batteries required would be too large for the aeroplane. The biggest challenge though would be in changing the infrastructure, and in convincing the airlines to take the risk of introducing a new design. Regulations regarding carbon emissions will become a motivating factor in some countries, but at the moment it doesn't make business sense for airlines to move away from fossil fuels."

The regulatory and economic pressures to shift towards clean energy will only increase, but for now at least, the challenge remains a technological and engineering one too. In a year where his exposure to a practical laboratory environment was limited by the pandemic, Shaimerden's work over the summer might just have a hastening effect on the era of all-electric flight. How does he feel about the project now that it's over? "It's been a great experience; I now feel a lot more confident with some of the manufacturing techniques and I'd love to buy a 3D printer for myself – maybe on a slightly smaller scale though!"

Shaimerden with one of the 3D printers he used to manufacture the propeller

IN CONVERSATION WITH

Ceren Kocaoğullar

Over these pandemic-affected years, few technologies have proved more useful – and at times aggravating – than the software which has enabled us to collaborate, in real time, on the same document or project. The popular cloud-based solutions that many of us are now familiar with have come at a cost, however, to security and resilience – effectively leaving us at the mercy of the robustness of the internal processes of their parent companies. Having recently completed her MPhil, Ceren Kocaoğullar is now studying for a PhD looking at peer-to-peer (P2P) communication as part of the TRVE Data project seeking alternative ways of achieving synchronicity without compromising potentially sensitive information.

"There are various benefits of having a centralised system, not least the fact that it's much easier to maintain a hierarchical system where you can update something at the top of that hierarchy and it has an effect all the way down. But in a centralised system, data might be held on the servers of, say, Google, whereas in a distributed P2P system with a 'local first' principle, data is held on the user's device itself. One benefit of this is that the data is more secure: there isn't a major company keeping it on its servers and claiming that there are no backdoors through which to access it. Another benefit is that you're not dependent on central servers. For instance, these P2P networks can be used in times of crisis, such as a natural disaster or in a warzone, when you might not have access to a stable internet connection. If you have access to a P2P system you can communicate by 'hopping' through other peers and other devices in the area."

Among the principal difficulties Ceren faces in achieving synchronicity is the corruption of data, especially when dealing with a mixture of online and offline users. P2P networks also have their own security issues due to the need for devices to be 'discoverable' in order to communicate, leading Ceren to consider the role of so-called 'anonymity networks' in possible solutions:

"Anonymity networks are helpful because they allow users to preserve the privacy of their metadata while communicating; this is critical because that metadata can reveal enough information to render ineffective any encryption of the message itself. Although there are specialist anonymity networks designed specifically for messaging, these often lose a large degree of practicality, particularly regarding user discovery – the act of searching for the individual you want to message. This can make these networks remarkably difficult to use, and is one of the reasons why older forms of encryption such as PGP, which has been in use since the 1990s, are being overtaken by popular encrypted messaging services such as Google Messages, Signal and Telegram.

"As part of my work I've been developing a framework and two security protocols to make these anonymous communication networks as usable as those popular encrypted messaging apps, while also preserving the metadata privacy. The ultimate aim is that these networks, and thus stronger privacy, might become accessible to more than just the small group of tech experts, journalists and security enthusiasts who understand their technicalities."

Those of us outside of that limited circle might question why, if our activities never border on illegality, we should be worried about our digital footprint. How would Ceren respond to those taking a more relaxed approach to their internet security? "It's an entirely understandable mentality, but the fact is that all of this information is in the hands of a few large companies which are almost totally opaque, which aren't well regulated, and which can largely decide their own terms. In many ways it's almost a political act to withhold your data from these companies. We know that they use it for all sorts of purposes, whether for direct commercial benefit or to feed into machine learning programmes, for instance. If those programmes – using the data that we've willingly shared – are then used for malign purposes, there's an argument to say that we're indirectly responsible for supplying and nourishing them."

