

# BLUEPRINT

Staff magazine for the University of Oxford | May 2015



*M*ETEOROLOGY RECORD | *M*AGNA CARTA 800 | *O*XFORD'S POETRY PROFESSORS



**FINALIST** ArtFund  
Museum  
of the Year  
2015

# NEWS IN BRIEF

◆ The University has gained accreditation as a living wage employer. This means the University is not only committing to pay the living wage to all its employees but also to contractors who work regularly on University premises. Contractors will be moved over to the living wage within the next two years when contracts are retendered or renewed. The living wage, which is intended to allow people to provide for themselves and their families, currently stands at £7.85 per hour, around 20% more than the national minimum wage.

◆ New targets have been approved by Council to support the University's objective of increasing the proportion of women in senior roles. By 2020 women should comprise 20% of statutory professors and 35% of associate professors. In addition, women should account for at least 30% of the membership of Council and its main committees; selection committees should aim for a representation of at least one-third women; and at least 50% of the names presented to Congregation for honorary degrees should be women and/or members of minority groups.

◆ Changes are being made to central IT support to improve support for users. April saw the introduction of a single system to manage all support calls, which allows you to check on the status of your request via a self-service portal on the IT Services website. Additional staff have been recruited and a dedicated phone number will be introduced for the service desk later this summer, along with a move to provide a 24/7 first-line support service in due course.

◆ Have your say about the quality of services provided by University Administration and Services (UAS) by completing a short online survey. The survey, which runs until 26 June, involves completing a brief evaluation of each of the administrative services you have worked with over the past year. The findings will be used to help identify strengths and areas for improvement in UAS. To participate, visit <http://po.st/z0TlnY>.

◆ The Sheldonian Theatre may be a familiar Oxford landmark, but did you know you can enjoy one of the best indoor panoramic views of the city from the theatre's cupola? You can access the cupola on a self-guided tour (just show your University Card for free entry for yourself and up to four guests) or on a one-hour guided tour. Priced at £6 for University Card holders, the guided tours include the Ladies' Gallery and attic, as well as the Clarendon and Bodleian Quadrangles and Radcliffe Square. Details at [www.ox.ac.uk/sheldonian](http://www.ox.ac.uk/sheldonian).

◆ Could you spare some time on 1 or 2 July to help at the undergraduate open days? If so, join the Undergraduate Admissions and Outreach team in welcoming prospective students and their families at key locations across Oxford. No specialist knowledge is required – the role simply involves giving directions and you will be invited to a briefing beforehand. To volunteer – whether for a couple of hours or a full day – phone (2)70745 or complete the online form at <http://po.st/z5kUBu> (for 1 July) or <http://po.st/zvb3qS> (for 2 July).

◆ An important milestone has been reached by the Oxford Thinking Campaign with the announcement that £2bn has been raised. The fundraising campaign was launched publicly in 2008, with an initial target of £1.25bn. This was surpassed in 2012 and a revised target of £3bn was agreed. In a challenging economic climate, there is still much to be done to achieve this goal.

The impact of Oxford Thinking is transforming lives across the



collegiate University and indeed the world. The past few years have seen major capital projects come to fruition, such as the new Mathematical Institute building and the redevelopment of the Weston Library (above), as well as important student support initiatives such as the provision of more than £120m for undergraduate support and outreach, and the Oxford Graduate Scholarship Matched Fund, which aims to build an endowment to fully fund over 165 graduate students for the expected duration of their courses.



FROM TOP: ENJOY Sheldonian views; SHARE YOUR UAS THOUGHTS; GIVE SOME GUIDANCE TO VISITORS



COVER: HANDS-ON ENGAGEMENT WITH A REAL DINOSAUR EGG AT OXFORD'S MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY (SEE P5 AND PP14-15)

# RESEARCH ROUND-UP

◆ Babies experience pain much like adults, a pioneering Oxford brain-scanning study has reported in the journal *eLife*. Led by Dr Rebecca Slater of the Department of Paediatrics, the study placed ten newborns and ten adults in an MRI scanner while they were poked on the bottom of their feet with a retracting rod – described as similar to being poked with a pencil and mild enough not to wake the babies. A comparison of scans showed 20 areas where adults' brains 'lit up' when experiencing the pain; babies' brains were active in 18 of those. The study also suggested that babies could be more sensitive to pain than adults – brain activity in babies was similar to that of adults experiencing four times the force. Dr Slater says: 'Some people have argued that babies' brains are not developed enough for them to really "feel" pain, any reaction being just a reflex – our study provides the first really strong evidence that this is not the case.' She adds that the findings suggest that where pain relief is given to older children undergoing medical procedures, it should also be considered for babies.

◆ The resolution of a decades-old debate about the oldest fossils on Earth has inspired new approaches to the search for early life. An Oxford-led team analysed 3.46bn-year-old rocks containing structures once thought to be Earth's oldest microfossils. The team report in *PNAS* that high-spatial resolution data show that these 'Apex chert microfossils' do not match younger fossils of microscopic life and instead comprise peculiarly shaped minerals. Genuine microfossils from other rocks analysed in the study give fresh insights into the diversity and strangeness of ancient micro-organisms. The publication embodies one of the key achievements of author Professor Martin Brasier of the Department of Earth Sciences, who died in December 2014 and was a driving force behind a revaluation of early life.

◆ A new demographic study suggests the West is not in decline and countries in the developing world are facing a variety of different challenges that have been 'understated'. A paper by Professor David Coleman and Dr Stuart Basten, from the Department of Social Policy and Intervention, says birth rates in Western Europe, the USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand are now relatively close to replacement, that the



underlying trend in Europe is upwards, and that population ageing, although inevitable, is likely to be 'manageable'. The paper appears in a special supplement, 'Population – the long view', for the journal *Population Studies*, which is guest-edited by the Oxford authors with Professor Francesco Billari from the Department of Sociology.

◆ Genetic factors have been found to make a greater contribution to the risk of sexual offending than family environment, according to researchers at Oxford University and Sweden's Karolinska Institute. Their study, in the *International Journal of Epidemiology*, analysed data on 21,556 convicted sex offenders in Sweden. The team found that 2.5% of brothers or fathers of convicted sex offenders were themselves convicted of sexual offences. This compared to convicted sex offenders making up about 0.5% of men in the general population. Statistical modelling suggests that around 40% of this difference in risk is due to genetic factors. 'We know that current tools are not very effective at predicting who might commit sexual offences and it could be that taking family risk into account would lead to more accurate predictions,' says Professor Seena Fazel of the Department of Psychiatry, who co-authored the paper.

