

2019 / 2020



ST STEPHEN'S HOUSE  
**NEWS**



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## PRINCIPAL'S WELCOME



Welcome to this year's edition of the College Newsletter. In it you will find what a varied community the College has become, and see something of the great variety of work our old members are undertaking in all sorts of challenging and important situations.

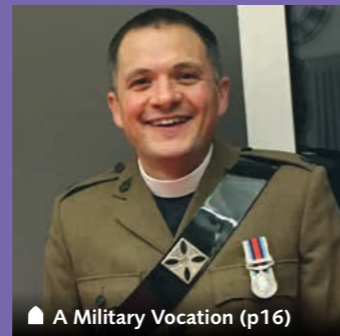
I would like in particular this year to encourage all our old members to join the 1876 Society. Many people already support us in this way, and the College benefits from the generosity of many donors: individuals who are inspired by our work, and Trusts which are committed to ensuring the education and formation we provide can continue.

Annual giving through the College's 1876 Society is a key part of this, and although many of our old members are clergy and teachers for whom charitable giving can be a real sacrifice, everything that we receive makes a difference to what we are able to provide for our students. ♥

Canon Dr Robin Ward



🏠 A Ghanaian Experience (p10)



🏠 A Military Vocation (p16)



**On the cover**  
Antique book spines from the College library.

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# NEWS



🏠 Helena Bickley



🏠 Millie Day



🏠 Tobias Ward



🏠 Angus Curry



🏠 Andrew Wong and family



🏠 Zayn Lakha

## Congratulations to...

- Ordinand student Helena Bickley and her husband James Percival, who were married on 31st August at St Michael and All Angels, Bedford Park.
- Millie and Andrew Day, who were married on 20th July 2019 at St Matthew's Church, Lightcliffe, West Yorkshire. Millie and Andrew join the college community this year as Millie studies for ordination at the House.
- Laura Ward (Ordinand) and her husband Thomas, who welcomed baby Tobias Francis Thomas Ward.
- MSc Learning and Teaching student Harriet Curry and her husband Matthew on the arrival of baby Angus Matthew Wilson Curry, a little brother for sister Olivia.
- Theology DPhil student Andrew Wong, and his wife Cecilia on the birth of their baby Aiden.
- Psychiatry DPhil student Gulamabbas Lakha and his wife Shaheda, who welcomed baby Zayn.

## Publications

*The Cowley Fathers*, by Dr Serenhedd James, has recently been published, sponsored by The Fellowship of St John. The book explores 150 years of the Society of St John the Evangelist, from 1866 to the present. This is the first comprehensive history of this influential Religious Community.

An article by the Revd Dr Andrew (Fr AKMA) Adam, St Stephen's House Tutor in New Testament and Greek, has been published in *Biblical Exegesis Without Authorial Intention? Interdisciplinary Approaches to Authorship and Meaning*, edited by Clarissa Breu and published by Brill.

A revised and expanded version of *Forgiveness a Catholic Approach*, by alumnus Scott Hurd (SSH 93, Vice President for Leadership Development at Catholic Charities USA), was published this September.

**Save the date!**

- **College Gaudy Dinner: Friday 18th September 2020.** All alumni & their guests are invited to this wonderful evening of hospitality SSH-style! To include a four-course dinner, with the evening overseen by the ex-Banqueting Manager of London's Savoy Hotel. Further details and tickets will be available on the College website in due course. Numbers will be limited so do book early to avoid disappointment.
- **College Garden Party: Friday 19th June 2020.** All alumni, their partners / families and guests are warmly welcomed to this annual (free) event, held in the College's cloister garden. Do join us for summer drinks, a light buffet supper and music in this beautiful setting. Further information will be available on the College website in due course. Tickets are free but booking is essential.

**SSH Staff news**

- Michèle Smith retired this summer as Bursar of the College, after 13 years in post. Michèle will remain as Director of SJE Arts.
- Congratulations to Alison Parker, who takes up the role of Bursar, after previously holding the post of College Accountant.
- Kellie Qualter, a member of the College housekeeping team, welcomed baby Shemiah Louise Romeo on 27th September.
- Philip McLean CMG, sometime Vice Chairman of the College's House Council, died on 5th June 2019, aged 80.
- Msgr Edwin Barnes, Principal of the College from 1987 to 1995, died on 6th February 2019, also his 84th birthday.



▲ Kelsey Fenner (right) stands with team-mate Leanne after the 2019 Varsity match  
 ▲ SSH MSc Education student and gymnast Kelsey Fenner

**Gymnastics success**

MSc Education student Kelsey Fenner was awarded a half-blue for her achievements in the university gymnastics team. She was placed sixth on the balance beam at the British Universities & Colleges Sport Championships. She then competed in the all-around at the

Varsity match against Cambridge where she was placed third all-around, the top Dark Blue scorer, though the team unfortunately lost to Cambridge. Kelsey also served as the Common Room's Sports Officer in Hilary and Trinity terms.



**Appeal to repair the chancel gable Cross**

Repair work has started to address weather damage and general ageing, which caused the partial collapse of the Cross on the chancel gable of the Church. The College is hoping

to fundraise to cover this crucial work. If you are able to contribute, please contact [development@ssho.ox.ac.uk](mailto:development@ssho.ox.ac.uk)

**COMING SOON!**

Meet the faces of the new College marketing & fundraising campaign, which aims to engage a wider audience in the work and support of St Stephen's House... Launching in early 2020.

▲ Mthr Alice Whalley  
 ▲ Fr Grant Naylor  
 ▲ Fr Chris Kinch

▲ Fr Taemin Oh  
 ▲ Fr Chris Kinch

# TOWARDS NEW FRONTIERS

September 2019 saw a first for St Stephen's House, as it undertook the College's first formal overseas fundraising trip to the USA.



📍 The Rector of Saint Thomas Church Fifth Avenue with The Principal

## Building on firm foundations

Fundraising at St Stephen's House is an interesting challenge! The College is fortunate in many ways: its alumni are typically extremely loyal and supportive, and given that the majority of the College's old members are priests – and therefore generally not (financially) wealthy – it is a constant source of encouragement that despite having relatively little, many give regularly.

