

# Development Report and Donor Roll

1 JANUARY - 31 DECEMBER 2020  
DOWNING COLLEGE CAMBRIDGE



## From the Master

When I wrote last spring during the first lockdown, I did not imagine that nearly a year later we would find ourselves in a third lockdown in the UK, with the College once again closed to the majority of our community. We did not foresee how the pandemic would have such a devastating impact – the loss of so many loved ones, the toll of redundancies and disrupted education, the social isolation and the never-ending uncertainty.

I know that many of you will personally have been touched by the events of the last 12 months and you will have had calls upon your support from many deserving causes. So I would like to express our gratitude, on behalf of the Fellows, students and staff at Downing, for your continued loyalty and generous support to the College. Gifts from alumni and friends, and legacies from benefactors who considered Downing in their will, have made a vital contribution this year. As a result, we have been able to provide additional student counselling to help those in crisis; recruit a new Head of Student Wellbeing; establish a new studentship programme with the University; provide bursaries for undergraduate medical students; and create an endowed Fellowship in Geography. This report outlines a few examples of how philanthropy continues to make a tangible difference to our students and to the College. Thank you.

Although the financial outlook remains challenging, I am confident that Downing will thrive again. As we plan to re-open after Easter, our fundraising priorities are focused on recovery and re-investment in world-class teaching and

research, and in an ever-richer student experience. We still have ambitions to build a Student Centre with amenities and study spaces fit for twenty-first century students, and in the longer term we need to build our endowment in order to withstand future shocks. I hope that you will be interested to learn more and will continue to support us as we restore the College's fortunes.

I enjoyed very much our first virtual Alumni Day and Association AGM over Zoom in September and hosting our MCR webinars throughout the autumn. Thanks to those of you who joined us and particularly those in different time zones; we will certainly stream many more College events in future.

Having said that, I am looking forward to when we can return to normal life and welcome students, staff, Fellows and alums back to a revived Downing in the coming months. Until then, do keep in touch and thank you again.

**ALAN BOOKBINDER, MASTER**



# STUDENT WELLBEING

Student wellbeing continues to be a priority at Downing and the College has increased its activity in this area this year, thanks in part to the generosity of alumni.

Many students have found mindfulness sessions and yoga classes particularly useful, while Downing's beautiful grounds have continued to offer much-needed space for solace and relaxation, with both the Master's and Fellows' Gardens available for use by quarantining students.

Loss of social contact due to pandemic restrictions has led to a substantial increase in requests for access to counselling services. Two transformative gifts have been received from alumni specifically to address this need and help students during this difficult time.

The Battcock Student Fund, established with a generous gift from **HUMPHREY BATTCKOCK (1973)** has enabled the College to respond quickly to the COVID crisis and mitigate the potential impact on student life, particularly for new students who matriculated in 2020. So far, the fund has supported additional nursing and counselling hours in College, as well as providing safe social spaces outdoors.

**ROBERT JOHN (1968)** and **PHILIPPA DODDS JOHN** have funded a new Head of Wellbeing, Dr Kate Daniels, who joined the College in January 2021. Their gift was made in memory of their daughter, Angharad.



A psychotherapist in private practice who has worked in the Collegiate University for 20 years, Kate is working with individual students, as well as creating courses, programmes and activities that cover pastoral and wellbeing issues.

“Positive wellbeing is a foundation for academic success and a great student experience. Downing is leading the way among Cambridge colleges by making wellbeing a strategic priority, and I look forward to working alongside my colleagues to support students' physical, mental and emotional health.” **KATE DANIELS**

“We look forward to meeting Kate, but I suspect that will not be until after Easter. We are just delighted that the College has recognised the need and has acted on it.” **ROBERT JOHN**

# EMERGING FROM THE PANDEMIC: FINANCIAL CHALLENGES

## From the new Senior Bursar, Gavin Flynn

The financial impact of the pandemic has been serious: in 2020 almost all student rents for Easter Term were lost; all conferences, corporate functions and summer schools were cancelled from March onwards; income from the retail properties the College owns in Cambridge was severely reduced; and the value of our endowment ebbed and flowed in line with international markets. This disruption continues into 2021 with the latest national lockdown reducing income yet further and causing us to have significant concerns about the scale of any conference business this coming summer.

