



OUSL, Oxford University Society of Luxembourg asbl

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Chair's Report – AGM 2025

Dear Oxonians,

A very warm welcome to the 2025 AGM.

It is a pleasure and a privilege to present my first Chairwoman's Report to the Society. As you know, Peter Munro stepped down from the role in November, and I would like to begin by thanking him for his time and his contributions during his tenure.

When I took over, I inherited a strong foundation – and I am proud to say that, in the seven months since, we have achieved a great deal together.

To begin with, our membership has grown from 72 to 85. It is a statistic we can be proud of – not least because we have made a deliberate effort to broaden our appeal, especially to women and younger alumni. One way we have supported that goal is by launching the OUSL on LinkedIn. The response has been immediate and the OUSL page now boasts more followers than we have members!

Our LinkedIn presence complements our newly updated OUSL website, where we also share news of upcoming events and record highlights from past ones. If you haven't yet visited, I encourage you to follow the links we include in most of our communications. Over the past months, our event calendar has expanded significantly. The Tripartite Gala Dinner is just around the corner, and we are already planning for the autumn and spring seasons. One of our key aims moving forward is to deepen cooperation with our sister societies—not only here in Luxembourg, but also in the Benelux region, Germany, and ideally, France. But more on that shortly.

Because first I wish to say that none of all this would have been possible without the incredible work of the committee. I owe special thanks to Jan Königshaus, our Vice Chair and former Chair. Jan cannot walk out of the door without meeting people and thinking up new plans for OUSL which he then speedily turns into reality. I also owe Jan a personal thank-you, for his unstinting help in my transition period as a new Chair.

I also wish to thank our Membership Coordinator, Sam Vinandy-Lau, who in a short period of time has shaped his post into one of creativity and networking while simultaneously guarding and growing the membership pool with enthusiasm. It is a testament to both Jan's and Sam's endurance—and good nature—that we're all still on excellent terms, despite the steady stream of emails I tend to send their way.

Another regular recipient of our internal mail flurries is Jos van Bommel. Jos has been instrumental in securing this very venue tonight and has, for years, organised the Freshers'

Association sans but lucratif, R.C.S. Luxembourg: F478 • Registered office: 17 avenue Guillaume, L-1651 Luxembourg. Bank Account: BCEELULL IBAN LU21 0019 1755 3010 3000.

Advisor: David Clark. Committee: Mette Ahlefeldt-Laurvig (Chair), Jan Königshaus (Vice-Chair), Linda Chirila (Secretary & Events), Katia Volodine, Jos van Bommel, Agnieszka Walczak (Treasurer & Vice-Chair), Dan Schmit, Henri Dupong (Counsel), Sam Vinandy-Lau (Membership).

Dinner and supported our mock interviews. Jos is now semi-retiring to Spain and intends to step down from the committee at the end of the year—but Jos, we remain hopeful that you'll reconsider!

Warm thanks as well to Agnieszka Walczak, our Treasurer (regretfully unable to be with us this evening), and to Richard Goddard, our honorary auditor, for his ongoing diligence and support. Thanks also to Dan Schmit, who continues to support the committee and will now focus on Outreach and Education—a key area for the Society.

As always, change is part of the rhythm of committee life. This evening, we bid farewell to three wonderful members. Thus, despite my best efforts to make him stay forever, we are parting ways with our long-serving legal counsel, Henri Dupong. A founding member of the Society back in 2004, Henri has spent over two decades calmly and patiently keeping us aligned with our legal responsibilities. I think it is only right that we give Henri a well-deserved round of applause.

We also say farewell to two outstanding women, Linda Chirila and Katia Volodine. Both have juggled young families and demanding jobs while still making valuable contributions to OUSL – testament to their energy and commitment. We are truly grateful and wish you both the very best.

Now, to new beginnings, pending your approval this evening. We are delighted to welcome back David Clark. A former Chair and more recently an advisor to the committee, David needs no introduction. Just think back to the remarkable Benelux reunion in 2022, which he spearheaded. There is never a dull moment when David is involved, and we look forward to having him formally back on the board.

We are also thrilled to welcome back Lidiya Cherneva, whose warmth and experience in engaging with young people will be a real asset as we look to strengthen this area of our work.

