

UNIV FUTURES

CELEBRATING PHILANTHROPY ISSUE 4 | 2025 | UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OXFORD



Contents

03
Message from the Master

04
Academic endeavour
at the heart of Univ

05
Unlocking some family secrets
of the past

08
Securing the future of Classics

10
Univ’s 775 Festival

12
Carbon, energy sustainability
and wellbeing

16
Colin Ford: Portrait of a curator

17
The importance of
regular giving

18
Financial highlights

21
2025 Diary of events

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**“No organisation survives credibly and
successfully for 775 years without showing
considerable resilience, flexibility and innovation.”**



Our 775th anniversary last year was
an opportunity to celebrate the
College’s long history, recognise
the contributions of our benefactors,
honour Univ people past and present,
reflect on our challenges and achievements
and consider what would drive our future
success. No organisation survives credibly
and successfully for 775 years without
showing considerable resilience, flexibility
and innovation, and Univ has certainly
demonstrated that over the years. Our
focus during the year was on Univ’s people,
all those who have helped us remain
a dynamic and stimulating academic
environment in which to work and study.

This year we are looking forward to the
opening of the first phase of Univ North,
including the nursery and some student
accommodation. We have welcomed
alumni, friends, staff and students to
our “hard hat” tours of the site, which
give a feel for the size and scale of the
development and its quality. These last few
months before the start of Michaelmas term
2025 will see intensified activity. Once the
contractors hand the buildings over to us,
another stage begins as we make the rooms
ready for student use by October. A huge
thank you to everyone who has helped to
make the vision for Univ North a reality.
In the coming year we will also be looking

at how best to secure an excellent teaching
and learning environment at Univ going
forward. We look forward to hearing your
thoughts on how we can best do that.
Thank you again for your continuing
support of Univ.

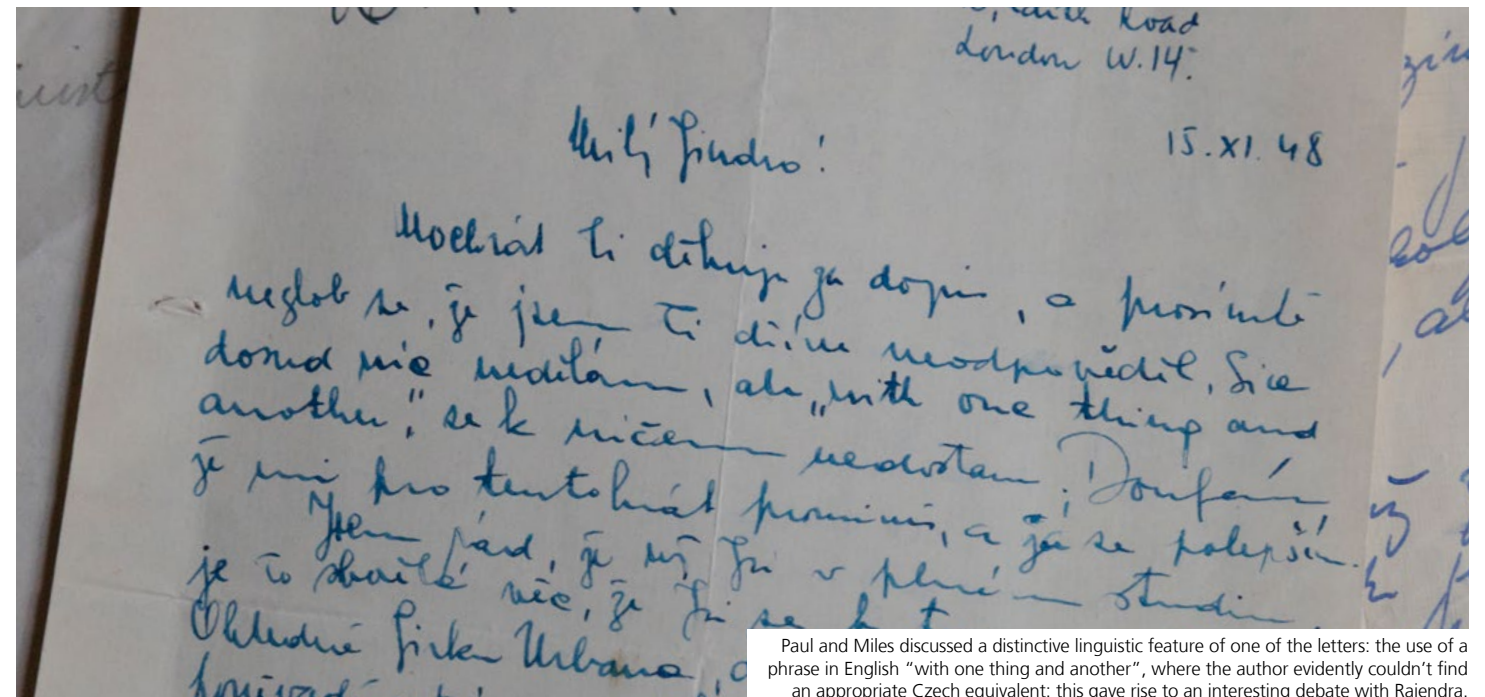
Valerie Amos
Baroness Valerie Amos LG CH PC



My thanks to the over 650 Old Members and friends who donated to the Univ North campaign. Univ North has a unique multi-generational element, with an existing care home, Fairfield Residential Home, a state-of-the-art nursery, student accommodation, café and gym. The nursery has been a key part of the vision for Univ North. It will provide affordable childcare for students and staff, both for Univ and the wider University of Oxford. We are proud to be able to provide such facilities, recognising that without the support of Univ's most generous alumni and friends, none of this would be possible. Thank you again. We plan to host a Univ North event later in the year to give you an opportunity to see what has been achieved.

