

John Crook Scholarship Recipients

2019

Simon McCoy-Hurst – BA (Affil) in History | MPhil in American History

Liverpool John Moores University

2018

Natasha Brett – MPhil in Biological Science (Pathology)

Aston University

2017

Alistair Jackson – MPhil in English Studies

University of Derby

Anabel Zelceski – MPhil in Medical Science (MRC Cancer Unit)

Brunel University

2016

Nicola Ibbott – BA (Affil) in Anglo-Saxon, Norse, and Celtic

University of Hull

2015

Richard Findlay – MPhil in Energy Technologies (Engineering)

Heriot-Watt University

Asma Jamil – MPhil in Multi-disciplinary Gender Studies (HSPS)

Aston University

2014

Charlotte Palmer – MPhil in Medical Sciences (Oncology)

Plymouth University

2013

Sarah Parnell – BA (Affil) in Psychology

Greenwich University

2011

Elizabeth Monaghan – BA (Affil) in Education with English

Open University

Scholars' Testimonials



Liz Monaghan – BA (Affil) in Education, 2011-13

“As a very mature Northern student from a ‘non-typical’ educational background, I never imagined being awarded a Scholarship to the best University in the world. My father came to the UK after WW2 as a refugee from Eastern Europe. My mother left school at 14 and, although I had a 1970s grammar school education, I left school at 17 to go out to work. It was not until I had four children of my own and found myself a single parent that I took up studying seriously.

I applied for the John Crook Scholarship quite by chance and, to be honest, not daring to believe that I would be invited for interview.... As I drove to Cambridge after work I began to realise that I was being given an incomparable opportunity to enter another world, one that would possibly change me forever.

The memory of the hours I spent in College during those interviews has stayed with me to this day—a heady mixture of awe, trepidation and excitement – but more than anything I felt welcome. I settled back into my ‘real life’, to work as a TA in a local primary school and being a mother. I treasured the experience of my interview day at John’s....

...the award letter arrived and I opened it while heading off to work where I received three cheers from Year 6 and a hug from the teacher.

I chose to study Education and English and spent my days flitting between the innovative Education Faculty building and our magical College surroundings, stopping at various libraries between the two, thrilled to be learning in such stimulating environments. Despite the practical difficulties of juggling home life and study I thrived, swept along simultaneously by a previously unacknowledged competitive spirit and fear of failure!

Since returning to my home city I work to support students with learning difficulties, disabilities or mental health problems at four local non-Russell Group universities. Most of the students I work with are, like me, the first in their family to go to University. I am constantly reminded of the importance of having access to someone who believes in your capabilities, who can encourage and facilitate learning at HE level. I share their pride and pleasure in their successes.

I have become a campaigning citizen, supporting areas close to my heart: young people's mental health care and refugee and asylum seeker organisations. This unpaid work brings me enormous satisfaction, making a difference to people's lives in practical ways such as befriending and Grace Hosting, as well as, for example, taking part at policy-making level to improve emergency health care provision for young people in crisis.

The John Crook Scholarship allowed me the privilege of an amazing learning opportunity which has been truly transformative. I miss my Cambridge days and have a yearning to get back to further study in the near future. As a believer in lifelong learning I know from personal experience that it is never too late. "

Sarah Parnell – BA (Affil) in Psychology, 2013-15



"My name is Sarah Parnell and I was awarded the John Crook Scholarship in 2012. My overwhelming memory of life at Cambridge University was the feeling of awe that I experienced when walking through the beautiful grounds of St John's, attending dinner at hall, and discussing my interests with experts in my subject area. I was welcomed in my course and in college, despite being older than the usual undergraduate. I found many social experiences that I enjoyed; particular favourites of mine were attending various theatre productions and festivals. I met like-minded friends who I still turn to for a good conversation and advice. Studying at Cambridge was challenging, however, the gift of studying to such a high level and being part

of college life, was worth all of the effort. I am so grateful that I received the John Crook Scholarship as it afforded me the opportunity to experience a fantastic academic and cultural journey."

Asma Jamil – MPhil in Multi-Disciplinary Gender Studies, 2015-16



"I have always dreamed of studying in Cambridge, but deep down I thought I would never stand a chance, let alone not being able to afford it. To my surprise being a recipient of the John Crook Scholarship has not only afforded me the chance to experience student life at Cambridge, but has restored self-belief in me, that I am capable. My journey in the last nine months has been one of great challenge, yet stimulating and rewarding. There are no words to fully capture my time in Cambridge and it's all thanks to the John Crook Scholarship. If I could define what was the best moment was I wouldn't be able to pick one. Despite being a small city, it is one of the places I met

people from across the world in one place and it was an honour to learn along with such a great blend of bright minds from all corners of the globe. Living away from home and meeting the demands of my course has been very challenging, however, it is this that has defined me as a person and taught me discipline, willpower, strength of mind, determination, resilience and so many other things I could not learn from books alone and staying in the comfort of my home. I came for the struggle – not for an easy win, and through the struggle I have learnt so much about myself and the Cambridge experience has most certainly changed my perspective on life. Cambridge is the best thing that ever happened to me, and it is not the end, it's only the beginning."