The serious impact on the College's finances will only fully be seen in the 2020/21 and 2021/22 accounts due to the timing of the conference business and our year end. While

the 2019/20 accounts suggest the College managed to break even despite the challenges, this was due to some unexpected and very welcome generous legacies. While this may occur again this year, we do not plan on that basis. Our projected losses are at least £2.5m this year, and more than £1m next year: our historically relatively stable income of £13-15m per year will fall to a low of ca. £11m. Philanthropy and the support of alumni are a significant part of our income, and we remain immensely grateful for this. In a normal year, your support contributes 20% of our income, and currently it is more than 25%. It is fair to say we can offer the basics of what we do without support, but our ability to fulfill our greater ambitions is enhanced by the generosity of donors. We have, of course, also been doing our part to protect our ability to deliver on



**£79,225**

**IN FUNDS RAISED BY THE COVID APPEAL IN 2020**

our goals and have taken significant action to conserve cash in the form of restructuring our workforce, deferring refurbishments and exploring alternative forms of finance to fund infrastructure investments. Nevertheless, we will consume cash reserves this year and are fortunate to have these reserves from the private placement borrowings secured by my predecessor.

This was certainly not the environment I anticipated when I accepted the role of Senior Bursar, and while it has been challenging, it has enabled me to learn far more, and far more quickly, than I might have done in other circumstances. It has also allowed me to see the College teams at their best. As the full impact on our finances has become clear and the mitigating actions have been taken, we are now able to turn our attention toward the recovery.

As we emerge from lockdown, and vaccinations begin to have a positive impact, we can rely on receiving student rents and catering income



**122 DONORS TO THE COVID APPEAL IN 2020**

– the 'Taverna' behind the Butterfield café and the 'Amphitheatre', complete with a stage, on the Paddock.

When the students returned to College in October 2020 and as the national prevalence of positive Covid tests increased in student age groups, we correctly anticipated that significant numbers of households would need to be isolated for 14 days: quarantine support has been essential, but it put additional pressure on College staff with meal deliveries to students isolating. Further, we participated in the class-leading Cambridge asymptomatic testing programme and increased Tutor contact to ensure students' emotional wellbeing. All of this has come with further financial costs which the College has managed, often by deferring other necessary initiatives.

### GAVIN FLYNN, SENIOR BURSAR

As a keen, yet distinctly average (in his words), triathlon competitor, the absence of real world events has driven Gavin online. Whether it is virtual time-based challenges with other triathletes based around the world through a training camp provider, or Zwift Team Time Trials on the bike with his local club, he can now often be found in his garage in unflattering lycra and sweatbands, and next to an industrial sized fan. Photos will not be provided on request.

again. The cost savings we have made during the pandemic will also stand us in good stead, as will many of the lessons learned in operating the College's services even more efficiently. Our first financial priority will be to replace lost income. Conferences will not look like they used to for quite some time, and other sources of business will be explored. Alongside this will be the rebuilding of our College community. It will take time, money and energy to recreate the unique environment which (I'm told and am looking forward to!) nurtures our students, staff and Fellows. Only then can we turn our attention to setting a clear strategic post-pandemic direction with associated investments in academic excellence, well-maintained services and infrastructure, and key aspects of the student experience and wellbeing.

