

THE RAI IS THE SEAT OF OXFORD'S CONVERSATION WITH AMERICA. IT IS THE FOREMOST ACADEMIC INSTITUTION FOR TEACHING AND RESEARCH IN US HISTORY, CULTURE AND POLITICS BEYOND AMERICA'S SHORES.



All photos: John Cairns

Annual Report 2015-16

RAI

ROTHERMERE AMERICAN INSTITUTE
AMERICA'S HOME AT OXFORD



Director's Foreword: Jay Sexton

It is a pleasure to report that, in the year of its 15th anniversary, the state of the Rothermere American Institute is strong. The high quality of academic programming, the increased presence of the Institute in the University and beyond, and the generous support of a growing group of benefactors all make the future a bright one for the RAI.

In a year packed with highlights, the first to spring to mind is the Institute's 15th anniversary celebration. It was marked on the occasion of the second annual Ambassador John J. Louis Jr. Lecture in Anglo-American Relations, established in honour of President Reagan's first ambassador to the Court of St. James's. Fittingly, the lecture was delivered by Ambassador Louis's successor today, Ambassador Matthew Barzun, who spoke scintillatingly on the endurance of the 'special relationship', and it was followed by a convivial dinner at University College. There, Lord Rothermere spoke of his family's long commitment to the study of America at Oxford, dating back to the establishment of the Harmsworth Chair in American History in 1922. The post was created in honour of his great-uncle, Harold Alfred Vyvyan St. George Harmsworth, a graduate of Christ Church, Oxford, who was killed in the First World War.



Photo: John Cairns



Photo: John Cairns

The 15th anniversary provided an opportunity to peer into the Institute's own history. Vere Harmsworth Librarian Jane Rawson assembled a display comprising some of the key documents relating to the founding era of the RAI. One of the most interesting was a 1993 letter outlining the reasons to establish an institute for the study of the United States. The author was Sir John Elliott, who remains an active leader in the affairs of the Institute. In the letter, Sir John argued that although there was growing student interest in U.S. studies, Oxford lacked the facilities and joined-up programming that would give the students the best chance of understanding the topics involved. But the argument for the RAI was never simply academic and internal. The letter outlined how, in the new geopolitical context after the end of the Cold War, it was more important than ever for the future leaders that we train at Oxford to be exposed to the history, politics, and literature of Britain's greatest ally.

Implicit in this argument is an important point: the so-called special relationship is not special by default; it has to be cultivated. And there is no better means of doing this than through higher education. The case that Sir John made in 1993 is every bit as relevant today; indeed, perhaps more so. The mission of the RAI has not changed. Fortunately, this mission is one that has been shared by the RAI's supporters, fellows, and students over the course of its first 15 years.

In the 2015-6 academic year, the RAI benefited from a strong group of visiting fellows. For the first time, both of the endowed visiting professors were female. Kristin Hoganson of the University of Illinois joined us as the Harmsworth Professor of American History and Lisa Miller of Rutgers University was the Winant Professor of



Photo: John Cairns



Photo: John Cairns

American Government. Kristin and Lisa both brought exceptional energy, range, and enthusiasm to the Institute. I count working with them as a career highlight. They reflect on their time in Oxford on pages 8 and 13 of this report. Their inaugural lectures, in Lisa's case on 'American Exceptionalism? Race, Crime and Democracy in the United States' and in Kristin's on 'Isolationism as an Urban Legend', will live long in the memory of all who were present. Furthermore, both convened important conferences that, when published, will leave a legacy for the RAI.

The Institute owes thanks, too, to its visiting fellows, who contributed much to the community of scholarship here. Bob Scott, President Emeritus of Adelphi University, joined us as Senior Visiting Research Fellow and convened a memorable symposium, 'The State of American Higher Education'. Azeem Ibrahim (Chicago) gave a powerful RAI-Mansfield College lecture on the persecution of Burma's Rohingya minority; Naomi Wolf and Xavier Marcó del Pont spoke on obscenity law and Don de Lillo respectively at the American Literature Research Seminar; and Marc-William Palen and Luke Nichter presented their research on neo-liberalism and Henry Cabot Lodge at the American History Research Seminar.

Launched in November 2015 with a talk from author Benjamin Markovits, RAI|Live is a new termly series which brings authors and audiences into conversation to explore contemporary American culture and ideas. Andrea Wulf, fresh from winning the 2015 Costa Biography Prize for her book, *The Invention of Nature*, enthralled a packed audience in February 2016 with a talk on the explorer and naturalist Alexander von Humboldt. Highlights of Trinity Term included the annual Esmond Harmsworth Lecture in American Arts and Letters, in which the world-renowned writer Lydia Davis described the thrills and travails of learning Norwegian. The Sir John Elliott Lecture in Atlantic History was given by Stuart Schwartz (Yale) on how hurricanes shaped the creation of welfare states in the greater Caribbean.

Postgraduate researchers remain the lifeblood of the RAI. For the first time, the holders of RAI postgraduate scholarships were given shared access to one of the large offices in the basement. This integrated postgraduates more firmly into the life of the Institute. We were fortunate to have four absolutely first-class postgraduate scholars in Skye Montgomery, Marina Perez de Arcos, Christine Fouirnaies, and Jurrit Daalder.

As in years past, the RAI would not be what it is without the hard work, creative thinking, and good humour of its staff. There is not a better group of people to work with in town. Particular thanks are owed to Michèle Mendelssohn (Academic Director), Huw David (Director of Development), Jane Rawson (Vere Harmsworth Librarian), Jo Steventon (Finance Assistant), and Richard Purkiss (Administrative Assistant).

On a personal note, there are too many people associated with the Rothermere American Institute for me to thank here, as I prepare to return to my original home in the Midwest after 18 years in Oxford. Working with such committed colleagues and friends at the RAI has been a huge pleasure for which I will always be grateful. I look forward to staying in touch with the RAI and hearing about what is certain to be its bright future. I wish the very best to Hal Jones as he takes the Institute forward.



Jay Sexton (John Cairns)

Graduate scholarships at the RAI

Thanks to the generosity of its benefactors, the RAI has once again been able to offer financial support to graduate students working in American history, politics and international relations, and literature. Four scholarship recipients reflect here on the impact of this support on their doctoral research.

Jurrit Daalder

Holding an Esmond Harmsworth Graduate Scholarship in American Literature has allowed me to complete my doctoral dissertation, 'Straight from the Heartland: New Sincerity and the American Midwest'. It examines the works of Richard Powers, David Foster Wallace, and Jonathan Franzen, and aims to establish a connection between the authors' much-discussed "return to sincerity" and the cultural construction of the Midwest as one of the few "genuine" places left in America. The scholarship enabled me to take an additional, fourth year to make changes and additions which I would otherwise not have had time for.

Most of these changes involved material collected as a Dissertation Fellow at the Harry Ransom Center in Austin, Texas. This included stacks of Wallace's notebooks and research binders as well as longhand and typescript drafts for his unfinished third novel, *The Pale King*, which was published posthumously in 2011. Sorting through more than a decade's worth of draft materials made clear the extent of the author's creative struggle in the last years of his life.

The additional year of study gave me the opportunity to think about postdoctoral projects. One idea, relevant to the current "trigger warning" debate and its larger artistic ramifications, has already led to a contribution to a volume about the work of American short-fiction writer George Saunders, forthcoming with Palgrave Macmillan in late 2016.

I have also gained valuable teaching experience. At the English Faculty, I used some of my archival research for two undergraduate lectures in the 'America after 1945' series. I also supervised an undergraduate thesis on twenty-first century American literature and designed my own Visiting Student course on contemporary American creative non-fiction.

Finally, in my role as co-convenor of the American Literature Research Seminar, it has been a pleasure and privilege to host top Americanists from the UK and US.