And finally, we have the pleasure of introducing Bob Kieffer, who joined the Society in late 2024 after completing his MSc at Oxford. Bob has a background in linguistics, human rights, and refugee law and we look very much forward to working with him.

I could not conclude, however, without thanking our alumni community at large. It is *your* continued participation and *your* support that make this society thrive. On behalf of the committee, thank you for being part of it.

Yours truly,

Mette Ahlefeldt-Laurvig
Chair, Oxford University Society of Luxembourg (OUSL)

And now let us turn to a short cavalcade of past events.

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AGM - OUSL TUESDAY 20 MAY 2025



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Quick picture cavalcade since last AGM on 17 June 2024

- ❖ OUSL generated events
- ❖ Joint events with sister organisations
- ❖ Member events announced by OUSL



Members of the outgoing OUSL Committee at the AGM, 17 June 2024



Beim Lentz Drinks

Last Thursday of the month

- ❖ Monthly drinks for Oxbridge
- ❖ Informal meet-ups

Oxbridge alumni enjoying the balmy weather at Beim Lentz, summer 2024

Schueberfouer, 2 September 2024



- ❖ Annual Fish dinner at Friture Armand
- ❖ Joint Oxbridge organised by our friends at Cambridge

OUSL Freshers' Dinner

16 September 2024

- ❖ 17 attendees – 10 alumni and 7 students.
- ❖ Study fields: from Computer science, English language, Literature to Cognitive Therapy
- ❖ Organised by Jos van Bommel



‘Croquet in the City’

On **22 September 2025**: “Croquet in the city” arranged by Cambridge at Parc Pescatore in Luxembourg city for Oxbridge alumni and freshers of both universities. A jolly event with croquet, a few drinks and picnic followed by Dinner.

Meeting Minds Alumni Weekend



22-24 September 2025: 1,200 alumni who met at Oxford for a stimulating weekend of academic talks. The event featured speakers such as social scientist Ben Ansell and writer Mary Ann Sieghart, as well as over 30 guided walking tours and creative writing workshops.

Tripartite Dinner 2024

24 September

The Tripartite Dinner 2024, Skybar



Minister of Justice, Elisabeth Margue



- ❖ The 2024 Tripartite Dinner hosted by LSE
- ❖ Guest Speaker: The Minister of Justice, Elisabeth Margue
- ❖ Venue: The Skybar Restaurant in City Concorde

Member event at the University of Luxembourg

3 October 2024



- ❖ Felix Pflücke organised a talk, ‘Comparative Law “in Layers”’
- ❖ Venue: University of Luxembourg
- ❖ Speaker: Oxonian Professor Birke Häcker, the University of Bonn
- ❖ And Felix also published two books!

Dr. Felix Pflücke (Brasenose College), Prof. Herwig Hofmann (St Peter’s College), Prof. Birke Häcker (Bonn University, Brasenose College), Louise Benjamin (Cambridge), Dr. Elif Biber (University of Luxembourg), Prof. Gilles Cuniberti (Trinity College), Justine Yansenne (Cambridge).

OUSL Gala Christmas Dinner

**St. Nicholas Eve 5 December 2025
at Cercle Münster**

The birth of a new tradition!

