

**History Dialogue**  
**Written Submissions**

No	Stakeholder	Written submission
1	[REDACTED]	<p>I wanted to address one of the points in the history report. I find it quite shocking that the group found it fit to lump together "Nazism" and "Communism" in the "Refugees from Nazism and Communism" section.</p> <p>It's right that Imperial commemorate the contribution of refugees from fascism, such as in Nazi Germany, and oppressive states more widely, which includes the USSR during the reign of Stalin. However an implied moral equivalence between the two minimises the unique evils of the Holocaust; an industrial scale genocide of Jews, Roma, disabled people, LGBT+ people. Further, any reading of history will understand the role that illegal persecution of leftists, including communists, played in the run up to the Nazis grabbing of power in the 30s. After all, Niemoller's famous poem begins "First they came for the communists..."</p> <p>Further, this paints a lack of knowledge about communism as a group of ideologies and the oppression during Stalin's rule of the USSR. Communism is a wide family of ideologies, some even conflicting, to the extent that Stalin persecuted those communists that did not adhere to his specific doctrine. This includes anarchist and libertarian communists, who of course opposed the authoritarianism and ideology of Stalin. The ideology of the USSR that he created was called Marxism-Leninism.</p> <p>Communism is broadly characterised as a stateless, classless, moneyless society. If you know anything about the USSR you will understand that it was not a communist society but rather a state capitalist society that was "striving" towards communism, although for Stalin that was just an ideal to motivate his people while he himself just had interest in power and cultivating a cult of personality.</p> <p>By lumping together Nazism and Communism, not only does that minimise the unique horrors of the Holocaust but it risks the college taking a political position. College should take a position against fascism and against authoritarianism, which includes Stalin's record in the USSR. But that doesn't mean being historically illiterate, and lumping together people of a differing political opinion who they themselves would have been persecuted *both* by Nazism and Stalinism. I would encourage the College history group to engage with academics who are knowledgeable on this issue, who will be at other universities as Imperial only does STEM, rather than relying on their own pre-conceptions of things.</p> <p>May I suggest either renaming the section as "Refugees from Authoritarianism" and omitting reference to communism, and instead talking about Stalinism. There is also an asymmetry in that the college hasn't mentioned fascism more generally, instead using the specific case of Nazism. If the college is talking about refugees from specific regimes then the consistent thing to do would be to talk about Nazism and Stalinism.</p>
2	[REDACTED]	<p>I agree with recognition of past achievements where appropriate. I disagree however with revoking recognitions and renaming places on our campus. A person's achievements can still be recognized as such, even if that person was involved in unrelated questionable activities.</p> <p>Thank you for taking my input.</p>

<p>3</p>		<p>First of all, many congratulations on your excellent work and report.</p> <p>Something I've been wondering though is whether your Group has considered whether the 'Imperial' in College's name should be changed to something else, given the negative connotations of empire. As someone who works a lot with academic and non-academic colleagues who are based in the developing world and with international non-governmental organisations, for me this is sometimes a point of awkward discussion with them. I don't think this was mentioned in your report however. Has the Group discussed it?</p> <p>It's fair to say that the British Empire is not always remembered fondly by its former subjects. While the word 'Imperial' may be interpreted in different ways, it definitely evokes that period of history for many people.</p> <p> UKRI's Strategic Advisory Group for the Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF), which has placed a key emphasis on the establishment of equitable partnerships between UK and overseas partners. In that context, it's been ironic to be having conversations with collaborators overseas about equitability whilst being based at a university with the word Imperial in its name, since the British Empire was not exactly an equitable arrangement... Of course it could be argued that the British Empire did some good in the world (e.g. improvements to infrastructure, public health, education, rule of law), though whether on balance it was a good thing is probably difficult to argue (though some historians would try!).</p> <p>I just think it would look very strange to the outside world for us to have established this History Group which has conducted such a thorough, 360-degree look at the College's history and how to account for it, but yet didn't comment on the huge elephant in the room, i.e. the name of the College itself. So, hopefully the College's name is something that will be debated and reported on, whichever decision is made about it.</p> <p>My personal view is that I'd be fine with the university changing its name. To me, there is no longer any room in today's world for imperialist, 'Britain is best' thinking, which should be a thing of the past.</p> <p>While I understand that the Terms of Reference of the Group were to focus on people and events of the past, and to focus on facts rather than perceptions, it could be argued that the choosing of the name Imperial was an event from our past, which perhaps needs re-visiting / remediation now. If we're considering renaming buildings, why not also consider renaming the entire College? It would seem to be in the same remit/scope. After all, if the College had been named 'Creationist College' or 'Flat Earth Technical Institute', I'm pretty sure we'd have changed the name by now... 😊</p> <p>I hope these are helpful thoughts, which is my intention in sharing them.</p>
<p>4</p>		<p>Thank you for the report. I briefly skimmed it expecting to see discussion of the name 'Imperial' and whether it should be changed or not. I didn't see any such discussion, is that because I skim read it too quickly or because it has been omitted? If the latter, surely that's the elephant in the room.</p> <p>Word classes of Imperial include: empire, imperialist, imperialism and connect to colonialism and colonisation and all the barbarism and exploitation that goes with that.</p> <p>Why not open a discussion on a name change?</p>

I've just looked at the report. I can understand the arguments for removing celebratory busts etc from certain figures because they had views which now know to be both wrong and damaging.

However, I'd much rather that we used the discovery of such people as a chance to reflect on our history, good and bad, and the way that all people, and all institutions, can have problems that at the time are not recognised.

That would surely be much more in line with our modern values than de-emphasising such people. I'm thinking particularly of Thomas Henry Huxley, whose contribution to science, and understanding of the role of scientists, was large.

Huxley was always aware of how much we are prone to our own prejudices, and must therefore fight against them. I am sure that he would, given the conversation now, see the widespread prejudices about race-linked genetic characteristics as the prejudiced error it is, especially given modern advances in genetics and for example the very small and local difference that affects skin color. Huxley would also have been aware, given the way research on genetics has been used, of how such ideas could be used to dehumanise groups of people.

These are complex and difficult questions, worthy of study so that we remain eternally vigilant against our own capacity to dehumanise people today: whether on race, religion, cultural, or gender basis. I'm not a great fan of statues myself: I am a believer in recognising important figures in the past and understanding them fully, reflecting on all of the context past and present. I feel this report would more represent modern values if it acknowledges that. We could replace the Huxley bust by a Huxley reflection day, perhaps, where once a year we reflect on his legacy, for good and evil, and why it was mixed.

I'm cc'ing [REDACTED] I notice that EEE was not represented on the Committee and feel that we strive to do better in these matters that the Report addresses.

Dear History Group,

Thank you for this much needed and important review of Imperial College history.

I have no problem with removal of visible memorials etc from those who on reflection, now, do not deserve this, and I am also happy that modern ethical values should inform such decisions, I am very deeply unhappy about what is proposed with respect to Thomas Henry Huxley's bust. Surely in this case contextualisation and using this as an example of past errors for us now to contemplate is better than removal. In fact, in this specific case, removal looks to me like an attempt to whitewash the College's past errors.

I do not propose that Huxley's advocacy of scientific and social ideas now known to be wrong should be accepted or unchallenged. Far from it. I believe this case above all others is an example for us to reflect on the errors of the past, and the way that esteemed and admirable people can make them. It is only by acknowledging our own capacity for error and collective ethical harm that we can hope to do better now. I can think of some very topical examples of this in College where some would argue we are still not owning up to institutional problems. That reflection is not well done by removing from view all past examples of those with erroneous views, or making it seem as though past problems never existed.

Huxley, in a very well known letter to Kingsbury, said (in the context of another scientifically unjustifiable but at the time culturally accepted view, the doctrine of immortality):

*Science has taught to me the opposite lesson. She warns me to be careful how I adopt a view which jumps with my preconceptions, and to require stronger evidence for such belief than for one to which I was previously hostile.*

*My business is to teach my aspirations to conform themselves to fact, not to try and make facts harmonise with my aspirations.*

*Science seems to me to teach in the highest and strongest manner the great truth which is embodied in the Christian conception of entire surrender to the will of God. Sit down before fact as a little child, be prepared to give up every preconceived notion, follow humbly wherever and to whatever abysses nature leads, or you shall learn nothing. I have only begun to learn content and peace of mind since I have resolved at all risks to do this.*

Huxley was someone who struggled through all of his life for both moral and scientific honesty. That does not mean he was in all respects moral or honest. He would I think, today, fully see both the scientific errors of some of his views – understandable at the time but as happens just wrong – and the way that generalisations relating to average qualities of different races have been and are used to dehumanise people and as part of racism now. He would personally find that abhorrent. And Huxley would be the first to acknowledge that scientific and social views, including his own, can be informed by prejudice and must always be subject to subsequent correction. An attitude that many now would do well to follow.



That Huxley made this mistake is a lesson to us all that we must examine our prejudices – just as he tried to – and ever be vigilant to the possibility that we have not done this enough and what we do may be grievously wrong. One could think of examples in addition to our pervasive racism: the current lack of personal responsibility towards the climate catastrophe, the societal acceptance of sexual objectification and violence, the prejudice towards those not conforming to gender stereotypes. No doubt there are others that I, embedded in our society, am not thinking of. Perhaps our treatment of other possibly sentient species.

In the spirit of enquiry and honesty which Huxley espoused we should be re-examining why he, and so many other thinkers of his time, confounded technological superiority and large-scale societal organisation with individual intelligence. We should be wondering what other collective errors we still make today.


I am upset that our reaction to deeply important moral and ethical matters, like racism, is to brush them under the institutional carpet viewing them as a historical aberration that is no longer to be remembered. Huxley is a personal example of this, and personal examples are what help people to learn. De-emphasising the eminence of Huxley as a scientist and thinker of his time, admired then, central to College history, allows us to feel comfortably superior now. We are not, and to think that we are smacks of arrogance and hubris. Huxley was not a bad, superficial, or unthinking person, yet he had abhorrent views. There is a lesson there for us all.




In fact, on reflection, I am deeply upset that we (Imperial College) are so failing in our duty to lead in this matter of morality, humanity, and intellectual honesty. As, I am sure, would Huxley be too. He would not care about his memorialisation. He would think that the only way to improve is to understand our own capacity for prejudice, and that remembering past errors is an essential part of this.

I propose that the Huxley bust be preserved, still publicly visible, and made part of an exhibition examining the moral, intellectual, and ethical errors of himself, the College, and society at that time – making links with similar failings through the 20th Century and now. Renaming buildings to reflect re-evaluation of the contribution of historical figures I have no objection to – it happens all the time and does not mean we are failing in our duty to examine and remember our past.

		<p>Perhaps this viewpoint was represented to the Committee and dismissed. I don't know. I would not be so clear that it is important in this case except that Huxley is such an excellent example of how society, and admirable moral people eminent within it, can be wrong. He was a great scientist impressive for his personal advocacy of honesty who inhabited his time and personally had moral failings which meant that his work contributed to grievous harm, and would in some aspects be viewed with horror now. So are we all. (Perhaps not the deeply impressive bit, but the rest). And the correct response to scientific views we now see as informed by prejudice and absurd is to refute the views and understand and contextualise that prejudice, the better to avoid it now.</p>
6		<p>I am interested in these issues in principle, and I write mainly to thank you for your careful attention to this matter at this time.</p> <p> I am neither familiar nor involved with any of the places mentioned in your specific recommendations, so do not have specific comments on those. However I am persuaded that the report is well-intentioned and thoughtful, and I commend it as such. I especially approve of the principle of not attempting to erase history but to learn from it, and as such I like the idea of a museum to preserve some objects removed from elsewhere under the recommendations. It would be important for this not to celebrate the objects themselves, but to document our disapproval. If anything is to be celebrated, it would be our ability to learn and move on.</p>
7		<p>Excellent initiative </p>
8		<p>I must say I was rather shocked at the extremity of some of your proposals. While there are certainly many figures from Imperial's past and present who deserve greater recognition, trying to cover up any aspect of history is simply an act of revisionism. Although you have made it clear that erasing history is not your wish what else can we call removing plaques, statues, and busts to gather dust in a storage facility. I am also concerned at the lack of accountability as this was not requested by the students and there does not seem to be any serious way for us to affect the course of these decisions.</p> <p>Of course, we are told we can give feedback just not if this feedback will actually affect anything.</p> <p>Furthermore, the composition of the group troubles me, it is stated that the group was set up to "make bold changes" which indicates that regardless of the research the outcome was predetermined.</p> <p>And, the fact that every member felt the statues outside the Royal School of Mines should be removed indicates a lack of diversity of opinion within the group.</p> <p>If I was being sceptical, I would say that this could be perceived as an attempt to improve the PR of the college while doing nothing about any real issues students face or present controversies the college is involved in.</p> <p>For example, Imperial College's current closeness with the CCP, a group which is considered by some to be currently conducting an ethnic cleansing of the Uyghur people and yet the leader of this group is given a private tour of the university by Imperial's President.</p> <p>This collusion might be viewed as more egregious than anything done by the figures you have deemed too controversial to remain on campus.</p> <p>How will that reflect on Imperial's current leadership a decade hence?</p> <p>I understand that this is not the History Group's prerogative to address these issues, but I feel the student body would much rather that effort was made to address the college's current failings rather than cosmetic changes to plaques outside buildings.</p> <p>None of this is meant to cast blame so I apologise if it comes across that way, as I assume this was done with the best of intentions, but it is frustrating that as a student our concerns over far more pressing issues have been side-lined in favour of this flavour of the month historical revisionism.</p>

9	[REDACTED]	<p>Thank you so much for this. I have only had the time to take a quick read through the report but I think that I can say already that I feel proud to be associated, however distantly, with such a thoughtful piece of work. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the approach by Professor Shah and his colleagues is not a million miles away from the rational, considered and fearless assessment I have been trying to encourage elsewhere. It seems to me that change will come out of this - but if it does it will be evident why change may be needed, the extent to which it is supported, and that the process has been as inclusive as is possible.</p> <p>I thought that the report also contained a real piece of tactical genius - which is to place any removal, or retention with explanation in a wider context that includes drawing attention to figures hitherto ignored. In particular, I was delighted to see [REDACTED] Philip Allsopp, recognised; [REDACTED]</p> <p>If I can be helpful I would like to be. Perhaps you would let me know if this work could be featured - positively - in our regular compendium of such projects, published by Policy Exchange? I think that it would offer a terrific model for others.</p>
10	[REDACTED]	<p>Thank you for producing this informative and important report.</p> <p>I would suggest that as a guiding principle, individuals who made an important contribution in their time, but shared the inappropriately racist or misogynistic views of their time, should not be erased from our history; but that individuals whose views or actions were inappropriate by the measure of their own time need to be disassociated from Imperial's name and history. Most of the examples you have identified fall into this second category, but there are some where a more lenient, historically-informed view could be taken. One famous misogynist missing from the report is Sir Almroth Wright, who worked at what is now Imperial and has a building (Wright-Fleming building) named after him – as Wikipedia state 'He argued that women's brains were innately different from men's and were not constituted to deal with social and public issues'.</p> <p>A more important issue for the committee to consider, however, is to look to the present and future connections of Imperial and consider how appropriate they are. One glaring example of an inappropriate funder is our ongoing research and innovation partnership with Nestle <a href="#">Nestlé   Administration and support services   Imperial College London</a></p> <p>The marketing activities of Nestle and other formula companies have been, and continue to be, a major barrier to improving population health worldwide, because their main competition is breastfeeding which is critical to the survival, health and development of young children. In the words of WHO's Director of Nutrition and Food Safety "The aggressive marketing of breast-milk substitutes, especially through health professionals that parents trust for nutrition and health advice, is a major barrier to improving newborn and child health worldwide". The BMJ, Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health and most UK health professional groups have boycotted formula funding/sponsorship in recent years, and Imperial is significantly out of step with this <a href="#">Calling time on formula milk adverts   The BMJ</a></p> <p>On a more prosaic level, the relationship with Nestle also impacts on our ability to attract funding as trusted independent researchers – an excellent UKRI fellowship application from [REDACTED] was rejected last year and the only criticism in the peer review comments was concern raised about the ability of an Imperial group to be trusted, given the Nestle-Imperial partnership. The work has subsequently been awarded a 1 million euro grant at a different university that does not have a relationship with the formula industry.</p> <p>Please can the committee consider Imperial's relationship with the formula milk industry, together of course with other industries whose marketing activities cause significant societal harm e.g. arms, gambling, tobacco, alcohol.</p>

		<p>Thank you again for spending time and energy considering these important institutional issues.</p>
<p>11</p>		<p>We would like to request the immediate removal of the description of Henry De la Beche having enlightened views on slavery from the history report, as we think this will cause serious offense to our staff and students in the Department of Earth Science and Engineering and the wider community.</p> <p>Although we agree that Henry de la Beche argued against the whipping of slaves, we disagree with the description of him being enlightened.</p> <p>He was against the abolition of slavery and his pamphlet: Notes on the Present Condition of Negroes in Jamaica, written in 1825, is a disturbing read (see link below).</p> <p>We ask that you delete this sentence in the report: He held enlightened views as to slavery on the family plantations, abolished whipping and prepared the slaves for eventual freedom, which he knew would come.</p> <p>If a replacement for this text is required, we would need some time to prepare it, to allow for wider consultation.</p> <p>In a phone call with Nilay Shah yesterday, the  asked for the wording in the report to be changed.</p> <p>They also informed Nilay that we plan to send a message to our staff and students today, clarifying that the department disagrees with the way Henry De la Beche is portrayed in the report and that we have requested immediate amendment.</p>
<p>12</p>		<p>I enjoyed reading your report and thank you for the time and energy that you put into researching these complex issues that are vital for our future.</p> <p>I found all of the recommendations to be very constructive and well-reasoned. I am excited to see them implemented.</p> <p>I would like to express disappointment and concern, however, about the way in which Sir Henry De la Beche, and the recent actions taken by my department (to remove his statue and rename a medal that previously had his name) are described and presented in the report.</p> <p>Of greatest concern is the use of the word “enlightened” in the description of De la Beche’s views of slavery. With respect, I find this phrase insensitive, unhelpful and quite out of keeping with the language of the rest of the report. I support my department’s request for a change of wording and appeal to you to reconsider this description.</p> <p>I also found it troubling that De la Beche has been placed in Category C (no action required), without explicitly acknowledging that this is because action has already been taken (by ESE). This could give the impression that the Report would not have recommended any action if ESE had not taken any.</p> <p>If the Group supports the actions taken by ESE, and this is why the Report considers De la Beche to be in Category C, I think it would have been appropriate to mention the changes that were made by ESE and include a statement that it is because of these changes that the Report recommends no further action.</p> <p>On the other hand, if the Group disagrees with the actions taken by ESE with regard to De la Beche—or would not have recommended them—I would like to see this issue discussed with the department in an open and sensitive way, because I would find this of deep concern. I note that the Report states that a document on the history of the College that is</p>

		<p>being prepared will “reflect on changes already implemented in the Department of Earth Sciences and Engineering.” I would like to ask that these reflections be discussed with ESE prior to publication to avoid any further insensitive language or possible contradiction with the views of my department.</p>
13		<p>Thank you for undertaking this important research on the history of our University. Some good points are raised.</p> <p>One of the main proposals is the renaming of Beit Quad and Hall, subject to student consultation. It is written in the report “The consultation should clarify the history and then gather and understand any strong objections. This is not intended to be a majority vote which is not always representative and inclusive.”. The latter point is very concerning. An explanation should be provided as to why you believe that “a majority vote ... is not always representative and inclusive”. A majority vote would appear to be much more representative than an arbitrary process that is not quantifiable. For example, what classifies as a “strong” objection?</p> <p>I would like to clarify that the intention of this email is not to stop the renaming process. The intention is to ensure that a proper, democratic, process is followed to ensure that an unbiased decision is reached. Currently, it seems that student objections will be judged subjectively by the History Group as to their “strength”, which does not seem fair. The report has shown the group’s opinion on this matter, so I am concerned about impartiality when judging student objections.</p> <p>I would like to hear the History Group’s thoughts on this and clarification must be provided to all students about this process.</p>
14		<p>I have heard that the history group at Imperial has recommended that Thomas Huxley amongst other great British scientists should have his bust removed and buildings names changed I can only ask ARE YOU OUT OF YOUR MINDS !!! If you don’t like this country and it’s history there’s plenty of other places on this Earth where I am sure you would be very welcome. I pay taxes that pay your wages and I don’t want my ancestors denigrated because they lived in there own time and unfortunately hadn’t invented a time machine to discover what idiocies are prevalent 100 200 or 1000 years in the future. Nazi Germany had a good go at trying to rewrite history with their book burning exercises your report is it’s bedfellow. I’m not the only one who is fed up with this contagious stupidity which seems to be at its worst amongst those who ought to be the guardians of free thinking the ordinary man or woman in the street has had enough as well. THINK AGAIN and bin this moronic report.</p> <p>Ps I have found that those who carry out these exercises are usually very reluctant to defend them or even reply to criticism when it comes down to it so I won’t hold my breath</p>
15		<p>Cancelling history and going woke is a very sad development at your university. It is a travesty that Imperial college has bent to the woke who actually are not that many, but, unfortunately, has a very loud voice drowning out common sense and logic.</p> <p>All people has equal rights in European countries, and BLM talking about white privelige is only true for the very rich people. Also, that perceived white privelige is true for all rich people of all races.</p> <p>Poor white people who is a majority amongst the poor, do certainly not experience any privelige. Also, white poor people are often excluded from scholarships that now focus on race rather than a poor background.</p> <p>For BLM to shame white people of what was done centuries ago, is unfair. There is nothing a person in 2021 can do about what happened before we were living, but we now live in a developed and better society for all in Europe. History got us here.</p>



		<p>Noone should be valued or devalued due to their race. Shaming is not productive, cancelling history does not change the events that occurred. Trying to make white people ashamed of being white, is racist. There is nothing a person can do about the colour of their skin.</p> <p>Why do BLM want to shame white people? My wish is for everyone to be proud of who they are: personality, qualities, worklife, race, etc. We are in this world together and the human race is one.</p> <p>My son is an excellent student with only top grades and is an academic talent. Every teacher has praised his intellect, reasoning and personal qualities.</p> <p>Imperial college is also an excellent academic institution. Medicine is his choice of study. I can no longer support his wish to attend Imperial college.</p>
16	[REDACTED]	<p>The composition of the study panel, as identified and named in the report appears unbalanced and lacking in expertise.</p> <p>The tone in the report is vague, with the resulting recommendations being correspondingly tenuous.</p> <p>The findings in the report are wantonly 'woke' and painfully apologetic.</p> <p>That the college's leadership have squandered their responsibilities (by diverting effort and focus to this report) is the only thing that Imperial College has to apologize for.</p> <p>Far better for the leadership of Imperial College to focus on underpinning the world's best Science, Technology and Medicine... than this diversion that adds nothing to the legacy that IC provides.</p> <p>What a waste of management time at a point in history where the College is slipping down the league tables.</p>
17	[REDACTED]	<p>I am sorry but this sort of historical revisionism is a disgrace. Abdus Salam was a genius and anyone who needs to know recognises this. Thomas Huxley was a genius and remains so. Please tell alumni how much you spent on this ridiculous exercise.</p> <p>If you wish to rewrite history go ahead but don't expect a penny more from me.</p> <p>Further to my earlier email I will no longer recommend this once great university to my colleagues in [REDACTED] Alison Gast concentrate on learning excellence. To say I am disappointed is an understatement and an annoyance since I now have to go the expense of amending my will. Thank you very much.</p> <p>Furthermore there is no-one from the Earth Sciences on your "History Committee".</p> <p>How Ironic no?</p>
18	[REDACTED]	<p>An analysis of history based on todays values is highly likely to find most of it pretty dreadful! I am descended from [REDACTED] but I don't have a thing against [REDACTED] and require busts to be moved and buildings renamed!!! Come on ! The removal of Huxley's bust and the renaming of the Huxley building would be an outrage.</p>

19	[REDACTED]	<p>I have just read the report from the History Group. I applaud it. It seems thorough and I think the group is making the right decisions. No institution should celebrate the names of people associated with dubious acts, even if those acts were widely accepted at the time within the prevailing culture and morality of the day. I support the renaming of awards and rooms within the college.</p> <p>There is a much larger issue that I wonder whether you have considered: the name of the college itself.</p> <p>Imperialism was accepted at the time the college was founded and the name of the college reflects the British Empire. Is it right that the name of the college still celebrates Imperialism? Is it not time that the college itself was renamed?</p> <p>This would be a huge wrench and the abandonment of a globally recognised academic brand. It would also be a statement of moral leadership.</p> <p>What are the group's views, please?</p>
20	[REDACTED]	<p>We can't judge the past with today's views. Huxley must stay.</p>
21	[REDACTED]	<p>I understand that people - probably everyone who was alive in Britain at the time if you work out where the riches made from the slave trade, the trade in drugs, exploitation of people in countries we colonised, etc, etc, etc - profited from practices that are now frowned upon (but were deemed right back then) and that cities, institutions and more benefited as a result.</p> <p>The fact that the City of London is a world centre for finance and insurance today is based, for example, on its past - financing the East India Company and so on.</p> <p>And yes, Imperial College was a beneficiary of all this too.</p> <p>The trouble is that you can't erase the past. You can - but shouldn't - take the names off buildings, but the buildings will still be there.</p> <p>And this week, a blue plaque has been unveiled in London commemorating the first black train driver in the UK. I wouldn't want to see it taken down, but doesn't that draw attention to obsolete attitudes as much as having the name of a slave trader over a door?</p> <p>In my view, we shouldn't be taking names off buildings, pulling down statues and so on. We should keep it all as it is, but make sure things are explained in a modern-day context close by.</p> <p>To do anything else risks heading down a very slippery slope. Rename the Royal Albert Hall on the basis that the royal family back then oversaw practices we don't like now?</p>
22	[REDACTED]	<p>Thank you for emailing me about the recent "frank review of our institution's history and the impact that this has on our present-day mission." I note that in the email you invite alumni to "email your comments, thoughts and ideas." I'm writing to you today about the sexism, misogyny and sexual harassment I experienced as a [REDACTED] student at Imperial College in the 1980s.</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p>

		<p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>To my knowledge, there was no policy on sexual harassment at Imperial College in the early 1980s. If there was, I didn't know about it and I had no place to go to report the harassment I endured.</p> <p>[REDACTED] t really tainted my experience as a woman at Imperial College, and I am certain I am not alone. I would be very keen to see Imperial College address the sexist atmosphere that was rampant during my time as a student there.</p>
23	[REDACTED]	<p>Personal opinion only</p> <p>I applaud your effort to keep your learning community relevant to modern society, welcoming for all students, and respectful of all civilised creeds and cultures.</p> <p>There is a movement of political censorship, currently going by the terrible label 'wokeness'. I watch with increasing concern as academic institutes are failing to protect their staff from extreme elements of this movement. Recently Kathleen Stock has been effectively forced to resign, even though Sussex University agree she has not infringed their code of conduct. Respected experts in their fields, like Professor Winston, are now demonised because they refuse to dilute their integrity when it comes to issues on human physiology.</p> <p>My heart felt plea is for you and your colleagues to keep the vanguard of science objective, and free from political meddling.</p> <p>As a civil society we must agree on common ground to enable mutual respect between all people. A good place to start is to set standards based on objective scientific facts. The simple truth is that the vast majority of all people are not racist transphobes, but the current semantic debate taking place regarding the definition of certain words is toxic and misrepresents the important issues.</p>
24	[REDACTED]	<p>I have two questions following the recent review of the University's history.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What did the review say about the term 'Imperial' in the University's name?</li> <li>2. What will happen to those who disagree with any recommendations?</li> </ol>

25	[REDACTED]	<p>Imperial should not rename any buildings, rooms or scholarships, etc. relating to Thomas Huxley, the Beits, Wernher, Hamilton, Fisher or Haldane. All should remain the same and not be "repurposed" in any way.</p> <p>These people were critical to the development of this institution and should not have those contributions degraded by any fashionable attempt to rate them based on the latest wokish interpretations of what is acceptable or not as per the current group of people who shout the loudest. If we make any of these changes we should also eliminate any names or references to "Imperial", "Royal", etc. For future reference, ML King was homophobic and Gandhi was a rascist so don't think of naming anything after them.</p> <p>Recommendations to recognize people like Prof. Salam and Constance Tipper are good.</p> <p>There should be no funding of future projects like this. Also, breakup the Engineering Department and make the Royal School of Mines stand-alone again.</p>
26	[REDACTED]	<p>I agree totally with the comments made in the letter published in today's Times by Prof Stephen Warren regarding the proposed change to rename the Huxley Building. Put bluntly: I think Imperial has lost the plot.</p>
27	[REDACTED]	<p>Imperial should utterly repudiate this woke nonsense. It should not rename the Huxley building where I worked and studied.</p> <p>I also find your suggestion of setting up scholarships for Black pupils at the expense of the white working class to be deeply racist and offensive. I strongly suggest that Imperial should not follow the crowd and follows the inclusive principles espoused by,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="https://dontdivideus.com/">https://dontdivideus.com/</a></li> </ul> <p>When I worked at Imperial College it was financially prudent, it is clear that the University sector in the UK has become lax and is spending funds on political trivia and virtue signalling. As a parent of three children at Universities I doubt that their tuition fees are being spent wisely and will not support their continuation at their current level either by vote or my personal contribution.</p>
28	[REDACTED]	<p>Thank you for sending me the proposed changes to the historical fabric of the college that you are considering introducing, some of which have been widely reported in the national press.</p> <p>Sadly, I note the following disturbing paragraph in the History Group Report;</p> <p>"It is recommended that the Beit Quad and Hall are renamed subject to consultation with students. The consultation should clarify the history and then gather and understand any strong objections. This is not intended to be a majority vote which is not always representative and inclusive."</p> <p>Why is the consultation restricted to the current crop of students at the college? Is it because you believe they will be more favourably disposed to agreeing with the report's recommendations?</p> <p>Why not canvas the entire alumni group? You evidently have no difficulty in contacting us, so give us a say in this planned rewriting of history to fit modern mores by putting it to a proper vote.</p> <p>I also note that while the authors of the report hope to "understand" any strong objections they don't appear to be prepared to accept them if their breathtakingly antidemocratic and arrogant statement about majority voting is to be taken at face value.</p>

29	[REDACTED]	<p>I graduated from Imperial [REDACTED]. I am proud to have studied at the college and of its continued strength as one of the world's great schools.</p> <p>I understand the rationale for a review of this longstanding institution's history, particularly in relation to its longstanding close relationship with commerce and expansionism.</p> <p>Inevitably this review has highlighted darker moments in Imperial's past which should be addressed. However, what the study has confirmed for me is how little imperial reflects on its vast, positive contribution to the world we live in today.</p> <p>I know of no other organisation or institution that I have been a part of that does so little to make its members or others aware of its inspirational history. Imperial's website makes little or no mention of this contribution.</p> <p>I went to Imperial through a process of osmosis, not because I knew of its achievements. I knew all about Oxbridge but I went to Imperial because "that's the best place to study engineering". I am constantly surprised in reading around the history of engineering that this or that was discovered or developed at Imperial. I was never told any of this when I was at the college. This extreme understatement was certainly reflected in the Imperial experience. It never engendered a belief in my generation that we were walking in the footsteps of giants, more that we were transacting with the college at arms length. A ticket to ride; no more.</p> <p>It would be my recommendation that the college should celebrate the positives of Imperial as well as address the negatives. Give undergraduates &amp; graduates a sense of their past. Tell all the stories. Inspire.</p>
30	[REDACTED]	<p>Firstly I just wanted to applause you and the History Group for the work you are doing to right historic wrongs (including recognizing people who weren't previously). I also feel the commitment to making this an ongoing process important and sensible.</p> <p>There was one glaring omission in my opinion. The name of Imperial College itself. While there are various definitions of the word Imperial, the negative connotations relate to the British Empire and its associated oppression. At the very least I would recommend addressing it as a potential future issue.</p> <p>Thank you for all your work, it makes me proud to be an IC alumni.</p> <p>I hope it's okay to email the group. I just wanted to say how much I enjoyed being a part of the discussion and hearing so many great thoughts and opinions. It made me miss being a part of academia! I'm confident Imperial College will have a bright future with so many thoughtful people engaging in the conversation.</p> <p>I wish you all the best.</p>
31	[REDACTED]	<p>I did wonder if/when Beit might be re-named...</p> <p>My recollection of 'Empire' politics at IC [REDACTED] was that each union AGM, there would be a motion tabled that 'this house deplores, and calls for action against, the apartheid state in South Africa'. When the motion came to a vote, a horde of RSM students would troop in from the bar, vote it down, and then return to the bar.</p> <p>With that anecdote, I don't mean to be flippant, but rather to show that the legacy of colonialism lingered on at IC for a long time, and not just in the names of buildings, rooms or bursaries.</p>

32	[REDACTED]	I am sorry. Beautifully organised and written but, for me, an appalling waste of time.
33	[REDACTED]	<p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>I will only address the issue about T. H. Huxley but my views undoubtedly must apply to all other early sponsors and academics whose memories and commemoration, it seems, will inevitably come about by the corrent woke agenda.</p> <p>i am horrified that the woke agendas seeks to hide history from everyone's site because the actions and people did things or subscribed to thoughts that nowadays seem unacceptable. But they were not unacceptable in their own times and must generally not be blamed. T.H. huxley was one of the greatest thinkers in biology of his time. Not to mention his support for the incredible revolutionary (at the time).</p> <p>We cannot expect that everyone in any age will have the bravery, or time, or resources, or priorities, to stand up to things like slavery or be 'loud' in those spheres. Darwin was against slavery as were Fox and Benjamin Franklin. Some, some100 years earlier than T H Huxley.</p> <p>I am unambiguous that we ought not to demolish or remove statues, busts, paintings, (maybe books??) of any historic persons who otherwise contributed massively to current institutions of standing. Imperial College should not bend to such stupidity, short-sightedness, and biased demands.</p>
34	[REDACTED]	Upon reading the report I am concerned that some seem to be trying to drag Imperial into the culture wars. I think politics should be kept out of science so am against these proposals.
35	[REDACTED]	<p>I am today in receipt of your mail with the link across to the History Group Report.</p> <p>Having read it, it appears yet another attempt to re-write history by portraying a number of the major benefactors of the college as evil men who should be erased from the annals of the Institution.</p> <p>It is part of the general trend to denigrate our past and portray the history of Britain and its Empire as wholly bad, destructive and something we should all be ashamed of. It is not a position I take - the attempts to tinker with history through the lens of how we are told we should see things today by a small vociferous minority is not worthy of Imperial College and does a great disservice.</p>
36	[REDACTED]	<p>I graduated in [REDACTED] spent many hours in the Huxley Building. I feel the proposal to rename this building and erase other famous names from the past is entirely wrong. We cannot judge yeaterday's actions by today's standards. We may not be proud of some of the facts of our history but they stand as our history. Many men and women did great things for which they should be remembered even if there were some questionable activities in the light of our attitudes today.</p> <p>I wonder if there is even a proposal to rename our great seat of learning, Heaven forbid!</p> <p>Further to my earlier response, I have now had a chance to read the report in full. It definitely appears to me that the recommendations are written in the light of how we view things today. A good example is where the report says "It is recommended that the Beit Quad and Hall are renamed subject to consultation with students." If the students referred to are today's students, then obviously the bias will be towards today's standards. I fully support the various suggestions about informative plaques and QR Codes to explain the context of the world as it was but let us not try to whitewash our history.</p>

37	[REDACTED]	<p>One wonders where the navel gazing taking place at Imperial College will stop. If one closely examines what our forebears either said, wrote or did, one will almost certainly find something which was perfectly acceptable at that time but is now deeply frowned upon by certain people. No doubt if one digs deep enough this would even extend to men like Prince Albert - so do we rename the Albert Hall, Prince Consort Road and even Imperial College itself ? Why stop at the Huxley building ? Redacting history is not the answer</p>
38	[REDACTED]	<p>Here are some of my thoughts which I recently expressed on Facebook.</p> <p>“Yeh, let's remove the statues of everybody who was or is not perfect including those who do all the modern complaining as though that helps anything. And then let's remove all evidence of Roman civilization in England because they were colonizers and had slaves. And then let's change the name of the city of York because it was called Yorvik by the Vikings and we know what they were like; Dublin was a slave trade centre where the slaves were Irish and white. Where should we stop ..... ?</p> <p>If I.C moves in this direction and “removes Huxley and others”, then you may count me out.</p>
39	[REDACTED]	<p>It is important to defend free speech and block attempts to rewrite or distort history. These freedoms of expression and intellectual exploration are central to academic life.</p> <p>What we are seeing currently are the characteristic of an authoritarian regime and society.</p> <p>Time the Universities did their job and protected academic life and those in it.</p>
40	[REDACTED]	<p>I'd be cautious about kowtowing to recent pressures to de-colonise and impose some racial new dawn.</p> <p>The name "Imperial" will be next, after all it resonates with the British Empire, which we all know was in the words of 1066 and all that, a "bad thing".</p> <p>Or you can read Niall Ferguson for a more balanced view of the Empire, or go to Churchill:</p> <div> <p>The image shows a portrait of Winston Churchill on the left and a quote on a dark background on the right. The quote reads: "If the British Empire is fated to pass from life into history, we must hope it will not be by the slow process of dispersion and decay, but in some supreme exertion for freedom, for right and for truth." Below the quote is the attribution "— Winston Churchill —" and the logo "AZ QUOTES" at the bottom.</p> </div> <p>From 1951, so he had the benefit of hindsight. So don't forget General Dyer, but remember the Empire stood alone against Fascism and led the fight back. Perhaps I can suggest that was a good thing.</p> <p>Oh and we all know Winston (WSC) was a bit dodgy on race, seeing the white race as having a duty to lead other races till they develop enough. But Winston was not a man with simplistic views on anything. As First Lord of the Admiralty before WW2 he supported the commissioning of Indian Officers into the Royal Navy, when many did not. But WSC did not advocate mis-treating other races.</p> <p>In particular I would single out BLM, they focus on Black matters and ignore Asians and Whites, in a word they discriminate against Non-Black races, they are in point of fact a racist organisation with a racist message. Woke and Transgender politics continue to rip through UK Universities. Much of this needs to be resisted.</p> <p>As for Alfred Beit. He donates money and establishes Trusts both in the UK and in Africa. But the source of the wealth doesn't meet the high standards now required. Black workers</p>

were roughly treated down African mines. Well I suspect so were many British workers badly treated by all and sundry during the 19th century. Does this century late clean up achieve anything ? Virtue signalling aside.

Thomas Henry Huxley advocated scientific racism and eugenics. Scientifically the notion of race is a bit imprecise or non-existent. But these views were not unusual for the time. I'm not an expert but I suspect we are not here talking about Hitler and the Nazis are we ? Strange also how it is certain ethnic groups who are the ones obsessed by race / skin colour. We are told race is a political idea. It seems to be a notion that is widely used and misused.

By all means fix a plaque on these locations explaining history, but I wouldn't change building names, or remove statues ... but I might advocate the removal of the statue of Nelson Mandela in London (who I actually respect), after all celebrating terrorists just isn't on is it ?

Oh yes and on slavery, it is not something only done by white people to black people. Barbary Pirates took 1.4m Europeans between 1560 - 1740. Greece and Rome not mainly African. Nazi Slave Labour 12m, all white. And no I do not favour reparations or job quotas. The latter would be discrimination after all, a "bad thing" yes ?

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/columnists/2021/11/02/want-fight-back-against-wokery-cancel-direct-debit-today/>

In case you don't subscribe, let me copy the bit where Imperial gets a bashing ...

I suspect that graduates of Imperial College London will have a similar reaction on hearing that a building named after Thomas Henry Huxley, the great biologist and anthropologist who determined that birds descended from dinosaurs, is set to be renamed. A report by the university's chillingly named "independent history group" has recommended that the name Huxley be excised because of his beliefs about human intelligence. The group cites Huxley's essay of 1865, "Emancipation — Black and White", which it says "espouses a racial hierarchy of intelligence, a belief system of 'scientific racism', legacies of which are still felt today".

You have to hand it to old Huxley. He cunningly hid his racism by being a leading voice in the movement for the abolition of slavery. Yes, some of his observations make us recoil today. But, yesterday, I looked up that self-same "offensive" essay, and here is a very different sort of paragraph: "We find girls naturally timid, prone to dependence, born conservatives; and we teach them that independence is unladylike; that blind faith is the right frame of mind; and that whatever we may be permitted, and indeed encouraged, to do to our brother, our sister is to be left to the tyranny of authority and tradition. With few insignificant exceptions, girls have been educated either to be drudges, or toys, beneath man, or a sort of angels above him... The possibility that the ideal of womanhood lies neither in the fair saint, nor in the fair sinner; that the female type of character is neither better nor worse than the male; that women are meant neither to be men's guides nor their playthings, but their comrades, their fellows and their equals, so far as nature puts no bar to that equality, does not seem to have entered into the minds of those who have had the conduct of the education of girls."

Over 150 years later, I feel almost tearful with gratitude coming across an establishment figure like Thomas Henry Huxley making the case, with such fierce logic and unrepentant eloquence, for my sex to receive the same education as the male. Do you think the Imperial College London's independent history group weigh Huxley's remarkable early feminism in its judgment to strip his name from a beloved building?

Of course not. The Inquisition seeks villains to burn retrospectively at the stake not human beings with the full complement of vices and virtues. They should christen Imperial's Huxley building the Pol Pot Year Zero building, in memory of the cultural vandals who took him down, and be done with it. Come to that, how long will the college be allowed to call itself Imperial? Bit insensitive, isn't it?

Stephen Warren, professor of astronomy at Imperial, called the report "astonishing", and said: "I am sorry that it has chosen to judge people from the past by the standards of



today. I would say that Thomas Henry Huxley is the individual of whom Imperial can be most proud.”

You can bet that alumni who share that opinion will be busy writing Imperial out of their wills. Such direct action can be surprisingly effective in the fightback against the woke activists. When Oriel College, Oxford, was deciding whether to appease the mob and give in to demands to take down the bust of its benefactor Cecil Rhodes, almost overnight charitable donations collapsed. Former students, who thought that a college dating back to 1326 should have the guts to stand up for its history, disinherited Oriel. Rhodes wobbled, but he did not fall. Instead, the college established new scholarships for African students using his fortune to enhance the future, not obliterate the past.

The self-righteous young mob thinks it can get universities to grovel with the threat of being cancelled. My generation is learning to beat them at that game: we just cancel the direct debit.

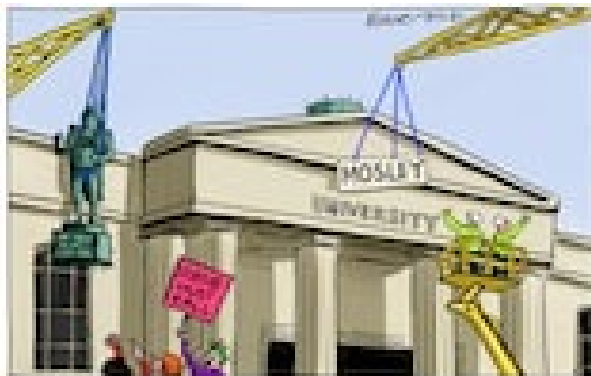
So "History Dialogue" I suggest you "man up" and "slap a couple on", woke needs resisting, Appeasement is often a bad strategy. Remember the 30's ? Time to re-arm ?

May I suggest Imperial taking cash from fascists is a larger problem than Non-PC behaviour in the 19th century, it would seem your stables are Augean.

Perhaps you've been looking at the wrong issues ?

[https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2021/11/06/ucl-imperial-among-several-prestigious-universities-benefiting/?WT.mc\\_id=e\\_DM1518256&WT.tsrc=email&etype=Edi\\_FAM\\_New\\_ES\\_Sun&utm\\_source=email&utm\\_medium=Edi\\_FAM\\_New\\_ES\\_Sun20211107&utm\\_campaign=DM1518256](https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2021/11/06/ucl-imperial-among-several-prestigious-universities-benefiting/?WT.mc_id=e_DM1518256&WT.tsrc=email&etype=Edi_FAM_New_ES_Sun&utm_source=email&utm_medium=Edi_FAM_New_ES_Sun20211107&utm_campaign=DM1518256)

[https://historyreclaimed.co.uk/decolonizing-imperial-college-a-few-suggestions/?mc\\_cid=46b42676a3&mc\\_eid=0b9eebf62e](https://historyreclaimed.co.uk/decolonizing-imperial-college-a-few-suggestions/?mc_cid=46b42676a3&mc_eid=0b9eebf62e)



Oh dear, Imperial has been seen sashaying down the Street of Negotiable Affection, she leered and said, "Looking for Trade Dearie ?", I think we all know the answer to that one ! makes Huxley look positively saintly !




"You will never find a more wretched hive of scum and villainy. We must be cautious"

41

I applaud the work of this committee as a serious and historically accurate investigation into the history of Imperial. I suspect it barely scratches the surface, and there are vast amounts still to uncover.

It also raises the importance of many great names, current and past, associated with the College which go uncelebrated.

The current trend for trying to rewrite and eradicate history is deplorable. Yes, we should understand it and set it in context, but to attempt to annul and rewrite it is a great disservice.

		<p>What was done was done, and new generations need to learn from this, and be constantly reminded of it as the walk around our College.</p> <p>The Tanaka Business school is an interesting modern example, and perhaps an appropriate one. In his lifetime he was convicted of corrupt practice, so we took his name off the business school. Did we give back the money that may have come for unjust means?? Poor Edward Coleston, in Bristol, was thrown into the harbour, but did they knock down the School he endowed, which today teaches many people of black and Asian descent??</p> <p>So, we named a Quad after the Beits, who made their money in mining in South Africa and now we should change that? Do we also pull down the statues outside the RSM building, which are a memorial to Alfred Beit? Do the residents of Selkirk Hall feel assured that William Selkirk insisted on a decent minimum wage for his workers when he was prospecting for Gold in South Africa, or as a surveyor on the Cape to Cairo railway, where over 500 Asian immigrant workers died in the first year of construction?</p> <p>I am pleased to see your comment: "I am also very clear: we will defend free speech. All views will be heard".</p> <p>Troubled by all the recent reaction to this stuff, I took the trouble to re-read 1984, by George Orwell; I would recommend that all members of this committee; indeed all students, do the same. We cannot create a culture where history is rewritten every day to suit the new norm. <b>We cannot allow newspeak and fear of thoughtcrime to take over our lives.</b></p>
42		 <p>One of the great problems facing all historians is in producing a factual account of the past from available records. If the records are corrupted because someone, somewhere along the line decided they were unacceptable then history suffers. We see that with the burning of books during the Reformation and an inability to discuss the positive achievements of unpalatable personalities in the present age.</p> <p>We are currently going through a disturbing period where some aspects of the past are being denied at the behest of a 'woke' minority who are trying to write people like Rhodes, Kipling and even Enid Blyton and Noddy out of the record. Think it through – if they have their way then not only will Huxley, Beit and other great men associated with Imperial College have to be 'distanced' but we would also have to eliminate Napoleon and the Roman Empire - all were built on slavery and imperialism. Even Imperial College would have to change its name.</p> <p>Our imperial history is a fact. It should not be obscured, neither should it be celebrated. It is part of what we are – like it or not. By taking historical events and personalities out of the context of their times and judging them by today's norms is doing a disservice to future generations. Professional historians today spend much of their efforts in trying to reverse that process.</p> <p>It will be interesting to see if Imperial stands by its history, good or bad – or bows to political correctness.</p>
43		<p>I trust that your defence of free speech means that no serious consideration will be given to the ludicrous and dangerous notion of denigrating the memory of Thomas Henry Huxley.</p>

44	[REDACTED]	<p><b>I totally support your support for free speech.</b></p> <p>However, with regards to name changes, I totally disagree. You are kowtowing to the media - if you investigated the past (over last 150 years) of many members of the investigative team you might find comments by them or their ancestors that do not conform with modern day thinking.</p> <p>In 50 years time there is a danger you will change names yet again.</p> <p>Lets live with the past and remember the good and bad.</p>
45	[REDACTED]	<p>So sad that Imperial lied about Wye's future and then asset stripped for their own funds. A sad and despicable reflection on a scientific and educational establishment. Please add this to your historical records.</p>
46	[REDACTED]	<p>Some thoughts from an older graduate of the College.</p> <p>As someone who was lucky enough to have Hugh Ford as a personal tutor, this allowed a very green undergraduate an early insight into the values and position of our college.</p> <p>I admire the desire to maintain Imperial as a leading institution of learning. Now some rambling in 3 areas.</p> <p>Before we begin a journey first and foremost we need a direction, before a destination. Always, short and long term we need a direction. It's important to check the mirror before we pull ahead. It's important to know where we came from, but we should not be too focused on looking back. Some balance is needed, how far do we look back. We can't see around all the bends in the road that are behind us, and we all know we should be looking ahead most of the time.</p> <p>Your project is important. I think the main focus has perhaps missed some issues a little closer to home. Lets not forget the people, slaves in a certain sense, who were exploited by the mine and mill owners of the past. Slavery, prejudice and discrimination were embedded throughout all the Imperial realms, ancient Rome, was not the first.</p> <p>The published material so far seems to have honorable objectives, not to glorify amoral and immoral behaviors, but seems lacking in SMART targets and objectives. Perhaps they are there, I hope so, if not perhaps a representative from the business school could be brought in to review the overall methodology. Sadly at the moment a small cynical voice inside me is suggesting the work may appear to many as a CYA PR activity.</p> <p>Perception is important, hence my email</p> <p>thank you wishing you all success with the work</p>
47	[REDACTED]	<p>It was interesting to see your report on what is clearly a challenging issue. I have several comments, most of which I suspect will replicate comments sent by others.</p> <p>First, I think the phrase "falls short of Imperial's modern values" very nicely captures the fundamental problem at the heart of the proposal. Today's "modern values" are tomorrow's beyond-the-pale* attitudes. We must interpret individuals' behaviour in the context of the mores of their time. Indeed, I suspect that in thirty years' time most current members of the College will be regarded with horror because of the way we have consumed meat (1.5 bn pigs killed for food each year), driven fossil-fuel-powered cars, taken long-haul flights, heated our houses using gas boilers, or made extensive use of</p>

		<p>single-use plastic packaging. It means that any re-naming now adopted will in the future have to be changed as the new names in turn become regarded as contravening Imperial's future values.</p> <p>What is regarded as socially acceptable changes over time. I would like to think that our descendants recognised that we also changed over time as we matured. And we should apply that same courtesy to those in the past. In general, rather than seeking to erase the past, we must learn from it – and use past behaviour as a stimulus for us to put our own into perspective.**</p> <p>Second, I would hope the College and its staff have the intellectual maturity to be able to separate the scientific achievements of individuals from any personal beliefs or attitudes they may have. We should be able to celebrate the achievements of historical figures, while not condemning them for other characteristics unrelated to those achievements. Indeed, given that none of us is perfect, and indeed cannot be given the way the definition of “perfection” changes over time, any alternative naming, if involving a person, will be subject to attack.***</p> <p>Thirdly, I am sure we have all looked with horror at the way Kathleen Stock has been pilloried and forced from her job for expressing a balanced and genuinely held opinion. There are obvious parallels with the current proposal, one difference being that the individuals you name are not around to set straight any misunderstandings.</p> <p>* This use of the word “pale” has the same root as “paling” in fences. It does not refer to skin colour!</p> <p>** Given the ambivalent attitude of eighteenth century Presbyterians to slavery, how does the renaming of the Cass Business School to the Bayes Business School really help? Better to have kept the original name and used that as a platform to raise awareness and for an initiative to tackle modern slavery. At least that would do some good.</p> <p>*** What made the “History Group” focus on the names it gives, rather than every other named building/institution/etc in the Faculty/College? For example, the Natural Sciences Faculty has a Schrodinger Lecture and Schrodinger Scholarship Scheme. Can the group explain why those are acceptable, given the comment by biographer Walter Moore (p89 of his biography of Schrodinger) that “There was something infinitely appealing to Erwin in the budding sensuality of immature girls”?</p>
48	[REDACTED]	<p>I was an Imperial student [REDACTED] I would like to express a strong objection to any name changes or removal of busts/other monuments. I feel this is entirely the wrong approach and has potential to do great harm to the physical and cultural make up of the university.</p> <p>I would be grateful if you would please forward me updates with any plans to proceed with the plans outlined in the report.</p>
49	[REDACTED]	<p>I hope you will give short shrift to those who want to rewrite history.</p>
50	[REDACTED]	<p>Thank you for your interesting survey of the various issues that arise from tensions between continuing aims and past history of Imperial.</p> <p>On the whole I have no general comment to make, apart from some slight discomfort over the current trend to rename everything, quite possibly with less relevant (if 'safer') candidates.</p> <p>Re one particular instance, however, I should remark that the present Huxley building is in</p>

		<p>any case an impostor! When I was at IC [REDACTED] the 'Huxley building' was the original RCS home ("a handsome edifice of Italian design" according to the Ward Lock Guide to London, 1894) -- now rebranded as the Henry Cole Wing of the V&amp;A. It was the appropriate building to be named after Huxley.</p> <p>And so, under the circumstances, renaming the current holder of the moniker seems both logical and unexceptionable...</p>
51	[REDACTED]	<p>I would like to respond to the President's email this week, with the History report and the proposal to remove building references to Thomas H Huxley which I think unnecessary and unwise for Imperial College, as as an educational institution which owes its existence to Prince Albert and the Great Exhibition.</p> <p>The frequent reference by the History group to 'celebration' may be problematic. University experience should be based on enquiry, critical thinking, rigour and understanding the world as it is.</p> <p>TH Huxley, whatever errors he may have shared in common with his time, was an extraordinary example of scientific endeavour who opened humanity's eyes to evolution.</p> <p>Because of his connection with Imperial College TH Huxley should continue to be a visible reminder on the Campus of the extraordinary Victorian period of scientific endeavour and an inspiration to independent thought over a lifetime.</p>
52	[REDACTED]	<p>I read your latest communication with a weary disbelief, despite forewarning by the press. I had thought Imperial of all places would be able to make the distinction between immutable facts and values which come and go.</p> <p>Unless you can prove without doubt that individuals were universally held to be criminals in their time. I suggest you leave their legacies alone rather than drawing attention only to what are now considered their negatives. The claim to be taking account of context while suggesting the erasure of Huxley and the Beits is pitiful. Anyone who has some problem coming to terms with the records of past figures of which they were previously likely to know nothing simply has a problem. They should attempt to deal with it themselves, or at least get on with studying science.</p> <p>[What about the Queen's Tower? Victoria was pretty keen on colonialism you know.]</p> <p>There is at least one present day large donor (and probably most of the rest) whose activities would earn the disapproval of a substantial (and noisy) proportion of your students. Are you intending to return his donation and cancel him? I bet you aren't.</p> <p>You won't have any donors left at this rate. Why would anyone bother if their views and activities could easily be despised by future generations, which is the case for absolutely everybody? I certainly wouldn't consider ever giving anything to an institution embarrassing me now and into the future with this kind of nonsense.</p> <p>Nor will you have many students beyond those from a certain entitled outlook who are apparently already vastly over-represented, not that you care.</p>
53	[REDACTED]	<p>Thank you for allowing us (alumni) a say in this matter. I'll keep it brief.</p> <p>I feel very strongly that we should all try to learn from history rather than cancel it; neither a statue nor a name is a celebration of the individual. Writing the individual out of history risks us repeating wrong doings.</p> <p>The Huxley building should stay.</p> <p>Thank you</p>

54	[REDACTED]	<p>I strongly object to the actions proposed in relation to Thomas Henry Huxley, including the removal of his bust and the renaming of the Huxley Building in which I studied.</p> <p>I consider it inappropriate to seek to judge historical figures by the (changing and currently self-righteous) standards of today and that Huxley deserves to remain an individual of whom Imperial should be proud.</p>
55	[REDACTED]	<p>I am a former student having study mathematics at the college [REDACTED], largely in the Huxley building where the department was based at the time.</p> <p>Imperial College was then and is now an institution with a clear mission to extend the understanding of science and technology through excellent teaching and leading edge research. The objective was to be a leading institution on the world stage in extending the boundaries of knowledge and understanding of these subjects for the enrichment of mankind. An objective well incorporated in the motto on the college crest now tragically deleted because of narrow literal translation.</p> <p>The college does not teach history or moral philosophy. It does however have much to be proud of in the contribution that it has made to the advancement of science and its application, in the achievements of many of it staff and alumni, in the life improvement through education that it has brought to thousands and in its current standing in the academic world.</p> <p>No matter how extensive your researches you will not find many who achieved great advance in extending the boundaries of understanding who do not have character flaws of some kind or who may have made missteps in taking their researches forward in the context of the social values and understanding of their day. Frequently it is these very things that drives individuals to extraordinary achievement.</p> <p>There is a sad obsession in our present times with racism and colonialism as if these were the only evils to have ever been present in the world. The Rector of the college in my time was a key part of the team that created the nuclear bombs that destroyed Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Should he be revered for his scientific genius or reviled for the consequences-discuss. You still employ a celebrated Professor guilty of breaking laws fashioned by himself and thereby endangering public health-discuss.</p> <p>Where you have identified people associated with the college whose great achievements have not been properly recognised perhaps due the their racial background or gender then I applaud the recommendations to correct this.</p> <p>Where you have chosen to stand in moral judgement over the possible failings of those that past generations have chosen to celebrate for their great achievements by the application of modern values and understanding to actions carried out in a vastly different time then I think you damage history, understanding and sadly the colleges reputation. To rename the Huxley building would be a disgrace. Queen Victoria is hardly untainted by colonialism. Is the building next door to be renamed too?</p>
56	[REDACTED]	<p>Thank you for the assessment of the College's history and the key findings you lay out in the report.</p> <p>Admittedly, during my time at Imperial I had never looked deeply into or considered the history of the College. However, it was clear to me that with such a name it's history must be rooted in some form of 'exploits' of the British Empire.</p>

Please see below my immediate reactions to some of the proposed actions set out in the report:

- Name of the College – I couldn't agree more that the Imperial College name should be preserved. Imperial is a part of my identity and tens of thousands of others and is recognised globally.
- Recognition Committee – this is an excellent idea, though the College must avoid brushing its history under the carpet simply by the renaming of buildings, rooms, scholarships and such. Rather I would prefer to see history preserved, particularly names, but with honest discussion on who/where/what/why these individual's actions are no longer acceptable in this day and age. Your guiding principles are therefore welcomed and believe will ensure a well thought through process to assessing appropriateness of names.
- Specific recommendations – I am in agreement with the recommendations set out in your report.
- Category B – Environmental DD – a number of companies who are involved in environmental damage today are also spending significant funds to support the transition to a net zero world. It is a difficult position for the College to reject funds from these organisations, particularly where the work being funded is focussed on the betterment of society or the environment. I am sure the College will set up a robust process to assess and determine what the right course of action is without being detrimental to the opportunities these funds provide to current and future students.