Christine Fourinaies

With the help of the Esmond Harmsworth Scholarship, I have been able to finish my doctoral thesis, which explores the use of inserted photographs in novelistic life-writing. Two research trips have been the focus of my year: one to the Harry Ransom Center at the University of Texas at Austin, to examine the papers of Norman



Virginia Woolf (George Charles Beresford)

Mailer and Doris Lessing, and another to the German Literature Archive in Marbach, where W. G. Sebald's papers are located. I have thus been able to visit the archives of all the authors discussed in my thesis, the others being Gertrude Stein, Virginia Woolf, and Vladimir Nabokov. I have also published an article in *Woolf Studies Annual*, entitled 'Was Virginia Woolf a Snob? The Case of Aristocratic Portraits in Orlando'.

Besides researching, writing, and publishing, I have gained much from co-convening the American Literature Research Seminar. It has been an enormous privilege to host scholars working in my field such as Thomas Karshan, opinion-shapers like Naomi Wolf, and a literary giant such as Lydia Davis. I hope that my efforts have played a part in advancing the profiles of both the American Literature Research Seminar and the RAI.

I have also benefitted immensely from working with and learning from more senior academics. I appreciate especially that the scholarship gave me the chance to work in close communion with Michèle Mendelssohn.

My academic work this year has helped me secure a post-doctoral position at the University of Chicago, where I will begin work next year after I have had a baby. I am very grateful to the benefactors of the Rothermere American Institute for the opportunities they provide, and hope to maintain a connection to the Institute in the future.



Photo: John Cairns

Oenone Kubie

The second year of my D.Phil. at the RAI has seen my thesis, 'Children in Chicago 1890-1930', develop significantly. I am interested in how adults conceptualised and problematized the figure of the child in the city (with an eye on the differences race, gender, class, and age made), but also consider the everyday experiences of children in the urban setting. Currently, I am working on a chapter which considers how children shaped the practice of new child-centred institutions of the Progressive Era, such as municipal playgrounds and juvenile courts. Earlier this year, I presented a chapter to the RAI American History Graduate Seminar and received encouraging and useful feedback from the group.

In June 2016, I presented a paper at the Children's History Society's 'Horrible Histories' Conference at Kings College London. Titled 'Dreadful Delinquents: Juvenile Crime and the Production of Urban Space', it examined the ability of delinquent children to shape their own experiences of city spaces as well as the urban experience of adult Chicagoans.

This academic year has been a year of firsts for me. My first article, 'Reading Lewis Hine's Child Street Labour Photography, 1906-1918', which grew out of my Masters work at the RAI, was accepted by the *Journal of American Studies*. I also acted as teaching assistant on an undergraduate Further Subject, 'The Age of Jefferson, 1774-1826'.

I remain incredibly grateful for the generous funding I receive through the RAI, without which none of this would be possible. In particular, I am grateful for the opportunity to be part of the RAI community. In 2016-17, the final year of my RAI-AHRC funding, I plan to finish drafting my thesis and build on initial teaching experience by taking on tutorials and lectures.



Oenone Kubie (John Cairns)



Christoph Nitschke (Sheng Peng)

Christoph Nitschke

Looking back on the first year of my D.Phil., what stands out is the chance to look at my subject from different angles. Personal interactions with fellow students, professors, and visiting scholars have advanced my work as much as surveying the literature. I have learned to take for granted the unique opportunities that the RAI provides – such as meeting with Alexander Butterfield (Deputy Assistant to President Nixon, 1969-73).

I study the complex interactions between mercantile and financial actors and governmental agents in the making of American external relations, during a time of near-global economic depression. My dissertation centres on the financial 'Panic of 1873'. Thanks to the freedom afforded by my RAI-Keble scholarship, I have also profited from opportunities beyond Oxford, interacting with American scholars to prepare an article soon to be published, and spending time at the Rothschild Archives in London and at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania this summer.

A joint month-long fellowship at the latter enabled me to study the papers of the banker Jay Cooke, a key figure in the Panic of 1873, with close ties to the U.S. government. Cooke's outstanding position in government finance boosted his standing abroad and enabled him to participate in an emerging transatlantic railroad bubble. He came to resemble a financial arm of American external relations, as he "established American credit abroad" through a successful refunding of American public debt, according to President Ulysses Grant. American travellers' first port of call in London would be Jay Cooke's house, not the U.S. consulate. Increasingly overextended due to a transcontinental railroad project, Cooke went bankrupt in September 1873, triggering a financial panic and several years of depression. The U.S. government lost key financial players who had influenced the conduct of foreign relations. Parallel stories of economic depression and the adjustment of United States foreign policy formation are my research agenda for the next two years.

None of all this would be possible without the support of the benefactors of my scholarship.



Photo: Iceberg in the Arctic (AVeith)

The United States, North America, and the Rapidly Changing Arctic

Dr Halbert Jones was appointed Interim Director of the Rothermere American Institute in July 2016. A native of North Carolina, he is a graduate of Harvard University, and before joining the RAI was Director of the North American Studies Programme at St Antony's College, Oxford. He previously worked as a historian at the U.S. State Department, where he compiled the official documentary history of U.S.-Latin American relations during the Nixon, Ford, and Carter administrations.

Outside of Alaska, most Americans do not think of their country as an Arctic nation, but with an Arctic Ocean coastline stretching over 1,000 miles, the United States has a direct stake in this fragile region and is one of a small number of countries with first-hand experience of the dramatic change now taking place in the far north. Climate change is generating both new challenges, as delicate ecosystems and traditional ways of life come under pressure, and new opportunities, as warmer temperatures open up access to shipping routes and natural resources. Both the challenges and the opportunities require careful and thoughtful management by governments that have historically had only a minimal physical presence in the region.

There was a dramatic illustration of the extent to which the Arctic is changing on 16 August 2016, when the *Crystal Serenity*, a 68,000-ton cruise-liner, set off from Seward, Alaska, for a 32-day voyage through the Northwest Passage, the formerly ice-choked waterway linking the North Pacific and the North Atlantic. Despite the luxury ship's placid-sounding name, the voyage was controversial, as it represented a first attempt to bring mass tourism to one of the world's most unforgiving and environmentally sensitive regions. Although the *Serenity* was accompanied by an icebreaker, there were fears that the massive ship might find its way blocked or experience some other mishap that would result in the pollution of Arctic waters. In the event of an emergency, rescue or clean-up efforts would have presented formidable logistical challenges. And while the inhabitants of some of the remote Inuit communities visited by the *Serenity's* passengers welcomed the economic opportunity represented by the arrival of well-heeled guests keen to purchase handicrafts and other souvenirs, there was also unease over the potential cultural impact of large-scale tourism. In the end, the *Serenity* docked safely in New York on 16 September, but the concerns highlighted by its voyage will no doubt arise with greater frequency and urgency in the years ahead.

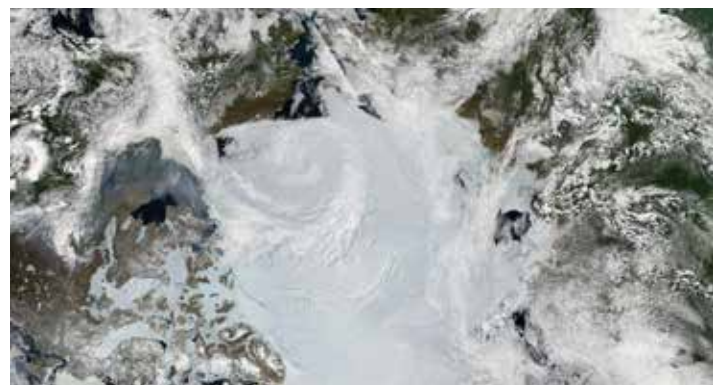
To explore these sorts of issues, and to place them in context, the Rothermere American Institute, in conjunction with the North American Studies Programme at St Antony's College, set out to explore the challenges of governance in the North American Arctic today. The initiative began with an international conference in 2013 at which historians, political scientists, geographers, legal scholars, and government officials contributed. It culminated in the publication in

2016 of a book on the subject, *Governing the North American Arctic: Sovereignty, Security, and Institutions* (Palgrave Macmillan). As the director of the North American Studies Programme at the time – before coming to the RAI as director in 2016-17 – I was proud to work on this exciting project with then-RAI director Nigel Bowles and our colleague Dawn Berry as co-convenors of the conference and co-editors of the volume. We are very grateful to the New York Community Trust, the Lester B. Pearson Fund of the University of Oxford, and the U.S. Embassy and Canadian High Commission in London for their support.



