

FRONT COURT

Trinity Hall Cambridge



HIGHLIGHTS

Our
Anniversary
Campaign

The
Wishing
Well

Changing
the tide



TRINITY
HALL
CAMBRIDGE

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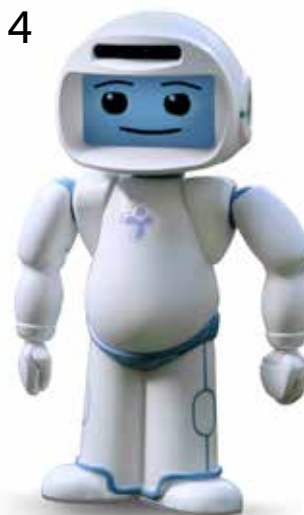
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Message from the Master

by Mary Hockaday | Master

I don't think any of us who enjoyed the 675th Anniversary Campaign launch dinner in July will ever forget the Hall looking so magical, with light and video projections on the ceilings and walls transforming the space. Recent alumna Sam Elbahja's reading of her spoken word poem, *The Wishing Well*, brought a lump to my throat (see pages 8 and 9).

Don't worry if you missed the launch, there are still many more events to participate in through this historic year. There are other magical memories stored and celebrated in *A Trinity Hall Treasury* and our excellent 1350 souvenirs (see back cover for more). I look forward to seeing many of you at the events ahead, or at reunions, and am deeply grateful for all the support so many of you are offering to College in this special year.

Philanthropy is enabling a new way for us to support undergraduates, by offering summer research placements with our Fellows. Our Fellows have to bid to have an intern (it's very popular!) and students have to apply. We piloted the scheme last year, and it's been very successful (see pages 16 and 17). Undergraduates don't often get the chance to start exploring the world of research in this way and as a research-led university, I'm glad we can offer alternatives to corporate summer internships, wonderful as they can be too.

Summer was magnificent, the gardens bursting into life and students bursting onto the lawn early this year, then retreating for a cold patch before the warm weather and post-exam celebrations took over, culminating in the rite of passage that is graduation and the graduands' dinner.

I also enjoyed an afternoon of great pride and shared frustration at football Cuppers. Trinity Hall's men's team was in the final for the first time since 1984, losing in a penalty shootout. The team was valiant and as I think they say, 'left everything on the pitch'. I also must commend our Boat Club for their incredible May Bumps' performances. THBC W1 is the first women's crew to end the Mays in one of the top two positions since 1983, a reminder that our triumphs are shared with those who came before us.

As this edition of *Front Court* highlights, our students' and Fellows' achievements are as impressive as ever. Professor Hatice Gunes, Head of the Affective Intelligence and Robotics Laboratory and shortlisted nominee for the Sony Women in Technology Award with Nature 2025, presented at the United Nations AI for Good Global Summit, driving technological innovation forward.

I also enjoyed hearing from Tyr Hogsander and his team. Tyr finds time outside his studies and Riviera Racing (see page 10) to serve as the JCR President, one of the many students who help make Trinity Hall what it is by engaging in College governance. We're very grateful to them all, as they help us navigate the next 675 years. 🍷



AI for good

by Professor Hatice Gunes | Trinity Hall Fellow and Head of the Affective Intelligence and Robotics Lab (AFAR Lab) at the University of Cambridge



© ITU/AI for Good

> Professor Hatice Gunes

In a world increasingly shaped by algorithms, the question is not whether we use AI, but how we use it.

The AI for Good Global Summit is the United Nations' (UN) leading platform for advancing the use of artificial intelligence to address global challenges. Held annually in Geneva, Switzerland, the summit is organised by the International Telecommunication Union (the UN's specialised agency for information and communication technologies), in partnership with over 40 UN agencies, and this year, it attracted over 11,000 participants from 169 countries.

I and the research lab that I lead, the Cambridge Affective Intelligence and Robotics Lab (AFAR Lab), were invited to attend the summit to give a talk and exhibit our robotic systems that aim to provide solutions related to the UN Sustainable Development Goal 3 (SDG3): ensuring good health and wellbeing for all.

My talk, titled *One Size Does Not Fit All: AI and Social Robotics for Assessing Child Mental Wellbeing*, presented our interdisciplinary efforts to develop socially intelligent robots for mental wellbeing assessment. In collaboration with the

Department of Psychiatry at Cambridge, we've been studying how robot-led interactions can provide more accurate, accessible assessments for children aged from 8 to 13. By combining structured interactions, validated psychological questionnaires, and AI models, we found that our robotised assessments could help identify wellbeing concerns more effectively than traditional self- or parent-reports. Automated analysis of nonverbal behaviours showed that children with higher wellbeing expressed themselves more openly, with notable gender differences observed. These findings challenge uniform assessment methods and support the need for personalised tools that consider individual differences.

The summit came at a particularly special time for us, as it marked the culmination of our ESPRC-funded Adaptive Robotic Emotional Intelligence for Wellbeing project. Since 2019, this project has explored how AI-driven robotics can support mental wellbeing for children and adults through mindfulness coaching and positive psychology interventions, not only in the lab but also in cafés and workplaces. Our VITA system, a longitudinal robotic wellbeing coach, showed significant improvements in participant wellbeing over a one-month pilot^[1]. At the summit, Dr Micol Spitale and Dr Minja Axelsson presented VITA to an international audience, attracting a great deal of interest and even a national TV interview. Meanwhile, our SORA4Wellbeing system offered an engaging, validated way to assess children's mental health both in-person and remotely^[2]. This line of research has received recognition across over 1,700 global media outlets and has received several awards, including the Runner-up for the Collaboration Award at the 2023 University of Cambridge Vice-Chancellor's Awards and the Best Paper Award in Responsible Affective Computing at the 2023 IEEE International Conference on Affective Computing and Intelligent Interactions.

