



ROBINSON COLLEGE  
CAMBRIDGE

**DONOR REPORT 2023**



THE NUMBERS  
THE PEOPLE  
**YOUR IMPACT**

FY22|23

## THE NUMBERS

TOTAL RAISED:

£2,307,101

CASH RECEIVED:

£1,213,882

## THE IMPACT

PROJECTS SUPPORTED  
(CASH RECEIVED)

Greatest need (Discretionary)	£343,440
Students	£708,849
Buildings	£32,948
Teaching	£124,931
Other	£3,715

## THE PEOPLE

5,798

TOTAL NUMBER OF  
ROBINSON ALUMNI

VALUE OF ALUMNI GIVING:

£102,352

% ALUMNI GIVING - 14%

BREAKDOWN OF DONORS

TOTAL DONORS:

902

Alumni	723
Friends, including parents of Robinsonians	103
Fellows & Staff, including former Fellows and Bye-Fellows	51
Corporate supporters	10
Trusts and foundations	1
Other	14





# LETTER FROM THE WARDEN

In 2022-2023, your support helped us face tough financial headwinds, with inflation placing our cost base under unrelenting pressure and with our fee income remaining broadly flat. Happily, other sources of income improved, with a stronger investment income and a further recovery in conferencing income post-Covid. But it is your generosity and your philanthropy that I would like to celebrate in this report. You have enabled us to achieve really worthwhile improvements, and have allowed us to be confident in our future financial health.

Crucially, we have been able to support incoming students. We want Robinson to be attractive to undergraduates from the widest possible range of backgrounds; just as importantly, we want all of our students to thrive while they are here. We want to be able to attract postgraduate students too – and international students, from Europe as well as from further afield. We want to meet their financial need where we can. For those students who do come to Robinson, we continue to invest in the cost of teaching, as well as measures to improve welfare and wellbeing. That means more than clinically responding to medical conditions; it also includes encouraging participation in sport and other activities that strengthen resilience. Thank you for making all that possible.

We have also embarked on major capital projects for the repair and renewal of our main building, a modern masterpiece. We want to improve it too, creating an inspiring, beautiful, safe and affordable place to live, study and work. We are looking at possible expansions of our estate too. Again, your generosity and commitment to Robinson allow us to make these plans with energy and confidence.

I hope you enjoy reading the report. Right from the start of the college, we have looked to our donors, alumni and other supporters; our appreciation of the kindness you have shown us is profound and lasting. I hope you might feel inspired to continue your support as we move forward, or even to extend it. You can be sure that we will seize opportunities with it, and create lasting value. Please do not hesitate to contact me or the Director of Development if you have any questions or comments.

SIR RICHARD HEATON KCB  
Warden of Robinson College

2022-2023

# ROBINSON ON A GLOBAL SCALE

## SECURING FUNDING FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

The landscape for non-UK students has undergone a transformative shift in the aftermath of Brexit. Alongside a sharp increase in cost of living—with Cambridge currently ranking as the UK's second most expensive city to live in—the fees for international students remain high<sup>1</sup>. As of October 2021, EU applicants are now required to pay international fees, which for the 2022-2023 entry year were nearly triple the cost of home fees for most courses.

Despite this, Robinson's commitment to fostering a diverse and inclusive environment remains unwavering. Thanks to donor-funded scholarships specifically targeted toward international students, we have been able to bridge the financial gap and ensure that deserving scholars from around the world continue to find a home in the Robinson community.

The William Waite International Scholarship, funded by a generous gift from Claudio Corbetta (Mathematics, 1991), provides funding to a minimum of three undergraduate students from outside the UK for the duration of their course. The aim of the scholarship is to provide sufficient funding to encourage a student from the EU to make an application to Robinson. Claudio's gift, named after one of his early teachers, stems from his own experience as an international student in the UK—a poignant and powerful example of giving coming full circle.

**“ WHEN I FIRST CAME TO ROBINSON  
COLLEGE, I RECEIVED A £500  
BURSARY WHICH MADE A HUGE  
DIFFERENCE TO MY LIFE ”**

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.essentialliving.co.uk/blogs-insights/the-most-expensive-places-to-rent-in-the-uk/>



My journey to Cambridge, where I studied Mathematics in the early 1990s, was made possible by the unwavering support of a remarkable teacher during my formative years: Mr William Waite, who has recently passed away, but who will always remain close to my heart. I have established the William Waite Scholarship in his honour and in the hope of keeping Mr Waite's memory alive and continuing his legacy of benevolence.

