



TRAIN DOWN THE BLUES

FOCUS ON CURIOSITY PAGES 16 AND 17



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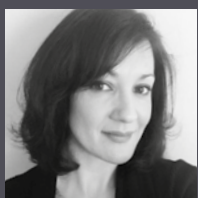
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STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

Amy Kerr, a second-year undergraduate student, studying Law with Law Studies in Europe at Lady Margaret Hall, tells Dan Selinger about her experience at Oxford.

Amy applied to Oxford after attending one of the University's access programmes, the UNIQ Summer School. She has benefitted from a Moritz–Heyman Scholarship – a programme of enhanced support to a limited number of new UK undergraduate students from a low-income background.

What school did you go to and what made you apply to Oxford?

I was at Budehaven Community School, a local comprehensive in north Cornwall without a strong history of sending students to Oxbridge. I'd never considered applying until I went on the UNIQ Summer School in Year 12, which sparked the seed in my mind that I could possibly fit in and thrive at Oxford. To have leading academics discuss with us controversial legal topics, and to ask for and value our opinions, was pretty exciting and a completely different world from my educational background.

How would you describe your time at Oxford? What have you enjoyed, and what challenges have you encountered?

My first year at Oxford has certainly been an experience. I've always struggled massively with self-doubt and self-imposed pressure, and have definitely fallen into the trap of Imposter Syndrome. At times, Oxford has felt like an impossibility, and there have been moments when I've told myself I have to walk away. But then, you remind yourself to look beyond the daunting reading list and fug of confusion, to the incredible

opportunity you've been given – discussing legal issues with the academics who wrote your textbook or who administer the contracts for the University is, well, rather cool.

How do your experiences compare to your expectations before you came to Oxford?

I remember being really anxious about the social side of University, not fitting in or finding people I felt comfortable with. My fears couldn't have been further from the truth – life in college is so open and friendly, and everyone is so interesting and interested. I love the breadth of conversations you can have here, with people from all over the world studying such a diverse range of subjects.

How have Oxford's staff helped you during your time here? Are there any specific members of staff who have helped you along the way?

Before coming to Oxford, I was concerned about the approachability of tutors (I remember asking at all the colleges I visited during open days whether the students felt they could approach their tutors for help). My first year has been really difficult, and I honestly think I would have walked away from it all had it not been for the support of one of my tutors who continues to believe in me, even when I don't. The welfare support provided by my college, and Oxford, is truly outstanding.

What part has the Moritz–Heyman programme played in your time here in Oxford?

I feel incredibly lucky and privileged to be a Moritz–Heyman Scholar. Not only has it removed a huge pressure and burden, through its extremely generous financial support, but it opens doors to a myriad of exciting internship opportunities across the globe.

The Moritz–Heyman Scholarship was made possible thanks to a generous donation by Sir Michael Moritz and Ms Harriet Heyman. Find out more on the University website.



Amy Kerr



John Cairns

DAY IN THE LIFE OF THE VICE-CHANCELLOR

Matt Pickles talks to the Vice-Chancellor about her role and her priorities for the future

**“
Our staff have the best
ideas about how to do
things more effectively. ”**

Professor Louise Richardson starts the day at 6am by brewing a coffee and reading the newspapers. 'I do not think a day has gone by since I have been here when Oxford has not featured in the press,' she says. Then she prepares for the day's meetings and works on an upcoming speech. 'I am very much a morning person, my brain is sharpest then, so if I have something important to write I'll do it early.'

She arrives at her office in the Clarendon Building at 8.30am in time for back-to-back meetings with senior members of staff, donors, visiting dignitaries and policy makers. She might give a lecture, travel to London or travel abroad on University business. She has to turn down nine invitations for every one she accepts. In the evening, she will usually host or attend a dinner. Her day rarely finishes before 10.30pm.

But although Professor Richardson's diary is planned to the last minute, it can be derailed at a moment's notice by a crisis. Already this year, two departments had to be relocated at short notice because of the discovery of asbestos in the Tinbergen Building, and MPs on both sides of the political spectrum criticised Oxford in the media.

It is an all-consuming job, so how does Professor Richardson keep from burning out? 'People draw their energy in different ways and I get mine from interacting with people,' she says. 'I meet the most extraordinary students and staff doing such creative work. I enjoy being around students, I have kids of a similar age. I'm a case of arrested development. I entered university at 17 and I never left.'

The job of Vice-Chancellor was not always this intense. 'Oh, it has changed a lot since I was an undergraduate,' she says. 'I get the impression it used to be a much more leisurely existence than the one I have now. Vice-Chancellors had more time for their academic work than I do, and universities like ours have become much bigger and more complex institutions.'

The Oxford job is particularly challenging. Despite holding similar roles at St Andrews and Harvard, Professor Richardson says she did not expect the degree of public scrutiny she has faced this year. 'I am amazed by how much of a public figure the Oxford

Vice-Chancellor is,' she says. 'Oxford seems to be a lightning rod for the press on so many societal issues, and everything I do and say is under the microscope. The role of Oxford Vice-Chancellor requires a lot of resilience.'

With such a busy daily schedule, it can be hard to set aside time for longer-term planning. But the Vice-Chancellor is clear that her main aim is to change the University's perception among the wider public. 'I really want to change the public image of Oxford so that it reflects the meritocratic institution I know this place to be,' she says. 'I want us to be celebrated nationally as a place for the smartest people who are most passionate about their subjects.'

She says the University's staff are key to achieving this goal. 'Staff can be our best ambassadors because they are so intimately linked to the community,' she says. 'They know our students are not all posh and they can tell stories about students who do not fit that stereotype.' She tells the stories of staff members at St Andrews who persuaded students from non-traditional backgrounds to apply to the famous Scottish institution.

Another of the Vice-Chancellor's aims is to make the University run more efficiently by giving people flexibility to make decisions without needing exhaustive consultations and meetings. Staff have an important role in identifying where improvements can be made. 'Our staff have the best ideas about how to do things more effectively,' she says. 'I hope we can create a culture in which people feel they can express ideas, and we have a mechanism for receiving them, discussing them and, one hopes, implementing them.'

Professor Richardson has other plans to make life better for staff. She wants to 'dramatically improve' the availability of affordable housing available to University workers. She wants to create more opportunities for career progression. And she is very keen for staff to share their experiences at her open office hours, which she holds four times each term.

'Even if it just to complain about something, it is very helpful to me to hear how people are experiencing their lives at the University,' she says. 'Keeping in touch with students and staff really helps to keep my finger on the pulse of the institution.'

