

Letter from the Principal

Helen King QPM

I would like to start by expressing my thanks to the Editorial Board for their diligent work in bringing this publication to fruition. I am sure that this has not been an straightforward task. They can rightly feel proud of what they have achieved, as should the authors whose work you find here.

Each of the Editorial Board and everyone who has contributed an article has also been carrying their own academic workload. Undertaking a postgraduate degree at Oxford is not an easy option and can feel both demanding and isolating. So it doesn't always feel comfortable taking on additional responsibilities alongside the hours of reading or lab work, deadlines, days of doubt, if not despair, and the sheer slog of writing up the assignments or submissions required by your programme. That everyone involved in STAAR voluntarily committed their time to this endeavour is greatly to their credit.

In managing the pressures of graduate study I believe Oxford Master and Doctoral students have an advantage, if they choose to take it, of having a College life as well as a Departmental one. This publication is a literary manifestation of what a College MCR is: a place where individuals, each deeply immersed in different but specific areas of study, can come together and enrich each others' thinking with their diverse expertise. Sciences, humanities, arts and varied disciplines within each are meticulously described and explained in each of the articles in this volume in a way that does not require expert prior knowledge. Thus each of us can read STAAR as intellectually curious equals.

St Anne's College has Eleanor Plumer and Robert Saunders Houses, but of course they are not the MCR. St Anne's graduate students are the MCR and represent a hugely diverse and talented group of people. I would predict that whatever path your future takes, you are unlikely ever again to be part of such an interesting and varied cohort. If you're not convinced then read STAAR and remember that this publication has involved only a small proportion of the total of the MCR. This also only captures a specific area of each of their individual interests and that beyond their academic interests our MCR members also represent many nationalities, languages, backgrounds, cultural and sporting talents, charitable and political causes, and personalities. Just as I encourage you to sample the full range of material included in STAAR I would also encourage graduate students to involve themselves in MCR life. Its relevance to particular academic studies may not be immediately apparent, but we all learn from others and from new experiences and perspectives.

This inclusive, open minded, outward looking approach is one that has long been a part of St Anne's history. It means that students from St Anne's leave with much more than a degree.

I started by thanking the Editorial Board and contributors. I will end by thanking you the reader, for even in the act of absorbing yourself in this publication, you are participating in the rich life of the MCR. Learn, enjoy, contribute!

Helen King
Principal of St. Anne's College