◆ An Oxford academic has discovered the oldest surviving non-biblical manuscript from Scotland. Dr Kylie Murray, of the Faculty of

English Language and Literature and Balliol College, discovered a 12th-century copy of the 'Consolation of Philosophy' by Boethius, a statesman of the late Roman Empire, at the University of Glasgow. Although the manuscript was known and had previously been catalogued, scholars had believed it to be English, with Durham being the most likely place of origin. However, closer inspection has revealed that the manuscript's handwriting and illustrations do not match those of Durham, or other English books, from this period. Dr Murray argues that the manuscript suggests a connection with the Scottish kingdom. She says: 'Glasgow's Boethius manuscript allows a fresh understanding of Scotland's early responses to key intellectual works in the Middle Ages, and provides a snapshot of how Scotland's literary culture as we now know it first began to emerge and develop.'



THE 12TH-CENTURY 'CONSOLATION OF PHILOSOPHY' MANUSCRIPT

► For more information, visit [www.ox.ac.uk/news](http://www.ox.ac.uk/news) and [www.ox.ac.uk/staffnews](http://www.ox.ac.uk/staffnews)

# PEOPLE AND PRIZES



**Dapo Akande**, Professor of Public International Law, has been appointed to an international advisory panel of the American Law Institute, working to develop the Restatement of the Law (Fourth) on the Foreign Relations Law of the United States. He has also been appointed to the International Group of Experts for the development of the 2nd edition of the Tallinn Manual on the International Law Applicable to Cyber Warfare.



**Dr Bungo Akiyoshi** of the Department of Biochemistry has been awarded both the R R Bensley Award in Cell Biology by the American Association of Anatomists, for

his important contributions to the field of anatomy and specifically in cell biology, and the 2016 Early Career Research Award: Cells by the Biochemical Society, for his work on mechanisms with relevance to cancer and organismal homeostasis.

**Professor Sir Gordon Duff**, Principal of St Hilda's College, has been appointed chair of the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council.



**Roger Goodman**, Nissan Professor of Modern Japanese Studies and Head of the Social Sciences Division, will become chair of the council of the Academy of Social Sciences in July.

**Claire Holden** of the Faculty of Music is to receive an ACU Centenary Award from the Association of Commonwealth Universities. The awards are made to early career researchers and are intended to facilitate travel to other Commonwealth countries.



**Rana Mitter**, Professor of the History and Politics of Modern China, has been awarded the 2014 Duke of Westminster Medal for Military Literature by the Royal United Services Institute

for his book *China's War with Japan 1937–1945: The Struggle for Survival*.

**Dr Simon Newstead** of the Department of Biochemistry has won an early career prize from the British Crystallographic Association

for his discovery of the structure of the plant nitrate transporter NRT1.1.

**Deborah Oxley**, Professor of Social Science History, has been elected a Fellow of the Academy of Social Sciences.



**Dame Carol Robinson**, Professor of Chemistry, has been named the 2015 European Laureate in the 17th annual L'Oréal–UNESCO For Women in Science Awards. The €100,000

awards recognise one exceptional female scientist from each continent. Professor Robinson was chosen for creating a revolutionary method for studying how proteins function, particularly membrane proteins, and establishing the new scientific field of gas phase structural biology.

**Dr Elina Screen** of the Faculty of History has received a prize from the Dr Philos Hans Holst's Memorial Fund for her work on two illustrated catalogues of coins in the SCBI series on Norwegian Collections.



**Rajesh Thakker**, May Professor of Medicine, has been appointed as a National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) Senior Investigator. Senior Investigators are the NIHR's pre-eminent

researchers and represent the country's most outstanding leaders of clinical and applied health and social care research.



**Monica Duffy Toft**, Professor of Government and Public Policy at the Blavatnik School of Government, has been named the 2015–16 *World Politics* Fellow at the Princeton Institute

for International and Regional Studies (PIIRS). The journal *World Politics* sponsors this annual visiting fellowship.



**Tony Watts**, Professor of Marine Geology and Geophysics, has been awarded the 2015 Harold Jeffreys Lecture of the Royal Astronomical Society. The award recognises

his contributions to the teaching and mentoring of young scientists and his research on the mechanical strength of Earth's lithospheric plates.

## ISIS ENTERPRISE WINS QUEEN'S AWARD

**Isis Enterprise**, the technology and innovation management consultancy based within Isis Innovation (the University's research and technology commercialisation company) has won a 2015 Queen's Award for Enterprise – the UK's highest accolade for business success.

Isis Enterprise won the award for its success in international trade, working with University researchers, corporates, investors and governments worldwide to provide training and to accelerate the development of technologies into new products and services.

Established in 2004, the organisation is now a £2.8m business employing 17 full-time consultants. Over 88% of Isis Enterprise's consulting revenue comes from working with clients outside the UK. Notable projects include developing an entrepreneurship Master's course for founders of technology ventures with the University of Malta; working with a group of LED lighting companies in Malaysia to boost their international growth and product development; and securing investment from Chinese regional governments and private investors to identify and license technologies and products that they can further develop and make available to Asian markets.

Isis Enterprise also has offices or expert local consultants in Hong Kong, Spain, Japan, UAE, Oman and Australia and has provided expert consulting to Colombia, Argentina, France, Chile, Mexico, South Africa and Thailand.

## EDITOR'S NOTE

Further to the article on OUSU's Student Advice Service published in the March issue, we would like to clarify that the University's Disability Advisory Service is a dedicated service available to support students with disabilities. It provides information and advice to students and assists with disability-related study support. Further information is available at [www.ox.ac.uk/students/welfare/disability](http://www.ox.ac.uk/students/welfare/disability).

## VIEWFINDER FOUND

This lovely Classical/Art Deco clock (p20) was designed in the 1930s by Sir Giles Gilbert Scott for the New Bodleian Library, of which he was the architect. The clock was removed for refurbishment and its surrounding stone protected during the recent transformation of the building into the Weston Library, where it now keeps time once more.

## AMONG THE GREATS



**Denis Noble**, Emeritus Professor of Cardiovascular Physiology in the Department of Physiology, Anatomy and Genetics, was honoured at a Royal Society event in

March celebrating 350 years of the world's first scientific journal, *Philosophical Transactions*.

Two special issues of *Phil Trans A* and *Phil Trans B* published commentaries on a highly selected set of papers from the whole 350-year history – just 17 articles from *Phil Trans B* and 16 articles from *Phil Trans A* were selected for this honour. A 1985 paper entitled 'A model of cardiac electrical activity incorporating ionic pumps and concentration changes' by Denis Noble and Dario DiFrancesco (a former member of the department) was selected for the celebration's *Phil Trans B* theme issue.

