NEWS IN BRIEF

♦ The Ashmolean Museum has launched a new podcast series, *Thinking with Things: The Oxford Collection Podcasts*, to highlight its diverse collections and illustrate that it houses something for everyone. In each podcast an Oxford academic selects a museum artefact and reveals its connection with their research. Astrophysicist Professor Chris Lintott, for example, has selected a 19th-century silver-gilt carriage clock to describe equations of solar time. The museum is keen to hear about academics who would make great candidates for future podcasts – please send your suggestions to public.engagement@ashmuse.ox.ac.uk. The podcasts can be downloaded free on iTunes or from www.ashmolean.org/podcasts.

♦ The University’s fifth annual Environmental Sustainability report is now available at www.admin.ox.ac.uk/estates/ourservices/environment/resources. The report sets out the environmental sustainability work of the University and focuses on its functional estate. Please contact the Environmental Sustainability team at sustainability@admin.ox.ac.uk with any suggestions for improving working practices or communication regarding environmental sustainability.

♦ The University launched its first Public Engagement with Research Strategic Plan in December. Oxford’s vision is to embed high-quality and innovative public engagement as an integral part of research culture and practice, enhancing its position as a world-leading research institution. A key focus is to support academics and researchers to develop and deliver high-quality activities and to foster a culture in which they are recognised for their accomplishments. The strategic plan is available at www.ox.ac.uk/research/public-engagement/support-researchers.

♦ The Department of Experimental Psychology is recruiting volunteers of all ages to participate in research which involves the measurement of human behaviour. Participants are invited to take part in experiments involving a range of activities, from playing computer games to filling out questionnaires. Volunteers are always free to withdraw from a study at any time and many researchers offer remuneration to compensate volunteers for their time. Visit www.psy.ox.ac.uk/participate to find out more.

♦ This month sees the launch of the first joint campaign to promote the University’s Gardens, Libraries and Museums. Aimed at tourists and day-trippers, the campaign will use posters, a free map and online advertising to publicise an amazing day out at the University’s museums and collections, which include the Ashmolean, Bodleian Libraries, Botanic Garden, Harcourt Arboretum, Museum of the History of Science, Museum of Natural History and Pitt Rivers. Find out more at mindgrowing.org.

♦ A new section has been added to the Staff Gateway at www.ox.ac.uk/staff to help direct you to some of the key content on the Estates Services’ website. Entitled ‘Working environment’, it helps you to find information about environmental sustainability initiatives, sustainable travel incentives, current building projects and the full A to Z list of the services Estates Services provide. This new section also helps you to report repairs and maintenance issues, report a security incident and access the wide range of Facilities Management services.

♦ Financial update: The University has set a target to retain a 5% operating surplus before investment gains every year in order to maintain its pre-eminent position as a place of outstanding learning, teaching and research. This year it retained 3.3%, and has therefore introduced a number of cost saving and efficiency schemes.

Overview of the year: the University’s overall income (excluding substantial windfalls in 2014/15) grew fractionally to £1,321.8m and total expenditure was 1.4% higher than last year, at £1,336.5m. The largest source of income remained research grants and contracts at £537.4m. The largest expenditure, at £680.3m, was staff costs, with a 6.6% increase from 2014/15 – this is partly due to increased staff numbers and partly due to increased employer costs such as National Insurance and pension scheme payments. The University’s net assets stand at £3.01bn (previously £2.84bn); this increase is due in part to the completion of major building and infrastructure projects. For more information visit www.ox.ac.uk/staff/universitys-financial-position.
RESEARCH ROUND-UP

A popular theory that suggests women delay motherhood in order to fulfil their educational ambitions is questioned by research led by Dr Felix Tropf from Oxford’s Department of Sociology. A recent paper in the journal *Demography* shows that in the UK a woman’s family background is a bigger factor than education alone. The paper argues that families provide social and financial support, and pass on genes affecting reproductive behaviour. The researchers looked at patterns of educational enrolment for cohorts of women born in the UK between 1944 and 1967 and compared the fertility histories of more than 2,700 female twins in the UK to see how education influenced the age of first-time mothers.

Moderate alcohol consumption may be linked to enhanced wellbeing, thanks to the improved social interaction associated with having a drink with friends at a local pub. While most studies warn of the health risks of alcohol consumption, researchers in the Department of Experimental Psychology have looked at whether having a drink may play a role in improving social cohesion, given its long association with human social activities. Combining data from three separate studies – a questionnaire-based study of pub clientele, observing conversational behaviour in pubs, and a national survey by the Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) – the researchers looked at whether the frequency of alcohol consumption or the type of venue affected peoples’ social experiences and wellbeing.

Lakes were as affected by climate change during the Jurassic Era as the oceans, research has revealed. A new study, published in *Nature Geoscience*, centres on the Oceanic Anoxic Event (OAE) phenomenon first evidenced in a landmark paper written by Professor Hugh Jenkyns and colleagues. It is the first time their hypothesis has been applied to lake, rather than marine, environments. Focusing on the discovery of organic-rich black shales at deep-sea drilling sites during the early 1970s, OAE research has shown how volcanic activity during the Jurassic Period triggered increased levels of atmospheric carbon dioxide, resulting in increased sea-surface temperature and reduced oxygen levels in large parts of the ocean. Marine algae and bacteria bloomed, forming sediments on the sea bed as they died that over time became source rocks for oil. The team from the Department of Earth Sciences studied sediments from one of the largest lakes in Earth history, formed rapidly in the Sichuan Basin in China as a result of Early Jurassic climate change about 183 million years ago. They found that increased temperatures led to high rainfall, creating lake reservoirs that acted like mini-oceans. The research makes comparisons between the events identified and the consequences of present-day global warming.