Iceberg in the Northeast Greenland National Park (Rita Willaert)

One original contribution of the project was to conceive of a 'North American' Arctic stretching from Alaska, across Canada's northern territories, to Greenland. While environmental change and the resulting challenges are circumpolar phenomena, in the North American Arctic these issues are being addressed through democratic, federal political systems, within which there have been a number of important innovations in the institutional arrangements for the governance of the Arctic in recent decades. As the colonial possession of a European power, Greenland might until recently not have been classified as part of such a region, but with the world's



The Arctic from Space (NASA)



Photo: Looking down on Pangnirtung, Nunavut (Lindsay Nicole Terry)

largest island having now achieved nearly complete self-government as an autonomous country within the Kingdom of Denmark, developments there can more usefully be analysed alongside those taking place in neighbouring North American jurisdictions. This is particularly true because, along with the Arctic regions of Alaska and Canada, Greenland forms part of an Inuit world, across which shared traditions and language give the region's inhabitants a common sense of identity. With indigenous peoples having won a much greater voice in the governance of the Arctic over the past several decades, this transnational cultural linkage becomes significant.

Governing the North American Arctic examines three particular themes: the unique challenges of establishing and exercising sovereignty in the Arctic, security concerns and the potential for international conflict in the far north, and the development of institutions for the governance of the region. In presenting an analysis of each of these topics, we sought contributions that would shed light both on contemporary issues and on the relevant historical context, as there is a tendency in current discussions of the Arctic to neglect the region's past. So, for example, the book recounts the history of efforts by early explorers to win recognition of their nations' claims to territory in the region, while also showing how questions of sovereignty continue to arise – in such contexts as complex negotiations over protocols for navigation through Arctic waters and the arrival of powerful external economic interests that threaten to overwhelm the regulatory capacity of local authorities.

The book offers an account of how technological change – particularly the rise of air power – made the military defence of Greenland and the Arctic a North American security concern more than 70 years ago, during World War II, while also examining the strategic posture of the United States and Canada in the far north today. Finally, in exploring the institutions of governance in the North American Arctic, the book looks back to activism by Alaska Natives in the 1960s and 1970s, which led to a unique settlement giving corporations owned by indigenous people control over much of the region's land and resources. It shows how a distinctive geopolitical moment at the end of the Cold War made possible the formation of the Arctic Council, a forum of the eight Arctic nations within which – perhaps uniquely among international organisations – indigenous groups have a seat at the table as formal participants in the Council's deliberations. At the same time, it examines more recent developments, such as the creation of the new territory of Nunavut in the Canadian Arctic, and the devolution of many additional powers to the Greenlandic government, possibly as a step towards eventual full independence.

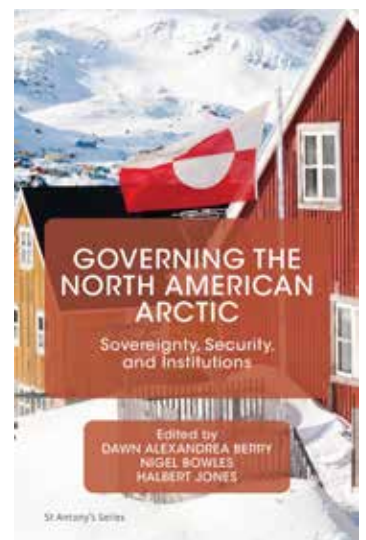
The book concludes with contributions from leading U.S., Canadian, and Greenlandic policymakers outlining the views of their respective countries on key Arctic issues. It is striking that, while these official

perspectives make reference to minor territorial disputes and to a handful of differences in policy between the nations of the region, they generally agree on the need for a functioning framework for the management of these issues. Despite the impression created in the popular press of a competitive “scramble” for Arctic territory and resources, the region is in fact the site of a great deal of international cooperation.

As a superpower with global interests, the United States has traditionally focused proportionally little of its attention on the Arctic, and the U.S. position on Arctic regional issues has been shaped in part by extra-regional concerns. For example, the United States objects to Canada's claim to jurisdiction over the Northwest Passage as an internal waterway – a rare conflict with a close ally – presumably not because U.S. officials fear Canadian control over the route but because such a precedent might complicate American naval operations in such places as the Straits of Malacca and the South China Sea. Moreover, U.S. investment in the infrastructure of governance in the region has been limited. As a contributor to *Governing the North American Arctic* highlights, an ambitious U.S. Coast Guard project to expand its icebreaking capacity in the Arctic is far behind schedule and badly underfunded.

But U.S. attention to Arctic issues is growing and becoming more focused. Although the United States sought to limit the remit of the Arctic Council when it was established in the 1990s, U.S. engagement with that body has grown and become more productive in recent years. In 2013, the Obama administration released the first-ever 'National Strategy for the Arctic Region', a document that built upon priorities established in the waning days of the George W. Bush presidency. The new strategy sets as priorities the advancement of U.S. security interests in the Arctic, the promotion of responsible stewardship of the region, and the strengthening of international cooperation. It is clear that Arctic issues are commanding high-level attention in Washington as never before.

Clearly, this is a momentous time for the Arctic. The Rothermere American Institute is pleased to have been able to help to shed light on the complex challenges facing the region and on the ways in which North American governments and peoples are striving to meet them.





Democratic National Convention, Philadelphia 2016 (J. Parker)

Federalism, judicial review, and separation of powers

The Winant Visiting Professorship of American Government was founded by Rivington and Joan Winant in honour of Rivington's father, John G. Winant, U.S. Ambassador to Great Britain from 1941 to 1946. Each year it brings to Oxford an eminent scholar of American politics and government. In 2015–16, the Chair was held by Lisa Miller, Professor of Political Science at Rutgers University.

Lisa Miller's research interests are in American law and politics, social policy, racial inequality, constitutionalism, and crime and punishment. Her third and most recent book, *The Myth of Mob Rule: Violent Crime and Democratic Politics* (OUP, 2016) is a cross-national analysis of when, and with what consequences, crime becomes politically salient. She has been a Visiting Scholar at the Program in Law and Public Affairs in the Woodrow Wilson School of Government at Princeton University and a Visiting Fellow at All Souls College, Oxford. Professor Miller's other books are *The Politics of Community Crime Prevention* (Dartmouth/Ashgate, 2001) and *The Perils of Federalism: Race, Poverty and Crime Control* (OUP, 2008). She writes:

Serving as John G. Winant Visiting Professor of American Government at the Rothermere American Institute was an extraordinary opportunity. The diversity of speakers, scholars, and students who come through the RAI in any given year is itself a stimulating experience. I was highly impressed with the knowledge of the undergraduates when I taught a series of lectures for the Politics, Philosophy and Economics paper on American Government and Politics. I focused on American political institutions – federalism, judicial review, separation of powers – which gave me an opportunity to highlight some of the research I had conducted for my book project.

Probably the best part of a thoroughly enjoyable year was the Winant Inaugural Lecture, which I gave in February 2016, and the day-long conference which followed. I was delighted with the large audience attending the lecture, 'American Exceptionalism? Race, Crime and Democracy in the United States'. The questions were insightful and provocative and I had the pleasure of sitting next to Joan Winant at the dinner that followed.

The conference the following day on my new book, *The Myth of Mob Rule*, was the kind of opportunity that comes along maybe once or twice in a career: the chance to sit in a room with a group of top scholars in your field and listen to them probe, challenge, praise and otherwise engage with your work. It was extraordinary and I am very grateful to RAI for supporting the event, to Ursula Hackett for her outstanding organizing efforts and to the wonderful staff at RAI. It all came off without a hitch.

