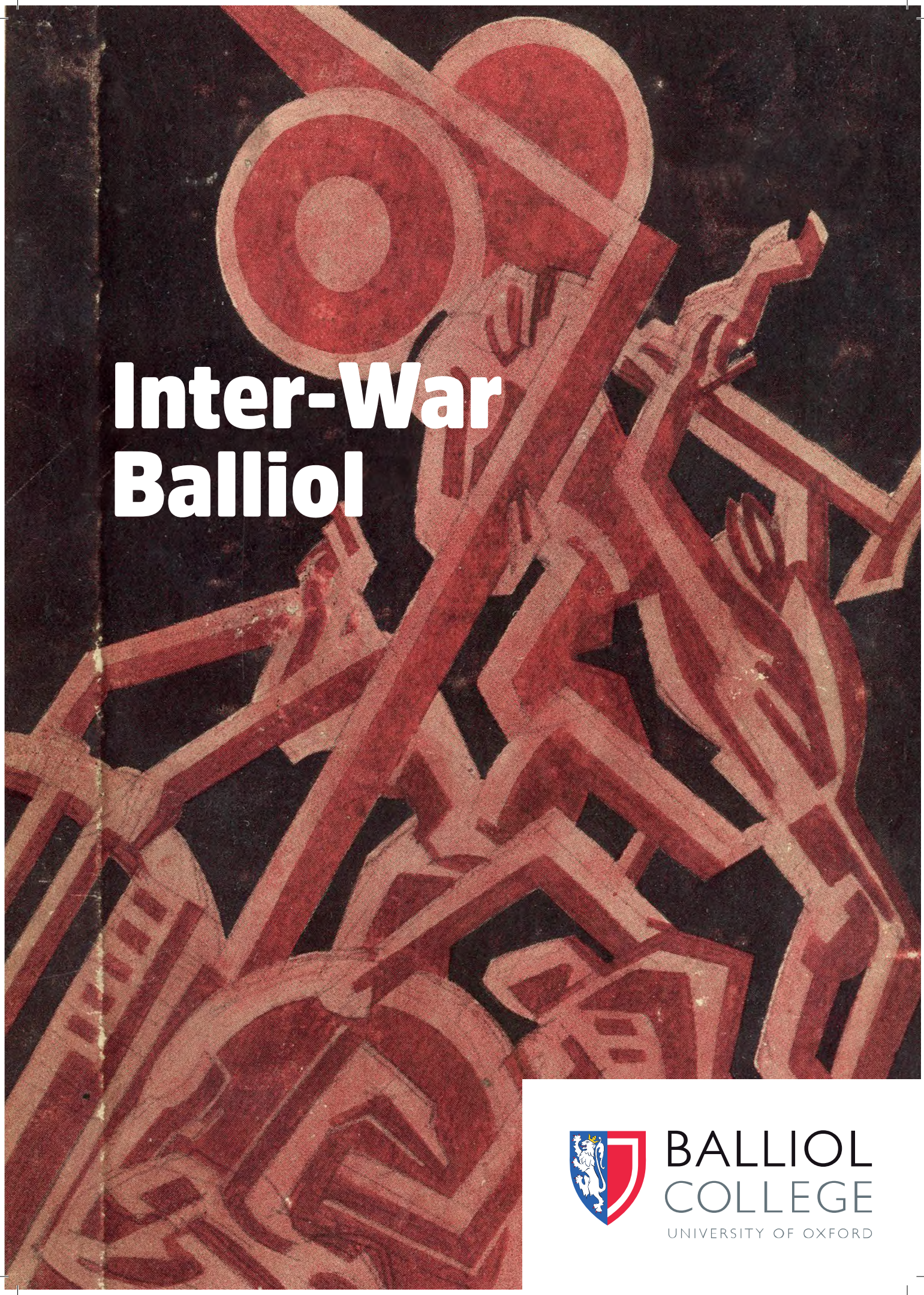


Inter-War Balliol

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INTER-WAR BALLIOL

A DANCE TO THE UNCERTAINTIES OF MODERN TIMES

By Martin Conway and Simon Skinner, Balliol Tutors in History

It is easy to think of Balliol in the inter-war years as a lost world, with all the sepia-tinted nostalgia that that can generate. At first sight it might seem one which sustained 'the tranquil consciousness of an effortless superiority' which Asquith famously recalled of his time at Balliol: a community entirely of men, drawn from very similar backgrounds; educated by a stable cohort of committed tutors whose sociable pedagogy might have been more notable than their scholarship; and housed in a community whose institutional rhythms and spaces – hall, library, chapel, and playing field – would have felt intimately familiar. Inevitably something of that Balliol comes through in this exhibition – a Balliol of much-loved tutors, highly present Masters, and an extensive support structure of servants, who served food in students' rooms, attended to laundry, collected and delivered mail, and even serviced bicycles: 'A fixed charge of 5/- a Term, for cleaning, inflating and oiling, is made to every gentleman who keeps a bicycle in College', records Balliol's Memorandum of Expenses. Balliol could therefore seem a world apart: its undergraduates were more conscious of being at the College than the University (contemporary wags commonly boasted that they were a product of one of the three great academies – Oxford, Cambridge, and Balliol). Behind its doors, locked every evening for reasons much more than practical, they lived in an intimate society which generated intense friendships, and their opposite; and they perceptibly enjoyed the rich social life of dinners, concert nights, debating societies and reading groups, sports teams, and JCR politics. 'Balliol men - and I was one', wrote Hilaire Belloc in 1916, 'Swam together in winter rivers, Wrestled together under the sun.'

But the great strength of this exhibition is the way that it proceeds to convey the instability and unease that characterised those years, the uncertainties of which may seem much closer to our own world. At its centre, of course, was what was then called 'the Great War' or indeed simply 'the World War', these nomenclatures capturing its seismic scale and psychic shock. The state funeral and burial of the Unknown Warrior and Sir Edwin Lutyens' Cenotaph of 1920, the Remembrance Day services in every parish and the poppies on every lapel from 1921, the c.70,000 war memorials carved and planted throughout the country – including the names of the fallen which dominated Balliol's chapel passage – established a public culture of war memorialisation unlike anything which had preceded them: less celebratory, less triumphalist, less providentialist, and less certain. Belloc's 1916 poem had continued: 'Oh! they have wasted you over the sea! The only brothers ever I knew, The men that laughed and quarrelled with me.'

This generated a new mood in Balliol. Something was over, and could not be recreated. This age found its new spirit in the former Merton student T. S. Eliot's The Waste Land published in 1922:

What are the roots that clutch, what branches grow
Out of this stony rubbish? Son of man,
You cannot say, or guess, for you know only
A heap of broken images, where the sun beats,
And the dead tree gives no shelter, the cricket no relief,
And the dry stone no sound of water.

But it was also true of those Balliol men who inhabited this changed world. Those students who went on to be significant literary figures – most notably Graham Greene (1922) and Anthony Powell (1923) – wrote about the world with a new mentality, in which the comic observation of human behaviour was always intertwined with a sense of the dangers that could not be ignored. William Golding was to call Greene 'the ultimate chronicler of twentieth-century man's consciousness and anxiety'; neither was happy at Balliol, or enjoyed the frivolities over which Belloc had earlier reminisced.

The Exhibition well illustrates this new uncertainty. Christianity's explanatory monopoly was fragmenting; and the inter-war generation sought succour and certainty in other systems – Humanism, Marxism, spiritualism and seances – which disorientated as many as they liberated. Moreover H. G. Wells' prophecy that the Great War might, at least, be 'the war that will end war', rapidly proved illusory. Rising colonial tension in India, Mussolini's entry into government in 1922 and that of Hitler in 1933, created a foreboding that international events would not spare the men of Balliol. During the Spanish Civil War of 1936-9, Denis Healey, then a Balliol undergraduate, was a prominent organiser of the Aid for Spain Campaign, staging a fundraising exhibition of Picasso's original sketches for 'Guernica', while Master Lindsay helped to coordinate the local packing stations set up to relay donations of food and clothing. In the famous Oxford City by-election of October 1938, one month after the Munich Agreement, Lindsay stood against and narrowly lost to the National Government candidate Quintin Hogg on an anti-appeasement platform, supported by among others Edward Heath, as the President of the JCR, Healey, then a member of the Communist Party and Heath's successor as President, and Roy Jenkins, of Oxford's Labour Club. This was not of course to be Balliol's ultimate enlistment in the cause of anti-fascism. There are 121 names on the chapel memorial to those fallen in the Second World War; the penultimate is that of Adam von Trott, a young German aristocrat who had come to Balliol in 1931 on a Rhodes Scholarship, and whose uncertain personal trajectory in the 1930s between anti-Nazism and German nationalism well conveyed the difficult choices of the era. He was to be executed in August 1944 for his involvement in the July Plot to assassinate Hitler.

Not all such uncertainties were, however, so far away. The most substantial revelation of this exhibition will surely be the challenges closer to home. Balliol was an institution of the privileged, but it sorely lacked the resources to secure its future. The College launched itself upon the great adventure of acquiring and renovating Holywell Manor, but it was a significant drain on already depleted bank accounts. Outside experts – such as Colonel Duke and Annie Bradbury, well described in this catalogue – were therefore brought in to instil more professional methods and achieve much needed economies. Taxation levels had risen, along with (albeit modestly) the salaries of the servant class upon whom Balliol, and Oxford more generally, had long relied. The College had to adapt to this modern world, building (with Trinity) a laboratory to teach science to a level equivalent to that in the universities of Europe and North America. Amateurism, and the effortless expression of power, were no longer possible. Instead, for all of their affectation of a certain insouciance, Balliol men had to be trained to bring effective governance to the still expanding territories and populations of empire. But, closer to home, the new disciplines of social science (incorporated into the PPE degree established in the aftermath of the Great War) had to be inculcated into Balliol men who would not be the rulers, but rather the administrators, of the contemporary world.

Inter-war Balliol was therefore much more complex than simply the solidity of its Jowettian architecture and ethos, and the inequalities of class, race, and gender which underpinned them. Instead, for the College, and for the students who inhabited it after a world war which they came to realise had never fully ended, the era was above all a dance to the uncertain music of modern times.

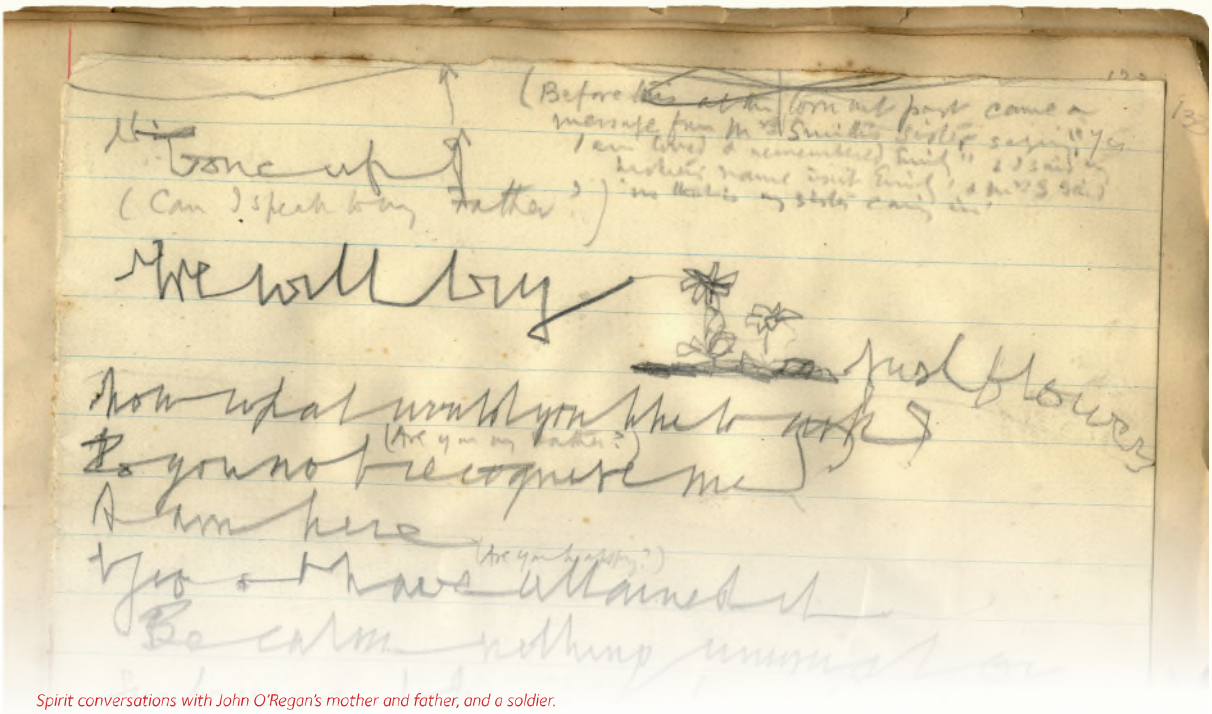
AFTER THE WAR

Oxford: a city of ghosts

'I did not go back to Oxford after the war...To me it was a city of ghosts'
Harold Macmillan (Balliol 1912) [i(a)]

At the outbreak of the First World War, future Prime Minister Harold Macmillan's time at Oxford was curtailed by military service. He fought at the Battle of the Somme where he was seriously wounded. Of the huge number of students who shared his experience, many never returned to the University, killed, or, like Macmillan, irrevocably changed by trauma and survivors' guilt. [i(b)]

Those who returned found Oxford changed. In his semi-autobiographical novel of 1922, *Patchwork*, Beverley Nichols (Balliol 1917) expresses undergraduates' alienation on finding a different Oxford to the one they had been holding onto during their 'exile'; 'A new generation had sprung up in the land...and we had come as "ghosts to trouble joy".[ii] With its finances damaged by war, the University voted to apply for a government grant in return for cooperating with an enquiry into the use made of its resources. War changed the emphasis of teaching. Science, which had had an important role in warfare, came to the fore, and a large incentive to take the government grant was to be able to pay for the extension of Science facilities. At Balliol this took the form of a Chemistry laboratory shared with Trinity College.



Spirit conversations with John O'Regan's mother and father, and a soldier.
[Balliol College Historic Collections. From John O'Regan papers]

Experiences of trench warfare changed the religious outlook of the University. In the years after the War, many looked away from Christianity towards other ways of understanding existence such as Humanism or Marxism. Some of the disorientated looked towards Spiritualism to process their losses.

A book of automatic writing belonging to John O'Regan (Balliol 1889) records conversations with the spirits of the recently dead. The family of A.L. Smith (Balliol Master 1916–1924) took part in many of the séances with Smith's daughters as mediums.

The book spans the years 1910–1919. The first conversation in 1910 takes place with O'Regan's parents. His notes describe how he sits with A.L. Smith's wife Mary, and his daughter Gertrude in the dunes at Bamburgh on the Northumberland coast. Gertrude Smith puts on the ring of O'Regan's mother and her hand begins to write.

In conversations during and after the War, acquaintances killed in battle join the close family who continue to communicate. On one page, O'Regan describes an evening in 1918 when he and his wife Alice return from a cycling holiday in the North via Balliol where they stay with the Smiths. Alice O'Regan, Mary Smith and, Barbara (another of the Smith's daughters) communicate with spirits including an Irish soldier call Mike Maguire: 'Yes,' he writes through Barbara, 'yes I am doing right, fighting the evil Huns here'.

On John O'Regan's death in 1922, A.L. Smith wrote to his widow from Bamburgh where that first séance took place, 'The place is full of memories, and more than that, of a sort of presence of my dear old friend'.



Watercolour painting of the beach at Bamburgh by Gertrude Smith [Balliol College Historic Collections. From John O'Regan papers]

This strange note

Wheels, a poetry anthology published in Oxford 1916-1921, exhibits the concerns of the generation whose youth felt blighted by the First World War. Edited by Edith Sitwell, its contributors included Sacheverell Sitwell (Balliol 1919) and Aldous Huxley (Balliol 1913). In *Patchwork*, Nichols describes the publication as 'the quintessence of modernity... its harsh angular covers...symbolical, in some ways, of the Oxford that was to be...inspired by bitterness, by hatred, by a vision of the sham and rottenness which lay behind the faded pomp and circumstance of war'. [iii]

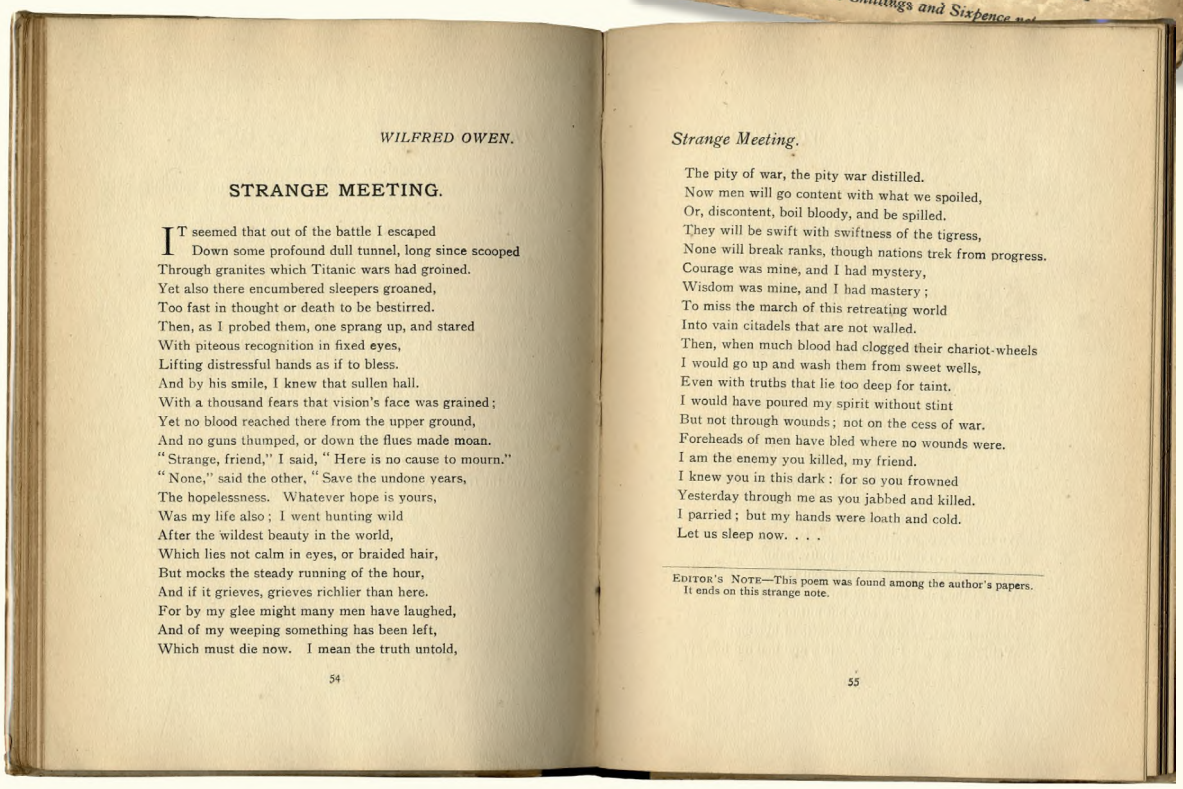
Wheels: Cycle Four (1919) published *'Strange Meeting'*, Wilfred Owen's poem from the front line for the first time. Its narrator travels to the underworld where he meets the enemy soldier that he killed ending with the line 'Let us sleep now'. The editor explains that Owen was killed in action and the poem was 'found among the

Covers designs of Wheels [Balliol Library, 1 b 165].

1919 and 1921 Estate of John David Roberts. By permission of the Treasury Solicitor. 1920 ©ADAGP, Paris and DACS, London 2024.



'Strange Meeting' by Wilfred Owen in Wheels, 1919 [Balliol Library, 1 b 165/31]



WILFRED OWEN.

STRANGE MEETING.

IT seemed that out of the battle I escaped
Down some profound dull tunnel, long since scooped
Through granites which Titanic wars had groined.
Yet also there encumbered sleepers groaned,
Too fast in thought or death to be bestirred.
Then, as I probed them, one sprang up, and stared
With piteous recognition in fixed eyes,
Lifting distressful hands as if to bless.
And by his smile, I knew that sullen hall.
With a thousand fears that vision's face was grained;
Yet no blood reached there from the upper ground,
And no guns thumped, or down the flues made moan.
"Strange, friend," I said, "Here is no cause to mourn."
"None," said the other, "Save the undone years,
The hopelessness. Whatever hope is yours,
Was my life also; I went hunting wild
After the wildest beauty in the world,
Which lies not calm in eyes, or braided hair,
But mocks the steady running of the hour,
And if it grieves, grieves richlier than here.
For by my glee might many men have laughed,
And of my weeping something has been left,
Which must die now. I mean the truth untold,

54

Strange Meeting.

The pity of war, the pity war distilled.
Now men will go content with what we spoiled,
Or, discontent, boil bloody, and be spilled.
They will be swift with swiftness of the tigress,
None will break ranks, though nations trek from progress.
Courage was mine, and I had mystery,
Wisdom was mine, and I had mastery;
To miss the march of this retreating world
Into vain citadels that are not walled.
Then, when much blood had clogged their chariot-wheels
I would go up and wash them from sweet wells,
Even with truths that lie too deep for taint.
I would have poured my spirit without stint
But not through wounds; not on the cess of war.
Foreheads of men have bled where no wounds were.
I am the enemy you killed, my friend.
I knew you in this dark: for so you frowned
Yesterday through me as you jabbed and killed.
I parried; but my hands were loath and cold.
Let us sleep now. . . .

EDITOR'S NOTE—This poem was found among the author's papers. It ends on this strange note.

55



author's papers. It ends on this strange note'. The bold, abstract imagery of the poetry is matched by cover designs displaying the move towards modernism, from a line drawing of a woman pushing a pram in 1916 to the angular covers of 1918, 1919 and 1921.