This giving often takes the form of small amounts – perhaps £10 to £30 a month; which often prompts people to ask if this type of giving really has the potential to make a difference.

The answer is an emphatic yes! The cumulative impact of this type of small-scale, grassroots giving is significant. As an example, since the College's alumni and friends community the 1876 Society launched in 2016 (membership of which costs from just £10 a month), almost £20,000 has been raised through these sorts of small, regular donations. This has made a critical contribution to maintaining the educational vocation of the College.

In essence, the fundraising foundations on which we must build are strong.

## Widening horizons

However, there still remains a significant gap to make up in order to meet the costs of much-needed repairs to the now-ageing site in which the College is based, and to safeguard the future teaching and quality of scholarship at the House.

It has arguably never been more important to widen the College's horizons and aspirations, to explore new avenues and initiatives. This includes:

- Working to raise awareness of the unique history and work of St Stephen's House, and to make it more relevant to more people, and encourage new supporters.
- Securing wider educational and greater commercial use of the site by summer schools, courses and conferences in the vacations, and the wider public year-round, through initiatives such as SJE Arts (see page 20).
- 'Exporting' the expertise, knowledge and teaching that St Stephen's House is famous for, and thereby reaching a wider audience and creating new links with new audiences and potential supporters.

It was a combination of these avenues, and following discussions with close contacts in the US, that led to the idea of an exploratory fundraising trip to North America.

Philanthropic giving to the College is largely generated from two key locations; the UK and US. We are also very fortunate to have a small number of well-connected alumni in the States.

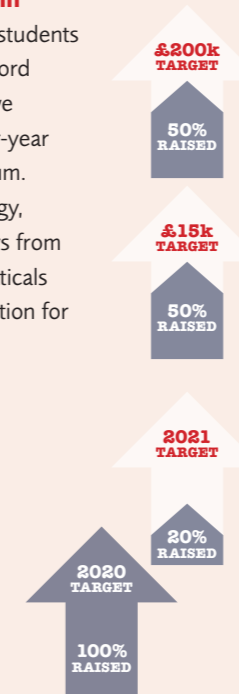
One such alumnus is Canon Carl Turner, who with his wife the Revd Alison Turner, was kind enough to offer to host a fundraising trip to New York by the House. With the kind support of other key contacts, not least Edward King Fellow and longstanding supporter of the College, the Very Revd Rick Lawson, the key costs of the trip were covered, allowing it to move forward.

In September 2019, The Principal and Development Director travelled to the city, ready to undertake a series of events and meetings aimed to showcase the work of the College, bring together supporters and wider relevant contacts, honour donors, and elicit further support.

The trip culminated in a Festal Evensong and reception held at Saint Thomas' Church, followed by a fundraising dinner, hosted by Fr Carl & Mthr Alison at their 39th-floor Rectory close to Times Square. This brought together key relevant contacts, ranging from seminaries and academic institutions from across the US, to existing and prospective individual donors, plus alumni and former staff members. The fundraising priorities outlined were as follows:

- **Funding for graduate studentships in Theology and Religion:** To enable US students to study at St Stephen's House for an Oxford University postgraduate degree. In total we are aiming to raise funds to support a four-year studentship, at a cost of £50,000 per annum.
- **Funding for study leave:** To fund clergy, academics, students, postulants and others from the United States for study leave or sabbaticals at St Stephen's House. Our starting aspiration for this area of fundraising is £15,000.
- **St Stephen's House 'In Residence':** This project will deliver an intensive week of bespoke teaching by academics from St Stephen's House in host parishes or institutions across the United States. The College will devise and deliver a summer school-style programme on a theme agreed with the host institution. The cost of delivering this is £25,000 per parish or institution. 📍

With many thanks to the following people, without whom the College's US fundraising work would not have been possible: The Very Revd Rick Lawson & Mr Mario Aningat, The Revd Canon Carl Turner & The Revd Alison Turner, The Revd Graeme Napier, The Revd Paul Burrows & The Revd Canon Michael Barlowe.



📍 The Principal addressing guests at The Rectory

📍 Inside St Thomas Church Fifth Avenue

## How to give

- Online – please visit the College's website and click 'Support St Stephen's House' – [www.ssho.ox.ac.uk](http://www.ssho.ox.ac.uk).
- Cheque – please make cheques payable to The Society of St Stephen's House and send to 'Freeport ST STEPHEN'S HOUSE' (no additional address details required).
- Or email [development@ssho.ox.ac.uk](mailto:development@ssho.ox.ac.uk).

## NEWSFLASH! The Main College Appeal – major milestone reached!

- In addition to the giving towards the US-focused initiatives outlined here, the College's visit to New York also resulted in a significant gift towards the main College Appeal.
- We are most grateful to The Very Revd Rick Lawson, a St Stephen's House Edward King Fellow, whose most recent generosity has enabled the College to announce that the main College Appeal has now reached the £1 million milestone.
- We hope that this will provide fresh impetus to alumni, and others, to match this generosity in whatever way that they are able.



# THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION: THE FUTURE



**The Revd Dr Mandy Ford (who trained for ordination at St Stephen's House in the late 1990s) recently completed a year as Interim Director of the Church of England's Ministry Division, during which she was instrumental in overseeing a major change management programme. We caught up with Mandy to find out more, and learn about the future of theological education...**

## **SSH: Can you tell us about your time as Interim Director at the Ministry Division?**

MF: It's been a year of significant change and restructuring, during perhaps the most extensive period of transformation at MinDiv since its inception, so it has been a real challenge, but at the same time, very exciting, and also very positive in the sense of being able to contribute to the future direction of theological education in the Church of England.

## **SSH: What are the key changes that have been implemented?**

MF: The core focus of my time at MinDiv has been to increase transparency and simplicity around the ordinand selection process, and removing any barriers that might exist for those

**Name:** The Revd Dr Mandy Ford  
**Years at SSH:** 1998–2000  
**SSH course/qualification:** BA Hons  
**Current role:** Director of Discipleship and Ministry and Canon Chancellor at Southwark Cathedral

exploring ordination, so there have been some quite major changes made to the discernment framework, and the Bishops' Advisory Panel (BAP) system. I've also been supporting the House of Bishops to help develop a sense of what is needed in terms of the next generation of ministry, and how we can create adaptive and flexible ways of training to support this. Training and development beyond ordination and curacy has also been under focus. So there's been a lot happening!