Before coming to Robinson, I attended Aldenham School in Elstree on an international scholarship and it was Mr Waite's kindness and guidance that played a pivotal role in my life. He and his wonderful wife Kathleen not only helped me with the practicalities of being alone in the UK and struggling with the English language, but also instilled in me the drive to excel for the betterment of my family, my school and myself.

I owe much of my success today to Mr Waite's selfless acts of kindness and mentorship during those crucial years. The William Waite Scholarship is my way of giving back and ensuring that others who have the potential to succeed but face financial constraints receive the support they need. My ambition for this scholarship is to give European students the opportunity to fulfil their potential, not only for their personal growth, but also for the betterment of their communities and our collective future.

When I first came to Robinson College, I received a £500 bursary which made a huge difference to my life. It was a small token of support that meant the world to me, and looking back I am inspired to share some of the good fortune I have experienced.

Robinson College holds a special place in my heart and I believe in the importance of supporting its mission to develop future leaders and change-makers. Through the William Waite Bursary, I aim to make education more accessible and empower deserving students to achieve their dreams, just as Mr Waite did for me. ”

2022-2023

# ROBINSON ON A GLOBAL SCALE

## SECURING FUNDING FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

Since 2017, the Kuok Group Foundation Scholarships have enabled Chinese students from low-income families wishing to study STEMM subjects to take up a place at Robinson. As the scholarships come to an end in 2024, we're incredibly grateful to the Kuok Foundation for all they've done to make the dream of coming to Cambridge a reality for these promising young students, and enriching Robinson in the process.



THE NUMBERS, THE PEOPLE, **YOUR IMPACT**

**I WANT TO EXPRESS MY HEARTFELT THANKS TO THE DONORS WHO HAVE MADE THIS SCHOLARSHIP POSSIBLE.**

**YOUR GENEROSITY HAS MADE A LASTING IMPACT ON MY LIFE**

Rang Chen arrived at Robinson on a Kuok Scholarship in 2021 to study Computer Science. He graduates at the end of the 2024 Easter term, and says of his time at Robinson:

It has been a spectacular journey, and I am grateful for the opportunities this scholarship has afforded me. The financial support provided by the Kuok Scholarship has empowered my academic pursuits. It has alleviated the financial strain and enables me to focus on my studies.

Moreover, the Kuok Scholarship has been a source of motivation and encouragement. Knowing that I have the support has inspired me to excel in my studies and seek out and make the most of various opportunities.

One such opportunity was the chance to intern at a tech start-up company on energy safety. The financial stability provided by the Kuok Scholarship allowed me to pursue real-world experiences beyond the classroom. The internship not only enhanced my practical skills but also provided insights into the tech industry.

The Kuok Scholarship has also fostered a sense of community. I had the privilege of befriending other Kuok Scholars. We have formed a supportive network and progress through our academic journeys together. We share insights and challenges, creating a collaborative environment that enriches our College experience.

Over the past three years, the Kuok Scholarship cultivated a sense of responsibility and gratitude. The support enables me to engage in various aspects of College life and ensures I can fully experience and contribute to the vibrant community around me.

I want to express my heartfelt thanks to the donors who have made this scholarship possible. Your generosity has made a lasting impact on my life.

2022-2023

# PRIORITY PROJECTS

## THRIVING MINDS: NURTURING STUDENT WELLBEING

Student welfare and wellbeing is a top priority at Robinson. Ensuring our students feel supported and secure means that they are able to actively engage in their academic studies, reducing overall stress and anxiety and enhancing their ability to cope with the challenges that come from studying at one of the world's most rigorous universities. We recognise that the success of our students extends beyond academic achievements, encompassing their personal development and resilience – investing in student welfare and wellbeing not only helps them succeed academically, but equips them with the tools to navigate the complexities of life beyond the University.

**“ YOU WANT PEOPLE TO FEEL THAT WHATEVER THEY STRUGGLED WITH, WITH THE RIGHT SUPPORT IN PLACE, THEY COPE. AND IF YOU COPE WELL WITH THINGS THAT YOU STRUGGLED WITH, THAT FEEDS BACK INTO YOUR LIFE FURTHER DOWN. ”**

You bring that experience with you, whatever you do, it's not only your academic experience it's how you did that. And that makes a difference to what you give back to yourself and other people. You want to get through knowing that you learned some important things about yourself, and you learned how to support yourself, and to support other people.

