



THE SIR RICHARD STAPLEY EDUCATIONAL TRUST

ANNUAL NEWSLETTER 2021

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The Sir Richard Stapley
Educational Trust

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Dr Jane Dancer, Chair

Greetings from our Chair, Dr Jane Dancer

I write to you at the end of what has been another difficult year and hope that you are keeping safe and well. Our students have continued to face significant challenges from Covid-19 which once again are highlighted in our annual survey of recent grant holders. Not only has the reduction in opportunities for part-time work impacted their finances but their studies have also been directly affected. For example, many scientists have been unable to undertake laboratory and field work, artists to exhibit their work, musicians to perform at concerts and medical students to gain clinical experience. Not surprisingly, for many this has taken its toll on their mental and physical well-being.

What comes across from the survey results, letters of thanks and the Trust's interviews with students is the extent to which our grants not only provide financial

Messages of Thanks

"I'm grateful beyond words for the grant. It is a very important support to my studies; I cried with tears of joy and gratitude when I received the news."

"I'd like to thank you for offering a grant to me for this year of study. It's been an overwhelming year studying throughout the lockdowns as life has been turned on its head. I've been privileged to come this far on my journey in life, which hasn't been without its heartaches and sacrifices, but I am finally doing what I've set my heart and mind on, and that is continuing to study towards becoming a doctor. Your grant will provide a way towards having a bit more financial stability during my studies which will allow me to make the most of the opportunities I have at the university." Marco

"Thank you very much again to every member of Trust for your generosity and for helping continue my dream of becoming a veterinarian." Henrietta

"This award from is greatly appreciated. It will make a real difference during my studies at the Royal College of Art. Thank you so much for all your help!" Emma

"I would like to wholeheartedly thank the Trust for their generous grant. This will be immensely beneficial in helping me travel to my hospital placements and ultimately complete my medical studies." Asaad

support but also a much-needed morale boost in these difficult times.

Grant giving

With the need for our grants being greater than ever, I am pleased to report that the Trust has been able to continue its work throughout the pandemic. This year we awarded 140 grants representing a total of £135,200, slightly higher than the £129,000 we distributed last year. While we have seen some recovery in the income from our investments, with the demand for our grants being greater than ever we are particularly grateful for the donations and the legacies that the Trust has received. If you are interested in supporting our work, please visit our website or contact our Clerk, Colin Nee, at admin@stapleystrust.org for information on how you can help us.

Other News

In May, the Trustees elected Will Glover to join our board. Will is passionate about making education more accessible and brings a wealth of experience to the Trust. You can read more about Will on page 13.

Last year we set out a Strategic Plan to maximise the benefits that the Trust can deliver in the context of the current environment for postgraduate study. In line with this, in the forthcoming 2022/3 funding round we will no longer require applicants to be 24 years or over and will be accepting applications from those taking postgraduate certificates and diplomas.

Apart from much needed financial help, we are keen to find other ways to support postgraduate students. Using the research undertaken for our Strategy Review and information obtained through our survey, we have developed a resource on other sources of grant funding for postgraduates which is now on our website. We are also continuing to establish a presence on social media where our students can share relevant information, publicise their performances, exhibitions and research and build their networks.

Finally, we have undertaken some housekeeping on the Trust's governing document. This was written in 1919 and reflects how such institutions operated back then. It has been updated to bring it into line with current practise and charity law without changing the objectives and the powers of the Trustees. Despite the challenges of Covid-19, the Trust has continued its good work and the feedback from our students highlights just how important this has been. I would like to thank Colin (our Clerk), my fellow Trustees, the Trust's benefactors and all those who have supported us over the past year. My thanks to you all!

"Thank you so much, this is a massive help. I can't thank you enough!" Connor

"I was honoured to receive a grant from the Trust for my doctoral studies. The support from your trust is incredibly valuable and has made my doctoral studies more accessible and affordable." Louis

"Thank you again for your support! This will undoubtedly support the rest of my medical degree immensely."

"Thank you and the Trust once again for all your help. This support is really helpful in enabling me to do this research degree and I really appreciate it." Brody

"I would like to thank the Trust for their incredible generosity. This grant means more than you know, and I would not have been able to continue my studies without it. Thank you!"

"I want to thank the Trust for this grant. It will go a long way to ease the burden of financial pressures on my studies this year, and for that I am extremely grateful." Chloe

"I cannot express how grateful I am for the Trust's financial help – truly making my dreams a reality!" Poppy

A Step into Social Media

When Sir Richard Stapley founded the Trust in 1919, the prospect of digital social media would have seemed bizarre, alien and no doubt a little intimidating. Now however the Trust recognises that it has a part to play in interacting with our alumni, and we have therefore renewed our presence on a number of platforms.

Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn will be familiar to most and throughout the year we have begun the process of sharing information and advice, along with the successes of the Trust and those whom we have supported over the last century.

These are early days; Twitter has seen the most engagement so far, with 86 followers consisting largely of alumni, postgraduate groups and universities. We've been thrilled to hear from alumni about what they have achieved since finishing their postgraduate studies; initiatives or projects they are working on; as well as congratulating some on finishing their studies which we have proudly supported. Do tell us if you have any performances, exhibitions or peer-reviewed research that can help to promote (admin@stapleytrust.org).