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Visit the Vice-Chancellor's webpages for details of her open office sessions www.ox.ac.uk/vc

Dr Bronwyn Tarr delivering a workshop at Curiosity Carnival



SO, YOU THINK YOU

Dr Bronwyn Tarr thinks that you can. True, you may not move like Jagger or pirouette like Bussell, but she believes that everyone possesses a basic ability to bang a tambourine and move to a beat. What's more, Bronwyn says that this simple rhythmic ability is at the heart of what makes dancing a great social bonding activity, one which has played its part in making humans such a successful species.

“
In our past,
and still today,
we dance to
connect with
others.”

Bolivian folk dancing



Morris dancers



Brought up in Namibia by a family of environmentalists, Bronwyn inherited their fascination with the natural world but was also attracted to the arts, especially dance and music. At the age of 18, she attended an arts academy in the USA as a dance major. 'I loved it, but I remained torn between dancing and science.'

'My curiosity about how things work eventually won and I returned to South Africa to study zoology, keeping up my dance training and performing on the side. To be honest, I think I always felt

The results? The groups completely in sync experienced the highest pain threshold (which indicates elevated endorphins) and gave more positive feedback about their feelings towards the others in their group. Synchrony significantly boosted both the psychological and physiological effects of moving to music.

This throws up numerous questions about how dancing might have helped humans develop and maintain the large, complex social networks we still experience and rely on today. Could

CAN'T DANCE?

a little like a dancer in the lab and an academic in the studio.'

In 2009 Bronwyn came to Oxford as a Rhodes Scholar, where she met Professor Robin Dunbar, British anthropologist and evolutionary psychologist and a specialist in primate behaviour. 'He was interested in using my work and knowledge of dance to help develop his study of the evolution of human sociality and large-scale community bonding. Finally, I could bring together my training in science and dance.'

Bronwyn's research focused on investigating the physiological and psychological effects of dancing in synchrony with others and to music – does dancing with a group of people help you to bond with them? If so, how?

'We ran numerous experiments,' explains Bronwyn. 'One of them involved groups of four strangers dancing at a silent disco. Wearing headphones, some of the groups moved together to the same beat doing the same pre-taught moves, others listened to the same music but were all told to do a different move at any one time, a third set were all taught different moves and were listening to different music.'

moving together have actually played an important role in our evolution?

As Bronwyn explains, some academics are not so sure. 'Canadian psychologist Stephen Pinker believes that music is "auditory cheesecake", that it exists by virtue of the fact that it triggers our pleasure centers in the brain, no direct evolutionary explanation beyond that. But moving in sync doesn't just trigger the release of happy chemicals, it is also a social glue. It's plausible that synchrony-based activities, like music and dance rituals, have developed due to the fact that they facilitate the release of these hormones in large-scale human communities.'

Maybe this social benefit can help explain humans' longstanding love affair with music. Bronwyn is convinced. 'In our past, and still today, we dance to connect with others. When I discuss my research I always hope people will walk away thinking about why they like music so much, have an impulse to tap along to the beat of a good tune on the radio or why they feel so great after a Zumba class.'

Visit www.psy.ox.ac.uk/team/bronwyn-tarr to find out more about Dr Tarr's research.

NEWS

Scientists complete conservation 'atlas of life'

An international team of scientists has completed the 'atlas of life' – the first global review and map of every vertebrate on Earth. In research featured in *Nature Ecology & Evolution*, scientists from the University of Oxford School of Geography and Environment worked with Tel Aviv University and 39 others to produce the new reptile atlas.

The data completes the world map of 31,000 species, made up of around:

- 10,000 species of snakes, lizards, turtles and tortoises
- 10,000 birds
- 6,000 frogs and salamanders
- 5,000 mammals.

Linking these maps together enabled the team to find new areas where conservation action is vital, such as the Arabian Peninsula and the central Australian deserts. Dr Richard Grenyer, Associate Professor in Biodiversity and Biogeography at Oxford University, says: 'Mapping the distributions of all reptiles had been considered too difficult to tackle. Hopefully our research will help to protect these, often elusive, vertebrates that suffer from persecution and prejudice.'

New Pro-Vice-Chancellor appointments



Dr David Prout
Pro-Vice-Chancellor
(Planning and Resources)

Responsible for institutional and strategic planning, and resource allocation

Start date: September 2017

Dr Prout has a distinguished career in central and local government, most recently (2013–17) as Director General for the £50 billion High Speed 2 programme. Prior to that, he was Director General for Local Government at the Department for Communities and Local Government. There he was responsible for all aspects of local government policy and funding and for the Fire Service.



Dr Robert Easton
Pro-Vice-Chancellor
(Development and External Affairs)

Responsible for public affairs, development and alumni relations, and international strategy

Start date: October 2017

Before coming to Oxford, Dr Easton worked at the Carlyle Group, the global alternative asset management company, latterly as a Partner and Senior Advisor. During his 17-year tenure, he performed numerous roles as an investment professional and served on portfolio company boards in many sectors. Previously, he held a number of positions in corporate development and investment banking. Dr Easton's philanthropic activities include being a trustee of the British Heart Foundation.

An *Aeluroscalabotes-felinus*, one of the 31,000 species which make up the reptile atlas

NEWS



New collaboration to tackle superbugs

A new collaboration between Oxford's Big Data Institute and the Centre for Tropical Medicine and Global Health will support understanding and action around one of the world's biggest health threats – drug-resistant infections. The Global Burden of Disease AMR (GBD AMR) project will gather and publish data on the impact of superbugs globally. This will allow scientists to map disease and death caused by drug-resistant infections for the first time – critical for targeting global efforts. Over the next four years, the research will enable the collection and synthesis of one of the largest datasets published on the impact of superbugs worldwide.

Bonavero Institute for Human Rights

The new Bonavero Institute for Human Rights opened its doors in October and welcomed its new staff and first research visitors. On 12 October it co-hosted the Annual Global Justice Lecture in the new Sir Joseph Hotung auditorium. Part of the Faculty of Law, but housed in a new building at Mansfield College, the institute integrates existing human rights research and practice across the University.



