



UNIVERSITY OF  
OXFORD

# OxfordPhilosophy

Summer 2009





**W**elcome to the first issue of Oxford Philosophy, with news about achievements and initiatives and about core values maintained. We are sending it to friends of the Philosophy Faculty including thousands of people who studied philosophy at Oxford as undergraduates or graduates. We hope that it may awaken pleasant memories of your time here.

The Oxford Philosophy Faculty is one of the largest in the world and widely recognised to be amongst the best. The 2009 edition of the Philosophical Gourmet Report, whose rankings are regarded as measures of faculty quality and reputation, places Oxford Philosophy outright second in the English-speaking world.

We are committed to delivering undergraduate education in which the tutorial system is central and providing a learning environment in which students can achieve their fullest potential. We also aspire to attract the world's best graduate students and to offer excellent graduate education characterised by the intensive dialectical engagement that philosophy requires.

The project of creating a newsletter for alumni and friends of the Faculty was an initiative of my predecessor as Chair of the Philosophy Faculty Board, Professor Roger Crisp. He oversaw a period of great change and renewal within the Faculty, and describes his two years as Chair as "the most challenging and interesting of the thirty years I have now spent at this University". We are greatly indebted to Roger for his skilful management.

On the pages that follow you will find reports of teaching and students, of research and books, of recent arrivals and colleagues sadly missed. There is information about major events in the next year or so, including guest lectures, and there are links to our website where, indeed, this issue of Oxford Philosophy is also available.

**Professor Martin Davies**

Chair of the Philosophy Faculty Board

If you have comments or suggestions about this publication, or would like further information about any aspect of Philosophy at Oxford, please contact us:

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## Oxford Pioneers the Study of Neuroethics

On 1 January 2009, the UK's first neuroethics centre was launched following an award of more than £800,000 from the Wellcome Trust. The Oxford Centre for Neuroethics is directed by Julian Savulescu, and brings together researchers from a wide range of disciplines to address current advances in neurosciences and related areas of clinical medicine. It is hosted by the Oxford Uehiro Centre for Practical Ethics and the Oxford Philosophy Faculty.

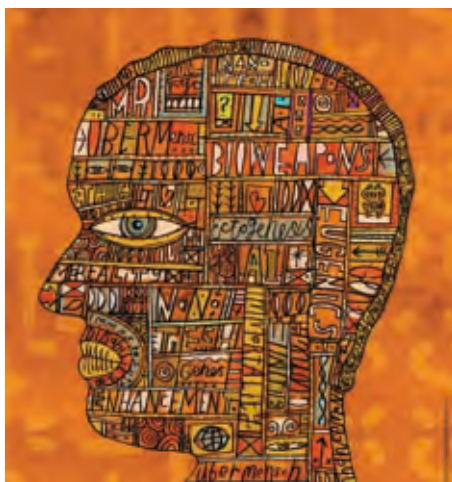
[www.neuroethics.ox.ac.uk](http://www.neuroethics.ox.ac.uk)

## Our Newest Tutorial Fellow

The Faculty is delighted to announce that, from October 2009, Dr Hilary Greaves will take up a Tutorial Fellowship at Somerville College. Hilary completed her PhD in Philosophy at Rutgers University in New Jersey in 2008. Since October 2007 she has held a Junior Research Fellowship in Philosophy at Merton College. She is a wonderful addition to Oxford's philosophy of physics research community, which is already the leading group of philosophers of physics in the world.

## In Memoriam: David Pears

The Faculty is sad to announce the death of David Pears on 1 July 2009, aged 87. Pears taught Philosophy in Oxford for nearly forty years as Fellow, Reader and finally Professor, first at Corpus Christi and then at Christ Church. Although he wrote on a wide range of topics, his major contribution was in the philosophy of mind and the study of Russell and Wittgenstein. He was one of the outstanding members of the generation who, in the 1950s and early 1960s, made Oxford the centre of the philosophical world.



Poster by John E French



The Common Room, Christ Church

## MP40: A Celebration of 40 years of Oxford's Mathematics and Philosophy Degree

On Saturday 4 and Sunday 5 July 2009, a programme of special events was held to celebrate forty years of Maths and Philosophy at Oxford. Amongst those attending were Alan Taylor (Merton, 1968), who sat the very first examination in Maths and Philosophy, Mods in 1969, and Derek Goldrei (Magdalen, 1967), who took the first Finals in 1970. On Saturday, following talks by Dana Scott and Angus Macintyre (the first two Professors of Mathematical Logic), there was a dinner with speeches by Hilary Priestley, Dan Isaacson, Michael Dummett, John Lucas, and Dana Scott. Robin Gandy, who played such an important role in establishing the course when he arrived in 1969, was warmly remembered. On Sunday, there was a series of lectures by Maths and Philosophy graduates, including Ian Rumfitt and Tim Williamson.





The membership of the Philosophy Faculty has changed dramatically over the past few years, with more than half of the College Fellows and Professors taking up their positions since 2003.

In the past, Fellows often arrived in Oxford as undergraduates and never left. In recent years the pattern has been very different.

Five of our recent arrivals discuss how their lives led them to Oxford and what attracted them to come here.



### **Thomas Johansen**

Brasenose College

Research interests: Ancient Philosophy; Philosophy of Mind.

After my doctorate (from Cambridge) I taught for thirteen years at Aberdeen, Bristol and Edinburgh. I honestly hadn't thought I'd ever move again within the UK! But when the opportunity arose two considerations in particular changed my mind. The first was a preference for the tutorial system of teaching: conversation, especially in philosophy, beats microphone and PowerPoint. True, as I was warned, I have ended up teaching more hours than at my previous university; but then you tend not to mind so much when you're enjoying the work. My second consideration was the belief (correct, as it turned out) that I could learn a lot from the philosophers here. My area of interest, ancient philosophy, is extraordinarily well represented, and valued, at Oxford. It is good to know that when you're struggling with a difficult issue, say in Aristotle's psychology, you can get great help just by talking to your colleagues at the next seminar.

### **Gonzalo Rodriguez-Pereyra**

Oriel College

Research interests: Metaphysics; Descartes; Leibniz.

I am now in Oxford for the second time in my career. I was previously Gilbert Ryle Fellow at Hertford College and a CUF lecturer (2001-2005). Having taught at different universities, I think what is unique to Oxford is its commitment to excel in both teaching (at undergraduate and graduate levels) and research. The undergraduate tutorial system of teaching enables the tutor to accompany the intellectual development of his or her students, and this, I find, is a very rewarding experience – as rewarding as undergraduates themselves find the experience of the tutorial system. Oxford also provides an incomparable setting to do philosophy: it has a huge number of brilliant and talented philosophers and students, and lots of seminars, talks, conferences and lectures taking place every week. It is a festival of philosophy.