Though Facebook has some way to go before we achieve the 'critical mass' lift-off, it has proven useful for those wanting to contact the Trust about their eligibility for funding or the application process. In addition, the 35-strong Facebook Group remains a place for alumni to interact and share their successes or seek / offer advice to other alumni at different stages of their academic career. We hope to develop this more as the group grows.

LinkedIn, being a more professional social media platform, may prove useful for those beyond their postgraduate studies and well on their way to forging careers in their chosen field of study or passion. Again, the Trust's LinkedIn group (building from our existing 27 members) aims to bring together professionals whom we have supported in the past, offering a chance to network and to keep in touch with the Trust on a professional level.

We would very much encourage alumni to engage with these platforms where they can. Not only do we wish to share and celebrate the success that results from our support of postgraduate students but, equally, we'd like to maintain contact so that alumni might consider assisting or supporting the Trust in the decades to come.

Joseph Rogers, Social Media Volunteer

"Please allow me to express my gratitude and honour to be awarded a grant. It will definitely allow me to focus better on my studies to become a doctor. Without your generous support I would be facing serious challenges to finish the course."

"Thanks again for the Trust's financial assistance over the years. I hope one day I'll be able to give back to the trust."

"Many thanks to yourself and the entire trust for all their help, it is beyond appreciated." Joshua

Learning From Our Users

Report on our annual survey 2021



Dr Debbie Marsden, Trustee

This year, our fifth annual survey, we had a 68% response from recipients of grants for the 2020/21 study period.

Respondents' universities and courses:

Students completing the survey came from 43 UK universities. The highest number of respondents were from Oxford, Cambridge and Aberdeen universities. Forty-nine percent were studying for a PhD; 30% were studying science related subjects; 24% were studying medicine specifically. The remaining respondents were studying a diverse range of subjects with a notable number studying subjects relating to Physical Geography, such as climate change, but also English Literature, Drama, Music and Vocal Performance. Respondents were from all years of study, but the majority were 2nd or 3rd years.

Financial shortfall, and how managed:

Seventy-two percent had a financial shortfall of between £750 and £5,000. Nine percent had shortfalls of over £10,000.

Over 90% of respondents received over £900 from our Trust. Our grants made a difference to all students responding to the survey this year and were considered essential for the completion of this year's study by 90% of respondents. Even those receiving smaller grants from our Trust reported that our funding had been essential for their

Alumni Updates



James Batty, MMus Composition Student

Royal Academy of Music

Ever since I began playing the piano at the age of eight, I also had a passion for creating my own music. In fact, I was usually keener to do this than to practise the pieces for my piano, violin and oboe lessons!

I first studied composition formally (with Jeremy Pike) when I started as a sixth-former at Chetham's School of Music, and had some competition successes, including being highly commended in BBC Young Composer of the Year. I went on to study an undergraduate degree in music and modern languages at Cambridge University and then spent several years focusing on pop music and music teaching before I felt the calling to return to my roots as a classical composer.

Doing some composition summer courses in Poland and Italy reinforced my decision to pursue a career in this field, and honing my craft through a Master's degree was an essential step towards this. I was delighted to receive offers from six UK conservatoires, some with scholarship support. I was drawn to the teachers and professional projects at the Royal Academy of Music and decided to study there.

studies, reducing financial stress and the need for extra jobs, and enabling focussed study.

Our grants are not expected to remove all a student's shortfall, so students need a combination of actions to cover their costs fully. Seventy-nine percent needed extra work to help with expenses; 46% reduced living expenses; 32% borrowed from friends and family; 5% took out loans from other sources. Fifty-one percent applied for grants from other grant makers; of those who did so, 43% were successful. No one had to reduce their studies from full-time to part-time.

Sadly, a few students felt they did not gain the university experience they expected and some of these felt they were unable to fully reach their potential in grades due to financial concerns, needing extra work thus reducing study time, poor accommodation due to reduced finances, the impact of coronavirus and poor mental health.

Major benefits of our grants

Benefits gained by students receiving our grants included being able to focus more on their subjects (86%) and a reduction in stress levels (87%). The grants benefitted students by reducing the need for extra jobs for 52% of respondents and a reduction in the need to borrow (48%). Compared to 2020, fewer students were able to enjoy extra curricula activities, probably in part due to the pandemic.

Sixty percent spent time sharing their talents teaching and mentoring other students. One medical student found the grant allowed time to spend time counselling prospective medical students from disadvantaged backgrounds to enable them to follow a medical career. A PhD Art student confirmed the more subtle gains of receiving the grant; the increase in self-esteem due to receiving the grant and confirmation that their work was good and recognised as worthy of an award improved others' views of them and appeared to make them more employable. The confidence the student gained enabled them to try new roles such as teaching and mentoring. These additional skills empowered them to approach challenges in a different way that in turn enabled new ways of working during the pandemic and led to the development of a very successful unexpected career path.

