



ROBINSON COLLEGE  
CAMBRIDGE

**DONOR REPORT 2022**

THE NUMBERS  
THE PEOPLE  
**YOUR IMPACT**

FY21|22

## THE NUMBERS

TOTAL RAISED:

£1,757,338

CASH RECEIVED:

£1,646,181

## THE PEOPLE

4,923

ALUMNI FOR WHOM WE  
HAVE CONTACT DETAILS

VALUE OF ALUMNI GIVING:

£1,037,140

% ALUMNI GIVING – 14%



## THE IMPACT

### PROJECTS SUPPORTED

Greatest need  
(Discretionary) £359,953

Students £1,362,587

Of which student  
wellbeing: £75,174

Buildings £3,046

Teaching £31,000

Other £750

### BREAKDOWN OF DONORS

TOTAL DONORS:

876

Alumni 703

Friends, including parents  
of Robinsonians 99

Fellows & Staff,  
including former Fellows  
and Bye-Fellows 59

Corporate supporters 8

Trusts and foundations 2

Other 5



# LETTER FROM THE DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR

Almost a year on, it is a pleasure to look back on 2021-22 from a distance. Like many of us, I would prefer to leave behind memories of the pandemic years we shared, but this long-awaited report takes us back to a time when we emerged from our separated lives to reunite as a community dispersed through repeated lockdowns. Recalling that year, I am reminded of one of the good things that was a feature of that most difficult time: the generosity of Robinson's alumni and supporter community, and the strength of its connection to the College.

Since then, your generous support has enabled us to expand our widening participation programmes, including the Pegasus Scholars Bridging Programme described in the pages that follow. Initiatives like this break down barriers and provide opportunities for individuals from underrepresented backgrounds to access higher education. Thanks to you, we have been able to reach aspiring students who might not otherwise have considered Cambridge as an option. Your contributions have helped us foster inclusivity and diversity within our student body, enriching our academic community with varied perspectives and experiences.

In 2021-22 you supported our ambitions to remain competitive with other Colleges within the University, so that we can continue to attract and retain exceptional scholars, provide the highest level of pastoral care; and offer enriching student experiences that distinguish us as a leading academic institution. With your generosity, we can invest in our academic programmes, research initiatives, and fellowship development, ensuring that Robinson remains at the forefront of innovation, scholarship, and intellectual pursuit.

We are still recovering financially from the pandemic, but as we navigate these challenges, we remain indebted to you for your enduring support. The impact of your contributions extends far beyond our red brick walls, shaping the lives and futures of countless individuals who call, or have called, Robinson College their home.

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "S. Westwood". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal blue line.

SARAH WESTWOOD

Development Director and Fellow

2021-2022

# PRIORITY PROJECTS

## HELPING OUR COMMUNITY THRIVE: THE STUDENT WELLBEING APPEAL

In 2022, we launched the **Student Wellbeing Appeal** to raise funds for a new Head of Student Wellbeing and Welfare, and to create a Wellbeing Centre at Thorneycreek House. The effects of the pandemic on students' mental health and wellbeing were significant, and required the College to have someone in post to respond to urgent cases, as well as to provide ongoing support by meeting students and offering consistent and professional help.

By the end of the 2021-2022 Financial Year, the College had received more than £100,000 toward the Appeal – enabling us to meet our campaign goals, and ensure that Robinson remains among the most forward-looking and imaginative of the Cambridge colleges in our approach to welfare and wellbeing. As of today, funds raised for the Wellbeing Appeal stands at £122,506. Thanks to you, our students have the support they need to continue to thrive, and to make the most of their experience at the University and at Robinson.

“When my son started at Robinson College earlier this year, the combination of a big transition coupled with normal anxiety caused a severe recurrence of his previous mental health issues.

We were beyond grateful for the fantastic welfare services on offer. He could just walk into the office when he needed help most and was made to feel welcome, supported and safe.

As a parent, it meant the world to me to have someone on site to help him. The excellent staff accompanied him through his difficult first few days with constant support, reaching out, offering strategies and help with navigating both, university life and other services available to him.

I am pleased to say that he found his place in no time and is enjoying university life fully now. I am not sure we would be here without the amazing work from the welfare team.

Thank you so much.”