**Chris Timpson**  
Brasenose College

Research interests: Philosophy of Physics; Philosophy of Science; Philosophy of Mind and Language.

I came to Brasenose from the University of Leeds. I knew, roughly speaking, what to expect at Oxford since I was an undergraduate at Queen’s reading Physics and Philosophy (1994-1998), where I also went on to take the BPhil and DPhil.

Returning after an enjoyable and stimulating sojourn elsewhere helps throw Oxford’s special qualities into relief. The degree of academic freedom one enjoys – in research, but especially in teaching – is unparalleled. The quality of the students is excellent; and the opportunity to teach by tutorial simply a joy. The desire to return to tutorial teaching was one of my main reasons for coming back to Oxford. The fact that it is arguably the strongest research centre in the world in philosophy of physics was a help too. Tutorial teaching is very much more like doing philosophy than teaching it. Everything at Oxford at every level is predicated on the pursuit of academic excellence, both in teaching and in research. It is a great thing to be a member of an institution where academic ideals are so deeply embedded.

**Frank Arntzenius**  
University College

Research interests: Philosophy of Physics; Decision Theory.

I have always been fascinated by the question of what the fundamental structure of the world is, and I took it to be obvious that physics provides us with the best insights into this. Consequently I chose to do an undergraduate degree in theoretical physics in Holland. However, I soon discovered that physicists tend not to be terribly interested in foundational questions. So I switched to philosophy.

I did a Masters and a PhD in philosophy of science at the LSE (interspersed by a couple of years of work for Friends of the Earth). After that I had a succession of jobs in the US, during which my interests became broader, so as to include Bayesian epistemology, decision theory, and metaphysics. Perhaps the unifying theme among my interests is that I love puzzles, at least puzzles which have clear answers. I was lucky enough to spend ten years at Rutgers, a superb department. I then had a sabbatical in Oxford, which I really enjoyed, both professionally and personally. So I applied for a job at University College and was lucky enough to get it. The Oxford Philosophy Faculty is fantastic; it has the largest and best group of philosophers of physics in the world, it has great graduate students, the best undergraduates, and I love the tutorial system. And Oxford is very pretty. I intend never to move again.



**Ofra Magidor**  
Balliol College

Research interests: Philosophy of Logic and Language; Metaphysics and Epistemology.

I grew up in Jerusalem, where I completed an undergraduate degree in philosophy, mathematics, and computer science. I decided it would be interesting to continue my studies abroad, and applied for the BPhil. I knew relatively little about Oxford, and wasn’t sure quite what to expect.

What I discovered when I arrived was very exciting. Opening the lecture list I was dazzled by the number and variety of lectures and seminars. Added to these was an endless flow of visiting speakers, philosophical societies, and reading groups. And then there were my fellow graduate students – people from a wide range of backgrounds who shared a passion for philosophy and were keen to discuss their ideas. By the time I completed my BPhil, I had become almost addicted to this intensive level of intellectual activity so I decided to stay on and complete a DPhil.

I was delighted when I was offered a Tutorial Fellowship at Balliol College. It allows me to continue taking part in this remarkable community and to have the opportunity to play a role in shaping the present and future of Oxford Philosophy.



## UNDERGRADUATE DEGREES

The Faculty is committed to providing tutorial-based undergraduate education of the highest quality led by world-class, research-active faculty. Teaching undergraduates is our primary and most highly valued mode of engagement with society, both nationally and internationally.

Students at Oxford continue to enjoy the opportunity to study philosophy in combination with at least one other subject. We offer seven joint degrees, of which PPE is the most celebrated example – inseparable, indeed, from the Oxford brand.

There is regular discussion between Philosophy and its partners about the content of

the joint degrees: recently, a Philosophy of Science paper was introduced which is especially suited to students reading Physics and Philosophy.

From October 2011 a new Neuroscience degree will replace the Psychology/Physiology combination in the PPP degree. We look forward to attracting students to the reshaped Psychology and Philosophy degree, continuing to build on our strength in philosophy of mind, and we hope to ensure that students on the new Neuroscience course will also have the opportunity to offer some Philosophy subjects.



[www.philosophy.ox.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate](http://www.philosophy.ox.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate)

## POSTGRADUATE DEGREES

The Philosophy Faculty boasts one of the strongest groups of postgraduate students in the world. Our two-year masters-level course, the BPhil, continues to provide a rigorous philosophical training that is the foundation for doctoral study, whether at Oxford or elsewhere, and for subsequent academic careers in the UK and around the globe.

As well as accepting numerous postdoctoral positions, over the past three years our students have taken up lectureships at the universities of East Anglia, Exeter, Leeds, London (both UCL and King's), York, and Oxford. A number have gone

further afield, accepting tenure-track Assistant Professor positions at Queen's College New York, Cornell University, and McGill University in Montreal.

In October 2008, the first group of students arrived for our new Master of Studies degree in Ancient Philosophy. This one-year course is designed to prepare those with a background in Classics for doctoral study on figures such as Plato and Aristotle.

[www.philosophy.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate](http://www.philosophy.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate)





## James Studd

DPhil student in Philosophy  
Corpus Christi College

**IN 2005, JAMES WAS AWARDED THE HENRY WILDE PRIZE FOR OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE IN PHILOSOPHY FINALS. IN 2008, HE WAS AWARDED THE INAUGURAL GILBERT RYLE PRIZE FOR BEST PERFORMANCE IN THE BPHIL EXAMINATION.**

**N**ot unusually perhaps, my taking up philosophy was by and large a lucky accident. I didn't study any philosophy at school, but wary of studying maths on its own, I set on studying maths and something at degree level. After battling with a few of the readings suggested in university prospectuses, I resolved to make the something philosophy.

It didn't take me long to settle on Oxford University. The collegiate set-up and the highly personalised tutorial system greatly appealed to me; as did the four-year course, which permitted the simultaneous study of both mathematics and philosophy.

As an undergraduate at Merton I thrived on the intellectual challenges posed by both subjects, but it was the quality of the teaching that was truly outstanding. Even as an undergraduate, I was given a weekly opportunity to discuss my work, often on a one-to-one basis, with inspirational, world-class philosophers such as David Bostock, Ralph Wedgwood, Ian Rumfitt and Dorothy Edgington. I quickly learned that my interest lay primarily in the philosophical questions that arise concerning logic, language and mathematics.