> Professor Hatice Gunes, Dr Minja Axelsson and Dr Micol Spitale, showcasing VITA



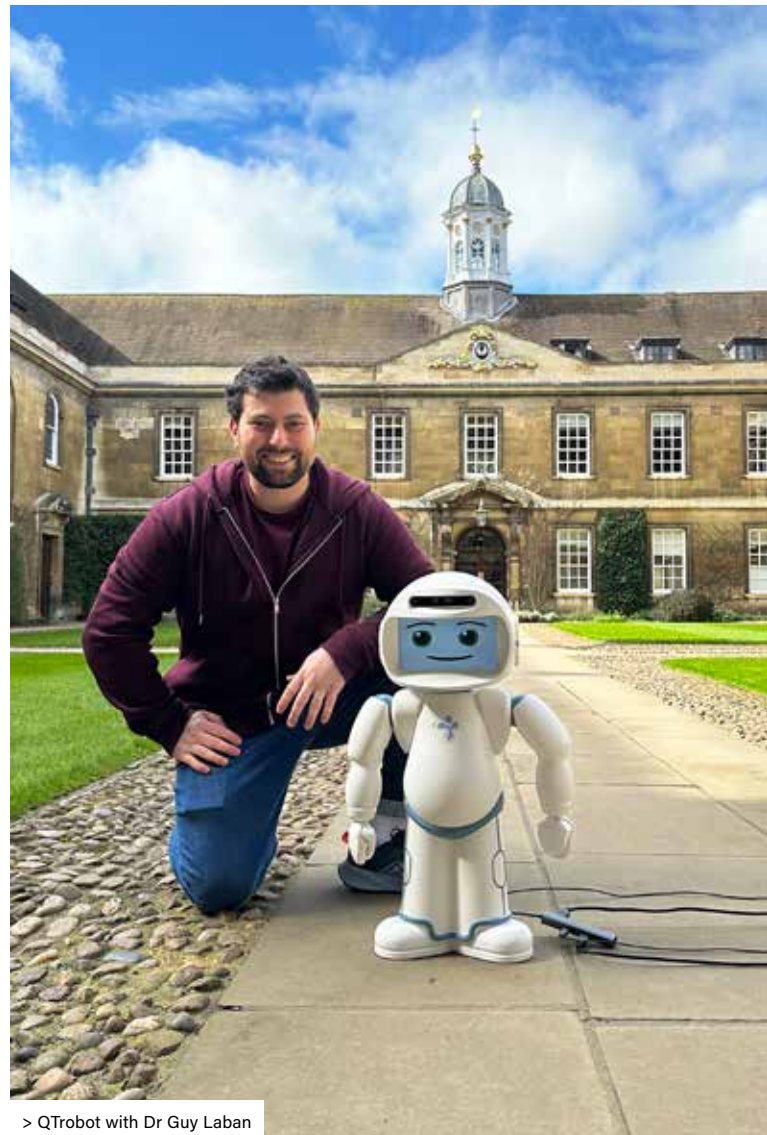
I also attended a thought-provoking talk by Dr Sasha Luccioni, AI & Climate Lead at the AI community, Hugging Face, on balancing the promise of AI with its ecological cost, emphasising that focusing only on direct emissions offers a misleadingly narrow view of AI's environmental impact. Instead, we need to consider Jevons' Paradox – a phenomenon where increased efficiency doesn't necessarily reduce overall consumption. In fact, making AI models faster, cheaper, or more accessible can increase demand and usage, which can lead to a larger overall footprint^[3]. Reflecting on my experiences at the summit, I felt a renewed sense of purpose.

The AFAR Lab's most recent work, *What People Share with a Robot When Feeling Lonely and Stressed and How It Helps Over Time*, will be presented at the 34th IEEE International Conference on Robot and Human Interactive Communication at the end of August 2025^[4]. What is exciting about this work is that it is the outcome of the research undertaken by AFAR postdoctoral researcher Dr Guy Laban, that included Trinity Hall participants and was conducted in the offices at Central Site.

In this study, students engaged in repeated conversations with QTrobot, a small humanoid robot powered by a large language model (GPT 3.5), designed to support emotional reflection. Over five sessions, students disclosed their personal events and feelings with the robot, guiding them to reflect on their emotional experiences and constructively reinterpret challenges. Over the course of their participation, results showed students felt less lonely and stressed, and increasingly opened up to the robot during conversations, using richer emotional language and displaying more expressive facial behaviour. Those feeling more distressed, lonely or stressed, tended to talk about friendships and connection, suggesting unmet social needs whereas students who felt less distressed spoke more about personal growth, creativity, and academic ambition. These findings demonstrate how social robots have the potential to help surface students' emotional needs through everyday conversation.

