



Fresh from the Forum



Come and
work for us!

£360k grant to tackle fossil fuel investment

Fossil fuel expansion is the leading contributor to the climate crisis. IF Senior Research Associate Lily Tomson is building the first low-carbon bond index in the world to help investors avoid supporting it with their money.



[Read more on page 9.](#)



[More upcoming events listed on page 2.](#)

John Bercow to speak at the IF

The former Speaker of the House of Commons is just one of the eight exciting speakers who will be joining us for talks at the IF this autumn.

We're looking for a new Deputy Director!

Do you have a broad range of interests and an enthusiasm for education? Do you enjoy engaging with the biggest issues of our time?

We are looking for a new Deputy Director to replace Dr Sarah Steele, who is leaving the IF after six years.

Applications will be accepted until 14 September. Looking forward to hearing from you!

[Find out more on page 14.](#)

[Meet the new IF Senior Research Associates on pages 4-6.](#)

Coming up next at the IF



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William
Hartston

Tuesday
3 October



Sharon
Dodua Otoo

Thursday
12 October



Philippe Sands

Monday
16 October



Women in
Policy in South
Asia

Thursday
26 October



John Bercow

Friday
10 November



Sheila
Fitzpatrick

Friday
17 November



Lisbet Rausing

Tuesday
21 November



Ros Atkins

Thursday
30 November

Coming up next at the IF



JESUS COLLEGE
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Intellectual Forum

Knock, knock! In pursuit of a grand unified theory of humour Tuesday 3 October, 19.30 Frankopan Hall and online

What makes a joke funny?

Humour comes in many forms, from slapstick to sarcasm to knock knock jokes. Author and humourist William Hartston will try to explain them all in this talk about what makes us laugh and why.

Join the IF to learn about the history of humour and to understand your own 'humour personality' a little bit more.

After the event, William will sign copies of his book, Knock, Knock! In Pursuit of a Grand Unified Theory of Humour, which will be available to purchase.

Reserve your ticket on [our Eventbrite page](#) now.



About the speaker

After reading maths at Jesus, William Hartston played too much chess to complete his PhD, which led to his twice winning the British Chess Championship. While writing far too many chess books, he worked as an industrial psychologist on the development and interpretation of personality tests. He has also written books about Puzzles, Sloths, Numeracy, Sex, Useless Information and The Things Nobody Knows. He is also an opera critic but still does not know what he wants to be when he grows up.



A look back at spring in the IF



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Julian of Norwich: mother, mystic, radical

The 14th century visionary Julian of Norwich was the first known woman to write in English. Dr Claire Gilbert spoke about her own 'vision' of Julian's life and read from her novel 'I, Julian'.



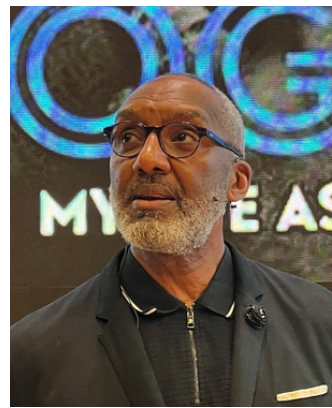
Ai Weiwei on memorials and freedom in art

The legendary Chinese contemporary artist, documentarian, and activist Ai Weiwei discussed the relationship between authority and art, visibility in the arts, and artistic process and time.



How to reach a nature-friendly future

Philip Lymbery explored how what we buy and eat affects climate change, and shared his hopes in the pioneers who are rethinking farming methods, rediscovering traditional techniques, and developing technologies to feed the global population.



Closing Ranks: My Life as a Cop

Dr Leroy Logan MBE, former superintendent in the Metropolitan police, discussed his life, his work, and his book, 'Closing Ranks: My Life as a Cop', and shared his thoughts on the future of policing and what could be done to improve matters.

Embracing fashion sustainability

Building on fashion brand Chloé's 70+ year tradition of responsible fashion, Riccardo Bellini discussed embracing sustainability at the core of the brand, and the role of leadership to drive a regenerative business transformation.