## I thrived on the intellectual challenges

After finishing my degree, it took me several months to realise that I wanted to pursue postgraduate study, and perhaps a career, in philosophy. It was the strength of the University's faculty, its active graduate body, and the comprehensive course structure and intellectual rigour offered by the two-year BPhil that persuaded me to apply to Oxford once more. When Corpus Christi College generously offered me a scholarship to pursue the degree I accepted immediately.

The BPhil is a unique course, combining elements of a taught and research masters degree. In the first year, three subjects are taught; then, after a notorious fourteen-week period of examination, students engage in research for their thesis. For my part, I returned to the study of Frege, Metaphysics, and the Philosophy of Language under the excellent tuition of Daniel Isaacson, Oliver Pooley and Tim Williamson. Then, under the patient and incisive supervision of Gabriel Uzquiano, I undertook research at the intersection of the philosophy of language and the philosophy of mathematics, focusing on certain problems bound up with mathematical and semantic objects and our attempts to engage in absolutely general enquiries.

Over the course of the BPhil I decided that I definitely wanted to pursue a career in academic philosophy if I could. Since I was keen to build on the research I had undertaken for my BPhil thesis, there was no real question of leaving Oxford for my doctorate. Few faculties carry even one philosopher who has published work on this rather specialised area of research; Oxford has two!





# Relocation Relocation

**T**he development of The Radcliffe Observatory Quarter (ROQ) on the site of the old Radcliffe Infirmary is the most ambitious project the University has undertaken for a hundred years. At its heart will be a new Humanities Centre. The first phase of its construction will provide new homes for English, History and Theology, as well as Philosophy.

The design for the ROQ is by Bennetts Associates, who were awarded UK Architectural Practice of the Year in the 2006 Buildings Awards. It incorporates the Radcliffe Observatory, a Grade I listed building. The two buildings making up the Humanities Centre will face the Observatory across a landscaped space, and their long arms will embrace the glass superstructure of a new Humanities Library. The whole campus will create a vibrant social, cultural and academic centre, with cafés and spaces for art exhibitions, films and musical performances, as well as lectures, seminars and conferences.

The Philosophy Centre at 10 Merton Street has provided a very pleasant home for the Faculty for more than twenty-five years, but it has too little space for our needs in the 21st century.

The new site offers us many exciting opportunities. For the first time, we will be able to locate our research projects under the same roof as the Philosophy Centre, helping to integrate their work more fully with the Faculty, and to provide offices for all our Statutory

Professors and many of our University Lecturers.

Most importantly, the ROQ will allow us to establish a Graduate Centre to meet the needs of our world-class graduate students. We will be able to provide these young philosophers with dedicated work and social space, in close proximity to the integrated Humanities Library, and right next door to many of the Faculty's leading academic staff.



Illustration and architectural model are artist impressions of the new Radcliffe Observatory Quarter by Bennetts Associates.



# PHILOSOPHY OF PHYSICS AT OXFORD

Oxford is the world's preeminent centre for philosophy of physics. The Faculty is ranked outright first for philosophy of physics in the latest Philosophical Gourmet Report and contains the largest concentration of philosophers of physics in the world.

The philosophy of physics community is very active, both in teaching and research. The undergraduate Physics and Philosophy course celebrated its fortieth anniversary this year, and we have just launched a new specialist Master of Studies course in Philosophy of Physics. It is aimed at students whose undergraduate degree is primarily in physics and who otherwise might not have applied for graduate study in Philosophy at Oxford.

<http://users.ox.ac.uk/~ppox>

## RESEARCH INTERESTS

The first decades of the 20th century saw the comfortable certainties of Newtonian physics thrown into doubt, first by Einstein's theories of special and general relativity, and then by the counter-intuitive principles of quantum mechanics. Oxford philosophers are making significant contributions to the attempt to make sense of these important conceptual changes.

Hilary Greaves, Simon Saunders, Chris Timpson, and David Wallace are applying themselves to quantum mechanics, especially the baffling 'many worlds' interpretation developed by the physicist Hugh Everett in 1957. Everett argued that quantum mechanics predicts the existence of a vast number of

branching worlds within a single universe, in which everything that could happen (according to the theory) does happen. The subtle issue as to how quantum indeterminacy, and hence probability, fits into this picture has been the subject of detailed study by the Oxford group.

The light that relativity theory sheds on traditional philosophical problems related to the nature of space and time, posed by the ancient Greeks and more recently by Newton, Descartes and Leibniz, has been the subject of recent research by Frank Arntzenius and Harvey Brown, as well as Oliver Pooley, who was awarded a Philip Leverhulme Prize in 2007 for work by an outstanding young scholar.

## PROFILE: HARVEY BROWN



In 2006, Harvey Brown, Professor of Philosophy of Physics, received a prestigious Lakatos Award for his book *Physical Relativity* (2005). The Award is given annually for an outstanding contribution to the philosophy of science. *Physical Relativity* is an attempt to prise apart the core of Einstein's theories of relativity – the special and the general – from the issue of space-time reality. In the case of the special theory of 1905, Harvey examines the historical underpinnings

of Einstein's work, and why it was that Einstein later had misgivings about some aspects of the way he first formulated his theory. The book questions the now fashionable view that it is the geometric structure of four-dimensional space-time itself that provides the central explanatory principle in the theory (something Einstein himself never defended). At the end of the book, Harvey argues that the subtle way in which special relativity fits into general relativity – Einstein's theory of gravity – is fully compatible with the somewhat unorthodox position set out earlier. He concludes that caution is in order when it comes to interpreting Einstein's theory of gravity as a theory about the very fabric of space-time.

In 2007, Harvey Brown was elected a Fellow of the British Academy. He served as President of the British Society for the Philosophy of Science from 2007 to 2009.

