

Gazette Supplement



UNIVERSITY OF
OXFORD

Encaenia 2014

Congregation

25 June

1 Conferment of Honorary Degrees

The Public Orator made the following speeches in presenting the recipients of Honorary Degrees at the Encaenia held in the Sheldonian Theatre on Wednesday, 25 June:

Degree of Doctor of Divinity

THE MOST REVEREND DR KATHARINE JEFFERTS SCHORI

Presiding Bishop and Primate of the Episcopal Church in the United States of America and sixteen other nations

Haec quae agmen honorandorum hodie ducit prima ex omnibus qui ecclesiam Americanam rexerunt est sexus muliebris, prima in scientia naturali educata. Non enim semper fuit sacerdos; immo ineunte aetate oceanographiae, ut dicitur, studuit. Postea aeronavis regendae artem et didicit et exercendae licentiam accepit. Dicit autem Psalmista, 'Si sumptero pinnas meas diluculo et habitavero in extremis maris, etiam ibi manus tua deducet me et tenebit me dextera tua.' Ita haec et in marina profunditate et in altis aetheris oris, ut videtur, veritatem quaesivit, Deum repperit. Haud mirum igitur eam saepe in praedicatione adfirmare numen divinum in compagibus animalium subtilissimis et in cunctis rerum naturae partibus sive magnis sive minimis inesse. Docet homines ut bonus vilicus praedia curet ita nos oportere tellurem diligenter tueri; quapropter ut cum inopiam domesticam abolere nititur, ita omnem quaestum improbat qui non sine terrae maris aëris detrimento effici possit.

Pastor indefessa, saepius itinera facit quam domi restat. Ecclesia Americana divisa est in partes plus quam centum; quas omnes ipsa visit, id quod nemo e primatibus antea fecerat. Libros quattuor scripsit, episcopos plus quam sexaginta consecravit; tamen inter negotia quamvis onerosa corpus

cottidie currendo exercet, et cum otio fruitur (quod raro, ut puto, potest accidere), fit psalteria chordasque digitis numerat. Constat eam in rebus vel arduissimis mentem aequam tranquillamque servare. Multas ecclesiae Anglicanae provincias dissensionibus nonnumquam vehementibus sollicitari, quis est quin sciat? Haec autem voces inter se disputantium clementer auscultat, neglectos attendit, gregem suum ad caelestia regna non aeronave sed fidei et pietatis exemplo dirigit.

Praesento pastorum pastorem, servorum Dei servam, Catharinam Jefferts Schori, feminam reverendissimam, Ecclesiae Americanae episcopum praesidem primatem, ut admittatur honoris causa ad gradum Doctoris in Divinitate.

Admission by the Chancellor

Ovium tuarum custos sapientissima, quae ecclesiam tuam pari lenitate et firmitate gubernas, ego auctoritate mea et totius Universitatis admitto te ad gradum Doctoris in Divinitate honoris causa.

Paraphrase

The lady who leads the line of honorands today is both the first woman to have headed the American Episcopal Church and the first scientist. For she was not always a priest, but began her career as an oceanographer. Later she learnt how to fly and acquired her pilot's licence. But in the words of the psalm, 'If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there will thy hand lead me and thy right hand hold me.' Even so she sought for truth, it seems, in the depths of the sea and in the heights of the sky, and found God there. It is small surprise then that her preaching stresses God's presence in complex organic systems and in every part of nature from the greatest to the least. She affirms that we men and women should act as good stewards of the

earth entrusted to us, and accordingly she combines her concern for domestic poverty with opposition to development that is environmentally unsustainable.

An indefatigable pastor, she spends the greater part of her time on travel within the church. The Episcopal Church comprises more than a hundred dioceses, and she is the first of its primates to have visited all of them. She has written four books and consecrated more than sixty bishops; and yet however heavy the burden of business she goes running daily, and when she can find the time (which cannot be often) she takes her harp and sweeps her fingers across the strings. She is admired for keeping a level head and a calm presence in even the most trying circumstances. It is common knowledge that many provinces of the Anglican Communion are troubled by disagreements, some of them acute. But she listens to the disputants sympathetically, attends to the forgotten, and guides her flock heavenward not in an aeroplane but through setting an example of faith and devotion.

I present a shepherd of the shepherds, servant of the servants of God, the Most Reverend Katharine Jefferts Schori, Presiding Bishop and Primate of the Episcopal Church of the United States of America, to be admitted to the honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity.

Admission by the Chancellor

Wise guardian of your sheep, who direct your church with mildness and firmness combined, I on my own authority and that of the whole University admit you to the honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity.