**Parent Testimonial**

**I ATTENDED ROBINSON IN THE  
EARLY 1990s, AND HAD QUITE  
A HARD TIME ADJUSTING  
TO LIFE IN CAMBRIDGE**



### Inside Robinson's new Wellbeing Centre

“ I attended Robinson in the early 1990s, and had quite a hard time adjusting to life in Cambridge. Back in those days I don't remember any societal emphasis on support for mental health or wellbeing. Quite the opposite, in fact: admitting that you were under pressure or feeling stressed out was not something anyone did. What I also remember very clearly is that Robinson did, and I believe still does, pride itself on being a supportive community of people: staff, Fellows, students, indeed everybody. I remember, for example, with great gratitude and affection, spending time with my pastoral tutor, Dr. Martin Brett, who would listen, puff deeply on his pipe, and dispense sensible advice.

Times have changed in the past 30 years or so, and I am so pleased that current generations are happy to open up and talk about the mental health challenges we all face—in particular at Cambridge, where the pressure to succeed is pretty intense. I am very grateful to Robinson for being there, for being such a supportive community and for helping me through those times, and it is for this reason in particular that, as an alumnus, I made a donation to the College's Wellbeing Appeal as part of the last Giving Day. ”

ALEX LENNON (Electrical and Information Sciences, 1993)

# EVERY GIFT MAKES AN IMPACT:

## DISCRETIONARY AND CUMULATIVE FUNDING

The Robinson College experience is defined, in part, by the building itself—the unique red-brick space that every Robinson student calls both home and classroom for a period of time. Maintaining and improving the space, especially now as a Grade II\* listed building, is a costly undertaking, and we're grateful for the flexibility that our discretionary funding gives us to respond to the areas of greatest need. **The Annual Fund** is one of the key sources of funding for building development and maintenance, as well as ensuring that Robinson can offer essential student support and safeguard our unique educational system well into the future.

Through initiatives like the **Telephone Campaign**, in which many of our supporters commit to regular giving toward discretionary funding, small gifts have a tangible, cumulative impact over time. Every gift, big or small, goes a long way toward both preserving and improving the physical heart of the College.

“ Providing match funding for the Telephone Campaign was a great opportunity, and one that I found very rewarding. The telephone team did a fantastic job, as always, and I was thrilled to see the results come in. It's particularly important for the college to be able to raise money to spend at its discretion on the hundreds of small but vital things that it needs to maintain the building and the amenities that make college life what it is.”

ROY PEARCE (MML, 1998)

“ PROVIDING MATCH FUNDING FOR THE TELEPHONE CAMPAIGN WAS A GREAT OPPORTUNITY, AND ONE THAT I FOUND VERY REWARDING ”



After twenty years as the Warden of Robinson College, Professor David Yates stepped down in 2021. The Professor David Yates Master's Scholarships were created to mark his leadership, and to build a legacy that will help attract future graduate students to Robinson, continuing David's aim to make a Cambridge education accessible to all. In 2022, the inaugural Professor David Yates Master's Scholarship was awarded to Peter Hipkin, an MPhil candidate in Early Modern History.

2021-2022

# PRIORITY PROJECTS

## WIDENING PARTICIPATION AT ALL STAGES: THE PEGASUS SCHOLARS BRIDGING PROGRAMME AND THE PROFESSOR DAVID YATES MASTER'S SCHOLARSHIPS

Established through a generous gift from the Isaac Newton Fund, and with ongoing funding by alumni donors, the **Pegasus Scholars Bridging Programme** aims to ensure that the opportunity to study at Robinson is made as accessible as possible to students from the widest variety of backgrounds. It was planned on the premise that achieving a place at Cambridge is only the first stage in feeling prepared to participate fully in the life and opportunities that our University affords. As such, the Programme is an invaluable chance for the College to offer incoming Robinson students a chance to preview the College, and to prepare for life at the University, before they officially begin.

It is gratifying to know that the College, with the generous support of our alumni and friends, has been able to put this Scholarship in place so quickly. It will fund graduate students over the coming years, helping to ensure that – regardless of background or means – aspiring students have the opportunity to reach their full potential here at Cambridge and beyond. Access to education is one of Robinson's core priorities, and I would like to thank those individuals who contributed to the Scholarship for helping us to continue to lead on this endeavour.

**PROFESSOR DAVID YATES,**  
former Warden of Robinson College

# BEYOND THE BOOKS: INVESTING IN OUR STUDENTS

Life at Robinson extends beyond the library and revisions: we recognise that extra-curricular pursuits are necessary to the health and happiness of our students, and create the space for our students to excel beyond their academics. **The Windward Student Support Fund**, funded by Oliver (Land Economy, 1999) and Jodie (History, 2001) Millican, is a needs-based fund that supports our students as they aim to become well-rounded, intellectually curious individuals.

Lauren Domfe (HSPS, 2021) received money from the **Windward Student Support Fund** for travel and subsistence at the IPF University Powerlifting World Cup in 2022.