## **SSH: What's the likely impact on theological education institutions (TEIs) such as SSH?**

MF: There is an increasing emphasis on lifelong learning; TEIs must be about more than just ordination training, and there will be an increasing focus on continuous engagement with formation, and continuing professional development for clergy and laity. As part of this shift, there is a major new review of theological education taking place, which my successor at MinDiv, Chris Goldsmith, will be carrying out.

## **SSH: It sounds like a time of potential opportunity for TEIs?**

MF: Yes, very much so. The conversations I've had with Principals of the UK's 22 TEIs have been very positive so far as we try and get a sense of how the world looks for them, and it's clear that there is scope to be far more entrepreneurial, and to strengthen the position of such institutions. There are also some great examples of new types of work and approaches being undertaken by TEIs – lots of them are very alert and actively looking for new opportunities.

## **SSH: But a time of considerable change, too?**

MF: Yes, but there is a sense that change is needed. Plus, we have to be honest, in that if you were trying to plan to train 1500 ordinands annually, it wouldn't necessarily make sense to start with 22 separate charities which include the local training courses alongside the residential colleges. Another big challenge that needs to be addressed is the importance of ensuring people are trained to serve anywhere in the country, but at the same time, allowing vital local mission strategy. We must change to remain relevant, so overall I think this is an extremely positive step. ♥



On her time at SSH...

*I chose SSH because the priests I most admired had trained there: what I saw in them was a disciplined life of prayer, and a high level of pastoral care and theological intelligence. My formation was a transformation – from teacher to priest – and I enjoyed the immersive residential experience immensely. I also enjoyed the rigorous academic theology, and my time at SSH sparked an interest which led to my PhD (on the subject of the hermeneutics and ethics of Paul Ricoeur).*





# A GHANAIAN EXPERIENCE

**As part of their formation, Ordinand students at St Stephen's House undertake one or more placement experiences during the summer vacation. Here, Simon Billington describes his recent placement in Ghana...**

When we were told that we were expected to do a placement during our summer vacation, I decided that I would try to be adventurous and look for one outside of the United Kingdom. Owing to the support of USPG (United Society Partners in the Gospel), C.O.S.T. (Christians Over Seas Trust) and the generous donations of my sending parish, St Michael's and All Angels, Wood Green (Edmonton),

I was able to secure a placement with the Rt Revd Matthias Medadues-Badohu of the diocese of Ho, in Ghana.

The Anglican diocese of Ho was created in 2003, after the Anglican Archbishop of Ghana deemed that the existing diocese of Korforidua, which covered two political regions (Eastern and Volta regions) was simply too large to be managed by a single bishop. Still in its infancy, the diocese of Ho continues to try to establish its presence amidst the backdrop of tight economic restrictions. Ho is the economic centre for the Volta Region and provides the best links to the rest of Ghana, though its economy relies heavily on the trade of local farmers rather than any notable level of industry.

The diocesan cathedral, St George the Martyr, boasts the title of *almost* the smallest cathedral in the world. Its floor space is, at a guess, very close to the size of the Chapel at St Stephen's House. Having been a parish church prior to its consecration as a cathedral, its ministry and mission field is still more akin to what one would expect of an Anglo-Catholic urban parish than a city cathedral.

The cathedral celebrates Mass every morning with the exception of Saturdays, unless there was a notable feast that day. The Sung Mass on a Sunday is quite the event and despite starting at 9am, it typically lasts until the early hours of the afternoon. The liturgy, which is widely shared throughout the diocese, was staunchly traditional, with proud and exuberant splashes of Ghanaian culture (where dancing was highly encouraged throughout the various hymns and anthems).

The mission of the Anglican church is currently focused around the attached Anglican schools, and the last two weeks of my placement saw a switch in my time from supporting the parochial life of the cathedral to schools ministry. I had the pleasure of leading the school worship on my last week and supporting the work undertaken in the classrooms.

One of the benefits of my placement being with bishop Matthias was the element of travel we did to support the life and work of the parishes in his diocese. On my first Sunday, I was asked to preach at a confirmation service, which was an absolute joy and great way to be welcomed to the country.

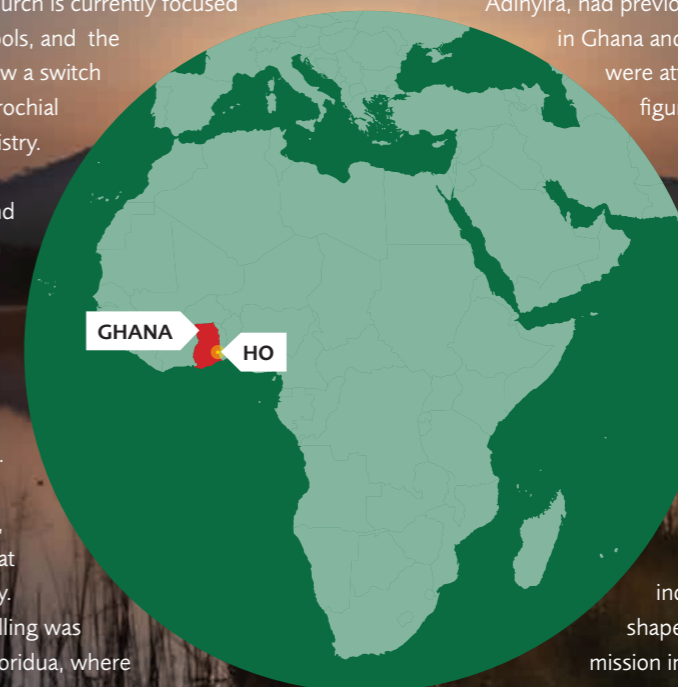
Another notable piece of travelling was to the neighbouring region of Korforidua, where



Confirmation service (Bpandu, Volta Region), Simon Billington is on the far right

I attended the installation of a Canon to the cathedral of St Peter. The newly installed Canon, Lady Justice Mrs Sophia Ophilia Adjebea Adinyira, had previously held the office of Supreme Justice in Ghana and her service, and following celebration, were attended by the leading legal and justice figures in the country.