Writing American history in uncertain times

Leading USA historians offered dispatches from the front lines of the USA's history wars about conservative politicians' use of legislation and intimidation to restrict teaching and research in USA schools and campuses.



Charms and written amulets in medieval England

Dr Katherine Hindley spoke on the medieval charm tradition and the English Middle Ages, where multiple languages, alphabets and modes of transmission gained and lost their protective healing power.



Your events are brilliant. Thank you for making them free and available to all.

-Event attendee



New IF Senior Research Associates



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Fresh faces at the IF

We're very excited to introduce five new IF Senior Research Associates (SRAs) who are joining our team! Henry Ajder, Victoria Baines, Ramsay Brown, Matthew Hanney, and Sir Ralph Waller have a range of specialisms that span technology and cybersecurity, business and politics, and religion and education. They have been appointed as IF SRAs due to their impressive contributions to their fields and their commitment to important research and exciting new thinking.



Henry Ajder

Globally recognized generative AI expert

Henry pioneered the field of deepfake and generative AI impact research. He has authored ground-breaking reports including 2019's 'State of Deepfakes' while Head of Research at the world's first deepfake detection company Sensity AI, and led MIT's 'Just Joking?: The Politics of Synthetic Media' research programme. His research and advisory have since influenced international legislation, corporate strategy, and best practice on generative AI.

"Jesus and the Intellectual Forum are incredible spaces for innovative thought, particularly on global, systemic challenges that require creative answers and agile, multi-disciplinary approaches. I feel as if I have joined the perfect group of people to generate new ideas that might just work."

- Victoria Baines



Professor Victoria Baines

Leading authority in digital trust, safety, and cybersecurity

Victoria is the IT Livery Company Professor of Information Technology at Gresham College, where she is responsible for delivering public lectures that demystify world-changing technologies for 'ordinary' people. Victoria has published on cyberspace governance, online surveillance, the future of cybercrime, and the politics of security. She also provides research expertise and futures insight to a number of international organisations.

New IF Senior Research Associates



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Ramsay Brown

Artificial Intelligence governance and safety expert

Ramsay Brown is the founder and CEO of The AI Responsibility Lab and Mission Control, the platform for trusted Generative AI. Based in Los Angeles, Rams has spent his career bridging innovation to impact: leading in nanotechnology, brain mapping, behavioural engineering, AI, virtual reality therapeutics, and AI Safety. He works with the Fortune 500, governments, and militaries to make the future approachable and actionable to leaders today.



Matthew Hanney

Politics and government advisor

Matthew is a Senior Partner at the Business Advisory firm Flint Global, and was previously a Special Adviser to Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg in the UK coalition government, covering constitutional reform, managing parliamentary relations, and leading briefing teams for high-profile events such as PMQs and Select Committee appearances. Earlier in his career Matthew worked on Barack Obama's 2008 Presidential election campaign and wrote for The Economist on European politics.

"Every academic needs a community in which scholarship and discussion can take place and I am delighted to be part of the Intellectual Forum as it fulfils this need perfectly and I hope that I can make a positive contribution to it."

- Sir Ralph Waller



Sir Ralph Waller

Methodist Minister and educational leader and researcher

Sir Ralph is a Methodist Minister researching Religious Thought in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. He is the Director of the Farmington Institute, and was Principal of Harris Manchester College in the University of Oxford and a Pro-Vice-Chancellor of the University of Oxford. He is Ecumenical Canon of Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford, and an Etheldreda Ecumenical Canon of Ely Cathedral.