The selected articles included papers by household names such as Newton, Lister, Priestley, Herschel, Davey, Telford, Faraday, Joule, Maxwell, Reynolds, Eddington, Leeuwenhoek, Turing and Medawar. Just three articles amongst those honoured were by living authors, of whom only Professor Noble was present at the event.

## MORE SWANS FOR OXFORD

Three further University departments have been granted Athena SWAN Silver awards: the Department of Physics, the Department of Psychiatry and the Nuffield Department of Clinical Medicine (NDM).

The Athena SWAN scheme recognises commitment to advancing women's careers in science, technology, engineering, maths and medicine (STEMM) employment in higher education and research. A Silver award recognises continued commitment and actions to advancing women's careers and it is particularly significant that two of the University's largest departments (NDM and Physics) have achieved this status.

The Department of Computer Science also gained a Bronze award in the latest round of the awards, announced recently by the Equality Challenge Unit. This means that all the University's science and medicine departments now hold awards: a total of 9 Silver and 19 Bronze awards.



## OUMNH SHORTLISTED FOR MUSEUM OF THE YEAR

The Oxford University Museum of Natural History (OUMNH) has been chosen as one of six finalists in the Art Fund Prize for Museum of the Year 2015.

The annual prize, which is widely regarded as the most prestigious award for UK museums, selects museums and galleries across the UK that have demonstrated exceptional creativity and ambition over the past 12 months.

The winning museum will be announced on 1 July and will receive £100,000. The other shortlisted museums are Dunham Massey (National Trust), Altrincham; IWM London (Imperial War Museums); The MAC, Belfast; HM Tower of London; and The Whitworth, Manchester.

In February 2014 OUMNH reopened after 14 months under wraps while its iconic Victorian glass roof was restored. This £4m project literally cast the museum's main court in a new light, both through the cleaning and replacement of some 8,600 glass tiles, and also thanks to a new LED lighting scheme.

The museum used its closure to experiment with innovative and creative forms of public engagement, such as the 'Goes to Town' trail in Oxford city centre. That initiative – a playful and creative campaign which included the installation of 12 museum specimens in locations across the city centre (such a penguin visiting a fish stall in the Covered Market) and the 'Goes for a Pint' series of natural history-themed quizzes in local pubs – has just



won a Museums + Heritage Award.

The museum re-emerged in 2014 with a new voice and an expanded programme for a wider audience.

◆ As part of the Art Fund Prize for Museum of the Year 2015, the Museum of Natural History is taking part in a photography competition judged by Magnum photographer Martin Parr and the public. Visitors are invited to capture the many aspects of the museum and submit their photographs to the Art Fund for a chance to win a photography holiday in Berlin. Details at [www.artfund.org/prize/photo-competition](http://www.artfund.org/prize/photo-competition).

## NAS DISTINCTIONS



Two Oxford academics been elected to the US National Academy of Sciences in recognition of their distinguished and continuing achievements in original research.

**Steven Balbus** (*top*), Savilian Professor of Astronomy and Head of the Sub-department of Astrophysics, has been elected a Member of the NAS.



**Professor Alex Halliday**, Head of the Mathematical, Physical and Life Sciences Division, has been elected as a Foreign Associate (a non-voting member of the Academy, with citizenship outside the US).

## RISE FELLOWS



**Peter Edwards** (*top*), Professor of Inorganic Chemistry, and **Lionel Tarassenko**, Professor of Electrical and Electronic Engineering, have been awarded the accolade by the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council of being appointed EPSRC RISE Fellows.



The RISE scheme is aimed at Recognising Inspirational Scientists and Engineers working in the UK. RISE Fellows

are renowned scientists and engineers who are fellows of the Royal Society, the Royal Academy of Engineering and the Academy of Medical Sciences.

## ARRIVALS BOARD

### PROFESSOR OF ORTHOPAEDIC TRAUMA SURGERY



**Matthew Costa,**  
Professor of Trauma  
and Orthopaedic  
Surgery, Warwick  
Medical School,  
University of  
Warwick, and  
Honorary Consultant

Orthopaedic Surgeon at University Hospital Coventry and Warwickshire NHS Trust, took up this post in the Nuffield Department of Orthopaedics, Rheumatology and Musculoskeletal Science on 11 May. He also became a Fellow of Wolfson College.

Professor Costa's clinical interest lies in musculoskeletal trauma, including patients with multiple injuries. His primary research interest is in clinical trials and clinical trial methodology, especially the clinical and cost effectiveness of musculoskeletal trauma interventions.

### PROFESSOR OF THE INTERPRETATION OF HOLY SCRIPTURE



**Hindy Najman,**  
Professor of Religious  
Studies, Judaic Studies,  
Classics and Divinity  
at Yale University,  
USA, will take up this  
post in the Faculty of  
Theology and Religion

on 1 July. She will also be a Fellow of Oriel College.

Professor Najman's areas of expertise are Second Temple Judaism, Hellenistic Judaism, Hebrew Bible, early Rabbinics and the history of Jewish interpretation, particularly the history of concepts in Ancient Judaism. She

has also written about interpretive authority and revelation, and is currently studying the author function in Jewish antiquity: how, for example, did ancient Jewish authors understand what they were doing when they were writing texts that were typically anonymous or ascribed to authoritative figures? Her most recent book is *Losing the Temple and Recovering the Future: An Analysis of 4 Ezra* (2014, CUP).

### DIRECTOR OF THE BOTANIC GARDEN AND HARCOURT ARBORETUM



**Simon Hiscock,**  
Professor of Botany  
and Director of the  
Botanic Garden,  
University of Bristol,  
will take up this  
post in Academic  
Services and

University Collections on 6 July.

Professor Hiscock's research centres on plant evolutionary genetics and he is currently investigating the genetic and genomic basis of adaptation and speciation in two 'model' systems – *Senecio* (ragworts) and *Sorbus* (whitebeams and wild service trees) – and the role played by hybridisation and polyploidy in these processes. Other work on plant reproductive biology focuses on the molecular genetic and biochemical basis of pollen-stigma recognition and subsequent molecular interactions between pollen and pistil.

As Director of the University of Bristol's new Botanic Garden, he oversaw its design and delivery and the development of its strategic mission. Through the Botanic Garden he also undertakes many outreach and public understanding of science activities.

## NEW HEAD OF MPLS



**Professor Donal Bradley CBE FRS** has been appointed as the new Head of the Mathematical, Physical and Life Sciences (MPLS) Division. He will take up the post on 1 September.

