

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 2017-18

RAI

ROTHERMERE AMERICAN INSTITUTE
AMERICA'S HOME AT OXFORD





Photo: John Cairns

Director's Foreword: Halbert Jones

The Rothermere American Institute enjoyed another successful year in 2017-18 as one of the world's foremost centres for the study of the history, politics, and culture of the United States. The RAI is proud to support a vibrant and dynamic community of students and researchers engaged in scholarship on the American experience, and to play a part in advancing a deeper understanding of the United States and its place in the wider world.



Photo: John Cairns

This past academic year brought with it some exciting steps forward for the Institute and for the University of Oxford in the field of American literature. We marked the installation of Lloyd Pratt as the holder of the University's Drue Heinz Professorship, and we were delighted to have Drue Heinz herself with us on the occasion of Professor Pratt's inaugural lecture, just a short time before her death in March at the age of 103. We mourn her passing and remember with gratitude her remarkable life and tremendous generosity as a patron of the RAI, of the University of Oxford, and of American literature more generally. We also celebrated the establishment of two fully endowed graduate studentships in American literature, which will be based at St John's College. Thanks to the large anonymous donation that made these scholarships possible, Oxford will be better placed to attract and support the most promising doctoral candidates in the field.

The US history community at the RAI welcomed Katherine Paugh – a scholar of slavery in the southern states and the Caribbean – as the newly appointed Associate Professor of North American Women's History, and we were honoured to have Elliott West of the University of Arkansas with us as Harmsworth Visiting Professor of American History. An eminent historian of the trans-Mississippi

West, Elliott joined a long line of distinguished scholars who have held the Harmsworth Chair over the course of nearly a century. During his time with us, Elliott gave an outstanding Harmsworth Lecture at the Examination Schools on the emergence of the American West as a region during the second half of the nineteenth century, highlighting how closely connected it was to a wider world that was rapidly becoming more integrated. He also convened a stimulating workshop in June on 'America and the Pacific World', bringing together historians who have been doing innovative work on US engagement around the Pacific rim.

The RAI also hosted important conversations about US politics. Oxford's strength in this area was enhanced by the arrival of Janina Dill as the new John G. Winant Associate Professor of US Foreign Policy. The Institute also celebrated the tenth anniversary of the establishment of the Winant Visiting Professorship of American Government by welcoming David Sehat of Georgia State University, a noted expert on the secular tradition in US politics. David was a generous and active member of the RAI community, and his inaugural lecture, entitled 'Politics after God', provided a fascinating perspective on the Founders' views on the appropriate relationship between church and state. We were also fortunate to have Kristin



Photo: John Cairns



Photo: John Cairns

Collins of Boston University with us as our Senior Visiting Research Fellow for the year. As a legal historian and authority on the evolution of US nationality law, whose work informed a significant recent Supreme Court decision on the parental transmission of American citizenship, Professor Collins provided an expert's perspective on contemporary immigration policy issues.

Throughout 2017-18, students, fellows, and visitors contributed to a rich programme of events that made the Institute a lively hub for learning, debate, and intellectual exchange. From an international conference at the start of the academic year on the life and work of Ralph Ellison, the acclaimed African-American writer, critic and scholar, to a day-long discussion at the end of Trinity Term about the policy challenges and questions of identity faced by Puerto Rico in the wake of Hurricane Maria, the RAI played host to a wide range of stimulating seminars, lectures, workshops, and discussions. Other highlights included a visit by the acclaimed poet and playwright Claudia Rankine to give the 2018 Esmond Harmsworth Lecture in American Arts and Letters; a captivating presentation by Antony Penrose on his mother, the model and photographer Lee Miller; and a day with two former members of the US House of Representatives for our annual Congress to Campus programme, allowing secondary school students of US politics to learn about American government directly from former legislators.

It was also an excellent year for the Vere Harmsworth Library. Home to one of the largest research collections on American history and politics outside the United States, the VHL sits at the heart of the Rothermere American Institute. With electronic resources becoming ever more important as research tools, the library has recently made a number of exciting acquisitions. Thanks in large part to the generosity of donors, the VHL has been able to obtain digital databases containing the transcripts of all congressional hearings up to 1979; the full archive of the *San Francisco Chronicle* between its

first publication in 1865 and 1984, greatly facilitating research on California and the American West; the vast historical periodicals collection of the American Antiquarian Society; the complete records of the Democratic and Republican Party conventions since 1832 and 1856 respectively; and 83,000 pages of British pamphlets, sermons, and parliamentary debates relating to the American Revolution, to name a few. Acquisitions like these help to keep the Vere Harmsworth Library and the RAI on the cutting edge as a world-leading centre of scholarship.

In closing, I would like to take this opportunity to say how grateful I am to the supporters and benefactors of the Rothermere American Institute, who make our work possible, and to the members of the RAI team. I could not ask for a better, more committed group of colleagues. Tara Stubbs has made great contributions as our new Academic Programme Director, and Huw David (Director of Development), Jane Rawson (Vere Harmsworth Librarian and Administrator), Joanne Steventon (Finance and Academic Programme Assistant), and Richard Purkiss (Administrative Assistant) have all worked with great dedication to make this past year a success. I know we all look forward to carrying on this work in the year ahead, and I hope to welcome many of you to the Institute in 2018-19.



Halbert Jones: Photo: John Cairns

Halbert Jones

Graduate Scholarships at the RAI

The generosity of the RAI's benefactors allows the Institute to offer financial support to graduate students working in American history, politics and international relations, and literature. Here, four scholarship recipients reflect on the impact of this support on their doctoral research.



Edward Murrow and President Truman (University of Maryland)

Sage Goodwin

My first year has taught me that a history doctorate is a delicate balancing act between secondary reading, conceptualising and developing a thesis project, attending and presenting at seminars and conferences, primary archival research and, of course, writing. Looking back at the 2017-2018 academic year I have found the RAI to be the best possible circus in which to perform, with the most supportive fellow troupe and team of trainers possible. And there I shall dispense with the metaphor for fear of overextending it.

I have already found being part of the RAI community invaluable to my work. I am indebted to my supervisors, Stephen Tuck and Mara Keire, for helping me mould my Master's thesis on television news coverage of the civil rights struggle into a fully-fledged doctoral project. Being exposed to the work and critiques of my fellow D.Phil. candidates during the weekly American Graduate History Seminar and associated skills sessions has helped me develop as an historian and academic. I am incredibly grateful for the feedback I received on a preliminary draft of my first article about CBS television news documentaries on civil rights, which I presented in Trinity term.



