

CAMPAIGN FOR OXFORD



Rob Judges/Oxford University Images



David Fisher/Oxford University Images

Left: Telethons are an important means of keeping alumni in touch with life at Oxford, and engaging their support

Above: The Prime Minister, David Cameron, and Chancellor, Lord Patten, greet Sir Ka-shing Li at a special event to mark the launch of the Li Ka Shing Centre

Transcript of a film outlining achievements of the Oxford Thinking fundraising campaign during the year

BETH COLLETT, HISTORY AND POLITICS, MANSFIELD COLLEGE

Oxford is such a phenomenal name, and I don't think it's just saying 'I went to Oxford', it's a word that's made up of a million different things. It's made up of people, it's made up of experiences, it's made up of opportunities, and to know that you've been part of that and can contribute to that is an incredible opportunity, and something that I will carry with me for the rest of my life.

NICK RAWLINS, PRO-VICE-CHANCELLOR, DEVELOPMENT AND EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

We've had two very remarkable donations in the last year. One was £20 million from the Li Ka Shing Foundation, and that's just the beginning of what will be a very major campaign of its own, which is to set up a 'big data' centre.

PRIME MINISTER DAVID CAMERON

I think what's happening today really matters. It is an enormous investment that Mr Li is making into this Centre.

NICK RAWLINS

The other very big donation came in at the end of the summer from John McCall MacBain to the Rhodes Trust.

CLIP OF CHARLES CONN, WARDEN OF RHODES HOUSE, ANNOUNCING THE GIFT AT THE 110TH RHODES ANNIVERSARY

This gift is £75 million.

NICK RAWLINS

That £75 million is an extraordinarily important piece of ensuring that the Rhodes Trust will go on from strength to strength over its second century in the way that it did over its first.

Of course, it's one thing to talk about the very major donors – and they are crucially important in any campaign – but one should not, for a moment, lose sight of the cumulative power of smaller donations. One of the things that perhaps a lot of people will have become more familiar with lately is the telethon. The key things about telethons are that the people who telephone are students here at Oxford.

EDWARD ADDISON, MATHEMATICS, WADHAM COLLEGE

I remember making my first phone call on the telethon.

GRACE WYLD, HISTORY AND ENGLISH, MANSFIELD COLLEGE

It was absolutely terrifying.

EDWARD ADDISON

Everyone was in the call room at the same time, and everyone was about to make their first call. Everyone was kind of looking round – like, has someone made a call yet?

BETH COLLETT

You're waiting and waiting, and then: 'Welcome to the O₂ messaging service,' and you think, 'Great'.

EDWARD ADDISON

After the first few days it became really quite natural.

GRACE WYLD

I was really shocked, actually, by how pleased people were to hear from you. I thought I'd come up against a lot of 'Oh no, asking for money again,' but actually people were fairly excited to be able to speak to someone who's at their college, particularly if they haven't been back for a while, or they left a long time ago.

BETH COLLETT

... 'Oh, did you have this tutor?' and I thought, 'How are they still here?'

GRACE WYLD

I think generally people always love to hear what's going on in terms of the rooms and the buildings, and asking 'Is your JCR still in the same place?' and things like that; it's all the little things that kind of make up your experience here.

BETH COLLETT

And they all say, 'Make sure that you enjoy all your experiences, don't let it bypass you.' It's nice for me to know that I need to make the most of 'now' because when I leave, it'll be not the same, sadly.

EDWARD ADDISON

I wasn't anticipating how willing people were to give and support the college. I was thinking, 'I'm probably not going to get that many people donating', whereas so many alumni were wanting to get on board and help. And that was really, really good to hear, especially from a current student's perspective, to know that everyone is still passionate about the college – and obviously that means it is still very special to them.

GRACE WYLD

Every single person I spoke to is still friends with someone from college, which is very reassuring.

EDWARD ADDISON

I've been thinking about so many years down the line, when I get a call on the telethon.

GRACE WYLD

It'll throw me straight back – I'll have probably forgotten about the telethon by then. It's odd to think now, what they'll be telling me – how the college will have changed and moved forward. No, it's quite a nice thought really.

NICK RAWLINS

One of the top priorities for the Campaign has been, and will remain, building some infrastructure.

The Weston Library, which is this extraordinary extension of the Bodleian Library, is nearing completion. On the Radcliffe Observatory Quarter we opened the new Mathematics Institute just a few weeks ago. We have the groundbreaking ceremony at the Blavatnik School of Government. At St Antony's College there's a new gateway building and there's a new and extraordinary building being constructed by the architect Zaha Hadid, which is going to house the new Middle East Centre. And we couldn't have done any of those things without the support we've had from our donors.

You get very few chances in life to paint on a really big canvas. And you get very, very few chances in life to do something that you think is going to have good effects indefinitely into the future. When we go out and endow a teaching post, or undergraduate support, or a graduate scholarship, then we're doing something that we can very reasonably hope will still be improving people's lives centuries away.