

KING CHARLES III

— *His time at Trinity* —



1967 year-group photo
showing His Royal Highness
in the fourth row from the
front, eighth from the right.

© Trinity College Cambridge

His Majesty King Charles III

was an undergraduate student at
Trinity College from 1967 to 1970.

This booklet, published on the
occasion of His Majesty's Coronation
on 6 May 2023, is about his time
at Trinity, and his continued
association with the College and
with Cambridge.

Foreword

Adrian Poole (matriculated 1967)

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October 1967. Just under 200 Freshers face the camera in front of the Wren Library. As usual then, we are all men. There's a little 'diversity' on view but not much. Hardly any facial hair but a lot more on top than there would have been before the 'swinging sixties.'

A few dissidents have declined to sport a white shirt and tie (to my astonishment now, I seem to be one of them). All are excited and anxious. Most are looking forward to the cigarette we will smoke as soon as this is over, and we can take off our gowns.

The first rule we've learned is that we can't walk on the grass. The second is that we can smoke almost anywhere we like, but not with our gowns on. There are all sorts of others, about nightly curfews and not having members of the opposite sex in your rooms after midnight (or whenever).

One of us is a bit different because some time in the future, God willing, he is going to be King.

Not that we thought much about it – not as much as *he* did, for sure. Most of us had little or no idea of where we were heading, nor were we much bothered. Privileged? Yes. Innocent? Certainly. We could not know the ordeals, global and personal, lying in wait for us. A fair number of the youths that stare out of that photo have passed on, and those that have not are now, as I'm told we're supposed to say, 'in later life.'

No wonder we let the Prince just get on with his time as a student, an experience as near to being 'normal' as he'd ever be likely to enjoy. I am embarrassed to say that I remember almost nothing about him until I reflect that this may well have been what he wished for, to pass me by as I passed him. Most of us I think felt sympathy for him, he seemed so unassuming, in the best sense of the word.

Scroll forward, more than 50 years on, to the same venue and time of year. Everyone is still wearing gowns; still no walking on the grass, it's true. But no smoking in prospect, not inside the College at least. And lo and behold, some women as well as men! And students from a far greater range of backgrounds, to the uninformed eye. Not *semper eadem* ('always the same'), not one little bit.

No royalty detectable, but perhaps just one now and then is enough to be proud of.

‘There is the same magic now about entering the tranquillity of the Great Court that there was when I first arrived as a Trinity undergraduate some 43 years ago.’

So wrote the then Prince of Wales in recollections of his undergraduate years for *Trinity: A Portrait*, published in 2011.

Capturing the mood of the 1960s, he mentioned ‘highly colourful’ Fellows, and the ‘extraordinarily loyal and understanding’ College staff – including porters, bedmakers and catering staff – ‘whose cheery greeting and down-to-earth common sense were able to inject a welcome reality into our sometimes surreal existence.’

The hurly-burly of student life notwithstanding, the Prince of Wales observed of his third year living in Great Court:

‘But my abiding memory is one of the silence at night-time “when the busy world is hushed”, punctuated only by the rhythmic chimes of the clock and the gentle flow of water cascading from the fountain. Magical. Yes, we were all very lucky.’





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First heir to the throne to graduate

While other members of the British Royal Family have attended Trinity College, the Prince of Wales was the first heir to the throne to gain a university degree.

His great-great-grandfather, Edward VII, came to Trinity in 1861 and studied a bespoke course of history.

Just after the end of the First World War, his grandfather, George VI, before he became Duke of York, spent a year at Trinity studying history, economics and ‘civics’ before his increasing royal duties required him to return to court.

Trinity’s association with royalty dates back over 700 years. As is well known, Henry VIII founded ‘The College of the Holy and Undivided Trinity’ in 1546, combining two medieval scholarly foundations or halls. These were Michaelhouse, established in 1324, and King’s Hall, established by Edward II in 1317 and founded by Edward III in 1337.

'A pop star welcome'

As Prince of Wales, Charles was admitted to Trinity in October 1967. Driven to Cambridge in a red Austin mini, he was greeted by crowds of people, pressmen and members of the College.

The Daily Express described it as 'a pop star welcome.'

Someone in the crowd shouted, 'Good luck!' and the Prince replied, 'I shall need it.'





© Mirrorpix

First impressions

The Prince would later write for *Varsity's* 21st anniversary special his 'First Impressions of Cambridge.'

'First impressions took on a distorted aspect because all that could be seen in front of Trinity Great Gate were serried ranks of variously trousered legs, from which I had to distinguish those of the Master and the Senior Tutor before meeting them.'

In this photograph the Prince is accompanied by the Master of Trinity, Lord Butler, and behind him is his Tutor, Dr Denis Marrian.

'No special arrangements'

Unlikely though it might seem, the College was determined to treat Charles like any other student.

Lord Butler, who had held senior ministerial offices including Deputy Prime Minister prior to becoming Master of Trinity, told newspapers: 'I have spoken to Prince Charles and his parents, and they are anxious that no special arrangements should be made and that he should be treated as normally as possible.'

Aware of national interest in what life at Cambridge would be like for the young Prince, the College held a press day in April 1967, six months before his arrival.