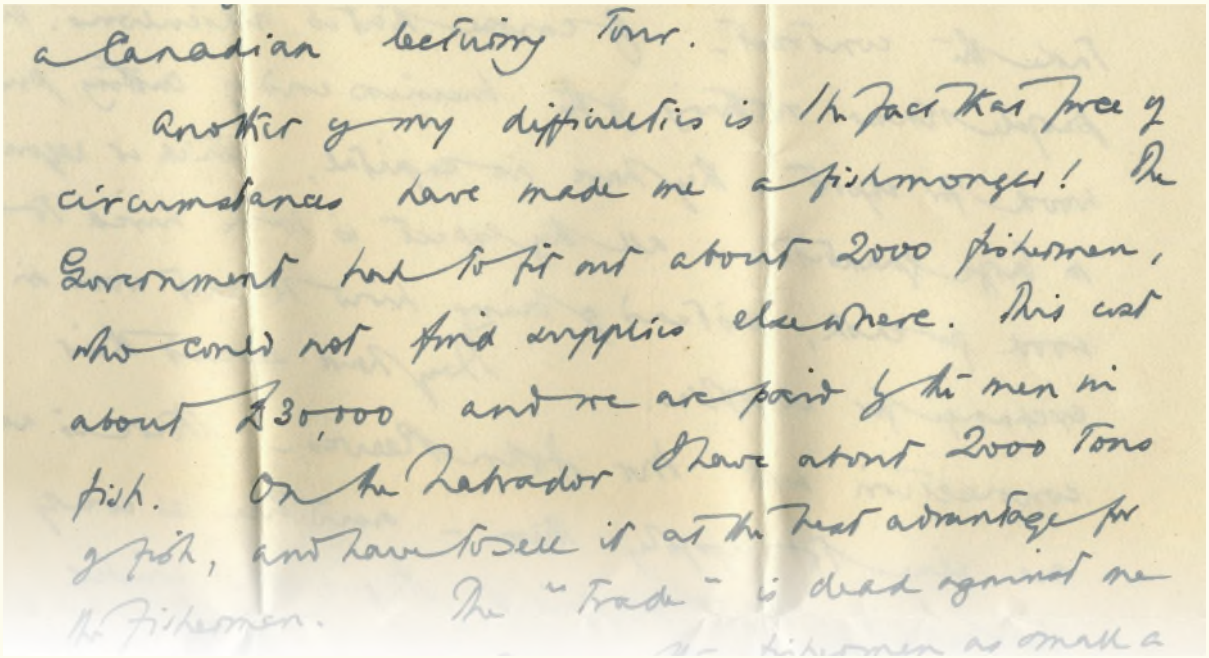
Many of the contributors to *Wheels* are women. Although there were women's colleges from the nineteenth century, women could not formally matriculate or graduate from Oxford until 1920. Both before and after this milestone, female presence in inter-war Oxford was strong, notably in literary circles like the one surrounding *Wheels*.

As well as Sacheverell Sitwell, inter-war Balliol educated other well-known literary names including Leslie Poles Hartley (Balliol 1915), Nevil Shute (Balliol 1919), Graham Greene (Balliol 1922), Alfred Duggan (Balliol 1922), Joseph Tod Gordon Macleod (Balliol 1922), and Anthony Powell (Balliol 1923).

Force of circumstances have made me a fishmonger

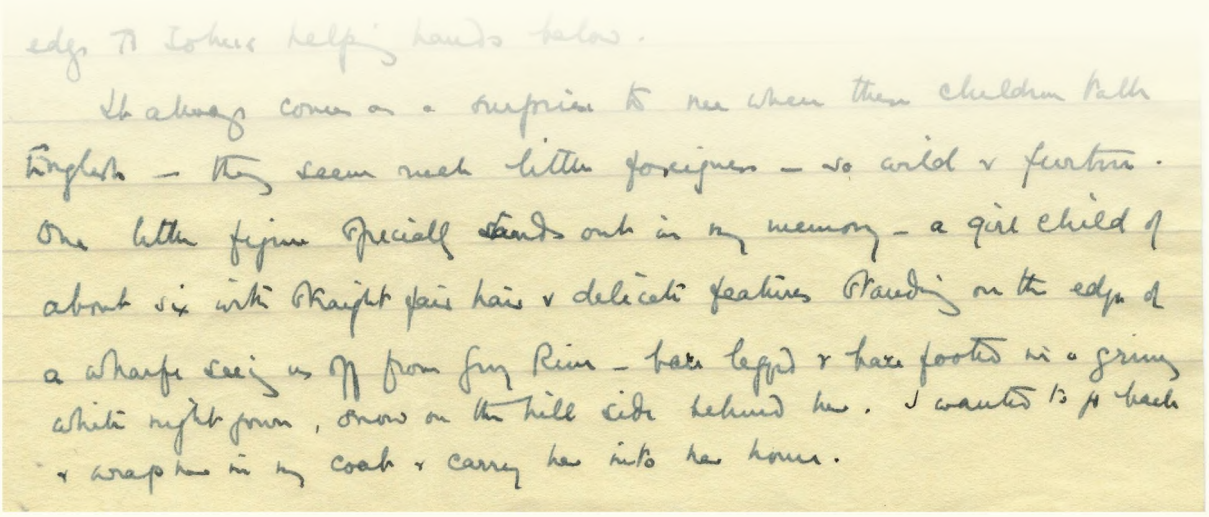
Between the shock of the 1914–1918 War and the rise of new powers to the world stage, such as the USA and Japan, but before the nails in the coffin hammered home by the economic devastation and damage to Britain's prestige of 1939–1945, the British adapted their approach to enable their Empire to survive.[iv] Even so, cracks were beginning to show. Oxford's role at the heart of Empire, and Balliol's centrality to institutions like the Indian Civil Service (ICS), nurtured by Benjamin Jowett in the previous century,[v] meant that a network of its alumni were often grappling with new international realities. These included changing balances of power and the progress of independence movements, notably in Ireland, but also in India.

The papers of John Hope Simpson (Balliol 1887) demonstrate the mix of influence and impotence, prejudice and paternalism at the heart of a colonial administrator's life lived across three continents. Originally from Liverpool, Simpson attended Balliol as an Indian Civil Service Probationer.[vi] At the age of 21 in 1889 he began 27 years of service in the ICS, rising through the ranks and surviving cholera, returning to Britain and becoming a Liberal MP in Somerset during the 1920s. In 1926, with the help of an ICS contact, Sir John Campbell (Balliol 1881), he transferred to Greece as President of the Refugee Settlement Commission in Athens helping mitigate the consequences of the 1920–22 Graeco-Turkish War (which had seen the Canadians first flex their diplomatic muscles by disagreeing with potential British military action against the Turks).[vii] In 1930, he reported on the limits to settlement in Palestine, the negative reception of which he regarded 'as his greatest failure.'[viii] A year later he was working for the League of Nations as co-ordinator for a flood relief effort on the Yangzi River at the request of the Nationalist government in China.[ix] His final posting in 1934 was in Newfoundland, where he and his wife, Quita, spent 3 years.


a Canadian lecturing Tour.

Another of my difficulties is the fact that force of circumstances have made me a fishmonger! The Government had to fit out about 2000 fishermen, who could not find supplies elsewhere. This cost about £30,000 and we are paid by the men in fish. On the Labrador I have about 2000 Tons of fish, and have to sell it at the best advantage for the fishermen. The "Trade" is dead against me

Letter from John Hope Simpson to Edgar and Eleanor Hope-Simpson, 8 September 1934 [Balliol College Historic Collections. Papers of John Hope Simpson, 7.ii.23] Image use courtesy of Elinor Hope-Simpson.



Letter from Quita Hope Simpson to Ian Hope Simpson, 25 May 1935
[Balliol College Historic Collections. Papers of John Hope Simpson, 7.iv.13]
Image use courtesy of Elinor Hope-Simpson.

Newfoundland at this point was not part of Canada, but a separate dominion. The dominions had, as a result of Canada's disagreement with Britain mentioned above, been granted independence in foreign policy in 1923 as part of Britain's coming to terms with the new stresses on the Empire. Newfoundland, however, did not benefit for long from this extension to its liberties. By 1934 it had descended into economic chaos after decades of corruption left it unable to weather the Great Depression, and surrendered itself to a British Commission of Government, losing its dominion status.[x] Simpson offered his services to J. H. Thomas, the dominions secretary, who appointed him commissioner for natural resources, comprising fisheries, forests, agriculture, and mines. Imbued with the ideals of ICS paternalism and of pre-war constructive 'new Liberalism' and its land campaign, Simpson claimed 'our main interest is prosperity for the common folk',[xi] and he wanted to provide opportunities for people to help themselves. Simpson attempted to rationalize the fishing industry, reducing the personnel involved, and established the successful Newfoundland fisheries board (1936). In a letter to his family in September 1934 he explains the difficulties he faces in rehabilitating the Newfoundland fisheries – the government has fitted out 2,000 fishermen at the cost of £30,000 and has been paid back in fish. Now he has to sell the fish.

If Simpson's letters express the fishy frustrations involved in colonial administration, his wife's contain a good measure of imperial paternalism (or maternalism) especially in her concern for the impoverished children she meets: 'it always comes as a surprise to me when these children talk English- they seem such little foreigners – so wild and furtive'. At another point she scenically describes a girl in a white night gown standing barefoot in the snow adding, 'I wanted to go back & wrap her in my coat and carry her into her house'.

INTER-WAR STABILITY:
THE MASTERS OF BALLIOL

In contrast to the general tenor of the times, the inter-war period saw a period of relative calm and continuity in terms of Balliol's leadership. The beginning of the period saw the end years of A.L. Smith's Mastership, but mostly it was under the tenure (from 1924) of his successor, A.D. Lindsay. As both men shared similar concerns and outlooks, even that one transition was not necessarily highly pronounced.



Portrait of A.L. Smith by Francis Dodd, 1913
[Balliol College portraits]

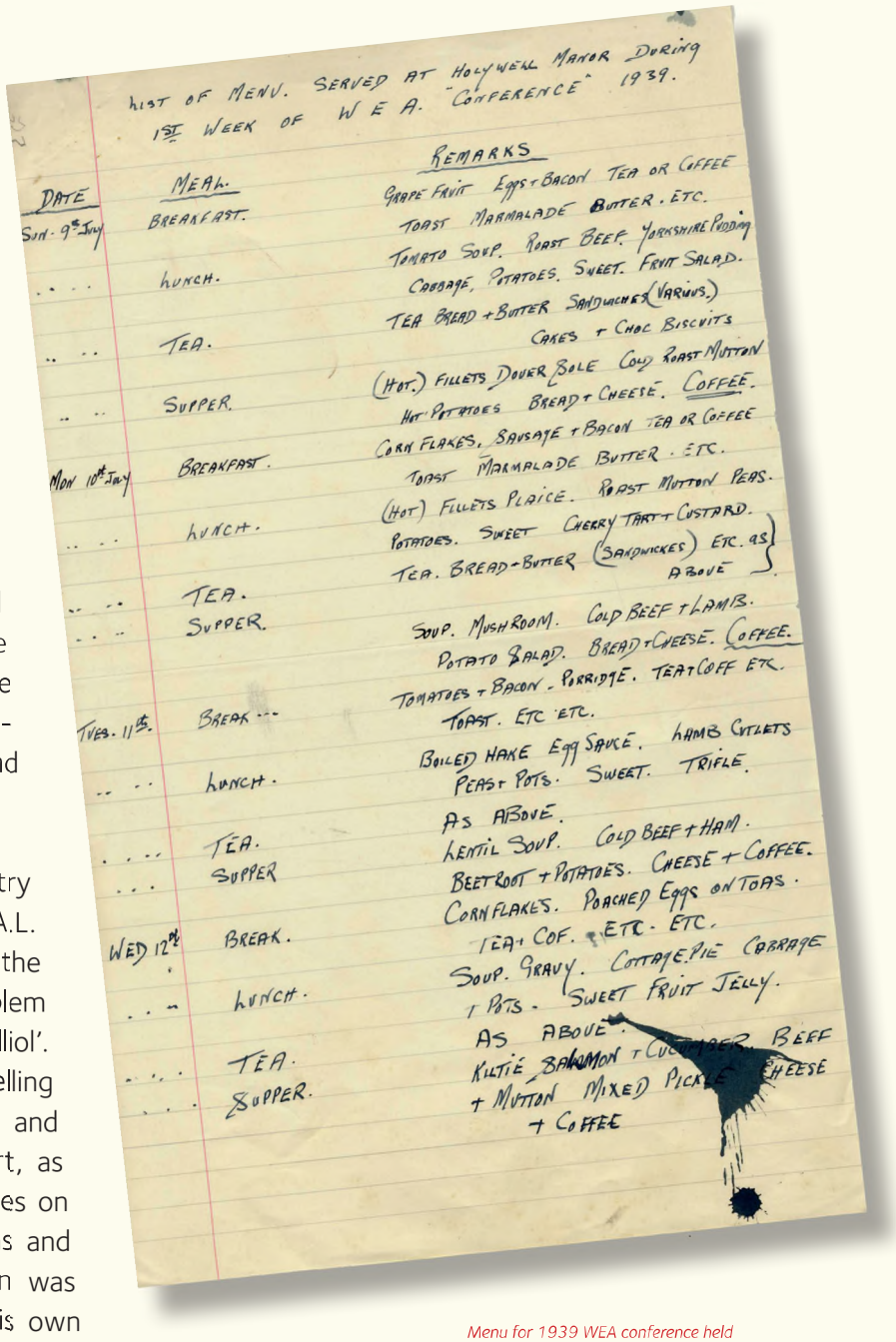
A.L. Smith was Master from 1916, having been an undergraduate (1869) and then a Fellow (from 1882), at the College.[xii] As the latter, his passion for teaching and pastoral work took precedence over scholarship and publishing. The great 19th-century reforming Master, Benjamin Jowett, valued his capacity to help develop those who might need extra support with their studies, especially those from African and Asian backgrounds who were coming into an alien milieu far from home.[xiii] Often this support was provided by periods of accommodation in Smith's busy and friendly household, by his wife Mary and their nine children, for whom the spacious accommodation on King's Mound was built on Jowett's orders.[xiv] Smith's concern for the broadening of education extended to support for female education and active involvement in the Workers Education Association. His Mastership was distorted by the 1914-18 War, initially by his exertions in the war effort, lecturing across the country, and later by the need to reconstruct College life after the War's depredations. This took a toll on his physical health and he died after two months of illness in 1924.[xv]

A.D. Lindsay had failed to win a scholarship to Balliol, studying instead at University College.[xvi] After some years teaching Philosophy in Glasgow, Edinburgh and Manchester, he was elected Fellow and Tutor in Philosophy at Balliol in 1906. Active service (he was mentioned twice in dispatches) and another period in Glasgow University were interludes in an Oxford career that culminated in his election as Master at Balliol.[xvii] His membership of the still fledgling Labour party raised eyebrows amongst the establishment,[xviii] but he continued the blueprint of Christian socialism, engaged pastoral work in College, and support for the WEA and women's education established by Smith.

‘Cornflakes. Poached eggs on toast. Tea & coffee’

Both Smith and Lindsay were actively involved in the provision of adult education to working people through their work for the Workers Educational Association. The WEA was founded in Glasgow in 1903 and remains one of the UK’s largest charities.[xix] The documents at Balliol bookend the inter-war period showing both Smith’s and Lindsay’s involvement.

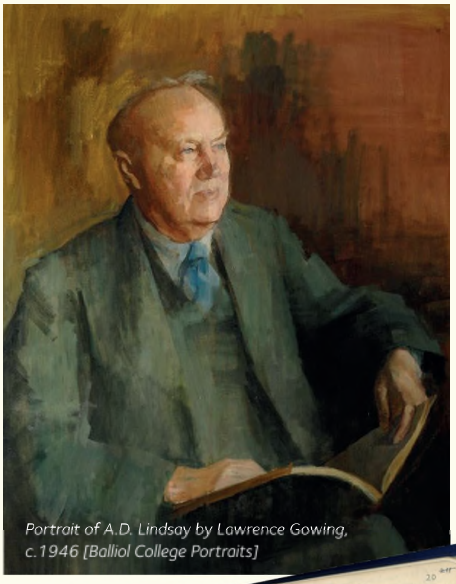
A programme of lectures for the Coventry Branch of the WEA for 1917 notes A.L. Smith’s commitment to delivering the final lecture of the series on ‘The Problem of Adult Education’ as ‘Master of Balliol’. At this period Smith was still travelling the length of the country lecturing and speaking on behalf of the war effort, as well as serving on national committees on Church and State, industrial problems and adult education.[xx] Perhaps the strain was beginning to show – he mentions his own health problems in a letter co-ordinating his participation with T.W. Price, as well as commiserating with Price’s ill health that had seen him have most of his teeth removed as detailed in other letters in the correspondence.


List of Menu. Served at Holywell Manor During 1st Week of W E A. "Conference" 1939.

Date	Meal.	Remarks
Sun. 9th July	Breakfast.	Grape Fruit Eggs + Bacon Tea or Coffee Toast Marmalade Butter. etc.
.. ..	Lunch.	Tomato Soup. Roast Beef. Yorkshire Pudding Cabbage, Potatoes. Sweet. Fruit Salad.
.. ..	Tea.	Tea Bread + Butter Sandwiches (Various.) Cakes + Choc Biscuits
.. ..	Supper.	(Hot.) Fillets Dover Sole Cold Roast Mutton Hot Potatoes Bread + Cheese. Coffee.
Mon 10th July	Breakfast.	Corn Flakes, Sausage + Bacon Tea or Coffee Toast Marmalade Butter. etc.
.. ..	Lunch.	(Hot) Fillets Plaice. Roast Mutton Peas. Potatoes. Sweet Cherry Tart + Custard.
.. ..	Tea.	Tea. Bread + Butter (Sandwiches) etc. as above
.. ..	Supper.	Soup. Mushroom. Cold Beef + Lamb. Potato Salad. Bread + Cheese. Coffee.
Tues. 11th.	Break...	Tomatoes + Bacon. Porridge. Tea + Coff etc. Toast. etc. etc.
.. ..	Lunch.	Boiled Hake Egg Sauce. Hmb Cutlets Peas + Pots. Sweet. Trifle.
.. ..	Tea.	As above.
.. ..	Supper	Lentil Soup. Cold Beef + Ham. Beetroot + Potatoes. Cheese + Coffee.
Wed 12th	Break.	Corn Flakes. Poached Eggs on Toas. Tea + Cof. etc. etc.
.. ..	Lunch.	Soup. Gravy. Cottage Pie Cabbage + Pots. Sweet Fruit Jelly.
.. ..	Tea.	As above.
.. ..	Supper.	Kiltie Salmon + Cucumber. Beef + Mutton Mixed Pickle Cheese + Coffee

Menu for 1939 WEA conference held at Hoylwell Manor [Balliol College Historic Collections. From MBP 48]

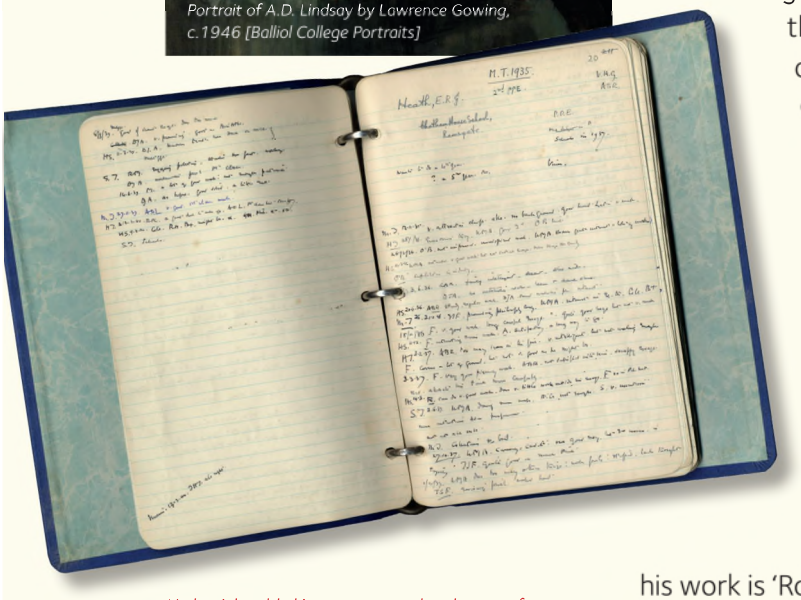
22 years later the WEA was meeting in the newly converted Holywell Manor during Lindsay’s tenure of the Mastership. The handwritten menu details the straightforward fare on offer to those workers attending with whom Lindsay had a natural rapport.[xxi] Like Smith, Lindsay participated whole-heartedly in the adult education movement delivering tutorials. At one of these, the class decided to get a portrait made for Lindsay of one of its members, John Elkin, a local miner. Gratefully accepted by Lindsay and his wife, this portrait apparently hung for many years in the Master’s Lodgings.[xxii]



Portrait of A.D. Lindsay by Lawrence Gowing, c.1946 [Balliol College Portraits]

Healey & Heath: Lindsay as Master

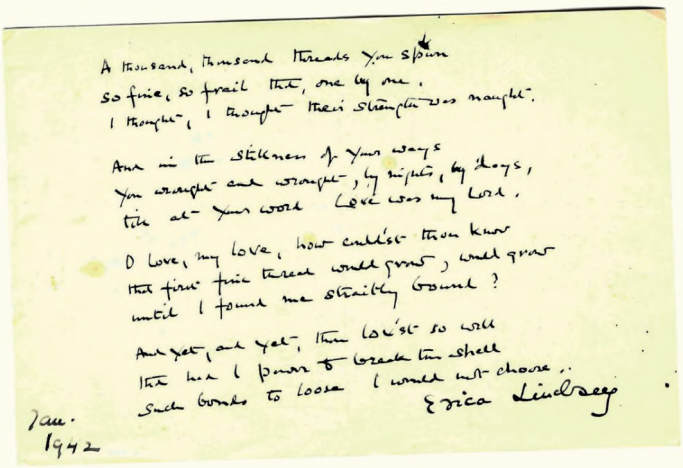
Following in Smith's footsteps Lindsay continued to elevate pastoral engagement with undergraduates. He established close relations with the JCR and initiated both a series of 'lay sermons' and informal gatherings in his lodgings for students.[xxiii] His 'hand-shaking' notes still survive in numerous blue cloth ring binders. These notes were based on tutors' assessments of their pupils and informed the termly one-to-one meetings the Master had with the students to discuss their progress. The names included show the influence Lindsay had on a generation of politicians, several of whom would go on to high office during the second half of the 20th century. The example pictured here is open to the entry for Ted Heath (Balliol 1935, Conservative Prime Minister 1970-1974), and the notes on the preceding page are the concluding remarks on a political rival, Denis Healey (Balliol, 1936, Labour Chancellor and Deputy Leader during the 1970s and early 1980s). Whilst Heath's entry begins with a note about him being 'a very attractive chap' it soon transpires that his 'Capabilities [are greater than his] industry' and that he 'does too many other things' outside of his studies to their detriment. Healey's entry on the other hand starts off saying that his work is 'Rough & Heavy' although he is a 'v. nice fellow', a theme that continues in notes saying his presentation is 'rough and formless' or 'interesting but perverse', although by the end of his College career Lindsay notes 'v. good, 1st class work'.



