



Gazette supplement

Chancellor's Special Honorary Degree Ceremony

Degree of Doctor of Civil Law

- Lady Elish Angiolini 366
- Secretary John Kerry 367
- Dinah Rose 368
- Professor Irene Tracey 369

Degree of Doctor of Letters

- Professor Sir John Curtice 370
- Christina Lamb 371
- Dr Dominic Sandbrook 372

Degree of Doctor of Science

- Isabella Tree 373

The Public Orator made the following speeches in presenting the recipients of honorary degrees at the Chancellor's Special Honorary Degree Ceremony on Tuesday, 24 February 2026.

Degree of Doctor of Civil Law

LADY ELISH ANGIOLINI

Igitur doctissimis viris proficisci placuit a lege, haud scio an recte, si modo, ut idem definiunt, lex est ratio summa insita in natura, quae iubet ea, quae facienda sunt, prohibetque contraria. eadem ratio cum est in hominis mente confirmata et confecta, lex est.

Divinitate supra modo visa¹ mos est nobis a lege exordiri. Et aliter exemplum cepimus – ita enim ipse Cicero de primo principio disserit valde controverso, iustitia dico. Testem ego feminam, immo Dominam, produco quae iamdiu locum firmum tenet, in alta tamen sententia et actione ascendit, momentum verum effecit. Quo itinere tectum illud vitreum traiecit, quod latum durumque agnovimus torvumque in officia ecclesiae et reipublicae, iudicii et academiae refulgere, quod et Scotiam eius patriam et ceteras partes regni nostri diffusi compressas obtexit. Aetate iam iuvenili iuribus incubuit, quae puellula occasione oblata adhiberi, sed praetermissa aliquando deficere, accurate observasset. Testis etiam adolescens eadem in iudicio maleficii viderat cum de reo tum de testibus parum idonee tractari; quod ad mitigandum, ut in persequendo ita in defensione summa ope nixa, semper ad iura utriusque partis spectavit. Dixit Horatius, ‘quem fors dierum cumque dabit lucro appone.’ Iam discipula haec, olim ex casu ferriviario aegre superstes, iuste quidem intellexit omnem quemque dierum maximi aestimandum. Quod quantum Universitati et alibi profuit. Plus decem annos collegium suum gubernatum rexit, multifaria subsellia excolenda corroboranda clare suffragata curavit, vigiles custodesque nostros acriter scrutata intento animo censuit.

Praesento iurisperitam nuper inter omnes spectatissimam, quae Academiam et Rempublicam edocuit, et discipulos et collegas rectos monuit, iuventuti et senioribus curatis profuit, Dominam Elish Franciscam Angiolini, Dominam Antiquissimo et Nobilissimo Ordini Cardui adscriptam, Excellentissimi Ordinis Imperii Britannici Dominam Commendatricem, nuper Collegii Sancti Hugonis Principalem, ut admittatur honoris causa ad gradum Doctoris in Iure Civili.

Doctorum et indagatorum, discipulorum et civium firma amica, quae impigre et efficienter apud nos in Universitate et in ordinibus custodum multis praesedisti, ego auctoritate mea et totius Universitatis admitto te ad gradum Doctoris in Iure Civili honoris causa.

¹ Sursum oculi...

Paraphrase

Well then, the most learned men have determined to begin with Law, and it would seem that they are right, if, according to their definition, Law is the highest reason, implanted in nature, which commands what ought to be done and forbids the opposite. This reason, when firmly fixed and fully developed in the human mind, is Law.

It is our custom, if Divinity is seen only above our heads¹, to begin with Law.² And we are in excellent company, as we see in Cicero's words on that fundamental yet much contested human value, justice. I bring before you a distinguished witness, a Lady – note the capital letter – whose feet have long been firmly established on Terra Firma,³ but whose thoughts and actions have reached great heights of distinction and considerable moment. Her journey has traversed the wide and adamant glass ceiling that lowered its glare upon the institutions of church and state, of judiciary and academia, and over both her native Scotland and the rest of our united and devolved realms. Her choice of a career in Law came early; at a tender age she had an opportunity to observe its workings, and to take a critical view of its shortcomings. As a teenage witness in a burglary trial she observed the inadequate attention accorded to accused, victims and witnesses, a problem she has done much to alleviate as prosecutor and defender, while never losing her regard for the due rights of both wronged and wrongdoers. Horace famously said, ‘whatever kind of day Fortune grants you, put it in the profit column.’ As a young trainee our honorand, surviving a serious train accident, had good cause to value every moment fate might grant her, to make the most, as she put it, of each and every day. And so many have been the beneficiaries of that determination both inside and outside the University. For over a decade she steered the governance of her college. The modernising and strengthening of courts of numerous kinds have received her support and clear direction, and our agencies of law-enforcement have seen the rigour of her attention and her stern assessment.