**THE COLLEGE ASSISTED ME FINANCIALLY,  
ENABLING ME TO FULLY ENJOY THE  
EXPERIENCE WITHOUT THE BURDEN  
OF FINANCIAL STRESS**

## **OTHER EXTRA-CURRICULAR FUNDS AVAILABLE TO STUDENTS, AND FUNDED BY DONORS, INCLUDE:**

- **Music awards, for choir and organ scholars**
- **Sports awards, including the Fred Boyne Sporting Achievement Fund, named for Robinson's late Head Porter**
- **Travel grants, to enrich students' academic research and experience**



Lauren Domfe (HSPS, 2021)

“ What I’m most grateful for is the support I received from the university. The College assisted me financially, enabling me to fully enjoy the experience without the burden of financial stress. ”

Lauren, who only started powerlifting in 2021, also spoke to the importance of her extra-curricular activity for her mental wellbeing.

**“ THE IMPACT IT'S HAD ON MY MENTAL HEALTH, I FEEL LIKE ESPECIALLY IN THE PRESSURED ENVIRONMENT OF CAMBRIDGE, YOU CANNOT UNDERESTIMATE DOING SOMETHING PHYSICALLY EXERTING TO MAKE YOU FEEL HAPPIER ”**

# FUNDING RESEARCH ACROSS DISCIPLINES: KEY SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAMMES

As the first Cambridge College to accept both men and women from its foundation, Robinson has always been a champion of diversity and equal access to education. We believe that background or means should not be a condition of academic pursuit, and it is with thanks to many donor-funded programmes that we can put this belief into practice, with the ambition to ensure that our student body remains academically, culturally and geographically diverse. Thanks to the generosity of our alumni donors, new funding opportunities are now available to our students.

**The Crausaz Wordsworth Scholarship in the Humanities** funds Robinson PhD candidates working in the arts and humanities. The inaugural recipients of the scholarship, Toby Barnett (on the cover of this Report) and Maddison Sumner, are pursuing PhDs in the Faculty of Modern and Medieval Languages and Linguistics.

“ I am very humbled to be a 2022 recipient of the Crausaz Wordsworth Scholarship in the Humanities. On the one hand, this scholarship provides me with the generous financial support required to pursue my doctoral research at Cambridge; on the other, it affords me the confidence to have faith in the strength of my academic ideas and, in turn, strive to contribute meaningfully to both knowledge and wider society. I grew up in and around the Cambridge area in a non-academic family and would never have dreamed of studying here for my doctorate as a child: this has made that possible and I am extremely grateful. ”

TOBY BARNETT

“ Receiving this scholarship, in the simplest terms, meant that I was able to pursue PhD at all – without it I wouldn't have been able to take on this level of study and thus for that reason alone it has changed my life and trajectory significantly. I had to work during my Master's and knowing that I wouldn't have to do that for the duration of my PhD was such a weight off of my shoulders. It really does feel like I'm being paid to do what I love and I think that my project deserves the time and effort that I'm able to dedicate to it with the support of the scholarship. ”

MADDISON SUMNER



**The Bernard Gordon Bursary**, funded by Claudio Corbetta (Mathematics, 1991), is awarded to undergraduate or postgraduate students who are studying a STEMM subject. Assessed on the basis of talent and financial need, this Bursary is designed to help students from outside of the UK. Undergraduate Stanislav Kurass joined Robinson from Latvia in 2019 to read Natural Sciences, an experience made possible by this extra funding.

👉 This bursary allowed me to devote more time and effort to my studies and things that are good for me such as going to the gym. As a result, I did very well in my second and third year exams, achieving a First two years in a row. It also made it possible for me to stay in college accommodation over the summer break to do an amazing internship with a Cambridge-based consultancy. I wouldn't be able to study at such a prestigious institution without such kind donations and financial support. I enjoy being part of the vibrant student community here at Robinson and I am very much motivated to thrive by the college environment, and I make good use of the facilities here, especially the college library. 🍌

STANISLAV KURASS



FROM THE FINANCE BURSAR

# FIONA BROCKBANK

FINANCIAL YEAR 2021-2022

## FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

I am pleased to report that the financial year ended 30 June 2022 (FY21/22) saw significant progress in key financial areas, following the significant impact of the Covid pandemic on the financial results of the previous two years.

In particular, we were delighted to welcome all of our students back into residence, which is a critical part of the Cambridge experience and meant that the College was once again a vibrant and lively environment. In financial terms, student

accommodation and catering income levels have therefore returned to pre-pandemic levels, having been significantly reduced as a result of the lockdowns in FY19/20 and FY20/21.