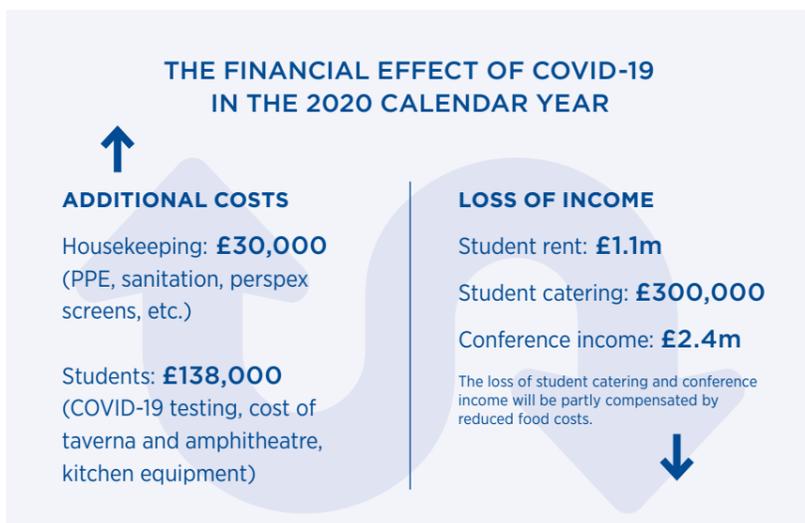
### The COVID-19 Emergency Appeal

At a time when the virus has made unparalleled demands on the College community and caused us serious financial losses, the Master, Senior Bursar and Senior Tutor identified student wellbeing as a key priority for 2020-2021 and the COVID-19 Emergency appeal was launched.

We ensured the experience of 2020 Freshers and all our students was a positive experience within the social distancing guidelines. Provision for student wellbeing has included additional counselling support for those who need it, help towards IT equipment to facilitate online learning, and the creation of new COVID-compliant outdoor socialising spaces

### The Harding Challenge widens its scope

The remit of the Harding Challenge, originally created to encourage new donors to support the Collegiate University, has been broadened in response to the need for greater student support this year. Gifts from all donors to the College's COVID-19 Emergency Appeal also now qualify for match funding from the Harding Challenge. The Harding match increases the impact of the gift to students in Cambridge by a factor of £4.59 for every pound donated, making each pound worth £5.59. Your gift helps Downing students directly, whilst the match helps students in greatest need through the Cambridge Bursary Scheme, including those at Downing.



# LIFE UNDER 'LOCKDOWNING'

Until March 2020, though social distancing was beginning to become normal, Downing operated much as usual.

When everything changed, students based at home rallied during lockdown to keep themselves connected and entertained. A particular highlight was the JCR's 'LockDowning' forum, comprising virtual entertainments from 'Poetry and Tea', 'Deserted Discs' and 'University Challenge', to High Intensity Interval Training (HIIT) workouts and Netflix parties.

Meanwhile, student support now included a delivery service to students in quarantine, the provision of screens in the Hall to enable students to collect meals safely, and the supply of equipment for remote learning.

Student financial needs evolved from asking for help with difficulties due to low family income, or towards materials, or for grants for travel. Suddenly, students on their year abroad were stranded needing to buy flights home at inflated prices, there was an increase in parents who were losing their livelihoods, and overseas students were faced with the expense of an extra two weeks in College before Michaelmas term in order to quarantine before NPR.

In the face of these needs, the generosity of alumni and friends ensures that students in times of financial crisis can apply to the College for emergency support.

Thank you.

"Students have suddenly found themselves facing a range of practical and financial difficulties and are without physical access to libraries, working spaces and the amenities that they previously took for granted. Studying at home has also presented new challenges. We've provided extra funds to cover emergency expenses for travel and quarantining, in addition to the usual maintenance and accommodation support requests, while needs for textbooks and equipment have replaced the usual calls for placements and vacation courses."

**DR GUY WILLIAMS (1992), SENIOR TUTOR**

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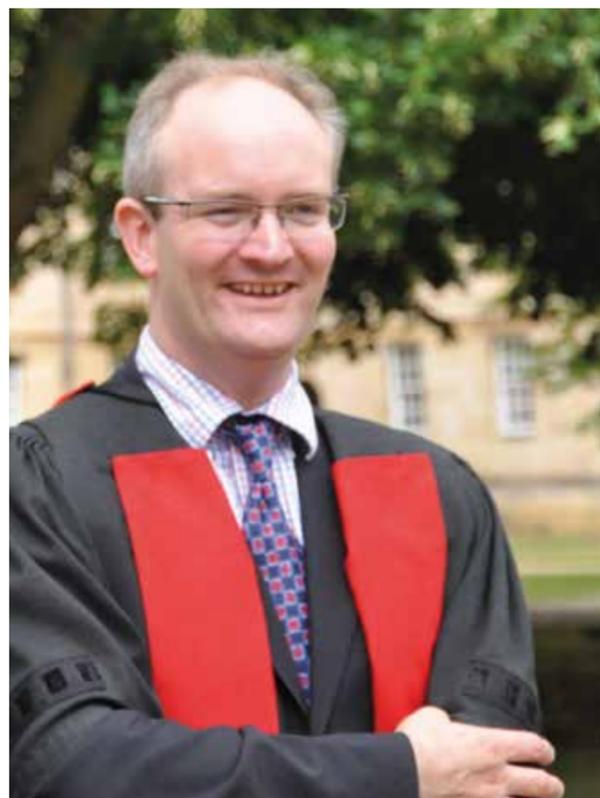
Maha Husain is a 3rd year Law undergraduate who was subject to quarantine when she returned to Downing for Michaelmas Term. Support from the Lander Fund enabled her to return to Downing to continue her studies.