Sage Goodwin

Outside term time, the Institute's generous provisions for assisting graduate students with travel for research helped make possible two trips across the Atlantic. I was able to visit a number of archives across several states, ranging from Columbia University in New York to the Dolph Briscoe Center for American History at the University of Texas at Austin, and from the Howard Gottlieb Archival Research Center at Boston University in Massachusetts to the Auburn Avenue Research Library and King Center and Library in Atlanta, Georgia. This allowed me to amass thousands of photographs of the papers of television broadcasters and executives from the leading CBS



Chicago Mural (Lacrossewi)

network, including amongst others Fred Friendly, Edward R. Murrow, Dan Rather, and Walter Cronkite. I even got the chance to hold CBS founder Bill Paley's Emmy at his desk, on a tour of his office during my visit to the archival holdings at the Paley Center for Media! I was also able to collect primary material from the collections of civil rights organisations and leaders such as the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., and Rev. Andrew Young. My association with the RAI further helped me to win a Harry Middleton Fellowship in Presidential Studies, which is supporting trips to the Eisenhower, JFK, and LBJ Presidential Libraries to research how these three presidents' administrations both affected and were influenced by television news coverage of the civil rights movement.

While in America I was able to present some of my early findings on how the producers of television news presented black America to their presumed white audience, at the National Council for Black Studies 43rd Annual Conference and at the Northeastern 10th Annual Conference in World History. Back in England, I presented a paper which discussed the gendered nature of civil rights coverage and its treatment of African American women at the Society for the History of Women in the Americas Annual Conference, and joined fellow RAI faculty and D.Phil. candidates at the Historians of the Twentieth Century United States Annual Conference in Cambridge to present my paper 'Framing the Civil Rights Story'.

This has been an incredibly busy and stimulating year which has only been possible due to the generous support of the RAI-Urquhart-Oxford Graduate scholarship at the RAI and University College. I am exceedingly grateful for the opportunity to undertake this D.Phil. in such a rich and inspiring environment.



Oenone Kubie: Photo: John Cairns

Oenone Kubie

This year, I have largely focused on finishing my doctoral thesis, *The Swarm: Children in Chicago, 1890-1933*, which I submitted in mid-May. My thesis looks at children outside institutional spaces in the urban United States of the early twentieth century, using Chicago as a case study. Children made up almost half the population of Chicago in the 1890s and they dominated street spaces in the city for the next forty years. While adults often spent their work and leisure time indoors, huge numbers of mobile and destructive children worked, committed crimes, and played outside in city spaces. Concerned middle-class adults developed a vast array of institutional and regulatory reforms to get them off the streets, many of which (playgrounds, juvenile courts, truancy laws, child labour laws) still govern children's use of the city to this day.

I recently presented this work at the Historians of the Twentieth Century United States annual conference in Cambridge and the Children's History Society conference in London, and received much useful feedback on my chapter concerning children and racial segregation in Chicago. I hope to viva shortly and will spend the rest of the academic year transforming this chapter into an article. I will also be preparing for the next academic year when I will take up a visiting research fellowship at Texas Tech University to work on the first output of my postdoctoral project – an article concerning child stage labour and the reframing of children's labour as play in the United States in the early twentieth century.

As well as working on my research this year, I have taken the opportunity to expand my teaching experience. I supervised my first undergraduate dissertation, my first graduate student, and completed the history faculty's teaching course, 'Developing Learning and Teaching'. I have also continued to participate in seminars and workshops at the Rothermere American Institute. I

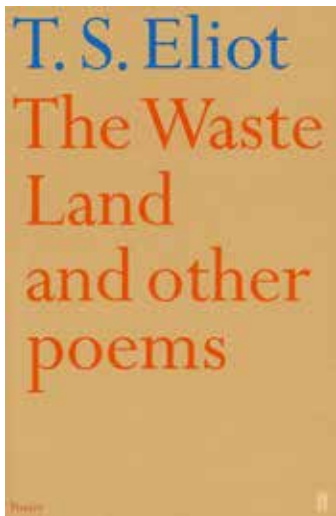
Union Stock Yards, Chicago, 1870s (Charles Rascher)





Photo: John Cairns

Graduate Scholarships at the RAI



I am currently organising the RAI annual postgraduate conference, 'Incredible: Lying, Credibility, and the Truth in Historical Research', which will be held in September 2018.

I would like to reiterate my thanks to the RAI for its generous support this year and throughout my doctorate. The whole Institute, and the American history graduate community in particular, has been an incredibly engaging, supportive, and enjoyable place to write my thesis.

Bárbara Gallego Larrarte

The Esmond Harmsworth scholarship has made an invaluable contribution to my academic career. With the financial reprieve afforded by this generous stipend I have been able to dedicate my final year of doctoral work to sustained research while also having enough time to take part in collaborative projects and conferences, and to participate fully in the life of the Rothermere American Institute.

The majority of my fourth year was spent writing up my thesis. During this final year I mostly worked on a chapter on T. S. Eliot, for which the RAI offered an ideal environment. The American theatre collections at the Vere Harmsworth Library proved an excellent resource to study Eliot's development as a playwright in London and America during the 1930s. Through my role as co-convenor of the American Literature Research Seminar (ALRS) I was able to engage in conversations about my research by inviting scholars whose work I admire. I am particularly pleased to have had the opportunity to bring the renowned Eliot biographer Robert Crawford to give a talk and lead a workshop at the Institute which attracted students (both undergraduate and graduate) and academics alike. My immersion into this kind of dialogic environment, made possible by this generous scholarship, has enriched my thinking on my Eliot chapter and triggered ideas for years to come.

The convenor role was extremely rewarding beyond the immediate context of my doctoral work. I had the opportunity to get to know and work with some wonderfully intelligent and generous people, such as my co-convenor Kristin Grogan, the

RAI's academic programme director, Tara Stubbs, and the Institute's director, Hal Jones. Inviting speakers and leading fortnightly seminars offered myriad possibilities for conversations and exchanges which are often missing from the largely solitary life of the D.Phil. student. Throughout the year I met speakers as diverse as the writer Olivia Laing, the poet Claudia Rankine, and the many visiting scholars who shared their ongoing projects with us. Immersion into this rich academic community has been one of the highlights of my doctoral years.

Beyond the ALRS, I had the opportunity to take part in the exciting cultural offerings of the RAI. The RAI|Live events were a particular highlight for me as this year they focused on life-writing, a major theme in my research. Deborah Treisman's enlightening talk on her collaborative biographical journey with the art curator Walter Hopps opened up fascinating questions about authorship and identity. Antony Penrose's talk about his mother, the photographer Lee Miller, built on similar themes and highlighted the affective impulse behind much biographical work. These talks stimulated ideas for the larger themes in my thesis, which looks at intergenerational influence and the role of age and affect in a writer's development.

Through the RAI's public engagement work I was also able to take part in its partnership with the Ashmolean Museum. The RAI contributed events to the museum's Live Friday evening in connection with the 'America's Cool Modernism' exhibition on 1920s and 1930s American art. I organised a 'Meet the Modernists!' group who engaged the audience by posing as writers, painters, and musicians from the period. It was an exciting chance to find different public audiences for my field of interest and to collaborate in a lively interdisciplinary environment.