Flora Nasser

Felice Nassar
Fellow and Director of
Development, Communications
and Alumni Relations



These letters had been discovered in a dusty folder among Henry Adler's effects and relate to the chaotic postwar period as the Soviet Union established its “Iron Curtain” in East-Central Europe. The experience of those who fled nascent communist dictatorship at great personal risk, only to find themselves incarcerated in refugee camps established by the Allies in West Germany, is more thinly documented than that of those who had fled or survived the Holocaust.

In Prague, aged only twenty-six and engaged in the postwar reconstruction of his native Czechoslovakia, Henry heard that he faced imminent arrest by the communists. He escaped by hiking for three days over the mountains; crossing the border covertly to a military camp in Bavaria. Four months later he obtained the permits needed to rejoin his parents

and elder brother, who had previously escaped to the UK. His willpower was forged by experiences of mortal threat and betrayal, with countervailing friendships evident from the correspondence; yet, he had rarely discussed those traumatic times with his family.

Dr Rajendra Chitnis, Ivana and Pavel Tykač Supernumerary Fellow in Czech at Univ, agreed to lead the project, which took place between June and September 2024. Two Univ students were sponsored by Paul to work on the translation: Jamie Hopkins (2023, Modern Languages – French and Czech) and Miles Bishop (2020, Modern Languages – Russian and Czech, with Slovak).

Dr Chitnis was able to help the students to work through the style of Czech language, particularly the slang and conventions of the times. Together they highlighted many



“He escaped by hiking for three days over the mountains; crossing the border covertly to a military camp in Bavaria.”

insights as the inhabitants of the camps shared their thoughts: their plans for the future; their hopes and fears; as well as many routine pre-occupations. Miles and Jamie familiarised themselves progressively with the unique character and emotions of the correspondents as each letter was translated, commenting that they felt an invisible bond develop between translator and author, notwithstanding the 75-year time gap.

It is hoped that these materials could be used by historians researching displaced populations in central Europe after the Second World War. Professor Catherine Holmes, A.D.M. Cox Old Members' Tutorial Fellow in Medieval History, is liaising with historians at Univ, in Oxford and beyond to integrate the letters kept by Uncle Henry into a wider research project.



“Letters such as these offer precious insights into the ways that vast geopolitical changes in the past were experienced by real people. They shed light on the social and family relationships which refugees struggled to maintain in the harshest of circumstances; often over vast distances; they also reveal glimpses of the most human of emotions: frustration, fear and hope.”

Professor Catherine Holmes



“This project was an amazing way to round off my first year studying Czech. The skills it gave me translating from Czech continue to benefit me as I progress through my course. More important, though, were the stories contained within the letters which remind us nowadays about the necessity of welcoming and supporting those fleeing danger. It was an honour to be able to play a part in revealing the extraordinary lives of these ordinary people.”

Jamie Hopkins (2023)



“Studying Czech at Univ is often quite theoretical at the beginning, very linguistic. This sort of project is a fabulous opportunity for our students. To get to know a place through these people at a dramatic time in that country’s history is one thing, but to use their skills in a meaningful way is hugely motivating. For modern languages students, I think this is potentially the skill you’re going to bring to the world, to bring people together in different ways.”

Dr Rajendra Chitnis



“I am grateful to Paul for providing us with this opportunity to discover his family’s past and to test our day-to-day learning in such a unique and meaningful way. Translating these letters was an invaluable, rewarding experience which not only revealed a moving narrative of resilience and cooperation during an extremely difficult period, but also further invigorated my love for the people, culture and language.”

Miles Bishop (2020)



Scan here
for more



Securing the future of Classics



Classics has been taught at Univ for 775 years (and counting) and the College is immensely grateful to its Old Members and friends for their generous support of the subject. Classics is by nature multidisciplinary, combining the study of the language and literature, history, philosophy, science, art, and archaeology of the Greek and Roman worlds. Our students enjoy this diverse range of material and are free to pursue (especially in the final two years of study) their particular interests, whether it be early Greek epic, the fall of the Roman Empire, or Zeno's paradoxes (remember Achilles and the tortoise?). The fact that Classics connects to so many other fields (from law, politics, and economics to literature, language, and art) is reflected in the diverse career paths pursued by our students.