Degree of Doctor of Letters

SIR ANISH KAPOOR

Artist and sculptor

Est Chicagoni prope lacum area quaedam ubi cives et peregrini spatium puerique ludere solent. Ibi in diem turba praetereuntium moratur, fulgore immensae cuiusdam molis allecta. Virum nunc produco qui hanc creavit Portamque Nubium vocavit. Spectatores non solum conformationis magnificentiam admirantur sed etiam superficiem avidè contuentur quae bratteis politis tecta velut speculum imaginem caeli et nubilorum et turrium insuper imminentium reddit. At propter operis convexitatem lineamenta rerum percussarum detorquentur, ita ut res cottidianae mutentur et oculis tamquam renovatis eas spectemus. Plerumque hic vir ingentia fecit; ita Mesopolitaniς Τέμενος creavit, quod dicitur omnes statuas in Britannia erectas magnitudine superare. Sed quamvis vasta sint huius viri opera, tamen venustas in eis et vel elegantia invenitur. Sic in illa compage Eboracensi fila metallica tanta subtilitate contextit ut dicant aliqui in suam mentem retia ad papiliones capiendos facta venisse. At licet simplicitatem saepe colat, contorta atque implicata etiam fabricavit; tanta est in eo varietas. Cum Olympiorum ludicrum Londini celebraretur, magistratus ei commiserunt ut monumentum faceret; quare turrim e chalybe construxit, quam Orbitam nuncupavit. Quod nomen motum indicat; et re vera metallum ipsum tanta vi instinctum esse videtur ut magno impetu exsurgere seseque torquere et flectere putares. Antea laudabantur sculptores quia figuras hominum tam bene excuderent ut molliter spirare viderentur, vivosque de marmore vultus ducerent; hic tamen neque homines neque res neque animalia imitatus merae formae merique nitoris pulchritudinem spectantibus pandit. Indiae natus, Britanniam diu incoluit, sed per suam artem linguam nullis finibus contentam loquitur, quam cunctae gentes pari facultate intellegunt diliguntque.

Praesento formarum inventorem ingeniosissimum, cuius opera amat populus laudant docti, Anish Kapoor, equitem auratum, ut admittatur honoris causa ad gradum Doctoris in Litteris.

Admission by the Chancellor

Sculptor insignissime, qui ingentibus animi viribus ingentia excogitavisti, ego auctoritate mea et totius Universitatis admitto te ad gradum Doctoris in Litteris honoris causa.

Paraphrase

Near the lake in Chicago there is a piazza where locals and tourists stroll and children play. Every day a cluster of passers-by can be seen lingering fascinatedly by a huge gleaming object. I now present the man who devised it and called it *Cloud Gate*. It is not only the grandeur of the structure that impresses these spectators; their gaze is also drawn to its surface of polished metal sheets, which like a looking-glass reflect clouds and sky and the surrounding skyscrapers. But the work's curved form means that the reflections are distorted, so that familiar things are made strange and we look upon them with freshened eyes. Our honorand is used to thinking big: for Middlesbrough he has devised *Temenos*, said to be the largest work of sculpture in the country. But even his vastest creations display grace and even elegance. Thus in *Temenos* he has woven metal wires together with such delicacy as to make some people think of butterfly nets. Often he aims for a kind of simplicity; sometimes, though, he has made involved and complicated constructions, such is the range of his imagination. Commissioned to design a monument to mark the London Olympic Games, he built a tower of steel, calling it *Orbit*. That name implies motion, and indeed he has put such dynamism into the very metal that it seems to surge up, bend, and twist energetically. In the past sculptors were praised, as in Virgil's *Aeneid*, for making bronzes so realistic that they appeared to breathe, or for drawing living faces out of marble; but here is one who represents neither people nor animals nor objects, revealing instead the beauty of pure form and sheen. Indian born, he has long lived among us, but his art speaks a language that knows no borders, one that all nations can equally understand and enjoy.

I present a brilliant shape-maker, whose works delight the people and impress the cognoscenti, Sir Anish Kapoor, to be admitted to the honorary degree of Doctor of Letters.

Admission by the Chancellor

Eminent sculptor, who with mighty imagination have designed mighty things, I on my own authority and that of the whole University admit you to the honorary degree of Doctor of Letters.