Lindsay's handshaking notes opened to the entry for Ted Heath [Balliol College Historic Collections. From Studies and Discipline.8]

'Dear Sister': Erica Lindsay

Lindsay's companion throughout his tenure as Master, which extended until 1949, was his wife Erica (d. 1962). They met in 1907 whilst she was a student at Somerville College.[xxiv] She retained a life-long passion for art and poetry[xxv] as demonstrated in the series of Christmas cards bearing her own compositions she had printed from the late 1930s, the examples exhibited being sent to Lady Mary Murray. Like Mary Smith, she was also instrumental in providing soft power at important junctures, notably



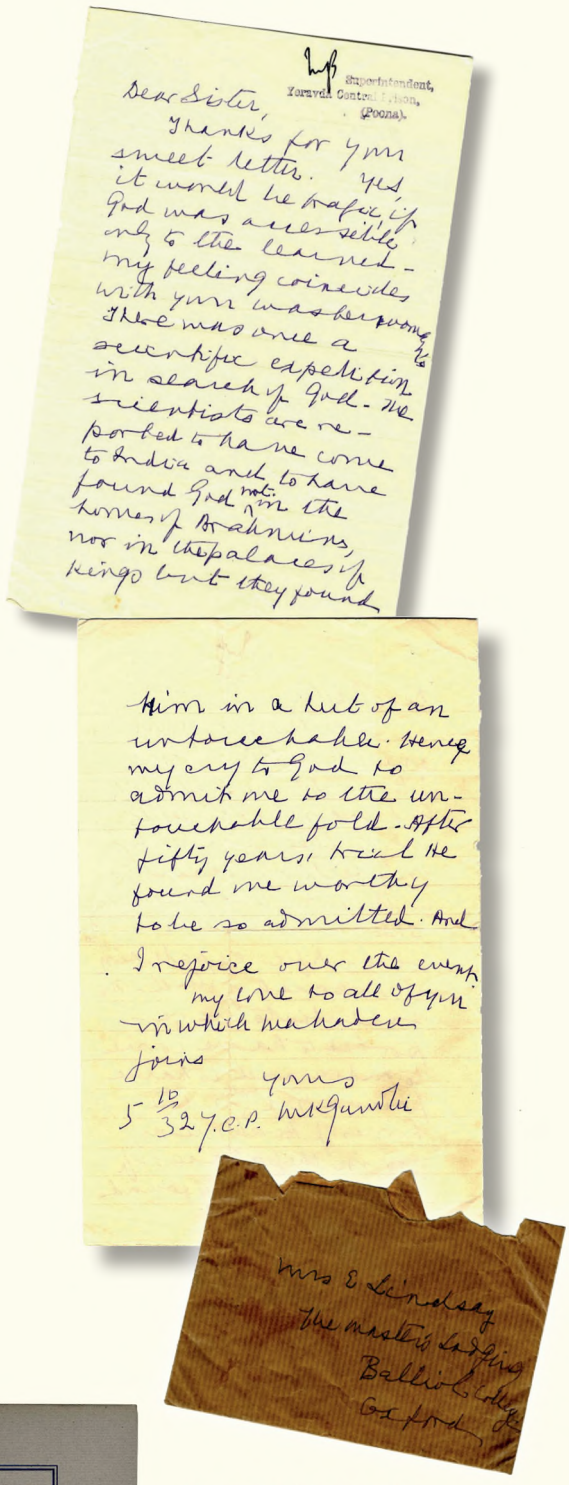
Christmas Card poem by Erica Lindsay [Balliol College Historic Collections. From Correspondence Collection, Erica Lindsay] Image use courtesy of the Lindsay family.

in 1931, when the Lindsays' hospitality in Oxford provided respite for Mahatma Gandhi during intense periods of talks in London.[xxvi] Gandhi had been invited to London, as the sole member of the Indian National Congress, for negotiations which it was hoped would stop his campaign of civil disobedience in India.[xxvii] For his part Gandhi was hoping for movement towards Indian independence. The talks were tense, and Gandhi mainly based himself in humble accommodation in the East End of London,[xxviii] but for two weekends the Lindsays offered him hospitality in the Master's Lodgings. Their solicitousness obviously made as much of a mark on Gandhi as his ideas did on them. Erica kept in touch, and the letter displayed here was sent to her after Gandhi had been confined to Yerwada Jail in Pune by the colonial administration on his return to India.

'I Believe in Democracy': Lindsay's research & publications

Lindsay managed to publish throughout his career, unlike Smith. Much of his output consisted of introductions to key philosophers from Plato through to T.H. Green, and a substantial work on Henri Bergson.[xxix] Perhaps his strength really lay in the communication of ideas particularly in relation to the consideration of topical issues.[xxx] An example displayed here is a set of addresses broadcast on the BBC in 1940 collectively entitled 'I Believe in Democracy'. His most well-known work was *The Modern Democratic State*, a history of that subject published during the 1939-1945 War and focussing on communism and fascism as responses to democracy. It was originally envisaged as the first of two volumes but the second volume never appeared.[xxxi]

Two gifts to the Library made by Lindsay perhaps also reflect his philosophical interests. They are both late 15th-century volumes by the medieval thinker William of Ockham – the one exhibited resplendent in a 16th-century binding decorated with the ornate 'blind' (i.e. without gilt) rolls typical of the period, and a mark where its library chain was once attached.


Superintendent,
Yerwada Central Prison,
(Poona).

Dear Sister,

Thanks for your sweet letter. Yes it would be a fine if God was accessible only to the learned - my feeling coincides with yours when I was between the Thieves was once a scientific expedition in search of God. The scientists were disappointed to have come to India and to have found God not in the homes of Brahmins, nor in the palaces of kings but they found

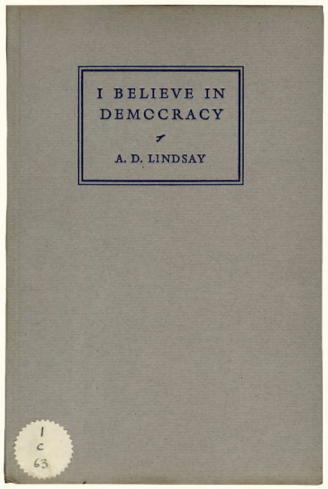
Him in a hut of an untouchable. Hence my cry to God to admit me to the untouchable fold. After fifty years I trust He found me worthy to be so admitted. And I rejoice over the event. My love to all of you in which Mahadev joins

Yours
5-10-32 M.K. Gandhi

Mrs E Lindsay
The Master's Lodgings
Balliol College
Oxford

Letter from Mahatma Gandhi to Erica Lindsay from Yerwada Jail, dated 5 October 1932. [Balliol College Historic Collections. From Correspondence Collection, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi]

With permission of the Navajivan Trust.

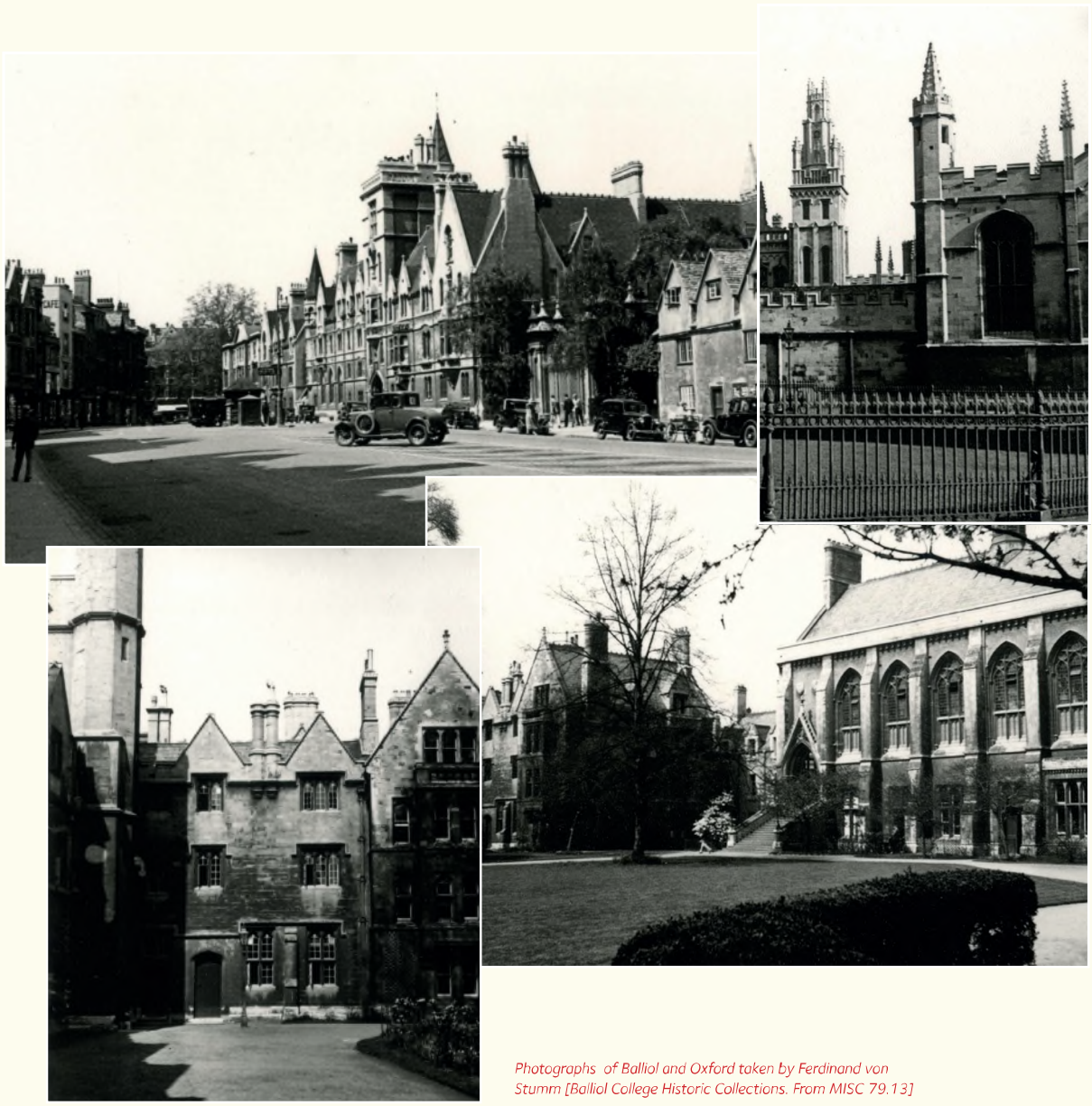

I BELIEVE IN
DEMOCCRACY
BY
A. D. LINDSAY

1
c
63

I Believe in Democracy, by A.D. Lindsay 1940. [Balliol College Library. 1 c 63]

STUDENT **LIFE**

The administrative records generated by the day-to-day business of the College show us the inter-war period from the College's perspective, but our collections of personal papers – generated and collected by individuals – capture life from a student perspective. One fascinating collection was donated by Ferdinand Eugen von Stumm, a German who matriculated in 1934 and attended Balliol for a year. This is a collection of ephemera[xxxii] – material with a short useful life that is usually thrown away. Yet, by its nature such material gives us glimpses into the daily life of a student during between the wars. So, what were the main similarities and differences between student life then and now?



Photographs of Balliol and Oxford taken by Ferdinand von Stumm [Balliol College Historic Collections. From MISC 79.13]

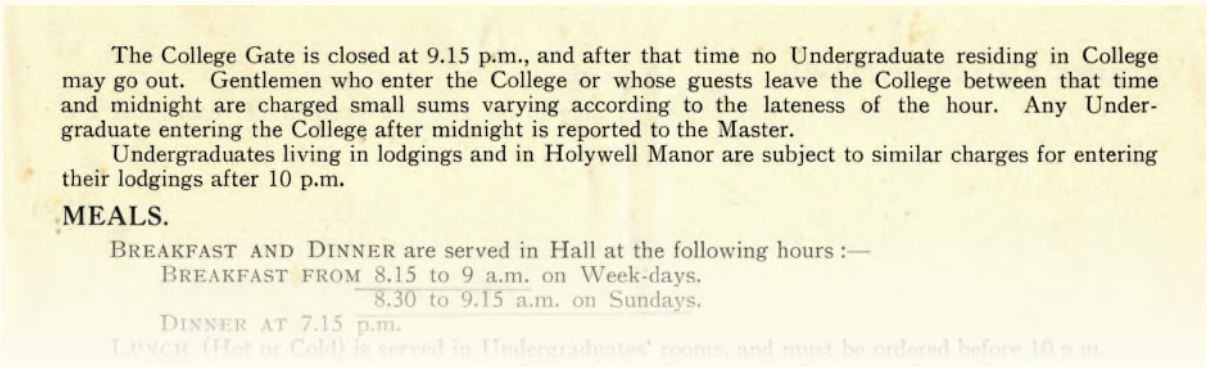




Photographs of von Stumm's room [Balliol College Historic Collections. From MISC 79.13]

The documents issued by the College for students indicate a far more paternalistic attitude than today's undergraduates would expect. The high academic standards demanded by the College will be familiar today – shown in the College Rules[xxxiii] by the requirement to read for an Honours Degree (the Pass Degree being less demanding), and the mandating of remedial classes if examinations are not passed first time. However, the rules extend beyond academic life, and into the realms of the personal and social.

Although attendance at chapel services was no longer mandatory, College still kept a close eye on students, requiring them to attend roll call in Hall five times a week between 8.45 and 9.00am. Tight control was exercised over students' absence – permission to go out for the day had to be sought from not only one's tutor, but also the Dean. Absence overnight was even more strictly regulated, needing approval from the Master, and was only granted in cases of 'illness or urgent private affairs'. Further regulation of student life was exercised through closing the College gates at 9.15pm, with the requirement that all students be inside by that time. Late return was punished by the issuing of fines or, in extreme cases, through a report to the Master. Whilst these rules clearly existed, however, students could always find a way around them. Von Stumm recalls in reminiscences, 'I must confess that on a warm June night I helped [my cousin] to climb out of his window overlooking Broad Street in full evening dress to attend a dance somewhere in town. We had found a rope ladder on a cupboard outside his room. In the morning he woke me up sleeping in his bed by pulling a string which was fastened to my leg and I let down the rope ladder again.'[xxxiv]



The College Gate is closed at 9.15 p.m., and after that time no Undergraduate residing in College may go out. Gentlemen who enter the College or whose guests leave the College between that time and midnight are charged small sums varying according to the lateness of the hour. Any Undergraduate entering the College after midnight is reported to the Master.

Undergraduates living in lodgings and in Holywell Manor are subject to similar charges for entering their lodgings after 10 p.m.

MEALS.

BREAKFAST AND DINNER are served in Hall at the following hours :—

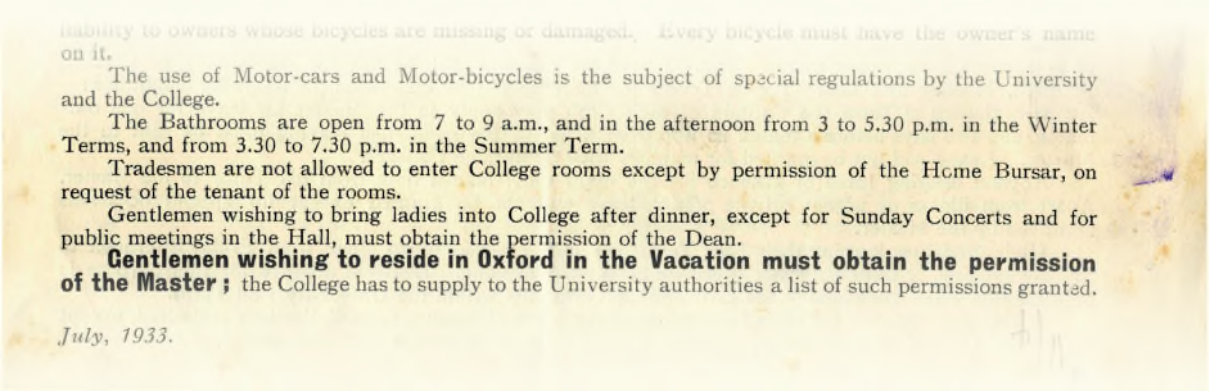
BREAKFAST FROM 8.15 to 9 a.m. on Week-days.
8.30 to 9.15 a.m. on Sundays.

DINNER AT 7.15 p.m.

LUNCH (Hot or Cold) is served in Undergraduates' rooms, and must be ordered before 10 a.m.

The College rules and regulations governed almost every aspect of undergraduate life [Balliol College Historic Collections. From MISC 380]

These documents also give insight into the provision of amenities for students at this time, which appear to be rather more 'basic' than the students of today would accept. Whilst en-suite accommodation is becoming something of the norm in student rooms, Balliol's rules from 1933 reflect that the College bathrooms (located in Garden Quad) were only open 7.00-9.00am and 3.00-5.30pm (Winter) and 3.30-7.30pm (Summer). The standard of the rooms themselves was also rather more spartan. Von Stumm recalls hanging 'a piece of green woollen cloth before the iron window to protect me of the draught.'



on it.

The use of Motor-cars and Motor-bicycles is the subject of special regulations by the University and the College.

The Bathrooms are open from 7 to 9 a.m., and in the afternoon from 3 to 5.30 p.m. in the Winter Terms, and from 3.30 to 7.30 p.m. in the Summer Term.

Tradesmen are not allowed to enter College rooms except by permission of the Home Bursar, on request of the tenant of the rooms.

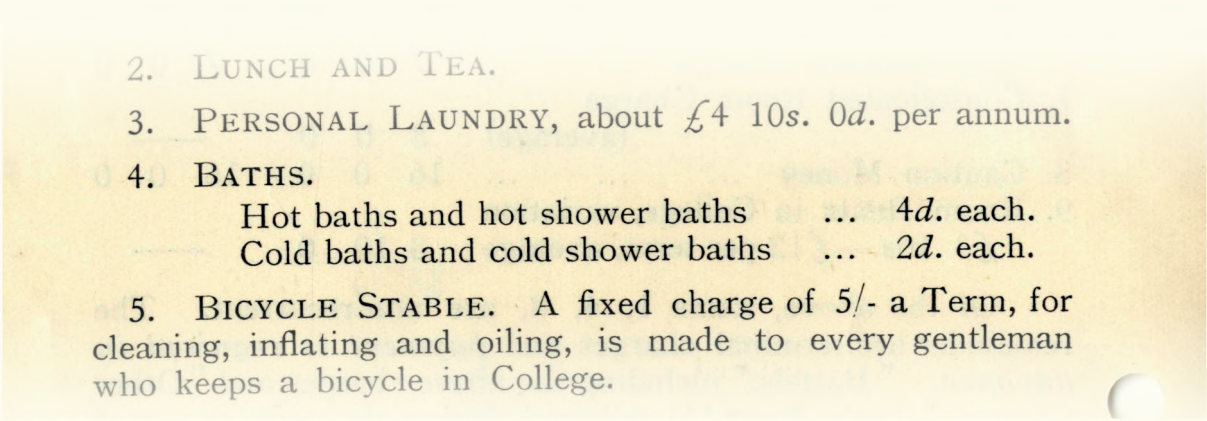
Gentlemen wishing to bring ladies into College after dinner, except for Sunday Concerts and for public meetings in the Hall, must obtain the permission of the Dean.

Gentlemen wishing to reside in Oxford in the Vacation must obtain the permission of the Master; the College has to supply to the University authorities a list of such permissions granted.

July, 1933.

[Balliol College Historic Collections. From MISC 380]

In other ways, students could be said to have been more pampered, thanks to the old-fashioned 'upstairs, downstairs' attitude towards College staff, and what it was acceptable for 'young gentlemen' to do for themselves. In official documents staff were referred to as 'College servants' and the 'Balliol College Memorandum of Expenses' [xxxv] and 'Meals' [xxxvi] information show the services undergraduates were expected to use. These included lunch being served in students' rooms and a personal laundry service. Student were even relieved of the onerous task of maintaining their own bicycles: 'A fixed charge of 5/- a Term, for cleaning, inflating and oiling, is made to every gentleman who keeps a bicycle in College.' Reminiscences from the period, however, suggest a closer relationship between students and staff. Ken Bowen (Balliol, 1937) recalled 'Scouts [housekeeping staff] were among the more important people in the College, philosophers and friends who addressed us as "sir", told us off when stupidity overrode intelligence, sold useful things like gowns and teapots, and kept our rooms tidy and serviced.' [xxxvii] Von Stumm recorded 'I will not forget Mr Cyril King who was porter at the College main gate overlooking Broad Street. I talked to him a lot and he was always well informed.'



2. LUNCH AND TEA.

3. PERSONAL LAUNDRY, about £4 10*s*. 0*d*. per annum.

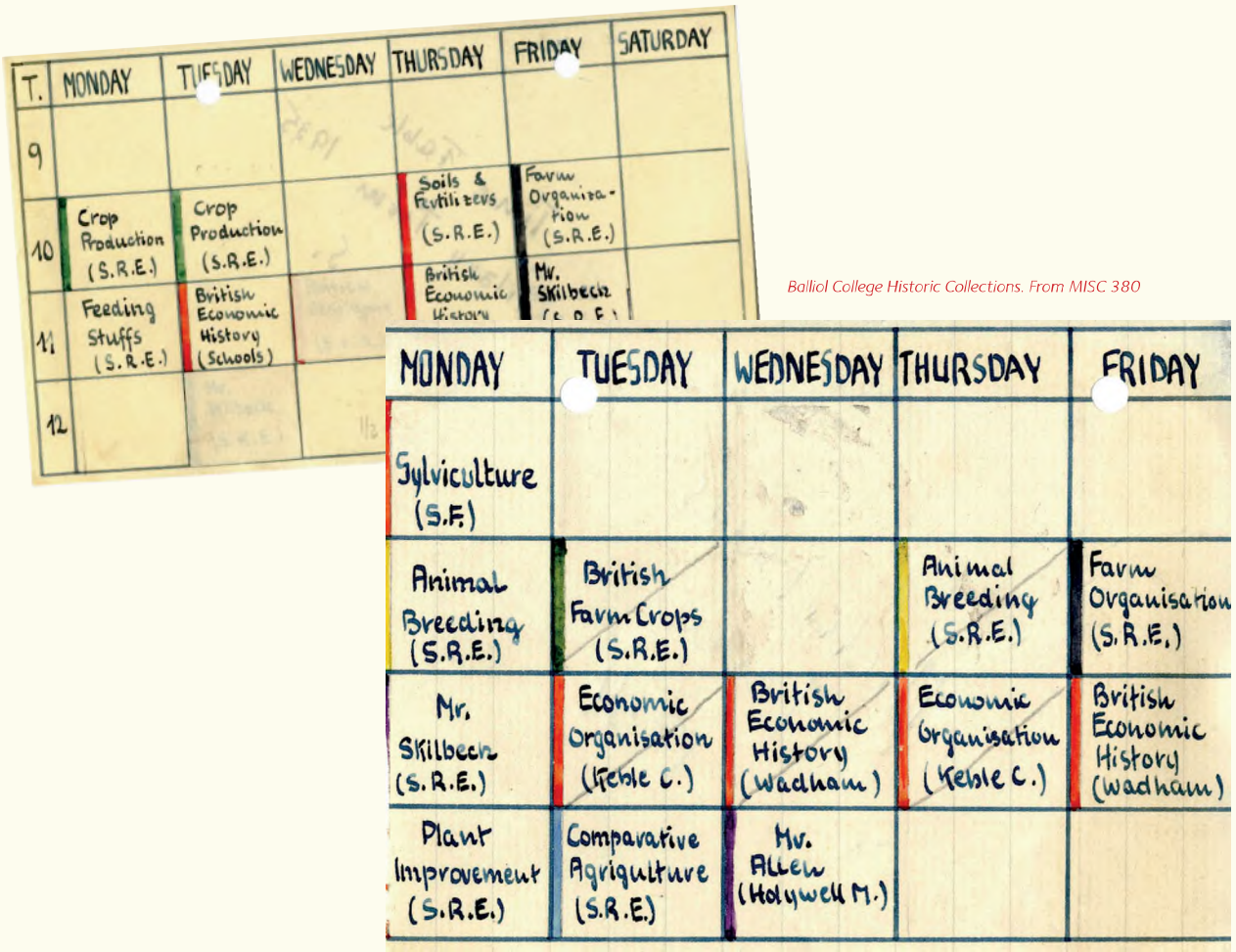
4. BATHS.