Classics is now bigger than ever at Univ: we aim to make ten offers per year in the undergraduate admissions process, and our students (many of whom learn Greek and/or Latin here ab initio) benefit from bespoke teaching provision in all branches of the subject. The foundation of this unique intellectual culture is of course the tutorial, and that is why your support in securing the future of our Tutorial Fellowships in Classics is so important. Professor William Allan has been the McConnell Laing Fellow and Tutor in Classical Languages and Literature at Univ since 2004, while Dr Aneurin Ellis-Evans has been the George Cawkwell Fellow in Ancient History since 2022. These Fellowships are partly endowed, but we hope that additional support will enable us to secure them entirely for the future flourishing of Classics at Univ. We were delighted to see many former students and friends of Classics at the inaugural George Cawkwell Memorial Lecture in Oxford on 6 March, which was given by Professor Paul Cartledge (a former member of College, now Emeritus Professor at Cambridge).

The Humanities are, as the name suggests, central to our understanding of ourselves and our world, and the insights to be gained from study of the Classical world remain as relevant today as they ever were. With your help we can ensure that access to an outstanding training in Classics remains possible at Univ and that our students can continue to learn from tutors who know and care about them as individuals and are committed to their success.

If you would like to know more about supporting our Tutorial Fellowships in Classics, please contact Felice Nassar, Fellow and Director of Development, Communications and Alumni Relations, Felice.Nassar@univ.ox.ac.uk



Univ's 775 Festival

On Saturday, 28 September 2024, University College celebrated a remarkable milestone as over 400 people gathered for a Festival to celebrate the College's 775th anniversary. The event brought together Old Members, current students, Fellows, staff, friends and family, all united in their appreciation for the College's rich history and promising future. We include a few highlights from the Festival here.



Top:
775 Festival programme; Baroness Amos with the 775 cake made by Alison Wright (1986, PPE); students with Univ teddies;

Middle (l-r):
775 sign made by the Works Department in Main Quad; guests at the Festival Dinner; 775 son et lumière; Baroness Amos with Professor Irene Tracey CBE, Vice Chancellor of the University of Oxford; children at the Festival;

Bottom (l-r):
Dr Roger Gundle, Supernumerary Fellow in Medicine, leading one of the tutorials; The Oxcentrics performing in the Fellows' Garden; the Chapel Choir.



Scan the QR code for more photos



Carbon, energy sustainability and wellbeing

A conversation about Univ North between Dr Andrew Grant (AG) and Richard Todd (RT)



Water Court Buildings



Woodstock Pavilion "low carbon" eco blocks

AG: Univ North is Univ’s landscape-led development of the College’s Staverton Road Annexe, which has been a home to Univ students for more than 50 years. New buildings and renovations will bring the ultimate capacity of the site to more than 270 bedrooms. Phase 1 of the construction is scheduled to present completed buildings from mid-2025 through to mid-2026 and will take the total bedspaces to about 240 for the site initially.

We have responded to the climate emergency by increasing biodiversity, planting British native species, and carefully preserving specimen trees on site. Every tree has been challenged prior to replanting the site as we consider our carbon footprint. The COVID-19 pandemic heightened and

informed our sensitivity toward wellbeing; the landscape-led design will create a range of spaces and amenities that elevates Univ North from a simple dormitory site.

Following the pandemic, global events led to a 200% surge in energy prices, reinforcing our commitment to energy efficiency and heat decarbonisation in building design, heating solutions, and waste management.

The timber superstructure is at the very heart of the building. What is cross-laminated timber and why is it such an exciting material in a “fabric first”¹ development?

RT: Cross-laminated timber or CLT is essentially giant, engineering scale plywood.

A CLT panel comprises wall-sized sheets of glued wood and is about 13 centimetres (5 inches) thick. It has been prefabricated and cut ready for assembly on site, with each panel shaped to form a bedroom wall, a floor plate or a roof surface.

The panels have been perfectly prepared by the manufacturer allowing them to be fitted together quickly on site like a building-scale jigsaw. It means that the Water Court Villa has had its superstructure and roof installed with weatherproofing and bathroom pods in place in a scant six weeks! So, as well as being a sustainable product – with sequestered carbon rather than high amounts of embodied carbon – its use means that we have only a fifth of the number of materials deliveries that would

¹ An approach to improving the energy efficiency performance of new and retrofitted buildings in which work to reduce heat loss precedes addressing the efficiency of building services.



CLT panel being lifted into place

be expected for a build of this scale if it were made from brick and block, concrete or steel.

With CLT, there is less noise, less waste and less dust. In addition, the CLT panels are available in different grades which allows for a higher quality visual finish where it will be exposed. By having exposed CLT walls, the need for a finishing layer, such as plasterboard, is removed which lowers the weight of the building and removes additional materials from site. Student areas will have certain walls as exposed CLT.

AG: Can you clarify what you mean by “sequestered” carbon?

RT: As CLT uses timber, the carbon trapped by the trees from the atmosphere is held

within the frame – it is sequestered – in contrast to the large amount of carbon-emitting energy required to make concrete or steel for a building.

AG: Does CLT have any other advantages?

RT: Yes. Accurate pre-fabrication means that the construction is both speedy and can be delivered with close precision. This means that each room is relatively airtight – no nasty draughts and chills in the winter – and is therefore extremely energy efficient. Layers of insulation complete the picture delivering buildings that have low energy bills with the development close to Passivhaus² standard.

