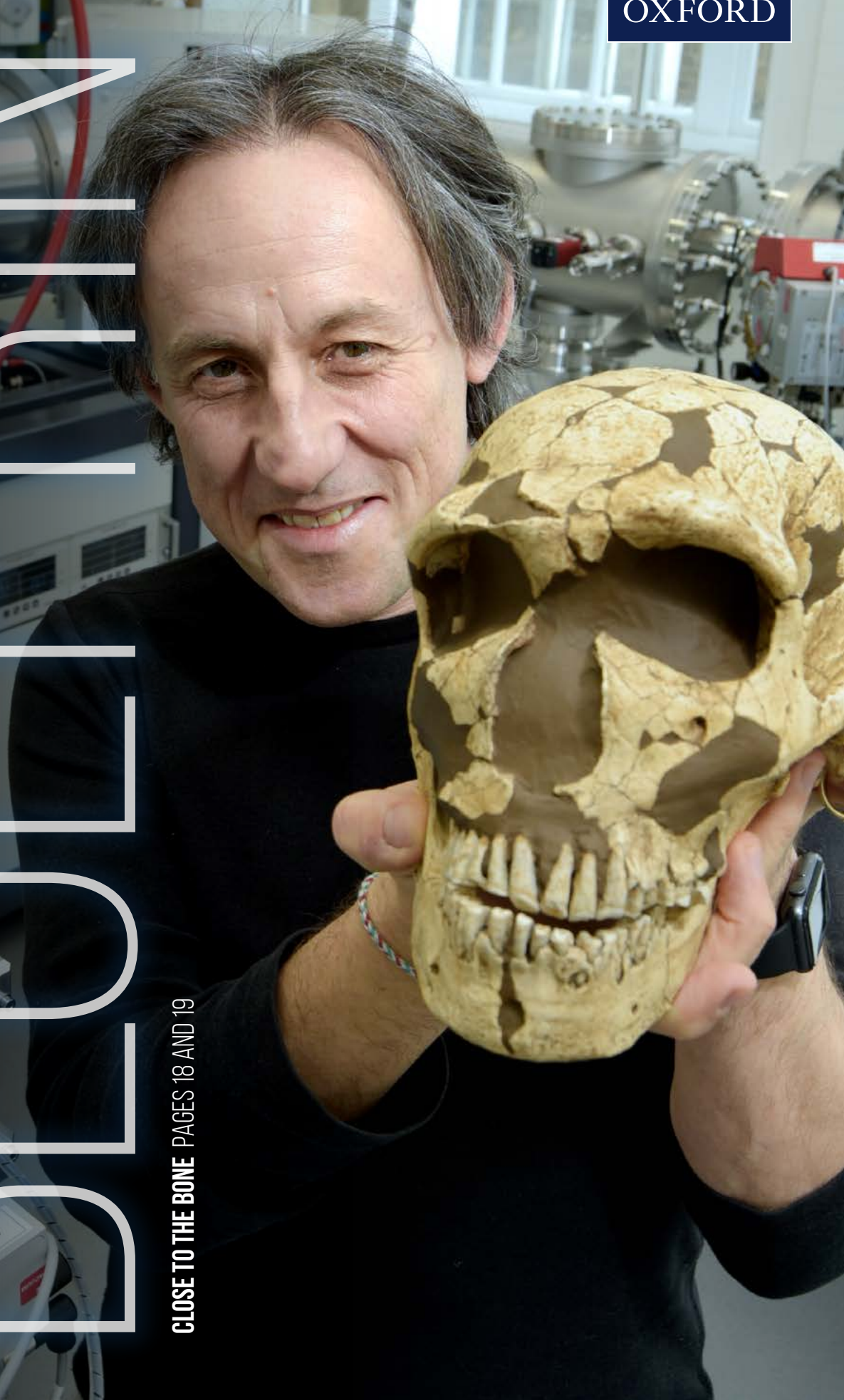




# FRANK BIRD BIRD BIRD



CLOSE TO THE BONE PAGES 18 AND 19

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# FINALIST: MUSEUM OF THE YEAR

**The Pitt Rivers Museum has been selected as one of five finalists for Art Fund Museum of the Year 2019, regarded as the most prestigious museum prize in the world. The annual award celebrates innovation and exceptional achievement in museums and galleries across the UK**

The Pitt Rivers Museum has been shortlisted for its creative programmes of reinvention and reinterpretation, which show a much-loved Victorian space challenging perceptions and demonstrating the vital role museums can play in contemporary society.

Using its collections of anthropology and world archaeology as a vehicle to debate social and political questions about common humanity, the Pitt Rivers is keen to be of personal relevance to every visitor and remains committed to engaging in difficult conversations about problematic pasts and presents in order to forge less violent futures.

2018 saw the Pitt Rivers welcome a record-breaking half a million visitors and deliver a range of powerful exhibitions, including *Kwibuka Rwanda*, which told the story of survivors of the 1994 genocide and their attempts to come to terms with loss and trauma.

Additionally, the museum initiated new innovative partnerships with contemporary artists, such as young Tibetan photographer Nyema Droma. And it saw the launch of an exciting collaboration with Maasai communities – changing the narrative used by UK museums to display Maasai artefacts and to tell Maasai stories as part of a living culture.

Dr Laura Van Broekhoven, Director of the Pitt Rivers Museum, says: 'We are thrilled to have been shortlisted for the Museum of the Year Award, and to have the support of the Art Fund in showing how museum spaces like ours are relevant to the contemporary world.'

'Every object in the museum contains multiple layers of stories, which question conventional narratives, acknowledge challenging histories, and show the differences and commonalities that come with being human.'



Scholastica Ene Kukatia from the Maasai community visits the Pitt Rivers, November 2018

'With the help of the Art Fund, we can share those stories, invite new stories and imagine new – less divided – futures.'

The other four museums shortlisted for the title are HMS Caroline, Belfast; Nottingham Contemporary; St Fagans National Museum of History, Cardiff; and V&A Dundee.

The winning museum, which will receive £100,000, will be announced at London's Science Museum on 3 July 2019. The other shortlisted museums will each receive £10,000.

Stephen Deuchar, Director of Art Fund and chair of this year's judging panel says: 'The five shortlisted museums have each offered outstanding and different approaches to the vital task of engaging with the widest public in new and adventurous ways.'

'We congratulate all those who are on the shortlist and encourage everyone to go and visit them.'

## Visitors to Oxford University's gardens, libraries and museums top 3.3 million

Oxford University's gardens, libraries and museums enjoyed a 3% rise in visitors in 2018, according to the latest figures from the Association of Leading Visitor Attractions (ALVA). Over 3.3 million people visited the four University museums, the Bodleian Libraries and the Botanic Garden in 2018 – giving the group its third record-breaking year in a row.

Share your stories, reviews, photos, memories and moments about the Pitt Rivers on Art Fund's Twitter using @artfund #museumoftheyear

Discover what's on offer at the museum: [www.prm.ox.ac.uk](http://www.prm.ox.ac.uk)

Find out more about Art Fund: [www.artfund.org](http://www.artfund.org)



Left to right: Hannah Bruce, Jozie Kettle, Olivia Harrard, Andrew McLellan, Clara Barker and Mara Gold

## TEAM WORK: BEYOND THE BINARY

**A project team from the Pitt Rivers Museum is working on a project titled *Beyond the Binary: Queering and Questioning Collections and Displays*, running February 2019 to January 2021 – with a major exhibition opening February 2020**

Annette Cunningham talks to the team about how the project will cement the museum's commitment to allying LGBTQIA+ communities (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual +)

### **The title is intriguing – what does 'queering' the museum involve?**

We're re-evaluating our collections through a queer lens to enable museum staff, project participants and visitors to engage with objects in a new and holistic way.

This involves creating a space for difficult histories to be confronted and reflected on – such as the impact of colonialism on queer lives across the globe.

### **Is anything new being added to the museum's collections?**

Yes, we're adding additional historic and contemporary objects from across the globe to the permanent displays. These will aim to ethically and accurately represent worldwide LGBTQ+ culture.



Dave Fleming

We want these artefacts to contribute to challenging hetero-normative interpretations of the museum's collections – and identify human histories that are unrepresented as a result of intolerance.

#### **What can you tell us about the exhibition?**

Launching in next year's LGBT+ History Month (February 2020) it will celebrate LGBTQIA+ history, while also raising awareness and visibility of the issues that people face today.

#### **Who else is involved?**

We're working with a broad range of partners, from researchers to community activists. Together we'll be bringing LGBTQIA+ lived experiences, stories and histories right into the heart of the museum. These exhibits will

highlight and celebrate traditions of gender and sexuality 'non-conformity' – expect films, music, family activities, talks, workshops, object handling and more. We'll also be doing more work to reinterpret our existing collections.

#### **What do you hope to achieve?**

The knowledge that no individual or group feels excluded from the museum because of their sexuality or gender, and so that all visitors – however they might identify themselves – can understand humanity better.

We also hope that this project may encourage other museums to take a step back from their collections to look at whether their displays embed inclusiveness – and do some queering of their own.

#### **Meet the project team:**

##### **Mara Gold, Research Assistant**

For me, one of the most exciting aspects of the project is the opportunity to shape LGBTQ+ museum methodology in a very real way, which moves far beyond the types of tokenistic representation seen in many museum and heritage institutions.

##### **Hannah Bruce, Project Officer**

We believe the potential for this project to impact the community both locally and nationally is great and to reach those who are not a part of the LGBTQIA+ community. We're aiming to educate, challenge beliefs and increase acceptance.

##### **Olivia Sharrard, Collections and Exhibitions Officer**

Beyond the Binary offers an amazing opportunity for us to learn and understand more about others through the objects in the Pitt Rivers Museum's collection, and for individuals and communities to see themselves represented within this museum.

##### **Jozie Kettle, Project Curator**

This project presents an incredible opportunity to create positive change within museum practices, allowing us the space to work collaboratively with a wide range of individuals, activists, researchers and colleagues to rethink the rules of engagement for representation within heritage spaces.

Also involved are **Dr Clara Barker**, Material Scientist and Chair of the University LGBT+ Advisory as Project Ambassador, and **Andrew McLellan** as Head of Learning and Participation at the museum.

The team members are looking for volunteers (researchers, activists, allies or community members) to help with research, planning events and delivering activities. They are also keen to hear your ideas. Visit [prm.ox.ac.uk/beyond-the-binary](http://prm.ox.ac.uk/beyond-the-binary) and @BeyondBinaryPRM for more information and contact details.



