

Chair's Report January 2023

The last two reports reflected on years hugely affected by COVID. Thankfully, the last year has marked a return to something like normality. So we have managed to have a number of successful social occasions, membership was up again, and the group has been involved in a several activities with the College Development Office.

Old member's contributions still support many undergraduates and graduates, by the funding of various awards, and whilst this is not a prime function of the Group it will continue to feature over the coming years. The College's admirable Ukraine initiative to support a student from that sadly benighted part of the world was helped over the line, by contributions from members. We provided the awards for the successful Physics Olympiad students who were coached and entered as part of the SEREN initiative. This has kept our interest in this laudable project in Wales, designed to encourage more students from Welsh schools and colleges to apply for Oxbridge entrance and places at other Russell Group universities. As Chair, I went down to Cardiff to present the prizes at the lunch organised for the large numbers who had entered the Olympiad.

Membership is well over 300 and continuing to grow. As the proportion of our women members increases over time we remain keen to ensure the committee and activities reflect this. So, I am pleased to report in this respect, that Nel Cotterill, well known to many of you has joined the committee, and with the plan at the AGM to extend the size of the committee, I have high hopes we will be able to rectify our committee gender imbalance further. With a larger committee it will be easier to transform the group over time bringing in younger members on a regular basis.

As our main purpose is social it is good to report we had several very successful events. In the spring there was a trip to the William Morris Gallery in Walthamstow. There was a guided tour of this little-known gem of a gallery in the morning, which was genuinely fascinating. In the afternoon Andy Simpson one of our own gave an equally excellent talk on Jane Morris, William's wife. What a fascinating woman, who came from the poorest of backgrounds and transformed herself into an educated, cultured and multi-talented person. As usual there was a convivial session in the local hostelry afterwards.

Old Members' Day was re-established in its usual June slot and was very well attended. The Principal gave a splendid start to the day with an update on many aspects of College life. Dr Simon Townley's talk on Victorian county history was fascinating. Prof. Paul Riley then took us into the mind-boggling world of regenerative medicine. Superbly delivered and utterly absorbing it took us into drinks and lunch. The tour of Fourth Quad in the afternoon was a revelation for the majority who had not yet seen the new addition to the College.

In September we had another well attended event in Chichester. On a day when we were very lucky with the weather which had been generally terrible! The guided tours of the Cathedral in the morning were very interesting followed by a leisurely lunch in Brasserie Blanc with a good chance to socialise with friends old and new. In the afternoon we split into those following a wide-ranging historical tour of the city on foot, and those who chose the wine tasting at the nearby Tinwood winery. A good day indeed.

The JCR (Curry Club) continues to thrive albeit in a recently revamped form. Rather than a curry house after drinks in El Vinos in Fleet Street, we now go to Brasserie Blanc in Chancery Lane for the meal. What price a name! The change was given the thumbs up last time and by the date of the AGM we will have had a further meeting on 31st January. Newcomers are always welcome.

The JOMG Group newsletter has now been in the hands of Andy Simpson for a couple of editions, and I am very grateful for the different and improved slant he has taken with it. I would also like to thank the rest of the committee for the work they have done over the year.

Our spring event is a 2-day trip to Stratford upon Avon taking in a performance of Cymbeline. This should be an excellent trip. The Old Members' Day is scheduled for Saturday June 24th in its traditional slot. We are also hoping to hold an event in Kent for September and as always members will receive advance notice by email.

Peter May (Chair JOMG)

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