

Timeline of the Colleges

Royal Holloway and Bedford Colleges combine over 150 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**, who died at the Epsom Derby in 1913, the pioneering woman surgeon, **Dr Louisa Martindale CBE**, and her sister, **Hilda Martindale CBE**, who argued for equal pay and rights for women as a pioneering 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



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



1942
Eunice Timberlake, Geography lecturer at Bedford College, develops new techniques in air navigation to aid air rescue after attacks on Atlantic convoys



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



2003
Community Action is founded to enable students to volunteer in the community



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



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



Royal Holloway 2012

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



2010
Comedian and actor **Lenny Henry CBE** gains an MA in Screenwriting. Renowned alumnae sopranos **Dame Felicity Lott**, **Susan Bullock** and **Sarah Fox** perform at College to mark our Silver Jubilee



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



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



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



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



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



1954
Jean Rook, the legendary *Daily Express* columnist, known as the "First Lady of Fleet Street" graduates in English



1982
Students include **Emma Freud OBE**, now Director of Red Nose Day and **Dr Simon Thurley CBE**, the CEO of English Heritage and **Jayne-Anne Gadhia**, CEO of Virgin Money



1966
Students include **Baroness Diana Warwick**, now Chair of the Human Tissue Authority and **Baroness Jean McFarlane**, one of nursing's great pioneers and England's first Professor of Nursing



1957
The future Deputy Speaker of the House of Commons and the House of Lords, **Baroness Janet Fookes DBE**, graduates in History



1965
Both colleges become fully co-educational