Achievements

Achievements this year have been many. Sixty-six percent gained exam / qualification success, which is laudable especially during the pandemic. Several students passed with distinction, gaining employment in both public and private work, obtained scholarships, or secured grant funding for further study. One student gained a prestigious Gerda Henkel stipend. Forty-seven percent produced

As I hoped, I have had some incredible opportunities over the past two years. I have had pieces performed and recorded by outstanding professional musicians, including Mark Simpson, Huw Watkins, Zoë Martlew, CHROMA and the Riot Ensemble, as well as having the opportunity to collaborate closely with extremely talented student performers. One of my collaborations with a singer and microtonal accordion player is being performed at the Sibelius Academy in Helsinki in 2022, which I am very excited about.

In June 2021, I released a solo album of my microtonal piano compositions, "Until I Set Him Free" which has been played on Radio 3. Mostly recently, over the summer I got to work with the Carice Singers who premièred one of my compositions at the Cheltenham Festival and I composed for a thrilling video opera project with the Opera North Youth Chorus.

I am incredibly grateful for the support of the Stapley Trust. Classical music is a relatively ageist field and being 10 years older than my peers, I was concerned about finding the financial aid to bridge my funding gap. I therefore really admired the ethos of the Stapley Trust, understanding the circumstances of students of all ages, and am proud to be a grant alumnus!

publications, presented at conferences, or produced posters. Covid impacted those studying Art subjects especially. However, 9% were still able to hold concerts or exhibitions. Others advised on policies.

Seventy-three percent of students successfully completed this year's studies and progressed to the next year in their courses; 10% progressed to higher levels of qualifications, and 28% gained post-graduate employment. Congratulations go out to all!

C-19 impact

Sadly, like last year over 80% of responding students felt their study was impacted by Covid-19. For many, students' courses remained online, and courses were delayed and were extended to reach completion.

- Medics reported a lack of patient interaction and very reduced clinical experience and therefore felt they had a lack of clinical experience. For some this added to physical and mental hardship.
- Art students had few opportunities to perform or have exhibitions, thus reducing networking opportunities and possibilities of future employment. The job market especially in music appears to be very slow to recover.
- Fieldwork was cancelled or postponed, altering original research plans or delaying course completion. Data collection was interrupted.
- Labs, archives, and libraries were inaccessible, so study and research were delayed or necessitated the purchase of expensive books.
- Some students moved home but still needed to pay for student housing. Home conditions were not always conducive to study and added to poor mental health and wellbeing.
- Finances for future study years are a growing concern, as holiday and term employment essential to topping up funds has reduced markedly. Students were laid off, and many could not find other employment even with in the universities. Even grants especially relating to the Arts were rescinded. This means many students face further hardship in the next few years. Two students had decided to delay progressing to PhD courses. This will give them time to address their mental health concerns and to work to gain more financial security.
- Some students caught Covid-19 and are still suffering 'long-covid' symptoms that affects their possibilities to study or work.

Like last year, there were many positives. Those who had



Dr Doaa Althalathini, Lecturer in Business and Enterprise

Oxford Brookes

I finished my doctoral study in May 2020 from the University of Plymouth, and started working as a lecturer in business and enterprise at Oxford Brookes in June 2020.

Before my doctoral study, I worked extensively with local and international NGOs in programmes aimed at reducing poverty, empowering women and enhancing economic development through entrepreneurship in Palestine. During this work experience, I was inspired by the success stories of many women entrepreneurs who were able to secure an income and a decent life for their families and children, while increasing their knowledge and confidence. Many lacked education and skills but they were resilient and determined to succeed and not to rely on external assistance.

My work experience and observations inspired me to start my PhD study in October 2016. In my research, I looked at the resilience of entrepreneurs and how they can navigate the challenging political, social and economic environment in the contexts of Afghanistan, Iraq and Palestine.

Throughout my PhD, I delivered high quality research outputs at international conferences, where I

finished their collection of data for their theses had plenty of time to complete their work. Seventy-eight percent of students leaving university said their future plans had not been affected by the pandemic. Others said that the situation had enabled them to re-evaluate their priorities.

Despite a difficult year, it is humbling that 77% of students said that they were likely to or would donate to our Trust, 78% offered help with fundraising and 60% would consider serving on the Board of Trustees. Thank you to all those who completed our survey, which validates the Trust's ambition to support postgraduate education for people from all backgrounds who have a financial need. The next year may well be challenging and we wish all students all the best in their desires to further their education and careers.

Dr Debbie Marsden, Trustee

Interviews with Our Users

How do our applicants feel about our Trust?

Every year, we carry out a survey of recent successful applicants (see our report on the 2021 survey on page 4).

In 2021, we decided to supplement the annual survey by carrying out some telephone interviews to gain a deeper understanding of how students experience applying for grants, including from our Trust. Professor Clive Seale, a member of our Board of Trustees, interviewed a small but diverse sample of recent, successful applicants in January.

Why studying?

Career progression was the most common reason for taking the degree for which they were funded, followed by interest in, or love for the subject or activity being studied.

When asked, four out of the five interviewees first mentioned career aspirations— to become a doctor, a professional singer or an academic; another spoke of a desire to help others.

Finding out about grants available

All interviewees had applied to other charitable funding sources apart from our Trust. Mainly, they found out about funding sources online, most often through searchable databases. Musicians are particularly well served by two specialist musician databases for this purpose. Other

won different awards including best poster presentation and best literature review. I have also successfully organised my time to complete all assignments and research, meeting all deadlines, while also volunteering, and working part-time as an Associate Lecturer.