Stories from the IF team

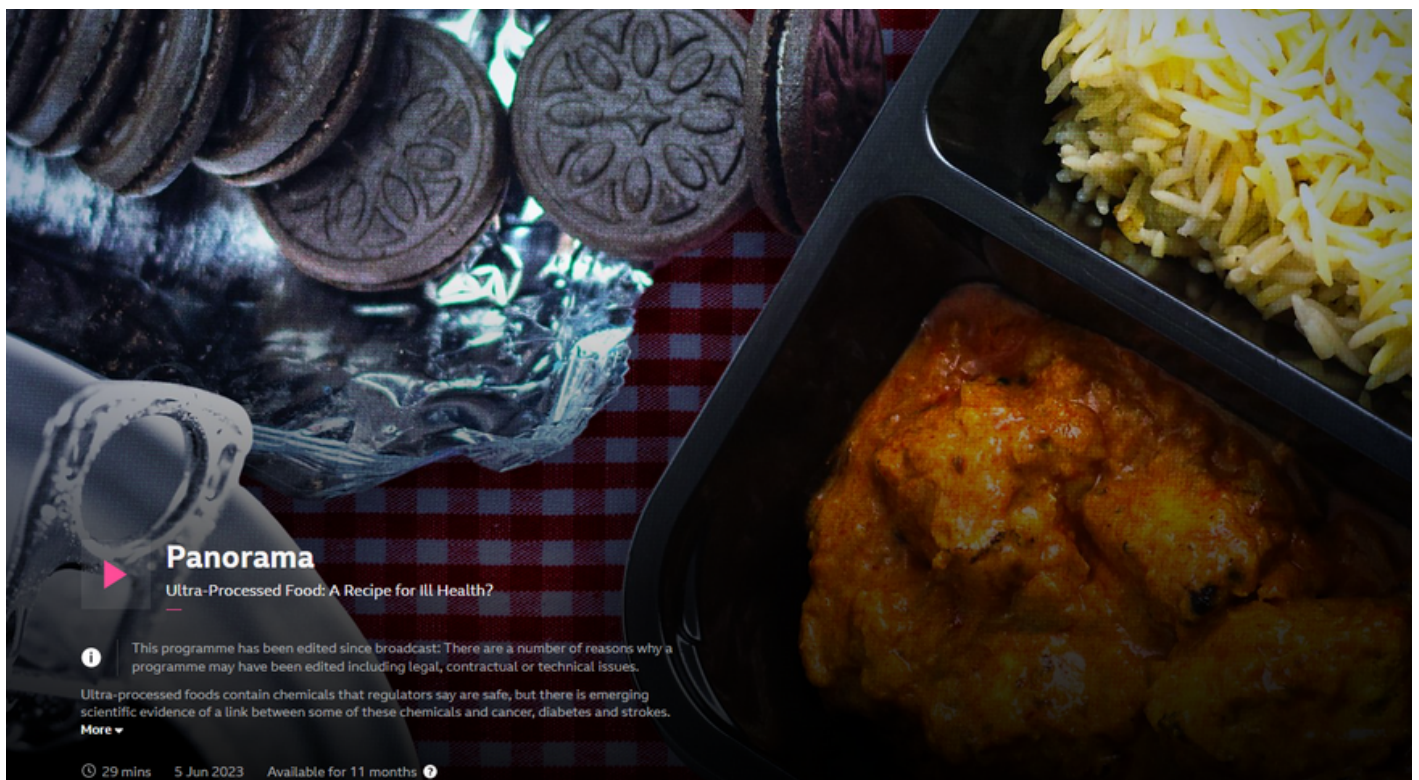


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A recipe for ill health? IF research into the regulation of 'ultra-processed foods' features on BBC Panorama

Growing research into the rise of chronic disease in the UK suggests it is urgent that we address the over-consumption of the 'ultra-processed foods' that have been linked to ill health. In a recent investigation by BBC's Panorama, aired on 5 June, IF Deputy Director Dr Sarah Steele addressed the influence that commercial sectors exert over public health and nutrition knowledge, calling for transparency and openness surrounding how regulators deem foods safe to eat.

The UK is grappling with a significant surge in chronic diseases, such as unprecedented type two diabetes prevalence, and a sharp increase in cancers amongst younger age groups. Scientific evidence suggests a connection between various health conditions, including cancer, diabetes, and strokes, and the prevalence of commercially-produced 'ultra-processed foods'—even as those foods are considered safe by UK regulatory bodies.