AG: Building on your point, the University, on behalf of itself and many of the colleges, forward-purchases Univ’s electrical power

from low carbon supply. This means that we can effectively be zero carbon except for the carbon cost of the national electricity grid. Importantly, Univ has demanded no gas power to the new buildings or indeed to the renovated buildings (the Nursery and 115 Banbury Road). It is a development of which we can all be proud. Have there been any consequences of this move to drop gas for the new buildings?

RT: Unsurprisingly, when one takes away the gas supply, the energy void has to be met with additional electrical power. This has meant a substantially upgraded electricity substation on site and considerable runs of mains voltage distribution. Underpinning all of this has been careful full lifecycle carbon costing.

² Passivhaus refers to buildings created to rigorous energy efficient design standards so that they maintain an almost constant temperature.

We have also sourced “low carbon” blocks, with reduced embodied-carbon concrete, to press the advantage.

AG: How have we relied on other high-tech modelling to guide choices to maximise efficiency and improve carbon cost?

RT: The College has procured a “Heat Decarbonisation Masterplan” which covers all the College’s premises. The model that the College commissioned for that study has been modified to address the question of how the new buildings at Univ North will cope with real students in occupation.

Having interlocks on the windows, and heating controls that respond according to actual room occupancy, means that if an occupant opens the window, or leaves the room entirely, the heating will switch off quickly and efficiently. This creates huge

advantages in avoiding wasted energy. For the Nursery, we have photovoltaic cells to augment the electrical power and a green roof (planted with vegetation) to absorb heat and limit solar gain on the building.

AG: This is an extremely heartening story: there is no merit in waste given the demands of today. Buildings should be warm in winter, and air handling units should supply fresh air while recovering heat from exhaust air to minimise waste. Even the cooker hoods, for example, are part of the scheme as they remove grease and moisture and then heat is extracted to warm the fresh incoming air. The air heating load is less than 20% of what it would be otherwise.

Let us finish by looking at the built environment holistically. Univ students have been living at “Stavertonia” for 50

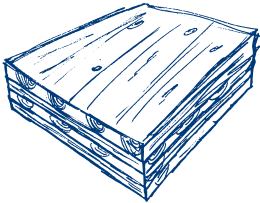
years, and the development will open its doors to a new children’s nursery, and an integrated site next to our neighbours at the Fairfield Residential Home. How is this multi-generational community expected to benefit from the new buildings and enhanced environment all set in the North Oxford Victorian Suburb Conservation Area?

RT: The developed site will be fabulous. It will offer a genuine opportunity for enhanced living and improved wellbeing. The architecture is “placemaking”, if you’ll forgive the jargon. The potential for the old, the young and Univ’s students and staff in between, to find points of connection and interaction in that built environment and breathe life into a vibrant, happy location is very real. Univ North will truly be a complementary site to the College’s High Street location.



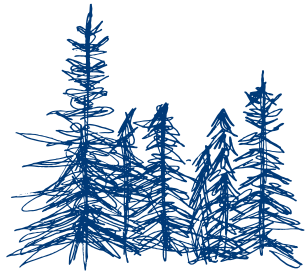
Views of the nursery, showing photovoltaic cells on the roof

What is cross-laminated timber (CLT)?



A CLT panel comprises sandwiched layers of glued wooden planks. It is strong and attractive.

Using CLT results in an **80% reduction** in materials deliveries.



The timber comes from the forests of Austria which require just **1.14 minutes** on a sunny summer’s day to replace the **410m³** of CLT required to build a Water Court Villa.



Every scrap of the raw timber logs going into the mill is utilised.



Air Source Heat Pumps supply heating and hot water with high energy efficiency.

Woodstock Pavilion is made from “low carbon” engineering blocks which use a reduced embodied-carbon concrete, which **save 3,724kg of CO₂** equivalent to:



Switching off **339** low energy lights for a year.

Not driving a petrol-fuelled car **15,517** miles.



Planting **372 trees** per year.



Landscaping includes enhanced **treescap**e of British native species to support **biodiversity gain**, and **wild grass meadow** to reduce the need for mowing and offer habitat for insects.



Photovoltaic cells at the Nursery augment the electrical power. The green roof (planted with vegetation) absorbs light and limits solar gain on the building.



To date,

97.4% of waste has been diverted from landfill: **38.55%** has been reused, **58.85%** recycled and **2.6%** disposed of.



Read the full interview by scanning the QR code

Map of the Univ North site

(building names in bold are the new facilities)



- 1 No. 104 Woodstock Road
- 2 No. 25 Staverton Road
- 3 Skirlaw Building
- 4 Bennet Building
- 5 Percy Building
- 6 No. 98 Woodstock Road

- 7 Nursery**
- 8 Woodstock Pavilion**
- 9 Greenwood Building
- 10 Redcliffe Maud House
- 11 Fairfield Residential Home
- 12 Water Court West Villa**

- 13 Water Court East Villa**
- 14 Walnut Lawn Villa**
- 15 Fairfield House
- 16 Banbury Road Villa**
- 17 No. 96 Woodstock Road



Dr Andrew Grant (1977, Chemistry), Finance Bursar and Fellow at Univ since 2017, is the Project Director for Univ North. Previously he was a senior oil and gas executive for over three decades at BP plc, where he had roles in commercial business development, financial planning, investment analysis, corporate finance and governance, supporting the Board with its £25bn capital investment programme.