MR ROBERT SILVERS

Editor and co-founder, New York Review of Books

Non paucos quidem his sollemnibus celebravimus, rarissime tamen hominem qui rem vere unicam gessit, quam antea effecit nemo nec quisquam, ut credo, iterum efficiet. Quomodo hunc virum satis laudem, qui ephemeridem creavit, annos plus quam quinquaginta fere solus sustinuit, tanta prudentia et sagacitate composuit atque auxit ut primum locum inter commentarios de litteris anglie scriptos iamdiu occupet? Existimatoris ars est libros aestimare, at non minoris momenti ars est existimatores eligendi; quam hic adhuc iuvenis Lutetiae didicit, tum patriam regressus summa peritia exercuit. Ephemeris illa Americam sapit, sapit Novum Eboracum, sed mens huius viri curiosior est quam ut ullis finibus contineri possit: et libri iudicati et librorum iudices a partibus fere omnibus orbis terrarum feruntur. Ingenio quodam divino hic eum scriptorem optat qui opus quodque optime iudicare possit, neque Oxonienses neglexit: immo neminem fortasse nostris Encaeniis honestavimus qui tot e spectatoribus tanta mercede conduxit. Memini vero me in uno commentario tres Balliolenses legisse, e quibus duo idem poema vatis illius egregii apud Aedem Christi educati attulerunt. Mercennarios suos hic leni manu dirigit (experto credite); paucas proponit quaestiones, eas tamen acutissimas. Dixit auctor Oxoniensis Americanos, si boni essent, post mortem Lutetiam ire; hic tamen a Francogallia iamdiu discessit, senectute semper virenti apud patriam nunc fruitur, aeternum illud Elysium colet quod est magnarum rerum apud homines recordatio.

Praesento editorum principem, litterarum fautorem indefessum, Robertum Silvers, *Commentariorum Novo-Eboracensium* fundatorem et gubernatorem, ut admittatur honoris causa ad gradum Doctoris in Litteris.

Admission by the Chancellor

Librorum arbiter praestantissime, qui conspectu benigno litteras omnium gentium tueris, ego auctoritate mea et totius Universitatis admitto te ad gradum Doctoris in Litteris honoris causa.

Paraphrase

Despite the fair number of distinguished people whom we have honoured at Encaenia, it is rare to find one whose achievement has been truly unique – who has done something which no one has done before, and which is unlikely ever to be done again. How am I adequately to praise the present honorand, who has founded a journal, sustained it almost single-handed

for more than half a century, and built it up with such shrewdness of judgement that it has for many years now held the first place among intellectual publications in the English-speaking world? The art of the critic is to assess books, but no less important is the art of picking the critic. It is one which our honorand learnt as a young man in Paris, and then displayed to full effect back in his native land. *The New York Review* has the flavour of the nation, and indeed of the city, from which it comes, but the range of its editor's curiosity knows no boundaries, and he draws his reviewers and the books for review alike from almost every corner of the world. He has an apparently magic gift for finding the critic best suited to each book, nor has he forgotten Oxford; it may well be the case that no one honoured at this annual event has paid so many of his audience so well. Indeed, I remember one number which featured three Balliol men, of whom two quoted from the same poem by W H Auden (himself a Christ Church man). This is an editor who guides his hirelings with a gentle hand (as I can testify from experience); he raises only a few points about the copy, but those very sharp. An Oxonian author wrote that good Americans go to Paris when they die, but we have here one whose French period is long past, who now enjoys an evergreen maturity in his own country, and who will always live in that Elysium which is the memory of great achievement.

I present a prince of editors, an indefatigable champion of letters, Robert Silvers, founder and guiding spirit of *The New York Review of Books*, to be admitted to the honorary degree of Doctor of Letters.

Admission by the Chancellor

Eminent arbiter of literature, whose humane gaze surveys the writings of all nations, I on my own authority and that of the whole University admit you to the honorary degree of Doctor of Letters.

Degree of Doctor of Science

PROFESSOR JEAN-MARIE LEHN

Honorary Professor of Chemistry, Collège de France, and Emeritus Professor, Strasbourg

Sculptorem hodie iam honestavimus, mox honestabimus inventorem musicae. Ecce chimicus qui suam scientiam et huius et illius arti comparavit. Ipse clavicymbalum dextere canit, et opera Arnoldi Schoenberg atque Albani Berg praecipue admirari dicitur; ex quo facile colligere possis eum et compagibus rerum implicatissimis gaudere et difficultates a plerisque declinatas acriter offendere. Chimicos idcirco esse artifices dicit quia non solum res scrutari atque explicare sed etiam novam naturam creare quaerant. Itaque chimiam notis musicis comparat, quas fidicen ante intellegere et in sonos convertere non potest quam descripsit inventor.