Nevertheless, digital anonymity has its downsides too, as behaviour on social media platforms has demonstrated. Is that something Ceren is worried about? "Absolutely. One of the things I'll be looking at in the PhD is this interplay between anonymity and accountability within the contexts of distributed and centralised systems. There's no doubt that anonymity can allow people with harmful intentions to carry their aims out more freely, and as such there has to be a balance. On the other hand, in certain cases anonymity is an essential part of a system, such as ensuring medical records are only accessible and identifiable to the individuals or authorities who need access to them. Everything is case-specific, and the trade-offs are different depending on the circumstance. What I'm proposing to do is to investigate ways of incorporating elements of both distributed and centralised approaches, creating hybrid systems which respond to the individual requirements of the particular purpose."

Although distributed systems might be her focus for now, Ceren is also keen to spread opportunity in the future: "The moment that I got the email from King's to say that I'd been given funding for the MPhil will stick with me for a lifetime – it really was life-changing and without it I simply wouldn't have been able to come. I'd love to do something significant in my career that benefits other people, but one of my ultimate goals is to help someone to come to Cambridge in the same way that I've been supported."

Ceren Kocaoğullar is a PhD student in the Department of Computer Science, funded by King's and the Cambridge Trust.

Having held the post since July 1985, Peter Jones signed off as Fellow Librarian in September, marking the end of more than three decades of his unflappable and sympathetic stewardship.

Q&A with Peter Jones

After 36 years as Fellow Librarian you must have amassed a sizable repository of memories – are there any that particularly stand out?

There have certainly been some highs and lows, but it's the people I'll remember the most. The librarians and archivists who have become friends as well as colleagues, the conservators who have beautifully restored our books, the donors and benefactors whose generosity has allowed us to add to our collections, and the staff members across the College who have supported us in myriad ways. Two individuals have been much in my thoughts recently, both having passed away earlier this year: the former Assistant Librarian Liz Russell – courtly dancer, formidable champion of the Bliss classification system, and scourge of Library architects – and John Barber, Chair of the Library Committee in 1985, who had managed the Library for a year before I arrived, and who became my mentor and friend. John was variously Vice Provost, Acting Provost, Lay Dean and Acting Development Director at King's; fittingly his last College job was as Chair of the Library Committee again.

The Library must have changed significantly since 1985 – what do you think are the most pronounced differences between then and now?

As in so many areas of our lives, the technological shift has been enormous. In a way I've straddled a thousand years' worth of library technology in one career at King's – from textura handwriting on ruled pages and borrowing slips put on spikes, to a typewritten card subject index, and finally to Sirsi Dynix Symphony, described by its manufacturers as "a proven, robust, Integrated Library System built for now and the next generation in library technology" and which flourishes on a virtual server somewhere. The handwritten catalogue entries made in the last two centuries can still be seen in the Library. I doubt the same will be true of our software system in thirty years' time!

Has anything remained more constant?

The Library staff has been amazingly cohesive and long-lasting during my time here; most members of the team have stayed with us for at least ten years. With their help we've navigated a succession of challenges from computerisation and digitisation to new library roofs, summer schools, the arrival of social media and, of course, the pandemic. The same is true of our archivists, a succession of highly qualified specialists dealing with records that cover an extraordinary range of both time and theme, with charters dating back to the 11th century and a modern archive embracing literature, art, economics and computing. That continuity has been immeasurably important, and very welcome.

What do you feel are some of the most noteworthy achievements from your tenure?

One of the early successes was the formation of the Cambridge Colleges' Conservation Consortium back in 1987, of which King's was a founder member and I the first chair. The conservators have rescued us from many a minor disaster, not least in 2018 when many of our documents were imperilled by a mould outbreak.

We've also been lucky to have enjoyed the support of some generous benefactors over the years. The conferences in honour of Tim Munby – one of my predecessors – that we organised with Joyce Wood in 2013 and 2016, and the subsequent creation of the Munby Centenary Fund, made it possible for us to secure acquisition funds for rare materials for the first time since the 1980s and make some special purchases like the wonderful William Blake prints of *Songs of Innocence and of Experience*. Not forgetting, of course, the triumph in 2015 of being able to secure the John Schroder collection of the writings and letters of Rupert Brooke, with the help of Maggs Bros antiquarian booksellers and thanks to two major grants. Libraries and Archives are the life blood of teaching and research today, as well as the material of College history. They should grow and flourish.