I have undertaken a postgraduate certificate in academic practices, and I am a fellow at the Higher Education Academy. I also gained experience in communicating at various University levels including organising conferences, research cafés, informal mentoring for new research students, and representing PhD scholars at both the University Doctoral College Board Committee and Faculty Doctoral Committee.

Recently, I wrote a policy brief on supporting women entrepreneurship in conflict zones, which was disseminated to relevant policy makers. I also published a paper in the *Journal of Business Ethics* exploring how Islamic feminism empowers women entrepreneurs in the conflict zones of Afghanistan, Iraq and Palestine. Currently, I am interested in further researching resilience and entrepreneurship in politically unstable contexts. In particular, I aim to investigate how the intersection of context, gender, family relations and religion inform entrepreneurial behaviour and in turn increase resilience for both men and women entrepreneurs.

In September 2021, I was promoted to Senior Lecturer and in December I won an award for the Outstanding Paper in the 2021 Emerald Literati Awards.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Sir Richard Stapley Educational Trust for their generous support, which has eased my financial difficulty in my second year and enabled me to focus on my achievements.

information sources included communications from their university, from supervisors, or from fellow students.

Searching for funding sources could be time consuming, with frequent difficulty reported in establishing the eligibility requirements of particular trusts. The Stapley Trust was commended for publishing clear guidance on this.

Some students (other than the interviewees) were said not to know much about the availability of charitable funding sources. The extensiveness and rigour of search strategies appeared to vary from one interviewee to another. In order to help with this, we have recently produced a new publication which we hope will help students with their search (see page 12 for more details).

Departments may vary in how supportive they are of self-funded students, or how knowledgeable academic staff are about such funding opportunities. It may be that staff and students in departments in more elite universities, which have a good flow of funded studentships are less knowledgeable about charitable sources.

Interviewees endorsed the view that wider knowledge of our Trust's offerings would be desirable and made various suggestions for promotion, including making sure we appear in online directories, and informing universities so that they can inform their students.

Experience of applying

Our own application process was felt to be straightforward, and the administration of the grant was largely problem-free. Being able to download the application form was a welcome innovation.

"It is one of the most streamlined and easiest applications to complete compared to other organisations, and that is a major advantage for students, especially medical students that are constantly studying 24/7 and medicine becomes our life. It's quite a burden having to apply for things over and over again and complete lots of different applications. The application from your organisation is very straightforward to complete"

Some interviewees made a particular point of praising the good communication they had experienced.

"Your communication is amazing! Out of all the trusts I have come into contact with, your communication is the best."

Moving to a web-based application system was regarded as possibly desirable from applicants' point of view, being more in tune with current ways of doing things.



Ray Jarvis: Retired teacher and examiner awarded the MBE for services to education

I notice that most if not all of the alumni who send in their thanks for the crucial contribution of the Sir Richard Stapley Educational Trust to developing their careers are relatively young. I am different – I am an old boy!

I happened to be sorting through my papers and reflecting on my early career when I stumbled upon a letter from the Secretary to the Trust in the 1960s. I had been offered a research opportunity at the University of Wales, but without government financial support. The Clothworkers' Company and the Stapley Trust came to my rescue. That, plus the support of my wife, enabled me to take up the offer.

The grant the Stapley Trust gave me in 1966 was £50. They repeated it the following year. Given that the rent on our flat was 4 guineas it should be clear that the grant was most helpful in meeting some of our costs.

In 1968, I took a position as Head of Economics at Simon Langton Grammar School in Canterbury where I remained for my whole teaching career. During that time, I taught over a thousand students

Impacts of being awarded a grant

All expressed gratitude for the grant from our Trust, and were able to cite a variety of ways in which it had eased their financial burden, enabling some to avoid having to take on paid work that would distract from their studies.

"I think your organisation needs to continue what it's doing. It's doing a lot of good, it's appreciated a lot, and every student that you fund you are helping provide a brighter future."

Receipt of an award, apart from having a financial effect, also had a positive effect on morale:

"As well as the financial support, it's the belief in me and my studies and that's really been fundamental because it's the kind of thing where you're always going through - self-doubt. It's such a long-term project, riddled with insecurity, so having the support of an organisation like yours has, for me, been really transformative."



Other feedback

We know we don't get everything right and there were good suggestions of improvements we could make. Helpful advice on new ways of gaining feedback about the Trust were suggested. All said that they would be pleased to join a Stapley alumni community. Mentoring, networking, finding out about each other's research and life experiences, and the feeling of 'giving back' to the Trust were seen as potential benefits.

The new design of our website attracted some positive comments. Various suggestions were made for

A Level Economics where two thirds of them gained A, B or C grades. I thoroughly enjoyed my time in the classroom where I tried to create a friendly atmosphere conducive to good learning.

Early in my career, I established a voluntary service group for students who wanted to do something different from playing games. An attempt was made at creating a system where volunteers and people who needed help could be linked together, ultimately resulting in the establishment of a Volunteer Bureau by the local council.

Later in my career, I became the School's Examination Officer and was an examiner in economics with Edexcel for 30 years, including some time as Assistant Chief Examiner.