I look forward to hearing more regarding the next steps of the History Group and future Town Halls/online consultations proposed in the report.

57

As an alumnus of City and Guilds College [REDACTED], I thank you for the opportunity to comment on the report of the History Group.

1. The naming of buildings/grants etc should celebrate and remind people of the history of the institution, i.e. be drawn from the names of people who have contributed to the founding/leading/funding of the institution and those who have made important scientific/engineering achievements. In selecting such names no preference or bias should be applied regarding the individual's race, religion, or beliefs - including beliefs which today some, or indeed, many, might find abhorrent. It is important to uphold our freedom of speech and belief today, and we should apply the same standards retrospectively.

2. It is important not to attempt to re-write history so as to airbrush out inconvenient truths. This report declares that this is not its intention yet it seems to me that following its recommendations would have precisely this effect. Naturally I do not object to honouring additional individuals based on their merit (per my first point) but I do not see the need to "rename" existing buildings/grants etc.

3. We need to learn our history as it was - warts and all. Indeed, learning about the social environment of previous eras in which various beliefs and practices which were acceptable then but are not today is an important part of the education of future students of Imperial College. So rather than renaming buildings such as the "Huxley Building" it would be better to provide a plaque on the building listing both his contributions to science and the establishment of Imperial College along with a statement to the effect that he also held beliefs about the intrinsic natural superiority of certain races over others which were unremarkable at the time but which are abhorrent today and which Imperial College does not condone. It should also be mentioned that he supported the abolition of slavery and supported equality of women's rights in education. (PS It is ironic in the present context that women's rights to education are very relevant to the history of Imperial College - though I do not know when women were first admitted? - yet Huxley's support for

women's rights appears in the very same paper as his now objectionable views on race superiority [Emancipation–Black and White, 1865]. )

4. Taking the Huxley example further, he was clearly mistaken in his belief that Caucasians are naturally superior intellectually to Negros. He did not have the evidence to the contrary which is available in abundance today! At that time it would have seemed totally incredible that a black man would one day become the President of the United States of America. It is important that people today recognise this fact, not least because it clearly demonstrates the progress that has been made since Huxley's day.

5. Clearly there remains more to be done about social injustice, but I do not believe the thrust of the recommendations of the History Report will further those aims at all and are more likely to be counter-productive in the long run. The fact that this report has been written at all is clearly related to the popular movement "Black lives matter". I totally agree that Black lives do matter, and there are many injustices still faced today by black people (and other groups). The College should focus on removing any injustices that remain within its purview. Having a fair representation of buildings/grants etc. named after notable black (or other minority group members) is rightly part of the action that should be taken. But this should not be at the expense of those historical figures who had previously been recognised, so long as their contributions had equal merit, and especially not if they are being de-selected on the basis of inconvenient truths about their beliefs.

4. It seems to me likely that there are other matters which students from minority backgrounds may be concerned about and which may indeed, on investigation, be determined are unfair to them. I believe the College's efforts should be directed to identifying and tackling such injustices rather than the current focus on famous individual's in the College's history.

58

I am hugely disappointed by your recommendation to rename the Huxley Building and remove Huxley's bust from the building. I strongly object to this proposal.

Huxley was a towering figure in British science. He was not only the first professional scientist, he was a great educator of the general public, became President of the Royal Society and held many other important positions and was pivotal in the organisation of science in South Kensington, which laid the foundations of Imperial College itself. There are few, if any individuals who have played such an influential role in the development of science in modern society and Huxley was preeminent in his advocacy of science for the good of all, for which he was known throughout the world.

Thomas Huxley was an extremely important figure in the life of this country and a humane and decent man. In a letter he wrote in 1880 he said he wanted to be known as "a man who did his best to help people". So why does your "History Group" want to erase his memory and contributions? It seems you feel qualified to pass judgement on his moral character and have decided he does not match up to the modern standards of Imperial College.

I find this to be outrageous as well as insulting. As we all are, Huxley was a person of his time. His statements can only sensibly be viewed in the context of Victorian Britain and a more sophisticated analysis needs to be done on what the man was like. Everything I know about Huxley leads me to believe he was a liberal, open-minded and thoroughly decent person with enlightened attitudes towards people and society. The only evidence cited in the Report of the History Group was a short essay written by Huxley in 1865 (Emancipation - Black and White). This was written in response to the passing of the 13th amendment in the US which abolished slavery. Huxley wrote this essay in full support of abolition and was a strong supporter of equal treatment, education and opportunities for all. As he wrote in that essay, he believed in "the moral law, that no human being can arbitrarily dominate over another without grievous damage to his own nature".



		<p>While it can't be denied that Huxley reiterated views in that essay that would now be considered racist and misogynistic. However, to consider that these views, taken out of the context of his times, can justify condemning his character and dismissing the massive and positive contributions made by this extraordinary person, is shameful.</p> <p>The Huxley Building should retain its name, and Huxley's bust should remain where it sits.</p>
59		<p>In 2008 I passed to Anne Barrett , College Archivist and Corporate Records Manager all my student notes [REDACTED] together with a booklet written to provide "Context of the Time", The time being 1957 to 1962. It is to this that I refer.</p> <p>If this booklet is of use to you in your "Project" please use it , I have a further copy if the archive has not retained it. Any comments that I have on your team's analysis would strictly reflect these views so the booklet is the most direct way of communication them to you.</p> <p>Imperial was pivotal in my on-going life. It bears heavily on all that followed. In brief this is: [REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED] Then retirement.</p> <p>All this could not have happened without IC as my booklet tried to set out. <b>Education is what remains when you have forgotten what you have learned.</b> Rigour, Stamina, use of Principals, deep suspicion of empiricism and beware of convention.</p>
60		<p>I think it is outrageous that Imperial should even consider re naming the Huxley building and should it do so I shall cancel all associations with Imperial. One cannot re write or attempt to re write history</p>
61		<p>I have just read the email from Alice Gast and the associated report from the History Group.</p> <p>I'm shocked at this approach by the college to somehow sanitise and dissociate itself from its past. I see no value in scouring the past for 'perceived' indiscretions from former staff/benefactors, especially when these are measured against current values. Based on the proposals, to be recognised by the college you now need to be born outside the UK or be female. The college should celebrate the achievements of its staff and students, irrespective of their gender, nationality, or religion.</p> <p>When studying at Imperial, I paid precisely zero attention to the name of any building or space. I suspect that this is probably true of 99.99% of all former and current students. Building and room names are simply administrative details. Does the college seriously think that prospective students research the history (and past papers) of names associated with buildings! Additionally, as a student of the RSM, the idea that the college might support the defacement of the statues at the entrance is, frankly speaking, quite bonkers. And all this from an institution which should value science and logic far above opinion and rhetoric.</p> <p>If Imperial goes down this path, can I assume that all staff will also immediately surrender any honours from the British Royal Family (because of their association with exploitative regimes), and also any of the historic UK institutions, such as the Royal Academy of Engineering, where former members have inevitably been involved historically exploitative</p>

technologies. You can see by these examples how easy it is to slip into absurdity.

In my view, Imperial should focus all its energies on maintaining its place as a world class place of learning, not on this politically correct nonsense. I'm very proud to have studied at Imperial, but after today's email, I'm sorry to say I feel that a little less.

62

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

		<p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>I do not give my permission for you to publish anything contained in this email.</p>
63	[REDACTED]	<p>I read with amazement the comments on the late Prof W. D. Hamilton</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>That such a fine man, who was by any standards a world citizen, should have his reputation attacked by reference to beliefs in eugenics is odd. [REDACTED] I know of no work or study undertaken which could be labelled as eugenic. I would be grateful if you would clarify what he did that has resulted in this vague, but deeply damaging attack.</p> <p>I think that the attack on Huxley and Hamilton is ridiculous and in the long term will backfire on the members of the committee who have made them. Frankly, whoever made these attacks certainly did not know Bill Hamilton. I for one will have nothing more to do with Imperial College until the threat hanging over the names and reputations of Hamilton and Huxley have been removed. Have you even considered the hurt you are inflicting on Bill's family? By launching this attack on the dead who cannot defend themselves you are following the classical path used by German Nazis, Soviet Communists, McCarthyism etc. The next stage will be to ban folk like me who cite Bill's work and stand up to defend him. The fact that you need to assert that freedom of speech will be defended suggests that this will not be the case. This should be simply be assumed as an unassailable truth.</p>
64	[REDACTED]	<p>thank you for the thorough historical report.</p> <p>I am an Alumni and would like to give you Feedback concerning the potential renaming of the Beit Quad: I think it helps a lot more to point out the questionable issues rather than rename. If you just change the name, there is no reminder of the issues. I do like the idea of a plaque or something like that because it will make people think. The scientific achievements still stand, it is the person that you have to draw attention to in that respect. Great idea.</p>
65	[REDACTED]	<p>Whilst I recognise the good work undertaken by the Group I am concerned that the College is responding to a 'fashion' which, I believe, is not the modus operandi of the majority. The College is entering a minefield. That is clearly not the issue for the Group as they have been directed by the College to investigate.</p> <p>I like the idea of identifying new people whose names might be remembered in the future. This would clearly be a moving review.</p> <p>However where rooms or buildings have been named historically after various</p>

		<p>benefactors, alumni, etc. it is important for the Group to reflect on why the names were chosen for a particular building in the context of the time when the names were applied. Unless the person concerned brings the College into disrepute by some subsequent event, discovery or action then I believe the names should remain. It seems to me that Huxley is a prime example when, at the time, the excellence of his work was recognised by the College Governors by naming a building after him. We should do the same today. Unless information about Huxley has been unearthed which would have changed the views of the then Governors, we have no right to overrule their decision. By all means put their decision in context for the people to read, but, in my opinion, change is not appropriate or we would effectively be rewriting history.</p>
66		<p>I was dismayed to read many of the proposals in the above report and in particular the proposed renaming of buildings and removal of statues just because the College's benefactors were part of a society whose norms do not sit comfortably with today's mores. By all means provide an interpretation of the background that matches the current political correctness but do not try to wipe out history – the past must only be judged in its historical context. By pandering to (and anticipating) complaints of a vocal minority, the College demeans itself. Such behaviour only serves to encourage those who wish to curtail our freedom of expression as has happened recently at Sussex University.</p> <p>The manner in which the Beit fortune was made would not be acceptable today but it is hypocritical to just airbrush it out whilst continuing to use the facilities it provided. This is the thin end of a very large wedge. There are numerous instances where funding has been provided by companies and organisations whose activities are not acceptable to many – tobacco, “big” pharma, defence, petrochemical - the list is potentially endless as nothing is completely innocent when multiple end use is considered. Is Imperial to refuse future support from any such sources or pretend it never happened in the past?</p> <p>I was even more disturbed to read that “the College’s name featured in our discussions”; Beit today Imperial tomorrow?</p> <p>If this nonsense proceeds in full I shall rescind my legacy to the College and I suspect many other alumni and Queens Tower Society members will feel the same.</p>
67		<p>As a graduate of  can I register my protest and sense of dismay at reading about Imperial College's recommendation to 'cancel' Henry Huxley by removing his bust from the college premises and renaming the building that bears his name.</p> <p>Huxley's ideas of 'race' are obviously now outdated and problematic, even noxious to the modern eye - in that respect he was a victim of the lack of scientific development at that time.</p> <p>In championing the precedence of objective analysis of facts over prevalent societal beliefs, however, he made an absolutely fundamental and timeless contribution to scientific practice - and displayed phenomenal personal courage in doing so.</p> <p>Every time a Creationist or Climate Change denier chooses to trash the authority of science, we can think of Huxley's remarkable example in bravely and single-mindedly advocating evidence over convenience of thought. Opponents of 'racist' models of human ability have as much to thank him for that as anyone. I hope a broader and respectful sense of his legacy will be fully taken into account when decisions around busts and building names are made.</p>

		<p>If you aren't yet completely exhausted by this topic, can I offer up the following suggestion in response to your kind offer. This comes from a discussion with my son, [REDACTED] so some intergenerational thought has gone into it!</p> <p>We appreciate that Huxley's hypotheses on race and intelligence appear problematic, not to say disturbing to a modern audience. This albeit his views might be a little more understandable when the context of them is fully considered.</p> <p>Without trying to exonerate him completely, we suggest he can be best seen to represent a tradition within which not enough forethought was given to the societal implications of scientific opinion.</p> <p>In this we see here an opportunity - for the college to revisit and reframe Huxley's legacy by co-naming the Huxley building along with another scientist to reflect the importance of the historical dimension of scientific understanding.</p> <p>Naomi Oreskes is an Imperial College alumni and a distinguished historian of science who has critiqued the way that Climate Science and other environmental and health controversies have been publicly (mis)communicated. She admirably reflects the more contemporary side of science that is concerned with holding scientific communication accountable within a socially responsible framework. The renamed Huxley-Oreskes building would be a fitting tribute to the contrasting contributions of these two figures.</p>
68	[REDACTED]	<p>As an Imperial Alumni [REDACTED] I read with shock and horror in the press of your proposals to bow to the current trend: denying history and white-washing the past by renaming certain buildings.</p> <p>Imperial is rightly proud of its rich history, and I believe we should regard our illustrious founders in their historical context rather than judging them by present values. It is worth bearing in mind that future generations may well look back in horror on current achievements by eminent individuals and be tempted to erase all memory of them for thinking or connections that, although perfectly acceptable today, may shock them.</p> <p>If you are bent on yielding to the weight of current opinion from a small but vociferous minority, and denying, and attempting to erase, the rich and varied history of the founders of this illustrious institution, perhaps you should first consider removing the word "Imperial", with all its connotations of empire and conquest, from the name of the college.</p> <p>I would not support this action, but it is the logical conclusion of the process you are recommending. It requires a certain amount of research, and intent, to be offended by the names of Beit and Huxley - names that are meaningless to the vast majority of those who read them. Imperial is a term abhorred by many, and a constant reminder that although founded for altruistic reasons, the college was itself, like much of Victorian Britain, funded using very dirty money - the fruit of empire, conquest and repression.</p> <p>I do not see the need for, and vehemently oppose the renaming existing buildings. However I would support any new buildings being named for the persons you highlight in your report. That being said, the safe route would surely be to cease to name any building after an individual and name them for contributions to science, engineering or medicine. In which case of course you would have to rename all the buildings in the college.</p>
69	[REDACTED]	<p>I am most grateful for your e-mail letter about the review which the College has undertaken of the historic links with the Beit family, whose endowments played such a major part in the founding of Imperial and at subsequent stages in the development of the institution. [REDACTED]</p>

[REDACTED] are much disturbed to learn of the recommendation made by the Independent History Group that the public links with the family and its benefactions should now be suppressed. It is hard to see how the Group, with its declared intention to consult with all 'partners' of the college, failed in preparing its recommendations to have any contact with representatives of the Beit family, or with the Beit Trust with which the college has had frequent association in recent years over the admission of African postgraduate scholars selected by the Trust. In this connection may I also point out that the statement in category A of the report that the future of the separate Beit Scientific Scholarships endowment, established by Sir Otto Beit, is 'under review' with the Beit Trust is incorrect; no contact has as yet been made with the Secretary of the Trust, [REDACTED], on this question.

[REDACTED] I would welcome the opportunity you have suggested to discuss these significant issues [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] As background for our discussion I believe it would help if I set out a number of points which should serve to illustrate the significant and contemporary elements, both personal and substantive, which continue to characterise Imperial's Beit connection, and [REDACTED]

A) Ongoing associations between Imperial and Beit benefactions and individuals:

- significant Beit financial support has been forthcoming to the College on at least one subsequent occasion since Sir Otto Beit funded the construction of the Beit Quad building in the years after the death of his brother, Mr Alfred Beit. As recently as 1985-1990 the trustees of the Beit Trust made a succession of generous financial grants to bolster the depleted funds which underpinned the Beit Scientific Scholarships fund, in response to a request for assistance by Imperial College. [REDACTED] Sir Alfred Lane Beit, was elected an Honorary Fellow of Imperial in 1993, partly in recognition of this considerable benefaction from the Trust;

B) The ongoing and close Beit engagement with the countries of southern Africa to the present day:

- in addition to the major endowments made in the Will of Mr. Alfred Beit for higher education establishments in both the United Kingdom and South Africa, a significant portion of his wealth was specifically directed through the establishment of the Beit Trust towards the benefit of the peoples of three southern African countries, today's Zimbabwe, Zambia and Malawi. This charity with offices in Woking and Harare, [REDACTED] continues to disburse some £2.5 million each year in support of new and existing ventures for the development of health, education, social welfare and wildlife conservation. They include a major programme of scholarships in universities in the UK and South Africa, and in which Imperial has shared. Large scale grants have been made in recent years towards the construction of children's hospitals in all three countries. These carry the Beit name and include a hospital in Bulawayo opened this summer by the President of Zimbabwe. This record demonstrates how resources accumulated from the original mining activities of Alfred Beit continue to be returned to the benefit of the people of Southern Africa. It should also be stressed that the public association of the Beit name with this wide range of projects across the region arouses no criticism in the countries concerned - rather the contrary.

[REDACTED]

I hope that these points will afford a clearer picture of the positive contributions which the Beit connection has made, and continues to make to Imperial College as well as to beneficial development in southern Africa. I believe that they justify a reconsideration by the College of the recommendation by the History Group in Category A of its report that the long-established Beit connection be in effect disowned, and hope that they will be taken into account in the next stage of your campus consultations on the History Group's report.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

## Submission 69 - Attachment

The charge against Alfred Beit is “due to the treatment of workers during the expansion of the Kimberley mines”. This is a reference to the compound system that was instituted in 1885, where the African workers were confined to a sort of barracks for work periods of 3 months or 6 months at a time.

Standard works covering labour conditions at Kimberley are:

Turrell (1987): Capital and Labour on the Kimberley Diamond Fields, 1871-1890

Worger (1987): South Africa's City of Diamonds.

More recent is:

Harries (1994): Work, Culture, and Identity: Migrant Laborers in Mozambique and South Africa, c. 1860-1910

Harries' work references Worger and Tyrell, and was favourably reviewed by Worger himself, as well as by (*inter alia*) Kathleen Sheldon and Tshidiso Maloka. Pages 68-79 provide a detailed discussion of the compounds.

Rotberg (1988): The Founder, a biography of Rhodes, also contains some useful information.

An unpleasant but seemingly necessary feature of the compounds was the thorough body searches for secreted diamonds. Most notable was the purging of miners before leaving the compound, after their 3m or 6m stint. This used castor oil and isolation. Before the compounds were instituted, it was estimated that about one-third of diamonds were stolen and sold on the black market (Illegal Diamond Buying). The proportion of IDB fell on introduction of the compounds, because it was very difficult to get the diamonds out. But it was still attempted on a large scale. Trevelyan (Grand Dukes and Diamonds, p66) states that up to 1901 the purging alone yielded on average 100 thousand carats per year.

de Beers obtained the monopoly at Kimberley in 1888. Because of a relatively high death rate, primarily from pneumonia, exacerbated by overcrowding, they introduced improvements to the compounds in 1903. The temperature difference between the hot conditions in the underground mines and the cold conditions on exiting outside was another contributory factor to pneumonia. It was notable that death rates in the compounds were lower than in the town of Kimberley (Harries, p. 78).

Perhaps the most interesting comment on conditions in the compounds is provided by John Tengo Jabavu (1859-1921), a Xhosa born in Healdtown, Eastern Cape. He was a political activist and the editor of South Africa's first newspaper to be written in Xhosa, Isigidimi Sama Xhosa. He was posthumously awarded the Order of Luthuli (Silver), one of South Africa's highest honours, by Thabo Mbeki in 2006, and so is a national hero. He visited Kimberley in 1906 and in his paper Imvo Zabantsundu (5 June 1906) he considered the compound system “as near perfection as it was possible to make it”.

On the website of the President of South Africa, Jabavu “is remembered as one of the most influential Africans of the 19<sup>th</sup> century”:

<https://www.thepresidency.gov.za/national-orders/recipient/john-tengo-jabavu-1859-1921>

Some other accounts corroborate Jabavu's opinion on the compounds.

Josiah Matthews, a local physician and parliamentarian, was pleasantly surprised by the quality of the Central Company's compound in 1885: “I found a large yard some 150 yards square enclosed partly by buildings and the remainder by sheets of iron ten feet high. Within this enclosure were sleeping rooms for 500 Kafirs, a magnificent kitchen and pantry, large baths, guardroom, dispensary and sick-



ward, store and mess-rooms" (Josiah Wright Matthews, *Incwadi Yami: Or Twenty Years' Personal Experience in South Africa* [New York, 1887], p. 218)

James Bryce visited in 1895 and commented positively in describing the compounds as "the most striking sight at Kimberley, and one unique in the world". (James Bryce, *Impressions of South Africa* [New York, 1898], p. 204).

In 1906 the missionary publication *Outlook* stated: "The de Beers Company have set an example of just and reasonable treatment of their Native employees."

The churchman W. C. Willoughby stated that the compound system was a "vast improvement upon the condition of affairs existing at Kimberley before it was adopted".

The wages were the highest in South Africa, and "it was with some justification that the manager of De Beers claimed in 1888 that 'our natives are better paid than the miners in any of the European countries' " (Harries p. 69).

Because workers were there voluntarily, they were in a position to negotiate conditions. This included changing the shift from 2 x 12h to 3 x 8h. The 8 hour shift was introduced at Kimberley in 1892, the same year that a similar proposal for British coal mines was rejected by Parliament.

70	[REDACTED]	<p>I support this initiative to review the history of Imperial College's from its early days and to revisit its legacy.</p> <p>I agree with many of the proposals which the Group has put forward, however I feel it has been too severe on Thomas Huxley. He was a distinguished scientist and closely related to Institutions which evolved into Imperial College.</p> <p>His initial ideas on race are certainly not considered acceptable today but were normal at the time and were part of the intense scientific discussions following on from Darwin. Freedom to express ideas should not be censored. His ideas on race evolved and matured later and this is important to recognise. His actions against slavery and in general his support for the advancement of black people should be set against his earlier published views. A forensic trawl through the actions and writings of most prominent Victorians would probably find unsatisfactory connections with or reference to what we now perceive to be errors relating to race.</p> <p>Let us take a wider more generous view on Thomas Huxley and his achievements and give him credit for these while still noting his earlier comments on racial equality.</p> <p>In the view of this concerned former post graduate student at Imperial College, a classification under B would be more appropriate for Thomas Huxley than A as is now proposed. He is significantly different to the others proposed in the A classification.</p> <p>Thank you for favourably considering these views.</p>
71	[REDACTED]	<p>It is difficult to say which is the more egregiously painful aspect of your recommendations and statements regarding the removal of certain busts and the renaming of venues at Imperial College - the fatuousness of the 'reasoning' behind them (Huxley, a vocal abolitionist 'might now be called 'racist' in as much as he used racial divisions..') or the mental gymnastics required to inform the disingenuousness of the ensuing assertion that what is proposed is 'very much not a "cancel culture" approach'.</p> <p>The gross insult to undergraduates - that such heavy handed steps are required lest they find themselves unable to grasp the complexity of context and moral nuance - displays staggering levels of condescension, matched only by the ridicule you are inviting for Imperial College,</p> <p>I have little doubt that in time - be that sooner or much later - these likely actions will be looked back on with a mixture of bewilderment (that a once serious body such as Imperial should have allowed itself to be so easily seduced by such risible 'arguments') and embarrassment. Sadly, by then, the damage will have been done.</p> <p>Please stop this.</p>
72	[REDACTED]	<p>A very good afternoon to you!</p> <p>I am writing to express how depressed I am to hear that the deplorable fashion of altering monuments and building names at the behest of a political ideology has now spread to my old college. I am certainly not the only one to be dismayed. It is even more depressing to see that the chief instigator of this appears to be Professor Gast herself.</p> <p>The removal of statues or the renaming of buildings might be a small matter in itself, but this practice is part of wider political movement which is motivated by so called identity politics. Not only is this movement extremely divisive – it also sets its ideology against the scientific values of the enlightenment – the values that Huxley in particular represents. This ideology is to be deplored – and treated with extreme scepticism.</p>

		<p>I also note that there are to be scholarships and studentships which are open only to people of a certain race. This is part of the same movement and amounts to straight out racism. If there is to be an answer to racism, the answer certainly isn't more racism. 40 years or more of affirmative action and the like in the US has been an unmitigated disaster not least for black people – why are you trying to introduce a version of it here?</p> <p>I was particularly concerned about two comments in the report:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. "When thinking about how names may be perceived, the perspectives of all our stakeholders should be considered, rather than just a majority."</li> </ol> <p>This is reminiscent of the case of the statue of Thomas Guy at Guy's Hospital. A consultation was held which ignored the fact that the great majority considered that the statue should not be removed. So the consultation was just a sham, then! The activists are determined to have their way regardless.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. "The process of naming and renaming buildings should not be seen as an extraordinary event but rather part of the normal course of operations, reflecting the evolving nature of our activities and the ever-growing number and range of contributions to be celebrated."</li> </ol> <p>In others words, don't think for a minute that they will be satisfied if you give them what they want – they will be back for more!</p> <p>How were the contributors to this report chosen? Is this a self-selecting group? How much diversity of opinion is there in the group?</p> <p>The most recent product of this political movement is the hounding of Prof. Kathleen Stock from her job for stating biological facts. She was not the first and will not the last until people start resisting. Thankfully, there are signs that some are prepared to stand up to it. This should be a wake up call. Don't be woke – be awake!</p> <p>Delay this for five years. The tide of fashion will have turned by then - I hope.</p>
73	<p>Attachment included below</p>	<p>Please find attached a letter for your attention, which I shall also send by mail.</p> <p>I hope that you received my email. I did not really expect a reply.</p> <p>However, since writing it, I have come across a number of articles which show how short-sighted a move by Imperial College to cancel his name would be; I attach two of these and hope you find them of interest.</p> <p><a href="https://pandasthumb.org/archives/2021/10/creationists-social-justice-advocates-unite-take-down-huxley.html">https://pandasthumb.org/archives/2021/10/creationists-social-justice-advocates-unite-take-down-huxley.html</a></p> <p><a href="https://www.imperial.ac.uk/media/imperial-college/administration-and-support-services/equality/public/history-group/Appendix-10---Huxley-and-Racism-by-Adrian-Desmond.pdf">https://www.imperial.ac.uk/media/imperial-college/administration-and-support-services/equality/public/history-group/Appendix-10---Huxley-and-Racism-by-Adrian-Desmond.pdf</a></p>

1<sup>st</sup> November 2021

Professor Alice Gast,  
President,  
Imperial College,  
Level 1 Faculty Building  
South Kensington Campus  
London SW7 2AZ



Dear Professor Gast,

**Re Professor Thomas Henry Huxley**

I understand that following a report by Professor Nilay Shah, who chairs the College's History Group, a building named after Thomas Henry Huxley is to be renamed due to his racist beliefs about human intelligence. This proposal is based on Huxley's essay 'Emancipation – Black and White', which embraces a racial hierarchy of intelligence, apparent 'scientific racism' that 'fed the dangerous and false ideology of eugenics; legacies of which are still felt today', notwithstanding that fact that it also endorses 'equal natural rights of Black people' and argues to 'give women the same civil and political rights as men', some 53 years before British women attained the vote (1).

I also understand that the report also recommends that a bust of Huxley, the first Dean of the Royal College of Science, should also be removed from display and placed in the college archives.

I am sure you do not need me to list the manifold contributions Huxley made to 19<sup>th</sup> century biology or the major roles he played in the development and acceptance of the theory of evolution, as an abolitionist, a reformer of education, and a lecturer on science to working people.

The many arguments against attempting to cancel Huxley have been well-rehearsed (2), but here I would emphasise that the views held by Huxley, however repugnant we might find them today, were widespread among the scientific community at that time, and the College is now falling in the trap of applying current moral standards to 19<sup>th</sup> century thought.

The prevalence of this view is best exemplified by examining what Charles Darwin himself thought about the subject: Darwin, a man of his time, divided humanity into distinct races according to differences in skin, eye, or hair colour, and was convinced that evolution was progressive, and that the white races—especially the Europeans—were evolutionarily more advanced than the black races, proposing race differences and a racial hierarchy (3).

As for gender, Darwin espoused the view that sexual selection gave men 'more inventive genius' with males evolving strength and power, together providing an alleged biological basis for the superiority of the male (4). He endorsed his cousin Francis Galton's view of hereditary genius transmitted down the male line, and nodded towards eugenics.

Rose (5) has likened asking such questions about group differences in intelligence to research on phlogiston in an era of modern chemistry, which illustrates the utter futility of judging past actions by today's standards, and of uncritical adherence to present-day attitudes, interpreting past events in terms of modern values and concepts. Pursing this view to its logical conclusion, Imperial College, which celebrated Darwin's bicentenary in 2009 by holding a series of events to celebrate his life and work, and whose alumnus Michael Dixon oversaw the development of The Darwin Centre at London's Natural History Museum, would advocate the expunging of Darwin's name from public view - a truly herculean task (6).

Equivalence of view would therefore demand that, together with Huxley, Charles Darwin should also be cancelled: I would ask you, therefore, is this a proposal you, and the College, would seriously entertain?

Professor Gast, Thomas Henry Huxley was a giant among British biologists, and to attempt to cancel his name because he was a man of his time, merely bowing to the warped concept of presentism, will bring Imperial College into disrepute, and expose it to ridicule. I would strongly urge you to resist the current tendency to cancel Huxley's name from the College for the specious reasons presented to you by Professor Nilay Shah, and the College's History Group.

I note that staff and students are to be consulted over the recommendations before the college decides what action to take early next year. I would ask that Fellows of the College, such as myself, should be included in any such a consultation.

Yours sincerely,



## References

1. T. H Huxley (1865) Emancipation–Black and White  
<https://mathcs.clarku.edu/huxley/CE3/B&W.html>
2. Nicholas Joseph Matzke (2021). Creationists and advocates of social justice unite to take down T.H. Huxley, a leader in educational inclusion. <https://osf.io/4smwv/>
3. Rose S. Darwin, race and gender. EMBO Rep. 2009;10(4):297-298.  
doi:10.1038/embor.2009.40

## Submission 73 - Attachment

4. Darwin C (1871) The Descent of Man and Selection in Relation to Sex. London, UK: Murray
5. Rose S (2009) NO: science and society do not benefit. Nature 457: 786–788
6. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_things\\_named\\_after\\_Charles\\_Darwin](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_things_named_after_Charles_Darwin)

CC John Allan  
Chair of Council  
Imperial College London  
Level 1 Faculty Building  
South Kensington Campus  
London SW7 2AZ

Professor Ian Walmsley  
Provost  
[provost@imperial.ac.uk](mailto:provost@imperial.ac.uk)

Amanda Wolthuizen  
Director of Public Affairs and Chief of Staff  
[a.wolthuizen@imperial.ac.uk](mailto:a.wolthuizen@imperial.ac.uk)

Professor Nilay Shah  
Department of Chemical Engineering  
[n.shah@imperial.ac.uk](mailto:n.shah@imperial.ac.uk)

74	[REDACTED]	<p>Very interested in this development. Have seen in the paper a report about renaming the Huxley Building.</p> <p>Was a bit confused as, to me, that would be a splendid London-Venetian terracotta construction on Exhibition Road, now part of the V &amp; A. In the 1940's it was home to the Maths Department. Had never realised there was anew building similarly titled.</p> <p>Huxley was complicated and his views on the world's tribes are pretty unpleasant but scientists at the time, Galton especially, even the sainted Darwin, were not to be judged by modern standards. If you do rename the present building I hope you find a suitable candidate.</p> <p>My time at Imperial [REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED] Only two women in the class. A woman principal unthinkable. I was sad when IC broke away from London University [REDACTED] so my education was broadened no end.</p>
75	[REDACTED]	<p>Many thanks for publishing the History report. [REDACTED] I have thoughts on 2 main aspects.</p> <p>A lot of this issue is about identity politics, and I cannot truly address except in the context of my own identity.</p> <p><b>Preface:</b> Naming of buildings is extremely important. It is much more important than statues (in my experience). As an example - [REDACTED] a building with a statue of William of Orange outside of it [REDACTED] and never noticed [REDACTED] I only came across this fact in the aftermath of the Colston incident. Colston sold his shares in the slaving company to William of Orange. [REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED] He gave his name to an organisation that exists for bigotry to this day [REDACTED]. My point is - even I did not notice this statue. That is not to detract from anyone else's experience of statues. My real point is - building names really matter.</p> <p><b>Huxley:</b> I support the renaming of this building. I think there are at least 2 cogent arguments:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>'We broke it, we fix it'</b>. Geoffrey Palmer, Chancellor of Heriot-Watt and who leads the University of Glasgow history and reparations (several years ahead, and first in UK) makes the point that racism was led by, and often justified by, the thought leaders of the day, in universities. Therefore, it is morally incumbent on universities to lead the clean-up of thinking in the 21st century. In many respects - 'we broke it, we fix it'. TH Huxley, as "Darwin's bulldog", was a thought-leader in evolutionary genetics. If he made statements about racial inferiority, they really counted. Related thought-patterns reached a zenith in 1930s Germany. Palmer himself names Hume and Kant as thought-leaders in societal racism, but the argument is the same. Indeed - it actually a much stronger one with Huxley and conversely with a modern university with a major thought-leaders in medicine and biology. There is the potential to lead societal thought in a more truthful and equitable direction. This not a complete repudiation of everything about TH Huxley (or the family of scientists) but a recognition that there is special significance to a named building.</li> <li><b>Not dissuading Black students.</b> Retaining the name would be off-putting. [REDACTED] Comprehensive, pretty ordinary, [REDACTED] There was widespread recognition that 'Oxbridge was not for us'. This contributes to the skewed proportions. On that basis, I think that a key Outreach step would be renaming a building that has the connotations that 'Huxley' now has.</li> </ol> <p><b>Abdus Salaam.</b> I am amazed there is nothing named after him. It was news to me that he was even an Imperial academic. He obtained one of the most prominent Nobel Prizes in history.</p>

**Combined solution: Rename Huxley Building to Abdus Salaam Building.** I note that the Huxley building is not biology-specific or medicine-specific and could easily be renamed 'out of Faculty'. **I would like to propose renaming the Huxley Building to the Abdus Salaam Building.** Not least on the grounds that when it comes to original work (rather than arguing for Darwin's ideas, ie basically being a vocal Darwin-follower) Abdus Salaam was a far more important thinker. But also because Huxley is a name that cannot be afforded on a building.

However, I approach these issues by analogy, not by direct experience. These views would therefore be subordinate to those coming from people who are more directly affected by the slave trade.

Try asking Geoffrey Palmer.....

As a follow-on - I realised that the Huxley Building actually houses Mathematics - not anything generic and definitely not biomedicine. So a rename to the Abdus Salaam Building would make even more sense as Abdus Salaam's outstanding achievements were in Theoretical Physics / Applied Mathematics.

76

I'd like to comment on the "Community Report from the History Group" that was emailed to alumni last week. I did my [redacted] at Imperial College.

In the report's Introduction, Prof. Gast writes that "We acknowledge that our name came into existence at a certain time and we do not wish to erase our history". I agree that history needs to be viewed in context, but I feel the rest of the report does not seek to do that.

The recommendation that shocked me the most was the proposal to rename the Huxley building and remove the bust of TH Huxley. I found this recommendation to be a misguided expression of 'cancel culture'. TH Huxley was a great scientist and one that the College should be really proud of. The inability of some people to place him into a historical context should not be what leads the College forward. Renaming the building would be an insult to the great work of TH Huxley, and I find the suggestion ironic given how TH Huxley had to fight against dogmatism and performative moral outrage in his own time.

I was also disappointed by the prospect of the statues at the front of the RSM being "reinterpreted by an artist". If the History Group wants to make their opinions known then add a plaque, but please don't deface an old and beautiful building.



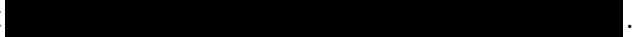
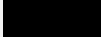
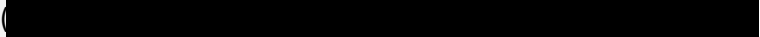
Apart from those recommendations, I found some of the guiding principles outlined on page 6 to be questionable:

- The renaming of a building is an extraordinary event, and it is not something that happens in the "normal course of operations". This report attempts to use the re-naming of buildings for political purposes, which is itself extraordinary.
- The guiding principles involve a lot of subjective opinions being taken, but do not specify by who. Who gets to decide what "inclusive" means? There are some good interpretations of that word, but there are also some flawed interpretations as well. Who gets to judge historical context? Who gets to decide what the College "stands for"? If these opinions are to be declared by the Implementation and Recognition committees described, then who is on them and how are they selected? This part of the report raised more questions than answers for me.

Finally, I was disturbed to learn that the College is funding racially-restricted scholarships for students based on skin colour. I think this kind of 'reverse racism' is wrong and I do not support it.

I understand that the College has been embroiled in a lot of controversy this year with the



		<p>bullying scandal involving Prof. Gast, and that re-naming buildings might offer a convenient distraction to that. I assume that is why this report has been commissioned and is being discussed in such a public way. However, I am disappointed to see Imperial College embroiled in yet another controversy. I do not think this serves the reputation of Imperial well.</p> <p>I do not support this report, and I strongly disagree with the proposal to rename the Huxley building.</p>
77		<p>In response to the proposed changes, I have to be direct and say that I am dismayed by these proposals taken on the back of a council of only 21 members' views. This is a dangerous game you are playing with the university's reputation. Once you start allowing a rewriting of history to the preferences of a select few, you will find that this will continue, and you will lose all control of the movement.</p> <p>Firstly, it fools no-one that the proposal has neglected to consider changing the name of the institution. If anything is deemed to be immoral in the current climate, it is empire and all that it stands for. Empire is synonymous with Imperial College's name, and the only reason I would suggest that it was not changed was that it has too high a prestige and all those academics making these proposals know that the brand affects their careers and standing. Taking a brave stand is easy if the only implications of the action are borne by others. Removing statues and renaming buildings of people long dead is easy as there appears to be no cost, but how about those proposing the changes bear some of that cost and rename the institution – maybe South Kensington College, although I'm sure that Kensington may have offensive connotations that offend some that I am unaware of.</p> <p>Secondly, I find it hard to understand how those Imperial alumni and current Imperial staff and students that have benefitted from the supposed ill-gotten gains of the Beit brothers can wash their consciences clean by getting rid of a statues and names. Really this is not a serious conversation that is being had. It is much like the conversation regarding Rhodes at Oriel College Oxford. If Rhodes reputation and standing is so abhorrent, by all means, get rid of the statue, but surely also relinquish his gifts, pay back his endowments, safe in the knowledge that no-one has benefitted from them. This will not happen because the people proposing these measures are cowards, scared of following the principle through, and also because they have a self interest in not paying back the endowments.</p> <p>Thirdly, you can forget about any future endowments, or at least they will be curtailed massively, as no benefactor want his legacy downgraded in the future. Rather donate to institutions that won't smear their reputation or rather don't donate at all. I note the massive expansion of the Imperial Campuses throughout London, so perhaps the University is not concerned with cash at the moment, but we shall see in time. People are not stupid and they have memories so they will not forget decisions made here.</p> <p>Lastly, I am proud to have attended Imperial College, not because of its history but because of the quality of the education, the facilities and the people I have met there. If you try and downgrade the history of institution good and bad by hiding facts in this way, I am no longer interested. If you go through with these proposals, you can delete me from your mailing lists and any future correspondence.</p>
78		<p>Interesting; Very interesting to go through it.</p> <p>I am one of those who studied at IC . I am very delighted to read its history and contributions!</p>
79		<p>As a , I strongly object to the deeply anti-historical, irrational recommendations of removing references to your University's connections to T. H. Huxley. As a person with a well-earned reputation for your scientific achievements, I hope you will recognize the deeply anti-scientific tone of the document that was presented to you. I cannot make the case against their recommendations any better than it is made in the first link, below. Please read it and think about the implications of giving in to these dangerously illiberal 'demands'. Having open and well informed debate about Huxley and his ideas is in the best tradition of your</p>

		<p>college—in the end, such debate will conclude that you and your institution should take pride in your connections to him. The second link gives you access to a historically well-informed understanding of Huxley’s views about race in their proper, historical context.</p> <p><a href="https://www.spiked-online.com/2021/10/30/the-woke-counter-enlightenment/">https://www.spiked-online.com/2021/10/30/the-woke-counter-enlightenment/</a>  <a href="https://osf.io/4smwv/">https://osf.io/4smwv/</a></p>
80	<p>██████████</p>	<p>Thank you for your efforts to looking over the history of Imperial College (IC), and to recognize important people and historical events that might assist in planning the way forward with the development of the future of Imperial College.</p> <p>██████████ there is one unique aspect that could be a significant event and may have had an impact on the development of part of the programs at IC in the Engineering School. That event was the relatively short-lived Athlone Fellowship Scheme which, from 1950 to 1970 brought 810 young Canadian graduate engineers to the UK for further education, either at a UK company, or University. In total, 810 Canadians were ██████████ and the most popular destination chosen for at least one year by far was Imperial College, 304 out of the 810 Athlone Fellows. As a result of their experience at IC, most returned to Canada and often played important parts in the growth and maturity of Canadian technological development.</p> <p>As far as I know, there is not any recognition of the Athlone Fellows who attended IC, nor of the importance of the Athlone Fellowship Scheme to either IC, or to the Board of Trade which was the UK organization that established the Fellowship.</p> <p>I might suggest that some recognition might be given to some such recognition, perhaps as a wall-mounted scroll with the names of all the 304 Athlone Fellowship recipients who attended IC. ██████████</p> <p>██████████ he document, entitled:  'A Short History of the Athlone Fellowship - One of the Finest Examples of UK-Canada Cooperation in Engineering Education'  can be accessed on the internet, at this site: <a href="http://era.library.ualberta.ca/items/460b4a54-0ffc-4140-8ca6-5364a55404bf">era.library.ualberta.ca/items/460b4a54-0ffc-4140-8ca6-5364a55404bf</a>  Or you can access this site by going to Wikipedia, and following the External Links in the article on the Athlone Fellowship.  I look forward to your response.</p>
81	<p>██████████</p> <p><i>Attachment included below</i></p>	<p>I read with dismay Professor Gast’s e- mail to alumni on the topic of learning from our past. We appear to be entering into the grip of the revisionists and the “woke”</p> <p>I have been proud of my ██████████ association with City and Guilds and Imperial. I was proud to achieve entrance to such an august institution and proud to receive my degree three years later. In following years I have again been proud to be associated with Imperial’s continuing achievements, have advised youngsters to apply to attend Imperial and have highly rated job applicants with Imperial degrees.</p> <p>That pride is now being challenged. The report’s content ill befits a scientific institution which has taken students from across the world and spread benefits across this earth. The report’s focus and language is not that of careful scientific enquiry, relying far too heavily on judgements made in today’s context of woke- ism and denigration of the UK’s past.</p> <p>I attach my reaction to the report we have been directed to. The report’s tone and recommendations sit ill with me and are an unwelcome parting gift from Professor Gast’s Presidency.</p> <p>It appears we alumni have been faced with a fait accompli. The composition of the committee was decided long ago and some of the findings have been placed in the public</p>

domain of the Times Education Supplement by Professor Gast herself. Too late to avoid the storm, but still time to stand back and judge more carefully. Just as the report critiques past figures, we need a critical assessment of its findings before embarking on implementation.

Please confirm receipt of this message. With great sadness and forebodings

## Imperial College- Learning from our Past.

### **Introduction.**

An exercise to learn from our past should always be illuminating. Of course, today soon becomes the past, which means that today's views are not necessarily enduring. Certainty in historical judgement is doomed to be short lived.

Such searches often claim to bring new facts to light. Sadly, in many cases it is more usual that old facts, known at the time have been lost, and today's searchers have brought only their current viewpoints and judgements to bear in "interpretation".

By their nature, most such researchers have axes to grind- whether they be the noble ones of increasing knowledge, or the less altruistic of promoting their own profiles, seeking research funding or pressing an opinion on the reader.

In current times we are much aware of the tyranny of the shouters- those who shout loudest get widest exposure of their views. In reporting the views the general media are more interested in the "shock, horror" aspects than in exploring the validity of the views or claims. Thus the ordinary citizen is cowed into accepting views that are not his own.

### **The Standards to be Set**

The report currently being evaluated focuses on the people who have made, funded or influenced the college's development. The focus seems particularly on the morality or righteousness of such figures.

Perhaps a good starting point is to recognise that there are indeed very few wholly perfect people in the world's history, if any.

Today it is generally accepted in the western world that chastising children by force is undesirable. One hundred years ago, the head teacher who declared his intent never to use the cane would be seen to be very odd indeed. Today we reflect on whether the caning teacher was in fact deriving personal pleasure from this "abuse" of a child. Yet today's non- caning teacher may instead be using verbal abuse and ridicule as a tool; perhaps to apply discipline or maybe for personal satisfaction. What is the difference between the two examples?

Similar difficulty arises if we were to categorise Alan Turing. There seems little doubt that he was an excellent logician. His practised homosexuality, illegal at the time, bears little on whether we should exalt him as a mathematician, logician or scientist. It seems unlikely that his intellect and industry were because of, or in spite of, homosexuality. Of course, exposing past homosexuals or "child beaters" sells books and newspapers and brings prominence to the "discoverer".

The application of today's mores to yesterday's people is fraught with difficulty. Usually the clearest indication we have of the person's "goodness" or evil intent is that made at the time by that person's own society.

### **Judgements change with Time**

There are huge differences in judgements on major historical figures and their acts and legacy. Depending on one's learnt views one might hail or castigate such as Jesus Christ or Mohammed. Some would accept the infallibility of the judgement of the current Pope. Yet in fifty years' time, with a different Pope those judgements might well change. Which would then be correct? If the latest pronouncement is accepted as the truth, what then do we make of the earlier Pope?

Inevitably, the judgements made today reflect the belief systems of today. How are we to cast certain judgement on figures who lived in a different environment? We can't. All we can logically do is weigh the effects today of their enduring legacy- scientific theories established, gifts or benefactions made- on us today.

Having apparently struggled to judge the persons in the College's history today, how will our judgments appear to those following us one hundred years later? They may reach different views and castigate us for our current judgements. There is little we can do to future proof our judgements

and opinions. We need today, above all, to stand back from today's fashions, pressure groups and seekers for publicity and move prudently and carefully. Above all we should focus on the historical figure's relationship with Imperial at the time and such benefits that accrued since.

**The UK Historical Context.**

There seems to be an unhealthy interest in denigrating this nation's past, particularly quoting exploitation or slavery. Yet in medieval times most of the British population were effectively slaves of the lords and the church. Britons and Britain were probably the most active in suppressing slavery across today's world. The British brought huge improvements in governance, health and standard of living under their rule or protection. Although it is their choice, many nations that left that umbrella have failed to maintain those standards, now fighting internal corruption and reduced life expectations for their growing populations.

Particularly as the "Imperial" institute, we need to celebrate the achievements. As scientists we should lean heavily on fact and less on "interpretation".

**Who Judges?**

With staff, students and alumni of considerable intellect the college needs to carefully weigh the backgrounds of those "experts" charged with this historical review. One would hope that the reviewers were from backgrounds that bear some relationship to the College's activities and membership. Of course minority interests must be heard, but the weight given to them should reflect their place within a larger majority. Specifically, the application of quotas is not appropriate; nor is allowing specialists' views, no matter how genuinely held, to override the common view on what is sensible and equitable.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]


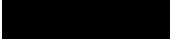

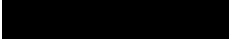

82	[REDACTED]	<p>You are not looking deep enough ..if you do you will find the majority of money that “ built” Imperial came directly or indirectly from questionable sources ..or passed onto benefactors in later years from The Empire /Slavery ( incl industrial slavery in <u>this country</u> in the 17-19th century etc. Slavery was not just Black or abroad ..look at what built the NE/NW of England –and money from that made its way to—and help build London. ( Check out the NE slaves who supplied London ( and IC) coal for example ) Even the streets built in South Kensington will have been part of the issue you are a( part) attempting to address .</p> <p>So the basis of Imperials Full history ( and surrounding buildings and streets ) should in- fact be looked at in full and if necessary buildings that were paid for with such funds pulled down and the name Imperial replaced ..</p> <p>Or alternatively do nothing but don't just pick certain BLM parts of history</p>
83	[REDACTED]	<p>Very disappointing! You certainly have a LOT of explaining to do.</p>
84	[REDACTED]	<p>Woke is not good , learn from history don't try to suppress the facts of the past. Change happens and is good ! Accommodate it and learn from it , but try not to suppress free independent thought , out of a misplaced feeling of guilt.</p>
85	[REDACTED]	<p>So depressing to note that the IC mafia has gone woke.</p>
86	[REDACTED]	<p>Thank you for doing all the work to produce the History Group Report. The President has asked for comments. Here are mine.</p> <p>There are suggestions on pp 8-9 for people who should be celebrated more than they are at present. They all seem amply worthy of celebration, and I hope means will be found to do so. But why are they all from backgrounds that are currently thought to be disadvantaged? If the History Group is attempting to do historical work rather than propaganda, it should consider everyone on their own merits, not as tokens for groups.</p> <p>For example, why has the admirable Sir Alfred Keogh (1857-1936) been neglected, to the extent that the college's recent press release on the appointment of Prof Hugh Brady as the new President describes the latter (completely falsely) as 'the first medic to lead Imperial'?</p> <p>Again, Prof William Watson (1868-1919) is, I believe, the only Fellow of the Royal Society to have been killed by enemy action in the Great War. His bravery and self-sacrifice should be remembered more than they are at his old college, in my view.</p> <p>My own view is that it would be wrong to cancel T.H. Huxley.</p>
87	[REDACTED]	<p>I think the exercise described in the above-mentioned email is misguided and one I don't agree with. As a result, I have cancelled my annual DD payment towards student support.</p>
88	[REDACTED]	<p>Please inform the Rector of the college that I no longer feel proud of my first class degree from imperial college.</p>
89	[REDACTED]	<p>A call from a donor who is a legacy pledger and regular giver and he called me to 'let off steam' (his words) on reading about the articles from the History Group. He said he is not happy with the approach they are taking and feels that we are trying to change history. I don't think he is going to stop supporting the College, he just wanted to express his thoughts to me.</p>



90	[REDACTED]	<p>I recently received your letter and being minded to continue and increase my support was poised to send my new direct debit instruction. I have paused upon reports that the Huxley Building may be renamed pursuant to a recommendation by your "Independent History Group". This beggars belief. I hope you can confirm that is not the case and the press reports are incorrect.</p> <p>I will wait to see what happens before considering any further giving and should that recommendation be enacted then sadly I will not continue to set up my direct debit.</p>
91	[REDACTED]	<p>You may find this useful. [REDACTED]</p> <p>"History is not there for you to like or dislike. It is there for you to learn from. And if it offends you, even better, because you are less likely to repeat it. History is not yours to change or destroy."</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px; text-align: center;"> <p>With all due respect, please read this, then read it again. Then teach it to your children and grandchildren.</p>  <p>History is not there for you to like or dislike. It is there for you to learn from. And if it offends you, even better, because you are less likely to repeat it. History is not yours to change or destroy.</p> </div>
92	[REDACTED]	<p>I wanted to update you on our ideas for responding to the recommendation from the History Group to celebrate the achievements of Constance Fligg Tipper. As you know, we already have a prize named after her, and I think [REDACTED] may as well . We had a discussion about this earlier this week at [REDACTED]</p> <p>We have a number of departmentally-funded PhD scholarships, so we would be keen to name one of these in her honour (a matter of going through the naming process).</p> <p>However in order to raise awareness of this and her contribution, [REDACTED] [REDACTED] student to create a display in the Department (in the main teaching area) outlining this.</p> <p>We'll take this forward, but hope this is a positive response to the report.</p>



		<p>A number of discussions have taken place across the Department with various groups who should respond separately to this inbox.</p> <p>I have led a number of discussions with academic staff at formal and informal academic staff meetings. The main points are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- we intend to do more to celebrate the achievements of Constance Tipper: in addition to the prize we will pursue naming a PhD scholarship (possibly aimed at under-represented groups) and we have a project in motion to create a display about her work in our main teaching corridor</li> <li>- there is general consensus that we need to action plaques to explain the context of the statues of Beit and Wernher on the exterior of the Royal School of Mines as soon as possible: while some might support the relocation or modification of the statues, it was felt that this would take a very long time to organise, so that even if this is the final outcome, we still need the plaques in place to show that we are not doing nothing</li> <li>- relatively few in Materials are aware of De La Beche, even some longstanding staff, which surprised me but the links are much closer with [REDACTED] than [REDACTED]</li> </ul>
93	[REDACTED]	<p>I am very supportive of the work you have been doing to uncover and understand the history of the College.</p> <p>I would like to highlight the elephant in the room and that's the name of the College itself. I believe that the time is ripe to reflect on whether the Imperial name is positive, desirable or even acceptable today.</p> <p>There have been lots of surveys about how the British view the Empire (<a href="https://yougov.co.uk/topics/international/articles-reports/2020/03/11/how-unique-are-british-attitudes-empire">https://yougov.co.uk/topics/international/articles-reports/2020/03/11/how-unique-are-british-attitudes-empire</a>) but how do people outside of Britain view it?</p> <p>Is it acceptable for a University that prides itself on being the most international UK University to have a name that reminds us of imperialist exploitation?</p> <p>Does the Imperial name "hinder our ambition to establish a truly inclusive environment which allows all to flourish and to feel at home".</p> <p>Does the strength of the Imperial brand justify keeping a name that is clearly linked to colonialism?</p> <p>These are clearly hard and controversial questions that will elicit very emotive responses, but I believe they need to be addressed.</p>
94	[REDACTED]	<p>We find girls naturally timid, prone to dependence, born conservatives; and we teach them that independence is unladylike; that blind faith is the right frame of mind; and that whatever we may be permitted, and indeed encouraged, to do to our brother, our sister is to be left to the tyranny of authority and tradition. With few insignificant exceptions, girls have been educated either to be drudges, or toys, beneath man, or a sort of angels above him... The possibility that the ideal of womanhood lies neither in the fair saint, nor in the fair sinner; that the female type of character is neither better nor worse than the male; that women are meant neither to be men's guides nor their playthings, but their comrades, their fellows and their equals, so far as nature puts no bar to that equality, does not seem to have entered into the minds of those who have had the conduct of the education of girls."</p> <p>So, agree with Huxley or disagree?</p>







95	[REDACTED]	<p>I have just heard that the 'chillingly named "independent history group", is recommending the renaming of our Thomas Henry Huxley building because of his beliefs, at the time, about human intelligence.</p> <p>I strongly disagree with this wokery.</p> <p>Could I have your views on this please?</p> <p>Unfortunately I can't think of another way to express my possible future actions which doesn't seem like blackmail.</p> <p>If this wokery is not resisted at all levels, there will be no end to these type of proposals.</p> <p>If the Huxley proposal goes through and I don't see enough public resistance to it, by yourselves, I will stop all my donations to the College, and remove it as a beneficiary in my will.</p>
96	[REDACTED]	<p>While most of the History Group's report is worthy and sensible, and to be supported, I'm not comfortable with applying modern morals to historical figures in general, and T.H. Huxley in particular.</p> <p>I have worked in the Huxley building for many years, Huxley is a personal hero of mine (starring in the great Evolutionary debate with Bishop Sam Wilberforce, held in the Oxford University Natural History Museum), and I am proud to work in a building named after such a great man. (btw, Sir Henry De La Beche is another personal hero of mine [REDACTED], so I was very glad to see he merited "no further action").</p> <p>I largely agree with the views in the report's Appendix on Huxley, written by Huxley's biographer, in which he proposes a balanced whole life approach to evaluating fallible historical figures with views we no longer agree with, and concludes that on that basis, T.H. Huxley, aka Darwin's bulldog, was a great scientist, largely progressive (by the only standards that matter - that of his contemporaries), and also showing considerable personal development in his views over the course of his life.</p> <p>As to the core "problem" - Huxley's support for eugenics - practically every Victorian scientist supported the basic assumption that white people were somehow culturally and evolutionarily higher than black and asian people, even bending evidence in support of their a priori views on occasion - as Stephen Jay Gould explains in his brilliant book "the Mismeasure of Man".</p> <p>Of course we no longer believe any of that racist nonsense, but that doesn't mean that honest and honourable Victorian scientists should automatically be criticised for sharing that widespread belief - unless they helped to knowingly distort or falsify data, which I don't think anyone has suggested is the case with Huxley. Criticising Huxley for his support for, and work on, eugenics, is completely unfair given that a contemporary engineer or physicist would most likely have supported eugenics every bit as much - but just not worked in that field.</p> <p>Finally, I'd like to point out that the Times published an opinion piece a few days ago about what an awful idea it would be to rename the Huxley building, and how Imperial and the wider culture would be weakened if we did. I agree with every word of that, and couldn't have said so better myself.</p> <p>So please: let's not fall into the obvious trap of seeking to rename the Huxley building, which celebrates a great Victorian scientist, the first Dean of the RCS, and an essential part of our history.</p> <p>I should say that I'm much less certain about the Beit brothers, to be honest I didn't know much about them, and the report does convince me - reluctantly - that renaming Beit Hall and Beit Quad might be for the best. But even there: every philanthropist had to make their money first, some in ways that do not bear today's scrutiny, before they can donate some of their money to good causes - like helping to establish Imperial College. Putting it crudely: if we like the money they donate, we may</p>

		<p>have to hold our noses once in a while.</p> <p>And finally: the name Imperial College might be thought by some to be not entirely unconnected with the British empire and all it's questionable effects on the world. But noone seems to contemplate renaming Imperial?</p>
97		<p>I am BASC, , and PhD, Imperial .</p> <p>I am appalled at the naming of university buildings after large donors!</p> <p>***</p> <p>In 1971, IC's Dennis Gabor received the Nobel Prize In Physics for his creation, in 1948, out of thin air, the math for holograms.</p> <p>In 1978,  IC's Prof. Colin Cherry received the the relatively new Marconi Prize. My first reaction was "What's that"?</p> <p>The Marconi is now regarded as "the Nobel in Communications".</p> <p>Just as the Fields Medal is "the Nobel in Math".</p> <p>***</p> <p>If you look at the list of MP winners, just about every algorithm or concept associated with cell phones, or computers, has its creator a MP winner!</p> <p>Google, the WWW and the browser, crypto-analysis, queuing theory, single-chip-computer, etc., etc.</p> <p><a href="https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marconi_Prize#List_of_Marconi_Prize_winners">https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marconi_Prize#List_of_Marconi_Prize_winners</a></p> <p>***</p> <p>The EE building is now named: Electrical and Electronic Engineering Building!!!</p> <p>I propose that it be named the "Dennis Gabor/Colin Cherry EE Building".</p> <p>A no brainer! What is Imperial waiting for?!</p> <p>Seriously: any Nobels or Marconis at Imperial EE since Gabor and Cherry?</p>
98		<p>First let me say how much I applaud the efforts of the college to illuminate the historic context of the college and to elevate the work of under-recognized academics. It is also very important bring a spotlight to the darker parts of our history. Your own public comments have been both brave and refreshing. Given the origins of the college in the 19th century it should be unsurprising that with a modern lens the activities and practices of many important individuals would not be acceptable in current times. With the progress of humanity this is hopefully always true; our society advances and we become more civilized.</p> <p>It is critical that we learn and apply the lessons of the past to our current actions and use those lessons as a way to move society forward. In an institution focussed on development of novel and new thought, rather than the research of past thought, sometimes the past if not considered or given enough time. I would applaud any actions taken to ensure current and future members of the college understand the context and sacrifice that enables them to enjoy and participate in the institution today.</p>

