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KING'S PARADE

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

In this issue

**CAMBRIDGE GIRLS'
CHESS INITIATIVE**

**INTRODUCING
DANIEL HYDE**

**IN CONVERSATION
WITH MURRAY
SHANAHAN**



Contents

3

BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE

4

INTRODUCING DANIEL HYDE

6

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

8

MAKING THE RIGHT MOVES

10

IN CONVERSATION WITH MURRAY SHANAHAN

12

MY PhD – LAURA BRASSINGTON

14

KEEPING HOUSE

16

SAVE THE DATE GET IN TOUCH



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Welcome

from the Admissions Tutor, Bill Burgwinkle



One of the great things about doing admissions at King's is seeing the new influx of undergraduates arrive at the start of each academic year, in full knowledge of the determination, industry and aptitude that they've displayed in order to get here.

It's also a reminder of how much more there is to do: that there are thousands of students out there – bright and eager – who just haven't had an equal chance. They might be every bit as talented as the students who do make it here, but either their schooling, their family life, their health, or their postal code has seen to it that their opportunities have been limited in some way. At King's we've long been aware of this and for more than fifty years have done our best to level the playing field, but obstacles still remain. Across the country there are students who lack the support to achieve their full potential in their school examinations, or feel discouraged and ill-equipped to make an application in the first place.

Over the past year we've tripled our efforts in this area, with a particular emphasis on helping our applicants overcome their educational disadvantages and improve their exam performance by providing the kind of encouragement and tutorial assistance to which some of their counterparts are accustomed.

As a result of these efforts, among those new undergraduates that arrived this term are thirteen students – all from schools that don't traditionally send students to Oxbridge, from families who haven't benefited from higher education, or facing other challenges – who were supported with funded private tutoring to help them attain the necessary grades. A further nine new students who have just arrived were part of a separate scheme that saw them paired with mentors who offered advice and encouragement over the course of the final five months before they took their A-levels.

Our admissions work is ever more linked up with that of the Development Office and Directors of Studies in individual subjects. Together we are determined to fashion a 21st century College, a real reflection of the population, which represents the best of the past and our aspirations for the future.

BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE

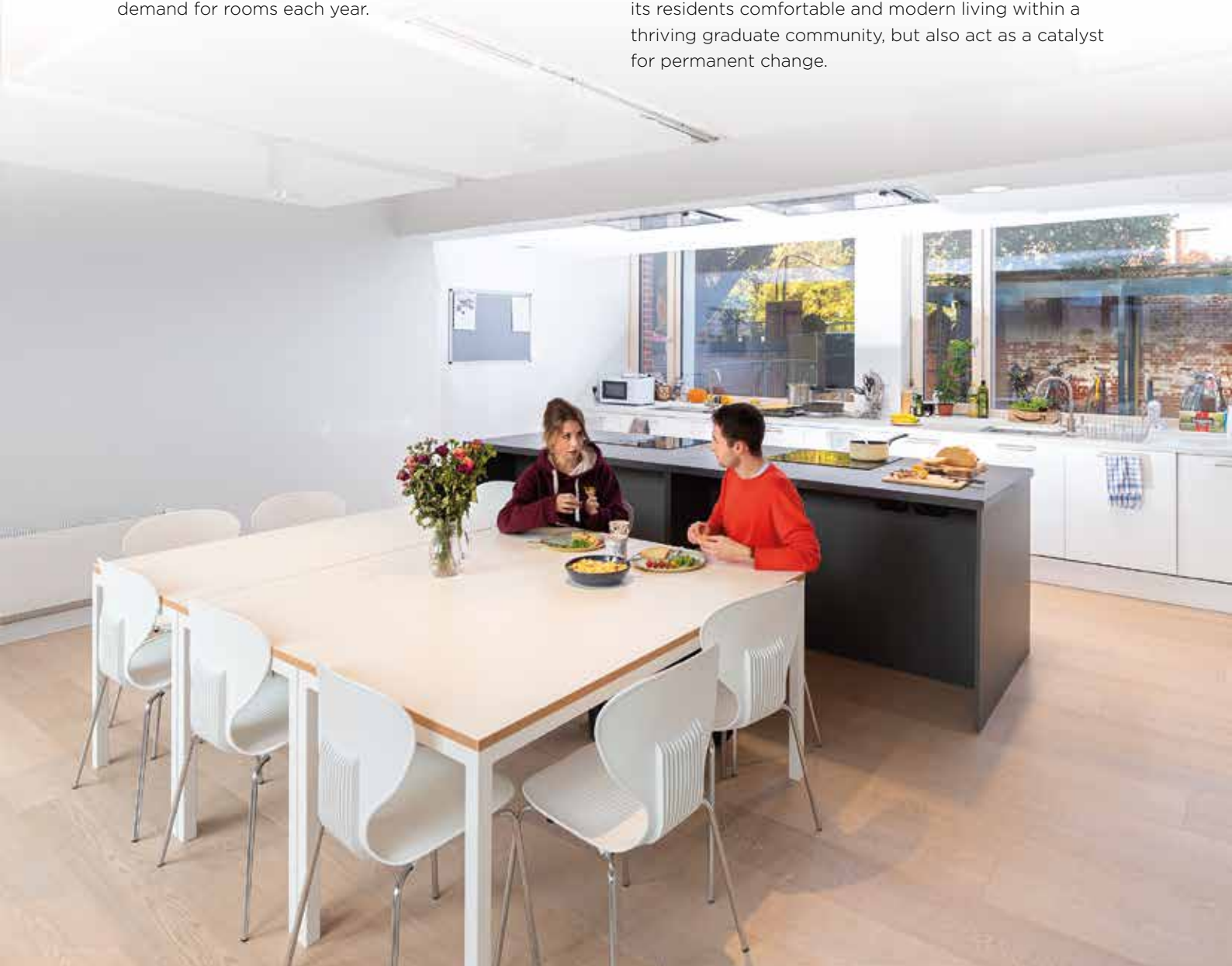
Work on the new graduate accommodation at Cranmer Road is on the verge of completion, with an initial group of students already in residence and the remainder due to move in at the beginning of Lent Term.