We recently started a new project called MICRO (Measuring children's wellbeing and mental health with social robots) that received €1.5M in funding, bringing together a multi-disciplinary team of researchers based at universities across Europe. The project will explore the use of social robots to measure children's wellbeing and mental health in schools, focusing primarily on vulnerable groups, such as children with developmental language disorders and refugee children who might benefit from preventative interventions.

Our mission, therefore, has been made ever clearer. We are building AI and robotic systems that serve people, not just serving progress for the sake of progress. 🌱



> QTrobot with Dr Guy Laban

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- [1] Micol Spitale, Minja Axelsson, Hatice Gunes: VITA: A Multi-Modal LLM-Based System for Longitudinal, Autonomous and Adaptive Robotic Mental Well-Being Coaching. *ACM Trans. Hum. Robot Interact.* 14(2): 38:1-38:28 (2025)
 - [2] Nida Itrat Abbasi, Guy Laban, Tamsin Ford, Peter B. Jones, Hatice Gunes: A Longitudinal Study of Child Wellbeing Assessment via Online Interactions with a Social Robots. *ACM Trans. Hum. Robot Interact.* 14(3): 51:1-51:35 (2025)
 - [3] Alexandra Sasha Luccioni, Emma Strubell, and Kate Crawford. 2025. From Efficiency Gains to Rebound Effects: The Problem of Jevons' Paradox in AI's Polarized Environmental Debate. In *The 2025 ACM Conference on Fairness, Accountability, and Transparency (FAccT '25)*, June 23–26, 2025, Athens, Greece. ACM, New York, NY, USA.
 - [4] Guy Laban, Sophie Chiang, Hatice Gunes. *What People Share With a Robot When Feeling Lonely and Stressed and How It Helps Over Time*. arXiv:2504.02991 [cs.HC]. Retrieved from <https://arxiv.org/abs/2504.02991>.

Our Anniversary Campaign

The world is changing, and with that change comes new challenges for our students and for our College. On Saturday 5 July, we launched our 675 Anniversary Campaign, our College's transformational fundraising initiative to nurture and protect everything we love and cherish at Trinity Hall.

Our Anniversary Campaign can be summarised thus.

- All talented applicants should **believe** there's a place for them at Trinity Hall, regardless of their background.
- All of our students should feel they truly **belong** to a community that inspires and supports their academic ambitions, wellbeing and resilience; a community surrounded by spaces to live and study while also being greener, more sustainable and more suited to the needs of students today.
- Our aim is to help every student **become** a success in whatever path they choose.

Speaking on these aims at our Anniversary Campaign launch, our Senior Officers explained how your philanthropy and our College's resources will secure Trinity Hall's future.



"Collegiate Cambridge is much poorer financially than many other comparable institutions with whom we compete academically. We invest about £12,000 per head per annum more in our students than we receive in fee income, which means that we run an education deficit of about £6.8 million annually. We're not fundraising to bridge that gap. Our endowment currently enables us to meet that deficit year on year, but it leaves us very short when it comes to investing for the future in our academic resources and estate. We aim to be able to adapt our estate to the new ways in which students work, creating spaces for both their academic and cultural activities that meet their needs for many years to come.

Our target is to raise £50 million, of which we have already raised half. We are certain with your help and generosity; we can reach this goal."

Tim Harvey-Samuel, Bursar



"The Campaign will have a huge impact on our outreach activities, addressing attainment gaps and reaching out to students who might not see Cambridge as a place where they could belong. Our 'You'll Fit In' programme enables students from underrepresented backgrounds at Cambridge to learn more about the admissions process and see what the University is really like. 160 of these students then join us for a residential event each year. They are taught by our academics, have lunch in Hall, and begin to see themselves studying for an undergraduate degree at Trinity Hall."

Dr Michael Sutherland, Senior Tutor



"25% of the undergraduate population have some sort of disability that would count under the Equality Act, and a growing proportion within that, face mental health difficulties. We as a college need to be very aware of that and be a place where early support can be given. The Campaign will enable our College wellbeing team to provide early intervention to our students and direct students to University support services, like counselling and mental health and disability support, when needed."

Natalie Acton, Head of Student Support at the University of Cambridge



"Our aim is to attract the best and brightest to Cambridge, and they come from all over the world. Many students have significant debt after undergraduate studies and pursuing a postgraduate degree is not an option without financial support. The costs are especially steep for international students. Donors have helped us make a real difference by enabling us to offer postgraduate studentships, but we aim to do much more. This Campaign is especially timely given the huge cuts that we're facing from Research Council funding in the UK. Your donations can help to mitigate these cuts by helping our strongest applicants come to Cambridge and contribute their talents to society."

Professor Ramji Venkataramanan, Acting Postgraduate Tutor



"In a very turbulent world, the College highlights the importance of sustained, independent, human-scale commitment to teaching, learning and innovation. We hope that you will join us in our mission to ensure that Trinity Hall supports the future of learning and continues to excel in the modern world."

Mary Hockaday, Master

To join our mission, visit campaign.trinhall.cam.ac.uk and find your cause. Watch our video on the **Anniversary Campaign playlist at youtube.com/TrinityHallCambridge/playlists**

> L-R, Master Mary Hockaday, Natalie Acton, Professor Ramji Venkataramanan, Dr Michael Sutherland and Tim Harvey-Samuel speaking at the Anniversary Campaign launch



© Martin Bond Photography



ALUMNI

The Wishing Well

by Sam Elbahja | Architecture, 2022



> Sam Elbahja

My journey to Trinity Hall began with a wish – a quiet one at first, but full of hope. A dream of something more, not just for me, but for my family.