The five weeks I have spent living with the Bishop and his family have shown me the shape and trials of mission and ministry in one of the poorest areas of Ghana. A sprawling diocese with its own language and cultural identity, it is proud of its place in the Anglican communion and is consistently seeking to expand and improve its presence in an area dominated by Evangelical Presbyterians. It has truly been an indescribable experience and one that will shape how I understand and engage with mission in the years to come.



The Cathedral of St George the Martyr, Ho (Volta Region)

*Firstly as student in Michèle's early days as Bursar, and latterly working together on the House Council, I have greatly appreciated Michèle's friendship and talents. Happy retirement!*

The Revd Canon Paul Armstead (SSH 2006)

*Michèle's achievement in creating a successful mid-sized venue and concert series cannot be over-stated; it is exactly what Oxford needs.*

Rebecca Dawson, Music at Oxford

*Michèle has been a fantastic bursar of the college, who has transformed the state of the buildings, brought order and purpose to our finances, and established the outstanding SJE Arts programme. We have been very lucky to have her here.*

The Revd Canon Dr Robin Ward, SSH Principal

# A BURSARIAL LEGACY

**Although her official title was 'Bursar', Michèle Smith was so much more than that, pioneering a wide range of visionary projects during her thirteen-year tenure at St Stephen's House, which resulted in a transformed outlook for the college. As she retires, we speak to Michèle about her time at SSH, and her future plans...**



Photograph by Gerry Lynch

## **SSH: How is the SSH of today different to the one you arrived at in September 2006?**

MS: "I'm delighted to say that it is very different! I recall in my first Governing Body meeting expressing my concern about the lack of funding and how much work needed to be done."

## **SSH: Where did you start?**

MS: "We were incredibly fortunate in receiving a significant amount of money from two of the college's main supporters, John Booth and Fr Rick Lawson to kick-start the work that was so badly needed. We spent this extremely carefully and made it go a long way, and the impact was transformative. It enabled an extensive programme of work to modernise the teaching spaces and bedrooms, install new heating, update the kitchen and dining room and generally complete those small touches that made the place feel more loved, welcoming and pleasant to live in."

## **SSH: You then moved your focus to the college church?**

MS: "Yes, the church was one of the other urgent considerations. When I joined, a site report valued the church as a negative asset because it was such a liability: I was determined to change that."

"I focused for a long time on finding a way of funding its restoration and maintenance. I could see it had potential as a music venue because of its excellent acoustic and its size, and well-connected contacts in the music business unanimously agreed."

## **SSH: And so SJE Arts was born?**

MS: "Yes. The college invested a lot of money to make the church usable and comfortable as a public venue, and SJE Arts hosted its first concert in 2011 – the European Union Baroque Orchestra. Gradually, things really took off, and we have since successfully fundraised to restore over half of the building work, including re-leading and insulating the side aisle roofs, repairing windows and guttering, as well as building new WCs and installing windows in the cloister so that is could be used more effectively by students and for art exhibitions."

## **SSH: What do you reflect on as your proudest achievement during your time at SSH?**

MS: "Turning the college into a more comfortable place to live and work gave me a real sense of satisfaction. I'm also extremely proud of SJE Arts. It now hosts over 70 concerts and arts events a year, and it is really opening up the college site for more people to enjoy."

## **SSH: And what was the biggest challenge?**

MS: "Finding the money to do the work that was – and is still – so badly needed is an ongoing challenge. St Stephen's House is in a difficult and slightly unique position. People assume that because we are a college in Oxford, we must be very wealthy and sadly, this simply isn't the case, not least because our alumni are generally poorly-paid in their vocations. It's also very challenging to get foundations to give grants for churches that aren't in parish use."

"But our church is a magnificent and special building, and I am confident that we will secure its future."

## **SSH: What are you looking forward to doing in your retirement?**

MS: "I hope to travel, and spend more time with friends. But I'm also looking forward to continuing as Director of SJE Arts, and to seeing it fulfil its potential as one of Oxford's great arts and concerts venues."

## **SSH: Are there any elements of work that you weren't able to complete during your time as Bursar that you hope to see undertaken in future years?**

MS: "Yes – lots! The re-development of Moberly Close has huge potential to provide more and better student housing, and possibly provide space for a lecture theatre that could be used both for student teaching as well as commercially for conferences during the long vacation."

"I would also love to see the Iffley Road entrance to the site transformed, as it would serve as a far better main entrance to the college. And finally, we only managed to complete about half the urgent repair work to the church in my time as Bursar, and I would love to see that completed properly."

"£850,000 would do it if anyone's interested!" concludes Michèle in her typically direct yet irresistible style! 🍷

# INSPIRING MINDS

## Current SSH student Gemma Baker writes about Mary Wollstonecraft

"I am a keen football fan and player. I have often experienced this confession causing surprised looks or the usual comment that 'girls can't play football'. Fortunately, I have never experienced the questioning of my academic capabilities because I am female, yet I know that the support I have enjoyed during my studies has not been afforded to many who have gone before me and is still not afforded to all.



Mary Wollstonecraft

I have spent time reflecting this year on the fact that women could not matriculate or graduate from Oxford until 1920, and am grateful to the inspirational women before me who have challenged educational disparities in society. I have thoroughly enjoyed my studies this year and was particularly inspired by the opportunity to explore the work of Mary Wollstonecraft, often referred to as a foremother of feminism. This seminar was especially poignant since, as the only female in attendance, I was outnumbered by about eight to one! I vociferously praised Wollstonecraft for her sharp criticisms of Rousseau's suggestion that 'a woman should never for a moment feel herself independent' and have been encouraged in my own work by her bravery.