Hot baths and hot shower baths ... 4*d*. each.
Cold baths and cold shower baths ... 2*d*. each.

5. BICYCLE STABLE. A fixed charge of 5/- a Term, for cleaning, inflating and oiling, is made to every gentleman who keeps a bicycle in College.

[Balliol College Historic Collections. From MISC 380]

The inter-war period saw the continued formalisation and diversification of the University curriculum. The Examination Regulations (the closest thing Oxford had to a formally issued syllabus) were becoming increasingly specific as to the topics covered for each subject. The subjects offered grew in number and became increasingly applicable to modern life. Simultaneously there was a shift towards placing increasing importance in getting a 'good degree', demonstrated by changing attitudes towards study over the period. In the 1920s, Cyril Connolly blithely wrote home from outside the Examination Schools, 'The examinations are pretty crashing. I know very little history and haven't read half the prepared books.' [xxxviii] In contrast Von Stumm saw his course in Agriculture and Forestry as directly relating to 'my future', and his personal papers show how seriously he took his studies. Carefully preserved are his termly lecture lists and timetables, issued by the Faculty of Social Studies, and class schedules for the School of Rural Economy.[xxxix] Von Stumm assiduously annotated these to show the sessions he planned to attend and drew colour-coded termly timetables to supplement them. His class notes from 1934 and 1935 also survive,[xl] dozens of neatly written pages relating to grassland, British farm crops, and crop production. However, one link to the pre-war attitudes survives – as noted by Bowen 'Most afternoons were given to exercise: soccer, hockey, squash and tennis…' Likewise, Von Stumm's timetables show that whilst his working week extends into Saturday, his working day rarely strays into the afternoon.



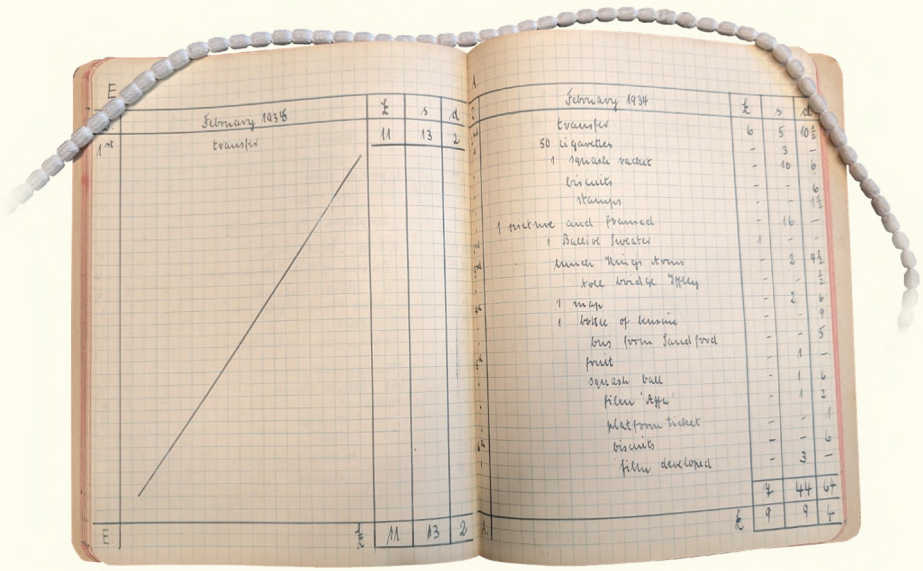
Balliol College Historic Collections. From MISC 380

A variety of pastimes were available to occupy this free time, including College clubs and societies. It is clear that rowing was popular, even amongst those who never set foot in a boat, with Von Stumm attending every day of Torpids in 1935, and carefully completing the inter-college chart.[xli] Just as is the case today, there were differences in personal experience. Bowen occupied himself mainly within College, recalling 'I had, incidentally, little feeling of University – I was at Balliol, not at Oxford'. However, Von Stumm clearly participated in inter-collegiate life, with at least one invitation to dine at Lincoln, and mentioning friends from across the University. Membership and term cards extant amongst his papers – for the Austrian Club and German Club – may indicate that he was looking to connect with those with a similar cultural background.[xlii] Life outside the confines of the University had a strong draw during the period. As pubs were still forbidden to undergraduates, students looked elsewhere for their entertainment, taking coach trips, bus rides around the City, watching military tattoos, films, and theatre performances.[xliii]



Von Stumm's collection of ephemera shows a rich social life, including University societies and day-trips out [Balliol College Historic Collections. From MISC 380]

Von Stumm kept detailed notes on his expenses, showing purchases of coffee and College clothing [Balliol College Historic Collections. From MISC 380]



Reminiscences of Oxford in the early 1920s may read rather like an extract from Brideshead Revisited: 'to be accepted by the upper class, then in possession of money and authority and even glamour, was a natural ambition... I came up to Oxford from college at Eton with a small group of scholars and for most of my time there I was hardly to see anyone else... I think that I was the first to insist on visiting the Mediterranean in summer.'[xliv] However, as the decades progressed, we see something of a charge in the attitude and background of those attending the College. Von Stumm, although from a privileged milieu, carefully monitored and controlled his spending in a neat black journal, recording the purchase of treats for himself, such as a Balliol postcard or a cup of coffee.[xlv] By the late 1930s the social class of those obtaining scholarships was more diverse, with Bowen recounting 'My family had limited means... I never had to worry about making ends meet [due to a scholarship], but I was, in any case, not extravagant, by nature and background'.



Balliol College Historic Collections. From MISC 79.13]

Yet, even in these records of life's minutiae, the shadow of impending war is inescapable. Von Stumm states that coming to Oxford was like the world opening up 'to a young man having been locked up in pre-war Germany. Only with the help of my mother's brother who had since long accepted Chilean nationality I was able to spend a year at Oxford.' Most disturbingly, he recalled Lord Rufus Isaacs (a member of a prominent Jewish family) regarding him 'with a friendly suspicion, prosecution of Jews having just begun in Germany'. These shadows are darker for Bowen, sitting finals in 1940. His memories capture the guilt and the confusion felt by many of his contemporaries, 'That third year was very unreal. Why were we enjoying ourselves? What were we studying for? What sort of world was in the making?'

PROFESSIONALISING THE ADMINISTRATION:

THE DOMESTIC BURSAR AND COLLEGE STAFF



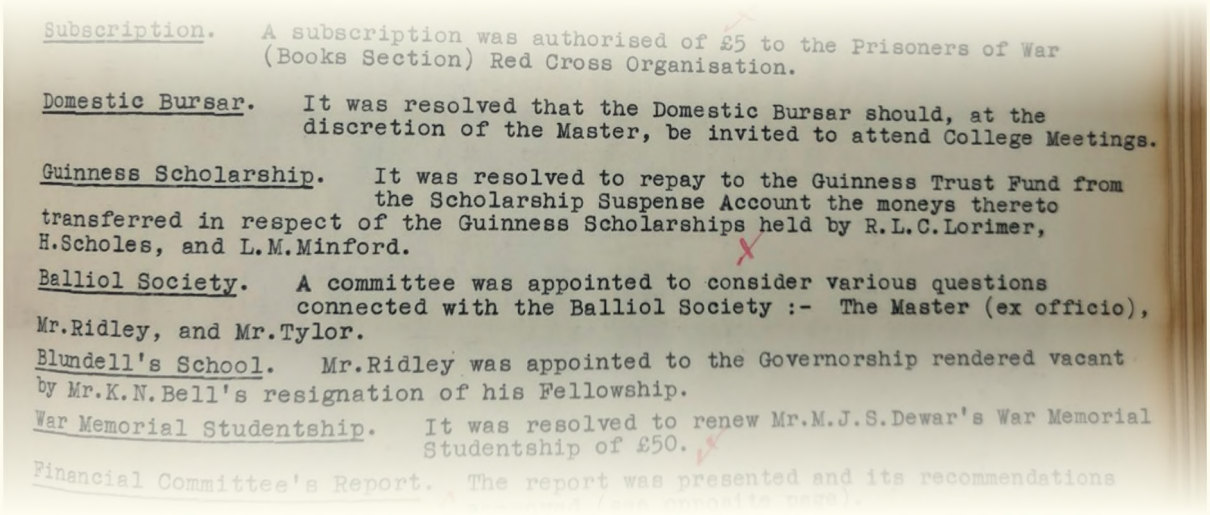
Photograph of College staff in 1939 including Colonel Duke in the centre of the front row [Balliol College Historic Collections. From ART 36]

Prior to the post-war period, the Master and Fellows managed the administration of the College. As Master Benjamin Jowett took on much of this responsibility personally, believing that the College's reputation for dining and other activities warranted his direct involvement.[xlvi] After the First World War, however, there was a move towards professionalising the administration.

In 1920, Colonel A.C.H. Duke was appointed as Domestic Bursar. Though he had limited university experience – having spent two years as an undergraduate at Cambridge University before joining the army at the onset of the South African War – he brought a wealth of practical experience. He had studied 'business efficiency' and a commercial course at the London School of Economics, which included accounting, banking, and finance. His military service provided experience in accountancy and the management of army and navy stores, including streamlining expenditures in officers' messes.[xlvii] This skill in economising was highly sought after by the College, and his position was initially offered as a 12-month role, with its extension contingent on the economies he could effect.[xlviii]

Following resistance in College to employing someone from outside the Fellowship, Colonel Duke's work was initially overseen by a committee of Fellows. His early reports focused on surveying expenditure on stores, water, and College buildings, and detailing the economies achieved.[xlix] His expertise gained him favour, his contract being renewed after the initial year without oversight from the committee and in 1929 he himself was elected a Fellow.[l]

Upon Colonel Duke's retirement in 1939, the College decided that a woman would be best suited for the role of Domestic Bursar as they wished to 'secure the services of an expert in catering and in the management of the hotel side of the college generally'. The catering officer at Gonville and Caius College in Cambridge, Annie Bradbury, was appointed from a shortlist of four women[li] In the report of the Bursarship Committee, it was decided that simultaneously a Chairman of the Domestic Committee should be appointed from among the Fellows and that he 'should be responsible to College Meeting for the actions of the Domestic Bursar'. Although Bradbury was never made a Fellow, she was invited to attend College Meeting in 1941. Bradbury served the College throughout the Second World War until the mid-1950s.[lii]



Subscription. A subscription was authorised of £5 to the Prisoners of War (Books Section) Red Cross Organisation.

Domestic Bursar. It was resolved that the Domestic Bursar should, at the discretion of the Master, be invited to attend College Meetings.

Guinness Scholarship. It was resolved to repay to the Guinness Trust Fund from the Scholarship Suspense Account the moneys thereto transferred in respect of the Guinness Scholarships held by R.L.C.Lorimer, H.Scholes, and L.M.Minford.

Balliol Society. A committee was appointed to consider various questions connected with the Balliol Society :- The Master (ex officio), Mr.Ridley, and Mr.Tylor.

Blundell's School. Mr.Ridley was appointed to the Governorship rendered vacant by Mr.K.N.Bell's resignation of his Fellowship.

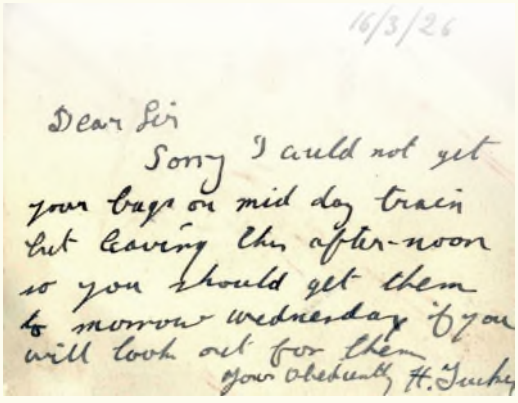
War Memorial Studentship. It was resolved to renew Mr.M.J.S.Dewar's War Memorial Studentship of £50.

Financial Committee's Report. The report was presented and its recommendations

Extract from College Meeting minutes for 5 November 1941 [Balliol College Historic Collections. From Government.College Meeting.C. English Register of College Meeting Minutes 1936-1942,]

'Not as a servant but as a friend'

A major part of the Domestic Bursar's role was to oversee the conference business. This provided more stable employment for staff such as scouts, who were previously only employed during term. In 1928 Tom Sawyer, a scout, retired after 50 years of service. He was interviewed for the local newspaper and noted the significant improvements in working conditions over the years, saying when he started 'they were very poorly paid and had to rely to a great extent upon tips from the undergraduates'. In vacations, he would seek work as the personal servant of the men that lived on his staircase and travel with them.[liii] Other staff would find seasonal



16/3/26

Dear Sir

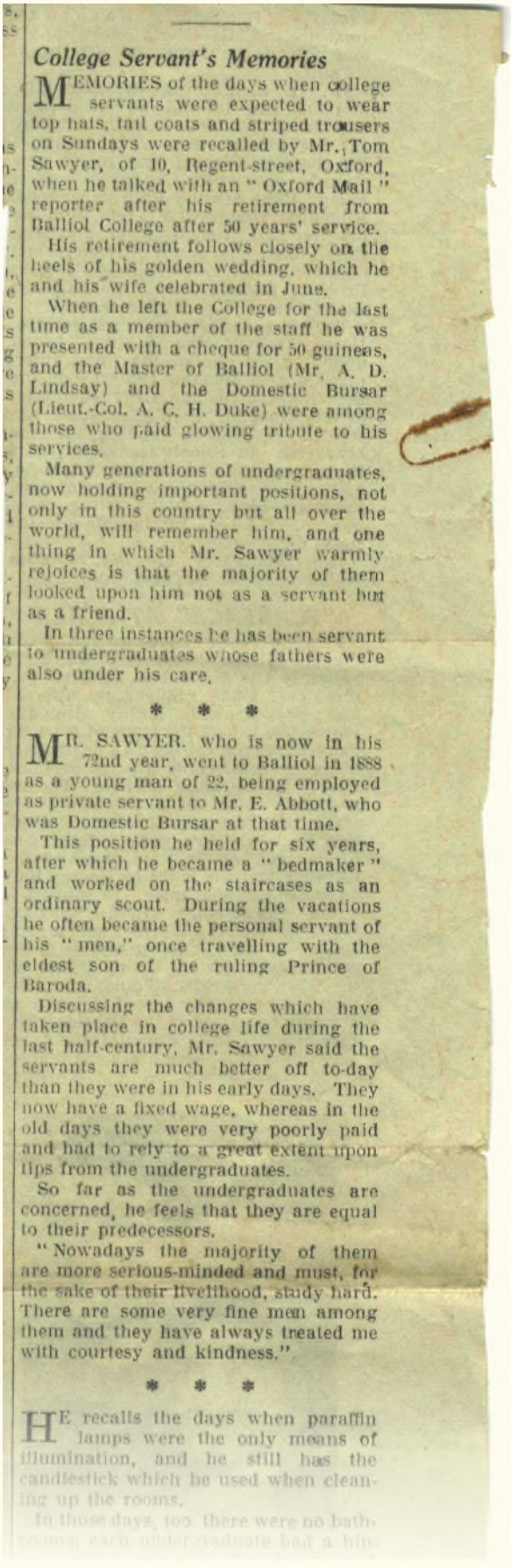
Sorry I could not get your bags on mid day train but having the after-noon so you should get them to morrow wednesday if you will look out for them

your obedient H. Tuckey

Postcard from H. Tuckey to D. G. Fields, 16 March 1926 [Balliol College Historic Collections. From Misc 377a]

work in seaside towns before returning to College for the next term.[liv] By 1928, fixed wages were paid, and staff were employed year-round.[lv]

Although the College was always seeking economies, levels of service afforded undergraduates were extremely high and staff were expected to be on call 7 days a week, from 6.30am–8pm. Staff would ensure that all of the students' and Fellows' needs were met, and discipline was upheld in the College. One scout, H. Tuckey, wrote to an undergraduate to apologise that his luggage had not made it onto the train on time, and would not be with him until the following day.[lvi] Night porters would collect letters from Fellows rooms, to save them the trouble of coming to the Porter's Lodge themselves.[lvii] Despite the high expectations, the staff's relationship to the Fellows was largely cordial. Outings were organised as part of the Balliol Servants Recreation Society and when, in 1937, staff met to consider the possibility of forming a union, it was unanimously opposed. In a letter written by H. Golder and H.G. Holton (both scouts with 44 and 39 years' service respectively) on behalf of the staff, they explain that to form a union 'would destroy one thing which we all cherish very much, namely the friendly feeling which has always existed between the college and its staff'. However, they go on to highlight that the number of conferences are currently putting a lot of pressure on staff [lviii] and by October many in the kitchen were requesting raises owing to efficiencies and the subsequent increase in labour.



College Servant's Memories

MEMORIES of the days when college servants were expected to wear top hats, tail coats and striped trousers on Sundays were recalled by Mr. Tom Sawyer, of 10, Regent-street, Oxford, when he talked with an "Oxford Mail" reporter after his retirement from Balliol College after 50 years' service.

His retirement follows closely on the heels of his golden wedding, which he and his wife celebrated in June.

When he left the College for the last time as a member of the staff he was presented with a cheque for 50 guineas, and the Master of Balliol (Mr. A. D. Lindsay) and the Domestic Bursar (Lieut.-Col. A. C. H. Duke) were among those who paid glowing tribute to his services.

Many generations of undergraduates, now holding important positions, not only in this country but all over the world, will remember him, and one thing in which Mr. Sawyer warmly rejoices is that the majority of them looked upon him not as a servant but as a friend.

In three instances he has been servant to undergraduates whose fathers were also under his care.

* * *

MR. SAWYER, who is now in his 72nd year, went to Balliol in 1888 as a young man of 22, being employed as private servant to Mr. E. Abbott, who was Domestic Bursar at that time.

This position he held for six years, after which he became a "bedmaker" and worked on the staircases as an ordinary scout. During the vacations he often became the personal servant of his "men," once travelling with the eldest son of the ruling Prince of Baroda.

Discussing the changes which have taken place in college life during the last half-century, Mr. Sawyer said the servants are much better off to-day than they were in his early days. They now have a fixed wage, whereas in the old days they were very poorly paid and had to rely to a great extent upon tips from the undergraduates.

So far as the undergraduates are concerned, he feels that they are equal to their predecessors.

"Nowadays the majority of them are more serious-minded and must, for the sake of their livelihood, study hard. There are some very fine men among them and they have always treated me with courtesy and kindness."

* * *

HE recalls the days when paraffin lamps were the only means of illumination, and he still has the candlestick which he used when cleaning up the rooms.

In those days, too, there were no bath-

'College servant's memories', newspaper cutting, 1928 [Balliol College Historic Collections. From MBP 277]

HOLYWELL MANOR

What's in a name?

The name for the area comes from a holy well situated in the Manor. However, the source of the water's sacredness is unclear. The antiquary, Anthony Wood, wrote 'Upon what account it had that epithite bestowed upon it, whether for the imployment of the water therof about sacred uses for the church... or els that by the reputed holiness therin in respect of the miracles it wrought and the like, I am in doubt.' [lix]

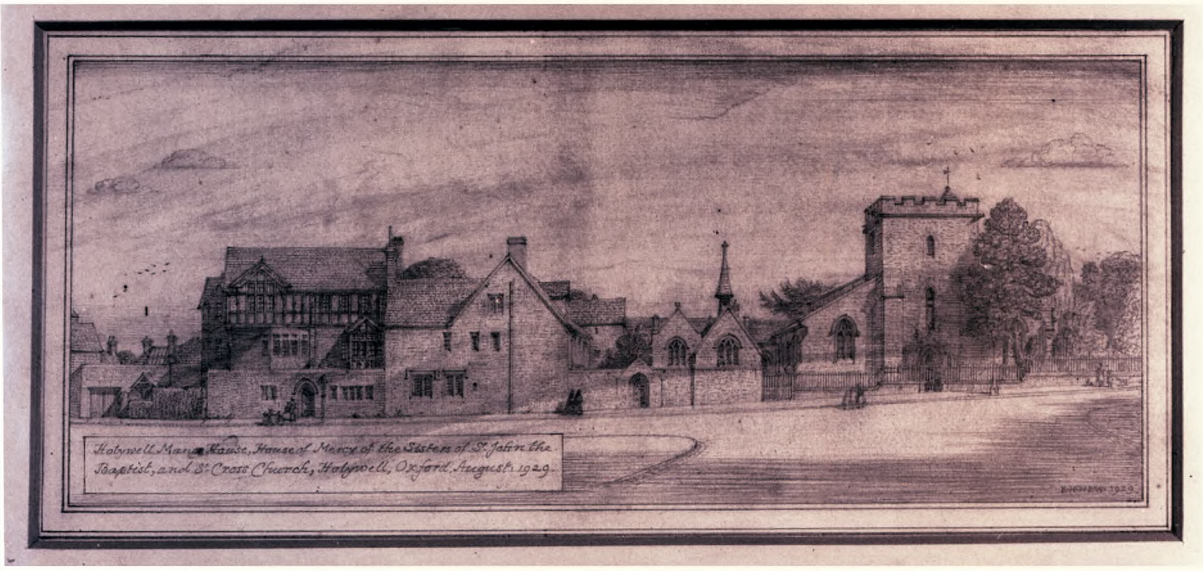
Even the well's site is a point of contention. Balliol College historian, John Jones, identified four possible locations – two in the Manor's garden, one beyond Napper's bridge, and another being the pond at the junction of Holywell and Long Wall Street.[lx]

History of Holywell

Balliol's involvement with Holywell did not begin until the 1920s. Yet the Manor House and the surrounding area has an interesting history extending as as far back as the Domesday book: 'The Church of St Peter of Oxford holds of Robert D'Oilly 2 hides in Haliwelle'. In 1266, Henry III granted the land and associated privileges of St Peter's to Merton College, including Holywell Manor. The area was not heavily populated until the 18th century, the parish consisting of the mill (now part of Magdalen College), the church, the manor house, and dwellings concentrated on Holywell Street.

The Manor House remained at the heart of the area. The original house is believed to date from the 11th century but the current building dates to 1516. Merton farmed the land of the Manor itself, but let the House to tenants amongst whom were the family of the Catholic martyr, George Napier, born there in around 1550. By the 1750s, however, it had become a workhouse and in 1761, the records of Merton College note part of it as 'ruinous'. In 1828, the property was divided into three tenements. A 'cold bath' and a cockpit appeared. During the 19th century the buildings became even more dilapidated, one of the tenements becoming a pub.

Holywell Manor in 1929 [Balliol College Historic Collections. From PHOT NEG 17]



The fortunes of the area began to change in the late 1800s when the University bought land to the North, creating the University Parks, and building the University Museum (now the Museum of Natural History). A community of Anglican nuns took over the Manor House in the 1860s and transformed it into a 'female penitentiary' for 'rescuing fallen women' and the premises were enlarged under the guidance of architect Henry Wilkinson Moore, with the construction of a private chapel over the putative site of the holy well.