### **KAREN TATE,**

Head of Student Welfare  
and Wellbeing at Robinson





Photo: Edmund Blok

I am contributing towards Robinson's efforts to support students' wellbeing and welfare by providing funds to help current students with the costs of getting assessments and subsequent support for disabilities like ADHD, ASD and SpLDs. I know from my own experience of supporting students at an Oxford College, where I am the Registrar, that getting a prompt

diagnosis and support can make a really big difference to undergraduate students who only realise they might have one of these disabilities after they arrive at college. Such students can have performed very successfully at school, but then the experience of higher education – both more intense and more flexible – can bring challenges to the fore. Having funding can help students source a more rapid assessment than might be otherwise possible, especially for ADHD. Getting a timely diagnosis and consequently, appropriate support, can enable students to enjoy, and do well at, their studies.

I enjoyed my time at Robinson (1994-97) and made the most of the extra-curricular opportunities Cambridge had to offer. I enjoyed my course (Music) without being a stellar student academically. Learning to write a fugue without access to a keyboard, in total silence, in four hours has not been in the least bit useful to me in most of my professional life, but the focus and determination that were required to do that have definitely been useful to me professionally. I am giving back to Robinson to ensure that current students are able to make the most of their time at Cambridge. Maybe some of them will, in many years' time, give to Robinson, too: continuing a cycle of support for the College, for the benefit of future generations of Robinson students.

**CATHERINE WHALLEY** (Music, 1994)

My time at Robinson is very special to me, and I realise how incredibly fortunate I am to have experienced the College's culture, entrepreneurial spirit and tuition. My support for the College stems from the hope that students today can benefit in the same way, and so have the inspiration Robinson provides for their lives ahead.

**CHARLES PRIDEAUX** (English, 1985)



2022-2023

# PRIORITY PROJECTS

## EMPOWERING DREAMS: TRANSFORMING SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS

The College's Student Opportunities Fund raised £33,872 the last financial year. The fund provides financial support to students for additional costs related to work, research or sports. The fund supports a diverse range of experiences, including attending the United Nations summer program UNIFY, participating in the Edinburgh Fringe Festival, training and equipment, and covering travel and expenses. The Student Opportunities Fund promotes personal growth, academic excellence, community, and significantly impacts the lives of many students, enabling them to fulfil their academic and personal ambitions.

Phoebe Barker received College funds to cover some of her trip to Oman to participate at an international cross country competition:

**OVERALL, THE EXPERIENCE WAS INCREDIBLE AND I LEARNT A LOT ABOUT PREPARING FOR COMPETITION IN AN UNFORGIVING CLIMATE THAT WILL BE USEFUL FOR FUTURE INTERNATIONAL EVENTS**





Through winning the BUCS (British Universities and Colleges Sport) trial at Parliament Hill, London on 20th January, I qualified to represent GB students at the World Universities Cross Country Championships in Oman on 18th February.

After a busy few weeks of authorising absence from the Vet School, gathering funding and sorting out visa applications and team kit, the evening of Tuesday 13th February came and I took the train from Cambridge to Heathrow ahead of an early flight on Wednesday morning. We travelled as a team (16 athletes – 4 in the long course (10k) and 4 in the short course (3k) for each gender – and 2 team managers) and arrived in Oman late on Wednesday evening. We awoke the next morning to bright sunshine and the bustle of Muscat as we were staying in a hotel in the centre of the city. The athletic life had begun!

The days leading up to the race involved going to accreditation, a course tour, a couple of race preparation training sessions, the opening ceremony and multiple team meetings. Although the Omani organisers were extremely welcoming and friendly, the actual information about the event and knowledge of competition was lacking! We were unsure of call-up location, call-up times and even the length of the course! The only thing that they were adamant on were timings: despite multiple nations protesting that racing the long courses after the short courses (and therefore at the hottest part of the day) was a terrible idea, the Omanis did not budge.

After a shortened warm-up due to the heat, we entered the call room wearing ice jackets and frozen towels around our necks. The other three GB girls and I joined the other nations to be led out into the centre of the stadium and into our starting pen. The gun went and we faced 10k of fast, flat racing around the Omani desert; it could not have been more different to English cross country running! Instead of mud and hills, we were faced with a flat, gravel course, covered in a layer of sand and topped off with a high UV index. Luckily, there were frequent water stations throughout and we all finished without heatstroke! I finished in 9th position, thrilled to make the top 10 in such testing conditions, and we won team gold, with Spain in 2nd and South Africa 3rd. We received our medals at the closing ceremony that evening before celebrating with takeaway pizza and Monopoly Deal at the rooftop bar of our hotel!