When fully occupied, the Cranmer Road accommodation – along with the adjacent Grasshopper Lodge – will house 102 graduate students across one unified site, more than doubling its previous occupancy and creating a cohesive graduate community with a central shared space.

Together with the College's forthcoming redevelopment of the Croft Gardens site on Barton Road, the new buildings will mean that, for the first time in our history, we will soon be able to provide College accommodation for all King's graduate students who require it. This has long been a desire of the College, and with rent prices in private housing in Cambridge becoming ever more prohibitively expensive, it has become increasingly imperative that we are able to fulfil the anticipated demand for rooms each year.

The new accommodation at Cranmer Road and Croft Gardens will also play a key role in supporting and expanding the College's programme of activities in helping applicants from socially and economically disadvantaged backgrounds to come to King's and succeed here.

The combined rental income from both properties will be reinvested into the Student Support and Access Initiative, providing crucial funding that will allow the College to intensify our access and outreach work, continue our nascent efforts in offering tutorial and mentoring support, and to establish a more generous and equitable system of financial support for both undergraduate and graduate students. In this way it is hoped that the new accommodation will not only offer its residents comfortable and modern living within a thriving graduate community, but also act as a catalyst for permanent change.



INTRODUCING THE NEW DIRECTOR OF MUSIC

Daniel Hyde

You first came to King's as an Organ Scholar in 2000 – will that experience come in useful as Director of Music?

I think anyone who's been an Organ Scholar at King's has been prepared for the professional standard to which we adhere, so in that sense it will have helped prepare me for any job of this ilk. Additionally, of course, I have a sense of the Chapel and its particularities as a building, as well as an understanding of the pressures that the current organ scholars come under in terms of doing what is essentially a full-time apprenticeship whilst also reading for a degree. But at the same time, I was a student learning a craft at that stage, whereas I'm now here as a teacher and working in a completely different way, so even though there's a degree of familiarity one can't really assume that one knows everything.

There have been a number of notably long-serving Directors of Music. Does that history of longevity bring with it an added expectation?

I certainly won't feel I have to stay here for a specific length of time just to chalk up an average, just as Stephen Cleobury said that he never intended to be here for 37 years. I think it's most important in this kind of job that one considers oneself to be a guardian of a tradition, and as far as I'm concerned there's a very healthy tradition here which I need to nurture and develop by cultivating its ongoing continuity. I'm sure there'll come a time when I'll feel like I've done what I can do and then it'll be time to hand over that stewardship to somebody else.

Could you give us a sense of Stephen's influence on you in your career?

Obviously when I was here as a student he was one of my biggest mentors, as with so many of the organ scholars and choral scholars over the past 37 years. But as well as developing one's innate musicianship and instinctive skills, he taught a level of professionalism below which one doesn't stoop. That's probably been the most valuable thing – learning some very specific professional skills of being prepared for anything at any time, not just when the cameras are on or the microphone is in your face.

As for your own tenure as Director of Music, what are your immediate priorities?

It might sound like a lazy response but the last thing I want to do is to suddenly start making sweeping changes, so I'm really just seeing how everything operates for now. Certainly one of the initial priorities is to sort out a workable method of recruitment into the choir, which has become increasingly difficult after the eradication of the centralised choral trials each September, before academic interviews take place. What that has meant is that we essentially

now don't know until January whether any of the new intake of undergraduates are likely to be of the requisite potential to be in the Choir, which inevitably makes the whole process a bit of a lottery. Recruitment is a year-round activity and I'm happy to meet prospective candidates informally at any time; our best ambassadors are those members who fly the flag for us by mentioning the choral opportunities on offer to their friends and family.