Sarah's research, done in collaboration with IF Senior Research Associate Lejla Sarcevic, analysed over 100,000 pages of email correspondences among academics at public institutions, executives from food and beverage companies, the Third Sector, and policymakers. The results reveal a profound network of influence that shapes policies around health and nutrition as well as what we believe we know about the foods and drinks we consume.

Stories from the IF team



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As Sarah explained in a Cambridge Festival talk that presented this research in more depth, companies producing ultra-processed food have a significant impact on the results of many of the scientific studies undertaken to determine whether or not these foods are safe to eat. In a systematic review of 206 nutrition articles, Sarah and her collaborators found that over half of these articles were sponsored by industry actors. What's more, these industry-sponsored papers were over seven times more likely to come up with an answer to the scientific question that favoured the industry's profit interests, demonstrating the powerful influence companies have over nutritional research and the resulting guidelines.

By understanding the motivations of research sponsors, she argues, we can take a more critical look at nutritional guidelines to better protect our long-term health.

[Watch the BBC Panorama episode](#)

[Watch the Cambridge Festival event recording](#)

About the researchers

[Sarah Steele](#) is a Senior Research Associate in Cambridge Public Health at the University of Cambridge. She is also a research collaborator at Bocconi University with her work sitting at the interface of Law, Criminology, International Relations and Politics, Sociology, and Global Health. Her works has featured on the BBC, CNBC, the ABC (Australia), HuffPost, IFLScience, Le Monde, and Times Higher Education, amongst other outlets.



[Lejla Sarcevic](#) is a former investigative journalist and researcher who has worked on issues of press freedom around the world. Her experience and focus on how people consume media and what organizations can do to encourage curiosity for complex topics led her to co-found ukiyo-kór – a creative agency that helps journalists, academics, scientists, and brands tell important stories in innovative, creative, and interactive ways. She is an IF SRA.



£360k to tackle fossil fuel investment



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On the cutting-edge of climate-conscious investment

Jesus College and the University of Cambridge have been jointly awarded a major £360k grant from Partners for a New Economy (P4NE) to support a project aimed at stopping the flow of money to fossil fuel companies.

The grant will significantly enhance the work of IF Senior Research Associate Lily Tomson, who is building a 1.5°C-aligned corporate bond index. This financial tool will help large-scale investors like the University of Cambridge or major pension funds to invest in alignment with the goals of the Paris Agreement and avoid funding the expansion of fossil fuel extraction and infrastructure.

In [an interview with Partners For A New Economy](#), Lily spoke in more detail about what her work involves and what it aims to achieve:



What are you working on?

Experts say that if we want to have more than half a chance of tackling the climate crisis and building a safe and just planet, no new fossil fuel infrastructure can be built going forward. I work with a group of researchers and practitioners testing whether it is possible to build a tool to direct money away from the expansion of fossil fuel extraction and infrastructure. We know we need some fossil fuels to keep the lights on right now, but the science is clear that to align with 1.5°C—the most the temperature of our planet can rise about pre-industrial levels while still avoiding the worst impacts of climate change—we should have stopped expanding in 2021. The tool we are building will aim to direct money away from companies in the power, banking, and insurance sectors as the main buyers and facilitators of new coal, oil, and gas.

Approximately 90% of new financing for fossil fuel expansion comes from loans and bonds, rather than equities (shares). Bond indices, therefore, play a critical role in assigning new capital to expansion. Ours would be the first corporate bond index to exclude fossil fuels, power utilities, and financial sector issuers whose actions would result in a world of dangerous heating above 1.5°C.

£360k to tackle fossil fuel investment



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We are in an exciting phase right now, as we now have the funding to pursue implementation. What that means is that we've got a feasibility study with very positive outcomes, and earlier than expected. It's been an interesting cultural process for me and the team in working out what level of uncertainty we are comfortable with to move forward on this. Nothing is ever going to be watertight, especially as we're building something entirely new and working with new constellations of data and incumbent index providers. We are trying to balance the academic mindset which is very evidence-based, alongside what feels much more like a social entrepreneur or intrapreneur mindset, building evidence up through testing it out in the world.