Richard Todd is Head of Built Environment at Bidwells property consultants, who specialise in assisting clients in decarbonising portfolios and promoting sustainable development. Richard and his team have delivered over 1,300 new student rooms in the last five years, supporting Oxford’s desperate shortage of student accommodation, and championing sustainable design within client briefs.



Colin Ford, CBE (1952, English) is one of the world's leading photographic historians.

Portrait of a curator

Colin spent his life curating photography at some of the best-known museums in the world. He was the first curator of photography and film at the National Portrait Gallery and founded what was then called The National Museum of Photography, Film and Television in Bradford. We explore his career and relationship with Univ further here.

How did Univ help you to develop?

During my time, one typically went to Oxford to become an academic. Although some have called me an academic because of my career, I don't really claim to be one. What I did at Univ was grow up. Having come

from a school where you were kept firmly in your place, Univ allowed me to grow and to better understand the world.

How did you get involved in photographic history?

In the 1960s, while Deputy Curator of the National Film Archive, I met Sir Roy Strong, who was then Director of the National Portrait Gallery (NPG). I asked him why they weren't showing any film at the Gallery, and he told me that they hadn't yet done photography either! We spoke about the matter, and two or three years later he wrote to me and said he had secured funding and asked me

to interview to be the curator of the Gallery's first photography collection. At that point, I didn't really know anything about photography! When I got the post, I became the first curator of photography in any British national museum or gallery. Before my arrival, there was only one photograph in the entire permanent collection.

What was the early focus of your career?

Soon after I began at the NPG, and still knowing very little about the history of photography, I learned about two great pioneers, the Scotsmen David Octavius Hill and Robert Adamson. They were among the first to present their photographs to the Royal Academy of Arts. In 1972, when the RA decided to send them to auction to raise funds, an anonymous donor purchased them for the NPG. Three years later, I learned about an even greater Victorian portraitist, Julia Margaret Cameron – now probably the most written about photographer in the world. When one of her albums was put up for sale, I had it banned from export and led

the first public campaign to buy historic photographs for the nation. After three decades of my compilation, the catalogue raisonné of her work, the first ever of a photographer, was published in 2003.

Would you still like to work in photography?

Nowadays, how do you sort out which are the good photographs, which are the preservable photographs? The latest figure is that 3,000,000,000 photographs are taken in the world every day. How do you find the good ones? How do you find the great ones? How do you build up a collection? I am relieved, almost pleased, to be out of that.

Why have you supported Univ?

Univ was the first Oxford College to come up with a financial scheme to help those applicants who didn't have the sort of money needed to get to Oxford. I came from a family that couldn't support me, and I had to work during the vacations. So, I felt personally that one ought to have the money to be able to study at Univ.



Read the full interview by scanning the QR code

Nowadays, how do you sort out which are the good photographs, which are the preservable photographs? The latest figure is that 3,000,000,000 photographs are taken in the world every day. How do you find the good ones?

The importance of regular giving



Univ is incredibly grateful for the support of its Old Members and friends who give regularly to the College. Each donation, regardless of size, helps to support countless members of the College community. Regular gifts to Univ's Area of Greatest Need are essential to supporting all the key aspects of life at Univ, from its world-class teaching to extra-curricular activities and student support.

As we adapt to an ever-changing list of pressures and demands, it is vital that we continue to support our students and academic community. This may be through our dynamic student support schemes, our world-leading tutorial system or through the many other aspects of student life that our fundraising helps to support. One thing is clear: gifts from our supporters have an obvious and meaningful impact on the College.

Moving forward after the College's 775th anniversary year, it is important to look to the future. We fully appreciate the immediate and practical impact of the support of our Old Members and friends. But we are also aware of the long-term future of the College, which is why regular giving is so crucial, as it allows us to continue to support our community and secure Univ's position for generations to come.

The following pages highlight how your philanthropy has contributed to the College, and some of the Univ initiatives that you have supported this past academic year. Thank you.

Univ's Area of Greatest Need

Unrestricted donations to Univ allow us to allocate funds to all areas of College life, depending on particular needs at any given time. A current example is a new opportunity for the College to expand its welfare provision for students. This year, donations to the Area of Greatest Need will allow us to enter a three-year pilot Mental Health Advisory Service, in collaboration with other colleges and the University's Student Welfare and Support Services (SWSS).

The service is intended to support students who live with mental illness while at university by giving them access to support from specialist advisers working in SWSS. Those advisers will have expertise that college and other university staff do not and will be equipped to help those students and to co-ordinate support with other mental health professionals.

Unrestricted giving allows us to help students not only through our welfare provision but also through other ways

that contribute to the wellbeing of students and enable them to flourish in their academic studies. This includes support for sport, music and other activities, along with grants for books and for academic-related travel, as well as support for students facing financial difficulty, all of which contribute to our cultivation of academic excellence.