Ipsum scit vulgus e quo tempore mundus magno illo fragore sit creatus atomos se in moleculas collegisse, e moleculis res varias et multiplices esse fictas. Multae tamen sunt res hominibus utilissimae quae naturaliter non creantur; quare chimicis opus est ut materies e qua omnia facta sunt intellegi mutari temperari possit. Lucretius de magistro suo 'deus ille fuit, deus' clamavit, quia rerum naturam explicare potuisset; tanto magis qui artem rerum novandarum cognoscunt, ei potestate quasi divina uti videntur. In qua arte hic vir maxime excellit; atqui dicit se minus moleculas ipsum disponere quam eis quasi suadere ut sua sponte nova fabricent. Caveas quidem construxit (sic docti eas vocant), non tamen ut moleculae tamquam in carcere coerceantur sed ut a plagis externis protegantur. Vir maxime ipse laudandus, studiosos chimiae propter hoc laudat: quae facta sunt, invenire quaerunt; quae sunt in praesenti, explorant; ad ea quae posthac fient, prospiciunt.

Praesento rerum minimarum scrutatorem oculatissimum, Iohannem Marium Lehn, apud Universitatem Argentoratensem quondam professorem, Collegio Francogallico honoris causa adscriptum, praemio Nobeliano nobilitatum, ut admittatur honoris causa ad gradum Doctoris in Scientia.

Admission by the Chancellor

Magister insignissime, qui supra moleculas dicionem benevolenter exerces, ego auctoritate mea et totius Universitatis admitto te ad gradum Doctoris in Scientia honoris causa.

Paraphrase

We have already awarded a degree today to a sculptor, and shall shortly award another to a composer. Here is a chemist who has compared his own subject to both their arts. He is himself an excellent pianist, and is said to be an especial admirer of Berg and Schoenberg; from which one may readily deduce both that he enjoys complex structures and that he readily encounters difficulties that most people shun. He argues that chemists are artists because their task is not only to discover and analyse but also to create. And thus he compares chemistry to a musical score which the player reads and interprets but which must also be composed.

Even the layman knows that from the time of the big bang atoms have coalesced into molecules, and molecules have developed into more diverse and complex structures. But many chemicals of great benefit to humanity are not found in nature, and chemists are accordingly needed to understand material phenomena and to change and control them. Lucretius declared that his own master was 'a god, a god, I say', for having understood the nature of matter; all the more do those who possess the art of making new matter seem to have a kind of godlike power. Our honorand excels in this art, and yet he describes it as less a matter of organising molecules than of persuading them to organise themselves into new structures. He has built 'cages' (as the scientists call them), not however to imprison his molecules but to protect them by keeping external forces out. Deserving in himself of the highest praise, he praises his subject for interrogating the past, exploring the present, and working toward the future.

I present a keen-eyed investigator of small things, Jean-Marie Lehn, Emeritus Professor of Chemistry at the University of Strasbourg, Emeritus Professor at the Collège de France, Nobel Laureate, to be admitted to the honorary degree of Doctor of Science.

Admission by the Chancellor

Eminent master, who exercise a benign sway over the molecules, I on my own authority and that of the whole University admit you to the honorary degree of Doctor of Science.

Degree of Doctor of Music

SIR HARRISON BIRTWISTLE

Composer

Vergilius in *Georgicis* narrat Orphea ad Stygia regna descendisse ut Eurydicen suam amissam ad vitam reduceret; sed postquam manes et Tartarus cantus dulcedine placavisset, ardore suo victum uxorem respexisset, quod vetuisset Proserpina, eamque iterum ad inferos esse detractam. Qua historia poeta quantum ad pectora commovenda et amor valeat et musica ostendere videtur. Recte igitur vir quem nunc produco Orphei personam induit, quippe qui cum leges musicas perfecte didicerit tum artem suam ad affectus hominum repraesentandos maxima peritia adhibeat. Graecis in litteris materiam semel et saepius reperit: etiam de Minotauro fabulam composuit, in qua partes Ariadnae prima egit cantatrix Oxoniensis. Ibi cruciatum semihominis in beluae forma inclusi, semiferi animum humanum possidentis modis valentibus exprimit. A violentia quidem et crudelitate in fictionibus non abhorret: ita in una e fabulis per rixas puparum – quas forsitan comicas putares – metum et miserationem commovet; terrorem etiam *πανικόν* in auditoribus priscis numeris assuetis excitavit. Sonos sane creat duos tetricos complexos, atqui aliquando se ad leniora vertit. Ex Ultima illa Cena narrationem musicam fecit, quae hac in urbe plausu fere omnium acta est. Praeterea quamvis existimatores irae exprimendae facultatem laudent, est quaedam in eo tristitia. Lamentationem de morte blattarum nuper finxit, quam canunt duodecim mulierum voces, tres fiducinas, tibia unica; tibia clariora ipse canit, cuius in sono aliquid plangoris fere semper continetur. Nec mirum est eum illum fiducinam praesertim laudare qui regnante Iacobo Primo se semper dolere dicebat. Denique sive audientes arrigat sive commovet sive conturbat, summum ingenium summae arti coniungit. Quem octoginta annos mox completurum grato animo salutamus.