Despite the concerns often expressed about the amount of time that teenagers spend on their digital devices, new research suggests that, if they stick to moderate device use, screen time may not be bad for their mental well-being. Dr Andrew Przybylski of the Oxford Internet Institute, with Cardiff University, analysed how 120,000 15-year-olds in Britain reported feeling after they had used different types of digital technology, using a well-established survey measuring mental well-being. The adolescents were also asked how much time they spent on the devices. The findings suggest some connectivity is probably better than none and there are moderate levels that are ‘just right’ for young people. They also say that the relationship between screen time and well-being is weak at best, even when young people go beyond moderate use. The research is published in the journal *Psychological Science*.

A long-lost song by English composer George Butterworth has been rediscovered at the Bodleian Libraries, a century after his death in the trenches. The three-page score is a musical setting of a short festive poem by Robert Bridges, beginning with the words ‘Crown winter with green’. It is believed to be the only surviving copy of this Butterworth composition. The score was found among a group of uncatalogued music manuscripts which were transferred from the library in the Music Faculty to the Bodleian’s Weston Library. Butterworth (1885–1916) was one of the most promising English composers of his generation, but his life was cut short at the age of 31 when he was killed at the Battle of the Somme.

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)
Ahmed Ahmed, Professor of Gynaecological Oncology, has received the International Scientist of the Year award from the United Arab Emirates Genetics Diseases Association. The award recognises his group’s recent research on genomics, screening and metastasis of ovarian cancer, and specifically the identification of a potential marker for early diagnosis of ovarian cancer and a target for therapy that drives ovarian cancer metastasis to the abdominal cavity.

Dr Maria Bruna of the Mathematical Institute has won the ‘Women of the Future’ Science award. The UK awards recognise inspirational women aged 35 or under and celebrate talent across categories including business, culture, media and technology. Dr Bruna’s work focuses on partial differential equations, stochastic simulation algorithms and the application of these techniques to the modelling of biological and ecological systems.

Joseph Conlon, Professor of Theoretical Physics, has won the 2016 Physics World Book of the Year award for Why String Theory?, in which he examines the continued popularity of string theory – an abstract, mathematically complex area that is (so far) unsupported by direct experimental evidence, yet nonetheless attracts the attention of thousands of physicists and mathematicians worldwide.

Professor Sir Gordon Duff, Principal of St Hilda’s College, is to receive the Sir James Black Award for Contributions to Drug Discovery by the British Pharmacological Society. The award recognises his group’s original discovery of Tumour Necrosis Factor alpha (TNFα) as a therapeutic target in human arthritis.

Luciano Floridi, Professor of Philosophy and Ethics of Information, has been appointed chair of the new Data Ethics Research Group of the Alan Turing Institute, the national institute for data science.

Anthony Harnden, Professor of Primary Care, has been appointed to the Council of the General Medical Council, which ensures that the GMC is properly managed and fulfils its objectives to protect, promote and maintain the health and safety of the public by ensuring proper standards in the practice of medicine. It is also responsible for the regulation of all UK medical schools and postgraduate training.

Marta Kwiatkowska, Professor of Computing Systems, has been elected a fellow of the Association for Computing Machinery. Her major contributions to the theory and practice of probabilistic verification are cited.

Irene Tracey, Nuffield Professor of Anaesthetic Science, has been awarded the 2017 British Prize from the Feldberg Foundation, which promotes scientific contact between German and English scientists working on experimental medical research. Professor Tracey has contributed to a better understanding of pain perception, pain relief and nociceptive processing within the injured and non-injured human central nervous system using advanced neuroimaging techniques.

Helen Watanabe-O’Kelly, Professor of German Literature, has received an Honorary DLitt from the National University of Ireland in recognition of her research in German Studies.
New Year Honours

Six members of the University were recognised in the 2017 New Year Honours list.

Nicholas White, Professor of Tropical Medicine at Oxford and Mahidol University, Thailand; Fellow of St John’s College; and Chairman of the Wellcome Trust’s South East Asian Research Units, was appointed a Knight Commander of the Order of St Michael and St George for services to tropical medicine and global health. Professor White’s research interests include the pathophysiology and treatment of severe malaria, the prevention of antimalarial drug resistance using artemisinin-based combinations, and the biology of relapse in vivax malaria.

Sir Roger Bannister, former Master and Honorary Fellow of Pembroke College, was made a Companion of Honour for services to sport. Sir Roger has had a distinguished career in neuroscience and is also widely known for being the first man to run a mile in four minutes, achieved in 1954 on the University’s Iffley Road track. His numerous contributions to sport include serving as Chairman of the Sports Council (now called Sports England).

Colin Mayer, Peter Moores Professor of Management Studies and Professorial Fellow of Wadham College, was appointed CBE for services to business education and the administration of justice in the economic sphere. He is an expert on all aspects of corporate finance, governance and taxation, the regulation of financial institutions, and the role of the corporation in contemporary society. He is also an Honorary Fellow of Oriel College and of St Anne’s College.

John Furlong, Emeritus Professor of Education and Emeritus Fellow of Green Templeton College, was appointed OBE for services to research in education and government. A former Director of Oxford’s Department of Education and a former President of the British Educational Research Association, he is a member of research groups encompassing learning and new technologies, teacher education, and professional learning.