What demand is there for the product?

We have a core group of major global asset owners who are co-developing the project with us. These are investors that have the clout to potentially move global markets, and who say, "Wow, yes, we get this, we can see the bits that in investment terms you are going to find difficult, and we want to work with you on those and build this together." Beyond this inner circle, it's early days, but I've not had a single negative conversation and it's been really striking how much interest there is from big asset owners internationally. They can see the need for an index aligned with the 1.5°C goal, and with an independent, evidence-based approach which can tackle a lot of the industry's 'greenwash'.

What impact would you like the bond index to have?

Banks and insurers are playing an absolutely central role in financing the crisis that we're in, but there's not yet enough stringent focus on them as actors who could be seeing the world otherwise and could be doing something differently. And unlike, for example, a fossil fuel firm, facilitating expansion activity isn't their core business model: it shouldn't be that difficult for them to change their activities. We hope that the index gets fixed income teams globally thinking much more drastically about climate change and other systemic risks.

About the researcher

Lily Tomson was previously Head of Networks at the responsible investment NGO ShareAction, where she built and supported communities of asset owners to develop ambitious responsible investment approaches. She led a project hosted by the Department for Work and Pensions to launch the Occupational Pensions Stewardship Council, a £550bn community of UK pension schemes sharing knowledge and practice on stewardship. She also launched the 'Responsible Investment Network - Universities'. She is a trustee with specialist interest in finance and investing at John Ellerman Foundation, and a non-executive director at the money and banking advocacy and research group Positive Money and the new economy charity NEON. She works full-time for the IF.

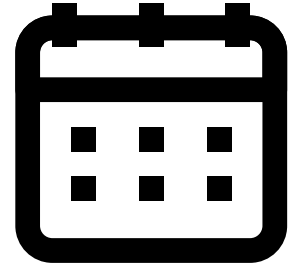
Never miss an event



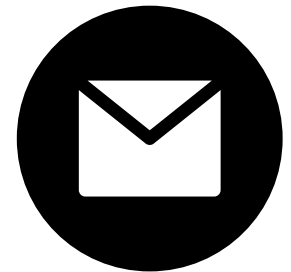
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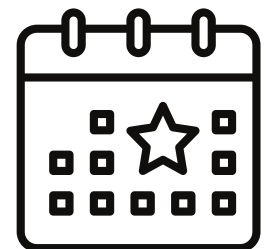
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Get involved



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Come and speak at the IF

We are always looking for new and exciting speakers to come and give presentations at the IF. We actively seek out variation and originality, and we invite anyone who has something they want to talk about to come and share it with our engaged and diverse audience, however niche.

If it's worth talking about, it's worth talking about at the IF.

Work with us: Executive and Professional Development programmes

Did you know you can work with the IF to run conferences and events? We offer a range of programmes for professionals at all stages of their careers, including bespoke packages for executives and companies. We offer different opportunities that can be calibrated for those looking to develop core business, leadership, or professional competencies, or to develop existing skills. We also offer a range of programmes for those looking to learn about the UK and Cambridge through cultural context and exposure.

Our programmes can be as short as half a day, through to several weeks, and have been offered in person, blended, and entirely online. For more information or to discuss your programme needs, please contact if-deputy@jesus.cam.ac.uk.

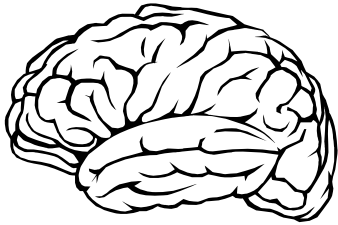
Educational and training programmes

We run educational courses for people from around the world, from student programmes to executive education. Our programmes for visiting students can act as an extension of their studies at a home institution, or offer an introduction to the British and Cambridge higher education environment. If you would like to know more, please contact if-deputy@jesus.cam.ac.uk.