Praesento Orphea reducem, Melpomenes antistitem sollertissimum, Harrison Birtwistle, equitem auratum, eximii honoris ordinis comitem, ut admittatur honoris causa ad gradum Doctoris in Musica.

Admission by the Chancellor

Musicae magister artificiosissime, qui numeris tuis sorores ex Helicone ad Britanniam arcessivisti, ego auctoritate mea et totius Universitatis admitto te ad gradum Doctoris in Musica honoris causa.

Paraphrase

Virgil tells in the *Georgics* that Orpheus descended to the realm of Hades to bring his lost Eurydice back to life again; but after he had enchanted Hell and its denizens by the beauty of his singing, he was overcome by his passion and looked back at his wife (which Proserpina had forbidden), and she was drawn down again to the underworld. Through this story the poet seems to express the power of both music and love over the human spirit. It is appropriate, then, that the man whom I now present has put on *The Mask of Orpheus*, for his musical craftsmanship is consummate, and he applies this skill to the depiction of human emotion. He has recurrently found inspiration in Greek myth, for example in his opera *The Minotaur*, in which the role of Ariadne was created by an Oxford graduate. Here he gives powerful expression to the agony of one who is a half-man enclosed in the form of a beast and a half-beast with the feelings of a man. He does not shrink from representing cruelty and violence: thus in *Punch and Judy* he takes what might seem to be a comic theme, the quarrels of puppets, and excites pity and terror from them; and he has been known to inspire *Panic* in listeners of conservative disposition. His sound world is difficult, angular and complex, but at times he strikes a gentler note. He has turned *The Last Supper* into the subject of an opera, one that was glowingly reviewed when it was performed in this city. Besides, however much the experts praise the anger conveyed by his music, there is a streak of melancholy in him too. He has recently composed a *Moth Requiem*, for twelve female voices, three harps and one flute; his own instrument, the clarinet, almost always has some flavour of plangency. It is no surprise that he greatly admires the Jacobean lutenist Dowland, who described himself as 'semper dolens' (ever grieving). But whether he is challenging, disturbing or moving his audience, he combines craft and inspiration in the highest degree. We hail him with gratitude in this his eightieth birthday year.

I present an Orpheus of our time, a most skilled priest of Melpomene, Sir Harrison Birtwistle, CH, to be admitted to the honorary degree of Doctor of Music.

Admission by the Chancellor

Masterly and inventive composer, whose strains have summoned the Muses from Helicon to Britain, I on my own authority and that of the whole University admit you to the honorary degree of Doctor of Music.

2 Encaenia

The Public Orator delivered the Creweian Oration 'in commemoration of the Benefactors of the University according to the intention of the Right Honourable Nathaniel, Lord Crewe, Bishop of Durham'.

Orator: *Honoratissime Domine Cancellarie, licetne anglice loqui?*

Chancellor: *Licet.*

Orator:

Mr Eliot of Merton didn't think much of the spring. 'April is the cruellest month,' he famously observed, a curious opinion from one who has endured an English February. In another poem he described 'the juvenescence of the year... depraved May, dogwood and chestnut, flowering judas'. Luckily he never got round to telling us what he thought of June. But June is surely a good time for celebration, as we bring the academic year to a colourful conclusion. Mr Eliot opened yet another of his bracing ditties with the words, 'In my beginning is my end.' They seem to be a bit down in the mouth south of the High. Coming as it does from North Oxford, this helpful and empowering oration would like to turn that round: in our end is our beginning. For today, as we remember the benefactions of the past, we also express our thanks for the benefactions of the present time, and look forward to the future that they will make possible. Encaenia means renewal, as your programme books explain; indeed this useful and educative oration hastens to point out that it is in fact a plural noun: renewals. We think of the many, many new graduates and undergraduates who will soon be coming up for the first time, and the multiplicity of fresh things always happening here, like the countless flame-like shoots of green that prick the surface of ploughland in the spring.