Being part of RAI also gives a great perspective on all things American in Oxford. Beyond the stimulating seminars and lectures (which one could spend all one's time attending!), I was invited to participate in numerous events, including a panel discussion the upcoming election, sponsored by Americans in Oxford, and Professor Desmond King's undergraduate course on racial politics; to moderate a discussion of Higher Education in the U.S. and U.K.; to present papers at conferences at Nuffield College; and to encounter people from all different backgrounds who are interested in U.S. politics, including writers, politicians, and, impressively, the U.S. Ambassador to the U.K., Matthew W. Barzun.



Lisa Miller (John Cairns)

Part of the great pleasure of the year for me was talking about topics *other* than my own, or the U.S. more generally. The Fellowship at Balliol provided a great opportunity for such discussions. Lunchtime became a regular time to take a break and talk informally with whichever physicist, mathematician, classicist, or philosophy or law scholar happened to be seated next to me. One of the great pleasures of Oxford for scholars with a generalist approach to their discipline, such as myself, is the college system, which regularly puts one in close contact with researchers from a wide range of fields. In addition, weekly Consilium dinners offered a window into college life at Balliol which was, at once, informal and elegant.

Congress to Campus brings Ken Kramer and Larry LaRocco to the RAI

Congress to Campus is the centrepiece of the RAI's programme to engage wider audiences in the politics, history, and literature of the United States. With the support of the British Library's Eccles Centre for American Studies and the U.S. Association of Former Members of Congress, in March 2016 the initiative brought former U.S. Representatives Ken Kramer (R-Colorado) and Larry LaRocco (D-Idaho) to the RAI to discuss American politics with secondary school pupils from across England.

The former members of Congress began by sharing their experiences as candidates and office holders with the audience of some 80 students, who came from a range of local schools as well as from further afield, in the West Midlands and Milton Keynes. With Professor Lisa Miller, Winant Visiting Professor of American Government and Professor Philip Davies, Director of the Eccles Centre, Kramer and LaRocco discussed the current American political scene in anticipation of the 2016 elections, touching on partisan polarization and disputes over immigration, healthcare, and energy policy.

Born and raised in Chicago, Ken Kramer served three terms in the Colorado House of Representatives before being elected to represent the state's 5th congressional district in 1978. A solidly Republican district, it centres on Colorado Springs and its suburbs. Kramer served for eight years in Congress and subsequently as Assistant Secretary to the Army and Chief Justice of the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims, until his retirement in 2004.



Ken Kramer and Larry LaRocco (John Cairns)

After a career in the U.S. Army, Larry LaRocco became active in Democratic Party politics as field co-ordinator for U.S. Senator Frank Church in northern Idaho. He ran unsuccessfully for the state's 1st congressional district in 1982, having taken jobs for one week in each of the district's 19 counties. His work involved – among other things – picking apples, waiting on tables, collecting rubbish, and being on a logging road crew. He succeeded in winning election to Congress for Idaho's 1st district in 1990 and served for two terms.

If you have links with schools and would like to find out more about participating in next year's Congress to Campus, please email enquiries@rai.ox.ac.uk



Students at Congress to Campus (John Cairns)



How America's overseas voters could decide U.S. presidential elections: Pro

The 2016 Democratic National Convention in Philadelphia produced many moments that made headlines worldwide. One of the most emotional came during the roll call to formally nominate Hillary Clinton as the party's presidential candidate, when a tearful Larry Sanders, the older sibling of Clinton's rival Bernie Sanders and a delegate for Democrats Abroad, cast a ballot for his brother. Months before, Larry Sanders had cast his first vote of the primary process, at the Rothermere American Institute, as part of Democrats Abroad's third 'Global Presidential Primary.'

This was the second time that the RAI had acted as a 'Voting Center' for expatriate Democrats (the Republican Party does not have a comparable global primary vote). To mark this occasion, the RAI published a report considering the critical importance of American citizens living outside the U.S. to the outcome of U.S. elections. The report on overseas voters and RAI analysis of the 2016 presidential primaries and general election generated unprecedented international media coverage for the Institute. The RAI featured in reports on BBC television and radio (including BBC One and BBC World News), Sky News, in the *Sunday Times*, *Washington Post*, *Los Angeles Times*, *Chicago Tribune*, *USA Today*, *The Huffington Post*, *Bloomberg News*, *Deutsche Welle* (Germany), *Vancouver Sun*, *The Japan Times*, *Evening Standard* (London), and FM4 Radio (Austria).

The Association of Americans Resident Overseas (AARO) estimates that there are 8 million Americans living outside the U.S. (excluding military and other federal employees, who account for another 2 million). This means that, as a community, 'overseas Americans' constitute the thirteenth most populous U.S. state. The U.K. is the third most popular destination for American expatriates after Mexico and Canada (and therefore the most popular outside of North America). The State Department has estimated the number of U.S. citizens resident in the U.K. at 224,000. The Brooklyn-born Larry Sanders, who has lived in the U.K. since the 1960s and served as a Green councillor on Oxfordshire County Council, is only one of many American citizens who belong to the political communities of multiple nations.

It was only with the passage of the Overseas Citizens Voting Rights Act (OCVR) in 1975, that U.S. expatriates secured the right to vote. As a result, in recent decades, according to political scientist Taylor Dark, 'American party organizations have taken the first steps to become "global" organizations themselves [and] ... the assumption that American electoral politics can be understood simply by examining domestic party activity is no longer tenable.' This has led to the rise of a phenomenon which scholars have called 'political transnationalism,' defined as 'direct crossborder engagement' by migrants in the politics of their country of origin, either directly (by voting or supporting political parties) or indirectly (by engaging

with the political institutions of their country of residence). Current research suggests that the political participation of Americans overseas does not differ greatly from that practiced by Americans in the U.S.: 'They vote, discuss US politics, engage in protest, lobby in Washington, contact legislators and more,' observes the *New York Times*.



Donald Trump (Gage Skidmore)

Expatriate voters have played a decisive role in the outcome of American elections in the past. Perhaps the most famous example of this came in 2000, when delayed overseas ballots gave George W. Bush a narrow 537-vote lead when the Florida recount was stopped by the Supreme Court. Had the election been decided based on the ballots that had arrived by the 26 November deadline, Al Gore would have won the state of Florida, and the presidential election, by 202 votes. There are other, less dramatic, instances of overseas voters playing a decisive role in the outcome of elections: for instance, in Jim Webb's victorious Senate campaign in Virginia in 2006, which delivered control of the Senate to the Democratic Party.

Professor Jay Sexton and Dr Patrick Andelic report

However, compared to the general U.S. population, voter turnout among expatriates is low. In the 2012 cycle, some 876,362 ballots were sent to overseas voters. Of these, 69.2% (or 606,425) were returned. Assuming a population of five million eligible voters overseas (a conservative estimate), this represents a turnout rate of 12%. By contrast, turnout in the U.S. among 18-24 year olds (a notoriously low-turnout demographic) was more than triple that, at 41.2%. Even taking into account expatriates who leave the U.S. with the intention of cutting political ties, the overseas voter turnout rate is strikingly low.

Both major political parties have overseas arms – Democrats Abroad (DA) and Republicans Overseas (RO) – and both have increasing turnout among expatriates as a principal goal. However, although superficially similar, the two display striking differences. The report prepared by the RAI reveals an expatriate Democratic organisation that is robust, well-developed, and integrated into the national party structure, and Republican organisations taking hurried steps to catch up.

Democrats Abroad has one clear advantage over its rival: its members are able to participate in a primary vote to choose the party's presidential candidate. Democrats Abroad was founded in 1964 by politically-engaged expatriates living in London and Paris, and has been recognised as a 'state' by the Democratic National Committee since 1976, which gives it the right to send voting delegates to the national convention and to elect members to the Democratic National Convention. Bernie Sanders defeated Hillary Clinton handily in DA's Global Primary (69% to 31%) and his brother Larry was one of 21 delegates that DA sent to this year's convention in Philadelphia.

