



THE EMMANUEL NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2023

EMMA ENABLES – UPDATE



Our new court has been named Young's Court, in honour of illustrious member, Thomas Young, an 18th-century polymath, whose interests ranged from physics to Egyptology.

Legend has it that Young first observed the principle of 'interference' in the ripples made by two swans on the Paddock pond, leading to the famous experiment of 'Young's slits', thus resurrecting the century-old wave theory of light.

We've made excellent progress with *Emma enables* since our last newsletter. The building work has been completed, providing 48 new student rooms, and some students have moved into the accommodation for the final term of the academic year. They're settling in well and everyone's looking forward to the opening of the new College bar, which will be run by students in term time. There are new teaching and seminar rooms, a lounge bar called Mike's, and a new event space. There will also be some lovely gardens, which are in the process of being planted.



Young's Court

We'll be welcoming the first tranche of post-docs in October and we're looking forward to them playing a full part in College life.

To celebrate the completion of the building work and thank those who have donated to *Emma enables*, we will be holding an event on 8 July. Invitations will be sent out to donors very soon and we are looking forward to celebrating all that they are helping us achieve.

EMMANUEL'S NEW BURSAR: *Introducing Catherine Webb*



We are delighted to have welcomed Catherine Webb, our new Bursar, who began her role at Emmanuel on 13 February. As Bursar, she will be responsible for the operational functions of the College and leading the college staff, as well as strategic oversight of Emmanuel's finances and facilities.

She spent her first month working with our outgoing Bursar, Mike Gross, focusing on understanding the breadth of issues that she will be responsible for, and getting to know our community of Fellows, staff and students.

Catherine said "I'm really excited to be re-joining the Emmanuel College community at an exciting point of its history and to play a role in the successful development of the *Emma enables* project. And personally, I am looking forward to the opportunities this role presents to broaden my experience and to apply my skills and experience in a very different context."

Catherine studied Economics at Emmanuel 1997–2000. She then joined the Civil Service, becoming a member of the Government Economic Service. In 2011, Catherine became Counsellor for Economic and Trade Policy based in Beijing. From 2019, she was HM Treasury's Director of Operations and in 2021 she was appointed a Companion of the Order of the Bath.

ARCHIVES BLOG

Fact or fiction: Thomas Young and the Emmanuel swan



Swans on the Paddock pond, with the Chapel and old Master's Lodge in the background

Thomas Young was, according to his epitaph in Westminster Abbey, 'a man alike eminent in almost every department of human learning'. It is therefore fitting that the new court at Emmanuel is to bear his name. Young was admitted here in March 1797, ostensibly to study for the M.B., but as he was already a qualified physician he spent his time reading widely and conducting scientific experiments. Some years ago, the late Dr Frank Stubbings, college Fellow and librarian, noted that 'an attractive tradition has it that [Young] first observed the phenomenon of 'interference' in the ripples set up by two swans on the Emmanuel pond. This phenomenon... was important to his arguments for a wave theory of light'. The origin of this 'tradition' is obscure; the earliest allusion to it in the college archives seems to be an entry in a student society's minute book.

Founded in 1929 as an amalgamation of Emma's two existing natural sciences societies, the 'Thomas Young Club' was keen to establish its own identity, so proposed that members should have a distinctive tie. After considering various patterns, it was decided in February 1930 to adopt 'the original design with swans'. Photographic evidence



Thomas Young Club tie, donated by Donald Maxwell (1944)

shows that this tie had a repeating motif of two diagonal parallel lines containing a row of swans. The lines were an allusion to Young's famous 'double slits' experiment, and the swans, clearly, referred to Young's supposed observations

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of 'interference' on the Paddock pond. By the mid-1940s the design had been modified, with the swans now being much more widely spaced. Perhaps they had been too reminiscent of a row of target ducks in a fairground booth!

Clearly, an oral tradition about Young's swans had existed for some time before 1930, but did it derive from anything other than mere whimsy? One element of the story is certainly dubious, for there is no evidence that Emmanuel had any resident swans until well after Young had gone down. Presumably, though, ducks or moorhens could have produced the same ripple effects. It is also indisputable that Young himself never directly mentioned either of our ponds, or the swimming bath, in any of his writings. The college archives are equally silent; the Parlour wager books, for instance, contain no obliging references to any watery experiments carried out by Young during his three years' residence.

It seems likely that it was the following famous passage in a pamphlet Young published in 1804 that (probably much later) gave rise to the 'swans' tradition: *Suppose a number of equal waves of water to move upon the surface of a stagnant lake, with a constant velocity, and to enter a narrow channel leading out of the lake. Suppose then, another similar cause to have excited another equal series of waves, which arrive at the same channel, with the same velocity, and at the same time with the first... Now I maintain that similar effects take place wherever two portions of light are thus mixed, and this I call the general law of the interference of light.*

This description of a still lake with a narrow outfall does sound very much like the Paddock pond, and it is certainly tempting to imagine that Young had it in mind when developing his theory. Unfortunately, he declares in the same 1804 pamphlet that it was not until 'May 1801' (that is, nearly a year after he went down) that the full revelation of the 'law' of interference came to him in a moment of inspiration. The Emmanuel 'swans' tradition, then, is almost certainly a fiction – but a very pleasant one.