In 1889 Balliol College began purchasing land in the area from Merton College to make a cricket ground (now the Master's Field) and, when the College began to look for additional accommodation for its growing numbers of students, its thoughts turned towards Holywell Manor.

Balliol and Holywell Manor

Even allowing for the surge in numbers immediately following the First World War, the College saw a considerable increase in undergraduates in the inter-war period. The Master, A.D. Lindsay, estimated that the College was hosting 25% more students than in the pre-war period, putting this down to increased demand for an Oxbridge education. Greater numbers meant College could not provide accommodation for all its students. In 1924, Balliol could host 140 men in 138 sets, meaning that 100 undergraduates had to live in lodgings around the City. These were expensive and at increasing

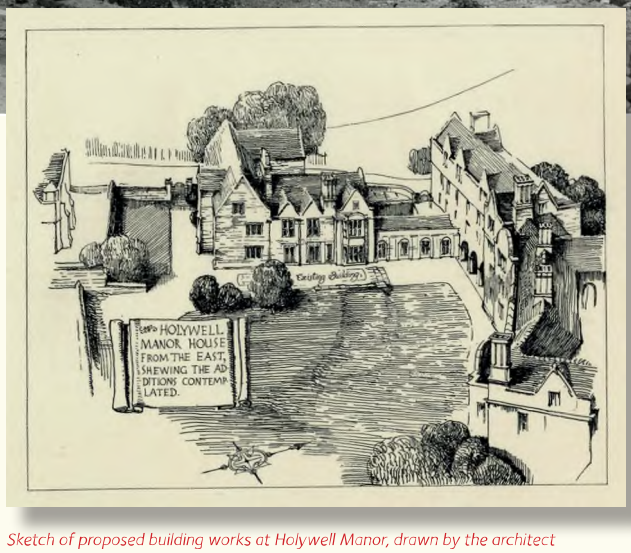
Plan of the Holywell Manor site, as shown in correspondence between Balliol and Merton [Balliol College Historic Collections. From MBP 327]





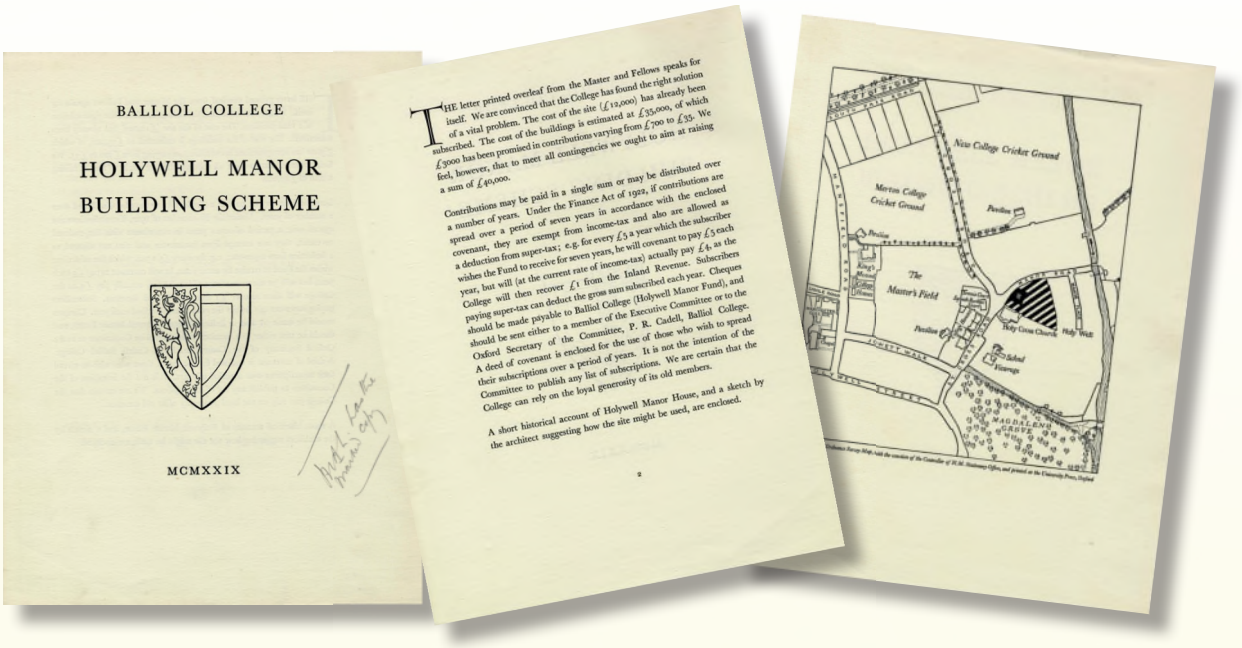
Holywell Manor during building works [Balliol College Historic Collections. From MISC 4]

distances from the College. Attempts were made to squeeze more rooms onto the Broad Street site by converting attics and adding storeys, but there was a limit to what could be achieved, with the College often facing difficulties. So Balliol began to look outside its ancient site for a solution.



Sketch of proposed building works at Holywell Manor, drawn by the architect and included with fundraising mailings to old members [Balliol College Historic Collections. From Departments III. Holywell Manor. 1B]

In 1927 the Estates Committee was instructed to approach Merton with a view to acquire the properties between Holywell Street and Jowett Walk. It became clear, however, that Merton were not willing to part with these buildings and as an alternative 'the Bursar was instructed to ascertain whether Merton would negotiate for the disposal of Holywell Manor House.'[lxi] At a special College Meeting, held on 29 June 1928 it was reported that whilst Merton were prepared to sell the surrounding land they would only agree to lease the Manor House itself for 99 years. A price of £12,000 for the land was agreed, with a nominal rent of £10 per annum for the house. However, Merton stipulated that the lease document state that the house must be preserved, and that building plans had to be approved with them in advance. The College authorised the sealing of the conveyance on 22 May 1929.



Excerpts from fundraising appeals sent from the College to old members in 1929 [Balliol College Historic Collections. From Departments III. Holywell Manor. 1B]

At the same meeting the architect, George Kennedy (Balliol, 1901), was selected, with no other names appearing to have been considered. Moving in the Bloomsbury Circle, his previous work included the library extension to the Royal Geographic Society; the new wing at King's College, Cambridge; and the Cambridge Arts Theatre. Kennedy was given the brief to prepare plans for the site that would house 40 members of the College. An initial hurdle was to define precisely what constituted the house, owing to Merton's preservation clause. This was not easy, owing to the 'chaotic red brick additions which have been allowed to grow up and make nonsense of it.'[lxii] Disagreements over this definition nearly derailed the whole scheme, when Merton objected to the demolition of a 17th-century wall.

Having decided to clear away the later additions, Kennedy was left with a choice, 'The original Manor House... might either be left as a separate entity, or incorporated in the larger building. After a very careful study of the conditions, we adopted the latter alternative as the only treatment of the site which would allow of a dignified and practical answer to the problem of the new building.'[lxiii] Kennedy saw leaving the Manor House free-standing as creating an 'archaeological incubus'. The design that Kennedy produced is a deliberate accumulation of styles – a Cotswold-style frontage, a medieval courtyard and Queen Anne style wings. This gives the viewer the impression of a building which has grown-up over time, and yet makes the overall effect timeless, which A.B. Rodger described as 'perhaps the last and certainly one of the finest examples of the Arts and Crafts movement.'[lxiv]

One of the principal motivators behind the project was history tutor, Kenneth Bell. His wife recalled 'Ken, about this time (1931) was doing a tremendous lot of work in getting Holywell Manor made up into a kind of undergraduate hostel... Ken persuaded his colleagues to buy the Manor... He got George Kennedy, an old Balliol man who was an architect, to be chosen to transform it'.[lxv] One of Bell's chief contributions was the founding of the Balliol Society in 1927, which allowed the College to turn to its Old Members for funding for the project at a time of internal financial hardship. The Society's stated aims were to keep Old Members in touch with the College, to publish and circulate

news of members, and to forward the interests of the College. To help do this they published a register of Old Members, and maintained a list of their addresses. This enabled the College to conduct an extremely modern fundraising campaign for the estimated cost of £50,000. The campaign began with a letter to American alumni in November 1928 for the financing to enable the College to purchase the site. This was followed up in early 1929 with the distribution of a brochure, titled the 'Holywell Manor Building Scheme'. An extremely professional production, featuring a plan of the site, this was accompanied by a sketch by the architect, and a blank, proforma deed of covenant. The brochure explained that the cost of the site had already been met, but that Balliol needed £40,000 for the building, of which £3,000 had so far been raised. The College used a deed of covenant to maximise the impact of subscriptions – if donors spread their contributions over seven years, the College was able to reclaim the income tax. So successful was this approach that, in an update letter sent in November 1929, the Master could report that of the £52,000 needed, £44,000 had been promised, and Balliol would take vacant possession by March 1930.

The resulting building was far more than simply a 'hostel for undergraduates'. The Home Bursar wrote to an enquirer in 1934 'I do not know whether the general verdict would be that Holywell Manor is a luxury, but the amenities to life are certainly considerably greater than what one is accustomed to in the ancient College buildings.' At a time when most toilets on the Broad Street site were in Garden Quad, Holywell Manor boasted two-room sets, each with running water,

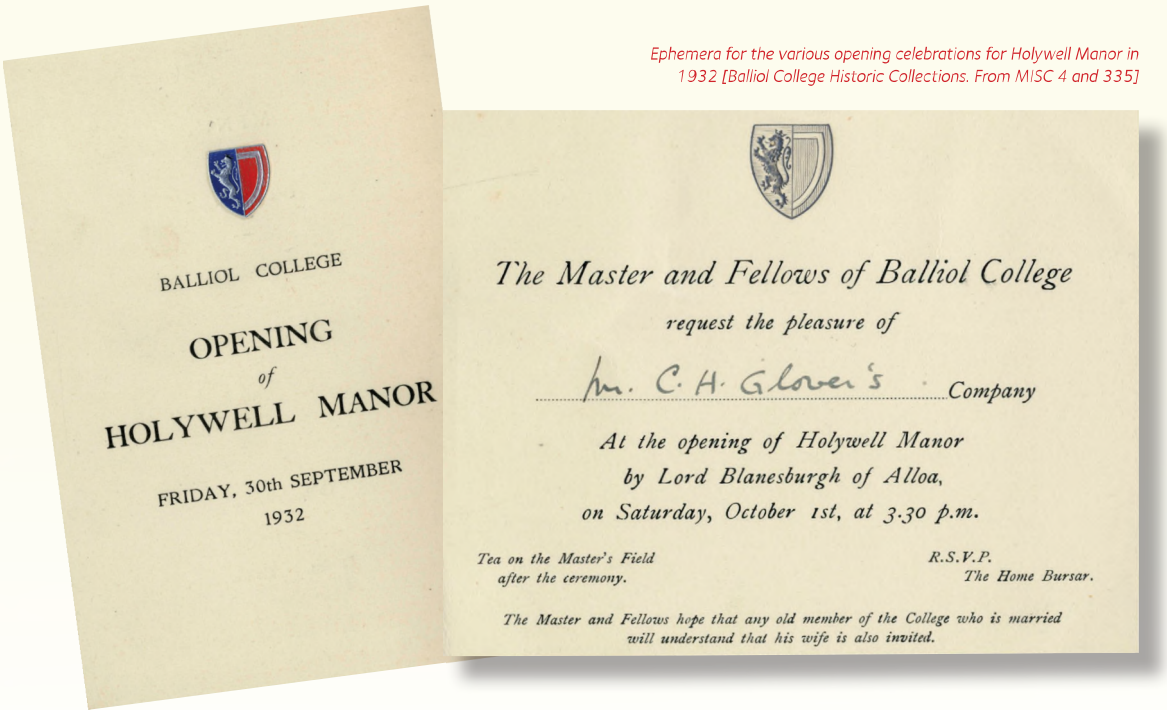




Holywell Manor following its completion in 1932 [Balliol College Historic Collections. From MISC 4]

central heating, and a bathroom on each floor. Rents of rooms were fixed on the same principles as in College, with room rents ranging between £5 and £10. But more than this, Holywell Manor was actually a beautifully appointed miniature college – a head of house (the Praefectus) whose study was two storeys high; a hall with a 'Renaissance coffered ceiling'; Arts and Crafts oak on the first floor, with the preserved original timbers on the ground floor. Care was taken over details. The Home Bursar informed the Bursar of St John's College that 'I'm afraid I cannot give you any information of value as regards the furnishings of these rooms. The matter was left entirely in the hands of the architect.'[lxvi] Documents in the Archives suggest that material was specially ordered for the furnishings, including commissioning a specific weave of fabric for covering seats and sofas. Even the gardens and grounds were important to Kennedy's view of the site: 'My object has been to put the building on easy terms with its site and to connect its future with the fortunes of the garden and the trees planted in relation to it.'[lxvii] Great personal care was taken over the garden which was specifically entrusted to the Estates Bursar and Director of the Institute for Research in Agricultural Economics, C.S. Orwin. In a beautiful mirroring of the funding of the building, the plants for the garden were obtained through an appeal to old members, who sent bulbs, shrubs, cuttings, and trees to fill the grounds.

Holywell Manor was opened with a weekend of revelry in October 1932. All of those involved in the building were celebrated in some way. The Executive Committee and significant contributors were treated to dinner in Hall on Friday, 30 September. Saturday saw a lunch for all those involved on the various committees over the years, with an 'at home' tea in the afternoon for all subscribers and Old Members. Finally, Sunday 2 October hosted a lunch for all the workmen and craftsmen who had made Kennedy's vision a reality. A few short weeks later the first wave of second and third year undergraduates took up residence in what is now Balliol's main graduate residence.


BALLIOL COLLEGE

OPENING
of
HOLYWELL MANOR

FRIDAY, 30th SEPTEMBER
1932

The Master and Fellows of Balliol College
request the pleasure of
Mrs. C. H. Glover's Company
At the opening of Holywell Manor
by Lord Blanesburgh of Alloa,
on Saturday, October 1st, at 3.30 p.m.

Tea on the Master's Field after the ceremony.

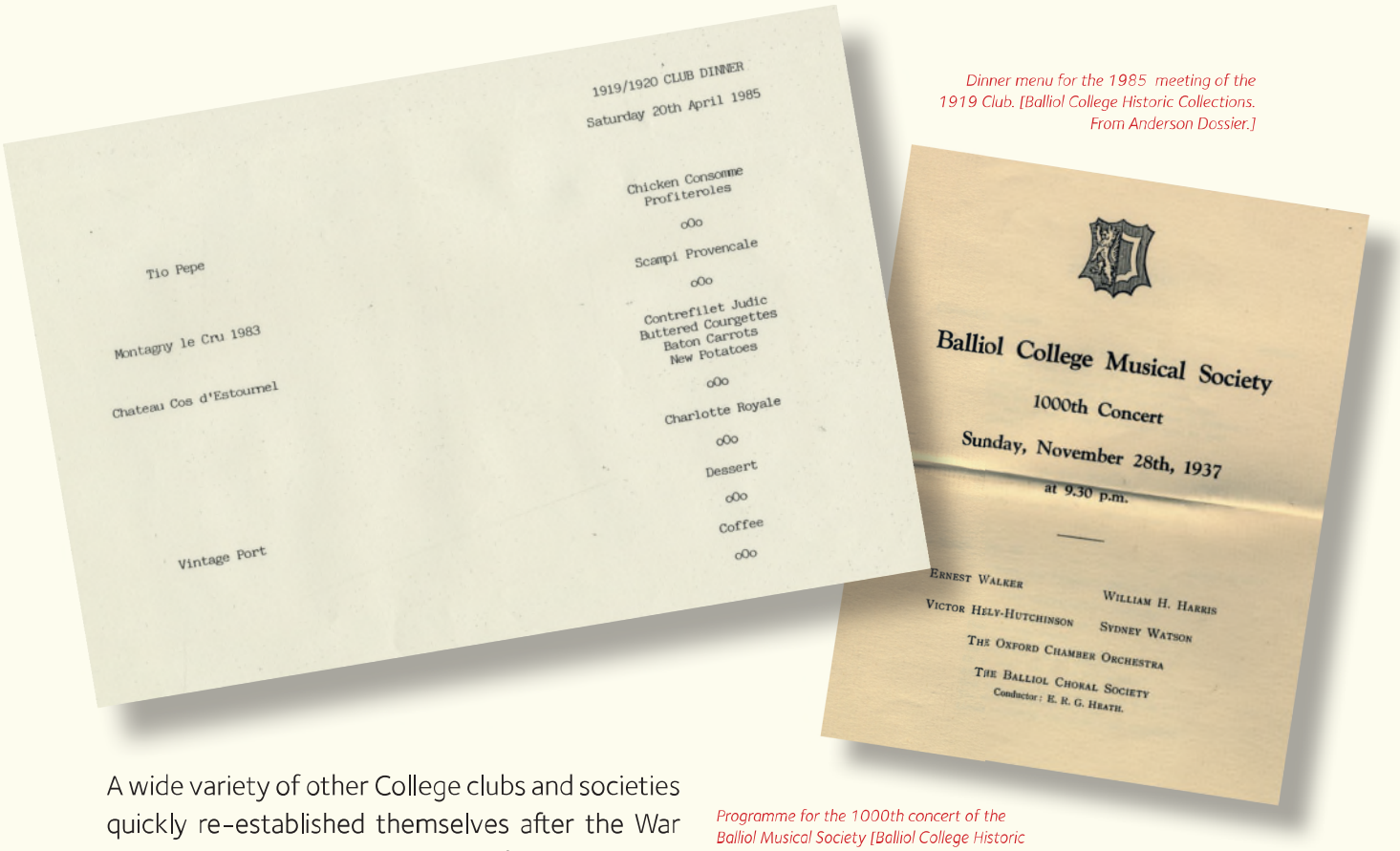
R.S.V.P. The Home Bursar.

The Master and Fellows hope that any old member of the College who is married will understand that his wife is also invited.

Ephemera for the various opening celebrations for Holywell Manor in 1932 [Balliol College Historic Collections. From MISC 4 and 335]

CLUBS AND SOCIETIES

When the First World War ended in 1918, those soldiers that survived returned to their previous lives. Around 150 new members admitted to Balliol since 1914 had not been able to matriculate, and of these 28 had been killed, but three quarters appeared in College by the end of the academic year. Experience in the War forged a special bond between these students, who formed the '1919 Club', which dined regularly in College until 1986 when they decided to meet for the last time.


1919/1920 CLUB DINNER

Saturday 20th April 1985

Chicken Consomme
Profiteroles

oOo

Scampi Provencale

oOo

Contrefilet Judic
Buttered Courgettes
Baton Carrots
New Potatoes

oOo

Charlotte Royale

oOo

Dessert

oOo

Coffee

oOo

Tio Pepe

Montagny le Cru 1983

Chateau Cos d'Estournel

Vintage Port

Balliol College Musical Society

1000th Concert

Sunday, November 28th, 1937

at 9.30 p.m.

ERNEST WALKER

VICTOR HELY-HUTCHINSON

WILLIAM H. HARRIS

SYDNEY WATSON

THE OXFORD CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

THE BALLIOL CHORAL SOCIETY

Conductor: E. R. G. HEATH.

Dinner menu for the 1985 meeting of the 1919 Club. [Balliol College Historic Collections. From Anderson Dossier.]

Programme for the 1000th concert of the Balliol Musical Society [Balliol College Historic Collections. From MISC 22]

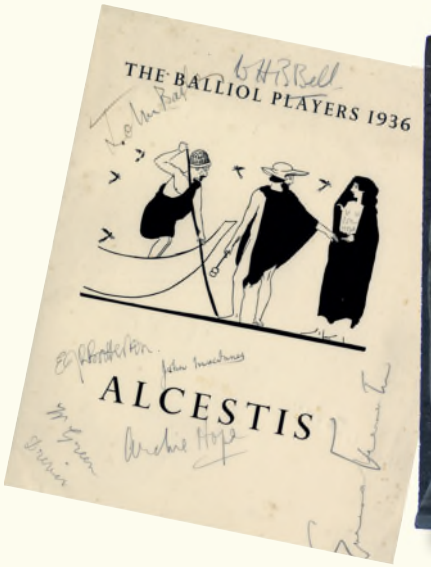
A wide variety of other College clubs and societies quickly re-established themselves after the War so there was plenty going on, if only because students had to be back in before the gates locked at night, making the pursuit of external entertainments difficult. There was the Musical Society, which held its thousandth concert on Sunday, 28 November 1937, with Ted Heath conducting the choir. Graham Greene attended the Hysteron Proteron Club at Balliol, a dining society which convened a termly 'backwards day': they finished porridge and 'we then returned backwards to Balliol ... *This morning started with bridge in dinner jackets*'.'[lxviii] Acting, as John Jones writes, was 'embraced by the authorities of the twenties rather cautiously.'



1938 Heath conducting silver band at Corfe Castle [Balliol College Historic Collections. Societies.Dramatic Societies.iib. 4]



Stills from the 16mm black and white film (silent) of the Balliol Players 1934 tour of Ajax [Balliol College Historic Collections. Societies.Dramatic Societies.ii.1]



Programme for 1936 production of Alcestis [Balliol College Historic Collections. From Societies. Dramatic Societies.ii.2]



Printing block used in the production of the programme [Balliol College Historic Collections.Societies.Dramatic Societies.iib.1]

Thus, on 7 November 1923, it was agreed to give leave for a play to be performed in College only if a list of actors was submitted and subject to 'veto'. If they were also performing with the Oxford University Dramatic Society then they would not be cleared for the Balliol. In 1926 the Governing Body finally allowed 'certain members of the College to arrange a tour in the South of England acting the *Hippolytus*. This was in fact the third tour of "The Balliol Players". A troupe of Balliol men would put on a play – usually a Greek classic – after the end of Trinity Term at a series of public schools and country houses.'[lxix] The tour even visited Thomas Hardy, performing the *Oresteia* for him in 1924 at Max Gate.