Award for Sicilian exhibition

Oxford classicist Dr Jonathan Prag has worked with Italian secondary school students to create an award-winning new exhibition in the city of Catania in Sicily, cataloguing stone inscriptions from the Roman period. The exhibition, housed in the Norman castle that now serves as Catania's civic museum, features artefacts between 1,500 and 2,500 years old, including funerary inscriptions, sculptures and fragments of buildings. The students involved have won a prize for their work from the Italian Ministry of Education. Dr Prag is now working on a larger project, titled *I. Sicily*, to create an online archive of Sicilian inscriptions.

The Full Picture: Oxford in Portraits

The University's walls are home to hundreds of portraits of exceptional individuals. These pictures celebrate stories from our past, make visible our values and ambitions for the future and help to shape the environment for our staff, students and visitors. The Full Picture: Oxford in Portraits displays newly commissioned portraits selected from over a hundred nominations of living Oxonians. They feature a range of people drawn from different genders, ethnicities, disabilities, socio-economic backgrounds and LGBTQ+ communities. An exhibition, offering the chance to view all the new portraits together, opens at Blackwell Hall at the Weston Library and runs from 24 November–7 January.

The project, funded by the Vice-Chancellor's Diversity Fund, has already catalogued existing paintings of pioneering figures whose achievements over the centuries have challenged the stereotypes of their time.

NEWS



Blue plaque unveiled at Wytham Woods

A blue plaque was unveiled at Wytham Woods (near the main car park) on Saturday 7 October. The plaque commemorates the 75th anniversary of the ffennel family's bequest of the land at Wytham to the University. Wytham Woods is used extensively for University research, education outreach programmes and for public enjoyment – hosting many events throughout the year which are open to all. Visit www.wythamwoods.ox.ac.uk.

Trench foot discovery paves way for new treatment

The physical cause of trench foot has been uncovered more than 100 years after the condition was first identified in the First World War. Non-freezing cold injury – better known as trench foot – can permanently damage hands and feet, causing chronic pain and long-lasting numbness and tingling sensations. Researchers at Oxford, Imperial College London and Johns Hopkins University studied serving armed forces personnel and veterans with the condition. They discovered that sufferers have a significant reduction in the number of nerve fibres within the upper layers of the skin in the affected areas. It is this damage to the sensory nerve fibres within the skin that causes the chronic pain.



Celebrating 25 years of University childcare

November 2017 marks the 25th anniversary of the University supporting families by providing dedicated childcare facilities. There are now five nurseries across the city for the exclusive use of staff and students. An additional nine community nurseries are supported, resulting in the provision of 400 University nursery places in total – more places per head than any other Russell Group University. Visit www.admin.ox.ac.uk/childcare for more information.

Social Sciences at Oxford named world's best

The Social Sciences Division at Oxford University has been named the world's best in the 2018 Times Higher Education World University Rankings – the first time that a UK institution has taken the top spot for Social Sciences in the poll's eight-year history. The 2018 ranking sees Oxford moving up three places to claim the top spot from Stanford University. The publication recognises Oxford Social Sciences' research excellence and its improved teaching performance.



Oxford Foundry

The Oxford Foundry is a brand new entrepreneurial hub at the heart of the University of Oxford launched in October by Apple CEO Tim Cook. The Foundry aims to bring together students from all academic disciplines and help them develop entrepreneurial skills. A key focus is to create an ecosystem to support the starting and scaling of ventures that will have a valuable social impact on our world. Located on Hythe Bridge Street, in a building that was once the Oxford Ice Factory, the building is a large and easily accessible space. It incorporates a café and lounge area and facilities for co-working, socialising, workshops and events.

Commemorating the University's first black student

This October University College unveiled a plaque in tribute to Oxford University's first black student, Christian Cole. Born in Sierra Leone in 1852, Cole matriculated at Oxford in 1873 to read classics. Following his graduation in 1876, he became the first black African to practice law in the English courts.

MY OXFORD

Professor Anne Trefethen, Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Gardens, Libraries and Museums (GLAM) discusses her career journey at Oxford, including her recently extended role to become Pro-Vice-Chancellor of Academic Resources and Information Systems.

How did your career begin?

As a lecturer at the Royal Military College, Shrivenham, teaching computational mathematics and numerical analysis. In 1987 I moved to the US and since then I've had roles in industry, academia and funding agencies.

What drew you to Oxford?

I came in 2005 to take on the role of Director of the University's new e-Research Centre, taking forward interdisciplinary research enabled by innovative technology and developing high-performance computing initiatives.

Is it true that you became Oxford's very first Chief Information Officer?

Yes, in 2012 I moved from the centre to take on the challenge of reorganising the way IT was delivered across the University. This led to the creation of today's IT Services and the development of Oxford's IT Strategic Plan.

In 2015, I took on the additional role of Pro-Vice-Chancellor of ASUC (Academic Services and University Collections), responsible for overseeing the University's libraries, museums and collections and its language teaching services. ASUC has now morphed into GLAM (Gardens, Libraries and Museums) with language teaching moving over to Academic Administration.

There's not a very obvious link between IT and museums – what was the appeal?

I'll always be in awe of the University's vast collections which, staggeringly, comprise over 22 million objects in total! For me there was actually an obvious link – a need to develop the digital infrastructure to allow us to share this precious resource. Our digital collections should allow better access both for teaching and research and allow interdisciplinary use. We now have over 26 projects underway making this a reality.

What does your new extended role involve?

I'll continue to be responsible for GLAM and will maintain my strategic responsibility for IT while recruiting a new Chief Information Officer. I'm now also leading a new initiative, working closely with the Registrar and others across the University, to focus on simplifying and



improving the delivery of the operational services that support our academic activities.

The University continues to go from strength to strength in research, innovation and attracting the world's brightest students and we want to ensure that we can continue on that trajectory. However, many of the processes that underpin the operational services have become unduly complex. By simplifying processes we aim to allow the University to continue to grow in its research and teaching capacity without the same level of growth in the support services effort.

How will these changes happen?

Many of our support processes and systems have been in place for many years, and are tweaked and adapted to cope with changing needs.

We need to step back and take a good hard look at the support we deliver so we can assess how to make processes smoother across the entire University. It won't happen overnight, but we're aiming to remove frustrations and unnecessary duplication, simplify where we can, share good practice and strengthen the career paths for professional service staff.

Can everyone get involved?

Absolutely! There has already been great engagement from departmental administrators and there will be opportunities for other communities of the University to get engaged. It's really only through working together that we can make these improvements and embed the changes in our collective ways of working.

If you have an idea for how to help improve delivery of our support services, please send your suggestion to focus@admin.ox.ac.uk.