When I was an undergraduate, at the end of the sixties, my college's JCR subscribed to *China Pictorial* and *China Reconstructs*, magazines supplied free by the legation of the People's Republic, which explained how guided by the principles of Mao Tse-Tung thought the workers were creating an earthly paradise. The point at which I realised that it couldn't all be true was when they printed a photograph of some smiling people in boiler suits with the caption, 'The peasants are joyously paying their taxes.' That has not been true since the creation of the world. But we have it on good authority that 'God loveth a cheerful giver', and substantial rewards are offered for compliance. You can check with the Presiding Bishop, but I think you'll find that the offer is still available. Terms

and conditions apply. At all events, our benefactors give cheerfully and indeed joyously. Dr James Martin, the James Martin 21st Century Foundation and the James Martin 21st Century Research Foundation have made another grand gift for the continued support of the Oxford Martin School. Dr Martin himself died a year and a day ago, on Midsummer's Day, but Mrs Lillian Martin remains closely involved with the school that he founded, and we remember him gratefully as one of the largest benefactors to the University in its history. The Institute for Strategic Dialogue has made a generous donation for the Weidenfeld Scholarship and Leadership Programme and the Humanitas Visiting Professorship Programme. Lord Weidenfeld himself will celebrate his 95th birthday in September.

You may have noticed that the number of honorands is smaller than usual. Readers of that Oxford classic, Max Beerbohm's *Zuleika Dobson*, may recall the Junta Club, which was so exclusive that it became reduced to only one member, and at its meetings the Duke of Dorset dined alone. Occasionally he proposed a new member, but when he mulled the idea over, honesty compelled him to recognise that the candidate in question was not as brilliant, handsome and aristocratic as himself, and he had to drop – with what regret – a blackball into the urn. You may think that we have brought a similar spirit to honorary degrees, and that the world has only produced five people who meet our exacting standards. In fact, we were intending to honour Professor Wally Broecker, the eminent earth and climate scientist; but where's Wally? The reason is a sad one: a family illness has kept him at home. But we hope to celebrate his achievement next year. It is a shame that he is not present to hear about the generous gift to the Department of Earth Sciences from Schlumberger Limited of multiple licences of its interpretation software. The department explains that this will transform its researchers' work in understanding how matter is trapped in conventional and unconventional accumulations in basins. That tends to happen in student digs.

Meanwhile our students continue to accumulate conventional and unconventional matter in their heads. We take pride in our tutorial method of teaching (perhaps a little complacently at times). But I can offer a tribute from across the ocean. An American friend has told me that she used to wonder why there were so many Limeys in the *New York Review of Books*, Oxford people especially. Then she found the explanation: it was the essay crisis. The weekly tutorial makes one assimilate

material quickly and assess it fluently with some superficial appearance of plausibility. Believe that or not, as you choose; but what we do believe in is teaching and learning. The Kai Feng Foundation has made a liberal donation for the Oxford-Kaifeng Scholarships, the first fully endowed scholarship scheme for Chinese students here. The Pershing Square Foundation has munificently endowed up to five Saïd Business School Scholarships for the MBA component of the 1+1 programme, designed to help outstanding young people from across the world to develop their potential as leaders. It is not only the brilliant students who matter – perhaps it is not even the brilliant ones who matter most – but of course we delight to celebrate exceptional success. A few of our prizewinners are on show for this day only at a theatre very near you. Their achievements are described in your programmes. I ask them to stand now to receive your applause.

Your applause has shown its usual warmth. There will be no need to emulate the family values of President Kim Jong Un, who executed his uncle last autumn for clapping half-heartedly – and for putting the President's portrait in a shady corner. We have a fine portrait of the Chancellor in the University Offices, and come to think of it, it isn't very well lit. Back in Wellington Square some revanchist running dog is trembling even as I speak.

As usual, league tables of universities have appeared, and as usual, they differ. Connoisseurs of the subtly modulated insult may have appreciated the news that one of them has found Eton College to be the sixth-best school in Berkshire. It happens to all of us. In the last year one table has made us the best university outside California, another the best university outside Massachusetts, and another the fourth best within 70 miles of Charing Cross. But accentuating the positive, as this manly and uplifting oration always does, we note that we have beaten every university in the world in at least one of these leagues. Of course, the differences between leading institutions are in fractions of a percentage point, well inside the limits of statistical error, but it may be worth mentioning that the QS rankings put our humanities first in the world by an unusually large margin. It is also pleasing to note that another British university took the second place.

Statistics also show that a majority of the audience are still awake at the end of Encaenia. But for the benefit of an important minority I hasten now to celebrate the munificent gift from the Sir Jules Thorn Charitable Trust for the Sir Jules Thorn Sleep and Circadian Neuroscience Institute, the

work of which promises to have important consequences for health and the treatment of disease. If you fancy a summer afternoon snooze, we have lovely places in which you can enjoy it. Now some people think that Cambridge is more beautiful than Oxford. The Cambridge architects who designed Wellington Square, the Zoology Building and the Sacher Building on Longwall were no doubt under instructions to keep it that way. But there is no doubting that we have the best Botanic Garden, and it is a pleasure to note the bequest from the late Mrs Mary Alexander to set up an endowment for the Garden and the Harcourt Arboretum.