I present a highly respected former leading advocate, one who has instructed government and academy, advised rulers and ruled, and protected and benefited young and old, Lady Elish Frances Angiolini, LT, DBE, KC, recently Principal of St Hugh's, for admission to the honorary degree of Doctor of Civil Law.

Admission by the Chancellor

Firm friend of teachers, researchers, students and citizens, who have been an energetic and effective force both in our University and at many levels of our nation's law-enforcement, on my own authority and that of the whole University I admit you to the honorary degree of Doctor of Civil Law.

¹ Please look up to the ceiling ...

² The order for presentation of honorary doctorates follows the traditional seniority of the faculties: Divinity, Civil Law, Medicine, Letters, Science, Music.

³ Our honorand joined Terra Firma Chambers, Edinburgh, in 2011.

SECRETARY JOHN KERRY

Iamque rubescebat stellis Aurora fugatis ...

Quae lux divina oppidis urbibusque permultis Americanis nomen impertivit. Num quando tamen clarius relucebatur quam ex oppido Coloratensi, ubi natus est hic quem nunc produco. Saepe homines in re publica illustres honoravimus. Sed longius erat hodie omnia indicare quae confecit hic virium civilium defensor, iurisconsultus, veteranus ornatus, rerum publicarum et legationum peritus, qui ante omnia res ac fortunas gentium, immo mundi totius, consilio usus tractavit, qui multis capax imperii plane videbatur. Vox eius omnem quemque oratorem in obscurum facile summo veret, ut quae in acie adhibita multum meruerit. Bellum, ut dicit, verum cum insulso semper conferebat. In Vietnamia licet persaepe mores repugnarent, atrociter ageretur, cum sociis munere quidem perfunctus militavit, sacramento adactus. Postquam ibi eminuit itidem se in bello eodem castigando audacem aptumque praebuit: nullam enim normam ibi adesse qua iuvenes morti condonari deberent. Deinde iuris reipublicaeque antistes cursum iniiit, in quo sui potens visus est, officii observans, patriae consulens. Aliquando ei dissentitum est vel etiam obstitum, postremo tamen per Congressum Senatūque processit, ut in res maximi momenti duceretur – populi salutem dico et aerarii, civitatum, gentium maxime diversarum, necnon naturae et mundi procuracionem valde necessariam. Secretarium eum Civitatis creatum audimus semper directe tetendisse, ut putares eum ‘eo die neminem tibi velle anteponeere.’ Atenim in cursu vitae tam longo, tam vario modo prospere modo infauste processit. Sed hunc libenter honoramus ut qui honestus, firmus, animo denique integer errores confiteri nunquam nollet.

Talem praesento, qui hoc certum habet, quicquid viti in patria sua vel alibi hodie adesse videatur in melius sanari posse dummodo ea respiciantur quae cives, quae gentes vere deceant, Iohannem Forbes Kerry, Praeclari Ordinis Sancti Michaelis et Sancti Georgii Magnae Crucis equitem, Praesidis Nomismate Libertatis decoratum, ut admittatur honoris causa ad gradum Doctoris in Iure Civili.

Dux probe, huius quoque regni amice, defensor egregie civitatis popularis, rationis, mundi nostri, potestatis denique iuste ac prudenter adhibitae, ego auctoritate mea et totius Universitatis admitto te ad gradum Doctoris in Iure Civili honoris causa.

Paraphrase

And now the dawn was glowing, putting stars to flight ...

The divine first light of day has given her name to many a town and city in America, but when was her lustre more brightly reflected than in Aurora, Colorado, the birth place of the man I now bring before you? We have often honoured those who have distinguished themselves in public life. But I would be hard tasked to list here all the achievements of this defender of democratic values, lawyer, decorated military veteran, statesman, negotiator, and above all ambitious realist in world, indeed cosmic affairs, who many would have said without any equivocation was fit for the highest office. His is a voice which would easily upstage, nay eclipse, any orator, a voice that has been well mobilised and sent into action. ‘War’, he writes, ‘has always contrasted the real with the absurd.’ In Vietnam, for all its ambiguities and horrors, his and his friends’ time was a tour of duty. ‘We had joined the service. We had taken an oath.’¹ Having served with distinction, he became an equally courageous and powerful critic of that war and its conduct. ‘There was’, he tells us, ‘no standard by which it constituted a justifiable use of brave young men’s lives.’ His stance was the start of a legal and political career journey marked by independence and the pursuit of principle as well as national interest. At times it courted challenge and controversy, but eventually it propelled him through Congress and Senate, touching on crucial matters of health policy, international diplomacy, economy, regional security in many parts of the world, and urgent environmental questions. As Secretary of State he was ‘earnest and to the point, always making you feel you were the only person he wanted to speak to that day’.² In such long and varied life’s work there were admittedly, and inevitably, failures as well as successes, but we readily honour a man of integrity, determination and independence of mind, one who above all can readily admit his errors.