From left: Jack Whitney, Bob Malloy, Jason Day, Chris McVeigh, Jordan Morris and Andy Connor

TEAM WORK MAKING A GREAT IMP

With the nature of the work of the Reprographics team expanding so significantly, the team has recently rebranded – now known as the University Print Studio – to help better communicate their wide range of services which include printing, bulk mailing, binding and a basic design service to make documents look sharp.

“

It's always very rewarding to see how all our hard work, together with the investment in the team and the new machinery, result in really great end products that we can all be proud of. ”



PRESSION

Visitors to the studio at Wellington Square find themselves stepping into a lively hub of activity. The team, and their state-of-the-art machines are at work busily producing everything from council papers to glossy posters.

The six members of the team used to spend the majority of their time producing black-and-white printing of official documents, including agendas and committee papers. However, aided by recent investment in equipment and people, the service has moved into exciting new areas and continually looks to improve.

Team fact: the University Print Studio is a member of the British Print Federation and is currently working towards accreditation

‘Only around 10% of our time used to be spent producing work which required artistic creativity and professional finishing, but now the team has grown and with our new equipment it’s probably the other way round,’ explains Bob Malloy who manages the team alongside his new deputy, Jason Day.

The investment in new equipment has given the team impressive new capabilities. ‘It’s vastly increased both the quality and the quantity of the work we produce and we’re now marketing more widely,’ says Bob.

Team fact: colour printing alone has risen from 400,000 sheets in 2010 to around 3 million copies each year

The team recently leased three new machines – a perfect binder, a laminator and a creaser-folder – to help them to deliver more high-quality products. ‘We now produce documents that look a lot more professional, including magazines and greetings cards,’ says Support Assistant Andy Connor, new to the University and bringing extensive design expertise to the team.

Team fact: the team employs one of the University apprentices – Jordan Morris joined in 2016

Chris McVeigh, Print Studio Assistant, explains how the new technology has improved poster production. ‘We’ve gone from outsourcing the occasional large poster request to producing numerous posters in-house, in a choice of three finishes and up to A0 in size.

‘It’s always very rewarding to see how all our hard work, together with the investment in the team and the new machinery, result in really great end products that we can all be proud of.’

We’ve got a free set of 50 personalised greetings cards to give away. To enter the prize draw email your contact details to blueprint@admin.ox.ac.uk by Friday, 24 November. Please type ‘greeting cards’ into the email subject line.

How can the team help you?

Visit the Print Studio website www.admin.ox.ac.uk/estates/printstudio for full details of their services or drop them an email at printstudio@admin.ox.ac.uk.

How can you help the team?

Please always complete the online booking form for all work requirements and try to warn the team in advance of larger jobs. Remember to factor time into your schedule for the team to process your work – just ask if you need advice.



If you are a regular visitor to Parks Road, you can't have failed to notice that a stunning new structure is under construction. Rebecca Baxter looks at the origins of physics in the city and reveals what is happening behind the hoardings.



Artistic impressions of the new Beecroft Building

The new Beecroft Building, the Physics Department's first new building for over half a century, will house laboratories providing state-of-the-art research facilities – enabling the department to advance its world-class work in experimental and theoretical physics research.

The study of physics in Oxford originated with the Philosophical Society of Oxford. This 17th-century group of scholars, which included Christopher Wren, Robert Boyle and Robert Hooke, met in the lodgings of a Warden of Wadham College to discuss the new fields of natural and experimental philosophy. Experimental philosophy

With a depth of 16 metres, it boasts one of the deepest basements in the city.

The Beecroft comprises seven storeys in total – five of which are above ground level. The two underground floors will house basement labs. Their position, shielded from traffic vibrations and electrical noise, will provide an ideal environment for sensitive experiments.

The light and airy atrium of the new building, designed to create an appealing exhibition space, will open to the public. Visitors will be invited to view kit from major experiments and browse materials especially developed for events, including the department's popular *Stargazing* event.

The building, by architectural firm Hawkins\Brown, has been designed in accordance with the University's policy on sustainability, seeking to minimise its environmental impact and carbon footprint. A significant portion of the

BEHIND THE HOARDINGS

(as physics was then known) was first examined as a degree subject at Oxford in 1850 and the subject's first professor was appointed in 1860.

In 1872, Oxford became home to the country's first ever purpose-built physics laboratory. The original Clarendon Laboratory's workshop's main equipment in the 1890s comprised just a treadle-operated lathe and a blacksmith's anvil and, until a major refurbishment in 1915, the laboratory's lighting was provided by gas burners.

A new Clarendon Laboratory was created on the site in 1939. This will now connect to the new building – named after donor Adrian Beecroft, British venture capitalist and alumnus of the University.

Contractors Laing O'Rourke moved onto the site in summer 2015 tasked with starting the deep excavation works required for the new Beecroft Building.

building's heating and cooling needs will be met by ground-source heat pumps. LED lighting throughout the building will be sensitive to occupancy levels and daylight. In addition, solar shading is being provided courtesy of the bronze fins which feature on the external elevations and sustainable timber and timber products are being used throughout the building.

The project is making good progress, with the laboratories and offices nearing completion, and work is expected to be completed in early 2018.

As part of the government's Quantum Technologies Programme, Oxford Physics has been awarded £38m to develop a technology demonstrator quantum computer over the next five years – offering the Beecroft Building a fantastic opportunity to showcase the potential of its new cutting-edge facilities.

CURIOSITY CARNIVAL:

So, how curious was Oxford about the work of our researchers? Headline results reveal that more than 9,000 people attended the event, engaging with 493 researchers, DPhil students and academics from more than 60 different departments and faculties across the University of Oxford and with contributors from MRC Harwell and Oxford Brookes.

Here's feedback from three people involved with the event:

Indroneel Chatterjee, Oxford Brookes University, sampling a scorpion at Curiosity Carnival



THE FEEDBACK



The Oxford Brookes researcher

Professor Janine Dermody, Professor in Marketing & Consumer Psychology and Research Lead (Marketing), Oxford Brookes Business School

We shared our edible insect's research at the Mad Hatter tea party in the Botanic Gardens and at the French-style research café at the Museum of Natural History. From feeling extremely exuberant that we were joining the carnival, I was beginning to feel nervous as the summer slipped by. How was this going to work? How well would Oxford Brookes and Oxford Universities coordinate all the varied information and the practice runs? Not to mention, how many tarantulas and scorpions would I need to order? How many visitors again? Significant pause – wow.

