

Dame Helen Ghosh DCB (née Kirkby, Modern History, 1973)



Dame Helen Ghosh became Balliol College's first female Master in 2018. She previously served as Director General of the National Trust from 2012, following a distinguished career in the Civil Service.

Helen came up to St Hugh's in 1973 and went on to achieve a First in Modern History before moving to Hertford College as a Senior Scholar to complete her MLitt on the cultural history of sixth-century Italy.

On leaving Oxford, Helen embarked on a career in the Civil Service, where she worked for 33 years in a variety of government departments, including the Department for Housing, Communities and Local Government, the Cabinet Office, HM Revenue and Customs, and the Department for Work and Pensions. Between 2005 and 2010 she was Permanent Secretary at the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, and from 2010 she served as Permanent Secretary at the Home Office. While a civil servant, she was the first - and so far the only - woman to serve as Permanent Secretary of one of the three "great Departments of State" (Treasury, Foreign Office, Home Office).

Helen was elected an Honorary Fellow of St Hugh's College by Governing Body in 2007 in recognition of her distinguished career. She was appointed a Dame Commander of the Bath in the 2008 Birthday Honours.

She left the Civil Service in 2012 to become Director General of the National Trust before moving to Balliol in 2018. We were delighted to catch up with Helen in an interview for the 2017 edition of the College *Magazine* just as she was about to become Master of Balliol. [Click here](#) to read the interview.

Helen is currently a Visitor of the Ashmolean Museum and a Trustee of the Rhodes Trust.