Do you have any ideas about the direction in which you'd like to take the Choir's repertoire?

Although the Choir has a platform that no other Choir of its kind enjoys, behind closed doors it's also an educational experience. There's always going to be a core repertoire that we sing in Chapel that is crafted and designed to be both suitably varied and educationally purposeful. So as far as the liturgical repertoire goes, the skill is more in turning the soil than anything else.

For our concert repertoire, again there's a bit of a balance to strike between the sort of music our promoters request and the new and imaginative work that I'll be keen to commission, continuing Stephen's legacy in that area. On the summer tour of Australia, for instance, we worked directly with the composer of a new piece, Ross Edwards, to nuance his score and develop the composition through rehearsal and performance. That's musically very exciting and a model I'd certainly like to replicate.

The challenge as far as recordings are concerned is really just trying to avoid rehashing music that's already been recorded. In a way that gives us more of an opportunity for some creative programming and I've already had some thoughts about areas of the repertoire which perhaps haven't been fully explored by the Choir – whether in terms of specific composers or music centred around specific themes. There are definitely a few ideas percolating in my head at the moment!

As we enter into November, your attention will naturally switch to the Christmas services soon – do you feel ready?

No, not yet! It'll always be easier once I've done the first cycle of something and I can't rely on my experiences of performing in the Christmas services nearly twenty years ago. When I was an Organ Scholar I made sure I did my hours and hours of practice and could deliver everything seamlessly, but that's not the same as standing on the floor when it's actually happening, and being responsible for drawing the whole thing together. But again it goes back to what Stephen taught us – be thoroughly prepared, well in advance – so that's what we'll be doing from now on!

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

with Siobhan Gormley and Monica Kullar

Tucked away on Chaucer Road, the MRC Cognition and Brain Sciences Unit (CBU) is home to more than 100 students and academics conducting research into a wide range of neuroscientific topics such as memory, perception, and mental health. King's PhD students Siobhan and Monica work in the 'Emotion' Group there, which has both a dedicated wing for creating and testing new therapies, as well as a number of scientists investigating the fundamental cognitions behind emotion and mood, terms which Monica's research is aiming to unpick:

"There are a lot of different perspectives on how to define emotion in research terms, and when it comes to mood it's even more unclear," she says. "One way that we're trying to conceptualise the difference is by looking at emotions as being driven by a stimulus or in response to a specific event, whereas mood could be seen as more of a

background affective state of mind – something that might feel a little bit less intense but which is longer-lasting and can colour other experiences."

The divergence in terminology is one which is made almost instinctively by doctors and therapists, but which has significant implications in understanding how depressed or anxious individuals might experience their affective states differently to a 'healthy' control:

"When I've spoken to practising clinicians they've emphasized that they spend a lot of time focusing on moving their patients away from talking about their generalised mood towards thinking about discrete, specific emotions – whether positive or negative – so that they can learn how to better cope with those emotions. In scientific research there isn't such a straightforward distinction; academic papers and research methodologies often use the terms in different ways or even interchangeably, which





inevitably results in conflicting evidence about potential treatments. I'm hoping that my research can contribute to a more nuanced understanding of how clinical patients might be experiencing and understanding their own emotions and mood, and perhaps we might then be able to sort out some of the discrepancies and improve evidence-based practice in a clinical setting too."

Siobhan's work looks more closely at evolutionary theories of depression, particularly the belief that behaviours such as submissiveness and withdrawal can often be caused by a decline in an individual's social status.

"My main focus is on empathy – how we empathise with individuals of an alternative social status, and how that might be different for individuals with depression. Within cognitive science, empathy's generally split into two different types: affective empathy, or our ability to feel 'with' someone when we're told that they're feeling sad or happy, for example; and cognitive empathy, which is more about our ability to infer what another person's emotions are without being told. There's quite a lot of research already suggesting that individuals with depression are highly attuned to affective empathy when they're being told about a negative emotion, but about the same as a healthy control when that emotion is a positive one. My theory is that this will also hold true for cognitive empathy – that individuals with low mood will display a negative bias and be uncommonly likely to identify when a person is feeling unhappy, but not necessarily when they are experiencing something more positive."

Like Monica, Siobhan appreciates the potential for her research to impact future mental health treatments, but for now is concentrated purely on understanding cognitive processes rather than how her findings might be applied.

"I think that the main focus for the two of us is more about understanding the underlying causes of different mental health problems in order to move towards a more transdiagnostic approach to mental health in general, and away from discrete diagnoses such as depression, anxiety and PTSD. There's obviously a huge overlap in symptoms so it's likely that there's also an overlap in cognitions, and if we can find a specific cognition and understand it, then we can target treatment better for that subset of people before trying the generic treatments and therapies."