Unlike its Democratic counterpart, Republicans Overseas has no formal affiliation to the national Republican Party. It holds no primary or caucus and sends no delegates to the national convention. Though it has only officially existed since 2013, its predecessor organisation, Republicans Abroad, was founded in 1978. At an RAI event on March 1, 2016, Stacy Hilliard, former Vice Chair of Republicans Abroad, announced the creation of a new Political Action Committee (PAC), American Voices International. Though independent of RO, this PAC will promote conservative causes and seek to boost turnout among expatriate Republicans.

The party organisations, and particularly Democrats Abroad, have been at the forefront of efforts to expand the political rights of expatriate Americans, and to increase voter turnout. They have lobbied successfully in favour of the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act of 1986 (UOCAVA, which requires all U.S. states and territories to allow U.S. citizens resident overseas

to vote by absentee ballot) and the Help America Vote Act of 2002 (which sought to improve voting procedures for all U.S. citizens after the controversial election of 2000). They also campaign on issues peculiar to Americans living overseas, in particular to reform or repeal the Foreign Account Tax Compliance Act (FATCA), 2010, which requires U.S. citizens outside the U.S. to report all financial holdings in excess of \$200,000 to the IRS, and has been identified as a leading cause of U.S. expatriates renouncing their citizenship.

Chronically low turnout among American expatriates remains an intractable problem for the parties. However, the increasing importance of overseas voters, and the growing awareness that a democracy's electorate may no longer be bound by national borders, has the potential to reshape our understanding not only of political parties but of the nation state itself.

Read the full report at <http://www.rai.ox.ac.uk/election2016>.



Hillary Clinton (Zachary Moscow)

A year of conferences

The RAI hosted three major conferences in 2015-16, drawing speakers from across Britain, Europe, and America to discuss expatriate Americans since 1865, the United States as an imperial power, and the life and legacy of the politician and scholar Daniel Patrick Moynihan on the fortieth anniversary of his first election to the U.S. Senate.



Photo: John Cairns

Americans Overseas: The United States in the World since 1865, held at the Institute in April 2016, explored the phenomenon of American emigration since 1865. The conference was organised by Stephen Tuffnell, Associate Professor of Modern U.S. History and Tutorial Fellow of St Peter's College, and featured a keynote address from Professor Brooke Blower (Boston University), author of *Becoming Americans in Paris: Transatlantic Politics and Culture between the World Wars*. As American traders and entrepreneurs, professional men and women, members of the armed and diplomatic services, journalists, and authors emigrated from the United States in the later nineteenth and twentieth centuries, they formed significant populations of their own. In the process of travelling and residing overseas, these individuals constructed complex webs of communication, financial inter-connection, and cultural transmission

that connected the United States to the world, and the world to the United States. They forged new identities or developed new inflections to familiar identities be they regional or national, racial or gendered. In short, these "neo-USAs" had an impact on their adopted homes and on the nation they left, out of all proportion to their numbers.

The **Harmsworth Conference on Trans-Imperial U.S. History** focussed on the years between 1815 and 1918 and aimed to place U.S. imperialism more fully in world history and better illuminate its workings, as well as those of the empires with which it intersected. Organised by Harmsworth Visiting Professor Kristin Hoganson and then-RAI Director Jay Sexton, the conference explored the various empires through which people, ideas, and things circulated and the experiences of empire in particular communities and places. Papers included 'How a Transimperial Arms Bazaar Stabilized Instability in the Circum-Caribbean', 'The US Consular Service: The Colonial Office of the US Informal Empire?', and 'Fighting John Bull and Uncle Sam: Race and Anticolonial Struggles around World War I'.

In 2016, the RAI's annual postgraduate history conference, **Daniel Patrick Moynihan's America**, considered Daniel Patrick Moynihan's legacy and the developments in the life of the American nation that occupied his career: As a politician and scholar, Moynihan was directly involved in or commented upon nearly all of the great and controversial issues in the twentieth century United States. A sociologist, political scientist, ethnographer, ambassador, senator, and official in four presidential administrations, Moynihan's career spanned fifty years and numerous spheres of public life. The conference featured papers from graduate students at Oxford and from as far afield as Finland, Turkey, and Nebraska. It also included keynote presentations from his daughter, Maura Moynihan, his friend and biographer, Godfrey Hodgson, and from John Price, who was Moynihan's assistant for urban affairs in the Nixon White House.

For more information on these and other conferences at the RAI, please see <http://www.rai.ox.ac.uk/event>.



A year as Harmsworth Professor: Kristin Hoganson reports

When the invitation to visit Oxford as Harmsworth Professor arrived, what came to mind were images of a place: gothic colleges, twisty lanes, precision lawns, secret gardens, paneled halls – all the settings of the *Lewis* detective series, without so many corpses lying around.

Oxford, I discovered, contains all of this, and so much more besides: the regal elegance of Queen’s College, the hushed magnificence of the Radcliffe Camera, the light and openness of the Vere Harmsworth Library; the fearsome grandeur of the Examination Schools where I delivered my inaugural lecture. The quiet of my RAI office enabled me to finish a documents collection on American empire around 1898. The views from the study of the Harmsworth House in Headington were so breathtaking that one of the greatest challenges to finishing my history of the American heartland was the verdant beauty of Oxfordshire.



Kristin Hoganson (John Cairns)

Yet, despite the countless wonders of place, the true magic of my year as Harmsworth Professor lay in the people I encountered at the RAI.

Jay Sexton was an unparalleled interlocutor on nineteenth-century Anglo-American relations and an animating presence at the heart of the Institute. In the office next to mine, deputy director Michèle Mendelssohn was as intellectually agile as her current subject matter; Oscar Wilde. Jane Rawson, the Vere Harmsworth Librarian, taught me how to navigate the complexities of one of Oxford’s oldest treasures – its library system – and its most confounding – the RAI’s colour printer. Huw David was a key source of institutional knowledge, and Joanne Steventon organized an unsurpassed Harmsworth Conference with the adept assistance of D.Phil. student Skye Montgomery.

As well as being the gathering spot for Oxford’s lively team of U.S. historians – Jay Sexton, Pekka Hämäläinen, Mara Keire, Stephen Tuffnell, Gareth Davies, Stephen Tuck, Peter Thompson, Richard Carwardine, Halbert Jones, and John Darwin (an honorary Americanist) – the RAI was an extraordinary place to meet Americanists from other disciplines. There, I learned about education policy from Ursula Hackett, bureaucratic practice from Nadia Hilliard, the private lives of diaries from Sally Bayley, and crime and punishment from Winant Professor Lisa Miller.

The most intense conversations of the year – at least before the Brexit vote – took place in the seminar rooms of the RAI. It was a joy to participate in the weekly D.Phil. seminar organized by Horatio Joyce and Oenone Kubie, in which students presented a stimulating variety of papers. A few topics to prove the point: alumni clubs, yellow fever, post-industrialism, Anglo-American kinship, and Seminole seafaring. The Master’s degree seminars were likewise sparky and the undergraduates I met bright and earnest.

The intellectual feast offered by the RAI was like a college gaudy, proceeding from course to course, to dessert and coffee, and loitering late at the lodge. The difference is that gaudies come around only occasionally but the pace at the RAI is relentless. Hurricanes, Nixon tapes, the electric chair, Hawaiian statehood, federalism, indigenous child removal, trade policy, presidential leadership, civil rights, the Civil War – imagine such fare day after day. For me, Steve Tuffnell’s Americans Overseas conference and the Harmsworth conference on transborder connections in an age of empire were the champagne. Equally stimulating was the sheer variety of people I encountered at the RAI – not just students and scholars, but also college presidents, congressmen, the U.S. Ambassador, White House insiders, party leaders, journalists, novelists, political activists, and museum directors. Five former Harmsworths stopped by this year, testimony to the lasting relationships forged through the Professorship.