The Rhodes Trust has celebrated the 110th anniversary of the Rhodes Scholarships in fine style, with an event that drew 900 scholars and their guests back to this city. And the greatest cause for celebration has been the immensely generous, indeed transformational, gift to the Trust from John and Marcy McCall MacBain and the McCall MacBain Foundation. It is fitting in this commemorative year that another Rhodes Scholar should have risen to lead his country, Mr Tony Abbott of Queen's winning a general election to become Prime Minister of Australia. He is best known over here for observing that a top education doesn't make you the suppository of all wisdom. When I studied philosophy, I was taught that a proposition could not validate itself, but I think I may have found the exception. At least he didn't read English. Mr Abbott is not the first or even the second Oxonian to have reached the Australian premiership: Mr Fraser of Magdalen and Mr Hawke of Univ, another Rhodes Scholar, were before him. Mr Hawke indeed told his nation that Mr Fraser had gone soft through spending time among the Poms, and then ruined the whole effect by adding that he, Mr Hawke, had got a better degree here than Mr Fraser had. Statesmen are competitive that way. Jeremy Paxman, educated in another place but at one time resident in this city, has just retired from *Newsnight*, and it was recalled that he once asked Mr Johnson of Balliol if it rankled that he had only managed a 2:1, while Mr Cameron of Brasenose had got a first. 'Well, it would,' he replied, 'if it wasn't that his first was in PPE.'

The European Elections were described by the media as historic. It is indeed that rarity, a national election won by a party not under Oxford leadership. In general elections, that has happened only twice since the 1930s. Mr Farage was educated in the University of Life. Life – always our most dangerous competitor. At least Oxford-led parties took the second and third places. And it would be ungracious not to mention the sterling efforts of two parties which have preferred

to put themselves under Cambridge leadership – the Liberal Democrats and the British National Party. We could have told them. Across the Atlantic, a survey of 250 top officials in the Obama administration has found that more of them have graduate degrees from us than from any public university in the USA itself. Obamacare has had a lot of problems, but the President has recently appointed a new health secretary, yet another Rhodes Scholar, Ms Sylvia Mathews Burwell of Worcester, and it now seems to be going rather well. Surely these things must be related.

The Fernside Trust has made a magnificent benefaction to endow Dean Ireland's Professorship of the Exegesis of Holy Scripture in perpetuity. We are sure that the professor's exegesis will be authoritative; not as authoritative, however, as that supplied to the Creationism Museum in Petersburg, Kentucky, last summer, when one of its employees was struck by lightning. Our scientists too look heavenward: Sir Michael Hintze through the Hintze Family Charitable Foundation has made a splendid gift for the creation of the University of Oxford Centre for Astrophysical Surveys. Back on planet Earth Professor Robin Dunbar and Rafael Wlodarski in the Department of Experimental Psychology have been investigating why we kiss. 'Kissing in human sexual relationships is incredibly prevalent,' they exclusively reveal, 'and we are still not exactly sure why it is so widespread or what purpose it serves.' If they would care to send a researchette round to my place, I may be able to help. One theory, they add, is that kissing 'somehow helps to assess the genetic quality of potential mates' (ha, we've all done that in our time), but they also consider the theory that kissing 'is used to increase arousal' (oh, surely not).

Meanwhile, Professor Dawkins has been bidding us not to tell children the story about the girl who kissed a frog and turned it into a prince, on the grounds that the process is statistically too improbable. I've long doubted that frogs turn into princes, but I had never guessed that this was the reason. At least he doesn't teach biology. Oh sorry, he does. Meanwhile, in the past months one Oxford graduate has acquired a throne – King Philippe of Trinity and Belgium – and another, Ms Amal Alamuddin of St Hugh's, has got engaged to George Clooney. I think we can guess which achievement has excited the greater envy. Anyway, however problematic the zoomorphology of batrachian royal metamorphosis, a prince can still turn into a king and a girl can still find her prince.