I'm Samira Elbahja – most people call me Sam. I grew up with my family in Tower Hamlets, East London, and I carry it with me wherever I go. It's more than just a postcode – it's where my imagination took root. But like many of us who grew up in social housing, I knew what it meant for opportunities to live just out of my reach. At school, the idea of Cambridge felt like a fantasy. Something whispered about, never taken seriously.

But I've always been a dreamer.

One day, my form tutor said, "You've got nothing to lose by applying." And so I did. Two interviews, two exams – and then the news came: I was going to study architecture at the University of Cambridge.

But architecture wasn't my only love. There was also poetry.

My path to it wasn't straightforward. I started out as a Regional Public Speaking Champion, where my teacher pointed out something I'd never noticed – the rhythm in my voice. "You should try poetry," she said. At my first open mic, I sat right at the back and soaked everything in. The next day, I returned with some scribbled lines on a crumpled piece of paper. I performed. It wasn't perfect, but it lit something in me. The same spark I felt on that public speaking stage. From that point on, I never stopped writing.

Looking back, I realise I'd been writing my whole life – in margins of school books, the Notes app on my phone, in the back row of English class.

Trinity Hall gave me the space to grow, not just as a student, but as an artist. Whether I was writing in the Jerwood Library,

pacing the Aula, or stretched out on Latham Lawn trying to push past writer's block, I was surrounded by history and possibility.

Trinity Hall also supported Give Us the Mic, an initiative I founded that brought voices from all corners of Cambridge together.

You might be wondering: what's poetry got to do with architecture? For me, they're inseparable. Both are about listening, storytelling, and understanding lived experiences.

In the past, I've been commissioned to write poems for architectural campaigns – from Heatherwick Studio's Humanise to Morris + Company's People's Choice Awards and Open City's Curators. And why I published *Naked Pen*, my debut collection, now stocked by Amazon, Waterstones, and Barnes & Noble!

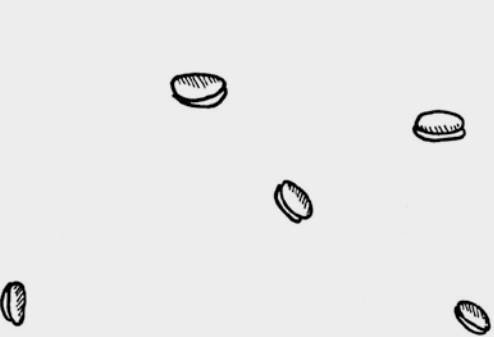
But this is just the beginning.

I'm the founder of The Blocks Workshop, a programme that helps young East Londoners connect poetry and architecture through creativity and reclaimed materials.

As a contributor to Homegrown+ and a board member of MAI Cultures, I want young people to believe that their wildest dreams – the ones you whisper into wishing wells – can come true.

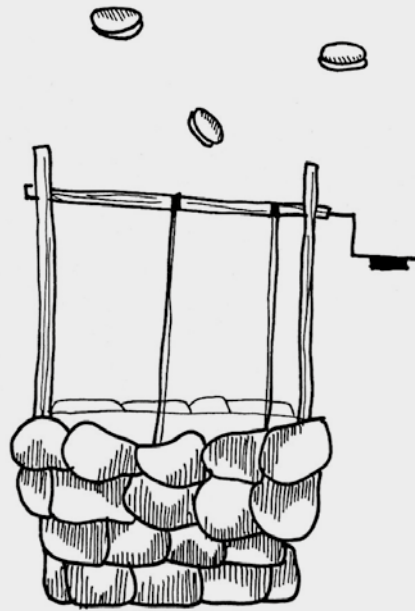
Which brings me full circle: to writing *The Wishing Well* for Trinity Hall's 675th anniversary.

I was deeply honoured to be a part of such a lasting legacy. 🙏



The Wishing Well

by Sam Elbahja



To be young and to believe is a difficult thing
You see, belief is kind of like a wishing well
The deeper you look in the more lost you get
But stepping back will allow you to see the bed
of shine
The glimmer of coins resting at the bottom
Moments of hope all arranged beautifully
So we can understand how hope is really born
And how we are born
Into dreamers, trailblazer, world changers
And how one person can change your entire life
Flip it like a coin
Heads up – your whole life is about to change
My teacher had done that for me
Changed my life when she mentioned Trinity
Hall Cambridge
You see, this was never meant to be in my story
I hadn't written my happily ever after yet
But I knew it would be something cool, of course,
something rewarding
Why?
It's because of my parents.
My parents coming from opposite ends of the world,
Meeting and then leaving home
Only to move to a foreign land
And learn how to speak a language that lodges in
their throats
Just so the language could roll off our tongues like
butter on a hot knife
So we can speak loud enough for people in the room
to hear us



To actually listen to what is being said
So we spoke and people heard us
But I would have never imagined the next part of
my story
Because when I turned the page
the writing was already there
And the more I read it, the more I was convinced
of my story
So you know what
I jumped in
I jumped in the book head first
And I found myself surrounded by century old stone
In a room that was not my own
But still kind of felt a bit like home, you know
With friends for neighbours
And teachers who really care about you
We fit like a glove
Dubbed as the friendliest college
And just walking through the Porters' Lodge will
prove that
With smiles as wide as the Mathematical Bridge
And hearts as big as Latham Lawn
So when I look back at my story now
I smile, a soft mellow lip curl
In disbelief that my story is actually quite interesting
that my many coins sitting at the bottom of the
wishing well
arranged my life story, decorating an image of
Trinity Hall
My home away from home
A way to start believing in the bed of shine

Listen to *The Wishing Well* anniversary poem on our YouTube channel: www.youtube.com/@TrinityHallCambridge



Changing the tide

Ever heard that electricity and water don't mix?
Our students at Riviera Racing say otherwise.