Professor Bradley is currently Lee-Lucas Professor of Experimental Physics, Director of the Centre for Plastic Electronics and Vice-Provost for Research at Imperial College London. His championing of cross-faculty research has included

coordination of impact acceleration activities, the successful launch of a pan-college PhD scholarships programme, pump-priming new research initiatives and overseeing the formation of 12 Imperial-led EPSRC Centres for Doctoral Training.

Professor Bradley's own research focuses on plastic electronics and encompasses fundamental studies on low-temperature/solution processed semiconductor materials and their application in a range of fields including energy-efficient displays, lighting and solar panels. He is a co-inventor of conjugated polymer electroluminescence and a co-founder of Cambridge Display Technology and Molecular Vision. He has more than 25 patent families to his name, and is ranked in the top 1% of most highly cited physicists in the world.

## EAT OUT FOR LESS



You may be aware that your University Card brings a number of benefits, such as a 10% discount at the museum and Bodleian shops, the OUP bookshop and the University of Oxford shop. But did you know that you can also enjoy a range of discounts at local cafés, restaurants and food suppliers? Here's just a taster.

In Jericho, Loch Fyne Oxford (55 Walton Street) offers 20% off your à la carte food bill when you present your University Card. The offer is valid any time Sunday to Thursday as well as Friday and Saturday before 6pm. If you're eating in or taking away, both Natural Bread Oxford (29 Little Clarendon Street) and Maison Blanc (3 Woodstock Road) offer a 10% discount to University Card holders – whether you're after a wild yeast sourdough loaf or beautiful French patisserie.

Cut-price cake and coffee is also on offer at Java&Co, an independently owned café at 35 New Inn Hall Street. Just present your University Card for 10% off your bill. You can also sign up to their VIP club for extra discounts ([www.javaandco.co.uk/vip\\_uni](http://www.javaandco.co.uk/vip_uni)) – it's free to join and you'll receive free cake on your birthday.

If you prefer cooking at home and like sourcing locally grown ingredients, why not try The VegVan, Oxford's mobile greengrocer. Run by Cultivate, a community-owned social enterprise, the VegVan stocks fruit and vegetables grown without artificial pesticides and fertilisers on ten acres of land just outside Oxford, together with other local produce such as eggs and honey. The van stops on Magdalen Road (outside The Rusty Bicycle pub) on Thursdays 4–7pm; Little Clarendon Street on Fridays 12–3.30pm; and outside Barclays Bank, Old High Street, Headington, on Saturdays 10.30am–2pm. From now until 31 July 2015 you can receive a 10% discount on your first shop by showing your University Card or by using the discount code oxuni10 when you shop online at <https://shop.cultivateoxford.org>.

For details, visit [www.admin.ox.ac.uk/personnel/staffinfo/discountsforstaff](http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/personnel/staffinfo/discountsforstaff) and [www.ox.ac.uk/staffnews](http://www.ox.ac.uk/staffnews).



## A LIFE OF ENLIGHTENMENT

The definitive scholarly guide to the writings of Voltaire is nearing completion, Professor Nicholas Cronk tells *Matt Pickles*

Professor Nicholas Cronk can see the finishing line. The director of the Voltaire Foundation has been editing the *Complete Works of Voltaire* since the late 1990s. The project, which will create a definitive scholarly guide to all known writings and correspondence by the great literary figure of the Enlightenment, began 30 years before that, in 1968. If all goes to plan, Professor Cronk and his team will complete the edition, in over 220 volumes, by 2019.

It seems surprising that a complete edition of the works of one of Europe's most iconic literary figures has not already been done and even more surprising that it is being compiled at an English university. 'Editions came out after he died, but they are unreliable because, in the years before and after the French Revolution, Voltaire's name was used to support particular political agendas,' explains Professor Cronk. 'Then there is the sheer scale of his writings. He lived a long time and wrote a huge amount in every possible genre. Unknown editions and previously undiscovered letters by Voltaire turn up all the time.'

Can there really still be new things to find out about Voltaire? Professor Cronk thinks so, and the Arts and Humanities Research Council agrees. They have just awarded him a fellowship for his project to edit and reinterpret Voltaire's *Letters on the English Nation*, which he wrote on his travels in England.

'Voltaire's *Letters on the English Nation* were enormously influential in setting the direction of the Enlightenment,' says Professor Cronk. 'The book introduced English thinkers like Locke and Newton to France and all of Europe. The English liked Voltaire so much he

was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society!'

Voltaire kept notebooks while on his travels in England, but these have never been used to throw light on the letters. 'So I want to re-examine these notebooks and try to find

### 'Unknown editions and previously undiscovered letters by Voltaire turn up all the time'

out more about Voltaire's social networks in England, to try to rethink this formative period.' The fellowship will last for two years, ending in 2017.

Prior to becoming director of the Foundation, Professor Cronk was a University Lecturer in French and the French tutor at St Edmund Hall, and he still enjoys teaching students. 'So much primary material is now available on the web, which is really helpful, but we have to use it with care – a lot of information on the internet is unreliable,' he says. 'At different times, people have tried to portray Voltaire as an anti-Semite, or pro-slavery, for example. I have had students tell me in tutorials that Voltaire was anti-semitic. But they are relying on a book, widely accessible on the web, that was published in France during the Nazi occupation.'

'It's important we don't lose the skills of archival research,' says Professor Cronk. 'We

keep on finding out new things about Voltaire. In the last few months, one of my graduate students has discovered what may be an unknown Voltaire work in a library in Italy, and I have just identified a letter from Voltaire to England's Queen Caroline, which was misattributed in a German library.'

The Voltaire Foundation was established after a bequest from Theodore Besterman, who died in 1976. He left a sum of money to the University to publish a series of monographs he had started, which is still underway as *Oxford University Studies in the Enlightenment*. It was also Besterman who launched the *Complete Works of Voltaire*, and he himself collected and edited the 21,000 letters to and from Voltaire that form a large part of that edition.

This year marks the 300th anniversary of the death of Louis XIV and the Voltaire Foundation is collaborating with the Château de Versailles to publish Voltaire's account of Louis's reign. 'Voltaire wrote the first major overall account of what he calls "the century of Louis XIV"'. This book created the myth of the Sun King that endures to this day,' Professor Cronk explains.

What next for the Voltaire Foundation when the *Complete Works of Voltaire* is completed? 'It's essential for us all to begin planning a digital edition,' says Professor Cronk. 'My ambition is to create a *Digital Voltaire* that will make our discoveries as widely available as possible.'