"I originally applied to Downing because I had heard of its reputation for undergraduate law, and I found the size of the community and location in the city centre quite appealing. Though I must admit, I was originally slightly unsure about my decision to study law at Cambridge. Ultimately visiting

Downing for interview really cemented that I had made the right choice in the course and college that I applied to. On first impression, Downing felt incredibly grand, and the gardens and buildings looked especially beautiful in the snow. Even though it was my first time visiting, I immediately felt welcomed. Everyone I met, from the porters to the student volunteers were very friendly and helpful. Experiencing what a supervision at Downing could be like during my interview left me excited for offer day and hopeful that I would be able to study law here.

These past 3 years have been incredible, and I have had the opportunity to meet so many individuals who have inspired and encouraged me to make the most out of this experience. In the future, I hope to practice as a lawyer and look forward to returning to visit Downing and all the people who made this experience so meaningful.

As an international student from Pakistan, returning to Downing during the COVID-19 pandemic was a source of a great deal of stress for me. I was lucky to be financially supported by the College which aided in funding my early return in accordance with quarantining regulations. Without the help during this difficult time, returning to Cambridge for my final year would not have been possible or as seamless. I am incredibly grateful to the generous donor who made this possible." **MAHA HUSAIN (2018)**



Jake Longhorn is a final year PhD student based in the Institute of Criminology. He was MCR president from 2019-2020, and is the current MCR welfare officer.

"I've been at Downing since October 2017 when I joined as an MPhil student and have had the best experiences of my life here, meeting people from all different disciplines, backgrounds and cultures. Soon after this picture was taken I was presented with the opportunity to work alongside Cambridgeshire County Council in my PhD research. I explore their processes for returning looked-after children to their birth parents, and as the birth child of foster-carers I relish the chance to do this important work.

While conducting my research, I've held down a few part-time jobs, including working in the Heong Gallery. More recently I was the Library Assistant in my department, but as a result of a policy review in January my furlough was suspended due to being on a zero hours contract. I applied to the unexpected financial hardship fund and the support I received has been a massive help with rent and bills, allowing me to focus on writing up the results of my research.

It means a lot to me that alumni have supported me in this final year of my PhD, and I will certainly remember the difference it has made and do the same when my future career allows." **JAKE LONGHORN (2017)**

# ALUMNI STEP UP TO COMBAT COVID

Downing alumni around the globe have responded to the challenges of the pandemic with courage, innovation and imagination. We are delighted to highlight a few of them here.



**RAVI GUPTA (1994)** is Professor of Clinical Microbiology at the Cambridge Institute of Therapeutic Immunology and Infectious Disease (CITIID) in the Department of Medicine, and has been prominent in COVID-19 research. He is a co-opted member of the government's New and Emerging Respiratory Virus Threats Advisory Group (NERVTAG). Throughout the pandemic, Ravi has worked on COVID-19 rapid diagnostics, SARS-CoV-2 intra host evolution and innate immunity, making a significant mark on the global fight to combat the virus.

Ravi's group were the first to observe mutations that seemed to suggest the virus was adapting to avoid the antibodies in the convalescent plasma treatment. It was the first time they'd seen something like this happening in a person in real time. His group, working under strict laboratory conditions, creates synthetic versions of the virus that allow them to manipulate it, modelling mutations such as those seen in the UK and South African variants to assess their likely impact on vaccines. Research continues into the efficacy of the currently available vaccinations against such variants of the disease.