What challenges are facing the Library today?

There are a few – recovering from the pandemic, adapting to changing reading habits, archiving 'born digital' College records – but perhaps the most pressing is the lack of space. This was an issue when I arrived at King's, and architect Richard MacCormac developed designs for a new library facility which would have seen a massive stone half-circle built in the Fellows' Garden. The design was a kind of tiered burial chamber – part underground, part overground – and was eventually realised at the Ruskin Library in Lancaster. In the end we built the excellent scheme designed by Cambridge architects Freeland Rees Roberts at the beginning of the 1990s, which improved access for our users and increased storage area at the heart of the College. Thirty years on from then, we find ourselves yet again short of space to store our archival records; it's very much a cyclical battle.

What are your own plans for retirement?

I plan to haunt the Library still: Archivist Patricia McGuire and I are planning to publish an edition of the earliest College inventories, and I still hope to get to grips with a new catalogue of the College's medieval manuscripts. And, of course, I'll continue to further the interests of the Library and Archives in my role as a Life Fellow!

NATURAL HABITATS: BIODIVERSITY AT KING'S

with Cicely Marshall

While the first year of the wildflower meadow bore witness to a stunning display of annual flowers such as poppies, cornflowers and corn chamomiles, its second year saw the germination of perennial plans such as kidney vetch and small scabious, as part of its transition towards a traditional East Anglian hay meadow.

The biodiversity of the meadow is being regularly monitored by academic staff across the University to understand its effect on species richness, as compared with the lawn which had occupied the space since the latter half of the 18th century. Research Fellow Cicely Marshall is leading the study, which is already reporting significant findings:

"We've found that the meadow supports three times more plant species than the lawn, including nationally scarce species like wild candytuft, and species like cornflower whose native populations have all but disappeared from the UK. The taller and more diverse meadow planting provides food and shelter for 130 insect species identified at the site, with iconic species like the elephant hawk moth and meadow brown butterfly being regular visitors.

"This thriving insect population in turn has a positive benefit for larger bodied species such as bats, which feed on the insects, and were found to be three times more likely to feed over the meadow than the remaining lawn. During a live bat transect (conducted partly by punt!) we identified five different species - Daubenton's, Noctule, Brown long-eared, Common pipistrelle and Soprano pipistrelle – all feeding or commuting along the river, Scholar's Piece and the meadow."

To assist with the monitoring, Cicely was joined by undergraduates Francesca Toccaceli and Calum McLennan as part of the inaugural Summer Research Programme at King's, helping with data collection and analysis, which will help inform the ongoing management of the meadow. The project also gave the students the chance to develop their practical field skills in habitat survey and taxon identification, in a year when opportunities for fieldwork were few and far between. Of the support, Cicely says: "It was wonderful to get out in the field with students again, something that's been impossible with the move to online learning. The work they've been doing to monitor the biodiversity across the College estate feeds directly into the way we manage our grounds, and will make a positive difference to species richness as well as to the King's community and our visitors."

Among the recommendations from the monitoring survey is the introduction of an otter holt on the bank at Scholars' Piece to provide refuge and improve connectivity between otter habitats to the north and south. As for the meadow, Cicely is hopeful that its sustained positive effects will mean that the College takes a favourable view towards its continued development: "There's no doubt that the introduction of the meadow has been an unqualified success; not only has it proven to have had a hugely beneficial impact on our biodiversity within the College, but it's also captured the imagination of so many people across the city and beyond. Personally I'd love to extend the meadow further into the Back Lawn, and I hope we can take a course of action which meets the ecological aspirations of the College while being mindful of the usage of the lawn for events."

Whatever its future, in just two summers of flowering it's hard to deny that the meadow has already had a significant impact. It's a view shared by the Provost, Michael Proctor, who added: "The wildflower meadow has inspired us to think more about how we look after and enhance our biodiversity, and has brought to attention just how much has been lost. We hope its presence in this iconic setting will motivate others to think about sustainability and to consider planting their own meadows elsewhere." Happily, it appears to have done just that!