► More information at [www.voltaire.ox.ac.uk/www\\_vf/default.ssi](http://www.voltaire.ox.ac.uk/www_vf/default.ssi)



# COME RAIN OR SHINE

Maria Coyle reports on the Radcliffe Meteorological Station, currently celebrating 200 years of continuous service



The Radcliffe Meteorological Station, based at Green Templeton College on Woodstock Road and maintained by the School of Geography and the Environment, holds the longest series of temperature and rainfall records taken at one site in Britain. Its daily full records date back to 1815, with less frequent observations from 1767.

The first Radcliffe Observer was Dr Thomas Hornsby, the University's Savilian Professor of Astronomy. He is acclaimed for his observations of the transit of Venus across the sun's disc – a rare astronomical phenomenon – and was also instrumental in founding the Radcliffe Observatory, where he carried out Oxford's earliest meteorological observations.

The observations of Hornsby, a Fellow of Corpus Christi College who taught experimental physics, reveal he had a meteorological interest that went beyond noting air temperature to calculate astronomical refraction. He was meticulous, making tens of thousands of observations from 1767 until his death in 1810. On one particularly cold day, 27 January 1776, he read his thermometer twelve times instead of making his usual three observations, noting in his journal 'this day wine keg in my study froze'.

Hornsby requested money from the Radcliffe Trustees in 1768 to establish the Observatory. The full cost of the building was £30,000 and its central feature is the octagonal tower, 108 feet high, which is an adaptation of the Tower of the Winds at Athens. This is where Hornsby made his astronomical observations, but he also used its small, flat roof to erect a rain gauge, thermometers and wind-speed recorders.

The weather station operated out of the Observatory until 80 years ago when it relocated to a site on the ground a few metres away. The early weather observations made by Hornsby even pre-date those of Kew Gardens, which later became the central weather station for the newly formed Meteorological Office. Kew's observatory only started its weather measurements in 1773.

**'This day wine keg in my study froze'**

*Thomas Hornsby*

*27 January 1776*

At a presentation on 15 May, Phil Johnson, Regional Network Manager for the Met Office, presented a commemorative shield to the University 'in recognition of 200 years of continuous climate observations'. Richard Washington, Professor of Climate Science, received the shield on behalf of today's Observers, commenting: 'Ours is an old planet yet one with a very young observational record. But without those 200 years of data, nature – and the way we are influencing it – would be so much harder to understand.'

Since 1925 the Radcliffe Observers have taken measurements at 9am GMT every day. Today's Observers are doctoral students from the School of Geography and the Environment, who read the thermometers,

measure the levels in the rain gauges and estimate cloud cover at the weather station. They also check the atmospheric pressure on a barometer inside the Observatory and note the sunshine and wind speed, as well as visibility from the top of the Department of Engineering Science. The Met Office relies on these data to support automated observations and climate change calculations.

By comparing recent data with the long-term averages, the Observers have discovered the combined winter rainfall total for December 2013–February 2014 was a record-breaker as the wettest ever of any of the three winter months since full records began in 1815. January 2014 was the wettest of all winter months with rainfall of 146.9mm which, although below the national figure, was nearly three times the month's long-term average in Oxford of 52.9mm. Last year was also Oxford's warmest since 1815, part of a very warm trend since 1990, with September 2014 being the second driest on record. The average annual temperature for 2014 was 11.5 °C, 1.8 °C higher than the 200-year average of 9.7 °C, a significant difference in weather terms.

Although today's students use mobile phones rather than big ledgers for filing their meteorological data, the core duty remains largely unchanged. A University decree requires that they continue for as long as the data are 'deemed to be of scientific value', so it is likely that this role will go on well into the future – come rain, snow or shine.

► More information at [www.geog.ox.ac.uk/research/climate/rms](http://www.geog.ox.ac.uk/research/climate/rms)

# POETRY'S PUBLIC PLACE

Oxford's Professorship of Poetry, once a province of classical erudition, is now one of the literary world's pre-eminent posts, discovers *Charlie Tyson*



A PLETHORA OF POETRY  
PROFESSORS: (LEFT TO RIGHT)  
GEOFFREY HILL, W H AUDEN,  
SEAMUS HEANEY, CHRISTOPHER  
RICKS, PAUL MULDOON AND  
JAMES FENTON

Poetry makes nothing happen, W H Auden tells us. But at Oxford, poetry sets into motion campaigns for the Professorship of Poetry – a lecturing position that writers such as Matthew Arnold, Robert Graves and Seamus Heaney have held. Auden, who served as Professor of Poetry from 1956 to 1961, recognised the post's strangeness. 'What is a professor of poetry?' he asked in his first lecture. 'How can poetry be professed?'

Oxford's Professors of Poetry are elected and any member of Convocation (anyone who has had an Oxford degree formally conferred or is a member or retired member of Congregation) can vote. Elections typically happen every five years, but Geoffrey Hill, the current Professor of Poetry, may be the last to serve a five-year term. Future poetry professors will serve for four years each, says Professor Seamus Perry, chair of the English Faculty Board.

Hill's last lecture as Professor of Poetry fell on 5 May. Elections to choose his successor begin on 22 May and end on 17 June. Candidates need 50 signatures from members of Convocation to earn a place in the ballot.

The professorship, created in 1708, was once described as offering 'no power, little work, and less money'. The job is now one of the most sought-after positions in the world of letters, thanks to the eminence of writers who have filled the chair in the past. Professors give a public lecture each term and deliver the Creweian Oration at Encaenia, Oxford's honorary degree ceremony, in alternate years. The post comes with a £12,000 annual stipend.

Incumbents originally lectured in Latin and devoted their attention to classical poetry. Matthew Arnold's tenure, which began in 1857, marked a turning point. Arnold lectured in English and lectured about English poetry. His lectures about translating Homer caused controversy. 'He's talking about contemporary attempts to translate Homer and finding fault with them in an acerbic and funny way,' says Perry. 'It's classically minded still, but it's deeply involved in contemporary use of English poetic language.'

## The professorship, created in 1708, was once described as offering 'no power, little work, and less money'

The professorship transformed again after World War II, reshaped largely by a formidable Somerville academic named Enid Starkie, a Rimbaud scholar noted for wearing red trousers and a French sailor's cap. Starkie pressed to get working poets – rather than poetry scholars and critics, as was then the case – into the job. Her vigorous campaigns on behalf of candidates lent heat to what had been a quiet, donnish affair.