I present just such a man, who is convinced that ‘there’s nothing wrong with America and the world today that can’t be fixed by what’s right with our citizens and with people around the globe,’ John Forbes Kerry, Honorary KCMG, winner of the American Presidential Medal of Freedom, for admission to the honorary degree of Doctor of Civil Law.

Admission by the Chancellor

Virtuous leader and friend of this country, outstanding advocate of democracy, reason, of nature and the wise use of great power, on my own authority and that of the whole University I admit you to the honorary degree of Doctor of Civil Law.

¹ John Kerry, *Every Day is Extra*, (London, Simon and Schuster UK, 2019) p108.

² Catherine Ashton, *And Then What? Inside Stories of 21st-century Diplomacy* (London, Elliott and Thompson, 2023) p70.

DINAH ROSE

MENS Humanior inter advocatores olim a nobis honorata est. Nunc adeſt Artis forensis verum sidus; talis enim appellata est patrona singularis quae mihi adstat. Salve, iuris stella! Atenim aliis tigrinior quam astricior videtur. Pone, precor, timorem; in domum invitata haec inter principales admodum dilecta concordiam veram praestabit. Modo caveant qui ei adversariae concurrent! Nunquam nisi accincta, ante omnes parata, apparet, quae sciat quantum possit argumentum ratione perfectum, graviter formatum. Studiis historicis Oxoniae incubuit, scaenamque ingressa Malcolmi partes egit, unde ad astra histriciora ascendere poterat, sed iurisperitos visit ante omnes simul partes agere simul suadere posse, iustitiamque defendere. Itaque iurisperitam eam et lepos et vis ingenii insignierunt. Neque minimi refert quod olim accidit ut haec iam puellula perperam iniusteque iudicatum esse cognosceret, quod intolerandum habuit. Nullo modo, ut videtur, ea parata fuit illud approbare quod ignave quidem magistri vel parentes nonnunquam obtendunt, nobis omnibus aliquando iniqua incidere; nonne idcirco aequiora oportet sequi? Causis multis ac variis actis se impavidam praebuit; ne eas omittam quas alii, invidia suspecta coacti, vitare maluissent. Haec rationis ius vel potius necessitatem respectam firme tenet, idioque et patrocinii. Aliud enim esse causam dicere, aliud causae subici. Ut in hoc cursu ita collegii praeses eam vidimus iuste ac firme decernere, idioque observari. Forsitan alii cunctentur, haec tamen maturius, efficacius agere solet. Nuper etiam una cum collegis poetam nostrum in iudicium adduxit, ut facetiae eius probarentur. Et superesse visus est quamvis severe tentatus. Ut dixit apud eundem Lysander, parum sufficit loqui nisi vera loqueris.

Praesento legis magistram, veram etiam ducem, quae intellegit iustitiam veritati nunquam non accommodari posse, semper debere, Dinah Gwen Lison Rose, Consiliariam Regis, Collegii Beatae Mariae Magdalенаe Praesidem, ut admittatur honoris causa ad gradum Doctoris in Iure Civili.

Propugnatrix constans iurum et iura recte adhibendi, quae iusta et aequa super omnia cetera magni facis, ego auctoritate mea et totius Universitatis admitto te ad gradum Doctoris in Iure Civili honoris causa.

Paraphrase

We have in the past had occasion to honour a ‘Mensch on the Bench’;¹ behold now a ‘Star at the Bar’. For so has been styled the formidable lawyer who stands next to me. *Salve, iuris stella!* Others, it is true, see her as the ‘Tiger of the Bar’. Fear not; when invited to tea, this most popular of college heads will be the most congenial company, but those who encounter her in court should be on their mettle, for here is a person who does her homework better than most, and has shown the value of rigorous preparation and the careful structuring of an argument. A gifted former student of history, she is vividly remembered for her stage performances in early life. She took the part of Malcolm in an Oxford *Macbeth*, whence she might have acceded to great Thespian heights, but it was in Law that she found the ideal combination of the performative with the pursuit of persuasion and justice. Here her intellect and personal magnetism have together brought her wide admiration. Childhood experience counted for something, for in her school days she had occasion to find mistaken and unfair punishment intolerable. She would, I believe, never have accepted that tired old let-out among parents and teachers, ‘Life is not fair.’ Should we not simply strive to make it fairer? In a wide range of judicial fields she has distinguished herself as a fearless advocate, even where others might have given way to pressure to reject an unpopular brief. The right to, nay necessity of, argument, and hence the right to advocacy, remains safe in such hands; a lawyer need not, after all, be identified with the individual or institution represented. As in her legal career, so as Head of House she has earned respect for humane but firm decisions; where others might cautiously drag their feet, she can determine and act quickly and effectively. Recently she joined other lawyers in putting even our national bard under scrutiny, along with his sense of humour. I believe he survived but was admirably put through his paces. ‘A good moral, my Lord:’ says Shakespeare’s Lysander, ‘it is not enough to speak, but to speak true.’² My Lord Chancellor,

I present a lawyer and leader who surely knows that justice should hardly be inimical to speaking true, Dinah Gwen Lison Rose, KC, President of Magdalen College, for admission to the honorary degree of Doctor of Civil Law.