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Matriculation and Admission to College

Matriculation marks the formal admission of a student to the University of Cambridge.

As part of Admission to College, a student signs the Admissions Book and joins the year-group photograph.

Until modern times each individual student at Trinity also had their photograph taken for the record.

A postage-stamp-sized photograph of the boyish Prince, seemingly uncertain whether to smile, has been kept in his College file ever since (enlarged opposite).

The photograph on this page was taken in the Wren Library as part of the press day in April 1967 to show how each student's photo was taken. In front of a white background, the distance between a chair and photographer was measured before the then Sub-Librarian Arthur Halcrow clicked the shutter.

A student is also shown filling in the Admissions Book.



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191	NAME OF STUDENT (Christian names in full and Surname underlined>	FATHER'S NAMES IN FULL (With description or title)	PRESENT RESIDENCE (Address in full)	DATE OF BIRTH (Day, Month and Year)	PLACE OF BIRTH	SCHOOL OR PLACE OF EDUCATION (With Postal Address)	NAME OF HEADMASTER OR PRIVATE TUTOR	STATUS	DATE OF ADMISSION	TUTOR	191
	<small>WALLES: FROM THE PRINCE.</small> <u>Charles</u> , <u>Philip</u> , <u>Arthur</u> , <u>George Prince of Wales</u>	Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh.	Buckingham Palace London.	14th November 1948.	Buckingham Palace	Godanston, Elgin.	F. R. S. Chew.	Pensioner	Oct. 1967	Dr. Marrian.	

© Trinity College Cambridge

In October 1967, when the Prince entered his details (pictured above) into the Admissions Book, he was shown the signatures of Edward VII and George VI.

This element of Admission to the College continues to this day, as does the year-group photo.



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Sausage and mash?

Media coverage prior to the Prince's arrival at Trinity speculated that he would eat sausage and mash, sleep on an iron bed, and be liable for library fines for overdue books.

In fact, Charles' first meal in Hall was minestrone, roast beef with Yorkshire pudding, roast potatoes, and French beans followed by fruit salad – all for six shillings.





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'You can call him Charles'

John Parry was in his second year when the Prince of Wales arrived.

Fifty years later, Dr Parry recalls his Tutor sitting him down and telling him about the new arrival. 'You can call him Charles,' he was told.

Another contemporary student living on the same staircase as the Prince told *The Belfast Newsletter* in 1969, 'We all agreed to give him the chance to be one of us. I don't think any of us would want to be in his shoes.'



© Alamy

At home in New Court

In his first year, the Prince of Wales lived in E staircase on the first floor of New Court.

Writing for *Trinity: A Portrait*, the Prince recalled:

‘A small, communal bathroom had recently been installed on the first floor of the staircase which spared passing tourists or visitors the alarming sight of my pottering across New Court in my bathing towel.’

In his final year he lived in Great Court, an experience which few students or Fellows are likely to forget.

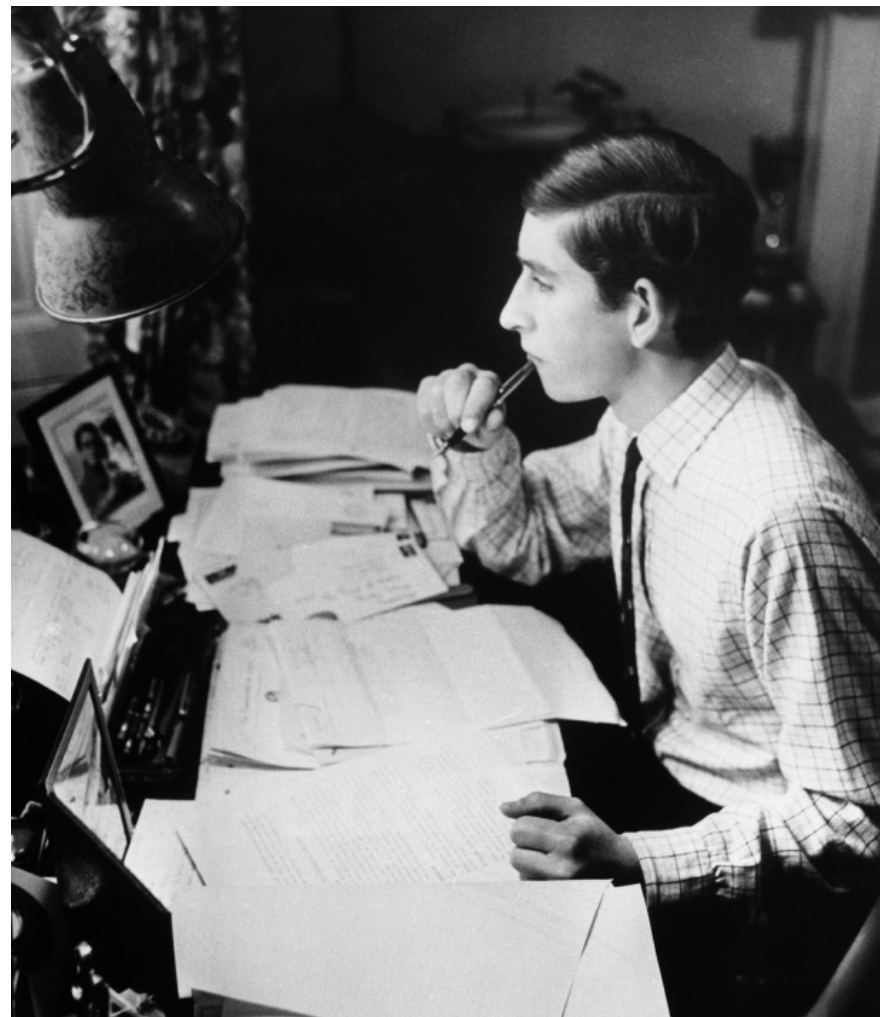
‘These three years were hugely formative ...’

