

CHRISTY KELLY

BST Alumnus 2013

From BST to Imperial College London and taking MSci Physics in Theoretical Physics to Heriot-Watt University, Christy Kelly never faltered on his academic path towards excellence. He has continued on this journey to achieve a PhD in Theoretical Physics, one of the highest academic achievements possible. In doing so, it is undeniable that he has continuously tried and succeeded to achieve his personal best: a drive that BST seeks to engender in all of its students.

During Christy's years of education, his desire to learn about a plethora of subjects and his eclectic curiosity led him down the path of 5 A-levels in Maths, Further Maths, Physics, Chemistry and English Literature.

These vast disciplines highlight the importance of maintaining diverse interests. His EPQ on Fascism and German culture was so memorable and even Ms Yamada and Mr Paterson were recently talking volubly about it, despite it being written 9 years ago! Ms Yamada said: 'Christy's truly incredible desire to read and think and explore ideas was so striking. We could all see he was destined to for an academic career.'

While doing his PhD, Christy went beyond academics and participated in various events. One of those he recounted was a conference he went to at Castiglioncello, Italy with a beautiful castle on top of a cliff where he "enjoyed the lovely Italian atmosphere and [the] interesting people". He also worked with a public engagement programme with an exhibition at the Royal Society where he talked to the wider community about 2D materials and got to meet the renowned physicist, Brian Cox. This multi-faceted approach to learning has taken him far, but his specialism and passion for physics is undeniable.

During his PHD, Christy focused on an alternate approach to quantum gravity instead of string theory to deal with the incompatibility of quantum mechanics and the theory of relativity. Even though all of this sounds complicated (which it is), he humourously commented that 'a lot of time was spent counting triangles in discrete structures'.



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Building on his successful PhD, Christy intends to further delve into the inner-workings of reality with a postdoctoral job at Riken (1 of 60 positions). He intends to research how much can be proven when some of the geometrical structure about the Penrose–Hawking singularity theorems is lost. This would give some hints about whether or not black holes continue to exist when spacetime is quantized or if they're just an artefact of the incomplete quantum gravity theory.

To the present-day BST students, Kelly acknowledges that picking your path forward in life is a daunting task. Kelly has strong words of inspiration for students to decide about their future and to “start thinking about what kind of person [you are].” He concedes that everyone is uniquely different, and he emphasises the importance of introspection and self-reflection in everyday life. “[Are you] someone who can live in a very planned and calculated manner? Or if you think you're the type of person to go with your gut, go with your gut.”

We can all take inspiration from the sheer effort and mental determination that Christy had as he persevered through his PhD. He's a fantastic example of what can be achieved when a truly inquisitive nature is combined with determination and ambition.

*Article written by BST Year 11 student,
Eugene Kang (February 2022)*



Christy Kelly 3rd from the right