The recovery of our conferencing business is a longer term and more complex challenge. Those of you who know the College well will already be aware that the conferencing business has always been a key part of the financial structure of the College, particularly given that we make significant losses on our core purpose of providing education (in common with other

**WE WERE HIT PARTICULARLY HARD FINANCIALLY BY THE PANDEMIC, AS WE HAD NO CONFERENCING INCOME IN FY20/21. WE WERE THEREFORE PLEASED TO ACHIEVE CONFERENCING INCOME OF £0.6M IN FY21/22 – WE REMAIN FOCUSED ON REBUILDING OUR BUSINESS IN A HIGHLY COMPETITIVE ENVIRONMENT**

Cambridge colleges). As a result, we were hit particularly hard financially by the pandemic, as we had no conferencing income in FY20/21. We were therefore pleased to achieve conferencing income of £0.6m in FY21/22 and although this is a great start, we still have a long way to go to return to our pre-pandemic income levels of around £1.9m. We remain focused on rebuilding our business in a highly competitive environment.

As a College, we are very proud of the fact that we did not make any staff redundancies during the pandemic and that we also topped up the government support provided to those on furlough. Both decisions were carefully considered – we felt at the time that it was the right approach to adopt, both strategically and in terms of providing stability for our employees in tough times. We recognised that when the restrictions were lifted, we would still need the skills and experience that we value in our staff, and this decision has proved to be the right one.

During FY21/22 we were proud to reach the point where all of our permanent employees were paid above the real living wage. It is an ongoing challenge to maintain competitive salaries when the College as a whole is facing the fundamental issue of a cost base that is growing faster than our income streams (given that home undergraduate tuition fees have been frozen since 2017). We believe, however, that this is an important area to continue to work on given the need to provide fair remuneration that reflects the vital role our staff play in supporting our students, Fellows and guests.

## INVESTMENT PORTFOLIO

The investment portfolio was valued at £75m at year-end, following the withdrawal of £1.8m in cash by the College to fund a potential property transaction. The portfolio performed strongly during the year, outperforming our equity benchmark by almost three times. Our future financial stability depends, of course, on the continued growth of the investment portfolio so that we can achieve a level of income which, together with conferencing income, will help the College to better offset the losses we make on education.

The portfolio is a mix of equity, funds, real assets, cash and idiosyncratic investments. Most of our holdings are very long term, so many of the individual holdings remain consistent year on year, although valuations obviously fluctuate. We remain incredibly proud that one of our idiosyncratic investments is in a company founded and run by one of our alumni, which has been incredibly successful to date. We are very excited about the company's future prospects and look forward to sharing in its success. →

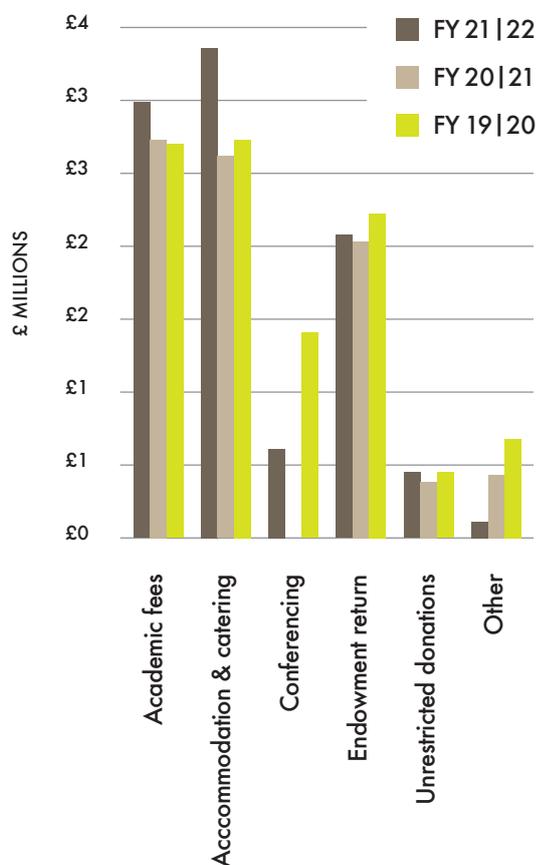
**DURING FY21/22 WE WERE PROUD TO REACH THE POINT WHERE ALL OF OUR PERMANENT EMPLOYEES WERE PAID ABOVE THE REAL LIVING WAGE**