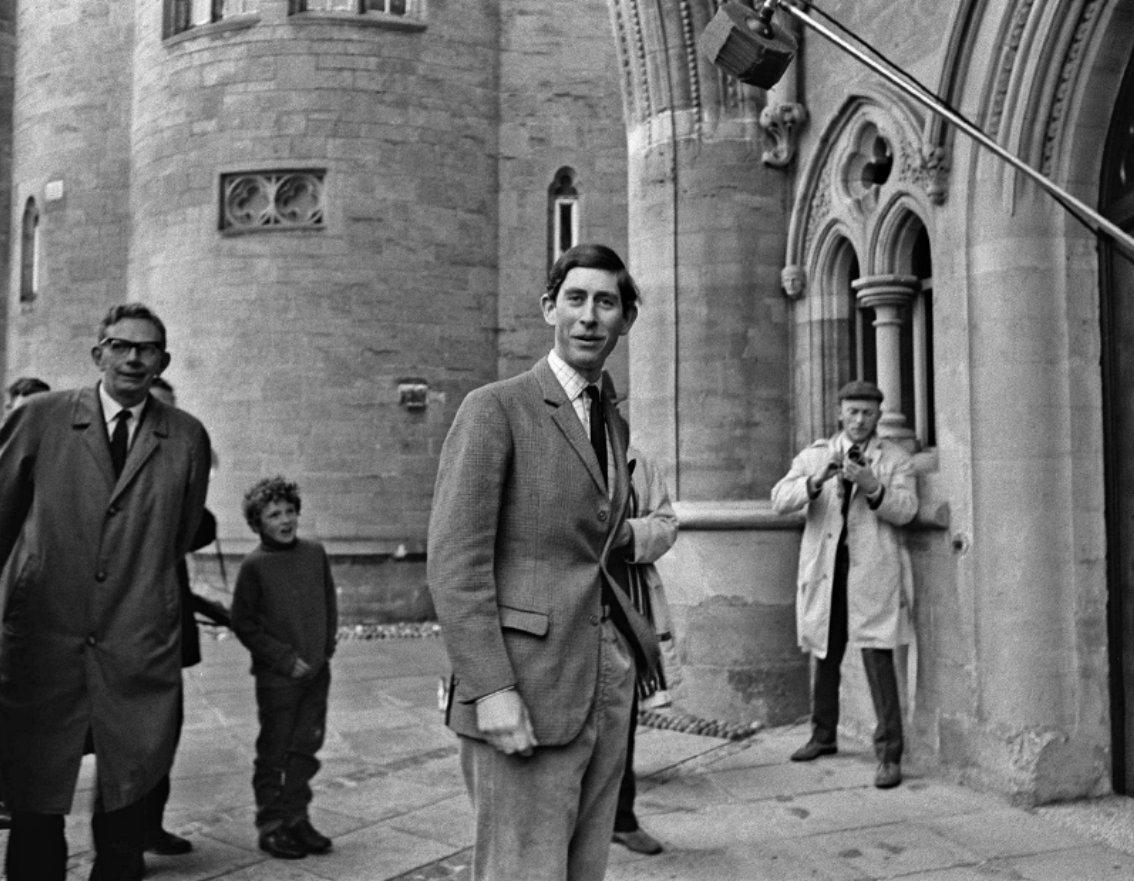
The Prince studied Archaeology and Anthropology in his first year, gaining a 2:1 in his exams. He took part in archaeological digs at Godmanchester and in Jersey in April 1968.

In his second and third years, he studied History. His Director of Studies at Trinity, Dr Anil Seal, now the College’s ‘Senior Fellow’, recalled the Prince’s ‘questing intelligence.’

As Dr Seal recently said:

‘Trinity, in a curious way, provides one of the keys to what this interesting person, who is much more than just a figure in the public eye, is all about; these three years were hugely formative to his commitments, his enthusiasms and indeed much of what he has achieved during the rest of his life.’





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A term in Aberystwyth

In April 1969 the Prince left Cambridge to spend a term at the University College of Wales in Aberystwyth, where he studied the Welsh language and the history of the Principality.

The photograph on the right shows the Prince of Wales in the language laboratory.



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The Investiture

His Investiture as Prince of Wales by Her Majesty the Queen took place at Caernarfon Castle on 1 July 1969.

The title the Prince of Wales is traditionally given to the heir to the English (later British) throne. Prior to the conquest of Wales by Edward I in the thirteenth century, it was used by the rulers of independent Wales.



© Alamy

'What the hell comes next?'