# TACKLING GLOBAL CHALLENGES

Janice Young, Communications Officer with the Medical Sciences Division (MSD) and Rachel Gaw, Events & Communications Officer with the Mathematical, Physical and Life Sciences Division (MPLS), explore how University business engagement and partnership specialists are working with researchers and industry partners to tackle future global challenges

Across the University, our academic community is building rich and long-lasting research partnerships to innovate, influence policy and tackle the biggest challenges industry and society are facing.

Teams of business engagement specialists are working with researchers to support them through these partnership processes. They share a common goal to understand the opportunities for collaboration with the wider world of business, commerce and policy – and bring that perspective to our researchers. They work closely with a variety of teams, including Oxford University Innovation, the University's technology and research commercialisation company.

The partnerships, which involve working with companies of all sizes, range from short, exploratory projects to longer-term strategic research alliances. They

can include fellowship opportunities and programmes to train and deliver future leaders.

Chris Jones, Head of Industrial Research Partnerships, MPLS, says: 'We spot where industry challenges might intersect with the academic endeavour to research, discover and teach. We aim to build relationships that deliver products to organisations that can use them for wider public, economic or further academic benefit.'

Benefits to researchers are extensive and include access to funding, data sets and equipment. Building commercial awareness can also help inform the relevance of our taught courses and research funding applications. The partnerships also provide places for our staff and students to work, learn new skills and broaden their perspectives.

The teams also work with the academic

community to ensure commercial involvement adds value to research and does not taint researcher independence. As Esther Brown, Head of Business Engagement & Partnership, Social Sciences/Humanities, explains, 'Our academics are exploring the next big global challenges across industry, society and the environment.'

'Academics that engage with external partners, access real data, drive innovation and demonstrate impact. Working with a business can bring new perspectives and value to the research.'

Maxine Allen, Head of Business Development and Partnering, MSD, adds, 'We offer a wide range of support, from facilitating the right introductions and establishing good working relationships to ongoing relationship management for strategic partnerships.'

## Recent University collaborations

### Oxford-Celgene Fellowship programme

Early career researchers in medical sciences are benefitting from a strategic alliance with global biopharmaceutical company Celgene. Researchers receive a unique training opportunity focusing on the discovery, development and commercialisation of innovative therapies for patients with cancer and immune-inflammatory conditions. Fellowship researchers receive mentorship from Celgene project leads and opportunities to

carry out research at Celgene sites in the US and Spain.

### The Oxford Future of Marketing Initiative

The digital transformation of marketing for global brands including Facebook and L'Oreal is being informed by academic experts at Saïd Business School. Launched by Professor Andrew Stephen, it brings together the brightest academic minds with high-level industry partners representing major global brands. Working together, they will address the

new challenges and opportunities brought by digital marketing in our increasingly technologically complex world.

### European Space Agency

The University has signed a new Letter of Intent with the European Space Agency, promising future collaboration between the two organisations and reflecting the growth of the space sector in the UK. Oxford researchers will collaborate closely with the agency across topics ranging from artificial intelligence to extra-terrestrial geology.

To find out more, please contact: Chris Jones (MPLS) [irpofficemanager@mpls.ox.ac.uk](mailto:irpofficemanager@mpls.ox.ac.uk) | Maxine Allen (MSD) [maxine.allen@medsci.ox.ac.uk](mailto:maxine.allen@medsci.ox.ac.uk) | Esther Brown (SSD / Humanities) [esther.brown@socsci.ox.ac.uk](mailto:esther.brown@socsci.ox.ac.uk)

# LATIN LOVERS

**Bethany White, DPhil Candidate, Faculty of History, and Junior Dean, Trinity College, talks to Dr Arlene Holmes-Henderson, postdoctoral researcher in the Classics Faculty, about the modern day advantages of learning this ancient language**

Although many of us don't consider ourselves to be speakers of Latin, it is littered in our everyday conversations. If you have ever referred to a *memo*, discussed the importance of an *alibi* or mentioned travelling *via* Didcot, then you are a *bona fide* speaker.

Researchers in the Classics in Communities project, based in the Classics Faculty, have been exploring how learning Latin at a young age can impact children's cognitive development.

Dr Arlene Holmes-Henderson, an expert in Classics education, is excited about the initial findings of this innovative research project. 'There are so many benefits of learning Latin,' she says. 'Quite apart from being a valuable and interesting curriculum subject in its own right, it can offer additional support for the development of literacy skills and critical skills.'

As part of her research, Arlene has tracked groups of primary school students in Scotland, the West Midlands, Oxfordshire and London. Gathering data about students' reading and writing proficiency before and



Dr Arlene Holmes-Henderson

after learning Latin seems to show that it can help children in other areas of life. 'Our data definitely support the hypothesis that learning Latin in primary school is a good educational choice,' she explains.

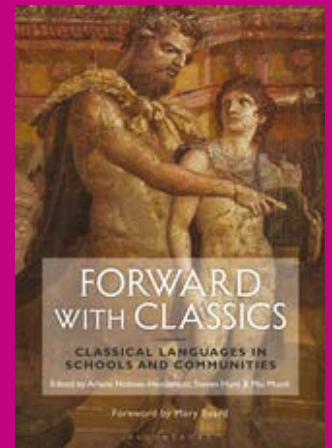
The researchers have looked particularly closely at classrooms in socially and economically disadvantaged areas. They have discovered that learning Latin in these schools has a positive impact and can make a significant difference to learners' progress.

And the benefit is not just academic. Learning Latin can also help children develop cultural literacy, which enriches their understanding of the contemporary world by making them familiar with classical references, including *carpe diem*, *et cetera*, *per se* and *vice versa* – to name just a few.

With plenty to gain from learning Latin, much is lost when children don't get the opportunity to have a go at it. This is another area where the Classics in Communities project provides help.

'Since 2014, when Latin and Ancient Greek were named in the English National Curriculum as languages suitable for study in primary schools, we have been running training courses and providing support for primary school teachers around the UK,' Arlene explains. The project website provides resources for teachers with little experience of Latin themselves. 'We hope this will enable more and more primary school children to have the opportunity to learn Classical languages.'

And Latin can also be a lot of fun. 'The legacy of the Romans encompasses literature, art, architecture, philosophy, history and language. Learning Latin helps young people begin to discover what life was like for the Romans. Graffiti from the walls of Pompeii provide short and relatively simple sentences so, even at primary school level, children can engage and get to grips with some real Latin.'



Dr Holmes-Henderson's book, *Forward with Classics: Classical languages in schools and communities* (co-edited with Hunt and Musie) showcases innovative practice in Classics education around the world. It is available at [www.bloomsbury.com](http://www.bloomsbury.com) with a 30% discount (£20) by using the code FWC19 (for a limited time only).

Fundraising is underway to continue this important research. If you can help with this, or know someone who can, please contact [arlene.holmes-henderson@classics.ox.ac.uk](mailto:arlene.holmes-henderson@classics.ox.ac.uk).

Want to find out more? Visit [www.classicsincommunities.org](http://www.classicsincommunities.org) and keep up to date with the project via twitter: [@classicsincomm](https://twitter.com/classicsincomm) and [@drarlenehh](https://twitter.com/drarlenehh)

# STUDENT SPOTLIGHT: EXAM SEASON

In the final term of the academic year, 10,000 students will sit 46,000 exams, and candidates will submit more than 6,000 pieces of written work. Jenny Roberts, Head of Examinations and Assessments in the Academic Administration Division, tells us more about the student examinations and assessments taking place this Trinity term



Ward Surgical 5, Exam Schools 1914–18

## A brief history of the Examination Schools

Built between 1876 and 1882 by Sir Thomas Jackson specifically for students to sit their exams, the Grade-II-listed Examination Schools on the High Street is considered by many to be Jackson's masterpiece. It stands on the former site of the Angel Inn, which is reputed to have been the first inn in England. The intricate mosaic floor in the School's Great Hall includes a depiction of the tortoise and the hare from Aesop's fables – a timely reminder for students to choose care over haste with their studies.

During both World Wars the Exam Schools was used as a military hospital. In World War I storage areas in the basement were also made use of with one room transformed into an operating theatre and others into resuscitation rooms – signs above the doors to indicate this are still in place. Today, as well as hosting exams, the building provides lecture room space for students, is the home of the Student Registry team and acts as a popular public conference venue.

## Examination attire

Students sitting their exams must wear *sub fusc* – this traditional outfit comprises a white shirt, black suit trousers or skirt, black gown and a mortarboard. While not compulsory, students often wear flowers on examination days. It is customary to wear a white carnation for the first exam, red for the final sitting, and pink for those in between.







## Two current Oxford students share their own advice on coping with examinations:

Alice Bourne, second-year undergraduate studying Law at Oriel:

*'Take planned breaks: half an hour breaks where you get something substantial done; so, if that's watching half an hour of Netflix or having a coffee with friends, or planning in a long lunch break, you find that you're more productive. I can easily do ten hours of work in a day if I plan it. Otherwise I just feel guilty about having that free time. There's always something to look forward to if you plan in your breaks before.'*

James Thorogood, MSc Social Data Science at Green Templeton:

*'What I do to de-stress during exams is really just focus on a fraction of the content that I need to cover. There's so much of the content that you need to learn and know well, but it's really just about learning a few of those key concepts. Take care of yourself and take care of your health as it's really about the quality of your thought and how you can put ideas together, and if you burn yourself out trying to learn everything then your thoughtfulness and critical thinking might suffer.'*

## Stress less: how students cope with exams



This year, the University has set up its Stress Less website ([www.ox.ac.uk/stressless](http://www.ox.ac.uk/stressless)). Here students can find tips and resources on how to cope with the stresses of exams, as well as information about exam preparation seminars, workshops and mock exams.

## Trashing: What a Waste



In recent years, students have celebrated finishing their exams by dousing each other in food, drink and other materials. This so-called 'trashing' is against the University's code of conduct, and has negative environmental, reputational and community relations impacts. The University's Trashing: What a Waste campaign urges students to think about the consequences of their actions when celebrating. For more information, see [www.ox.ac.uk/whatawaste](http://www.ox.ac.uk/whatawaste)

## Exams of the future

Most exams at Oxford are sat using paper and pen, and written work is usually submitted in print form. However, the University is experimenting with e-exams which allow students to type rather than handwrite their answers. Following a successful pilot last year, a larger-scale trial is now being planned in detail for Hilary term 2020. In addition, a new electronic appointment and payment system for examiners will be rolled out this year; and from October, all DPhil theses will be submitted electronically by using a new portal.