		<p>Sometimes I feel this dialogue is one sided and no-one is prepared to present an alternative perspective. That is not to defend the actions of those highlighted - they were individuals of their time and did participate in activities and postulate concepts we find reprehensible today. However, I think it is important to remember that typically these individuals while doing this appear to have had some redeeming features in their philanthropic work and their desire for a better world. There would be many more individuals who espoused these views or exploited others that did not carry our greater thought process forward or endow significant wealth to betterment of society through education and research.</p> <p>By removing names and artifacts we do not change what happened we simply remove any visible reminder of these events and the legacy we have received from our forefathers - be they academics, benefactors or exploited peoples. I strongly oppose the rewriting of our society because we find it unpalatable. We already live in a world that can deny so many palpable truths from the Holocaust to COVID and I fear the editing of our history is a terrible thing and one that a college dedicated to science should avoid.</p>
99		<p>I am against the renaming of buildings (or indeed removal of statues). I am in favour of explanatory labelling and putting people in the context of their times. Everyone has flaws and these should not be used exclusively to define the person - the good they did/do should be recognised too.</p> <p>Further to my email, I note that although the report claims the Group has "analysed ... gifts" and was considering researchers (and donors?) whose "proposed theories or been involved in activity that we would not consider acceptable today", they have somehow overlooked the donations from the Mosley Trust; money linked to a well documented and known Fascist.</p> <p>The Group wanted to gain an " understanding of how Imperial is perceived by a wide range of stakeholders" - well, to me this omission, whatever the reason, looks appalling.</p>
100		<p>I read with interest the recently published community report to review the College's legacy and heritage in the context of its present day mission. This is indeed a complex matter, as the report states, and I was pleased it was acknowledged that a specific complexity is interpreting historical events and teachings with the lens of modern day values and standards.</p> <p>In recent years, there is an unprecedented momentum which is sweeping away recent history and forcing changes in society. While some of these changes are for the better, there is the tendency of an 'overcorrection' which needs to be carefully considered as we go forward.</p> <p>Rather than erase the past, I prefer an approach of providing context. This supports thinking and discussion, which is at the heart of Imperial's culture. Erasing the past puts it out-of-sight and out-of-mind, but also means that we forget the lessons of the past. Seeing the past, also serves to remind us about how our own actions and behaviour, will be seen by future generations. Updating the names of buildings or colleges is one thing, removing statues is another.</p> <p>I was proud to attend Imperial College, and benefit from being surrounded by a diverse group of smart minds. We were proud of the College's history and as being an institution out of which top research is generated, and people go into the wider world to achieve and contribute.</p> <p>I hope a balanced perspective is applied as the recommendations are decided upon, and the College does seek to erase its past, as it attempts to step-in-line with a recently 'woke' society.</p>

		<p>Thank you to those who led the History Group's efforts.</p>
<p>101</p>		<p>I fail to understand how you can live with putting a title "Learning from our past" to a document and a set of proposals that is all about denying the past. Portraying the one thing as the other is insulting and offensive to all your readers - and, by extension, all Imperial alumni.</p> <p>It is legitimate to consider actions like removing the names of racists from college buildings as appropriate in 2021: that is a matter of opinion, although the precedent may make future potential major donors more hesitant. What is not legitimate is to call that kind of decision "learning from our past": that is a deliberate attempt to mislead everyone who reads a title and trusts the content of what follows to be to do with the same subject.</p> <p>I kept quiet a few years ago when last I was nearly moved to give feedback on college decisions. The issue at that time was the reduction of the job title of the person in charge of the college from "Rector" (which sounds like someone running an academic or religious institution) to a mere "President" (which is what mere salesmen are called in modern businesses): that was a foolish decision, but at least it wasn't a direct insult to me and huge numbers of others like me.</p>
<p>102</p>		<p>I read through the report released last month. I have written this email to share a few of my thoughts on it and the proposed next steps.</p> <p>My primary question is whether the College considers any reference to the British Empire to be negative? Last year, Imperial removed the motto from its crest because of the reference to 'scientific knowledge being the crowning glory of the Empire'. If we are to remove the motto from the crest because of a reference to the British Empire, why are we still calling ourselves Imperial? The name Imperial was granted to the College in 1907 by King Edward VII (who was Emperor of India) and empire to which the name refers is obviously the British Empire. It seems like a double-standard for one rather minor reference to the British Empire to be removed whilst the College's name remains.</p> <p>My opinion is that the motto should be restored. Whilst the College may decide to rightfully remove explicit references to harmful colonial efforts, passing references to empire are not detrimental. During the hundreds of years that the British Empire existed, I believe it would have been common to refer to the empire in the same way we would refer to the country today (i.e. there is an Imperial War Museum instead of a National War Museum).</p> <p>As the College considers the past hundred years of its history, it is also important to consider how the College will appear to the History Group of the 2100s. I noticed that the Imperial Enterprise Lab was sponsored by BP. In addition to a past deeply connected to the British Empire's efforts to acquire a source of oil in Persia (now Iran), BP has been responsible for one of the largest environmental disasters in recent history with the Deepwater Horizon oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico. As I am writing this email, COP26 is still ongoing and the activities of companies like BP have greatly contributed to man-made climate change. Are we leaving a positive legacy by being sponsored by companies who most likely don't reflect the values of the College?</p>

103	[REDACTED]	<p>Busts and old money bad - Fascism, anti-Semitism and new money good.</p> <p>The aroma of hypocrisy and self-righteousness is over-powering.</p>
104	[REDACTED]	<p>I have just received the document “ Imperial College London Community Report from the History Group” and, having carefully considered its contents, my comments are below. Unusually for an IC alumni I am very interested in history generally and that of IC in particular and am grateful for the opportunity to pass comment on this report.</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED] These were both first rate demanding courses and, like nearly all the others who completed, I am very proud of my association with Imperial College. We have alumni from all over the world ; I have never heard of any of them objecting to the word Imperial or to any of the persons named round the campus.</p> <p>The introduction (2nd para) states “although our history cannot be changed” -a sentiment I agree with entirely-it then goes on to make various suggestions which would have the effect of changing/reinterpreting some aspects of IC history.</p> <p>Various buildings etc have been named after those who have benefitted IC , either through outstanding academic achievement or other ways eg financial -donating large sums of their own money or arranging government funding. The report comments “ some of which are uncomfortable in the context of our modern values”. There is no uniformity of belief in what these “modern values” are even in the UK, never mind the rest of the world, and we have no idea what values might prevail in future. Thus someone might be offended by pretty well anyone. T H Huxley was undoubtedly a leading Victorian scientist and academic at RCS. His views on evolution wouldn’t appeal to religious fundamentalists or his views on race to Marxist fundamentalists but cancelling his name to appease such cranks would make IC look ridiculous. The recent decision to remove the Latin motto from the IC crest was an example of this kind of virtue signalling whose effects are entirely counterproductive.</p> <p>Regarding commemorating outstanding academic achievement I am definitely in favour of commemorating those whose achievements were mainly at IC of whom Prof. Abdus Salam and Prof Denis Gabor were prime examples. However some of the others merely passed through IC en route to greater things like thousands? of others. For example Narinder Singh Kapany spent most of his career in California and Professor Allotey in Africa. They both had distinguished careers but not at Imperial. It is not clear what career success Phillip Allsopp achieved after graduating from Imperial but merely being president of Guilds Union is hardly an academic achievement-in fact few students seek such posts and nearly anyone who aspires to them stands good prospects of getting them. Celebrating people like this opens the way to those who distinguished themselves in other non-academic pursuits eg rugby, rowing, chess etc.</p> <p>Regarding finances student fees etc only pay running expenses; IC can only stay a top ranking University with continuous large scale financial support from government (GB or overseas), large companies or wealthy individuals. Alas virtually all of these sources of money can be considered tainted by someone as the present row about funding from the Chinese government or the Mosley family show. Some private donors prefer anonymity but most prefer recognition so naming a building after them is a small price to pay. Hence the Beit family are rightly recognised. Removing the name because of what may or may not have happened over 100 years ago is not going to encourage future donors. Governments are liable to ask for far more damaging quid pro quo’s. Go woke go broke as the saying goes.</p> <p>If IC starts changing names to suit current fads, or commemorating people to fill quotas rather than for actual achievement, it will open the door to a continuous and never ending process of re-evaluation and consequent rows which will distract IC from its primary function as an elite academic institution . To take this to its logical conclusion the name “Imperial” should be changed-which would be quite disastrous as it is a leading academic</p>

		<p>brand name. <b>I would take the line that “history cannot be changed”, nothing is to be renamed and that is the end of the matter.</b> Those that don't like it are perfectly at liberty to study elsewhere.</p> <p>Thankyou for taking the trouble to read this.</p>
105		<p>I strongly support the need to decolonise our institution and make appropriate reparations.</p> <p>A couple of comments about the language of the report and the Consuls' statement:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The framing that this represents use of “a contemporary moral lens” is dangerous on two levels. First, it is historically inaccurate, as these attitudes were widely condemned at the time (Pri Gopal's Insurgent Empire is a good read on this, including for example, which prominent thinkers were on which side of the debate around the Morant Bay rebellion). Second, it erases the experience of the victims of slavery/colonialism who certainly would have considered what they were experiencing to be wrong.</li> <li>2. Despite the scare quotes, by using the term “cancel culture” the college is accepting a bogus culture war talking point. Our discussion on this should actively reject this notion of “cancel culture”, given that structurally it is actually the voices and views of minority ethnic and other groups that are typically silenced and marginalised.</li> </ol>
106		 <p>I was pleased to see that the College firmly supports freedom of speech, and that I trust that, when investigating the lives and views of historical figures with close links to IC, all such figures are considered sensitively taking into careful account historical context.</p> <p>Huxley it seems has come under close scrutiny. His contribution to science is unquestioned. His views on other issues, which may have altered during the course of his life, could well attract criticism, but such attitudes were widespread at the time.</p> <p>H G Wells was a supporter of eugenics, as were a number of public figures in the late 19th Century. Are his links with the College under examination? Wagner and Marx were antisemites, but their contributions to music and political thought remain widely recognised.</p> <p>What matters most of all is an individual's contribution to the overall development of human society. The College should celebrate its links with Huxley, warts and all.</p>
107		<p>Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the recent findings/report and related recommendations in relation to Imperial's history and specific individuals.</p> <p>To quote Shakespear, 'the evil that men do lives after them, the good is oft interred with their bones'.</p> <p>The recent fashion seems to be to search for any speck of something that could or might be considered inappropriate today and ignore the merits of undoubtedly great men. This is just revisionism.</p> <p>I can think of few more appropriate individuals than Thomas Huxley to have their bust displayed and a building named after them. He was a self taught man who promoted education generally and this institution specifically. He was a supporter of Darwin, but more importantly someone who promoted ideas, debate and science.</p> <p>I think Imperial be should celebrating Huxley's legacy not seeking to diminish it.</p> <p>Similarly, Imperial should honour those who have provided it with the resources to further</p>

		<p>its activities, Beit and others' altruism and support should not be denigrated more than 100 years later.</p> <p>Imperial would do better to look at the processes it uses to vet new bequests in the light of more recent news and should re-examine its' links with China if it is serious about its ethical position and freedom of speech.</p>
108	██████	<p>Learning from the past is a valid and meritorious pursuit but there is a but: Seeking to judge the past using current values does not represent or exemplify learning from the past. Seeking to take punitive action, in some way justified by past failures to conform to current standards, is not warranted nor helpful in any sensible rational agenda. In my view the basis of the committee's work is flawed; taking a moral stance on action to be taken on CURRENT REPRESENTATION of historical action has no merit and no value at all.</p> <p>Let me expand.</p> <p>There are three tests to consider in regards to the behaviour of people in the past:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1: Was it legal at the time?</li> <li>2: Was it morally acceptable at the time?</li> <li>3: Was it ethically acceptable at the time?</li> </ol> <p>That the behaviours at a given time be subject to assessment against current law, morality and ethics is valid as an investigative exercise. But any attempt to implement retrospective action is not justifiable. What would be justified action would be where the action at the time was shown to be illegal or immoral or unethical by standards of the time.</p> <p>To do the former would open the door to absurdity. In extremis would we find all historical war leaders guilty of murder?</p> <p>Should all descendants of judges who handed out death sentences be held responsible as accessories to murder?</p> <p>Then if we bring local and geographic conditions into play we immediately tangle ourselves with hypocrisy. What prevails today in the UK, legally morally and ethically are not universally accepted in all of today's world. To pick on historical figures in our own land is hugely hypocritical and worse still leaves ourselves open to criticism of ducking the global issues in respect of countries not accepting our current standards.</p> <p>If we then argue that it is the internal and personal business of those countries and we should not interfere, then we have no grounds to seek retrospective action concerning our own past!</p> <p>In summary, seeking to assess past behaviour of our people, whilst of undoubted interest, is no basis for seeking to retrospectively give out a punishment or otherwise take action against their failure to conform to current law, morality and ethics.</p> <p>In conclusion I find the premise of the committees recommended actions fundamentally flawed. In my view the committee should never have been given this remit!</p>
109	██████	<p>Having read what you intend to do about all references to Huxley, I wish you to know that I strongly disapprove of your policy and further I do not want any further communication from you in any form. The current Imperial College no longer represents the college which I attended many years ago and hence I do not wish to be associated with it.</p>
110	██████	<p>I am disappointed that you have dragged IC into this transient kerfuffle triggered by BLM. Alumni should have been asked about proceeding, and students should not be involved. The Yale report should be accepted by IC, judging people by their times and their good deeds.</p>

111	[REDACTED]	<p>We have been passing on to you the feedback we have received to the Giving inbox about the History Group report. I have a couple of examples of positive responses from [REDACTED] donors that it would be great if you could add to the feedback tracker you're working on? Only if you think they're relevant.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I am absolutely thrilled about the recommendation to rename the theoretical physics group after Abdus Salam! This is actually something which I have wondered about since a long time, as he founded the theoretical physics group in 1957, though to propose a name change of an entire department seemed like a long shot. I hope that this proposal succeeds. I read the report which you kindly shared with great interest and I am pleased that some of the forgotten heroes are being remembered to such an extent. If there is an opportunity to contribute towards scholarship that gets setup in his name, please do let me know about it...I look forward to us keeping in touch and, hopefully, to hear that that the college succeeds in setting up a scholarship in Prof. Salam's memory.</li> <li>• I would like to visit the Physics department in the near future. It is one of my favourite places. Can you let me know how I can help raise the little I can to go towards the Abdus Salam chair/professorship.</li> </ul>
112	[REDACTED]	<p>I am very distressed to learn of two things - that notable alumni of Imperial College have not been recognised for their extraordinary contributions to the development of technology over the last century; and to learn that Imperial has commissioned a report to revise its history and to remove historical names of buildings due to current fashions.</p> <p>I object most strongly to removing the historical connections to Beit and Huxley. These are narrow minded responses to woke-ism and imply a profound criticism to those who recommended the adoption of these names in the first place - who surely were well informed, intelligent, and above all people of their time.</p> <p>Historical revisionism is wrong from top to bottom and I had thought that Imperial was above such nonsense.</p>
113	[REDACTED]	<p>I am contacting you in connection with the recently published History Group Report.</p> <p>I have spent my entire adult life proud to be an Imperial alumnus, but I shall certainly not be proud if Imperial decides to adopt these ill considered recommendations, which are politically motivated and nothing to do with the Imperial mission.</p> <p>I am concerned that this process is not impartial. One such concern is the reference to "interviews with international alumni". I suggest that the group has targeted specific individuals for their opinion, whose supportive opinions for the recommendations in this report were already known and has not provided equivalent opportunity for individuals who had contrary opinions.</p> <p>I am particularly concerned that Imperial is not focusing on its science, technology and medicine mission but is pursuing a populist, left wing political agenda. I do not understand why there is a "History Group" at all in a University which does not teach/research history. In fact, the completely out of context reference to Environmental Due Diligence suggests that the History Group itself is not actually about history but about any hobby horse they choose to mount.</p> <p>The recommendations in this report must not be adopted. I refute the statements that the names of buildings and the statues enriching the university campus can in any way be regarded as a "barrier to building an equitable and inclusive university". The biggest barriers facing British students remain as they were in my day - class and opportunity - and at a time when our nation has never had greater need for STEM graduates, Imperial's time and money is better spent reaching out to those who truly are excluded from access to</p>



high quality higher education.

I do not agree that there is significant opposition to the status quo, as suggested by this report. I suggest that in fact an extreme agenda is being pursued by a small group of people, who view our nation's history as a matter of shame, which does not represent either mainstream or majority opinion.




I do not agree with the renaming of Beit Hall, nor the removal of statues associated with the Beits. During my time as a student I do not recall any concern being expressed by any student or any member of staff about the legacy of the Beits. This is a concern "of its time" and the action proposed is the 21st Century's equivalent of the dissolution of the monasteries. A small group of people has decided that they are offended by a monument to our history and so it is destroyed, to the detriment of future generations. I am reminded of the actions of IS in destroying Palmyra and the Taliban in destroying the Bamiyan Buddhas.

The contributions made by the Beits to the College have massively benefitted countless students, including those attending today. They are being judged on the basis of recently adopted attitudes, attitudes which may be replaced by more enlightened opinions in years to come. Accused of crimes now which were not crimes then. They are dead and can not defend themselves, so damnatio memoriae. Very brave. Does the College not appreciate the message that this sends out to potential donors? Who is going to make a donation to the College when your reputation will be trashed and your name will be expunged after your death?

I am particularly appalled by the trashing of Thomas Huxley, a giant of science. Who has raised concerns about the 'scientific racism in Huxley's work'? This is simply not borne out by the facts. Thomas Huxley was a man of his day, a great scientist of any day and he made significant contributions both to abolition/emancipation, as your extremist contributors have pointed out, and to the encouragement of female participation in science, which they choose to ignore.

I do not agree that current students should have a final say in any decision to rename and certainly not the student union. It is a long time since I attended University, but it is a much shorter time since my son and my daughter graduated and I can say with confidence that the level of participation in student unions today is much the same as it was in my day. The majority of students continue to have very limited contact with the student union and in most cases this contact is for social reasons only. The very extreme positions taken by student unions and in particular the NUS represent not the views of the majority of students, but the views of a very tiny number of extreme agitators with clear left wing ambitions. By consulting with student unions, it is this very extreme position which will feedback into your ill considered proposals, not the opinions of the majority of students. The election history of our country demonstrates that many, if not most, students of today will hold conservative opinions in adult life and will not agree with the radical extremist opinions propagated by student unions in general and the NUS in particular.

I was an undergraduate at the time of Salam's Nobel award and I would not question his inclusion as a name worthy of remembering. However the same can not be said of some of the other recommendations. Surely the person to be remembered should have a significant role in the development of Imperial, through commitment of time, and/or major achievement during his/her time at the College. Francis Allotey and Phillip Allsopp can not be considered to meet these criteria as both were merely attending Imperial as students and neither was a major contributor to its subsequent development. The comment made about Allsopp "he always spoke very fondly of his time at Imperial" could equally be said about tens of thousands of other students, myself included. Being president of a constituent college union and editor of the college magazine is just not the level of achievement required for recognition. Perhaps I can nominate Barney McCabe for

		<p>playing the piano outside the Iranian embassy during the siege?</p> <p>This activity is the thin end of the wedge. These same extremists will be gunning for anyone who offends their narrow minded sensibilities and I assume that the "Imperial" name itself is in their sights. Anything which recognises or celebrates our history and the fact that we were and are a great nation which has made a massive contribution to science and technology.</p> <p>Ditch this nonsense. If it is to remain a location of choice for the best students, the institution renowned for the best research, Imperial needs to focus on science and technology and leave the politics to others.</p>
114		<p>As an ex student I was proud to have attended Imperial. it is one of the leading global institutions, I believe this status is at risk.</p> <p>Quite frankly I am appalled at this backward looking exercise in symbology and judgement of the past, as a forward looking science, engineering and medical university these are the last two things one would expect. Symbology is the province of religion, not science.</p> <p>If you cannot handle the truth, in whatever form it takes, or how you perceive it, then where are you heading? The answer I believe is censorship.</p> <p>To balance the scales the suggestion is that you convene a separate committee dedicated to identifying how Imperial can raise the bar in both education and research, with excellence and world leading positions in the major constituent departments as the objective. My opinion is a major opportunity is opening up as mediocrity allied to group think is taking hold in many former leading universities.</p> <p>I would be very happy to come to College to discuss all of the above.</p>
115		<p>I took the opportunity to join the discussion group which was very open and informative being able to contribute and listen to the view of other participants. We didn't have enough time to discuss in extensive details as to ensure everyone could participate, hence the reason I am adding further views below.</p> <p>I read the History Group report and felt that though it was a small step in the right direction, but it does not go far enough to impact the 'inclusive' culture that the College is trying to achieve. I think that decolonisation of the College's courses through its reading lists, library catalogue and institutional repository, would be one of the more effective way of doing this. The decolonisation of reading lists and library catalogues has something that has been done or in the process of being done in other HE institutions (including Russell group universities) Here, in the library, we have a Decolonising libraries group chat and have started looking at how we can decolonise the reading lists. But without the support from academics and senior level staff in the College, I don't see how this can be achieved. For example, Cambridge has a Decolonisation Working Group (<a href="https://www.lib.cam.ac.uk/about-library/diversifying-collections-and-practices/cambridge-university-libraries-decolonisation">https://www.lib.cam.ac.uk/about-library/diversifying-collections-and-practices/cambridge-university-libraries-decolonisation</a>)</p> <p>I would like to see the College being more forward thinking, as a world leading university, we have an opportunity to be one of the forerunners for not merely promoting a 'diverse' culture but actual be a diverse cultural university that allows both staff and students to flourish.</p>
116	 <i>Attachment included below</i>	<p>Please see my attached letter in response to our President's below email inviting comments, thoughts and ideas on the History Group's recently published report. I would appreciate if you would acknowledge safe receipt.</p>



The History Group  
South Kensington Campus  
Imperial College  
London SW7 2AZ

Dear Chair and Group Members

**Re: Community Report from the Imperial College History Group**

I refer to the email from President Alice Gast dated 29 October 2021 inviting comments, thoughts and ideas from the wider Imperial community on the Community Report published by the college's history group last month and provide the following feedback.

I welcome this opportunity but note that President Gast did not follow the same process when she unilaterally decided to change the college's crest last year in what many saw as a knee jerk reaction to the aftermath of George Floyd's death in the United States. Had she taken more time and consulted more widely, including all Imperial's alumni, I am sure we could have come up with a far superior outcome.

As a general rule I believe it is wrong and unhelpful to judge the past by the present, especially the further one goes back in time. As Adrian Desmond, Huxley's biographer, highlighted: *assessing past actors by present criteria is fraught with danger, when the only reasonable way of critiquing them is to weigh them up against the standards of their own time: that is, to be sensitive to the contemporary context.*

**Report Introduction, Context and Approach**

I agree that it is most important to understand our history for it explains how we have got to where we are today and I have no problem with it being highlighted on the college campus, provided it is done in a balanced and fair manner and that both the good and not so good sides of individual stories are told and not just the latter.

But much of the history in the report has been in the public domain and known about for a long time without any issues being raised (as far as I am aware) by the college itself, its staff and students or from elsewhere.

Nor have the college's values suddenly been revamped. So what has changed? The history group seems to be most concerned about changes in perception of historical events and how names may be perceived post George Floyd but that is dangerous territory to enter – perceptions can vary widely from individual to individual, an individual's perceptions can originate from all manner of things and can quite often be irrational, illogical and based more on emotion than fact.

There will always be people who will claim to be offended no matter what and I caution the college against adopting lowest common denominator ways forward in order to be seen as "inclusive" and not

offend anybody. It is not the job of Imperial, or indeed any other university, to protect the feelings of its students (contrary to what an increasing number of students seem to think these days).

The report includes phrases and terms which are quite fundamental to understanding its approach but which are not defined. For example, *fully inclusive organisation* (pg1), *equitable and inclusive university* (pg1), *prevailing thinking* (pg5) and *moral stance* (pg5). What prevailing thinking? Moral stance based on what? There are many different competing thoughts about what has been happening in society over the past 18 months (none of which I would say are prevailing) and moral stances vary considerably from person to person.

The report states that *where bodies associated with individuals of interest still exist (e.g. trusts/trustees), engagement with such groups would be required to agree how to acknowledge past activities and any proposed actions* (pg5) but no mention is made of similarly engaging with living descendants.

### **Alfred Beit, Sir Otto Beit and Sir Julius Wernher**

Applying my general rule described earlier I oppose the proposed renaming of Beit Quad and Beit Hall, which have provided fond memories to generations of alumni passing through Imperial.

In fact given the following, which Appendix 9 of the report quotes Sir Richard Sykes (our then Rector) as saying in his message on the centenary of Imperial College in 2007, I am baffled as to why the history group has reached the conclusions it has:

*Philanthropists of the early twentieth century, such as Alfred and Sir Otto Beit and Sir Julius Wernher, have played a vital role in helping us to get to where we are today, as well as subsequent generations of alumni and supporters. We have invested their gifts wisely and the returns our contributions have made to healthcare, industry and society around the world are there for everyone to see.*

*All three benefactors Alfred Beit, Otto Beit and Julius Wernher, were men of great integrity and proud that they had made their money through legitimate business, that they had organised the diamond and gold fields on proper business lines and set up an industry structure that was revered. They had spent their lives working hard, developing industry and good working practices, being self-effacing and philanthropic. They were loyal and down to earth, devoted to the cause of education and the teaching of practical science to assist industry - in short they were in tune with the values and intentions of Imperial, beginning with the Royal School of Mines*

Sir Richard's praise of the three men is glowing. Not only does he say that they were in tune with Imperial's values at the time, he clearly thought fourteen years ago that their actions still mirrored the college's modern day values – which makes one ask what exactly is going on here? The history group does not say that Sir Richard Sykes got it wrong, nor does it offer any explanation for the volte-face (apart for a concern about “perceptions” in some quarters).

The report recommends that *Beit Quad and Hall are renamed subject to consultation with students* and that *this is not intended to be a majority vote which is not always representative and inclusive*. Does that mean alumni like me get no say in this? If not a democratic one, what sort of vote is deemed to be “inclusive”?

The report also highlights that practically the whole of the endowment of the college since its incorporation in 1907 up to 1930 was provided by Sir Julius Wernher, Alfred Beit and Sir Otto Beit – a very substantial sum by any measure. The college cannot have it both ways insofar as it wants to hold

onto the endowment (despite what it now regards as its tarnished origins) but disassociate itself from the donors (by declaring them *persona non grata*). If the college is insistent on the proposed name changes then it should hand an equivalent sum of the endowment in today's money back to the living descendants of the Beits and Wernher. I take a similar view on the treatment of Cecil Rhodes legacy at Oxford.

Obviously the college would have to raise money from elsewhere to fund that, which would probably include raising student tuition fees, but that is not a bad thing as activists would learn that there is no such thing as a "free lunch".

I am very surprised that no mention has been made of making contact with any living descendants of Sir Julius Wernher, Alfred Beit and Sir Otto Beit to canvass their views and feelings on the proposed name changes.

On reading that *the endowed Beit PhD Scholarship from 1902 is under review with the Beit Trust to be repurposed and awarded to African Scholars*, two thoughts immediately sprung to mind. Firstly, the internationally renowned Rhodes scholarship at Oxford - coincidentally also first awarded in 1902 - has been given to many African students in the past but that has not stopped activists still trying to erase all vestiges of his memory from that university. Secondly, why restrict the award to people from Africa? There are many other underrepresented groups at Imperial; for example, only thirty white working class applicants from poor neighbourhoods were apparently admitted in 2017.

### **Thomas Henry Huxley**

Applying my general rule described earlier I also oppose the proposed renaming of the Huxley Building.

As Adrian Desmond states, Huxley's essay "*Emancipation – Black and White*" is one essay out of literally hundreds of essays, lectures, notes and reviews that Huxley wrote, gave or had published. There appears to be no criticism of any of his other work. Desmond also notes that Huxley's views evolved over his lifetime to the point where they would be considered progressive based on generally held views at the time.

The history group believes his controversial essay *falls far short of Imperial's modern values*. Nobody disputes that it would clearly be unacceptable today but it was written 156 years ago. The group's position is therefore a particularly egregious example of judging the past by the present. If the history group wishes to pass judgement on somebody then surely it is also only fair that it is done "in the round"; that is, taking account of all the laudable things that person has done as well.

By all accounts Huxley was a great figure of scientific enquiry. Nobody – not even a man of his formidable reputation – gets everything right and nobody is perfect. Imperial should know better than most that the history of science and medicine is littered with people who have made mistakes and got things wrong. For example, in medicine many doctors thought that lobotomy was the right thing to do. We now know it was wrong. In more recent times in psychology, "false memory syndrome" was popularised when there was very little evidence for it.

### **Ronald Fisher and John Haldan**

Insufficient detail has been provided in the report for me to fully assess the issue of renaming the Silwood lecture theatres but I offer these general thoughts on the matter.

The history group's concern with Fisher and Haldan is their past connections in eugenics. "Eugenics" is a term loaded with historical significance. Its historical connotations tie it to the atrocities carried out by Germany's Nazi regime in World War II.

Yet certain practices that have eugenic features continue today, albeit framed differently. Prenatal testing and preimplantation genetic diagnosis, for example, are understood to expand prenatal knowledge and enhance parental choice. They are clearly used by some prospective parents to determine which individuals should come into existence and which should not, particularly where a high likelihood of disability has been identified.

I note from its website that Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust provides abortions. If some of those fetuses are aborted because, for example, downs syndrome has been diagnosed critics would argue that the college itself is guilty today of practising a form of eugenics and of hypocrisy.

### **Gary Tanaka**

The history group states that it was commissioned *to examine the history of the College through its links to the British Empire and as part of a series of initiatives to address racial injustice*. But Tanaka is a retired American businessman and has nothing to do with that so I do not understand why he has been included in this study (and the report offers no explanation).

However if Gary Tanaka is deemed worthy of mention then surely Max Mosley is aswell but I note that his name is missing from the report.

### **Max Mosley**

Max Mosley was the late head of Formula One and set up the Alexander Mosley Charitable Trust in the name of his son who died in 2009 of a suspected drugs overdose.

The Daily Telegraph newspaper reports that *Imperial College has been handed almost £2.5 million from the Alexander Mosley Charitable Trust over the past five years*.

When the college launched the world's first Centre for Psychedelic Research in early 2019 Professor Charles Monroe was appointed the first Alexander Mosley Charitable Trust Fellow and Tutor in Engineering Science. The centre is currently carrying out a randomised control trial into the use of psilocybin to help those with major depressive disorder with funding support from the Alexander Mosley Charitable Trust.

Critics argue that the trust's money is tainted as it comes in part or whole from the inheritance left by Max Mosley's father, Oswald Mosley, the leader of the British Union of Fascists in the 1930s whose supporters (the Blackshirts) wore Nazi-style uniforms and were notorious for their violence against Jews and left-wing groups. Even if Max Mosley's own money, it is still viewed by many as tainted – it is well documented that Max Mosley supported his father's fascist party and its successor, the Union Movement. The Daily Mail reports that *Max Mosley published a pamphlet during a 1961 by-election as a Union Movement agent claiming that "coloured immigrants" spread leprosy, venereal disease and TB, and should be repatriated*. According to Professor Lawrence Goldman, emeritus fellow in history at St Peter's College, Oxford, Mosley never apologised for supporting his father's movement.

## Submission 116 - Attachment

The inclusion of Tanaka and exclusion of Mosley creates more questions than answers about the whole report (well-intentioned though it may be). Imperial's reported press response to the Mosley issue – that all gifts *are subject to thorough due diligence* – raises further questions and leaves the college wide open to accusations of hypocrisy and double standards.

So how do we, the Imperial community, navigate this minefield and moral maze? Well, I think the answer is actually very simple and is where I started this letter. We should not assess past actors by present criteria. Instead, we should weigh their actions up against the standards of their own time. Applying that reasoning would mean that the proposed actions in the report against individuals such as Beit, Huxley et al. should be withdrawn but that action should be taken in respect of the Tanaka and Mosley legacies. I believe few reasonable people would disagree with that. The history group Community Report should be updated accordingly and reissued.

In closing I would make one small, final request. I note that on page 7 the American word "townhall" has been used. There are perfectly good existing words in the English language to describe the type of discussion proposed without the need to import a confusing Americanism.

Yours faithfully

████████████████████

117	[REDACTED]	<p>In [REDACTED] when I attended lectures by [REDACTED] in the Huxley Building I confess I was unaware of Huxley or his background. I do, however, feel strongly that however much this country and its people may have erred from the 'norms' adopted by some parts of our society, there are no actions that we can take to alter history. Neither can the wrongs of the past be rectified by tearing down memorial to those identified as villains. We need to remember that is no period in history in which oppression and exploitation were absent from the world. Our aim should be to use the study of history to understand the frailty of humanity and strive to espouse a Society in which tolerance understanding and mutual support are the norm.</p> <p>If you decide to dissociate Imperial from Huxley, look in the records, determine the monetary value of his gifts inflate to present day value and return that value to the descendants of Huxley</p>
118	[REDACTED]	<p>This document contains no illustration whatsoever! I recommend such as: graph, chart, diagram, drawing, illustration, cartoon, photo etc.</p> <p>I selected the whole text, and parsed that through a readability checker.  <a href="https://www.online-utility.org/english/readability_test_and_improve.jsp">https://www.online-utility.org/english/readability_test_and_improve.jsp</a>  The Flesch Reading Ease is far below the recommended minimum of sixty!  {Flesch Reading Ease: 29.95}</p>
119	[REDACTED]	<p>Thank you for your email concerning the history group report.</p> <p>Having looked at the document, I must say that I am confused as to the purpose of the document. Since graduating in [REDACTED] I have only had a peripheral interest in the college matters , but even to me there are two glaring omissions.</p> <p>The first concerns the Tanaka business school. While there is a certain wry amusement to be had from the business school being founded on the proceeds of crime, the way this is addressed in the report is totally inadequate. Word on the block at the time was that the donation was spent with unseemly haste to avoid the possibility of having to return any of it to the defrauded investors. This was also said to have been a driver in changing the school's name.</p> <p>My second issue is with the complete failure to address the act of educational vandalism perpetrated on the Wye agricultural college. This internationally important and well-respected institution was taken over by Imperial and then brutally asset-stripped, run into the ground and closed. I append an extract from the Wikipedia information on the subject.</p> <p>I feel very sad that the contribution which Wye college could be making to agriculture, ecology and the environment was snubbed out.</p> <p>The impression I have had since my college days is that whilst Imperial has a fine selection of educators and researchers, the organisation overall has on occasion let itself down.</p> <p>For information:</p> <p><b><i>The end of Wye College</i></b></p> <p><i>In 2004, the new Rector of Imperial, <a href="#">Richard Sykes</a>, announced that the Department of Agricultural Sciences was closing, and that most teaching and research at Wye would end.<sup>[11][12]</sup> In 2005 it was announced that Wye College would be converted into a large research centre for non-food crops and biomass fuels, with the support, under a "concordat", of <a href="#">Kent County Council</a> and <a href="#">Ashford Borough Council</a>.<sup>[13]</sup> Up to 12,500 jobs were planned if the research hub developed fully.<sup>[14]</sup> Villagers were not informed of the scale of the proposals, which included housing, until a public meeting organised by Imperial.<sup>[14]</sup> Opposition quickly began, and leaks of official documents to a local campaigning website,<sup>[15]</sup> have shown that the principal aim of the plan, particularly once</i></p>



*an industry partner fell through, soon became to raise £100 million for Imperial projects in London by building 4,000 homes, most on 250 acres in the [Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty](#).<sup>[14][16][17]</sup>*

*The plan provoked bitter opposition both locally and nationally, and was seen as a test case for other attempts to build in AONBs. In 2006, Ashford Borough Council withdrew its support, and Imperial College abandoned its plans.<sup>[17]</sup> This decision was hailed as a key victory to preserve the status of the AONB, and it stopped Wye from becoming a much larger town.*

120

Like many, I read in the newspapers with dismay the way in which Oxford University is ripping itself apart over how to appropriately recognise Cecil Rhodes, alumnus of Oriol college.

I am a proud alumnus of Imperial College, a member of Friends of Imperial, and in a minor way a benefactor. It was with some trepidation that I recently received an email from Alice Gast, president of Imperial informing me that 'Last June we commissioned a group to undertake a frank review of our institution's history and the impact that this has on our present-day mission.' and including a link to their report.

I was shocked at how sloppy the report was. It is littered with spelling mistakes and grammatical errors. To meet its stated objectives the report should examine, analyse, inform and advise in a balanced way about a series of complex issues. The report has entirely failed in this. It is not fit for purpose and should be withdrawn. The report makes many recommendations. A few are sensible, most are pointless and a few I find, frankly, objectionable.

The most objectionable recommendation is that regarding Thomas Huxley. Huxley was the primary advocate for Darwin's theory of evolution and a fervent campaigner for the abolition of slavery and for the rights of women. The report recommends that 'the bust of Huxley should be moved from the building for preservation with this historical context to College archives and the building should be renamed.' The reason, apparently, is that his essay 'Emancipation – Black and White' espouses a racial hierarchy of intelligence. In this essay, published in 1865, this view is expressed in a single short paragraph. Huxley's argument is in fact that ,whether this view is true or not,it is not a justification for slavery. The thrust of the essay is to promote the social and political rights of women.

I do not doubt that Huxley believed in a racial hierarchy of intelligence, because it was scientific orthodoxy at the time. However I simply do not believe that this is a reason for cancelling one of founders of the biological sciences. I also do not understand the rationale. Is it because a student might be offended by a paragraph in one of hundreds of essays written by a prominent scientist? How would they ever know unless it was pointed out to them? If we insist on doing so, surely we should insist that they read all of the other essays as well, both to give context, and to ensure that there are no other thoughts that they might find objectionable.

The report is not wholly without merit. It also recommends that another of Imperial's greats, Professor Abdus Salam, a theoretical physicist of Pakistani origin who was awarded a Nobel prize in 1979, should be more widely celebrated.

In her article about the report in the Times Education Supplement President Gast states that 'The report also shows where we can do more to celebrate forgotten and overlooked parts of our history, including ... Dennis Gabor, a Hungarian electrical engineer who won the 1971 Nobel Prize in Physics for inventing holography.' However this is not recommended in the report, perhaps because the group found a paragraph in one of his publications they objected to after she had written it.

The report has already generated much negative publicity in the UK press. For example Allison Pearson's opinion piece in the Daily Telegraph (Wednesday 3 November) which has a lengthy quote from 'Emancipation – Black and White' which she extols as an early and eloquent example of feminism. In my view such negative publicity is both inevitable and merited.

The report states 'It was hard to achieve a complete consensus on the statues on the front of the RSM building; however all members felt that a substantive intervention was required.' It not clear what this sentence actually means, and I suspect that substantial was intended.

Although I spent 3 years at Imperial and have visited frequently in the last few years I could not recall any statuary that might be objectionable, so I looked for images on the internet. I was expecting to find something that would now be regarded tasteless but found two unexceptional busts with 4 allegorical figures, none of which appear to have anything to do with racial or gender stereotyping.

No reasoning is given in the report for the alteration or removal of these historic monuments celebrating the founders of the Royal School of Mines. It appears that readers are supposed to assume that this is inevitable as 'their wealth came largely from the development of the diamond and gold mining industries in South Africa.' and that they were associated with the Kimberley mines and the Jameson Raid. This is one of many areas of the report where labelling and virtue signalling has taken the place of examination, analysis, information and recommendation.

To conclude, the report is not fit for purpose and should be withdrawn.

I agree with President Gast that 'Learning and understanding more about our past strengthens our culture'. Imperial should therefore commission a history of Imperial College that is comprehensive and balanced. We might then learn how the working conditions at the Kimberley mine were different from those of other mining operations and how, if at all, the RSM founders were responsible. We may also learn about the Jameson raid, although I suspect that this will turn out to be completely irrelevant to Imperial's history.

Ensuring that Imperial is 'an equitable and inclusive university' is a noble aim I fully support. The biggest barrier to inclusivity is income inequality and I welcome Imperial's initiative to increase its support for Black British and other under represented groups. It is a pity that the History group report seems designed to offend those of us who value Imperial, including its past, and thus jeopardises the support on which these efforts depend.

121

I have been following with interest the ongoing debate around the recently released History Group report. I do not wish to comment on the specific recommendations made in the report, but rather raise a point of method and approach to the question.

I was surprised to see that a so-called "History group" did not have among its members a single professional historian. I think this was a mistake: comparing the History Group report with the Yale report (2016, chaired by a historian) or the Caltech report (2020, with a professor of history among its members) on similar issues immediately reveals a vastly different approach.

I do not wish to criticise the work of the colleagues on the History Group, who I am sure laboured with the best of intentions and have been able to count on the input of qualified external advisors, as some of the appendices demonstrate. However, just as one wouldn't want to commission an Assyriologist to design a bridge, I don't think an engineer, scientist or medic ought to be expected to master the finer points of historical scholarship, nor to be conversant with the nuanced approaches taken in the humanities when evaluating

		<p>multi-faceted issues such as the ones the History Group grappled with.</p> <p>When the group was being convened, I recommended [REDACTED] that the only (to my knowledge) qualified historian on Imperial's faculty, [REDACTED], be appointed to it. I was disappointed to see him relegated to the role of advisor.</p> <p>Imperial would be well served, in my opinion, by commissioning a new report to an external group of independent professional historians, tasked to delineate the general principles by which to judge the issues. Without the guiding light of higher level principles, and the insight that the humanities can bring to these thorny questions, a list of bullet point recommendations risks to reduce complex issues to over-simplified binary decisions.</p>
122	[REDACTED]	<p>I am writing to you, both as an [REDACTED] and a [REDACTED], in order to voice my opposition to the renaming of the Huxley building and the hiding away of his bust.</p> <p>It is extremely dangerous to judge historical figures such as Thomas Huxley without taking proper account of the society in which they lived. He was one of the greatest anatomists of the 19th century and a fierce supporter of Charles Darwin's theories on evolution. He engaged in some of the leading debates of the time on the natural world and man's place in it. Given that the concept of evolution was so new and the social context in which these debates took place, it is not surprising that Huxley examined the evidence for and against the evolution of man with the expertise at his disposal, comparative anatomy. To suggest that this links him to eugenics, in the modern post Nazi sense of the word, is simply wrong. Huxley was indeed a complex character, but he was also an outspoken opponent of slavery and of discrimination, within the confines of his time. He remains a giant in the history of biology and should be celebrated, not erased and consigned to a storeroom.</p>
123	[REDACTED]	<p>As the former holder of a scholarship at Imperial College, I read the "Community Report From The History Group" (October 2021) with interest. It is an important report and it is right to carefully consider the past in making decisions for the future.</p> <p>What stood out for me was the need for a much more detailed consideration of the principles regarding any renaming of buildings, scholarships, or rooms. In my view a much higher test is needed to justify renaming of a building, scholarship or room than naming a new building etc. We need to safeguard against unreasonable censoring or reinterpreting past decisions based on current attitudes. We also need to remember the contribution made by past generations who are no longer here to defend their decisions.</p> <p>A higher test would be to examine the naming in the historical context of the time the decision was made. Was the name chosen reasonable given the then current understanding of science, law, business ethics and public attitudes? If it was reasonable on the basis of this test, the name should be retained and, if necessary, an explanation provided of changed attitudes etc. The explanation should be in written form, not just a QR code. If the name chosen was unreasonable against the above criteria, the name should be changed and a written explanation and QR code provided.</p> <p>For me, a change of name should be regarded as something very exceptional and certainly not "part of the normal course of operations" as stated in iii) of the Principles section of the report.</p> <p>I hope you will take my views into account in making decisions on the naming of current buildings.</p>

As per our previous conversation on the wokism pandemic at British and American universities and the impact on donors, please find the attached article from a Cambridge historian in case you haven't seen it already. I really hope the Imperial leadership takes sensible decisions on decolonising:

**Decolonizing Imperial College: a few suggestions, by David Abulafia**

Activists at Imperial College are targeting Darwin's colleague TH Huxley. They want to rename the building named after him. But what about the name of the college? Activism is full of contradictions.

Now T.H. Huxley is under attack by members of Imperial College not because of his views about slavery – he was an ardent abolitionist – but because he shared a common view of his time, and believed in a hierarchy of races. A building named after him must, we are told, be renamed. Apparently one has to be wholly good to be accepted by the woke activists, but the term 'good' has, it goes without saying, a specific meaning of its own, meaning a twenty-first century belief in and agitation for what calls itself Social Justice. Specific meanings also attach to a whole range of terms the activists use, notably racism, capitalism, colonialism and imperialism.

But wait a moment: imperialism! We are talking about Imperial College. No one has suggested it should change its name. Or rather, it has happened, but ended on a sour note. It is said that when University College and Imperial College were negotiating the merger that never came about, one of the big issues was a choice of name. At that point, the story goes, the people from Imperial had a brilliant idea. The new university could take one word from each institution's name: Imperial, a word they were certainly not willing to lose, and College, in recognition of UCL – making the new name 'Imperial College'.

Not that woke activists are known for their sense of humour. One of their most noticeable characteristics is their insistence on picking not just on particular individuals among the very many with a checkered past, but on certain things that commemorate them, while ignoring a great many others. This has been pointed out again and again in relation to Cecil Rhodes: Rhodes House and Rhodes Scholarships are still very prominently there. Churchill College has been lambasted by its own Fellow, Priya Gopal, but she somehow never gets round to objecting to the use of the name, even though not long ago she chaired a notorious seminar in the college where Kehinde Andrews insisted Churchill was comparable to Hitler and the British Empire was worse than the Nazis.

So let's think about a new name for Imperial College, as well as Churchill College. It's important to get in first on this, in case it becomes an issue. Clearly Professor Gopal has earned her rewards, and no one in the past can really be trusted, so let's make Churchill College Gopal College in her honour. And, since there are so many charlatans who have invested in the woke business, Imperial obviously needs to be named after one of their equally charlatan sources of inspiration, whether Jacques Derrida, Edward Said or the totally incomprehensible Professor Homi Bhabha, who according to that wonderful book *Cynical Theories* won second prize after Judith Butler in Philosophy and Literature's Bad Writing Contest.

I was saddened to hear that you are proposing to rename the Huxley building. I would like to write in strong support of keeping the name Huxley. He is one of Imperial's greats.

For me, as a biologist, Huxley was an inspirational scientist. But also, he has broader significance. He came from a non-privileged background. He got to where he was in Victorian Britain by sheer hard work. He was not a monied gentleman. He worked his way up through the toughest medical schools in the east end of London. He was against privilege and the British class system. He was Britain's first paid scientist – in other words the country's first professional scientist - an important milestone in breaking the upper-

		<p>class mould of society at that time. He spent time educating underprivileged people (in for example, the Royal School of Mines). He worked with government to set up primary school education for all children. He was open minded and a forward thinker. All of these things are inspirational for me, as I myself came from the state school system, and a school where relatively few people went to university.</p> <p>Huxley also changed his mind on the issue for which you have maligned his reputation.</p>
126	██████████	<p>I sincerely hope Imperial is not about to try and rewrite some of its past history. By definition the past is history, over , and we can not change it. I am ██████████ and the only thing I ever wanted to change at Imperial was some of my lecturers.</p> <p>But today with the world facing still a major Pandemic, and the more devastating problem of Climate Warming. I believe all Imperial's considerable resources should be devoted to these two major issues and not side tracked by past history.</p>
127	██████████	<p>This report has confirmed my growing fear that you seem to have changed IC so much that I recognise it no longer. Where has the humour, frank self-criticism and care for the scientific process gone?</p> <p>Instead you appear to have spent considerable time and money dragging the college towards navel-gazing and virtue-signalling. This would be a serious breach of your duty to cultivate the young minds in your charge.</p> <p>Apparently you have no need of funds because you take from the right-wing [Mosley] with one hand and dole it towards the left [BLM] with the other. I have altered my will accordingly.</p> <p>There will be no legacy for IC unless you prove me wrong - before I die!</p>
128	██████████	<p>With regard to Thomas Henry Huxley, I'm sure the History Group means well, but I think it's got it wrong with this one.</p> <p>In the modern world it is well established that black people are on average just as intelligent as white people. However, back in Huxley's day there wasn't such clarity as black people had been very oppressed up until then and hadn't yet had the opportunity to shine. So at that time investigating whether black people are less intelligent than white people might have seemed like valid scientific research. Not ideal I know, but I certainly don't think this proves Huxley was a racist.</p> <p>It's very clear to me that Huxley, an abolitionist, does not deserve to be ostracized and lumped in together with the evil people that supported the slave trade. Therefore I hope the History Group will reconsider their recommendation.</p>
129	██████████	<p>As an alumnus with an Imperial doctorate in the ██████████ I have naturally been interested in press reports of a proposal that the Huxley building be renamed, on the grounds that Huxley was a racist. I don't know who the 'history group' who have made this proposal are, but as you may (or may not!) know, Imperial once had a small but very distinguished programme in the history of science, several of whose former members have considerable expertise in this field. Janet Browne, ██████████ and Aramont Professor of the History of Science at Harvard, is author of the standard biography of Darwin. Jim Secord, who was a postdoc then lecturer in the department and is now Emeritus Professor ██████████ Cambridge, is the world's expert on science and communication in Huxley's time. Both have directed the Darwin correspondence project, giving them a wide view of context of Huxley's views. ██████████</p> <p>██████████</p> <p>I would not want to encumber you with unsolicited opinions – I'm sure you have plenty – but if you wanted a balanced and informed view of the matter I should be happy to offer one, and so I imagine would Janet and Jim.</p>

Please see below, from my blog on medium.com

### **Was T. H. Huxley a racist?**

It has recently been proposed that Imperial College, London, one of the world's leading universities, should remove a bust of Thomas Huxley, the nineteenth-century biologist and Darwinian, a professor at one of its ancestor institutions, and rename what is now the Huxley Building, on the grounds that Huxley was a racist. Reference was made specifically to an 1865 essay, "Emancipation — Black and White", in which he had written as follows:

"It may be quite true that some negroes are better than some white men; but no rational man, cognisant of the facts, believes that the average negro is the equal, still less the superior, of the average white man. And, if this be true, it is simply incredible that, when all his disabilities are removed, and our prognathous relative has a fair field and no favour, as well as no oppressor, he will be able to compete successfully with his bigger-brained and smaller-jawed rival, in a contest which is to be carried on by thoughts and not by bites. ... But whatever the position of stable equilibrium into which the laws of social gravitation may bring the negro, all responsibility for the result will henceforth lie between Nature and him. The white man may wash his hands of it, and the Caucasian conscience be void of reproach for evermore. And this, if we look to the bottom of the matter, is the real justification for the abolition policy.

"The doctrine of equal natural rights may be an illogical delusion; emancipation may convert the slave from a well-fed animal into a pauperised man; mankind may even have to do without cotton shirts; but all these evils must be faced if the moral law, that no human being can arbitrarily dominate over another without grievous damage to his own nature, be, as many think, as readily demonstrable by experiment as any physical truth. If this be true, no slavery can be abolished without a double emancipation, and the master will benefit from freedom more than the freed-man."

From our present day perspective this sounds pretty awful, and it is probably quite fair to say that Huxley was a racist. But apart from being a famous and distinguished scientist and teacher, he was also, in the context of his time, a progressive, an abolitionist and almost certainly much less of a racist than the great majority of his peers. The proposal to dishonour him is finding many supporters, but it is also finding many critics, for whom racism is every bit as abhorrent as it is for the supporters, but for whom the whole thing seems to be taken out of proportion.

How, then, should we treat Huxley's memory? How might we come to a reasonable and balanced judgement ?

The first thing is to look a bit further into the context, and a good place to start is with the final sentence of Huxley's paper: "The duty of man is to see that not a grain is piled upon that load beyond what Nature imposes; that injustice is not added to inequality." The essay was not actually about race at all. It was about the rights of women, and in particular about the injustice of giving girls and women an education far inferior to that given to men: the education provided in girls' schools was almost non-existent, and women were still barred from university. Most people at the time believed that women were "inferior" to men and Huxley wanted to make that point that even if that were the case (which he didn't believe it was) it would be no reason to deprive them of a good education. On the contrary. As in the case of race, injustice should not be added to inequality.

This was, then, a progressive essay, published in a distinctly progressive periodical. While

Huxley doubted that women were inferior to men, however, he was in no doubt that Blacks were, statistically at least, inferior to Whites. So what is the context of that? The first thing to observe is that almost all educated English men, indeed almost all men and women of the upper-middle and upper classes, would have agreed with him. So too, moreover, would most educated Americans, including most of those from the Northern states who fought and gave their lives for the emancipation of slaves in the recently concluded Civil War. Most English would have had no cause to say it. Their encounters with Blacks, if any, were few and far between. And if Huxley had not wanted to make a point about female emancipation, he might well not have said it either.

To uphold slavery and deny that it was an abomination was one thing. To consider negroes the equal of whites was quite another, and while scientists at the time disagreed as to whether they were separate species (we must remember that Darwin's *Origin of Species* was just six years published and that what we now call creationism was the the accepted orthodoxy) or separate branches of the same specie; whether the differences were inherited or evolved, biologically or culturally determined; almost all agreed on the inequality. We can see now that the research on brain size, to which Huxley referred, was seriously flawed; but such research was in its infancy. The evidence was convincing, the results 'made sense' and there was no obvious reason to doubt them.

Other aspects of Huxley's essay, too, can be only understood in historical perspective. The idea that Whites would have no responsibility for the fate of negroes, once freed from slavery, now strikes us as absurd. We have witnessed the oppression that followed emancipation, and that continues to this day. We know that there is no such thing as a "fair field" in such matters, that incumbent power will almost always be abused. What Huxley will have had in mind, however, was not the world of politics but the contests of the animal kingdom and the political economy of free markets.

We also need to be aware of satire. Interpretations of historical texts are always more tenuous than we imagine, but the suggestion that doing without cotton shirts might be an "evil to be faced" is surely tongue in cheek, and it is reasonable to suppose that the linked suggestion that the transformation from "well-fed animal" to "pauperised man" was also such an evil should be taken in the same way. Huxley anticipated that the lot of the freed slave would not be an easy one, but the principal of abolition, for him, appears to have overridden such practical considerations. His observation that salving the white conscience was the "real justification for the abolition policy" is similarly to be read, I suspect, as an observation based on his contacts with American scientists, and not a reflection of his own views as to the reasons for supporting abolition.




The idea that the "master" might benefit more from abolition than the freed-man is also related to what "many people think," rather than being presented as Huxley's own opinion, but even if we choose to attribute it to Huxley himself, it needs to be taken in historical context. The idea may seem repugnant now, but Huxley's was a world in which moral duties weighed much more heavily than rights, and in which heavenly rewards were considered far more important than earthly sufferings. Huxley himself struggled with Christianity — he would soon proclaim himself an agnostic, coining that word, and was widely regarded as an atheist. But he was very strongly supportive of its moral teachings. With no scientific evidence to support the central Christian message, he would not have committed to the notion that while slaves might find salvation in heaven, masters would struggle; but he would certainly have endorsed the message. Deprived of their freedom, the slaves had little scope for moral choice. It was on the slave holders that the force and consequences of morality weighed.