**Name:** Gemma Baker  
**Course:** MSt Theology (Christian Ethics)  
**Years at SSH:** 2018–2020  
**Current role:** Delighted to be returning to Staggers for the PGCE course

Aside from her sharp wit and fearless pursuit of equality, what most inspires me about Wollstonecraft was her ability to maintain her faith where many feminists today feel the need to leave the Church. Challenging the idea that women must defer to the 'superior' knowledge of husbands or fathers on religious matters, Wollstonecraft criticised Rousseau for giving a sex to mind as inconsistent 'with the principles of a man who argued so warmly and so well for the immortality of the soul'. She challenged "the warped reason of man" disregarding the equality of male and female before God and the obstruction of a female individual's relationship with God.



Gemma Baker

I have been inspired to read more Wollstonecraft, and fully support her vision that education will help achieve a more equal society in which men and women can flourish together. I hope as a teacher I can inspire the next generation of female theologians...and maybe some footballers too!"

## Ex-student and curate Fr Sam Gibson writes about Ken Leech

"While studying for the MTh I had to write a dissertation. Having just come out of a doctoral programme I was a bit stuck for a topic, so I started re-reading the theologians who had inspired me as an undergraduate. Foremost among these was Fr Ken Leech, whom I had met briefly at the Student Christian Movement Conference in 2011. He trained at SSH, and died in 2015 just as I entered college.



Sam Gibson

Ken's work represents a lesser-known strand in the varied garment that is Anglo-Catholicism: a development of the radical, socialist and egalitarian tradition associated with figures like Conrad Noel and Stanley Evans. I think St Stephen's House has always represented – in varying degrees – these different approaches within the catholic movement, so part of this research was a desire to return to the sources so as to renew my own commitments.

What fascinates me most about Ken Leech is that he brings together concerns which are currently regarded as discrete or separate. So, he can write a rich and mature spiritual-doctrinal work like *True God* alongside essays on drug culture, race and political protest. This realisation came to me at a helpful time, because I was hearing that there was a gap between "doctrine" (belief) and something called 'practice', which perhaps only a few twentieth century thinkers had really bridged!

Ken Leech insists that the connection between orthodoxy and orthopraxy is something deeply rooted in patristic and medieval Christianity, and not a recent invention. This insight isn't unique to Leech (and is reflected increasingly in systematic and practical

**Name:** Fr Sam Gibson  
**Course at SSH:** MTh  
**Years at SSH:** 2015–2017  
**Current role:** Assistant Curate, St Alphege Solihull

theologies), but he receives it in a uniquely English and Anglican context. Part of the joy of reading Ken's work is rediscovering, with him, the wonderful and eccentric figures of Thaxted, the East End and beyond. They were writing what we would call Liberation Theology before its Latin American iteration came into vogue.

He continues to inspire my work as someone called both to parish ministry and a life of theological reflection. I am a bit of an evangelist for him (something he would probably recoil at), and I recommend his work to ministers and parishioners alike." ♥



The Revd Ken Leech

# INSPIRING MINDS





📍 Fr Chris Kinch about to take a service whilst out on exercise



# A MILITARY VOCATION

**"If I'm being honest, my first response to the feeling of vocation was to kill it off."**

Being a priest was the last thing I wanted to be – I'd seen the way clergy could sometimes be treated, and I didn't want it. I had my sights set on joining the police. I'd grown up on a relatively tough council estate in Reading where there were a lot of social issues, and I'd seen the positive impact of policing and thought I could make a difference.

But the sense of vocation just wouldn't go away, and so, although no-one in my family had been to university, I decided to read Theology at King Alfred's in Winchester.

A year later, I found myself at an ordinand selection conference, half hoping they wouldn't pick me... but they did, and I arrived at SSH in 2003, aged 22, feeling nervous.

The then Principal, Fr Jeremy Sheehy, immediately put me at ease, and I had a room in the main building (Benson Room 2, floor 2!), right under the Founders' Chapel. There were many memorable times at Staggers, but it was the placements I found particularly rewarding. As well as a prison chaplaincy at Bullingdon prison, I did a summer placement with the Army in Germany, and it was this placement which was ultimately life-changing for me.

**Name:** The Revd Chris Kinch CF

**Role:** Army Chaplain

**Years at SSH:** 2003–2005

**SSH course:** PGDip Theology

I lived in the Mess for a month alongside the 7th Armoured Brigade and spent time with various chaplaincy units. It was shortly after the second Gulf War, and there were many reservists with some very raw pastoral needs. The chaplains I worked with were impressive, and I loved the fact that I was living amongst the people I was ministering to. The soldiers knew their chaplains had experienced what they had, and so knew they understood what they were going through. The chaplains had a real credibility; with none needing to justify their place within their unit.

Once I left Staggers I had a great curacy in Long Eaton, Derby, and I also volunteered as a police chaplain, doing shifts around my parish work. It was 5 years after leaving SSH before I finally explained to my Archdeacon that I couldn't shake off the feeling of wanting to do military chaplaincy, and he supported me in this path.

In August 2010 I joined the 243 Regiment Field Hospital as a Reservist, which involved undertaking officer training at Sandhurst, all alongside my time as a Team Vicar in the Parish of Swindon New Town and then my first incumbency at Holy Nativity, Knowle in Bristol, which was pretty hectic.

From the start, it looked like an Afghanistan deployment as chaplain to the Hospital and Joint Force Support Medical Group there might happen. I volunteered to go with the Regiment, and we were

based at Camp Bastion. The experience was incredibly harrowing and traumatic, but it was a huge privilege and it confirmed my vocation.

We sadly lost seven British soldiers in the three months I was there; one of them was one of my medics.

I returned from Afghanistan and didn't know how I would ever describe it to anyone, or if I would ever feel that needed again.