Trinity Hall students, Tyr Hogsander (Land Economy, 2023), Matteo Cascini (Engineering, 2023), Yonatan Merkier (Engineering, 2023), Joseph Franks (Engineering, 2023) and Nehansa Siriwardena (Medicine, 2024), are members of Riviera Racing, a team at the University of Cambridge who recently built a one-of-a-kind catamaran and competed in the 2025 Monaco Energy Boat Challenge this past July. With their racing vessel 'Aurora', they placed 10th out of 20 university teams in the Energy Boat class and demonstrated how their cutting-edge, zero-emission technology could be the future of the maritime industry. Tyr and Matteo told us more about their formative journey to the race and where they hope to go next.

The Riviera Racing team is a completely student-led co-operative with around 35 dedicated members from across the University of Cambridge. Studying everything from engineering to clinical medicine, these determined students first dipped their toes into the Monaco Energy Boat Challenge last year, entering a hydrogen-fuelled boat called the 'Meridian'. This year, they stripped the vessel back to basics, swapping hydrogen cells for battery-power, creating a boat focused entirely on endurance and a more consistent nautical performance.

Their catamaran 'Aurora', is almost entirely custom-built. The best part? It is completely emissions-free. The catamaran racer has a novel single engine outboard, a 9kwh custom battery built with prismatic LFP blade cells, a unique propellor and steering system, and is all encompassed in a one-of-a-kind military grade case that allows for greater longevity and flexibility in the water.

Body and Structures Lead Engineer, Matteo Cascini said: "Working on such a unique and ambitious project has been incredibly rewarding. Each part of the boat has been carefully designed for performance, and it's been invaluable to apply our knowledge in a truly hands-on environment."

While for Riviera's engineers, this project was a chance to put their engineering studies into practice, for students such as Deputy Director of Operations and Treasurer Tyr, it was an opportunity to be a part of a community taking on something bigger and creating something tangible. "The students who founded Riviera are some of the most driven and ambitious engineers and businesspeople I've ever met. The project being completely student-led is important to us because it's a demonstration of what can be achieved when we work out problems together."

> Riviera Racing team at the 2025 Monaco Energy Boat Challenge



© YCM/Studio Borlenghi

> Riviera Racing team working on the vessel during testing



© Matteo Cascini

The Riviera Racing project has been generously backed and supported by Trinity Hall through the Lee-Yung Family Fund for Entrepreneurship and the 2025 Trinity Hall Catalysts programme, with both Tyr and Director of Operations Harsh Sinha taking part in the initiative.

Tyr said, "Getting it from CAD to the water has been all about speaking to people who have done this for decades. We must say a huge thanks to Professor Tony Purnell, Trinity Hall Honorary Fellow and Founder of Pi Research, for helping the Lead Engineer Matteo and the Body and Structures team with his industry expertise. We are incredibly grateful for the support from our partners who have made this project possible."

Going into the challenge, the team's aim was to be consistent and reliable, performing well in all three of the energy classes' races that tested the boat's speed, endurance and manoeuvrability. They certainly achieved their mission, finishing in 10th place overall in the Energy Class category out of 20 university teams from across the globe.

After their performance, the Riviera Racing team said, "It was an outstanding learning experience for us. Finishing 10th out of the 20 boats in our class, we dramatically improved on last year's result and set a precedent for the future success of the

team. We leave with a deeper understanding of our system, new collaborators, and a clear vision for what's next."

Their result on the water is just as inspiring as the future impact their tech could have on an evolving yacht industry. Sustainable yachting has become more and more popular with rising environmental awareness and Riviera Racing is confident that they can persuade the industry to continue to reduce its carbon footprint and look towards more sustainable alternative propulsion systems.

Tyr said: "This [boat] is not just a proof of concept but a genuine working machine. We're now able to confidently say that this tech can be (and in some cases, already is) used on real, commercial boats. And we're just students, think of where else it could go!"

The team has high ambitions for the future and as team members graduate, they hope to continue to innovate and raise the bar, focusing on developing even more innovative technologies for the boat such as foiling, computer vision and hydrogen power.

Honorary Fellow Professor Tony Purnell said: "The team's energy is infectious and their passion clear. It's inspiring to see students thriving in their chosen field, and Riviera Racing embodies everything a university society should be."

With the team's sights firmly set on re-entering the Monaco Energy Boat Challenge next year, as well as competing in the Sardinia Innovative Boat Week in October, look out for their sails (or lack thereof) on the horizon. 🚢

To keep up to date with Riviera Racing and to learn how you can support them in their mission, make sure to check out their website at rivieraracing.co.uk.