The Prince of Wales was an enthusiastic member of the Trinity drama group, the Dryden Society. He took part in two revues, 'Revolution' [sic] in 1969 and 'Quietly Flows the Don' in 1970.

The Prince's love of 'The Goon Show', a radio comedy produced and broadcast by the BBC Home Service through the 1950s, is well known. A sketch in the 1969 revue that featured him sitting in a dustbin was inspired, according to John Parry, in part by Goon Spike Milligan's skit 'Jump into a dustbin and dance.'

As the Prince recounted in *Trinity: A Portrait*, it was also inspired by his own experience living in New Court. 'It was a quiet corner of the College, where the early morning silence was broken only by the weekly refrain of "O come all ye faithful" from the local refuse collector.'

The Sunday Mirror tracked down the dustman Nobby Clarke, who had obtained tickets for the revue, and told the paper: 'I shall watch his performance in the dustbin very closely – in fact it's a pity he didn't mention it to me because I might have given him a few tips so to speak.'



© John Parry

The Prince reportedly forgot his lines in a dress rehearsal of the 1970 revue and said, 'What the hell comes next?' swiftly ad-libbing, 'This does not happen at the BBC.'



© John Parry



© John Parry

'Have you got enough tickets?'

Such was the excitement about the Prince's appearances in the 1970 revue that tickets were fetching five times their original price on the black market, according to *The Daily Telegraph*.

Then President of the Dryden Society, John Parry, remembers a porter contacting him before the performance and saying: 'We've had a phone call from Japan. They want to fly over an airplane full of tourists. Have you got enough tickets?'



Custard pies

John Parry cast the Prince as the padre in a production of Joe Orton's 1960s' farce *Erpingham Camp*, written for television in 1966 and set in a holiday camp.

His performance was well received. Critic Valerie Grosvenor Myer wrote, 'it's not every festival which offers the spectacle of the heir to the throne getting a custard pie full in his face.'





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Polo and cello

In addition to acting, learning to fly and playing polo for the University, the Prince of Wales played the cello, taking part in the College orchestra's performance of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony in December 1967.

Conductor at the time, Giles Swayne, told *The Daily Telegraph*, 'The Prince is a very competent player and is very willing to take criticism. Like all other members of the orchestra, he gets plenty of it.'

In a 2021 interview with the Poet Laureate Simon Armitage, for BBC Radio 4, the Prince recalled practising in his rooms at Trinity. 'I was a very bad member of the cello section I can assure you.'



'Happy Birthday Charlie'

The Prince turned 21 on 14 November 1969. Fellow students strung a 300ft rope banner across Great Court with 'Happy Birthday Charlie' in huge gold letters.

Meanwhile the Prince was in London attending official celebrations including a private service of Holy Communion at the Tower of London in which he made an act of thanksgiving and dedication, followed by a party and firework display at Buckingham Palace.

'Leisure'

While a student, the Prince passed his pilot's qualifying examinations at RAF Oakington. He undertook 20 hours of dual instruction in a twin engine Beagle Basset aircraft. This photograph was one of those taken to mark his 21st birthday.

In College, the Prince read the lesson in Chapel frequently and in his last term was awarded a Chapel Reading Prize.

He was a member of the Union Society, where on 12 May 1970 he made his maiden speech contributing to the motion, 'This house believes that technological advance threatens the individuality of man and is becoming his master.'

He was accompanied by his great uncle the Earl Mountbatten of Burma, who also spoke at the debate.





‘We are all very pleased considering he has had to do his duties’

The Prince of Wales’ BA was announced on 23 June 1970.

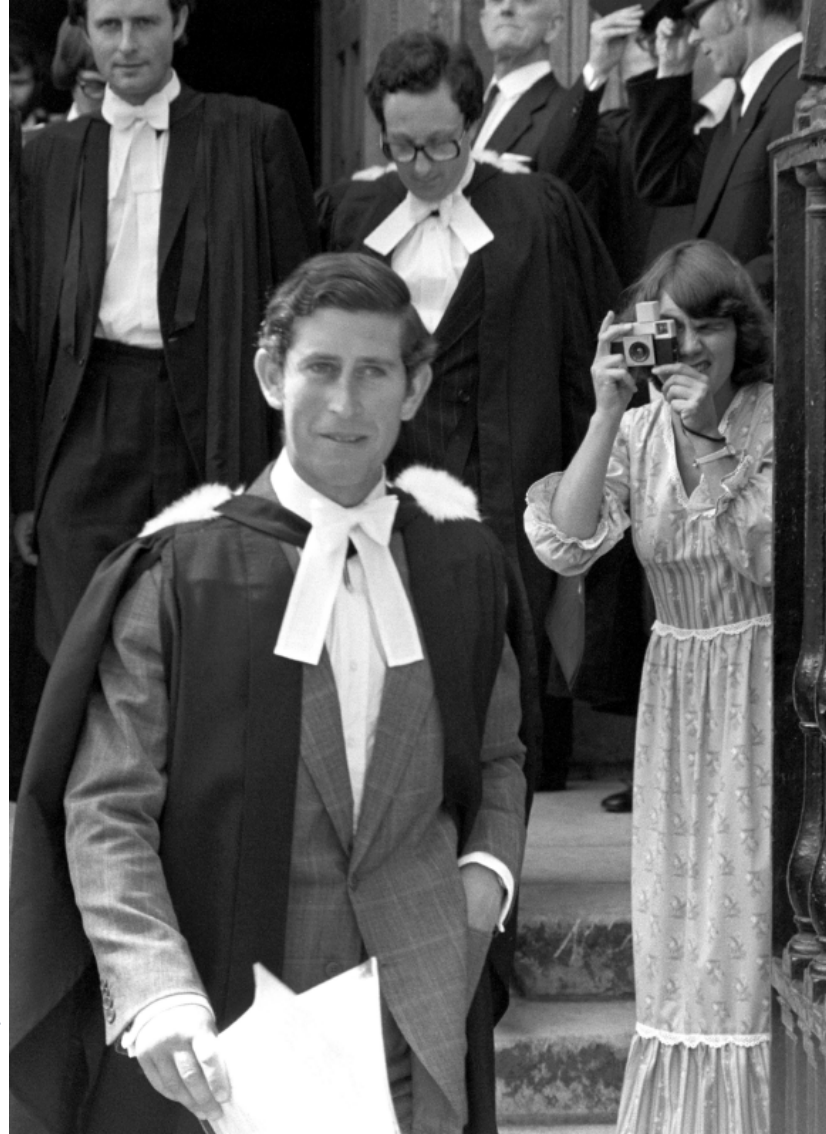
The 1970 *Annual Record* recorded that the Prince ‘has been submitted to the rigours of University lectures and College supervisions in the same way as his contemporaries, though unlike them he had to combine his work for the Tripos with an increasingly heavy load of public duties.’