# ENCAENIA

The Oxford Encaenia is the annual ceremony at which the University of Oxford awards honorary degrees to distinguished men and women and commemorates its benefactors. It is held in the Sheldonian Theatre – the University’s ceremonial hall which celebrates its 350th anniversary this year – during Trinity term

## Ceremony origins

Encaenia is the surviving part of The Act, the late medieval ceremony used to award senior degrees of the University, originally held in the University Church of St Mary the Virgin. The weekend event included a satirical speech, sometimes scandalous, which many felt inappropriate for a church setting. This prompted its move to the new Sheldonian Theatre.

By 1760 the ceremony had changed to be much as it is today – largely reshaped by the will of Nathaniel, Lord Crewe (1633–1721), who had left money to the University for this purpose.

## Early honorands

The earliest honorary Oxford degree

awards were non-ceremonial. The first was granted to Lionel Woodville in 1478 or 1479. Shortly afterwards, Woodville, Dean of Exeter and the brother-in-law of Edward IV, was elected Chancellor of the University. Oxford’s first ceremonial honorary degrees were awarded on 6 September 1566, when Queen Elizabeth was visiting the city.

## Ongoing traditions

On the eve of Encaenia a dinner is held for the honorands in the Divinity School. The following morning (always Wednesday of ninth week) the heads of colleges, University dignitaries, holders of the Oxford degrees of Doctor of Divinity, Civil Law, Medicine, Letters, Science, and Music, and the honorands assemble in a college for

the Lord Crewe’s Benefaction of peaches, strawberries and champagne. They then walk in procession to the Sheldonian Theatre for the Encaenia ceremony. The honorands wait in the Divinity School until escorted over by the Bedels.

Each honorand is then introduced by the Public Orator with a speech in Latin and admitted to his or her new degree by the Chancellor. The Orator then delivers the Creweian Oration on the events of the past year – and in commemoration of the University’s benefactors. The ceremony is followed by a lunch at All Souls College and the day concludes with a garden party, hosted by the Vice-Chancellor, for honorands, their guests, members of Congregation and others.



## HONORANDS 2019

Eight people are to receive honorary degrees from Oxford University on 26 June 2019.

### Professor Jennifer A Doudna,

Professor of Chemistry and Molecular and Cell Biology at the University of California, Berkeley

Together with her team in 2012, she made a major discovery of a simple way of editing the DNA of any organism, greatly assisting researchers tackling HIV, sickle cell disease and muscular dystrophy.

Professor Andrea Ghez, an astronomer and Professor of Physics and Astronomy at the University of California, Los Angeles

One of the world’s leading experts in observational astrophysics, she is best known for her ground-breaking work which has uncovered the best evidence to date for the existence of supermassive black holes.

Professor Shafi Goldwasser, a computer scientist and the RSA Professor of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science at the University of California, Berkeley

With research interests spanning cryptography, computational number theory and complexity theory, her work includes the introduction of zero-knowledge interactive proofs (which relates to proving the value X).

Professor Daniel Kahneman, Professor Emeritus of Psychology and Public Affairs at Princeton

Best known for his work with Amos Tversky on human judgment and decision-making, for which he was awarded the Nobel Memorial Prize in Economics in 2002. His many honours include the Presidential Medal of Freedom (2013).

Ustad Rahat Fateh Ali Khan, a Pakistani singer, primarily of Qawwali, a devotional music of the Muslim Sufis

Born into a family whose name has become synonymous with South Asian musical tradition, he has sung more than 50 title tracks of television serials and over 100 film songs in both Hollywood and Bollywood.



**Mr Yo-Yo Ma**, world-renowned cellist  
His celebrated career has involved performing new and familiar works from the cello repertoire and engaging unexpected musical forms. He has received many prestigious awards and performed for eight American presidents.

**Dr Cyrus Poonawalla**, founder and Chairman of the Serum Institute of India  
Founded in 1966, the Serum Institute is now the world's largest manufacturer of life-saving vaccines by number of doses, producing more than 1.5 billion doses a year that are used in over 170 countries.

**Professor Sir Simon Wessely**, Regius Professor of Psychiatry at King's College London and a Consultant Liaison Psychiatrist at King's College and the Maudsley Hospitals  
In a career spanning general hospital psychiatry as well as academia, Sir Simon founded the King's Centre for Military Health Research, has published books on chronic fatigue syndrome and regularly contributes to media discussions on science and medicine.

Spaces are limited but tickets are still available for this year's Encaenia ceremony. To register please visit [www.ox.ac.uk/news-and-events/the-university-year/encaenia/encaenia-tickets](http://www.ox.ac.uk/news-and-events/the-university-year/encaenia/encaenia-tickets).





# MY OXFORD

**David Holt, Building Surveyor with Estates Services, discusses his passion for preserving the University's historic buildings for future generations to enjoy and learn from**

## **What originally brought you to Oxford?**

After qualifying as a building surveyor in Glasgow, I stayed there for work before moving 'down south' a couple of years later in 1985 to join the Corporation of London.

I later worked for a large firm of loss adjusters in London. Interesting work, but after receiving one too many death threats from dissatisfied claimants (with fraudulent claims), I happily took up an opportunity to become the Building Consultancy Department (comprising just myself!) with Adkin Estate Agents. That brought me to this part of the country and in 1997 I changed roles to work for the University, and have been based at the Malthouse since then.

I find Oxford beautiful; very compact in comparison with Glasgow or London, and (traffic permitting), just a few minutes' drive or bike ride from Oxfordshire's pretty countryside.

## **What was the draw to conservation?**

Much of my career has been spent dealing with the repair and maintenance of buildings. However, I've always been more interested in the design and construction of older, traditionally built properties.

A significant issue with the Sheldonian Theatre's painted ceiling in 2004 needed specific skills. Having no prior knowledge of painting conservation, I attended a series of various building conservation courses, which helped me on the ceiling paintings' project – and have been invaluable on numerous building repair projects since.

## **What project have you enjoyed the most?**

The University's functional estate contains a large and diverse range of unique buildings with architectural importance and I really enjoy helping to conserve them. My favourite being Sir Christopher Wren's first commission, the Sheldonian Theatre. I am, unquestionably, most proud of the various phases of work within the auditorium of this building to help restore it to its original

appearance. This included reintroducing the original colour scheme and replacing the 1960s flooring and 'blingy' brass and glass lighting.

## **Have you made any interesting discoveries?**

Much of our work is done on the exterior of buildings, where we're less likely to discover anything particularly unusual, but we've had some finds in the Sheldonian. An old clay tobacco pipe was found above a painting, and in 2001 we discovered a business card and a parcel label with two one penny stamps dated February 1901, left by John C Nairn, the previous ceiling painting restorer.

My favourite – related – discovery, was finding a pair of trousers when removing all the ceiling paintings in 2004. Left by Frank Morrill, who worked with John C Nairn, the pocket contained one of Frank's tools and a metal canister with a note dated 6 March 1901. Frank asked for his trousers to be donated to a museum and signed off:

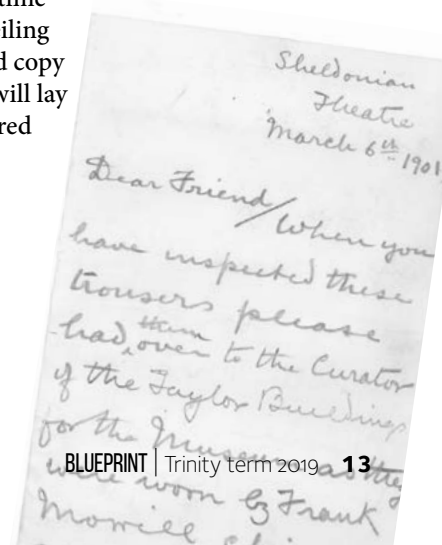
*'Hope you will enjoy yourself when you have found this valuable treasure. I expect I will have fed the worms by that time however I will have a good time before I do so. Goodbye old chap. Goodbye. Yours in Ashes(?), Frank Morrill'*

## **Have you left anything tucked away for future generations?**

Since about 2004 I have been researching and recording information, including alterations, repairs and events relating to the Sheldonian. When the ceiling conservation work was completed in 2008, a time capsule was placed above the ceiling and I was asked to add a printed copy of my document. Hopefully, it will lay undiscovered for another hundred years, or more...

Find out more about the work of the Conservation team at: [www.admin.ox.ac.uk/estates/aboutus/managingtheestate/conservation](http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/estates/aboutus/managingtheestate/conservation)

Frank Morrills' trousers and note from 1901





# A DAY IN THE LIFE OF CLAIRE D'MELLOW

Eleanor Williamson talks to Claire D'Mellow about her role as a Continuous Improvement Practitioner with the University's Focus Programme – a broad programme of activity to improve the way in which support services are delivered across the University

Continuous Improvement is like a video game,' says Claire D'Mellow. 'Through repeated play, you keep getting better. Each time you find a way to meet the increased challenge, you move up to the next level.'

Claire is one of the first members of University staff to train as a Continuous Improvement Practitioner, after answering an advert to join the Focus Programme. Five months into her secondment to Focus, Claire reflects on her journey.

'Having previously worked in companies experiencing rapid growth, I've seen considerable change – and realised I thrived on it. Since coming to the University, I haven't missed the world of industry, yet I was keen to maintain the dynamic of an improvement environment.'

'In the University role I've come from Head of Finance, IT Services, I was one part in a larger process and struggled to effect change. The Focus approach is about breadth and reach – and as a Practitioner, this is the lens I look through.'

Even after 14 days' training, the transition to Practitioner is a steep learning curve. Fortunately, this is well structured and supported. 'Each of us has a skills development portfolio and a coach working alongside us to reinforce the learning,' explains Claire.

Claire's new-look day builds in many fresh approaches. At 9.30am each day her project team has a 15-minute stand-up meeting – timed to keep everyone focused – to check progress and raise any matters needing help to move forward. With visibility and transparency characterising the Focus approach, risks, concerns, successes and actions are all logged onto wall charts for everyone to view.

Claire's days centre on running workshops with stakeholders in different parts of the University. 'I'm currently working with six departments and one division on improving departmental purchasing processes. As with all Focus projects, we begin by understanding

how people currently do things – what their processes look like, and where commonalities and variations lie.

'One day I'll be interacting in a workshop – 15 scheduled in May alone. The next day, I'll capture and reflect on what we learned. We're working together to figure out exactly where we are, where we want to be and how we're going to get there.'