Valentine Cunningham, Emeritus Professor of English Language and Literature and Emeritus Fellow and Lecturer in English at Corpus Christi College, was appointed OBE for services to scholarship and the understanding of the humanities. He works widely across literary-historical-cultural periods, areas and genres, as well as in literary theory, and has published books on subjects as diverse as the Victorian novel, the writing of the Spanish Civil War, and King Lear.

Dr Premila Webster, Director of Public Health Education and Training in the Nuffield Department of Population Health, was appointed MBE for services to public health.

Carbon Reduction Prize

The University has won a 2016 Green Gown award for its ‘ambitious’ approach to carbon reduction, aiming to reduce carbon emissions by one-third between 2011 and 2021. Since 2011, 4,767 tonnes of carbon and £1.1m of annual energy costs have been saved, through more than 180 projects ranging from solar panels and lighting upgrades to roof insulation. Further projects mean Oxford is on track to achieve 41% of its target by 2017.

Athena SWAN Awards

The Department of Oncology and the Nuffield Department of Surgical Sciences have both recently been awarded Athena SWAN awards, which recognise commitment to tackling gender inequality in higher education, at Silver level. This brings the University’s total so far to 27 awards: 20 at Silver and at Bronze level.

The first three Social Sciences departments applied for Athena SWAN awards in November; the results are expected shortly. The University will be applying for a Silver institutional award in April.

Best HE Building

The Investcorp Building for the Middle East Centre at St Antony’s College has been named the best higher education and research building at the World Architecture Festival in Berlin. The structure, which was designed by Zaha Hadid Architects and opened in June 2015, has been likened to a piece of ultra-modern sculpture, resembling the upturned hull of a ship, and contains a lecture theatre and library.
University Apprenticeship Awards

The 2016 University Apprenticeship Awards were presented in the Sheldonian Theatre in December. Thanks to Abingdon and Witney College, ATG Training, Activate Learning and Oxfordshire Apprenticeships, the winners received £100 vouchers to spend in high-street stores. The winners were:


The Apprenticeship Mentor Award (nominated by the apprentice) went to Colin White, Patrol Team Supervisor, Oxford University Security Services, and the Poster Competition Prize (for a poster showcasing her work) went to Danielle Hoare, Apprentice Administrative Assistant in the Nuffield Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology. The prize for the most Outstanding Contribution to the University’s Apprenticeships Scheme, which normally goes to an individual, was this year won by the entire Estates Services Facilities Management Team.

The University now has at least one apprentice in 30 departments and in 17 colleges.

New Year, New You…?

If you’re struggling to kickstart the healthy new regime you keep promising yourself to adopt, have a look at how the University can help motivate you and make your resolution a reality.

All University staff can apply for membership of the University Sports Centre on Iffley Road. As well as its athletics stadium housing the famous Roger Bannister running track, the centre’s facilities include racquet courts, a martial arts hall, an eight-lane swimming pool and cardiovascular and powerlifting gyms. The centre opens 6am to 10.30pm Monday to Friday, 7am to 7.30pm on Saturdays and 8.30am to 7.30pm on Sundays.

Call in and meet the team (or phone them on 01865 240476) and they’ll help you find the membership option that’s right for you. Visit www.sport.ox.ac.uk to find out more.

Staff are also invited to get involved with any of the University Sports Clubs - there are over 70, covering everything from archery to rugby, surfing to yachting. Get back into your favourite sport or try something completely new. Visit www.sport.ox.ac.uk for information about what’s on offer.

In addition, the University Club on Mansfield Road is free for staff to join (partners can join for just £30). This smart sports and social club offers a friendly space in the heart of the city to relax, work out, socialise and network with colleagues and friends. Once a member you can enjoy annual gym membership for £65 (yes, that works out at just £1.25 a week), plus low-cost exercise classes and the opportunity to hire the all-weather sports pitch. The sports facilities and gym are open 7am to 11pm Monday to Friday and 7am to 10pm on Sundays.

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Professor Alastair Buchan, Head of the Medical Sciences Division, took up the new post of Head of Brexit Strategy for the University on 20 January. Professor Buchan will co-ordinate the University’s response to policy developments, and help ensure that Oxford is best placed to identify opportunities and adapt to this rapidly evolving situation. He has been appointed Pro-Vice Chancellor (without portfolio) and will be supported in this new role by Alasdair MacDonald, Private Secretary to the Vice-Chancellor, and the staff of the International Strategy Office.

The role of Head of Medical Sciences Division has been taken on an interim basis by Professor Chris Kennard, Emeritus Professor of Clinical Neurology, formerly Head of the Nuffield Department of Clinical Neurosciences, until a new head of division is appointed.

Viewfinder Found

The stained glass window with the stern-faced lady is

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Evolutionary biologist Greger Larson talks to Maria Coyle about where our chickens, dogs and pigs come from

‘Post-truth’ – an adjective relating to circumstances in which objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than emotional appeals – was selected by the Oxford Dictionaries as the 2016 Word of the Year. But according to evolutionary biologist Greger Larson, we have always constructed narratives on how things happened because of a collective desire for certainty, which stretches the extent to which we know what is really going on. He is not afraid to challenge such ‘certainties’ using new genetic techniques.