These have been the highlights of a year rich in research and academic engagement. I am very grateful to have been given the opportunity to benefit from and contribute to such an intellectually vibrant environment. I very much appreciate the gift of time at this final stage in my doctoral work.

Mitchell Robertson

The 2017-18 academic year, the second of my D.Phil., has been an enjoyable experience. It

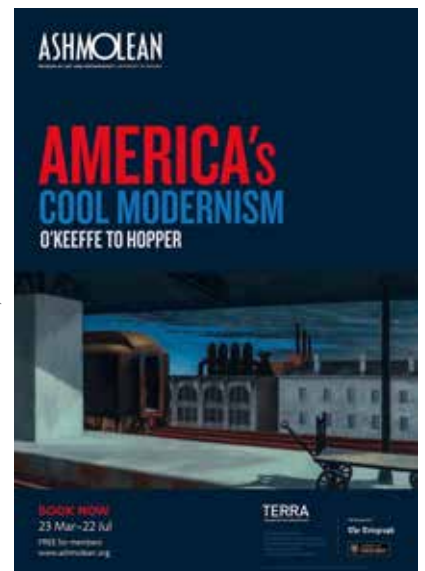




Photo: John Cairns



has been a busy year for me at the RAI as I've been co-convening the History Graduate Seminar. The seminar this year has been a fascinating environment to be in and I've learned a lot from others' work as well as having my own work vastly improved by feedback from graduate students and faculty. This year the seminar benefited greatly from the presence of our two visiting professors, Elliot West as the Harmsworth Professor and David Sehat as the Winant Professor.

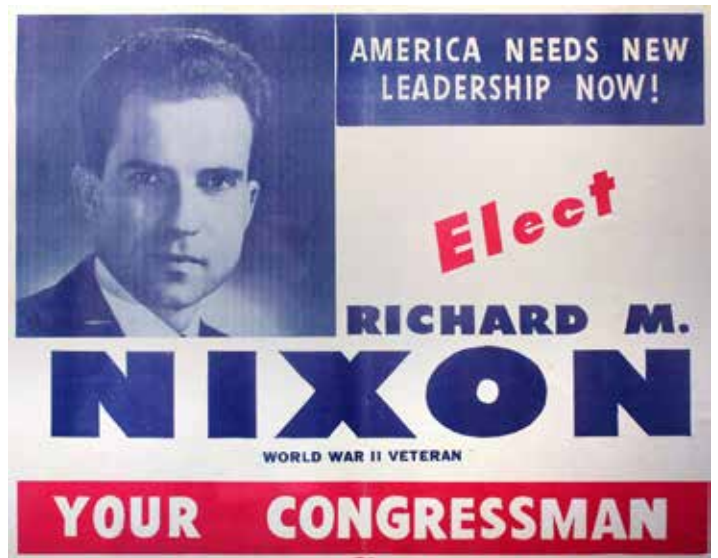
My major highlight of this year has been the publication of my first article, an adaptation of the M.St. dissertation that I completed at Balliol College, in the *Australasian Journal of American Studies*. The article concerns the surprising survival of the Legal Services Program under President Nixon. This government program, which provided lawyers to the impoverished in civil cases, managed to survive repeated attempts to curtail and defund its activities. Subsequently, I was very grateful to learn that the piece had been awarded the

James Holt Prize for the best article published in the journal in the previous two years.

In May, I travelled to Tempe, Arizona to present at the Policy History Conference. The RAI was well represented, with delegates including three current D.Phil. students (Dominic Barker, Daniel Rowe, and me) and two alumni (Patrick Andelic and Tom Packer). This was my first American conference and a very enriching experience. I presented a paper entitled 'As if the previous Administration were still in command': How Legal Services lawyers and bureaucrats saved the War on Poverty'. This represented a synopsis of my entire D.Phil. project. Having received some invaluable feedback from the audience, I have since developed continuing relationships with those academics. Taking advantage of being in the US, I spent a week at the Hoover Institution at Stanford University, which proved very fruitful.

As I write, I am preparing for another month in the US which will take me to the National Archives, just outside Washington D.C., then to the Gerald Ford Presidential Library and Bentley Library in Ann Arbor, Michigan, and finally to Texas, where I will spend a week at the Lyndon B. Johnson Presidential Library and the W.R. Poage Legislative Archive at Baylor University. For this trip, I am very grateful for the support of a RAI Graduate Travel Award.

As I end the academic year, I would like to acknowledge the support of the RAI's benefactors, who have so generously supported the scholarship which has enabled me to study at the University of Oxford.



Richard Nixon congressional election poster, 1946



View from the Winant Chair

Each year, the Winant Visiting Professorship of American Government brings to Oxford an eminent scholar of American politics and government. The Winant Chair 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. In 2017–18, the Chair was held by David Sehat, Associate Professor of History at Georgia State University.



David Sehat: Photo: John Cairns

A cultural and intellectual historian of the United States, David Sehat is a graduate of Dallas Baptist University, Rice University, and the University of North Carolina. He is the author of *The Jefferson Rule: How the Founding Fathers Became Infallible and Our Politics Inflexible* (Simon and Schuster, 2015) and *The Myth of American Religious Freedom* (OUP, 2011; updated edition 2015), which won the Frederick Jackson Turner Award from the Organization of American Historians. *Professor Sehat writes:*

It was a great pleasure and privilege to be this year's John G. Winant Visiting Professor at the Rothermere American Institute. While the formal responsibilities were few, I looked for ways to be active in the RAI community and beyond.

The central responsibility of the year was the annual Winant Lecture on American Government, which I delivered in February and titled 'Politics after God'. Many people have argued that the United States was born secular but I have come to see that religious and political arrangements at the founding moment were highly contested rather than thoroughly secular. In my lecture I tried to show how some people at the founding—most notably James Madison, Thomas

Jefferson, and Thomas Paine—sought to create a government in which one's personal religious belief had no relevance to American political life. They sought to create, in that sense, a politics after God. But their attempts were stymied by resistance from those who sought a public role for Christianity. In the short term the conflict between those who promoted and those who resisted a role for religion in public life produced an ambiguous protection in the First Amendment. But in the long term the political vision offered by Jefferson, Madison, and especially Paine offered a touchstone to which later activists and intellectuals could return. In some sense, their vision triumphed in the 1960s.

In addition to the main lecture, I gave a number of smaller talks and presentations. During Michaelmas, I delivered a lecture to the Oxford American Politics Society on the state of the Republican



James Madison by James Sharples (Princeton University Art Museum)



Scene at the Signing of the Constitution of the United States by Howard Chandler Christy



Balliol College dining hall (David Iliffe)

Party after the election of Donald Trump. During Hilary, I spoke to the American Politics Seminar at the RAI on the role of ideas, interests, and institutions in American politics. I also participated in the Congress to Campus program at the RAI with former members of Congress Jim McDermott (D-WA) and Tim Murphy (R-PA), where we discussed the American political system and the upcoming midterm elections.