Later in their studies, the pair will be monitoring the brain activity of their volunteers using some of the sophisticated equipment at the Unit, including the fMRI scanner and magnetoencephalograph (MEG). For now though, Monica is concentrating on an observational study using much more familiar hardware:



"The other side of my research is looking into where the mind goes at rest and how we can better study the differences in the ways that people drift towards certain thoughts. What's really interesting is that a lot of people in the field look at mind-wandering as simply stimulus-independent thought, rather than spontaneous thought, so many of the studies involve measuring what happens when someone's mind drifts from some form of boring, repetitive task such as endlessly pressing a button. My hypothesis is that this isn't really the best way to study what the mind does at rest and I'm more interested in how the mind itself chooses places to navigate to – different kinds of memories to bring up or different kinds of thoughts to drift towards. There's a lot of research that shows that when people are depressed they not only tend to wander a lot more mentally, but also more towards the past and towards negative thoughts, and that's something that I'd like to unpack a little bit.

"One of the stages of this will be an experience-sampling study where participants will be asked over an extended period to answer surveys on their mobile phones prompting them to respond with what they've been thinking about throughout the day and where their mind has been drifting. This will hopefully provide us with a rich data set of more naturalistic responses than we'd get in a laboratory setting and also allow us to look more closely at an individual, rather than at the group level, which tends to be the norm for these kinds of studies."

Siobhan and Monica are in the second year of their doctoral studies at the CBU and are also both on the committee of the King's College Graduate Society, as Equality Officer and Welfare Officer respectively.

Making the Right Moves

King's Fellows Chryssi Giannitsarou and Elisa Faraglia are part of a team of four that run the Cambridge Girls' Chess Initiative (CGCI), providing chess coaching to girls aged between 5 and 13 in the Cambridge area.

The Cambridge Girls' Chess Initiative was founded in 2015 by Mette Eilstrup-Sangiovanni, a Fellow at Sidney Sussex College, to address the fact that young girls are vastly outnumbered by boys in after-school or extra-curricular chess clubs. When Mette went on sabbatical to Italy for a year, Elisa Faraglia, whose daughter was one of those benefitting from the coaching, got involved to help keep up the project's momentum. As the Initiative expanded, Kerry Carter-Cox and Chryssi Giannitsarou – who both

have daughters that also play – came on board, and what started as an irregular occurrence has now become a monthly training session. Over time, it has given more than eighty girls in the local area regular coaching from a team of highly experienced chess coaches, led by the international chess master Dagnė Čiukšytė. We caught up with Chryssi and Elisa – both Fellows in Economics at King's – to ask them about the Initiative's aims and aspirations.





How did the Cambridge Girls' Chess Initiative first come about and why is it important that something like this exists?

EF: My daughter's in a chess club at her school but in the club there are only three girls to about thirty-six boys, and that can be intimidating. If the clubs are dominated by boys then it's very easy for the girls to get discouraged and lose interest - bringing them to the training here at King's makes them feel like they're in a more welcoming space and one in which they can be at ease. Besides, many of the local schools simply don't have chess clubs, so there's a dearth of access more widely which is naturally exacerbated by the pervasive stereotype of chess somehow being a masculine activity. There's no gender pre-disposition towards being good at chess, and so this represents a small step in addressing deeply ingrained gender imbalances in our cultural and educational system.

Do you have a sense of the levels of girls' participation in chess clubs across the country?

CG: Looking at the most recent figures of the International Chess Federation one sees that out of 900,000 players registered worldwide, the participation rate for women was 14.3%. Shockingly in the UK that percentage is only 8.1%, and if you look at the world's top 100 girls there are no British players whatsoever. In tournaments the ratio was found to be even worse: sixteen male players are taking part in chess competitions for every one female player. Given those numbers it's no surprise that there are so few women currently competing at the elite level - there's only one woman ranked in the world's top 100 - but there's also no reason why that wouldn't change if girls were actively encouraged to take part from an early age.

How do the training sessions at King's work? What's the format?

EF: We have three levels: beginner, intermediate and advanced, and usually about forty girls in total at each session. The younger girls stay for an hour and a half but the intermediate and advanced players stay for two and a half hours. We have four coaches at each session, so it usually works out that we've got one coach allocated to every ten girls. In addition to the training sessions, we also have a team that competes in the Cambridgeshire Chess Championship against local schools. There are about thirty teams in the league and ours is the only all girls team.

You also held your first tournament over Summer; how did that come about?

CG: The coaches suggested that we should have an internal competition at the end of the year, so on the last day of June they arrived with their software for deciding the matches and we had a Swiss-style tournament. It was all very informal and pressure-free;

everyone got a certificate at the end and it gave the girls a sense of having graduated at the end of the year. More than anything it was just lovely to have a room full of girls playing competitive chess; you just don't see that anywhere else.