Professor Larson heads an international team as Director of Oxford’s Wellcome Trust Palaeogenomics & Bio-Archaeology Research Network (Palaeo-BARN). The team’s projects are seeking to find out where dogs, pigs and chickens were first domesticated and how many times this may have happened independently in different parts of the world. They combine the resolution afforded by DNA sequences and fine-scale morphological variation with detailed archaeological research and palaeontology. Last year, they created waves by suggesting that dogs were domesticated not once, as widely believed, but twice, in different parts of the world.

Greger is an American citizen, but has spent most of his life as an expatriate. Born in Bahrain to parents who moved around the world to teach at schools for the children of US military, he was exposed to change and diverse cultures from an early age. This may partly explain why he is so open to new ways of thinking and likes to test the evidence for accepted opinion, even his own.

He admits candidly that the first paper he ever published (in 2005) turned out to be 100 % wrong; he said pigs were domesticated many times, but later discovered the amount of mating between wild and domesticated pigs was much greater than thought. Put simply, he says: ‘Evolution and gene flow can completely re-orientate you so you see things in a different way.’

He has long had a fascination with the human–canine bond (although he does not currently own a dog himself). His questions were piqued by a programme he watched 20 years ago, in which it was suggested that this much-celebrated association started after humans picked up some wolf puppies. ‘I remember thinking that this must be wrong,’ he muses. ‘It presupposes people thought it a good idea to grab a wild animal, a predator with big teeth!’ There are individual cultures with examples of pet keeping, but he felt this did not adequately explain why such behaviour happened all over the world.

A big influence on his work has been evolutionary biologist and American paleontologist Stephen Jay Gould, who proffered the theory that long periods of evolutionary stability were interspersed with rarer, sudden spikes of branching evolution. Greger’s career is rooted in a curiosity about ‘how’ and ‘why’, but he feels this did not adequately explain why such moments of transition and change. ‘Humans have ridiculously deep relationships with particular animals that infuse our culture,’ he says. ‘When did stories about animals that are friendly and the big, bad wolf start and why? I think there must be signatures archaeologically, culturally and genetically that you can use to try to infer the origins.’

Although a trained archaeologist, Greger was more comfortable being described as an evolutionary biologist – which is probably why he hates being asked what might have triggered his own research interests. ‘I loathe that question because I think we always add that one moment retrospectively, when actually there are lots of things happening at the time.’

He is more likely to be found in a lab than on a dig, peering at genetic variations and mutations in ancient and modern DNA. He first arrived at Oxford as a Master’s student of World Archaeology, which he followed with a doctorate in the Department of Zoology. He returned to Oxford in 2015 after postdoctoral studies abroad and a spell as a lecturer at Durham University.

His work deconstructs existing scientific hypotheses about the ‘how’ and ‘why’, but Greger says he owes a lot to the hard graft and considered approach of archaeologists over many decades. ‘Domestication is a system up for debate rather than the study of a particular animal or topic. Lots of people have been coming to it from lots of different perspectives,’ he explains.

To relax, Greger particularly enjoys the work of stand-up comedian Stewart Lee, another Oxford alumnus who delights in deconstructing ideas. The two men may be similar in highlighting the ambiguities of what we know and what we claim to know.

‘New evidence can completely re-orientate you, so you see things in a different way’

Find out more at www.palaeobarn.com
Lectures and Talks

No Bell Prize
Friday 24 March, 6.30pm
Oxford University Museum of Natural History
Free, but booking required
www.bit.ly/mnhevents
A fun and informative panel event, in partnership with Oxford Neuroscience, where neuroscientists get interrupted by a bell if they use incomprehensible jargon.

Oxford Literary Festival 2017
Saturday 25 March – Sunday 5 April
Venues across the city
www.oxfordliteraryfestival.org
Book now for this year’s festival featuring celebrated authors discussing their work. Oxford staff and students can claim a 20% discount by using code OUOXLIT17 when purchasing tickets online.

Slow Art Day
Saturday 8 April, 2–4pm
Ashmolean Museum
£9 adults/£8 concessions, includes afternoon tea; booking required
www.ashmolean.org/events/lectures
Part of a global event aiming to help people discover the joy of taking their time to view works of art. Discuss your discoveries in the Western Art Galleries over afternoon tea.

Making a Contemporary Opera
Friday 21 April, 5–7pm
Merton College
Free, but booking required
www.ticketsource.co.uk/newchamberopera
Katie Mitchell, Visiting Professor of Opera, discusses the complexities of making a contemporary opera.

Exhibitions

Volcanoes
10 February – 21 May
St Lee Gallery, Weston Library
www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/whatson/whats-on
A spectacular selection of eye-witness accounts, scientific observations and artwork, charting our evolving understanding of volcanoes.

The Song of the Trees
From 24 February
Museum of Natural History
www.oum.ox.ac.uk/visiting/whats-on.htm
Discover the fascinating history of some of the trees at Wytham Woods, the University’s ancient semi-natural research woodland just outside the city centre.

Concerts

Broadside Ballads
Saturday 25 February, 7.30pm
Holywell Music Room
Tickets: £14/£10
www.oocmevents.org
Three of the UK’s most innovative folk artists plus guests delve into the Bodleian’s collection of ‘British Broadsides’ – low-cost daily song sheets – to bring Broadside Ballads to life for a new generation.