Our final day provided us with a chance to explore Muscat. We visited the Sultan Qaboos Grand Mosque and sampled some of the local food at a traditional Omani restaurant before making our way back to the airport for a night of travel. We arrived back in the UK at 6:30am, which gave me just over 24 hours to prepare for a job interview at 8am the next day: back to reality!

Overall, the experience was incredible and I learnt a lot about preparing for competition in an unforgiving climate that will be useful for future international events. I am extremely grateful to all of the funds that supported me: Robinson College's Student Opportunities' Fund, the Hawks' and Ospreys and the Achilles Trust, thank you all.



FROM THE FINANCE BURSAR

# FIONA BROCKBANK

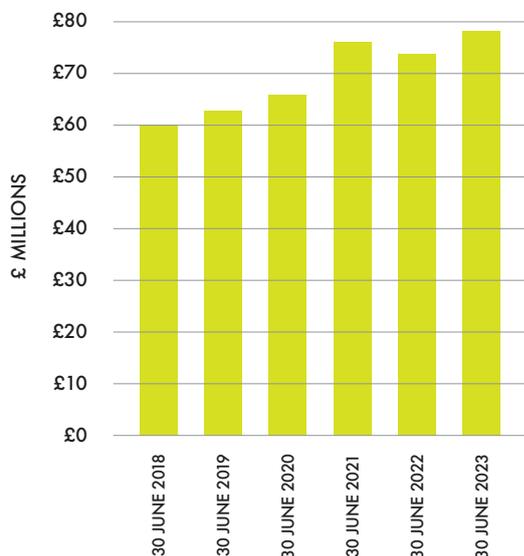
FINANCIAL YEAR 2022-2023

## FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

During the year, the College recognised a total income of £10m and a statutory deficit of £0.1m, compared to £9m of income and a statutory deficit of £0.8m in the previous year. Much of the year-on-year growth related to an increase in investment income and continued recovery of conferencing income post Covid. Although we are very encouraged by this performance, the ongoing challenges created by the recent high inflation environment are significant.

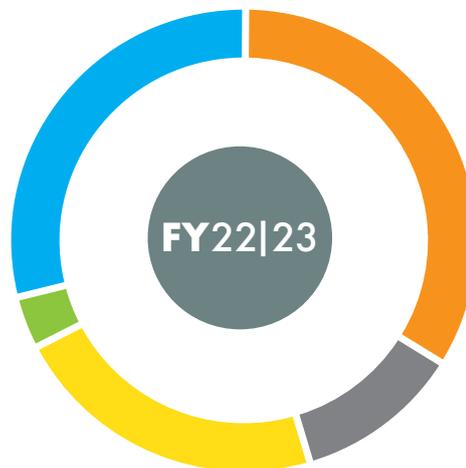
This is particularly difficult in our financial context given that the regulated home undergraduate tuition fee has been at a fixed level for a number of years, and there is continued pressure on key expenditure including wage growth and the cost of the utilities needed to service our large estate. Last year I reported how proud we were to have achieved at least a real living wage for all of our permanent employees. I'm pleased to say that from April 2023 we extended that to also cover our casual employees, who are an important part of our workforce.

FY 22 | 23 -  
INVESTMENT PORTFOLIO VALUATION



30 JUNE 18	£59,561,000
30 JUNE 19	£61,514,000
30 JUNE 20	£63,207,000
30 JUNE 21	£76,546,000
30 JUNE 22	£74,499,000
30 JUNE 23	£77,063,000

FY 22 | 23 -  
OUR UNRESTRICTED INCOME ANALYSIS



Accommodation & catering	34%
Conferencing	11%
Endowment return & Investment	22%
Unrestricted donations	4%
Academic fees	29%

## CAPITAL PROJECTS

The main capital project, in terms of its physical, operational and financial impact on the College, is the water ingress works. This is our multi-year, multi-million-pound project to resolve the persistent issues our main College building has with water penetration and drainage. This ambitious project involves working our way around the College and putting in place a redesigned solution to make sure the building is fit for purpose. In the 2022-2023 financial year we addressed Long Court.

The scale and cost of the project is such that it is not possible to fund from operational cash flows and as such we were very grateful to receive a

generous gift of £0.5m from Trinity College (in the 2023-2024 financial year) to support the works.