I was fortunate to speak to a number of audiences outside Oxford. During Michaelmas, I gave a public lecture sponsored by the Department of United States and Canadian Studies at the University of Nottingham on the connections between Ronald Reagan and Donald Trump. During Hilary, I gave a paper on ideas and the American political tradition as part of the American History Seminar at the University of Edinburgh. I also delivered the annual Richard E. Neustadt Lecture on American Politics at University College London, where I discussed the beginning of the modern fight over the Founding Fathers. During Trinity, I gave a lecture sponsored by the Department of History at the University of Southern Denmark. The lecture was about untruths and alternative facts within the Trump administration.

When not speaking or participating in activities at the RAI, I was productive in my research. I saw the publication of a journal article in *Modern Intellectual History* entitled 'Political Atheism: The Secularization and Liberalization of American Public Life'. I submitted final drafts for two book chapters that await publication. The first is entitled 'On Legal Fundamentalism' and will be published in an edited volume on US intellectual history by Cornell University Press in December 2018. The second is entitled 'Franklin Delano Roosevelt and the Problem of Historical Time' and will be published in an edited volume on American presidential politics by the University of Virginia Press in early 2019. These were side projects for my main work, which is a book provisionally titled *Politics after*

God on the history of American secularism. I wrote a book proposal, a book introduction, a long methodological postscript, and six of nine chapters for that book. I also signed a publication contract with Yale University Press. The book will be published in the next couple of years or by 2021, at the latest.

All that is to the good. But in many ways the work is not the only thing, or even the most important thing, that I will take from this year. I've also gained in a personal sense. I learned how to tie a bowtie. I finally figured out which way to look when crossing the street. I translated for visiting American friends an English menu that used French words for vegetables that in the US are called by their Italian names. When I think back over the year, other smaller moments stand out. I remember a bright autumn morning after several days, possibly weeks, of cloudy skies, when I realized that the sun was now low enough to shine directly into my office, which warmed the room like a heater. I think of a late afternoon in May, sitting in the back room of the Lamb and Flag, drinking the best beer that I had in Oxford, and talking with RAI friends about *The Three Burials of Melquiades Estrada* and other favorite westerns. And I distinctly relish a dinner at Balliol late in the year, when I was struck by the friendliness of the faces in the glow of candlelight and realized how far I had come since being uncertain where to sit on the first day.

It has been a wonderful year. I am enormously grateful for the opportunity.



Portrait of John G. Winant



Photo: John Cairns

Congress to Campus brings Jim McDermott and Tim Murphy to RAI

Each year, 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 US Association of Former Members of Congress, in March 2018 the initiative brought former US Representatives Jim McDermott (D-Washington) and Tim Murphy (R-Pennsylvania) to the RAI to discuss American politics with secondary school pupils and with undergraduate and graduate students.



Tim Murphy; Photo: John Cairns

Jim McDermott represented Washington's 7th congressional district between 1989 and his retirement in 2017, winning re-election eleven consecutive times in one of the United States's most strongly Democratic districts. The district includes most of Seattle, together with adjacent suburbs. Originally a psychiatric doctor, McDermott served in the US Navy Medical Corps and as a foreign service medical officer in central Africa. During his career in Congress, McDermott was Chairman of the House Ethics Committee between 1993 and 1995 and was assigned to the Committee on Ways and Means and the Committee on the Budget. He sponsored numerous pieces of legislation, notably to combat violence against women and to promote trade with sub-Saharan Africa.

Tim Murphy was Member of Congress for Pennsylvania's 18th congressional district between 2003 and his resignation in 2017. The district encompasses suburbs of Pittsburgh and more rural counties in the south and west of the state. Born and raised in Ohio, Murphy worked as a psychologist before entering politics and took an active lead in Congress in promoting legislation concerning mental health issues. He served on the US House committees on Energy and Commerce, Veterans' Affairs and Government Reform.

Here, two A-level students from Old Swinford Hospital School in Stourbridge, West Midlands, describe their experiences of the day:

"Congress to Campus was an enlightening experience that was a great help in demystifying American politics, lifting the barrier that those studying the American political system may feel due to the significant differences between British and American law, institutions and culture. Congressmen McDermott and Murphy provided invaluable insights through their answers to the plethora of questions posed to them on everything from the issues they faced within their own states in their respective tenures (these varied greatly from state to state, emphasising the geographic enormity of the nation), their opinions on a possible trade war because of the actions of President Trump ("Trump will talk, Congress will do nothing"), to



Jim McDermott; Photo: John Cairns



Photo: John Cairns



Congress-to-Campus student: Photo: John Cairns

the issue of gun-related violence that has been dominating media globally since the Parkland School shooting in Florida in February 2018.

“The former members of Congress responded with openness and in a way that was of great assistance to the A-Level studies we are currently undertaking. A-Level politics students may have been shocked by McDermott’s emphasis upon ‘compromise’ and ‘co-operation’ and his suggestion that the party leaderships were a greater source of aggression between the parties than individual congressmen who (by their own admission) needed to work together to get things done.

“This insight was particularly helpful given that the British perception of Congress is that it is something of a warzone: the Congressmen suggested that the reality of Congress was entirely different. Murphy and McDermott also discussed the personal experiences that led to their involvement in politics. This was particularly intriguing as – despite the statistic that one-third of Congressmen are lawyers – the two men were actually doctors of psychology and both had become involved in politics after experiences with servicemen. The insights of the Congressmen on the issues debated as well as their advice for anyone looking to go into politics themselves was invaluable and I personally found the whole experience extremely valuable in my study of politics and in thinking about a possible career in the future.”

Courtney Boden

“Congress to Campus came in the build-up to the 2018 mid-term elections and while there was some discussion of the prospects

for this vote, the main focus for the first discussions at Congress to Campus was mental health issues and the delivery of mental health care in the United States – or lack of which, as the former members agreed. Both having been professionals in the field of psychology, McDermott and Murphy found common ground in discussing the inefficiency of government investment in the field. However, when it came to gun violence and mental health, McDermott favoured the removal of guns and the imposition of further checks, while Murphy believed the reasons for school shootings lay in the failure of law enforcement and mental health clinics.

“During the second session, issues of racial tensions, President Trump’s trade war and the role of the Supreme Court were discussed. In many ways, Murphy and McDermott did not display the party polarisation seen in US politics, though tensions were clear when the Supreme Court was brought up. Murphy, as a former member of the House for Pennsylvania, was quick to express his discontent at the role of the courts in law making and in matters which he felt should be left to the legislature, noting the recent court-mandated redrafting of Pennsylvania’s congressional district boundaries. McDermott instead argued that the Supreme Court had the right to involve itself in order to protect the rights of the people.”

