Virtual Quad
Weekly wellbeing tips, events and reflections from students and staff of Mansfield College

respair:
(16th century noun and verb)
the return of hope after a period of despair
Virtual Quad:  
Message from the Principal

Mansfield Unmuting

The sun has come out and the tulips are opening. This time last year, I launched Virtual Quad to share photographs of the flowers and good wishes from an all-but-empty College. None of us could have any idea how enduring and epoch-shifting the pandemic would be, nor how much of a stamp it would put on your generation of students. I have learned to ‘meet’ people on Teams, without being sure where in the world they are, or what time zone they are in, or in what ways they have been personally affected by coronavirus. Breaking down barriers and building collegiality has never faced more practical barriers.

And yet, the signs of spring are accelerating. Many of you are back here In Real Life, others soon will be, and we are trying our best to continue to connect with you all. I’m particularly pleased that, under Sarah Farrow’s editorship, Virtual Quad has become an important way of connecting members of College near and far. It’s the go-to place for:

- College events you want publicised among JCR and MCR members;
- Exercise classes, creative writing classes, volunteering, sport, music and drama opportunities;
- A regular reminder of welfare and other resources;
- Information about travel and other grants available from College and the University;
- Advertisements for Mansfield-only internships, scholarships and prizes;
- Pictures of cats, flowers, anything else you want …

Please read it and use it, and I hope it will become an even more valuable resource as we slowly start to open up. If there is one thing we can learn from the covid crisis, I hope it is how precious human connection is, and how important it is to nurture it. (cont.)
And here – because it is where this started, and because I like flower pictures, is my Flowers of the Day on the Actual Quad just now.
To all observing...

Ramadan Mubarak

The Islamic Society is holding a free iftar pickup service for Muslim students and a sign-up system for taraweeh (night prayers) in the Robert Hooke prayer room throughout the month.
The reason so many Muslims find this month so enriching and spiritually uplifting is due to the wisdom behind fasting. It's mentioned in the Qur'an that we're instructed to fast so that we may attain 'Taqwa' (2:183). Taqwa can be translated as being in a constant state of God-consciousness. It's a state of being in which you're always actively aware that God knows your every action and as such, you stay away from bad deeds. The phrase "God can see all your actions" is relevant in the discussion of Taqwa. It can often just be lip service when it comes to abstaining from bad deeds and we don't really act upon it. However, what Taqwa means is to embody this phrase in all your actions. You're always aware that God can see your actions and also your intentions, and so with this mind, it enables you to attain a greater level of self-control.

Whilst you fast, you stay away from food and water for the whole day. The wisdom behind fasting is such that since you're holding yourself back from things that are otherwise permissible, like eating and drinking, you're then more likely to stay away from doing actions that are impermissible. You also feel a sense of guilt if you do a bad deed whilst you're fasting, as it can leave you feeling as though your struggles for the day have been wasted, since you haven't attained 'Taqwa'. For a whole month, we experience this feeling of spiritual enlightenment by abstaining from certain actions and it's in the hope that we can continue this newfound self-control beyond Ramadan. This month acts as a time when Muslims feel the closest to the Qur'an and their religion. It's a time when Muslims aim to be better versions of themselves and try to leave this month in a higher spiritual and personal level than the one in which they entered upon.

- Ahnaf Farabi
Thank you to Farabi for sharing his experience of Ramadan - we welcome more contributions from students and staff about how you have observed Ramadan or celebrated different festivals - please send them in!

13 April (Tuesday) to 12 May (Wednesday)
RAMADAN (Muslim)

20 April (Tuesday) - 1 May (Saturday)
RIDVAN (Baha’i)

21 April (Wednesday)
RAMA NAVAMI (Hindu)
ADAR MAH PARAB (Zoroastrian: Shenshai - Parsi)

26/27 April (Monday/Tuesday)
HANUMAN JAYANTI (Hindu)
Message to the MCR:

Hello all,

Hope you're having a nice break.

The JCR in collaboration with Somerville College is organising a Refugee week during the Trinity term (the dates of the week are 14th-20th of June).

To all those who are doing your research on a topic concerning Refugees (or have previously worked on the topic), we would love to learn about your work!

If you'd like to present any relevant research, please email mahati.garimella@mansfield.ox.ac.uk & sara.cepele@mansfield.ox.ac.uk.

Kind regards,

Mahati
Cause for Pause

Mondays at 8.30pm

A weekly online shared space in which to find some rest and sense of community.

A reflective online space to come together using words, music and silence across traditions.
Maybe you'd like to bring a reading (a few words or maybe a poem or a story) or share a piece of meditative music.

Nothing is expected of attendees - everyone is invited to come together and just 'be' in this shared space. You can join on Zoom using this link.

Take time to stop.
Take time to pause.
30 April
Justice Dikgang Moseneke
introduced by Professor Kate O'Regan
All Rise
(In conjunction with the Bonavero Institute of Human Rights)
Justice Dikgang Moseneke, former Deputy President of the post-apartheid Constitutional Court of South Africa, discusses his extraordinary journey from 15-year-old convict to judge. (Postponed from last term.)