In 1966, for example, the contest determining who would succeed Robert Graves as Professor of Poetry narrowed to two candidates: Robert Lowell, now

recognised as a titan of postwar American poetry, and Edmund Blunden, a British pastoral poet who today is rarely read. Sir Maurice Bowra, then Warden of Wadham College, backed Lowell. But Starkie wanted the post for Blunden. She gathered 301 signatures supporting him – well in excess of the 50 now required for a candidate's nomination. 'This was a serious academic affair until Dr Starkie turned it into something like the Oxford–Cambridge boat race,' Bowra told the *New York Times*. 'We'll be standing on Magdalen Bridge selling rosettes next.'

People do sometimes place bets on candidates with local bookies, Perry says. In 2009 the horse-race excitement turned bitter, when Derek Walcott, a Nobel laureate and the perceived frontrunner, withdrew from consideration and the winner, Ruth Padel, resigned nine days after she was elected. The position remained vacant for a year until Geoffrey Hill was elected in 2010, in the first election to permit electronic voting. In that election, 2,455 votes were cast; in Padel's election, which required voting in person, 426 people voted.

There are five nominations for the imminent election: poet, playwright and novelist Simon Armitage; poet, novelist and critic Ian Gregson; poet, crime writer and clinical neuropsychologist Seán Haldane; playwright, poet and Nobel laureate Wole Soyinka; and poet and translator A E Stallings. Candidate statements are available via the website below.

► More information at [www.ox.ac.uk/poetryprofessor2015](http://www.ox.ac.uk/poetryprofessor2015)

## EXHIBITIONS

### Great British Drawings

Until 31 August 2015

Ashmolean Museum

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[www.ashmolean.org/exhibitions/greatbritishdrawings](http://www.ashmolean.org/exhibitions/greatbritishdrawings)

Exhibition showcasing over a hundred works by some of Britain's greatest artists, from Turner and Gainsborough to Gwen John and David Hockney.

### 'Dear Harry...' Henry Moseley: A Scientist Lost to War

Until 18 October 2015

Museum of the History of Science

[www.mhs.ox.ac.uk/moseley](http://www.mhs.ox.ac.uk/moseley)

A centenary exhibition about Henry 'Harry' Moseley, an exceptionally promising physicist whose life was cut short in Gallipoli in 1915.

## CONCERTS

### English Chamber Orchestra

Saturday 13 June, 7.30pm

Sheldonian Theatre

Tickets £42 / £37 / £21

[www.admin.ox.ac.uk/sheldonian/concert\\_tickets\\_and\\_forthcoming\\_events](http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/sheldonian/concert_tickets_and_forthcoming_events)

As part of the Sheldonian's 350th anniversary season, the English Chamber Orchestra performs Haydn's 'Oxford' Symphony in the glorious setting for which it was conceived.

HARRY MOSELEY, A PHYSICIST OF GREAT PROMISE



## LECTURES AND TALKS

### The changing face of elections and television

Friday 5 June, 5pm

Butler Room, Nuffield College

<https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/page/media-politics>

Talk by Michael Crick, political editor of Channel 4 News.

### Code breaking at Bletchley Park

Saturday 6 June, 2.30–6pm

Auditorium, Magdalen College

Tickets £10

[www.magd.ox.ac.uk/alumni-event/code-breakers-at-bletchley-park](http://www.magd.ox.ac.uk/alumni-event/code-breakers-at-bletchley-park)

Talks by former head of MI6 Sir John Scarlett; historian and author Ben Macintyre; and author Dr Andrew Hodges.

### Malaria control: past, present and future

Thursday 11 June, 6pm

E P Abraham Lecture Theatre, Green

Templeton College

[www.gtc.ox.ac.uk/whats-on-calendar.html](http://www.gtc.ox.ac.uk/whats-on-calendar.html)

Professor Nicholas J White will deliver the Archie Cochrane Lecture.

### Managing the crises in Ukraine and elsewhere: lessons for leadership

Friday 12 June, 5pm

Pichette Auditorium, Pembroke College

[www.pmb.ox.ac.uk/events](http://www.pmb.ox.ac.uk/events)

Ambassador Jack Matlock, former US ambassador to the Soviet Union, will deliver the fifth annual Oxford Fulbright Distinguished Lecture in International Relations.

## CONFERENCES

### Physics and the Great War

Saturday 13 June, 10.30am–5.30pm

St Cross College

[www.stx.ox.ac.uk/happ/events/physics-and-great-war-one-day-conference](http://www.stx.ox.ac.uk/happ/events/physics-and-great-war-one-day-conference)

A conference to review the key ways in which physics and its mathematics changed the nature of conflict from various points of view: technical, historical and sociological.

## DRAMA

### As You Like It

Wednesday 3–Saturday 6 June, 7.30pm

Christ Church

Tickets £7 / £5

<http://asyoulikeitoxford.wix.com/2015>

Oxford students present Shakespeare's classic summer comedy in the Christ Church Cathedral Garden.



### Twelfth Night

Monday 29 June–Saturday 15 August

Wadham College

Tickets £23 / £18 / £13

[www.oxfordshakespearecompany.co.uk](http://www.oxfordshakespearecompany.co.uk)

Outdoor production of *Twelfth Night* by the Oxford Shakespeare Company, with music by Nick Lloyd Webber.

## FAMILY FRIENDLY

### Send a message SOS

Thursday 28–Friday 29 May, 1–4pm

Museum of the History of Science

[www.mhs.ox.ac.uk/events/family-friendly-events](http://www.mhs.ox.ac.uk/events/family-friendly-events)

Discover Morse code and use the museum's telegraphic apparatus to unravel the mystery message. Suitable for children aged 7 upwards.

### Meet the mummies

Wednesday 27–Friday 29 May, 1–4pm

Ashmolean Museum

[www.ashmolean.org/families](http://www.ashmolean.org/families)

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Handwritten text at the top of the page, likely a header or title, written in a medieval script.

Main body of handwritten text in a medieval script, consisting of several paragraphs. The text is written in a cursive style typical of the late Middle Ages.



# LIBERTIES FIT FOR A KING

The Bodleian Libraries hold four 13th-century reissues of the Magna Carta, says *Matt Pickles*

The Magna Carta – the legal document that established for the first time that nobody in England is above the law, including the king – was sealed 800 years ago on 15 June 1215 at Runnymede, near Windsor. Over the next few years the ‘Great Charter’ was reissued a number of times and, of the versions reissued in the 13th century, only 17 originals remain, known as ‘engrossments’. Four of those sit in the Bodleian Libraries, three from 1217 and one from 1225, so it is no surprise that the University is celebrating the 800th anniversary this summer.

The Bodleian opened the Weston Library to the public in March this year, with two public exhibition spaces created in the Blackwell Hall. The ‘Gloucester Charter’ forms the centrepiece of the current ‘Marks of Genius’ exhibition, which will be on display until 20 September 2015. Two other charters are being shown in a smaller display in late May and June in the Blackwell Hall.