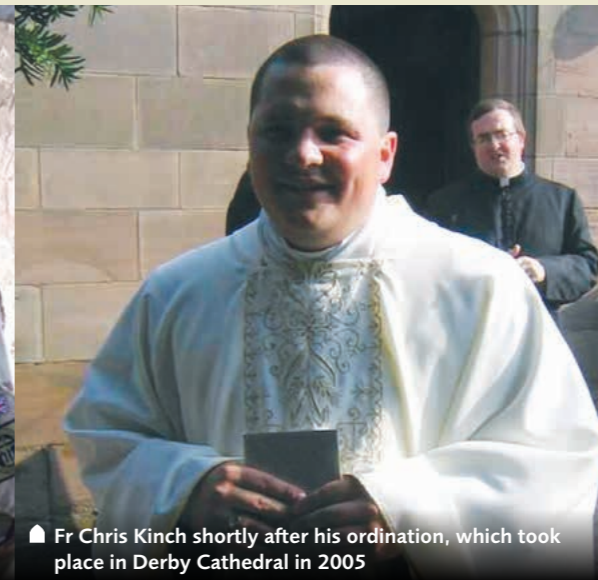
I decided to enter full time Army Chaplaincy in 2016 and I now have a real sense of being where I belong. In many ways it's just like being a parish priest but in a different context. I say daily Mass, and take part in training with the rest of the Regiment, and I'm also trusted by the Command Group. Chaplains are typically very valued in their role.

I also get involved in helping to teach the moral component of Army training. A lot of my work takes place with 17–25 year olds, which can be a rare demographic within civilian parishes. They might not always be able to describe what is on their heart or their mind, but when they talk to you, they want the conversation to matter – it's not about hymns or flowers, but something really meaningful. And that's probably the best bit of being a military chaplain. ♥

**"I'd recommend it to anyone."**



📍 Fr Chris Kinch in Afghanistan in 2012



📍 Fr Chris Kinch shortly after his ordination, which took place in Derby Cathedral in 2005



📍 Fr Chris about to lead a 'Drumhead' service

Ecclesiastical History student Rick Yoder, originally from South Carolina, recently completed an M.Phil in Theology at St Stephen's House, the topic of which focused on the history of Christianity and how Christians relate to the supernatural. Here Rick shares some of the highlights of his research, and the stories which trouble the dominant narratives of modernity.



# CHRISTIANITY AND THE SUPERNATURAL



- 1 The Archives Nationales de France, where Rick conducted part of his research
- 2 Author Rick Yoder pictured in Oxford
- 3 A forgotten 18th Century playing card found in a French priest's archive
- 4 Anglo-Catholic exorcist Dom Robert Petitpierre
- 5 Aelred Carlyle, Abbot of Caldey Island
- 6 Evelyn Underhill

My time at St Stephen's House has led me to some interesting discoveries.

My dissertation explores the life, writings, and reception of a hitherto forgotten French mystic named Jacqueline-Aimée Brohon (1731–1778). Though deeply engaged with such Enlighteners as Rousseau and Voltaire as a young novelist, Brohon had a Jesuit-influenced conversion that led her to a life of retirement and prayer. From the 1770s, she was receiving visions of Jesus, the Sacred Heart, the Virgin Mary, and other sacred subjects. These visions strengthened her sense of a vocation to expiatory suffering. Brohon believed she was meant to found a quasi-Messianic 'Society of Victims' which would offer reparation for sin and the reform of the Church. Lay women would play a key role in this group of twelve 'victims,' and would be largely equal to the priests of the Society. It seems, however, that Brohon died before any such group came into existence. Her writings were published during the Revolution, in 1791, by her conservative confessor. However, they were quickly taken up by a prophetic and millenarian wing of the Constitutional Church.

Years later, the revolutionary Abbé Grégoire wrote about her in his massive *Histoire des Sectes Religieuses* (1810/1814/1828). Grégoire calls Brohon an insignificant madwoman and a heretic. In doing so, he wrote her out of the religious history of France. Yet in my research, I came across evidence which suggests that Brohon was a much more sophisticated thinker, that she was clearly drawing on older Catholic precedents, and that she had a surprising number of connections in high places (including Versailles). I argue that Brohon is an important bridge figure between the expiatory mysticism of the seventeenth century and the visionary, romantic 'victim-soul' spirituality that became so popular in nineteenth century French Catholicism. Mysticism was not dead in the eighteenth century. The Age of Reason was, sometimes, the Age of Vision.

My other major project, co-supervised by the Principal, involved a wide-ranging study of Anglo-Catholicism and the occult. I was even able to get a short summary of my work published in the *Church Times* in December 2018.

From the Ritualist controversy to the decade following Vatican II, a number of prominent Anglo-Catholics explored the paranormal. Some, including Arthur Machen, Evelyn Underhill, and Charles Williams, joined occult groups like the Hermetic Order of the Golden

Dawn. Quite a few clergy did so as well; Revd A.H. Baverstock, Dean Bennett of Chester, and two Mirfield fathers (including a future Bishop of Llandaff) were all members of the Stella Matutina, a Golden Dawn successor body, in the 1910s.

The Anglican abbots were often similarly inclined. Fr Ignatius of Jesus, Abbot of New Llanthony, saw all kinds of apparitions – of ghosts, of the Blessed Sacrament, of the Virgin – and was friendly with spiritualists. Aelred Carlyle, Abbot of Caldey Island, was even more colourful. He dabbled in Theosophy, read *Dracula* to his monks at recreation, saw his own sister's 'astral body' float away when she died, and translated the 'relics' of a monk from Glastonbury that were found using a Ouija board. Nashdom Abbey was home to a much later, much sounder character: Dom Robert Petitpierre, a major Anglo-Catholic exorcist. Petitpierre and his mentor, Fr Gilbert Shaw, engaged in their deliverance ministry while formulating a comprehensive theory of 'the psychic'. Petitpierre's book *Exorcizing Devils* (1976) provides evidence of his own interest in such unusual topics as Ley Lines, place-memories, psychic activity, and black magic. Yet perhaps no one has rivalled the Revd Montague Summers, a convert from Anglo-Catholicism to Rome, in mapping the diabolical world. His purple prose outlined the global horrors of vampires, witches, werewolves, and demons, all of which he believed in without a shadow of doubt. The underlying unity lies in a common supernatural cultural politics. They enlisted the paranormal – in various iterations – to demonstrate the truth of Christianity's claims about the spiritual world.