Lord Butler said: ‘We are all very pleased considering he has had to do his duties. He has been living in ordinary rooms and dining in the Halls. This boy has come out with flying colours.’

He is pictured with the Queen, President Richard Nixon, and other members of the Royal Family, at Buckingham Palace in February 1969.

Official duties in London in June 1970 meant that he was unable to attend the Senate House ceremony where degrees are officially conferred. He took it by proxy in October instead.

This photograph shows the Prince leaving Senate House after receiving his MA in 1975.





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'I count myself as fortunate'

In a letter (pictured below) to Head Porter Arthur Prior on his retirement in 1980, the Prince of Wales wrote:

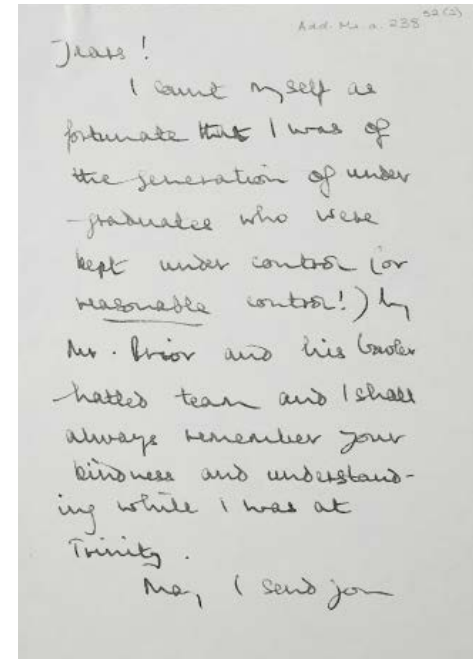
'I count myself as fortunate that I was of the generation of undergraduates who were kept under control (or reasonable control!) by Mr Prior and his bowler hatted team and I shall always remember your kindness and understanding while I was at Trinity.'

Mr Prior (above right) was a Porter at Trinity from 1935 and Head Porter, 1969–1980.

The main photograph, taken in October 1967, shows the Prince of Wales with Mr Prior's predecessor as Head Porter, Bill Edwards.



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TRINITY IS BEST

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‘Trinity is best’

In the 50 years-plus after his student days, the Prince of Wales returned to Cambridge on many occasions.

In 1979 he visited Cambridge Science Park (CSP), which had been spearheaded by Sir John Bradfield, Trinity’s Senior Bursar from 1956 to 1992. The first science park in Europe, CSP sparked the research and technology entrepreneurialism known today as the ‘Cambridge phenomenon.’

At the event in 1979, the Prince of Wales was shown one of several new developments in ink-jet printing technology pioneered by Cambridge Consultants Ltd.