Our spend on capital works in the year was £2.7m (vs £1.7m in the previous year) and although the water ingress works were the dominant project, our work to refurbish specific areas of the estate continued.

In late 2022 we received the news that the main College building had been awarded Grade II\* listed status. While we are proud that the architectural qualities of the building have been formally recognised, this has brought more operational complexity and cost to our capital works projects.

# ALTHOUGH WE ARE VERY ENCOURAGED BY THIS PERFORMANCE, THE ONGOING CHALLENGES CREATED BY THE RECENT HIGH INFLATION ENVIRONMENT ARE SIGNIFICANT

## INVESTMENT PERFORMANCE

Investments at our year-end of 30 June 2023 were valued at £78m, an increase of £2.6m compared to the previous year valuation. This continues the growth trend of recent years in the portfolio, with a net increase of an impressive £20m over the past five years. The portfolio includes equity, funds, real assets, cash and idiosyncratic investments, and is overseen by our Investment Committee. We appreciate the contribution provided by our alumni who serve on the Committee, particularly given the importance of the growth of the portfolio to the long-term financial stability of the College.

## DONATIONS

During the year we benefitted from £0.9m\* of donations of which £0.4m were unrestricted, which we were able to use to fund general College operations. Two areas where restricted donations had particular impact in the year were:

- Our first Head of Welfare and Wellbeing, who was appointed in response to the increasing demand for support and wellbeing services that all colleges are experiencing. This new role combined with the College nurse and Chaplain provide an integrated welfare team to better support our students.

- In Michaelmas term 2022, we ran a very successful pilot of our Pegasus Scholarship programme which provides a pre-matriculation introduction to Cambridge for a small number of freshers from a range of backgrounds. The programme helps support and encourage students who historically have found the transition to Cambridge more challenging.

The first full year of the programme was launched in Michaelmas 2023.

Donated income helped to fund both initiatives and we are immensely grateful for the generosity of all our donors. The money donated makes a huge impact.

\*Please note: We do not classify certain donations as income in the statutory accounts, even though they are reported as income in internal reporting. This discrepancy is due to specific accounting rules and audit requirements. The figures provided align with the audited accounts.

## LOOKING FORWARD

As reported in the Donor Report last year, the key financial long-term challenge faced by the College is that income growth is largely constrained, whereas expenditure is typically inflation-driven. In particular, the UK home student regulated tuition fee has been frozen since 2017, with the Bank of England CPI inflation data showing broadly a 27% increase over the same period.

Our financial strategy continues to include:

- A focus on increasing donation income, noting that as a relatively young College, we have fewer cohorts of alumni than some of our collegiate neighbours to help fund the exciting projects and plans we have.
- Continued growth of the investment portfolio which will in turn increase investment income

- Growth of the conference business
- Continual management of our cost base carefully to ensure expenditure growth is well controlled

I should like to conclude by thanking all of our generous donors, as well as our staff and Fellows who continue to work incredibly hard to support our students and wider College community.

# SAYING THANK YOU

Hundreds of you donated an outstanding £1,213,882 to Robinson in 2023, with a further £1,093,219 pledged for future years. This extraordinary generosity helped us to maintain the international diversity of our student community and to offer additional funding to participate in sport at an elite level. With your help, we continued to promote student wellbeing through a programme that helps build resilience and prevent mental health concerns becoming a crisis. Your unrestricted gifts have been no less meaningful, and have reduced the impact on our reserves from unexpected spending demands. For all this and more, thank you!

To express our gratitude, all qualifying donors were invited to the 2024 Donor Day, an annual celebratory lunch in College, on Saturday 22 June. Donors giving a total of over £25,000 are invited to join the College Circle, whose members' names are currently inscribed on the donor honour boards in the Dining Hall.

Those letting us know they have remembered Robinson in their wills are welcomed as members of the Crausaz Wordsworth Society and invited to attend its biennial celebration in College, next scheduled for 2025.

We look forward to welcoming you to one of these events in Cambridge soon, and in the meantime thank you again for supporting Robinson.

## WHAT'S NEXT?

As part of our ongoing Development programme, Giving Day returns in December 2024, with a focus on celebrating all things Robinson. Keep an eye on our news and social media channels to find out how to make your gift, spread the word, and join us in a 36-hour festival of supporting Robinson.



Donor Day 2022



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

REGISTERED CHARITY NO 1137494

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FRONT COVER:  
Phoebe Barker, recipient of Robinson College's  
Student Opportunities Fund