We are grateful to the many Old Members and friends who have chosen to support this area of the College. By setting up a regular donation to the Area of Greatest Need, you are helping the College to plan for its future.

775 Giving Day

As part of the celebrations for Univ's 775th anniversary, we hosted the College's first ever Giving Day. Over 36 hours, from 30 April until 1 May, we appealed for donations to four main funds: Area of Greatest Need, Music at Univ, Univ Boat Club and Student Support. Each of these areas support fundamental aspects of student life at the College.

Throughout the day, there were various events and challenges

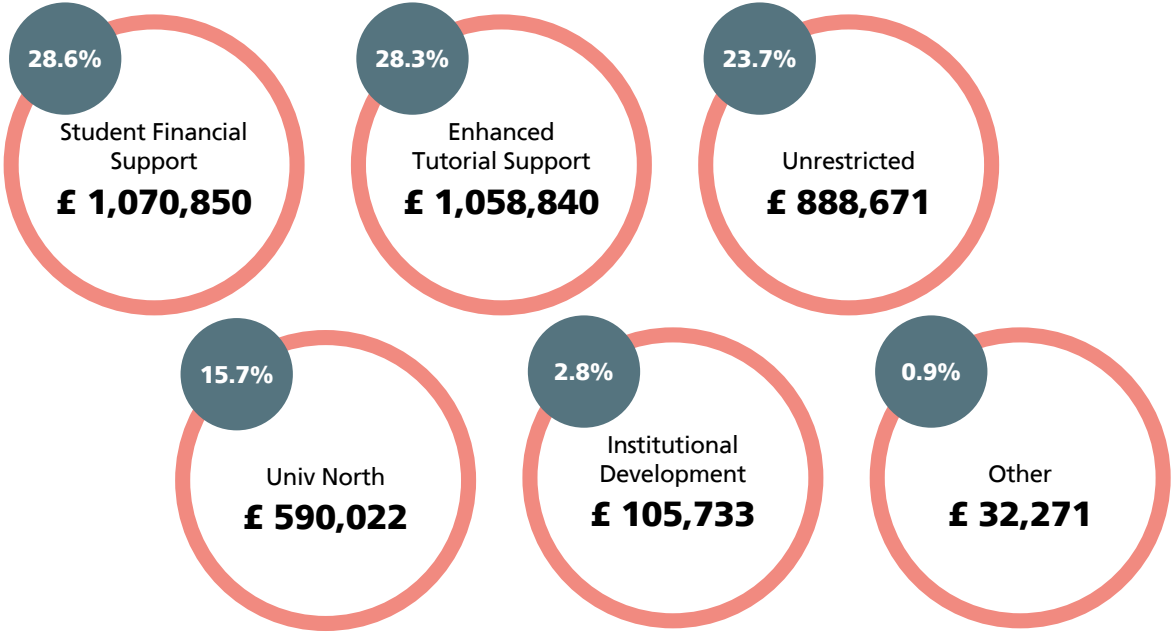
in the College ranging from an Erg challenge for staff and students in the Main Quad to a 7.75 hour "pianothon" in the Hall, a Haiku poetry competition and a "Hunt the Martlet" where wooden martlets designed and made by the Works Department were hidden in and around the College. There was also a Univ first with maypole dancing on the grass of Main Quad (again, the Works Department came up trumps with a brilliant maypole design and a beautiful wreath of flowers for its crown!).

Through the generosity of our Old Members and friends, we were able to raise over £201,000 with the support of 348 donors. This includes those generous donors who gave to the Matched Funding in advance of Giving Day, allowing us to match pound for pound every donation that came in on the day. Without their support, Univ's 775 Giving Day would not have been the great success that it was. It is our people who make the Univ community so exceptional, and we appreciate your support. Thank you!

