



The Bedford Society

I hope you enjoy this latest version of the Bedford Society Newsletter.

I am delighted to announce that on 8th June, Caroline Willbourne (Philosophy and Greek 1967) will receive an Honorary Fellowship in recognition of her distinguished career in family law, and her longstanding support for the College as a member of the Bedford Society Committee. You can hear from two of last year's Honorary Fellows, Dr. Rupert Whitaker (Psychology 1984) and Margaret Busby (English 1965) in the newsletter.

In March we celebrated the life of Bedford alumna, Sarah Parker Remond, with an unveiling of a blue plaque in Bloomsbury. Several Bedford alumni attended. Betty Hales reports below.

Also in this edition you can read about Professor Penelope Corfield's book, *The Georgians: The Deeds & Misdeeds of Eighteenth-Century Britain*.

May has been busy for universities in the UK, with the publication of the Research Excellence Framework (REF) 2021 results. In its independent assessment of the quality of research across UK universities, the REF 2021 results put the College's research within the top 25% overall, with 88% of research judged to be within the top two categories of 4* and 3*, defining it as either world-leading, or internationally excellent respectively. This is up from 81% in 2014 when the last REF was carried out. [You can find out more here.](#)

There is information on the talks and other events in College open to Bedfordians and the Society intends to restart our own series of talks and events in the new academic year. We already have one talk planned for October and will send details of that soon. Do keep a look out for further details.

Very best wishes,

Dr. Claire Gobbi Daunton
History 1974
Bedford Society Chair

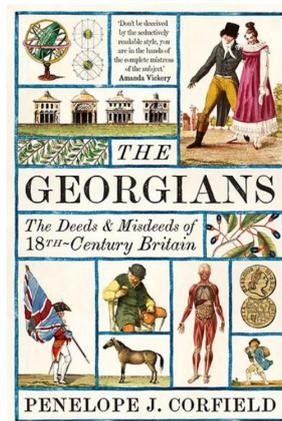
Appointment of new Principal

The College is pleased to announce that Professor Julie Sanders has been appointed to be the next Principal. Professor Sanders will succeed Professor Paul Layzell who will retire later this year



following 12 very successful years in the role.

[Find out more](#)



Professor Penelope Corfield on publishing 'The Georgians: The Deeds & Misdeeds of Eighteenth-Century Britain'

Professor Penelope Corfield's book *The Georgians: The Deeds & Misdeeds of Eighteenth-Century Britain* came out at the start of the year. She tells us more about the process of writing and publishing it.

[Find out more.](#)



Hear from 2021 Honorary Fellows Rupert Whitaker and Margaret Busby

We are thrilled that Bedford Society Committee member Caroline Willbourne is being awarded an Honorary Fellowship this year. Last year we were delighted that Bedford alumni [Dr Rupert Whitaker](#) (Psychology 1984) and [Margaret Busby](#) (English 1965) were given this honour. Hear more about their memories of Bedford College and what the Honorary Fellowship means to them.

[Find out more](#)



Bedford College's 175th Anniversary

2024 will mark the 175th Anniversary of the founding of Bedford College. The Bedford Society Committee is currently discussing with the College how best to mark this anniversary, both looking back on past achievements and forward to the future of the College.

We hope to celebrate our own institution but also mark the role of Bedford in the wider movement of higher education for women and indeed its role in widening access to higher education. This is very much a topic for today and we hope to join with the College in promoting this as part of our own tradition.

We are thinking of three events, in three places - Bedford Square, Regent's Park and Egham. We are very much at the planning stage, talking within the Committee and with the College. The type of event will depend on the size of the venue, availability of the spaces and time of year, also costs.

We look forward to hearing your thoughts and suggestions on marking the anniversary, so please do send these through via this form by Wednesday 29th June.



Commemorating Sarah Parker Remond

On 25th March 2022 at 1.20pm a plaque was unveiled in Grenville Street to

commemorate Sarah Parker Remond. Sarah led a very interesting life during which she was the first Black woman scholar at Bedford College during the 1850s.

It was a bright sunny day and a group of Bedford Alumni were part of the vibrant group who listened to the music and speeches and watched the long-overdue unveiling. It was a very up-beat and enjoyable event organised by [Black History Walks](#) and supported by RHBNC. The plaque was unveiled by Professor Paul Gilroy, of UCL, where the Race Studies Centre is named after her. Professor Gloria Agyemang spoke about Sarah Parker Remond on behalf of the College.

There were seven speakers, who brought to life Sarah's amazing story. She was born free in Salem, Massachusetts in 1824, into an active abolitionist family and made her first public speech at 16 years of age. Her mother, Nancy Remond, owned a successful catering and hairdressing business, and was a major influence in her life. She travelled widely across America delivering speeches and lectures on behalf of the American Anti-Slavery Society. In 1858, she travelled alone to Liverpool to spread the abolitionist message and found herself lecturing to packed audiences across Britain. She urged the British to boycott American cotton, harvested by slaves, and support the Union in the American civil war. She was also one of the first to speak openly in Britain about the sexual exploitation of black enslaved women.

In 1859 she enrolled at Bedford College, where she studied a range of subjects for 2 years and became friends with the founder, Elizabeth Jesser Reid. Sarah went on to study at University College and later studied medicine in Italy, where she became an obstetrician.

Amazingly, one of the speakers at the unveiling was Margaret Yvonne Busby CBE, who in 1961 became only the second Black woman to enrol at Bedford College. She also has made a considerable contribution as the first and youngest Black woman book publisher and in 2020 was voted one of the 100 Greatest Black Britons. Hopefully she will be the subject of her own Blue Plaque one day.