Cicely Marshall is a Research Fellow at King's and Teaching Associate at the University's Department of Plant Sciences.

***Vanessa cardui*, or Painted Lady, on *Scabiosa columbaria* (Small Scabious) photographed in the wildflower meadow.**

***Episyrphus balteatus*, or Marmalade Hover Fly, on *Scabiosa columbaria* (Small Scabious) photographed in the wildflower meadow.**

***Zygaena filipendulae*, or Six-spot Burnet, on *Scabiosa columbaria* (Small Scabious) photographed in the wildflower meadow.**

Family MATTERS

Father and daughter Roger and Jess Avery both work at King's, in the maintenance and visitors' departments respectively.

Before arriving at King's, Roger was a footballer with Cambridge United, serving his apprenticeship under manager Ron Atkinson, turning professional at 18, and becoming the first Cambridge-born player to appear for the club in the football league. After leaving the 'U's he turned semi-professional with Bishop's Stortford, enjoying some good FA Cup runs and playing at Wembley, while labouring with his father. As Roger recalls, it was working for Milton builder Derek Haird that he first visited the Cambridge colleges:

"I'd done a few jobs at King's and was familiar with the place, so when a member of staff retired, the Clerk of Works asked me how I'd feel about working at the College. At that time my dad was about to retire and it made sense to go for it, and that was 22 years ago."

Shop manager Jess arrived three years ago after working in retail and at the Mumford Theatre. What did dad Roger think about her getting a job at King's? "I didn't even know she'd applied!" he laughs. Jess explains: "I saw the job come up and thought I'd give it a try, but didn't tell dad until the day I came for my interview – we bumped into each other at the Porters' Lodge!"

Having got the job, Jess is now responsible for the day-to-day running of the shop – contacting suppliers and maintaining stocks – and is keen to implement some changes: "We don't want to just be a souvenir shop; we want to support local businesses and artists more, and to keep our products high quality."

Roger's work meanwhile sees him co-ordinate and supervise maintenance works. "We're trying to become increasingly proactive", he says. "We'll always have the reactive stuff to deal with – lights tripping, drains blocking – but we're trying to eliminate that as much as we can by nipping them in the bud."

Both father and daughter are positive and friendly presences around College and enjoy being around other people. Roger comments: "It's always nice to feel like you've helped somebody, even if it's just arranging moth spraying! What might seem like an innocuous problem can sometimes become a big issue, especially if a student's doing exams at the time." As Jess adds, "it's the rapport and relationship you create with people that makes your workplace. You spend as much time at work as anywhere, so I look at it as if the other people I work with are like my family."

And in this case, they actually are! But are there any more members of the Avery clan likely to be arriving at King's anytime soon? According to Roger, you never know: "My wife always comments on how nice it'd be to work here, but I'm not sure we need a hairdresser!"

Softly I take my leave,
As softly as I came;
"Goodbye!" I softly wave
To the western clouds again.