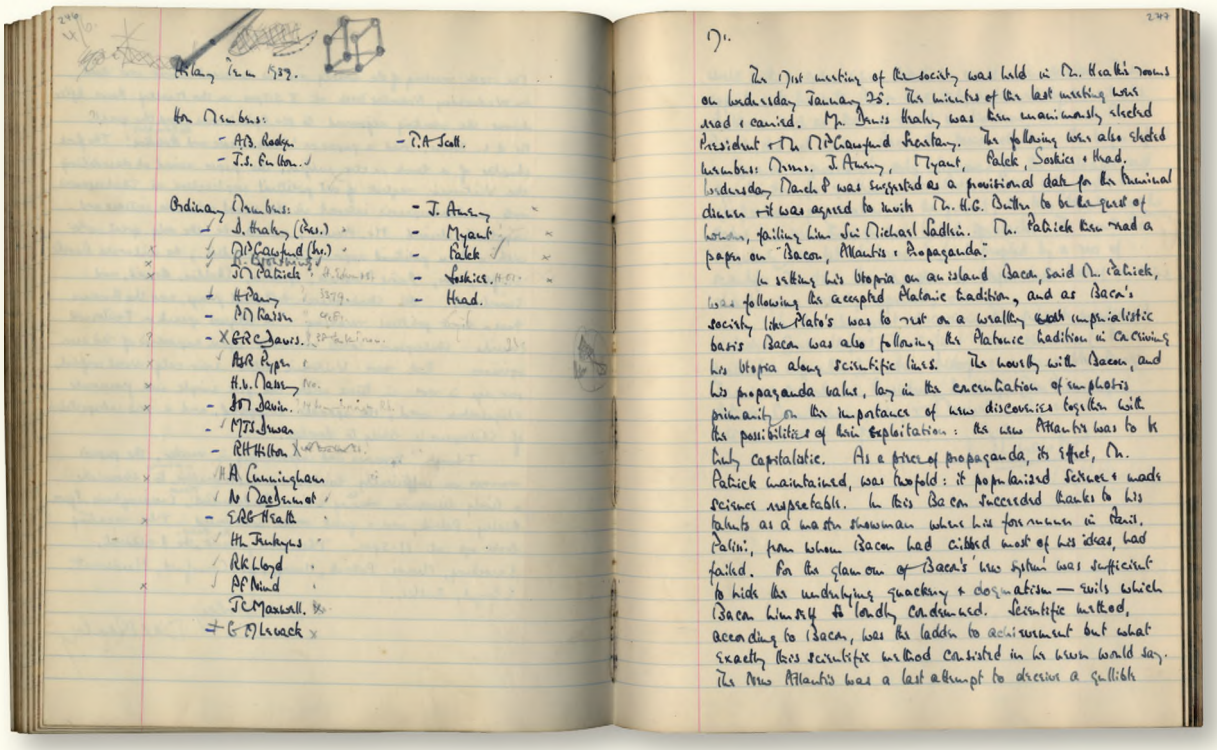


During this period, John Jones notes, 'Sport flourished, but never dominated the College [...] corporate pride was taken in them without any undue fuss. This was partly because the College had so much else to be proud of – distinguished alumni by the score, academic prowess, success in Union elections, and so on.' The College claimed Head of the River in Torpids in 1928 and 1929; Inter-Collegiate Rugby Cup in 1930 and 1933; nine Rowing Blues and sixteen Rugby Football Blues between 1920 and 1939. The Nawab of Pataudi (Balliol 1927) scored 238 not out against Cambridge in 1931, a record that still stands.



1928 Head of the River team [Balliol College Historic Collections. PHOT36 8]

Beyond the bounds of the College there was the Balliol Boy's Club, a recreational club for the working boys of the St Ebbe's area of South Oxford run by Balliol students and Fellows. Begun in 1907, it was consolidated in 1921 as a memorial to one of the founding student members, Keith Rae (T.E.K. Rae, Balliol, 1907) who was killed at Hooge in 1915 in the first military use of flamethrowers. It flourished until the late 1960s, when it was absorbed by City initiatives. The 1921 endowment survives as the Keith Rae Trust, which supports youth clubs and similar organisations today.



Leonardo Society Minute book for 1931–1939 (with contributions from Heath and Healey) [Balliol College Historic Collections. From Societies.Leonardo Society]

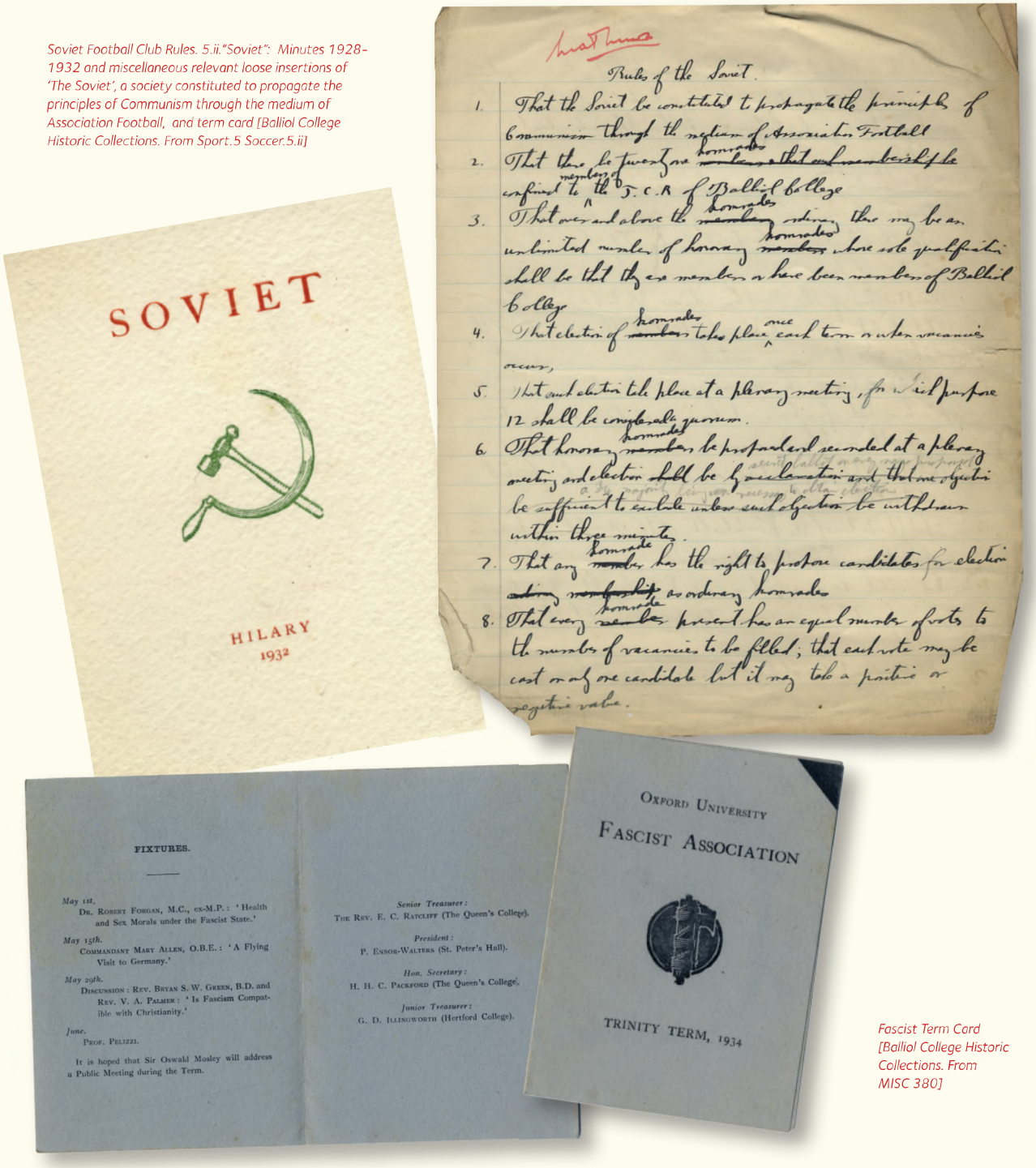
Balliol has become particularly well known for its famous alumni in the political sphere. These were formed by the new Politics, Philosophy and Economics (PPE) course which began at Balliol in the 1920s. With A.D. Lindsay as a key architect, this started as a radical attempt by the University to address the problems posed by the political unrest in Europe and was designed to engage with the modern world, rather than the medieval and classical ones. The intention was to produce graduates better able to serve Britain and its empire, and to open Oxford to state-educated applicants by dropping the 'traditional requirement that all students know Ancient Greek, a speciality of private schools'.[lxx]

The JCR presidents for three years in a row show the reach that the PPE course quickly established, both in the UK and in Europe's public life. In 1938 Ted Heath (future Conservative Prime Minister) took the presidency, followed in 1939 by Denis Healey (future Labour Chancellor) and in 1940 by Roy Jenkins (future Labour Chancellor and first leader of the SDP). Political debating societies also flourished. One such was the Leonardo Society, whose minute book from the time survives and demonstrates the connections people made in College. Heath, Healey and Jenkins were all members, meeting in each others' rooms.

The economic and political ferment of the times encouraged political extremism. Both the British Union of Fascists and the Communist Party of Great Britain started to attract young intellectuals and, although neither movement achieved huge support in College, Fascist and Soviet Society term cards exist among the collections of personal papers at Balliol.

By early 1939, with College Minutes anticipating the worst, Balliol's contingency plans for war were well advanced. Even so, the College Dance and a special Gaudy for Cyril Bailey's retirement went ahead as planned. Three months later the Office of Works requisitioned most of the College for the War effort.

Soviet Football Club Rules. 5.ii."Soviet": Minutes 1928-1932 and miscellaneous relevant loose insertions of 'The Soviet', a society constituted to propagate the principles of Communism through the medium of Association Football, and term card [Balliol College Historic Collections. From Sport.5 Soccer.5.ii]



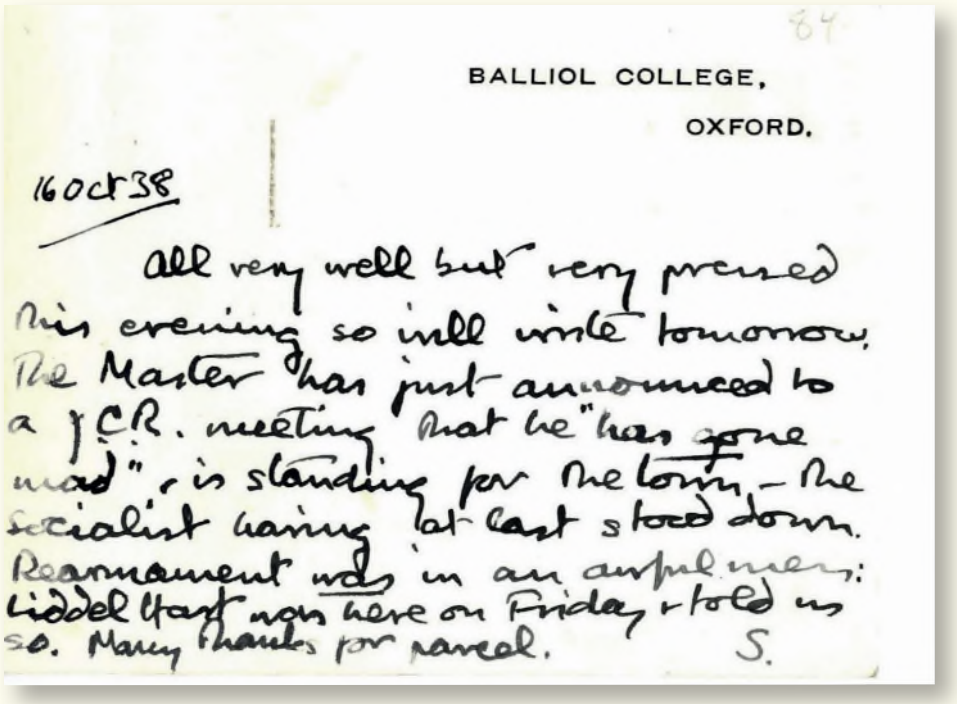
Fascist Term Card [Balliol College Historic Collections. From MISC 380]

BEFORE THE WAR

‘The Master has just announced … that he has gone mad’

Neville Chamberlain’s signature of the Munich Agreement on the 30 September 1938 quickly led to disquiet amongst many on both left and right in Britain, and remains a byword for appeasement over 80 years later. Seen as a surrendering of Czechoslovakia to Nazi aggression, this element of foreign policy led to a major reformulation of political boundaries in Britain as forces opposed to it tried to find common ground. One of those deeply affected by Munich was Con O’Neill (Balliol 1931). After winning a history scholarship at Balliol, he took a first in English in 1934, was elected a Fellow of All Souls, and then called to the bar at the Inner Temple. He could have pursued a brilliant academic or legal career, but instead he entered the Foreign Office, where his first overseas posting was to Berlin in 1938. Alone in the diplomatic service, he resigned in protest at the Munich settlement. Later, Edward Heath sent him as Ambassador to Brussels to prepare Britain’s negotiations for entry to the European Community, which he led to their conclusion in 1974.

A by-election in Oxford a month later became a testing-ground for this new politics. Amidst news of the return of the crinoline and the craze for swing music in the US, an article in *The Picture Post* draws attention to the fact that the world, including President Roosevelt and Adolf Hitler, are watching the progress of this local Oxford story, seeking insight into the British political frame of mind. On one side was Quintin Hogg, standing for the government, with his wife. The article rather strangely emphasises that they both had blue eyes and lips shaped like Cupid’s bow, although it was Mrs Quintin Hogg who was able to ‘put 400 votes in [her husband’s] bag’ with a glance. On



BALLIOL COLLEGE,
OXFORD.

16 Oct 38

All very well but very pressed this evening so will write tomorrow. The Master has just announced to a J.C.R. meeting that he "has gone mad", is standing for the town – the Socialist having at last stood down. Rearmament was in an awful mess: Liddell Hart was here on Friday & told us so. Many thanks for parcel.

S.

A note from A.F. Giles to his parents dated October 16, 1938.
[Balliol College Historic Collections. AF Giles, 084]



Harold Nicolson and Vita Sackville West (to left). [Public Domain]

the other side was a hastily assembled campaign put together by the Master of Balliol and Vice-Chancellor of the University, A.D. Lindsay. An independent candidate (although a member of the Labour Party) he had induced the Liberal and Labour candidates to stand aside to present a united front of progressive opposition.[lxxi] A hastily scribbled note from A.F. Giles (Balliol 1936) from a couple of weeks before telling his parents that 'The Master has just announced to a meeting of the JCR that "he has gone mad"' and is standing in the election, gives an impression of the tone and tempo of the moment. *The Post* article emphasizes a disconnect between the snobbily progressive academics and the common sense townspeople. This could have contributed to Lindsay's losing the election, but he did actually perform quite creditably, garnering 12,363 votes to Hogg's 15,797,[lxxii] in a constituency, which, as the article itself notes, was 'a Conservative stronghold, with a regular clear majority of over six thousand against all comers'.

Immediately after the coverage is a photograph of one of the Goebbels' children obediently reciting a poem to her parents and Hitler.

'The ice cracks at no single moment'

Across Europe the political and economic crises of the 1920s and 1930s, and the subsequent rise of fascism and communism, led many to struggle with their responses.

In Britain there was a feeling that the old ways of doing politics were outdated and needed to be replaced. The poster boy for this moment was Oswald Mosely. Initially starting out as a Conservative he crossed the house to join Labour in 1924 which had just formed its first government. Disillusioned by Labour's acquiescence in the laissez-faire status quo and the stymying of his radical proposals when given responsibility for unemployment in Labour's second administration, Mosely formed the



The Government Candidate at the Oxford by-election

Quintin Hogg, good-looking 31-year-old son of Cabinet Minister Lord Hailsham, asks the girls at a laundry to vote for him and show their confidence in Neville Chamberlain's foreign policy.



The Government Candidate's Wife

Mrs. Quintin Hogg—at right of picture—read all her husband's statements and revised them before they were issued to the electorate.

CRISIS BY-ELECTION

The Oxford by-election, first to be held since the Munich agreement, was of world importance: it gave a verdict on Mr. Chamberlain's foreign policy after a sharp campaign, fought on new party alignments. In this article, Tom Harrisson, organiser of Mass-Observation, sums up the result from the objective reports of his field workers at Oxford.

IN the past few weeks the whole politics of Britain have been shifted by events which seemed at first remote, the business only of a small, unspellable and distant state. For years the ordinary person has been most concerned with home, family, neighbours, street. In the past month foreign affairs have forcibly taken a front-page place for weeks on end. Via the gas mask it has been brought home (literally) to every elector that foreign policy may be as important as street lighting, new housing, or the price of milk.





The Independent Candidate at the Oxford by-election

A. D. Lindsay, academic 59-year-old Master of Balliol (left of picture) came into the by-election at the last moment to provide a united opposition to the foreign policy of the Government.



Lindsay making one of his many n speeches from a loud-speaker van.

the next few weeks a long list of by- being fought, on the one main issue of licy. Briefly, was Chamberlain right? present Government to be relied on ? vernment can choose the order in which these by-elections. It chose to start with That was the ideal constituency in which te of confidence for Mr. Chamberlain's

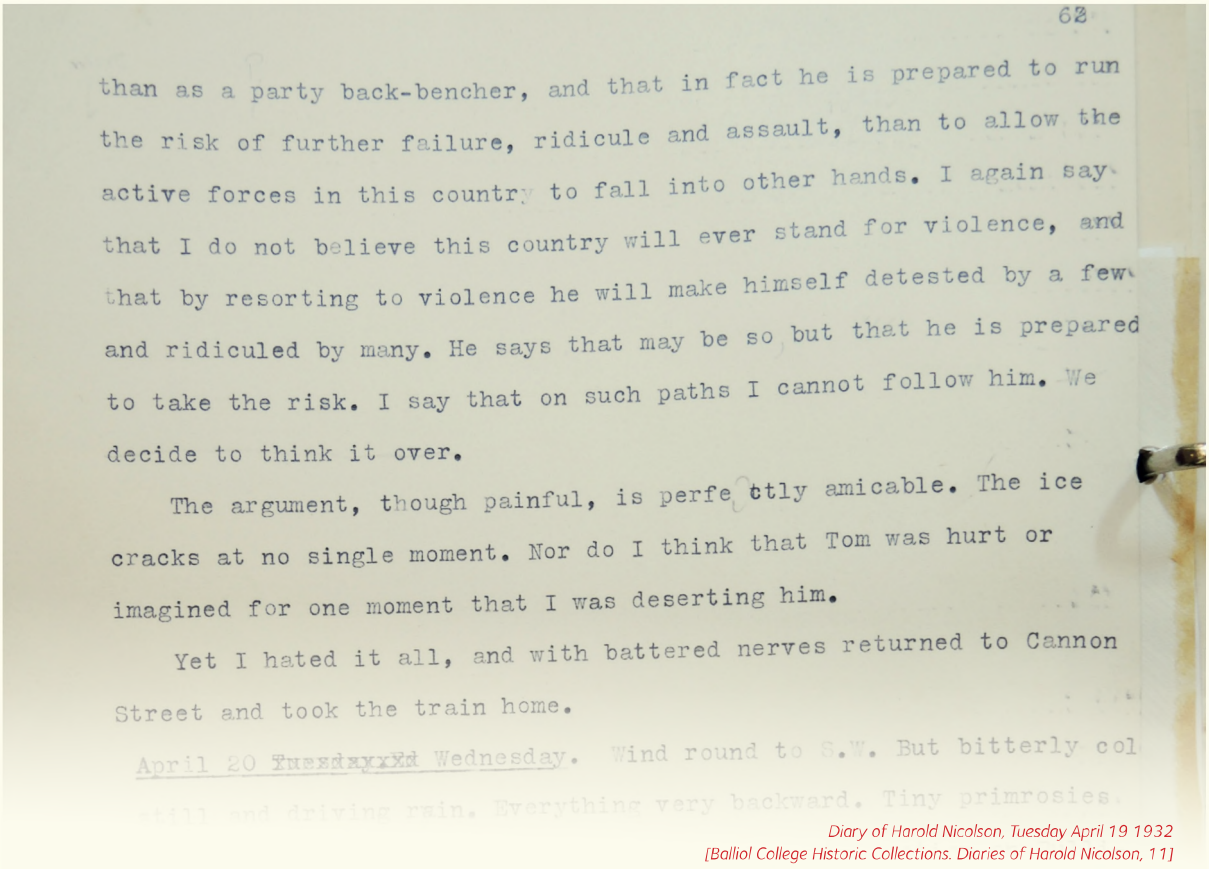


The Independent Candidate's Wife

Mrs. Lindsay—left of picture—helped to organise intensive canvassing after her husband's dramatic entry into the by-election.

PICTURE POST 45

Cover and article 'Crisis By-Election' from the Picture Post, November 5, 1938, [Balliol College Historic Collections. Papers of Noel Howard Eldridge, 18]



62

than as a party back-bencher, and that in fact he is prepared to run the risk of further failure, ridicule and assault, than to allow the active forces in this country to fall into other hands. I again say that I do not believe this country will ever stand for violence, and that by resorting to violence he will make himself detested by a few and ridiculed by many. He says that may be so but that he is prepared to take the risk. I say that on such paths I cannot follow him. We decide to think it over.

The argument, though painful, is perfectly amicable. The ice cracks at no single moment. Nor do I think that Tom was hurt or imagined for one moment that I was deserting him.

Yet I hated it all, and with battered nerves returned to Cannon Street and took the train home.

April 20 ~~Tuesday~~ Wednesday. Wind round to S.W. But bitterly cold and driving rain. Everything very backward. Tiny primrosies.

Diary of Harold Nicolson, Tuesday April 19 1932
[Balliol College Historic Collections. Diaries of Harold Nicolson, 11]

'New Party' in 1931.[lxxiii] This called for wider executive power for government to implement national economic planning in areas such as housing, industry and pensions, against a perceived threat from globalization.

Amongst those who followed him were Harold Nicolson (Balliol 1904), a career diplomat, diarist and husband of Vita Sackville-West, who had met Mosely in Berlin a few years earlier.[lxxiv] Nicolson acted as propagandist and edited the party's magazine, *Action*.[lxxv] Quickly, however, Mosely's obsession with the need for drastic action led him towards increasing authoritarianism and then the transformation of the rump of the New Party into the British Union of Fascists. By this time, several founding members, including Nicolson, had resigned, unable any longer to follow their erstwhile leader's rightward march. This entry from Nicolson's diary details the moment where their split becomes final, and his futile attempts to convince Mosely (referred to here as 'Tom' – a pet name given by his mother)[lxxvi] to alter his course and re-enter mainstream politics after a hiatus. These wishes were reiterated in Nicolson's resignation from the New Party, where he expressed the opinion that Mosely might still become Prime Minister should he follow Nicolson's advice.



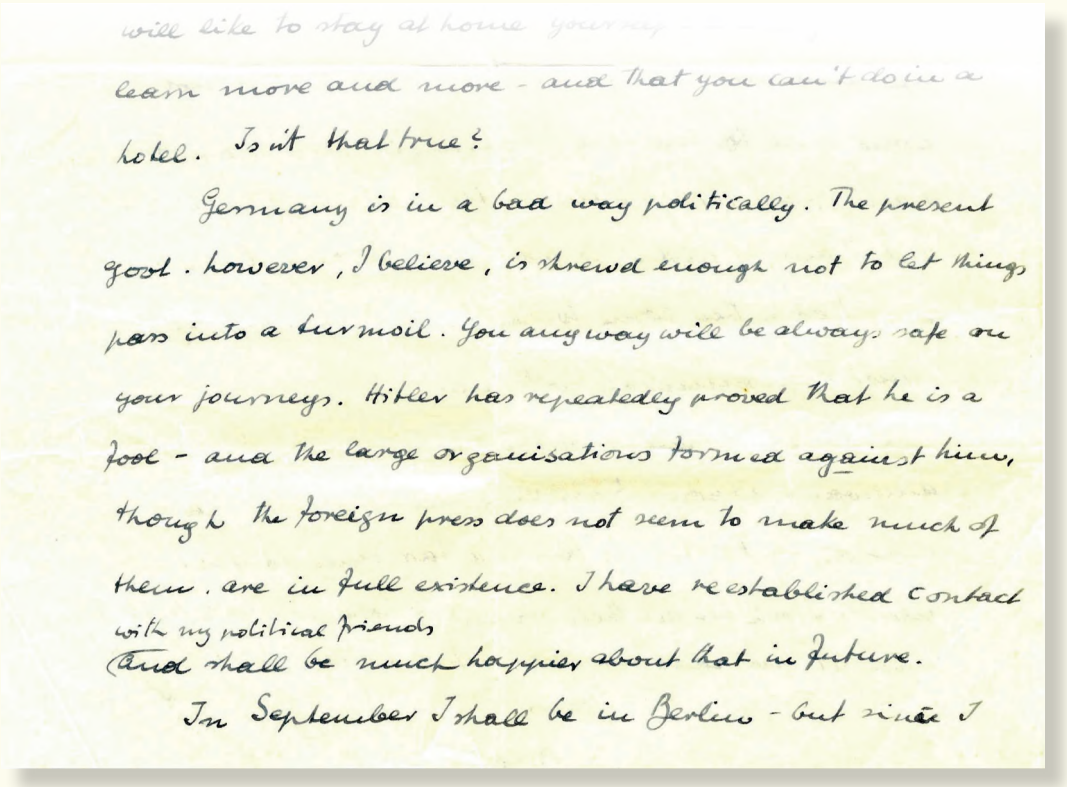
Adam von Trott zu Solz at Balliol.
[Balliol College Historic Collections. Adam von Trott Dossier]

'Hitler has repeatedly proved he is a Fool'

Four months after Nicolson broke with Mosely, a German undergraduate was also wrestling with the political turmoil in his own country.