What kind of skills and competencies can the girls learn through playing chess?

EF: It's a fantastic way of developing logical and abstract reasoning skills which are especially useful for any form of work which is mathematical or spatial, but perhaps more than that it encourages patience and strategic thinking. When the girls play for the first time they have a tendency to rush through each game, but after a while they start to manage their time better and take a more considered and planned approach; the matches take longer and are actually much more interesting to watch. That kind of strategic thinking has obvious benefits in terms of the girls' approach to tests and examinations in general - not just in maths but in other subjects as well.

Have there been any moments or outcomes over the last few years of the Initiative that you've been especially proud of?

EF: Seeing the girls perform well in the local league is always pleasing, and some of them are now competing nationally as well. But it's the wider progress which for me is more gratifying. This year we actually had to drop one team from the league because some of the girls were now playing for their school team instead - that's really good news and exactly how it should be. We've forged some positive relationships with the local chess community too, to the extent that the regional federation here in Cambridgeshire has asked us to try to put together an under-10 girls team that can compete for the county nationally. That kind of external validation has been really rewarding.

What's next for the Initiative? Is there anything in particular that you'd like to achieve?

CG: In practical terms, we're in the process of applying for charitable status which will allow us to make grant applications and expand the initiative so that we can open it up to more girls in the region and pay for the additional coaches, chessboards and clocks that this would necessitate.

EF: One scheme that we're trying to encourage this year is for all the schools that participate in the local league to field a team made up of an even split of boys and girls for at least one match of the year. Although it's great that we're able to provide this coaching here at King's, at some point we'd like to see the schools doing it themselves and to see chess clubs more actively embracing the involvement of girls and encouraging them to join in.

IN CONVERSATION WITH

Murray Shanahan

After publishing what he considered to be his *magnum opus*, a comprehensive theory of cognition and consciousness from the multiple perspectives of neuroscience, experimental psychology and philosophy, Murray Shanahan could have been forgiven for feeling a trifle disappointed with its public reception. “I put all these years of thoughts in so many different disciplines together into this one academic monograph that cost about 60 quid to buy and absolutely nobody read,” he recalls.

Except one person certainly did: the novelist and screenwriter Alex Garland, whose output included the novel *The Beach* and the screenplays for *28 Days Later* and *Never Let Me Go*. And in 2013, three years after the publication of Murray’s *Embodiment and the Inner Life*, the Professor at Imperial College received an out-of-the-blue email from Garland:

“He’d read it and found it very useful in relation to a script he’d been writing for a film about artificial intelligence and consciousness, and asked if I’d like to meet up for coffee and talk about it”, Murray remembers. “I didn’t have to think very hard – it was an exciting prospect to be involved in a science fiction project and in a way like going back to the deepest of my childhood roots and how I got into the field in the first place.”

It transpired that the script, which was later nominated for an Oscar for Best Original Screenplay, was for Garland’s directorial debut, *Ex Machina*. And Murray’s involvement didn’t end there: “We met up quite a few times during the filming and then I also got involved in the publicity for the film. If you’d told me ten years ago that I was going to be interviewed by *Empire* magazine with a famous film director I’d have just laughed.”

Although *Ex Machina* won critical acclaim from within the artificial intelligence community, Murray does have reservations about the fidelity of popular representations of AI more broadly: “I think there’s a lot of confusion propagated by the media who like to conflate applications of AI with what we call artificial general intelligence, the kind that we see in science-fiction films through characters like Ava in *Ex Machina* or HAL in *2001: A Space Odyssey*. We just don’t know how to build that kind of human-level general intelligence yet, or systems that can construct abstract representations of the world out of the raw sensory data that that comes in.”





The notion of imbuing a robot with sophisticated cognitive capacities inevitably leads to that of introducing emotional consciousness. Is that something Murray can see on the horizon? “You can certainly build an embodied AI robot that exhibits behaviour which is emotion-like but it’s a whole other ballgame to build a robot or an AI that actually has emotions. Similarly I think you can imagine building a robot that is aware of its surroundings, and maybe even aware of itself as an embodied entity and aware of its own cognitive states and thought processes. But that’s not necessarily consciousness, and if we ever got the point where we could build something that was capable of suffering, for example, then maybe we should think twice about whether we want to do that or not.”

One of the enduring debates within the AI community has been around what form this artificial general intelligence would take – whether through mimicry of the human brain or a less imitative alternative. Having dedicated several years of his early career to computer modelling of the brain, where does Murray stand? “The jury’s still out. People often say that maybe it’ll turn out that the best way to build artificial intelligence is not to copy the brain, but it’s certainly a viable research path. What we do know is that the very large collections of neurons within the brain can give you sophisticated cognition, so it seems to me that taking as much biological inspiration as possible is a good idea.”

