

**Royal Holloway, University of London**  
**17 May 2018**

**Citation for Dr Claire Gobbi Daunton**

Chairman of Council, it is my privilege to present to you Dr Claire Gobbi Daunton.

This honour is awarded in recognition of Claire's extraordinary contribution to Royal Holloway and Bedford New College through her steadfast voluntary work for the Bedford Society. The Society was set up for alumni and former staff of Bedford College, one of our founding colleges.

As Chair of the Bedford Society Committee, Claire has skilfully steered the Committee and Bedfordians, and in the course, I am sure, ironed out the inevitable differences of opinion that arise at times. Through her tireless work, Claire has reengaged many alumni, keeping the spirit and unique identity of Bedford College alive and thriving.

This award also recognises the invaluable support that Claire gives to the Bedford Society Scholarship Fund, specifically the time and energy she has dedicated to support fundraising activity, which has enabled many postgraduate students to achieve academic excellence.

Claire read history at Bedford College. Although her Undergraduate degree course took place during the oil crisis of 1973, the subsequent three-day week and disruption that followed, Claire (then Claire Gobbi), has described this period of her life as "a golden time." Unsurprising, when you consider that the history department of Bedford College was located in St John's Lodge, the glorious villa in Regent's Park with a rose garden running down to the boating lake where some tutorials took place from time to time.

The intercollegiate nature of the History degree in that period meant that Claire was able to take courses in different colleges of the university. She and her fellow students were encouraged to feel rooted to Bedford, but also a vital part of the University of London.

Claire graduated from Bedford College in 1974, and went on to study for a MA in European Studies at Queen Mary, University of London and later a PhD in Medieval History at the University of East Anglia. The expertise gained from the MA course led to her appointment to a post with the European Commission where she wrote a report on archive-keeping. The report was helpful in the setting up of the Commission's Archive Service.

"What I took from Bedford College was a deep love of my subject and of academic enquiry more generally, and an abiding sense of gratitude to the place and to the people who taught me" Claire said.

This sense of connection to Bedford was strengthened when Claire became part-time Archivist at the College in 1984. When Bedford merged with Royal Holloway College in 1985, Claire began working with Elizabeth Bennett to produce the *Catalogue of the Archives of Bedford College (University of London), 1849-1985*, which was published in 1987.

Claire's knowledge of Bedford's extraordinary heritage as the first higher education institution for women in the UK is of huge value to Royal Holloway from both an alumni relations and historical point of view. Claire has generously lent her time and expertise to work with our archivist to make the College aware of the Bedford archives and the extraordinary findings within them.

Claire's academic career led her to many varied roles as an historian within the University of London before she moved with her husband, Professor Martin Daunton FBA, to Cambridge in 1997 where he took up the Professorship of Economic History and became Chair of the Faculty of History and of the School of Humanities and Social Sciences. He was elected to the Mastership of Trinity Hall in 2004 and served in this role for 10 years.

Claire's expertise in medieval history led to her involvement in some fascinating research projects, including in 2006, a project with the University of East Anglia, funded by the Leverhulme Trust to carry out doctoral research on the patronage and iconography of Norfolk glass in the late medieval period.

In 2012, Claire's research led her to making a discovery which made the national news. While studying the medieval stained-glass windows of St Clement's Church in Outwell, Norfolk, Claire spotted a set of 12 extraordinary and unique medieval carvings in the roof of the nave. Blackened with age and nearly impossible to see, the carvings had been forgotten. Claire believes these date to the mid fifteenth century. The style of the carving is similar to that in some European churches; but the subject matter has not been repeated elsewhere. These carvings are now considered to be of national, and even international, importance.

Claire has now served as Chair of the Bedford Society for two years, and served as Vice Chair for two-and-a-half years before that. The Society has raised £100,000 towards the refurbishment of 11 Bedford Square, and a further £100,000 is currently in the Bedford Society Scholarship Fund. None of this would have been possible without the support of the Committee on which Claire has played a leading role.

In recognition, therefore, of the extraordinary amount of time and energy which she has dedicated on a voluntary basis to the College to engage and inspire Bedford College alumni via the Bedford Society, may I invite you, Chairman of Council, to induct as an Honorary Fellow of Royal Holloway and Bedford New College, Dr Claire Gobbi Daunton.

Professor Katie Normington  
Senior Vice-Principal (Academic)  
17 May 2018