Admission by the Chancellor

Stalwart defender of rights and the right application of the law, who upholds the principles of fairness and equity, on my own authority and that of the whole University I admit you to the honorary degree of Doctor of Civil Law.

¹ Lord Neuberger, Honorary DCL, Encaenia, June 2018.

² *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, Vi.

PROFESSOR IRENE TRACEY

Collegam superiorem nunc commendo cui multum omnes debemus, te ipso haud excepto, Honoratissime; nam ubi Vicecancellaria, ibi Cancellarius, quod ipse dixisti necesse esse! Adstat quae simul hanc urbem simul Universitatem et novit et magni pendit. Verius quam nos Oxoniensis appellanda est, quae a medicis Radclivianis in lucem allata sit. Et eorum fortunam certe observatam attendit per cursum suum inter indagatores medicinae et biologiae scientiarum illustrem. Scilicet ante omnia eam novimus ad dolorem sublevandum nixam esse, ut ‘reginae’ vocabulum meruerit. Sed potius ultricem benevolam, immo victricem forte futuram ego eam vocarem, quae indicia comiter tractando pernoscit. Hanc penes sunt scientiae, sed nil minus libet ei cum collegis discipulisque omnium studiorum congressae colloqui. Ipsa praemio Gibbsiano affecta, mox Professor electa, exemplum iunioribus vix superandum praebuit. Scilicet diu atque alte secum agitavit num investigationibus illecebrisque huiusmodi parumper positus hoc negotium nodosius susciperet, ut nos discrepantes, animo pervicaces, regendos familiariter curaret. Quodsi forte aliquando paeniteat, culpa praecipue eo transferenda erit, quod prospere quidem apud Mertonenses collegio suo custos praesidebat, quod summam spem offerebat studiis assidue colendis Universitatisque praestantia tuenda, quod gravissime suadebat ut in studia nostra liberius adscisceretur. Ea notavit quae maximi faciamus, quae opus sint ubi in dies versemur quibusque condicionibus, quibus modis discipulos sustinere et educare, resque nostras cum populo melius consociare possimus. Et in eo acute sapiens est quod negat dolorem nobis prodesse. Avifer autem eius aureus, itidem alumnus Mertonensis, iam in viam insistit medendi, ut studentibus copia salutaris detur cum eo, cum magistra, spatiando confabulandi.

Praesento indagatricem praestantem, collegam affabilem commodamque, competitricem Marathoniam quae cursum nostrum producat, Irenen Carmel Tracey, Excellentissimi Ordinis Imperii Britannici Commendatricem, Regiae Societatis Sodalem, huiusce Universitatis Vicecancellariam, ut admittatur honoris causa ad gradum Doctoris in Iure Civili.

Columnen dignissimum et oppidanum et academicum, ratione recta confidimus te nos sursum producturam esse; ego auctoritate mea et totius Universitatis admitto te ad gradum Doctoris in Iure Civili honoris causa.

Paraphase

I now bring you a senior colleague in whose debt we all find ourselves, and not least yourself, Sir, for it is her very title, as you have yourself argued, that logically necessitates your own. Here stands one who knows and values this town and its University, herself an Oxonian in a more complete sense than most of us; she first entered this world at the Radcliffe Infirmary, whose fortunes she will have followed through her long and distinguished international career in biological and medical sciences. Known perhaps most widely as a reliever of pain – ‘Queen of Pain’ is a popular soubriquet, but let us rather call her its enemy and potential vanquisher – I like to imagine her no less as one with a finger on the pulse, and with it the ‘common touch’. Science apart, she takes equal pleasure in easy communing with colleagues and students in every field. As an example to our students we could hardly do better than this Gibbs Prize winner and later Professor and who advanced to great eminence and must surely have thought long and hard before passing from the excitements and rewards of scientific investigation to the perplexing task of managing and looking after us – contrary and boat-rocking bunch that we are – in a more familiar way. Should she ever regret the transition, a good part of the blame must be placed on the success she made of her days as Warden of her old college, Merton, and the promise that was seen in her continuing support of research and of Oxford’s pre-eminence, and her strong advocacy of widening access to higher education. She has stressed our priorities and greatest needs, be these in employment and working conditions, in funding and ‘upskilling’ of students, or in Oxford’s wider role in the world, and she has been wise and realistic enough to repudiate the notion that pain is good for us. Our honorand’s golden retriever, another Merton graduate, has made his first steps in a therapeutic career, and students are offered the improving opportunity of walking and talking with him and his owner.