Workshops are a distinctive ingredient of the Focus approach. It is by talking to departments and bringing them together that a shared understanding emerges. What Claire calls the 'voice of the customer' is central to building a picture of what they need, and to identifying the improvements that will most benefit them.



**Focus is about enabling the right change, not hasty change – and that attracted me. So did the opportunity to step back and look at processes end to end**



Observation is another technique up Claire's sleeve: she calls it 'go see'. It involves visiting a place where a process is taking place to watch the movement of things and people. 'Observing the journey of a file from cupboard to photocopier to workstation to spreadsheet and onward to someone else for checking is revealing. It enables you to gain valuable insight into where a process might be simplified for the person doing it.'

The Practitioners are not the subject matter expert on a project. 'This is both important and useful,' says Claire, 'because it gives me permission to ask all the supposedly 'stupid' questions that are often the most valuable and overlooked.' Neither does the Practitioner provide the answers – a Practitioner's expertise is used to guide others through a collaborative process, to reach their own well-supported outcomes.

'Being a Practitioner is all about bringing people together to focus on something,' concludes Claire with a smile. 'And, importantly, to keep that focus going.'

# 350 YEARS OF THE SHELDONIAN

**Officially opened in 1669, the Sheldonian Theatre is currently basking in the glory of its 350th anniversary**

Managed by Estates Services, the University's official ceremonial hall is the meeting place of Congregation and the University's governing body. Staging many prestigious ceremonies, including matriculation, graduation and honorary degree ceremonies, it is significant to each student's Oxford experience.

An important venue for public musical performances, it is also a popular city attraction; when not in use it invites visitors (free admission to all University members) to marvel at the splendour of its interior and enjoy its fascinating history.

## Origins

Renowned as the first major design of Sir Christopher Wren (a Fellow of All Souls College), the project was conceived in the 1630s when William Laud, Archbishop of Canterbury and the Chancellor of the University (1630-41), determined to end the unsuitable use of St Mary's Church for University business and ceremonies. Funding came solely from Gilbert Sheldon, Warden of All Souls – and later Archbishop of Canterbury.

The building's original function was highly unusual. As well as serving as a venue for academic assemblies, it was also designed

to house the new University Press in the basement.

The Sheldonian was the first full-scale, free-standing classical building erected by the University or its colleges.

## Build

The foundation stone was laid on 26 July 1664 and, after appointing John Fell as Treasurer (subsequently Vice-Chancellor, 1666-9), the building work then progressed quickly. By the summer of 1666, the decoration of the interior had already commenced and its iconic exterior was completed by 1667.

Unsurprisingly, a team of master craftsmen worked on the building. The master mason, Thomas Robinson, employed up to 41 masons (paid 1s 6d a day) and 20 labourers (at 1s a day). The stone was sourced from quarries across the country – the ground floor crafted in Headington stone and smoother Cotswold stone creating the upper storey.

Elaborate interior woodwork, including the Vice-Chancellor's chair and the decorative work on the galleries, was undertaken by two brothers, William and Richard Cleer, who crafted the pieces in their London workshop and transported the

finished masterpieces to Oxford by barge.

The original roof design was a masterpiece of architectural design, greatly impressing Wren's contemporaries. Without columns, it comprises a series of timber trusses and complicated cross beams supported by braces and screws.

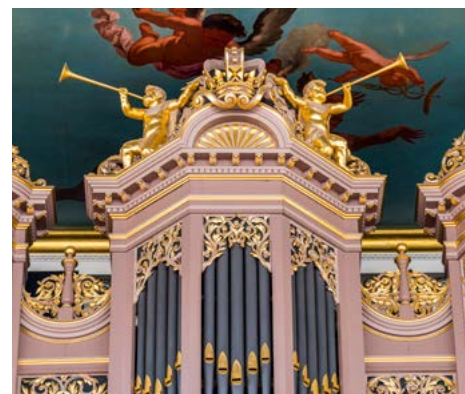
## Costs

The final bill to create the majestic Sheldonian came in at £14,470 (around £3.1m today). Itemised costs include:

- 48 fodder (tonnes) of lead – £777
- Wood for roof beams and panelling – £1,347
- Woodwork by the Cleer brothers – £288
- Interior painting by Richard Hawkins, Oxford – £235
- Ceiling painting by Robert Streater – £448
- Transportation of ceiling painting from Whitechapel by water – £210

The ceiling by Robert Streater, Sergeant Painter to the King, depicts Truth descending to be with the Arts and Sciences and the expulsion of Envy, Rapine and Ignorance.

Left: The theatre's painted ceiling, restored 2004-8. Centre: Curators Dr Andrew Fairweather-Tall, Professor Stephen Payne and Genevieve J Garrido. Right: The theatre's third organ, installed by Henry Willis in 1838







## Heads

Commissioned by Wren, the original set of 13 heads were carved by William Byrd. The first set was replaced in 1868. Further erosion led to installation of a third set, sculpted by Michael Black, in 1972.

The original heads are resting in the grounds of Wadham College and Worcester College. Media interest has helped to locate some of the missing heads – believed to have been gifted to Oxford associates.

## Opening

The Sheldonian Theatre officially opened on 9 July 1669. At 8am that morning, a special Convocation took possession of the theatre with the Registrar reading the donation charter signed by Sheldon, and a celebration of the launch of the University Press.

The opening was also made memorable by a scathing attack by Robert South, the University orator, on the Royal Society. Ironically, although specifically excluded from South's attack, Christopher Wren was a member of the Society.

## Restoration

The Sheldonian Theatre has seen a number of major restoration projects in recent years. The ceiling panels were sent away for a four-year conservation and repair project in 2004 and Wren's original interior colour scheme, last seen in the 1720s, was reintroduced.

Upper gallery seating was altered in 2018 to improve safety and – much welcomed – comfort.

## Curators

The University Statutes define the role of the Sheldonian Theatre's Curators, currently Professor Stephen Payne (Chair), Dr Andrew Fairweather-Tall and Ms Genevieve J Garrido, plus the Proctors and Assessor, as having 'charge of the theatre and its precincts' and to 'make arrangements for the conduct of the business of Encaenia', Congregations and degree ceremonies.

The Curators are currently sponsoring a pilot to invite community groups with a demonstrable link to the University to co-create public events in the theatre, and exploring options and finance for replacing the Sheldonian's 40-year old electronic organ, housed within the 1860s pipe-organ case.

The Sheldonian Theatre

Find out more about the Sheldonian Theatre and upcoming events:  
[www.admin.ox.ac.uk/sheldonian](http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/sheldonian)

Contact the Curators:  
[curators@sheldon.ox.ac.uk](mailto:curators@sheldon.ox.ac.uk)

There is currently a vacant Curator post, to hold office until Michaelmas 2023 open to any member of Congregation:  
<https://gazette.web.ox.ac.uk/files/25april2019-no5237pdf>  
 (page 384)

# CLOSE TO THE BONE



Dave Fleming

Professor Higham examining the cast of a Neanderthal skull

**From research originally designed to build nuclear bombs during the Second World War came the key to unlocking the history of humanity and the natural world – radiocarbon dating. Developed by a scientist who had worked on the Manhattan Project (which produced the first nuclear weapons), the technique is now the premier dating tool used in archaeology and environmental science**

Genevieve Juliet, Media Relations Manager – Research and Innovation, talks to Professor Thomas Higham, Director of Oxford's Radiocarbon Accelerator Unit (ORAU), about the team's work



**Work is always interesting – we were recently sent whisky from Shackleton’s expedition in Antarctica. We were hoping for a taste, but unfortunately they wanted it all back!**



Researchers at ORAU, within the School of Archaeology, are world leaders in radiocarbon dating. Using an advanced technique that involves accelerator mass spectrometry, results from testing are now faster and more reliable than ever before.

‘The great thing about radiocarbon dating is that anything that was once alive can be dated,’ explains Professor Thomas Higham, Director of ORAU.

‘For us it has to be less than 50,000 years old, but fortunately a lot of really interesting things have happened in this period: our species moves out of Africa and we replace the Neanderthals. We see the development of complex societies, agriculture and the dispersal of humans into all parts of the world. And the chronology for all of this has largely been built using radiocarbon dating.’

Since the lab opened in the 1980s, it has built a global reputation as a leader in the field. ‘We specialise in archaeological samples, particularly bones,’ says Tom. Dating very old bones comes with a handful of challenges, including the possibility of contamination and very low levels of collagen, the main material used in dating.’

The method for processing and dating bones includes a variety of stages focused on isolating the collagen and removing contamination. ‘We end up with fluffy white cotton-wool-like material, which is the collagen. That’s the standard procedure. For more difficult cases, we’ve developed a better method called single compound dating.’

This involves separating the individual amino acids in the collagen and isolating hydroxyproline, a single amino acid. ‘Hydroxyproline is rarely found outside mammalian collagen so it comes with a virtual guarantee you’re dating material from that particular bone,’ explains Tom, ‘So, for the first time, we’ve been able to date important human fossils by eliminating all contaminating sources of carbon.’