There was no need for nerves; the collaboration was superb. The carnival was remarkable not only in showcasing Oxford's research but also in the professionalism, passion and proficiency of the people who organised, reassured, reminded (paperwork usually) to enable Oxford's researchers to shine. Visitors eagerly devoured our insects, accompanied by questions, questions, questions! I have never experienced anything quite like these people who made the Curiosity Carnival such an awe-inspiring event – thank you. Oh and can we do it again please?



The Oxford University researcher

Holly Reeve, Research Project Manager, Department of Chemistry

The Curiosity Carnival was a great way for us, as a team of researchers, to think more creatively and with a wider lens about what we do and why the public might be interested to know more about it. Every visitor we interacted with seemed interested, excited and surprised by the fantastic display of Oxford research.

We asked 'What can chemists learn from nature?' We developed an experiment exploring how chemists learn from nature and intensify nature to make the everyday chemicals we rely on at the scale we need them. We used potatoes, yeast and a pure enzyme (catalase) to break down hydrogen peroxide and make oxygen gas (in our experiments: foam!) to make foam explosions!

It was so rewarding to talk a crowd through our experiment, people who would probably not have heard much about enzymes before, and then hear them excitedly picking 'team yeast' or 'team enzyme'. Even better – after this, they wanted to know more about how we use them in the lab!



The visitor

Darcey Jones, age 7, daughter of Kate Lindsay, Head of Technology Enhanced Learning in IT Services

At the Curiosity Carnival I found out lots of things! For example, on Broad Street, there were mathematicians – they showed me that actually what looks like magic is really a maths rule! I breathed on a plant and saw bugs drop off – that's what they do when they feel an animal's breath, and know they are about to be eaten with the plant. I did an experiment throwing squishy brains into a hole, I did really well but when I put on some special goggles it was really hard. It turned out the goggles changed how I saw things and made me throw to a different place.

At the Ashmolean Museum I drew a virus and controlled a computer mouse with different remotes to learn all about mutation and genes. The dancers dancing to heart beats were amazing, it looked like very hard work to dance to hearts which were beating faster! My mum asked me if I would like to go University one day. I'd like to go so I can make discoveries too!



Find out more:

www.oxfordsparks.ox.ac.uk/content/what-can-chemists-learn-nature

<http://vincent.chem.ox.ac.uk/outreach.htm>

CURIOXITIES

Visitors from all over the world spend hours staring at unusual fragments of the past in museums and libraries managed by the University. Here, the colleagues who dedicate their days to understanding and caring for these artefacts tell us about their favourite things.



Rob Judges

**Dr Lauren Sumner-Rooney,
Museum Research Fellow
in the evolutionary
neurobiology of invertebrates**

My favourite thing: *Aphrodita aculeata*
(Annelida: Polychaeta: Phyllodocida)
at the Oxford University Museum of
Natural History

My research background is in some of the more unusual inhabitants of the world's oceans, so I tend to be drawn to squishy things in jars. But I've chosen *Aphrodita*, or the sea mouse, because I think it's a great example of a beautiful local animal our visitors will rarely, if ever, see alive, and it's full of surprises. It certainly doesn't look like your typical worm – the body is oval, fuzzy and lined on both sides by shocks of sleek iridescent bristles called setae, which have an incredibly effective photonic structure for reflecting light, even in the dark ocean depths. Although the sea mouse appears quite innocent, it is actually a voracious predator that has been seen to devour closely related carnivorous worms more than twice their size, head first. As an added bonus, its scientific name, derived from the Greek goddess of love, has unusual origins thanks to the imaginations of lonely sailors who came across them at sea(!).

Aphrodita is located at the back of the main hall on the ground floor of the museum, in the Phylum Annelida cabin.

Dr Sumner-Rooney
with her favourite
museum artefact



Rob Judges

Nick Millea stands in front of the Elizabethan map

Nick Millea, Map Librarian at the Bodleian Libraries

My favourite thing: the Elizabethan Sheldon tapestry map

Imagine, a 700-square-foot map of Worcestershire that is more than 400 years old! One of four magnificent maps commissioned by Warwickshire gentleman Ralph Sheldon in 1590, the tapestry spent two centuries in storage; it was left in a fragile state, dark from years of accumulated dirt and with sections in disrepair or missing.

When the Weston Library was opened in March 2015 we finally had space to house it and immediately set about getting it repaired. After sending the map to the National Trust conservation studio

offices in Norfolk it also made a trip to Belgium for cleaning, and is now restored to the glorious piece we see today in the hall of the Weston Library. There is nothing else quite like it on the planet; to think that the intensity of the colours were hidden under centuries of dust and dirt.

When I started as the Map Librarian I never thought I would be working with a Tudor tapestry map!

The Elizabethan tapestry map is located in the main hall of the Weston Library; a map specialist is stationed by the map every day from 11.30am for half an hour.

Is there an artefact that fascinates you?

Why not tell us about it in the next issue?

Please send your submissions to blueprint@admin.ox.ac.uk.

INTERMISSION

Many of our colleagues across the University are engaging in interesting and extraordinary activities outside work. Here are just a few of the fascinating stories we have heard so far...

Dwayne John – HR Office Manager (maternity cover), Bodleian Libraries
Trustee of Dovecote Centre
www.dovecoteproject.com

Growing up, I spent many Easter and summer holidays enjoying activities and opportunities at the Dovecote Centre holiday play schemes. They provided me with the chance to socialise and gave me a sense of belonging. It also helped build my confidence, self-esteem and social skills.

Dovecote Community Children & Families project is a community-led, parent-managed charity. It delivers inclusive, engaging and integrated services to support the effective development and wellbeing of

children, families and children with disabilities.

The key focus is to work closely with families and individuals who experience multiple deprivations and social exclusion. We want to empower and support them by meeting their needs in the community. We run an afterschool club, sensory play sessions, parenting support groups and much more.

I became a trustee because I wanted to give back to my local community; my involvement has enabled me to understand the importance of working with others to help them achieve success or develop new skills.

Dwayne John



Rudy Vansingel

Amanda King – Education and Facilities Project Administrator, Academic Centre, John Radcliffe Hospital

Adventurer and photographer
<http://earthexpeditions.co.uk>
www.amanda-king-akimages.com

I have always been intrigued by exploration. As a child I read countless books on the early explorers and dreamt about seeing some of these far off, remote places for myself.

And travel I did! In 2008, following a series of events on an expedition I found myself cast adrift and alone in the middle of a desolate area in Costa Rica. With no money or food and little water, I had to get across the country trusting my wits.