Oxford Philharmonic Orchestra – Maundy Thursday
Thursday 13 April, 7.30pm
Sheldonian Theatre
Tickets £10 / £20 / £30 / £42
www.venues.ox.ac.uk/whats-on
Left incomplete upon his untimely death, Mozart’s Requiem is shrouded in mystery and intrigue. Hear this haunting piece along with his uplifting Clarinet Concerto in A major.

Family Friendly

Stars and Specula
Friday 3 March, 6–7.30pm
Museum of the History of Science – location to be confirmed
www.mhs.ox.ac.uk/events
Enjoy an evening of stargazing through a genuine 1840s telescope, together with modern and replica Galilean telescopes.

Super Science Saturday: the Brain
Saturday 11 March, 12–4pm
Museum of Natural History
www.oum.ox.ac.uk
What’s going on inside your head? Meet top brain scientists and take part in demos and activities to find out.

Staff Events

University Administration and Services (UAS) Induction Programme
Tuesday 14 March, 9am–1pm
Medical Sciences Teaching Centre
www.admin.ox.ac.uk/uis/events/induction
New to UAS or an academic division, department or faculty? Come along for a broad introduction to the collegiate University and UAS and to network with colleagues. Visit the website to register.

UAS Conference
Tuesday 28 March
Andrew Wiles Building, ROQ
www.admin.ox.ac.uk/uisconference
An information and training event enabling staff to find out more about the University’s administrative functions. Watch out for an email in March notifying you that registration is open. Come along to share best practice and learn new skills.

Hidden Treasures
31 March to 2 April, 1–4pm
Pitt Rivers Museum
www.prm.ox.ac.uk/whats-on
Peer up high and crouch down low to discover some of the museum’s hidden treasures.

Visit www.ox.ac.uk/events-list for a wide range of events taking place across the University and www.museums.ox.ac.uk/content/family-friendly-events for more family activities.
Off to a Flying Start

Annette Cunningham takes a look at the University’s 2016 Apprenticeship Awards

On a surprisingly sunny day last December, the Sheldonian Theatre hosted the University’s annual Apprenticeship Awards – an occasion to celebrate success and for graduating apprentices to collect their hard-earned qualification certificates.

‘The awards help us to showcase and recognise the fantastic work that the apprentices and their mentors are carrying out across the University on a day-to-day basis,’ explains Clive Shepherd, the University’s Apprenticeship Manager. ‘Apprenticeships have played a significant role across the University for many years, particularly in the more traditional apprentice roles such as engineering, but a few years ago the value of developing the scheme was realised, both for the University and for the local community. We’re proud to now have more than 100 apprentices carrying out high-quality vocational training in a diverse range of placements including finance, lab technician and building maintenance roles. Many go on to secure full-time positions at the University – a fantastic start to any career.’

Grace Parsons, an HR Apprentice with IT Services, was delighted to discover that she’d scooped the New Apprentice Award. ‘Taking an apprenticeship has proved a great decision for me,’ she says. ‘I initially stayed on at school to study for A-levels but quickly realised that the best way for me to show how well I can do something is actually to do it. I knew I wanted to work directly with people and so the opportunity to get involved with a human resources apprenticeship really appealed, and I’m really feeling the benefit of putting what I learn into immediate practice.’

Grace is so committed that she is now an Apprentice Ambassador and goes along to events and talks to others about the benefits of apprenticeships. Her apprenticeship involves an evening course at Oxford City College and a day-release to study Business Administration at Abingdon and Witney College. At work she’s been learning recruitment and employee absence management processes, and it was her work implementing a new staff-absence management system across IT Services that led to her award nomination.

Wendy Simmonds, HR Manager, says: ‘We wanted to recognise Grace’s exceptional performance getting to grips with implementing a complicated leave system. It has had a significant impact on how we monitor and report absences. We often have to remind ourselves that she’s a new apprentice and not an experienced member of the team.’

Adam Fisk (pictured on the cover), Maintenance Apprentice with the Oxford University Museum of Natural History, was a winner in the Intermediate Apprenticeship category and confesses he felt a bit of a rush when he discovered he’d won. He is highly enthusiastic about the museum and his role there: ‘It’s a great place to work – I’m enthusiastic about the museum and his role there: ‘It’s a great place to work – I’m able to learn as I go and I love the fact that everything I do is hands-on,’ he says. ‘I really enjoy working on the museum’s exhibitions. We have to work out the best possible way to show off what’s being exhibited and then build the display to a tight deadline. It’s really rewarding to see the finished result.’

‘We’re proud to now have more than 100 apprentices carrying out high-quality vocational training in a diverse range of placements’

‘Having five of our apprentices as finalists in these awards is a great accolade,’ says Clive. ‘Managers have been quick to recognise that the apprentices not only support their business but help re-energise existing staff and teams with their enthusiasm, willingness to learn and progressive attitudes. All of our apprentices are a great asset to the University.’

A full list of winners of the 2016 University Apprenticeship Awards is on p6. More information about University Apprenticeships is at www.apprenticeships.ox.ac.uk; an update on the Oxfordshire Apprenticeship Awards is at www.oxfordshireapprenticeships.co.uk/awards
Pride of Place

The University is committed to supporting and celebrating its LGBT staff and students, reports Stuart Gillespie

At this time of year, Oxford’s iconic skyline takes on a noticeably more colourful look. To mark LGBT History Month, the rainbow flag can be seen flying across college and department rooftops, highlighting the University’s commitment to celebrating its LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans) staff and students.

It may seem an uncontroversial idea that people should feel accepted and comfortable in their workplace or place of study, but even in 2017 that isn’t always the case for everyone – particularly those from LGBT communities.