The critical observation is perhaps that while Huxley didn't think negroes equal to whites, he did think that they should be treated — that everybody should be treated — as human beings. They might well find themselves pauperised and starving whereas before they had at least been fed. But they would be men, not animals. And women too. One of the most

		<p>appalling features of American slavery was that while rape was considered an abominable crime, there were by mid-century as many mulattoes as there were pure negroes. Raping a slave didn't count as raping a person. And it is characteristic of the period that these mulattoes came in for particular condemnation. The science said that hybrid progeny tended to be weak, so, combining the prejudices of the time, they were described as effeminate. Respecting as he did both Blacks and women, Huxley would have had none of this.</p> <p>Commemorative busts are strange things: rather like mounted stags heads they are institutional trophies, but with something of the trophy hunter too. By all means let Imperial put its bust of Huxley away and treat it as a curiosity rather than a monument. But the lectures he gave — to women, unusually, as well as to men, and to teachers and the wider public as well as to students of the School of Mines, are an integral part of Imperial's history. His views are unacceptable now, and very rightly so, but they were distinctly progressive by the standards of his time. And if any name is to be changed, let it be that of the university itself. A university that honours, in its own name, a thoroughly racist imperial heritage is really not in a very strong position to call out anybody for racism, let alone Huxley.</p> <p>Full disclosure: I am generally classified as White, but dislike the connotations of that and think of myself rather as vaguely pinkish. I am also an Imperial College alumnus, having earned my PhD there in the history of science. Rather ironically in present circumstances, the department, which produced many distinguished scholars, was long ago disbanded as being irrelevant to the College's core mission.</p>
130		<p>As a graduate of Imperial College I am appalled at the suggestion that the memory of Thomas Huxley should be expunged from his building and other memorials to his name. He was an eminent scientist, naturalist and opponent of slavery. The fact that he was associated with eugenic theory should not detract from his reputation. Eugenics was a serious scientific investigation, which was taken up and cruelly misused by the tyrant Adolf Hitler.</p> <p>The tendency of young people nowadays to judge the past strictly according to modern possible transient moral standards and then to eliminate the memory of great people is regrettable.</p> <p>I will not pretend that I loved the Huxley Building as such. I endured the winter of 1947 there and caught severe bronchitis which did not do my degree much good!</p>
131		<p>I note from the Times today that you are seeking the views of staff and students on the subject of naming buildings and lecture theatres in the College. I write to you as an alumnus [personal information removed] ... I particularly wish to express my robust objection to any suggestion that the Huxley Building should be renamed. That would be an outrage and make nonsense of the esteemed scientific heritage of Imperial College.</p> <p>Was T.H. Huxley</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. "Darwin's bulldog" who was the leading promoter of the theory of evolution to the public</li> <li>2. The first leader of the Royal College of Science</li> <li>3. The first scientist to suggest that birds are descended from dinosaurs</li> </ol> <p>Or not? He may indeed have held views on race that some people today may not share; but then so did all his contemporaries have similar views. How very foolish and short sighted of Mr Huxley not to be four generations ahead of his contemporaries in his racial opinions! Do please stand up to this nonsense!</p>



132	[REDACTED]	<p>My six instructive years at Imperial College in the [REDACTED] [REDACTED] were fulfilling and gave me a springboard for a successful career in industry. I valued my association with an institution which was famed for its rational scientific approach. Politically motivated fads driven by a vocal minority were never part of college life.</p> <p>The recently exposed trawl (by "The History Group") through ancient history seeks eminent people from the past who may not meet current left-wing ideology and can be demonised. Simultaneously, the college is taking donations from the Max Mosley Trust with its modern connections to fascism and anti-Semitism. This reeks of hypocrisy and double standards. It is appalling. I am amazed that this activity is encouraged by the college and that staff have time to devote to it.</p> <p>Imperial College would win many plaudits from the "silent" majority by being a leading educational institution prepared to stand up to the mob. A start could be made by disbanding the "History" Group. Staff or students who don't like it can be advised to go elsewhere - the college will never be short of high quality staff or students. The leadership of the college in recent years is also open to question.</p>
133	[REDACTED]	<p>[REDACTED] I studied at Imperial College and [REDACTED] I had the privilege of studying under Professor Chain and was proud of attending such a prestigious centre of learning. I intended to show my gratitude for the opportunity to attend Imperial by leaving a sizeable bequest to the college in my will,</p> <p>Sadly, however, I am now deeply ashamed to be associated with the college because its proposal to "cancel" one of the most distinguished biologists of the 19th century, T.H. Huxley, at the behest of an ignorant group of zealots. Craven capitulation by universities to similar demands have become depressingly all too common but I expected more from Imperial. If the Huxley building is renamed I intend to cancel the bequest.</p>
134	[REDACTED]	<p>As you may be aware, I am a long-term member of the College, [REDACTED] [REDACTED] I am writing to express my deep concern at recent actions by College authorities relating to renaming the Huxley Building and the acceptance of donations from the Moseley Foundation.</p> <p>Firstly regarding the Huxley building, I am totally unconvinced by the arguments of the "History Group" in favour of removing his name and a bust of him. His so-called misdeeds in no way justify this move, especially when viewed in the context of the time in which he lived. Indeed I believe it reflects badly on the College that it chose to form this Group, no doubt in response to the cancel culture fomented by minority activists using the social media to amplify their views. Many university authorities have acquiesced to this movement, without any real justification for doing so. What will the Group recommend next? "Imperial College" has colonial, possibly racist, connotations, so it will have to go, perhaps in favour of "Inclusive College" which also has the merit of being virtue-signalling?</p> <p>That at the same time the College chose to accept, apparently without question, donations from the Moseley Foundation with its fascist, anti Semitic background, is almost beyond belief. This is hugely damaging to the College's reputation. By contrast with Huxley, Moseley and his actions are recent history and there is no excuse, contextual or otherwise, for the College not to have rejected these offers. What are the History Group's views on this?</p> <p>I had never imagined that I would ever be ashamed of my association with the College, but these actions have made me so.</p>

135		<p>I think the idea of renaming the Huxley Building and removing Huxley's bust is very ill-judged. When I first entered the original Huxley Building in Exhibition Road, as a student in , the association with a great scientist encouraged one's own original thinking. His influence on education in this country, extending far beyond his position as the first dean of the Royal College of Science, was enormous. He was ahead of his time in his support for the education of women. He argued strongly for the abolition of slavery. Do we know of any action of his which could be called racist? Are some words in one essay, which now appear ill-chosen, sufficient reason to insult his legacy in the proposed manner?</p> <p>I would like to add to my earlier comments.  On p.11 Huxley is accused of "scientific racism". However Adrian Desmond writes in Appendix 10 that the term "scientific racism" is not useful in Huxley's case. The conclusion at the end of his piece is clearly inconsistent with the proposed destruction of Huxley's invaluable legacy to the college and to scientific education in general. Surely amongst the audience at his popular lectures in the East End there would have been people of all colours. I do not believe the college would have dared to take this course if Aldous, Julian or Andrew had been alive. I am convinced they would have testified that their grandfather was not a racist.</p> <p>I have discovered that not all alumni seem to have been consulted on this, not even those with fond memories of studying in the Huxley Building. This should be remedied.  Thank you for your attention.</p>
136		<p>I am writing in response to the email sent by President Gast on 29 Oct 2021. This referred to the recent findings of the History Group which have since received widespread – and generally unfavourable – coverage in the UK press. My heart sank when I received this email: it seemed yet another example of unnecessary, negative publicity for a once-revered institution. Recent examples include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. dropping the College's Latin inscription after complaints from students, who were apparently "upset" by its reference to an empire that had largely vanished before their grandparents were born</li> <li>2. dropping the Petroleum Engineering course over climate concerns, despite the fact that developing countries will need fossil fuels for decades to come</li> <li>3. Prof Neil Ferguson's inaccurate predictions about the course of the COVID pandemic and his subsequent personal conduct during lockdown #1</li> </ol> <p>Surely Imperial College has more important things to do with its resources than pursue the ex post facto re-writing of history? What/who gives the History Group the right to act as judge and jury when viewing the College's history through the distorting lens of today's values? Even if some parts of the College's history are "uncomfortable in the context of our modern values" (p3), it is surely better acknowledge and address them instead of consigning a statue to the dust room, or a benefactor's name to the dust bin. I struggle to believe that a significant majority of today's students support your changes - the existence of the College's allegedly tainted history obviously did not stop them studying there. I am sure that they are far less worried about this than about typical student concerns such as coursework, financial pressures and the sheer amount of learning needed to maintain their place at one of the world's top academic institutions.</p> <p>I do not understand what the College hopes this report will achieve. It claims that its recommendations will " ... [ensure] that our history is not a barrier to building an equitable and inclusive university ..." (p2). What evidence is there that Imperial, with its thriving and diverse student population, is not an "equitable and inclusive university"? And even if it were not, what evidence is there that "our history" is a "barrier"? The report does not explain clearly why it feels its recommendations should be adopted and certainly does not expound the positive aspects. I suspect that the main consequence will be to irritate a large number of your supporters, with a consequent reduction in future donations. You might restore the College's reputation in the eyes of some people - but at what cost?</p>

Despite President Gast's assurance that "No decisions have been made" and that "all views will be heard", I doubt very much that anything I say will influence the outcome of this process. I have seen too many "consultations" used by organisations as a fig-leaf to cover, with the veneer of respectability, decisions that have already been taken. If the College is truly of President Gast's view that "It's up to us to shape them [ie. outcomes]" then it should ballot its community so that decisions can be seen to be taken in public.

I give below some specific comments about the History Group's report.

Specific comments:

P2 "our recommendations ... focus on ensuring that our history is not a barrier to building an equitable and inclusive university"

What evidence do you have that the College's history does provide a barrier to this aim? How many students decide not to come to Imperial each year because of concerns over its history? Unless it is a significant factor in deterring students, then why change it. You can't change history, you can only re-write it – and why is your version of history better than the current version?

P5 "interpretation of historical events and teachings in the light of present day values"  
I struggle to see why this is necessary. Values change over time, so how often will the History Group feel the need to "adjust" the College's history? And what purpose does it really serve? As L.P. Hartley wrote "The Past is a foreign country: they do things differently there".

P6 "find people to celebrate from a more inclusive lens"

I disagree profoundly with this statement. People should be celebrated for what they have achieved, not who they are or which views they hold. The choice should be made purely on merit: colour, creed, sex or other characteristics should not come into it.

P8 Category A

Are there no "pale, stale, males" associated with the College whose achievements deserve to be more widely acknowledged?

P10 "It is recommended that the Beit Quad and Hall are renamed"


I do not know if the views expressed about the Beit brothers in the report are accurate – certainly they are no longer here to defend themselves. I cannot condone the alleged treatment of their workers or their alleged role in the Jameston Raid. If the College feels that its association with the Beits is so toxic, then it should hand back the buildings to the Beit family or compensate them. To retain the benefits of their generosity while erasing their name smacks of gross hypocrisy





P11 Thomas Henry Huxley

The report states "Huxley ... might now be called racist" but acknowledges that "he expressly opposed any notion that racial ranking could justify oppression". Surely, by your words, there is no case to answer? It cannot be right to expunge Huxley from the College's memory simply because he held views that we might find offensive today. As Evelyn Beatrice Hall put it when she paraphrased Voltaire "I disapprove of what you say, but I will defend to the end your right to say it". Or, as President Gast said in her email "I am also very clear: we will defend free speech". I assume that she means free speech through the ages and not just free speech of today?

P12 Ronald Fisher

I find Eugenics an abhorrent concept, for which there can be no justification. But how will removing Fisher's name from Silwood Park help redress the balance? Why do his unacceptable views outweigh the vast contribution he made to the field of statistics? Will

		<p>you also rename the various statistical tests and methods (around 20, listed on Wikipedia) invented by Fisher?</p>
<p>137</p>		<p>First and foremost I will like to commend the efforts of the History Group in the execution of this initiative to examine the history of the college through its links to the British Empire. I have taken time to read the report and I think it is well thought through, germane and strategically useful in creating the kind of global institution that truly represents the highest quality of learning and character that Imperial College strives for.</p> <p>I particularly enjoyed reading the honest commentary about such laudable historical figures such as Narinder Singh Kampany, and Francis Allotey as well as the questionable dealings of Tanaka among other figures. I believe this honest appraisal of character and actions, (giving their proper historical context) will allow for a much more historically rich institution that has the courage to take a moral stance and build a healthy community.</p> <p>Notwithstanding the foregoing, I had a few comments on things that could be done to potentially improve the effectiveness of this entire endeavour to achieve the desired impact; my opinions are personal and primarily informed by my experience at the Business School (so may be limited in the scope of the college), but also by virtue of my position as a student leader and engaging extensively with issues surrounding EDI both within and outside the institution; so I hope you find them helpful and practical. Kindly find my thoughts as follows:</p> <p><b>1. Efforts should be made to ensure greater Visibility of this initiative and its output;</b> it has been my observation that on several occasions there had been an information gap between the efforts of the institution to address certain issues and the information that students had. For instance, I recall once mentioning to a group of African students that the Business School had recently launched an Africa Scholarship and to my dismay the students had no idea about the initiative. This instance made me increasingly aware of the gap between the organizational efforts of the institution and the student body (who represent by far the largest population of the institution and its primary ambassadors.) I believe the optimal use of communication channels should be employed to give the output the desired visibility. With students in particular, it will be useful to employ the services of Student Ambassadors, Student Reps and Social Media among other traditional information sources like the Imperial College blog and occasional emails.</p> <p><b>2. The document makes mention of assessment of historical actions based on Imperial College’s Ethos &amp; Values but there is no clear mention/definition of the values of the institution;</b> This gives room for subjectivity and ambiguity. It would help to have the values of the institution stated clearly and succinctly both within the context of this report and in general. On this point I must comment that a lot more work can be done to embed the values of the institution within the psyche of the student body and community at large. While the reputation of the institution is not in doubt, the guiding principles of Respect, Innovation, Collaboration, Excellence and Integrity are (I speak as a student/alumni) NOT sufficiently emphasized in the day to day operation of the institution. A random sampling of students in the corridors may be sufficient to demonstrate this point. A good example of proactive steps to promote culture can be seen in the recent #ImperialTogether drive here. I realize that this may fall outside of the purview of this committee but it is worth noting that the yardstick for assessment of character/actions should be clear and unambiguous.</p> <p><b>3. While the use of QR codes and Plaques are a useful and visible way to communicate the historical context of some of the proposed amendments, the use of active storytelling</b> should also be employed through:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Organized Guided tours</b> that take visitors and students around the buildings, and narrate the historical development of the institution as a whole.</li> <li>2. <b>An annual event/gala</b> (or a segment of a major Campus-wide event) that is set aside to communicate the historical antecedents and the ethos of the institution including its vision</li> </ol>

		<p>for the future.</p> <p>It is my belief that the implementation of these recommendations will go a long way to helping to ensure that the deliverables of this project are felt across the College and the Business School; as well as encourage more individuals and institutions connected thereto to reflect on their own historical footprint and their role in shaping the world that we all hope to see.</p>
138		<p>Many thanks for your work on the Colleges history.</p> <p>We have been encouraged to respond to your recommendations  and I would like to do so now.</p> <p>I have been a staff  . I do understand that some black people might feel offended when entering the building and I do feel sorry if they are being reminded every day of a suppressed history. However, I still would feel horrified if the statues of Wenher and Beit would be removed. If they were busts somewhere in the building, I would happily agree to have them relocated to a special exhibition about the Colleges history, but they do belong and have been designed and created to form the entrance in its entirety which in turn is in harmony with the architecture of the building. I am in favour of having an explanatory board in the entrance hall (just above the benches would be a good place in my opinion) comprising information about the building, the architect and architecture, the role of the Goldsmith company and hence the names of the east and west wings; the sculptor P.R. Montford and the allegoric figures (I hope that there is more information on them in the archive about their meaning), the “good and the bad” from a modern moral lens of Wernher and Beit, possibly even some fact about the Kimberly mine in South Africa.</p> <p>In my view we (any modern society) should focus on fighting that mining rights or any resources should be in the hands of the respective government of the country where they are situated.</p>
139		<p>You have asked for feedback on the report you have produced and I set out my views below.</p> <p>It is always difficult reconciling the past with present day thinking and the whole subject of the place we have inherited and how that was achieved is not easy. I am of the view that we cannot always judge yesterday’s behaviour with what we take as acceptable or unacceptable today. We only have to look at our recent past, let alone what was happening over 100 years ago, to see how we have changed as a society and how our moral values have changed to create and sustain a more equal and fairer society for all. And while we would not condone some of the behaviours of that century, it was ‘the norm’ at that time and place.</p> <p>So to my point. My view about Beit and Wehrner, and indeed for Huxley and de la Beche, is that without these people Imperial College would probably not exist. Certainly not in its current, globally recognised, world leading, form. Beit clearly had student welfare high on his agenda as well the creation of the world class College we have today. I am therefore totally opposed to the removal of the statues in front of the RSM and would support a plaque to provide balanced historical context. The renaming of the Beit Quad and Beit Hall should not be left to the current students to decide, but the views of all Alumni as well. Who knows what the student population in a few years time will think? We may be discussing changing the names back again for fully justifiable reasons, who knows. Again, explanation better than removal.</p> <p>Could I suggest that the RSMA be involved in any discussion on the subjects pertaining to the RSM. Contact through the President, Tim Cotton, would be appropriate.</p>

		Your ideas for new names to be recognised is to be applauded and I fully support this.
140	██████	<p>The statues on the front of the RSM building should stay in place. They are witness to a period in history and the history of the RSM. Toppling statues doesn't make you any more moral or just and it would clearly be a whitewashing of history. The Beit brothers and Wernher would have been acting within the moral framework of the time and it is totally wrong to apply 2021 morals onto them.</p> <p>The obvious pragmatic solution would be to install a balanced plaque presenting both their flaws and virtues.</p> <p>In addition rather than removing the statues why not put up a new statue somewhere in the Imperial College grounds recognising the contribution of the Black Gold and Diamond miners in South Africa together with a plaque explaining the connection with the founders of Imperial College.</p> <p>Without the funding provided by Otto Beit there would not be a Beit Quad and ignoring this fact is yet another attempt to rewrite history. Retaining the Beit Quad name together with another plaque presenting Otto Beit's flaws and virtues would be a better way forward.</p> <p>I have no strong views on the renaming of a hall of residence.</p>
141	██████	<p>Statues help us remember persons of achievement preserved in a statue. For some people looking at statues might be traumatic because it reminds them of history. In my opinion slavery and racist comments cause trauma. Our aim is to create positive behaviours across the campus and those statues might develop negative feelings among some individuals.</p> <p>The College complies with The Equality Act 2010 which aims to protect individuals who are treated unfavourably due to the nine protective characteristics including race. Therefore, The College should be represented by people who are role models and value equality and inclusion.</p> <p>I haven't seen many statues of women scientists on the campus. Maybe we should name one of the buildings after a famous woman scientist. Thank you for your time.</p>
142	██████	<p>I am writing to express my concerns at removing Beit and other historical names from Imperial College buildings. I think it is worth pointing out keeping the name "Beit" is not only a reminder of exploitation in Africa (which should be discussed and understood) but also discrimination in higher education here in the UK: As Jews, the Beits could not attend certain universities and they therefore endowed both Imperial and UCL* being universities that accepted Jewish students.</p> <p>Believe it is incredibly short sighted and narrow to remove names such as Beit from historic buildings even if today we don't regard their names so highly.</p> <p>*"The Godless of Gower Street" moniker comes from when UCL was founded in 1836, having no requirement for students to be Christians – and furthermore, quite a few universities restricted access to only certain denominations of Christians at that. This also extends as to why there are a lot of good works / institutions funded by Carnegie (Presbyterian) and Cadbury (Quakers).</p>
143	██████	<p>Thank you for your recent letter concerning the report by the History Group. It is perhaps ironic that an establishment known as "Imperial" College should seek to distance itself from its imperial-era benefactors.</p>

As a graduate of Imperial College and a published historian, I am deeply concerned that in attempting to re-write its history by deleting people whose past views or actions are now deemed politically unacceptable, the college undermines its own raison d'être. For unlike art or philosophy, which are based upon opinion and perception, and in which there are no "right" or "wrong" answers, Science and Mathematics are based on the rigorous examination of facts and evidence - and there is a "right" answer. In other words, Science is based on solely the truth, however difficult or uncomfortable that might be. Tampering with the facts of history because they do not fit in with current fashion therefore cuts across the fundamental principle on which a college of Science and Technology is founded.

A teaching establishment also has a responsibility to ensure that students learn to make mistakes - after all Science is advanced through iterations of trial and error. If scientists are too frightened to be wrong occasionally, how will Science advance? Are Scientists in the future to be judged solely on their errors, with no acknowledgement or credit for the subsequent achievements resulting from those errors? And just like scientific research, the value of history is the opportunity to learn from it, not to judge it in the privileged comfort of hindsight: history is a teacher not a student. The one characteristic common to all humans is that we are all imperfect and we all get things wrong. It therefore flies in the face not only of natural justice, but also of scientific progress, to judge past benefactors solely on the retrospective interpretation of what they did "wrong" without taking into account what they did "right."

In the three years that I spent as an undergraduate at Imperial College I never knew nor cared why Beit Quad was so called: it really did not matter - it was just what the place was called. In much the same way, how many Londoners could tell you where Trafalgar actually is? A name only becomes an issue when you make an issue out of it, and you thereby manufacture a crisis that need not exist. Renaming a building changes nothing - it will still have been paid for by the same person, and it will continue to be used by people who ought to have more pressing concerns than how someone else made their money over a hundred years ago. And who knows, the actions taken in good faith by today's scientists may offend their successors in a hundred years' time. Perhaps, too, when the fashion changes, buildings might be given back their original names - which illustrates the whole pointlessness of the exercise.

I applaud your interest in the history of Imperial College, but I implore you not to cede to an ill-considered passing fad and not to tamper with historical facts because they are currently unfashionable. To permit such obfuscation of the truth would be unworthy of a distinguished scientist.

144

I feel the need to write to you to express my views on the History Group Report. I shall concentrate on Thomas Huxley, but many of the points apply to others, and some to all, who have been included in the recommendations.

Let me start by confirming that I whole-heartedly support the principle of reviewing our history to make sure we are not inappropriately celebrating individuals of the past who behaved in a morally unacceptable way, as judged, as a general principle, by the standards of their times. I also commend the initiative to positively seek out and celebrate a diverse set of role models to add to those that currently represent Imperial's past. Importantly, the emphasis of the exercise needs to be positive.

With that said, I have some major concerns with the process through which the History Group is making recommendations for deselection (aka cancelling, to call it what it would be - despite the protestations to the contrary).

The first concern is about the scope of the Report. The History Group has taken on a very ambitious project and in my opinion has spread itself thinly over a large and difficult

ground. The rather short document that has been released would be fine if it was the result of a screen to identify individuals for further focused analysis. However, as a document that makes recommendations, it provides little to inspire confidence that sufficient in depth, well informed and balanced dialogue has taken place to justify revising the memory of such giants as Thomas Huxley. I entirely agree with the points made by [REDACTED] recent e-mail regarding the dearth of input from independent professional historians. In my opinion this is particularly striking when it comes to the history of evolutionary theory and genetics. Genetics really began with Mendel's Laws of Inheritance, which were not known about in Britain until 1902, by which time Huxley was dead and buried. In late Victorian times, the scientific community was still struggling with defining what Darwin's theories on natural selection through adaptation to environments meant for human populations, and Huxley's writing needs to be seen in that light. Huxley stood for the Enlightenment principle that science should be evidence-based. He did not have the benefits of mass sequencing of human genomes that now tells us how similar all humans are to one another. I seriously doubt Huxley would challenge that if he were today! In my opinion, taking down Huxley because his work contributed to eugenics is about as logical as cancelling Jesus because his name has been used to justify crusades. As pointed out by one of my colleagues, if this line of thinking about the past continues into the future, not everyone in College today may pass similar political inquisition in one hundred years from now!

The second concern is about potentially lost educational opportunity. I have seen the argument that Huxley's name needs to be hidden because "he might now be called racist". Furthermore, he and the others that are deselected might be featured instead in a College museum – which I fear would come to be seen as some sort of annex to Madame Tussaud's Chamber of Horrors. What is actually needed is a concerted attempt to provide a narrative that explains these individuals in the context of their times, and which reflects on how they influenced their futures – both for good and for bad. [REDACTED], I suspect that the majority of Imperial Staff and Students have a very scanty knowledge of the history and philosophy of science – and hence may be apt to jump to conclusions based on current events. Do you not think that it is this that needs rectifying? The positive way forward here is to review how much we are or are not doing to help our Constituency understand the past and have insight into the present and future ("history repeats itself" etc). Burying it all under the carpet seems to me like a dereliction of duty. Huxley would be proud of an educational initiative, after all general education was one of his priorities.

My third concern is about the lack of clarity about how decisions will now be made on the History Group's recommendations following the current discussion period. If in fact it is the History Group that will take stock of opinions on its own recommendations and then make the decisions, I fear that the process is self-substantiating. Even worse, there is the risk of perception that decisions are being made too rapidly and inevitably - an appeasing reflex triggered by the George Floyd affair. In physiology, of course, a reflex is a programmed behavioural arc in which a sensory stimulus results in a preordained rapid motor response without the need for central nervous system input. In my opinion we should be in no such rush – the important thing is to get it right. Perhaps independent and appropriately appointed and historically-informed committees focusing now in depth on specific individuals or small groups of individuals is the way forward?



To conclude this ramble, I support the overall aims of the History Group, but feel that much more thought and discussion needs to go into the merits versus lack of merits of the specific individuals. I definitely support celebrating a more diverse selection from the past, but I do not agree that a reflexive renaming/removing buildings/statues etc of those now out of favour is the right way forward. What is needed is a balanced educational initiative, including narrative on those individuals who were revered in their day but are now seen by some in hindsight in a different light.



145	[REDACTED]	<p>I am a lecturer [REDACTED] Imperial College. I have read the History Group (HG) Report with great interest and if I have time before the 13 December consultation deadline, I will submit a response since, like many College staff, I have a number of misgivings about the content and the recommendations of the HG group.</p> <p>I am writing to ask two things of you in your capacity as the chair of the HG. Given one of the stated aims of the College is to hold a widespread and thorough dialogue with the College community on the report, would it be possible:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1) To extend the consultation period until the new year, rather than the more narrow consultation period of 23 October - 13 December 2021?</li><li>2) Do you think the College would be interested in holding a public debate with a panel of speakers discussing the report content and recommendations?</li></ol> <p>The reason I suggest both of these things is that I believe it is important for the College to be seen to engage in a comprehensive community discussion of the HG report (as <a href="#">stated in the College ToR</a> ) rather than appear to just administratively push through the recommendations. For example, i think an expert panel discussion in the Great Hall would an excellent way for the College to ensure that there is a broader discussion of the report &amp; HG recommendations.</p> <p>If helpful, i would be happy to co-organise such a public forum and, along with possible speakers from the HG panel, my colleagues &amp; i have a number of ideas and contacts for some excellent invited speakers who could contribute to such a panel discussion.</p> <p>I look forward to hearing your response to these suggestions.</p>
146	[REDACTED]	<p>I'd like to make a brief contribution to the debate.</p> <p>I wish I had more time to read around the topic more, including the details of Huxley's writings, but this isn't possible. I'd also like to read more about the Yale report and process, which it has been suggested had a better approach to the whole question of naming buildings etc.</p> <p>The main point I want to make is that although I would be keen for us to recognise people like Salam more, I am very uncomfortable about removing people like Huxley, who made huge contributions to science. I am aware that he was involved in areas that we would now recognise as unacceptable, but I don't think this invalidates his many other achievements. At the time, this was seen as a valid area for enquiry.</p> <p>I also think that if we do recognise new people in a more inclusive way, we should ensure that we only do this for people who have made outstanding contributions (like Salam). Some of the names suggested in the report do not seem to me to have made outstanding contributions. Also we should be careful to make sure that none of these contributions could be seen as unacceptable by some people now or at a later stage (e.g. the development of flamethrowers makes me uncomfortable).</p> <p>I fear that if we look into the background of many other people that we celebrate, we may find things we don't like. We may all have skeletons in the cupboard. This is often seen at the moment when people turn up unwise, careless or unacceptable comments made by celebrities of various sorts in their past, and this can be used to invalidate their later achievements. I think this is not always justified.</p> <p>I think that we have to take a balanced view of people like Huxley, and for me, the balance is that we should recognise his contribution to science despite a relatively minor aspect which we now consider unacceptable.</p>

		<p>On the other hand, I feel strongly that we should not be naming anything after Tanaka, who was convicted for fraud, which is unacceptable to everybody.</p> <p>PS I would have preferred to have had an anonymous way (which I was not able to find) to respond to the report. I think that many other people may also be reluctant to “come out” on such a sensitive issue in public. It could be argued that everyone should be prepared to justify their opinions and not hide behind anonymity, but I suspect that many more people would take part in the debate if they could do it without being identified.</p>
147	[REDACTED]	<p>I read your report and I'm very disappointed by your recommendations.</p> <p>If you genuinely cared about the representation of minorities at Imperial College, you'd have recommended instead that the History Group not be established at all, and the funds be spent instead on funding overseas students from poor countries.</p> <p>As a [REDACTED] citizen, renaming Beit Hall has absolutely ZERO impact on how welcomed I feel at Imperial, whereas increased scholarship opportunities certainly would, especially since many academics reply to overseas applicants to PhD positions negatively due to the restricted state of funding.</p>
148	[REDACTED]	<p>My main thoughts on the College History Group November 2021 report are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I agree that under-acknowledged contributions should be identified and recognised, and chairs and scholarships seem a constructive and practical way to do this.</li> <li>• I do not understand the statement that ‘majority vote which is not always representative and inclusive’. How would a minority vote be more ‘representative and inclusive’? If, as I suspect, it means that action is taken that is not supported by the majority then under what circumstances will such action be taken, by whom and why?</li> <li>• I do not support the renaming of buildings and rooms at the College.</li> </ul>
149	[REDACTED]	<p>I'm an alumni [REDACTED] Although I will cease to be a student of the college, I feel great affection towards it, and as this campaign was asking for viewpoints, I thought I should offer mine.</p> <p>The College has a terrible reputation of not listening to its students and staff. The sale of St Mary's, the decision to uproot student accommodation to act on as well as the bullying allegations levelled against the current president are representative of a culture of not listening to students and alumni. Although we understand the College is a large and complex organisation, which needs to take decisions to run efficiently and secure the greatest level of service and opportunity for its members, this particular campaign is different.</p> <p>The renaming of buildings, the decisions to honour certain alumni and dishonour others are all assumingly to redress historical injustices, and not to lead to a better running of the College. They will likely have minimal impact in the standing of Imperial or the fantastic academic opportunities it offers to students. As such, I strongly encourage that any proposed changes are put to a vote of alumni and students. Although this campaign is admirable in its efforts, vetting and selecting certain statements to present to key stakeholders and decision makers by unelected staff will inherently not feel democratic.</p> <p>At the end of the day, the way the college wants to represent its history and image should be a decision that is influenced heavily by its students and alumni who have to live with it as part of their own identity. There would be no better way to do this than putting any and all proposals to a popular vote.</p>

150	[REDACTED]	<p>Following the President's call for opinions on this matter, I would like to briefly share mine.</p> <p>While I do not hold strong views and it has taken me time to reach the decision to submit this, I think that my views can be summarised as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- I strongly support the idea of better celebrating some figures from our past.</li> <li>- I disagree with removing names from buildings and actions alike. I do not think that it is appropriate to judge the past with the eyes of today and I also feel that it sends a worrying message to donors and alumni (those wanting to leave a legacy would not like to be dependent on the unpredictable and changing political mood).</li> </ul> <p>Thank you for your consideration and for your excellent work.</p> <p>PS: Needless to say, I would like this opinion to remain strictly confidential.</p>
151	[REDACTED]	<p>In response to the call for staff to share thoughts on the history dialogue I wanted to make you aware of an article written (and forwarded to me) by an esteemed colleague of mine from another university. It relates specifically to Huxley and in the context of WWU's Huxley College of the Environment where similar discussions have been taking place. Here is a link...</p> <p><a href="https://pandasthumb.org/archives/2021/10/creationists-social-justice-advocates-unite-take-down-huxley.html#footshooting">https://pandasthumb.org/archives/2021/10/creationists-social-justice-advocates-unite-take-down-huxley.html#footshooting</a></p> <p>This article puts forward that the history of Huxley's work and views has not been fairly recalled by those advocating the removal of Huxley's name.</p> <p>Clearly these are difficult topics and I am not enough of an expert to comment further, but I did think it appropriate to pass on the link - I hope it helps.</p> <p>Thank you for the work you are doing on these important and challenging issues.</p>
152	[REDACTED]	<p>My email to you today highlights my personal concerns with the findings of the commissioned History Group.</p> <p>To the best of what I have read, the group is proposing both the renaming of Beit Hall and the Huxley Building and certain lecture rooms. The group suggests a replacement with QR codes so people can understand the past history of the building. This is all ostensibly done in the name of 'inclusion and diversity', and to better reflect the current ethos of Imperial College London.</p> <p>Firstly, to the best of my knowledge, while looking through the appendix, I could only find few external advisors that came from a purely history-based background; almost all are from human resources and diversity roles, which is certain to add bias to the report already.</p> <p>In addition, I want to stress that we should not go down the route of what is effectively an erasure of history, despite the group claiming otherwise. Once everyday terms disappear from our language then it is effectively gone. We learn from history and in the past there have been numerous examples of attempts to erase it, with great cultural and human loss, such as Mao's Cultural Revolution. Despite the claims that suggest otherwise, this is very much what 'cancel culture' would approve of.</p> <p>Furthermore, I find it somewhat ridiculous that the report finds the history of the college 'uncomfortable'. It is uncomfortable because our values and morals have changed dramatically in the course of 100 years. It is better that we can know and understand our history in the context of the time, rather than brushing it under the carpet. We cannot</p>

		<p>judge history on our moral compass because there is really no comparison to how we live in modern society now.</p> <p>In conclusion, my recommendation would be not to rename buildings based on how 'uncomfortable' they make us (or rather, the small minority who find them offensive), but instead provide a plaque or equivalent information board outlining an unbiased chronological timeline. If we celebrate those who were side-lined in the past, I think this should be done so that we can effectively showcase both sides. I also think it is important (in light of recent attempts to erase British history) to keep in mind that these are not simple 'good vs evil' cases. For example, Huxley was actually a vocal abolitionist and to remove his name, in my opinion, would be to undermine his contribution to that movement.</p> <p>I hope that you will take my concerns seriously and I look forward to hearing the final decision.</p>
153		<p>I liked the scope and balance of the report. Only one thing jarred with me, which was the idea that perhaps the Huxley building should be renamed. I'm no expert, but I've read in the past about Thomas Huxley and his immense achievements in anatomy and education, besides evolution by natural selection, and of course his positive association with Imperial College. I was not previously aware of any whiff of racism, but even supposing there is evidence that he held some beliefs that were probably common at the time and are known nowadays to be prejudices, that is insignificant compared to his passion for science and his impactful support for evidence-based theories. I believe the case for having a Huxley Building at Imperial College remains overwhelming, and much more so than the case for keeping the names of benefactors of Imperial College whose contribution is measured in £££.</p>
154		<p>I think this is a deeply flawed exercise. In the interests of brevity, I won't comment on each of the Recommendations from the report by the History Group October 2021. Suffice to say, I don't think anything should be changed or removed, but I do welcome additions made on the basis of their contribution to science.</p> <p>Although I praise the attempt at historical accuracy, I say it is a flawed exercise for the following reason: there is no end to what the History Group might deem unfavourable in future.</p> <p>I'm sure everyone in that committee is convinced of their own reasonableness and balance, but what about later incarnations of this committee? What if they found out someone had voted for Brexit, or didn't believe in abortion - would their bust be removed from display?</p> <p>The end point of this exercise is therefore to remove all mentions of anyone. There will always be something that is deemed unfavourable by future generations. Particularly if you look hard enough.</p> <p>There is also a flaw in judging retrospectively - we have no way of knowing for certain what the person actually thought on all sorts of subjects. Although we might have some written documentation in certain cases, is this really enough to condemn an individual, and to condemn them fully over the course of their lifetime? Their views might have changed or modified. If Imperial is about finding out the truth (in the scientific sense), I'm surprised the college would allow a relatively weak standard of evidence to be used in passing judgement.</p> <p>And when the end point in this exercise is reached, I'm sure everything about an individual will have been considered to the detriment of their actual contribution to science. For a college that prides itself on objectivity this will be a bizarre destination.</p>

I sense the leadership in the college and this committee have succumbed to a particular moment in time. I also suspect this history committee is likely to be an object itself of review in the years ahead, and certainly all its members should be prepared for the same scrutiny that they are subjecting historical figures to.

155

Hello, and thank you for allowing me to add my views to this dialogue.

In recent years, inspired by the TV series, "Who do you think you are?", many of us have been motivated to research our family histories, and it is probably fair to say that more than a few of us have come across connections which in the context of their time were acceptable, as then seen through a blind eye; but which in the context of the present are repellent.

L P Hartley wrote, "The past is a foreign country. They do things differently there". The past is what it was, it cannot be altered, or selectively winnowed, but has to be seen and assessed, and understood, it's lessons drawn, warts and all.

It seems almost clichéd to say that only through learning and adhering to the lessons of history can positive change for the better be made now, not to expunge inconvenient truths, but to ensure that former attitudes and practices, abhorrent in hindsight, can never again be part of the here and now.

Certain institutional founders of Imperial College and its constituent colleges appear to have been weighed in the balances of today and found wanting. I think that no secret or cover-up should be made of this. It should be fully documented and made plain to any and all interested parties. My guess would be that there are few if any long standing institutions in the UK that do not have egregious episodes somewhere back along the family tree. Not for nothing is it said that "behind every great fortune lies a great crime". Perhaps also we can say "let whosoever is without sin cast the first stone".



So I favour transparency of history, and a focus on what ICL is NOW as a world bastion of excellence, tolerance, charity, equality and humanity. While I do object to changing names on established parts of College infrastructure, I don't support the concept of removing statues or of pinning descriptive plaques on them. Perhaps College History could, if not already the case, be the subject of a lecture or two for all students, irrespective of discipline.




The removal of statues is the start of a very slippery slope. Where do you stop once you have started? Royalty could not stand the light of scrutiny for a moment. Exploiters of Empire, First World War generals, almost any politician of any era (not least the present) and so and so forth, might all fall.

I grew up in an isolated village [redacted] Serious intolerance of all foreigners, which included anyone born outside the parish boundary, and absolutely with a wartime enemy association, abounded. Our village was by no means unique in this. We had it fed into us daily, and it was the norm. Perhaps that deserves censure, if ever (not going to happen) a statue to me gets erected.

I am so grateful for the golden opportunities which took me first to [redacted] Grammar School, and then on to Imperial College and the Royal School of Mines where decency, humanity and regard for the contributions and welfare of others brought out the best in me. I have had the privilege to take those Imperial/RSM standards with me to many parts of the world as a practicing [redacted], and to receive in kind the same from those I met and worked with.

Imperial is a major force for good in the world. Don't let any skeleton in the long distant

		<p>past drag that down. ICL isn't judged by what was, but what is, and what is, is Great.</p> <p>Thank you so much again, and I apologise for any rambling sentiments above. I hope I have understood the issues, and am glad to send these views, and if there is ever anything I can do further, then just let me know.</p>
156		<p>Firstly, I think it is admirable that the College has chosen to address some of the problematic aspects of its history in setting up the History Group and examining the college's links to the British Empire, colonialism and racism. Personally I fully support the recommendations of the Group and think that the college should follow them by taking action, consulting the wider community as appropriate.</p> <p>The history of science is no less complicated than human history in general and so it would be simplistic to expect the findings of these investigations to produce conclusions that meet with universal approval. However, I think that Imperial College, because of its close association with Empire – illustrated not least by its name – has a particular responsibility to address the problematic parts of its history and how they are manifested in the college today. If we are truly a world leading institution, then there is a duty upon us to show moral leadership in the decisions we make and how we conduct college business. Moral leadership involves making difficult decisions guided by our principles - and the History Group report has pointed the way to how the college can begin to address its complex history and show such moral leadership. It now falls to the College's senior management to show true leadership worthy of an institution of our academic standing, by following through on the recommendations of the History Group. The eyes of the world, including those of future students, staff and supporters, are upon us and I hope we can make the right decisions.</p> <p>Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to this dialogue.</p>
157		<p>In the past few weeks and months we have been reflecting on the importance of our institution's history, the impact this has on our current mission and how these affect our choices moving forward. I appreciate that this is a complex and sometimes difficult conversation, but one that is good and necessary. I would like to contribute, briefly, my point of view here – this is a very busy time of the year and I am not sure I have time to attend the small group discussions.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Celebrating past figures in science and technology – building names*. I understand that there are strong arguments made about the names chosen for some of our most important buildings on Imperial campuses. One prominent example is the “Huxley Building”. It seems clear to me that we now realise that several activities and openly held points of view held by (this) Huxley are now deemed unacceptable, discriminatory and insulting to many of us in College and outside. I am therefore in favour of renaming the building, and moving the iconography (bust/statuary) to an appropriate place in College where an appropriate reflection on the contribution of this man to College and wider science can be made (a museum?).</li> <li>2. Celebrating current figures in science and technology – building names*. We have a long tradition of attempting to recognise present public figures by naming prominently some buildings, or parts thereof. I imagine that this may at times be driven by donations from the individuals, their families or companies. One prominent example is the Dyson Building of Design Engineering. This is also very problematic. Dyson, as an outspoken industrialist supporter of Brexit, is a divisive figure. Brexit is a hugely divisive issue which is offensive and is causing very serious problems for many of us in College and in our wider society. In my opinion, Brexit will eventually come to be seen as a huge stain on the fabric of the nation, a corrosive blotch with irreversible consequences well beyond our institutional boundaries. Because of this, I feel very strongly that the History group should also consider recommending the renaming of the space adjacent to the Science museum to the Building</li> </ol>

		<p>of Design Engineering. The contribution of Mr Dyson could be then discussed and presented in the same place Huxley's bust will be placed.</p> <p>3. The College name. Our institutional name "Imperial" is itself very problematic for many of us. The connotations associated with empire, its unjust exploitation of humanity and natural resources that are celebrated with "Imperial", need to be dropped now. This may sound like an unsurmountable step. But grown-up, civilised countries and institutions have done this in the past, and it is not beyond our capacity to do this The German Max-Planck Society has something to teach, here. It is not that the Emperor Has No Clothes: we should no longer celebrate Empire. This is a long overdue matter – it should have been ditched in the 1950s or 60s. Let's do it now.</p> <p>*given our poor track record in naming buildings after people of dubious reputation (Tanaka, anyone?), maybe we should simply have a moratorium on using names of people to denote buildings.</p>
158		<p>RE. History of RSM and Imperial.</p> <p>I am sure that should the founding funders of the RSM and Imperial not have funded these institutions, they would have been eventually funded by others, and no doubt the source of that funding would also have been found wanting in terms of modern day ethics.</p> <p>The fact that it was funded by these philanthropists to provide higher education for those who were previously excluded should be noted by the current custodians of the management policy at Imperial.</p> <p>I would like to say thank you to all the founding subscribers and subsequent contributors for the higher education I received at the RSM. I would also state that I would be extremely embarrassed to be associated in any way with any action taken to remove or in any way downgrade any visible signs of public appreciation to these funders.</p> <p>To misquote Margaret Thatcher, "History is History is History". Many congratulations to the History Society on establishing and documenting the history of Imperial and I truly hope that these facts will be collated into a book so that we can all benefit from it and draw our own personal conclusions based on facts.</p>
159		<p> Professor Sir Geoff Palmer. He was the first black Professor in Scotland. Born in Jamaica and came to London as a teenager. His field was Brewing. I know him well. A scholar and a gentleman. He has a view on all slavery and statues etc which you might find interesting. He's doing a review of such matters for Edinburgh Council.</p> <p>You can read his views on all this here:  <a href="https://www.open.ac.uk/scotland/news/blogs/GeoffPalmer">https://www.open.ac.uk/scotland/news/blogs/GeoffPalmer</a></p> <p>If you scroll down you will find that Geoff says this:  "Although many people have stated that statues such as that of Henry Dundas (pictured right) should be removed, my view is that if you remove the evidence, you remove the deed. Therefore, slavery-related objects such as statues and buildings should carry plaques which tell the truth of links with slavery. In this regard, the next statue that is removed, should be racism. Teaching this history properly in schools and giving it proper attention in our higher institutions of education should help to reduce slavery-related racism."</p> <p>I agree with Geoff's view. And it is far more important now to eradicate 21st century slavery, slavery which isn't confined to Africa, Asia etc, but is going on in the UK too.</p> <p>By the way, some of you might have listen to the Radio 4 programme "The Life Scientific".</p>

		<p>One such episode features Geoff Palmer. You might find it interesting...  <a href="https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b0640j59">https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b0640j59</a></p> <p>If you are short of time, fast forward to 10 minutes in where he describes an interview he had for a Min of Ag funded post . It did not go well...  He is remarkably unbitter</p>
160	<p>Attachment included below</p>	<p>In response to your request for comments regarding the Imperial College History Group I submit the following.</p> <p>PS. I endorse the comments by Professor Sir Geoff Palmer and Professor Paul Jowitt</p> <p>Quote “The Beit brothers’ wealth came largely from the development of the diamond and gold mining industries in South Africa. Most of their interests were focused on the Kimberly diamond mines, which oppressed a largely Black migrant labour force. Alfred Beit was also involved in the planning and financing of the botched Jameson Raid of 1895, which aimed to trigger a coup in the Transvaal Republic. The raid was one of the factors that spurred the Second Boer War.”</p> <p>To say Alfred Beit oppressed the migrant black labor is ridiculous. Certainly, black labor was used by the mines for many years, they were paid reasonably well for the times and sustained their families back in their home country. They were fed, clothed, paid, and housed, they were treated at times in an unacceptable way by modern standards in some countries, which was unfortunately, the way of life there until the end of Apartheid.</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>To say Beit is responsible for the oppression, whatever that means, makes little sense, since the African work force voluntarily hired on with the mines, since they had little other way to support their families. The Jameson raid and the attempted coup is a political issue and is not an issue that should be used to judge Beit. Leave him be at the entrance and leave him be as the hall name where I stayed as a student.</p> <p>What should be a concern of the chap’s club is the hypocrisy of a Royal School of Mines with no mining in it, in fact some in the school probably are against mining in general. I have contacted the leaders of the College, School, and Department concerning the need to revive an undergraduate mining engineering degree program at the RSM with only one negative response. Currently, there is no such degree program in the UK, this is something the Chaps Club should be involved with and promoting, rather than worrying about a statue or hall name for someone who very few have any idea who he is. I must admit I never paid any attention to the statues when I was at the RSM or the name of the hall.</p> <p>While on the topic of hypocrisy , it seems to me that the club should be seriously looking at changing its name, which is an insult to the female members of the club. No doubt you are well aware that for many years IC had few female students and the RSM even more so. To say women were oppressed would be a fair statement. I recall a long debate by the club when the discussion on whether to admit women to the club took place.</p> <p>That should never have happened, it should have been accomplished much sooner in the life of the club, which reflected the attitude in those times to women in science and engineering, particularly mining. In the past, the Beit hall bar had a little room for ladies to deposited, while the men engaged in drinking and frivolity in the bar, such was the Chap’s club in those days.</p> <p>[REDACTED]. I hope the club takes on the task of a name change, which is much more important than worrying about statues. May I suggest the The Chaps and Chapesses club be considered, and I attach some discussion of the term.</p>



# Can a woman be a chap?

- [May 15, 2019](#)

Q: What's the origin of the word "chap"? The British seem to use it the way Americans use "guy." Does it apply only to men? Or could a Brit say a woman is "one of the chaps" as we'd say she's "one of the guys"?

A: The noun "chap" has been used since the early 18th century to mean a man or boy. The usage is primarily British and began life as a shortening of "chapman," an obsolete term for a merchant that dates back to Anglo-Saxon days. (We'll have more on "chapman" later.)

"Chap" is used once in a while for a woman, but not all that much. One of the few examples we've seen is from the first episode of *The Vicar of Dibley*, a British sitcom that began airing on Nov. 10, 1994.

After the Rev. Geraldine Granger arrives at St. Barnabas as vicar, one of the villagers says, "She seemed a decent chap to me," while another replies, "That's the point. She's not a chap."

The *Oxford English Dictionary*, an etymological dictionary based on historical evidence, has this early example for the term "humorously applied" to a woman:

"Nought would do / But I maun gang [must go], that bonny chap to woo." From *Helenore, or the Fortunate Shepherdess* (1768), the major work of the Scottish poet Alexander Ross.

Feminized versions of "chap" are sometimes used humorously now, especially in the phrases "chaps and chapesses" and "chaps and chapettes," but this usage isn't all that common either, according to our searches of news databases.

We haven't found any standard American or British dictionary that accepts the use of "chap" as a gender-neutral term. All the ones we've consulted define it in this sense as a chiefly British noun for a man or boy. Some label it informal.

None of the dictionaries have an entry for "chapette," but one, *Collins*, includes "chapess" and defines it as an "informal, humorous" British noun for a woman.

The collaborative Wiktionary, which defines "chap" as a man or fellow, has entries for "chapess" and "chapette." Both are defined as informal British terms for a "female chap; a woman." Usage notes add that they're generally found in the two plural phrases cited earlier.

In looking into your question, we came across a Dec. 27, 2017, [article](#) in the Times (London) about gender-neutral guidelines at a military training base in England for future officers.

The two-page document, written by the Joint Equality Diversity and Inclusion unit at the Defence Academy in Shrivenham, Oxfordshire, suggests that “chaps” and other gendered words be replaced by such terms as “people, folks, friends or you all.”

So the British military (at least the unit nicknamed JEDI) considers “chaps” a gendered word—unlike the non-gendered plural “guys,” which appears in both US and UK standard dictionaries.

Some British dictionaries describe the use of “guys” for men and women as American, though *Oxford Dictionaries Online* defines the usage both in its US and UK editions as “People of either sex,” and gives this example: “you guys want some coffee?”

(We’ve published several posts about “guy,” including one in [2007](#) about the non-gendered usage and one in [2008](#) about the origin of the term.)

Interestingly, English has four distinct “chap” words. Here are the senses: (1) a man or boy, (2) cut or roughened, as in chapped lips, (3) the jaws or cheeks, and (4) cowboy leggings.

As we said earlier, the use of “chap” in sense #1 is a shortening of “chapman,” an old term for a trader or dealer. The word was *céapmann* in Old English, where *céapian* meant to buy and sell, and *céap* meant bargaining. Yes, those Anglo-Saxon words are ancestors of our adjective “cheap,” which as you know may describe something that’s a bargain.

The earliest *OED* example for “chap” used to mean a man or boy is from *A Complete History of Algiers* (1728), by Joseph Morgan: “‘Prithee!’ returned my scornful, choleric Chap; ‘Don’t compare Me to any of your scoundrel Barbarians!’ ”

As for sense #2, “chap” first appeared in Middle English as a verb meaning to “remove by chopping,” according to the *OED*, which cites this example:

“Anon her [their] hedes wer off chappyd.” From *Richard Coer de Lyon*, a poem believed written in the early 1300s about the storied exploits of King Richard I of England during the Third Crusade.

(The verb “chop” showed up in the mid-1300s as simply another form of “chap,” the *OED* notes. Although there were similar words in other Germanic languages, the ultimate source for the cutting sense of “chap” and “chop” is uncertain.)

By the late 14th century, *Oxford* says, “chap” was being used as a noun meaning a “painful fissure or crack in the skin, descending to the flesh: chiefly caused by exposure of hands, lips, etc., to frost or cold wind.”

The first *OED* citation is from John Trevisa’s 1398 translation of *De Proprietatibus Rerum* (“On the Order of Things”), an encyclopedic Latin reference compiled in the 13th century by the medieval scholar Bartholomeus Anglicus:

“Lepra ... makyth chappes, chynnes and clyftes” (“Leprosy ... maketh chaps, chinks and clefts”).

Early in the next century, the *OED* says, the verb “chap” came to mean to “crack, cause to crack in fissures.” The earliest citation is from a translation, dated around 1420, of a Latin book about agriculture:

“And yf thai [“they,” the roots of a flowering tree] chappe, a stoone under the heed Roote is to doo.” From a Middle English translation of *Opus Agriculturae*, also known as *De Re Rustica*, written by Palladius in the late 4th or early 5th century.

The participial adjective “chapped” showed up in the mid-15th century. The first *Oxford* example is from the *The Towneley Plays*, a series of mystery plays (dramas based on biblical stories) believed written sometime before 1460: “My fyngers ar chappyd.”

The earliest example we’ve seen for “chapped lips” is from an April 11, 1823, letter by Francis Hall from Soatá, Colombia: “at the expiration of five hours we gained the summit of the *Paramo* without any other inconvenience than chapped lips.”

(The *Páramo* is an ecosystem in the Colombian Andes. Hall, a retired British army officer, joined Simón Bolívar’s independence movement in South America and later became a hydrographer for the Colombian government.)

The use of “chaps” to mean the jaws or cheeks (sense #3) showed up in the mid-16th century, and is now primarily used for the cheeks, or jowls, of a pig. The first *OED* citation is from a 1555 translation of a Latin history of Spain’s explorations in the New World:

“The hooke ouerthwarteth and catcheth hold of his [a shark’s] chappes” (from *The Decades of the Newe Worlde*, Richard Eden’s translation of an early 16th-century work by the Italian historian Peter Martyr of Angleria).

The use of “chops” to mean the jaws or mouth appeared a few decades later, as we wrote in a recent [post](#) about musical “chops,” or skill. A singular use of “chop” (spelled “choip”) to mean jaw showed up in the early 1500s.

Finally, sense #4, the use of “chaps” for the leggings worn by cowboys, appeared in the late 19th century. As John Ayto explains in his *Dictionary of Word Origins*, the term “is short for Mexican Spanish *chaparreras*, a derivative of Spanish *chaparro* ‘evergreen oak.’ ”

Ayto adds that “they were named from their use in protecting the legs of riders from the low thick scrub that grows in Mexico and Texas (named with another derivative of *chaparro*, *chaparral*). *Chaparro* itself probably comes from Basque *txapar*, a diminutive of *saphar* ‘thicket.’ ”

The earliest *OED* example for this sense of “chaps,” which we’ve expanded, is from *Baled Hay* (1884), a collection of sketches by the American humorist Bill Nye:

“ ‘Chaps,’ as they are vulgarly called, deserve more than passing notice. They are made of leather with fronts of dogskin with the hair on. ... ‘Chaps’ are rather attractive while the wearer is on horseback, or walking toward you, but ... the seat of the garment has been postponed.”

Good question. You have a choice. "Gal" and "girl" come to mind, as do "dame" and "doll" or "dolly". [There's a famous American musical called "Guys and Dolls".] In the North of England and Scotland, "lass" is common. "Bird" sounds rather 1960s-ish. "Sheila" is common in Australia but rare elsewhere. "Chapess" and "chapette" apparently exist, but are very rarely used.

# chapess

## Contents

- [1 English](#)
  - [1.1 Alternative forms](#)
  - [1.2 Etymology](#)
  - [1.3 Noun](#)
    - [1.3.1 Usage notes](#)
  - [1.4 Anagrams](#)

## English

### Alternative forms

- [chappess](#)

### Etymology

[chap](#) + [-ess](#)



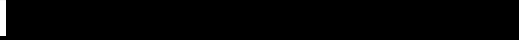
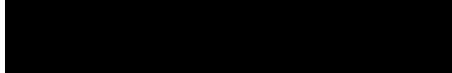

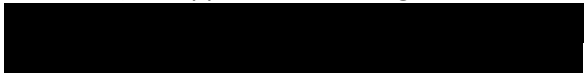
### Noun

**chapess** (*plural* [chapesses](#))

1. ([Britain](#), [informal](#)) A [female chap](#); a [woman](#).
- 1.

### Usage notes

- Generally only used in the phrase *chaps and chapesses*.

<p>161</p>		<p>Please find below some feedback from a colleague - they may have submitted this themselves, if so apologies.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Relocate the statues of Beit, Wernher etc (to the Courtyard at the back of RSM, which needs landscaping anyway??), and updating with alternative, appropriate figures (eg dead persons of interest from the second half of the 20th century) in fields appropriate to the RSM's tenant Departments (BioEng, Materials, ESE). Sensitively updating the RSM entrance (the "Mining" and "Metallurgy") signs is probably also now called for, rather than continuing to live in a museum.</li> <li>2. Consider renaming the College in the long term from something that celebrates Imperialism to something else, e.g. that celebrates global engagement and internationalism, and a pathway over 10-20 years to get there, e.g. interim branding. E.g. United World College (OK, that's taken), or London International University or something similar. Maybe to please monarchists there's a Queen's centenary option? E.g. Queen's College of Technology, London? i.e. KCL-Tech. But because the brand of Imperial is so strong in certain geographies, I think that interim, blended branding, e.g. Queens Imperial Technology University, London (QUIT-UL), or something, is probably a good direction to travel. (to then become QUL??).</li> <li>3. I think there is a problem with Imperial's association in research and management with organisations which wouldn't pass an ESG investment filter, eg arms companies, MOD, coal mining and big Oil. There's also a risk that we don't engage with companies like Rio Tinto that will be needed to produce materials at all points in the future. There's also a risk that political fashions change faster than research career timescales – e.g. with nuclear and the energy transition, or with China. Also, many of those organisations are fundamental to many research areas Imperial academics work in. I don't think the Oxford solution or scrutiny or SRI panels are a good way of managing this issue – they take a long time to approve things and large amounts of research avoids them. But I don't have a good answer, either.</li> </ol>
<p>162</p>		<p>You are apparently soliciting input on this. </p> <p> My general view is that the UK lost confidence in the rightness of its positions over the course of the 1940s and 50s, leading to decolonisation through the 1950s, the rebranding of the Empire as a "Commonwealth;" a term that, 70 years on, is itself slowly falling into disuse. In that context, having a university called "Imperial" with statues of founding donors who made their money from colonial exploitation seems, erm, a bit of a relic? The country implicitly acknowledged that Empire was bad 70 years ago! But of course the brand is strong, particularly in certain geographies.</p> <p>So I would propose;</p> <p>(1) The RSM statues be relocated ["retain and explain"] and the exterior entrance updated, e.g. with new statues. E.g. the RSM has three tenant Departments now (BioEng, ESE and Materials), as opposed to "mining" and "metallurgy." </p> <p>. And we should explain the history with plaques inside the entrance (maybe consolidate and update the war memorials too? Presumably other graduates have died in conflicts since 1945?), and keep the "mining" and 'metallurgy' plaques. The busts in the main stairs could be updated, too – I know who Bessemer was, but I have no idea about the others? If no-one knows who they even are, surely that's a problem? I would propose the new statues be leading figures from the disciplines of the tenant Departments, who are dead, who were connected to those Departments, and whose main contributions were in the period 1950-2000. They should not be donors. There could be a programme to update the statues and busts every 20 years on a rolling basis.</p>

		<p>(2) Imperial should seek to develop a new name, that does not celebrate Imperialism. Probably for 2025-2040 this would be an additional branding, followed by dropping of the term “Imperial” – i.e. a two-step process. I’m not a monarchist, but I would note that Queen Elizabeth’s centenary is coming up, although “Queen’s College” wouldn’t itself be very distinctive. The name should not look like a copy of UCL, KCL etc, and should go through the proper Royal Charter process, rather than having “Not ICL but ICL really” branding and then an “ICSTM” legal name like last time, i.e. just a corporate muddle. I would also note that self confident global brand institutions don’t generally plaster their buildings with their logos – I can’t think of a single building in Oxford or Cambridge, or even Harvard, but we seem to suddenly have developed a thing for putting our logos on towers overlooking the A40.</p> <p>(3) We should systematically seek to curate lists of our graduates that have gone on to do things we would be proud of, and celebrate them in displays that have a rolling update programme. E.g. in Materials, [REDACTED] and those are just two of the people I know personally. i.e. Much as Constance Tipper is notable, one might hope to be able to find a greater number of examples. They were also men, of course, e.g. [REDACTED] (in the Department of Chemistry) and [REDACTED] (in Metallurgy) made key contributions to extractive metallurgy with their diagrams in the 1940s.</p>
163	<p>[REDACTED]</p> <p><i>Attachment included below</i></p>	<p>Attached is my submission to the current discussion concerning renaming or removing historical items related to the RSM.</p> <p>I would appreciate confirmation of receipt of this submission.</p>

Dear Professor Gast:

This letter is in response to your request for submissions on the proposal to rename the Beit Quad and Hall and modify or remove statues in front of the RSM Building on Prince Consort Road. Whatever the ultimate decision, I trust it will be wise, just, reflect the academic evolution of the RSM and the College and take due account of those who contributed in many ways to its current status as a world-leading science and engineering university.

Arguably, the statues are of little consequence, but they do recognise key historical figures in the development of the College. For most who pass by, the statues (and the Beit Hall precinct) are just part of the streetscape, with no particular significance. However, for many former RSM students, they are recognition of the generosity and foresight of those who contributed to their education and career development. It is only a particular minority that considers the statues and Beit Hall and Quad out of their historical context that may have a different view of their significance.

An Australian social critic coined the term ‘offenderati’ for those readily or deeply offended by views and values contrary to their own, or are intolerant of them. In my opinion, while the views of the offenderati must be taken into account, the situation where such a group can exercise a dictatorial authority over the majority view must be managed carefully and thoughtfully. To my mind, the current ‘cancel culture’ bears a remarkable and troubling resemblance to the historical pursuit of heretics, religious dissidents, witches, and, in recent times, political dissidents in central and Eastern Europe and Asia. Unfortunately, in the past the appeasement of hegemon and authoritarians has been found to be a futile exercise. Airbrushing historical records does not lead to reliable history and does not alter the basic facts. It is certainly not part of the Western, liberal democratic tradition.