I used upturned pitcher plants to collect water and came to rely on the bananas a group of monkeys threw at me, for food. I had some very frightening encounters, in particular one where I escaped a group of machete men who wanted my head!

The experience (which is being written as a book following talks on BBC Radio) taught me a great deal and has led me to continue travelling around the globe from the Amazon to Antarctica, photographing wildlife and documenting areas of interest.

I enjoy looking back on these experiences with the knowledge that I have now had some worthy adventures of my own.

Charlene Rowley – Web & Digital Media Officer, Estates Services

Hot air ballooning

I've been ballooning with my husband Matt since we met nine years ago, and in that time we've been part of two record-breaking events. The first being the Channel Crossing in April 2017 where we were one of 82 balloons that flew past the White Cliffs of Dover, crossed the English Channel and landed in Escalles, a small village off the coast of France, where the French farmers greeted us with coffee and pain au chocolat. And the second was the Lord Mayor's Balloon Regatta to mark the 30th anniversary of the London City Airport in September 2017. Away from

record-breaking, my personal favourite event was the Longleat Sky Safari – 119 balloons flew over the safari grounds, making it the official home of the UK's largest balloon event.

There is something magical about seeing your everyday environment from a different perspective. However, the early mornings can be quite challenging.

Sadly, we won't be taking to the sky until March next year; the winter months are too dark and windy for us to fly. But at least I'll get a lie in!



Charlene and Matt soaring over the British countryside at the Lord Mayor's Balloon Regatta earlier this year

Dr Clara Barker – Technical Laboratory Manager for the Centre for Superconductivity, Department of Materials

Vice-Chair of the LGBT+ Advisory Group

www.pointsoflight.gov.uk/out-in-oxford

www.glam.ox.ac.uk/out-oxford

I knew during my school days that I was transgender, even if I didn't have the words back then. Growing up at a time when talking about LGBT+ issues was strongly discouraged, I felt confused and without a role model. The same has been true for my scientific career in STEM subjects – a lack of visible role models made me believe I had to hide who I am to stay in my field.

Now I want to make sure that young people and scientists know that they can be themselves and achieve the most they can. So I volunteer with the LGBT+ Advisory Group with the aim of improving student and staff life here at Oxford University. I also deliver awareness talks to help people who are not LGBT+ themselves understand terminology and the issues we face. Through this work, I became involved in 'Out in Oxford', a Gardens, Libraries and Museums



(GLAM) cross collections 'trail' of objects that highlight varied sexualities, genders and gender roles throughout history.

Also, working with Oxfordshire County Council on an anti-bullying committee and Oxfordshire youth groups has allowed to me engage with young people and schools in the community to improve inclusivity. And recently, I started a support group for parents of LGBT+ young people as they too need support to understand LGBT+ issues.

The University has given me an amazing chance to be myself and contribute to the LGBT+ community.

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.



WHAT'S ON

Find out which events are recommended for your diary by colleagues from four of our popular visitor venues.

The Ashmolean Museum

www.ashmolean.org/home

Our latest feature exhibition, running until 18 February 2018, is the first major display exploring the visual cultures of Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam and Judaism as these five religions spread across Asia and Europe in the first millennium.

Imagining the Divine: Art and the Rise of World Religions not only showcases many beautiful artefacts, including some of the earliest representations of Christ and Buddha, but also raises big questions about how different cultures have sought to make their gods visible and how they have interacted and influenced each other. Tickets cost £9 each for University staff members.

We're marking the beginning of the festive period with our free OneWorld Weekend. This festival of talks, performances and activities for all ages is open from 11am–4pm on 18 and 19 November and explores the cultural traditions of different faiths and communities. Booking is required for some of the activities.

Visit our website to find out about our tours. There's a different themed tour every day between 1.15–2pm and we also run regular afternoon and highlight tours.

Our usual programme of free talks, activities and workshops remains full of fascinating options for all. And make sure you call into our newly refurbished café for warmth and refreshment as the year draws to a close.

Xa Sturgis

Director

Museum of Natural History

www.oum.ox.ac.uk/visiting/whatson.htm

Super Science Saturday on 25 November is a biannual science fair hosted at the Oxford University Museum of Natural History. Bringing together Oxford University researchers and family visitors, the fair offers a great opportunity to engage with some of the research that goes on within Oxford.

Around 100 researchers from the museum and University departments typically take part. The researchers design and lead activities based on their current projects and will focus on this year's Surprising Science theme.

Come along to try out some of the hands-on demos and meet the scientists and question them about their work. This free event is drop-in 12–4pm with all activities designed with a family audience in mind – particularly recommended for those over eight years old.

If you can't make the fair then come along to one of our regular Science Saturday sessions run by volunteer scientists every Saturday 2–4pm throughout the academic term time. Science Saturday invites families to experiment, explore and investigate the natural world by looking at a variety of objects including fossils, bees, minerals and skeletons.

Full lists of all of our special events coming up, together with our diverse range of regular events, are available on our website.

Carly Smith-Huggins

Education Officer: Secondary (Art), Families & Young People

Footprints of the Buddah – one of the fascinating exhibits from *Imagining the Divine: Art and the Rise of World Religions*



Museum of the History of Science

www.mhs.ox.ac.uk/events

We're delighted to be working with the bioartist Anna Dumitriu in our latest free exhibition *Anna Dumitriu: BioArt and Bacteria* which runs until 18 March 2018. Bacteria are at the heart of Dumitriu's ground-breaking work, which combines traditional artistic media with contemporary science, to produce artwork that is not only about bacteria but actually fused with them.

A feature piece in the exhibition, Microbe Mouth, was created using 'teeth' grown in a lab using an extremophile bacterium from the genus *Serratia*. The work, which was created in collaboration with scientists Melissa Grant and Rachel Sammons, poses the question 'Are we ready for teeth made from microbes?'

As part of the larger programme of events for *Anna Dumitriu: BioArt and Bacteria*, we will be joined by Dr Timothy Walker (Nuffield Department of Medicine) for a talk on TB on Thursday, 15 February, at 6pm. TB still kills more people each year than any other germ. Dr Walker will discuss where it has been, how is it spreading and how the DNA holds some vital clues.

Robyn Haggard

Public Engagement Officer

Anna Dumitriu will host a tour of the exhibition on Wednesday, 22 November, at 1pm. Why not visit during your lunch break?