Providing support for LGBT staff and students at Oxford is the LGBT Advisory Group, chaired for the past year by long-serving member Helen Charlesworth. As well as organising high-profile events to coincide with landmarks such as LGBT History Month and Oxford Pride, the group works hard to help make sure the University is an open and inclusive place.

Helen, whose day job involves leading on communications for the University’s Undergraduate Admissions and Outreach office, says: ‘The LGBT advisory group is here to support lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans staff and students. People tend to perform better – at work and study – when they feel able to be themselves. How secure people feel can be affected by official procedures, so we work closely with the University’s Equality and Diversity Unit (EDU) on appropriate policies. Our feeling of safety is also affected by everyday reality across the University, so we try to help create an open and inclusive atmosphere, including improving the visibility of LGBT staff and students across the University.’

Trudy Coe, Head of the EDU, says: ‘The work of the LGBT Advisory Group – and our other student and staff groups – is invaluable in contributing the views and experiences of LGBT staff and students towards policy and decision-making, in challenging us to do even more to make Oxford a diverse and inclusive community, and in creating a vibrant social space for new and existing LGBT staff.’

The group’s flagship event is the annual LGBT History Month lecture, held every February since 2010 to coincide with the UK-wide campaign. Speakers have included several former Oxford students: broadcaster Paul Gambaccini, politician Angela Eagle, writer Val McDermid and Ruth Hunt, CEO of Stonewall. A number of Oxford professors have also spoken at the event, including Andrew Hodges on Alan Turing and Diarmuid MacCulloch on the history of the sexuality in the Christian West. In 2016 Oxford Egyptologist Richard Parkinson talked about LGBTQ heritage in world cultures, and on 9 February CN Lester, a trans activist and musician, gave this year’s lecture on the need for queer/trans history in a world that too often forgets that variations in gender and desire have always been with us. Podcasts of previous lectures are available at www.admin.ox.ac.uk/eop/sexualorientation/lgbthm.

The Advisory Group also takes part in Oxford Pride every Trinity term, marching as part of the parade and running a University stall on the main festival site. And at a TED-style micro-talks event in 2016, five members of staff from different colleges and departments spoke at a University event celebrating the Pride theme of ‘heroes’.
Helen adds: ‘In 2017 we’re excited to be working with The Oxford Research Centre in the Humanities (TORCH) on their Humanities and Identities series of events, and with the University’s Gardens, Libraries and Museums group on their “Out in Oxford” cross-collections trail. This trail will highlight various objects that have LGBTQ+ relevance, with interpretations and personal stories written by members of the LGBT community and allies.

‘The Advisory Group also supports a staff social group, which runs jointly with LGBT staff at Oxford Brookes University and other local employers. We work to support individuals who are coming out or just looking to meet colleagues across Oxford. We want people to know they can contact us if they have any questions or need any help. To sign up to our mailing list, all people have to do is send a blank email to oxu-lgbt-staff-subscribe@maillist.ox.ac.uk.’

But the Advisory Group exists, in part, because we don’t yet live in that truly inclusive and accepting world. Helen says: ‘We know there’s still work to be done: last year, Oxford University ranked only 244th in the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index. The University therefore made it an official equality objective to increase its score in this table. This year, Oxford ranks 187th out of 400.

‘It’s thankfully rare at Oxford, but hate crime is still a reality for many LGBT people. Even within the relative safety of the University there are “micro-aggressions”: little jokes or comments that reinforce negative stereotypes, which can be very damaging in the workplace if they go unchallenged. We know there are parts of the University where people don’t feel safe or comfortable to come out. They may not know how much help and support is available, so I’d encourage people to get in touch if they have any concerns at all, or if they’d like to get involved in the group.’

‘An increase in the number of openly LGBT role models across the University has played an important part in creating a more inclusive environment’

Helen notes that an increase in the number of openly LGBT role models across the University has played an important part in creating a more inclusive environment at Oxford – as has demonstrable and visible support from the top. ‘Nineteen members of staff have recently attended Stonewall Role Models training, supported by the Vice-Chancellor’s Diversity Fund,’ explains Helen. ‘Allies are also crucial, and one thing I find especially positive is that the Vice-Chancellor has always introduced our LGBT History Month lecture, and the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Equality and Diversity has hosted the post-lecture Q&A session: that’s a powerful public statement that the University is serious about equality and stands in support of its LGBT staff and students.

‘I think attitudes are improving generally across the University. I hope that our work has played a part in that, but there are many other factors. For example, the Equal Marriage Act introduced in 2013 has been influential and reflects a growing social acceptance of same-sex relationships. The Act did, though, create further challenges for trans people, which I think are not so well known. One of our key objectives now is to try to raise awareness around trans issues and how people can support their colleagues and fellow students.’

More information about the University’s Equality and Diversity Unit, including details of this month’s LGBT History Month events, at www.admin.ox.ac.uk/cop

Articles highlighting the University’s stance on embedding gender equality and on promoting diversity appeared in the November 2016 and July 2016 issues of Blueprint; see www.ox.ac.uk/blueprint
It's been said that the only certainties in life are death and taxes. But from a biologist’s point of view, one of the most enduring facts of life on earth is change. Fortunately, biological life – whether plant, animal, fungi or microbe – is adaptable and, as the world around us has changed through the eons, living organisms have evolved to survive and thrive. While adaptation is key to our survival, it can occasionally cause a few problems of its own. As our bodies have changed in shape over time, new mechanical problems have appeared, causing some new and uncomfortable conditions.