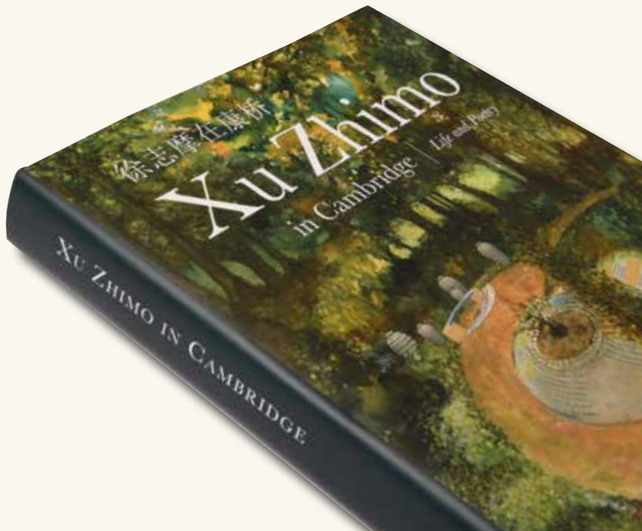
100 YEARS OF XU ZHIMO IN CAMBRIDGE

The beginning of term saw us mark the 100-year anniversary of the arrival of one of our most intriguing alumni, the Chinese poet Xu Zhimo. When Xu entered King's in October 1921 to pursue a one-year programme of study, few would have predicted the lasting impact that his relatively brief stay would subsequently have both on Xu's own life and in the wider context of the Chinese literary tradition. Xu's experiences in Cambridge – the people he met, the influences he was exposed to, the emotions he felt – all shaped his worldview and inspired his poetic writing. Among these works is Xu's most well-known and widely recited poem, 'Saying Goodbye to Cambridge Again', written in 1928 and now a standard text in Chinese literature syllabuses, read and learned by millions of schoolchildren every year.

It was in recognition of Xu's important connection with King's that the College opened a Memorial Garden in 2018 near to one of his favourite spots, merging English trees with plants native to Xu's home region of Haining. A granite stone at the entrance to the Garden has the first and last couplets of 'Saying Goodbye to Cambridge Again' carved upon it.

To commemorate the centenary, the College has published the book *Xu Zhimo in Cambridge* by Fellow Commoner Stuart Lyons (KC 1962), containing 24 poems in Xu's original Chinese, with Pinyin transliteration and Stuart's English verse translations. Drawing on archival material and with an introduction detailing the poet's life and friendships, the book highlights the Romantic influences on Xu's poetry and illuminates his emerging, though tragically short-lived, literary talents.

The book includes Stuart's verse rendition of 'Wild West Cambridge at Dusk', the winner of the 2020 Stephen Spender Prize for poetry in translation. A limited number of copies are available in hardback and can be purchased from the College shop, with all proceeds going towards student support at King's.



MY PhD

with David Matyas

In my doctoral project I'm trying to understand the legal universe navigated by humanitarians, looking in particular at those formal and informal actors who are providing aid and the scope of their rights and obligations.

Ultimately I'm trying to think of more pluralistic ways of understanding humanitarians and whether there are means of expanding in law the scope of who they are, what they can do, and the protections afforded to them.

I've taken a bit of a meandering road here, moving back and forth between academia and practice. I started being interested in humanitarian issues during my undergraduate years, heading from Canada to Oxford for a Master's degree in development studies. It was work that took me to Ethiopia where I was based in the rural Gurage region and saw how two different communities – highland and lowland – were managing weather risks. I loved the work and started looking for other opportunities to engage in humanitarian and development practice.

My first job after my Master's was in the Foresight division of the UK Government Office for Science. I was part of projects that looked at the futures of global environmental change and migration, and the future of disasters – asking what we can do now, in terms of policy decisions, to make sure that we're ready to address the disasters of the future. From there I went to work at Save the Children, in London and at its country offices in Niger and Senegal. It was work based mostly around disaster risk, vulnerability, and food security, and in many ways it was a dream job.

But during this work, I began to experience more and more acutely a range of structural and systemic challenges that I didn't feel I had the necessary skills to fully engage with. Law seemed like a way to start building that toolset, so I moved back to Canada to retrain as a lawyer at McGill University, passing my summers working variously in legal aid in the arctic and at a corporate law firm. I then spent a year clerking at the Supreme Court of Canada, for the wonderful and progressive Justice Rosalie Abella, before the chance came to study in Cambridge as a Gates Scholar, and here I am!

"what constitutes humanitarian assistance – is it just about saving lives, or does it encompass broader protection mandates as well?"

Among the questions I'm wrestling with are how humanitarians are legally defined, what protections exist for those actors under international law, and whether that humanitarian space might be imagined more expansively in law. The traditional notion of humanitarians as being employed by, for instance, the Red Cross or Médécins sans Frontières, doesn't fully reflect the diversity of the humanitarian actors on the ground; there are many other informal actors, members of diasporas and local solidarity networks who are engaged in humanitarian assistance but who don't fit the mainstream idea of who a humanitarian is. The definition of a humanitarian is important to consider because it bears on other questions, like who has safeguards, who has obligations, and who has access – questions which law as a discipline can help approach in a structured manner.