> L-R, Yonatan Merkier, Tyr Hogsander and Matteo Cascini at the 2024 Monaco Energy Boat Challenge

© Harsh Sinha



MAKE A DIFFERENCE

The power of collective giving



> Catherine Johnson

by Catherine Johnson | Regular Giving Manager

Giving Day may have only lasted 67.5 hours but its impact will be felt for years to come.

From the 13th to 16th of May, the Trinity Hall community came together for our fifth Giving Day campaign celebrating our 675th anniversary. Our donors raised a remarkable £249,677 in less than four days to support our mission and cement the continued legacy of Trinity Hall. Over 372 donors participated in our Giving Day efforts, unlocking more than £94,000 in match funding and demonstrating the strength of our global community.

The College's commitment to support students and invest in the future of Trinity Hall remains stronger than ever, and this year's Giving Day focused on the key areas that are central

to our mission: postgraduate support, mental health and wellbeing, widening participation, clubs and societies, and sustainability.

These priorities lie at the heart of our College and ensure that everyone who joins Trinity Hall **believes** that there is a welcoming place for them, **belongs** to an inspiring and driven community and **becomes** the person they want to be. With our help, our students can go on to make strong contributions to society in an ever-evolving world.

A global response, local involvement

This year's Giving Day launched with an online pub quiz (hosted by history postgraduate student, Benjamin Iago Gibson (2023)) in support of the Christopher Padfield Fund for our postgraduate community. The event tested our participants on their Cambridge knowledge and Trinity Hall trivia, challenging their knowledge in a fun and informal competition. The following morning, our students led a 6.75km 'plogging' run which combined jogging with litter collection to raise funds and awareness for our Sustainability Fund. Our Boat Club then closed out the campaign on the final day by rowing 67.5 miles in under two hours.

We are so grateful for everyone who played an active role in our Giving Day activities. Whether you participated in an event, donated towards our projects or spread the word on social media using #GiveTogetHER, your efforts served as a tangible reminder of what can be achieved when a community comes together.



> Trinity Hall Boat Club at the end of the Ergathon

“Without your generosity, my time at Cambridge and at Trinity Hall would have been so different, and you have allowed me to have the university experience that I have always wanted – thank you.” Law undergraduate student, 2023

Bold ambitions, clear impact

The generosity shown by our alumni, students, Fellows, staff, and friends of the College, will have both immediate and lasting effects on Trinity Hall and our students as we move forward in our anniversary year. These contributions will support the many meaningful projects that help ensure our students and College continues to thrive.

The £17,438 raised for the Christopher Padfield Fund will play a vital role in alleviating financial pressure for postgraduates, by providing research grants to support academic work and enabling the organisation of academic events within College for both our MCR and postdoc communities.

The £9,988 raised to support the Rowan Williams Studentship will fund a place at Trinity Hall for a student from an area of conflict, enabling them to study at College during the 2026–27 academic year. This vital support will offer them access to a transformative educational experience.

Our donors also raised £6,408 in support of Trinity Hall's widening participation initiative, 'You'll Fit In', a programme designed to encourage applications from Year 12 students from underrepresented backgrounds at Cambridge. The programme offers a series of engaging webinars and residentials that guide students through the Cambridge admissions process and provide insight into student life, from both social and cultural perspectives. Since its launch in 2023/24, the programme has seen over 1,500 students participating in the webinars and 200 attending our residential events. We're thrilled that a 'You'll Fit In' participant will be joining us at Trinity Hall as an undergraduate this October and other participants will also be joining other Cambridge colleges. The funds raised this Giving Day will help to ensure this programme's continued impact and growth.

Supporting student wellbeing remains a core priority for the College and the £6,071 raised will allow the College to continue investing in its Wellbeing team and initiatives that focus on early intervention and preventative support. These include opportunities for social connection, physical activity, study skills development, and stress management workshops – all designed to help students thrive both academically and personally.

Donations to the Boat Club Fund will support Trinity Hall's ongoing commitment to rowing excellence. Our teams produced incredible performances on the river during this year's May Bumps and with £9,504 raised, the Boat Club will use these funds to purchase a second Telemetry System. This will provide both the men's and women's First Boats with access to real-time performance data and analytics to enhance their training and on-water performance.

And lastly, the £15,948 generously raised for sustainability projects was originally intended to fund the design and installation of a solar (PV) array on the SCR at Central Site. However, once work began, a structural survey revealed that the roof could not, unexpectedly, support the installation. We are now exploring alternative solutions to ensure the funds are used effectively to support our move to renewable energy sources.

Our sustainability strategy continues to reflect the College's broader commitment to environmental responsibility, building on our Platinum Green Award from the University of Cambridge. Our aim is to reduce our reliance on non-renewable energy and promote long-term sustainability.