Ravi had already made a name for himself in HIV research and was honoured in the 2020 TIME 100 list of influential individuals worldwide. This title was awarded in recognition of his demonstration of a 'functional cure' of HIV infection by stem cell transplantation, the second such case in history.

"Throughout the pandemic, Ravi has worked on COVID-19 rapid diagnostics, SARS-CoV-2 intra host evolution and innate immunity, making a significant mark on the global fight to combat the virus."



**DR JOEL MEYER (1997)**, an intensive care consultant at Guy's and St Thomas' Hospital has co-developed Life Lines. The Life Lines project enables virtual visits to loved ones' bedsides through secure video calling, a vital scheme for intensive care patients and families during the pandemic. Life Lines has provided 1,350 tablet devices to NHS teams across the UK, has supported 73,354 virtual visits since March 2020 and 476,796 video call minutes.



**DR JACK MANLEY (2017)**, a junior doctor working in ICU with COVID patients, co-founded DeliverAid to encourage hospitality businesses to supply healthy food to frontline NHS workers in London. Jack was winner of May Week's Heroes of Cambridge award and has provided around 45,000 meals since the start of the pandemic to NHS workers and families facing food poverty.



**DR KATIE BROOKS (1995)** has worked on essential documents for COVID-19 clinical trials, as part of her role as a Principal Medical Writer at a leading global contract research organisation.

"Jack was winner of May Week's Heroes of Cambridge award..."



No celebration would be complete without a mention of Downing's creative spirits. Downing alum and much loved illustrator, **QUENTIN BLAKE (1953)** produced a series of online 'Send a Rainbow' e-cards. The original drawings were auctioned in June 2020, 100% of the proceeds going to NHS Charities Together.

Meanwhile, **THE MARSH FAMILY (BEN AND DANIELLE 1995)** together with their four children) have delighted thousands with their musical expertise. Early in the first lockdown, they 'went viral' on YouTube with their adapted version of 'One More Day' from *Les Miserables*. They featured in the press and on breakfast television and have since released a succession of other entertaining compositions, recently including 'Have the New Jab', adapted from 'Halleluja' by Leonard Cohen.



Please get in touch if you have a pandemic story to tell which we can share on our social media: [development@dow.cam.ac.uk](mailto:development@dow.cam.ac.uk)

# FELLOWSHIP UPDATE

The College community has coped well with the upheaval caused by the ongoing changes and updates to learning and operational conditions over the last year. Downing Fellows have also been working at the forefront of coronavirus response, medical care and research, and their activities have continuously evolved and progressed since we first reported on their involvement.



**DR TIM BURTON (1994)** is Consultant Physician and Clinical Director of Acute Medicine at Addenbrooke's Hospital. He is on the front line of the hospital's response to the pandemic, as well as undertaking his own clinical work with COVID patients, focusing both on Addenbrooke's COVID-19

strategy and hands-on care. Initially, there was a high level of uncertainty as to what the key challenges facing the hospital would be – beds, oxygen, staffing or other urgent requirements. At the height of the pandemic, ICU nurses were caring for two to three patients each, rather than the usual one, and medical students and surgeons were brought in to provide necessary additional support. Meanwhile, Tim's own clinical work has centred on the palliative and human needs of patients and their families. As Oon Fellow in Pharmacology at Downing, Tim has continued pharmacology supervisions, both physically in College during the Michaelmas term, and by Zoom since Christmas.

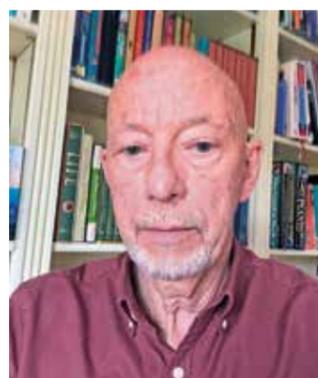
"Things are looking positive. The latest lockdown has had an impact, and the vaccination effect is now also kicking in. The number of cases is going down fast, in line with the most optimistic trajectory shown by modelling. Not only that, but also surgery which had been on hold will be able to resume.