‘Throughout our lineage we have been adapting the shape of our joints, which leads to a range of new challenges for orthopaedic surgeons,’ says Dr Paul Monk of the Nuffield Department of Orthopaedics, Rheumatology and Musculoskeletal Sciences (NDORMS). ‘Recently there has been an increase in common problems such as anterior knee pain and shoulder pain when reaching overhead, which led us to look at how joints originally came to look and function the way they do.’

Paul’s team developed a set of 3D computer models of human joints, showing how common medical complaints have arisen and how we may evolve in the future. By compiling CT scans of bones from humans, early hominids, primates and dinosaurs, they used 3D engineering and mathematical methods to produce 3D ‘morphs’ to plot changes in the shapes of species throughout the human lineage. Physical copies of the models can be created using a 3D printer, to assist surgeons in planning operations. This has provided new insights into the morphological trends associated with common orthopaedic complaints. ‘These models will enable us to identify the root causes of many modern joint conditions, as well as allowing us to anticipate future problems that are likely to begin to appear based on lifestyle and genetic changes,’ adds Paul.

‘It’s the lifestyle changes in particular that are currently under scrutiny among orthopaedic surgeons,’ says hip and knee consultant Professor Siôn Glyn-Jones from NDORMS, who worked with Paul in the development of his models. ‘Paul’s work has shown that, in hominids, the development of the hip appears to have coincided with changes in the shape of a very small and previously unrecognised bump on the top of the femur, which adapted as we began to walk upright. As we’ve become more sedentary, this change that may have developed to help us walk upright is now starting to cause arthritis. We’ve been able to develop operations to fix this, which in the long term should reduce people’s likelihood of having to have hip replacements.’

Siôn’s team have also been developing dynamic 3D models to predict real-time movement of patients’ hips, to predict their risk of developing arthritis. These are increasingly being used when planning operations to get a better idea of which parts of each bone are damaged by different physical activities, highlighting which areas of the bone need modifying.

Just as our bodies have developed over time, so too have our medical techniques for fixing ourselves. Professor George Bentley is Emeritus Professor and Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon at the Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital (Stanmore) and at the Institute of Orthopaedics and Musculoskeletal Science, University College, London. Together with Professors Peter Walker and Gordon Blunn, he has been using 3D technology to both plan surgery and create replacement parts that are tailor-made for each patient.
‘3D assessment and mapping of bone structures in the hip, knee and shoulder joints enables us to produce patient-specific models of replacement joints for arthritis, as well as plates and screws used for fixing fractures and correcting spinal deformities,’ he says. ‘By using patient-specific models, prototypes of implants to replace bone and joints can be precisely engineered to fit the patient. Even the surface finish of the prosthesis may be designed to ensure a rapid incorporation into the skeleton of the patient. The models also help us to train the next generation of surgeons more rapidly and in greater numbers.’

There are also more routine applications for 3D modelling, such as improving the lifespan of museum specimens. ‘Many of our fossil and bone samples are too fragile to travel or be used in the classroom, but 3D printed models are much more durable and can be handled by students,’ says Mark Carnall, Zoological Collections Manager at Oxford University’s Museum of Natural History.

The museum provided many of the samples scanned to create Paul Monk’s 3D models, an area that Mark has been increasingly involved with in partnership with other institutions. ‘Researchers are starting to look at the human body in ways that they never have before. One team that we worked with was examining the shape of the human pelvis in relation to childbirth. They discovered that the way that most people deliver babies in hospitals is one of the worst ways possible. This is causing us to re-think our attitudes to many areas of medicine.’

‘Museums are not just beautiful cases filled with specimens,’ Mark adds. ‘The bulk of our collections are not on display, as they are specimens primarily for teaching and research use. There’s a perception that museum collections are just historical repositories but this research shows they are continually needed in cutting-edge science and learning.’
It’s easy to over-use the phrase ‘hidden gem’, especially in a city like Oxford, but the Bate Collection of Musical Instruments, tucked away behind the Music Faculty on St Aldate’s, surely qualifies. It contains one of the most important collections of historic instruments in the world.

The Bate Collection, which is part of the University’s Music Faculty, began with a gift by musicologist and broadcaster Philip Bate in 1968, when he donated an impressive lifetime’s collection of European orchestral woodwind instruments and other instruments. Since then, the collection has expanded so that more than a thousand instruments are on display, including Britain’s most comprehensive collection of European woodwind, brass and percussion instruments.

The collection tells a vivid story of the history of music. ‘We have instruments that have been made by all the most important English, French and German instrument makers,’ says Andrew Lamb, who manages the Bate Collection. ‘They show the musical and mechanical development of all wind and percussion instruments from the Renaissance and the Baroque periods to modern times.’

The collection boasts a ‘military serpent’ made in 1813 by Thomas Key, the instrument maker to the royal family in the early 19th century. It has a trumpet made in 1666 by trumpeter Simon Beale, who was the state trumpeter to both Oliver Cromwell and Charles II. Visitors can also see one of the most famous recorders in the world, made in 1720 by celebrated baroque recorder-maker Pierre Jaillard.

What makes the Bate Collection particularly special is that, unlike many museums and collections, its objects are not only used for display purposes. Mr Lamb actively encourages people to play the instruments for themselves. ‘As much as possible, we want people to use the instruments,’ says Mr Lamb. ‘Many music groups practise with our instruments, and we put on regular recitals. The instruments don’t always sound perfect, but that can make it an even more special experience for the audience.’

