

# INVITATION



Oxford & Cambridge Society of Rheinland

## P E R S O N A L

Düsseldorf, 11<sup>th</sup> November 2024

### Oxbridge new year with Professor Dr. Dennis Lehmkuhl

Dear friends,

As the universe keeps unfolding, so do our theories and insights into cosmology charting its development. The following image, for example, shows the so-called cosmic microwave background that is today interpreted as an echo from immediately after the big bang, and as conclusive evidence

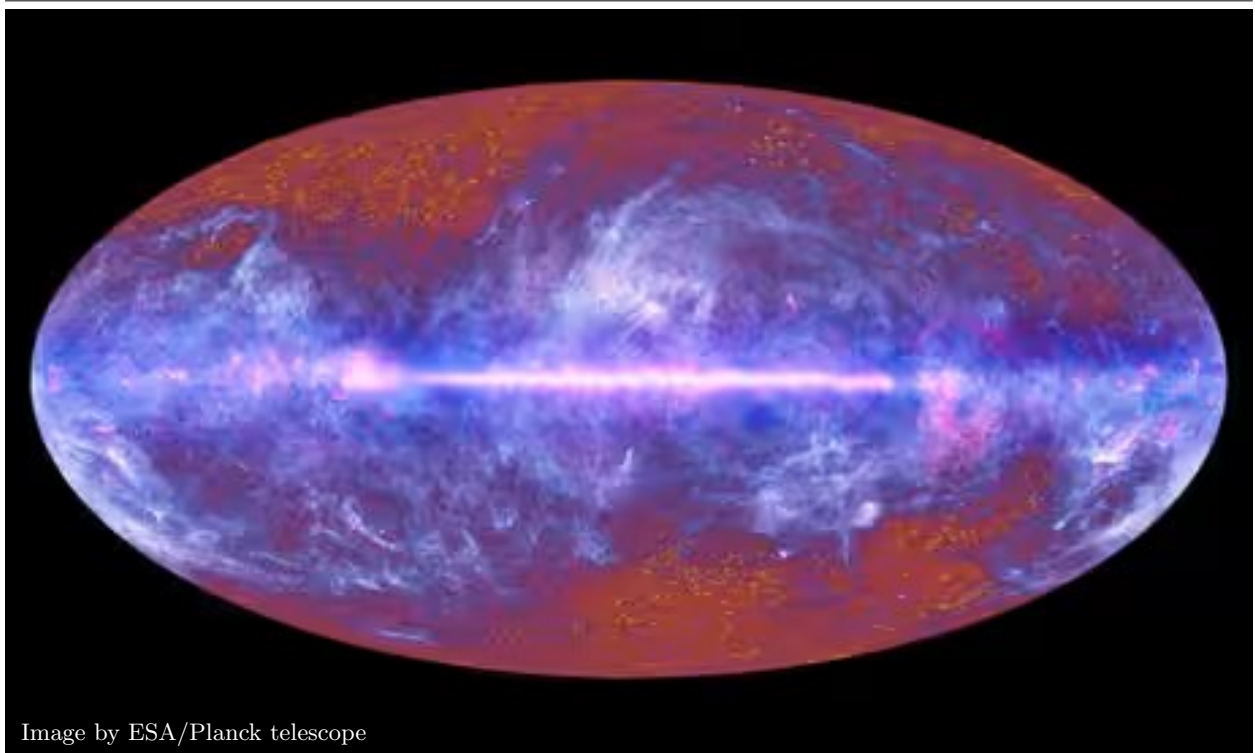


Image by ESA/Planck telescope

that the universe started about 14 billion years ago and has kept expanding since then. After exploring the origins of life in the deep sea together, this year, we're headed into outer space:

**Date & Time:** Friday, 21<sup>st</sup> February 2025, 6.30 for 7pm

**Venue:** [Industrie-Club](#), Elberfelderstrasse 6, 40213 Düsseldorf;

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Our guide on this trip to the edge of the universe and back to its beginnings will be Professor Dr. Dennis Lehmkuhl (Oriol, Oxford, 2005), Department of Philosophy, Universität Bonn, speaking on:

**“Einstein’s first visit to Oxford and how it convinced him that the universe is expanding.”**

Albert Einstein visited Oxford for the first time in 1930, just a few months after his first visit to the California Institute of Technology (Caltech). The year before, Edwin Hubble from Caltech had argued that the light reaching us from all galaxies in the universe is shifted towards the red part of the spectrum, a result that was quickly interpreted as evidence that the universe is expanding.