I present an eminent scientist, an affable and personable colleague, Marathonian competitor to keep us in the running, Irene Mary Carmel Tracey, CBE, FRS, FMedSci, Vice-Chancellor of this University, for admission to the honorary degree of Doctor of Civil Law.

Admission by the Chancellor

Worthy eminence of town and gown, whom with good reason we trust to lead us onward and upward, on my own authority and that of the whole University I admit you to the honorary degree of Doctor of Civil Law.

Degree of Doctor of Letters

PROFESSOR SIR JOHN CURTICE

Constat suffragium nobis more dari, sed quantae molis esset vel hic vel foris hoc certe affirmare posse, comitiis in posterum nos confisuros esse. Ad ὄστρακισμοῦ morem confugiamus maiorum? Sed comitiorum studium huiusque rationis reipublicae, hoc omnino aliud est. Nunc prodit vir Cornubiensis lepidi atque adhuc iuvenilis ingenii, qui propter acumen et explanandi et praevidendi ubique notus eminet. Neque collegis eius, ut opinor, neque omnino aliis aut mirum aut improvisum fuit hunc abhinc quatuordecim annos sodalem electum esse Academiae Britannicae. Ego autem iam senior eum in mentem revoco forma insignem apud Nuffieldios studentem, clare multa confecturum. Et credo me vocem eius antea in sacello Magdalenensi audiisse, ubi tiro se iam parabat ut studia ad utilitatem probam adhiberet, sicut ibidem et ipse, Honoratissime, te praeparabas. Et laete hodie hic recipitur, etsi Vallis Glottiana, ubi recentius versatus est, nec patribus nostris Londinii conscriptis unquam longe abesse videbatur neque ceteris qui per oppida vel municipia dispersi se ab eo inspici sentiebant. Nos suffragatores diversos vero nimis efficaciter perspicit – quod sollicitudinem quandam parat – sed tali animo et studio et eloquentia explicat ut insuper admirationem moveat; et quamvis ita aliquando pignora ponenda cieat, ipse ut caveatur monere solet. De aura populari conicit, cognitione rerum et civium animi cum diligenter tum caute usus. Quae scribit legere, quae censet audire libet, praesertimque consiliis eius decet ibi UTI UBI nuper de fide nostra rebus publicis habita, iamque caduca, dissevit, ubi sensus nationis ut sunt, ut discrepant, ita sermone acuto ac sapienti depinxit. Non solum apud nos res in inopinata feruntur quae nuper etiam vix facile prospicere dabatur, ut quaestiones huius et sententiae subtiles oblatae magni videantur aestimandae.

Praesento rerum publicarum scrutatorem egregie studiosum, ardentem, Iohannem Kevin Curtice, equitem auratum, Academiae Britannicae socium, apud Universitatem Vallis Glottianae Professore, ut admittatur honoris causa ad gradum Doctoris in Litteris.

Investigator impiger sententiarum populi rerumque admodum mutabilium, qui explicando docuisti, referendo mentem nostram movisti, ego auctoritate mea et totius Universitatis admitto te ad gradum Doctoris in Litteris honoris causa.

Paraphase

It will take much thought and argument, I believe, to ensure our continuing faith in elections, whether in this country or abroad. Restoring the ancient practice of ostracism might be a start. But the study, the science of elections and the democratic system in action, is a different matter. Next in our line is a man, a still engagingly boyish child of Cornwall, whose expertise, whose diagnostic and predictive powers, have made him a national institution. His own election as a Fellow of the British Academy in 2012 cannot have surprised any psephologist, nor anyone else for that matter. I am old enough to remember the distinctive figure of the then rising star at Nuffield College, and even before that I must have heard his musical voice in chapel while he was in the earlier stages of preparing to turn his PPE degree, like yours at the same college, my Lord Chancellor, to honest use. His alma mater welcomes him back, though his later academic home of Strathclyde has never seemed very distant from Westminster, nor indeed from any of the constituencies and councils that have earned his scrutiny. He ‘reads’ us, the electorate, rather too effectively for our comfort, but the passion and often extensive eloquence of his analysis is at once inspiring and disquieting. It is said that his perceptions have sometimes influenced the bookmaker’s odds, but he himself would urge caution. His understanding of the public mood and voting behaviour is conditioned both by statistical rigour and an interest in shifting social patterns, plus a little judicious scepticism. He is good to read, and equally good to hear in conversation; I particularly recommend his recorded interview under the title ‘Is there still trust in politics?’, an example of his clear-headed and balanced view of our nation’s ideological state and its divisions.¹ As our political order, along with that in other countries, develops in ways we would have found it hard to predict even a little while ago, we need the observation and nuanced explanations that he offers us.

I present a political scientist of uncommon zeal and ardour, Sir John Kevin Curtice FBA, FRSE, FRSA, Professor at the University of Strathclyde, to be admitted to the honorary degree of Doctor of Letters.