Wytham Woods

www.wythamwoods.ox.ac.uk

www.facebook.com/WythamWoods

Wytham Woods has now been managed by the University for 75 years, and we're celebrating with a year full of activities and events. The celebrations kicked off at Curiosity Carnival, swiftly followed by the unveiling of a Blue Plaque to mark the anniversary in October.

Over the coming months you can take in a woodland film screening, watch badgers in their natural habitat or sit in a gigantic bird's nest. From the world's longest-running bird population study to canopy-scanning lasers, mechanical vole hotels and Wi-Fi-enabled badgers – the strangest ideas become reality at Wytham.

If you're not a lover of the great outdoors there's plenty going on in town too. From late November a new exhibition in the Museum of Natural History's Wytham Room is showcasing recent work by Wytham's artists-in-residence Robin Wilson and Rosie Fairfax-Cholmeley.

Early 2018 will see art and photo exhibitions at St John's College and the Mathematical Institute, inspired by the science that's been hosted in the woods over the decades – and the curious characters who have carried it out.

Keep an eye on what's happening at Wytham on our website or Facebook page. Most of the events are free, but some will require booking.

Tom Marshall

Communications Officer



We've got a fantastic staff prize on offer courtesy of the Ashmolean Museum. Enter our prize draw to win tickets for four people to *Imagining the Divine: Art and the Rise of World Religions* exhibition, followed by lunch at the museum's Rooftop Restaurant (up to the value of £120). To enter, please send your name and University contact details to blueprint@admin.ox.ac.uk by Friday, 15 December.

Want to find out more?

Visit www.ox.ac.uk/events-list for details of a wide range of great events open to everyone taking place across the University.

Visit www.museums.ox.ac.uk/content/family-friendly-events for more information about family activities taking place at eight University venues.

Visit <https://talks.ox.ac.uk> for details of a diverse range of events, talks and workshops. Each event listing indicates whether it is open to all or only to members of the University.

MY FAMILY CARE

Meghan Lawson explains how a new staff benefit is helping people to balance their work and family life.



Many University staff combine work with demanding caring responsibilities. Whatever family means to you – children, elderly parents, family members with complex care needs or all of these – My Family Care is a new University staff benefit that offers help and advice.

By signing up to the Work+Family Space website you can download guides, view webinars and access a phone line where you can Speak to an Expert on anything family related, from practical eldercare challenges to questions about child development. The website also includes a Being a Dad section with resources aimed at fathers.

My Family Care has the capability to help you find emergency care for your family all over the UK

My Family Care is also a UK-wide provider of emergency back-up childcare and adultcare services. This is a great resource that can help you to find care for your elderly parents or arrange childcare anywhere in the country. There is also access to a nanny-share service.

More than 400 University staff have already signed up to access this new staff benefit

Registering with My Family Care, the Work+Family Space web resources and the Speak to an Expert service are free for University employees. You only pay for any back-up care that you book or if you want to arrange a personalised care search.

Visit www.admin.ox.ac.uk/personnel/staffinfo/benefits/family/mfc. To register you just need your University employee number (from your payslip) and your SSO username.

DISABILITY SUPPORT

Caroline Moughton discusses the support available for staff members living with a disability.

We employ people with disabilities in a diverse variety of roles and grades across the University – although many who fall within the definition would not choose to use that language about themselves. The definition of disability is broad and includes people with long-term health conditions, mental health issues, dyslexia, cancer and hearing or sight loss.

People may be living with pain, disturbed sleep and constant fatigue. Most people can work steadily all the time, but people with disabilities may need a different pattern of work to cope with only being able to focus for short time spans – or having periods of great creativity and other times when they can do very little.

The University is increasingly aware and supportive of staff and students living with a disability. Disability Narratives (available at www.diversityprojects.ox.ac.uk), a recent research project highlighting the lived experience of staff members with disabilities and their

experiences at work, explores how support can make a difference.

Support is available for both staff and students. Staff members can receive advice from the Occupational Health Service (www.admin.ox.ac.uk/uohs) or the staff disability advisor (caroline.moughton@admin.ox.ac.uk). Students can access the Disability Advisory Service or contact their departmental disability coordinator.

UK Disability History Month (22 November to 22 December) is an annual event which aims to create a platform to focus on the history of disabilities in our community – find out more on the Equality and Diversity Unit webpages (www1.admin.ox.ac.uk/eop/disab).

More broadly, we're working to anticipate the needs of disabled people in our workforce. This includes facilities in our buildings and online systems as well as our recruitment and working practices and career development opportunities.

INTRODUCTION TO

KEVIN COUTINHO

Kevin Coutinho, new Head of the Equality and Diversity Unit, has worked in the higher education sector since 2008, specialising in equality and diversity policy and practice. Kevin met Shaunna Latchman to discuss his new role.

Tell us a bit about yourself and how you came to be here?

I grew up in London and after graduating worked in the voluntary sector, at the Windsor Fellowship, a race equality charity. I realised that to make a charity sustainable and more effective, I would need a better understanding of business and so I sought out a scholarship and took the MBA route. I next worked at Cambridge for seven years and then Birkbeck before the opportunity to apply for this role came up. Additionally, I'm Chair of the Trustees' Board of the Windsor Fellowship and have elderly caring responsibilities– so life is busy.

What does a typical day look like?

A very long day normally! It really varies, from dealing with problems and successes, supporting others – be it students or senior colleagues – or managing projects and training. A lot of my day is about people, but I also have a lot of reading to fit in as well.

What do you particularly like about your role?

The variety is great but more to the point, I really like my work and I enjoy engaging people with Oxford's vision and aims – it motivates me to get up in the morning. This University is a world-class national institution, so what we do here at Oxford in Equality and Diversity Unit can help others and catalyse them to pursue a broader agenda in their own organisations.

What challenges do you think Oxford will present?

The University is embracing equality and diversity, which is evident through our participation in Athena SWAN, Stonewall's Workplace Equality Index and the Race Equality Charter. There's a lot of engagement, which is clearly positive. I like chocolate (probably too much for a diabetic) and, to me,

the University is a bit like a Wispa or an Aero bar – lots of free-forming bubbles all covered by a lovely silky smooth veneer. The challenge is trying to co-ordinate the bubbles so we are more effective without losing the local autonomy and character that makes Oxford special.

How do you plan on addressing this?

There is no quick fix – listening is a start and understanding the needs of others is key. Co-ordination and sharing workable solutions and good practice will help reduce the need to reinvent the wheel when local areas are looking to progress equality and diversity.

