

# **2018 Epiphany Conference Programme**

(version 03 January 2017)

The 2018 Epiphany Conference

Balliol College, University of Oxford  
Epiphany (Saturday 06 January) 2018

Convened by Matthew Carlos (host) + Yorick Wilks

a collaboration between  
the Cambridge Epiphany Philosophers + the Oxford Monastic Institute

with Support from  
The SOBOTA Foundation + The Cambridge Institute for Applied Psychology and Religion

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**Schedule** ( 10:00 - 18:00 followed by Eucharist )

<u>Hour</u>	<u>Activity</u>	<u>Presenters</u>
09:30	MORNING PRAYER (optional)	
10:00	Tea/ Coffee + Welcome	Matthew Carlos + Yorick Wilks
<i>Session I ::</i>	<i>Biology + Spirituality</i>	
10:30	Science + Spiritual Practices	Rupert Sheldrake
11:00	Agriculture, Philosophy + Monastic Practice	Alex Markham
11:30	Discussion	
<i>Session II ::</i>	<i>People + Practice</i>	
12:00	Liturgy, Community + Contemplation	Leon + Isabel Clarke
12:30	Discussion	
13:00	LUNCH	
<i>Session III ::</i>	<i>Language, Intelligence + Religion</i>	
14:00	Passwords to Paradise	Nick Ostler
14:45	Super-intelligence + Creator Deities	Yorick Wilks
15:15	Discussion	
15:45	Epiphany Philosophers' Website Update	Roberta Catizone + Yorick Wilks
16:00	TEA	
<i>Session IV ::</i>	<i>Psychology + Religion</i>	
16:30	Psychology, Religion + the Epiphany Philosophers	Fraser Watts
17:00	Mara, Madness + Meditation	Andrew Skilton
17:30	Discussion	
18:00	EUCCHARIST	

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*Attendees :: Cambridge Epiphany Philosophers [EPs].*

**Arthur Bell** is an Anglican priest, who went to Mirfield after Cambridge. He lived in Canada, and also for a time at 11 Marion Close (the epicentre of much EP activity).

**Chris Clarke** was active in the EPs from the 1970s onwards. A prominent member of the General Relativity group, that included Steven Hawking, Chris worked in cosmology and relativity at an international level between 1960s and 1990s. In 1999 he left his post as Professor of Mathematics at the University of Southampton and began publishing on science and spirituality.

**Isabel Clarke** was active in the EPs from the 1970s onwards. Isabel became an NHS clinical psychologist and has published and spoken extensively on psychosis and spirituality.

**Leon Clarke** works in computer security and is training to be a CofE reader. He has been involved in the EPs since before he could walk (having been dragged along to meetings by Chris and Isabel Clarke as a child), and has an amateur interest in many of the philosophical questions considered by the EPs.

**Rupert Sheldrake** is a distinguished biologist and author who has held research fellowships at the University of Cambridge, Harvard University, and The Royal Society. He is the originator of the hypothesis of *morphic resonance*. Rupert's first book, *A New Science of Life* (1981/2009), was written while living for 18 months in the ashram of Fr Bede Griffiths in Tamil Nadu.

**Fraser Watts** is currently Visiting Professor of Psychology of Religion at the University of Lincoln, and Executive Secretary of the International Society for Science and Religion. Formerly he was Reader in Theology and Science, Director of the Psychology and Religion Research Group, and a Fellow of Queens' College, University of Cambridge. He is also an Anglican priest, though not currently in active ministry.

**Yorick Wilks** is Emeritus Professor of Artificial Intelligence at the University of Sheffield, whose first research was on the nature of metaphysical argument and its computational modelling. The recipient of many prestigious international awards, Yorick founded some of the largest AI labs in America and Britain. Richard Braithwaite supervised his Cambridge doctorate, and he has remained an EP since.

*EP Guest Attendees: (EP connexion)*

**Janet Bell** (Arthur Bell)

**Roberta Catizone** (Yorick Wilks) originally trained in Fine Art before moving into computer programming and working extensively with Yorick Wilks. She is the EP website steward.

**Vanessa Mathews** (the Clarkes) trained in Humanities and Information Technology. She is currently a researcher on the SOCIAM (social machines) project at Southampton University, investigating AI, machine consciousness, and how their pragmatic implementation may impact what it means to be human. She has a strong interest in how humans experience their own self-awareness with particular reference to religion, and is very interested in the cross-over between psychology and spirituality.