Dating these fossils has played a major role in understanding the relationship between Neanderthals and our human ancestors. The prevailing idea was that modern humans arrived and, due to their innate superiority,



Dave Fleming

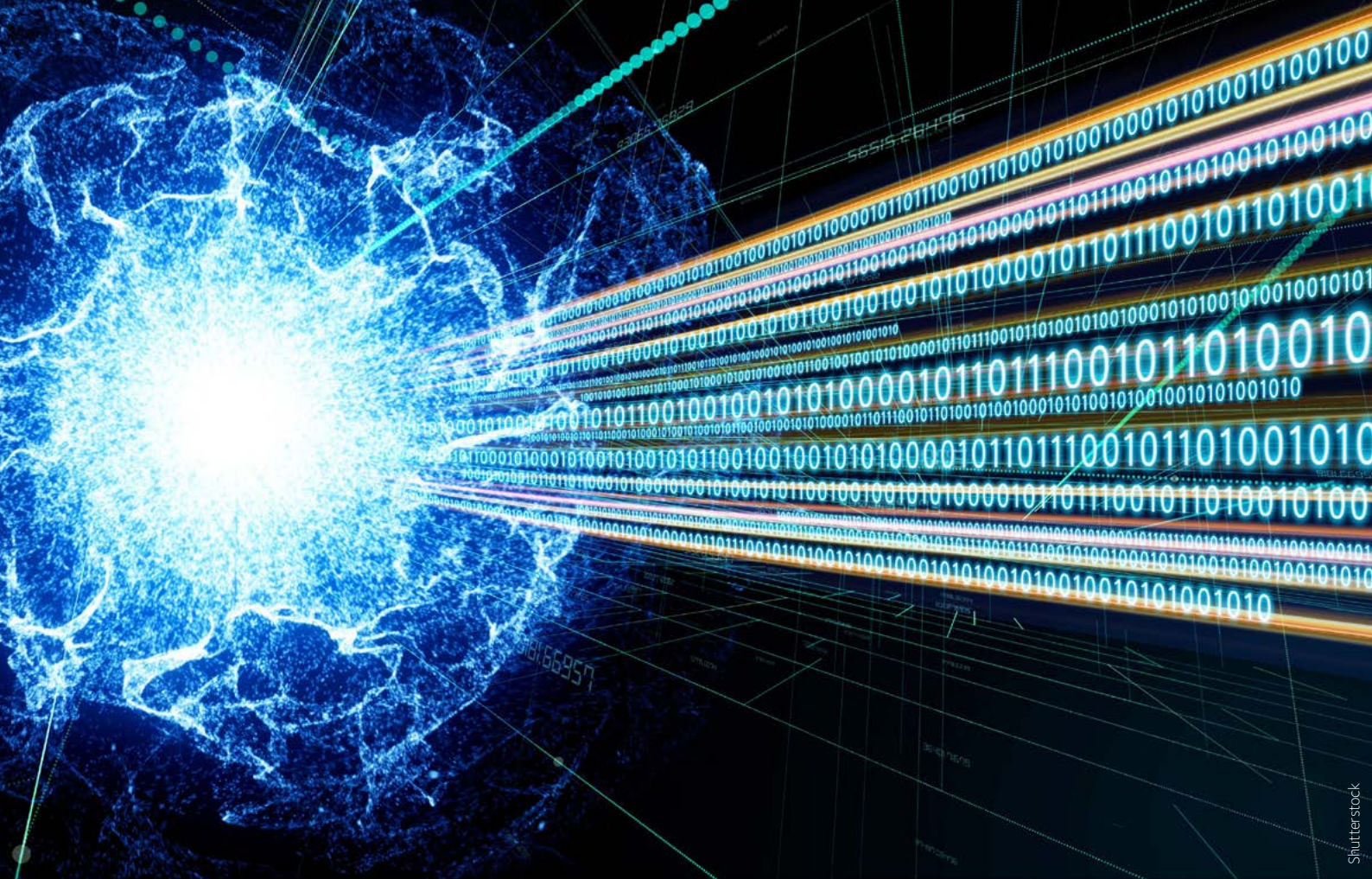
Neanderthals died out quite quickly. The team’s results show that is not the case. ‘We estimate that there was a degree of overlap of different populations for about 2,500 – 5,000 years, creating a mosaic-like pattern of humans across Europe until around 40,000 years ago, when Neanderthals finally disappeared.’

ORAU’s testing skills are also used to help detect fakes – everything from paintings to Chinese tea – and the lab has helped with several high-profile projects over the years, including dating the Shroud of Turin and the bones of Richard III. The lab also assists the police with identifying human remains. ‘Tooth enamel helps establish when the person was born,’ explains Tom. ‘And biological material, such as hair, can reveal when the person died.’

Extended funding from the Natural Environment Research Council, enables ORAU’s expertise to be available to researchers globally. ‘The programme provides funding for UK-based archaeologists and environmental scientists to access radiocarbon dating services that support their research,’ says Tom. ‘We analyse and date about 600 of these samples a year.’

This programme has been one of the keys to ORAU’s continued success. ‘We’re fortunate that many archaeologists choose to send their samples to Oxford, so we’ve worked with a lot of amazing materials over the last thirty years – and long may this continue!’

Find out more about radiocarbon testing and the work of the ORAU at: <https://c14.arch.ox.ac.uk>



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# TAMING ‘MOODY’ MICROCHIPS

**The research of Dr Natalia Ares, senior research fellow, focuses on quantum phenomena in solid-state devices. For her PhD, she investigated semiconductor devices for quantum computing at CEA Grenoble, France. She has also completed a master’s in quantum chaos at the University of Buenos Aires, Argentina. Natalia explains how she is working to train microchips**

Every day I realise just how much machines do for us. I wake up every morning courtesy of the alarm on my phone – a long way from the ‘knocker-uppers’ from decades before who would rap on windows to ensure workers were awake.

Machines make life much easier. I brush my teeth with very little effort – simply switching on my electric toothbrush while I am still half asleep. Earlier generations slaved over the weekly wash; I just have to remember to put laundry in the washing machine and I don’t even have to scrub my dishes clean.

With the machines at home carrying out all the tedious tasks, I’m free to set off to work as a physicist and carry out interesting experiments in quantum mechanics. In my lab, we cool down microchips, similar to the ones we have in our phones, to 1/50 of a degree above absolute zero.

Why do we do this? To be in the quantum realm, where we can explore novel functionalities. The technology to cool these chips has evolved to a point where we can tell a refrigerator to do its job just by clicking a button. To comply, it follows programmed instructions on when to open and close a set of valves – and it nearly always works!

Once the chip is cold, machines are no longer able to help us. We are aiming to build chips that harness quantum behaviour for computing, but we are not there yet. The chips are unique, almost ‘moody’, and we can explore their capabilities only if we find the right operating parameters.

Armed with years of experience, I just about manage to tune a chip in a couple of weeks. I now teach my graduate students and postdocs the tricks I’ve learnt, hoping they will acquire the right intuition and teach their own students one day. But an important part of my

research now consists of breaking that cycle, to help make these chips into established technology.

We thought it was impossible for machines to help us tune the chips because we humans do it by learning about its characteristics as we go along. As these change from chip to chip, we cannot simply give the machine the 'right' instructions.

This is a similar problem to the one we encounter when we make machines drive a car. We need the machine to learn how to do the job as it goes along, and what makes that possible is a type of artificial intelligence called machine learning. However, thanks to recent breakthroughs in machine learning, we're seeing self-driving cars starting to be developed, and this gave us hope we could

have a machine help tune our quantum chips.

Now we have demonstrated that machines can tune quantum chips – and much faster than us. This key discovery will allow us to operate more complex circuits composed of many chips.

It worries me slightly. My expertise – as one of 'knocker-upper' – seems to be no longer required. Those in my group who have the expertise now refuse to tune a chip manually. And who could blame them? It is comparable to calculating the square root of 11 without a calculator.

But I'm not looking for a new job – as one of my colleagues says, we are just taking 'the robot out of the human' and I'm expecting to face even more exciting challenges tomorrow!

“

**Our microchips are unique... almost moody. We learn about each chip as we go along, it's not simple to train a machine to be able to do that**

”

Read more about Oxford's work in AI at [ox.ac.uk/ai](https://ox.ac.uk/ai) and look out for future campaigns on quantum computing and building a sustainable future

Dr Natalia Ares



# AFRICA OXFORD INITIATIVE (AFOX)

**Avni Gupta, Communications Officer for AfOx, talks about the work of this university-wide initiative – which brings the University’s long-standing multi-disciplinary engagement with Africa under one platform**

Visit the website to find out more about the initiative, events and links to AfOx’s social media accounts: [www.afox.ox.ac.uk](http://www.afox.ox.ac.uk)

View the AxOf researcher database: [www.afox.ox.ac.uk/database](http://www.afox.ox.ac.uk/database)

Tune into the AfOx insakas via podcasts at: <http://podcasts.ox.ac.uk/series/africa-oxford-initiative-insakas>

Contact the team at: [afox@ndm.ox.ac.uk](mailto:afox@ndm.ox.ac.uk)



AfOx travel grant recipient Sarah Hill (Department of Zoology) with her collaborators at the Ministry of Health in Luanda, Angola

Established in 2016, AfOx has already brought together 700 members working on a myriad of collaborative projects between Oxford and African institutions. Almost 300 Oxford academics and 200 African researchers have signed up to the AfOx researcher database to share their ideas, knowledge and expertise.

### **Building networks for research leadership**

The ethos of AfOx is to facilitate the development of equitable and sustainable collaborations between researchers from African institutions and from the University of Oxford. One way this is achieved is through the AfOx Visiting Fellows Programme.

The programme enables researchers from African institutions across the continent to visit Oxford for a period of four to eight weeks to utilise the University’s facilities, including its labs and libraries, and to undertake collaborative work with our researchers.

This summer, 20 researchers from 12 African countries will visit Oxford between July and September. The researchers will be affiliated with a college and a department and will work on a diverse range of research topics from radio astronomy (galaxy surveys) and antibiotic resistance in pathogenic bacteria to peace and conflict studies.

### **Connecting researchers for impact collaborations**

AfOx recognises that effective research partnerships fundamentally depend on people meeting each other to ensure that ideas are genuinely co-developed. To enable this, AfOx provides travel grants allowing two or more researchers to work on a collaborative project, either in Oxford or at an African institution.

More than 138 travel grants have now been awarded, facilitating new collaborations between 46 Oxford departments and 90 African institutions across 30 countries. They have helped to support partnerships in a diverse range of research fields including economics, zoology and archaeology. These collaborations have led to co-authored publications, joint grant applications, student co-supervision and the delivery of joint lectures.

### **Student engagement and support**

Targeted student support can enhance a graduate’s experience, promote a sense of belonging and influence the academic success of emerging African leaders in Oxford. In partnership with the Oxford University Africa Society, AfOx runs academic support programs for prospective and current African graduate students. AfOx also supports several social events throughout the academic year to provide a welcoming environment for African students and staff at the University.

### **Africa-focused conversations**

Using its convening powers, AfOx hosts engaging conversations on Africa related issues. One of the most popular events is the AfOx insaka. This is a gathering for sharing ideas and knowledge about Africa-focused research. Experts from varied disciplines and academic background present their work and ideas, followed by opportunities for discussions and networking.

Hosted twice a term at St Cross College, the AfOx insakas feature talks on diverse issues from the fourth industrial revolution and marine ecology to conservation and health systems, among others. There is always an interesting event coming up.

# 2019 APPRENTICESHIP SUCCESS

**It has been a great start to the year for our University Apprentices. Our own annual event to share and celebrate the achievements being made across the University took place in March – and was closely followed by three of our Apprentices scooping prizes in the 2019 Oxfordshire Apprentice Awards**

The University Award and Expo event in March at the Sheldonian Theatre celebrated the ongoing success of the University's Apprentice scheme and the achievements of everyone involved.