It was a particular pleasure to meet some of the people who made it all possible, and especially Vyvyan and Alexandra Harmsworth, who have taken such interest in the Harmsworth Professors as well as the larger work of the RAI.

And yes, there were bodies, plenty of them, in James McCrone’s reading from his timely political thriller, *Faithless Elector*. Oxford is an odd location to finish a history of that seemingly most insular of places, the rural Midwest. At least that’s what I thought when the invitation arrived. But looking back on this extraordinary year, the RAI really was an ideal, and idyllic, spot in which to write about the taut ties between locality and human connection.

Travel awards for primary research in the United States

Each year, the generosity of the RAI's friends and benefactors enables the Institute to offer a number of travel awards to undergraduate and graduate students undertaking primary research in the United States. Alice Duffy (Keble College) received one such award in 2015-16.

The third year of an undergraduate degree in History and Politics provides the opportunity to complete a 12,000 word dissertation. I chose to focus on the role of 'soft power' (a term coined by Joseph Nye) in international diplomatic relations. I was particularly interested in how modern world leaders convey their intentions symbolically, both to international adversaries and their own domestic audience. With this in mind, I examined diplomatic relations between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. in the context of the Cold War. I was curious to see if the symbolic aspect of diplomacy played a significant role in the marked improvement of superpower relations in the period between 1985 and 1989.

With the RAI's generous support, I travelled to Simi Valley, California in September 2015 to work in the archives at the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library, looking particularly for records concerned with the four summits held between President Reagan and General Secretary Gorbachev between 1985 and 1989.

Firstly, I looked at memorandums sent between senior members of the National Security Council (NSC) laying out U.S. strategy for diplomats taking part in talks as well as the administration's approach to 'public diplomacy' – i.e. how aims and outcomes of the various summits should be presented to the American public as well as Western European allies. This included communications with the U.S. Information Agency planning public diplomatic schedules for all senior members of Reagan's administration months ahead of the summits, to ensure the U.S. was presented in a positive light and to avoid providing the U.S.S.R. with propaganda 'ammunition'. The frequency with which such issues were discussed shows the importance assigned to public appearances, symbolic gestures of friendship, and the media presentation of U.S.–Soviet relations.

Secondly, I examined how cultural and scientific exchanges were addressed at the summits. Here, I looked at Memorandums of Conversation at the summit, talking points, NSC strategy documents, and the agreements reached as a result of negotiations, in particular the Cultural Exchange agreement signed by both leaders at Geneva in 1985. These revealed the importance assigned to people-to-people contact as a vehicle for improved understanding in the quest for peace between the two superpowers.

Finally, I explored ceremonial aspects of the summits themselves: gestures of goodwill, gift exchanges, and the use of historic analogies and Russian proverbs by the President in remarks made at arrival



and departure ceremonies and at state dinners. While these gestures may seem insignificant, evidence of the painstaking drafting process demonstrates how vital it was considered to convey precisely the right message to the Russian delegation, and to ensure that nothing in the remarks could be manipulated against U.S. interests. The information I gathered revealed the weight attached to 'soft power' in repairing relations that had been close to an all-time low as recently as 1983 and in pulling Reagan and Gorbachev back from the edge of mutually destructive nuclear war.

As well as being fruitful, the trip was hugely enjoyable. The location was stunning, nestled amongst the Santa Monica Mountains and offering incredible panoramic views. I toured the attached museum, including the 'Air Force One' that President Reagan used. As an unexpected bonus, I witnessed preparations for the second Republican Presidential Debate, which took place in the museum the day after my arrival.

I would like to thank the RAI's travel awards committee for awarding me this grant, and the Institute's benefactors for making it possible. I am hugely grateful; this research has provided me with first-hand information and insight that I could not have hoped to gain simply by examining resources available in Oxford. Access to such recent U.S. government documents was hugely exciting and has contributed greatly to my understanding of international diplomacy.



The RAI has made seventeen awards to outstanding undergraduate and graduate students to enable research in the United States during the 2016–17 academic year:

Robin Adams, D.Phil. in History, St Peter's College: *The Financing of the Republican Movement in the Irish War of Independence (1919–21)*
Award for archival research at the Library of the American Irish Historical Society, New York, and the New York Public Library

Jonathan Askonas, D.Phil. in Politics, St Cross College: *Closed Loop: Structural Sources of Epistemic Closure in the American Military*
Award for archival research at the National Archives, Washington D.C.

Joe Barrett, M.Phil. in Economic and Social History, New College: *The Development and Implementation of Head Start in the United States and the Urban Programme Pre-Schools in Britain*
Award for research at the National Archives, Washington D.C., and the Philadelphia City Archives

Jennifer Bright, D.Phil. in Social Policy, Balliol College: *What Drives Economic Development Policymaking in 21st Century U.S. Cities?*
Award for research in New York and Washington D.C.

Camilla Chen, D.Phil. in English Literature, St Edmund Hall: *The Tiny, the Miniature, and the Small in Modern American Poetry*
Award for archival research at the Rosenbach Museum & Library in Philadelphia

Jurrit Daalder, D.Phil. in English Literature, Mansfield College: *Straight from the Heartland: New Sincerity and the American Midwest*
Award for archival research in the Larry McCaffery Papers, San Diego State University

Jane Dinwoodie, D.Phil. in History, Lincoln College: *Beyond Removal: Indians, States, and Sovereignities in the American South, c.1812–1860*
Award for archival research at Tulane University, New Orleans, Louisiana

Jack Doyle, D.Phil. in History, St Hilda's College: *The 'Aviator Myth': British, French, and American First World War Pilots as Combatants and Cultural Icons*
Award for archival research at the Library of Congress and National Air and Space Museum, Washington D.C.

Rivers Gambrell, D.Phil. in History, Kellogg College: *Football, Flags, and Flyovers: American Nationalism and the Violent Spectacle of the NFL*
Award for archival research at the Ralph Wilson Jr. Research and Preservation Center, Canton, Ohio

Louis Halewood, D.Phil. in History, Merton College: *Naval Co-operation and Competition between Britain, France, Italy, and the United States, 1914–1922*
Award for archival research at the National Archives and Library or Congress, Washington D.C. and the Woodrow Wilson Presidential Library, Staunton, Virginia

Olivia Hepsworth, D.Phil. in History, Hertford College: *Second Wave Feminism and Reproductive Rights*
Award for archival research at the Schlesinger Library, Harvard University

Christoph Nitschke, D.Phil. in History, Keble College: *America in a World of Crisis: The Panic of 1873 and U.S. Foreign Relations*
Award for archival research at the National Archives, Washington D.C.

Mike Norton, D.Phil. in Politics, Nuffield College: *Electoral systems, Polarization, Ideology, and the U.S. Congress*
Award for research in Washington D.C.

John Shepherd, B.A. in History, Pembroke College: *The Interaction of Eugenic Theories with Judicial Institutions and Procedure*
Award for archival research at Northwestern University Library, Illinois

Jenny Venables, B.A. in History and Politics, Pembroke College: *Indentured Servitude in Maryland from 1600 to 1750*
Award for archival research at the Maryland State Archives, the Maryland Historical Society, and the Library of Congress, Washington D.C.

Nina Yancy, D.Phil. in Politics, University College: *Class along the Color Line: White Americans' Beliefs about Race and Inequality*
Award for research in Baton Rouge, Louisiana

Sarah Yerima, M. Phil. in Politics, New College: *The Other Price of the Ticket: Respectability Politics, Strategy, and Exclusion in the American Civil Rights Movement*
Award for archival research at Wayne State University, Michigan, the New York Public Library and the National Archives, Washington D.C.