Dogged investigator of the political state of our society and the changing fortunes of our democracy, who have both informed and explained, both recorded and provoked much thought, on my own authority and that of the whole University I admit you to the honorary degree of Doctor of Letters.

¹ www.youtube.com/watch?v=gwnbcxOqwZw

Admission by the Chancellor

CHRISTINA LAMB

Iam satis cognovisti, Domine, qualia haec femina confecit, qualia scripsit, nam propius quam ego talia quaedam ipse observavisti. Itaque tuis verbis ratione quidem relatis delictum id bellicum agnovit super omnia neglectum, saepe conceptum, stuprum dico per vim inlatum. Quo flagitio praeterito nos vix progressos esse dixisti; quamvis in omnibus bellis admissum esse videatur, tantum abest ut purgatum sit. Haec tamen multa animadversa renuntiavit quae nos, magna ex parte longe a bellis absentes, animo omnino non fingere possemus. Eademque nonnunquam ad ea excutienda contulit quae complures fugere maluerunt. Huius hic denuo receptae fortasse circumspectius de cursu Oxoniensi nos iactabimus; licet hic primum se ad acta diurna describenda incubuerit, verecunde tamen ipsa concedit se inde et studiis aliquantum variis perfectis praecipue paratam esse ad omnia fere narranda, pauca vere intellegenda. Quid? Nunc multa videtur accepta intellegere. Adulescens spectavit ut fabulas componeret, sed cum primum in Pakistaniam Afganiamque advenisset complura visa cognovit qualia certe sciebat se nunquam ita confingere potuisse. Iam per quadraginta annos ex terris compluribus de calamitatibus vel ab hominibus vel ex deis partis nos loquendo, scribendo certiores fecit, quin etiam humanitate quosdam et misericordia inductos nobis ostendit. Sibi opus et officium fuisse eo ire unde alii discederent; pericula gravia et hostilia novimus eam ideo ingressam. Quare id faciat requirimus? Inter saevitias extremas et iniurias sane acerrimas se conspexisse quam mire homines nihilominus superesse speque adduci possint; ex caelis enim maxime caliginosis sidera fulgentissima elucere. Recordemini quendam ex eis superstitem olim dixisse: 'Inutilia facere videbimur, nisi haec a te tuisque paribus exposita erunt.' Quare nuntios iuniores ex ea exemplum comperere oportebit.

Praesento nuntiam constantem, animosam, aliis sequendam atque aemulandam qui res ita peregre cognitae nobis renuntiant, Christinam Lamb, Excellentissimo Ordini Imperii Britannici adscriptam, sociam Collegii Magnae Aulae Universitatis adscriptam honoris causa, ut admittatur honoris causa ad gradum Doctoris in Litteris.

Admission by the Chancellor

Nuntia egregia modo rerum adversarum modo spei bonae et firmitatis humanae, ego auctoritate mea et totius Universitatis admitto te ad gradum Doctoris in Litteris honoris causa.

Paraphrase

You, Sir, are already well enough acquainted with the work and writings of this lady, and have observed some of her subject matter at closer quarters than I have myself. She has good reason to quote your own words on what she identifies as the world's most neglected war crime, the prevalence of sexual violence, an outrage in which, as you say, we have 'gone backwards', one which figures in all recent conflicts, and one which 'we haven't remotely solved.'¹ Here is a woman who has seen and vividly reported what would otherwise be frankly unimaginable for those of us who live and work outside war zones, and she has taken on assignments that very many reporters have happily eschewed. As we welcome her back to Oxford we may wish to temper the pride we feel in her undergraduate career; yes, here she cut her teeth as a journalist, but she modestly remarks that her PPE training and experience in student journalism trained her in writing 'about pretty well anything, with little knowledge.' We see no lack of knowledge in her now. In her earlier life she had aspired to be a novelist, but in her first missions in Pakistan and Afghanistan she saw and learnt much that she knew she could never herself have invented. The stories and reports she has brought us from many countries over the last four decades have covered man-made conflicts and natural disasters as well as stories of human tenderness and compassion. Her job, she says, has been to go to places whence others are leaving, and in doing so she has faced severe dangers and attacks. Why has she persisted? Amidst atrocities and extremities of repression and violence, she has seen and presented to us remarkable examples of human resilience and hope. As she puts it, 'in the darkest skies you find the brightest stars.' As an inspiration to younger journalists we should remember what was once said to her by one of those stars: 'If people like you don't report what people like me do, what is the point of what we do?'

I present a determined and courageous communicator, a model for foreign correspondents to mark and follow, Christina Lamb, OBE, Honorary Fellow of University College, to be admitted to honorary degree of Doctor of Letters.

Outstanding reporter both of human tragedies and of human survival and hope, I on my own authority and that of the whole University admit you to the honorary degree of Doctor of Letters.