Apprentices, managers and staff were invited to learn more about the types of apprenticeship available and to celebrate the progress of our current apprentices. Many of our current training providers were on hand to offer information and advice on how Apprenticeships help support the work of departments and develop the careers of individuals.

Registrar Gillian Aitken congratulated this year's winners and presented their awards.



Left to right: Jordan, Josephine and Emily at the Oxfordshire Apprenticeship Awards

## And the winners are...

- 1st-Year Apprentice Award  
Matthew Harris, Personnel Services
- 2nd-Year Apprentice Award  
Emma Ludlow, Estates Services
- 3rd- or Final-Year Apprentice Award  
Max Whitmore, Student Systems
- Most Improved  
Jennie Charlton, Computer Science
- Apprentice Manager Award  
Liisa O'Brien, Oxford Learning Institute
- Poster Competition  
Georgia Smith, Plant Sciences

This year's Apprenticeship Manager's Special Award went to the Print Studio in recognition of their great work and contribution towards promoting Apprenticeships.

Visit <https://universityofoxfordapprentices.blogspot.com> to read the winners' reactions.

The achievements of three of our University Apprentices were also recognised at the Oxfordshire Apprenticeship Awards which were announced in April at Jurys Inn, Oxford:

- Winner of Apprentice Ambassador Award  
Jordan Morris, Apprentice Reprographics Assistant, Print Studio
- Winner of Intermediate Apprenticeship Award  
Josephine Allen, Apprentice Training Administrator, Oxford Learning Institute
- Finalist of Shining Star Award  
Emily Joyce, Administrative Manager, Graduate Admissions Office

More details are available at [www.oxfordshireapprenticeships.co.uk/awards](http://www.oxfordshireapprenticeships.co.uk/awards)

## How can the Apprenticeship team help you?

The team members can support your department with hiring a new entrant apprentice, or guide you through the existing employee Apprenticeship training programme which helps to develop current members of staff. This is open to University staff of all ages and at any stage of their career.

Find out more, including details of the team's briefing sessions, at [www.apprenticeships.ox.ac.uk](http://www.apprenticeships.ox.ac.uk)

# INTERMISSION

Members of the University share details of their interests outside their working lives

**Greg Sweetnam**, Estates Services, Receptionist at the Gibson Building

During the week I'm often carrying out reception duties at the front desk of the Gibson Building, but most Saturday mornings you'll find me composing poetry at the Queen's Lane Coffee House.

I didn't have much of an interest in poetry before joining a writing workshop at the Old Fire Station in 1983, frequented by everyone from fellow beginners to established Oxford poets. I was soon hooked and found myself reading more and more poetry – as well as trying to write it. Over the years, others at the workshop became friends and mentors, providing encouragement and useful advice.

I slowly found my voice, influenced by Irish poets like Seamus Heaney and Derek Mahon, and have since been widely published, most recently in November's *Oxford Magazine* and, further back, nine works were included in the Oxford Poets Anthology in 2004. When I first saw the book sitting on a shelf in Waterstones I could hardly believe it. I'd loved to have signed it and put it back!

A future ambition is to have my own book of poetry published, but it's important to just focus on the poem at hand. I'm always trying to surprise myself – if I am not surprised, how's the reader going to be? I often deliver public readings around Oxford and give talks to students about life as a practising poet.

**From *The émigré sketchbook***

*iii*

*What allows the girl with soft pencils to look up*

*At the still life, the night sky beyond the bay window*

*And, under a bulb of daylight, transcribe the moth's*

*Flutter not as a butterfly but a hummingbird,*

*Is the hesitation reflected in the glass,*

*The barely-visible mother who is weighing up*

*School in the morning with her gifts of time and space.*

GREG SWEETNAM

**Nathan Grassi**, Communications Officer, The Centre on Migration, Policy and Society (COMPAS)

While researching early-20th-century New York with my comedy partner, Ida Berglöw Kenneway, we were amazed to find a black and white photo of a Coney Island food cart labelled 'Nathan & Ida's Hot Dogs.' So we did some digging – and discovered it was related to Nathan's Famous, a large fast food chain in the US, founded in 1916 by Nathan and Ida Handwerker from Poland.

The name coincidence was just too good

to pass up. We created a show titled Nathan & Ida's Hot Dog Stand which is loosely based on their lives - letting our minds run wild. It's a classic rags-to-riches comedy full of romance and adventure, which includes puppetry, mime, dance and the incomprehensible 'diner-speak' of the 1930s. The show has been performed at festivals around the UK, won two awards and is about to set off on tour again – including a two-week season in London.

In a very different experience to live theatre, I also directed a podcast called

Victoriocity – a comedy detective series set in an alternative Victorian London.

The podcast is now in its second season and is free to download. There is an extraordinary scene set in a fictional Oxford college – which must be heard to be believed.

Upcoming tour dates:  
[www.nathanandida.com](http://www.nathanandida.com)

Subscribe, download and listen to the podcast: [www.victoriocity.com](http://www.victoriocity.com)

Nathan and Ida in action







Justine Shaw running a candle-making workshop at the Hungerford Bookshop

**Justine Shaw**, Operations Manager at TORCH (The Oxford Research Centre in the Humanities)

Away from the office, I run a literary-inspired home fragrance company called Literati & Light. I began my business whilst researching my PhD in modernist literature after noticing how many books have very particular and evocative descriptions of fragrance. As a former candle-maker by trade I was acutely attuned to the impact of aroma and its ability to instil deep emotion and memory, and I quickly became immersed in merging my love of literature and scent together.

I found myself scouring literary texts looking for key moments where aroma plays an essential, though often unnoticed, role. From the lime-flower tea of Proust's madeleine episode to the oranges and lemons of Fitzgerald's jazz age tales, fragrance abounds in literature just as it does in life, providing a sensual symphony to our experiences.

Three years on, Literati & Light now produces eco-friendly artisan candles and diffusers which pay homage to a wide range of literary texts. I recently partnered with Penguin Classics to create two bespoke candles inspired by *Wuthering Heights* and *Pride and Prejudice*. I'm always keen to hear from people about stories they'd like to experience in fragrance, so do please drop me a line if you have any suggestions: [info@literatiandlight.com](mailto:info@literatiandlight.com)

Find out more, including details of Justine's products and regular candle-making workshops at: [www.literatiandlight.com](http://www.literatiandlight.com)

**Beatrice Shelley**, Communications Officer, Department of Psychiatry

It's not showy like ballroom, or sultry like Latin; there's no caller like a ceilidh – and it's not a dance class. My unusual hobby is 'Balfolk' – a folk dance tradition rooted in the local village festivals of continental Europe. In France, Italy, Belgium and the Netherlands musicians and dancers gather around bandstands in spontaneous informal events known as clandestine mazurkas. Think flash mob but subtler, more intimate, more folky, less intrusive.

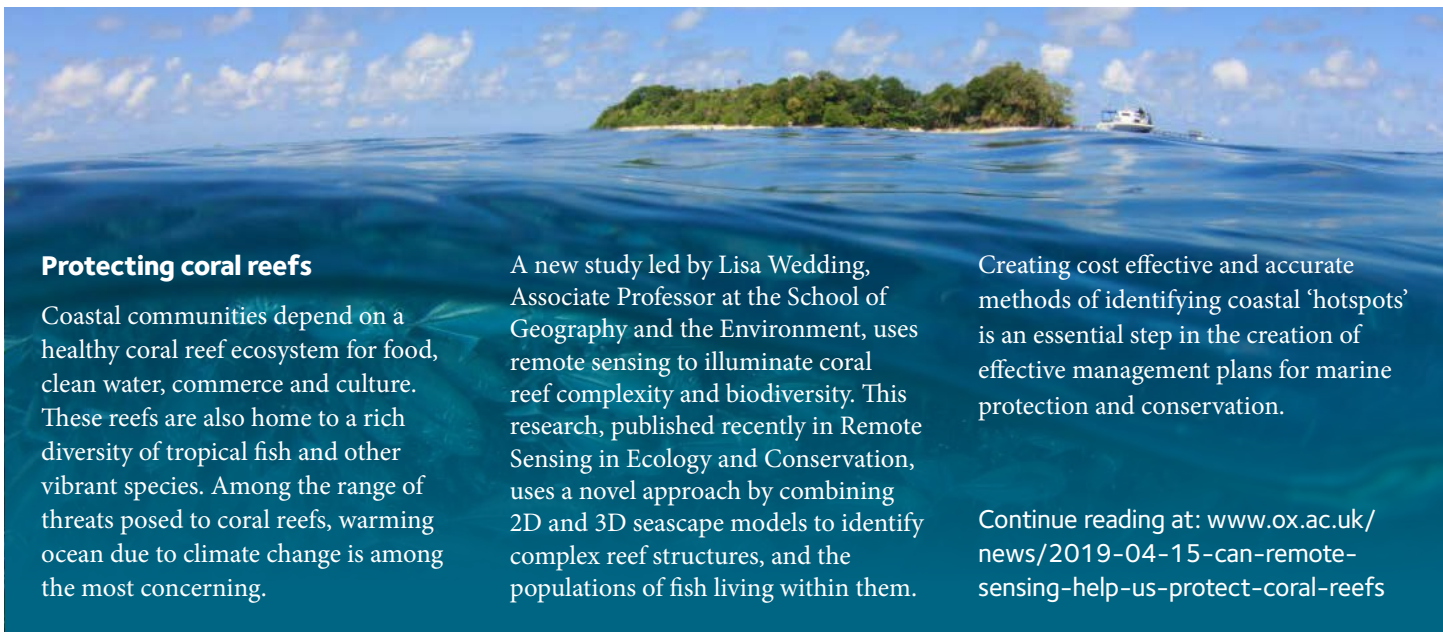
I loved it the instant I first heard the music – continental folk tunes are much more soulful than our variety. I love to dance it because the steps are happily simple but infinitely variable, perfect for the cautious newcomer and the creative expressive mover. True to its essence as a social dance, I also love it because it's such a friendly and cross-cultural community too.

If you're interested in joining in, please look up Balfolk Oxford on Facebook, visit the website <https://folkinoxford.co.uk/balfolk-oxford.html> or email [oxbalfolk@gmail.com](mailto:oxbalfolk@gmail.com) to join the mailing list



If you'd like to share details of a pastime or project you're involved with in your spare time, please send your submissions to [blueprint@admin.ox.ac.uk](mailto:blueprint@admin.ox.ac.uk)

# RESEARCH ROUNDUP



## Protecting coral reefs

Coastal communities depend on a healthy coral reef ecosystem for food, clean water, commerce and culture. These reefs are also home to a rich diversity of tropical fish and other vibrant species. Among the range of threats posed to coral reefs, warming ocean due to climate change is among the most concerning.