Lydia Davis, Benjamin Markovits, and Andrea Wulf visit the Institute

In a busy year for American literature at the RAI, the 2016 Esmond Harmsworth Lecture in American Arts and Letters was given by the acclaimed author Lydia Davis. It was one of a series of events which brought authors and audiences into conversation about contemporary American culture and ideas, alongside the launch of RAI|Live. This new series saw writers Benjamin Markovits and Andrea Wulf discuss their work with students, faculty, and members of the public.

A winner of the Man Booker International Prize and recipient of a MacArthur Fellowship, Lydia Davis followed other distinguished American writers such as Richard Ford, Joyce Carol Oates, and Marilynne Robinson in giving the **Esmond Harmsworth Lecture in American Arts and Letters**. She entertained a large and rapt audience in describing the pleasures and challenges of 'Learning Norwegian'. Lydia Davis's most recent work includes a collection of stories, *Can't and Won't* (2015) and a novel, *The End of the Story* (2014). She has also translated Marcel Proust's *Swann's Way* and Gustave Flaubert's *Madame Bovary*.

Young British Novelists in 2013 and teaches creative writing at Royal Holloway, University of London. Markovits has written six novels: *The Syme Papers* (2004), *Either Side of Winter* (2005), *Imposture* (2007), *A Quiet Adjustment* (2008), *Childish Loves* (2011) and, most recently, *You Don't Have To Live Like This* (2015), which he discussed with the RAI|Live audience in a discussion led by Marina Mackay, Associate Professor of English and Tutorial Fellow at St Peter's College, and graduate student Jurrit Daalder.

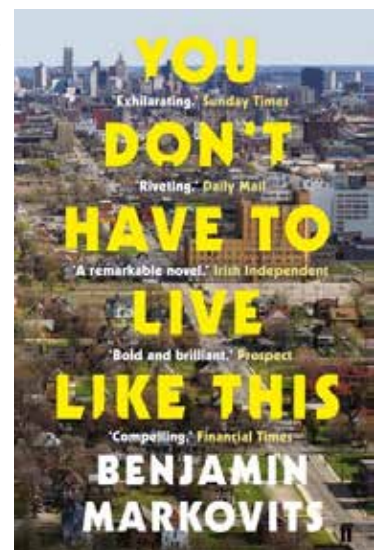
Andrea Wulf's *The Invention of Nature* (2015) reveals the profound influence of German naturalist and explorer Alexander von Humboldt (1769-1859) on the way we understand nature today. His achievements almost forgotten, his name still lingers everywhere, from the Humboldt Current to the Humboldt penguin. Charles Darwin thought him 'the greatest scientific traveller who ever lived', while to Simón Bolívar he was 'the real discoverer of South America...since his work was more useful for our people than the work of all conquerors'. At RAI|Live in February 2016, Wulf read from her book, which won the 2015 Costa Biography of the Year prize. She was then joined in conversation by Yadvinder Malhi, Professor of Ecosystem Science at the School of Geography, and Eduardo Posada-Carbó, Professor of the History and Politics of Latin America at the Latin American Centre.



Andrea Wulf

Benjamin Markovits launched **RAI|Live** in a collaborative event with the British Library's Eccles Centre for American Studies. Markovits grew up in Texas, London, and Berlin. He studied literature at Yale and abandoned a career in basketball to study the Romantics at Oxford. Since then he has taught high-school English, edited a cultural magazine and published essays, stories, poetry, and reviews in *The Guardian*, *Granta*, *The Paris Review*, and *The New York Times*, among other publications. He was named one of *Granta's* Best

Alongside all these special events, the RAI's regular **American Literature Research Seminar** met on Thursdays during term-time. It featured papers on topics ranging from 'Locating the Avant-Garde in the Work of Don DeLillo' to "'Learned Ladies': Edith Wharton's intellectual women'. A special reading group met each week to consider the work of ground-breaking African-American writer James Baldwin.



Book launches at the RAI: from the Civil War to African-American art

The RAI continues to be in high demand as a venue to launch books on American history, literature, and politics. In 2015-16, authors presented new works on topics ranging from African-American literature of the nineteenth century and art of the twentieth century, to the international dimensions of the U.S. Civil War; to the fundamental paradoxes at the heart of American government.

In October 2015, Don Doyle, McCausland Professor of History at the University of South Carolina, launched ***The Cause of All Nations: An International History of the American Civil War*** (Basic Books) at the RAI. The book places the Civil War in a global context, revealing how the conflict was bound up with European interests. Abroad, the war was viewed as part of a larger struggle for democracy that spanned the Atlantic Ocean and had begun with the American and French Revolutions. Away from the battlefields, a parallel contest took place, involving foreign observers with divergent views on the war. Radicals such as Karl Marx and Giuseppe Garibaldi called on the North to fight for liberty and equality, while aristocratic monarchists such as Napoleon III hoped that the Union's collapse would jeopardise democratic movements on both sides of the Atlantic.

worked variously in a coal yard, in an iron foundry, and as a hotel porter. He served with the 369th Infantry in France, where he was wounded and lost the use of one arm. He kept an illustrated journal of his experiences and took up painting after the war. Despite a short career, and a limited output of only around 140 paintings, his art attracted critical acclaim. Using newly discovered archives and unpublished material, *Suffering and Sunset* represents an intellectual history and cultural biography contextualising Pippin's work.

In ***The Strangers Book: The Human of African-American Literature*** (Pennsylvania UP), which he launched in December 2015, Oxford's Drue Heinz Professor of American Literature, Lloyd Pratt, explores how nineteenth-century African-American writers reframed the terms of humanism by redefining what it meant to be a stranger. They posited that being a stranger, unknown and unknowable, was an essential part of the human condition. Pratt focuses on nineteenth-century African American writing and publishing venues, such as the Colored National Convention and literary societies in Nantucket and New Orleans. Frederick Douglass's writing is examined in tandem with that of the francophone free men of colour who published the first anthology of African-American poetry in 1845.

Former Harmsworth Visiting Professor of American History, Gary Gerstle, chose the RAI to launch his new book, ***Liberty and Coercion: The Paradox of American Government from the Founding to the Present*** (Princeton UP) in January 2016. Now the Paul Mellon Professor of American History at Cambridge University, Gerstle addresses a paradox at the heart of American governance: how a widespread mistrust of 'big government' coexists with willingness to use government to impose one's views on others. The book traces the roots of the present crisis through two centuries, back to the original framers of the Constitution. While limitations were placed upon federal control and far-reaching powers allotted to the states, the central state eventually prevailed and outran its constitutional authority. The ensuing conservative rebellion turned the conflict over government's rightful domain into the defining issue of today's United States.

If you are an author or publisher and would like to find out more about holding a book launch at the RAI, please email: enquiries@rai.ox.ac.uk.



Photo: John Cairns

Celeste-Marie Bernier, Professor of African-American Studies at the University of Nottingham and a former RAI Senior Visiting Research Fellow, returned in November 2015 to discuss her new book, ***Suffering and Sunset: World War I in the Art and Life of Horace Pippin*** (Temple UP). Horace Pippin (1888-1946) was an African-American soldier and artist. After leaving school at 15, he



The Vere Harmsworth Library in 2015-16

The Vere Harmsworth Library (VHL) has had another busy and successful year, writes Jane Rawson, the Vere Harmsworth Librarian. Reader numbers rose by a further five per cent and the library recorded high levels of reader satisfaction in this year's surveys and feedback comments. We are proud of the central role we play in supporting Americanists across the University and from elsewhere in the U.K.

We continue to acquire books at a fast rate, adding almost 2,000 new volumes to our collection over the course of the year. As well as purchasing books and receiving many more under the U.K.'s legal deposit scheme, we are grateful to all who have donated books and other materials over the course of the year. Particular thanks are due to Andrew Boxer, Richard Carwardine, Caroline Cracraft, Godfrey Hodgson, James Pettifer and Donald Ratcliffe for their generous gifts. We are especially grateful, as ever, to the Association of American Rhodes Scholars for their ongoing support of the Aydelotte-Kieffer-Smith collection, to which we will add a further 100 books this year.