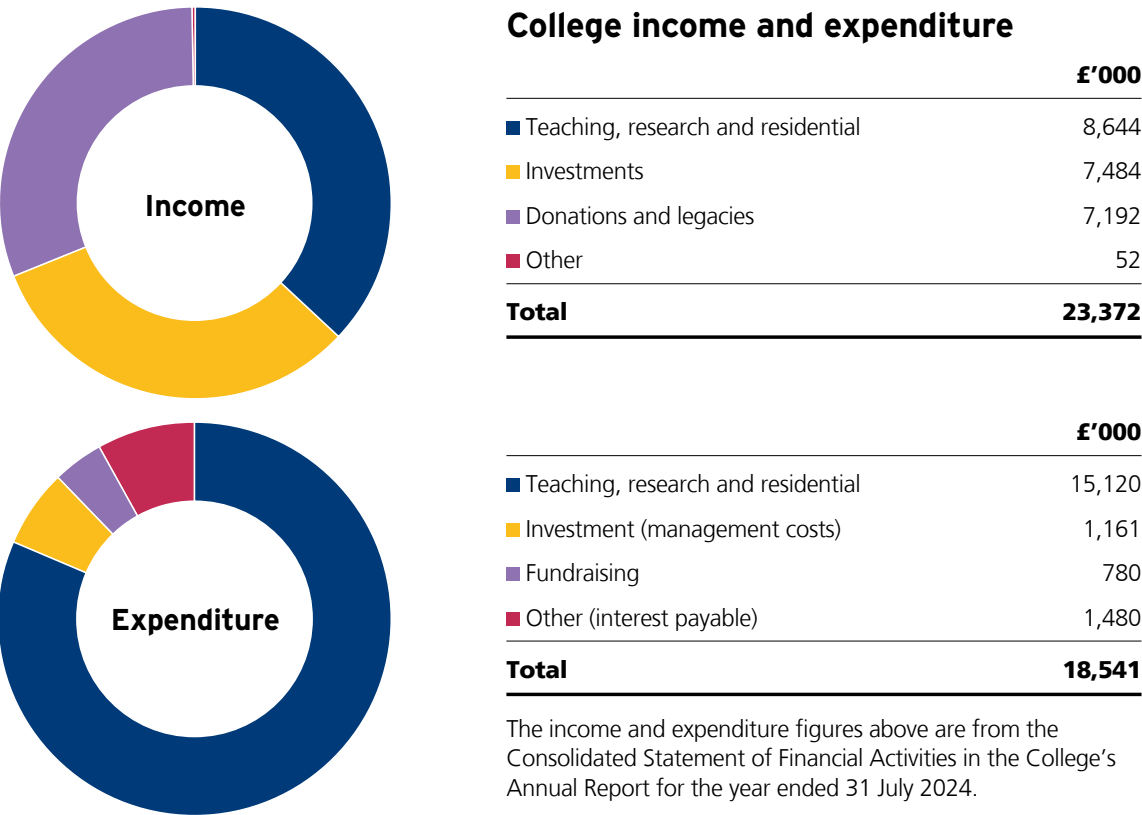
Financial highlights 2023-24

The following report is for the academic year 2023-24 and includes financial performance for the period August 2023 to July 2024.

Areas your donations supported

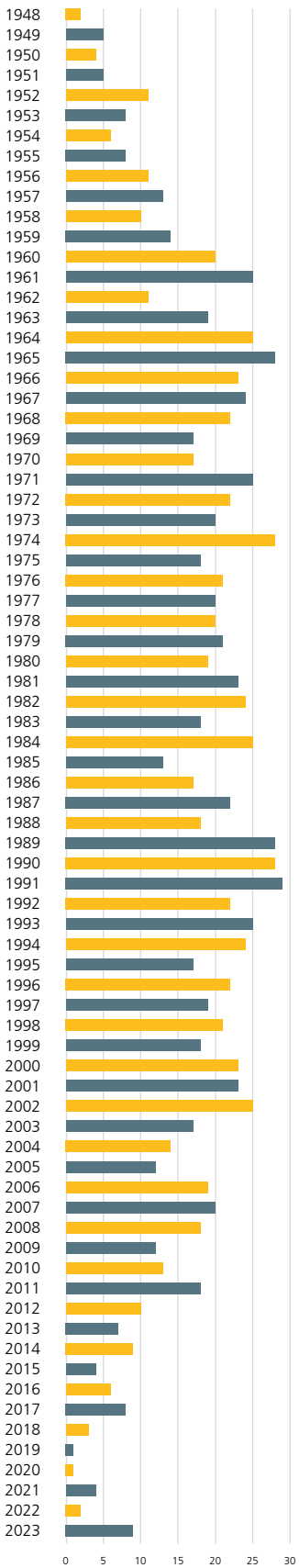


College income and expenditure



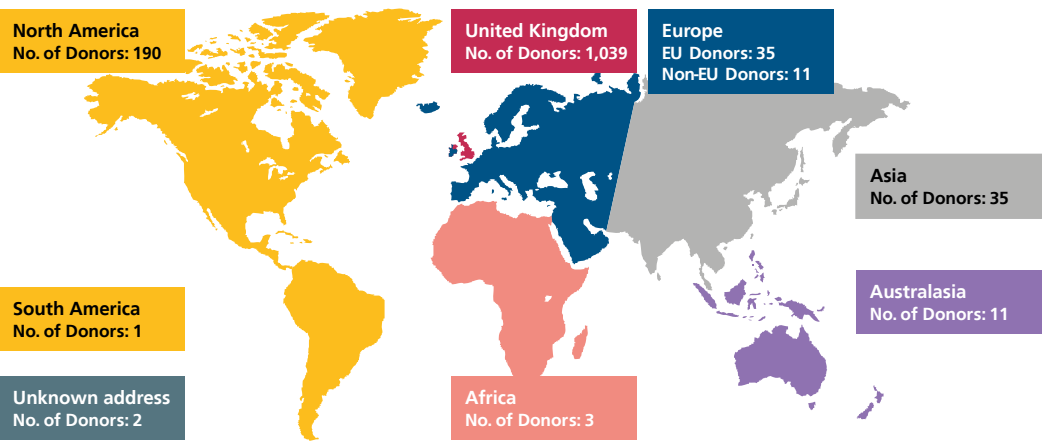
Giving by matric year

(number of current donors)