A new study led by Lisa Wedding, Associate Professor at the School of Geography and the Environment, uses remote sensing to illuminate coral reef complexity and biodiversity. This research, published recently in *Remote Sensing in Ecology and Conservation*, uses a novel approach by combining 2D and 3D seascape models to identify complex reef structures, and the populations of fish living within them.

Creating cost effective and accurate methods of identifying coastal 'hotspots' is an essential step in the creation of effective management plans for marine protection and conservation.

Continue reading at: [www.ox.ac.uk/news/2019-04-15-can-remote-sensing-help-us-protect-coral-reefs](http://www.ox.ac.uk/news/2019-04-15-can-remote-sensing-help-us-protect-coral-reefs)

## Shedding a light on health

Researchers from the Oxford Centre for Diabetes, Endocrinology and Metabolism (OCDEM) have found that increased exposure to bright sunlight may be associated with a lower risk of type 2 diabetes and heart disease by lowering blood insulin and triglyceride levels. The study, published in the *Journal of Clinical Endocrinology & Metabolism*, is the first to suggest that regular exposure to bright sunlight might improve glucose and fat metabolism.

A team of researchers led by Dr Costas Christodoulides and Professor Fredrik Karpe from the Radcliffe Department of Medicine examined data from local weather stations coupled with blood and body fat measurements from over 10,000 healthy middle-aged people from the Oxford Biobank and the Netherlands Epidemiology of Obesity studies – large-scale databases of health information from volunteers living in Oxfordshire and Leiden.

Continue reading at: <https://www.rdm.ox.ac.uk/news/greater-exposure-to-bright-sunlight-correlates-with-lower-diabetes-and-heart-disease-risk-indicators>

## Mystery of volcanic ash layer

Researchers from the University of Oxford have traced the origin of a pre-historic eruption that blanketed the Mediterranean region in ash to Naples' lesser-known volcano Campi Flegrei, located immediately to the west of the city.

Since the late 1970s scientists have identified the same pre-historic volcanic ash layer in sediment cores extracted from sites ranging across 150,000 square kilometres of the central Mediterranean. This widespread ash layer, dated at 29,000 years ago, blanketed the region and clearly indicated a large volcanic eruption. While the region is well known for its many active volcanoes, such as Mount Vesuvius which famously destroyed Pompeii in 79 AD, scientists had failed to confidently match this older, far-ranging ash deposit to a specific volcano or eruption.

Continue reading at: [www.ox.ac.uk/news/2019-04-25-mysterious-volcanic-ash-layer-blanketing-mediterranean-29000-years-ago-traced](http://www.ox.ac.uk/news/2019-04-25-mysterious-volcanic-ash-layer-blanketing-mediterranean-29000-years-ago-traced)

## Sustaining biodiversity

In an era of always-on information, it is surprising how little we know about key biological aspects of animal species worldwide. Fundamental pieces of information, such as fertility and survival rates – the building blocks of how populations persist – are missing from global data for more than 98% of known species of mammals, birds, reptiles and amphibians. This is a gap with far-reaching implications, since conservationists fight to save species from extinction.

However, a multidisciplinary team which includes researchers from Oxford's Interdisciplinary Centre on Population Dynamics, believes we know more than we think. To measure available data and identify gaps, they developed a Species Knowledge Index that classifies available demographic information for 32,144 tetrapod species.

Continue reading at: [www.ox.ac.uk/news/2019-04-12-zoos-and-aquaria-deliver-missing-information-critical-sustaining-biodiversity](http://www.ox.ac.uk/news/2019-04-12-zoos-and-aquaria-deliver-missing-information-critical-sustaining-biodiversity)



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# NEWS

## Tours

Looking for a walking tour for colleagues or visitors to the city? Dr Nina Kruglikova, Research Affiliate at the School of Anthropology & Museum Ethnography, designs and delivers a number of different walking tours in her free time, including one which embraces Oxford's Russian heritage. As an alumna, she has many entertaining stories about Oxford life and its traditions to share. Nina also gives charity walks for both the general public and University members. These have covered various themes, including the History of Science in Oxford during British Science Week, Oxford during the Great War, History of Women in Oxford and literary tours in support of Book Aid International.

Find out more: [nina.kruglikova@gmail.com](mailto:nina.kruglikova@gmail.com) Facebook: [www.facebook.com/ninasoxford/](http://www.facebook.com/ninasoxford/)



## Ashmolean for All

Work is taking place to develop a strand in the Ashmolean's Audience Engagement strategy. This seeks to encourage museum activity that is with and created by its many audiences – identifying young people, families and older people as essential to reshaping the physical and intellectual spaces of the museum. The Ashmolean also runs social workshops for older people which focus on exploring the artefacts, the stories behind-the-scenes and meeting people.

A new team is now being brought together to create new opportunities for co-production with, by and for older people. If you would like to express your interest in becoming a member of this team – or if you know an older person who might like to be involved – please contact Beth McDougall on 01865 282456.



## Postgraduate Certificate in Teaching and Learning in Higher Education

This one-year, part-time programme is for academic, teaching and research staff who are currently teaching at the University. Applications (closing date is Friday 28 June) are open now for places starting in October 2019.

Further details: [www.learning.ox.ac.uk/teaching](http://www.learning.ox.ac.uk/teaching)

## Undergraduate Open Days – volunteers needed

The Undergraduate Admissions and Outreach team invite staff to share their enthusiasm for the University by welcoming prospective students and their families to Oxford at the University's annual undergraduate Open Days – this year's events are scheduled for Wednesday 3 July, Thursday 4 July and Friday 20 September 2019. The role involves welcoming visitors and giving directions – no specialist knowledge about the admissions process is required. A full briefing is provided and it is a great way to meet colleagues from across the University.

To volunteer: Whether for a few hours or a full day on 3 or 4 July please seek permission from your line manager and email your details over to [opendays@admin.ox.ac.uk](mailto:opendays@admin.ox.ac.uk)

Find out more: [ox.ac.uk/opendays](http://ox.ac.uk/opendays)



# NEWS



## Swift Tower

Following a public competition in 2017 led by the RSPB, the winning design by local resident Jonathan Wheeler can now be found in University Parks near the pond. Jonathan's design, which echoes the birds' distinctive shape, will provide space for dozens of swifts to raise their young. Several Estates Services teams were involved in the creation and installation of the tower, including Conservation & Buildings, Environmental Sustainability, Finance and University Parks.

Swifts, among the UK's best-loved birds, are under threat from the destruction of suitable nesting sites during building renovations. The new tower contains 25 nest boxes, designed by the RSPB. There are plans to install a sound system to play recorded calls to attract the city's annual visitors to this new accommodation.

Don't forget to keep an eye on the progress of the swifts that return each summer to nest in the Museum of Natural History's tower.

Visit the webcam: <https://oumnh.ox.ac.uk/swifts-in-the-tower-0>

## Improved expenses process

The Focus programme is delivering a project to implement a new electronic expenses system and to help make the expenses process more straightforward and efficient. In parallel, the Finance Division has revised the language of the Expenses Policy to help make it clearer. The rules on claiming expenses remain the same, with emphasis on the four principles that underpin all University expense claims:

1. Value for money is achieved.
2. It is not possible and/or practical for the University to pay for the good or service directly.
3. Costs incurred are for business purposes only, and the individual does not receive a personal benefit.
4. Only actual and evidenced costs are reclaimed.



Find out more: [www.ox.ac.uk/staff/news-listing/2019-02-28-expenses-policy-improvements](http://www.ox.ac.uk/staff/news-listing/2019-02-28-expenses-policy-improvements)

## Oxplore

Launched in September 2017, the University's digital outreach platform brings the richness of Oxford's research and teaching to young people aged 11–18 and their teachers. Oxplore's website features 'Big Questions' which encourage teenagers to think beyond the school curriculum, make links between subjects and understand the value of higher education.

To launch the 50th Big Question, 'Would you pay everyone the same?', 70 local state school pupils took part in related activities linked to gender inequality and equal pay at Lady Margaret Hall. An online event in March – hosted by Dr Tom Crawford, mathematician and maths communicator – reached more than 1,800 pupils in 48 schools who tuned in to interact with a panel comprising Tom and three undergraduate students, Esther Agbolade, Felix Peterken and Olivia Webster.

To view the recording visit: [www.youtube.com/c/LetsOxplore](http://www.youtube.com/c/LetsOxplore) or check out all 50 Big Questions: [www.oxplore.org](http://www.oxplore.org)



# NEWS

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Public Affairs is happy to help you promote articles that you or people in your area have written on its Medium publication site at <https://medium.com/oxford-university> – which currently has 23K+ followers. Any article published is also promoted on our social media channels and is usually featured in the Discover carousel on the University's homepage.

## Already have an idea?

Contact: [digicomms@admin.ox.ac.uk](mailto:digicomms@admin.ox.ac.uk)



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## Brexit Update

The University's website includes information about the implications of the UK leaving the European Union, with information and guidance for EU staff and students at: [www.ox.ac.uk/news-and-events/oxford-and-brexit](http://www.ox.ac.uk/news-and-events/oxford-and-brexit)

Should you have any specific questions which are not covered in either the staff or student Q&As, please contact the relevant team as listed below:

### Immigration, visas and the EU Settlement Scheme:

Please contact either James Baker or Tim Currie in the University's Staff Immigration Team:  
[james.baker@admin.ox.ac.uk](mailto:james.baker@admin.ox.ac.uk)  
[tim.currie@admin.ox.ac.uk](mailto:tim.currie@admin.ox.ac.uk)

### Research and EU funding issues:

Please contact Research Services:  
[ecresearch@admin.ox.ac.uk](mailto:ecresearch@admin.ox.ac.uk)

### Pay and purchasing issues:

Please contact the purchasing team:  
[purchasing@admin.ox.ac.uk](mailto:purchasing@admin.ox.ac.uk)

## Plastic-free deliveries

The *Gazette* team has been working with Oxuniprint to reduce the amount of waste generated by the distribution of the *Gazette*, *Blueprint* and the *Oxford Magazine* and distribution is now plastic-free. Royal Mail deliveries will be packaged in a compostable bag and deliveries to University or college addresses will arrive as below:

- When the *Gazette* is sent alone (weeks 1, 3, 6, 7, 9 and any subsequent weeks), addresses will be printed directly on the front cover of the *Gazette*.
- Where the *Gazette* is accompanied by *Blueprint* (week 4) or the *Oxford Magazine* (weeks 0, 2, 5 and 8), publication/s will be delivered in a compostable bag (even if just the *Gazette*).