21 May
Paul Solman and Joe Klein
Reporting America
Two senior commentators share their insights into the world of American politics. Paul Solman has been business and economics correspondent for the PBS NewsHour since 1985. Joe Klein is a columnist for Time magazine, a member of the Council on Foreign Relations, and author of the novel Primary Colours, based on Bill Clinton’s 1992 presidential campaign.

28 May
Micky ScottBey Jones
Brave Spaces
Through gathering thousands of people to talk after one of America’s most contentious elections through The People’s Supper, social justice movement work and personal relationships, Micky ScottBey Jones - the Justice Doula has learned to create Brave Spaces where our humanity is centered and we are all invited to learn, grow and do better as we know better for the liberation of all. Join Micky for an interactive conversation and exploration of creating brave space together.

4 June
Ambassador George Krol
Should we fear Russia?
Over the course of a 36-year diplomatic career, Ambassador Krol has represented the USA in states that emerged from the former Soviet Union, including Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, Uzbekistan, and Kazakhstan. A Mansfield alumnus, Ambassador Krol was taught by Dr Michael Freeden.

14 May
Dana Denis-Smith
From the One and Only to the Many: the Rise of Women in Law in 100 Years
Dana Denis-Smith is founder of the First Hundred Years Project and CEO of Obelisk Support. She speaks about: how and why we should celebrate and discuss women’s history; women’s portraiture; her award-winning work celebrating the first 100 years of women in the legal profession in the United Kingdom; and its follow-up ‘The Next 100 Years’ focusing on the future of women in law.

11 June
Dr Tristram Hunt
Museums as 'the true teachers of a free people'
Dr Tristram Hunt, Director of the V&A Museum, discusses the role of public museums in creating our culture and describes how, despite its origins rooted in Empire, monarchy, and high Victorian capitalism, the collections of the Victoria & Albert Museum tell a fascinating story of civic republicanism.
This term we are holding services on Zoom so that we can come together to worship - if not in person, at least in spirit. We are looking for volunteers to lead prayers, take readings or contribute music to the services.

If you are interested, please contact the chaplain (chaplain@mansfield.ox.ac.uk)
Keep Active - Anywhere!

Did you know that you can sign up to Active Anywhere through your OU account and have access to over 500 online fitness classes to stream anywhere? And it's all FREE!

Sign up [here](link).
Mindfulness

Wednesdays at 6pm
6:00 - 7:45pm BST (Weeks 1 & 2)
6:00 - 7:30pm BST (Weeks 3 - 8)

The course costs £70 per student. The College will also reimburse 50% of the costs (i.e. £35), on successful completion of 6 of the 8 sessions.

Mindfulness is a well-researched and effective means of promoting well-being, and alleviating stress, anxiety and depression.

Visit [here](#) for more info, and to book.

“Mindfulness has changed my attitude towards myself and completely altered my relationship with my work. I feel a lot better about everything and a lot more able to manage things” [University of Oxford student Mindfulness course participant]
Would you like to try an interactive companion designed to help people manage stress?
Are you stressed with uni work? Having trouble sleeping? Just curious?

Meet Purrble!

We’re looking for Oxford University students to test Purrble during the Trinity Term!

If you take part, you will:
- receive a Purrble for free (yours to keep if you want to)
- complete short questionnaires daily for up to 8 weeks (~2 min each) to tell us about your experience with Purrble
- be invited to take part in one online interview (~30 min) to tell us how you think Purrble could be most appropriately presented and used by people your age

Purrble is a small interactive companion in the shape of a fluffy animal designed to support emotion regulation practices.

In our recent studies with young people, our participants have reported that interacting with Purrble helped them relax, ground themselves in the present moment, and manage stressful moments in daily life.

Interested in taking part?
Scan the QR code before the 28th of April to find out more and sign up!
Virtual Quad: OUCS Workshops

A range of workshops from Counselling Services to help you build skills to respond to the demands of life at university.

Exam Anxiety
Thursday 29 April 11.15am-12.45pm

Emerging from Covid
Thursday 6 May 3.15-4.45pm

Managing Panic
Friday 7 May 1.15-2.30pm

Special Anxiety
Tuesday 11 May 6-7.15pm

How to Relax
Wednesday 12 May 5-6.30pm

Managing Sleep and Insomnia
Friday 14 May 11.45am-12.45pm

Workshops are open to all Oxford students.
Further information available [here](#).
To book send an email to: counselling@admin.ox.ac.uk
The Department of Experimental Psychology is running three mental health webinars this term:

**Our Mental Wellness: Coping with Trauma**
Thursday 6 May, 10:00am – 10:45am

Most of us will experience a traumatic event at some point in our lives. Following trauma, we may experience unwanted distressing memories and feel a wide range of negative emotions. Our sense of self and the world may also change. This talk will discuss research findings on helpful and unhelpful ways of coping with trauma. Find out more and register via OxTalks.