A pertinent example is the Vice-Chancellor Diversity Awards. This high-profile event, which takes place on 8 May 2018, is a celebration of work taking place across the University to promote equality and diversity.

It will profile opportunities for shared learning and replicating models that work. Hopefully it will inspire people to think about equality and diversity as part of our success story. Another current initiative is the relaunched Diversity Fund, a pot of £70,000 that enables the piloting of ideas which provide an opportunity to innovate beyond existing resources.

So the future's positive?

Of course. We have some very good work and practice on sexual orientation and gender identity in place in fact, in some respects I'd say we are ahead of the curve. However, we still have lots to do more broadly and I'm looking forward to making a difference and inspiring others to become change agents.

To find out more about the work of the Equality and Diversity Unit visit www.admin.ox.ac.uk/eop.



Rob Judges

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Oxford University Innovation, offering support to researchers

Oxford University Innovation, the new name for the University's research commercialisation company, has hotdesks in a number of locations around the University.

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See www.innovation.ox.ac.uk/hotdesks for a full list of locations, and details of when Oxford University Innovation staff will be available.



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PERFECTION ON A PLATE

Professor Charles Spence, experimental psychologist and the head of the University's Crossmodal Research group, has attracted a wealth of media attention with his fascinating research into how our multisensory experiences can enhance our eating experience.



Blueprint investigated Professor Spence's findings and discovered that setting the ideal scene to help us all get the best from our Christmas Day meal involves appealing to all of the senses – not just our taste buds.

'Research that we were involved in a few years ago demonstrated that the more senses you stimulate, the more Christmassy people felt, at least if you got the right sensory triggers,' explains Charles. 'When all the senses were in alignment people felt most Christmassy, and what is more, ended up eating more mince pies!'

We tend to eat more on Christmas Day than at other times. And the large volumes may not just be caused by feeling full of Christmas cheer. The research reviewed in his latest book, *Gastrophysics: The New Science of Eating*, also reveals that we tend to consume 35% more food when eating with one other person and 75% more when with three. This helps explain why, at many festive gatherings in the UK, it's estimated we each manage to consume around 6,000 calories!

Here are just a few insights from Professor Spence's research on how to create a great Christmas experience.

What you serve your food on can have a huge impact on how people perceive it to taste. There's currently a lot of online discussion concerning the more unusual choices of platter being chosen by some restaurants (including bricks, slates, dog bowls and Wellington boots), resulting in a twitter campaign @WeWantPlates for those bored of boards.

However, research shows that people can more easily recollect a meal when they have eaten off of something unusual – worth considering if you want to dish up something memorable.

If you're sticking with plates, be aware that the shape and colour can influence the dining experience. Round white plates help your food taste sweeter, so a good contender for your Christmas pudding.

People tend to eat less from red plates as it seems to trigger some kind of avoidance



signal. Great if you want to cut down on the calories, but subconsciously suggesting your food is dangerous may not be ideal for Christmas Day.

You either love them or loathe them, so if you're trying to disguise the Brussel sprouts, green plates help make them less prominent and you're less likely to hear protests from the haters.

Research orchestrated by Charles in a Scottish hotel restaurant also reveals that using heavy cutlery results in people rating food as tasting significantly better – so remember that weightier cutlery is likely to result in hefty compliments about your festive fare.

Serving wine? Classical music will help make it taste more expensive and red lighting will help bring out the fruitiness in red wine. Green lighting tends to make your wine taste crisp and fresh. And a tip if the wine bottle happens to be especially heavy is to let your guests pour for themselves to feel the weight – it will help suggest that they are pouring a tippie of quality.

Audiovisuals can also help your day sparkle. Candles have been shown to be more effective than the sight of a Christmas tree at evoking that festive feeling and, interestingly, the smell of cinnamon helps suggest Christmas more successfully than the scent of pine needles or oranges.

Here's to a merry – and multisensory – Christmas.



To find out more about creating the perfect dining experience, check out Professor Charles Spence's newest book, *Gastrophysics: The New Science of Eating*.

DECK THE HALLS

The colleges and halls are a home away from home for students who are new to Oxford, and at a time when we are all settling into our festive customs, they too are engaging in traditions of their own. A few of the colleges have shared some of their oldest traditions with us.

Wadham College

12 Days of Christmas: for the Wadham student Christmas dinner, the chapel choir goes up the narrow, stone spiral staircase into the Hall Gallery to sing the 12 Days of Christmas. The custom, over more recent years, includes leaping up to sing the line 'Five gold rings'.



The Queen's College

Needle and Thread Gaudy: New Year is marked by the threading of more than one hundred needles. At the Needle and Thread Gaudy, the Bursar threads a needle onto each guest's clothing and advises them to 'be thrifty' in the coming year.



University College

Since 1674, every new member of University College has entered details of their name, their parents, their age and where they come from in an admissions register. The college has examples of the handwriting of 340 years' worth of members – including renowned author CS Lewis.



Tours

Two colleges are offering the opportunity to win a guided tour of their historic halls. Christ Church, home of Great Tom, the clock tower you hear peeling across the city every hour, and The Queen's College, founded in 1384, on the High Street.

The Queen's College offers a choice of 10.30am on Thursday, 14 December, or Friday, 5 January, for a visit. All winners of the Christ Church tour will be asked to arrange their tour individually with the team at Christ Church.

To enter the prize draw please email blueprint@admin.ox.ac.uk by 5pm on Wednesday, 29 November. Please state the name of the college you would like to tour – and your preferred date if choosing Queen's – in your email subject line.



What would you like to know about the colleges?
Send your suggestions or questions to blueprint@admin.ox.ac.uk.

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LAST WORD

Laetitia Velia, Senior Graphic Designer, Public Affairs Directorate, selects her favourite part of Oxford and explains why it is important to her:

I used to cross Magdalen Bridge's magnificent 11 arches most days and found it enjoyable whatever the season.

I have a particularly wonderful memory of taking a leisurely stroll on a crisp autumnal Sunday morning and marvelling at the view of the beautiful Magdalen tower. During the summer, the sight of colourful punts bobbing gently on the shimmering water set me up for the day.

From old photographs, it appears that the area around the bridge, completed in 1790, has stayed very similar over the decades. I like to imagine crossing it in 19th-century Oxford with the horses and carriages clattering by.



Main picture:
Punts under
Magdalen Bridge
Left: A procession of
Hall's drays crossing
Magdalen Bridge, 1912