Jacob Russell



Jim McDermott with students: Photo: John Cairns

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



Reflections from the Harmsworth Chair

Established in 1922, the Harold Vyyan Harmsworth Visiting Professorship of American History is the oldest and most prestigious chair in American history outside the United States. It was created by the 1st Viscount Rothermere in memory of his son Vyyan, who died in the First World War. Associated jointly with the RAI and with Queen's College, each year the Harmsworth Professorship brings one of America's most distinguished historians to Oxford. In 2017–18 it was held by Elliott West, Alumni Distinguished Professor of History at the University of Arkansas.



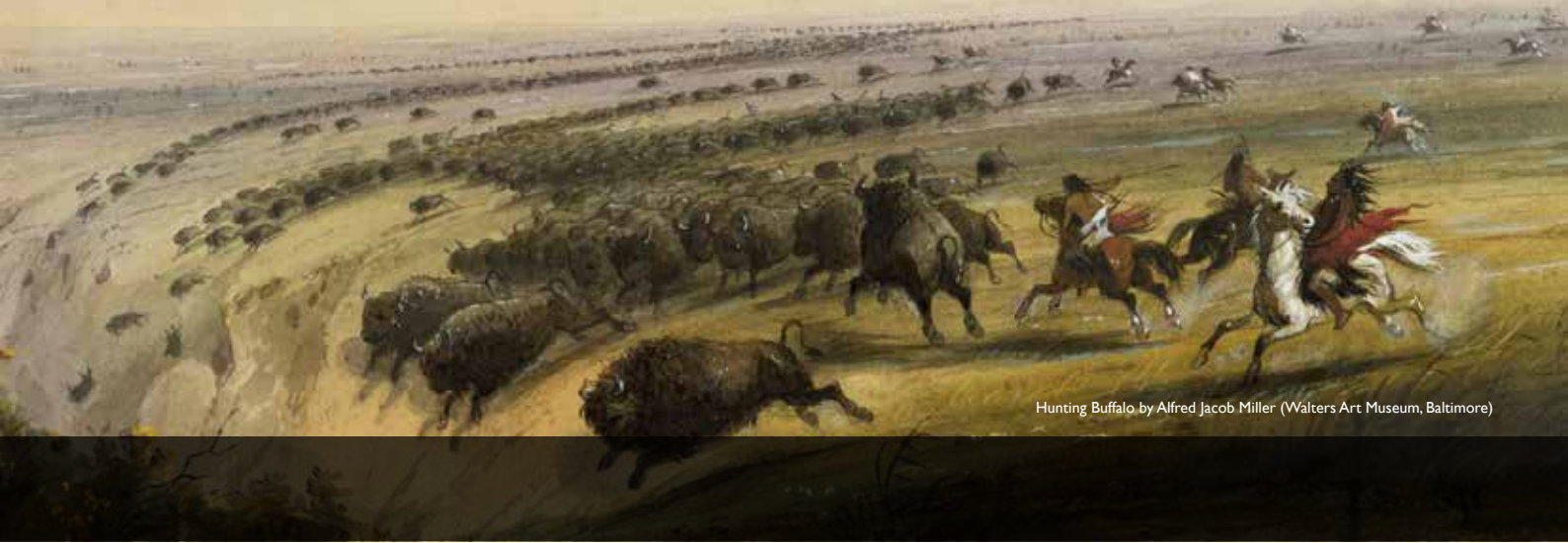
Buffalo Bill Cody, 1880, by Sarony



Plains Indian man, 1835 by George Catlin (Smithsonian Museum)

A graduate of the University of Texas and the University of Colorado, Professor West has published extensively on Native Americans and on the history of the American West. Two of his books, *Growing Up With the Country: Childhood on the Far-Western Frontier* (1989) and *The Way to the West: Essays on the Central Plains* (1995) received the Western Heritage Award, and *The Contested Plains: Indians, Goldseekers, and the Rush to Colorado* (1998) received five awards including the Francis Parkman Prize and PEN Center Award. His most recent book is *The Last Indian War: The Nez Perce Story* (2009). Professor West writes:

When I was invited to be the Harmsworth Professor of American History for 2017–18, I thought of the comment of a friend who had been offered a similar unexpected and extraordinary opportunity. It was like when he was a boy and looked down to see a five dollar bill on the sidewalk, he said. He knew he didn't deserve it, but he did pick it up. For the privilege and pleasure of my year at Oxford, I have to begin by thanking the Rothermere Foundation. More personally, I thank Vyyan and Alexandra Harmsworth for their unflinching support for the Rothermere American Institute and for the study of American history generally.



Hunting Buffalo by Alfred Jacob Miller (Walters Art Museum, Baltimore)

As I feel sure all previous Harmsworth Professors would agree, the RAI offers an intellectual smorgasbord as tasty as can be found anywhere, from the Monday seminars presenting students' doctoral research, to presentations on eclectic topics each Tuesday afternoon in term, to special presentations and conferences. Among my favorites were David Sehat's Winant lecture on 'Politics After God', Mara Keire's talk on sexual coercion and popular culture in New York City, Simon Baatz's reflections on the famous murder of the architect Stanford White, Rivers Gambrell's exploration of Richard Nixon and the politicization of football, and Antony Penrose's extraordinary presentation on his mother, the photographer Lee Miller, and her life before, during, and after World War II.



The Queen's College front quadrangle (kaofenlio)

Those offerings were just a tiny portion of those across the university. I was especially drawn to lectures through the Centre for Global History and the Centre for the History of Science, Medicine, and Technology. Where else could one find presentations on the history of global humanitarianism and on the connection of China's Boxer Rebellion to Buffalo Bill Cody? I happily made my own contribution to this global perspective with my Harmsworth Lecture on science in the American West and a conference on the expanding American interest in the Pacific world during the nineteenth century.

The year provided welcome time to comb through and polish a manuscript many years in the making, a history of the American West from the expansion of the 1840s until around 1880, the years when the West as we know it today was acquired and came into focus. In this work I could draw on the advice, thoughts, and general stimulation of the splendid cohort of colleagues at the RAI—Pekka Hämmäläinen, David Sehat, Huw David, Mandy Izadi, Hal Jones, Ray Lavertue, Mara Keire, Gareth Davies, Stephen Tuffnell, Stephen Tuck, and Kristin Collins—and on the fine Vere Harmsworth Library with its marvelous librarian, Jane Rawson.

The Queen's College, my other academic home, was its own delight. Its remarkable faculty and staff were unfailingly amiable and welcoming, beginning with Provost Paul Madden and his wife Alison.

Its campus is a jewel, among the most beautiful of the university's thirty-eight colleges. An ideal evening included evensong with the globally admired college choir followed by dinner at high table and the convivial gathering afterwards in the senior common room. Queen's offered its own intellectual feasts, one highlight being a conference on the Scottish enlightenment. Each week in Oxford offered musical performances of a remarkable range. Two especially fond memories are of Mozart's Requiem in D minor at Keble College chapel and of Handel's Messiah with the Queen's choir at St. Mary's university church, but they were only highlights of many, including regular evensongs at Christ Church, New College, Magdalen, and Merton and, of course, at Queen's.