Exhibiting Magna Carta is not a new event for the Bodleian: the Gloucester Charter was part of the permanent display in the Bodleian’s Divinity School until the mid-1980s. But it was only known relatively recently that the Bodleian Libraries could state that they hold four of the 13th-century originals.

‘In December 2007 a 1297 version of the Magna Carta was put up for auction at Sotheby’s in New York,’ explains Dr Bruce Barker-Benfield, Medieval Manuscripts Curator at the Bodleian. ‘Prior to the sale, a census of all surviving originals up to 1297 was carried out by Professor Nicholas Vincent of the University of East Anglia, who established that there were 17. His research also revealed that a Magna Carta dated 1225 in our collections was indeed an original, which had not previously been known for certain.’

The Gloucester Charter, which was issued to the county of Gloucestershire in 1217, is considered the Bodleian’s finest. Along with the other 1217 Charters, it was produced by guardians of the 10-year-old King Henry III to stabilise his reign. It removed clauses from the original charter, which had greatly reduced the power of the king. So although the Magna Carta is known as ‘The Great Charter of English Liberties’, the 1215 document was watered down soon after it was agreed by King John.

‘It is an important moment in the history of the kingdom,’ says Dr Hugh Doherty, a former British Academy Post Doctoral Fellow in Medieval History at Oxford. ‘Here we have

those around the boy king following the death of John seeking to use Magna Carta to bring their enemies back on side. We see different liberties confirmed to different constituencies of the kingdom at the specific moment of 1217. These liberties are different in detail from those guaranteed in 1215 and in 1225.’

So how would the Magna Carta have been received in Gloucester? ‘It was dispatched to Gloucestershire and read out in the county court before the barons and knights of the county assembled there to hear this dramatic document,’ says Dr Doherty. ‘It was presumably read out in Latin and then translated into Anglo-Norman French, the language of the aristocratic elite of the English kingdom.’

## The 1215 document was watered down soon after it was agreed by King John

There is clearly a large public appetite for seeing the Magna Carta. In 2010 one of the Bodleian’s 1217 Charters had an extended stay in New York after an ash cloud from an Icelandic volcano grounded international flights. Thousands of New Yorkers flocked to the Morgan Library for an impromptu five-day exhibition. The appeal lies partly in the historical significance of the charters, but also their beautiful design and condition.

How were the charters so well preserved? ‘In medieval times the charters would have been kept folded tightly into a small package with their seals preserved on the inside,’ says Dr Barker-Benfield. ‘So they have been nicely preserved and the seals have sometimes survived.’ The Gloucester Charter was preserved in this way in Gloucester Abbey for centuries, while the other 1217 Charters which were sent to Oxfordshire were kept in Osney Abbey.

For the Bodleian’s conservators, the way the documents were folded has brought challenges of its own. ‘This method of storage has left creases in the documents to show that they were once folded into small panels,’ says Dr Barker-Benfield. ‘The Gloucester Charter was folded to  $\frac{1}{32}$  of its full size so an important



ABOVE: ARTIST CORNELIA PARKER HAS CREATED A REPLICATION IN STITCH OF A WIKIPEDIA ARTICLE ON THE MAGNA CARTA; LEFT: THE GLOUCESTER CHARTER, ISSUED IN 1217

part of the conservation process over the years has been to open it out and flatten it again.’ The Charter is now in the Weston Library in a beautiful modern oak frame.

Another problem with folding the charters is that, when a rodent bit a small hole in one of the 1217 Osney documents, the document had three holes in it when it was spread out. ‘At least they make a pleasing symmetrical pattern,’ says Dr Barker-Benfield.

Oxford is marking the anniversary in other ways. The Ruskin School of Art commissioned a new artwork from the acclaimed British artist Cornelia Parker. Almost 13 metres long, *Magna Carta (An Embroidery)* is a replication in stitch of the entire Wikipedia article on Magna Carta as it appeared on the 799th anniversary. It has been on display at the British Library since 15 May.

‘Stitched by over 200 people, the artwork includes contributions from people whose voices speak to different aspects of Magna Carta and its legacy, from prisoners, judges and lawyers to barons, baronesses and MPs,’ says Paul Bonaventura of the Ruskin School of Art.

### Other Oxford events celebrating the 800th anniversary of the Magna Carta include:

- ◆ Talk by historian Tim Porter on the Magna Carta at the Ashmolean Museum, Tuesday 16 June, 2pm  
[www.ashmolean.org/events/Lectures](http://www.ashmolean.org/events/Lectures)
- ◆ Talk by A E Dick Howard on Magna Carta’s American journey at the Weston Library, Friday 5 June, 1pm  
[www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/whats-on](http://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/whats-on)

► To see the Gloucester Charter, visit the Marks of Genius exhibition at the Weston Library: <http://genius.bodleian.ox.ac.uk>

# OUT OF THE IVORY TOWER

The University is committed to promoting public engagement with research, as *Charvy Narain* explains

One of the core strategies of the University's Strategic Plan 2013–18 is to ensure that the public is aware of and engaged by its research: 'The endeavour to widen engagement with society pervades Oxford's activities, informing research, enhancing teaching and learning and increasing our impact on society', the plan states.

Professor Shearer West, Head of the Humanities Division, is the University's first Academic Champion for Public Engagement with Research. Her post as Academic Champion is intended to help create a culture in which public engagement becomes an integral part of higher education activities.

'The University of Oxford is an outstanding university where world-class research is conducted across all disciplines,' Professor West says. 'If our researchers engage with others outside the University, we can inspire people, stimulate imagination and build trust in the work we do.' She adds: 'But equally, I believe researchers gain enormously from this engagement: the questions asked by members of the public can often provide unexpected insights and help us think about our research in new ways.'

Many departments around the University encourage staff to participate in activities aimed at schools and the general public, and this summer Dr Lesley Paterson (currently Head of Communications and Engagement at the Royal Academy of Engineering) will take up the newly created Oxford post of Senior Facilitator and Coordinator for Public Engagement with Research. She will be based in Research Services.