To many it would seem that the College is engaged in a superficial and futile exercise in ritual purification and appeasement of ideological, dictatorial purgers. An issue here is that there may be no limit to the consequent scope of the exercise. For example, it suggests that a more thorough examination of ALL historical bequests is required to ensure they are ideologically pure by current standards. Logically, any future bequests would need to meet both contemporary standards and those projected for about 2140, which is clearly absurd. Further, some may go as far as suggest that the College should drop *Imperial* from its title - it is a reminder of the College’s engagement in Great Britain’s imperial enterprise.

It is ironic that so-called progressives use repressive measures like cancellation, which is notably regressive. What will be achieved in the current exercise is difficult to discern, apart from virtue signalling and conformity to a current fashion, and little will be achieved that makes a positive contribution to the intellectual, cultural and academic life of the College.

From these comments you may conclude that I am not in favour of renaming Beit Hall and Quad and removal of the statues on Prince Consort Road.

Plaques acknowledging the source of funds provided by the benefactors, although consistent with the standards of Victorian and Edwardian times, may not be consistent with contemporary ones, may be appropriate.

Respectfully submitted,

[Redacted signature]

[Redacted address line 1]

[Redacted address line 2]

[Redacted address line 3]

With reference to the referenced report and its recommendations, I would just like to say that where at all possible, I feel that disclosure to the extent appropriate and required should be the starting point for addressing this issue, unless the circumstances are overwhelming and indicate a clear breach of historical norms which then requires further additional action. If that is the position that is being taken then ok but I am not clear that it is.

Over the course of history, values and norms have evolved significantly and continuously. Values that were once widely held are now (quite correctly I hasten to add) held as ghastly, yet to airbrush all of these characters from the history of Imperial College would not, I feel, be appropriate.

For example, it is proposed that the financial contributions of certain individuals who provided "practically the whole of the endowment of the College since its incorporation [in 1907]" be virtually expunged. My belief is that we do better to acknowledge this rather than airbrush away the inconvenient truth that their wealth arose in no small part from mistreating large numbers of people. What doesn't change is that the college was initially funded in large part by the profits of such activity and that cannot be ignored.

In a similar vein, Eugenics was reasonably mainstream at the time - albeit abhorrent. HG Wells, an RCS alumnus, called for "the sterilization of failures" in 1904 although he later changed his views. One could say that it was very bad science based on very bad values but which, at the time, was not completely out of the mainstream.

Many individuals from earlier times held views that were clearly wrong by today's standards. This includes major historical characters, some of whom continue to be generally lauded. It is perhaps easier for me to compare characters from my current country of residence where Washington and Jefferson were both massive figures in 18th Century US history, and also slaveholders. There are certainly other comparable 19th century British figures whose actions don't stand up to modern scrutiny. One might equally argue that the whole nature of the Empire was immoral yet it sits as the name of our college and I don't believe that this should be changed.

So, given that many individuals at times around the founding of the college held views that while reasonably mainstream at that time are quite rightly now held to be unacceptable, I am not sure where the line is being drawn, when it is essentially the views and practices of the time that are being reconsidered.


Is it ok to tolerate behavior if one has other finer moments or is seen to be of more general historical significance but not to do so in the case of others who are lesser known. Beit and Huxley are pretty significant characters in Imperial's history it would seem.

Finally, it seems interesting that these cases fall into category "A" - recommendations for a particular action while the actions of a convicted criminal "Tanaka" are a category "B" that seems to require further research and analysis. Surely being convicted of criminality is pretty clear-cut compared to the other cases. I would contend that if the case against Beit et al were based on their actions with regards to the Coup in the Transvaal being criminal, then this is potentially more damning as this cannot in any way be seen to be a reflection of any norms prevailing of the time.

I want to be explicit that I in no way agree with or condone the actions of Beit, Huxley et al. However, I really do believe that they should not be "air-brushed" away - good and bad, they are a part of the college's legacy.

It is a difficult balance to strike and if the renaming of buildings is ultimately deemed necessary then so "beit" but we ought not get too righteous - after all the whole basis of the Empire and it's "Imperial College" is pretty dubious from an ethical perspective - but it



		<p>is history - and there are powerful lessons to be learned from that history. Moreover, I don't think that the college and academia generally should be out there too far from general public policy with regards to renaming, etc. You will likely not get a lot of response to this report in one direction - who wants to take any risk in terms of being seen as a supporter of "bad" behavior and as a result, I do think that taking into account a broader perspective than academics is important.</p>
165		<p>I learn of your report on the college history which appears set against the new moral order which dictates that greats such as Sir Otto and Alfred Beit and Sir Julius Wernher, celebrated and honoured in the past, should no longer be celebrated for their exceptional achievements, techno-business exploits and benevolence without validation by of-the-day politically correct opinions and sensitivities, in order to sensitise Imperial College to the modern generations of students.</p> <p>Suffice to say I cannot understand why such an esteemed institution as Imperial College feels compelled to tinker with great legacy effects related to the 19th and early 20th centuries, and which have stood the test of time, just to show its morally correct credentials in 2022. It's completely unnecessary identity politics and self flagellation at risk of undermining its other attributes.</p> <p>I further see what is being proposed is unfair and disregards period context and norms. It is fundamental to the application of science and technology in days past, that mineral extraction exploits were carried out overseas in undeveloped countries (per the era across one Empire or other), at great personal and commercial risk, with industrial social and racial side effects which were of-their-day and not understood in today's terms. There was no benchmark for anything; and it is naive of today's more socially and racially enlightened students, and sensitive others, to see otherwise. They should be encouraged to accept history and its learnings. Where do we stop in looking backwards and picking at weaknesses and failings in historical great endeavours, by 21st century pickers, who have some self righteous arrogance to re-validate past greatness and relevance in today's Imperial College fabric?</p> <p>I'd say Imperial College(RSM) should be worrying about appealing to prospective students and students who look at the academic and work-life enhancing merits of attendance, and not be fretting and agitating about some unfortunate side effects of the institution's benefactors as were part of history. Any student who does not see that mineral industrial exploits over the centuries, by their forbears, likely had some unfortunate social and racial consequences in the undeveloped world, is not very aware of the world or industrial history. They should worry more about today's social, technological and racial inequalities in the developed and undeveloped world, that they might get a chance to do something about. If they can't they should go elsewhere.</p> <p>In summary, I feel Imperial College should boldly rise above this cancel culture (and thereby pragmatically differentiate itself) and proudly continue to trade on its mainstream academic attributes and links to industrial historical greatness, as enabled by the Beit brothers and Julius Wernher still being commemorated around the college.</p> <p>Specifically I say:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>The Beit Quad and Hall</b> - should not be renamed. They are what they are and the Beit name recognises history and benevolence, and is well deserved in perpetuity. Any change is needless comfort cosmetics</li><li>• <b>The Statues at the front of RSM</b> - should not be removed. They do not misrepresent anything. No intervention is required other than possibly a plaque alongside which explains their achievements and the overseas environments in which the benefactor individuals were working.</li></ul>

		<p>• <b>The endowed PhD scholarship</b> - should remain as is. It will otherwise become discriminatory and destroy original elements. (It is apparently 'under review and is to be repurposed and awarded to African students'. What African Students means is anybody's guess and is fraught with danger. There are many persons of all sorts of colours, and white ones, as African citizens. I suspect it possibly means black African Students. In which case say so. And what constitutes black! And why should it be just African students? Is the 'specification' of scholar to represent reparations for past century social damages in (black) Africa? Perhaps it should be for Jewish students as Beit might wish? I think this repurposing could distort the purpose for nothing other than an overlay of 2022 social-racial delicacies).</p> <p>I forward the above in good faith and best interests of Imperial College and sensible student community, as a proud alumni of the Royal School of Mines, Imperial College. I wish the team good luck in landing on the best practicable, least costly and fitting solution, and for the names of Beit and Wernher to endure in unadulterated form.</p>
166		<p>I understand the concerns about the representations of Beit, Beit and Wernher around the College due to the treatment of workers during the expansion of the Kimberley mines. It does concern me that we should want to erase history by removing their names from the Beit Quad and Hall. This naming recognizes their interest in student welfare and in no way celebrates their more oppressive activities.</p> <p>I would have a particular objection to the removal of the statues. If the College wishes to purge its collective conscience then a very significant financial contribution to the communities that were oppressed would show a serious intention to right wrongs. I do not believe that venting our righteous wrath on defenceless statues is an appropriate activity for the College.</p> <p>Some appropriate additions may well be helpful to place the statues in the contexts of their day and ours. When doing this it should be remembered that future well-doers may want to put our achievements in context when they realise that our wealth was achieved by oppressing overseas workers who provided us with cheap goods and that our choice of transportation wrecked the planet for future generations.</p>
167		<p>I was indifferent about the college's history until the report you made. To highlight it in our department  I did a history quiz at the last staff meeting, where I listed the nefarious activity of some people we celebrate through chairs named after them, buildings etc. Doing this quiz made me think it's entirely ridiculous to celebrate people with dodgy pasts (eugenics, slavery etc) and we shouldn't do it. So my feedback is to rename buildings, honaray chairs, buildings etc, and even to remodel statues of these guys.</p> <p>I also think we could make a new installation somewhere to celebrate key characters in our history, balanced with the good and less good characters, and for those with slightly dodgy activity we can highlight the tension that they did good and also did other stuff that caused harm. i.e. not to cancel the history, rather to illustrate it in a balanced way (at the moment we're celebrating the good with none of the bad)..</p> <p>Anyway, just my 2p worth.</p>
168		<p>I'm writing to provide my opinion about the history group and the work it is doing.</p> <p>I think all this work is completely unnecessary. We all know that in the past there was racism everywhere, and luckily now not anymore. We don't gain anything by spending resources on this.</p> <p>We have very limited funding as a university. Let's spend it on useful research and not this.</p>

		<p>I would like to ask to cancel all funding to this history group and all these things related to the culture at Imperial.</p> <p>The culture at Imperial is great already. I have never seen a single instance of racism or discrimination here. Racism and related problems stem from ignorance, and people at Imperial are relatively well educated so this does not apply to us.</p>
169	[REDACTED]	<p>For a long time I have been embarrassed and ashamed of our statues on the Royal School of Mines. It says much about the colonial attitude that it ever seemed like a good idea to create statues of armed western looking people standing over indigenous characters whilst they dig in the ground with their hands. I'd suggest a plaque would be an excellent addition to the front of the building affirming our commitment to ethical practices in the extraction industry and the rights of indigenous peoples, and perhaps repurposing the statues as a memorial to those who have suffered from exploitation.</p>
170	[REDACTED]	<p>Thank you for the publication of the History Report, particularly the recommendations regarding name changes. As a resident of Huxley building, I understand that while Thomas Huxley has made substantial contributions to the field of biology, and did not condone oppression, his contributions to racial pseudoscience have caused significant harm that is felt today. I agree that names have implicit associations with honour, and therefore am supportive of the recommended changes. I further support implementation of regular name reviews. Name changes should be seen as opportunities to honour people whose contributions occur after the 19th century, or were not acknowledged at the time of their occurrences.</p>
171	[REDACTED]	<p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>I have seen the correspondence in the Press about the current review of Imperial's links with various names of significant people associated with it's history. [REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED] the Beit Trust continues, in a major way, to support precisely the type of projects and African students which Alfred Beit specified should be done with the funds which he left on his death. Imperial has benefited greatly over the years from his legacy, both in building developments and scholarships. Those of us of my, now elderly, generation of students were well aware of the strong links between Beit and the founding of Imperial and the overwhelming majority of us were and remain happy and proud to see these links celebrated in such ways as the Beit Quad, Beit Hall and the Beit Scholarships. I would hope that the current students, and probably alumni, if reminded by the excellent research done by Imperial's archivist and set out in Appendix 9 to the History Group's report, would feel the same. It would certainly be sensible, if conducting a current campus and alumni canvass of opinions, that the archivist's report should be made available to all participants.</p> <p>I understand that there is also a suggestion that the name Huxley might be written out of Imperial's history. Here again it seems that a likely transitory bout of political correctness is overshadowing the important contribution made by these people in their day, even if there are some aspects of their work or lives which would be done quite differently today.</p> <p>[REDACTED] I do hope that you, the Provost and others involved will not allow the history of Imperial to be rewritten to exclude the commemoration of those who have played such important parts in it becoming the highly respected and achieving institution which it is today. For if this reforming line of thought is carried to it's (i)logical conclusion then surely the name</p>

		<p>"Imperial" itself, with all the adverse connections potentially associated with that word, would have to be removed as well!</p>
		<p>I do apologise for sending a further note on this subject, but I have been re-reading the College archivist's report at Appendix 9 of the History Group's draft report. I really feel that in any canvassing exercise, the last two paragraphs of the archivist's report, starting with Sir Richard Sykes' comments, should be highlighted and drawn to the attention of all those being included in the canvass.</p>
172	[REDACTED]	<p>As a former [REDACTED] I would like to add my voice to the proposals. I agree with all but one of the History Group's suggestions and that is the proposal to rename the Huxley Building. I believe that Huxley should continue to be honoured by the College in this public manner.</p>
173	[REDACTED]	<p>I would like to formally share my support for the incredible proactive and balanced work done by the History Group in creating this report. In particular, I find the recommendations of a dynamic approach to building (and other) naming and the acknowledgement of why any names are changed very important steps in creating a sustainable and constructive dialogue. History shouldn't be ignored, but rather used as a mirror to reflect where one is now and what lessons should be learnt. Educating the public and modern university community using this balanced narrative (with the history or even physical symbolisms retained and accessible) instils a more critical understanding of the complex factors involved and helps us all to strive to be better. I feel the dynamic nature of naming would also be a valuable contribution, leveraging the positive aspects of inclusion and representation - which will continue to evolve. Making naming a continual process further removes the inertia that can so often be divisive. Furthermore, this would allow for continual dialogue.</p> <p>Really looking forward to the implementation of these (and other) recommendations. We cannot allow a report to be the final part of this conversation.</p>
174	[REDACTED]	<p>Thank you for your recent email and the report it contained. I have looked through it with interest and, as invited, I have some brief comments on it.</p> <p>For many the statement that "we will defend free speech" will be welcome but it is also indicative of the current climate, that Imperial or indeed at any top university, it needs to be highlighted or restated. It is a given.</p> <p>Having looked through the report I would support recognising those from minority communities if it is felt that they have been underrepresented, overlooked or ignored. Wherever this is deemed desirable then I would suggest that is done by scholarships or named chairs where the recipients or occupants will carry the name and understanding of the reason behind it.</p> <p>On the proposals to rename buildings or facilities I'm completely opposed. I think applying current views, standards or opinions to earlier times is without merit. I accept that some, by the standards of today, might not now be elevated to their current status. Whilst this might mean highlighting their history and the views or actions that they may have held is perfectly proper. Trying to eradicate history is to be resisted.</p> <p>George Washington was a slave owner – should his name be removed from American history? Churchill was staunch defender of the British Empire - should this be considered sufficient to eradicate his later achievements? Martin Luther King Jr was a serial womaniser - should he now be removed from modern history? Haber was both an enabler of gases for warfare but also provided the chemistry for fertilisers which have helped and</p>

		<p>fed millions - should he be a candidate for removal or renaming?</p> <p>Perhaps I should have queried when you removed the motto from the college crest. The Latin could be translated in a number of ways but you chose to interpret it in a way that justified its removal. There was no consultation with alumni at that point and following that unilateral action I have to question the consultation now. Is it genuine, will the results be published before decisions are taken or is it simply a manoeuvre to cover decisions already taken?</p> <p>I will follow carefully what follows from this consultation. I am a supporter of the College and would hope to do so in the future. I may need to review this if you embark on eradicating Imperial's history.</p> <p>If as has been reported in some of the press that you have accepted money from a Mosley family fund could I suggest that it is returned asap which will at least prevent the IC community from being accused of hypocrisy.</p>
175	<p>Attachment included below</p>	<p>The attached letter to Professor Warren is a contribution to the current dialogue from a [REDACTED] I trust this will be considered by the President's Board in their final deliberations.</p> <p>As a [REDACTED] representative, I have much appreciated the robust and well argued responses of Professor Stephen Warren and Professor Armand Leroi in highlighting the weaknesses of the History Group's recommendations. I hope the President's Board will listen to their concerns and seriously consider their own recommendations. I fear that great reputational damage will be done to Imperial College if the 'denaming' of Huxley goes ahead.</p> <p>I sincerely hope that Professor Leroi's request that Imperial signs up to the 'Chicago Statement', closely linked to Professor Warren's recommendations citing the excellent Witt Report from Yale, will persuade the Board to put on hold any decision on the History Group's recommendations until it has first considered alternative ways of moving forward.</p> <p>In 2025 we will mark the bicentenary of Huxley's birth. It would be sad indeed if Imperial College cannot play a leading role in celebrating this major anniversary of the man whose pioneering role in science education made its creation possible.</p>



reform movement in British politics and were backed by public figures such as Lyell, Darwin and Wallace. It is highly significant that the vast bulk of Huxley's essay is devoted not to issues of race but to the education of women in Britain - hence its title - and this was a cause that he championed passionately all his life. I wonder if the members of the IHG have paid any attention to this fact in their wish to 'cancel' Huxley or has this been conveniently overlooked?

Part of me is in fact grateful that the IHG report has re-ignited public interest in Huxley. Since the events marking the centenary of his death in 1995, I sense his star has been on the wane and public awareness of his achievements diminished, although I presume the archive of his correspondence and papers at Imperial will still be consulted and used after the end of the Covid restrictions. I personally regretted the 'demotion' of his statue in the Natural History Museum, which used to enjoy pride of place opposite Darwin at the far end of the main entrance hall but has now been relegated upstairs where, ironically, he now sits alongside the statue of Richard Owen, a man whose views Huxley openly opposed.

Set against all of the above, I hope you will agree that the bicentenary of Huxley's birth in 2025 offers a potentially important opportunity to re-appraise his legacy. What role does Imperial wish to play in this? If it declines to do anything about this, where else might the family want to organize a symposium or similar event? What should be its title and what would it aim to achieve?

I understand that the governing body of Imperial is due to make a decision early next year on whether to adopt the proposals of the IHG report regarding Huxley and other leading figures in the history of the College. Please feel free to use this letter as you see fit. I hope it will remind your colleagues that, for many of his descendants, TH Huxley is still admired and honoured for the immense scientific, educational and social benefits that his life's work has given to so many people today. It is very reassuring to know that you share this view yourself.

I look forward to hearing from you and hope that we might meet up in London some time next year. [REDACTED]

Yours sincerely,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

I have read the review of IC's history mentioned in the President's email to alumni of 29th October 2021. Thank-you for such a clear exposition of the issues, and the recommendations of the Committee.

Imperial College (and the Royal School of Mines in particular) is my alma mater of which until now I was very proud.

institution prepared me brilliantly for the successful and satisfying career in the mining industry which followed.

I was very distressed by the time I had finished reading the report. It looks as if IC is going to do what so many other institutions have done and cravenly capitulate to a noisy minority and start re-writing history by removing statues and other reminders of people it doesn't like. There are too many individual recommendations to comment on them all, but as an RSM graduate I utterly oppose the proposed removal of the statues of Julius Wernher and Alfred Beit at the RSM entrance because they owned South African mines which used black labour; without their philanthropy the RSM would probably never have existed. Huxley is also a potential victim, despite being one of the greatest scientific and educational figures of the 19th century. I dug a bit deeper and found that they even propose to remove the name of RA Fisher, almost certainly the greatest statistician that ever lived, from a lecture theatre at Silwood Park, because he worked in eugenics which was regarded as a worthy subject of academic study in his day (now properly debunked). I fervently hope that the College has the courage to reject these recommendations.

I understand the feelings of some that the lives and standards of people a century ago do not conform to our supposedly superior moral position to-day, and that, where possible and sensible, wrongs should be righted. But if we are going to cancel everyone who ever did or said anything now considered inappropriate in a different age, and so pretend that they didn't exist, there won't be much history left to celebrate. We are all flawed. Why not destroy all Roman statues in the UK on the grounds that the Romans practiced slavery throughout their empire? Why would the Engineering Faculty wish to accept a donation from the Worshipful Company of Armourers and Brasiers who were involved in arms manufacture in the distant past, and whose resulting accumulated wealth no doubt funded the donation? Where does it all end? It never does of course. Our modern self-appointed moralists will always find new victims and heroes that require the re-writing of history to meet their particular (and always temporary) view of virtue. History is what it is, including its artefacts, and we need to understand and learn from it, not cancel it. These memorials were thought worthy by those who made them at the time, and it is surely the height of arrogance to believe that we alone have the wisdom to judge their acts without any experience of the times in which they lived. All such memorials can remind us of both the good and bad things people did in past ages, and we can learn something from both.

In passing I note that none of the distinguished committee of worthies which produced this report have anything to do with either the RSM or the mining industry. I must have passed the Wernher and Beit statues at the RSM's main entrance a thousand times over the years, and I object to an important part of my personal history being wilfully destroyed by people who are not a part of it nor have any understanding of it.

I oppose many (though not all) of the recommended changes. I realise that I am only one individual with no influence over what the current regime decides to do. However, my will currently includes a bequest to the College to support students from disadvantaged backgrounds. If these changes are implemented, I will be deeply disappointed in my alma mater and will have no alternative but to rescind that bequest. A trivial and no doubt ineffectual act I know, but it's the only real arrow in my quiver. There would be many other more deserving institutions to which the bequest can be re-directed.



177

In reading your initial findings your ideas for new names to be recognised is to be applauded and I fully support this. This shows that there is positive value to be gained by understanding where we have come from and who has helped shaped Imperial College to be a very successful seat of learning.

Even if we find negative value in this search then this can surely be used to the greater good by educating future students as to how they can avoid the behaviours of past alumni and going out into the world to improve it. I do not think we can erase history, therefore removing the statues, renaming buildings and changing scholarships would be wrong. However, providing information for individuals to make informed decisions would be a preferred way forward. The past doesn't mean that the current or future Imperial or RSM holds the same "values" of the founders and as long as this is clearly stated history is what it is and should not be forgotten but people should be prompted/reminded so such things do not occur again.

Imperial is not alone in the retrospective look about where the College came from many other intuitions are walking down the same path. I came across the following by Sir Geoffrey Palmer : Chancellor Herriot Watt University "my view is that if you remove the evidence, you remove the deed. Therefore, slavery-related objects such as statues and buildings should carry plaques which tell the truth of links with slavery. In this regard, the next statue that is removed, should be racism. Teaching this history properly in schools and giving it proper attention in our higher institutions of education should help to reduce slavery-related racism."

In my humble opinion that sums it up in a nut shell! But I would add a word of caution : this exercise is not a project it has to included in everything we do going forward. Putting up a plaque, writing a report are the first steps we now need to keep talking about our past and make it part of the Imperial College Culture. Why do I say this? As a university we rely on new blood; every year thousands of students, faculty and support staff join Imperial College so this message is just as important to those people who have yet to arrive at Imperial. It needs to be out in the open all the time, is should be in prospectus material, it should be taught in first year lectures, it should be in staff inductions and finally our Alumni Associations should also be educated.

So in closing, well done in doing this important work but now the hard work begins in talking about what the next steps will be and I don't think that can be done in a couple of months. I encourage the History Group to stay active and have meaningful dialogue before doing any changes.

178

I hope you remain safe and well during these most difficult times. I can only imagine the pressures you have been under.

I know how busy you must be but I just wanted to drop you a note to thank you for your initiative with the History Group. It is wonderful to hear that the Group has recommended [REDACTED] Abdus Salam, to be considered for some further recognition by the College. [REDACTED]

I look forward to hearing about further developments next year..

Thank you again.

Congratulations to you and your colleagues for preparing the Community Report from the History Group. I read it with great interest. I would like to make one or two comments:

I was saddened that the Recommendations Committee did not include, in no order:

Professor **Arthur Holmes** FRS, (1870-1965) RCS geology graduate, who while still a student, had a paper read at the Royal Society that founded the radiometric dating of rocks. Holmes also identified mantle convection cells as the driver for continental drift.

**Richard Oldham** FRS (1858-1936) RSM student, who disentangled 'P', 'S' and 'L' earthquake waves founding modern seismology.

Professor **Janet V Watson** FRS (1923-1996). RSM geology student & staff member. Doyenne of Precambrian geology. First lady President of the Geological Society of London 1982-84. (The staff choice for the headship of the Geology Department in 1974. She declined.)

**Sir Richard Lukman** (1938-2014) RSM student, Secretary General of OPEC 1995-2000 and Hon. Fellow of Imperial College.

More general comments:

- When I came to the RSM 60 [REDACTED] I felt I was joining a mini-United Nations. Hannah Gay's data (Fig 4, 5a & 5b) show that about 20% of IC students then came from the empire and colonies. I would suspect that the percentage in the RSM was higher. For some courses overseas students outnumbered natives.
- The report mentions the liaison with the Delhi Institute of Technology. There was a significant cadre of Indian students in those days. The Indian Society Annual Dinner, to which native staff and students were invited, was a 'hot' occasion that I well recall.
- I have travelled widely in former colonies and have been warmly welcomed by RSM alumni, often with a convivial dinner.
- The 2013 conference to celebrate a century of oil technology teaching and research in the RSM was attended by alumni from around the world including several from former colonies.
- In 1957 seven RSM alumni from colonies or former colonies were professors; 3 were Directors of Geological Surveys.

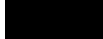
These are random data of a small sample from a small constituent college but perhaps they are replicated across IC. Many of the original donors of 'dirty' money may have anticipated that they were contributing to the education of white male imperialists. When I came to IC 60 years ago it was metamorphosing into an inclusive body with students and staff from the former colonies and beyond.

An extract from the college's charter carved above the entrance to the RSM states: 'to give the highest specialized instruction, and to provide the fullest equipment for the most advanced training and research in various branches of science, especially its application to industry'. Perhaps the Community Report of the History Group might make the point that, whatever the original funding and mission of the constituent colleges, IC has long endeavoured to honour its charter irrespective of nationality, colour, or creed.

I hope that these comments are helpful.

180	[REDACTED]	<p>Thomas Henry Huxley was an eminent biologist who is remembered for development and popularisation of Darwin's theory of natural evolution. Imperial College London should be proud of his legacy and resist an intolerant ideology that attempts to distort the history of science.</p>
181	[REDACTED]	<p>I am writing to express my views concerning the History Group findings and suggestions.</p> <p>I would like to start with a necessary caveat: <b>I am not an historian</b>, therefore my comments are mostly based on the report itself, and on a Wikipedia based assessment. Nonetheless, I feel confident in sharing my opinion, bearing in mind that very few members of the History Group appear to have a background in history (I apologize if I am wrong: this comment is based on Appendix 2).</p> <p>Having said that, three points stand out to me:</p> <p><b>1. Thomas Huxley:</b> I could not agree more with Adrian Desmond's comment that "I think we have to beware of judging the past by the present. Assessing past actors by present criteria is fraught with danger, <b>when the only reasonable way of critiquing them is to weigh them up against the standards of their own time</b>" (bold mine)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Following this methodological criterion, it seems to me that Thomas Huxley cannot be regarded as a negative force in the history of race relationships. His thought, at least as outlined in the appendix, seems to be more "advanced" than that of his contemporaries in several respects - abolition of slavery, inter-race marriage, equality of opportunity etc.</li> <li>b. Furthermore, <b>his scientific contribution seems to be more than aligned with Imperial College values of Excellence, Integrity and Courage</b></li> </ol> <p>2. I am also compelled to share my view about the statement "<b>The College's history should not be erased</b>", which sounds rather hypocritical when the "<b>non erasure aspect of it would consist of a plaque with a QR code</b> (if I understand correctly). As we are living in the 21st century, we cannot adopt the Roman "damnatio memoriae" as a standard of erasure, i.e. complete erasure (fortunately?) cannot be achieved. A plaque with a QR code seems to me the maximum level of erasure that can be realistically achieved, in an era where everyone can search for Thomas Huxley online and still find his connections to Imperial College.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Furthermore, there is already a precedent for the same "erasure" prone tendency, namely the cancellation of Imperial College's motto "Scientia imperii decus et tutamen". Thus, I am not confident in the good faith of the above statement.</li> <li>b.</li> </ol> <p>3. On a more general note, <b>I don't share the "Principles" that have been used by the History Group</b>, inasmuch as I don't believe that names "should be considered as way of projecting the College's ethos and values". <b>Personally, I believe that names should be representative of people that have made astounding scientific contributions and are related to Imperial College</b> (for instance, Huxley). I might be excessively blunt in this statement, but <b>Imperial College is not renowned for its ethos, but for its scientific prowess</b>. I believe that names should represent that, not ethos (which can rapidly change) or wealthy donors...</p> <p>I hope I have expressed my opinion in an at least a somewhat clear and constructive way, and I apologize if I have made any factual mistakes. Of course, I would love to develop each of these points (and possibly more) in more detail, but at least for the purpose of informing the present discussion, I believe that this is enough for the moment.</p>

182

  
*Attachment  
included  
below*

I am enclosing the report written by the History Reclaimed group of historians as part of the consultative process following publication of the recent report into the College's history and associations by the Imperial History Group.

Our report focuses on the composition of the History Group, the case of T. H. Huxley, and the treatment of the founding benefactors of Imperial College, the Beit brothers and Julius Wernher.

We have sent it already to Professors Alice Gast and Nilay Shah, who chaired the History Group, but we understand that we should also submit it to you so that it will form a part of the official depository of inputs to the consultation.

I would be grateful if you could acknowledge receipt of our report.

*The following submission to the History Group at Imperial College, London, comes from the History Reclaimed group of historians. It focuses on three particular aspects of the review of Imperial's historical origins and connections that the College has undertaken in 2021:*

- i. the inadequacy of the overall process that has been followed, including the limited range of sources consulted, and the personnel involved in the inquiry.*
- ii. the case of Thomas Henry Huxley, whose name is to be removed from the Huxley Building. He has been misrepresented and his views have been distorted on the basis of a single short essay which has been misunderstood.*
- iii. the treatment of memorials to Imperial's founding benefactors, the Beit brothers Alfred and Otto, and Julius Wernher.*

i. Personnel and Process

The Imperial College History Group is composed of 19 members, one of whom is the College Archivist. Despite its name, it does not include a single historian at work in a university History department. Most of its members are teachers of natural science, engineering and medicine. The Group had two external advisors who attended half of the scheduled meetings.<sup>1</sup> The issues addressed by the History Group largely concern the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. No member of the History Group, or among those providing external advice, is an expert in the history of the Edwardian period, when crucial institutional developments and financial transactions created Imperial College. No member or advisor has broad experience of the study of modern British biography. The History Group would surely benefit from the advice of historians of business and higher education. These specialisms are required to judge figures like Huxley, Wernher, and the Beit brothers. We also note how little historical literature is referenced in the History Group's report and appendices.

---

<sup>1</sup> Both external advisors are, without question, admirable and high-ranking scholars. One teaches in a Department of Geography, however, and expertise in modern British social, intellectual, business and educational history, which is required for this review, is not evident. The external advisors will have given their advice to the very best of their abilities. It is the responsibility of Imperial College itself to compose a committee genuinely equipped for the tasks it faces.

The evidence adduced in regard to Wernher and the Beits has been compiled by the College Archivist. Experts who have published on the founders and the foundation of Imperial College, such as Dr. Jill Pellew, Senior Research Fellow of the Institute of Historical Research, University of London, have not been cited nor consulted at any stage.<sup>2</sup> Adrian Desmond is the distinguished biographer of Thomas Henry Huxley, but this work was published nearly three decades ago in the 1990s, and it is insufficient to base decisions on just a single view of such a complex life. The controversial actions recommended by the History Group require evidence and assessment from several scholars, not only in Huxley's case, but in all others as well. As it happens, we do not read Professor Desmond's assessment and conclusion in Appendix 10 as providing the strong case required for the renaming of the Huxley Building. He seems rather to praise Huxley than to damn him.<sup>3</sup>

The History Group is, in short, remarkably lacking in historians, and in relevant historical expertise. Imperial College might have contacted dozens of highly-qualified and highly-experienced academic historians to advise it on each and every person under scrutiny and on the overall validity of the exercise in which it is engaged. It has chosen instead to act on insufficient evidence and with an inadequate number and range of opinions. This calls into question the whole exercise.

ii. Thomas Henry Huxley

**Huxley as a Liberal and Progressive:**

Huxley's reputation as a liberal and progressive is utterly secure. No one, with his record of support for noble historical causes could be thought worthy of 'cancellation' or renaming. He was a political liberal; an active proponent and supporter of women's rights and education at all levels; an elected member of the London School Board, which brought elementary

---

<sup>2</sup> J. Pellew, 'A Metropolitan University fit for Empire: the role of private benefaction in the early history of the London School of Economics and Political Science and Imperial College of Science and Technology, 1895-1930', *History of Universities*, xxvi, 2012, 217-31. J. Pellew, 'Donors to an Imperial Project: Randalors as benefactors to the Royal School of Mines, Imperial College of Science and Technology', in J. Pellew and Lawrence Goldman (eds.), *Dethroning Historical Reputations. Universities, Museums and the Commemoration of Benefactors* (London, IHR, 2018), 35-46.

<sup>3</sup> Professor Desmond writes: 'from my perspective, if Huxley was guilty of something today that is popularly labelled 'racism' ...it was of a less pernicious sort than that held by many of those around him. And he lost some of what we would now term racial prejudice as he advanced in years, despite many of his confreres stiffening their racial resolve.'

education to the children of the capital after 1870; president of a college for working men in London; a brilliant biologist in his own right and the most famous populariser of science in British history. His laboratory in the Science Schools Building in South Kensington was designed to be a symbol of a new scientific and industrial age. His annual summer course for teachers, which was held there, was transmitted by the participants to British schools and 'became the foundation of the modern discipline of biology.' He supported the emancipation of slaves in the United States, and everywhere else. When the Governor Eyre case split British intellectuals over Eyre's handling of a rebellion in Jamaica in 1863, Huxley was with John Stuart Mill and other radicals in calling for Eyre's prosecution.<sup>4</sup> All this – a remarkable record in the promotion of liberal and democratic causes - should have been weighed against his supposedly racist remarks in the 1865 essay 'Emancipation: Black and White'. It is hardly mentioned.

### **Racism versus Racial Prejudice: Understanding the Difference**

This leads to the 1865 essay itself in which Huxley presented entirely uncontroversial ideas about race for that era, whether in Britain or the United States. Adrian Desmond seems to be telling you this in his report on Huxley, but your Group has evidently chosen to ignore him. This is how mid-Victorians thought in 1865. To cancel Huxley because of these views is to cancel History itself. Furthermore, your History Group does not appreciate the crucial difference between thinking in racial categories and racial prejudice. Mid-Victorians thought in terms of distinct racial groups: the world was divided into races with different physical, emotional and intellectual attributes. In this sense, everyone in the 1860s was a racist because of the centrality of the category of race in all social thought. But crucially, many people of this era were NOT racially prejudiced: Africans and African-Americans might have certain distinct characteristics, but as Huxley is arguing so clearly in this 1865 essay, they should be in receipt of the same rights and opportunities as everyone else: discrimination was unacceptable. That is the very point of the essay and of its final sentence: 'The duty of man is to see that not a grain is piled upon that load beyond what Nature imposes; that injustice is not added to inequality'. Charles Darwin said the same in his chapter on slavery in *The Voyage of the Beagle*: 'If the misery of

---

<sup>4</sup> Adrian Desmond, 'Huxley, Thomas Henry', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography (ODNB)*  
<https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-14320?rskey=MzG2oD&result=2>

our poor be caused not by the laws of nature, but by our institutions, great is our sin'.<sup>5</sup>

On this subject we may take our lead from the great Harvard palaeontologist and historian of science, Stephen Jay Gould, who wrote thus in 1996:

We cannot use a modern political classification as termini of an old spectrum. The egalitarian end did not exist for the policymakers of Darwin's day. All were racists by modern standards. On that spectrum, those we now judge most harshly urged that inferiority be used as an excuse for dispossession and slavery, while those we most admire in retrospect urged a moral principle of equal rights and nonexploitation, whatever the biological status of people.<sup>6</sup>

Which of you in the History Group will argue against the greatest historian of science of the modern era? Huxley was quite obviously in the latter camp, urging equal rights for blacks as well as women. We should admire him for doing so, not cancel him.

### **If Huxley then Darwin also:**

But what will follow if the History Group has its way and Huxley is cancelled? Then you will have to cancel Darwin as well. For as Stephen Jay Gould makes clear, across Darwin's life his 'basic belief in a hierarchy of cultural advance, with white Europeans on top and natives of different colours on the bottom, did not change'.<sup>7</sup>

Darwin's last major work, *The Descent of Man* (1871) is explicitly racist:

The races differ in constitution, in acclimatisation, and in liability to certain diseases. Their mental characteristics are likewise very distinct; chiefly as it would appear in their emotional, but partly in their intellectual faculties. Every one who has had the opportunity of comparison, must have been struck with the contrast between the taciturn, even morose, aborigines of S. America and the lighthearted, talkative negroes.<sup>8</sup>

---

<sup>5</sup> Charles Darwin, *Voyage of the Beagle* (London, 1839), ch. xxi, Mauritius to England.

<sup>6</sup> Stephen Jay Gould, *The Mismeasure of Man* (1981) (London, 1996 edn.), 422.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid*, 416

<sup>8</sup> Charles Darwin, *The Descent of Man* (1871) (1875 edn.), 167-8.



Is that not racism and racial stereotyping on a par with Huxley's attitudes? But there is more from Darwin. He held in contempt the Fuegians, from the southernmost reaches of South America:

Viewing such men, one can hardly make oneself believe that they are fellow creatures placed in the same world... It is a common subject of conjecture, what pleasure in life some of the less gifted animals can enjoy? How much more reasonably it may be asked with respect to these men.<sup>9</sup>

And he had a low opinion of women's intellectual abilities, as well:

The chief distinction in the intellectual powers of the two sexes is shown by man attaining to a higher eminence, in whatever he takes up, than woman can attain – whether requiring deep thought, reason, or imagination, or merely the use of the senses and hands.<sup>10</sup>

Gould asks whether we should 'simply label Darwin as a constant racist and sexist all the way from youthful folly to mature reflection?' In answering his question he develops a 'general argument [that] is obvious and easy to make':

How can we castigate someone for repeating a standard assumption of his age, however much we may legitimately deplore that attitude today?<sup>11</sup>

The History Group at Imperial College is castigating Huxley for holding 'a standard assumption of his age'. But if Huxley is to be cancelled on these grounds, it follows that Darwin, whom Huxley championed, must be cancelled in his own right as well. He also held views that we deplore today. Will you do so? If you will not, but choose to cancel Huxley on these same grounds, you will be pilloried in public for your inconsistency and hypocrisy. On the other hand, if you do cancel Darwin for racism, you will at that moment cease to be taken seriously as one of the preeminent institutions in the world for the study of natural science.

---

<sup>9</sup> Charles Darwin, *Beagle Diary*, 25 Feb. 1834, <http://darwinbeagle.blogspot.com/2009/02/25th-february-1834.html>

<sup>10</sup> Darwin, *Descent of Man*,

<sup>11</sup> Gould, *The Mismeasure of Man*, 418.

We note that people who have limited historical knowledge and are unused to working with the past often believe that ‘surgical strikes’ can be made on History and specific targets removed at a stroke. But History is not like that: contexts, opinions and ideas are shared across whole generations and communities. Pull at one hanging thread and the whole garment unravels. Quite simply, if you cancel Huxley who was Darwin’s champion, you must cancel Darwin as well, and on the same grounds. And if you do that, you will become a laughing stock.

### **Huxley, Eugenics, and Scientific Racism:**

We note the claim that Huxley’s 1865 essay, ‘Emancipation – Black and White’ espouses ‘a belief system of scientific racism that fed the dangerous and false ideology of eugenics’. We would ask the History Group to provide evidence for this ‘belief system’ in Huxley’s work and for any association between Huxley and eugenics. The term eugenics was not coined by Francis Galton until 1883 and eugenic ideas only took hold in some sections of the intelligentsia in Britain in the Edwardian period, and then failed to make any impact at all on social policy. When Huxley was at the height of his powers in the 1860s and 1870s, eugenic ideas, such as they were, were largely ignored when they were not being ridiculed.<sup>12</sup> Above all, where is the evidence linking Huxley to eugenic thinking or the eugenics movement? We do not believe there is any. If the History Group is arguing that any thinking at all about race which runs counter to modern standards is eugenic by definition, you have once more been badly advised and have misunderstood Victorian intellectual history.

Finally, it should be noted that in the 1860s, as Adrian Desmond has explained elsewhere, Huxley, from his position in the abolitionist Ethnological Society fought bitter battles ‘against the ultra-racist Anthropological Society’ and ‘refuted the anthropologicals’ linking of black anatomy with slavery’.<sup>13</sup> It was the leaders of the Anthropological Society who ‘promoted the pro-slavery dogma that black people were a separate species and inherently capable of no higher development than that of

---

<sup>12</sup> Lawrence Goldman, *Victorians and Numbers. Statistics and Society in Nineteenth Century Britain* (Oxford, 2022 forthcoming), 260-1.

<sup>13</sup> Adrian Desmond, ‘Huxley, Thomas Henry’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography (ODNB)* <https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-14320?rskey=MzG2oD&result=2>

enslavement.’<sup>14</sup> It was the Anthropological Society which developed a pseudo-scientific racism, in other words: it was Huxley who opposed them. Eventually, in Huxley’s construction of a new Anthropological Institute in 1871, ‘the ultra-racists were purged’.<sup>15</sup> Huxley was a racist, like all mid-Victorians. But he was also the most vocal and vehement opponent of racial prejudice. And the origins of so-called ‘scientific racism’ can be found among Huxley’s most bitter opponents.

### III: Sir Alfred Beit, Sir Otto Beit, and Julius Wernher

The History Group proposes to rename buildings and spaces associated with the Beits and Julius Wernher and to take action, yet to be determined, regarding the statues of these figures on the façade of the Royal School of Mines building. These men were founders of Imperial College in the Edwardian period and their very large benefactions were crucial to Imperial’s subsequent success, as the History Group acknowledges.

We hold no brief for these men, three of the so-called ‘Randlords’ who numbered perhaps a dozen in all. They made vast personal fortunes from the exploitation of the mineral resources of Southern Africa and the labour of thousands of Southern Africans. Several of them engaged in unscrupulous commercial, political and military action in the region; others were simply corrupt. But several, including the founders of Imperial, were very generous philanthropists, as well. About the Beits and Wernher, we wish to make three points concerning their status as founders; their differences from the other Randlords; and the spectre of antisemitism.

1. Imperial should be free to decide what it wishes to do in relation to its founders. We would make the point, however, that there are more open, honest and educationally-beneficial ways of dealing with this trio than simply removing all trace of them. An institution which expunges its founders is open to the objections of dishonesty and the denial of its true identity. We would suggest that a better course of action, and one faithful to the historical record, is to continue to recognise their contributions to Imperial College but to contextualise them by providing full details of their lives and actions. This could

---

<sup>14</sup> Adrian Desmond and James Moore, ‘Darwin’s Sacred Cause: How a hatred of slavery shaped Darwin’s views on human evolution’, 2009, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, Boston/NYC; quotes from pp.332-3

<sup>15</sup> Desmond, ‘Huxley, Thomas Henry’, *ODNB*.

include physical descriptions such as plaques and notices, virtual exhibitions, and actual displays within the precincts of the College. This would be an educational opportunity, a chance to inform people about the many issues involved, from racism and exploitation to munificence and public benefit. We think it is an opportunity that a great institution of higher learning should grasp rather than bury.

2. Secondly, your documentation fails to differentiate the Beit brothers and Wernher from the other Randlords who were neither as honest nor as scrupulous as this trio. Not all Randlords were the same. According to Maryna Fraser, 'The Wernher-Beit-Eckstein group enjoyed a reputation for fairness and honesty'. Alfred Beit 'was the most popular of the Randlords... Wernher was the most respected.'<sup>16</sup> 'An ardent belief in the great causes of the day' led Alfred Beit 'to distribute vast sums of money, but his benefactions were always made privately with rare self-effacement. Because of his close association with Rhodes, he was the target through life for much abuse, some deserved, some not.'<sup>17</sup> Julius Wernher meanwhile 'remained aloof from politics generally' and 'supported a programme of reconciliation in the Transvaal after 1907'. He was 'trusted and acknowledged as a leader, as much for his integrity of character as for his intellectual power.' His chief pride 'lay in the fact that he had earned the complete and profound trust of the industry which he had done so much to establish'.<sup>18</sup> There is a danger, in short, that in general condemnation of the Randlords, the distinctiveness of the founders of Imperial, who were known at the time, and since, to have been different from other members of this group, and also better, is forgotten or disregarded. As Jill Pellew has put it in an essay notable for the careful balance she strikes, in some contemporary views Wernher and Beit were 'colonial buccaneers' who ruthlessly exploited workers tied to their mines. But in others 'they were creative and highly successful entrepreneurs, skilled in and passionate about their business, and about the development of the part of the world in

---

<sup>16</sup> Maryna Fraser, 'Randlords', *ODNB*, <https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-95075?rskey=vE9PiW&result=1>

<sup>17</sup> C. W. Boyd, 'Alfred Beit', *ODNB*, <https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-30676?rskey=n5QUxU&result=1>

<sup>18</sup> I. D. Colvin, 'Julius Wernher', *ODNB*, <https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-36834?rskey=wuM3Ip&result=2>




which they operated'. They also sought to redress 'England's lack of technological skills' by endowing Imperial College.<sup>19</sup> In thinking about these men we suggest that the History Group take into account Pellew's findings.

3. The Randlords were the targets of both popular and elite antisemitism, disdained not only for their wealth and the way it was made, but for a religious identity and heritage which several of them shared. According to Sir David Cannadine, they were subject to 'political malice and religious, racial and social prejudice.'<sup>20</sup> Wernher was not Jewish, but the Beit brothers were of Sephardic Jewish descent. Though like many German Jews in this period, they had converted to Lutheranism, their heritage was not forgotten and they were lumped together with the other Jewish Randlords - Barnett Isaac Barnato, the Joel brothers who were Barnato's nephews, Lionel Phillips, Sigismund Neumann and Maximillian Michaelis. We simply caution Imperial College not to take actions, that, in the name of anti-racism, will remind people of the antisemitism which men of this background experienced between the 1880s and the First World War, and which contributed to the rising tide of anti-Jewish feeling across Europe.

---

<sup>19</sup> Pellew, 'Donors to an Imperial Project', 45-6.

<sup>20</sup> D. Cannadine, *Decline and Fall of the British Aristocracy* (New Haven and London, 1990), 345n.

183		<p>many thanks for all your work, and I have read the comprehensive community report and its recommendations, including the renaming of rooms/buildings with names of the evolutionary biologists Huxley, Fisher, Haldane, and Hamilton.</p> <p>In the report it says that "The College's history should not be erased, but all aspects of its history fully realised". However, renaming rooms and buildings is a type of erasure or at least a rewriting of history. This I find problematic by itself - George Orwell warned in his dystopian book "1984" that "who controls the past, controls the future". At a minimum, there is the danger that we don't learn from history but repeat it. I also do not see a significant difference between industrialists from Victorian England donating to Imperial College, and today's big pharmaceutical companies which contribute extensively to Imperial College. In a hundred years, maybe future members of this College feel the same way about those.</p> <p>If the College wanted to have true inclusiveness why not publish regular surveys how staff really feels, and have staff be included in more democratic processes e.g. voting. Salaries of senior staff could be reduced and hierarchies removed, and postdocs could be paid more.</p> <p>Lastly, a documentary about the origins of Imperial College and its scientists could be made, so all is out in the open.</p> <p>If Imperial College stresses that it follows evidence-based peer-reviewed science, including that from long ago, and not ideology, it should be on firm grounds.</p>
184		<p>I'm very sorry I was unable to join one of the small group discussions.</p> <p>I would however like to draw to your attention and formally submit <a href="#">my view on the History Group report</a> (particularly the findings and recommendations pertaining to Thomas Henry Huxley) as part of this discussion, if possible.</p> <p>I understand that this is not as useful as a dialogue within a group and I would have liked the opportunity to engage in and directly respond to views on this topic. Stephen Curry was however kind enough to host my view on his blog for the College and it gives my position on some of the key conversations that have arisen in response to the report.</p> <p>I wish you the best of luck with your ongoing efforts and look forward to seeing the post-dialogue report.</p>
185	 <p><i>Attachment included below</i></p>	<p>Please find attached a letter that has been submitted as a Correspondence to Nature about the cancelling of Thomas Henry Huxley at Imperial College. The letter argues that the accusations leveled by the History Group against Huxley are historically false and do not take account of his extraordinary contribution to science and society. It is signed by 46 scientists, scholars and writers, including 19 Imperial College academic staff, 17 from the Department of Life Sciences, among those 12 Professors. The signatories (including IC staff) also include one Nobel Laureate, 5 scientific knights, and 21 FRSs. The letter has also been signed by Janet Browne, the eminent Harvard historian of evolutionary biology. We submit this as an indication of the strength of feeling in the scientific community about this matter. The debate about "cancellations" is, in large part, one about whom we should honour: who the heroes that inspire the next generation of scientists should be. We have no doubt that Huxley deserves to be among them.</p> <p>Please find attached a document in which I review the four scientists considered by the History Group: Huxley, Haldane, Hamilton and Fisher. In this document I review what these scientists said and did. I conclude with some reflections on the impact that cancelling may have on teaching and free inquiry at the College — and the principles that it lacks. This document was distributed to all DoLS academics in order to assist them to a</p>

balanced view of these scientists: in short, I do the work that the History Group so conspicuously did not.

Please find attached a letter outlining the recommendations of a group of Silwood Staff about what should be done with the names.

## Huxley at Imperial

A committee charged with investigating Imperial College's past has accused Thomas Henry Huxley of "scientific racism" and proposes that his name be removed from a building and his bust from its lobby. This accusation is, on the historical evidence, false. Huxley was, in fact, an ardent abolitionist who fought the virulent pro-slavery scientific racism of his day and publicly welcomed the defeat of the Confederacy in 1865. Early in his career, it is true, he believed in a hierarchy of races, but as he aged he became sceptical of racial stereotypes. "We knew," he is reported as saying "so little about the races that it was impossible to disentangle what any particular nation was. We did on the other hand, know that there was a great deal of human nature in all kinds of men, and of social conditions which exercise an enormous influence." (*Nature* **18**,480 (1878)).

Huxley was a remarkable man. From childhood poverty he rose on his merits to become President of the Royal Society and Privy Counsellor. "Darwin's Bulldog", he fought for the theory of evolution, and first demonstrated our evolutionary descent from an ape-like ancestor. He believed that everyone should have a scientific education. So he reformed London's schools, was a Principal of a Working Men's college, wrote volumes of journalism, gave lectures for working people, and opened his classes to women. He brought science to government, serving on eight Royal Commissions. He reorganized higher scientific education, transforming it, in the words of his biographer, "from a gentleman's occupation into a profession." To that end he founded the Royal College of Science, later Imperial College, the very institution that now seeks to disown him.

Huxley's early belief in a hierarchy of races is not ours. But, for his scientific accomplishments, his conviction that all men and women should be judged on their merits, civic mindedness, and the reforming zeal he brought to British science and education, we remain in his debt. For these reasons we think his name should stay on Imperial's walls. And he has one more claim on our affections: he was instrumental in the founding of this journal and, in 1869, wrote its very first article, a lyrical paean to Nature (*Nature* **1**,9-11 (1869)).

Prof. Armand M. Leroi	Department of Life Sciences, Imperial College London
Dr. Arkhat Abzhanov	Department of Life Sciences, Imperial College London
Prof. Thomas Bell	Department of Life Sciences, Imperial College London
Prof. Michael J. Crawley FRS	Department of Life Sciences, Imperial College London
Prof. Robert G. Endres	Department of Life Sciences, Imperial College London
Prof. Nicholas P. Franks FRS	Department of Life Sciences, Imperial College London
Prof. Michael P. Hassell FRS	Department of Life Sciences, Imperial College London
Prof. Erhard Hohenester	Department of Life Sciences, Imperial College London
Prof. Mark Isalan	Department of Life Sciences, Imperial College London
Prof. Russell Lande FRS (Emeritus Royal Society Prof at Imperial.)	Department of Life Sciences, Imperial College London
Dr. Vassiliki Koufopanou	Department of Life Sciences, Imperial College London
Prof. Peter J. Nixon	Department of Life Sciences, Imperial College London
Dr. Joseph A. Tobias	Department of Life Sciences, Imperial College London
Miss Katie Willis	Department of Life Sciences, Imperial College London
Dr. Nikolai Windbichler	Department of Life Sciences, Imperial College London
Prof. William Wisden FRCS	Department of Life Sciences, Imperial College London
Prof. Denis Wright	Department of Life Sciences, Imperial College London
Dr. Toby Andrew	Department of Metabolism, Digestion and Reproduction, Imperial College London
Prof. Stephen J. Warren	Department of Physics, Imperial College London



**Submission 185 - Attachment 1**

Prof. A. Richard Palmer FRCS	Department of Biological Sciences, University of Alberta
Prof. Graham Bell FRS, FRCS	Department of Biology, McGill University
Prof. Jerry Coyne	Department of Ecology and Evolution, University of Chicago
Sir Prof. Walter Bodmer FRS	Department of Oncology, Oxford University
Prof. Janet Browne	Department of the History of Science, Harvard University
Prof. Richard Dawkins FRS	Department of Zoology, Oxford University
Prof. Joe Felsenstein	Departments of Genome Sciences and Biology, University of Washington
Prof. Robin Weiss FRC FMedSci	Division of Infection and Immunity, UCL
Prof. Julian Peto FRS	Faculty of Epidemiology and Population Health, LSHTM
Sir Prof. Paul Nurse FRS, Nobel laureate Medicine or Physiology 2001	Francis Crick Institute
Prof. Steve Jones	Genetics, Evolution & Environment, UCL
Prof. Nikolas Maniatis	Genetics, Evolution & Environment, UCL
Dr. Adam Rutherford	Genetics, Evolution & Environment, UCL
Prof. Dallas M. Swallow	Genetics, Evolution & Environment, UCL
Prof. A.W.F. Edwards FRS	Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge University
Prof. Sophie Scott	Institute of Cognitive Neuroscience, UCL
Prof. Deborah Charlesworth FRS	Institute of Evolutionary Biology, Edinburgh University
Prof. Brian Charlesworth FRS	Institute of Evolutionary Biology, Edinburgh University
Prof. John Hardy FRS	Institute of Neurology, UCL
Prof. Dimitri Kullmann FRS FMedSci	Institute of Neurology, UCL
Prof. Veronica van Heyningen FRS, CBE	Institute of Ophthalmology, UCL
Sir Prof. Mel Greaves FRS FMedSci	Molecular Pathology, Institute for Cancer Research
Sir Prof. Alan Fersht FRS FMedSci, Fellow of Imperial College	MRC Laboratory of Molecular Biology, Cambridge University
Prof. Alice Roberts	School of Biosciences, University of Birmingham
Prof. William D. Richardson FRS	Wolfson Institute for Biomedical Research, UCL
Prof. John Wood FRS	Wolfson Institute for Biomedical Research, UCL
Sir Prof. John Lawton FRS	York, UK

## Cancelling Huxley

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

December 9, 2021

### Four bad biologists

Imperial College's History Group has delivered its [report](#). One of its objectives was to identify historical figures currently celebrated in College who might cause us embarrassment and to recommend ways of ensuring that they do not. Much of their work concerned people who gave us money. Beit Quad currently contains student housing but Alfred and Otto Beit had mines in South Africa; Basil Zaharoff endowed a named chair in Aeronautics but was an arms dealer: their names are to be removed.

My concern, however, is not with donors but rather four scientists for whom buildings or lecture theatres are currently named. All four are evolutionary biologists. T.H. Huxley, R.A. Fisher, J.B.S. Haldane and W.D. Hamilton are celebrated at Imperial by the Huxley Building in South Kensington, the Hamilton Building at Silwood Park and the Fisher and Haldane lecture theatres in that building. The report states that all of these scientists promoted either racist or eugenic ideas and recommends that, for this reason, at least three of the four buildings or theatres be renamed.

These four men are arguably the greatest evolutionary biologists since Darwin himself. Their discoveries are taught — often with their names attached — throughout the Biology degree curriculum. If their names are to be removed from our public spaces — if they are to be cancelled — then they should only be so after carefully examining the reasons for, and consequences of, doing so. The History Group report fails to do so. Specifically, I shall show that the report is:

1. Unbalanced. It takes the view that, whatever the scientific accomplishments and moral virtues of these scientists, *any* statement that they made — no matter how obscure or fleeting — that is inconsistent with current morality is cause enough for them to be erased from our public space.
2. Unscholarly. For the most part it does not tell us what these scientists actually said, why it is so bad, much less place their words in their historical contexts.
3. Heedless. It does not consider the chilling effect that cancelling these scientists may have on the science we teach and do.

Here I attempt to remedy these deficiencies and give a brief account — for better or worse — of what each of these scientists did and said. And, although I shall conclude with some

reflections on the principles that make universities run, I shall *not* offer any recommendations as to what should be done about our four scientists. That is up to you.

## What they did and said

### Thomas Henry Huxley (1825–1895)

For evolutionary biologists Huxley is an heroic figure: “Darwin’s Bulldog” — the man who championed the theory of evolution in the face of establishment opposition, most famously that of the Anglican Church. For thirty-one years he held the chair of natural history at the Royal School of Mines and then served as Dean of the Royal College of Science; he won scientific fame for work in comparative anatomy and public fame for his lectures and the essays. He served on eight Royal Commissions, was President of the Royal Society 1883–85 and a Privy Counsellor. He was truly an Eminent Victorian — ours.

The History Group assert that he was racist. They wish to remove his name from a building and relegate his bust to the archives. Here, for once, they have done their homework, commissioning Adrian Desmond, Huxley’s most recent biographer, for a [report](#). Desmond’s approach is scholarly; his conclusions measured. He observes that Huxley repeatedly spoke of a racial hierarchy. For example, in an 1865 essay, *Emancipation—Black and White*, Huxley wrote:

“It may be quite true that some negroes are better than some white men; but no rational man, cognisant of the facts, believes that the average negro is the equal, still less the superior, of the average white man.”

But Desmond also notes that, over time, Huxley wrote less, and with less certainty, about racial hierarchies, and did so even as scientific racism was in fact on the increase (see below). Desmond’s conclusion is this:

“...from my perspective, if Huxley was guilty of something today that is popularly labelled ‘racism’ (defined in his case as undervaluing black people, the more so at the start of his career) it was of a less pernicious sort than that held by many of those around him. And he lost some of what we would now term racial prejudice as he advanced in years, despite many of his confrères stiffening their racial resolve.”

I shall not attempt to excuse Huxley’s belief in a racial hierarchy; it is enough to note that it is not ours. Rather I shall briefly sketch some of his accomplishments to remind the History Group why his name is on one of our buildings.

