The de Rohan Scholarship

Margaret de Rohan writes:

In 2006, at the time of the heroic 'Bike to the Future' venture, undertaken by Graham Upton (former Vice-Chancellor of Oxford Brookes University), my husband, Maurice, and I pledged £50,000 for an Oxford Brookes postgraduate scholarship for ten years if Graham successfully completed his ride. And, of course, being the man he is, he did.

Thus The Alison and Francis Gaillard Scholarship was born. Alison (nee de Rohan) and Francis Gaillard met and fell in love while reading for their BA degrees at Oxford Polytechnic in the early 1980s. They married in September 1985 and had their honeymoon in the Greek Islands. A year later they returned to Greece to celebrate their first wedding anniversary. A few months later - on 6 March 1987 - after a day trip to Bruges to see some of the art treasures there, they died together, within sight of Zeebrugge harbour, when 'The Herald of Free Enterprise' ferry capsized and sank in less than three minutes. One hundred and ninety one other people also died that tragic day.

In early November 2005, my husband, Maurice, was diagnosed with cancer. Despite a major operation and six months of chemo-therapy, he lost his valiant fight on 5 October 2006, and once again our family suffered a devastating loss.

But out of tragedy, good can often flow. It is now my great pleasure to establish a new postgraduate Scholarship - 'The de Rohan Scholarship' - in memory of Alison, Francis and Maurice - which will provide postgraduate Scholarships in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences for full-time and part-time study on one of the Masters courses in Creative Writing, English, History and the MA by Research in Art History per year for at least the next ten years.