When I retired in in 2005, I was awarded the MBE for services to education, the first such honour ever received by a member of staff at the school. Given the calibre of the staff preceding me, this indeed was an honour to be cherished. It all began with the letter I wrote to the Stapley Trust back in 1966. I thank the Trust most sincerely and hope that your excellent work will continue for as long as there are people like me who need your assistance.

The Sir Richard Stapley Educational Trust

Telephone: 121, Gloucester Place, Tel. HUNTER 0871
J. S. CHOWN Portman Square, W.1.
Secretary: Mrs JOYCE BROWN, B.A. Oct. 15th 1966

Raymond P. Jarvis Esq
Dear Sir,

At a meeting of the above Trust held last night your application was considered and it was decided to make you a grant of £50 for the forthcoming year. This grant can be renewed on application in a year's time provided that your progress is satisfactory. I therefore enclose a cheque.

Perhaps you would be good enough to report any examination successes from time to time.

Yours faithfully,
Joyce Brown
Secretary

modifications, but it seems participants largely visited the site to find out how to apply for funds. An alumni community forum, and perhaps links to searchable databases of other funding sources, might give people another reason to visit the website.

For a copy of a fuller report on these interviews, please contact our Clerk, Colin Nee at admin@stapleytrust.org

Remembering the Trust in your Will



Dr Sarah Other, Trustee

Hello! I'm Sarah Other, one of the trustees of the Trust. I joined the Board last year.

I have remembered the Trust in my own Will to repay a debt of gratitude. I would not have been able to achieve my professional successes without my highest qualifications - which the Trust supported financially back when I was a student. Including the Trust in my Will means I can support the Trust but without the anxiety about affording the commitment within my lifetime.



Ondřej Soukup: Conductor, MMus student at the Royal College of Music

After a year filled with opportunities at RCM, I will be making my debut with the Czech Chamber Philharmonic, the Bohuslav Martinů Philharmonic, and will assist Jac van Steen with FOK Prague Symphony Orchestra on two programmes this season. These engagements come at a perfect time as I am still receiving the generous support and learning opportunities at RCM while preparing for the next stage of my career.

At RCM, my schedule is very varied as it depends on what projects are on. This way there is always something exciting to do! Here are some highlights from my first year at RCM:

The most breath-taking experience was recording one of the Russian composer Stravinsky's most iconic works: Soldier's Tale. Not only did I get to make music with top players from RCM, but we were joined by 48 dancers from the Central School of Ballet, a film crew from Middlesex University and none other than Sir Thomas Allen, the legendary baritone, who took the Narrator role!

Shortly after this, I was personally invited by the music director of English National Opera, Martyn

I hope that you too will consider whether to leave a legacy to help support future postgraduates. We can do so much more with your support!

If you decide to include the Trust in your Will, you can ask your solicitor or professional adviser to do this by giving them the following details:

The Sir Richard Stapley Educational Trust,
Registered charity number: 313812
PO Box 76132, London E8 9HE

What to leave?

You could choose to leave the Trust a specific cash sum or alternatively a percentage of your estate. Depending on your circumstances it is possible that your estate will save up to £400 inheritance tax for every £1,000 you leave us.

What to tell us:

It is entirely up to you whether you tell us that you are remembering the Trust in your Will. We will never ask you to share information about the value or type of gift you have chosen to leave to the Trust. That is a private matter for you. You simply have to tell your solicitor or professional adviser how much, or alternatively what percentage of your estate, you would like to leave to the Trust.

Your gift, our promise:

We recognise that when you prepare your Will, your family and close ones must come first. We know that personal circumstances change and there might be a time when you decide you need to take the Trust out of your Will.

If you want the Trust to dedicate your gift to an area of our work that's special to you, we are happy to discuss this with you.

Finally, if you do choose to remember the Trust with a gift in your Will: thank you - we will use it wisely!

Any queries?

If you have any questions about making a donation or remembering the Trust in your Will, please contact our Clerk at admin@stapleytrust.org

Brabbins at short notice to conduct Thea Musgrave's difficult work called Turbulent Landscapes with the RCM Philharmonic.

This and many other fantastic experiences would not have been possible without the support of my family and trusts like the Sir Richard Stapley Trust. I am so grateful to the Trust for supporting my study at the UK's Top Music School (2016-2021). The support I receive means that I can make the absolute most of the many opportunities at RCM. This support makes a big difference to my options, and I do my best to give back through the music that I dedicate myself to.

Therefore, I would love to see you at one of my performances. Please come say hi! Apart from RCM, you can also see me with the University of London Symphony Orchestra, where I was appointed Resident Student Conductor.

For concerts, updates or to get in touch, you can find me on www.ondrej-soukup.com and my Facebook page.

Thank you very much again!

New Stapley briefing paper

Grants from other charitable funders

Much as we would love to help every student in financial need, Sir Richard Stapley Trust's funds are very limited so sometimes we can't help or can't help enough. Our new briefing paper 'Charitable Grants for Postgraduate Study in the UK' aims to offer some alternatives to UK-based students seeking charitable grants to finance further or higher degrees.

Part 1 provides information and links to print and online searchable directories of UK grant makers. Part 2 provides links to some specific UK grant makers that we know have helped students seeking support.

You can find it [here](#).