The opportunity to handle the instruments is not just open to professional musicians. The collection also runs hands-on education workshops for school groups, tertiary and further education groups, and home education groups. It runs group visits, family handling sessions and tours for life-long learners. All of this contact means the instruments regularly require restoration. There is an active community of volunteers who help with this process.

‘Britain’s most comprehensive collection of European woodwind, brass and percussion instruments’

As part of the Music Faculty, the collection plays a role in the University’s teaching and research programmes. ‘Oxford’s music students study composers and instruments from history and being able to see these instruments and play them adds an extra, interesting dimension to their learning,’ says Mr Lamb. ‘Academics also visit from all over the world to study our instruments in more detail.’

In recent years, the Bate Collection has used new technologies to allow people to study, play and hear its instruments without visiting Oxford. Working with Mark Wirkowski of Imperial College London, the Collection has made detailed files of some of its instruments available for free online, so that enthusiasts can use 3D printing to produce exact replicas. The files to print the 18th-century French church serpent, along with an instruction manual, can be downloaded from www.bate.ox.ac.uk/serpent.html.

The Bate Collection has also partnered with the University’s IT Services and the Ashmolean Museum to produce an app called re-sOUnd, funded by the University’s IT Innovation Fund and downloadable from the App store at https://itunes.apple.com/gb/app/re-sound-historic-instruments/id1121672326. Smartphone users can download the app and ‘play’ many of the Bate’s instruments: they can play a 19th-century guitar by plucking the strings on the screen; they can sound the Beale Trumpet by blowing into the microphone on the phone.

‘The quality of the recordings and the technology means that people can play the instruments to a high standard and it sounds exactly like the real thing,’ says Theodore Koterwas of IT Services, who developed the app. ‘At a time when more and more music is being created on computers, this app also brings back some of the physicality that is involved in playing an instrument.’

The Bate Collection is open Monday to Friday 2pm to 5pm and, during University term time, Saturdays from 10am to midday. For information on recitals and educational events, visit www.bate.ox.ac.uk
Clockwise, from far left: Andy Lamb sounds a modern serpent; playing the gamelan, an Indonesian orchestra of bronze gongs and other metallophones; harpsichords by Jean Goermanns of Paris and Johnson of London; 18th-century violins and cellos available for use by Music Faculty students.
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“...”

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What do you actually do?
I promote the research done in the Nuffield Department of Clinical Medicine. Our scientists are doing some incredible research, but scientific language is sometimes not very accessible. We partly depend on government and charity funding, so taxpayers and people who donate to charities are entitled to know how their money is spent.

Our department gathers information on research in a database called PINFOX, which feeds research profile pages on our websites. In recent years, I’ve supervised the creation of over 200 podcasts: interviews with our researchers and students as well as introductions to our research units.

Publications are of course a major output of research, and I also help our researchers keep their publication lists up to date in Symplectic, the University-web-based publications management system. Academics and researchers are expected to deposit their accepted manuscripts in an open access repository. Helping them comply has become a big part of my job.

Why is open access important?
Scientific data should be available to everybody – research results should be shared, not only with the scientific community but also with government bodies, policymakers, industries, NGOs etc. Particularly in the field of medicine, sharing results can help limit duplication of work and unnecessary clinical trials.

Since 1 April 2016, the University expects all academics and researchers to deposit author-accepted manuscripts in the Oxford University Research Archive (ORA), in order to be eligible for the next REF funding assessment. Departmental Open Access contacts like me are there to encourage, help and remind our researchers just how important this is – and nudge them to do it as soon as a paper is accepted.

As child, what did you want to be?
I grew up in Switzerland. I always wanted to be a teacher and actually trained to become one. My first job was as a year-4 substitute teacher in a remote mountain village and I loved every minute.

So how did you get from there to here?
After teacher training, I studied biology at the University of Lausanne and completed a PhD in plant biology. I took up a job to promote the research done at the university for a year and stopped working when the children came along. We lived in Boston for six years where my husband did a post-doc at Harvard Medical School. We moved here 11 years ago and I started working for the University when my youngest child started preschool.

What activities do you enjoy outside work?
I’m lucky to live in Haddenham, which is a very lively village. I dance with the Haddenham Hoofers – we do Appalachian tap dance and the photo shows me in costume – and sing with the Wichert Chorale. I am also a member of the Safe Walking and Cycling Group – and the proud initiator of a new cycle lane in the village! (We are now working on a cycle lane between Haddenham and Thame, but getting two county councils to work together is quite challenging!) I also do a lot of sport, from mountaineering and skiing in Switzerland to running and cycling around the village.

What was your last live cultural event?
Aside from concerts with the Witchert Chorale, it was The Last Tango of Flavia & Vincent at the Aylesbury Waterside Theatre. As students, we were part of a very active Argentinian tango school in Lausanne, and watching it always feels special.

Who would you most like to sit next to on a long-haul flight?
Mmm, not sure. I’d probably be tongue-tied anyway. Nelson Mandela, perhaps? I would have loved to talk with him about the future of Africa and the world.

Finally, what’s your most prized possession?
Lots of little things, like children’s memorabilia. And perhaps one bigger thing: my road bike. Our local country roads are great for cycling and our Sunday morning bike ride is a favourite moment of the week, in the morning light with dew on the fields and hedges.