# Armchair Philosophy

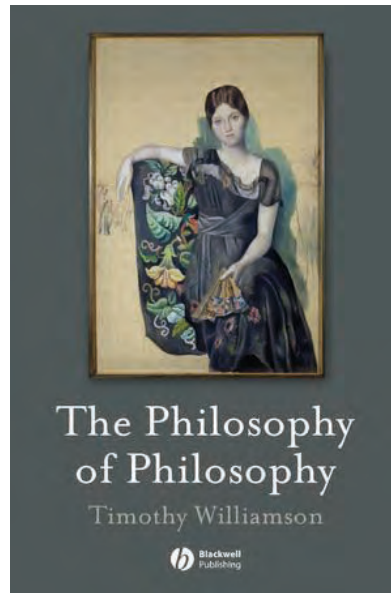
By Timothy Williamson

The front cover of *The Philosophy of Philosophy* (Blackwell, 2007) shows 'Portrait of Olga in an Armchair'. I wanted an armchair because the book is about the problem of armchair knowledge. Philosophy appears to be an attempt to gain knowledge of the world without bothering to get up out of one's armchair and look at what the world is actually like. How can such an attempt possibly succeed? There was a more obvious choice for the cover, Rembrandt's 'Old Man in an Armchair'. He is pensive, white-bearded, dressed in antique robes: the very image of a traditional philosopher as anti-philosophers imagine us, moribund leftovers from a pre-scientific age. Picasso's Olga is young and elegant; what she's sitting on isn't very obviously an armchair. The message: armchair knowledge isn't what you think it is.

In the twentieth century, philosophers liked to argue that philosophy isn't really an attempt to gain knowledge of the extra-linguistic world at all: either it seeks only knowledge of our own language, which we take with us to the armchair, or what it seeks is not really knowledge but rather clarification, achieved through reflection on the use of words or rules of grammar. That was the 'Linguistic Turn'. Although the emphasis gradually changed from words to concepts, the underlying idea remained the same: philosophy does not try to gain substantive knowledge of an extra-linguistic, extra-conceptual world. Scale down your ambitions and you can stay at home.

The unambitious picture does not fit much of contemporary philosophy. Philosophy of physics is continuous with theoretical physics. Contemporary metaphysicians want

to know the nature of change or consciousness, not just the nature of our concepts of them. These ambitions make the problem of armchair knowledge all the more acute. Isn't it time that philosophy handed over to natural science?



The book defends the use of armchair methods to gain substantive knowledge of the extra-linguistic, extra-conceptual world. Here is one way it can happen. We learn to apply concepts on the basis of perception. We acquire skills in applying them on that 'online' basis which go far beyond what is required simply to possess the concepts. For example, you may possess the concept of causation while being very bad at determining what caused what. But you may also become quite good at making such determinations. We also have an ability to transfer skills in applying concepts online to 'offline' applications in the imagination, for example when we assess counterfactual conditionals like 'If you had flicked the switch, you would have caused the light to come on'. Sometimes, such assessments require minimal background knowledge; the conceptual skills

suffice. Philosophers' thought experiments are like that. For example, your skill with the concept of knowledge, now applied offline, may enable you to recognise in your armchair that if at 12.37 you had seen a stopped digital clock reading '12.37', without realising that it was stopped, you would have had a justified true belief, but not knowledge, that the time was 12.37. You thereby learn something about knowledge, not just about the concept of knowledge. You do so not simply because you have the concept of knowledge — someone can have it and be lousy at applying it — but because you are not bad at recognising the difference between knowledge and its absence, even when you are using your imagination. The armchair skill that philosophy cultivates in judging potential counterexamples is firmly rooted in our capacity to gain knowledge of the world through perceptual experience. Philosophy is not radically different from other sorts of inquiry into the world. Nevertheless, it refines everyday cognitive skills in special ways, and thereby makes a distinctive contribution to human knowledge. But perhaps that isn't what Olga is thinking.

**Timothy Williamson** has been the Wykeham Professor of Logic and Fellow of New College since 2000. His main research interests are in philosophical logic, epistemology, metaphysics, and philosophy of language. He is the author of *Identity and Discrimination* (1990), *Vagueness* (1994), *Knowledge and its Limits* (2000), *The Philosophy of Philosophy* (2007) and over 120 articles. Williamson on Knowledge, edited by Patrick Greenough and Duncan Pritchard (2009) contains fifteen critical essays on his work and his replies.





*“You thereby learn something about knowledge, not just about the concept of knowledge.”*



# Why Climate Change Calls for Philosophy

By John Broome

What should we do about climate change? This is a moral problem. We, the rich among the current generation, are being asked to make sacrifices for the sake of people who will live in the future. The only reason we have for doing that is a moral one.

Yet few moral philosophers have so far contributed to the discussion of what we should do about climate change. Scientists and economists have been making most of the running. Moreover, many of those scientists and economists are openly suspicious of ethics. They think it is subjective and unreliable, and has no place in our political decision-making. They forget that, since the question at issue is a moral one, the answer has to be a moral judgement. When they themselves try to answer the question, they inevitably make their own, hidden ethical assumptions. Hidden assumptions are untested and unreliable. Because the scientists and economists do not trust ethics, we should not trust their ethical assumptions.

So moral philosophers need to become engaged. There are difficult ethical issues that need to be tackled before we can answer the question of what we should do about climate change. I shall mention just a few of them.

One is about how to value the future compared with the present. The economists who work on climate change 'discount' future material goods: they count goods produced in the future as less valuable than the same goods produced now. The degree to which they discount the future makes a huge difference to their conclusions about the effort we should make to combat climate change. This is an important place where economics calls for moral philosophy, because the choice of a discount factor rests on ethical premises.

Another issue is the value of human life. Climate change will kill at least tens of millions of people, through famines, disease, heat waves, storms, flooding and other causes. This is probably the greatest harm it will do. To assess just how bad it is we need moral philosophy. What harm does a person suffer when she loses her life? What sacrifices should we make to diminish the amount of killing?

The hardest question arises from the small-but real chance that climate change could cause humanity's extinction. Many people think extinction would be an extraordinarily bad event. If that is so, it might well be so bad that even the small chance of its occurrence outweighs all the other consequences of climate change; some economists now make that claim. On the other hand, many people have a contrary intuition. They think that the existence of more people in the world is not beneficial and, conversely, that the nonexistence of potential future people is not harmful. Their intuition implies that extinction would not be a bad event. Whether extinction would be bad is a question for the ethics of population, a recent topic within moral philosophy. We must work hard to find an answer.

John Broome is White's Professor of Moral Philosophy and a Fellow of Corpus Christi College. His theoretical work is summarised in *Weighing Goods* (1991) and *Weighing Lives* (2004) and he pursued more practical applications of these views in *Counting the Cost of Global Warming* (1992). He now works principally on normativity, rationality and reasoning, but maintains an interest in climate change.



# The Oxford Uehiro Centre for Practical Ethics

The Oxford Uehiro Centre was established in 2002 with the support of the Uehiro Foundation on Ethics and Education of Japan. Directed by Julian Savulescu, the Centre hosts a team of research fellows, associates and students, and plays a special role in encouraging academic and public debate about ethical problems in contemporary society.