This interest in neuroscience and cognition has been merely one facet of a wide-ranging career that has seen Murray embrace symbolic logic, gatecrash Philosopher King’s meetings during his Computer Science PhD, and gradually shift towards the physical rather than the abstract: “At a certain point I became rather disillusioned with that symbolic approach to AI and so I started to abandon that whole way of thinking and got more interested in robotics. One of the arguments was that you shouldn’t be thinking of intelligence as this disembodied phenomenon of rational thought but rather as grounded in our interaction with the physical world and the complex objects that it contains.”

For Murray, this emphasis on the tangibility of AI also has an ethical dimension: “The technology needs to be transparent in the sense that it’s humanly comprehensible and not just a kind of black box that does something mysterious. That comprehension is important in terms of trust but also feeds into issues of regulation because it’s very hard to regulate something that you just don’t understand.”

Such are the issues of AI safety and ethics which Murray explores through his work as an advisory board member for Cambridge’s Leverhulme Centre for the Future of Intelligence, a multi-disciplinary partnership with Imperial College London and the universities of Oxford and Berkeley:

“We don’t look so much at the alarmist, apocalyptic scenarios but much shorter-term issues about the ramifications of the AI applications that are around today. And not just about mitigating dangers but about how can we make the best use of AI to benefit humanity – how can we harness advances in machine learning, for instance, to build medical applications that can reliably and rapidly diagnose from images the presence of tumours or other kinds of diseases. Those kinds of questions we felt needed a lot more attention, not just from scientists but also from philosophers, social scientists, economists and so on.”

If the box-office appeal of *Ex Machina* is anything to go by, it seems likely that questions of the future of AI will be given plenty of attention in the public sphere too. But might the film also contain a hidden message for its audience?

“There’s actually a bit of Python code that appears on screen which I wrote for the film, and if you translate the code it prints out the ISBN of my book. Within about 24 hours of the pirated version of the film surfacing online, quite a few people had discovered the ‘Easter egg’ and I did see a brief spike in book sales!” he jokes.

Murray Shanahan (KC 1984) is Professor of Cognitive Robotics at Imperial College London and Senior Research Scientist at DeepMind.

MY PhD

with Laura Brassington



In my thesis, I explore Charles Darwin's chief scientific instrument: his correspondence network. Darwin's network spanned oceans, time, and – most intriguingly for me – considerations of status in 19th-century science and society.

My main concern is with how Darwin corresponded with individuals from vastly different social and economic backgrounds. *On the Origin of Species* was not just the product of Darwin's readings in economics and philosophy, but also testament to his use of a diverse range of facts gleaned from those embedded in generations of knowledge about gooseberries, radishes, or rabbits. Central to the *Origin* is an analogy between natural and artificial selection. Just as a skilled breeder of sheep would select individuals with desirable variations and allow only those to breed, Darwin realised that nature worked in the same way, but more rigorously and over a longer period of time. After

many generations, the process would produce differences as wide as those between the Merino and the Leicester Longwool, or between the Labrador and the Bedlington Terrier.

One such community with whom Darwin corresponded were the pigeon fanciers. Although Darwin himself bred pigeons as he attempted to understand the extent of variation under domestication, he mostly relied on the advice of figures such as the journalist, William Bernhard Tegetmeier. "Believing that it is always best to study some special group, I have, after deliberation, taken up domestic pigeons", Darwin wrote in *Origin*. For three years, between

1855 and 1858, Darwin entered their world, corresponding with their most renowned figures, reading and commenting on their publications, and joining their clubs – sometimes in the most unlikely of places ...

*I sat one evening in a **gin palace** in the Borough amongst a set of pigeon fanciers, when it was hinted that Mr. Bult had crossed his Pouters with Runts to gain size; and if you had seen the solemn, the mysterious, and awful shakes of the head which all the fanciers gave at this scandalous proceeding, you would have recognised ... how dangerous for endless generations the process was.*

Darwin to T.H. Huxley,
27 November 1859



The pigeon fanciers were not 'citizen scientists' or 'outsider artists', but individuals dedicated to their craft, whose observations and knowledge, grounded in generations of tradition, were of vital importance to Darwin's theory. Many individuals from such communities were deeply engrossed by the pursuit of scientific knowledge and overcame great barriers to contribute to scientific networks. The value of exploring Darwin's correspondence is that it reveals a cross-section of views on science and society at the time. A wealth of sources, for instance, testify to the importance of the contributions of women to knowledge about nature – women such as the silkworm observer Mary Whitby, who performed important experiments for Darwin on the inheritance of caterpillar peculiarities.

Although many studies highlight women and working-class practitioners, they tend to treat them as individual curiosities, set apart from mainstream issues. By exploring their place within the wider contexts of the changing social roles of scientific practitioners and the formation of disciplines, as seen through correspondence, we are able to treat their contributions to knowledge seriously and resituate both the figures and their work within the history of science.