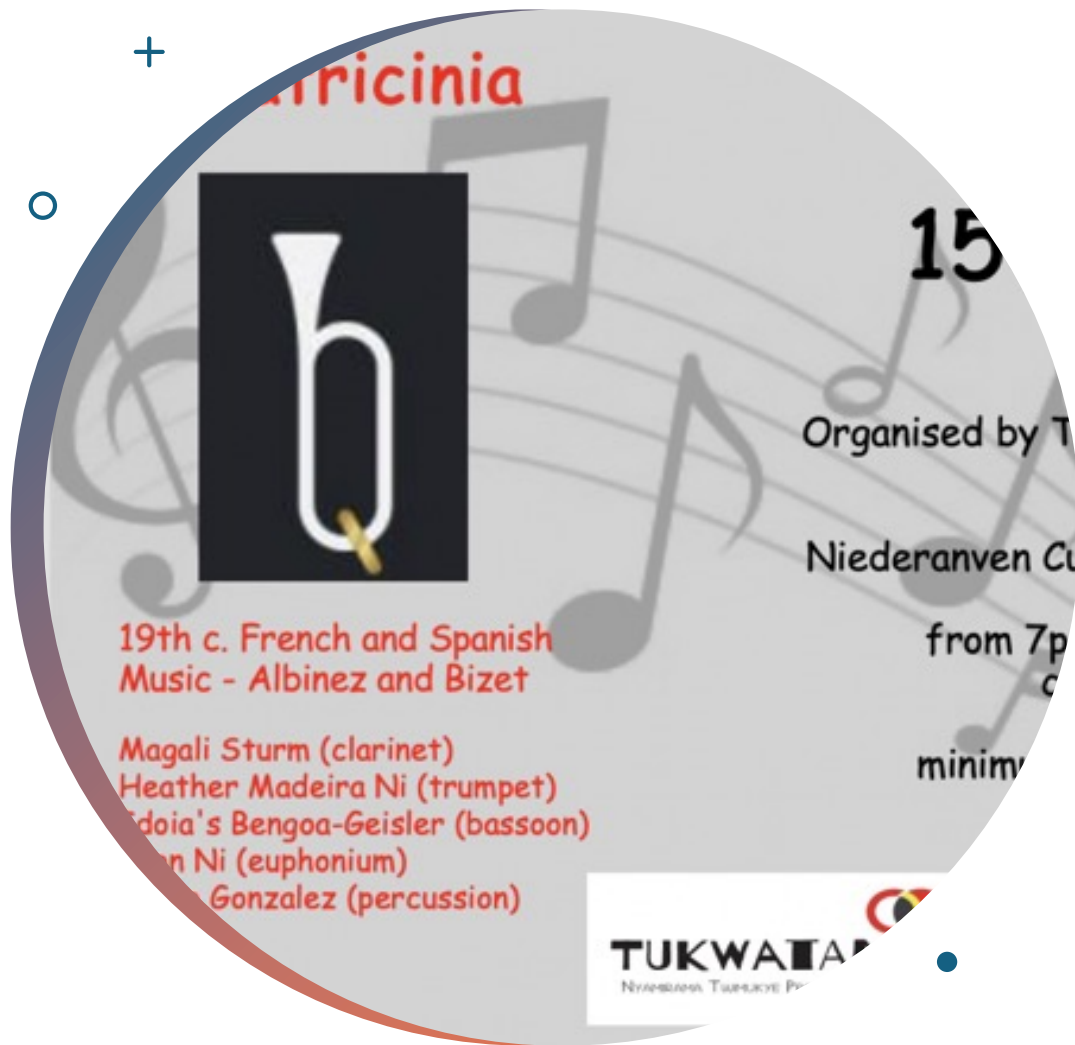
- ❖ Forty guests (members with partners)
- ❖ Jazz music in the bar
- ❖ Christmas Carols
- ❖ Festive & congenial atmosphere
- ❖ Organised by Mette, Linda and Jan



Member events 14 January 2025: Literary Evening

- ❖ James Leader held a Literary Event at Café des Capucins
- ❖ New book, *Into Babel*
- ❖ Great presentation and discussions





Member event 15 January: Charity Concert

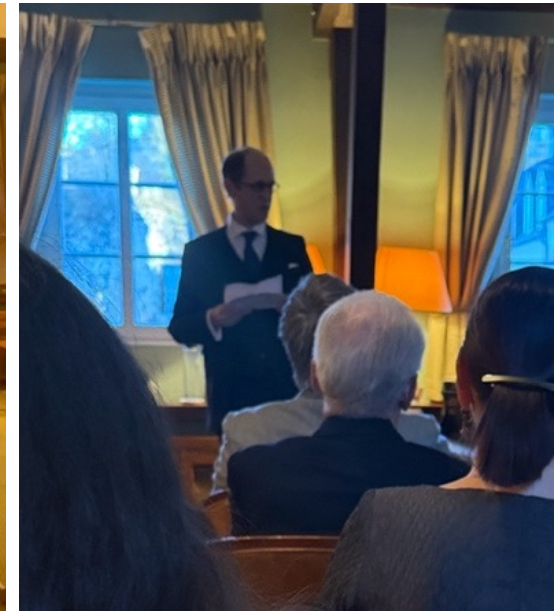
- ❖ Organised by Peter Carter and his wife Beverly.
- ❖ Professional musicians
- ❖ Voluntary donations through ticket sales
- ❖ very successful

Concert-Dinner

1 February 2025

Oxonians gather again!