This was in stark contrast to Einstein’s own convictions, for in 1917 he had founded modern cosmology on the assumption that the universe is static (i.e. not changing in size) and eternal (i.e. without a beginning).

After discussions with Hubble and other astronomers at Caltech, Einstein gave his first lectures on the topic at Oxford, where, contrary to his original beliefs, he argued that the universe was expanding after all.

Drawing on hitherto unpublished manuscripts, calculations, and travel diaries, this talk will investigate how and why Einstein changed his mind, in what sense precisely the universe is expanding, and how that idea, in turn, gave rise to the idea of a “big bang” that started the universe. It will also become clear how bewildered Einstein, coming from the Berlin of the 1920s, was by both California and even more so Oxford.

As always, we will be providing not just food for thought, but thought for food:

Winter leaf salad dressed with grape and hazelnut vinaigrette,  
Picandou flambeed with honey, sprouts, and bread crisps

—

Duroc pork fillet wrapped in pancetta on cherry-pepper sauce  
by seasonal vegetables and potato noodles

or

Pike-perch fillet poached with mango-coconut sauce,  
spinach leaves, and Parisian potatoes-Piment d’Espelette.

The price for the evening is €75; this includes aperitif, water, selected wines (Chardonnay Bourgogne Les Chenaudieres, Cave de Lugny, and Pinot Noir Bourgogne AC, Domaine Lamy-Pillot) as well as coffee after dinner and port at the bar.

To register for the event, please reply by e-mail to [Markus.Brandstetter@oxbridge.de](mailto:Markus.Brandstetter@oxbridge.de). State your name, college, matriculation year, choice of menu (pike-perch or pork), and, should you wish to come in company, the name of your guest. Dress code: Evening dress, festive, elegant.

With your registration we request prepayment of the amount of €75 per person, which is refundable in cases of *force majeure*, but in any case will become nonrefundable 14 days before the date of the event, to the following bank account:

IBAN DE56 7012 0400 7254 4090 27, BIC DABBDMMXXX,

owned by the signatory on the left, using the same references as by e-mail.

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Please note that we can count and process your reservation only after receiving your payment.

With very best wishes,



Dr. Markus Brandstetter  
(Clare Hall, Cambridge, 1993)

Dr. Elmar Holschbach  
(Green Templeton, Oxford, 2005)

About the speaker:

Dennis Lehmkuhl holds the Chair for Natural Philosophy and Philosophy of Science at the University of Bonn. He came to Bonn as the first Lichtenberg Professor for History and Philosophy of Physics, the first professorship in Germany specifically dedicated to this subject. It was established by the University of Bonn and the Volkswagen Foundation as part of an effort to bring Professor Lehmkuhl back to Germany from a professorship at Caltech, where he had been head scientific editor of the Einstein Papers Project, which researches Albert Einstein's literary estate and publishes his collected papers.

Professor Lehmkuhl finished his DPhil in Oxford in 2010, returned to Oxford as a Departmental Lecturer for 2013–14 before moving to Caltech, and will return yet again as a Visiting Fellow at All Souls College from 2025 to 2026 for a joint project with Sir Roger Penrose, who was awarded the Nobel Prize of 2020 for the prediction of the existence of black holes.

*For further information on the collected papers of Albert Einstein see <https://einsteinpapers.press.princeton.edu/>.*

About the club:

Please refer to previous invitations or follow the hyperlink on page 1.