What never faded was the pleasure of simply walking around Oxford, enjoying its fabled views and teasing out others less obvious. From the fellows' garden at Queen's there was the lovely perspective of the spires of All Souls College next door. These, I learned, are the original "ivory towers" that we academics supposedly inhabit. Would that it were so. Then there were the cobbled passways, like Magpie Lane, between High Street and the estimable Merton Street. A walk of a couple of miles took me past University Parks and the swimming hole of Parson's Pleasure, down Mesopotamia, an island in the Cherwell River; then up the thousand-year-old path of Cuckoo Lane to the lovely Harmsworth House in Old Headington, sometimes with a stop at the White Hart pub.



Sitting Bull, 1885 (David F. Barry)

From lectures and concerts to the festive gaudies at Queen's and strolling around Addison's Walk, from seminars and evensongs to conversations over pints at the King's Arms and the Lamb and Flag, my most lasting takeaway from the year was a sense of participation and, in however brief and limited a way, of membership in the city and the university as a scholarly enterprise and a cultural community many centuries deep.



Travel awards for primary research in the United States

Each year, the generosity of the RAI's friends and benefactors enables the Institute to make a number of travel awards to undergraduate and graduate students undertaking primary research in the United States. Rivers Gambrell (D.Phil. in History, Kellogg College) received one such award in 2017-18. She writes:

President Richard M. Nixon once declared, "Once you get into this great stream of history, you can't get out. You can drown. Or you can be pulled ashore by the tide. But it is awfully hard to get out when you are in the middle of the stream." Nixon's sentiments suitably reflect my recent visit to his Presidential Library in Yorba Linda, California, which was made possible by a travel award from the RAI. Once in the archives, it was very easy to become sucked into the stream of history, which in this case consisted of the thousands of documents pertaining to Nixon's connection with the world of athletics.

My dissertation focuses on the American presidency and the changing politics of sport, with a particular emphasis on Nixon's politicization of sport and the lasting implications of his football fandom on presidential politics. I was therefore eager to comb through the thousands of documents related to his meetings and correspondence with coaches and players, and to further explore files detailing his political deployment of sport during the 1968 and 1972 presidential campaigns.

Thankfully, the archives did not disappoint. The most compelling documents I discovered were related to the issue of race. During the campaigns, Nixon's team ardently recruited black athletes such as heavyweight boxer George Foreman, and hoped to form a group called 'Black Professional Athletes for the Re-election of the President', with membership of the group based around men like Bonnie McCrae of the New York Giants, Buddy Young, Assistant to the Commissioner of Football, Roger Brown of the Indianapolis Pacers, and Brady Keyes, a former defensive back for the Pittsburgh Steelers (Nixon's aides wrongly believed Keyes played for the Philadelphia Eagles – an error that the football-obsessed president himself would undoubtedly have spotted).

As is often the case with archival research, some of the greatest gems I found were in the locations where I least expected them. A search through speechwriter David Gergen's files revealed the transcripts of a football safety film that Nixon lent his voice to in 1971, and a scan through White House Communications Director Herb Klein's files contained colourful commentaries on presidential meetings with professional athletes and coaches. These anecdotal reports of Nixon's activities were designed to show 'the human side of the President' and will contribute enormously to my thesis.

After leaving Yorba Linda, I visited Simi Valley, home of the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library. After soaking in the gorgeous views of the Santa Susana mountains that surround the Library, I ploughed once again through the archives, in the hope of finding hard evidence of Nixon's lasting impact on sport and politics.

Once again, I was not disappointed. Reagan also deployed sport in ways that effectively contributed to his use of populist language and imagery, although—unlike Nixon's—his aides were quick to say no whenever they spotted potential political controversies in the football world. For example, in 1982, when NFL franchise owner Al Davis threatened to go to court over the relocation of the Oakland Raiders to Los Angeles, White House Counsel Fred F. Fielding alerted Deputy Chief of Staff Michael K. Deaver that Reagan should avoid involvement at all costs, as it was a "no-win for the President."

These examples provide a mere glimpse into the treasure trove of archival material that I uncovered during my research trip to the presidential libraries. I would never have been able to afford this visit to the United States without assistance from the benefactors of the Rothermere American Institute, to whom I express my deepest gratitude. There is no doubt that the material that I uncovered during this experience will contribute to what Nixon once described as the 'great stream of history'.



Ronald Reagan's presidential inauguration parade, 1981 (National Archives and Records Administration)



President Nixon at 1969 Washington Senators baseball game

The RAI has made awards to a number of outstanding undergraduate and graduate students to enable research in the United States during the 2018–19 academic year:

Asha Banerjee, M.Phil. in Economic and Social History, Balliol College: *The British Reaction to the American Financial Panic of 1907*

Award for research at the J.P. Morgan Library and Archive, New York Stock Exchange Archives, and at the Library of Congress

Dominic Barker, D.Phil. in History, Lady Margaret Hall: *Ronald Reagan and Race: The Evolution of Colour-Blind Conservatism*

Nicolas Ollivant Award for research at the Gerald Ford Presidential Library in Ann Arbor, Michigan, the University of Wisconsin at Madison, and Eureka College, Illinois

Talene Bilazarian, D.Phil. in Politics, Wolfson College: *Counter-terrorism and Communities: Considering the Local Dimension in the US and the UK*

Award for research in Los Angeles and Boston

Alex Coccia, D.Phil. in Politics, St John's College: *Local Level Understandings of Poverty in Persistent Poverty Counties in the US*

Award for research in Vinton, Athens, and Cuyahoga counties, Ohio

Emma Day, D.Phil. in History, Pembroke College: *Out of the Silence: Women Protesting the AIDS Epidemic, 1980-2018*

Award for research at the Library of Congress and the National Archives, and at the National Library of Medicine, Maryland

Angelica De Vido, D.Phil. in English Literature, Oriel College: *A Home at the End of the World: Examining the American Female Bildungsroman post-1990*

Award for research at the Fales Library, New York University, and the Herstory Archives, Brooklyn

Bethany Evans, B.A. in History, St Anne's College: *The Life and Work of Ida Lupino*

Award for research at the Margaret Herrick Library, Los Angeles

Sage Goodwin, D.Phil. in History, University College: *Framing the Civil Rights Story: Prime-Time Television News and the Black Freedom Struggle, 1954-1968*

Award for research at the Paley Media Center, NY, the University of Texas, and the King Library and Archive, Atlanta

Angus Higgins, B.A. in History, Hertford College: *The Spread of Proslavery Imperialism through the US Consular Service in Britain in the late-1850s*

Award for research at the Library of Congress, Washington D.C.