The compostable bags can be disposed of in a compost bin, with garden waste or with food waste (where they can also be used as caddy liners).

Send questions or feedback to: [gazette@admin.ox.ac.uk](mailto:gazette@admin.ox.ac.uk)



## First Animals

12 July 2019–24 February 2020

Watch out for a new exhibition this summer which tells the story of our earliest beginnings. The first animals evolved in the oceans 600 million years ago, laying down a blueprint for future animal life. *First Animals* at the Museum of Natural History brings together fossils from sites across the globe, including a generous loan of more than 50 exceptional specimens from Yunnan University in Chengjiang, China. The exhibition features specially commissioned digital reconstructions and the latest techniques in palaeontology.

Find out more: [www.oum.ox.ac.uk/firstanimals](http://www.oum.ox.ac.uk/firstanimals)



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## New College Chorister Open Day

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Join our choristers for an afternoon of music and fun – and find out everything about life in New College Choir. Meet the director, Robert Quinney, and talk to choir and school staff, and current chorister parents. As New College choristers, musical boys enjoy an extraordinary life as well as substantial scholarships at **New College School** [www.newcollegeschool.org](http://www.newcollegeschool.org).



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#### CONTACT

[nancy-jane.rucker@new.ox.ac.uk](mailto:nancy-jane.rucker@new.ox.ac.uk)  
01865 279108

for more details see

[www.newcollegechoir.com](http://www.newcollegechoir.com)

## RETIREMENT AND INHERITANCE TAX PLANNING SPECIALISTS



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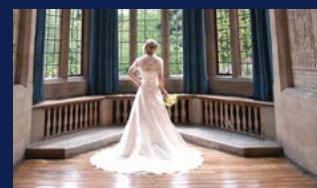
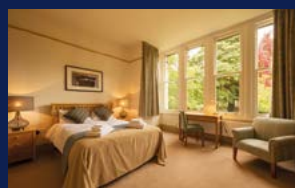
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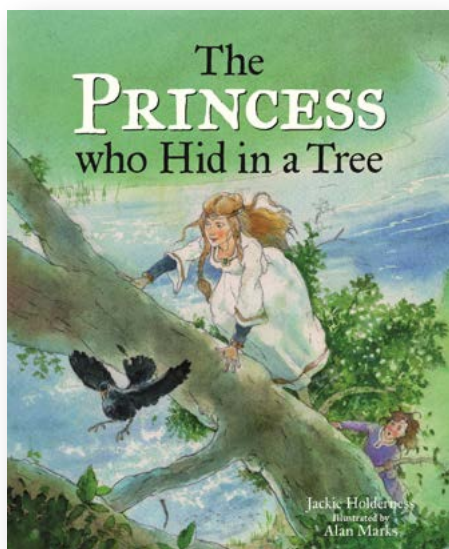
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### Bodleian Library Publishing:



#### *The Princess who Hid in a Tree: An Anglo-Saxon Story*

**Jackie Holderness**, Cathedral Education Officer, Christ Church

**Alan Marks**, Prize-winning illustrator of children's books.

'A charming re-telling of a celebrated story from Oxford's history. The beautifully illustrated book introduces young readers to Frideswide's story in a fresh and immediate way. It's impossible not to cheer on a princess who decides for herself how she wishes to live her life.' **Professor Louise Richardson**, Vice-Chancellor

Published April 2019

#### *Korean Treasures Volume 2: Rare Books, Manuscripts and Artefacts in the Bodleian Libraries and Museums of Oxford University*

**Minh Chung**, Head of the Bodleian China Centre Library and Korean Collections

This second volume collects together further important and often unique objects from the Bodleian Libraries and the museums of the University of Oxford.

Published June 2019

#### *The Selden Map of China: A New Understanding of the Ming Dynasty*

**Hongping Annie Nie**, Teaching and Research Associate, University of Oxford China Centre, Senior Member of St Anthony's College

Reveals the enthralling story behind this extraordinary artefact, and China's relationship with the wider world.

Published June 2019

#### *Oxford Botanic Garden: A Guide*

**Simon Hiscock**, Director, Oxford Botanic Garden and Arboretum

**Chris Thorogood**, Deputy Director and Head of Science, Oxford Botanic Garden and Arboretum

A lavishly illustrated practical guide to the Oxford Botanic Garden and its work today.

Published August 2019

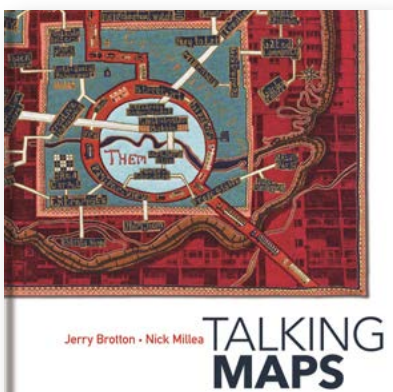
#### *Talking Maps*

**Nick Millea**, Map Librarian at the Bodleian Library

**Jerry Brotton**, Professor of Renaissance Studies, Queen Mary University of London

Accompanying the exhibition at the Bodleian, this book shows how maps and stories have always been intimately entwined.

Published July 2019



### Oxford University Press:

#### *Middlemarch – Oxford World Classics*

Edited by **David Carroll**, Emeritus Professor of English Literature at the University of Lancaster and **David Russell**, Associate Professor of English and Tutorial Fellow, University of Oxford

*Middlemarch* addresses ordinary life at a moment of great social change, in the years leading to the Reform Act of 1832. George Eliot explores many subjects of concern to modern life: art, religion, science, politics, self, society and, above all, human relationships.

Published April 2019

#### *The Poetic Edda*

**Carolyne Larrington**, Professor of Medieval European Literature and Official Fellow, St John's College

This great collection of Norse-Icelandic mythological and heroic poetry relates the exploits of gods and humans.

Published April 2019

#### *Priest of Nature: The Religious Worlds of Isaac Newton*

**Rob Iliffe**, Professor of History

He was the dominant intellectual figure of his age. His published works reached across the scientific spectrum. Yet alongside his public success, Sir Isaac Newton harbored private religious convictions that, if revealed, threatened not just his livelihood but his life.

Published May 2019

#### *Charles I's Killers in America*

**Matthew Jenkinson**, Member of the Senior Common Room, New College

When the British monarchy was restored in 1660, King Charles II was faced with deciding the fate of those who had signed his father's death warrant eleven years earlier. Facing the gallows, some of the men involved fled to America. His book traces the gripping story of two of these men, Edward Whalley and William Goffe.

Published June 2019

# THE GREAT OUTDOORS



Nigel and the Wytham Woods team

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The woods can be divided into four main habitats. The forested area is a simple three-way split between ancient semi-natural woodland, secondary woodland and modern plantations. The fourth key

habitat is the limestone grassland found at the top of the hill. Other smaller habitats include a valley-side mire and a series of ponds. The ancient woods date back to the last ice age, while the secondary woodland dates to the 17th century and the plantations to the 1950s and 1960s.

As well as providing the work space for numerous researchers – there are usually around 60 projects on the go – you may also bump into Wytham's residential artists or its poet, or discover its Japanese kiln being fired, an army of volunteers feeding its hungry fire around the clock with fallen wood.

### Want to find out more?

Simply get in touch with Nigel Fisher, Wytham Woods Conservator, to talk through how your team can enjoy a great day in the great outdoors.

Contact Nigel:  
[wytham.woods@admin.ox.ac.uk](mailto:wytham.woods@admin.ox.ac.uk)

Website: [www.wythamwoods.ox.ac.uk](http://www.wythamwoods.ox.ac.uk)

Find out about their public events:  
[www.wythamwoods.ox.ac.uk/events](http://www.wythamwoods.ox.ac.uk/events)

Local residents can apply for a permit to walk through the woods: [www.wythamwoods.ox.ac.uk/permit](http://www.wythamwoods.ox.ac.uk/permit)

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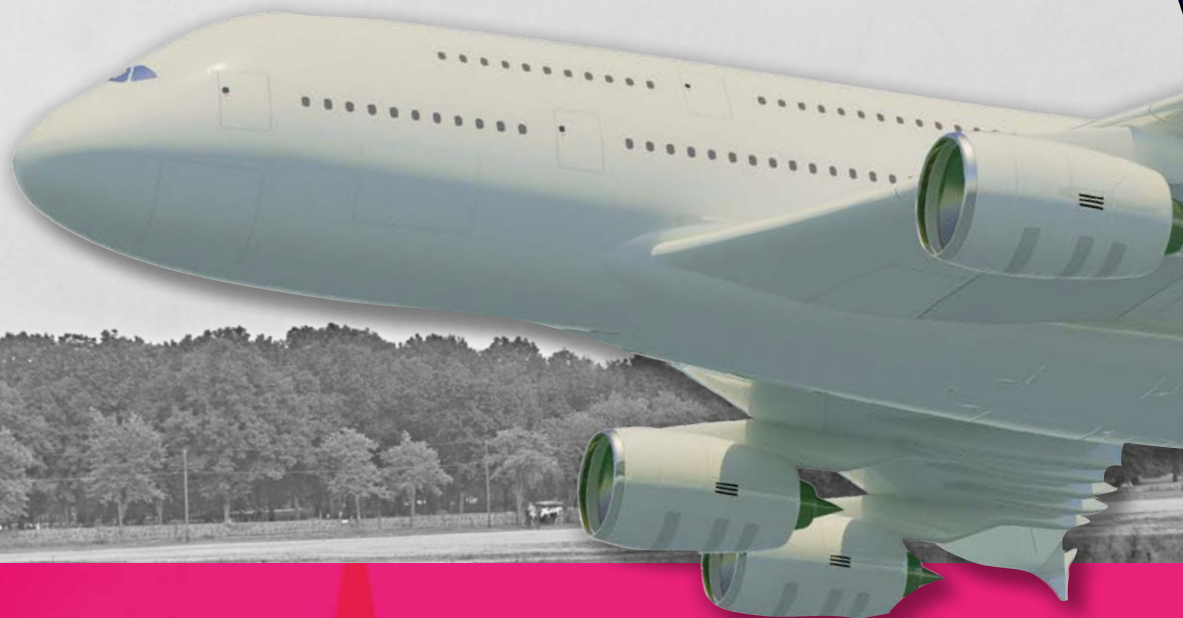
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