The Centre's research programme is wide-ranging and sometimes controversial. Topics include human enhancement and the use of performance enhancement in sport; stem cell research and cloning; neuroethics; health care and public health; and reproductive technologies.

Results of research undertaken by Professor Savulescu and his team often appear in medical and scientific journals, as well as the best philosophy publications. Beyond peer-reviewed journals, the public debate on issues in practical ethics is often poorly informed and reactionary. The Centre aims to enhance public understanding of key issues in practical ethics.

In September 2008, the Centre launched a service providing a daily ethical response to science and technology issues arising in the news. These bulletins are posted online at the Uehiro website which also contains podcasts of media appearances and lectures by members of the Centre. These include the recent edition of BBC Radio 4's Analysis programme on Thought Experiments, presented by Janet Radcliffe Richards; as well as talks by,

amongst others, Julian Savulescu on the moral imperative to enhance human beings, Walter Sinnott-Armstrong on neuroscience in the courtroom, Jeff McMahan on cognitive disability and cognitive enhancement, Allen Buchanan on the biomedical enhancement project, and Steve Clarke on cognitive bias and the precautionary principle.



Photo by John Robertson



# TEACHING EXCELLENCE AWARDS

We are delighted to report that two members of the Philosophy Faculty have recently been recognised in the University Teaching Awards scheme, which rewards excellence in college and University teaching.



## Volker Halbach

Reader in Philosophy and  
Fellow of New College

Volker received his award in Trinity Term 2009 for his work revising the first-year Introduction to Logic course after it was decided that the Hodges text, with which many readers will be familiar, was finally due for retirement.

In consultation with other logic teachers in the Faculty, Volker re-designed the course, writing a new text book (The Logic Manual) and providing teaching and learning resources for tutors and students. By creating and

unifying teaching materials in this way, he performed a great service to those who teach and are taught first-year logic at Oxford. The new course is still very young, but the signs are that it is a great success. Students are taking more away from logic than ever before, and there is now greater opportunity for students to look ahead and seek out more advanced material.



## Peter Millican

Reader in Philosophy and  
Fellow of Hertford College

Peter received his award in Trinity Term 2007. It recognised his contributions both as College Tutor and University Lecturer.

Peter was commended for the care taken to make philosophy both accessible and stimulating to Hertford students. Of particular note was a novel approach to tutorials, designed to encourage discussion and interaction between students; preserving, whilst transforming, this inspirational teaching method.

The award also reflected the excellent feedback provided

Find out more about Peter's research on Hume at [www.davidhume.org](http://www.davidhume.org).

The relationship between general philosophy and the early modern period is discussed in the introduction to Peter's edition of Hume's *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (Oxford World's Classics, 2007).

by students on Peter's lectures, tutorials, and classes. Some of Peter's lectures were on David Hume and others were on General Philosophy, which is the course that introduces all first-year undergraduates in Philosophy to history of philosophy, epistemology, and metaphysics. The topics in the course involve core readings from the early modern period between Descartes and Hume. In his lectures, Peter aimed to provide an understanding of how the topics hang together, and an appreciation of why they naturally arose as the modern scientific world-view emerged.



## The Objective Eye

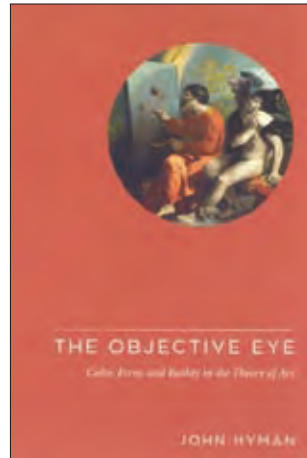
(Chicago, 2006)

John Hyman Queen's College

"The longer you work, the more the mystery deepens of what appearance is, or how what is called appearance can be made in another medium." – Francis Bacon, painter.

This, in a nutshell, is the central problem in the theory of art. It has fascinated philosophers from Plato to Wittgenstein. And it fascinates artists and art historians, who have always drawn extensively on philosophical ideas about language and representation, and on ideas about vision and the visible world that have deep philosophical roots.

My book *The Objective Eye* is a radical treatment of this problem, deeply informed by the history of philosophy and science, but entirely fresh. The questions tackled here are fundamental ones: Is our experience of colour an illusion? How does the metaphysical status of colours differ from that of shapes? What is the difference between a picture and a written text? Why are some pictures said to be more realistic than others? Is it because they are especially truthful or, on the contrary, because they deceive the eye?



## The Development of Ethics: A Historical and Critical Study

(OUP, 2007 & 2008)

Terry Irwin Keble College

The *Development of Ethics* is a selective historical and critical study of moral philosophy in the Socratic tradition, with special attention to Aristotelian naturalism, its formation, elaboration, criticism, and defence. I discuss the main topics of moral philosophy as they have developed historically, including: the human good, human nature, justice, friendship, and morality; the methods of moral inquiry; the virtues and their connections; will, freedom, and responsibility; reason and emotion; relativism, subjectivism, and realism; the theological aspect of morality.

The first volume examines ancient and mediaeval philosophy up to the sixteenth century. The second volume examines early modern moral philosophy from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century. Volume three will continue the story up to Rawls's *Theory of Justice*.

The emphasis of the books is not purely descriptive, narrative, or exegetical, but also philosophical. I discuss the comparative merits of different views, the difficulties that they raise, and how some of the difficulties might be resolved. The books try to present the leading moral philosophers of the past as participants in a rational discussion that is still being carried on, and help the reader to participate in this discussion.

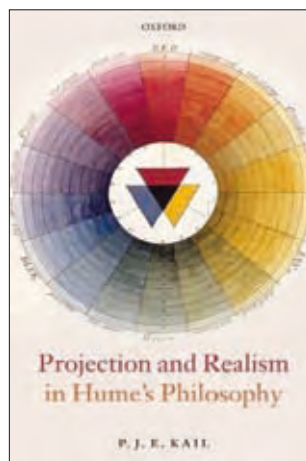


## Projection and Realism in Hume's Philosophy

(OUP, 2007)

Peter Kail St Peter's College

In *Projection and Realism in Hume's Philosophy* I try to elucidate what it is about Hume's philosophy that attracts the metaphor of projection, in an effort to understand both the metaphor and Hume's own thought regarding religion, causality, the external world, and value. I also aim to understand the extent to which the metaphor can be combined with various forms of realism that are sometimes attributed to Hume. That Hume's writings could attract both realist and projective readings was a puzzling fact that partly motivated the project in the first place. The cover of the book is an allusion to Hume's talk of gilding and staining natural objects with colours borrowed from internal sentiment. It is the first representation of the colour wheel, dating back to the eighteenth century, and yet seems surprisingly modern, a bit like Hume's own philosophy.



