

Our history

Royal Holloway and Bedford Colleges combine over 160 years of historic discoveries, notable alumni and academic innovation. Here are some of the milestones along the way.

1849

Bedford College is founded by **Elisabeth Jesser Reid** as the UK's first higher education college for women

Early students include the novelist **George Eliot**, famed for *Middlemarch*, and the first woman doctor **Dr Elizabeth Blackwell**, who trained nurses in the American Civil War



1886

Royal Holloway College is opened by **HM Queen Victoria**



1887

The first 28 students begin their studies, including our first international student, from China



1894

Students include the suffragette martyr **Emily Wilding Davison**, the pioneering woman surgeon, **Dr Louisa Martindale CBE** and her sister **Hilda Martindale CBE**, who will argue for equal pay and rights for women as a senior civil servant



1860

Sarah Parker Remond, the slavery abolitionist and early African American female physician, is a student



1910

Countess Frances Lloyd-George CBE, the wife and Private Secretary to Prime Minister David Lloyd-George, graduates in Classics



DAME
IVY
COMPTON-BURNETT
NOVELIST
LIVED HERE
1897 TO 1915

1905

The novelist **Dame Ivy Compton-Burnett DBE** and **Professor Helen Cam CBE**, who will become the first female professor at Harvard, are students

1900

Both Bedford and Royal Holloway Colleges are admitted as Schools of the University of London



1912

Margaret Benson becomes Professor of Botany at Royal Holloway College, the first female professor in the country



1914

Richmal Crompton, the author of the *Just William* books, is a student as is **Ethel Watts**, the first woman to qualify as a chartered accountant



1922

Students include **Dame Kathleen Lonsdale DBE FRS**, one of the first two women elected to the Royal Society and **Sylvia Scaffardi**, co-founder of the Council for Civil Liberties, now known as Liberty



1939

Bedford College is evacuated to Cambridge during the Second World War



1944

Sir William Hunter McCrea FRS becomes Head of Mathematics at Royal Holloway. His discovery that the sun is composed mainly of hydrogen leads to the development of the Big Bang Theory



1942

Eunice Timberlake, Geography lecturer at Bedford College, develops new techniques in air navigation to aid air rescue after attacks on Atlantic convoys



1998

The Information Security Group wins the Queen's Prize for Industry



2003

Community Action is founded to enable students to volunteer in the community



2003

Sir Andrew Motion, the Poet Laureate, is appointed Professor of Creative Writing and the singer and rapper **Example** graduates in Media Arts



1996

The Brit Award-winning singer **KT Tunstall** graduates in Music and Drama



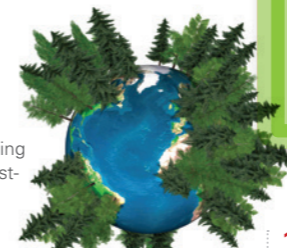
1995

Professor **Euan Nisbet** begins monitoring the rising levels of atmospheric methane, a highly potent but neglected greenhouse gas



1989

The South East Asia Research Group starts work on intrepid mapping of this remote rainforest-covered region



1985

Royal Holloway and Bedford New College opens following the merger of the two colleges. **HM Queen Elizabeth II** inaugurates the new College the following year



1980

Postgraduates include **Janice Hadlow**, the future Controller of BBC2



1977

Baroness Catherine Ashton, who will become the EU's first ever foreign minister, graduates in Social Science



1969

Professor Samuel Tolansky receives samples of moon dust from NASA, brought back by Apollo XI, for his diamond research at Royal Holloway



1960

Professor David Bellamy OBE, the renowned broadcaster and environmental activist, graduates with a PhD in Botany



1965

Both colleges become fully co-educational



1982

Students include **Emma Freud OBE**, now Director of Red Nose Day and **Dr Simon Thurley CBE**, the CEO of English Heritage



1954

Jean Rook, the legendary *Daily Express* columnist, known as the "First Lady of Fleet Street" graduates in English



1957

The future Deputy Speaker of the House of Commons and the House of Lords, **Baroness Janet Fookes DBE**, graduates in History



2013
Our Music Department is awarded a prestigious Regius Professorship by the Queen to mark her Diamond Jubilee. Until now, only two had been created in the last century

2012
We are the Olympic Village for Rowing. Our particle physicists contribute to the discovery of the Higgs Boson particle

2011
The winner of five Paralympic Gold Medals, **Sophie Christiansen OBE** graduates in Mathematics