I'm also looking at what constitutes humanitarian assistance – is it just about saving lives, or does it encompass broader protection mandates as well? That's a big conversation; the part that I've been interested in is what legal sources are saying, and how those sources map onto the debate. A lot of the sources I've been looking at tend to track quite closely to a narrow definition of a "principled" view of humanitarian assistance, based on humanity, independence, neutrality and impartiality. Since there's no single overarching international treaty in this area, I'm drawing on sources from human rights law, international humanitarian law, international disaster law, and the law of the sea – all areas that relate to providing assistance.

Generally under international law it's the state that has the primary obligation to provide humanitarian assistance. An NGO or UN body can offer to assist, but their access is subject to state consent. The state can refuse to give consent for that assistance – it might consider that international humanitarian assistance isn't required, for example, or amounts to non-neutral support for an opposition group – but it can't do that arbitrarily. This can lead to tension surrounding so-called needs assessments, which might determine whether the denial of consent is arbitrary or not. Often it's the state carrying out these assessments, but many NGOs will perform their own needs assessments which might be based on alternative indicators and come to different conclusions.

It's also not always clear who should be asked for consent – in opposition held regions of a country, for instance, should requests be channelled through the central state or an opposition group? Can you ask a non-state armed group for consent to enter an area? There have been cases where, in the same conflict, some humanitarians might take one approach – closely following the central government's directives on where they can be headquartered and provide assistance – while others take different stances on how to proceed – rejecting those conditions and providing assistance instead, with the operational consent of non-state armed groups.

One of the avenues I've been exploring recently is around humanitarian defences in domestic law, and how acting in a humanitarian *manner* might offer a shield against criminal prosecution. I've been looking closely at a Canadian case where three individuals were accused of human smuggling into Canada and tried to defend their actions by claiming that they had been humanitarian in nature. The notion of a humanitarian defence in the judgment took the narrow definition of "principled" humanitarian assistance as a point of departure, but allowed some play within those principles to account for the complexity and precarity of humanitarian assistance. It's an approach that could be interesting in other contexts too. And, if we start to see these principles as a framework rather than a set of firm red lines, we might start to imagine more pluralistic ways of defining humanitarian assistance that aren't limited to traditional actors, but encompass a more diverse constellation of figures as well.

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT...

A new four-year Research Fellowship at King's will focus on findings from the excavation last year of a large and rich early medieval burial ground on the College's Croft Gardens site on Barton Road, and what can be learnt about life and death in Cambridge after the end of the Roman period.

The existence of the early medieval cemetery on Barton Road had been presumed since the nineteenth century, but it was only when existing buildings at Croft Gardens were demolished last summer that it became possible to investigate the area archaeologically.

The project was carried out for King's by a team from Albion Archaeology, who found more than 60 graves, most dating from the early Anglo-Saxon period (c. 400–650 CE). The burials were on varying alignments and many contained grave goods including bronze brooches, bead necklaces, glass flasks, weapons, and pottery. Evidence of Iron Age structures and Roman earthworks was also identified.

The findings are unusual in their extent and preservation, and will provide information about the health and diseases of the community, as well as burial habits and dress. New methods can now reveal nutritional and genetic evidence, helping to analyse migration and family relationships and changing ways of life around the ruins of Roman-period Cambridge.

New Research Fellow Katie Haworth will be working in collaboration with other local experts to help increase our understanding of a transformative period in history.

Save the Date

Members and Friends Events

2022

19 March
Foundation Lunch

2 April
20th, 25th & 30th Anniversary Reunion

7 May
Legacy Lunch

14 June
King's Golf Day

18 June
10th Anniversary Reunion

23 September
50th Anniversary Reunion

24 September
35th, 40th & 45th Anniversary Reunion

26 November
1441 Foundation Dinner

Concerts and Services

2021

24 December
A Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols

25 December
Christmas Day Eucharist

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

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Making a Gift
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