## DONATION INCOME

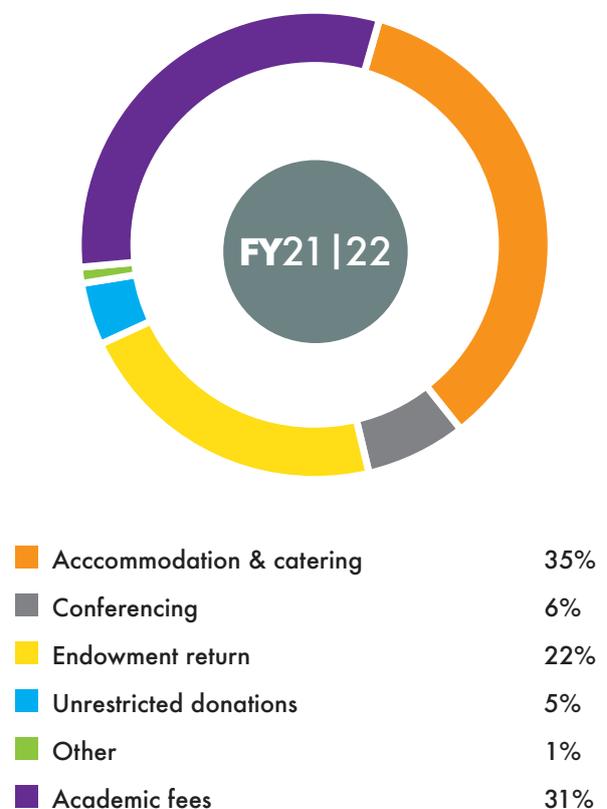
During the year we benefited from donations of upwards of a million pounds, of which £0.4m was unrestricted and could be used to fund the general running of the College.

We are extremely grateful for the generosity of all of our donors. The money donated makes a huge difference and, as well as the financial benefit, we appreciate that your donations also mean that the work we do is seen to be of value.

**FY 21|22 - HOW OUR UNRESTRICTED INCOME STREAMS COMPARED TO PRIOR YEARS**



**FY 21|22 - WHERE DID OUR UNRESTRICTED INCOME COME FROM?**



## CAPITAL PROJECTS

The College has a significant multi-year capital programme to ensure that the estate is maintained to an appropriate standard and this programme has meant that each summer, when the majority of students are out of residence, we undertake refurbishment work on various parts of our accommodation.

In addition to this 'business as usual' work, we are faced with an exceptional challenge in the form of water ingress problems in our main College building. The work required to deal with this problem involves a multi-year, multi-million-pound commitment to extensive renovation work. →

We had a trial run of the remedial work in 2020, but work in earnest began in the summer of 2022 when—if you happened to visit the College during this time—you would have seen Long Court being torn up and rebuilt over a number of weeks. This work is essential to preserve our building, but the work is disruptive in nature and so has to be carefully planned to minimise the impact on our resident students.

Post year-end, in late 2022, the College was notified that our main building had been awarded Grade II\* listing status by Historic England. We are very proud to be the custodians of the building and that our love of its architecture is shared. The listing does, however, add complexity and cost to the extensive works we need to undertake to ensure the building is sound for future generations.

**WE ARE VERY PROUD TO BE THE CUSTODIANS OF THE BUILDING AND THAT OUR LOVE OF ITS ARCHITECTURE IS SHARED. THE LISTING DOES, HOWEVER, ADD COMPLEXITY**

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## WHAT'S NEXT?

The main long-term financial challenge facing by the College is that income growth is largely constrained, while expenditure is typically inflation-driven. In common with many other organisations, we are facing significant increases in staffing and utility costs, but we cannot increase our prices at the same rate—in particular we are faced with a UK undergraduate tuition fee that has been frozen at the same level for a number of years.

The obvious question is: what do we intend to do about this?

The College is taking a consistent approach to our financial strategy, the key elements of which are:

- **Continue to seek donation income, recognising that as a relatively young College we have fewer cohorts of alumni than some of our neighbouring Colleges and therefore have to work that much harder to fund the exciting projects and plans we have.**
- **Continued growth of the investment portfolio, which in turn will increase investment income.**
- **Grow the conference business, working to continue to deliver a high-quality product but with a focus on profitability.**
- **Continued careful management of our cost base to ensure that expenditure growth is well controlled.**

Finally, I would like to thank again all of our generous donors and our staff and Fellows who continue to work incredibly hard to support our students and the wider College community.

# Robinson College

Crausaz Wordsworth Building



The Warden of Robinson College, Sir Richard Heaton KCB,  
at his Admission in October 2021



Thank you again for supporting Robinson and contributing to the transformational impact described in these pages. If you would like to renew your support, please scan the QR code to make another gift.

## Keeping in touch

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**ROBINSON COLLEGE**  
CAMBRIDGE

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FRONT COVER:  
Toby Barnett, one of the 2022 recipients of the  
Crausaz Wordsworth Scholarship in the Humanities