The University offers a number of ways of engaging with the public, ranging from being the 'guest scientist' on a departmental Twitter feed (<https://twitter.com/ndmscience>) to getting involved in major collaborative events, such as the Breath Festival, which last November marked the tercentenary of the death of the 18th-century physician Dr John Radcliffe. To mark the occasion, researchers from many different departments collaborated with colleagues at the John Radcliffe Hospital and the University's museums on a series of events about breath and breathing ([www.ouh.nhs.uk/artlink/breath](http://www.ouh.nhs.uk/artlink/breath)). The festival included talks on topics as diverse as the dying breaths in Shakespeare's *King Lear* and the digital imaging of oxygen in the brain, as well as music and dance performances in spaces such as the University Museum of Natural History. The centrepiece of the one-day festival was

a specially written piece of musical theatre, composed by the Oxford alumnus Orlando Gough, and developed through research at the Respiratory Medicine Department at the Churchill Hospital. A festival attendee enthusiastically commented: 'This was possibly the most inspiring whole-day/cross-discipline event that I have EVER attended! I think I'll move to Oxford!'

More regular events include the Ashmolean Museum's Live Fridays ([www.ashmolean.org/livefriday](http://www.ashmolean.org/livefriday)), when the museum opens its doors from 7–10.30pm, giving visitors the chance to see its collections after dark as part of live performances and creative workshops as well as lively talks. For Halloween weekend this year there will be a special DEADFriday bite-sized lecture series, exploring the theme of death. Lecture contributors who have an innovative take on the topic and an interest in using an object from the museum's collections are encouraged to get in touch with their ideas (more details at <http://torch.ox.ac.uk/deadfriday>).

**'If our researchers engage with others outside the University, we can inspire people, stimulate imagination and build trust in the work we do'**

The University also offers regular training opportunities for developing public engagement skills, such as the recently launched series of talks on supporting public research engagement, which takes place every fortnight at venues across the University. These lunchtime talks offer informal training and networking opportunities for anyone whose role includes science communication within the Medical Sciences Division (contact [michaela.livingstone@mpls.ox.ac.uk](mailto:michaela.livingstone@mpls.ox.ac.uk) for more information).

Many departments and institutes also offer their own public engagement training and support, via their departmental communication support officer. The Wellcome Trust Centre for Human Genetics, for example, recently organised a STEM



David Fisher Photography



Christian Kipp



Greg Smolinski

Ambassador training session. The STEM Ambassador national programme puts people working in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) subjects in local schools to encourage students to engage with science subjects. 'You pick your own level of interaction, and your only obligation is that you volunteer to do something at least once a year,' says Brian Mackenwells, the Public Engagement Officer at the Wellcome Trust Centre for Human Genetics. 'It's a brilliant way to dip your toes into public engagement.'

More information at [www.ox.ac.uk/research/support-researchers/using-research-engage](http://www.ox.ac.uk/research/support-researchers/using-research-engage)



ENGAGING PUBLIC INTEREST IN RESEARCH. ABOVE: SCIENCE FUN AT A WELLCOME TRUST EVENT; LEFT, FROM TOP: A LIVE FRIDAY EVENT AT THE ASHMOLEAN; A DANCE PERFORMANCE AT THE UNIVERSITY'S MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY AS PART OF THE BREATH FESTIVAL; AND AN OPEN DOORS EVENT OPENS EYES

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# WHY AM I HERE?

ZOE DAVIS-HEANEY

*Administrator, Oxford Martin Programme on Human Rights for Future Generations, and Oxford Human Rights Hub (Faculty of Law)*

## Tell us about the programmes you administer

Both are hosted by the Faculty of Law, but we're based at Pembroke College.

The Oxford Martin Programme on Human Rights for Future Generations (HRFG) is a three-year interdisciplinary research programme, fully funded by the Oxford Martin School, that aims to contribute to international academic and policy debates on human rights with a focus on poverty, armed conflict and environmental change. It brings together academics from across the University by drawing on the disciplines of law, philosophy and international relations.

The Oxford Human Rights Hub (OxHRH) was initially funded by the Higher Studies Fund, but is today funded by the Bertha Foundation and the British Academy, amongst others. It brings together academics, practitioners and policymakers worldwide to enable international and local exchanges of knowledge and best practice about developments in human rights law. Innovative information technology is key to delivering this vision.

## So what's your own role?

I provide administrative support for both projects, their directors and staff. That includes managing external and internal awards; ensuring we have the funds, resources and infrastructure to support key research activities; and organising international conferences, seminars and workshops. I love the diversity of my job and being part of this developing area – I'm very closely following the plan to set up the new Oxford Human Rights Institute at Mansfield College. I enjoy working with people who are hugely successful and well known for what they do, while being the most down-to-earth people I know.

## Childhood ambition?

At the age of 7 I started to learn the flute and piano. At 15 I had passed my grade 8 flute with distinction. By 16, I was being taught by the principal flautist of the BBC Symphony Orchestra, ferried to London by my (very patient!) parents for lessons every week. I later graduated with a BA (Hons) in Music and then went to the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester to study composition at postgraduate level – I was all set to become a professional musician.

## So how did you get from there to here?

It became clear to me that though I loved music, it wasn't going to be my career

choice. I went to work at a private IT security firm as sales administrator and left seven years later having completed an MBA. Keen to put that into practice, in 2003 I became a project administrator in the University's Finance Division, moving on in 2005 to become Centre Administrator at COMPAS. Seven years later (after returning part-time once I'd started a family) I began a secondment to the Faculty of Law. When the HRFG administrator position was advertised, I got the job; in 2013 I was asked to support the OxHRH as well and jumped at the chance.

## And you're also involved with Oxford Legal Assistance?

OLA works closely with OxHRH and is similarly hosted by the Faculty of Law. It offers opportunities for undergraduate law students to become involved in *pro bono* work and operates two main projects: a legal advice clinic focusing on issues within immigration and asylum law (in partnership with Turpin and Miller, a local Oxford law firm); and a year-long social policy project with Citizens Advice Oxford (CAB).

## The CAB has a number of links with the University, doesn't it?

Yes. In particular, OLA works with CAB advisers on cases relating to personal debt issues. CAB has seen a huge rise in debt cases across Oxford, with living costs continuing to rise and wages struggling to keep up – impacting on people's health and wellbeing and their ability to sustain a regular living wage. CAB is looking to further understand the societal context of these trends by using an evidence-based approach and so, through the work CAB does with OLA, we are starting to capture actual experiences through the use of questionnaires and subsequent data analysis. CAB will then be able to identify specific issues that need readdressing and hopes to widen the local and national debate on the policy and systemic changes required to make positive, practical changes to people's lives.

This is also a key year for CAB – its 75th anniversary – and OLA is proud to be part of it. An anniversary event at Oxford Town Hall on 21 July, 5.30–7pm, will highlight the work of Oxford CAB, its links with academic programmes within the University and the importance of working with local government, communities and businesses to improve the lives of those who live in and around Oxford.



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