Natalie Hill, D.Phil. in History, Balliol College: *The Art of Human-Horse Engagement: Tracing lived and represented human-horse relations in Northern Plains Indian communities, c.1700 to the present day*

Award for research at the Denver Museum of Nature and Science, Colorado

Maya Kornberg, D.Phil. in Politics, Wolfson College: *Congressional Engagement with Outside Sources of Information in Deliberating and Learning*

Award for research in Washington D.C.

Grace Mallon, D.Phil. in History, University College: *The Interactions of the Federal and State Governments in the Early American Republic*

Award for research at the Georgia Historical Society and the State Archives of Tennessee

Christoph Nitschke, D.Phil. in History, Keble College: *The Panics of 1873 and U.S. Foreign Relations*

Award for research at the Library of Congress and the National Archives, Washington D.C.

Mitchell Robertson, D.Phil. in History, University College: *The Afterlife of the Great Society*

Award for research at the National Archives, Washington D.C.

John Shepherd, M.Phil. in the History of Science, Medicine and Technology, Worcester College: *The Uses of Psychiatry and Psychology in Attempts to Understand, Predict, and Control Criminal Behaviour in California, 1900-1940*

Award for research at the University of California, Berkeley

Isaac Smy, B.A. in History, Oriel College: *The White Working Class during the Progressive Era*

Award for research at the Tamiment Library, New York University

Stephen Symchych, D.Phil. in History, St Antony's College: *Partisanship and Bad Feelings in the Era of Good Feelings*

Award for research at Harvard University Library, Smith College, MA, and the Library of Congress

Jessica Wallace, B.A. in History, Trinity College: *Cultural Representations of HIV in late 20th Century America*

Award for research at the New York Public Library and the Brooklyn Public Library

Lara Wilson, B.A. in History, Lincoln College: *The Changing Character of the American Social Elite c.1890–1920*

Award for research at the Rhode Island Historical Society and the Newport Historical Society

In Memoriam: Mrs Drue Heinz DBE, 1915–2018

The Rothermere American Institute was deeply saddened to learn of the death of Mrs Drue Heinz, DBE, on 30th March 2018 at the age of 103. An outstanding philanthropist and patron of the literary arts, she was a generous benefactor of the RAI and a member of the Institute's Founding Council. She endowed Oxford University's Drue Heinz Chair in American Literature, a position associated with St John's College.



Mrs Drue Heinz, DBE (The Heinz Endowments)

Born during World War I in England on March 8, 1915, Drue Heinz was the widow of the late H.J. Heinz II of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. In the United Kingdom, she was a Trustee of the Royal Academy of Arts and, as a member of the London Library, created an endowment there to develop its literary collections. In 1983, she founded the Hawthornden Literary Retreat in Midlothian, Scotland, as an international retreat for writers. In 1995, Mrs Heinz was named an Honorary Dame Commander of the Order of the British Empire and in 2002 she was elected as an honorary fellow of the Royal Society of Literature.

In the United States, she endowed the Drue Heinz Literature Prize at the University of Pittsburgh, a national prize for short stories, and was an active board member of the Carnegie Museum of Art, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the MacDowell Colony, the Pierpont Morgan Library, and the American Academy in Rome, and served on the International Council of the Museum of Modern Art. She joined the Board of Directors of the Howard Heinz Endowment in 1973, which later became The Heinz Endowments, and became Director Emeritus in 1994.

In 1971 she co-founded Ecco Press, which published *Antaeus* magazine and republished many out-of-print books of outstanding literary merit. She also served as publisher of *The Paris Review* from 1993 until her retirement in 2008.

Mrs Heinz most recently visited Oxford in November 2017 for the inaugural lecture of the Drue Heinz Professor of American Literature, Lloyd Pratt. It was an honour for all the RAI's staff and students to have her company for what was a memorable occasion. Professor Pratt regards Mrs Heinz's generous benefaction as "a turning point in the history of the study of literature in English at Oxford. Mrs Heinz made it possible for Oxford undergraduates and postgraduates to study American literature in ways previously unavailable to them. She linked Oxford to the American literary scene and academy, creating a vital pathway for artistic and scholarly exchange." As well as endowing the Drue Heinz statutory professorship, her contribution to Oxford has supported a steady stream of visiting writers and scholars from the United States. It is one of the many critically important literary and artistic transatlantic corridors she established across the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.



Lloyd Pratt, Drue Heinz Professor of American Literature: Photo: John Cairns

Vyvan Harmsworth, Secretary and Trustee of the Rothermere Foundation and Chair of the RAI's Board of Advisors said: "Drue Heinz was a personal friend of the late 3rd Viscount Rothermere and his sister, the Countess of Cromer. As a result of this friendship Lord Rothermere invited her to join the Founding Council of the RAI. Her deep knowledge and love of the United States influenced and enriched the development of the Institute. Her interest in the RAI never waned and her advice, encouragement, and philanthropy has greatly helped the Institute flourish during the past 15 years. She will be remembered with great affection and admiration by all who knew her at the RAI."



Photo: John Cairns

A Literary Year at the RAI

This year, the RAI has played host to a variety of literary events, both within its own walls and in the wider Oxford community, writes Tara Stubbs, the RAI's Academic Programme Director and Fellow and Tutor in English Literature at Kellogg College.



Tara Stubbs: Photo: John Cairns

The highlight of Michaelmas Term was Lloyd Pratt's inaugural lecture as Drue Heinz Professor of American Literature, on 'Free Reading'. Mrs Heinz was in attendance, and the lecture provided a stimulating combination of literary and personal history. Later in the academic year, another high point was the 2018 Esmond Harmsworth Lecture in American Arts and Letters, given by the acclaimed poet, essayist, and dramatist Claudia Rankine. Her lecture on 'The counter-narrative, the racial imaginary, and visual art', was bold and challenging, and attracted a huge audience from around the university and city. The following day, Professor Rankine gave a very successful workshop on similar topics to students and fellows.

One of the broader aims of this year's academic programme planning has been to encourage more members of the public to engage with the RAI's events, and particularly through the RAI|Live programme of talks and discussions. In Michaelmas Term Deborah Treisman, Fiction Editor of *The New Yorker*, visited the RAI to discuss her new book, *The Dream Colony* – a biography of the curator Walter Hopps – in a public conversation with Miguel De Baca, the 2017-18 Terra Visiting Professor of American Art. Treisman will return to the Institute in June 2019 to give the 2019 Esmond Harmsworth Lecture.

Complementing the theme of Claudia Rankine's lecture, the programme of RAI|Live events for the year also explored the intersection between literature and art. Hilary Term saw a brilliantly engaging talk by Antony Penrose, son of American surrealist photographer and muse Lee Miller, on 'Lee Miller: Witnessing Women at War'. It

was gratifying to see how many members of the public attended this event. Trinity Term's RAI|Live talk, by Ben Arogundade, discussed his photojournalistic book, *Obama: 101 Best Covers*. Ben raised interesting questions about the hagiography that surrounds Obama, and is currently working on a comparable book project on Trump's magazine covers.