¹ Christina Lamb, *Our Bodies, Their Battlefield* (London, 2020) p389.

DR DOMINIC SANDBROOK

Constare videtur annales historiasque non semper suaves esse lectu. Ecce tamen investigator ingeniosus, copiosus, Balliolensis – quae recentius transmisit quomodo Latine appellabo? – qui nos et iuniores et seniores ita eruditos oblectavit ut simul meditari simul laetari possimus. Nam ratione, ut putat, credit tempora haec et praeterita leniter aestimanda esse, nosque de futuris spem aliquam, quantumvis circumspectam, habere. Ipse, Domine, olim audientes id monuisti quod manifestum erat sed inquitem quandam induxit, XXX vel XL post annis non omnibus adesse datum iri. Ecce post L annos nonnulli qui te audivimus; tempora illa turbida eo viviora in memoria adhuc habemus quod huius verbis prope innumerabilibus edocti sumus librisque continuis quos de annis bellum secutis scriptos edidit. Quae de illis Britanniae temporibus ‘consolationis frigidae’, ut vocantur, scripsit nunc respicimus; tum raro quidem felicius aliquid accidit – nuptias regales inter alia huius generis revocamus. Ut animo demisso provideramus, ad controversias vel probationes nos parantes lucerna solita deficiente candelis vel cereis uti coacti sumus. Haec prius acciderunt quam natus est, nunc tamen libenter agnoscimus quam exacte ea memoret, quanto plus tradat quam nobis notum esset, quomodo nationis calamitose imminutae opinio cum spe residua fortunae melioris futurae discreparet. Facilitatem humanam apud eum scribentem sentimus, qui testimonia iuste ac benigne ex partibus diversissimis comparata valide confert. Unde nobis suadet ut reputemus quam insolitum in statum respublica nostra conducta sit, quibusque sententiis hae res posthac in annales referri possint. Quae apud Facultatem nostram Historiae olim dissevit etiam nunc recipi possunt, imbibere debent; ibi enim ex more suo cum de singulis egit, tum aperte nec sine acumine aestimavit. Lupi denique huius vagantes utinam in eo ordine floreat ubi secundum naturam commorentur; et commoratio eorum historiis mandabitur.

Praesento inter historiarum auctores magistrum candidum, explanatorem alacrem rerum nuper gestarum moresque nostros attingentium, Domenicum Christophorum Sandbrook, ut admittatur honoris causa ad gradum Doctoris in Litteris.

Admission by the Chancellor

Musae Clivus suboles, auctor calamo et voce callide, qui illustrando nobis animum movisti sciscitatusque nos docuisti, ego auctoritate mea et totius Universitatis admitto te ad gradum Doctoris in Litteris honoris causa.

Paraphrase

I think we agree that not all historians have written in the most agreeable style. But here is a Balliol man, gifted and prolific researcher and teacher – how may I Latinise ‘podcast(s)’? – who has at once enlightened and entertained both old and young, has made us both reflect and laugh, and has seen the grounds both for cool assessment of past and present and for cautious hope of national survival, if not exactly optimism. On one occasion in the 1970s you, Sir, stated the sobering but obvious truth that many of your audience ‘won’t be here in 30 or 40 years’ time’. 50 years on, and some who heard you then are still here, our memories of those turbulent times keenly sharpened by the hundreds, nay thousands, of pages in our honorand’s series of histories of the post-war decades. We value his depiction of our ‘cold comfort’ Britain thawed only occasionally by warmer public moments such as a royal wedding, a time when, as had been gloomily foreseen, we did some of our essays and our exam revision by candle and oil lamp when the lights went out. Writing of times before he was born, this man reminds us vividly, but also tells us more than we knew, of the tension we have felt between predictions of terminal decline and some persistent faith in eventual recovery. The human touch and the generous balancing of evidence we see in these books – tellingly deployed from many corners of society – invites our own considered understanding, and should also inspire reflection on the strange present state of our body politic and how future historians might write about such things. Please listen to the engaging lecture our History Faculty has kept from 2011;¹ there you will hear that characteristic range of detail and open, though often stringent, judgment. As we wish him well, we confidently hope for more, and expect his support in the secure return of his *Errant Wolves*² to their natural premier league habitat; their rest will make history.

I present a master among readable historians, a passionate analyst of our recent and formative past, Dominic Christopher Sandbrook, FRHistS, to be admitted to the honorary degree of Doctor of Letters.

Scion of Clio, skilled employer of pen and voice, who have both enlightened and provoked, taught and questioned, on my own authority and that of the whole University I admit you to the honorary degree of Doctor of Letters.

¹ *The Weird World of Seventies Britain*.

² Our honorand is a loyal supporter of the ‘Wanderers’.