The collective generosity and enthusiasm shown by our community – alumni, students, Fellows, staff and friends – reinforces the strength of our shared commitment to Trinity Hall's mission and values. Whether you made a gift, joined an event, or helped spread the word, **thank you.** 🙏



To find out more about how we're supporting students and the future of Trinity Hall, contact development@trinhall.cam.ac.uk

The foundations of Trinity Hall



> The Senior Combination Room



> Loggan print of Trinity Hall 1690

> The Dining Hall by Gertrude Hayes



The SCR's well

You may have heard poet Sam Elbahja reciting her poem *The Wishing Well* at our Anniversary Campaign launch, but this is not the only well related to Trinity Hall. From before the College's foundation in 1350 until the mid-19th century, a working well stood in what we now know as the Senior Combination Room. It was filled in for fear the well could become contaminated with bacteria causing typhoid or cholera. ☹

The North Court fruit garden

The gardens and open spaces are a joy for all of us at College, and North Court is no exception. It is helpfully situated next to the Aula Café and Bar and contains several shaded seating options, making it a favourite amongst our students for when studying on Latham Lawn becomes a little too hot for their liking. Shading them from the sun is a fig tree that hints at North Court's past, not as the social area as we now know it but as a majestic fruit garden in our walled College. In 1690, a mulberry tree was planted and Fellows were permitted to help themselves to the fruit as and when they wished. The tree was removed in 1879. ☹

The open-air Dining Hall

Transporting us back to the early 18th century, sitting in the Dining Hall would have been an entirely different experience. Not simply because of the change in cuisine, with tongue and udder appearing regularly on the menu, but with the ceiling of the Hall entirely open, and the fireplace being positioned in the centre of the room. The room was refurbished in 1742 to modernise it, as it was suspected to be the last remaining medieval hall in Cambridge at the time. ☹

With 2025 being the College's 675th anniversary, we've spent much of this year celebrating our Trinity Hall foundations, but what about literally? The buildings that surround us hold a wealth of history unbeknown to many. How many of these facts do you know?



> The Dining Hall false window

> Wychfield House



> Exterior of Bishop Bateman Court



The mysterious Dining Hall window

Have you ever noticed while eating in the Hall, a strange looking window on the east wall above High Table that seemingly leads to nowhere? Before 1864, this small arched window connected the Master's Lodge to the Chapel so that the Master's family could watch Chapel services from their own home. It was removed when the length of the Chapel was increased by eight feet eastwards to create the platform for the altar. 🕒

The story of Wychfield House

Wychfield House is popular accommodation, but you may not know it has a connection to a famous biologist. Wychfield House was in fact built by Francis Darwin, Charles Darwin's third son, and was purchased by the College in 1948. It has had many renovations since and you may not know that the Witch Elm tree close by was the inspiration for the name of the site. You may have also heard it rumoured to be a witches' burial site. 🕒

The refurbishment of Bishop Bateman Court

Some of you will have lived in Bishop Bateman Court during your time at Trinity Hall and, due to the generosity of our donors, this building will now become fully degasified, in line with our Campaign masterplan to diversify our energy sources. Work on the building will commence late November 2025 and is anticipated to be completed by January 2027. 🕒

Find out more about our masterplan at: campaign.trinhall.cam.ac.uk/masterplan



RESEARCH

Mapping the microbiome

by Dana Bao | Natural Sciences, 2023



> Dana Bao

As an undergraduate student in Natural Sciences entering my final year, I've always found computational biology fascinating. It opens great possibilities besides the traditional wet lab approaches, implementing the power of computational algorithms to solve complex biological issues. My curiosity led me to a unique opportunity this past summer, joining my Director of Studies, Professor Anton Enright, as a research intern exploring the field of nanopore sequencing.

Nanopore sequencing is a relatively recent technology that reads long stretches of DNA or RNA directly by threading them through tiny molecular pores. It is used in areas such as environmental and biodiversity studies, clinical infection diagnosis and food safety. Nanopore sequencing excels at producing long reads (sequences of DNA) and sequencing low-input genetic material, but it also generates extremely large datasets that tend to be noisy and error-prone. There is also no universally accepted pipeline for downstream analysis – and that's where my contribution begins.

"In the Enright laboratory, we are exploring nanopore sequencing in lots of research areas but most recently in 'shotgun' metagenomics, where we assess the microbiome of samples by rapidly sequencing all available DNA and matching it to all known organisms. This creates an accurate microbiome profile in real time," said Professor Anton Enright.

At the beginning of summer, I collected kefir, soil (taken from Trinity Hall Central Site), and cat skin samples from a willing and friendly participant and learned how to clean, organise, and interpret complex raw read outputs using bioinformatics tools for metagenomic analysis. This involved becoming comfortable with the command-line interface, exploring programming languages such as Python and R, and using open-source platforms to align reads, identify species, and draw meaningful conclusions about the microbial communities present in each of our samples.

Our goals were to identify the detailed microbiome composition of both the kefir and soil samples to offer valuable guidance for optimising kefir production and provide insights into gardening practices involving or dependent on these soils. We also aimed to characterise the microbiomes of cats, from their different living environments to age groups,



> Professor Anton Enright in the lab

potentially uncovering information relevant to their health and wellbeing.

I quickly learned during my internship that waiting for enormous amounts of data to be processed, such as blastn alignments and genome assembly, was proving inefficient and I had to find a better solution to analysing our samples. This led us to discovering more time-efficient and practical choices like minimap2 and miniasm that fit the traits of large nanopore data specifically.

By mid-August, we had generated detailed microbiome profiles for all but one of our main samples. For kefir, our analysis identified the core bacterial and yeast species that were likely responsible for its fermentation qualities and affirmed that the species found in the product belonged to a brand new (and as yet unnamed) strain! The soil samples analyses revealed the 'supersoil' used by the gardeners contained rare microbiome species, which could be the reason underlying their beneficial quality for plant health.