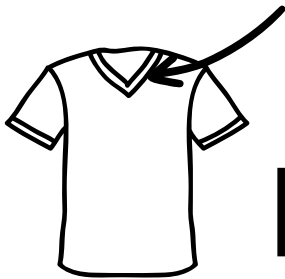
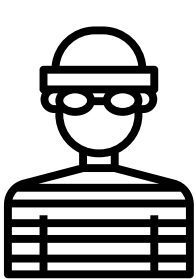
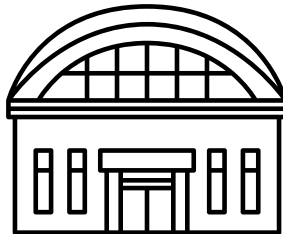
The IF Rebus challenge



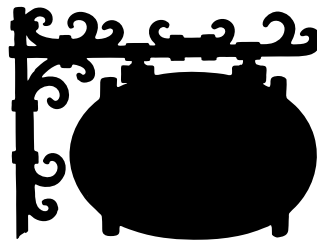
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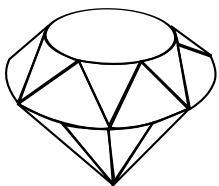
Answers
on the final
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Come work with us!



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We're looking for a new Deputy Director!

If you are driven by intellectual curiosity, possess a knack for leadership, and have a passion for education and executive education programming, we invite you to apply to join our dynamic team at the IF.

As Deputy Director, you will play a pivotal role in our leadership team while also acting as Professional Education Programmes Lead. This role is an incredible opportunity for someone looking to engage across the breadth of academia and policy.

For further discussion, please contact Dr Julian Huppert on if-director@jesus.cam.ac.uk. Applications close on 14 September at 23.59 and we hope to interview at the end of September.

[Job listing on
jesus.cam.ac.uk](#)

[IF Deputy Director
job description](#)



Farewell and good luck to Dr Sarah Steele!

Sarah joined the IF as its second team member in 2017. In the six years since, she has built up the executive education programme, served as a mentor to many interns, and helped develop the IF into a vibrant hub for multidisciplinary engagement. She is leaving to take up a Presidential Fellowship at City, University of London, where she will be continuing her important work on sexual harassment and bystander training. We wish her all the best in her new position!

"Sarah has made an immense difference to the IF. Without her, it would not be the exciting and dynamic place it is today. She has been an inspiration to many students in the College and led highly successful educational programs. Her academic work is making a difference in the real world. I'm delighted she has found such an excellent position to move to. She is irreplaceable – but we will try!"

– Dr Julian Huppert

IF team update



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Ella Curry, our former Communications Coordinator, left on 5 July to work at Dr Beynon's Bug Farm in Wales before pursuing a Master's in Entomology at Harper Adams University in Shropshire. She worked at the IF for ten months after completing her BA in English at Jesus College.

Ella said: "I have thoroughly enjoyed my time with the Intellectual Forum, and have learned a huge amount from the excellent instruction of the team and the varied and stimulating job requirements. I have felt welcomed, valued, and involved from the very beginning of my role, and it has been a pleasure to work with such a friendly and collaborative team on such interesting and important projects."



We are very pleased to introduce our new Communications Coordinator, Dr Molly Becker, who started full-time with the IF team on 5 July 2023.

After completing her PhD in American Literature at the University of Cambridge, Molly joined Christ's College as Alumni Communications Coordinator before moving over to the IF as Communications Coordinator.

Molly said: "I am very excited to be joining the Intellectual Forum and Jesus College. I'm looking forward to working with this great team, who have all been so welcoming, and to continuing the excellent work that Ella has begun."

Contact us



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DR JULIAN HUPPERT
Intellectual Forum Director
if-director@jesus.cam.ac.uk

Dr Julian Huppert is an academic and politician. He was the Member of Parliament for Cambridge and is now Founding Director of the IF at Jesus College.



DR SARAH STEELE
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CHARLOTTE NEWMAN
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The IF Rebus challenge answers



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Intellectual Forum

(brain = intellectual, four 'um')

Frankopan Hall

(Franc, open, hall)

Convening

(con, v, n, inn, g)

Julian Huppert

(jewel, e, on, h, up, port)

Jesus College

(Jesus, call, edge)