Amanda Goode
College Archivist

LAUNCH OF *Emma Experience*

One of the aims of *Emma enables* was to establish a new programme designed to equip every member of our community with the skills and opportunities they need to flourish. With thanks to the generous support of our members and donors, that ambition has been realised with the launch in February of *Emma Experience*.



classes, there is already a promising and varied line-up of events and opportunities on the horizon.

These will hugely benefit all members of our community and we look forward to sharing updates on the programme as it evolves.

Emma Experience Director, Daniel McKay, launched the programme on 1 February with a fascinating talk by Dr Jonnie Penn on 'AI and the Future'. In his introduction at the event, the Master said: "It's not the Emma Experience Director's programme, it's not my programme, it's *our* collective programme."

From workshops to compelling arguments and public speaking, to group fitness training sessions and yoga

None of this would have been possible without donations; we're so grateful to those of you who have enabled us to get the programme off the ground. If you'd like to see how the programme is shaping up for yourself, you can explore the *Emma experience website*. (www.emmaexperience.uk).

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An Emma Enterprise Competition

Entrepreneurship embodies skills that are reusable across a wide range of career paths and we are keen to offer students and post-docs the opportunity to gain hands-on experience in this area. We are going to launch an Enterprise Competition in Michaelmas term 2023, which will provide practical experience in developing and pitching a business or social enterprise idea. Our Fellow Steve Young is organising it.

The competition will comprise three key stages. In Michaelmas term, we will provide on-line tutorials in areas such as pitching an idea, financing, creating a team, marketing and product development. In Lent term, we will offer mentorship to a short-list of teams developing their business idea and then at the start of Easter term the teams will come together to be judged in a competitive final.

We are asking for volunteers to give tutorials, to mentor teams and to help with the final judging. If you would be willing to help in any of these capacities we would be very grateful if you could let us know at enterprise@emma.cam.ac.uk and we'll send you a link to an online form.

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Emma gives

In March we held our fourth Giving Day and we were once again overwhelmed by the kindness and generosity of the Emma community. 328 members, staff, Fellows, students and friends made a gift, raising over £96,000 for our student support fund; this is incredible, and we're very grateful to everyone who donated. Many of you also contributed an *Emma gives* Acorn of Kindness and we've featured a small selection in this image. It was a joy to read your kind and inspiring messages, anecdotes and dedications to Emma people. However you supported *Emma gives* this year, thank you.



FORTHCOMING EVENTS

23 & 24 September

Gathering of Members (2000, 2001 & 2002)

Members who matriculated in 2000, 2001 & 2002 are invited to a Gathering of Members of the College, to be held on Saturday 23 and Sunday 24 September 2023.

The weekend will begin with tea, served in the Old Library between 3.30pm and 5.00pm, and to which partners and families are warmly invited.

Dinner (for members only, no gowns, and most people like to wear black tie, though this is not essential) will be served at 7.30pm in Hall, preceded by drinks in the Old Library at 6.45pm. Further drinks will be available after dinner and accommodation on the Saturday night.

Booking details will be sent in July.

14 September

William Morris walking tour of London with Lucinda Hawksley

Further details to be confirmed.

19 September

Emmanuel Society London Drinks

Bunghole Cellars, 57 High Holborn, Holborn, WC1V 6DT

We'd love to see members at the drinks party in London; a great time to meet up again with fellow Emma members to chat, catch up and network. There's no need to book, but if you are able to fill out the booking form, please do.

Please meet us in the downstairs area of the Cellars. We look forward to seeing you there!

Autumn 2023

Emmanuel Society Dinner in Liverpool

Further details and the date to be confirmed.

REQUEST A BOOKING FORM OR BOOK ONLINE AT:

www.emma.cam.ac.uk/members/events

FELLOWS' NEWS

We are delighted that Lionel Bently – one of our Fellows in Law – has been elected as an Honorary KC by the Ministry of Justice, in recognition of his involvement in national and Europe-wide policy work. He was on the Copyright Expert Panel of the Strategic Advisory Board on Intellectual Property advising the UK Government about intellectual property; led the team of researchers that advised the Gowers Committee reviewing Intellectual Property on Economics of Copyright Term Extension in relation to Sound Recordings; and was part of the team that produced a report for HM Treasury on Models of Exploitation of Public Data by Trading Funds.



Careers Database

Join more than 900 members by adding or updating your entry to the Emmanuel Careers Database.

Do sign up even if you graduated relatively recently, as advice on applications, surviving interviews and getting started in a new job can all be really valuable.

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