In another corner of the psychology department Professor Charles Spence studies how the perception of taste can be manipulated, and he has been advising us how to give a good party. If you put gin in a heavy glass, you can get away with serving a cheaper brand. If the crisps are stale, make crunching noises and your guests will believe them to be fresh. When selecting the background music, avoid German techno: it makes people drink more (actually *Eine Kleine Nachtmusik* was more what I had in mind). Riesling seems classier if the lighting is pink, and Christmas pudding tastier if *Winter Wonderland* is playing (no, please). So next time you have folks round, take a few tips from the Pippa Middleton of the Science Area – or should that be the Ebenezer Scrooge? But I should be careful with these comparisons. Last year, in praising Professor David Macdonald, the Director of the Wildlife Conservation Research Unit, who made the meerkat famous and is now trying to do the same for the Bornean clouded leopard, I called him the Max Clifford of the animal world. I would not wish to be misunderstood.

The New Year brought the Order of Merit to Professor Martin West, in recognition of his services to Greek scholarship. The last classicist to receive this exceptional honour was Sir Ronald Syme, Camden Professor of Ancient History, in 1976, and the last Hellenist was Gilbert Murray, Regius Professor of Greek, in 1941. We like to keep these things in the family. The New Year Honours also brought a damehood to Professor Frances Kirwan, knighthoods to Professor Paul Collier, Dr Noel Malcolm and Professor Peter Ratcliffe, CBEs to Professors Marian Dawkins and John Kay, the OBE to Ceridwen Roberts, and MBEs to Karen Hewitt and Dr Marios Papadopoulos. In the Birthday Honours Professors Colin Blakemore, John Pethica and Richard Sorabji have been knighted, Professor Martin Biddle has received a CBE, John Simpson an OBE and Dr Damian Jenkins an MBE. The Royal Society has elected to its fellowship Professors Dorothy Bishop, Marian Dawkins, Liam Dolan, Patrik Rorsman, Rajesh Thakker and Anthony Watts, and the British Academy Professors Mary Dalrymple, John Gardner, Vincent Gillespie, John Hawthorne, Julia Lee-Thorp, Colin Mayer, Kevin O'Rourke and Jenny Ogza. We congratulate them all.

Three college heads retire this summer, Frances Cairncross as Rector of Exeter, Christopher Lewis as Dean of Christ Church and Sheila Forbes as Principal of St Hilda's. Their successors are Sir Rick Trainor, Canon Martyn Percy and Sir Gordon Duff. Other farewells are for ever, and as always, I call to

mind those friends and colleagues who have died in the past year, among whom were John Albery, Master of University College, Anne Barton, Fellow of New College, Michael Brock, Warden of Nuffield, Marilyn Butler, Rector of Exeter, Lorna Casselton, Fellow of St Cross, Alan Cowey, Fellow of Lincoln, John Enos, Fellow of Magdalen, Ellis Evans, Fellow of Jesus, Seamus Heaney, Fellow of Magdalen, James Martin, benefactor, Borivoje Minakovic, Fellow of Linacre, John Moffatt, Provost of Queen's, James Naughton, Fellow of St Edmund Hall, Ernest Nicholson, Provost of Oriel, Christina Roaf, Fellow of Somerville, Geoffrey Smith, Fellow of St Cross, Michael Sullivan, Fellow of St Catherine's, Joan Thirsk, Fellow of St Hilda's, and Geoffrey Young, Fellow of Jesus. *Requiescant in pace et in aeternum luceat eis Dominus Illuminatio Mea.*

While mourning the dead, we can also take pleasure in the longevity that our medical researchers have played their part in increasing. At least one of those whom I have just commemorated reached the age of 98, and one of those last year 99. I do not know which Oxford don has lived longest; perhaps someone will tell me in time for next year's oration. Bertrand Hallward, a don at Cambridge and then Vice-Chancellor of Nottingham, reached 102, which shows that not all vice-chancellors are broken by the weight of their labours. When Martin Routh died at the age of 99, having been President of Magdalen for 63 years, he had lived longer than any other college head. That record, established in 1854, stood until last autumn, when it was broken by Sally Chilver, former Principal of LMH, whose centenary falls early in August. Next year we look forward to celebrating the moment at which the Visitor of University College, Oriel and Christ Church surpasses her great-great-grandmother Queen Victoria as the longest-serving occupant of the visitorial office. But all of these must yield to an alumna of LMH, Margaret Wileman, former Principal of Hughes Hall, Cambridge, who is 105, at least until her next birthday in four weeks' time. So Cambridge wins this competition, with a little help from ourselves.

Even the longest life, however, is short set against the history of this university and, as we hope, with the yet longer story still to come. That brings me back to T S Eliot. Why did he think April the cruellest month? Because it mixes desire and memory, he said; the birth of the new is the death of the old. Yet desire and memory are both good things: we remember our past with gratitude, and we look forward desiringly to the adventure which is the future. And how wise Mr Eliot was, after all: for in my beginning, as you see, is my end.