Adam von Trott zu Solz (Balliol 1931) was steeped in German heritage and culture, being part of a noble dynasty that could trace its roots back to the 13th century, and having a father who was Minister of Culture for the Kingdom of Prussia.[lxxvii] He was versed in the thought of the philosopher Hegel whose writings informed the conservative strain in his thinking.[lxxviii] Deeply interested in foreign affairs he studied in Oxford, initially at Mansfield College, and then at Balliol as a Rhodes scholar, attracted by the reputation of the Politics, Philosophy and Economics degree.[lxxix] Whilst at Balliol he engaged with the predominantly left leaning sympathies of many in the College, joining the Labour Society and entering A.D. Lindsay's sphere.[lxxx] Amongst von Trott's intimate circle were David Astor, later editor of The Observer and a founder of Amnesty International,[lxxxi] and Diana Hubback, daughter of the suffragist Eva Hubback.[lxxxii] He may or may not have been romantically involved with Diana, but they certainly had an intense friendship leading to the exchange of several hundred letters.

The correspondence spans most of the 1930s and the early years of the 1940s. In this early example we see von Trott's frustration with, and suspicion of, the anxieties of the foreign press over the rise of Hitler, and his assertions that the German political system is robust enough to dispense with this menace. At this point it seems that von Trott's conservative pride in his nation led to some complacency as to the emerging danger. Later letters detail his attempts at accommodation with, and resistance to, the Nazi regime, some expressed in coded references.[lxxxiii] In 1939 he joined the German Foreign Office, and in 1940 joined the Nazi Party in order to obtain access to party information. At the same time, he was a foreign policy specialist in the Kreisau Circle, a clandestine group of intellectuals planning the overthrow of the Nazi regime. As a diplomat, he was able to make visits to London and Washington D.C., during which he tried but failed to obtain the support of the Allies.[lxxxiv] He was hanged for his part in the failed plot to assassinate Hitler in 1944 led by another German of noble descent, Claus von Stauffenberg.[lxxxv]



will like to stay at home yourself
learn more and more - and that you can't do in a
hotel. Is it that true?
Germany is in a bad way politically. The present
govt. however, I believe, is shrewd enough not to let things
pass into a turmoil. You anyway will be always safe on
your journeys. Hitler has repeatedly proved that he is a
fool - and the large organisations formed against him,
though the foreign press does not seem to make much of
them, are in full existence. I have re-established contact
with my political friends
and shall be much happier about that in future.
In September I shall be in Berlin - but since I

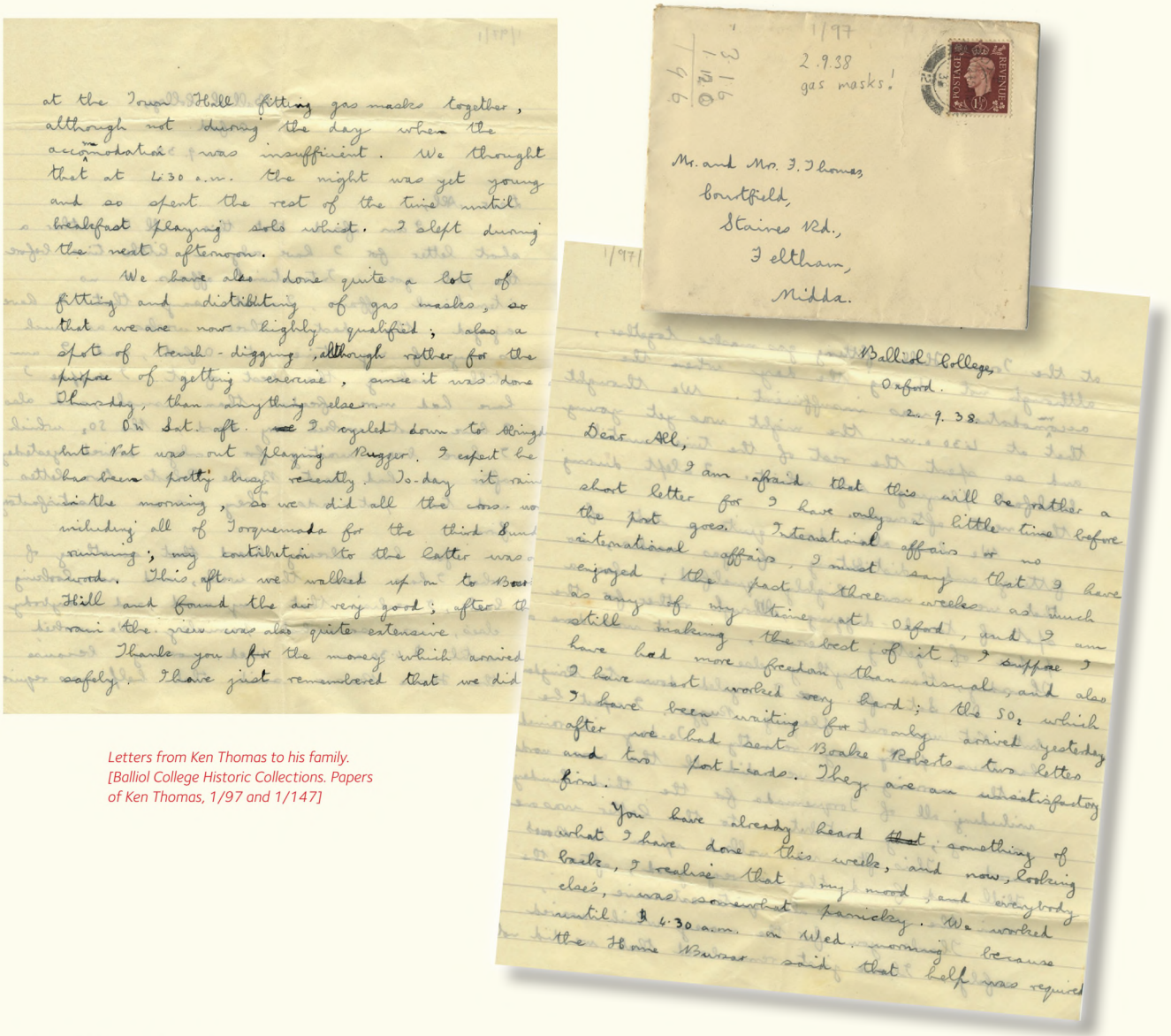
Letter from Adam von Trott zu Solz to Diana Hubback, August 28 1932
[Balliol College Historic Collections. Papers of Adam von Trott, Correspondence, T11]

Very hush-hush

The late 1930s in Oxford were characterised by uncertainty as the unstable political situation in Europe started to cause disruption to the everyday life of the University.

The Balliol-Trinity laboratories were a centre for excellence in Physical Chemistry research throughout the inter-war period including the work of Cyril Hinshelwood (Balliol 1919), Harold Hartley (Balliol 1897), Ronald Bell (Balliol 1924), and John Wolfenden (Balliol 1919).[lxxxvi] The threat of war put peacetime projects there on hold.

The letters home of Chemistry student, Ken Thomas (Balliol 1935) capture the impact of imminent war on the labs. In one letter sent on 2 September 1938 he describes how work in the lab is paused awaiting a delivery of chemicals but he has been assembling gas masks and digging trenches instead. He describes the general mood as 'panicky' but also writes that 'International affairs or


at the Town Hall fitting gas masks together, although not during the day when the accommodation was insufficient. We thought that at 4.30 a.m. the night was yet young and so spent the rest of the time until breakfast playing solo whist. I slept during the next afternoon.

We have also done quite a lot of fitting and distributing of gas masks, so that we are now highly qualified; also a spot of trench-digging, although rather for the purpose of getting exercise, since it was done Thursday, than anything else.

On Sat. aft. we I cycled down to Wings but Pat was out playing Rugger. I expect he has been pretty busy recently. To-day it rained in the morning, so we did all the cross-country including all of Torquemada for the third time running; my contribution to the latter was a wood. This aft. we walked up on to Boar's Hill and found the air very good; after the rain the view was also quite extensive.

Thank you for the money which arrived safely. I have just remembered that we did

1/97

2.9.38
gas masks!

Mr. and Mrs. F. Thomas,
Bentfield,
Staines Rd.,
Feltham,
Midds.

1/97

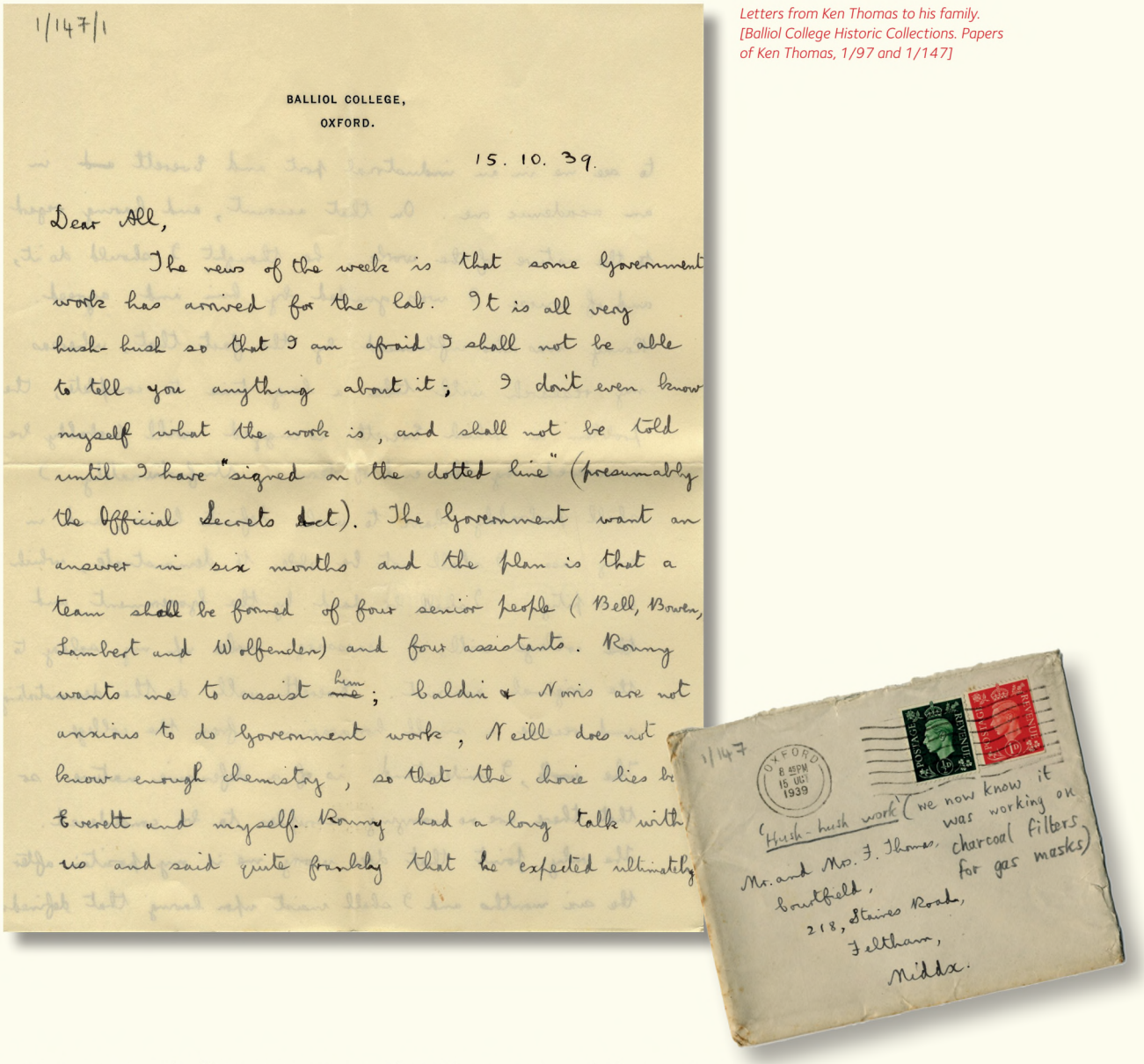
Balliol College,
Oxford.
2. 9. 38.

Dear All,

I am afraid that this will be rather a short letter for I have only a little time before the post goes. International affairs or no international affairs, I must say that I have enjoyed the past three weeks as much as any of my time at Oxford, and I am still making the best of it. I suppose I have had more freedom than usual, and also I have not worked very hard; the SO_2 which I have been writing for only arrived yesterday after we had sent Boake Roberts two letters and two post cards. They are an unsatisfactory firm.

You have already heard ~~that~~ something of what I have done this week, and now, looking back, I realise that my mood, and everybody else's, was somewhat panicky. We worked until 4.30 a.m. on Wed. morning because the Home Bursar said that help was required

Letters from Ken Thomas to his family. [Balliol College Historic Collections. Papers of Ken Thomas, 1/97 and 1/147]



1/147/1

BALLIOL COLLEGE,
OXFORD.

15. 10. 39.

Dear All,

The news of the week is that some Government work has arrived for the lab. It is all very hush-hush so that I am afraid I shall not be able to tell you anything about it; I don't even know myself what the work is, and shall not be told until I have "signed on the dotted line" (presumably the Official Secrets Act). The Government want an answer in six months and the plan is that a team shall be formed of four senior people (Bell, Bowen, Lambert and Wolfenden) and four assistants. Ronny wants me to assist him; Baldwin & Norris are not anxious to do Government work, Neill does not know enough chemistry, so that the choice lies between Everett and myself. Ronny had a long talk with me and said quite frankly that he expected ultimately

1/147

OXFORD
8.45PM
15 OCT
1939

(Hush-hush work (we now know it was working on charcoal filters for gas masks)

Mr. and Mrs. F. Thomas,
Southfield,
218, Staines Road,
Feltham,
Middx.

Letters from Ken Thomas to his family. [Balliol College Historic Collections. Papers of Ken Thomas, 1/97 and 1/147]

no international affairs, I must say that I have enjoyed the past three weeks as much as any of my time at Oxford, and I am still making the best of it'. Weeks later British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain agreed not to respond to a German annexation of the Sudetenland, postponing conflict until 3 September 1939 when the United Kingdom and France declared war with Germany after the latter invaded Poland. October 1939 sees Thomas telling his family that some 'Government work has arrived for the lab. It is all very hush-hush'. This secret research was on the improvement of charcoal filters in gas masks. Thomas's later letters chronicle the breaking up of the lab as the staff and students go to wartime jobs. Thomas left Balliol for a job at Imperial Chemical Industries (ICI) Research Laboratories in Widnes.

Kingdom Come

In 1939 editions of *The Cherwell* and *Kingdom Come*, a new student publication for wartime Oxford, students respond to world politics through poetry, prose and artwork.

Noel Eldridge (Balliol 1937), editor of *The Cherwell*, is pictured clutching his publication after a river swim, towel toga-like, at the launch of *Kingdom Come*. The smiling faces in this group photo seem to belie the disintegration of the community that is apparent in the advertisements in *The Cherwell*: the Swan pen, a perfect present for 'a friend on active service or in training', or *The Cherwell* itself which will help friends on National Service 'keep something of Oxford'. As it had twenty-five years previously, war once again broke up the academic life of Balliol.

Noel Eldridge was born on 25 December 1918, just after the end of the War. He died, fighting in the next War, on 29 September 1944. A letter to family in his first term at Balliol describes the mundane details of College life, the clubs he has joined, including the Balliol Boy's Club and the Labour Club, his 'fairly bare' room improved by having his books in it (he includes a plan) and the curfew arrangements. In contrast, his final letter from the front line is a poem for his mother's birthday on 12 October: 'I shall be thinking of you more than ever on that day':

'My thoughts then darling are the things we knew
The spendthrift past, the careless days
We did not value with the juster thought
The quieter beauties we too little shared.'

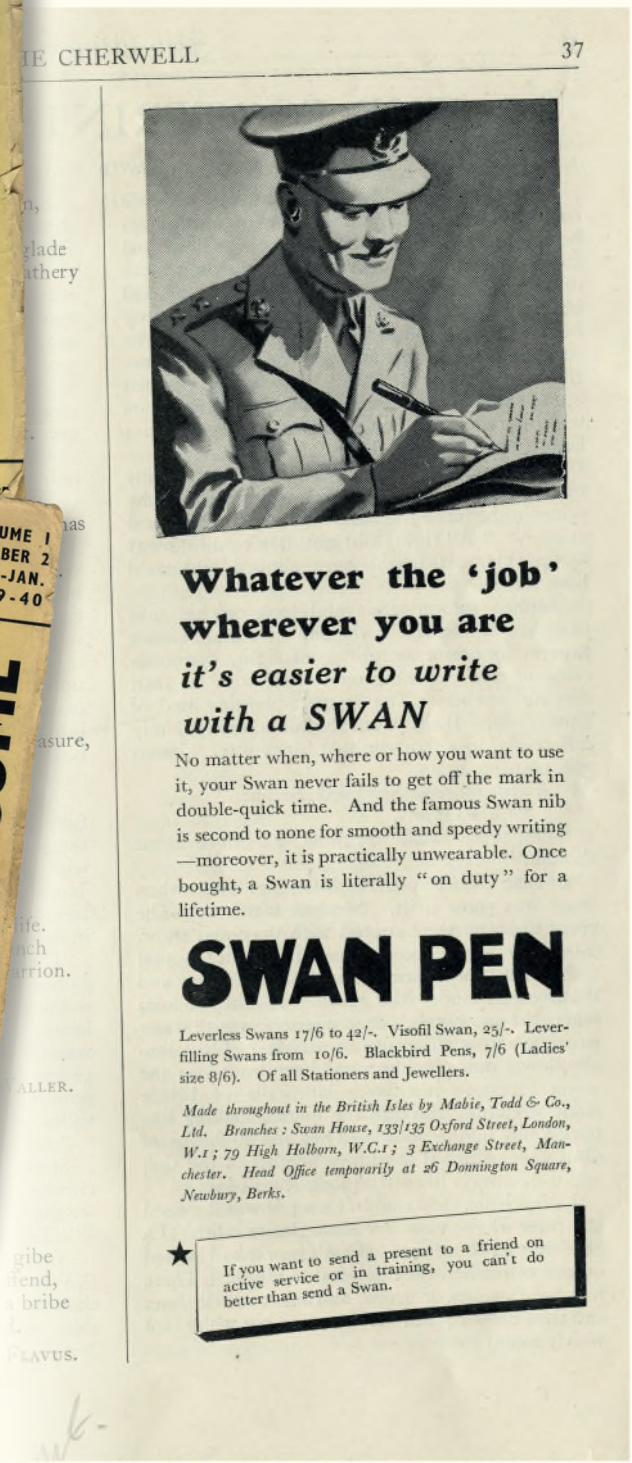


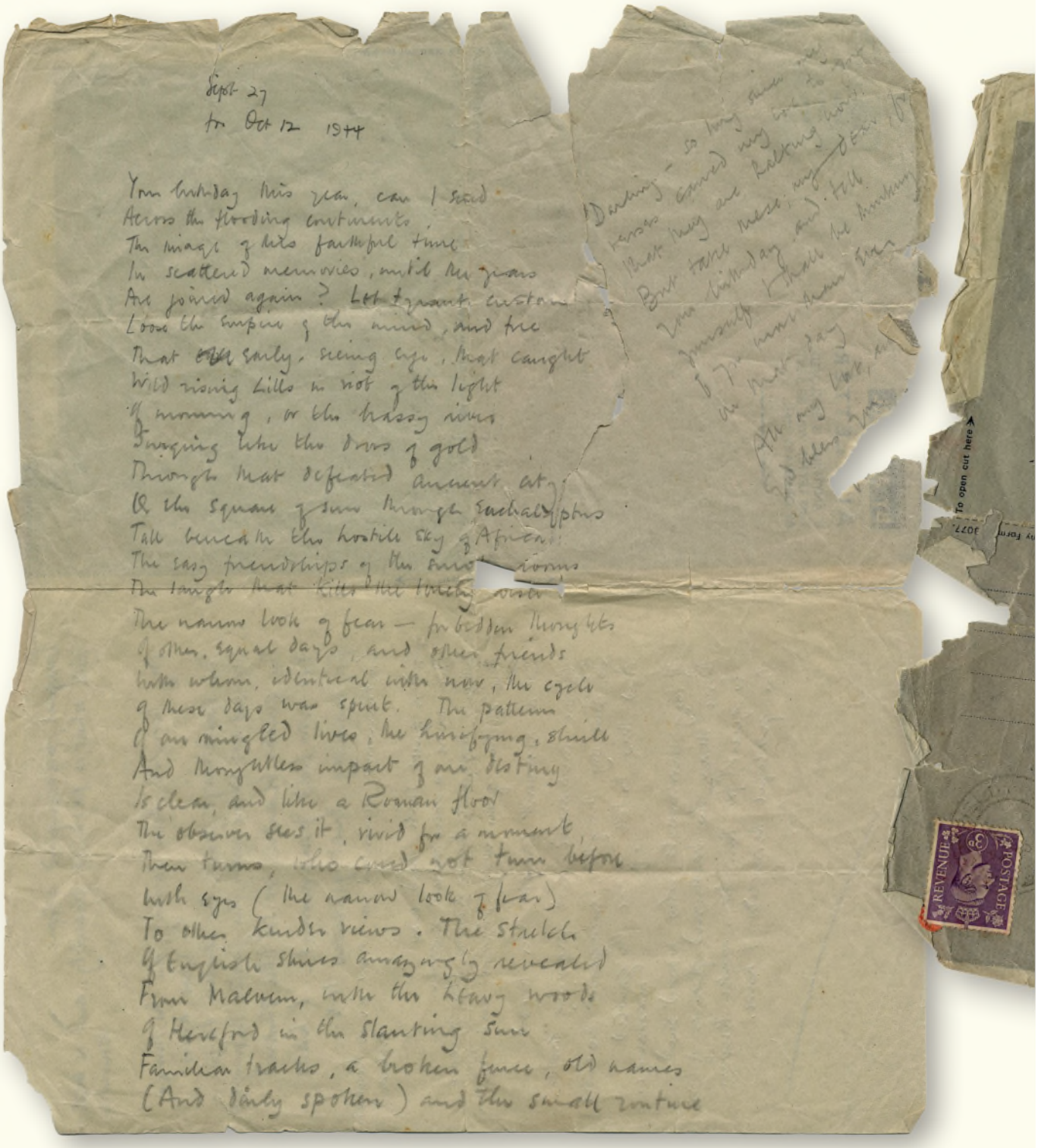
Photograph of students celebrating the publication of Kingdom Come.
[Balliol College Historic Collections. Papers of Noel Eldridge, 24/1



