

## Editor's Note

One of the small miracles of formal hall is that you almost never sit next to anyone in your own exact field. You arrive expecting conversation about the unusually nice April weather, and three courses later you are forty minutes into a conversation about something you did not know existed at seven. This issue of *Ex-Aula* comprised of work collected over Hilary Term 2026 is, more or less, that dinner. Five contributors from different disciplines, none of whom would ordinarily share a table at an academic conference, here commune and talk about their work.

Inae shares a challenging argument: that adolescent liver cancer in South Africa is not a clinical rarity but a policy failure, traceable to a missed birth-dose vaccine. Leah asks why the social dimension of ocean governance has remained the conceptual residue of marine management, and proposes a framework for a better understanding of the relationship between people and the oceans. Sammy takes stroke, one of the more frightening clinical conditions, and explains it, disarmingly, as plumbing. Ann shows that the amino acids we file away as protein building blocks are, in the solid state, intricate crystals whose electrons can be mapped. Finally, Vincent critically examines the claim that an epidemic of despair is driving fertility decline in Europe and finds that the data may say otherwise.

These work all share the notion that available explanation deserves another look. It is this instinct that brought most of us into graduate work, and the same one that makes the Hall, on a good evening, one of the most interesting places in Oxford.

**A note to the MCR.** Trinity Term submissions to *Ex-Aula* are open. Consider this your invitation to the upcoming term's table. We are looking for Research Spotlights (i.e., 600-800 word prose detailing your research and its broader societal relevance), Research Snapshots (i.e., interesting image or figure from your research accompanied by 200-300 word caption), and the occasional thing we have not thought of yet. The rule is the one you already know from any decent formal hall: share about whatever you like, provided the person across from you can follow. If you can explain it over the main course, you can explain it in *Ex-Aula*.

Submissions, queries, and unsolicited opinions about the editorial direction of *Ex-Aula* can all be addressed to the editor ([greco.malijan@seh.ox.ac.uk](mailto:greco.malijan@seh.ox.ac.uk)). The first two are more likely to receive a reply.