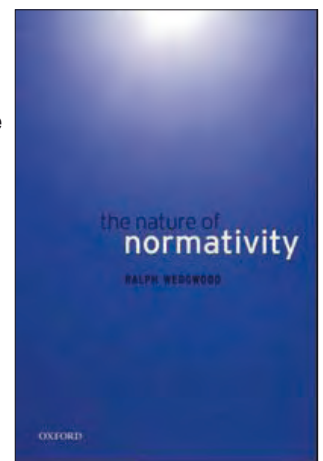
## The Nature of Normativity

(OUP, 2007)

Ralph Wedgwood Merton College

My book presents a new theory about normative thought – the sort of thought that is concerned with what ought to be the case, or what we ought to do or think. In it I defend a kind of realism about the normative, according to which normative truths or facts are genuinely part of reality.

As many philosophers agree, any adequate version of realism must answer certain explanatory demands: What is the nature of these normative facts? How could we ever know them, or even refer to them in language or thought? I argue that my version of realism can meet these demands, in part by relying on a version of the idea (which has been much discussed recently in the philosophy of mind) that "the intentional is normative" – roughly, we must talk about how people ought to think in giving an account of the nature of thought itself.



## Michael Frede

11 August 2007

Michael Frede, Professor of the History of Philosophy at Oxford between 1991 and 2005, died in a swimming accident in Greece. He was one of the foremost scholars of ancient philosophy of his day, and one of the most widely respected. His work on Aristotle successfully challenged many orthodoxies (notably concerning categories and metaphysics), and his work on later philosophers, in particular the Stoics and Sceptics, as well as Galen and other medical writers, was groundbreaking. His first collection of papers, *Essays in Ancient Philosophy* (1987), is on the shelf of every serious scholar of ancient philosophy, and illustrates the astonishing range of his insight and originality. Work is already underway to collect the papers he wrote since then.

He had great success as a teacher at Oxford, supervising (mostly in Café Rouge, on Little Clarendon Street) numerous doctoral theses on a variety of topics and authors, from Plato and Aristotle to Plutarch and Plotinus. His graduate seminars were always packed, as Oxford's ancient philosophy students – and visitors from all over the world – soaked up his learning, and passively chain-smoked with him.

His early death was a blow to the subject, as many more years of work were expected of him from his beautiful home in Athens, one of whose sides lies, fittingly, on *Odos Theorias*. There have been several memorial conferences and events, including ones in Princeton (where he had been Professor from 1976 to 1991), in Cambridge (where the Southern Association for Ancient Philosophy celebrated his life and work in 2008), and in Oxford (where there was a lecture in his honour, followed by a reception, in June 2008).

He is survived by his partner of many years, Katerina Ierodiakonou, and a son and three daughters.

Ben Morison



## Susan Hurley

16 August 2007

Susan Hurley was a pioneer of a deeply interdisciplinary approach to philosophy that makes detailed use of scientific data in the service of answering long-standing philosophical questions. She was distinctive in contributing a large body of important work to two separate fields. With a background in law, her DPhil studies in Oxford under the supervision of John McDowell blossomed into a series of papers in decision theory and legal and political philosophy. Her first book, *Natural Reasons: Personality and Polity* (1989), was widely acclaimed. Then Susan began work on issues in philosophy of mind, particularly the unity of consciousness and the interdependence between perception and action. *Consciousness in Action* (1998) challenges many current conceptions of the mind, developing a distinctive account of the location of the conscious self, embodied and embedded in the natural order.

Susan was the first woman to be elected to a Fellowship at All Souls College in 1981. After a period as a tutorial fellow at St Edmund Hall (1985-1994), she took up a chair in Warwick and renewed her association with All Souls. The College remained a treasured intellectual home for her in Oxford thereafter, and an ideal base for interdisciplinary events like the Chichele lectures on *Frontiers of Consciousness*. A new chapter opened in 2006 when Susan was appointed Professor of Philosophy in Bristol, where she launched a multi-centre research project on *Consciousness in Interaction*, in collaboration with Andy Clark and others. Some measure of the success of that project is apparent from Susan's paper on 'The shared circuits model', which appeared posthumously in *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*. An international conference in her memory, *Minds, Brains, and Beyond*, was held in Bristol in March 2009.

Susan Hurley was a major contributor to political philosophy and to philosophy of mind, psychology and neuroscience. Her death at the age of 52 is a deep loss for research in the social and cognitive sciences as well as philosophy.

She is survived by her husband, Nicholas Rawlins, Watts Professor of Psychology at Oxford, and their two sons.

Nicholas Shea

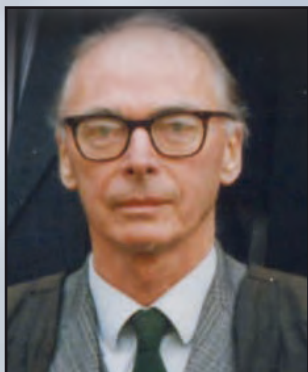




## John Lloyd Ackrill

30 November 2007

John Lloyd Ackrill was one of the leading ancient philosophers of the twentieth century. Together with Gwil Owen and Gregory Vlastos he revolutionised the way ancient philosophy is done through a passionate commitment to approaching ancient texts with philosophical rigour and sophistication as well as meticulous scholarship.



Ackrill spent almost his whole professional career at Brasenose, initially as a Tutorial Fellow (1953-1966), and then as the first holder of the Professorship of the History of Philosophy (1966-1989). It was characteristic of Ackrill to describe his work as merely pointing out or clarifying problems; and some of his work such as his influential 'Aristotle's Definitions of *Psuchē*' and his 1981 book, *Aristotle the Philosopher* is principally of this sort. Other writing – his ground-breaking articles on Plato's *Sophist* and the famous lecture 'Aristotle on *Eudaimonia*' – display a less Socratic style; but even here Ackrill always steered clear of overarching systems, preferring to work on the particularity of texts and problems. In 1960 he took over the editorship of the Clarendon Aristotle Series, whose aim was to present accurate translations of Aristotelian texts, and philosophical commentaries designed to help readers to think about these texts for themselves. The second volume to appear was Ackrill's own on the *Categories* and *De Interpretatione* (1963). His translation set a remarkable standard for faithfulness and elegance; his illuminating and incisive commentary has been among the main stimuli for work in these areas ever since, and the book is one of the most cited works on ancient philosophy in the English-speaking world. Before retiring as editor in 2001 he oversaw the writing of nineteen other volumes in the Series.