Covers of Kingdom Come.
[Balliol College Historic Collections.
Papers of Noel Eldridge, 22]

Advertisement in The Cherwell Magazine,
4 and 18 November 1939.
[Balliol College Historic Collections. Papers of Noel Eldridge, 21]



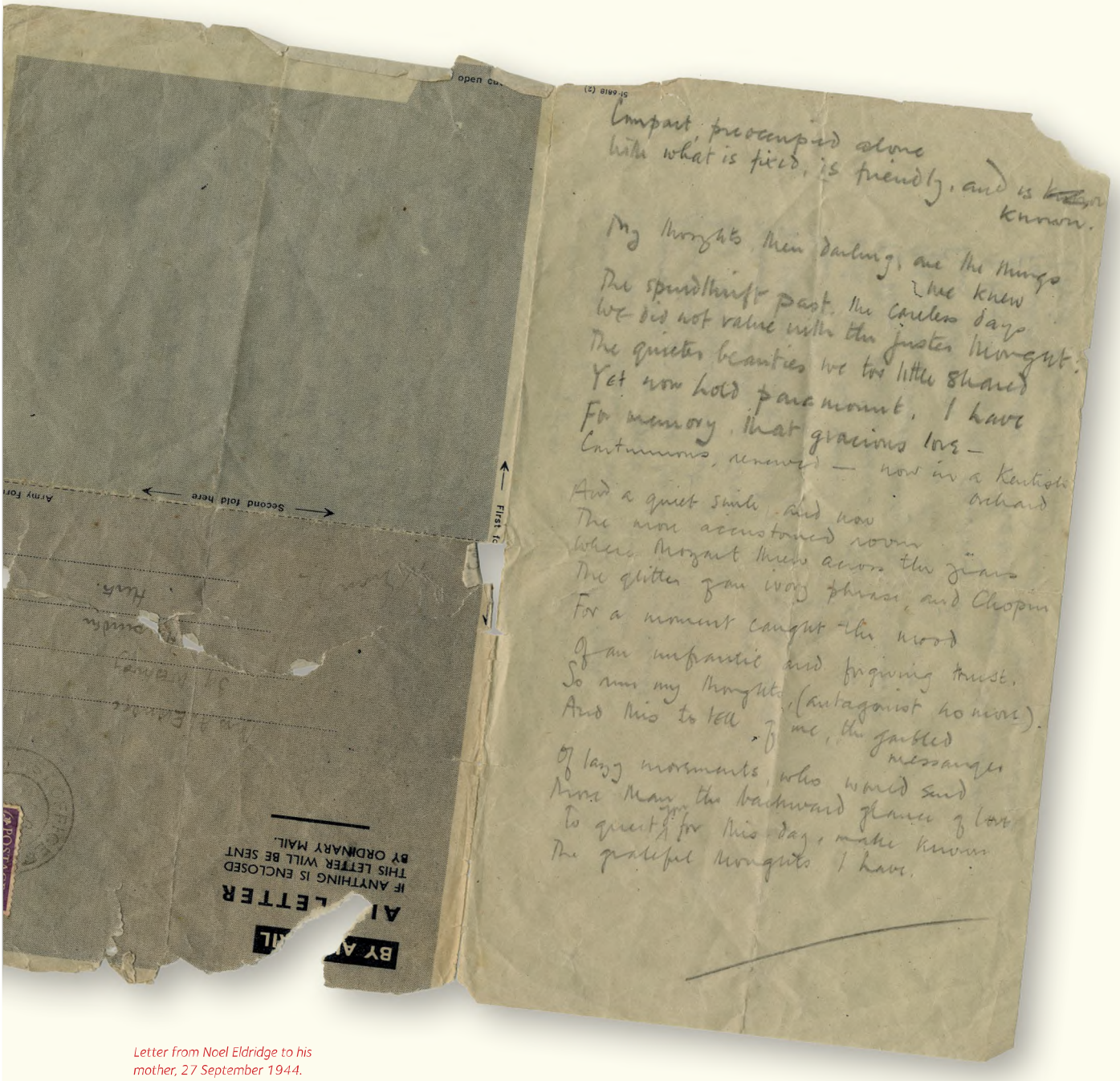


Sept 27
to Oct 12 1944

Your birthday this year, can I send
Across the flooding continents
The image of this faithful time
In scattered memories, until the years
Are joined again? Let tyrant custom
Loose the empire of the mind, and free
That early, seeing eye, that caught
Wild rising Lilies in mist of the light
Of morning, or the brassy irises
Swinging like the bows of gold
Through heat defeated amount at
Of the square of sun through Eucalyptus
Tall beneath the hostile sky of Africa
The easy friendships of the [illegible] rooms
The tangle that kills the [illegible]
The narrow look of fear — forbidden thoughts
Of others, equal days, and other friends
With whom, identical with now, the cycle
Of these days was spent. The pattern
Of our mingled lives, the hurrying, strict
And thoughtless impact of our destiny
Is clear, and like a Roman floor
The observer sees it, vivid for a moment,
Then turns, who could not turn before
With eyes (the narrow look of fear)
To other kinder views. The stretch
Of English shires amazingly revealed
From Malvern, with the heavy woods
Of Hereford in the slanting sun
Familiar tracks, a broken fence, old names
(And daily spoken) and the small contour

Darling – so long since we
years opened our eyes to
Black days are [illegible]
But [illegible] ness, my dear, of
Your birthday, and tell
joyously I shall be thinking
of you more than
the more say
All my love, and
God bless you

To open cut here
3077



Letter from Noel Eldridge to his mother, 27 September 1944. [Balliol College Historic Collections. Papers of Noel Eldridge, 11]

FROM BALLIOL TO EUROPE: MACMILLAN, O'NEILL, HEATH, HEALEY AND JENKINS

By Graham Avery (Balliol 1961)

Those who entered the College in the inter-war years inherited a tradition of public service at home and abroad. They lived in the aftermath of the European war of 1914-18, and their lives were to be shaped by another European conflict in 1939-45. Among the Balliol men who were involved in that conflict, and later played a role in European affairs, were Harold Macmillan, Con O'Neill, Edward Heath, Denis Healey, and Roy Jenkins.

Their social origins were diverse: Macmillan and O'Neill came from privileged homes, and had studied at Eton College, while Heath, Healey, and Jenkins came from more modest backgrounds, and were 'grammar school boys'. After leaving Balliol, they were involved in the war of 1939-45, and in the European integration that followed it. For my part, I encountered them all during my career in public service in Whitehall and Brussels.

Harold Macmillan (1894-1986)

Harold Macmillan (Balliol 1912) was born into the Macmillan publishing family. At Balliol he joined political societies, including the Oxford Union. He was awarded a first in Classical Honour Moderations, then joined the army when war was declared in 1914. He served on the front line in France and was wounded on three occasions.



Harold Macmillan in the 1950s
© Copyright National Portrait Gallery

In 1924 he was elected Conservative Member of Parliament for Stockton-on-Tees, and in 1940 joined the wartime coalition government in which he held several posts: Minister Resident in the Mediterranean, and then head of the Allied Control Commission in Italy. After the war, together with Churchill, he argued for European integration as a means of combatting Soviet totalitarianism and preventing a recurrence of the horrors of Nazi rule. From 1951 he had a succession of Ministerial posts (Housing & Local Government, Defence, Foreign Secretary, Chancellor of the Exchequer) and served as Prime Minister from 1957 to 1963.

Macmillan projected an image of calm and style, and was known for his pragmatism, wit, and unflappability, acquiring the popular nickname 'Supermac'. He made economic and social reforms which increased living standards in Britain, and he reorientated foreign policy. His 'winds of change' speech speeded up the process of decolonisation, and he made Britain's first application to join the

European Community, which was blocked by France's President de Gaulle. In a speech in the House of Commons in 1961 he said:

'Future relations between the United Kingdom, Europe, and the Commonwealth are matters of capital importance in the life of our country. Although the Treaty of Rome is concerned with economic matters it has an important political objective, namely, to promote unity and stability in Europe which is so essential a factor in the struggle for freedom and progress throughout the world. In this modern world the tendency towards larger groups of nations acting together in the common interest leads to greater unity and thus adds to our strength in the struggle for freedom'

Macmillan became Chancellor of the University of Oxford in 1960, and it was from his hands that I received my degree in the Sheldonian Theatre.

Con O'Neill (1912–98)

Con O'Neill (Balliol 1931) came from an Irish family active in politics. After taking a first in English in 1934, he was elected a Fellow of All Souls and was called to the bar at the Inner Temple, and then in 1938 entered the Foreign Office. In the war he served in the Army Intelligence Corps. During his career in the Foreign Office, which included posts in Berlin, Bonn, and Finland, he resigned three times: in 1938 in protest at the Munich Agreement, in 1946 to become a leader writer for *The Times*, and in 1968 when he failed to be appointed ambassador in Bonn. He returned to the Foreign Office in 1969 as ambassador in charge of Britain's negotiations for entry the European Community, which he led to a conclusion in 1972. This was the crowning achievement of his career.



Con O'Neill in 1961
© Copyright National Portrait Gallery

O'Neill was an outstanding diplomat – an imposing, austere figure, brilliant and idiosyncratic. According to David Hannay, who worked with him in Brussels, 'A high, domed forehead, a prominent nose and a sepulchral voice combined to give an impression that was perhaps more episcopal than diplomatic. But closer contact revealed a sharp, if acerbic, sense of humour and great integrity'. As a junior member of the negotiating team, I met him at meetings in Brussels, where he showed an impressive grasp of strategy and tactics, and firm leadership of the team of senior officials from other Ministries.

Edward Heath (1916–2005)

Ted Heath (Balliol 1935) came from a working-class background – his father was a carpenter and his mother a lady's maid. In Oxford he was active in university politics, and was President of the Union. After leaving with a second in Politics, Philosophy and Economics (PPE), he served in the war as an officer in the Royal Artillery. He took part in the Normandy landings, and commanded an artillery battery in France and Germany. In 1950 he was elected Member of Parliament for Bexley. He progressed rapidly in the Conservative Party, becoming Chief Whip in 1955, Minister of Labour in 1959, then Leader of the Party in 1965. He served as Prime Minister from 1970 to 1975.

His most prominent achievement was to bring the United Kingdom into the European Community. According to his biographer John Campbell, he regarded this as his finest hour. In a speech at the



Edward Heath in 1965
© Copyright National Portrait Gallery

signature of the Accession Treaty in Brussels in 1972 he said:

'What design should we seek for the New Europe? It must be a Europe which is strong and confident within itself. A Europe in which we shall be working for the progressive relaxation and elimination of east/west tensions. A Europe alive to its great responsibilities in the common struggle of humanity for a better life'

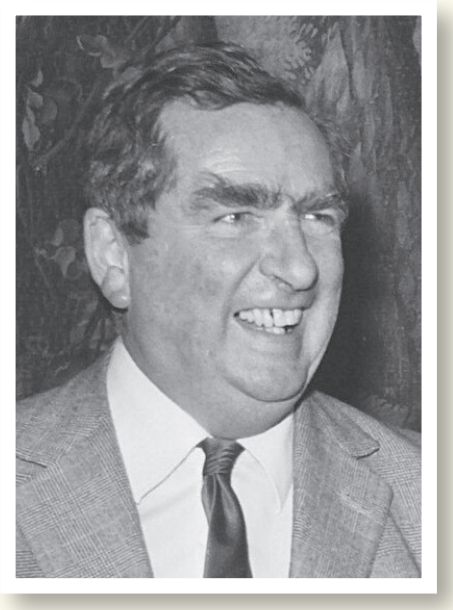
In the House of Commons in 2005, Michael Howard paid this tribute to him:

'After the war, he saw political integration in Europe as the best way to avoid a repeat of its horrors. That became the moving force of his political career, and as Prime Minister he succeeded where Macmillan had failed. Ted never wavered in his attachment to the European dream'

I worked for Heath, at a distance, during the EC negotiations, and wrote a few words of the Treaty that he signed in 1972. Later, after a service in Balliol Chapel, I met and talked with him.

Denis Healey (1917–2015)

Denis Healey (Balliol 1936) came from humble origins: his father was an engineering mechanic, and his grandfather was a tailor. At Oxford he became involved in Labour politics, and joined (and soon left) the Communist Party. He succeeded Heath as president of the Balliol JCR, and they became lifelong friends and political rivals. After obtaining a double first in Literae Humaniores, he served in the war in the Royal Artillery and the Royal Engineers, and saw action in the North African and Italian campaigns.



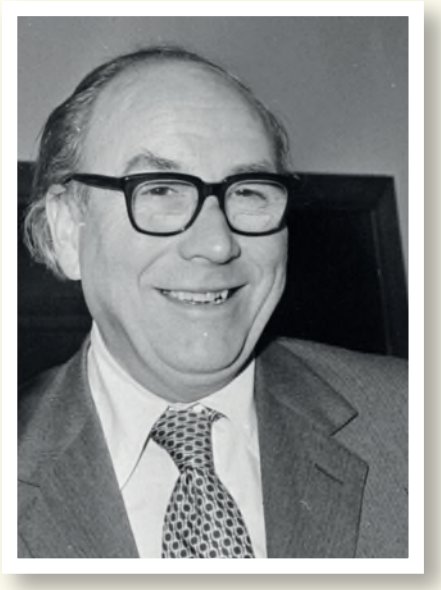
Denis Healey c.1970.

Healey joined the Labour Party in 1945, became secretary of its international department, and made contacts with socialists across Europe. He was elected Member of Parliament for Leeds South East in 1952, and became Minister of Defence in 1964, then Chancellor of the Exchequer in 1974. He narrowly missed becoming Leader of the Labour Party in 1980. He was well known to the public for his bushy eyebrows and piercing wit.

I observed Healey in action at a meeting of EC Finance Ministers in Brussels where, in a clash with Italy's Filippo Maria Pandolfi, he used a vulgar Italian expression (vaffanculo) which he had acquired in wartime service in Italy. Other Ministers were surprised, but not offended; many of their generation had fought in the war on opposing sides, and they enjoyed the banter of former combatants.

Roy Jenkins (1920–2002)

Roy Jenkins (Balliol 1938) was the son of a Welsh coal miner who had become a Labour MP. At Oxford he obtained a first in PPE. During the war, he trained as an officer and worked as a codebreaker at Bletchley Park.



Roy Jenkins in 1977.

In 1948 he was elected Member of Parliament for Southwark Central, and later for Birmingham Stechford. He became Labour's leading advocate of entry to the European Community. In 1961, when Macmillan applied to join the EC, Jenkins spoke in favour. He was elected as Deputy Leader of the Party in 1970, but resigned from the post when the Party decided to oppose EC entry. In a speech to the House of Commons in 1971 he argued:

'Opposition to entry is based on a misunderstanding of the exercise of sovereignty in the modern world. It greatly overestimates our ability to control our own destiny, in or out of the Community, and makes a false equation between detachment and independence. To pretend to a sovereignty which has ceased to be effective is to restrict and not to preserve national freedom'

He was appointed Home Secretary in 1965, Chancellor of the Exchequer in 1967, and Home Secretary again in 1974. He went to Brussels as President of the European Commission in 1977, then returned to British politics as a founder of the Social Democratic Party (SDP), and in 1982 was elected Member of Parliament for Glasgow Hillhead. He became Chancellor of the University of Oxford in 1987, in succession to Macmillan.

Jenkins was an author, as well as a politician. He made no apology for enjoying good food and wine, despite criticism from some in the Labour Party. Denis Healey commented 'Roy's best period in office was as Home Secretary in 1966–70, when he succeeded in imprinting his liberal humanism'. A senior Treasury official, Alec Cairncross, recalled: 'Roy Jenkins was the ablest of the four Chancellors that I served. He listened to advice, but made up his own mind, explaining to his advisers the grounds for his decision'. The political scientist Vernon Bogdanor wrote:

'Jenkins was the first leading politician to appreciate that a liberalised social democracy must be based on two tenets: an aspirational society (individuals must be allowed to regulate their personal lives without interference from the state), and a post-imperial country like Britain can only be influential in the world as part of a wider grouping (the EU)'

I worked for Roy Jenkins myself for four years as a member of his cabinet in Brussels. He had extraordinary perspicacity, and was able to see further into the future than most other politicians. He had a remarkable capacity to prioritise, delegating less important tasks to others – if there was nothing at his level to do in the office, he would go home for lunch and read (or write) a book. European heads of government treated him as an interlocutor, which raised the Commission's political profile.

One example of his far-sightedness was the lecture that he gave in Florence in 1977 advocating monetary union and a common currency. I remember sitting on the lawn at his home in East Hendred where the idea was discussed at a strategy meeting. I was sceptical, and in his lecture Jenkins himself (quoting Jean Monnet) said 'politics is not only the art of the possible, but also the art of making possible tomorrow what may seem impossible today'. A few months later I met him, looking bemused, in a corridor of the Commission's headquarters, where he told me 'I just had the most amazing telephone call from Schmidt, who has agreed with Giscard to go ahead with the idea'. That is how the euro was born.

A special group of inter-war alumni – those who died in the war of 1939-45 – is recorded on the memorial outside Balliol's Chapel. It includes five Germans, and when I first saw it in 1961, I was puzzled that it included men who had so recently served an enemy state. Later, I realised that they shared an identity stronger than war – membership of the Balliol community.



Adam von Trott (1909-44)



Adam von Trott in 1943.

The best known of the Germans named on the memorial is Adam von Trott (Balliol 1931). He came from a distinguished family – his father was Prussia's Minister of Culture, and his mother was half-American. His attractive personality earned him a wide circle of friends in Oxford and elsewhere. It was in Balliol's JCR in 1933 that he learned that Hitler, whom he detested, had seized power. After obtaining a second in PPE, he returned to Germany to pursue a law career, and then entered the German Foreign Office. Meanwhile, he joined a clandestine group of intellectuals, the Kreisau Circle, which planned the overthrow of the Nazi regime. During visits to London, where he met Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain and Foreign Secretary Lord Halifax, he pleaded for British support for the German opposition, but they refused. He was executed in 1944 for his part in the failed plot to kill Hitler. Had the plot succeeded, he could have become Foreign Minister in a post-war government, and pursued his vision of a united and peaceful Europe.

In the preceding paragraphs I have offered only a bare outline of the lives of six men who studied at Balliol in the inter-war years. I have not listed the many honours and titles that they subsequently earned (three were made Lords, and two were granted knighthoods). What their stories illustrate is the increasing diversity of the College's inter-war intake, and the contribution that their generation made to thought and action in post-war Europe.

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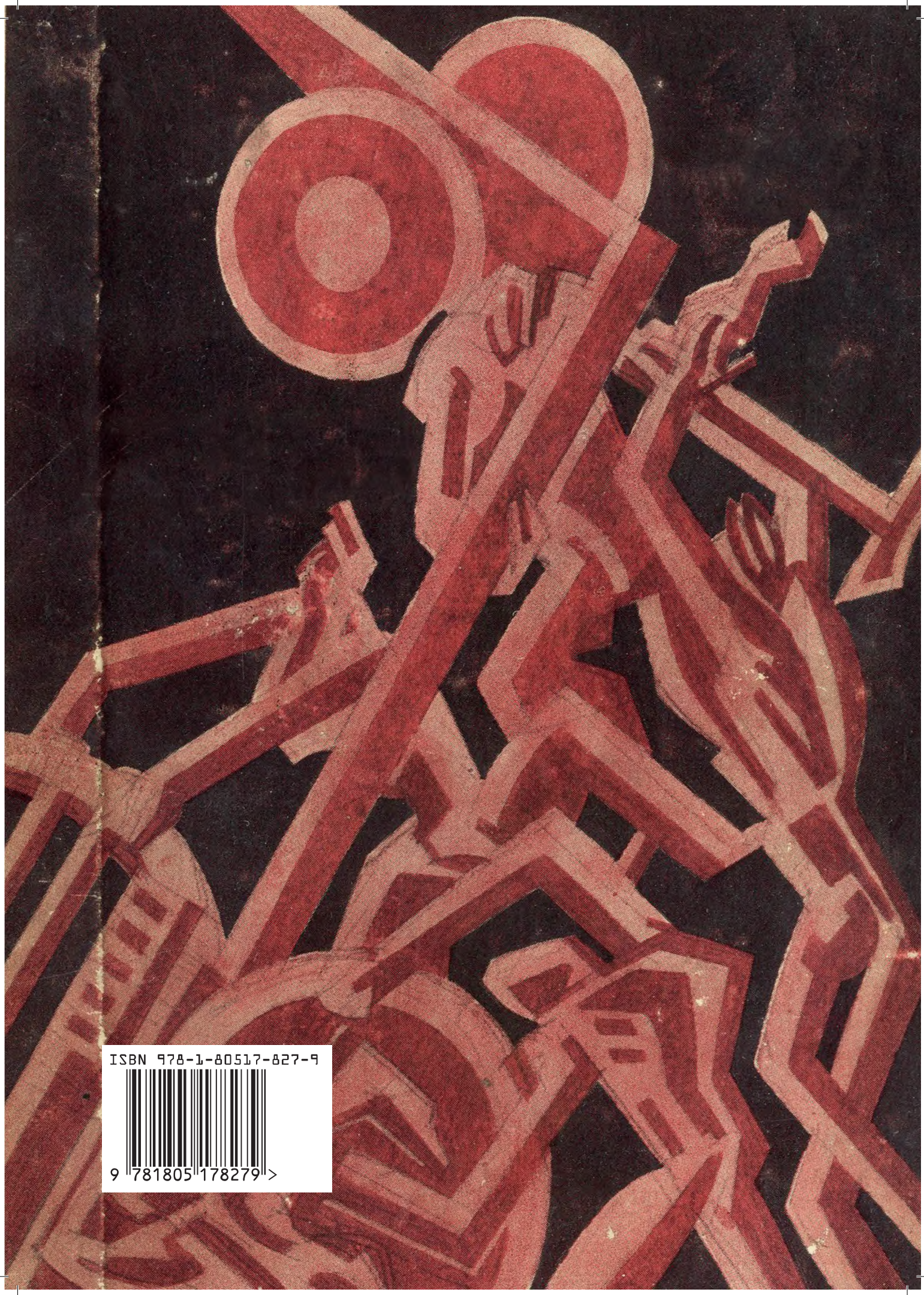
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