1. Huxley was a self-made man. In the 19th century, most scientists, Darwin among them, were men of independent means. Not so Huxley: *his* father was a math teacher in Ealing who lost his job when Thomas was ten. Thomas left school, became an anatomist’s apprentice, took part of a medical degree from the University of London, and, at age 21, got a job as assistant surgeon on HMS Rattlesnake bound for Australia. He published important papers on comparative anatomy, was elected FRS at 26 and made Professor at the Royal College of Mines at 29. He was one of the first of a new breed of professional scientists who advanced entirely on the strength of their intellectual merits. As such, he was our ancestor.

2. He was a scientific reformer. Huxley believed that science needed to be at the heart of government policy. And so he sat on innumerable committees and Royal Commissions, among them the Home Office's Contagious Disease Committee. In his *Duties of the State* speech, given at Birmingham in 1871, he argued against free-marketeers such as Spencer that it is the state's role to educate, vaccinate, and build the urban infrastructure that would lessen the misery of the industrial working class (Desmond 1997 p.61.) A new role for science in government meant more scientists and so Huxley reformed British universities spurring Oxbridge to revamp their moribund science. In 1869 he and some of his friends persuaded Macmillan to publish a new scientific journal (Desmond 1994 pp.371-372), and it was Huxley who, drawing on aphorisms by Goethe, wrote its [first article](#). They called their new journal *Nature*.
3. He founded Imperial College. The Royal College of Mines where Huxley got his first job was a modest institution in Piccadilly. It was he who engineered its merger with the Royal College of Chemistry into a single "National College of Science" with a spanking new building in South Kensington (Desmond 1997 p.13). Huxley was its first Dean — the first head of what would become Imperial.
4. He was a champion of public education. In 1868 he became head of a Working Men's College in South London; its avowed purpose was to be an engine for social mobility (Desmond 1994) pp.361-363. He led the Education Committee of the London School Board which turned "a few ragged schools into a London-wide system of education" (Desmond 1997 p.23). Throughout his life he gave working-men's lectures and turned them into best-selling collections of essays. The public lectures continued at South Kensington where his new lecturers gave them too. Posters for those lectures could, until recently, be seen framed in the Central Library's stairwell.
5. He promoted women in science. Most of the 1865 *Emancipation* essay isn't about race: it's about gender. Women, he argued, should be let into science. And not just science. "Let [women], if they so please, become merchants, barristers, politicians." Women, he recognized, suffer the burden of motherhood but "The duty of man is to see that not a grain is piled upon that load beyond what Nature imposes; that injustice is not added to inequality." A certain Miss McConnish took the top marks in Huxley's practical class at the RCM and became his Demonstrator in 1874 (Desmond 1997 p.64). In that year London became the first British university to grant women degrees. That it did so was in no small part due to Huxley.
6. He was a great scientist. Huxley sought to demonstrate, by comparative anatomy, the truth of Darwin's theory. He charted the links between vertebrates and invertebrates; he showed that birds were small dinosaurs. In *Evidence as to Man's Place in Nature*, 1863, he showed that we were the descendants of some ape-like ancestor and did so while Darwin was still being coy about the matter.
7. He was, by the standards of his day, *anti-racist* (See diGregorio 1984 Ch. 5 for a review). In the 1860s he tackled "polygenist" anthropologists who tried to use comparative anatomy to support slavery by arguing that human races were different species. Huxley would have none of it: we are, he iterated over and over again, one species — and got the polygenists kicked out of the learned societies. His 1865 *Emancipation* essay begins:

“Quashie’s plaintive inquiry, ‘Am I not a man and a brother?’ seems at last to have received its final reply — the recent decision of the fierce trial by battle on the other side of the Atlantic fully concurring with that long since delivered here in a more peaceful way.”

“Quashie” refers to Wedgewood’s abolitionist [icon](#) of an African in chains. The defeat of the Confederacy in May 1865, Huxley is saying, has decisively answered the question for Americans. But, for Huxley, the answer had always been “yes: you are both.”

8. He was an opponent of early eugenics. In the 1880s Galton, Stephen and Spencer, marrying Darwinian theory to liberal politics, discussed how our species might be improved by artificial selection. In *Evolution and Ethics*, 1893, Huxley denies that ethical imperatives can be derived from nature. We can imagine some despot, he says, who might seek to sort the fit from the unfit; but who would have the wisdom to do so? Certainly not the kind of men most keen on the idea: they would have to be devoid of natural affection and sympathy to execute their plans. Such efforts would be socially destructive. Success in life is mostly a matter of chance: the qualities that lead a man to greatness might, under other circumstances, lead to the gallows. And, finally, who truly belongs to the elect?

“I sometimes wonder whether people who talk so freely about extirpating the unfit, ever dispassionately consider their own history. Surely, one must be very ‘fit’ indeed, not to know of an occasion, or perhaps, two in one’s life, when it would have been only too easily to qualify for a place among the ‘unfit’.” (Huxley [1893/1989](#) p.97)

He was surely thinking of Marian, his brilliant and beloved daughter, who had died insane at the age of 28, mostly likely the victim of schizophrenia (Desmond [1997](#) p.175).

To summarize: Huxley’s racist remarks were few and mild by the standards of his day. Against them must be set his hatred of slavery and his long campaign against the virulent scientific racism that supported it. He was deeply egalitarian and it was his life-long mission to expand access to scientific education to all men and women of talent. He had a deep belief in the power of science to change the world for the better and he worked tirelessly to do so. These were his values; they are ours.

### Ronald Alymer Fisher (1890–1962)

Fisher was a giant of 20th century science. He is sometimes credited with having invented modern statistics. He drew, for the first time, the distinction between a statistic and a parameter, pioneered the estimation of likelihood, developed the theory of statistical testing and the analysis of variance and, in his 1935 book, *The Design of Experiments*, laid the foundations for rational experimental design (Bodmer et al. [2021](#)). There is hardly an area of frequentest statistics upon which he did not touch — though Bayesians sometimes blame him for thwarting their advance.

Evolutionary biologists, however, remember him for being one of three scientists who put Darwin’s theory of evolution by natural selection on a mathematical footing. In the early 20th century, Darwin’s theory was in parlous shape. The nature of inheritance, upon which any

theory of evolution depended, was disputed between the “Mendelians”, concerned with discrete genetic variation, and the “biometricians” concerned with continuous variation. Fisher’s first major contribution in 1918 was to show that these two views could be reconciled; in doing so, he laid the foundation for the genetic analysis of complex traits and hence much of modern biomedical genetics. Fisher went on to develop models of evolution under natural selection and genetic drift. These he summarized in his 1930 book, *The Genetical Theory of Natural Selection*, which included his famous “Fundamental Theorem of Natural Selection”, an equation that he modelled on, and believed as important as, the Second Law of Thermodynamics. This work, along with that of J.B.S. Haldane (see below) and the American Sewall Wright, established the theoretical foundation for the “modern synthesis” of the 1940s and hence all evolutionary biology since (Provine 1971; Bodmer et al. 2021).

Fisher was educated at Harrow where he won a mathematics prize and chose, as his reward, the collected works of Charles Darwin. Awarded a scholarship to Cambridge his interests in genetics and evolution appeared early: many of the themes that occupied him for decades appear in a lecture he gave as an undergraduate of 21. Graduating, he got a job at Rothamstead Experimental Research station where he did much of his fundamental work on experimental design and statistics; in 1933 he became head of the Department of Eugenics at UCL where he remained until his move to Cambridge in 1943. Elected FRS in 1929, he gave the Croonian lecture, was awarded the Copely medal and, in 1952, was knighted. He was Anglican, patriotic, and politically conservative (Fisher-Box 1978 p.11).

The History Group has identified Fisher as a eugenicist and so wish to remove his name from a lecture theatre. They are not alone in doing so. Fisher has been often commemorated but they’re all coming down. Rothamstead has renamed a [building](#); UCL has renamed a [computational centre](#); Gonville and Caius has removed a [window](#); The Society for the Study of Evolution has renamed a [prize](#); the Statistical Societies have retired a [lectureship](#). There may well be others. In response to this trend a group of distinguished statisticians and geneticists led by one of his former students, Sir Walter Bodmer, have recently summarized Fisher’s accomplishments and beliefs (Bodmer et al. 2021); my summary is based largely on theirs.

There is no doubt that Fisher was a eugenicist: he was deeply aware of the burden that deleterious mutations exert on our health and well-being and believed that something should be done about it. Fisher’s particular concern — one almost unique to him — was with the “dysgenic” effects of social structure. Fisher observed that there was a negative relationship between social class and fertility; if the attributes that promote social achievement — intelligence, say — are heritable then it follows that natural selection must be decreasing their level in the general population. He argued that this “dysgenic” force explained the decline of historical civilizations — the Egyptians, Greeks and Romans had all, in their turn, fallen victim to it. Modern civilization would go the same way unless the State did something about it, specifically, provide family allowances proportional to income thereby inducing the “higher” classes to have more children. Acting on his convictions he fathered eight.

Fisher sketched these ideas in the latter third of *The Genetical Theory of Natural Selection*. Although the book was, and is, fundamental to evolutionary biology his eugenic arguments have been mostly passed over in silence (but see Beauchamp 2016 and Kong et al. 2017 for selection estimates based on genomic data). But Fisher was also involved with the Eugen-

ics Society founded in 1907. One of the aims of this society was to advocate the decrease of heredity “feble-mindedness” or other heritable disease by *voluntary* sterilization, that is, negative eugenics. Fisher, who supported this aim, undertook population genetic analyses on the effectiveness of sterilization for the society and, in the 1930s, for the UK government’s “Brock committee” charged with investigating the matter. This committee supported voluntary sterilization, given suitable safeguards, but its recommendations were never enacted in legislation. By the early 1940s Fisher withdrew from the Eugenics Society citing its lack of scientific direction and later rarely commented on eugenic matters.

Fisher, however, continued to study human genetics. In the 1940s he analysed the genetics of the Rhesus blood group system which can lead to haemolytic disease in newborns as the mother’s immune system attacks her child’s. Fisher’s analysis (with his student, Race) clarified the inheritance of Rhesus (Fisher-Box 1978; Edwards 2007). Now all prospective mothers are tested for their Rhesus blood-group type and, if necessary, a relatively simple intervention can be applied that prevents the disease.

Finally, there is the question of Fisher’s views on race. In the 1952, UNESCO organized a “statement on race” in an attempt to disassociate genetics from the racist ideology that permeated the science of the Third Reich. Fisher dissented from this statement writing:

“available scientific knowledge provides a firm basis for believing that the groups of mankind differ in their innate capacity for intellectual and emotional development’, seeing that such groups do differ undoubtedly in a very large number of their genes” (Bodmer et al. 2021).

He was also friendly to Otto Von Vershuer, a German human geneticist associated with Nazi racial and eugenic policies. At a personal level there is no evidence that Fisher was racist; among his post-graduate students were Jewish refugees from Nazism such as Sir Walter Bodmer, now head of MRC’s Oxford Institute cancer lab.

To summarize: Fisher’s importance as a scientist is indisputable, but there is no doubt that he held views that might be thought unacceptable today. His position on race is close to Huxley’s; but it was given a hundred years later in the face of a consensus — the UNESCO statement — that there were no differences in the innate capacities of the races. He also lacked Huxley’s zeal for social justice. He advocated the voluntary sterilization of people with heritable disorders. True, he did so at a time when modern eugenic methods such as pre-implantation genetic diagnoses had not yet been invented, but he does not seem to have considered how voluntary sterilization might be abused.

Fisher is, for me, a tragic figure. Supremely clever, he grasped deep truths with a swiftness and clarity that left his contemporaries and successors struggling in his wake; but he also had, in his daughter’s words, “a peculiar blindness to emotional tones” (Fisher-Box 1978 p.11). The force of his logic was unchecked by consideration of the needs, hopes, and desires of others. In an age that prizes empathy over reason, he inevitably stands condemned.

### **John Burdon Sanderson Haldane (1892–1964)**

Haldane is the second of our scientists who laid the foundations of theoretical population genetics. Between 1924 and 1932 Haldane derived the equations that describe the behaviour of discrete genetic variants under strong natural selection. His models were less abstract but



less general than Fisher's. They were also more useful. They could be used to estimate the strength of selection and Haldane did so for the evolution of melanism in the Pepered Moth, a classic case that we still teach using his equations. He summarized his results in *The Causes of Evolution*, 1932, a book that, like Fisher's, was instrumental in forming the "modern synthesis" of the 1940s. Later he provided the first estimate of the mutation rate in humans and then estimated the impact of deleterious mutations on population fitness. (We will return to this when discussing Hamilton.) He pioneered the application of population genetics to heritable medical conditions such as haemophilia and muscular dystrophy (See Charlesworth 2017 for a full account of his science). He was elected FRS in 1932 and received many other honours besides (Wingate 1966).

Haldane was a scion of the Whig scientific élite. Brilliant, wayward, egotistic, and irrepressibly articulate, he is a biographer's joy (Wingate 1966; Clark 1984; Medawar 1982; Subramanian 2020). Educated at Eton and Oxford he joined up in 1914 and fought as an officer of the Black Watch with violence and pleasure. Returning to Oxford he became interested in experimental physiology and used himself as a guinea pig. The result was crushed vertebrae, perforated eardrums and papers. Appointed Reader in Biochemistry at Cambridge in 1923 he got himself sacked and then reinstated for being named in a divorce case. (A journalist who interviewed him left her husband for him.) He was a man of the left: first an ardent socialist, later a card-carrying Communist. He averted his eyes from Stalin's purges and publicly excused the persecution of his friend, Vavilov, in favour of the charlatan neo-Lamarckian Lysenko. The episode remains a blot on his memory. From 1933 to 1957 he was Professor of Genetics and then Biometry at UCL; Medawar recalls him as a stimulating but difficult colleague. In 1957 he moved to India — he said it was over Suez — where he became an Indian citizen and trained several generations of geneticists and staticians. His memory is revered there still. In 1964 he published a poem titled *Cancer's A Funny Thing* about the disease that killed him.

The History Group have identified Haldane as a eugenicist and wish to remove his name from a Silwood lecture theatre. Unlike Fisher it's hard to know why. Haldane said rather little about the subject and was never a member of the Eugenics Society. He was, however, a prolific and incisive essayist and presumably it is in these, if anywhere, that his eugenic ideas are to be found.

In his first book, *Daedalus, or, Science and the Future*, 1924, Haldane speculated about the future. His discussion of reproductive technology takes the form of a future-history essay written by a "rather stupid undergraduate for his supervisor" in the year 2070. By the 1960s, this future-historian says, most conceptions were *in vitro* and brought to term in artificial wombs. The French were particularly keen on the new tech. "Selection" — by whom he does not say — was ubiquitous so that successive generations were more talented and less criminal than previous ones. There were, however, quarrels over the optimal sex ratio.

This scenario, Haldane is quite clear, is a "myth"; a sketch of a probable future. It was, however, one Aldous Huxley's sources for *Brave New World*, 1932<sup>1</sup>. A public lecture that Haldane gave in 1935 is more serious and was summarized in *Nature. Human Genetics and Human Ideals* begins:

"Two widely held opinions on human genetics may be summarised as follows:

- (1) It is essential in the interests of national hygiene that the unfit should be

---

<sup>1</sup>Aldous was Thomas Henry's grandson.



sterilised; (2) some races are superior to others, the members of which cannot rise to the highest levels of humanity.”

He considers what might be meant by these propositions, concisely discusses the empirical evidence that bears on them, and argues against sterilization. Turning to race he argues that the distribution of psychological attributes among races is unknown but certainly overlaps widely. “Great caution,” he concludes, “is required in the application of our existing knowledge of human genetics, and far more extensive information is needed.” It’s a conclusion that is both true and unobjectionable, both then and now.

In a 1951 essay *Human Evolution: Past and Future* Haldane returned to the theme. We cannot, he says, currently control our evolution but what, if in the future, we could? We will not get this power soon, but it is worth talking about it because we ought to discuss the right and wrong ways of using a power before we get it, because we should discuss what kind of changes we want, and because in doing so we might discover new things.

So Haldane considers eugenics. He considers negative eugenics — selection against deleterious mutation — but is skeptical of its efficacy at reducing the genetic burden on our species for population genetic reasons. He opposes sterilization, whether compulsory or voluntary, for carriers. Laws permitting voluntary sterilization, he points out, are subject to gross abuse. He considers positive eugenics — selection for desirable traits — but says that the “genetic basis of human abilities is so utterly rudimentary that we know nothing of them...” and that “Until even one such gene is known, it seems to me rather futile to talk about a programme for positive eugenics.” He does however suggest that we might want to get rid of wisdom teeth. All this is perfectly unobjectionable by 21st century standards. But Haldane has more to say, for example, about the desirability of maintaining human genetic diversity:

“I believe that this psychological polymorphism has been a major reason for the success of the human species, and that a full recognition of this polymorphism and its implications is an essential condition for its success not only in the remote future but in our own lifetime.”(Haldane 1951 p.278)

Which leads, quite naturally, to a brief discussion of race:

“Man is also polytypic. This does not mean that any two races differ as much in intellectual, aesthetic, or moral potentialities as they do in colour. The darkest European has lighter skin than the lightest Negro. There is no overlap. But even in a society where Negroes have poor opportunities of education the most cultured Negro is far more cultured than the average European, let alone the least cultured one.”(Haldane 1951 p.279)

And, recalling recent history, he offers a warning:

“I think that future students of evolution will build on Darwin’s work as Marx built on that of Smith, Ricardo and others. But this will only be done by a study of natural selection at work. Its time scale is so much slower than that of economics that we cannot hope for the necessary knowledge in one human generation. For this reason it is necessary to apply dialectical thinking to Darwinism. Until we get it, it is futile and dangerous to talk about controlling human evolution. Hitler tried to do it. Hitler is dead, but his ideas are alive, and we must be very careful

to see that Darwinism is not made the basis of a new Hitlerism.” (Haldane 1951 p.218)

Eugenicists were dismayed by Haldane’s essay. “None”, wrote a certain A. C. Blacker in *The Eugenics Review*, “is better equipped by scientific attainments and literary skill to use against eugenics the same weapon, the derisory tones muted but none the less perceptible, than Haldane.”(Blacker 1952). (See also his most recent biographer’s assessment (Subramanian 2020 pp.130–143.) But enough about Haldane’s “eugenics”. For me, the following captures the spirit of the man. It’s from an essay called, delightfully, *Movies for Toads*:

“I have described these particular experiments rather than hundreds of others which are constantly being made on animal behaviour, largely because I liked Dr. Honigmann, a refugee who worked at the London Zoo before the war, was interned, and carried out his work on toads in Glasgow until his death. I liked him partly because he so obviously liked toads.”(Haldane 1951 p.205)

For liking toads, and Dr Honigmann, we cannot help but like Haldane.

To summarize: Haldane was brilliant, radical, and unconventional, but why he should be thought a eugenicist is mystifying. True, he speculated about human reproductive technology such as *in vitro* fertilisation and artificial wombs, but he was deeply, publicly, skeptical about the efforts of the eugenicists of his day.

### William Donald Hamilton (1936–2000)

Bill Hamilton was, by his own account, Fisher and Haldane’s intellectual heir. In the 1960s he set out to solve the problem of altruism in much their mathematical terms. In two path-breaking papers (Hamilton 1964a; Hamilton 1964b) he derived the conditions under which an altruistic gene could increase in a population and stated it as a beguilingly simple equation that came to be known as “Hamilton’s Rule”. In doing so he extended the concept of Darwinian fitness as a property of a single genotype to that of *inclusive* fitness which considers others. It is from this vision of evolution that Richard Dawkins drew much of *The Selfish Gene* (1976). Many other important papers followed; in the latter part of his life he attempted to explain another great evolutionary mystery: sex. His “Red Queen Hypothesis” for the maintenance of sexual reproduction remains one of the main contenders in the field. He was elected FRS in 1980, and awarded the Crafoord and Kyoto Prizes as well as many other honours (Grafen 2004).

Hamilton grew up chasing butterflies in Kent (Seegerstrale 2013). At public school he won a book prize and — echoes of Fisher — chose *The Origin of Species*. In 1957 he went up to Cambridge where he absorbed Fisher’s *Genetical Theory*. Its impact on him was immense. “Fisher’s logic and ideas,” he later wrote, “still underpin most of the ever broadening paths by which Darwinism continues its invasion of human thought.” Remarkably, by the time he graduated, he had settled on solving the problem of altruism. Although enrolled at the LSE and UCL for an Msc and then a PhD, these were years of intellectual isolation. Lionel Penrose, striving to cleanse UCL of Galton’s eugenic legacy, viewed talk of the genetics of social behaviour as anathema — to him it smelt of Fascism (Grafen 2004 p.113). In 1964 Hamilton was appointed to a lectureship in genetics at Imperial. Based at Silwood Park, he published important papers while there, but in South Kensington proved to be an undergraduate lecturer

of rare incompetence. For fourteen years he was refused promotion<sup>2</sup> and, in 1978, left Imperial for a chair at Michigan. In America, where the sociobiology revolution was underway, he came into his own. But in 1984 Southwood, making amends, brought him back to Britain as a Royal Society Professor at Oxford. The final act of Hamilton's life was typically idiosyncratic. HIV, some said, had jumped from apes to humans during a Polio vaccine trial in the Congo. Most virologists dismissed the idea; Hamilton thought they were being obtuse. In 1999 he travelled to the Congo to test it and contracted malaria. It is often said — and it would be apt, if true, for so much of his work was about the evolutionary chase between parasites and their hosts — that *P. falciparum* killed him. It didn't: in March 2000 a gastrointestinal haemorrhage did (Seegerstrale 2013 p. 345-355). He was 64. He had built on Haldane's and Fisher's legacies, yet of all our scientists he resembled Darwin the most. Like Darwin, Hamilton knew and loved the natural world (they shared the South American rainforest and Kent) and, from its patterns, wrought beautiful new theories. Bob Trivers captured the quality of his mind when he said “while most of us think in single notes, Bill thought in chords.”

The History Group says that Hamilton was a eugenicist. As with Fisher and Haldane they offer no evidence for this view but, strangely and inconsistently, they do not suggest that his name be removed from the Silwood Park building. However he is clearly at risk so I evaluate his ideas here.

Even as Hamilton lay dying Oxford University Press were publishing his collected papers. Volume 1, which covered altruism had appeared in 1998; Volume 2, which concerned his papers on the evolution of sex, would do so in 2001. In these volumes Hamilton introduced each paper with an essay. Vivid, fluent, erudite and digressive, they tell of his delight in the natural world, the places he visited, the people he worked with, the origin of his ideas, and his frank hopes for them in the Darwinian soup of scientific ideas. They also tell of his fear that we, as a species, were headed for “The Great Planetary Hospital.”

All species are subject to a continual rain of deleterious mutations — mutations that cause obvious inherited disease or at least decrease the Darwinian fitness of those who bear them. Such mutations are usually swept from a population by natural selection; in its absence, however, they increase in frequency by genetic drift and accumulate so that eventually all individuals are enfeebled and the population goes extinct. Geneticists call this process “mutational meltdown”. It's not mere theory but has been demonstrated experimentally.

Hamilton worried that modern medicine — particularly ante- and post-natal medicine — was reducing the cleansing force of natural selection in humans. Children with inherited disorders who might have previously died were now being saved; they would eventually reproduce and so transmit their deleterious variants which would increase in frequency in the population to the detriment of all. He thought that process was well underway and that we would see its effects soon:

“In 40 years civilized countries will have become uncomfortably aware of, for example, the increasing load of the intrinsically unhealthy on health services... But probably in 40 years most will still be saying it doesn't matter, we can cope... Anyway, step forward another 40 years and I believe that...it will be seen that *Homo sapiens*, at least, in the so called “first-world” is indeed entering a phase of medical instability.” (Hamilton 2001 pp.xlvii–xlviii)

---

<sup>2</sup>By Dick Southwood: to a senior lectureship.

Humanity would become utterly dependent on medical technology to keep us going; we would all end up as patients in the “Great Planetary Hospital.” And, were some other crisis to occur — a global economic collapse, say — then the survival of the species itself would be at risk (Hamilton 2000 p.456)

What should be done? Hamilton offered some suggestions. Physicians should be allowed to euthanize severely afflicted babies. Should the parents of such a baby wish to keep it alive then they, rather than the state, should pay for its care. Churches that defend the lives of such children should be taxed to support them. (Hamilton 2001 p.xlviii). He notes that selection against genetically impaired zygotes is already happening (by pre-implantation genetic diagnosis or termination of fetuses with chromosomal abnormalities) but seems to think that this is not enough to avert disaster. Yes, we should think far more seriously about germ-line interventions even if such technology could not yet be envisioned<sup>3</sup>; but the sheer magnitude of the problem — the thousands of genes that would need fixing in any genome — will always make this unfeasible (Hamilton 2000 pp.456–66.) For Hamilton only selection could save us. And although his willingness to allow congenitally deformed infants to die seems callous, he rejected religious or sentimental talk of the equivalence of lives, and did so from personal experience. A brother, ‘Jimmy’, had died from a congenitally obstructed bowel aged just two days; another, Alex, had died in a climbing accident aged 18 years. The first, he said, was just an abstract noun; the second was the other half of a brotherly symbiosis. Why, he asked, can’t other people see such differences as I do? (Hamilton 2000 p.479.)

Hamilton’s obsession with these eugenic ideas — he did not hesitate to use the word — came as a shock to his admirers. He’d published on them only once: in an obscure symposium volume produced by an intellectually ambitious Minnesotan high-school. (An earlier paper on the same theme had never appeared doubtless because it given at a conference sponsored by the Vatican Academy.) It was Fisher all over again: a revered scientist who had revealed the beautiful logic of natural selection but who, upon turning to human evolution, had apparently jumped the moral rails. Most of Hamilton’s colleagues passed over his heresies in silence. But David Haig, the Harvard population geneticist, reviewed Volume 2 of the *Narrow Roads of Gene Land* and assessed them with clarity and care (Haig 2003). He titled his review *The science that dare not speak its name* and summarized his take on Hamilton’s argument as follows:

“I think that many of Hamilton’s ideas on eugenics are naïve and misguided, but I support his plea that this should be a question on which one could have a reasoned, nonacrimonious exchange of views. The extent to which the human genome is deteriorating is an important question that should be squarely faced, rather than sidestepped.”

I think that this assessment is fair. Hamilton never gave a formal analysis of the problem (see Lynch 2016 who, however, does). His discussion is assertive, alarmist and sometimes inconsistent — he has a thing against Caesarian sections on somewhat different evolutionary grounds.

Summary: Hamilton was arguably the greatest evolutionary theorist of the latter half of the 20th century. He showed that altruism can be the product of natural selection, and it is

---

<sup>3</sup>He wrote before the invention of CRISPR-Cas9 gene editing.

upon his “gene-centred” view of evolution that the evolutionary study of animal and human behaviour was built. Yet he saw that natural selection had another side. David Haig put it like this:

“Natural selection was central to [Hamilton’s] view of the world, and he clearly recognized that natural selection has a bright and a dark face. The bright face reflects all the beauties, and exquisite adaptations, of the living world. The dark face hides the selective culling of the less fit, in parasite-ridden lives that are often nasty, brutish, and short. In Hamilton’s essentially tragic (far from Panglossian) vision, the bright face is the product of the dark face and is dependent for its continued existence on the dark face. Out of his love for the bright face he was prepared to embrace the dark.”

The two faces of natural selection — the idea recurs. It was Thomas Henry Huxley’s mournful theme in *Evolution & Ethics* written a century before.

## Cancel culture and its consequences

I began this essay by arguing that the History Group report is unscholarly and unbalanced. The extent of these defects should now be plain. I have attempted to give a better account of what these four scientists said and did — to do the work that the History Group should have done but did not.

For me the greatest failures of the History Group report do not, however, lie in its lack of scholarship, but rather the values that motivate it. Distributing the report, Ian Walmsley, the Provost, wrote “The report avers that it is not promoting a ‘cancel culture’” (Walmsley 2021). Actually, it avers nothing of the sort. It talks about promoting an “inclusive environment which allows all to flourish and to feel at home”. This sentiment, we can all agree, is admirable. However on the most fundamental value that lies at the heart of any university — that it should be a place where ideas can be freely exchanged — the report is silent.

There is a principle at work in the machinery of most modern universities. It is the principle that students should, under all circumstances, be kept *safe*. At first glance that may seem unobjectionable. We can all agree that students should be protected from bullying, sexual harassment or unsafe laboratories. But, in recent years — since about, say, 2010 — the principle has been extended to the idea that students should be kept safe from *emotional* harm. Although well-intended, this extension has created the problem we now face. That is because *ideas* can cause emotional harm, yet ideas are precisely what universities make and teach.

Ideas that impinge upon human identity — who we are and how others see us — are of particular concern. The spread of social justice scholarship and activism in the last decade have primed students to find offence in the most fleeting expression of uncongenial ideas and denounce them, and their authors, on a claim of hurt. Hence the growth of trigger warnings, cancellations, deplatformings, suspensions and firings. These forces have caused havoc on American campuses<sup>4</sup>, but are now at work in Britain too. Such disputes are evidence of a

---

<sup>4</sup>See Lukianoff and Haidt’s *The Coddling of the American Mind* (2018) and Pluckrose and Lindsay’s *Cynical Theories* (2020), which lay out, in harrowing detail, the argument I have given here. See also [A Letter on Justice](#)

growing intolerance of divergent opinion on British campuses in which academics, for their views, are savaged on social media and denounced by petition<sup>5</sup>. The UK government have proposed [legislation](#) to protect freedom of opinion in British universities. I do not say that that this is a good idea; I do say that it's a symptom of the times.

But let us return to our problem: Huxley, Fisher, Haldane and Hamilton. It may seem that merely removing their names from buildings and lecture theatres poses no threat to academic freedom. But I am not so sanguine. For evolutionary biologists their cancellation raises a pressing question: can we still teach their ideas? *All* of them?

I am confident that Fisher's Fundamental Theorem and Hamilton's Rule will keep their places in the curriculum; and that we can still tell our students, as Huxley first told us, that birds are little dinosaurs. Conversely, that any lecturer at this College should argue for a hierarchy of human races in class is no more conceivable than she should argue for a flat earth. But what of "the science that dare not speak its name"? Fisher, like most prominent geneticists working in the first half of the twentieth century, did indeed argue for eugenics; Hamilton is only remarkable for being so unfashionably late. All these scientists believed that the burden of mutation on our species is substantial; and all thought that something should be done about it. And it is here that I wish to lay before you a wildly heterodox thought: that they were neither foolish nor evil, but merely ahead of their times.

Three studies published in the last twelve-month make the point. The first, in *Nature*, is based on the UK's Biobank and reports the exon sequencing of ~50,000 people and the discovery of thousands of potentially pathogenic loss-of-function variants (Van Hout et al. 2020). The second, in the *New England Journal of Medicine* reports the initial results of the UK's 100,000 genome project and identifies hundreds of new mutations in people with rare, previously undiagnosed, diseases (Smedley et al. 2021). The third, again in *Nature*, reports a new machine learning method based on evolutionary alignment of sequences that, the authors claim, can identify hundreds of thousands of potentially pathological mutations in humans with unprecedented accuracy (Frazer et al. 2021). Suddenly it's clear: if you have a child with some weird, undiagnosable, disease you should sequence its genome to find out what's wrong. Indeed, now you can — and the NHS will likely pay.

What, you may ask, has this to do with eugenics? Such studies are surely not aimed at the elimination of genetic diseases but at their diagnosis in children who have them, perhaps even their cure. But that view is naïve. Our current crop of undergraduates may well have their full genome sequences on their laptops long before they dandle their babies on their laps. They will want to know what genetic diseases their children might have before they even conceive them or, having conceived them, bring them to term. The UK's [Human Fertilization and Embryology Authority](#) currently permits pre-implantation diagnosis of some 600 genetic disorders. This number is set to soar: technological advance, the desire of parents for healthy kids, and the fiscal maths will ensure that (Leroi 2006). Doubtless the word "eugenics", so nasty in the mouth, will be rarely said aloud; yet, like it or not, genomics has brought us to the frontier of a new world of universal, state-sponsored, genetic counselling and intervention very much like that of which Fisher & Co dreamt.

---

*and Open Debate* published in Harper's Magazine in 2020 in which a slew of American intellectuals expressed their concern.

<sup>5</sup>See, for example, *l'affair* Kathleen Stock at Sussex (Kelly 2021), and its 2019 analog at Imperial concerning our Vice Provost (Education), [Simone Buitendijk](#).



For this reason I believe that their ideas deserve to be discussed no matter how discomfiting to received moral sensibilities they may be. Indeed, in my third year class, *Biodiversity Genomics*, I do so. I do so with an eye to the ironies of history and ask what modern evidence — now so abundant — reveals about their truth. Just to be utterly clear: I do not advocate, in class, the sterilization, voluntary or otherwise, of anyone. In fact, I don't advocate anything for my job is not to delve into moral philosophy but to teach the science. But *any* discussion of the mutational burden on our species, its consequences for the health of our children, and how to meliorate it, comes perilously close to “eugenics”. This January when, once again, I stand before my class, I shall feel the gaze of the History Group — as censorious as it is ignorant of genetics old and new — fall upon me. And I should not.

I said that the conflict between academic freedom and the desire to protect students from emotional harm has been long evident in America. And it is from America too, I believe, that a partial solution comes. There the battle lines have been drawn as universities have been forced to [examine](#) the principles they hold most dear. In 2014 the University of Chicago planted its flag. The [Chicago Statement](#) is a declaration for the primacy of academic freedom:

“In a word, the University’s fundamental commitment is to the principle that debate or deliberation may not be suppressed because the ideas put forth are thought by some or even by most members of the University community to be offensive, unwise, immoral, or wrong-headed.”

Robert Zimmer, then president of Chicago, addressed the question of harm directly when he wrote:

“Universities cannot be viewed as a sanctuary for comfort but rather as a crucible for confronting ideas and thereby learning to make informed judgments in complex environments.”(Zimmer [2016](#)).

Many universities, among them Princeton, Johns Hopkins and Columbia, have [subscribed](#) to the Chicago Statement. I believe that Imperial College should too. Our great predecessor would have, of that we can be sure. Thomas Henry Huxley devoted much of his life to defending science against the moralists of his day. But let me give the final word to the scientist whom the History Group have traduced most. In the preface to *Daedalus* J.B.S. Haldane wrote that his essay

“will be criticized for its undue and unpleasant emphasis on certain topics. It is necessary if people are to be induced to think about them, and it is *the whole business of university teacher to induce people to think.*” [italics mine]

I submit that it is this simple, yet profound, truth that Imperial’s History Group have forgotten if ever they knew it.

## References

- Beauchamp, J.P. (2016). “Genetic evidence for natural selection in humans in the contemporary United States”. In: *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 113.28, pp. 7774–7779.
- Blacker, C.P. (Oct. 1952). “J.B.S. Haldane on eugenics”. In: *The Eugenics review* 44.3, pp. 146–151.

- Bodmer, W. et al. (2021). “The outstanding scientist, R.A. Fisher: his views on eugenics and race”. In: *Heredity* 126.4, pp. 565–576.
- Charlesworth, B. (2017). “Haldane and modern evolutionary genetics”. In: *Journal of Genetics* 96.5, pp. 773–782.
- Clark, R. (1984). *JBS: The Life and Work of J.B.S. Haldane*. Oxford.
- Desmond, A. (1994). *Huxley: The Devil’s Disciple (V1)*. Michael Joseph.
- (1997). *Huxley: Evolution’s High Priest (V2)*. Michael Joseph.
- diGregorio, M.A. (1984). *T. H. Huxley’s place in natural science*. Yale.
- Edwards, A.W.F. (2007). “R. A. Fisher’s 1943 Unravelling of the Rhesus Blood-Group System”. In: *Genetics* 175.2, pp. 471–476.
- Fisher-Box, J. (1978). *R.A. Fisher: the life of scientist*. Wiley.
- Frazer, J. et al. (2021). “Disease variant prediction with deep generative models of evolutionary data”. In: *Nature* 599.7883, pp. 91–95.
- Grafen, A. (2004). “William Donald Hamilton. 1 August 1936 &#x2014; 7 March 2000”. In: *Biographical Memoirs of Fellows of the Royal Society* 50, pp. 109–132.
- Haig, D. (2003). “The science that dare not speak its name.” In: *Quarterly Review of Biology* 78, pp. 327–335.
- Haldane, J.B.S. (1951). *Everything has a future*. George Allen and Sons.
- Hamilton, W.D. (1964a). “The genetical evolution of social behaviour. I”. In: *Journal of Theoretical Biology* 7.1, pp. 1–16.
- (1964b). “The genetical evolution of social behaviour. II”. In: *Journal of Theoretical Biology* 7.1, pp. 17–52.
- (2000). “A review of Dysgenics: Genetic Deterioration in Modern Populations”. In: *Ann. Hum. Genet.* 64, pp. 363–374.
- (2001). *The Narrow Roads of Gene Land: V2, the evolution of sex*. Oxford University Press.
- Huxley, T. H. (1893/1989). *Evolution and Ethics*. Princeton University Press.
- Kelly, J. (2021). “Kathleen Stock — free speech and fear on Campus”. In: *Financial Times*, 05.11.2021.
- Kong, A. et al. (2017). “Selection against variants in the genome associated with educational attainment”. In: *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 114.5, E727–E732.
- Leroi, A.M. (2006). “The future of neo-eugenics. Now that many people approve the elimination of certain genetically defective fetuses, is society closer to screening all fetuses for all known mutations?” In: *EMBO Rep.* 7, pp. 1184–1187.
- Lynch, M. (2016). “Mutation and Human Exceptionalism: Our Future Genetic Load”. In: *Genetics* 202.3, pp. 869–875.
- Medawar, P. (1982). “J.B.S.” In: *Pluto’s Republic*. Ed. by P. Medawar. Oxford University Press, pp. 263–269.
- Provine, W.B. (1971). *The Origins of Theoretical Population Genetics*. University of Chicago Press.
- Seegerstrale, U. (2013). *Nature’s Oracle: The Life and Work of W.D. Hamilton*. Oxford University Press.
- Smedley, D. et al. (2021). “100,000 Genomes Pilot on Rare-Disease Diagnosis in Health Care: a Preliminary Report”. In: *New England Journal of Medicine* 385.20, pp. 1868–1880.
- Subramanian, S. (2020). *A Dominant Character: the radical science and restless politics of J.B.S. Haldane*. Atlantic Books.



- Van Hout, C.V. et al. (2020). “Exome sequencing and characterization of 49,960 individuals in the UK Biobank”. In: *Nature* 586.7831, pp. 749–756.
- Walmsley, I. (2021). email, 05.11.2021.
- Wingate, P.N. (1966). “John Burdon Sanderson Haldane, 1892-1964”. In: *Biogr. Memrs Fell. R. Soc.* 12, pp. 218–249.
- Zimmer, R.J. (2016). “Free speech is the basis of a true education”. In: *Wall Stree Journal*, 26.08.2016.

## Recommendations from Silwood Park

December 13, 2021

Dear Provost,

The History Group proposes to remove names from 3 or 4 buildings (the fate of one, “Hamilton” is unclear). We are an ad-hoc group of Silwood staff and students — ecologists and evolutionary biologists all — who have considered what should be done about them. Here, in brief, are our recommendations:

1. The Huxley and Hamilton Buildings in South Kensington and Silwood Park should keep their names. We do not argue the case for doing so here; for further information see Leroi’s submission to the History Group titled *Cancelling Huxley*. We suggest that a QR code which leads to an essay about these scientists, written by a competent scholar, be attached to each of them.
2. The Fisher, Haldane, Darwin and Wallace lecture theatres in the Hamilton Building should be renamed. We do not make these recommendations because we believe that Fisher and Haldane deserve censure but so that they can be named for others of greater relevance to the Silwood Park Community. (They were named for their association with Hamilton rather than Silwood.) Specifically, we recommend that:
  - (a) “Fisher” be renamed “Canning” for Elizabeth U. Canning (1928–2021). Professor of Parasitology at Silwood Park until 1993, after which she continued as Emeritus for many years, Liz Canning was an eminent protozoologist, an expert in Microsporidian parasites. She worked on their taxonomy and life cycles, work that became suddenly important during the AIDs epidemic as people began dying of microsporidian diseases. In 2000, studying some odd Bryozoan parasites, she discovered that they were not, as previously thought, protozoans but a new class of Myxozoans: animals related to Cnidarians.
  - (b) “Haldane” be renamed “Waloff” for Nadejda “Nadia” Waloff (1909–2001). Until her retirement in 1978, Nadia Waloff was a central figure in economic entomology Silwood Park. She worked primarily on the ecology and evolution of the Hemiptera, studying their wing polymorphisms. She was a pioneer of manipulative field experiments in ecology. She was the first (along with O.W. Richards) to manipulate the population density of herbivorous insects on wild plants using experimental applications of insecticides. This work showed that the impact of herbivorous insects on the fecundity of plants was far greater than had ever been previously understood. She also pioneered spatial ecology, mapping the distribution of ants nests on Rookery Slope in Silwood, and demonstrating that regular spatial patterning

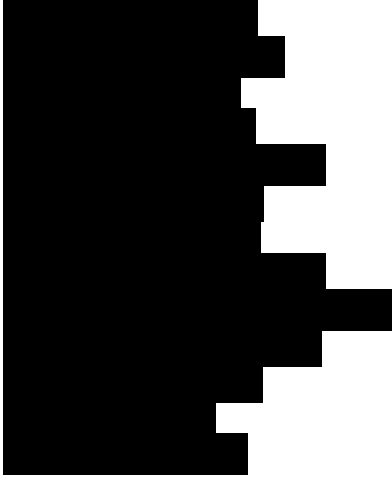
could result from intraspecific competition<sup>1</sup>.

These lecture theatres would also have QR codes leading to essays detailing their accomplishments.

- (c) “Darwin” and “Wallace” be kept for the interim but be renamed in the future for distinguished dead scientists associated with Silwood.
- 3. We also recommend that an annual “Thomas Henry Huxley Lecture in Science & Society” be established at South Kensington. This lecture would be given by eminent figures who have brought science to bear on the problems of society and, as such, exemplify Huxley’s spirit. We note that Imperial College had a series of “Thomas Henry Huxley Memorial Lectures” in the 1920s and 1930s, so this really just revives an old idea.

In making these recommendations we do not speak for Silwood staff as a whole, but only for ourselves.

Sincerely yours,

A large black rectangular redaction box covers the signature and name of the author.

---

<sup>1</sup>M. Crawley pers. comm.

186

After the release of the History Group Report, I have sought to obtain feedback from both departments that I work for ( [REDACTED] ) and engaged with the focus group discussions. After speaking with a number of colleagues and further reading, below is my collated feedback.

These are the principal points I would like to contribute towards the consultation phase of the proposed timeline:

- Firstly, we would like to know more about how the proposed historical figures for action and recommendations were selected. Both departments that I work for have minoritised figures identified as an action point for celebration. We would like to know more about the criteria used to select these figures and whether other minoritised figures were also considered for celebration. More context and a reading list for all figures would be appreciated. We would like our staff and students to have the option to undertake further reading so that they can come to their own conclusions. Is Imperial College willing to contribute financially to commissioning artwork to celebrate these minoritised figures?
- Slavery and the present-day effects of slavery need to be made explicit in the report. During a focus group I attended, one participant denied that there were any present-day effects of slavery. They claimed that everything was resolved when slavery was abolished, and therefore historical figures celebrated who owned slaves should not have any actions taken against them. This is not true and being confronted with prominent sculptures and artwork of historical figures who owned slaves isolate our students and staff of colour. We must counter indifferent attitudes towards slavery.
- Proper contextualisation of all figures listed in the report is required. The statues of Alfred Beit and Julius Wernher are at the entrance of a listed building, the RSM building where ESE is located. I understand legally these statues cannot be removed, but proper contextualisation is needed. I also understand the removal of statues and renaming of buildings, scholarships etc is the divisive part of the conversation. If statues cannot be removed and if names must stay the same, proper contextualisation needs to be added. This contextualisation should factor in the successes of these figures but also needs to address all exploitation, links to slavery, colonialism, and power imbalances.
- There should be a clearer explanation of how this report and its recommendations fit into the wider conversations of race equality and EDI at the college. Another theme that was discussed at one of the focus groups I attended was why our history was a focus rather than other outstanding issues such as outreach, representation, recruitment or the attainment gap. While I do agree these are important issues that need to be addressed, it does not mean you cannot address multiple issues at once. I believe some colleagues were unaware of the college's action plan around race through the Race Equality Charter.
- Communications and social media could be a bit more mindful in the future. There was an Instagram post that celebrated the entrance of the RSM building that showed the statues of Alfred Beit and Julius Wernher. Going forward, maybe posts like this shouldn't celebrate this entrance or similar statues.

[https://www.instagram.com/imperialcollege/p/CWX5u3YtI v/?utm\\_medium=copy\\_link](https://www.instagram.com/imperialcollege/p/CWX5u3YtI v/?utm_medium=copy_link)


Please do keep us updated of the next steps and decisions made based on the consultation.

If you have any questions regarding my feedback, please let me know.

187

Thanks for sharing the report on Imperial's history. It demonstrated careful consideration of sensitive issues. It's a difficult task to undertake. Thank you for starting this discussion.

The thing that concerns me, and apologies if I've misread, is that it still seems like it is going to take work for staff, students and members of the public to access this information. People will have to find to documents to read, to be aware that there are QR codes contextualising individuals and Imperial's history. I've seen hundreds of people walk past a statue with a QR code outside the British library without using it. It's hard to find

		<p>what you are looking for on the Imperial website and you have to know that it exists in the first place. Additional resources on top of what new students, for example, can already access could well be forgotten within a few years. For example, an online training course for staff on Imperial's imperial history could be set up, it could be required training for new starters.</p> <p>It's really important to celebrate success and introducing new scholarships that are named after people from minority groups is a good way to do so and to widen access to study at Imperial. I'm not sure that this goes far enough – celebrating individuals is a very traditional form of commemoration, we should think more radically about ways of sharing the history of people of colour and women at Imperial in addition to scholarships.</p> <p>The report was very focused on individuals, however I couldn't see anything that addressed in detail Imperial's role as an imperial institution, for example, the ideology of the name 'Imperial', what it means to staff and students now and Imperial's role in influencing policy, developing scientific ideas and technologies that enabled colonial exploitation.</p>
188	 <i>Attachment included below</i>	<p>I attach here a Word document with my thoughts/suggestions on your report. Hope you might find it useful.</p>

## Submission 188 - Attachment

Dear History Group,

I had the opportunity to read your report and did so with great interest. I would therefore like to present my thoughts about it, and to do so with the necessary premises. The first one is that I agree that the rediscovery and exploration of the history of the College can only prove to be beneficial for the future of our university. "Our mission is primarily to inform" are the words used in the report, and these follow Cicero's rule that "History, in truth, is witness of times, light of truth, life of memory, teacher of life, messenger of antiquity" (*Historia vero testis temporum, lux veritatis, vita memoriae, magistra vitae, nuntia vetustatis*)<sup>1</sup>.

The second premise is that, hence, the matter that is the object of criticism in this letter are some of the recommendations suggested by the Group and the principles that directed them, not, of course, the desire to learn more about and contextualise historical happenings.

### *Section I: About the University's values, aims, principles and methodology in deciding the recommendations*

In the report, the Group acknowledges that they are dealing with "complex issues" and that therefore "To support the development of recommendations, it became clear that a set of governing principles should be established to guide decision making". Among the principles provided, I and IV are particularly relevant for what will be later discussed. They state: "

- i. Building/room names should be considered as way of projecting the College's ethos and values. Names should be consistent with the diverse and global community today and with the College's desire to be an inclusive place of work and study.
- iv. Where renaming is proposed, the concerns associated with the namesake's teachings, views, behaviour etc. should be considered carefully. The context of the time and the degree to which the namesake was a key protagonist must be taken into account, without diluting or denying the active detractors and oppositional voices to this prevailing context and time, while also keeping principle (i) in mind. In all cases, a clear rationale must be published."

The first element of criticism follows from principle I and is that it lacks definition. What are exactly the College's ethos and values? These are not provided anywhere in the report but in a separate page linked in the same email containing the link for the report itself. In a video on such page, Provost Ian Walmsley explains that these are: "Respect, Collaboration, Excellence, Innovation, Integrity"<sup>2</sup>. It is evident that these are quite vague, in the sense that any institution operating in the spectrum of legality and striving to achieve success would arguably aim for the same. Furthermore, only two of them actually refer to a moral attribute, namely respect and integrity respectively. It is clear that in order to propose recommendations of which individuals are worthy of recognition, a clearer definition should be provided. For instance, are these terms associated to a utilitarian understanding of good and evil as proposed by Spinoza<sup>3</sup>, or should rather be thought in association with the Christian principle of loving one's neighbour as oneself (Matthew 22: 37-39)?

Of course, there is plenty of other possible interpretations and this might also sound as a naive question, but it is necessary to inquire the nature of specific terms before using them as parameters for concrete changes.

The second criticism is linked with what just outlined and is rather not directed to the Group's suggestions but to those who commissioned the report (i.e. Imperial's President and Provost<sup>4</sup>). This can also be reduced to a specific question. After having defined the values which should inspire Imperial's community, and as long as inquiring the history of the College is an endeavour which I greatly support and appreciate, should current partnerships not have been investigated before assessing whether they conform to them? Indeed, while we cannot offer but recognition and revaluation for the people of the past, we can contribute today to the improvement in the lives of people who might still be abused. I believe that a complete and thorough analysis of Imperial's partners may prove instrumental in this sense and for people to form an opinion on them, I suggest visiting the "Featured partnerships" page in the Imperial website<sup>5</sup>.

The third element of criticism is still relatively connected to principle I and is the choice, given the premises, not to focus on Imperial name. Quoting the report: "Whilst the College's name featured in our discussions, the group focused on people and activities rather than abstract entities. We acknowledge that our name came into existence at a certain time and we do not wish to erase our history." Now, this is in clear contrast with what was done by Imperial itself last year. Indeed, in June last year, following the protests sparked by the death of George Floyd, an email by the Provost himself informed the community of the decision to remove the College's motto *Scientia imperii decus et tutamen* (Science the crowning glory and safeguard of the Empire) from the crest. It is self-explanatory that this was done because of the presence of a reference to the Empire, which is nonetheless not considered in relation the name. The reason why this should be retained will be later explored, but the choice of not focussing on it while suggesting to remove the names of people whose actions have been shaped by the existence of the Empire itself, shows without restraints the lack of coherence in the report.

The fourth element of criticism is instead related to principle IV. The context of the time is indeed not often taken into account to the correct degree, otherwise some choice would be inexplicable. The specific cases where this did not occur are discussed later.

The fifth and final element of criticism is related to the opaqueness about the methodology with which the personalities have been selected for a revaluation of their contribution to the College. Seven individuals or group of individuals have been recommended for a positive action and it is not clear why they are the only ones which have been selected. It might be that a sort of "importance score" has been considered so that only those thought to have been least acknowledged in proportion to their contribution have been reported. This might be linked to the fact that, on the other side, those recommended for a negative action are seven as well. Nonetheless, no mention of this is given. Furthermore, I think some personalities who are not present in the report might deserve more recognition than some who are instead present there. An example is philosopher and mathematician Alfred North Whitehead who held the role of professor in applied mathematics at Imperial College from 1914<sup>6</sup> and that of chief professor in the Department of Mathematics from 1923 to 1924<sup>7</sup>. Among his several contributions is the work *Principia Mathematica* written along with future Nobel Prize winner Bertrand Russell, exploring the foundations of the subject from which it takes its name. He was certainly one of the finest intellectuals who ever set foot in the College, but from a simple research on the Internet it can be seen that no scholarship, building or other type of award was named after him (if this is not the case, then the College has serious communication problems, since information on other prizes/scholarships is instead widely available).

### *Section II: About the specific recommendations*

Before delving into the nature of the recommendations presented, it must be outlined how the report divided its analysis of the individuals into three categories. Quoting it, these are:

"

- a) Recommendation for a particular action
- b) Further research and analysis required
- c) To be documented and acknowledged in our publication but no particular action required"

Since the object of this letter is, indeed, the recommendations, all personalities on whom attention will be brought are ascribable to category a). The opinion on the suggestions provided by the Group on the single individuals are shown below:

**Professor Abdus Salam, Constance Tipper, Narinder Singh Kapany, Professor Francis Allotey, Imperial's welcoming response to refugees from Nazism and Communism:** All of these have been suggested for a positive recognition of one form or the other. Given their contribution, it is right that they are celebrated through scholarships, as proposed in most cases, or otherwise.

**Dr Margaret Fishenden:** I have nothing against the celebration of Dr Fishenden. However, I would like to quote the report, according to which she “was an industrial researcher in the Department of Mechanical Engineering during the 1930s and 1940s. During this time, Imperial became pre-eminent in Combustion and Heat Transfer, with pioneering work done by Margaret Fishenden and Owen Saunders. This research contributed to wartime studies into aircraft gas turbines, flamethrowers, and airfield gas-burners.” In other words, Dr Fishenden contributed to the development of weapons which led presumably to the killing of many people. Apart from the fact that I cannot see how this might conform to the principles which inspire the College as defined above, this will be further considered below.

**Philip Alsopp:** Perhaps the least understandable among the positive recommendations. In particular the report states that he “should be celebrated widely and a scholarship set up in his name. As part of this, the college should connect with his family to find out further information.” Indeed, only four line of text are dedicated to him (and without an appendix of any sort, unlike most individuals in group A), prompting myself to ask why he was not included in group B instead. In the very limited biographical account which is provided it appears that he won an Engineering Scholarship in 1949 and that he was the first black President of the City and Guilds College Union and editor of Felix (the university newspaper). Now, I cannot see how belonging to an ethnic minority and winning a scholarship might be judged sufficient contributions to have a scholarship named after someone. It is evident that if this were the case, the report would be filled with people who deserve a recognition of this kind. The concluding remarks, “The submission in the call for views noted that he always spoke very fondly of his time at Imperial”, makes the suggestion even more risible.

**Sir Alfred Beit, Otto Beit and Julius Wernher:** These three negative recommendations show how principle IV has not been dutifully considered. This seems to be confirmed by Appendix 9 itself, which quotes Sir Richard Sykes: “All three benefactors Alfred Beit, Otto Beit and Julius Wernher, were men of great integrity and proud that they had made their money through legitimate business, that they had organised the diamond and gold fields on proper business lines and set up an industry structure that was revered. They had spent their lives working hard, developing industry and good working practices, being self effacing and philanthropic. They were loyal and down to earth, devoted to the cause of education and the teaching of practical science to assist industry – in short they were in tune with the values and intentions of Imperial”. Of course, these personalities were involved in actions and business dealings that today would not be considered acceptable, but as the report itself acknowledges, these were considered so at the time. By a society that had values which are clearly different. For what regards Alfred Beit’s contribution towards the Jameson Raid in South Africa, it is stated that “he paid reputationally and financially, with a censuring by the British South African Committee of the House of Commons and a fine of £200,000”. Furthermore, it is stated that “The committee did state that Alfred did not support the action for any financial gain, but he resigned his directorship of the British Company in 1897”. So, he was indeed judged by the public opinion of the time, according to their values and paid accordingly. For what instead regards the treatment of the workforce in the Beit brothers and Wernher’s mines, although a mistreatment is alleged in relation to the expansion of the Kimberley mines, no actual document about it is provided. This is not to say that it did not occur, as the treatment of people in Africa and working in mines in those times was notoriously negative, it is just to outline another limit of the report. Nonetheless, unfortunately, the behaviour of both Beit brothers and Wernher was regrettably common. However, it is in line with that of many other illustrious personalities of the British Empire. An example is Sir Robert Baden-Powell, father of scouting, who first came under the spotlight for his successful resistance against enemy troops at the siege of Mafeking, this as well an episode of the Second Boer War. He has been accused, in that occasion, of treating differently and presumably discriminating in such a life/death situation the native black population<sup>8</sup>. Another example is instead Sir Winston Churchill who deliberately decided to bomb civilian targets in Germany during WWII and whose government’s inaction with respect to the Bengal famine led to a disproportionate number of deaths<sup>9</sup>. What should be hence the criterion to establish whether a personality should be maintained in their original celebration role? I think that this should be given precisely by the answer to the question of whether he/she gave more good than bad contributions according to the ethical system predominant at the time, which was not a dictatorial one and nonetheless expressed a wide set of different school of



## Submission 188 - Attachment

thoughts. Of course, new personalities, who were disregarded previously and have been reconsidered through today's values should be celebrated as well, but this is what ought to be a positive, rather than negative approach. As Baden-Powell and Churchill, also the Beit brothers and Wernher would therefore deserve celebration. Otherwise, the consequences would be that of erasing the legacy not only of these personalities, but of many others, so that no street, no square could be linked to significant events or personalities in the history of a country.

On a side note, it is interesting to outline, again, how the business conducted by these three personalities, as well as the presence in South Kensington of the Natural History Museum, the Victoria & Albert Museum and Royal Geographical Society among others, are all linked by the preeminent role of the Empire. It is therefore hypocritical to focus on the personalities and not considering the university name. On the other side, if a thorough analysis, completer and more systematic than this was conducted also by other institutions, then the result would be that the maps of South Kensington (among others) would be unrecognisable.

**Thomas Huxley:** This is without doubt the most unjust name proposed for a removal, and this is so for a specific reason: the contribution he gave are simply much higher in terms of intellectual output than the fact of which he is accused. That is being a supporter of scientific racism. Now, if, of course, as both the report and Appendix 10 note, Huxley believed in the superiority of white over black men, both also stress out that in his thought that should not be a justification for any type of violence exerted from the former upon the latter. Appendix 10, then, seems however to undermine the same assumptions that could justify the suggestion of renaming his building and removing his bust provided in the report. Indeed, Adrian Desmond's excerpt warns of judging the past historical figures according to today's values instead of those of their times and asserts that scientific racism is not the proper term to use when referring to Huxley's thought. Any possible accusation of shaping with his racist thought later society seems to be countered by the same excerpt. Indeed, this point outlines how, while Victorian's society attitude towards other ethnicities became harsher, Huxley's actually softened. Huxley seems therefore to be a "son of his times" rather than a "father of modern racism". However, assuming the opposite was true, such stain would arguably not overshadow the positive sides of this historical character, as said above. There is no need to remind how he, for instance, defended with unfathomable courage Darwin's theories against his ferocious detractors. To reprise the point about Dr Fishenden, it is also not understandable how a character whose invention concretely led to the death of others might be celebrated, while one holding purely theoretical beliefs and not intending to harm anyone might not for the nature of those same beliefs. This in a context where harsher ideas were the common rule.

**Ronald Fisher and John Haldan:** These two personalities are accused to have contributed to the development eugenics. No appendix for them is provided. The participation to the eugenic debate in the first half of last century is, however, not a rarity or several scientists of the time. Examples include economists Vilfredo Pareto and Corrado Gini<sup>10, 11</sup>. As for Huxley, it would therefore be wrong to judge Fisher and Halden for holding ideas which were not considered immoral nor proved to be scientifically wrong at the times in which they were conceived.