CHARITABLE GRANTS FOR POSTGRADUATE STUDY IN THE UK





Isabel Birds: PhD candidate researching long non-coding RNA

Approaching the end of my PhD in a pandemic was not what I'd expected, but it's also presented me with new opportunities that I may not have otherwise considered. I'm really grateful to the Trust as my funding has given me the financial stability to take advantage of these opportunities.

Most recently I had the chance to undertake an internship on DECOVID, a project using electronic health records from hospitals to answer clinical questions and support the COVID-19 response. As part of the chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) team, I've been investigating the relationship between COPD and severity of COVID-19, and learnt a lot about health records and how they're structured. I'm keen to do more work with patient data after my PhD so this experience was particularly valuable for me.

As a computational biologist my expertise has become much more in demand for supporting undergraduate and master's students. Particularly at the start of the pandemic, students were unable to access labs and had to switch to computational projects. The majority had no experience of computational research, and neither did their supervisors. I was

Introducing William Glover, Our Newest Trustee

Our trust is governed by its 10-strong Board of Trustees, all of them unpaid volunteers. We asked our most recently appointed trustee, William Glover to introduce himself...



William Glover, Trustee

Why did you apply to join our board?

I was motivated to apply because of the transformative influence that education has had on my own life. The myriad of people, places and experiences that I have encountered throughout my adult life would simply never have been open to me had it not been for the scholarship, fellowship and other educational opportunities afforded to me by organisations such as the Stapley Trust.

I embarked on my Masters studies into the National Writing Project pedagogy, and I was given the opportunity, as Director of Youth Ministry at The Chautauqua Institution in New York, to contribute to the seminal work on the Abrahamic Initiative; that work pre-9/11 brought together diverse young people from Jewish, Muslim and Christian backgrounds in a spirit of interfaith dialogue and work that continues to this day in the form of the Abrahamic Program for Young Adults.

In my career, which has been truly international, I have held a number of senior posts and worked globally on every continent and my motivation to work with the Stapley Trust stems from my first-hand experience of the myriad of

able to provide support to make sure the students could still carry out a high-quality research project. Some of this work was featured in a Biochemical Society webinar, "How to deliver biomolecular science honours research projects with limited lab bench time (part II)", which is available on YouTube.

Attending conferences has also changed a lot, with only the conference fee and no traveling or accommodation to consider. As I write, I am attending RNA 2021 from the comfort of the sofa with our dog Sadie (pictured), although I'm not sure she's as excited about the talks as I am! I'm presenting our new paper which is currently available as a preprint; recording audio to accompany my poster was a strange experience. As we return to in-person meetings I think taking forward some of the lessons we've learned about making training and networking opportunities like this accessible to everyone will be key.

Thanks again to the Trust for all that you do for me and other students. I used some of my funds to pay for a decent home office set up, and after over a year of not being able to access the university offices I'm so glad I was able to do that. The support your grants provide is invaluable.

challenges faced by post-graduate students which, while subject to local adaptations, generally have in common: funding, focus and family commitments at their heart.

What skills and experience do you bring to the Trust?

My own educational journey has been enriching, engaging and ever-evolving. I applied to join the Board of Trustees at the Sir Richard Stapley Educational Trust having almost 30 years of educational experience, working in the primary, secondary, FE and HE sectors, in the maintained and independent sectors and in day and boarding schools.

I have published a number of charitable books that themselves have funded education projects from the Democratic Republic of Congo to Laos, Vietnam and even North Korea - all projects where I myself have had the opportunity to contribute as an on-ground volunteer.

Alongside formal academic awards including my School Master Fellowship at Merton College, Oxford and Fellowships with the Higher Education Academy and the Chartered Institute of Educational Assessors, my voluntary work in education has been focused on widening participation, in seeking to make the educational landscape more meritocratic and particularly in SEND work.

Through a scholarship, I volunteered annually in a non-secure detention facility in Western New York which in itself is a unique educational environment and the only such facility globally. My own experiences as a scholar further encouraged me to contribute in my home area of West Dunbartonshire with the J&B Strathleven Bursary Trust, and I have now served as the Chair's Academic Advisor for over 21 years with a Trust that works specifically to alleviate poverty through funding education and skills training for local people in what is one of the most deprived post-industrial communities in the UK.

A voracious academic, I also continue my own research work informally while developing my own career, and at the time of my appointment to the Trust I was in post as Head of Education and Qualifications at The Royal College of Surgeons (RCS). This was a post to which I was specifically appointed and recruited, from Asia, to manage the educational aspects of the demerger of general dental practice from the RCS and into the new College of General Dentistry.

Prior to coming to the RCS I had served concurrently as Academic Director in China for the Consortium on North American Universities based out of Northeastern University in Boston and as Director Academic Quality and Governance for Kaplan Inc. based in Hong Kong. I



Chris Lyes: DPhil student studying Classical Archaeology

University of Oxford

I'm in the third year of my DPhil researching the use of stone in antiquity. Previously I had worked on the professional services side of Universities, but a serious illness (Crohn's Disease) affected my ability to continue to do this kind of work which was highly stressful and intermittent.