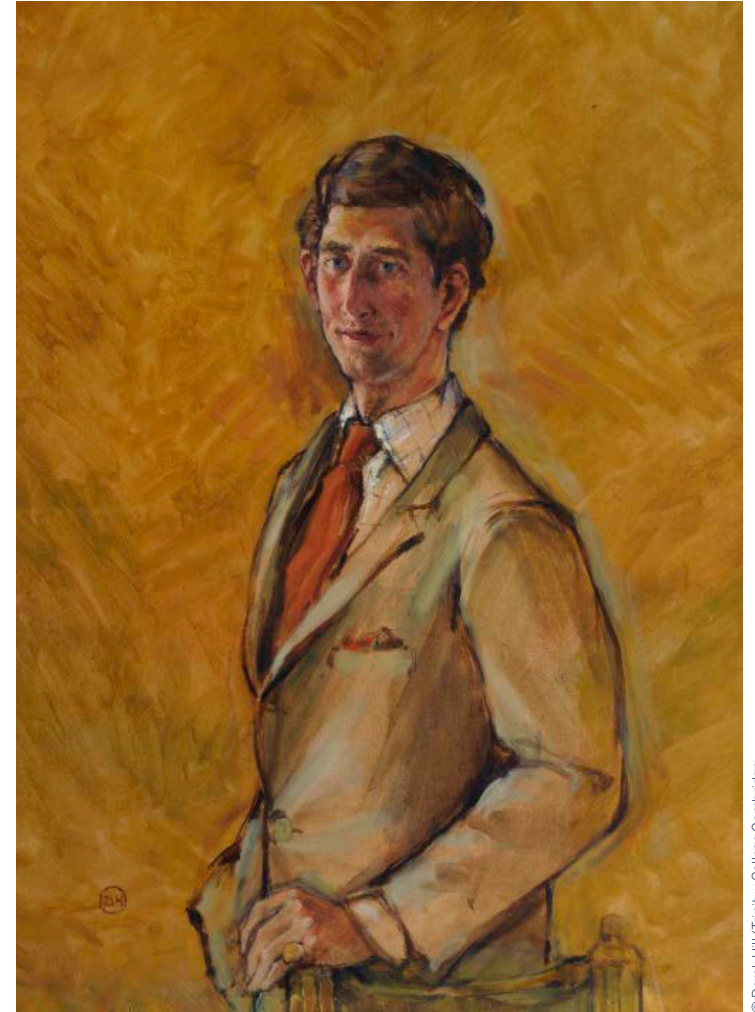
Invited to type in a message, he paused for a moment and then typed ‘Trinity is best.’

Honorary Fellow

In 1988 Prince Charles was made an Honorary Fellow of Trinity, following in the footsteps of his father, the Duke of Edinburgh, who was also an Honorary Fellow and Chancellor of the University from 1976 to 2011.

As King, His Majesty succeeds the Queen as Visitor to the College.

The College commissioned a portrait of the young Prince from Derek Hill in 1971. It hangs in the Master's Lodge, not far from a portrait of Queen Elizabeth I.





© Homerton College/David Johnson

‘Our diversity is our greatest strength’

In November 2021 the Prince of Wales, on one of his several visits to Cambridge, went to Homerton College, where he was welcomed by its Principal, Lord Woolley of Woodford, Founder and Director of Operation Black Vote.

The Prince joined a discussion about the experience of black students at Cambridge and Homerton’s efforts to ensure that students of all ethnicities and backgrounds feel welcomed and supported.

The Prince of Wales said: ‘For our society to meet successfully the huge challenges before us, we will need all our talents and all our contributions.’

‘That is not simply a good intention – it is the most profound good sense.’

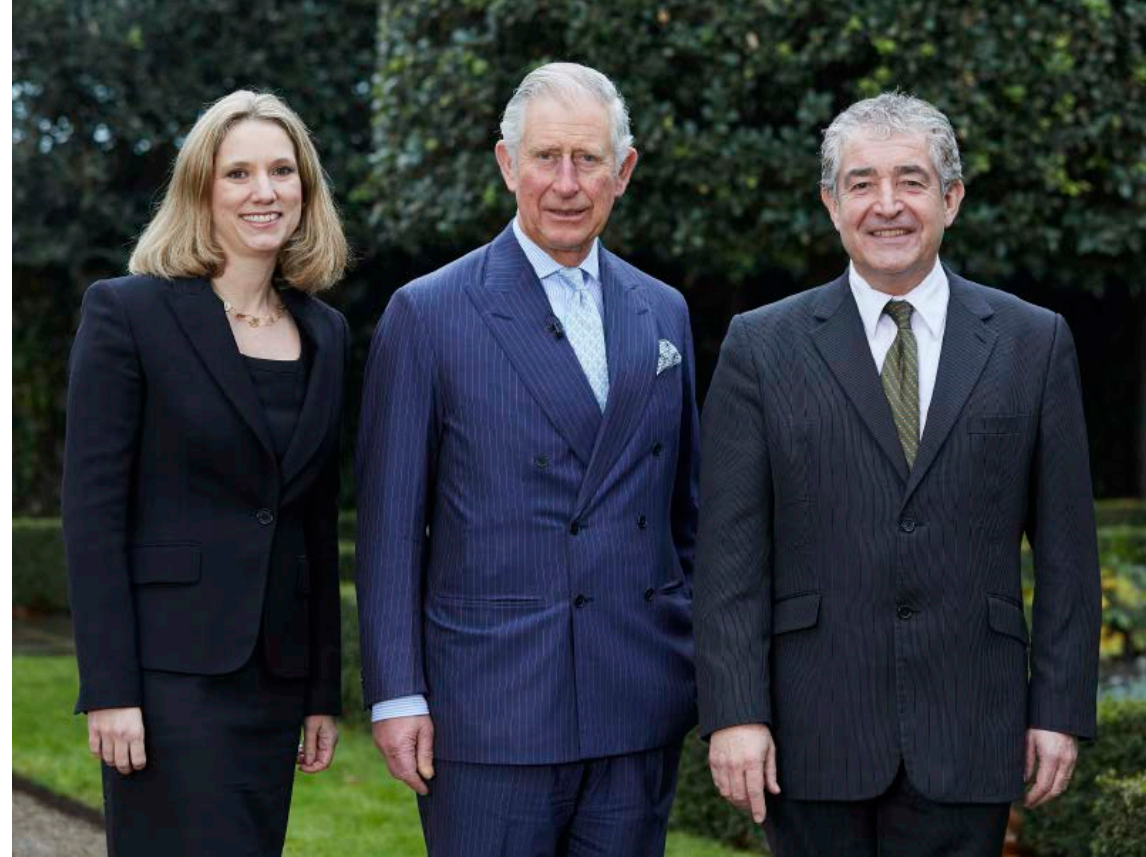
‘I have said before that our diversity is our greatest strength, and I become ever more convinced of that truth as time goes by and as I see fresh examples of that principle – as I do so clearly here today.’