From a College perspective, supervisions are a refreshing break. Teaching by Zoom presents new challenges – more preparation and structure, and sending questions to the students in advance – but I always enjoy talking to the students who stretch me in a different way. I'm looking forward to the return of the old College existence. When the Fellows and students can socialise as they did before and we can hold Formal Hall again, that will be a sign that we are getting back to normal."



**DR HARRIET GROOM (2001)**, former Fellow in Natural Sciences, is an Associate Principal Investigator in the Department of Medicine and is contributing her expertise in viruses to fighting coronavirus. "We are investigating how the shape of the viral genome influences success of

infection. Our work is on how RNA stem loops influence the expression of SARS-CoV-2 genes and my fourth year Biochemist Kayden Xie is looking at out how the virus finds its own genome in the cell. We hope that these projects will highlight targets for therapeutics." Harriet was invited to speak at the Huawei/Globescan: Sustainability and Resilience webinar about how to avoid future pandemics. She sees the increased online presence of the University and Colleges as an opportunity for widening participation.



Downing College Emeritus Fellow **PROFESSOR PAUL LINDEN** (Department of Applied Mathematics & Theoretical Physics) co-lead the Royal Society's Task on 'Environmental and aerosol transmission' of COVID-19 as part of the programme 'Rapid Assistance in Modelling the Pandemic' (RAMP). This involved

almost 100 scientists and engineers and considered both close-range and long-range transmission of the virus. The results of this work will soon be published in the Proceedings of the Royal Society. He is also the lead on a new UKRI project on assessing the risk of transmission in schools and participates in other projects on transmission in public transport and offices and other workplace environments.



**PROFESSOR GRAHAM VIRGO (1984)** is Fellow in Law and Professor of English Private Law, and in his role as University Senior Pro-Vice Chancellor has been responsible for ensuring that, despite the various lockdowns, the University has been able to provide high quality education in very different and rapidly changing circumstances. In March 2020 the University pivoted within six weeks to online assessments and then prepared for online lectures. Graham dealt with the University's response to the various issues with A level results and ensured that every student who made their offer was admitted.

"I'm now preparing for examinations and assessments for next term and also planning for what education will look like next academic year. I'm also involved in recovery planning. The University will not be going fully online. One thing we have learned is how important the residential experience is to our students and how much they welcome in-person teaching. But there is a growing confidence that our education provision can be enhanced by the use of digital technology, enabling more blended learning. And it is clear that the way we examine and assess our students will be changed for good: for many subjects we will not be reverting to the way we have examined before.

I'm also involved in the launch of Cambridge Advance Online, enabling the academic University to work with Cambridge University Press to launch a suite of new online courses. I have worked with the University Library to expand its digital offering and to develop its services of 'Click and Collect' and 'Scan and Deliver'. And I have worked closely with the Institute of Continuing Education, which has switched to fully online delivery of its courses and which is developing exciting new plans for future courses and delivery."

*"One thing we have learned is how important the residential experience is to our students and how much they welcome in-person teaching."*



**PROFESSOR DAVID WALES** FRS, Downing Fellow in Chemistry and Professor of Chemical Physics, uses theory and computer simulation to model flu virus to guide the development of new antiviral drugs. His group now has several coronavirus projects up and running.

"I'm running a calculation to predict the conformational change of the SARS-CoV-2 spike protein associated with cell entry and infection. It's a complex process, but I nearly have the first complete path after adapting all the algorithms to work for a molecule of this size. Knowing the intermediate structures exposed during the infection cycle may guide the development of novel antiviral drugs to combat COVID-19."



Senior Tutor and Darley Fellow, **DR GUY WILLIAMS (1992)**, is Assistant Director of Research at the Wolfson Brain Imaging Centre. He reports "Imaging research into the neurological impact of COVID-19 is continuing on both our 3T and 7T MRI scanners. As well as imaging patients

with acute disease, we're part of a national network of imaging centres which follow up with COVID patients after they've recovered from their initial infection. By co-ordinating the way we obtain magnetic resonance imaging data across the network, we hope to be able to build a better picture of the long term effects on the brain than is possible from data from a single Centre."



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