- ❖ Oxbridge event with Cercle
- ❖ Oxbridge tenor Alexander Gebhard & pianist Grégoire Baumberger.
- ❖ Franz Schubert's 'Winterreise'
- ❖ Venue: Cercle Münster
- ❖ Spearheaded by Jan Könighaus in cooperation with Cambridge and Cercle, & including guests from LSE



New Year's dinner-talk in Düsseldorf

Oxbridge Rhineland

21 February 2024

- ❖ Several OUSL members attended
- ❖ Speaker: Dr. Dennis Lehmkuhl (Oriol, Oxford, 2005), University of Bonn
- ❖ Theme: 'Einstein's first visit to Oxford and how it convinced him that the universe is expanding.'
- ❖ Organised by Markus Brandstetter





Dinner-Talk on the Hanseatic League

25 March 2025

- ❖ OUSL event at Cercle Münster
- ❖ Speaker: Oxonian economist and historian Jens Tholstrup
- ❖ Theme: 500 years of trade – from herring to cloth
- ❖ Well-attended by guests from Oxbridge, LSE, the Johanniter Order, and Deutscher Verein.

*Oxonian economist and
historian Jens Tholstrup*



Member event: Dinner-talk at the Johanniter Order

3 April 2025

- ❖ OUSL Chair and Vice Chair in support of charity event
- ❖ Invited guest speaker: Mette Ahlefeldt-Laurvig
- ❖ Theme: Reformation issues
- ❖ Guests from Oxbridge alumni and Deutscher Verein
- ❖ Net profit went to Johanniter Hëllefsgemeinschaft



Guided Tour to Villeroy & Boch in Mettlach and lunch at Schloß Sareck

12 April 2025

- ❖ Visit to Villeroy & Boch Headquarters
- ❖ Organised by Jan Könighaus and Baron Paul de Schorlemer
- ❖ Oxonians, partners, and children
- ❖ Ambassador Tadahiro Matsubara of Japan
- ❖ V&B park, historic abbey, V&B World Museum
- ❖ Lunch at Schloss Saareck
- ❖ Shopping spree at V&B Outlet!



Felix von Hardenberg giving a toast



On the tour of the V&B park



Our group in front the headquarters of the old Abbey



Ambassador Matsubara and his new tie!

New Members Welcome Drink

On a sunny 6 May 2025

- ❖ Society held its very first 'New Members Welcome Drink'
- ❖ Arranged by our Membership Coordinator Sam Vinandy-Lau
- ❖ Lively two-hour cocktail reception



'Old' and new members mingle at Café des Capucins (now Mezza)

Future events 2025-2026

Tripartite Dinner at Golf-Club Grand-Ducal

19 June 2025

- ❖ Tripartite Gala Dinner for Oxbridge and LSE alumni
- ❖ Oxford organises
- ❖ Fully subscribed!
- ❖ Drinks on the terrace – Music by Duo Natalia – a sumptuous three-course dinner in banquet room



Golf-Club Grand-Ducal



*Natalia van der
Mersch, violin*

*Natalia
Kovalzon, piano*

FURTHER PROJECTS IN PLANNING:

Autumn 2025 and Spring 2026:

- ⇒ Mid-September, mid-morning hike in the beautiful area around Kopstal, followed by lunch at Restaurant Edelwyss
- ⇒ September 2025: 'Croquet in the city'
- ⇒ September 2025 Freshers' dinner at Restaurant Chiche!
- ⇒ 19-21 September 2025: 'Meeting of Minds' weekend in Oxford for world-wide alumni
- ⇒ Dinner-Talk with the Swiss Ambassador to Luxembourg, H. E. Benno Laggner
- ⇒ 7 October 2025: Dinner-talk with Dominic Grieve, Oxonian and former Attorney General for England and Wales
- ⇒ 30-31 October 2025: Student Fair at Campus Belval
- ⇒ 4 December 2025: Annual OUSL Christmas Gala Dinner
- ⇒ Brewery visit
- ⇒ Joint event with Conférence Saint-Yves and Oxbridge
- ⇒ First aid course

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***Warm thanks to all Oxonian alumni for
your continued support of our society!***

With best wishes,

Mette Ahlefeldt-Laurvig

Chair, Oxford University Society of Luxembourg
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