It is this theme that unites my work as a whole. How do we relate to the supernatural? How does this situation change in the shift we call 'modernity?' It is a question I have been privileged to investigate in London, Paris, Lyon and, of course, here at St Stephen's House, a place I will always remember fondly. ♥

Rick Yoder studied at St Stephen's House from 2017 to 2019, pursuing an M.Phil in Theology (Ecclesiastical History). In addition to his academic work, he had poems published in various editions of *ASH*, the Oxford University Poetry Society's literary journal, and two volumes of *Jesus: The Imagination*. He will continue his study of early modern Catholicism at Penn State University, where he be supervised by Dr Ronnie Hsia. He blogs regularly at *The Amish Catholic* ([amishcatholic.com](http://amishcatholic.com)).

– Fact File –

# SJE ARTS

## Location

The College church of St John the Evangelist  
St Stephen's House, Oxford  
109a Iffley Road, OX4 1EH

## Key contacts

Georgia Davies, Concert Manager –  
[concert.manager@ssho.ox.ac.uk](mailto:concert.manager@ssho.ox.ac.uk)  
Michèle Smith, Director –  
[michele.smith@ssho.ox.ac.uk](mailto:michele.smith@ssho.ox.ac.uk)  
Sally Doyle, Administrator –  
[sally.doyle@ssho.ox.ac.uk](mailto:sally.doyle@ssho.ox.ac.uk)

## About

SJE Arts is a public music and arts venue based in the church and cloister of St Stephen's House.

Hosting a wide variety of concerts, art exhibitions, plays and private events, the church is well-known for its outstanding acoustic, and is capable of seating audiences of up to 500.

SJE Arts was the brainchild of former SSH Bursar Michèle Smith. Keen to encourage greater use of the College's magnificent neo-Gothic church, a programme of work was undertaken to make the church suitable for public use.

SJE Arts now hosts around 100 concerts, recordings, rehearsals and exhibitions each year, the income from which helps to support the maintenance of the church and cloister buildings.

## How does SJE Arts work with SSH?

SJE Arts is part of SSH, and public use of the church building is carefully fitted around its core purpose as an integral part of ordinand formation at the College. In addition, students often volunteer with the work of SJE Arts.

## Example events/concerts

- The SJE Arts International Piano Series – a carefully curated selection of pianists from around the world feature in this annual programme of concerts. Examples of performers include Angela Hewitt, Stephen Hough and Eric Lu.
- The Sixteen – Globally-renowned choral group The Sixteen's Christmas tour takes in SJE Arts for its Oxford stop, with a packed audience guaranteed for this magnificent showcase of festive music each December.
- The Oxford Art Society Open Exhibition: SJE Arts' magnificent cloister gallery hosts this annual exhibition, featuring some of the best artistic talent, both professional and new/undiscovered.
- The SJE Arts Next Generation Series – Now in its fourth year, these concerts have been inspirational, bursting with talent, enthusiasm and above all, optimism. Artists have included the super-talented saxophonist Jess Gillam and celebrated cellist Sheku Kanneh-Mason.

## Get involved at SJE Arts!

We're always looking for volunteers and paid staff to help run concerts and exhibitions,

particularly from those within the College community.

Volunteers receive free and discounted tickets, and it's a fun, friendly and sociable way to spend an evening, in the stunning setting of this hidden heritage gem.

Contact [concerts@ssho.ox.ac.uk](mailto:concerts@ssho.ox.ac.uk) for more details or to join. ♥

🌐 [www.sje-oxford.org](http://www.sje-oxford.org)

📘 SJEArts

🐦 @SJE\_Arts



📍 Jess Gillam & Zeynep Oszuca



📍 The annual Oxford Art Society exhibition

# WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

In each issue of the College newsletter, we catch up with an alumnus to find out what they have gone on to do after leaving the College, and their memories of studying here.

**Name:** Francesca Po

**Studies undertaken at SSH:** MSt Study of Religion, DPhil Theology and Religion

**Year of graduation:** 2014 (MSt), (2020 anticipated DPhil graduation)

**Undergraduate degree/other studies:** BA Religious Studies, Music minor (UC Berkeley); MA Philosophy and Religion (California Institute of Integral Studies)

**Your current role (or what are you currently doing):**

Teacher of Religious Studies at Mater Dei High School, freelance academic work (speaking engagements, publications)

**Please briefly describe a typical day (for you, in your current role)**

Complete day at school from about 8am–4pm, Monday–Friday; work on extracurricular academic projects on my free time (nights, weekends, holidays).

**Could you tell us about your time at SSH? What was life like when you were here?**

I spent five years at Stagers and benefitted from a variety of grants through the generosity of the college. I was an independent student though my entire time there, but was very active in the social and spiritual life of the college.

**How did SSH prepare you for what you've subsequently gone on to do?**

Confidence in my field and expertise; a well-connected network for future professional pursuits.

**Are there any particularly memorable moments or experiences from your time at the College?**

Hands down, the Anglo-Catholic cultural experience! Having grown up a Philippine-American Roman Catholic and romanticising about the Inklings and Oxford life, being a member of St Stephen's House was both novel and affirming; an experience unlike anywhere else in the world.

**What advice would you give to someone considering studying here?**

Come strong-willed, open, and broad-minded, and you will have an Oxonian experience unlike any other.

**Any parting thoughts?**

I can't thank Fr Robin and Michèle Smith enough for their relentless financial, professional, and spiritual support during my five years at Oxford. To the rest of the staff and students, thank you for making my time there one that I will boast of for the rest of my life. I hope we cross paths again soon! Please do not hesitate to get in touch with me anytime, whether for personal or professional purposes. ♥



## THE PRINCIPAL'S PERSPECTIVE

A theologian recently wrote 'Parish Ministry is essentially ascetical theology'. This reminds us of the distinctive contribution that theological colleges make to the pursuit of theological science as a whole. University theology faculties often struggle to give the subject coherence: is it about religion, in which case should students be compelled to study Christian topics at all, or is it simply another Humanities discipline to be shaped by the sort of presuppositions that shape English Literature or History at undergraduate level? Theological colleges are crucial in making sure that the spiritual realities of Christian living and practice are integrated into the academic study of theology. The future of this college depends very much on our ability to sustain and preserve this holistic understanding of what theology is for, and how it benefits the Church in forming Christians.