**‘Ever since I was a young teenager
I have been deeply worried about
the way we have shaped our world’**

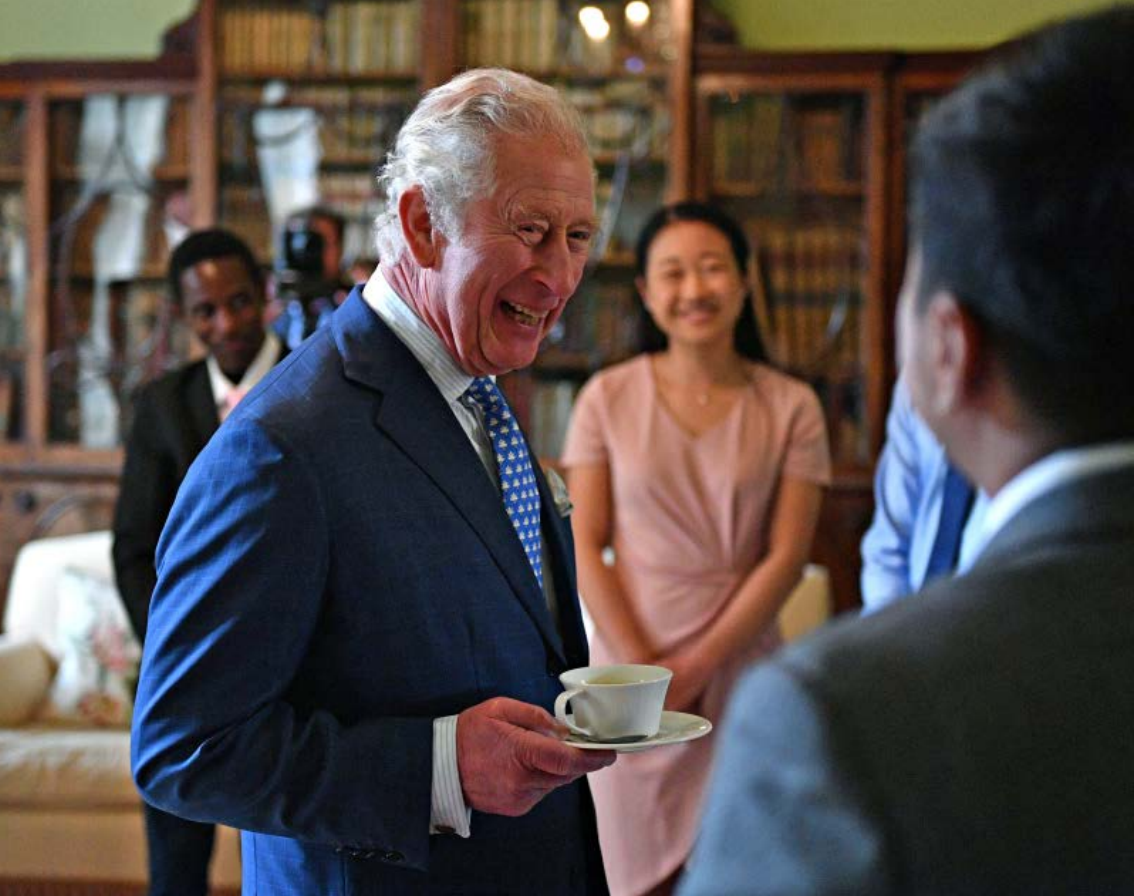
Building on his longstanding interest in environmental matters, the then Prince of Wales collaborated with fellow alumna Professor Emily Shuckburgh and environmentalist Tony Juniper on the 2017 Ladybird book on climate change (authors pictured opposite).

For the second edition, published in 2023, he wrote the afterword, in which he says:

‘When you understand how important trees are and how nothing goes to waste, you start to see just how completely all life on Earth is inter-connected. I think this is a wonderful thing. It is so special that I call it “sacred”. If something is sacred to us, it means it is so important that we have a duty to look after it.’



© University of Cambridge



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'He empathises with people from completely different backgrounds to his own'

In 1982 the Prince of Wales readily accepted the invitation from the University conveyed through Dr Seal to be Chairman of the Cambridge Commonwealth Trust which was established that October. He went on to be Chairman of associated trusts and later became their Patron.

In 2013 these trusts were merged to form the Cambridge Commonwealth, European and International Trust, which continues today.