Darwin's correspondence took him to some unexpected places, and thanks to his vast scientific network, I too have been able to explore the making of scientific networks in a range of fascinating locations. Next stop: the Acharya Jagadish Chandra Bose Indian Botanic Garden, Kolkata.

To find out more about the Darwin Correspondence Project with which Laura's research is closely aligned, visit www.darwinproject.ac.uk

The Darwin Correspondence Project is an initiative based at the University Library that began in 1974 to locate the naturalist's letters and publish full transcripts of them alongside extensive contextual notes, both online and in the printed 30-volume series *The Correspondence of Charles Darwin*.

The Project has identified over 15,000 letters exchanged between Darwin and more than 2,000 correspondents around the world. Such was his epistolary yield that, at times, his letter-writing proved an encumbrance to Darwin; in 1869 he wrote to his old acquaintance John Innes that "I get so many foolish letters from foolish people, that I seldom have the heart to write to my friends."

But Darwin's correspondence was also a useful way of communicating with his scientific network of physicians, farmers, gardeners and other working people who could provide valuable information for his research and books. One such correspondent was the Hertfordshire nurseryman Thomas Rivers, an authority on the cultivation of roses and fruit trees, whose experiments Darwin had read about in the *Gardeners' Chronicle* and other periodicals. Their correspondence began in December 1862, when Darwin wrote to Rivers asking for information relating to the degree of variation in the buds of fruit trees:

"I do not know whether you will forgive a stranger addressing you. My name may possibly be known to you. – I am now writing a book on the Variation of Animals & Plants under domestication; & there is one little piece of information, which it is more likely that you could give me, than any man in the world, if you can spare half an hour from your professional labours & are inclined to be so kind."

Having graciously provided the "little piece of information" that Darwin sought, Rivers thereafter became a key source of answers for other investigations, in spite of Darwin's misgivings about impinging too heavily on Rivers' time: "When a person is very good-natured, he gets much pestered, – a discovery which I daresay you have made, or anyhow will soon make," he wrote to Rivers early in their correspondence. In a letter of 1863, however, he playfully legitimised his regular pestering of Rivers on the grounds of its potential benefit to society:

"I have little compunction for being so troublesome, – not more than a grand Inquisitor has in torturing a Heretic – for am I not doing a real good public service in screwing crumbs of knowledge out of your wealth of information?"

As the correspondence continued, Rivers felt emboldened to offer conjectures of his own, and a genuine affinity appears to have developed between the two: Rivers wrote expressing his wish that Darwin was his neighbour, while an invitation to visit Sawbridgeworth was only declined for fear of Darwin's enjoyment of the conversation providing too much "mental excitement" for him to bear. Over the following years, Rivers proceeded to assist Darwin in performing experiments, checking theories, and procuring specimens, finding himself frequently cited in Darwin's *Variation* when it appeared in 1868. Upon receipt of a signed copy of the book, Rivers, who by that time had turned 70 and retired from the nursery, wrote back to Darwin:

"I thank you very, very much for the honour you have done me in sending me a copy of your new book [...] the subject to me is most fascinating & I shall go through the volumes with that calm pleasure which the recollection of the observations made in early life gives to old age."

In 2020 the Darwin Correspondence Project will be having one last push to trace undiscovered letters for publication in the printed series *The Correspondence of Charles Darwin*, the final volume of which will go to press in March 2021.

Keeping HOUSE



Veronica Danbury has been a housekeeper at King's since 2002. She grew up in Birmingham but moved to Cambridge to join her husband-to-be in 1990.

"I'd mostly worked in hotels as a cleaner since I was 16, but my first job in Cambridge was microfilming at a unit on Clifton Road, near the old cattle market," she recalls. "I was so fast at it that when I went on maternity leave they brought the machine to me so that I could do it from home!"

After having her son Nathan, Veronica took a weekend job at Johnsons dry cleaners, where a friend of hers recommended that she give King's a try. Her initial impressions were of a welcoming and positive environment: "It really felt like a family – everyone was there for each other and helped each other out," she says.

In the ensuing seventeen years Veronica has worked variously as a 'bedder' in Webb's, Bodley's, and A Staircase, as well as cleaning the Provost's Lodge, College Office, and now the Library and Archives. During that time she's come into contact with her fair share of students – so how has she found that interaction?

"They become yours, don't they?! When I started on Q Staircase I was like a mum to them, and I've had some lovely times since – getting to know them, being there when they graduate, and meeting their parents – that's what makes the job so worthwhile."

That proximity and daily interaction with the students means bedders like Veronica are also very much on the front line of the College's provision of pastoral care – often the first to notice when students might be having difficulties:

"You have to get to know the students in case there's a problem – even if you just speak to them for five minutes while you're doing the bin or tidying the kitchen," she says. "If you didn't talk to them you wouldn't know if anything was the matter or notice that they were behaving out of character. Even the students who keep themselves to themselves you still have to keep an eye on, because everyone goes through their bad times."