As always in a presidential election year, the Philip and Rosamund Davies U.S. Election Campaigns Archive has received plenty of attention. The collection is an extensive archive of campaign ephemera from American elections at all levels, generously donated to the VHL by Professor Philip Davies (Director of the Eccles Centre for American Studies at the British Library). It comprises a wide range of material, from buttons, posters, bumper stickers, flyers and leaflets to more unusual examples of campaign ephemera such as t-shirts, caps, dolls, rain bonnets, jewellery, bars of soap, playing cards, and commemorative plates. The majority of the material dates from the late twentieth century onwards, but older items include nineteenth and early twentieth-century campaign buttons, and ballots from the Civil War era. The archive continues to grow as Professor Davies actively collects and donates material from each round of elections in the United States. For more information about the archive, please see <http://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/vhl/finding-resources/elections-archive>.

Items from the U.S. Election Campaigns Archive were displayed in the library for 'Super Tuesday', when the RAI hosted Democratic Party presidential primary voting on 1st March. These items featured on television on BBC South Today. We have also been enjoying participating in the U.S. National Archives & PBS's [#ElectionCollection](https://narations.blogs.archives.gov/2016/07/19/electioncollection/) challenge on social media, posting pictures of items from the archive each Tuesday on Twitter and Instagram. You can read more about the challenge on the U.S. National Archives blog at <https://narations.blogs.archives.gov/2016/07/19/electioncollection/>. All our pictures from this initiative can be seen on www.instagram.com/vhllib.

We are always delighted to welcome visitors to the library. You can find us online both on the RAI website at www.rai.ox.ac.uk/vhl and on our own site at www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/vhl. We also have a blog (<http://blogs.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/vhl>), Facebook page (facebook.com/VereHarmsworthLibrary) and Twitter feed (twitter.com/vhllib) if you would like to keep up with our news.



"Thank you for providing such a wonderful space to work, I don't know how I would have prepared for my exams without the RAI!"

"I've spent a good amount of the last four years here studying for my degree, which I have now finished. This is by far my favourite library, it's airy, light, and the staff are excellent and friendly. I love the RAI. Thank you!"



Finances and fundraising

The RAI maintained a strong financial position in 2015-16 thanks to the generosity of its benefactors, returns from its endowment funds, and by ensuring a rigorous control of costs. In the 2015/16 financial year, the RAI generated revenue of £505,500 (2014/15: £507,800), comprising an income of £287,600 from its endowment funds (2014/15: £202,100), £118,100 from donations spent in-year (2014/15: £249,000), £34,100 in student fees (2014/15: £29,800), and £65,700 in other income (2014/15: £26,900). Expenditure of £505,500 (2014/15: £507,800) comprised £164,900 in pay (2014/15: £209,900), £235,400 in non-pay expenses (2014/15: £213,800) and £105,200 in infrastructural and capital costs (2014/15: £84,100).

The RAI received £1,281,000 in donations and written pledges of gifts in 2015. This included £494,000 in gifts received (including gifts to endowment), which represented an increase from £388,000 received in 2014, £322,000 in 2013, and £156,000 in 2012.

Donations received in 2015 included the following:

- £188,000 towards an endowed graduate scholarship in American history
- two \$100,000 donations which have been allocated to the RAI's general endowment
- \$110,000 towards an endowed postdoctoral fellowship in American history and to establish the Carwardine Prize for the most outstanding M.St. student in U.S. History
- \$50,000 in support of general administrative costs

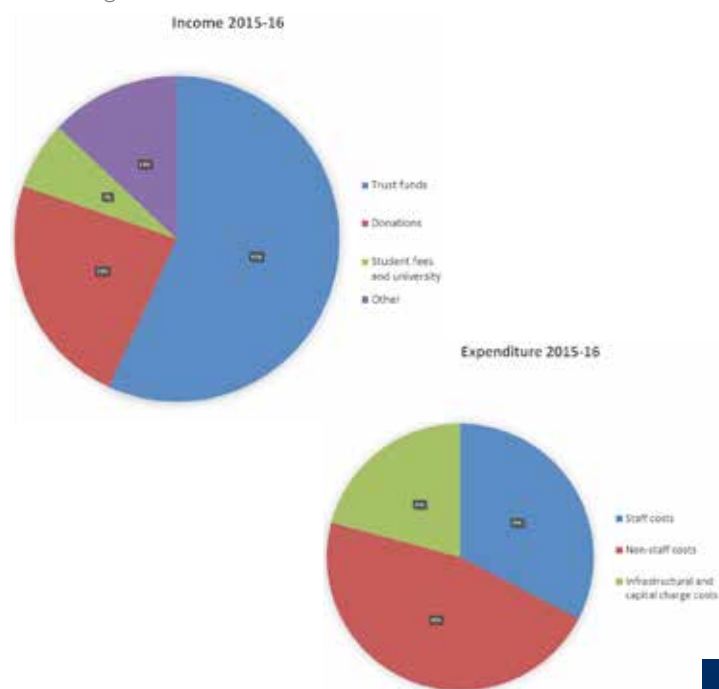
Pledges of approximately £776,000 were made towards RAI scholarships in 2015, including £614,000 to endow further graduate scholarships in American history, and £146,000 to fund two three-year doctoral scholarships in American politics, in association with University College.

The Institute was able to add £141,328 in donations to the endowment funds which underpin its operating costs and scholarships during 2015-16. These endowments stood at £8,849,000 in market value in July 2016.

The Rothermere American Institute records its special gratitude to those donors who made or pledged major gifts during 2015: William and Camille Broadbent, Joan Winant, the Robertson Foundation, Nicolas Ollivant, and a benefactor who wishes to remain anonymous.

The RAI's cost of raising funds remained low, amounting to approximately £70,000 in 2015. This comprised staff costs and other expenses associated with fundraising, such as travel and events at the RAI and in the U.S. A total cost of raising funds of approximately £70,000, set against £1.281m in cash and pledges received, amounts to a cost of raising funds of less than 5.5%. This compares favourably with charitable benchmarks.

Several major infrastructural projects to lower both the RAI's energy costs and its carbon output were completed or moved close to completion in 2015-16. These included the installation of solar panels on the Institute's roof in December 2015 and the final stages of a three-year project to replace all lighting with low-energy fittings – a project with the extra benefit of making the RAI's offices, seminar rooms, and public spaces, and the Vere Harmsworth Library, much brighter.



Become a 'Friend of the RAI'

The Institute's Friends of the RAI initiative is a great opportunity to support the RAI's mission: to promote the better understanding of the history, literature, and politics of the United States.

The generosity of benefactors, trusts, and foundations makes possible all that we do at the Rothermere American Institute. Our Friends are our partners in this endeavour.

It costs us, for example:

- £10,000 p.a. to sustain the RAI's programme of **travel awards**, allowing outstanding students to pursue research in the United States. Pages 14 and 15 of this report describe some of these projects.
- £5,000 p.a. to provide essential **hardship grants** for students encountering unexpected financial distress.
- £10,000 p.a. to run the RAI's **world-class research seminars** in American history, literature, and politics.

We can sustain these activities only by securing the funds to do so – and Friends of the RAI make a vital contribution.

In token of their support, **for an annual donation of £40 (\$80)**, Friends receive:

- A 'Friend of the RAI' certificate
- A stylish RAI pin badge
- A copy of the RAI *Annual Report*
- Regular email updates, a termcard at the start of each term; and a weekly update of forthcoming events
- A standing invitation to Red, White, and Brew, the RAI's weekly coffee gathering, every Tuesday at 11am during term
- A warm welcome at all RAI public lectures and seminars



Photo: John Cairns

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Photo: John Cairns

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- Past and upcoming conferences – www.rai.ox.ac.uk/events

The RAI can also be found on Facebook – www.facebook.com/RAIOxford and Twitter – www.twitter.com/RAIOxford. If you are not already on the RAI's mailing list and would like to receive updates of forthcoming events and activities, please contact enquiries@rai.ox.ac.uk.

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