During visits to Cambridge to meet students supported by the Trusts, the Prince's interest and empathy was clear. As Dr Seal observed, 'The Prince of Wales really lights up when he meets the young. In his work for Trinity and for Cambridge he has demonstrated that again and again.'

In November 1988 the Prince of Wales chaired the first meeting of the Isaac Newton Trust, which was established by Trinity and continues to be supported by the College.

The Prince of Wales is pictured opposite meeting Trust scholarship awardees in March 2022.

Alumnus crowns alumnus

His Majesty King Charles III was crowned by Trinity alumnus the Most Revd Justin Welby, the Archbishop of Canterbury (left), at Westminster Abbey on 6 May 2023.



How Trinity celebrated the Coronation

Trinity celebrated the Coronation in a variety of ways, from a new punt named Charles, a Wild Crown woven from willow, and Great Gate lit up with the archive image of the 18-year-old-Prince of Wales, to the establishment of the King Charles III Professorship in the field of sustainability.

More than 800 students, Fellows, staff and their guests attended an evening party after the Coronation with the Master Dame Sally Davies, fresh from the ceremony in Westminster Abbey, reading the College's Loyal Address and leading a toast to His Majesty.

Trinity made a charitable donation of £30,000 to a local food bank and launched a new volunteering scheme for staff.

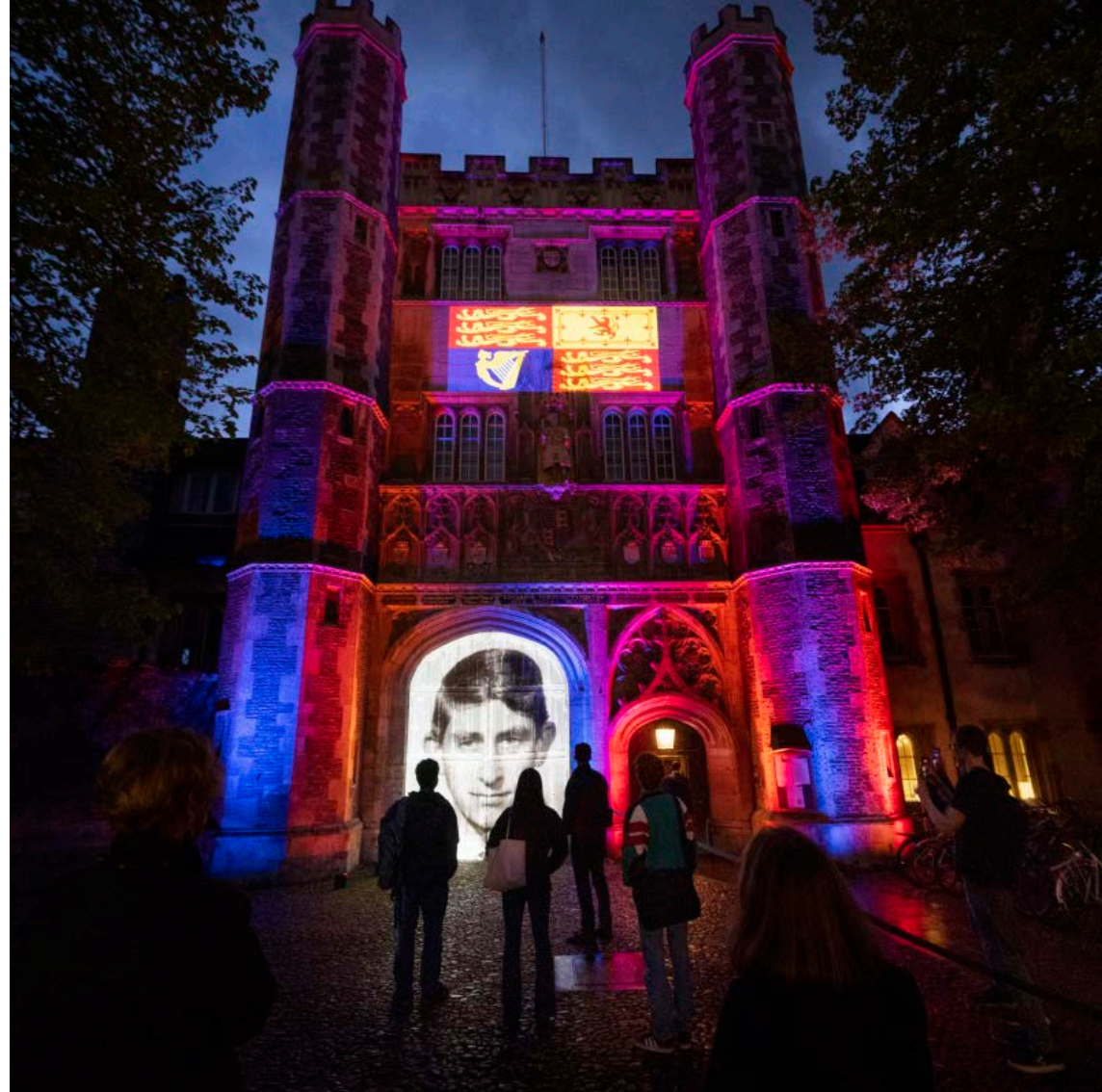




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KING CHARLES III HIS TIME AT TRINITY



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