Betty Hales (Physics 1973)

[You can watch Black History Walks video of the event here.](#)

Health Studies at Bedford College

The exciting news about the launch of a new Department of Health Studies at RHBNC prompts some Bedfordian recollections of the interesting history of health-related teaching at Bedford College.

The story began in 1896, with the establishment of a Hygiene Department, tasked mainly with training women for careers as sanitary inspectors, a role that had come into being with the enactment of the Public Health Acts of the 1870s. The Hygiene course was discontinued after the First World War but, in the early 1920s, courses for trainee health visitors were run by the newly established Department of Social Studies. Innovative international courses in public health for nurses were also offered by the Department, in association with the League of Red Cross Societies and the College of Nursing.

Forty years later, in the 1960s, the Department of Sociology (as it had by now become) introduced an innovative course, run in conjunction with the Royal Middlesex Hospital School of Nursing, consisting of a degree in social administration combined with a specially designed, shortened postgraduate SRN course. This was superseded in 1980 by an integrated four-year undergraduate degree in Nursing Studies, under the direction of Marion Ferguson. The degree ran very successfully, albeit with small numbers but, sadly, the Department's move to Egham severed the crucial link with the Middlesex Hospital, and the last cohort of nursing students graduated in 1986.

Meanwhile, back in the 1960s, the Department had appointed Professor Margot Jefferys to head a new Social Research Unit which, with substantial external funding, ran many major research projects, and also launched a taught master's degree in Medical

Sociology. That unique and very successful degree programme was run in close association with the Research Unit, and operated on various off-campus sites, semi-detached physically (and not altogether conveniently) from the main Department in Regent's Park. Margot Jefferys retired in 1982 and was succeeded as programme director by Professor Mike Bury. When the rest of the Department moved to Egham, in 1984, it received funding to enable it to remain for a period in proximity to the main London hospitals. It was located at 11 Bedford Square, now the *de facto* spiritual home of the Bedford Society. A few years later the master's programme joined the rest of the Department – re-badged by this time as Social Policy and Social Science – in Egham.

The Bedford Society has been exploring the possibility of organising a special health-related event, maybe a reunion, for the Bedford alumni of these degree programmes. ***However, in order to do that we urgently need your up-to-date contact details, and your permission to use those details for the purpose of organising such an event.*** So, unless we already have those details and/or permissions, **please complete the update form.**

And do please pass this message on to any fellow alumni who might not be in receipt of this Newsletter, and ask them **to complete the update form** so that we are able to keep in touch with them.

We very much look forward to hearing from you – and of course to meeting all of you soon, in person!

Professor Gavin Drewry

Member of the Bedford Society Committee,

Bedford College Sociology Department staff member from 1966 until the Merger

Memories of Bedford College

In the last newsletter, we asked readers to share their memories of studying at Bedford College. Thank you to those who submitted the following contributions - we hope you enjoy reading them. If you would like to submit a piece for future newsletters, please email alumni@rhbnc.ac.uk with your contribution.



Diana Lane

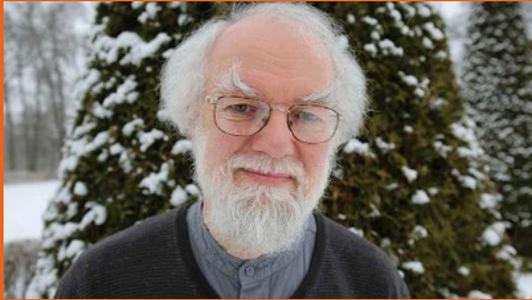
I went to Bedford College at the age of 17: London was not a challenge for me as I came from Merseyside - I was used to big city life, albeit on a smaller scale geographically. Some students had not lived in a big city before and took time to adjust. Nevertheless, there was not space for all in halls of residence and I was lucky to gain a place in my second term in a converted group of terraced houses in Swiss Cottage.

Read more.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Events at the College are both online and in person this term.

You can find the full listings at www.rhbnc.ac.uk



Twentieth Annual Hellenic Lecture

**Monday 30th May 18:00,
Chapel, Royal Holloway and
Bedford New College**

Rowan Williams, former Archbishop of Canterbury and an eminent scholar of Eastern Christian thought, will reflect of

Orthodox Christian spirituality.

[Find out more](#)



Magna Carta Lecture 2022

**6pm-8.15pm, Monday 6 June
2022, Middle Temple Hall
London**

This event is taking place in the beautiful surroundings of Middle Temple Hall, built between 1562 and 1573 and one of the four ancient Inns of Court, situated at the heart of London overlooking the Thames.

This year, HM Chief Inspector of Prisons, Charlie Taylor, will give the lecture, *The importance of good prisons in a criminal justice system*.

Appointed in 2020, Charlie Taylor spent much of his career as a teacher and was formerly Chair of the Youth Justice Board. Reporting directly to the Secretary of State for Justice, he leads HM Inspectorate of Prisons for England and Wales, which provides independent scrutiny of the conditions for and treatment of prisoners and other detainees.

Prior to the pandemic, prisons were described by the House of Commons Justice Committee as being in an "enduring crisis" with high levels of violence and self-harm, limited opportunities for education and work, and poor re-offending outcomes. When the pandemic hit, most prisoners were confined to their cells for 23 hours a day. As prisons emerge from this very challenging period, the government has announced an ambitious plan of prison building and reform.

No one is better placed to know the problems facing prisons or assess the reform plans than Charlie Taylor, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons for England and Wales. Charlie Taylor has established a reputation for his hard-hitting reports and his drive to improve leadership and performance in the prison system.

[Book here.](#)

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