

**FITZWILLIAM SOCIETY**  
**SECRETARY'S REPORT FOR THE AGM**  
**ON SATURDAY 23 SEPTEMBER 2023**

The last 12 months has seen plenty of events for both UK based and overseas alumni. The drinks evening in Manchester, originally scheduled for early September 2022, but then postponed following the death of the Queen, took place in October. The programme of Subject Dinners continued, including events for Medics and Vets in February and Geographers in June. For overseas alumni there were receptions in Singapore, Thailand, Hong Kong, Seattle and New York. The 1869 Foundation lunch, for alumni and friends who plan to include gifts to the College in their wills, was held in June. Cultural delights included a concert by Hannah Roberts (cello) & Simon Parkin (piano) in June.

The traditional London Drinks event in March was held on 9 March at a new venue, The George & Monkey, in north London, and as usual attracted a good turnout. Once again, it was not possible to find a suitable venue in the capital for the London dinner, so instead it was held in “London-on-the-Cam”, in College, on 27 May. Numbers attending were at least as high as at the most recent dinner in London, in 2019, and several of those attending told me that they had much appreciated an excuse to return to Fitz., one of them for the first time for decades.

Your committee has as usual met twice in the last year. The May meeting was held in College, before the aforementioned “London Dinner”. It was again arranged as a hybrid meeting, which enabled two committee members, who were in Devon and Croatia respectively, to attend via *Teams* videoconferencing. The second meeting took place on 11 September, and was held remotely on *Teams*.

The scheduling of the Reunion Dinners has now reverted to the 2 dinner pattern established before lockdown. The first dinner took place yesterday (with booking priority for 2003 and 2013 matriculants), and the second is this evening, with priority for matriculants from pre 1964, 1983 and 1993. The two additional dinners arranged for early September last year for those who matriculated in 2000, 2001, 2002, 2010, 2011 and 2012, as part of the catch-up following lockdown, had to be postponed as the planned dates fell within the national period of mourning following the death of the Queen, and were held this year on 31 March and 1 April. The Golden Matriculation events were also disrupted by lockdown, and following last year’s event in July for those who matriculated in 1970, 1971 and 1972, which I think was regarded as a success by most of those attending, a similar 3 cohort event is planned for next year, for those who matriculated in 1973, 1974 and 1975.

There has been less sub-committee activity than in some recent years. The Strategy group met once, in July. The Grants sub-committee, chaired by Rachael Webb, received 13 applications for grants to support student activities and projects under the programme which started in the academic year 2014-15. This sub-committee liaises with the MCR and JCR Presidents in the Michaelmas term each year to discuss the process and timetable for applications for grants, and the criteria to apply to them. This year the maximum sum available was again £3,000. Some of this year’s applications were very imaginative, and £2,670 was awarded to the 10 successful applicants. A wide range of projects were supported, including improvements to the JCR accommodation, board games and Lego for the JCR and library, and a microwave/combi oven for the MCR. Other successful applicants the Land Economy Society and three faith groups, (Ladies’ Bible Study, the Jewish Society

and the Islamic Society). Particular thanks are again due to Rachael for her hard work in driving this programme and providing feedback to the applicants.

The Trust Sub-Committee has not met in the last year. It was formed to liaise with the College about the annual programme of awards from the Fitzwilliam Society Trust Fund. The College administers this in accordance with details agreed with the Society in 2007, when the charitable company which had previously made the awards passed to the College the custody and management of the trust fund and the administration of the awards. The trust fund was built up over many years from donations, and its income is used to make the awards. They include academic scholarships and prizes, a grant to the library, prizes for debating and grants for music and arts projects. The role of the sub-committee is to consider, and if thought fit to approve, any changes to the awards programme proposed by the College. A detailed report on the Trust Fund awards for 2022-23 has been provided separately.

Thanks are due to many people for their support of the Society during the year, including Baroness Sally Morgan, the Master, Dr Nicola Jones, the Director of Communications and Engagement, Peter O'Connor, the Development Director, Dr Paul Chirico, the Senior Tutor and Rod Cantrill, the Bursar, together with their respective teams. And finally, we must thank our President, Professor Glen Norcliffe, for chairing committee meetings and this AGM, for his interesting and entertaining speeches at two dinners (with another planned for tonight), as well as several helpful ideas and suggestions which he has given when speaking at meetings and also (and I add my personal thanks for this) given to me by email and telephone many times during the year.

Peter Howard  
Secretary  
September 2023