**Sir Basil Zaharoff:** This is instead an interesting case. Although no appendix is provided for him as well, the facts of which he is accused were arguably against the ethical values of Victorian England. It would be therefore interesting to know whether they were already known at the time at which the Chair of Aviation was named after him. If this is not the case then, according to the principles outlined above, this is the only where the renaming could be justified.

### *Section III: Suggestions for a harmonic coexistence of the College with its own history*

The following points, in conclusion of this letter, are suggestions for what I deem to better approaches for the College to relate with its own history.

## Submission 188 - Attachment

1. Assign more funds to and expand the Centre for Languages, Culture and Communication and in general to the humanities within the College. This might lead to an increased interest in history and further research in the subject
2. Students should be encouraged/compelled to take at least a course in the subject, so that they might learn the context in which the college was born (and also to improve their general knowledge)
3. Plaques or QR codes or both should be added along campus so that statues of all personalities (either controversial or not) might be better contextualised and so that the community could know the reason why they have been inserted there.

I hope the points I analysed in this lengthy letter may be of any use for your future work.

Yours sincerely,

██████████

<sup>1</sup>Cicero, Marcus Tullius. *De oratore*. BG Teubner, (1886): 286

<sup>2</sup><https://www.imperial.ac.uk/about/values/>

<sup>3</sup>Spinoza: Youpa, Andrew. "Il Spinoza's Theory of the Good." *The Cambridge Companion to Spinoza's Ethics* (2009): 242.

<sup>4</sup><https://www.imperial.ac.uk/news/231374/dialogue-begins-community-confronts-celebrates-learns/>

<sup>5</sup><https://www.imperial.ac.uk/enterprise/business/industry-partnerships-and-commercialisation/industry-partnerships/featured-partnerships/>

<sup>6</sup><https://www.britannica.com/biography/Alfred-North-Whitehead/Career-in-London>

<sup>7</sup><https://www.imperial.ac.uk/mathematics/about-us/>

<sup>8</sup>Krebs, Paula M. *Gender, Race, and the Writing of Empire: Public Discourse and the Boer War*. Vol. 23. Cambridge University Press (2004): 18-19

<sup>9</sup>Hickman, John. "Orwellian rectification: popular Churchill biographies and the 1943 Bengal famine." *Studies in History* 24.2 (2008): 235-243.

<sup>10</sup>Schumpeter, Joseph A. "Vilfredo Pareto (1848-1923)." *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* (1949): 147-173.

<sup>11</sup>Berlivet, L. A. (2016). A laboratory for Latin eugenics: the Italian Committee for the Study of Population Problems and the international circulation of eugenic knowledge, 1920s-1940s. *História, Ciências, Saúde-Manguinhos*, 23, 51-72.

189

██████

*Attachment  
included  
below*

I attach my contribution to the History Group process. Please acknowledge receipt.

For completeness I have also attached the original email correspondence I had with ██████████, that I have used in my report.

# Huxley, Beit and the foundations of Imperial College

██████████  
December 11, 2021

## 1 Introduction

These comments on the History Group report concentrate on the two most significant negative recommendations, the renamings of the Huxley Building, and of Beit Hall and Beit Quad. T H Huxley and Alfred Beit were the two most important individuals involved in the creation of Imperial College. Over many years T H Huxley collected in South Kensington the pieces from which Imperial College was assembled: the Royal School of Mines, the Royal College of Science, and the City and Guilds of London Institute. For his part Alfred Beit very largely paid for the foundation of Imperial College. Therefore these renamings are of existential significance. Incredibly the founders of Imperial College have become *personae non grata*.

The History Group proposes to reduce Huxley and Beit to a pair of QR codes, something one can expect noone will use in 20 years time. They would be cancelled, and it is dishonest to profess otherwise.

The report recommends highlighting six individuals who should be known better. This is a positive idea that I largely support. It is very important that due diligence is completed on these individuals or the initiative may backfire. Will they be subjected to the exacting standards of Huxley and Beit? For some of these individuals there are people alive who knew them. They should be consulted lest we later find out that one or more of the nominees indulged in behaviour that “falls far short of Imperial’s modern values”. For Abdus Salam it appears he made significant contributions to the development of Pakistan’s nuclear weapons and was very closely associated with Munir Ahmed Khan. How different is this work in an ethical sense to that of Zaharoff who is vilified in the report? This is a question that must be considered very carefully.

The report has some very striking shortcomings. In addition to several spelling and grammatical errors, Alfred Beit is mistitled as Sir Alfred Beit (his nephew), the section supposed to be on Environmental Due Diligence is a copy of the section on the Delhi Committee, and very embarrassingly the section on Zaharoff was simply lifted directly from Wikipedia. One could forgive this sloppiness, but not the serious shortcomings in some of the most substantial recommendations. For the cases of Beit, Fisher, Haldane, and Hamilton no analysis at all is provided to justify the recommendations. How is anyone supposed to be convinced? How then can the recommendations be accepted? For Huxley a proper scholarly analysis is provided, in the form of a report prepared by his biographer Adrian Desmond, and yet the charge against Huxley that he was a scientific racist directly contradicts the expert opinion. This means that the report does not contain a coherent case for any of the renamings, just a set of unsubstantiated charges and a list of wishes. This goes against item (iv) listed under ‘Principles’ in the History Group report which states that ‘in all cases a clear rationale must be presented’. The President’s Board cannot proceed with these renamings under these circumstances.

The greatest problem of all in the report is the lack of justification for the principles adopted. Without a well-argued justification these simply constitute another wish list.

The remainder of this report contains three main sections. The first is a discussion of the principles involved in renaming buildings. After that I consider at length whether the charge against Huxley is valid, and to what extent it is significant, and then turn to Alfred Beit. I close with a short section of final remarks, before I list my recommendations.

## 2 Principles of renaming

The History Group provides in their report a set of principles that they have followed in producing their recommendations. These may be viewed as criteria for selecting recommendations that meet an overall principle, and it is clear that the overall principle is *to create a more inclusive environment for the whole community*. Everything must be subsumed to this overall principle. Given the overall principle, the criteria listed have some coherence. However no justification for this overall principle is provided. It is a worthy principle, noone would disagree with it, but it cannot be the only principle. It will sometimes clash with other important principles and must be balanced against them. Consider the following. The first of the History Group's criteria is stated: "Building/room names should be considered as way of projecting the College's ethos and values. Names should be consistent with the diverse and global community today and with the College's desire to be an inclusive place of work and study." This is a very radical idea. In most universities buildings are viewed simply as a reflection of the university's history. This history can be a draw for prospective students. For example, people will want to come to Imperial because it was Huxley's home. The university's history may also be a source of pride, and a source of inspiration. It may also be a source of knowledge, and through reflecting on that knowledge it can become a source of understanding and wisdom. We learn from history. All these benefits are shared across the university, creating cohesion within the community. Removing or replacing names to promote inclusion may therefore damage this cohesion. This shows why it is necessary to balance the requirements of different principles. The third criterion listed includes "The process of naming and renaming buildings should not be considered as an extraordinary event ...". Donors are important to Imperial College, but who would donate the money to have a building named after themselves or a relative under these conditions? A broader set of principles is required, that balances different goals, backed by detailed justification, and placed in the context of the purpose of a university: the discovery and dissemination of knowledge.

Before considering this question further I will express my personal opinion that Imperial College is already an extremely inclusive university, and is already very activist in this regard. The people I have met at all levels in the university over many years are very largely progressive. Communications, reports, webpages, posters, emails etc are suffused with the inclusion philosophy. Inclusion initiatives are ubiquitous, but in fact they are almost superfluous because they preach to the converted.<sup>1</sup> We can always do better, and should never be complacent, and initiatives like the Black Scholarships are very positive. The College environment as it is, however, does not in any way justify the revolutionary change that the History Group advocates. These proposals will destroy our foundations, and we will lose far more than we will gain. The College would do far better to focus on positive proposals that look to the future rather than negative proposals that pass judgment on our history.

Others more knowledgeable than me have studied this question of renaming buildings. I suspect that scientists (like me) are probably not the best people for seeing the big picture, and it requires the views of historians in particular, as well as input from, for example, sociologists, psychologists, and philosophers. People from outside university such as politicians and those in business may also provide useful different perspectives. I have read widely on this topic, and there are many reports on renaming buildings at different universities, but to my knowledge only one of these is devoted specifically to studying principles, rather than considering particular cases. This is the Witt report from Yale University (Prof John Witt was the Chair of the committee). This is a wonderfully clear and scholarly publication that addresses the question of renaming buildings from multiple angles. Everyone I have recommended this report to has told me how enlightening they have found it.

The Yale Committee to Establish Principles on Renaming was set up by the President of Yale, because of agitation to change the name of Calhoun College. The President had the wisdom to understand that first he needed a set of principles that could be applied to any renaming question, before he could consider the case of Calhoun College. The result was the Witt report, and its set of principles. After accepting the report, the President set up a second committee to consider the specific question of renaming Calhoun College, by making a detailed study of Calhoun, and applying

<sup>1</sup>In passing I would note that Heads of Department are not always the best people for gauging the mood in the College. All the problems in our university land on the desks of the HoDs, and they may get a jaundiced viewpoint. They are like doctors in a hospital who only see people who are ill, but the world outside the hospital is healthy. [REDACTED], noting that the outlooks expressed frequently did not tally with my own experience.

the principles of the first report.<sup>2</sup>

The make up of Witt's committee was very different to that of Imperial's History Group, and included several historians, as well as a lawyer, a professor of management, a neuroscientist, and undergraduates and alumni.

The introduction to the Witt report is an elegant summary of the different forces pulling on the decision process, including:

- The purpose of a university is to discover and disseminate knowledge
- To erase a university's history is antithetical to the spirit of the institution
- History is also the commemoration and memorialisation of the past, and so expresses values, which may change
- Change is indispensable in a university
- The importance of genuine inclusiveness for all those who will make it a leading centre for research and teaching in the years to come

With these ideas in mind the committee approached the problem, and examined a very wide range of documentation relating to the history and principles of renaming, and analyses of particular cases. They consulted with other universities who had wrestled with problems of renaming. They invited inputs from students, staff, faculty, alumni and members of the public, and they analysed these inputs and correlated the range of opinions to the different groups providing input. This latter process is similar to the process going on at Imperial now, except at Yale they did this before considering any particular renaming issues.

The Imperial History Group was very aware of the Witt report, but the direction they have taken is almost diametrically opposite. There are so many wise comments in the Witt report that I can only recommend that everyone on the President's Board read the whole report. Before moving on to their recommendations I would like to provide one quote they make after they had read all the inputs to the call: "Running through many comments we received was widespread agreement that the University can and should aim to be diverse and inclusive in a way that emphasizes its traditions of excellence and does not efface the institution's history." This provided a guiding idea as they went about the work of drawing up recommendations.

The result of the study was a set of principles that should be adopted when considering renaming. My main recommendation will be that these principles be applied to the proposed renamings at Imperial College. The Witt report was written with the idea in mind that their principles could usefully be applied at other universities too.

The main principles, paraphrased in places for brevity, are the following:

1. *There is a strong presumption against renaming a building on the basis of the values associated with its namesake, especially when a building has been named for someone who made major contributions to the University.*
2. *Sometimes renaming on the basis of values is warranted, in particular if a principal legacy of the namesake is fundamentally at odds with the mission of the University, or if the relevant principal legacy was significantly contested in the time and place in which the namesake lived.*
3. *When a name is altered, there are obligations on the University to ensure that the removal does not have the effect of erasing history. When a name is retained, there may be obligations on the University to ensure that preservation does not have the effect of distorting history.*

Principal legacies are explained as typically the lasting effects that cause a namesake to be remembered.

There is much more to the recommendations than the stated principles. These must be read in conjunction with the accompanying narrative for their application to be properly understood. So whereas it might appear that these principles imply that renaming would be rare, in fact the committee that applied them to Calhoun College recommended changing the name of the college, to honour Grace Murray Hopper.

---

<sup>2</sup>The two reports are available at <https://president.yale.edu/decision-name-calhoun-college>

The Witt committee placed great emphasis on inclusiveness throughout the report. In other words it strongly endorsed the overall principle adopted by the Imperial History Group. Nevertheless through considering and understanding the multiple additional factors that are important in renaming cases, the committee's conclusions are quite different and more measured than the principles adopted by the Imperial History Group.

There is a second important report that is relevant here. This is History Matters - Principles for Change by Imperial alumnus Trevor Phillips. This was not available to the History Group as it was published on 25 October 2021, the day before the History Group report appeared. It was produced by the think tank Policy Exchange. This is significant because documents published by Policy Exchange very often determine future government legislation.

To explain the purpose of the report I quote "The principles set forth in this paper have been designed such that they can be applied by any public institution to any context in which the reinterpretation of history is being considered". The report contains three straightforward principles that are rather bland in themselves. What is significant is the accompanying narrative that expands on the principles. I recommend that the overall process that Imperial is following be compared carefully against the recommended procedures listed in this report.

The report recommends taking the long view, "Decisions about change should not unduly be influenced by what may be temporary shifts in public sentiment or taste.", and also emphasises that "Paying due regard to the past includes considering the historical context of the matter at hand". This principle of judging people by the times in which they lived is shared by the Witt report.

### 3 T H Huxley

In considering Huxley I have read Cyril Bibby's biography as well as a number of documents which I reference below, and I have consulted with Jonathan Pritchard who has read Adrian Desmond's biography. Jonathan has also read very widely on the subject of race in Victorian times.

You will receive many inputs on Huxley, and several may cover similar ground. Huxley was one of the most remarkable individuals of the Victorian era. His origins were quite humble, and his formal education extremely limited. He was mostly self educated. Despite this he became an extremely successful research scientist, educator, administrator, and public figure who advocated for several progressive causes that he was passionate about. Two themes were particularly dominant in his life. First he fought for the right of all people to receive the same treatment and to have the same opportunities to reach their potential, whether the working class, women, slaves in the United States, or freed slaves in Jamaica<sup>3</sup>. Second he fought against dogma that could not be defended with evidence.

In his fight for truth based on evidence he was a pioneer of the scientific method in the biological sciences, and he believed in applying reason to all problems, bravely following wherever his reason backed by evidence took him, uninfluenced by prevailing wisdom. This naturally resulted in controversies, and his zeal also sometimes led to error. Although pugnacious he was not proud, and when shown the evidence he was quick to admit his error and modify his beliefs. There is the famous story of his visit to O C Marsh at Yale, and Marsh persuaded him to change his mind on the evolution of the horse using fossil evidence. Another nice anecdote is provided in Fig. 1 which is an extract from Bibby's biography. This illustrates how he was willing to quickly change his mind when faced with the evidence. This story also illustrates Huxley's generosity.

Huxley fought for many causes over his career. A partial list follows:

- the pursuit of knowledge through his groundbreaking scientific research
- his advocacy for Darwin's theory of evolution and his fight against the conservative faction in the Church
- his opposition to dogmatism wherever encountered
- freedom and equal treatment for all humans, especially the abolition of slavery in the USA, and education for women<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup>For details of Huxley and the Jamaica Committee, as well as many other valuable points relevant to the charge against Huxley, see: <https://pandasthumb.org/archives/2021/10/creationists-social-justice-advocates-unite-take-down-huxley.html> <https://osf.io/4smwv/>

<sup>4</sup>From another of his biographers, Paul White, "Huxley is described as an abolitionist. He was in fact much more



tion, but Huxley is not to blame for that. As soon as he got an adequate laboratory he made his students observe each type for themselves, and that in itself was a revolution. Patrick Geddes \* relates how, instructed by Huxley to examine the radula of a whelk, he found that the mechanism was different from that described by his master. Huxley told him to look again, then looked again himself and slapped his student's shoulder in delight: "Pon my word, you're right!", he declared. "You've got me! I was wrong! Capital! I must publish this for you!"—and had the discovery published by Geddes in the Zoological Society's *Transactions* explicitly as a correction of his own work. Today, when every secondary

Figure 1: Anecdote from Bibby's biography showing Huxley changing his mind.

- his popular lectures for the working class
- his campaign for universal education for children
- the introduction of science education at all levels, including laboratory experiments
- the reform of university education
- the idea that science may illuminate but does not decide moral issues

These are his principal legacies, and define Huxley the man. The idea of a hierarchy of races is one he believed early in his career, while his views softened later. Bibby believes this happened by 1867, while Desmond argues that it happened more gradually. However it is important to note that this was not something he was fighting for i.e. it was not one of his causes. Therefore it is not something that defines him. It was simply a view that he shared with the rest of society at the time. Another of his biographers, Sherrie Lyons, states: "In Europe and the United States one would be extremely hard pressed to find anyone in the sciences, not to mention the society at large in the nineteenth century, that did not have a hierarchical view of the races."<sup>5</sup> In his 1865 essay 'Emancipation black and white' Huxley uses this idea of a hierarchy of races in comparing the emancipation of slaves to the emancipation of women, the radical cause that he was actually fighting for in the essay. He was able to take for granted that his audience shared this view of a hierarchy of races. The point then is that to criticise this section of the essay is not to criticise Huxley the man, but to criticise Victorian society as a whole. But it is an empty position to criticise the whole of Victorian society. This would be claiming that today we are morally better, which is nonsense. Lincoln has some wise words on this point (a quote from the end of the Civil War): "Human nature will not change. In any future great national trial, compared with the men of this, we shall have as weak and as strong, as silly and as wise, as bad and as good. Let us therefore study the incidents in this as philosophy to learn wisdom from and none of them as wrongs to be avenged."

For me one of the oddest charges in the report is the statement that Huxley's position on racial hierarchy "falls far short of Imperial's modern values". Taken literally, i.e. if Huxley was alive today and espoused the same views, this would of course be true. But without question Huxley would not say these things today. As shown by the two earlier examples, Huxley would immediately change his position when presented with clear evidence that contradicted a previously held view, and this would be especially true on issues to do with race given that Huxley was a social reformer. This demonstrates the problem of judging people from the past by the standards of today. We are all very strongly influenced in our behaviour and utterances by the values, practices, and accumulated knowledge of today and the moral issues that are of particular current interest - and not of course by the unknowable values, practices etc of the distant future. The moral issues of the day and our thinking about them

than this. He called for the elimination of all political, legal, and economic prejudices, equal rights and opportunities for people of all races (and sexes)." [https://president.wvu.edu/files/2021-04/PS White Huxley Legacy.pdf](https://president.wvu.edu/files/2021-04/PS%20White%20Huxley%20Legacy.pdf)

<sup>5</sup>[https://president.wvu.edu/files/2021-04/Lyons Huxley Legacy.pdf](https://president.wvu.edu/files/2021-04/Lyons%20Huxley%20Legacy.pdf)



change in a complex way, as knowledge accumulates, and are dependent on particular developments and events. The quote “falls far short of Imperial’s modern values” is wildly off key given the goal of the History Group of improving inclusion, for Huxley was undoubtedly one of the greatest pioneers of inclusion, on race, on gender, and on class.

In a meeting with the Astrophysics group this November the Chair of the History Group specifically criticised Huxley for ‘not attacking the prevailing view of racial hierarchy’ (verbatim quote). Given that Huxley worked 14 hours a day for 40 years on another set of very worthy causes, many concerning inclusion, this is an unreasonable criticism. The History Group shows little appreciation of the fact that no one is perfect, and that allowances should be made. The Witt report cites some examples: Yale himself had involvement in slave trading, Gandhi made racist remarks about Africans, and even Frederick Douglass was found to have made highly patronising remarks about native Americans. In a recent essay, Nigel Biggar, Regius Professor of Moral and Pastoral Theology at Oxford, wittily expressed this notion thus: “... we ought to tolerate the public celebration of morally ambiguous heroes – those being the only kind available to us – ...”.

No one is perfect. In considering renaming the Huxley building, a quote from Huxley himself, from another context, is apposite as a final word: “I do not advocate burning your ship to get rid of the cockroaches”.

## 4 Alfred Beit

The History Group charge against Alfred Beit is “due to the treatment of workers during the expansion of the Kimberley mines”. This charge is not elaborated on so it is unclear what it means. Nevertheless I have been unable to discover anything in Alfred Beit’s history which directly corresponds to this statement.

In this section I consider this charge. A proper understanding requires a considerable amount of background, making this section rather long. Three subsections follow: a brief history of the Kimberley mines and Beit’s role there; a summary of Beit’s character; and then an account of the history of the labour conditions at Kimberley, which raises a number of questions. After that I have another subsection considering other issues raised by the History Group report.

Shortly after completing my section on Beit I received a letter from Geoffrey Wheatcroft, author of *The Randlords*<sup>6</sup>. I had asked him for a history perspective on the charge against Beit. It seems to me Wheatcroft directly answers some of the questions I raise about labour conditions, but he makes other points and his letter is valuable as a standalone comment. Therefore I have included his letter after my subsection on labour conditions at Kimberley. Otherwise I have left my section on Beit untouched.

In considering Alfred Beit I have consulted the following works:

1. Henning Albrecht: Alfred Beit The Hamburg Diamond King
2. Geraldine Auerbach: Alfred Beit – South Africa’s Financial Genius (Pt 1, and draft of Pt 2 provided by the author)
3. Geoffrey Wheatcroft: *The Randlords*

I have also corresponded with Geraldine Auerbach in addition to Geoffrey Wheatcroft. Albrecht (whom I have been unable to contact) and Wheatcroft are professional historians. Auerbach is not, but has the advantage of close personal association. She grew up in Kimberley and her father purchased the building containing Beit’s office.

### 4.1 Beit at Kimberley

The first diamond near Kimberley was discovered by a child by the Vaal river in 1866, and in 1869 prospectors began digging near the river. That the source of diamonds was the clay pipes in the region that became Kimberley was not understood until 1871. Soon thereafter thousands of miners, British (especially English from Cornwall), Australian, American, Boer, and African arrived in the remote semi-wilderness, six days travel from Cape Town. From here I will use the term black for the African miners, while Geoffrey Wheatcroft uses Bantu. As explained in his book in writing history there are

---

<sup>6</sup>and a recent thought-provoking book on Churchill which exemplifies his style

difficulties associated with choosing a name that both distinguishes (from San and Khoekhoe) but does not have perjorative overtones, noting that what is normal at one time can become perjorative at a later time.<sup>7</sup>

Alfred Beit was a German Jew born in Hamburg in 1853. He arrived in Kimberley in 1875 by which time the place had progressed from a chaotic field of tents to a collection of shacks with the aspect of a Wild West town. The four diamond pipes were each a checkerboard of claims, with 1600 in the main Kimberley mine alone, with a chaotic and dangerous 3D structure, depending on which claims, all hand dug, had reached the deepest. The cost of production, the instability of the market from over- or under-supply, the progressive difficulty of increasing depth and the transformation from the softer yellow soil to the hard blue clay, all incentivised amalgamation of claims and raising of capital through shares to finance the purchase of heavy industrial equipment to automate the extraction of diamonds. Beit progressed from diamond dealer for DJ Lippert and Co., through independent property developer, to claim buyer and share dealer for Porges and Co. in a semi-independent role beginning in 1880. In the period 1882-1885 the mines went into a period of depression, after a speculation bubble burst. Albrecht states “In this situation, Beit’s true talents were revealed. With great foresight, energy and an extraordinary organisational ability, Beit, who day after day took on an enormous workload, succeeded in saving several companies from insolvency and in putting them on a new sound financial basis.” In 1884 he became Porges’ main representative in Kimberley, although still salaried and not yet a partner. Subsequently through a legendary succession of share deals, joining with Rhodes and Barnato they eventually succeeded in achieving the monopoly of diamond mining at Kimberley for the de Beers corporation in 1888, and they all became Life Governors. The next year Beit moved to London.

### 4.2 Beit’s character

In comparison to Rhodes and Barnato, little has been written about Beit. Auerbach describes him as “an intensely private man, with nervous mannerisms, eschewing publicity at all turns”, but he was extremely popular with everyone from diggers to colleagues for his sincerity, goodness of heart, generosity and honesty. This is described at length in Albrecht’s book.

Auerbach’s books are replete with quotations giving witness to these qualities, which reinforce the positive comments in Appendix 9 of the History Group report. A small selection follows.

His protege J B Taylor: “Alfred Beit had the kindest, most generous, and loveable nature of any man that ever drew breath. ... Beit was the best friend South Africa has ever had. He rendered more practical service to the country than any man I know of.”

His biographer Seymour Fort: “He became that rather rare product, a self-made but really unselfish millionaire. ... Beit perhaps more than most men, brought into the business arena the qualities of fair play, generosity and friendship ...”

His employee Lionel Phillips: “Of all the men I had become acquainted with in Kimberley, none was more genial and kind, none more brilliant in capacity, more bold in enterprise or more genuinely respected and admired than Alfred Beit. His intelligence was keen and his power of decision as great as it was rapid.”

His ability in business was a combination of his rapidity of thought and depth of understanding of a problem, but his success was enhanced by his honesty and his good relations with and generosity towards those he interacted with, leading to trust and confidence in his dealings and therefore cooperation.

### 4.3 Labour conditions at Kimberley

To understand the history of the labour conditions at Kimberley it is necessary to be familiar with, among other things, the problem of illegal diamond buying, known always at Kimberley as IDB. Diamonds found in a claim belonged to the claim owner, but might be discovered and secreted, sometimes swallowed, by a labourer who would look to sell them illegally. IDB accounted for a substantial fraction of all diamonds discovered, maybe one third, but estimates vary widely. Some diamond dealers at Kimberley were complicit in IDB, but it has never been suggested that Beit was one of them. A

---

<sup>7</sup>The widely used term Kaffir was acceptable in the 19th century, coming from Arabic and meaning infidel or outsider.

colourful eye-witness account of mining at Kimberley in the early days that includes a description of the problem of IDB is provided by (the) Anthony Trollope.<sup>8</sup>

The jurisdiction under which Kimberley fell was disputed, but was eventually decided by a court in favour of Griqualand West (British from 1873), over Orange Free State or Transvaal (both Boer). British race policies were essentially colourblind, while the Boer states practised apartheid.

There are two key events in the development of labour conditions at Kimberley. The first was the Black Flag revolt which took place in early 1875. This was an armed rebellion by the white miners, ostensibly motivated by the endemic IDB by black labourers. They demanded imposition of separate housing for the black labourers in (open) compounds, and a ban on black workers holding claims. The Lieutenant Governor, Southey, was in too weak a position and he capitulated to the miners' demands. This marked the end of colourblind policies at Kimberley. This all occurred before Alfred Beit arrived.

The second key event was the introduction of closed compounds for the black labourers beginning in 1885. By this stage almost the entire labour force was black. As the mining became industrialised and went underground it turned into a type of factory, and the organisation and discipline required meant that labour became highly structured in a regimented fashion. The closed compounds were in fact modeled on military barracks. This also provided a solution to the problem of IDB at last. Labourers would spend fixed periods of three or six months in the compound. The living conditions *per se*, but not the restrictions, were a considerable improvement on conditions in the early years of Kimberley. For example the de Beers compound provided sleeping quarters, a refectory, sanitary latrines and washing facilities, a number of stores (including bakery, butchers, grocery), a dispensary, a hospital and a church. Nevertheless mortality rates in the compounds were judged too high, with the principal cause identified as pneumonia, ascribed to overcrowding, and further improvements were introduced in 1903. The closed compounds were certainly unpopular when introduced, but wages were much higher than elsewhere in South Africa, and after an initial strike was faced down there was no shortage of labour, with workers coming from as far away as Zambia. Of course workers were there voluntarily.

The Kimberley mine compounds were viewed at the time, by some at least, as a good model. In Turrell (Journal of African History, 1984) we read "Unlike in the Rand, there was no shortage of labour in Kimberley after the (second Boer) war. 'The de Beers Company have set an example of just and reasonable treatment of their Native employees', wrote *Outlook*, famous organ of Christian mission opinion, in 1906." From today's perspective the conditions in the compounds appear very demeaning, while the segregation of black and white introduced in 1875, nothing to do with Beit, could be seen as a seed of apartheid. However the latter issue is separate from the question of whether Beit's actions at Kimberley may be considered immoral. My cursory presentation only scratches the surface, but it is very far from obvious that the answer is in the affirmative. Instead of dismissing Beit with a single phrase "due to the treatment of workers during the expansion of the Kimberley mines" a detailed scholarly treatment is required, identifying Beit's particular role and responsibility and including comparison with labour conditions elsewhere at the time. And overall, in the spirit of the Witt report, Alfred Beit should be judged by the values of his time and by focusing on his principal legacies.

#### 4.4 Letter from Geoffrey Wheatcroft, 7 Dec 2021<sup>9</sup>

Dear [REDACTED]

Forgive for not replying properly before. My recollection of research I did forty years ago is far from total, and I'm not sure I can add much to what you've found in "The Randlords", but these are my thoughts.

On the whole I'm not much in favour of pulling down statues and renaming buildings, as opposed to Vergangenheitsbewältigung, or understanding and making a reckoning with the past. Once you start judging the past by today's standards and expunging supposedly bad people from our history, where do you stop? It's an endless task. I touch on this in the Epilogue to my recent book "Churchill's Shadow".

<sup>8</sup><https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/mod/1870trollope-southafrica.asp>

<sup>9</sup>I have formatted his letter verbatim into this report, but for the sake of formality when submitting this report I will include copies of my email to him and his emailed reply.

Alfred Beit was no worse, and perhaps slightly better, than the other mining magnates. None of them took a particularly humane view or enlightened views of their black labourers, but then you could say that about most mill-owners or mine-owners in England at the time, or in America. Nor is it true that the diamond mineworkers were exceptionally ill-treated. Their work was gruelling and they were subjected to unpleasant body searches, but when Trollope visited Kimberley in 1878 he was surprised to find that the miners were paid more than English farm labourers at the time.

Things changed when gold was discovered in the Transvaal in 1886. The distinctive feature of the Rand mines was that they held enormously the largest quantity of gold ore on earth, but of low quality, and the price of the the end product was fixed by then gold standard. So whereas at Kimberly, where diamonds had no intrinsic value and over-production took the price down. So the magnates answer was monopoly in the strict sense of a sellers' market cartel to control output, on the Rand it was monopsony, a buyers' market cartel to control the price of labour. The owners. were continually complaining that, on the one hand, they had to pay their miners too much and, on the other, that there was an acute shortage of labour. One answer was the truly appalling episode of "Chinese slavery", the importation of scores of thousands of Chinese indentured labourers paid much less than black mineworkers.

That's slightly off the subject. Beit was a financial genius who would have made money anywhere. He was the brains behind De Beers, and the first person to see the possibilities of deep-level gold mining. He was reticent and mild personally, and rather in awe of Rhodes. When I was writing my book I formed no very strong impression of Beit, whereas I came to detest Rhodes and his vulgar imperialism. Even so, I don't think the bust of Rhodes in Oxford should be removed, or Rhodes House and the Rhodes scholarships to be renamed.

Or if they are, perhaps all the money Oxford has received should somehow or another be returned. And the same goes for Imperial College (has anyone suggested changing that name?) which has benefited so enormously from Beit's huge philanthropy. It's ironical, by the way, that Beit should now be suspect: at the beginning of the last century he and the other Jewish Randlords were the subject of vitriolic antisemitic abuse, mostly from the Left

That's far more than you asked for, and even then may not answer your question. But unless diamond and gold mining is regarded as more iniquitous than other forms of capitalism, or even any other ways of getting rich, on which education has always indirectly depended, I see no reason to single out Beit.

With best wishes,

Geoffrey Wheatcroft

#### 4.5 Additional matters raised by the History Group report

We are told the decision on renaming Beit Hall and Beit Quad will be made by the students, and that "this is not intended to be a majority". The latter is a heterodox idea that is alarmingly lacking in detail. In his report Trevor Phillips recommends that a supermajority of 2/3 is required for decisions of this nature. And why only the students? And what knowledge will inform their decision?

Auerbach estimates Beit's fortune at the time of his death in today's money as 4 billion pounds. He was very generous to charitable causes in Africa in his lifetime, and in his will he bequeathed a large fraction of his fortune to charitable causes, in South Africa, Germany and the UK, as well as Zimbabwe, Zambia, and Malawi, through the Beit Trust which was his single largest donation. The trust continues to provide resources for schools, hospitals, wildlife conservation, and postgraduate scholarships for study in South Africa and the UK. Even today they provide grants of over £2m per year. The motto of the Beit Trust, set by Alfred Beit in his will, is 'for the benefit of the people'. Beit was very self effacing and his generosity was not motivated by a desire to establish a legacy. Albrecht recounts that when Beit made a very considerable donation to the foundation of the University of Hamburg he requested that it remain anonymous.

Several universities benefited from Beit's largesse, including Wits, Cape Town and Rhodes in South Africa, and Hamburg, and Oxford, but Imperial was the most fortunate. As detailed in Appendix 9 of the History Group report, Alfred Beit, and his brother Otto Beit, together with Alfred Beit's associate Julius Wernher have been the most generous donors in the history of Imperial College, largely paying

for its foundation, and continuing with a long line of generous benefactions over decades. Both Julius Wernher and Otto Beit sat on the Governing Body. The final paragraph of Anne Barret's Appendix 9 praises the three of them for their integrity and generosity, and fittingly summarises: "they were in tune with the values and intentions of Imperial, beginning with the Royal School of Mines".

The connection with the Beit family and their generosity financially and in time and effort has continued almost unbroken since the founding of the College. Otto's son Sir Alfred Beit was a Trustee of the Beit Scientific Research Fellowships and more recently Otto's grandson Sir Alan Munro was on the Governing Body from 1995-2005, was Chair of the Imperial College Trust for 15 years, and he chairs the selection board of the Beit Scientific Research Fellowships, to which the Beit Trust made a large additional financial support grant in recent years.

Up to the publication of the History Group report Imperial College has been warm in its gratitude to the Beit family for their outstandingly generous support of the College. Suddenly in October 2021 the Beit family has been dismissed in a sentence, with no explanation and no gratitude, an astonishing development that looks arbitrary and churlish. Repudiating a donor, when no new information has come to light, and where the donation satisfies standards such as the Yale principles, entails a moral imperative of reimbursement, irrespective of the date of the donation.

## 5 Final remarks

In considering the principles involved in renaming buildings the Imperial History Group has focused on inclusion alone, an important goal, but not the only one. The report lists five individuals, Beit, Fisher, Haldane, Hamilton, and Huxley, who are condemned as harmful although no coherent justification is provided for any of them. Considering Huxley, his failure is that he believed early in his career, along with the rest of Victorian society, in a hierarchy of races. But a more careful analysis of what really defines him reveals that, instead, he was actually a pioneer of inclusion, perhaps the greatest of the Victorians in this, and on this topic he took society a long way along the path towards where we stand now. He is a role model rather than a villain. We patronise our students if we say they will be unable to grasp this. And we patronise them if we say they must be sheltered from hearing Huxley (and the others) speak. Challenging our students in their thinking is one of the fundamental roles of a university because our duty is to teach students how to think rather than what to think. If we cancel Huxley (and the others) the students lose the opportunity to learn from history; and they will fail to encounter Huxley's life as an example of how to engage with society to answer its challenges; and they will miss the lesson of how society itself changes, and how good people can have held beliefs that we now find unacceptable; and they will miss the lesson that it is valuable to read widely and challenge your beliefs, and you become mentally stronger by doing so. Our duty is to prepare students for the future where they will face new questions that have not even been thought of, and they will need all the reasoning skills that we can equip them with and all the mental strength that they can develop.

## 6 Recommendations

1. The History Group report lacks a detailed analysis that justifies the principles adopted. It also lacks any analysis to justify the renamings for Beit, Fisher, Haldane, and Hamilton. In the case of Huxley the charge against against him contradicts the analysis provided by Adrian Desmond. The President's Board cannot proceed with the renamings under these circumstances.
2. In considering renaming, the focus of the History Group only on inclusion is too narrow. The College should draw up and make public a set of principles under which buildings, scholarships etc may be renamed, based on broader considerations, for future use, and for the benefit of potential donors.
3. Repudiating a donor, when no new information has come to light, and where the donation satisfies standards such as the Yale principles, entails a moral imperative of reimbursement, irrespective of the date of the donation.
4. A group of external qualified senior individuals, independent of the History Group, should be commissioned to undertake a dispassionate analysis of all the email inputs, to guide the reading

## Submission 189 - Attachment 1

of the President's Board. These inputs include short emails, lengthy carefully argued emails, and substantial reports. A summary should quantify the strength of feeling and the range of viewpoints, categorised by groups: students, staff, faculty, alumni, public. Then an expert disinterested commentary would be required on all the detailed inputs, and comparison against the History Group recommendations.

5. If after considering all the inputs from the current stage you decide to continue with this process, then commission external expert analyses of the proposed renamings for Beit, Fisher, Haldane, Hamilton, and Huxley, following the principles of the Witt report from Yale University, with a committee that includes historians, scientists, and historians of science.
6. The overall process that Imperial is following should be compared carefully against the recommended procedures listed in the Policy Exchange report History Matters by Trevor Phillips.

The attached is the correspondence I have had with [REDACTED]. This is the complete correspondence i.e. my original email and his reply.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED]

Forgive for not replying properly before. My recollection of research I did forty years ago is far from total, and I'm not sure I can add much to what you've found in "The Randlords", but these are my thoughts.

On the whole I'm not much in favour of pulling down statues and renaming buildings, as opposed to *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*, or understanding and making a reckoning with the past. Once you start judging the past by today's standards and expunging supposedly bad people from our history, where do you stop? It's an endless task. I touch on this in the Epilogue to my recent book "Churchill's Shadow".

Alfred Beit was no worse, and perhaps slightly better, than the other mining magnates. None of them took a particularly humane view or enlightened views of their black labourers, but then you could say that about most mill-owners or mine-owners in England at the time, or in America. Nor is it true that the diamond mineworkers were exceptionally ill-treated. Their work was gruelling and they were subjected to unpleasant body searches, but when Trollope visited Kimberley in 1878 he was surprised to find that the miners were paid more than English farm labourers at the time.

Things changed when gold was discovered in the Transvaal in 1886. The distinctive feature of the Rand mines was that they held enormously the largest quantity of gold ore on earth, but of low quality, and the price of the the end product was fixed by then gold standard. So whereas at Kimberly, where diamonds had no intrinsic value and over-production took the price down. So the magnates answer was monopoly in the strict sense of a sellers' market cartel to control output, on the Rand it was monopsony, a buyers' market cartel to control the price of labour. The owners. were continually complaining that, on the one hand, they had to pay their miners too much and, on the other, that there was an acute shortage of labour. One answer was the truly appalling episode of "Chinese slavery", the importation of scores of thousands of Chinese indentured labourers paid much less than black mineworkers.

That's slightly off the subject. Beit was a financial genius who would have made money anywhere. He was the brains behind De Beers, and the first person to see the possibilities of deep-level gold mining. He was reticent and mild personally, and rather in awe of Rhodes. When I was writing my book I formed no very strong impression of Beit, whereas I came to detest Rhodes and his vulgar imperialism. Even so, I don't think the bust of Rhodes in Oxford should be removed, or Rhodes House and the Rhodes scholarships to be renamed.

Or if they are, perhaps all the money Oxford has received should somehow or another be returned. And the same goes for Imperial College (has anyone suggested changing

Submission 189 - Attachment 2

that name?) which has benefited so enormously from Beit's huge philanthropy. It's ironical, by the way, that Beit should now be suspect: at the beginning of the last century he and the other Jewish Randlords were the subject of vitriolic antisemitic abuse, mostly from the Left

That's far more than you asked for, and even then may not answer your question. But unless diamond and gold mining is regarded as more iniquitous than other forms of capitalism, or even any other ways of getting rich, on which education has always indirectly depended, I see no reason to single out Beit.

With best wishes,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

I am a professor [REDACTED] at Imperial College. I would like if possible to ask some questions about Alfred Beit, whom you cover in *The Randlords*, if you think you are able to help. I enjoyed reading the *Randlords*, and I particularly liked your statement 'I have tried hard to avoid moralising and neither to idolize nor to traduce the Randlords'. I will give you the background to my enquiry now, but can provide more information if you think you can help.

As I think you will know, Beit and other members of his family have made large donations to Imperial College, particularly at the time of its foundation, but continuing ever since. Our President recently commissioned a History Group to investigate the history of the College and its links to Empire. One of the recommendations of the History Group is to rename Beit Hall and Beit Quad, as well as remove or make adjustments to a statue to Wernher and Beit. The reason given is "due to the treatment of workers during the expansion of the Kimberley mines", but that is all. There is no discussion or presentation of the history of the mines, and Beit's role.

Most of my knowledge on the topic comes from *The Randlords*, and I haven't been able to locate much more that is useful. I did notice you reviewed a book on the Kimberley mines not long ago but I can't put my finger on which book it was, but probably 'Capital and Labour on the Kimberley Diamond Fields, 1871-1890' by Turrell. I have not read this book.

I am trying to get a general picture of the labour conditions, and who was responsible for imposing them. From your book I have learned about the Black Flag revolt, the formation of compounds, and IDB. But I am unclear to what extent Beit was involved (little as far as I can tell) or should be considered morally responsible, or indeed whether the compound solution was reasonable given the situation. I think you say in your book that body searches for secreted diamonds applied to all labourers, white as well as black, but I wasn't certain.



**Submission 189 - Attachment 2**

I am not in a position to impose any deadline on you, but my own deadline is Dec 13, when the feedback to the History Group report closes.

I may be contacted at

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

If you can provide any illumination on this I would be extremely grateful. I can provide the History Group report (it's not long and the section on the Beits is only a few lines), as well as an Appendix which largely lists the donations the Beits and Wernher made to Imperial.

yours sincerely, [REDACTED]

190	[REDACTED]	<p>I am a final year student from the Department [REDACTED]. I fully support your efforts in making amends for the college's questionable history and inequality.</p> <p>I think critically analysing the morals of those involved with Imperial is a necessary process that should be constantly ongoing, and should always have designated people, time and funds to do it properly from here on in.</p> <p>I think renaming buildings/rooms/scholarships/chairs from undesirable people named in the History Group Report such as Huxley, to scientists from underrepresented groups like people of colour/females will make many people feel more comfortable and welcome at Imperial.</p> <p>I also think Henrietta Lacks, a black woman who was wronged by scientists and whose cells are still used by scientists working at Imperial today, should be commemorated in the Department of Life Sciences.</p>
191	[REDACTED]	<p>While I believe it is entirely appropriate to re-evaluate the contributions made by historical figures, I doubt that many, perhaps any, great historical figures would meet current standards in all their affairs. Nonetheless, the contributions they made are the foundations of the modern world and those contributions should continue to be acknowledged as part of our history, except in very limited cases.</p> <p>I believe it is appropriate to use a plaque or a linked QR code to add context but I do not believe that removal or alteration of statues or renaming of historic buildings is appropriate.</p> <p>That includes the RSM building, Beit Quad and Hall and the Huxley building.</p> <p>Re-purposing of scholarships to help correct the wrongs of the past is a much more positive action to take.</p>
192	[REDACTED]	<p>[REDACTED] and I am a professor and former dean of the Huxley College of the Environment at Western Washington University. Our college was named after Thomas H. Huxley when it was founded in 1969 as the world's first interdisciplinary environmental college. My understanding is that the idea of canceling Huxley at Imperial College was directly derived from a similar effort here at WWU, and which I'm sad to report was recently approved by our Board of Trustees.</p> <p>We must of course reckon with the legacy of our institutions' historical figures, Huxley included. Unfortunately, larger religious and political forces are at work to take advantage of this commitment. Specifically, it's the far-right creationist disinformation upon which the claims against Huxley are based. This disinformation is at the core of their <a href="#">wedge strategy</a> to undermine evolution and secularism, to bring about cultural and public policy change that reflects politically conservative fundamentalist evangelical values. Their win at WWU is small potatoes, but if it succeeds at Imperial, being the home of Huxley, as well one of the top 10 universities in the world, it will be proclaimed by every creationist group to further advance this agenda.</p> <p>Upon reading your History Group report, and the cascade of articles and letters that have followed, it is clear there is little awareness of or attention to these forces in the Imperial College conversation. Let me explain.</p> <p>The religious right has long had Huxley, "Darwin's Bulldog," in their crosshairs. A vocal secularist (he invented the word "agnostic") and leading voice for the idea of humankind existing within, rather than divinely apart, from nature, Huxley represented an existential threat to their theistic worldview. They saw evolution as contrary to religious orthodoxy and a threat to the social order, and a dangerous widening of democracy that would</p>

overturn both religious authority and the aristocratic hierarchy.

Of course, this was all originally centered in Britain, and best remembered in the 1860 Oxford evolution debate, with Huxley defending Darwinism and Samuel Wilberforce defending creationism. As we all know, Huxley crushed Wilberforce, marking the beginning of a new worldview based on science, secularism, rationality, and egalitarianism.

While creationism lost favor in Britain, it found safe harbor in the fundamentalist Christian movement in North America, and they have kept up the fight ever since. For decades, anti-evolution creationists have used disinformation tactics, such as gaslighting and quote-mining, many aimed at Huxley, to undermine the teaching of evolution in public schools. Gaslighting happens when creationists sow seeds of doubt to get people to question their own perceptions or judgments about science generally, and evolution in particular. Quote-mining is a strategy in which passages of writing are lifted out of context to misrepresent the writer's position. This material is then strategically placed at slick pseudo-science websites, TV "documentaries", and even academic textbooks that look legitimate at first and even second glance.

Unfortunately, this is exactly what is happening at Imperial College. The History Group's two central criticisms of Huxley are: 1) the excerpt from his essay "Emancipation Black and White", and 2) the claim that he held hierarchal views of race. Both these claims have deep creationist origins. Let's look at each.

The essay excerpt was first [published](#) in 1973 in a pseudoscience creationism publication, by Henry M. Morris, founder of scientific creationism, fanatical anti-evolutionist, and himself a racist who espoused a biblical justification for slavery. In the article, Morris accuses evolutionists like Huxley of supporting racism and genocide. Morris knew that the charge could split his enemies - the beginnings of the anti-science wedge strategy. There it sat, smoldering, until it eventually metastasized throughout the creationist literature and blogosphere.

The second charge, that Huxley held hierarchal views of race, is a direct outgrowth of Morris's original article, particularly the writings of the following authors:

- Paul Glumaz, an operative for the Lyndon LaRouche organization, a fringe conspiracist political network in the U.S. His Huxley [article](#) was published in Executive Intelligence Review, a notorious LaRouche newsmagazine known for hawking conspiracy theories, including that climate change is a hoax and the "Big Lie" that the last U.S. presidential election was stolen.
- Jerry R. Bergman, a young-earth creationist and author of the book [The Darwin Effect](#), which purports to document "the common destructive threads that tie some of history's most murderous dictators, uncaring capitalists, and aggressive social activists to the flawed concepts of Charles Darwin."
- Michael Flannery, a fellow with the anti-evolution, intelligent-design-promoting Discovery Institute, which promotes creationism under the banner of "Intelligent Design", as well as other conspiracy theories attacking critical race theory and that the climate change is bogus. Flannery has produced a string of pseudohistorical commentary, including [this](#) one on Darwin and Huxley.
- Nicolaas Rupke, a creationist historian who published two articles in the [Creation Research Society Quarterly](#), a pseudoscience journal published by a [creation science group](#) whose founders included Henry M. Morris. One of these articles purports to prove the 6,000-year geologic history of the earth and the biblical flood.

The next event in the story is the saddest for me. Back in 2020, well-meaning social justice advocates here at WWU came across these sources on the internet and incorporated them in their demands to rename our College, claiming Huxley was a scientific racist, social Darwinist, eugenicist, and supporter of genocide – basically all the accusations in the creationist articles, and even [including citations](#) to them!

Our president then constituted a version of your History Group, and without any expertise in evolutionary science or science history, the group internalized the creationist disinformation into their deliberations. In fact, they cited many of these sources in their final report recommending denaming. Now that our Board of Trustees has approved the recommendation, our legacy will be as the first public higher education institution to elevate creationist disinformation from the darkest fringe corners of American thought, giving it the legitimacy they've long sought. Our legacy will be how we fell into this creationist trap.

Now I've learned that the demand to dename the Imperial College Huxley building and remove the Huxley bust is derived directly from the WWU denaming materials. For me, this is evidence that Morris's gaslighting strategy is working, and that the wedge strategy is spreading, even to places like yours where creationism itself is not a cultural force.

Here at WWU, our [concerns](#) were dismissed as ad hominem fallacy. But this misses the point. The criticisms themselves, not just their creationist origins, are seriously flawed distortions and falsehoods. The fact is there is abundant evidence from legitimate, objective historians of Huxley's moral journey from typical Victorian to radical anti-racist, where he rejected **physical** hierarchies, arguing instead that they were **culturally** imposed and enforced--often violently--by an oppressive society. That evidence clearly dwarfs both the cherry-picked quotes and racial hierarchy claims. Beyond that, isn't it just good scholarship and good due diligence to look at the agenda underlying these sources?

The Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. taught us that the arc of the moral universe bends toward justice. Each generation of social reformers travels a different segment of that arc, navigating by a moral constellation unique to their time and place in history. Huxley anti-racism was perfect, but he brought himself and the rest of society to a more just place on that arc. We should celebrate his journey for making ours possible.

Don't be fooled. Huxley's message isn't racist. It's timeless. The values he fought for are at the core of Imperial College's mission to this day. Far from causing harm, we are in a better place because of Thomas H. Huxley.

Thank you. I'd prefer if my name and organization are included, as they are part of the story. Redacting them from my comments would make the message incomplete.




193

I read the history group's report with interest.

I entirely defend, and support, a fresh re-look at the history of the College and the lives of those who created and endowed it. For over a century Imperial College has been a fine academic institution that purports to unravel new truths about the natural world. Uncompromising integrity and a willingness to learn from history in an unbiased manner are central to that.

I do, however take issue with some of the actions that the Group proposes. As an RSM alumnus, I believe most strongly that the recommendation to airbrush the names of my alma mater's founding fathers from its history, or to re-purpose the statuary at the Prince Consort Road entrance, are distasteful and misguided concepts, and I believe I am not alone in thinking this way. Those statues and those names were chosen back in the day to honour the people who had been instrumental in the founding of a subsequently great institution. They had vision and they gave, or at worst contrived to be given, the endowments that created Imperial College. If their morals or motives are now seen to have been flawed by today's standards, so be it. They did what they did, and we have a great college as a result of it. The engraving of their names in stone, and therefore in history, merely tells us that those people were perceived to be great in their day. We do not teach, nor in the light of your historical exposé do we have to pretend, that those founders were entirely high-minded, altruistic people; only that they were the people who

		<p>created and nurtured the College that every single subsequent alumnus has benefitted from.</p> <p>We would not propose interfering with all statuary of roman emperors and excising their names across Europe because we now disapprove of how they ruled their empire. We seem to be able to celebrate all that ancient history whilst simultaneously understanding that the terrible atrocities and slavery committed were the norm in those days. Why is the history of Imperial College, now perhaps suddenly seen to be slightly chequered, any different?</p> <p>Please do not cause history to become blurred because of our current fashionable woke-ism. Let us rather own up to it and celebrate Imperial College, warts and all.</p>
194	[REDACTED]	<p>I wish to comment on the recommendation to rename Beit Quad and Hall and a proposed intervention concerning the statues at the front of the RSM building.</p> <p>I do not believe that renaming of Beit Quad and Hall and the removal of the statues at the front of the RSM building is the right way forward as this is effectively re-writing history against current societal standards and could be considered promoting a “cancel culture” in the College. I believe it would be far more appropriate to mount an informative plaque explaining the background to the benevolence of the people involved and where the funding came from. Such an approach has been recommended for adoption in Edinburgh concerning statues of figures involved in the slave trade. Students and staff would then be much better informed and hopefully be motivated to tackle current injustices in a positive and non-discriminatory manner. Speaking of which, perhaps the History Group should also consider present history and question whether Imperial College should accept funding from China, either direct or indirect through Chinese students attending the College (self-funded students excluded of course). As I’m sure you are aware China has a recent history of human rights abuses (judged against current societal norms) and discrimination against minorities and religious beliefs.</p> <p>Incidentally, until I read your report, I had no idea that the statues at the front of the RSM were of Beit and Wernher ,even though I was a student [REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED] By raising this issue you have brought attention to the statues that perhaps previously didn’t exist. Placement of plaques is therefore a much better solution rather than defacing an historic building.</p> <p>I also believe that alumni should be directly involved in the decisions. Should you decide to move forward with the proposed renaming and removal of the statues I would have to reconsider my future support to Imperial College.</p>
195	[REDACTED]	<p>I have been involved with the ridiculous charade of a process de-naming the Huxley College of the Environment at Western Washington University, and as a result I did a lot of research on Huxley and his views on race, diversity, equity, and inclusion. I hope you will find these articles helpful in your search for the truth on Huxley. As you will see, T.H. Huxley, was, in the main, an anti-racist, and was recognized as such, at the time, by both sides.</p> <p>(Of course, using the term "anti-racist" is an anachronism -- the term "racism" dates to the 20th century -- even its ancestor term, "racialism", dates to the 20th century! And Huxley died in 1895. But we are well past the point where being cute and subtle and academic about the term "racism" term is feasible. The term is essentially always applied in the most blunt-I-know-it-when-I-see-it way, and by this standard, which is the standard that basically EVERYONE is using, Huxley has a great many, notable, culture-leading, highly progressive anti-racist words and actions, far outweighing the occasional mistakes he made in the process of helping free himself and society from major, huge, prejudices (e.g.</p>

		<p>slavery, and polygenism- the view that different races are different species.)</p> <p>The articles/blogposts are pasted below. The links are:</p> <p>Updated: Creationists and advocates of social justice unite to take down T.H. Huxley, a leader in educational inclusion  By Nick Matzke  November 3, 2021 23:40 MST  <a href="http://pandasthumb.org/archives/2021/11/updated-creationists-social-justice-advocates-unite-take-down-huxley.html">http://pandasthumb.org/archives/2021/11/updated-creationists-social-justice-advocates-unite-take-down-huxley.html</a></p> <p>De-naming the Huxley College of the Environment: Comments to the WWU Board  By Nick Matzke  December 9, 2021 08:00 MST  <a href="http://pandasthumb.org/archives/2021/12/Matzke-Huxley-comments.html">http://pandasthumb.org/archives/2021/12/Matzke-Huxley-comments.html</a></p>
196		<p>Thank you for your work on this delicate topic. To be brief, I am not in favour of the mooted changes for the RSM and Beit Quad other than to add a plaque, where appropriate, with some historical context of the assumed origin of the donations that were made.</p> <p>If the more radical changes of removing statues and renaming buildings are implemented, has consideration been given to raising and offering to return the gifts or their net present values?. I feel an element of honour and hypocrisy is at stake here. The Beit Trust seems to still be active and may now have more modern and relevant alternatives where it might deploy such funds.</p>
197		<p>Thank you for consulting alumni on the proposed changes.</p> <p>I am hugely disappointed that Imperial College is following the current “woke” agenda and planning to change the names of various buildings, halls and lecture theatres. As an institution I thought we were bigger than this.</p> <p>The men who’s names were honoured in this way were “of their time” and gave greatly to the college. This is history, who is to say that in one hundred years time the ideas of some of todays “greats” will be considered unacceptable.</p> <p>Please think again, taking a longer more mature view.</p> <p>This is not to mention the hypocrisy of accepting money from The Mosley Trust, with its known connection to fascism, while seeking to obliterate the names of past benefactors.</p>
198	  <i>Attachment included below</i>	<p>Please, see enclosure</p>

## Letter to ICHistory Group



December 13, 2021

In 1953 I came to the RCS, IC as a refugee from the Nazi's and Communism and recollect to being warmly received there by students, staff and teachers, alike. My four years there, [REDACTED] [REDACTED] were perhaps the most formative, adventurous and enjoyable in my life, having taken place in buildings named after Huxley. Nowadays, I send my children, grand-children and geat-grandchildrden there to share a taste of that part of my life. I admit that I have not been aware of T.R. Huxley' racial (or racist) utterances, but even with the new revelations I cannot justify the proposed retroactive stigmatisation or erasure affecting the happy memories on the order of thousand youngsters.

Writing retrospectively, were not Huxley's views, now esteemed unacceptable, shared at his times at least partly by a general consensus? Projecting into the future, where will this stop? By replacing Newtonian dynamics with Laplaceian, due to the former's nefarious deism and meddling with witchcraft? By removing the inscription over the Cavendish? By revocation of the tobacco manufacturer H.H. Will's name from publications? By renaming the five books of Moses, as 5 books of Jethro ?.

Particularly worrying foor me are the apparent unanimity (no dissent frm the ill-chosen recommendation?) and the adoption of a single world-view (no alternatives? no plurality?) that bode badly for future policy-making.

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

199		<p>Please find below my thoughts on the current debate. Society has and is changing at a rapid pace. It is difficult to reconcile what was acceptable and the norm 20 years ago, never mind back when the college was formed. Much of the foundation was driven by endowments from eminent scientists/industrialists which has benefited the college. Some of it on an ongoing basis. These patrons themselves were not immune from religious or other prejudices. Despite the specifics relating to the likes of Wehrner, Beit, de la Beche et al, most living souls in the UK have indirectly benefitted from previous exploitation, empire and behaviours which were not considered unacceptable at the time. More recent comparisons are available.</p> <p>Tearing down or trying to hide the past does not change what happened. The college should acknowledge those that assisted in it's foundation and leave statues and names in place. Certainly, a notice could be fixed close to the statue to explain but do not take them down.</p>
200	  <i>Attachment included below</i>	<p>Please find a summary of discussions from civil engineering attached.</p> <p>I coordinated the report in Civil Engineering and following this experience I would like to flag the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. I think it is very difficult to have the conversation you envisage. I am really conscious that there were support staff on the call I had last Thursday who are black and who did not go to University and who do not have the confidence to speak up in meetings. I know this because they have shared their lack of confidence with me previously. I have no idea how the conversation which had to be online in the current climate landed with them. The students who spoke, with better educational opportunities, could be very intimidating to those staff members. I don't feel at all comfortable about this.</li> <li>2. I found reading Huxley's essay very upsetting. I am not sure if the students who were pretty vocal understand the context. Huxley, by virtue of his good work in the area of genetics was seen as an authority. He then put forward views that could support racist action. This is very serious and hurtful to many – I am not sure if you can draw an analogy with a politician who does good work and then becomes corrupt?</li> <li>3. The issue around the Beit brothers goes deeper than naming of buildings – it is fundamental to many aspects of the college from what I understand.</li> </ol> <p>I support the views of my colleagues around the presentation of the report. I also think the naming could have included the word consultation, e.g. "Consultation document on Imperial College's history".</p>



## CIVIL ENGINEERING RESPONSE TO COMMUNITY REPORT FROM THE HISTORY GROUP

DEC 13 2021

### 1. Introduction

To enable a discussion on the issues raised in the Community Report from the History Group two actions were taken within the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering.