Over the years there have been a number of students whom Veronica remembers particularly fondly, but have there been occasions when her affection has been tested? "They do push it sometimes. For me the worst thing is when they try to pull the wool over your eyes – hiding mattresses behind the wardrobe and things like that. I might be soft but I'm not stupid!"

Now that she's moved to the Library, Veronica doesn't have quite as much contact with the students – except when they're getting in the way of her dusting – but has she noticed any ways in which students have changed since she first arrived? "They don't bring as much stuff with them! The rooms are definitely easier to clean now; you used to have trouble getting around the room with



all the bits and pieces they brought. One year someone set up a Scalextric track across their room and another time someone kept a kitten in Bodley's for a few months, until one of her neighbours reported her!"

When she's not dodging racetracks or giving valued advice, how does Veronica spend her time? "I love my gardening and I do like a Sudoku! We've also got our own narrowboat moored near Northampton, which is something my husband had always wanted. He had a heart attack six years ago and nearly didn't make it,

so once he survived we just thought "life's too short", then remortgaged the house and decided to make some memories."

Although they can't get far in the space of a two-week holiday, Veronica and her husband plan to venture further afield after retirement, when Veronica hopes to still be at King's. In the meantime, she's very much enjoying her time in the Library and playing her part in the team there. "I know what my role is," she says, "it's keeping those shelves dust-free!"

The enduring image of Jim Goodliffe wheeling a wooden barrow around the footpaths of King's will no doubt be a familiar one to generations of readers.

Jim has been a handyman at the College for more than 41 years, having arrived not long after his schooldays were over at Chesterton Community College. When his six-month stint as a landscape gardener came to an end, he spotted an advert in the *Cambridge Evening News* for a job at the College and thought he'd try his luck:

"Back in those days it was easier," he says. "I came here on a Friday at 10.30 for an interview and had been given the job by 10.45 - and I've been here ever since!"

As handyman, Jim is responsible for all manner of janitorial odd-jobs, whether moving beds and chairs, collecting rubbish, or arranging rooms for events. It's a job which also means he interacts with all kinds of people across the College: "We get to know everybody

really - students, Fellows, and staff members from every department - anybody that needs help."

From assisting Stephen Hawking on a visit to the College, to asking Amanda Holden for her autograph, Jim has a trove of assorted memories of King's from over the years. Are there any that he recollects more vividly than others?

"I do remember when one of the very august Fellows, Peter Avery, went for a walk down by the river but misjudged the ground and all of a sudden went running down the slope and straight into the water. He was fine of course but two of the porters had to fish him out; it was hilarious!"

Jim says that he's now busier than ever but is enjoying his work and has no immediate plans to retire. When the time comes, what advice would he give to his replacement? "Always pick Barrow #1," he says, "it's the easiest one to pull!"



IN MEMORIAM

It is with great sadness that we report the death of Sir Stephen Cleobury. Following a long illness, Stephen died peacefully in the late evening of 22 November – the feast day of St Cecilia, patron saint of music and musicians – in York, where he had lived since his retirement in September.



During his long tenure as Director of Music, Stephen enhanced the reputation of the Choir and extended its reach by developing its activities in broadcasting, recording and touring, as well as founding the tradition of the annual commissioned carol for Christmas Eve which, since 1984, has made an invaluable contribution to contemporary choral writing. His influence as a teacher and role model to young musicians has been felt by thousands of singers and organists who have been Choristers, Choral Scholars and Organ Scholars at King's.

In December 2018, Stephen conducted the Choir in the 100th anniversary of *A Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols*, broadcast live

from King's to millions of listeners around the world. Six months later he was knighted in the Queen's Birthday Honours for services to choral music, bringing tremendous pleasure to both the Choir and the College, and many more around the world whose hearts have been touched by Stephen's work.

The Provost, Professor Michael Proctor, said: "As Director of Music, Sir Stephen served this College with distinction for nearly four decades. At this truly sad time, the College community, and indeed many around the world, are mourning his passing with a profound feeling of loss. Our thoughts and prayers are with Sir Stephen's family and the Choristers and Scholars of our choir who worked so closely with him."

Save the Date

Members and Friends Events

2020

14 March

Foundation Lunch

28 March

20th, 25th & 30th Anniversary Reunion

24 April

Alan Turing Lecture

25 April

Legacy Lunch

16 June

King's Golf Day

20 June

10th Anniversary Lunch

25 September

50th Anniversary Reunion

26 September

35th, 40th & 45th Anniversary Reunion

28 November

1441 Foundation Dinner

Concerts and Services

2019

24 December

A Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols

25 December

Christmas Day Eucharist

2020

6-12 April

Easter at King's

15 June

May Week Concert

21 June

Singing on the River

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

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