**Our Mental Wellness: Overcoming Mistrust and Paranoia**
Thursday 20 May, 2:00pm – 2:45pm

**Our Mental Wellness: Bullying and Anxiety**
Thursday 3 June, 10:00am – 10:45am.

Catch up on previous talks in the series via YouTube.
If you are returning to Oxford and want to use the eduroam Wi-Fi service, you must take action to reconnect. The security certificate for connecting to eduroam Wi-Fi has been replaced which means that everyone connecting to eduroam using a laptop, phone or tablet computer will need to set up Wi-Fi on their device again. It’s easy to do – find out how.
The new Bodleian website for students and readers went live on 30 March. The new website boasts easier navigation, improved design and greater usability, especially for mobile devices. The usual link www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk will automatically direct you to the new site.

NB: A small number of microsites, such as the NHS site, will continue to run on the original website alongside the new one until a subsequent release in June.
Open for entries on 22 April – Earth Day.

Last year's Sustainability Photographer of the Year Awards gave us a glimpse of how you saw the world during lockdown, when the drop in human activity provided more of a place for nature.

The year’s theme is ‘looking forward’. We are thinking about our sustainable future in light of the lessons learned from the pandemic. We also now have a new environmental sustainability strategy for the University and are trying to build back better; all of these give us reasons for optimism. We would like to know what looking forward and sustainability mean to you as an individual, bringing life and focus to issues of global significance from right here in Oxford.

All students and staff of the University are welcome to enter the competition. See here for more information and the entry form. The competition closes on 10 June 2021.
Communications Assistant (part-time) at Mansfield College

Closing date for application is 30th April (6pm).
Grade 4: £22,417, pro-rata

We are seeking a proactive and efficient Communications Assistant to provide (mainly digital) communications support, for a 2 day a week role for 12 months within the Development team at Mansfield College, University of Oxford.

Initially we are advertising this role within the Mansfield community only as we would like this to be a career development opportunity for students or alumni of the College.

Applications are particularly welcome from Black, Asian and minority ethnic candidates, who are currently under-represented in administrative posts at Mansfield. Mansfield College and the University of Oxford are equal opportunities employers and all applications will be considered on their merits.

Job Advert

Job Description
Applications must include a CV and Covering letter and completion of an online Equality Monitoring survey which is online here.

Any questions?
All queries and applications should be directed to development@mansfield.ox.ac.uk.
We would like to invite you to participate in an online survey that investigates why some international university students stay in the UK after graduation. **The survey will only take 14 minutes to complete and you will have an opportunity to enter a lottery for a £10 voucher at the end** (there are several vouchers available). You may only take this survey if you are an international student (i.e. you were not born in the UK) and you are not an exchange student (on programmes such as Erasmus, etc.). Please click [here](#) to participate.

The survey is part of academic research undertaken by Filip Němeček, a DPhil student at the University of Oxford, under the supervision of prof. N.D. de Graaf. The findings of this research will be published in scientific outlets such as peer-reviewed academic journals. All your responses will remain strictly confidential. This project has been reviewed by, and received ethics clearance through, the Oxford Sociology Department Research Ethics Committee (DREC).

We hope that you will be able to participate in the survey.

Kind regards,

Filip Němeček (Department of Sociology, University of Oxford)

Prof. N.D. de Graaf (Nuffield College, University of Oxford)
Over the Easter Vacation, one of our amazing Junior Deans organised an Easter Egg hunt and Big (socially-distanced) Picnic!

Have some photos or news to share? Send it in to: virtualquad@mansfield.ox.ac.uk
Royal Literary Fund Fellow: Jon Stock

provides academic writing support for all students, undergraduate or postgraduate. One to one sessions are for 50 minutes and take place online.

To book a slot, email jon.stock@rlfeducation.org.uk.

Academic Support Tutor: Gail Leckie

offers one to one study skills support for any undergraduate of any subject, to discuss any concerns you have about your academic work broadly construed.

Email: gail.leckie@mansfield.ox.ac.uk for an appointment.
Welfare Support.

A quick recap of different welfare support in and around College.

Tutor for Welfare: Gail Leckie

is a first point of contact for any students who would like to talk over any welfare issues (broadly conceived) with a member of staff. If you would like to arrange a meeting, please contact gail.leckie@mansfield.ox.ac.uk.

Chaplain: Sarah Farrow

is available for all members of College from all faiths and philosophies. To schedule a time to meet please email: chaplain@mansfield.ox.ac.uk

You can find more options (including Junior Deans, Peer Supporters and specific post-holders) here: mansfield.ox.ac.uk/student-welfare
Support Overview

A quick recap of different welfare support in and around College.

University Counselling Service
Appointments will take place online with the option to type out messages in a session as opposed to speaking in case privacy is an issue. More details (and podcasts) on the website.

Daily 8pm-2am Oxford Nightline
An independent listening service run by and for students of Oxford. Contact them here.

Every day, all day TogetherAll
Free online service giving you access to a global welfare community. More.

Student Space
Run by Student Minds, this website offers access to dedicated support services for students as well as information and advice to help you through the challenges of coronavirus. More.
Listen to the Mustn'ts, child, listen to the Don'ts. Listen to the Shouldn'ts, the Impossibles, the Won'ts. Listen to the Never Haves, then listen close to me. Anything can happen, child, Anything can be.

—"Listen To The Mustn’ts" by Shel Silverstein