

KING'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE

presents

MODERN ENQUIRIES

into the

Nature and Causes

of the

WEALTH OF NATIONS



INTERNATIONAL PROSPERITY AND DEVELOPMENT
250 YEARS AFTER ADAM SMITH

A two-day conference marking 250 years since the publication of Adam Smith's *The Wealth of Nations* (1776). Leading scholars will reflect on the history and theory of long-term economic growth and development, concluding with a public forum exploring key issues in future global development, comprising Sir Tim Besley, Matthew Agarwala, Jane Humphries and (in the chair) Gillian Tett. This gathering will be followed by the University of Glasgow's major commemorative conference in October 2026, which will launch an accompanying volume published by Cambridge University Press.

KEYNES HALL, KING'S COLLEGE & THE SIDGWICK SITE

5–6 March MMXXVI

Convened by GARETH AUSTIN (Cambridge), ALEX TREW (Glasgow) and TOKE AIDT (Cambridge)

Supported by KING'S COLLEGE CAMBRIDGE & THE ELLEN McARTHUR TRUST

Day 1: Thursday 5 March 2026

Keynes Hall, King's College

9.15–9.25 Welcome

Gillian Tett (Provost, King's) & **Gareth Austin** (Research Director of King's College)

9.25–10.45 Session 1: The Wealth of Nations

Chair: John Dunn (Cambridge)

Alex Trew (Glasgow)

'Adam Smith's Economic System at 250: Imaginary Machines for a Transformed World'

Craig Smith (Glasgow)

'The Principles which lead and direct Philosophical Enquiries illustrated by the Wealth of Nations'

11.00–13.00 Session 2: Adam Smith's World

Chair: Sriya Iyer (Cambridge)

Jane Humphries (Oxford)

'The Invisible Hands of Women and Children in Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations*'

Simon Szreter (Cambridge)

'The Poor Law, Settlement and the Division of Labour'

Regina Grafe (Cambridge)

'Thinking with Adam Smith: Factor Prices in Colonial Latin America'

14.00–15.20 Session 3: Religion and Moral Sentiment

Chair: Toke Aidt (Cambridge)

Sascha O. Becker (Warwick)

'Religion and the Wealth of Nations'

Tim Besley (LSE)

'Moral Sentiments in Market Economies' (*with Maitreesh Ghatak*)

15.35–16.55 Session 4: Long-Term Perspectives on British Economic Development

Chair: Martin Daunton (Cambridge)

Leigh Shaw-Taylor (Cambridge)

'Smithian growth in England and Wales 1415-1820'

Eoin McLaughlin (Heriot-Watt)

'The Inclusive Wealth of Nations: the Case of the UK, 1760–2020'

Day 2: Friday 6 March 2026

Morning: Keynes Hall, King's College

9.00–11.00 Session 5: Finance and Economic Development

Chair: Charles Read (Oxford/Cambridge)

Craig Muldrew (Cambridge)

'The Importance of Finance Capital for the Wealth of a Nation'

J. Vernon Henderson (LSE)

'Adam Smith and the City (tentative title)' (*with Leigh Shaw-Taylor & Jacques Thisse*)

Tiago Cavalcanti (Cambridge)

'Financial Intermediaries and Economic Development'

11.15–12.45 Session 6: From Colonies to Global Economic Development

Chair: Nuala Zahedieh (Edinburgh/Cambridge)

Pat Hudson (Cardiff)

'Growth and Development: Smith and the Colonies'

Gareth Austin (Cambridge)

'Causes of the Wealth of Nations: Economic Development over Time and Space'

▷ **Venue Change** ◁

The afternoon session takes place at the **Sidgwick Site**, approximately 10 minutes' walk from King's College. Please allow adequate time for the transition.

Afternoon: LG19, Arthur Goodhart Lecture Theatre, Faculty of Law, Sidgwick Site

14.00–16.00 Public Forum: The Next 25/250 Years

Chair: Gillian Tett (Provost, King's)

Panellists: Sir Tim Besley (LSE), Matthew Agarwala (Kent), Jane Humphries (Oxford)

A forward-looking discussion on the prospects for global prosperity and development.

Free and open to the public. Students especially welcome.

Practical Information

Venues

Keynes Hall, King's College

King's Parade, Cambridge CB2 1ST

Day 1 (Thursday) and Day 2 morning sessions.

Main entrance via the Porter's Lodge on King's Parade.

Arthur Goodhart Lecture Theatre (LG19)

Faculty of Law, Sidgwick Site, West Road CB3 9DZ

Day 2 afternoon Public Forum.

Approx. 10 minutes' walk from King's College.

Registration & Attendance

Registration

Attendance is free. Please register via the [Eventbrite page](#) to secure your place and receive programme updates.

Public Forum

The Friday afternoon session is free and open to all. Students are especially welcome. No registration required, but please arrive early to secure a seat.

Recording

The Public Forum will be recorded and made available on YouTube following the event. Earlier sessions will not be recorded or live-streamed.

Accessibility

Both venues are wheelchair-accessible. Please contact the organisers in advance if you have specific access requirements.

Contact & Organisation

Enquiries

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Organising Committee

Gareth Austin, Alex Trew, Toke Aidt, Caro Schade, Christoph Hess, Nick Fitzhenry

Acknowledgements

This conference is generously supported by King's College, Cambridge and the Ellen McArthur Trust Fund.

Related Event

This gathering precedes the University of Glasgow's major commemorative conference in October 2026.