This year, too, the RAI worked with the Ashmolean Museum on its successful spring and summer exhibition, 'America's Cool Modernism'. Members of the RAI community helped to plan the museum's 'Live Friday' event on 25 May – including TED-style talks on literature, art, history and fashion in 1920s and 1930s America; still-life workshops focusing on the style of Georgia O'Keeffe; and a 'Modernist Party' given by graduate students in the guise of famous Modernist figures. The event was enhanced by two discussions at Blackwell's bookshop around the topics of the exhibition, and a collaboration with the bookshop for a display on American Literature.

All this took place in addition to the RAI's regular programme of in-house American Literature Research Seminars. Highlights included award-winning writer Olivia Laing discussing *The Lonely City: Adventures in the Art of Being Alone*; one of the RAI's Postdoctoral Visiting Research Fellows, Emilia Borowska (Royal Holloway), speaking on 'Chris Kraus's Journey to the End of History'; and Natalia Cecire (Sussex) presenting on 'Quartz contentment, or, passing for dead' in the work of American Modernist writers. The year has been involved, eclectic, and thrilling, and I can't wait for the next one.



Photo: John Cairns

Finances and fundraising

The RAI maintained a healthy financial position in 2017-18 thanks to the generosity of its benefactors, returns from its endowment funds, and by maintaining careful control of its costs.

In 2017-18, the RAI generated revenue of £613,600 (2016-17: £566,600), comprising an income of £371,300 from its endowment funds (2016-17: £335,900), £125,000 from donations spent in-year (2016-17: £154,400), £76,900 in student fees and University funding (2016-17: £33,700), and £40,400 in other income (2016-17: £42,600). Expenditure of £614,200 (2016-17: £566,400) comprised £238,900 in pay (2016-17: £236,200), £254,100 in non-pay expenses (2016-17: £208,000) and £121,200 in infrastructural and capital costs (2016-17: £122,200).

(not including pledges), amounts to a cost of raising funds of less than 3.5%. This compares very favourably to charitable return-on-investment benchmarks.

The RAI was the beneficiary of £1,915,000 in new funds in 2017. This total included several gifts in excess of £100,000: £533,000 from an anonymous donor towards the endowment of the RAI Directorship as the Edward Orsborn Chair in U.S. Politics and Political History; and gifts of £135,000, £133,000 (held in trust by University College) and £123,000 to endow graduate scholarships in American history and politics. The Institute also benefitted from £418,000 in endowed match funding from the university's graduate matching fund and £236,000 from University College's Radcliffe benefaction for graduate scholarships in American history and politics which are jointly affiliated to the RAI and University College.

The 2017 total was the second highest since the RAI was founded in 2001 and compared to £2,461,000 in donations in 2016, £494,000 in 2015, and £388,000 in 2014.

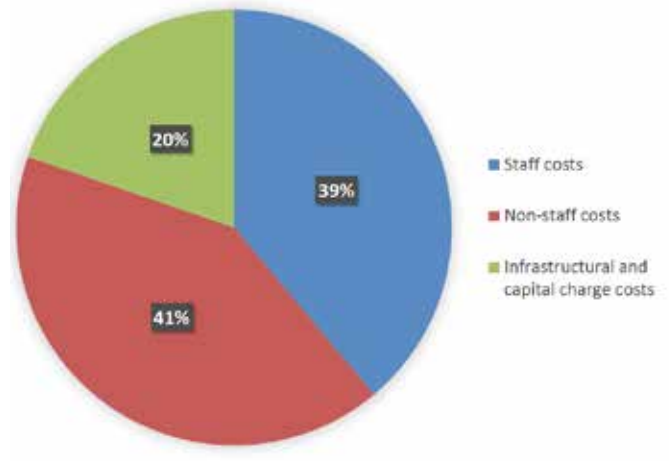
Other donations received in 2017 included the following:

- £81,000 to complete the endowment of the Broadbent Junior Research Fellowship American History.
- £76,000 in support of the RAI's general costs and endowment.
- £45,000 to support the Harmsworth Junior Research Fellowship and graduate scholarship on the U.S. and the First World War.
- £45,000 to acquire for the Bodleian Libraries full and permanent access to the Daily Mail historical newspaper archive.

The RAI records its special gratitude to those donors who made or pledged major gifts during 2017: William and Camille Broadbent, Joan Winant, the Rothermere Foundation, the Daily Mail and General Trust, the Josephine P. and John J. Louis Foundation, John Price, Frederic Sanford, and several benefactors who wish to remain anonymous.

The RAI's cost of raising funds remained low, amounting to approximately £67,000 in 2017. This comprised staff costs and other expenses associated with fundraising, such as travel and events at the RAI and in the United States. A total cost of raising funds of approximately £67,000, set against £1.915m in cash received

Expenditure 2017-18



Income 2017-18

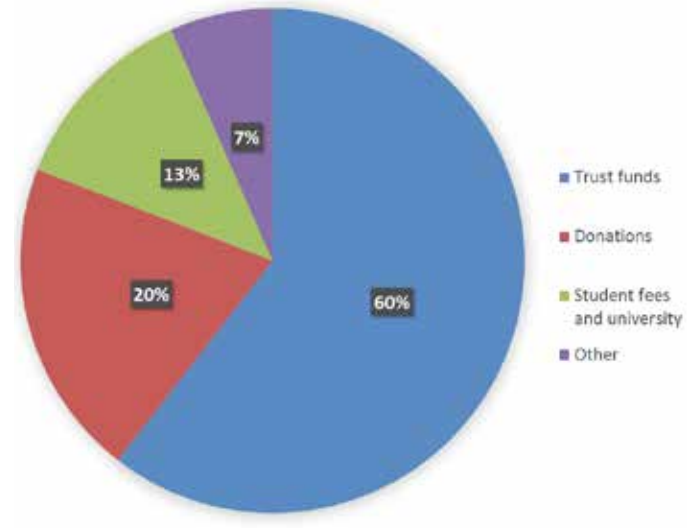




Photo: John Cairns

Become a 'Friend of the RAI'

The Institute's Friends of the RAI initiative is a great opportunity to support the Institute'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 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 – the Director's monthly *RAI Matters*; 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

And **for an annual donation of £80 (\$150)**, Friends receive all of this, plus a personally dedicated copy of a book by an RAI author.

To become a Friend of the RAI, simply visit www.rai.ox.ac.uk/friends or complete the form in the centre of this report.

For further information on how you can support the RAI, please contact Huw David, RAI Director of Development, at Huw.david@rai.ox.ac.uk.

Stay in touch with the RAI all year long

The RAI website – www.rai.ox.ac.uk – contains all the latest news of events and activities at the Institute.

The site features dedicated pages for:

- Podcasts of RAI lectures – www.rai.ox.ac.uk/podcasts
- 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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