

Jesus College Old Members' Group

Chair's Report January 2022

I started last year's report by saying - well, well what a strange year - and I could certainly do the same again! However, slowly and falteringly we are moving back towards normality which has meant that this year the group has been able to be more active again.

Old Members' Day did have to be delayed at the last minute from June to early September, but it turned out to be an excellent day. The morning comprised a series of reminiscences of student times from the last 50 years or so. This gave a link from the last big College anniversary in 1968 to the current 450th one celebrated this year. They were all stimulating amusing and even thought provoking and I thank those who spoke for their splendid efforts. Lunch was excellent and a good chance to catch up with old friends in many cases after a long COVID enforced gap! The afternoon started with a guided tour of the Botanical Gardens and ended with a tasting of the The Oxford Artisan Distillery's splendid gins!

An excellent trip in November to the British Library was the next event. It focussed on the Elizabeth and Mary, Royal Cousins, Rival Queens Exhibition. It was brilliantly curated and two Jesus Fellows – Sue Doran and Paulina Kewes - were significantly involved in this. Both joined the group on the visit and after the exhibition conducted, with the BL curators, a very stimulating Q and A session for the group. A very convivial meal afterwards rounded off a very good day. Meanwhile the JCR (Jesus College Curry Club) resumed its meetings face to face at the wine bar in Fleet Street and afterwards, in the Indian restaurant. They have met twice and a third is imminent in February.

The membership remains comfortably over 300 although of course we always welcome new members. The committee would dearly like to have a better gender balance and therefore I do hope if there are women members prepared to join, they get in touch with me. The role is not onerous but new blood on the committee is always a good stimulus to new events and activities.

Old members contributions support many graduates and undergraduates by funding various awards, a tradition it will be good to continue. We are also supporting the SEREN initiative which encourages bright students from Welsh schools to apply to top universities including Oxford. I know many old members would relish a return to a greater presence from Wales in the College intake.

We intend to arrange a number of events over the coming year, COVID allowing. The JCR will meet regularly every 6-8 weeks and the day trip to Chichester, including a guided tour of the cathedral and a tour of a local vineyard with a wine tasting, planned for last year will take place later in the summer. Earlier dates will include the Old Members' Day back to its usual late June slot and before that, a visit to the William Morris Gallery at Water House in Walthamstow, London is planned. Other ideas from members would be welcomed – so get your thinking caps on and get in touch.

I hope you have all made the most of the last difficult year and I offer you my best wishes for the coming months.

Peter May (Chair JOMG)