Giving by region

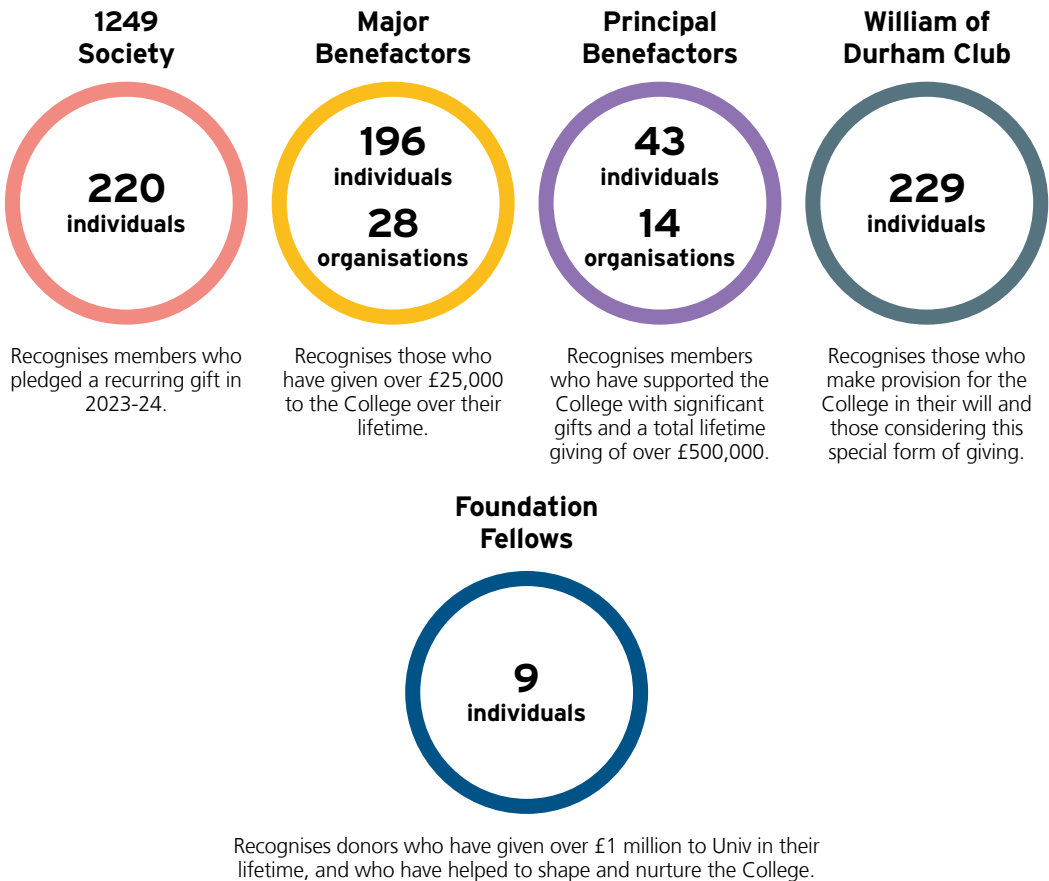
(total current donors: 1,327)



Univ's Giving Circles

Our giving circles are Univ's way of thanking those who have made substantial contributions to the College over their lifetime. We are committed to thanking and recognising our donors in a meaningful way. Each of these societies has its own associated events and communications, providing members additional opportunities to socialise within the College community.

Please note that as part of our ongoing work to improve our giving circles and members' benefits, we will be updating some of the thresholds for membership for 2024-25. These changes will be reflected in the Donor Roll 2024-25.



2025 Diary of events

APRIL

5-12 April

Master's trip to Washington DC, New York and Boston

11 April

Boston Drinks Reception for Old Members and friends
– all welcome

Date TBC

Univ Online: Dr Andrew Ker

MAY

19 May

Spring USPGA (Golf) Meeting – all welcome

22 May

HLA Hart Memorial Lecture

24 May

William of Durham Luncheon*

31 May

Summer Eights – all welcome
Boat Club Dinner and reunion for the 2014-16 crews

JUNE

1 June

Summer Eights – Martlet Regatta – all welcome

15 June

Univ Cricket Day – all welcome

18 June

2025 Leavers' Garden Party

TBC

Univ Seminar – all welcome

JULY

12 July

1249 Society Summer Garden Party

Date TBC

Young Univ event

SEPTEMBER

5 September

Milestones Anniversary Lunch

27 September

2009-2012 Gaudy

Date TBC

Edinburgh Alumni Drinks

OCTOBER

6 October

Autumn USPGA (Golf) Meeting – all welcome

26 October

Founders and Benefactors Evensong

DECEMBER

6 December

Advent Carol Services – all welcome

12 December

London Carol Service – all welcome

Date TBC

Univ in the Arts

2026

JANUARY

5-14 January

Master's trip to Asia



For more information about events, please visit:
bit.ly/ufm213 or scan the QR Code above.

*If you are considering leaving a gift in your Will to Univ and would like to attend the William of Durham Luncheon, please email development@univ.ox.ac.uk



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