In his personal life, Ackrill displayed the same qualities found in his academic work. What colleagues found most striking about him was his modesty, his courtesy, kindness and unflinching good humour, a Socratic seriousness coupled with a quiet wit, and his love for his family.

He is survived by his wife Margaret, their four children and two grandchildren.

Lindsay Judson

## Gwynneth Matthews

28 March 2008

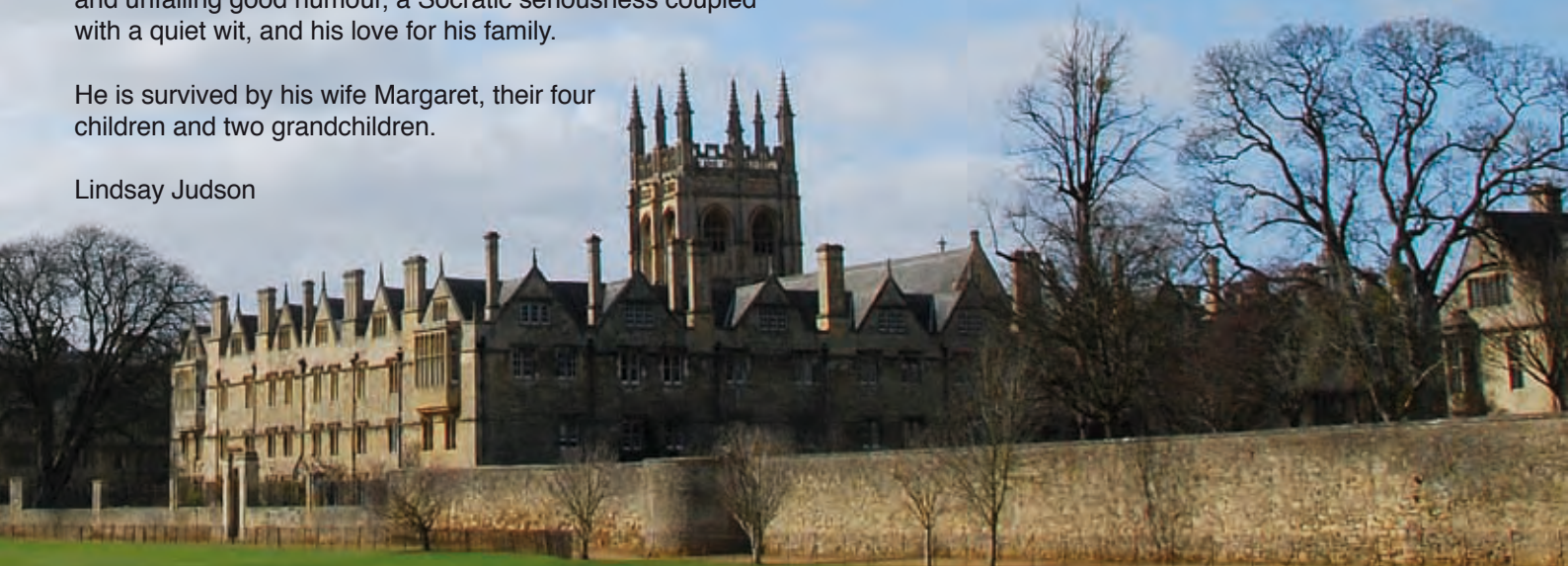
Gwynneth Matthews was Fellow in Classical Philosophy at St Anne's from 1962 to 1987. She was born in 1925 and spent her early childhood in North Wales. Her sister Pauline remembers that her interest in classical literature was fired in part by the sight of an enrobed Dame Sybil Thorndike, a neighbour in Portmadoc, declaiming *Medea* on the family hearthrug. After a degree in Bangor, Gwynneth took a First in Greats at St Hugh's in Oxford, and moved on to the BPhil and university posts at Exeter and Bangor.



Gwynneth's first publications concerned the nature of inference. She had a deep and lifelong interest in the philosophy of science, from the Presocratics through Leibniz to the present day. Her linguistic and philosophical sensitivities are well illustrated in the introduction to *Plato's Epistemology and Related Logical Problems* (1972), which included her own pellucid translations of key Platonic passages. Her paper on weakness of will (1966) is a classic, still cited, and its conclusion nicely exemplifies the openness of her mind to influences beyond philosophy: "If what one wants is an account of what happens in cases of weakness of will, one would do better to take a variety of cases ..., drawing material from poets, playwrights, and novelists, and from one's own plentiful experience." That knowing reference to individual experience cannot fail to bring to the minds of those who knew her Gwynneth's quizzical smile. The quickness of her wit extended from her philosophy into the rest of her life.

I was privileged to have Gwynneth as undergraduate tutor, and friend. She was a wonderful teacher – incisive, insightful, and deeply inspiring – and it was while reading *Mill* with Gwynneth that I began to have some idea of how I might want to spend my life. Like so many of her students, I am deeply in her debt, and miss her greatly.

Roger Crisp







The State Hermitage Museum, St.Petersburg



Private Collection

## THE JOHN LOCKE LECTURES

The John Locke Lectures are among the world's most distinguished lecture series in philosophy. The list of past lecturers includes most of the greatest philosophers of the last half century. The series began in 1950, funded in part by Oxford University Press, who have published many in book form.

Recent series are available to download as podcasts from the Faculty's website.

We are delighted to report that David Chalmers, Professor of Philosophy and Director of the Centre for Consciousness at the Australian National University, will give the lectures in Trinity Term 2010.

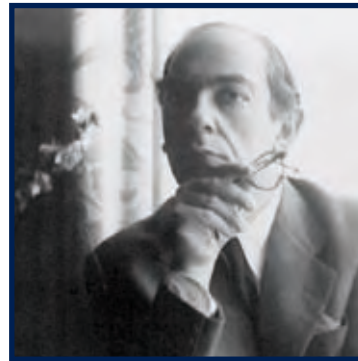
## THE GARETH EVANS MEMORIAL LECTURE

This annual lecture is a tribute to the former Wilde Reader in Mental Philosophy, Gareth Evans. Widely regarded as one of the leading philosophers of his generation, Evans died in 1980 at the age of 34.