**Nick Ostler** (Yorick Wilks) studied Greek, Latin, Philosophy, and Economics at Balliol College before taking his doctorate at MIT in Linguistics and Sanskrit (studying under Noam Chomsky), and becoming a consultant on language technology and intelligent systems. He is author of several books, the latest being *Passwords to Paradise*, and currently chairs the Foundation for Endangered Languages.

**Harris Wiseman** (Fraser Watts) received his PhD from the Faculty of Divinity at the University of Cambridge. He is currently a Senior Research Associate at the Institute of Education and author of *The Myth of the Moral Brain: the limits of moral enhancement* (MIT, 2016).

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*Attendees :: Oxford Monastic Institute [OMI] (\* attended EP conference 2017 as guests of Yorick Wilks)*

**June Boyce-Tillman** is an Anglican priest, and Professor of Applied Music at the University of Winchester, where she founded the Centre for the Arts as Wellbeing, the Tavener Centre for Music and Spirituality, and worked to establish an inter-faith monastic residence hall. Her work focuses upon Christian female mystics and musicians.

**Alex Bruce** is Professor of Law and Buddhist Chaplain at Australian National University specialising in the intersection of law with animal ethics, consumer protection, and religion. A Gelug monk, he created and moderated the 2007 Interreligious Symposium in Canberra, Australia with HH the Dalai Lama.

**Iлона Budapesti**, a Buddhist monastic formerly of Harvard and Stanford Linguistic Faculties, Data Science Engineer for two of the top three global e-commerce companies, a derivative negotiator and analyst for Lehman Brothers is now using Artificial Intelligence to date canonical Buddhist texts. \*

**Matthew Carlos** is a philosopher, artist, philanthropist, and Zen monk. He has served as a professor for HRH The Prince of Wales' School of Traditional Arts and the European Graduate School, worked with TED Prize winning architectural firm Zero Zero, exhibited at the Tate Modern, co-invented technology platforms at AT&T, and served as a rural hospital chaplain. He directs the Oxford Monastic Institute.\*

**Aisvarya Das** is a philosopher and Guadiya Vaishnava monastic specialising in religious visualisation. He ran mainframe computers for London financial institutions during the 1980s, subsequently spending twenty years in outreach, counselling, and management for temples in the USA, UK, Asia, and Europe.

**Christine Madsen** is a librarian and distiller. Formerly of the Harvard and Oxford university libraries, she was the first to systematically examine digital cultural heritage materials and technology usage among the diaspora of Tibetan scholars and monks. She is an Academic Visitor with the OeRC.\*

**Alex Markham** is a Franciscan Tertiary from an ancient family of yeoman farmers in Hampshire. He took degrees in Biology at Oxford, the environment at Berkbeck, and is now a Lecturer in Horticulture at Sparsholt College currently researching the intersection of Agriculture, Philosophy, and Music.

**Martha Reeves**, who writes under the name Maggie Ross, is an Anglican solitary of forty years profession who is directly responsible to the former Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams. She is the author of a number of books, the newest being the two-part *Silence: A User's Guide*. She translated several volumes in the Carthusian novice conference series published by DLT, and spent several years in a Carthusian charterhouse in France.

**Andrew Skilton** is former Fellow of Clare Hall Cambridge, Visiting Professor at McGill University, and currently Senior Research Fellow in Buddhist Studies at King's College London. Ordained a monk in one of the earliest Western Buddhist lineages, he edits the journal *Contemporary Buddhism*.

*OMI Guest Attendees: (OMI connexion)*

**Frederik Kaster** (Iлона Budapesti) has a PhD in Physics specialising in biomedical image processing from the University of Heidelberg, and now uses machine learning techniques as a quantitative portfolio analyst and software developer with Oxford Asset Management.

**Graham Ward** (Martha Reeves + Matthew Carlos) is Regius Professor of Divinity and Chair of the Faculty of Theology and Religion at the University of Oxford. He is alumnus of Fitzwilliam College, and formerly Dean and Director of Studies for Theology at Peterhouse, University of Cambridge. Graham has wide interests in the nature of religion and its relationship to anthropology, sociology, politics, gender theory, psychoanalysis, contemporary science, and has written on the theology of language.