- i. A survey was issued on Tuesday November 30 2021 to all staff and students.
- ii. All staff and students were invited to a meeting on Wednesday December 8 2021.

### 2. Survey

The survey was run via MSForms. All responses were anonymous, however there was an opportunity to provide an email address so that respondents could participate in this summary report. People could provide written comments on the specific recommendation categories, the principles, and the overall report.

There were 7 written responses to the survey questions. These are provided below. There were also some tick box questions. The data from those questions are not provided due to the low response rate.

#### 2.1 Comments on "Category A: Recommendation for a particular action" of the Specific Recommendations

- While I strongly support celebrating former scientists that belong to minorities in their field, I oppose to interpreting historical facts with the eyes of today and taking action as a result of this (e.g., removing statues or re-naming buildings).
- The consequences of these actions are important: they can scare potential donors (will my name be removed in 200 years because I ate meat?) and can escalate (some people are already suggesting changing the College name, this would have very important implications for our brand).
- I find it disappointing that more is not said about Huxley's strong abolitionist views; he also contributed massively to contemporary scientific writings and thought.
- The names should be chosen because of what a person has brought to the world and to Imperial, I don't care about the person's skin color or sex.

#### 2.2 Comments provided on the Principles

- I believe that there is no logic to judging the past through a 'racist' prism because our values have changed drastically from the past. I think we should aim to present both sides of Imperial College's history, both good and bad.
- Renaming is a big issue for some of us. Minor Oxford colleges swap names with donors all the time. I'd rather have a considerate majority than a self serving minority when it comes to naming.
- I think the History Report has no place in an academic institution - I believe it is infantilising to suggest that we (students) should be shielded from potentially offensive building names. I think focussing on delivering world-renowned teaching and research should remain the top priority.

## Submission 200 - Attachment

- There wasn't much historical context. Was eugenics a minority view in the 1920's? Was it even thought of when names for buildings were chosen?

### 3. Departmental Forum

The forum was scheduled to take place over 1 hour and participants could choose to participate in person or over teams. All participants chose to engage via teams. 32 people logged on however only 17 engaged for a period of at least 20 min. Of those on the call there were only about 5-6 actively engaged in the discussion.

The discussion was facilitated by [REDACTED]. A Power-Point presentation giving key points from the report and from media coverage of the report was prepared to prompt discussion.

An attempt to categorize the points is made below. It is important to appreciate that these points do not represent a consensus view, rather they are the points made by those who felt comfortable and confident in articulating their perspective. The online nature of the meeting means it was impossible to assess how comfortable those who did not speak were with the conversation.

#### 3.1 Points around association with Beit brothers and Huxley

- The Beit brothers were not scientists.
- People should look at Huxley in a balanced way and prioritize his scientific contributions.
- It is not appropriate to ease names, the majority of what Huxley did should be on display.
- The reflection could be viewed as a self-flagellation exercise.
- People commented that reading Huxley's essay which was provided in the Appendix was upsetting.

#### 3.2 Points around evolution in understanding of what is acceptable

- It is a good point not to judge people by today's standards but by the standards of the time. An appropriate question to ask is whether others were saying these or similar things at the time.
- It is inevitable that scientists from the 19 century will have views we find difficult.
- People may have made excellent contributions but there should be an acknowledgement of views that are not aligned with current values.

#### 3.3 Points around renaming

- The proposed new names all involved people in minority gender / race groups, should we look broader? There is a bias in this list. We should look beyond steps that are within the positive action remit.
- The renaming may be perceived as a step to shield students from difficult conversations.
- There is an argument to use only numbers to identify rooms to make them easier to find. Is this an accessibility issue if we don't use numbers?
- Will all naming be for only 25 years? This is a very short time.
- There are no guidelines on how to name professorships.
- Why is there still a Tanaka professorship?

### 3.4 Points around conversations, communication, and decisions going forward

- People will not take the time to read information via a qr code.
- People listen to sound bites and full complexity of individuals can not be communicated in a sound bite.
- It is important to have the difficult conversations.
- If there are people who made positive and negative contributions to science and society that should be more openly discussed.
- It is hard to quantify both people's opinion and strength of opinion, including how upset people are.
- It seems that the final decision will not be a majority decision but it is not clear how that decision will be made.
- Understanding the past should allow us to pursue a better future.

### 3.5 Points around presentation of report

- The appendices should have been integrated in the report and provided in the pdf.
- There is a contrast between the Appendix providing information on the Beit brothers and the appendix presenting information on Huxley. The Huxley Appendix went into more depth, the author openly stated their own position, and both positive and negatives were clear. The Beit Appendix was shorter and the negative aspects of their contributions were not clearly communicated. People at the meeting mentioned using Wikipedia to fill gaps in information.
- The way the Category A recommendations were arranged was poor. The items for positive action were presented with the points where people's contribution had negative facets. It is not at all clear why these were lumped together and it made the information hard to access.
- The landscape layout was not helpful.
- How wide was the search for facts?

201

■  
*Attachment  
included  
below*

I attach my response to the report. It is regrettable, I think, that there is no anonymous portal for submission. I have met colleagues, on different sides of the matter, who are hesitant to declare their views openly.

## INTRODUCTION

The chief virtue of the report is the proposal for scholarships. This is the only recommendation that should be adopted, immediately and without quibbling.

The chief flaw of the report is the proposal to 'cancel' four of the greatest names in the history of science, on very briefly stated and flimsy grounds. The three parts of the claim against Huxley are simply false (hierarchy of intelligence, scientific racism, eugenics). The claim against Haldane is also false (promoting eugenics). Both scientists were outspoken progressives. It is regrettable that the History Group – assuming that these names really were unknown to them – made no elementary attempt to assess the lives and achievements of these figures.

In the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary year (2022) of the Ciba symposium, Imperial should host a symposium, like the one at which Haldane spoke in 1962, on 'Humankind and its future.' This symposium (and the preparatory workshops for it) would send a signal to the Imperial community and the world about the intellectual standards of an Academy in its discussions of science, history and society. We are a brand-name university, and we should stand for the most open, inclusive and well-informed discussions. We should go with evidence, not indignation or smear.

My response to the HG report focuses on Huxley and Haldane for reasons of space, but could be extended also to Fisher and Hamilton. In brief: both Huxley and Haldane were among the outstanding progressive scientists of their era. The linked article by Huxley makes the *moral* case for equality of black people, even when the unequal conditions of black people made a *rational* case for equality hard to uphold. Haldane, as will be seen, was not an advocate of cloning or eugenics, as alleged in the HG report, but was speculating, as he was invited to do, about 'mankind 10,000 years in the future'.

>

## THE UNREASONABLE ATTACK ON T.H. HUXLEY

The HG report recommends the celebration of former Imperial academics and students, and the creation of scholarships in their names. This is a positive and imaginative measure which everybody can agree to without hesitation.

This welcome proposal is undermined by the report's attack on four of the world's most renowned biologists. I have come to realise, through my links with colleagues at Bristol (where similar debates have taken place) that the entire field of biology is regarded by some social scientists and historians as little more than race science and colonial ideology. This philistine view (which extends its criticism to the greatest names in the discipline including Darwin) regards all biological work on human origins, genetics, variation, populations or traits as borrowing the same logic as race theory. At its worst, this view of biology and its medical offshoots as an elite white enterprise leads to phenomena like vaccine scepticism and the rejection of scientific medicine in favour of folklore.

The HG report falls into the same trap, and makes the historically inaccurate claim that TH Huxley was a proponent of scientific racism (SR). SR certainly existed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, but as pointed out by the biographer Adrian Desmond, quoted in [appendix 10](#) of the HG report, Huxley is exempt:

Nor is the term "scientific racism" useful in Huxley's case. This term was initially used by historians to characterise the American ultra-racists in the Confederacy and after, that is, those who depicted black people as not only anatomically 'lower' and intellectually 'inferior',

but who then used that to justify slavery. If that is the definition used, it cannot be applied to Huxley.

Huxley opposed the leaders of SR – figures like Robert Knox (1791-1862) who believed that all the races arose independently (and were effectively different species) and who declared that mixed-race children would be sterile; James Hunt (1833-1869) who saw racial difference as the explanation for the physical and mental capacities of human societies; and Carl Vogt (1817-1895) who insisted that blacks and whites are more different from each other than are two species of ape. Vogt, we should note, was elected to the American Anthropology Society in 1869, *after* the American Civil War. That war had not changed the minds of many in the scientific establishment about the role of black people in society.

The stand-out exception to this influence of SR was TH Huxley. In a mid-century characterised by attempts to find anatomical and moral differences between blacks and whites, Huxley welcomed the outcome of the American Civil War; declared that the right side had won; dismissed the argument that freedom for blacks would be economically ruinous *not* by disputing the cost of their freedom, but on the principle that freedom was natural law, 'even if we have no cotton shirts.'

This brief summary of Huxley's view is to be found in the very paper linked to in the HG report but not, it seems, read carefully by them. The Huxley article opens with references to the Anti-Slavery literature of the day, including the figure of Quashie (the name of a slave rebel in a popular Victorian novel) and the Wedgwood seal 'Am I not a man and a brother?' which was stamped on items of pottery that were kept in the houses of anti-slavery sympathisers.

In his article Huxley uses a simple rhetorical trick, which I will paraphrase as follows: 'In America, blacks are not the equal of whites. You call yourself rational people and given the facts on the ground you see no evidence that negroes ever *can* be equal...very well, let's accept this for the sake of argument. What, then, will you say about your own wives and daughters? Are you telling us that because they are not equal, they never can be? Why do we keep putting obstacles in their way, and then insisting that this is the natural way of things? Why do you insist on being *rational* when the question of emancipation is *moral*?'

Huxley explicitly compares the bad arguments used against black and female emancipation in this paragraph, where he says, in effect, 'Very well, have it your way. You will tell me that blacks and women cannot be equal. Is that a reason to add to their burdens?'

Supposing, however, that all these arguments have a certain foundation; admitting, for a moment, that they are comparable to those by which the inferiority of the negro to the white man may be demonstrated, are they of any value as against woman-emancipation?

The Huxley article is breath-taking for its audacity in 1865, more than 50 years before English women had the vote, and at a time when they could still not take a degree. If there was another top-flight scientist anywhere in the world arguing for emancipation of women and black people, and applauding the outcome of a bloody and protracted civil war, and refusing to be sidetracked by arguments about mental capacity of blacks vs whites, I have not come across them. Others, like Humboldt (d.1859) certainly supported abolition, but did not advertise their views.

There is, contrary to the claim in the HG report, no statement in Huxley of a racial hierarchy in intelligence. Scientific racism is a misnomer, properly applied to Huxley's contemporaries; and the reference in the HG report to eugenics is scientifically illiterate, since eugenics is concerned with positive and negative breeding schemes to reduce or eliminate the 'unfit', rather than a deduction

about *moral and mental capacity* deduced from physical characteristics, which is what preoccupied the race theorists in mid-Victorian anthropology.

It is very clear, reading this brief paragraph in the history report, that no-one with expertise in evolution or in the history of science was on hand. It appears that all the allusions in Huxley's text to contemporary Victorian publishing, anti-slavery campaigns, and writers like Milton and Goethe were overlooked. Better scholarship would have saved the report's compilers from their misreading of Huxley's article, which stands its meaning completely on its head. I will add something that may set the article in context. It was published in [The Reader](#), a short-lived London weekly journal of news and commentary, on 20 May 1865. Its scientific commentary was a forerunner of *Nature*, which opened in 1869.

### THE STRANGE CASE OF JBS HALDANE

The HG offers no evidence in the case of JBS Haldane beyond the following:

...John Burdon Sanderson Haldane (1892-1964) who developed mathematical theory of population genetics, and was the first to discuss human cloning and its implications in eugenics.

We can see here the familiar, lazy allegation directed by hostile voices to every famous biologist, especially if they worked on any aspect of genes or inheritance; that their work somehow contributed to eugenics. You would get no idea, from this negligent summary, that Haldane was not only a giant of 20<sup>th</sup> century evolutionary biology, and the 'new synthesis' between statistics, developmental biology and molecular biology which we regard today as the mature theory of evolution; but was also a famous progressive and anti-imperialist. He went to live in India after the Suez crisis in the 1950s. Garland Allen, in her careful [survey of eugenic controversies](#) 1910-1945 counts Haldane among those who criticised its assumptions, at a time when many prominent geneticists did not:

In the post-1925 period, however, considerably more criticism was published by well-known geneticists (T.H. Morgan, H.J. Muller, Raymond Pearl and H.S. Jennings in the United States, [J.B.S. Haldane](#), Lancelot Hogben, Lionel Penrose and Julian Huxley in England, and Otto Mohr in Norway, among others), and at the very least this signalled that eugenics did not have the unqualified support of the entire genetics community.

Haldane was one of 14 signatories to the [UNESCO Statement](#) on the *Nature of Race and Race Differences* in 1951. This Statement included the summary remark 'Historical and sociological studies thus support the view that genetic differences are of little significance in determining the social and cultural differences between different groups of men.'

To get a sense of how far we have come, in a short space of time, consider this paragraph from the 1951 UNESCO report. This statement, which dismisses the claim that equality depends on equal human capacity ('endowment') echoes the arguments of Huxley in 1865. Equality is an ethical principle, not a rational one. You cannot deny equality on the basis that this or that group do not appear to 'deserve' it. Huxley really was ahead of his time:

We now have to consider the bearing of these statements on the problem of human equality. We wish to emphasise that equality of opportunity and equality in law in no way depend, as ethical principles, upon the assertion that human beings are in fact equal in endowment.

Here in the HG report, the question of *human cloning* has been added to the charge sheet of eugenics. Since the HG offers no evidence or links, we can only guess what led them to the claim about human cloning. Those familiar with Haldane's life and work know that almost exactly two years before his death, he was asked to speak at a symposium held in London (26-30 November 1962) by the Ciba Foundation (later Novartis and now BASF).

The theme of the symposium, and the collection of its published proceedings, was 'Man and His Future', and Haldane's paper was called 'Biological Possibilities for the Human Species of the Next Ten Thousand Years'. The clue is in the name. What can we expect human society to look like, 10,000 years from now? We should bear in mind that looking 10,000 years into the past takes us to the earliest known permanent cities, at sites like Çatalhöyük in Turkey. What will it be like, an equal distance into the future?

Haldane refers here to clones, or asexually-produced replicas of other people. Haldane does not say how this cloning would be done. Haldane does not advocate that it *should* be done. He does not claim that he or anyone else intends to work on the problem. The first cloned animal, an amphibian, had been reported only that year, 1962, by John Gurdon who won the Nobel Prize for this breakthrough in 2013. A variant of the Gurdon procedure would produce the first cloned mammal, a single sheep (Dolly) only in 1997.

Haldane is looking into the far future, in the spirit of science fiction. Haldane's first wife Charlotte Burghes published a novel in 1926 called *Man's World*, about artificial sex selection of human beings. Haldane enjoyed speculations of this type, and questions of their biological plausibility. As the following excerpts from Haldane's paper make clear, the wrong people might be cloned (§11 below); vain people will not welcome competition from their own clones (§11); cloning does not guarantee that all traits and talents will be inherited, as these have an environmental component (§12); he is agnostic about racial equality, including the 'equality' of white people (and gives examples in his paper of superior arrangements among underdeveloped peoples) (§13); equal opportunities to education do not yet exist (§14); racial differences are not an impediment to scientific participation (§15); testing for cystic fibrosis and other disorders will make family planning possible, as indeed it now is, though we do not use the term 'negative eugenics' with this meaning (§16); and a tyrannical world state would attempt to eliminate recessive genes (the 'silent' traits that are always present in the population and have no effect on their carriers), a development Haldane calls 'sinister.' (§17). Patrick Lissouba, mentioned here as a genetic scientist, went on to become the first democratic president of Congo-Brazzaville in 1992, and died in 2020.

>>EXCERPTS FROM HALDANE'S [CIBA SYMPOSIUM PAPER](#)

1. On the general principle that men will make all possible mistakes before choosing the right path, we shall no doubt clone the wrong people. ... And the greatest humbugs, like Hitler, would hardly relish the thought of producing a dozen possible successors with their own abilities, and youth to boot. Possibly a movie star at the age of forty might have similar feelings.
2. The clonal progeny of Arthur Rimbaud, if given favourable conditions, might have shown no propensity for poetry, and become second-rate empire builders.
3. I do not believe in racial equality, though of course there is plenty of overlap; but I have no idea who surpasses whom in what.



## Submission 201 - Attachment

4. The opportunities for intellectual pursuits have not, of course, ever been equalized anywhere. The only tropical African who has yet made a major scientific discovery is Pascal Lissouba, who has discovered a new genetical phenomenon.
5. ... in science at any rate racial origins and ancestral traditions impose no appreciable barrier. I get on far better with intelligent Indians or Japanese than with Europeans whose interests differ from my own.
6. The recognition of human physiological diversity may have enormous consequences. As soon as its genetical basis is understood large-scale negative eugenics will become possible. There may be no need to forbid marriage; few people will wish to marry a spouse with whom they share a recessive gene for microcephaly, congenital deafness, or cystic disease of the pancreas, so that a quarter of their children are expected to develop this condition. I cannot predict the later steps which will make positive eugenics possible, since we know the genetic basis of few desirable characters. I make some suggestions later
7. The third alternative, that of the tyrant world state, is equally sinister...Huxley's Brave New World adumbrates such a society. Owing to the large number of harmful recessive genes carried by most people, eugenics, largely directed to preventing their coming together, would be an important branch of applied science.

<<

### CONCLUSION

The HG was poorly resourced. It is bad enough that no evolutionary biologist or historian of the period was on hand. What is worse, the report's authors show little interest in science or history, or any curiosity in the biology they criticise, and no grasp of the context in which it operated. They have mis-read the single article they have cited, and they have neglected the rest of a great scientist's achievements.

Giving ourselves an easy victory over the past, and cherry-picking odd lines here and there from a vast corpus of Huxley's or Haldane's writing, is irresponsible and negligent. It is also a fine distraction from the problems of the present and future in widening representation of minorities in science.

The sections of the report dealing, in a brief and throwaway manner, with Huxley, Haldane, Fisher and Hamilton have turned Imperial College into an international laughing-stock. Imagine if we read the same article from the University of Oxford, or Yale. We would assume that there was no final read-through by the college authorities, who would surely have asked for a better case to be made for the removal of Huxley's bust or the renaming of rooms. We would probably conclude that the college leadership was afraid to ask for an improved version for fear of being seen as part of the problem. We would wonder at the collapse of standards in a great institution, afraid to tell its sub-group to go away and make a better case, and apparently unembarrassed by the thinness of the material that was about to appear on their webpage.

The Imperial College History Group's Report, as part of the Imperial History Dialogue and requested by the President of Imperial College, Professor Alice Gast, has recently been brought to my attention.

I am writing to you as [REDACTED]

I am

particularly interested in your report, terms of reference and recommendations, most especially in connection with the benefactors of the Royal School of Mines, Alfred Beit, Julius Wernher and Otto Beit.

There is no indication in the report and its sources of reference of two [REDACTED] historical publications which give detailed accounts of the life, work and philanthropy of both these individuals in S. Africa and subsequently in London. These works are as follows:-

\* [REDACTED] 'A Metropolitan University fit for Empire: the role of private benefaction in the early history of the London School of Economics and Political Science and Imperial College of Science and Technology, 1895-1930', History of Universities (OUP), Vol.XXVI/1, Feb 2012, 202-244 [a peer-reviewed historical journal].

\* [REDACTED] 'Donors to an imperial project: Randlords as benefactors to the Royal School of Mines, Imperial College of Science and Technology' in Jill Pellew and Lawrence Goldman (eds.), Dethroning Historical Reputations: Universities, Museums and the Commemoration of Benefactors (London, IHR, 2018), 35-46.

I note that [REDACTED], Imperial College Archivist and Corporate Records Manager has been one of your advisors and I am surprised that she did not refer these sources to your History Group. They, of course, contain numerous references to original sources, including those in the Imperial College archives [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] As a historian I think it is important that, before it makes its recommendations, your History Group reads and considers these sources.

It is not my place to comment on recommendations that might be made about any reinterpretation of the statues by Paul R Montford on the entrance to the RSM in Prince Consort Road. But I would just say, as both a historian and former university development official, that I have always favoured publicly explaining monuments that chime poorly with current ethical views rather than taking them down. This can serve much better as a prompt for discussion of the context of the individual concerned and his or her life, work or generosity - in this case leading to greater understanding of the background to an important component (the RSM) of a very significant university (Imperial College of Science, Technology and Medicine).

The context of the acquisition of the wealth that enabled Alfred Beit, Julius Wernher and then Otto Beit to help found the RSM is deeply shocking today. Diamond and gold mining at that time in southern Africa involved deep-level operations depending on an African workforce. It was a highly exploitative, closed compound system of controlling local labourers who were badly paid and exposed to horrendous health conditions. It is suggested that the allegorical figures on the lower part of the plinths on the RSM busts of Beit and Wernher are illustrative of aspects of that exploitation. Moreover, Beit in particular was associated with the activities and ambition of Cecil Rhodes whose support of the 1895-6 Jameson Raid was publicly condemned by a Parliamentary Committee of Inquiry in 1897. These 'Randlords', as well as imperialism and the rationale for the Boer War generally, were all vociferously condemned in their day by radical public figures such as the political theorist, J A Hobson. Others in London society condemned their 'social climbing', mingling with the highest of society (including the Monarch), enhanced through

their philanthropic activity.

Yet there are other factors to be considered in the balance of judgement about these individuals. Alfred Beit and Julius Wernher both genuinely held a strong belief in the importance of educating those who were to use their skills and training to the benefit of the Empire. They were by no means merely ‘whitewashing’ their sins in overseeing a deeply exploitative mining system. They were genuinely concerned about its being managed effectively and (arguably) humanely. (Wernher later brought in a British bacteriologist to advise on improvements that eventually led to a mass inoculation scheme, according to his ODNB entry.) They believed strongly in the importance of educational institutions, particularly for the teaching of practical science. It was this which underlay their undoubted generosity to the Royal School of Mines (financial details of which are set out in my accounts above)

It could be argued that these benefactors were ‘men of their times’, although one is somewhat sceptical about the argument that the reputation of a vilified donor can be justified by this argument, particularly when there were contemporaries - such as Hobson, in this case - who criticised the individual’s ethics. But it is undoubtedly the case that Wernher and the Beit brothers were comfortable with the ethos of the new Imperial College where serving the ‘far corners of the Empire’ was part of the belief of its constituent colleges and felt to be a duty that should be maintained. [See Gay’s History of Imperial College, London p.202]

I would also like to add that in your Report there is no substantial reference to the pivotal role played in the founding of Imperial in 1907 by Lord Haldane. It was his vision of a university in London, based on Charlottenburg in Berlin, that was the driving force for its foundation - and for his securing its funding, including the major donations from Wernher, Beit and Co towards the Royal School of Mines. Good sources for R B Haldane, an exceptional statesman and man of probity, are E Ashby and M Anderson, Portrait of Haldane at Work on Education (1974), and John Campbell, Haldane: The Forgotten Statesman Who Shaped Modern Britain (2020).

203

I want to feed back on the History Group’s recommendations

- I applaud the recommendation to recognise the hidden figures of the College’s history – in other words, all the people who are not white men. Fuller representation around College would be welcomed by the College community.
- I think that the Beit Quad and Hall should be renamed and any statues removed. My stance on this is because of the behaviour of the Beit/ Wernher in relation to the treatment of their workers.
- I agree that naming relating to Haldane and Zaharof should be removed.
- I think that any representation and naming in respect of Huxley should remain in place but with appropriate labelling. I appreciate the History Group’s position that Huxley’s views fall ‘far short of Imperial’s modern value’. Huxley’s views were in step with his contemporaries who essentially saw anyone who was not a white European man as inferior. Adrian Desmond makes a good case in his paper that Huxley’s views were not as radical as others and that his views softened. It is to give a portrait of a scientist without nuance if we judge him on the words he used in one particle paper. Virtually all leading men in British society held views that would today be held to be abhorrent – views that we would rightly judge as racist and anti-semitic. Women were roundly judged to be inferior and unsuitable to be conferred with degrees by many universities for much of the C19th and the working-class (90% of the population) were generally regarded as an underclass in need of ‘civilisation’ through Christianity.

204



*Attachment  
included  
below*

Please find attached my response to the HG report.  
Thank you very much,

## The History Group brief

In 2020 Imperial College commissioned the History Group (HG) to examine “the history of the College through its links to the British Empire”; to report on “the present understanding and reception of the College’s legacy and heritage in the context of its present-day mission” ([EDI, History Dialogue](#)), with the mission defined to be “enduring excellence in research and education in science, engineering, medicine and business for the benefit of society”; and to consider how we might best “steward our legacy in a way that fits our values” (President email, July 2020).

The HG briefly considers the legacy and makes recommendations on a number of historical figures at Imperial College including Victorian industrialists and scientists, who are broadly classified as having either made “positive” or negative contributions to the College’s history, with the latter “uncomfortable in the context of our modern values” (HG [report](#)). Specifically, the report states that four intellectual giants of biological science and their contributions to founding evolutionary biology - T.H. Huxley, R.A. Fisher, J.B.S. Haldane and W.D. Hamilton - all promoted either political race theory or eugenic ideas and, as such, the report recommends that various College buildings and lecture theatres no longer be named after them. These four historical figures were placed in Category A (out of three possible categories, A-C), which meant the HG was able to offer “*a moral stance on action that should be taken on current representation of named individual’s historical activities*” (Ibid, p.5). Recommendations for historical figures placed in Category B were deferred (subject to “further research and analysis”), while Category C individuals were judged to be largely unproblematic with “no particular action required”.

The HG consultation process itself is part of a broader series of College initiatives to address equality and inclusiveness of students and staff in campus life in the wake of the Black Lives Matter (BLM) protests in [2020](#). In addition to examining College history, the HG brief includes the consultation of members of the College and its wider communities and to make recommendations and “advise the President and Provost on how the College might acknowledge and respond to its history”.

Finally, in response to several fundamental concerns raised by staff about both the commission process (for example, who will read and summarise the written responses to the HG Report and focus group discussions) and the HG report content and recommendations, the College has been keen to emphasise that “no decisions have yet been made: a College response to the report will be made by President’s Board, informed by the current community dialogue” (President email, 23 Nov 2021) and that the HG report is emphatically “not promoting a ‘cancel culture’” (College Consuls email, 5 Nov 2021).

## The premise of the College commissioned HG report

Although the College asserts that “no decisions have yet been made”, the primary problem that underpins the HG report is the flawed *premise* of the HG briefing by the College, which in turn reflects the narrow decision making process that has been presented to staff and students for discussion as part of the [community consultation](#). The consultation itself is rather perfunctory, undertaken between 26 Oct - 13 Dec 2021, with the whole process [originally](#) scheduled to have concluded with the President Board recommended actions in Oct 2021. The premise of the report is the assumption that historical figures who are judged to be morally flawed by contemporary values can in principle no longer be upheld as having a scientific legacy, rather than be judged by an assessment of more enduring contributions to the foundations of modern science. This is problematic, partly because such an approach asserts that we can only uphold and celebrate scientists today, whose values and social views are considered worthy and consistent with our own. As such, a subjective preoccupation with contemporary values is upheld in favour of more objective attempts to evaluate lasting

scientific contribution. More fundamentally, such unscholarly history (projecting present values onto the past) logically also questions the possibility of objective enquiry today, not just our ability to assess scientific legacy. If indeed it is intellectually impossible distinguish between historically specific values and scientific understanding, the result is that the two become conflated and crudely understood to be largely inseparable. Any nuance in understanding the history of science is stripped away.

Stated bluntly, such an ahistorical approach results in bad history, bad science and does little or nothing to combat racism today. Indeed, the preoccupation with condemning Victorian moral values is somewhat of a strawman (Malik, [Observer](#), 31 Oct 2021) and might appear to some to be a displacement activity by the College in response to BLM, rather than more serious attempts to address the root cause of contemporary university problems, such as the lack of democratic College governance structures accountable to academic staff.

As part of the HG dialogue, Professor Curry and his former colleague Dr Elmahdi ([Huxley's legacy](#), 23 Nov 2021) point out that the logic of upholding contemporary values as a primary judgement criterion is that *no scientist* can ever really be celebrated, since no individual can live up to perfect (or even timeless) moral standards:

*“There is no one person in history who has held perfect morals by modern (and changing) standards of acceptability and so perhaps there is no use in honouring anyone with a statue, bust or by naming a building after them.”*

Even if we do not believe that individual failings to be both inevitable and central to any appraisal of scientific legacy, it could still be reasoned that we do not need to uphold individual achievement, only collective endeavour. However, at important moments in history, historic figures can still be of great symbolic importance or even be thought of as heroes - along with debate and contestation - not just because we may recognise the scientific legacy of individual contributions, but also the desire to uphold and celebrate collective *human achievement*. By contrast, if we negate the possibility of any objective evaluation of scientific legacy, then this also undermines how we understand and value modern science and our academic freedom today.

Unfortunately, due to the premise of the briefing, the HG report reads throughout as the implementation of a foregone conclusion or administrative diktat – namely, that morally flawed, or “offensive” scientists need to be condemned with degrees of censor applied, while only virtuous scientists should now be upheld and celebrated. The latter “positive examples” of science presented by the HG report, however, still use the same flawed methods of achievement judged primarily by individual moral worth rather than attempts to assess enduring scientific legacy. And even these examples will only be upheld on a fleeting basis, as moral standards change over time.

## HG Report Content

The History Group met monthly for nine months (Sept 2020 – May 2021) to consider the College in its current form since 1907, with two external “experts” joining the meetings on a bimonthly basis. What is striking about the report is the perfunctory, administrative, and censorious nature of the document, with a primary aim clearly described as the classification of historical figures into three “actionable” points: A) recommended actions, B) postponed actions and C) ignore. As such, the report is not interested in the history of science, scholarship nor even history *per se* (which is ironic, given the name of the group), but more concerned, in the words of the authors, with providing a “moral stance” on those historical figures who might fit uncomfortably “in the context of our modern values”.

Four historically important evolutionary biologists (Huxley, Fisher, Haldane and Hamilton) were identified by the report as problematic and singled out for recommendations. Although it is essential to defend these historically important scientists from misrepresentation, in the interests of space, I would refer you to the document submitted by Professor Leroi (Department of Life Sciences) on this matter, as I believe his reply provides a more detailed, scholarly, and balanced account of these four historical figures than the original HG Report. Although there is a lack of any scholarly detail in the HG report describing these historical characters, there is one exception to this, where the HG has commissioned the author Adrian Desmond ([Appendix 10](#)), a distinguished science historian and biographer of TH Huxley, to comment on Huxley and racism in response to his essay *Emancipation Black and White* (1865). On balance, Desmond concludes that the term "scientific racism" is not an accurate or useful description in Huxley's case and that:

*"if Huxley was guilty of something today that is popularly labelled 'racism' (defined in his case as undervaluing black people, the more so at the start of his career) it was of a less pernicious sort than that held by many of those around him. And he lost some of what we would now term racial prejudice as he advanced in years, despite many of his confrères stiffening their racial resolve."*

Despite Huxley's cited essay being a polemic against slavery and for women's education, the HG report concludes the opposite, summarising TH Huxley primarily as a "Category A" racist with the recommendation that the Huxley Building be renamed, and his bust removed from public view. The report states:

*"[Huxley's] essay Emancipation – Black and White espouses a racial hierarchy of intelligence, a belief system of 'scientific racism' that fed the dangerous and false ideology of eugenics; legacies of which are still felt today. The group believe this falls far short of Imperial's modern values"*

Having commissioned Desmond to assess the historical context and meaning of Huxley's essay, the HG report subsequently ignore and effectively mis-cite the conclusions of the commissioned scholar.

In summary, the HG report is unscholarly, shoddy (in places, plagiarised from Wiki) and ironically, given the commissioned name, the report is not interested in the history of science, but more preoccupied by contemporary concerns, such as the re-branding of Imperial College (Malik, [Observer](#), 31 Oct 2021) in order to not offend modern sensibilities and no doubt with an eye upon attracting greater numbers of high fee-paying overseas students.

## HG Recommendations

Having initiated the process with premise of how best the College might "steward our legacy in a way that fits our values" (President email, July 2020), it is perhaps not surprising that the HG report rather ominously concludes:

*"We have found that there are a relatively small number of important findings where activities and teachings associated with the key namesakes are no longer compatible with the values and culture of a twenty-first century global institution."*

If this statement is not an example of "cancel culture", then it is difficult to know what is.

What does "no longer compatible" mean? [REDACTED], I teach my postgraduates introductory quantitative, population and evolutionary genetics, all of which draw upon the theory and techniques first developed by T.H. Huxley, F. Galton, K. Pearson, R.A. Fisher, J.B.S. Haldane and W.D. Hamilton. I uphold these scientists, not for their views on race theory or eugenics, but because of their founding contributions to the field of modern

genetics. If these “*key namesakes are no longer compatible with the values and culture*” of today, is that surprising? Most Victorians believed in eugenics and proponents of Social Darwinism, eugenics and scientific racism continued well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century (including the Fabians, liberal economists, William Beveridge and Winston Churchill). And such comparisons of this sort made by the College itself reflects an embarrassingly low moral benchmark – surely the College can do better than Victorian morality to demonstrate virtue? Does the Report, having conflated flawed morals and scientific legacy, imply that I should no longer be teaching these subjects? Will I be disciplined by the College if some of my students take offence at the mention of these historical figures or the teaching of quantitative genetics? If TH Huxley is deemed to be morally dubious when he was in fact a leading liberal of his age - an abolitionist and advocate of universal education - who next will be judged to be flawed or offensive? Darwin perhaps? He certainly offended the Church in his day and delayed publishing *The Origin of Species* by some 25 years because of the uproar he knew he would cause in Victorian society. Is the College really advocating that offensive ideas do not have a place in universities?

When it comes to recommendations for how to deal with problem of Huxley falling “short of Imperial's modern values”, the HG recommends that, in addition to renaming the Huxley building, the bust of Huxley, the first dean of the Royal College of Science from 1881-85, should be removed from display, placed in the college archives and hidden from view. Two alternative suggestions include that the bust remain in place, but that “trigger warning” plaques be included along with QR code linked text explaining the offensive nature of Huxley. A third imaginative suggestion is that the Huxley bust remain on display but be placed in purgatory glass case (no doubt to protect the vulnerable viewer from infection or toxic fumes). The latter two suggestions are presented as a compromise but are no such thing. All three proposals reflect the misguided College premise that historical figures deemed by crass philistine diktat to fall “short of Imperial's modern values” can in principle no longer be upheld as having any scientific legacy.

For staff and students to be presented with warning text on a plaque or via QR code is both condescending and paternalistic. And what does this tell us about our academic freedom if we are told by the College what to think? Or the presumption that staff and students are so feeble, we need to be protected by “trigger warning” statements about the offensive nature of Huxley? Staff and students came to university to learn to think for themselves, contest and debate. The HG recommendations on Huxley are antithetical to the principle of academic freedom.

### **Positive counter-proposals to the HG report recommendations**

The following recommendations be implemented by Imperial College:

- 1) We replace the HG report with Professor Leroi's more substantial and balanced account of these four historical figures.
- 2) Instead of the HG report and recommendations, Imperial College sign up to the Chicago 2014 declaration ([Chicago Principles](#)) on Academic Freedom and that the College publicly re-iterate it's commitment to Academic Freedom as outlined in the College [2007](#) Charter and Statutes.
- 3) The College to stand as an exemplar to all UK universities in refusing to cancel historical figures and by promoting the commitment of all higher education institutions to free, robust, and uninhibited debate.
- 4) The submitted letter from Huxley's great grandson is of great interest and reminds us that the bicentenary of Huxley's birth is upon us in 2025. We should use this opportunity a bicentenary celebration and invite a distinguished panel of scholars to speak at The Great Hall and debate his legacy today.



Attachment  
included  
below

I imagine that the History Group is taking a deep breath after your welcome report before continuing to further examine the College's past.

When you do, please spend some time considering the life of [REDACTED] Dan Akyeampong, [REDACTED] [REDACTED] I've attached a brief biography. I'm afraid that I wasn't tuned in to what you were doing first time around.

I only recently found out about Dan's death in 2015. His Wikipedia page is only of this year (I don't know who put it up) and earlier attempts of mine to find out about him had failed.

To the best of my knowledge my facts are correct. His Wikipedia page contains more information, written well (some of the comments following only make sense if you have read it). There are many more things that could have been said. For example, Dan was not considered loyal enough to Nkrumah so a pro-Nkrumah physicist was installed next door to Dan's office at the ICTP to keep an eye on him. He failed. Later, under one of the military governments in Ghana, it was the eggs from Dan's chickens that saved the household economy. However, these are not the makings of college biographies. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

**Daniel ('Dan') Afedzi Akyeampong** (24 November 1938 – 7 March 2015) was the first Ghanaian to become a full professor in mathematics at the University of Ghana, Legon. In 1966 he and fellow Imperial College alumnus Francis Allotey became the first Ghanaians to be awarded doctorates in the mathematical sciences.

Dan went to school at age six when he could touch the tip of his left ear with his right hand over the top of his head. His entry requirements to read mathematics at the University of Ghana in 1960 were more demanding, but equally achievable since Dan had left Mfantsipim secondary school in Cape Coast in 1959 with prizes for best student in mathematics and science.

In 1960 the U of Ghana was, for a final year, an affiliated college of the University of London. Dan was taught by good physicists and mathematicians, including the British ex-spy Alan Nunn May, who had set up the Condensed Matter Group there after his release from jail. Dan achieved high grades in his final examinations in 1963 and came to the Theoretical Physics Group at Imperial College, then a constituent college of the U of London, to do the Diploma (DIC) in theoretical physics as the preliminary year of a PhD programme. After completing this successfully Prof. Abdus Salam asked him to join the newly-formed International Centre in Theoretical Physics (ICTP) in Trieste of which he was Director. Dan, who had endured continual racism in London (although not with the Theory Group) found Trieste more benign. His work on the symmetries of elementary particles was very successful and he was awarded his IC-supervised Doctorate (and DIC) by the U of London in 1966.

On returning to the U of Ghana as a lecturer in Mathematics there was little scope for continuing work in elementary particle physics, with condensed matter having higher priority. Abdus Salam had anticipated this and had made Dan an associate of the ICTP which, for several years, funded him for three summer months in Trieste to do fundamental particle research. In this he often worked with one of Salam's main collaborators, Bob Delbourgo, and they produced many good papers on particle behaviour. In the period before the restoration of democracy in Ghana in 1992 life was often not easy in the university. Nonetheless, by then Dan had become the first Ghanaian at the University to become full Professor of Mathematics and Head of the Mathematics Dept. (three times), and Pro-Vice Chancellor. Dan, who had very high standards, was passionate about improving university education in Ghana and Africa and served on many national bodies addressing educational reforms and standards. Internationally he was vice-president of the International Council for Science in the late 90s.

He was an imposing man with an infectious laugh and his cry of 'Ecco Mi' as he came through the door usually signalled a robust discussion.

He died of septic shock in 2015 after surgery, leaving behind his beloved wife Sally, children and grandchildren.

See [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Daniel\\_Afedzi\\_Akyeampong](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Daniel_Afedzi_Akyeampong) for more detail.

206	[REDACTED]	<p>In response to the recent BMA Charter work, we received the below comment that is relevant to share with the History Dialogue.</p> <p>In addition there have been comments that the History Group did not really look into the history of the School of Medicine, so this could be a good opportunity to encourage more of this research going forward. Thanks</p> <p>----</p> <p>Please let us know your comment or query here:  the much venerated alumnus sir arnold walmsley stott was in fact heralded from a long family lineage of slave-owning cotton producers in england. he spent much of his time involved with upholding and supporting the family business and even directly running the mills and farmlands.</p> <p>Should the medical school continue to uphold the legacy of a known family of slave-owning cotton farmers, or step aside and distance ourselves from namings and mentions of this close linkage to decades of mistreatment of poor migrant workers?</p> <p>----</p>
207	[REDACTED]	<p>Thank you for circulating your report, which poses some difficult questions with no straightforward answers. However, I am concerned about some of the potential implications for the RSM. When the RSM celebrated its 150 years in 2001, Beit and Wernher were then recognised as the two great benefactors, who had made 150 years possible, with Beit having contributed to the costs of building the RSM and bequeathing the college a substantial amount in his will, and likewise Wernher contributed significantly to the building of the RSM. This is recognised in your report. Without these two gentlemen it is unlikely that the RSM would exist nor would the thousands of students who have benefitted from an RSM education of excellence producing world leaders in the geological, mining, metallurgical and other fields. For nearly a century the RSM was recognised as the leading institution of its kind globally, and that aura of excellence was in part due to the interest and efforts of the Beit brothers and Wernher in establishing the RSM, and the accompanying student welfare. Their deeds, in this context, were rightly recognised by their peers at the time with the statues adorning the entrance to the RSM. At any point in time we can look at the past and there will be events and persona that will be viewed in a different light from that at the time of reflection. There are far worse examples, in todays world, than what these gentlemen were perceived to be involved in. Because they made their fortunes in the establishment of the South African mines does not mean they condoned any transgressions and I would contend that their contribution to the successful establishment of Imperial far outweighs any negatives. Does the college accept any funding from China, with their modern day slavery and persecution of ethnic minorities, or what is the relationship with Saudi Arabia etc.</p> <p>I think it is wrong that todays students should determine the legacy of these three great benefactors. Yes, they are entitled to their views and these are respected but to overturn history is not their remit. I strongly support the retention of the two busts adorning the RSM together with Beit Hall and the Beit Quad. These are part of IC's great history and must be retained. It is inevitable that the next point of debate will be "Imperial" and what that word implies.</p> <p>Let history be acknowledged but let it rest.</p>
208	[REDACTED]	<p>Dear Imperial College history group, and others concerned,</p> <p>I read your review in early November following press publicity, and though I wanted to say something felt I might not be considered to have any standing in the matter, not being a scientist or anything to do with Imperial College – but have decided to write in anyway. [REDACTED]. In my earlier life I spent many years in West Africa, and have read a great deal of nineteenth century English</p>

literature and colonial history which I think provides me with some social and historical perspective. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] I have become interested in him and am writing a book about this later period of his life, in such a different environment from his career in London. Some years ago I did a good deal of research in the Huxley Archive at Imperial, with help from [REDACTED], and am now writing this up.

Anyone can understand the movement to give more recognition to other distinguished people, but to demote Huxley as part of the same movement seems extraordinary. After all, Huxley wasn't just a staff member of colleges which eventually became part of Imperial, he was in effect a founding father, and he was and still is internationally known.

Obviously, Huxley was a nineteenth century man, a Victorian, and his views developed in that age, not ours. Scientists in general do not appear to think that his work or ideas assisted the development of 'scientific racism'. The fact that Huxley always stood for just treatment for all seems to me to be of greater importance than the now-shocking language he used on occasion, especially considering the context of the time, in which many in Britain supported the Confederacy in America. Even in the 1865 essay 'Emancipation - Black and White', which has been singled out from all his huge body of work - scientific, public lecturing and journalistic - to be decisive in the view we should take of Huxley, he argued for equality of opportunity to be given to women and 'negroes', both of whom he thought at the time had been disadvantaged by nature. Adrian Desmond has explained the complexities and the context of Huxley's views. We would have to cease to honour anyone in the nineteenth century if Huxley is no longer to be honoured in the very institution he did so much to help create.

The very next year, in 1866, Huxley and the other members of the Jamaica Committee incurred racist abuse over the Governor Eyre issue. Thomas Carlyle referred to them as 'a group 'of N\*\*\*\*\*-Philanthropists, barking furiously in the gutter.' (My asterisks.) The Pall Mall Gazette queried offensively whether his and Lyell's 'peculiar views on the development of the species have influenced them in bestowing on the negro that sympathetic recognition which they are willing to extend even to the ape as "a man and a brother"'. These were offensive times and Huxley was by any objective standards a force for good, and for equality among all people. He wrote so much throughout his adult life that it is easy to cherry-pick opinions that are no longer acceptable.

I hope that what has been said by an advisory group at Western Washington University hasn't influenced anyone's thinking in the Imperial History Group: it is of course much more extreme, contains actual lies (for example claiming that he was a polygenist) and is apparently influenced by creationist anti-Huxley propaganda, but I am worried by the comment in the Group's recommendation:

'There have been concerns raised about the 'scientific racism in Huxley's work'. Huxley studied the geographical modifications of mankind and, while a slavery abolitionist, his essay Emancipation – Black and White espouses a racial hierarchy of intelligence, a belief system of 'scientific racism' that fed the dangerous and false ideology of eugenics; legacies of which are still felt today.' It is surely important for transparency to investigate whether these concerns are fair and who has raised them.

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] I would be very proud of having Huxley as one of the people who founded my university. Statues and buildings names are perhaps relatively unimportant, but if the reasons given imply that Thomas Henry Huxley is not worthy of honour at Imperial, I think it will do the university great discredit.

I am an alumnus of Imperial College [REDACTED] and I am writing in response to reading the "Community Response from the History Group" and some of its recommendations, in particular that relating to Thomas Huxley.

I write to express some comments on the content of the report and in particular a strong objection to the recommendation in respect of Thomas Henry Huxley.

1) The report says its aims include:

- *interpretation of historical events and teachings in the light of present day values and exploring the historical context in terms of prevailing thinking*

Comment: I suggest it is appropriate always to seek explore the historical context in terms of contemporary thinking of the historical time, rather than prevailing thinking only, which in time might even itself be seen as 'falling short of 'Imperial's modern values' from some perspective in the future!

2) **Recognition Committee** : *A Recognition Committee should be established to review honorific naming for significant contributions to science, engineering, medicine and business. The group should periodically review all named buildings, rooms, Chairs and scholarships and set a protocol to complete due diligence and approve any new naming. In addition, a proactive approach should be taken to seek new naming opportunities and find people to celebrate from a more inclusive lens, including our recommendations below.*

Comments:

a) I think this is broadly speaking an excellent approach and a welcome initiative, provided that no re-naming is applied in particular in reference to any contributor to the intellectual heritage of Imperial College. There will be plenty of opportunities to rightly celebrate diversity in new facilities over time.

b) It would help give assurance as to the recognition of the general history and legacy of the College if an explicit commitment would be made that no attempt to rename the College would be considered.

3) **Principles:**

- i. Building/room names should be considered as way of projecting the College's ethos and values. Names should be consistent with the diverse and global community today and with the College's desire to be an inclusive place of work and study.

*Comment: This is good in terms of naming policy for new facilities, but not if to be used as a device to promote 're-naming' akin to a making a Purge.*

*iv. Where renaming is proposed, the concerns associated with the namesake's teachings, views, behaviour etc. should be considered carefully. The context of the time and the degree to which the namesake was a key protagonist must be taken into account, without diluting or denying the active detractors and oppositional voices to this prevailing context and time, while also keeping principle (i) in mind. In all cases, a clear rationale must be published.*

Comment: For example, while I wholeheartedly agree that the late Prof Abdus Salam deserves huge appreciation it is also true that his is an already relatively widely known reputation (not least as a Nobel prize winner and recipient of many important awards in recognition of his life and work) and there are others far less well championed to date. Nonetheless his achievements were legion and Departmental or Chair naming (as opposed to re-naming) recognition could well be considered. I believe however that in any such process or added edification of Prof Salam there should, in line with these Principles, also for balance and context be taken into account his widely reported role in advancing the proliferation of atomic weapons.

#### 4) Specific objection to the recommendation re THOMAS HENRY HUXLEY

The report says:

*There have been concerns raised about the 'scientific racism in Huxley's work'. Huxley studied the geographical modifications of mankind and, while a slavery abolitionist, his essay Emancipation – Black and White espouses a racial hierarchy of intelligence, a belief system of 'scientific racism' that fed the dangerous and false ideology of eugenics; legacies of which are still felt today. The group believe this falls far short of Imperial's modern values and, in light of this, the group recommend that the bust of Huxley should be moved from the building for preservation with this historical context to College archives and the building should be renamed. An explanation of the renaming process should be visible as outline in the general recommendations.*

COMMENT: To seek to pin the 'dangerous and false ideology of eugenics; legacies of which are still felt today' materially on Thomas Henry Huxley would be ludicrous and an example of a modern totalitarian-style Purge (itself as an activity not consistent, I suggest, with the College's values). Huxley was a strong slavery abolitionist; he was also a vigorous exponent of the rights of girls and women to equal education. He was an important teacher and dedicated explorer of the natural world, with many discoveries to his credit. He followed his thinking – often 'in advance' of his time - with recognised integrity and if he found fault with, or doubted, his own intellectual conclusions then he questioned them himself. Far from "falling....far short of Imperial's modern values" I should have thought this commitment to open intellectual rigour fits supremely well with what these values are – or at least should be - today. In any event I do not think that judging Victorian science wholesale by 'modern values' serves for a better understanding of the thought prevalent in the day and such intellectual laziness, if adopted, would also not I suggest be consistent with the tradition of Imperial. I suspect that a specific "American lensed view" may be driving this recommendation (see some USA context below), which if implemented would show inappropriate bias by the recommending body.

Your link to 'Huxley and Racism by Dr Adrian Desmond' I think provides a fair, balanced and scholarly assessment (in line with what Imperial's values should always be). In regard to any charge of 'scientific racism' he writes:

Nor is the term "scientific racism" useful in Huxley's case. This term was initially used by historians to characterise the American ultra-racists in the Confederacy and after, that is, those who depicted black people as not only anatomically 'lower' and intellectually 'inferior', but who then used that to justify slavery. If that is the definition used, it cannot be applied to Huxley. He hated slavery and deplored the white supremacists (a contemporary term) running London's Anthropological Society<sup>iii</sup>, who were in league with the Confederates in America (indeed Richmond [Richmond Virginia, USA prominent place of the Confederacy] had its spies inside the society). He effectively ousted them from the Society and publicly denounced their pernicious views. This despite his favourite sister's

husband being a surgeon with the Confederate army during the Civil War: not even family ties could persuade him to weaken his support for the anti-slavery Union.

He goes on to describe the evolution of Huxley's own thinking and thereafter draws his conclusion:

"Three years later, in his most influential paper (1870, *Journal of the Ethnological Society of London*) "On the Geographical Distribution of the Chief Modifications of Mankind",<sup>x</sup> Huxley simply characterised the human groups spacially by their anatomical distinctions, hoping to use this to get evolutionary clues as to their origin. In this paper there was no talk of inferiority or ranking of geographical groups. So one senses him changing through the years, becoming more sensitive and reacting to the reactionaries. By 1878 he actually thought, at least in terms of the European races, that social and political distinctions were as much responsible for racial designations as any biological difference. In the end, he admitted in *Nature*, "we knew so little about the races that it was impossible to disentangle what any particular nation was. We did on the other hand, know that there was a great deal of human nature in all kinds of men, and of social conditions which exercise an enormous influence." (*Nature*, August 1, 1878, pp 479-80.<sup>xi</sup>) "

"Conclusion. My take above is still the view of an old white male, and I have no doubt that different tacit assumptions would induce a young black female historian to see Huxley quite differently, and with equal justification. Be that as it may, from my perspective, if Huxley was guilty of something today that is popularly labelled 'racism' (defined in his case as undervaluing black people, the more so at the start of his career) it was of a less pernicious sort than that held by many of those around him. And he lost some of what we would now term racial prejudice as he advanced in years, despite many of his confrères stiffening their racial resolve. "

In her Introduction to this piece above, Anne Barrett, College Archivist, notes:

"Adrian Desmond was invited to comment on the matter of Thomas Henry Huxley (1825-1895) and racism in response to his essay *Emancipation Black and White* 1865.

Adrian is Huxley's biographer, and an historian of 19<sup>th</sup> century science, keynote speaker at Imperial College Huxley centenary events 1995. His writing style is fast paced, dense in information, and broadly contextualising of his biographical subject.

Adrian provides a balanced historical assessment of Huxley's complex character.

Huxley's essay *Emancipation – Black and White* espouses views that are clearly unacceptable and abhorrant today. Adrian also notes that Huxley's views evolved over his lifetime to the point where they would be considered progressive based on generally held views in the population at the time. This is one essay out of the literally hundreds of essays, lectures, notes, reviews, that Huxley wrote, gave or had published."

**I believe any implementation of the recommendation that the bust of Huxley be banished this attempting to help put into effect his reputation's oblivion by exile to 'archives' \* and the building renamed itself would bring the College gravely into disrepute and quite rightly attract adverse reputational impact from institutions around the globe. If it transpires that only the withholding of financial giving becomes the sole means to protest this ill-judged proposal then you should not be surprised if this occurs in droves among alumni who, like me, cherished their time and learning at Imperial**

		<p><b>College and its values, which I would regard being betrayed by such disproportionate act of slur on the whole-life reputation of Thomas Henry Huxley and an insult to many of those who love the College and appreciate its history ‘warts and all’.</b></p> <p>*Report recommendation: the bust of Huxley should be moved from the building for preservation with this historical context to College archives and the building should be renamed. An explanation of the renaming process should be visible as outline in the general recommendations.</p> <p>I look forward to hearing the results of this process and am minded regrettably to withhold any further financial giving until this is clarified and determined.</p>
210	[REDACTED]	<p>This week we have published a rather thought-provoking piece that opposes the idea of changing the name of the Huxley Building. I have linked it below:</p> <p><a href="https://felixonline.co.uk/issue/1788/comment/huxley-s-apology">https://felixonline.co.uk/issue/1788/comment/huxley-s-apology</a></p>
211	[REDACTED]	<p>Please explore whether there is scope for adding, rather than subtracting, a name for the Mathematics and Computing Building at South Kensington. Provided the families and communities agreed, could we add a distinguished name and have a new hyphenated name? There are some obvious potential candidates from our 20th Century Nobel Laureates, some of whom worked in a Huxley Building during their time at Imperial College. Any such name extension should, in my opinion, have to be made in conjunction with preparing a durable and well displayed narrative that recognises the strengths of both scientists, and draws attention to the unacceptable and poorly informed views that Huxley expressed on race, while emphasising the modern College’s firm commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity. The same points should be made to all students and staff when they first arrive at Imperial College.</p>
210	<p>[REDACTED]</p> <p><i>Attachment included below</i></p>	<p>I was in touch last week with Imperial 600 about the history group forum [REDACTED]</p> <p>A few members came forward willing to engage with the process going forward about identifying LGBT+ members from the College’s history that are important to celebrate. [REDACTED]</p> <p>What would you suggest as a way forward for our small group of volunteers who are willing to continue engagement with you on this topic?</p>



## Response to History Dialogue:



---

### We, the undersigned, note that:

1. The mission of the History Group to address racial injustice at Imperial College London<sup>1</sup>.
2. The aim of the History Group "to understand our history better, place our important findings in context and develop some insights and plans which will help us on our journey to becoming a fully inclusive organisation"<sup>2</sup>.
3. The aim of the History Group Report to "empower the College to make a radical change to become a more inclusive environment for the whole community".<sup>1</sup>
4. The History Dialogue Summary reflects: "Throughout the process, there was very strong support for finding ways to recognise figures and achievements from Imperial's past that may be lesser-known or undercelebrated"<sup>2</sup>.

### We believe that:

5. There is necessity to improve the ethnic diversity of figures publicly recognised by Imperial and do not envisage the following recommendations to be conflicting with the actions the College chooses to take in fulfilling that goal.

### We furthermore believe that:

6. The lack of visible representation at the College of a diverse range of people from our Institution's history - including LGBT+ and people with disabilities, plus recognition of the intersectionality of different minoritised characteristics.
7. Doing the best for science means retaining LGBT+ scientists, but many LGBT+ people do not find STEM to be a comfortable working environment – and have thought about leaving<sup>3</sup>.
8. However, workplaces with visible LGBT+ role models and visibility (e.g. in the curriculum) and support from leadership were overall felt to be more comfortable and supportive for members of this community<sup>4 5</sup>.
9. We recognise that there are challenges in identifying prominent members of the LGBT+ and disabled communities in history, notably that individuals with these characteristics were not widely celebrated in historical records.<sup>6</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.imperial.ac.uk/media/imperial-college/administration-and-support-services/equality/public/history-group/History-Group-Report-2021---Version-2.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.imperial.ac.uk/media/imperial-college/administration-and-support-services/equality/public/history-group/History-Dialogue-Summary.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.rsc.org/new-perspectives/talent/lgbt-report/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://blogs.imperial.ac.uk/materials/2021/06/30/dr-andrew-cairns-on-his-research-and-lgbtq-role-models-in-stem/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://blogs.imperial.ac.uk/imperial-medicine/2020/02/24/meet-our-lgbt-student-community/>

<sup>6</sup> [https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/stephanie-rankin/lgbt-scientists\\_b\\_6983680.html](https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/stephanie-rankin/lgbt-scientists_b_6983680.html)

**We recommend to the Provost and History Dialogue:**

10. Acknowledges that LGBT+, disabled and intersectional people from Imperial's history lack public recognition.
11. Recognises the strength of intersectional role models to improve the environment for all Imperial's minoritised communities.
12. Commission research into LGBT+, disabled and intersectional role models from Imperial's present and past, which could include paying for research to uncover evidence for the LGBT+, disabled and intersectional history of the College.
13. Sets up parallel and/or/ inclusive dialogue around LGBT+, disabled and intersectional representation.
14. Sets targets to improve public recognition of Imperial's LGBT+, disabled and intersectional representation.

With respect to your report "Community Report From the History Group" i find myself positive in its direction.

Indeed, where it is discovered that Imperial has not recognised a past achievement or indeed a past achievement is now seen much more positively in the light of achievements based from it that followed then clearly they should be recognised. Very hard to be in any other position in that one.

However, with others, struggle to determine how to apply today's values to events at times over three hundred years ago where clearly values were very different.

Over the years i have found that the easiest way to put this in context and so to find a solution is to ask ourselves "what are we doing today that humanity in three hundred years time will find unacceptable?" and secondly "how should that future humanity deal with the great scientists / innovators / financiers of today that are positively commemorated but who are found to be unacceptable under the lens of future values?"

Obviously, the answer to the first question is that we don't know - and that is the point. All we can do is operate to the highest ethical standards and apply today's positive values to try and innovate, or finance innovation, for the betterment of humanity and allow Imperial to recognise its achievements and donors.

The answer to the second question is the key. A strong guide to humanity in 300 years time on how to deal with our today's positive recognition that they then find unacceptable is to show how we are dealing with this situation today.

And then it becomes clear. We should treat others from the past as we would want to be treated ourselves by the future.

Therefore, for me, i would not want to de-recognise past scientists or donors who operated in the values of yesteryear but i would want to ensure we fully understood what their values were and why these were acceptable at the time. Perhaps in doing so and therefore keeping it a live discussion we can seek to get ahead of ourselves and spot what becomes unacceptable earlier than we otherwise would. We certainly won't achieve this if we just erase it from sight. Keep their names on the buildings, keep the history alive and so demonstrate to the future that we sought to understand.