The next Gareth Evans Lecture will be given on 2 March 2010 by Christopher Peacocke, who held the Waynflete Professorship of Metaphysical Philosophy at Oxford between 1989 and 2000. He is currently Professor of Philosophy at Columbia University and Richard Wollheim Chair in Philosophy at University College, London.

Each year the Faculty brings eminent philosophers from around the world to Oxford for a number of highly prestigious lecture series. These lectures are open to the public and you are warmly invited to attend.

[www.philosophy.ox.ac.uk/lectures](http://www.philosophy.ox.ac.uk/lectures)



Private Collection

## THE ISAIAH BERLIN LECTURES

Established in 2004, the Isaiah Berlin Visiting Professorship brings leading scholars in the history of philosophy or history of ideas to Oxford for a term in which they give a series of six lectures.

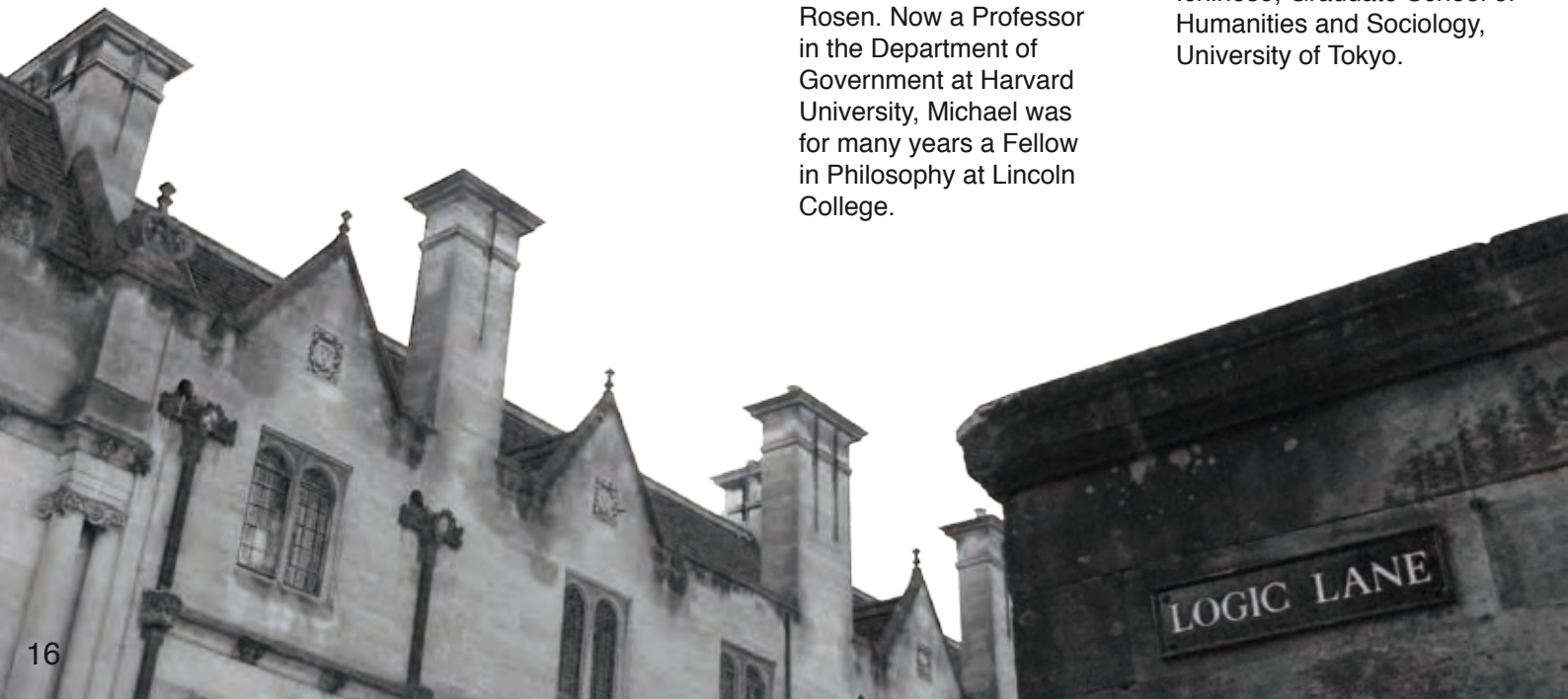
In Hilary Term 2010, the Berlin Lecturer will be the familiar figure of Michael Rosen. Now a Professor in the Department of Government at Harvard University, Michael was for many years a Fellow in Philosophy at Lincoln College.



## THE UEHIRO LECTURES IN PRACTICAL ETHICS

Each year the Uehiro Centre for Practical Ethics invites a world leader in the field of practical ethics to present a series of public lectures in Oxford, and to produce a book on the same topic.

The 2010 Uehiro Lecturer will be Professor Masaki Ichinose, Graduate School of Humanities and Sociology, University of Tokyo.





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In May 2008 Oxford University launched the **Oxford Thinking** Campaign, which aims to raise £1.25 billion in order to continue the tradition of excellence in the collegiate University.

Any donation to the University represents new investment in the intellectual capital of Oxford, allowing faculties, departments, and colleges to advance their role in engaging with the most important issues of our age.

The collegiate University has already received support from alumni and others in the UK, the USA, and across the world. To date, £720 million has been raised. There is still a long way to go and we welcome your support.

If you would like to find out more about the Oxford Thinking Campaign and the ambitions of Oxford Philosophy, please contact:

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Tel: +44 (0) 1865 611543  
luke.purser@humanities.ox.ac.uk

THE PHILOSOPHY FACULTY HAS THREE KEY GOALS WHICH WILL ENSURE THAT OUR POSITION AS ONE OF THE WORLD'S PREEMINENT ACADEMIC DEPARTMENTS IS NOT JUST MAINTAINED, BUT STRENGTHENED.

**1 ATTRACT AND ADMIT**  
the best national and international graduate students in philosophy, irrespective of their financial or social backgrounds, by establishing substantially more graduate scholarships.

**2 RECRUIT AND RETAIN**  
outstanding teachers and researchers in philosophy by working with colleges to fund new posts and to support existing ones.

**3 PRESERVE AND PROMOTE**  
the unique intellectual and educational culture of Oxford Philosophy and, crucially, provide for the first time a dedicated, world-class centre for philosophy graduate students through our move to the new Humanities Centre on the Radcliffe Observatory Quarter.

**Oxford Thinking**  
The Campaign for the University of Oxford



Artist impression of the new Humanities Library on the Radcliffe Observatory Quarter by Bennetts Associates.

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