I had worked for several years at the Institute of Education and had been enormously inspired by the academic staff that worked there, especially Professor Sir Chris Husbands, and knew that I wanted to join them, so I made the decision to 'cross the floor' and retrain as a university lecturer, and that meant getting a doctorate. First of all, I got myself a Master's degree at night school while working during the day, and then started the full-time programme at Oxford two years ago. The experience has been transformative, but financially challenging as, being slightly older than the norm, I was excluded from applying from many sources of funding, and that was where the Sir Richard Stapley Trust was exceptional. Most charities place an upper age limit of 24 on applicants, but the Stapley does not, and consequently I was eligible to

witnessed the impact scholarship funding can have not only on marginalised candidates but also in advancing human understanding and the knowledge base.

I bring with me a wide range of career experience in the voluntary sector and at the time of publication I serve not only as a Magistrate on the Surrey Bench, as a Governor of Fosse Bank School in Kent and as a Panel Member at the Heathrow Community Trust but I am also Strategic Advisor to the School of Life Sciences at the University of Roehampton. I was appointed in 2021 by the National Lottery Communities Fund to the Grant Awarding Panel providing Covid-19 response funding and support within the London Borough of Hillingdon.

Living with an ABI (Acquired Brain Injury), I am particularly active in my role as a trustee of Headway Surrey where I am known as a vocal advocate for the empowerment of those living with ABI to be given every opportunity to live full and engaging lives in which they have choice, control, independence and opportunity and with a similar focus I was delighted in 2021 to take up the role of Chair of the Post-19 Advisory Board at BeyondAutism.

Any advice for those applying for grants from our Trust?

If I had any advice for applicants to the Stapley Trust it would be to make their applications clear, concise and focused. As trustees, we evaluate a large number of applications and if I have learnt anything from my experiences as a grant maker and trustee with other bodies, and from my exposure to the 2021 round of funding at the Sir Richard Stapley Educational Trust, it is that an application is the one chance we all get as candidates to showcase our proposal and to focus the minds of any panel on how the applicant's research will enhance the knowledge base, further understanding and contribute more widely in the field.

apply, and was successful. The grant I received went on tuition fees which at Oxford are high, but together with my student loan and some part-time work, allowed me to stay on the doctoral programme and continue my studies.

Over the last year I've thrived, for alongside my research I've also been undergoing training as a teacher. I took a few short courses run by Oxford and was then accepted onto the University's inaugural 'Advancing Teaching and Learning' programme, which leads to Associate Fellowship of the Higher Education Academy, one of the key qualifications which new lecturers are now expected to have. On top of this I've also taught undergraduates. In fact, I've taught a lot of undergraduates—17 in the last year, totalling over 65 contact hours, at Exeter, St John's and Trinity Colleges and I've loved it! The feedback has been immensely positive, and my work has been featured as a case-study in Flexible and Inclusive Teaching by the University's Centre for Teaching and Learning. It's provided me with a strong portfolio of practical experience to go alongside my doctorate when I eventually leave Oxford and enter academia as a teacher.

Reflecting on our last annual grant round

As a relatively small charitable trust, we have just one grant round each year. It opens on the first working day in January, and generally closes later the same month once we have received the maximum number of eligible applications that we can consider (300). Each application is scored by three of our trustees acting independently of each other, with a final whole Trustee Board discussion to decide on grants to be awarded. After each annual grant round, our trustees reflect on what went well and what could be improved.

Statistics

Nearly 1900 students viewed the grant documents and 540 students submitted applications. Of these, 125 did not meet our eligibility criteria or were not completed fully or accurately. A further 117 were received too late to be among the first 300 eligible applications received. Of the 300 eligible applications received, grants were awarded to 140 students.

One of our trustees' concerns is that our application 'window' has to close so quickly after it opens. This will be even more of an issue from 2022 onwards when we start accepting applications from those under 24 years old and those studying for postgraduate certificates and diplomas. Given our size and reliance on our ten trustees to score all of the applications, there is little that we can do to extend the window by considering more applications. But we feel there is more that we can do to enable ineligible applicants to select themselves out before spending hours on the application form to no effect.

Improvements

To reduce the number of ineligible applications, we plan to restrict access to the application form to only those who have confirmed that they meet our main eligibility rules. We will also be more explicit about the qualities we expect in a strong application, and have overhauled our application form to enable students to bring out those qualities.

Both of these changes will apply in 2022, and from 2023 onwards we aim to move to a fully online application process, which will improve students' experience of applying and to improve back-office processing. You can find out more about the changes happening from January 2022 in the article which follows on the next page.

Colin Nee, Clerk to the Trustees



Mark Seow, PhD student in Musicology.

King's College, University of Cambridge

I've just begun the fourth year of my PhD, the bulk of which will be spent writing up my thesis.

My research examines how metaphors can help us to understand historical experiences. It works from the premise that metaphors aren't just a symbolic or fanciful adornment of language, but rather tangibly shape how we experience things. How is it that when lovers split, they locate their pain in their chests? Or when during the early stages of the pandemic we described the "front line", how did this make nurses feel when they dressed up and went to work as if to war? Metaphors construct as well as describe experiences, and the pandemic has heightened this reality.

Historical metaphors offer up a way of accessing historical experiences, and 18th-century metaphors about music can tell us about what it might have felt like to listen to music in the churches of Johann Sebastian Bach. I'm excited about how my research encourages us to reimagine our approaches towards the analysis of Bach's music.