This experience has prepared me for my final year by improving my technical and problem-solving skills. I am now more comfortable in handling bioinformatics work, which will be incredibly useful for my upcoming Part II projects where I hope to still be focusing on bioinformatics. Equally as important, working closely with experienced researchers has improved my ability to collaborate, communicate findings clearly, and adapt quickly when experiments or analyses do not go as planned. The Enright lab has been an incredibly welcoming environment to work in, with its members showing endless patience, intellectual curiosity and a willingness to help and collaborate. Professor Enright has the rare ability to explain complex ideas in a clear and grounded way – while also giving students the space to think independently and make their own discoveries. I feel incredibly lucky to have worked on this summer project and looking ahead, I hope to build on this foundation in the future. 🧠

The Undergraduate Summer Research Projects were made possible thanks to our generous donor, alumnus Iain Drayton (1991).



News in Brief

Read more at
trinhall.cam.ac.uk/news

COMMUNITY

Sustainability Impact Award



Trinity Hall has been awarded a Platinum Green Impact Award from the University of Cambridge, the highest achievement available in 2025 to recognise commitment to sustainability. Spearheaded by Jeffrey Opreij (2022), MCR Green and Ethical Affairs Officer, Alex Younge (2023), current JCR Green and Ethics Officer, and May Brown (2023), last year's JCR Green and Ethics Officer, the award is a reflection of the College's ongoing dedication to a greener future. This commitment continues into 2026 and beyond, with projects including the degasification of Bishop Bateman Court.

SPORT

A year of rowing successes

Rowing at Trinity Hall this year has been one for the history books. Our Boat Club faced tough competition on the river this May Bumps and each of our crews produced incredible results, spurred on by the ferocious cheers of our alumni, students, staff and Fellows. Our W1 team rose to second on the river, making them the first Trinity Hall women's crew to place in the top two in May Bumps since our 1983 crew made Headship. Row Hall! Our postgraduate student and Paralympic rower Jan Helmich (2016), was also commended this year, receiving the University's 'Sports Person of the Year' award for his athletic excellence.



> W1 after a successful Bump

© Dik Ng

> Jan Helmich



© Dik Ng

© Dik Ng



COMMUNITY

Trinity Hall welcomes new Honorary Fellows



© 2024 Ernie Savarese

We are delighted to welcome two distinguished alumni to the Trinity Hall Fellowship this year. Engineer, author and former professional athlete Dr Emma Pooley (Engineering, 2001) and chair of Nomura International plc and former Permanent Secretary to the Treasury Sir Tom Scholar GCB (History, 1987) will join a remarkable group of individuals as Trinity Hall's newest Honorary Fellows. They will be formally admitted to their Honorary Fellowships during a ceremony at Trinity Hall in October.

SPORT

A hard-fought Cuppers final

It was also a successful year for our Men's Football team who made it to the Cuppers final to play against Jesus College. Cheered on by the Trinity Hall community, they battled it out in a fantastic match but in the end were narrowly beaten by Jesus in a nail-biting penalty shootout with a final score of 5-4. We will be sure to watch them next year as they compete for a second chance at victory.



> Trinity Hall Men's Football Club at Cuppers final



> Professor Sir Simon Wessely



> Professor Iain Whitaker

© Swansea University

AWARDS

King's Birthday Honours

Trinity Hall Honorary Fellow and alumnus, Professor Sir Simon Wessely (1975), and alumnus, Professor Iain Whitaker (1994), were recognised in the King's Birthday Honours for their services to the public and their professions. Professor Sir Simon Wessely was awarded Knight Grand Cross of the Order of the British Empire (GBE) for services to mental health. Professor Iain Whitaker was awarded Order of the British Empire (OBE) for contributions to clinical practice, research and training.

AWARDS

Fellows earn academic promotions

Five members of the Trinity Hall Fellowship, Professor Ramji Venkataramanan, Dr Heather Inwood (1999), Dr Lee de-Wit, Dr Alena Drieschova and Dr James Wood, have been awarded academic promotions at the University of Cambridge in recognition of their outstanding contributions to teaching, research and academia.



Diary dates

25 October

Danse Macabre Concert in the SCR

28 October

PaTHways: Nicholson Careers Evening

30 October

Drinks in New York

1 November

Drinks in Toronto

6 November

THEN Event: What does it mean to have a start-up in Cambridge?

15 November

Master's Circle dinner (invitation only)

27 November

675 birthday party, London

6 December

Reformation event at St Edward's Church

14 December

Supporters' festive drinks (invitation only)

w/c 12 January

Dinners in Hong Kong and Singapore

17 January

Choir reunion

February

Engineering Society dinner

Law Society annual dinner

Politics Society dinner

7 February

Orpheus Britannicus concert in the Dining Hall

10 March

THEN Event: How to scale-up in Cambridge?

18 March

Trinity Hall Spotlights: AI

28 March

MA ceremony and reunion for 2019

17 April

Aula Club dinner in College

18 April

10th Anniversary dinner for 2016

25 & 26 April

First Years' family lunches

See our upcoming events at

www.trinhall.cam.ac.uk/events

675th Anniversary Merchandise

Celebrate our 675th anniversary with our unique commemorative designs celebrating our foundation in 1350.

Buy yours now at www.trinhall.cam.ac.uk/675shop
Ships worldwide directly from our partner, Portlantis.



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