Degree of Doctor of Science

ISABELLA TREE

Sequitur terra, cui uni rerum naturae partium eximia propter merita cognomen indidimus maternae venerationis. Sic hominum illa ut caelum dei, quae nos nascentes excipit, natos alit, semelque editos sustinet semper; novissime complexa gremio iam a reliqua natura abdicatos tum maxime ut mater operiens.

Unde quondam luco vetere vel loco umbroso conspecto maiores nostri numen adesse solebant sentire, vel ‘si quis specus saxis penitus exesis montem suspendebat non manu factus sed naturalibus causis.’ Nos tamen iam pridem per saecula, praesertimque per annos hos propiores, divitias naturae modo quaestui habemus modo praedamur; itaque ea velut laesimus quae olim nobis impertita erant. Ultima in illustri nostro agmine venit quae magna spe instincta fortiter repugnavit, ut quae eximie reficiendi ac restituendi capax aparuerit. Hac alma manu curante ipsa natura nobis multa et mira contulit. In rebus agrestibus redintegrandis antecessores vocamus hanc viatricem auctricem et maritum eius, qui fundum suum Sussexiensem prope caducum in situm refotum mutaverunt dumeto, palude, nemoribus abundantem, ubi secundum naturam animalia mire varia habitarent, etiamque inter haec et genera quaedam prius in periculum pereundi lapsa. Nonne Placeat ibi tueri quemadmodum scientia vivente, immo vero regendo florente, equi exmoorenses, iam inducti una cum bobus longo cornu designatis suisque staffordiensibus vita communi fruuntur, necnon animalia parvula, scarabaei, papiliones, luscinae, turtures, ciconiae, falcones peregrini, ne omittam castores labore negotiosi! Et nobis quoque exemplo praebito hi ducentes prosunt; orandum est ut aliis magis magisque in consiliis proferendis suffragari, detrimento opum rusticarum – ita enim rura nostra adhuc tam amoena paene ex consuetudine opprimi videmus – et perniciem increbrescenti possint obsistere. Huius laboribus auditis spectatisque in spem nos adducimur hac nova velut coniunctione hominum et virium naturalium.

Praesento amicam et procuratricem veram eorum optimorum quae nobis amoenitas naturalis locorum, audacia, firmitate, peritia culta, nobis offert, Isabellam Tree, ut admittatur honoris causa ad gradum Doctoris in Scientia.

Admission by the Chancellor

Satelles dignissima Matris ante omnes almae, quae inquinata in statum nativum restaurare, labefacta corroborare, nobis denique demonstrare potuisti quanta rura valeant sua sponte procreare, dummodo eis fere libere parere concedatur; ego auctoritate mea et totius Universtitatis admitto te ad gradum Doctoris in Scientia.

Paraphrase

Then comes the earth, that one part of the natural world to which for its merits we have, in veneration, given the title of ‘Mother’. She belongs to mankind as does the sky to God: she receives us at our birth, nourishes us when born, and when once we are brought forth into the world she supports us always, and when at last we have been abandoned by the rest of nature she embraces us in her bosom and then more than ever gives us her maternal protection.¹

And hence the sense of divine presence that our ancestors felt in their souls when they saw a grove of ancient trees, or a secluded shady spot or ‘a cave made deep by crumbling of rocks, a place not built with hands but by natural causes’?² But over centuries, and particularly in the course of the last 100 years, we have exploited and robbed the riches of nature and caused irreparable damage to what was once granted us. To close today’s distinguished line comes one who has boldly and ambitiously resisted, who has provided an outstanding model of return and resilience, one to whose own nurturing care nature has thankfully bestowed extraordinary rewards. Here stands a ‘rewilding pioneer’, for as such are known this gifted author and travel journalist and her husband, who have transformed their Sussex estate from an exhausted and failing farm into a richly revived environment of scrub and wetlands and woods, a natural home for an astonishing range of wildlife, including species once under severe threat of extinction. At Knepp, now a living, nay flourishing natural laboratory, you may see coexisting not only the wild Exmoor ponies and Longhorn cattle and Tamworth pigs that they introduced, but thriving communities of insects and beetles and butterflies, of nightingales, turtle doves, storks and peregrine falcons, and even of working beavers. And we too are the richer for their example and leadership. Their now increasing influence on other projects may buck the trend of destruction and depletion so prevalent in our still beautiful country. We hear and watch³ her work and find hope in this new engagement between man and nature.

I present a true servant and friend of the best that our natural world can offer when tended by courage and commitment and experience, Isabella Tree, to be admitted to the honorary degree of Doctor of Science.

Worthy attendant of the most nurturing of all Mothers, who have ‘wilded’ what was weakened, revived the moribund, and shown the creativity of landscapes when left to do much of their own work, I on my own authority and that of the whole University admit you to the honorary degree of Doctor of Science.

¹ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History Book II*, ch. LXIII.

² Cf. Seneca the Younger, *Epistle XLI*.

³ See the documentary film *Wilding* (2023).