I've just returned from the Royal Musical Association conference held this year in Newcastle. My paper entitled 'Liquid listening in Bach's Germany' was well

Stapley Grants 2022/23

Some of our rules are changing

We will open for grant applications for the 2022-23 academic year on 4 January 2022. As highlighted in our last annual newsletter, we are making some changes to our eligibility rules.

Key points:

- Applicants will need to confirm they meet our main eligibility criteria before they will be able to download the application documents. These criteria are stated below.
- We will:
 - be much more explicit about what a strong application looks like
 - no longer require applicants to be 24 years old or over
 - in addition to those courses already eligible, we will accept applications from those taking postgraduate diplomas and certificates.
- The pool of applicants will increase so competition for our grants will be fiercer.

Our main eligibility criteria

We have removed the requirement for students to be 24 years or over, and we will be allowing those taking PGCEs and many other postgraduate diplomas and certificates to apply to the Trust for the first time.

To be eligible to apply, applicants need to be:

- graduates with a First Class or Upper-Second Class honours degree (2:1), or a master's or doctoral degree, or final year undergraduate students expected to achieve a 1st or 2.1
- accepted on to or applying for a course of study at a UK university in 2022/23 for
 - a degree in medicine, dentistry or veterinary medicine taken as a second degree,
 - or a higher degree (master's, PhD, or their equivalent) in any subject
 - or a Postgraduate Certificate or Postgraduate Diploma in any subject
- and the forthcoming 2022/23 academic year must officially begin on a date between 1 January 2022 and 31 December 2022 and be officially scheduled to last for at

received.

Alongside my PhD research, I've become increasingly active as a public musicologist. I presented The Early Music Show on BBC Radio 3 in February 2021, and also penned a show for their Father's Day celebrations. I recently appeared as a guest musicologist on the televised BBC Proms on which I spoke about Bach, Handel, and the Historically Informed Performance movement. I'm a critic for Gramophone, and continue to write for concert halls and music labels.

The Sir Richard Stapley Educational Trust contributed to funding my Masters at the Royal Academy of Music, and my career as a period violinist has gone from strength to strength. The past season included performances with John Eliot Gardiner's Orchestre Révolutionnaire et Romantique in Lyon, Chineke! at the Royal Festival Hall, Armonico Consort at the Royal Albert Hall, and Bach's St Matthew Passion evangelised by Ian Bostridge. This autumn, I will perform with English Touring Opera, Chineke!, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, and La Serenissima. Performing to live audiences has never felt more thrilling!

least 8 months

- already living in the UK at the time of application
- planning to remain living in the UK throughout the proposed course of study (e.g. not accessing the course remotely from outside the UK)
- facing a financial shortfall in the academic year 2022/23.

One important change is that we will be more explicit about the qualities we are looking for in those seeking our support. Assuming they meet our basic eligibility criteria, the attributes listed below will be used to gauge whether an applicant fits the desired profile. They will not be required to meet each one separately; rather the whole 'package' will be assessed overall:

- The student is undertaking a course to better achieve their ambition regarding career path or personal development
- has the potential to make a contribution to wider society
- may have had to overcome - or is facing - particular challenges such as disability or family, social or economic barriers
- demonstrates real passion and commitment to the chosen area of study
- is in real financial need but has a strategy for addressing this and has made an effort to access other sources of funding
- has shown evidence of academic ability, taking into account their background when assessing past performance
- has the support of an informed and competent referee.

Colin Nee, Clerk to the Trustees

Postscript: A Doctor Writes...

Dr Anthony Rafferty – Medical doctor specialising in General Practice

I am a medical doctor currently pursuing a career in General Practice.

My journey began at the age of 29, two years before I returned to study medicine at the University of Sheffield. I had just finished my PhD and was lucky enough to secure a research job coordinating clinical trials in pre-term babies. It was a gift to see tiny babies being born every day, though challenging to acknowledge that many of them had rocky roads to travel during the initial days of life.

I was truly inspired by the medical teams that worked tirelessly to help these little humans and ultimately decided to return to university to train as a medical doctor. I was accepted onto a medical programme at the age of 31, though returning to study medicine as a graduate student meant I was facing annual tuition fees of £9,000 with no financial support.

It was an incredibly challenging, yet ultimately rewarding 5 years at university. The training was intense, and during the initial years I was trying to juggle extra research activities in addition to my full-time studies in order to scrape by financially. However, things changed significantly for me when I learned about the Sir Richard Stapley Educational Trust, which I applied to for financial support and was successful! Words can't describe how much the incredibly generous financial support changed my university experience, and the comfort and assistance it provided me in the latter years of my studies. The fantastic contributions that I received from the Trust relieved the financial stress I was experiencing and allowed me to focus fully on my studies.

I graduated in the top decile of my class and secured competitive jobs in Southern England. After my initial year of postgraduate medical training I was offered a prestigious post at The National Maternity Hospital in Dublin, Ireland, and had the opportunity to continue with my pre-term birth research. After a fantastic experience there, I later moved into general medicine practice, hoping to have the opportunity to help prevent disease through offering nutrition and lifestyle advice.

It is an absolute privilege to be a doctor and I am utterly grateful for the support from the Sir Richard Stapley Education Trust. I wouldn't be here working in this fantastic job without it!