One of the ways in which the College is extending its reach at the moment is with the inauguration of our 'St Stephen's House in North America' Campaign. We already have a covenant of friendship and co-operation with Nashotah House, and this summer we have launched a three-fold appeal in New York, thanks to the generous hospitality and support of Canon Carl Turner, an old member and the Rector of St Thomas' Fifth Avenue, and longstanding supporter of the College, the Very Revd Rick Lawson.

We hope to achieve funding for US students to undertake postgraduate study in Theology at Oxford, fund study leave for US clergy, academics, and students at the College, and establish a 'St Stephen's House in Residence' programme, delivering an intensive week of teaching and learning at parish venues in the US.

Elsewhere in this newsletter you will be reading about the retirement of Michèle Smith as college bursar after thirteen years in post. Michèle has been an outstanding bursar of the College during this time, transforming our finances and the built environment in a way that has sometimes seemed almost magical in her ability to conjure success out of what have been very demanding and stringent circumstances. I am hugely grateful to her for the chance this has given me to focus on academic and formational issues. SJE Arts has been the project perhaps closest to her heart, and I am delighted that she is remaining as its Director. ♥

Canon Dr Robin Ward



### The 1876 Society Thank you to all members of the 1876 Society for their support:

- Stuart Abram
- The Revd Dr Peter Anthony
- Andrew Archibald
- The Revd Paul Armstead
- The Revd Simon Atkinson
- The Bishop of Fulham
- The Bishop of Richborough
- The Revd Paul Barrow
- Kathy Bentin
- Dr Paul Beresford-Hill CBE
- The Revd Imogen Black
- The Dean of Ely
- John Booth
- The Revd Toby Boutle
- Professor Ian Boxall
- The Revd David Brecknell
- The Revd Canon Paul Burrows
- Mr Edward Cain
- The Revd Bruce Carlin
- The Revd John Caster
- The Revd Robert Coates
- Mariko Coelho
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- The Revd Robin Jones
- Malcolm Kemp
- Professor Peter Kraus
- The Revd Dr Tomas Krejci
- The Revd Dr Elizabeth Larson
- The Very Revd F Q Lawson
- Rachel Makari
- The Revd James Mather
- The Revd Alexander McGregor
- Chad Moody
- The Revd Grant Naylor
- The Revd Stephen Niechcial
- The Bishop of Burnley
- The Revd Giles Orton
- Muray Palmer
- Giulia Paoletti
- The Revd Graham Lunn & The Parish of St Michael and St Augustine, Beckenham
- The Parish of Saint Thomas Church Fifth Avenue, New York, USA
- Richard Parker
- The Revd Oliver Petter
- Dr Mark Philpott
- The Revd Hugh Pryse
- The Revd Jay Ridley
- The Revd Father David Stevenson
- Gillian Stroud
- Gregory Tucker
- The Revd Canon Carl Turner
- Ann Turner
- The Venerable Dirk van Leeuwen
- The Revd John Warner
- The Revd Ben Weitzmann
- Richard Yoder
- The Revd Dr Jennifer Zarek
- The Bishop of Chichester



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To join The 1876 Society, please email: [development@ssho.ox.ac.uk](mailto:development@ssho.ox.ac.uk)

### ORDINATIONS TO THE DIACONATE 2019

- Sam Aldred, The Collegiate and Parish Church of St Mary, Swansea and Brecon
- Tom Crowley, Eastbourne (St Saviour and St Peter), Chichester
- William Hamilton-Box, Hammersmith (St Luke), London
- Jay Hewitt, The Benefice of Barnsley, Central (St Edward the Confessor) (St George) (St Mary) (St Thomas), Leeds
- Alan Rimmer, Tottenham (St Mary the Virgin), London
- Yaroslav Walker, Ruislip (St Martin), London
- Sam Maginnis, Loughton (St John the Baptist) (St Gabriel) (St Nicholas), Chelmsford

### ORDINATIONS TO THE PRIESTHOOD 2019

- Chris Dingwall-Jones, Fleetwood (St Peter) (St David's Church Centre), Blackburn
- Rebecca Feeney, Standish (St Wilfrid), Blackburn
- Kvetoslav Krejci, Reading (St Giles with St Saviour), Oxford
- Blair Radford, Monk Bretton (St Paul), Leeds
- Michael Vyse, Worksop Priory (St Mary and St Cuthbert), Southwell and Nottingham
- James White, Ruislip (St Martin), London

The new GDPR rules prevent us from publishing examination results without the explicit consent of our students. So we congratulate all our students who successfully completed their courses in 2019, and who were awarded the Postgraduate Certificate in Education, the degrees of Master of Studies, Master of Science, Master of Philosophy and Doctor of Philosophy. We are very proud of all you have achieved during your time with us.

## HAVE YOU JOINED THE 1876 SOCIETY?

The 1876 Society is a membership society for alumni, friends and supporters of St Stephen's House, with the aim of providing a community of stewardship to help support the work and future of the College. Simply by becoming a member you are supporting this aim. You can join yourself, join in memory of someone, or gift someone else membership.

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Membership starts from just £10 per month.

Level of membership	Cowley member	Benson member	King member	Group or parish member
Membership eligibility	Current students & previous year's leavers	Those under 30	Those over 30	Open to corporate, parishes or other groups
Suggested monthly donation	£18.76 per annum	£16 a month	£22.50 a month	£79 a month (or £1,876 one-off cost)
<b>Special offer</b>	A special membership category of £10 per month is currently available for both Benson & King membership.			

## HOW TO GIVE TO ST STEPHEN'S HOUSE

**Online:** visit [www.ssho.ox.ac.uk](http://www.ssho.ox.ac.uk) and click on 'Support St Stephen's House'

**Cheque:** Made payable to 'The Society of St Stephen's House' and sent to 'Freepost ST STEPHEN'S HOUSE'

**Bank transfer:** *Account name:* The Society of St Stephen's House.  
*Account number:* 64617086. *Sort code:* 40-51-62

For tax-efficient giving from the USA, please visit [www.oxfordna.org/donate](http://www.oxfordna.org/donate)

## FOLLOW US ONLINE!

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