News in brief

The University’s Access Agreement has been approved by the Office for Fair Access (OFFA). According to OFFA rankings, Oxford will spend more of its additional fee income (50%) on access and financial support than any other university in England. From 2012–13, first-year UK undergraduates from the lowest income households will have their tuition charges limited to £3,500 (repayable after graduation), and will also receive a bursary of £4,300. In later years their charges will be limited to £6,000 and their bursaries will be £3,300. The Access Agreement is at www.admin.ox.ac.uk/edc/access.

For the tenth year in a row, Oxford has come top of The Times Good University Guide league table, based on criteria such as staff–student ratios, graduate employment and bursaries. Oxford also improved its showing in the individual subject league tables, coming top in 14 subject tables. Medicine, Law, English, Politics, Maths, Philosophy, Theology, French, Russian, Linguistics, Business Studies (Oxford’s Economics and Management course), Middle Eastern and African Studies, Music, and Art and Design.

Staff and students from across the collegiate University welcomed an estimated 20,000 extra visitors to Oxford on 6 and 7 July as part of the Open Days for prospective students (www.admissions.ox.ac.uk/opendays). In addition to talks, tours and Q&A sessions held in departments and colleges, the Examination Schools was used as a site for information sessions and briefings for prospective students and their parents. The next Open Day will be on Friday 16 September.

A new area allowing readers direct access to high-demand material has opened at the Bodleian. The Gladstone Link (www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/notices/2011-jul-08a) is a newly refurbished space in the area connecting the Radcliffe Camera with the Old Bodleian Library. Named after the Gladstone bookshelves used on the main level of the underground bookstore, the Gladstone Link contains shelf space for 270,000 books, roughly doubling the open-shelf provision in the Bodleian to around 500,000 items.

A new online teaching resource, ‘The Elements of Drawing: John Ruskin’s Teaching Collection at Oxford’, has been created jointly by the Ashmolean and the Ruskin School of Drawing and Fine Art. The website (http://ruskin.ashmolean.org) features Ruskin’s extensive collections of drawings, manuscripts and photographs kept at the Ashmolean, and unites the images with his original catalogue, comments and instructions to students. It provides a valuable archive for the study of art theory, art history and the development of modern art as well as the study of Ruskin himself.

Wondering how to keep your children entertained over the school holidays? Why not take advantage of one of three local playschemes, which have discounted rates for University staff? They are the Oxford Montessori School’s Create Holiday Club for 3 to 15 year olds at Forest Farm School in Elsfield; Oxford Active camp for 4 to 14 year olds at Cherwell School in Summertown; and Sport Academies camp for 6 to 15 year olds at Abingdon School. Visit www.admin.ox.ac.uk/eop/childcare/playscheme for details.

The University and the Oxford Radcliffe Hospitals NHS Trust have agreed to formalise their relationship by entering into a Joint Working Agreement and a Trade Mark Licence. These collaboration agreements will provide a formal structure and governance to the relationship between the two organisations, enhancing the ability to share ideas and activities and to function as a joint venture committed to the pursuit of excellence in patient care, research and education. Further information at www.medsci.ox.ac.uk/news.
Training teenagers to interpret ambiguous events positively rather than negatively can influence their future interpretations and potentially their mood, a study has shown. This opens the door for a new treatment for anxiety, which can develop first in adolescence. Interpretation of day-to-day events is known to be important in problems such as anxiety. For instance, if someone you’ve recently met ignores your wave, this can be read negatively (they snubbed you) or positively (they just didn’t remember you). A tendency towards negative interpretations can push someone towards longer-term anxiety problems. A team in the Department of Experimental Psychology trained one group of volunteers to interpret events negatively and another positively. The ‘positive’ group tended to continue interpreting events positively even after guidance stopped. The team now wants to see whether the technique can change the negative thoughts of teenagers with high anxiety.
Honorary degrees awarded at Encaenia

Eight leading figures were honoured at Encaenia on 29 June. They are:

**Professor Elizabeth Helen Blackburn** (Doctor of Science), molecular biologist and 2009 Nobel Laureate in Physiology or Medicine, who discovered telomerase, an enzyme critical to the reproductive process of gene cells.

**Justice Edwin Cameron** (Doctor of Civil Law), a Justice of the Constitutional Court of South Africa, a prominent human rights lawyer during apartheid and on issues around HIV, and the first senior South African official to state publicly that he was living with HIV.

**Professor Sir Geoffrey Ernest Richard Lloyd** (Doctor of Letters), a historian whose scholarship examining the scientists of classical antiquity has made contributions to the study of ancient culture across a wide range of areas.

**Sir George Martin** (Doctor of Music), producer of all but one of The Beatles’ albums and considered one of the great music producers, with more than 700 recordings to his credit and 30 number-one hits over more than 50 years. His career as composer and producer has spanned classical music, comedy and stage acts, and film soundtracks.

His Excellency Giorgio Napolitano (Doctor of Civil Law by Diploma), President of Italy

**Professor Dame Linda Partridge** (Doctor of Science), a geneticist whose work on the fruit fly as a model for ageing has led to discoveries about the genes and biological processes that control the ageing process in all animals.

Marilynne Summers Robinson (Doctor of Letters), prize-winning American novelist and author of *Gilead*, *Home*, and *Housekeeping*.

**Professor Oliver Smithies** (Doctor of Science), geneticist and 2007 Nobel Laureate in Physiology or Medicine, who jointly developed the technique of homologous recombination of transgenic DNA with genomic DNA, leading to the development of principles for introducing specific gene modifications in mice, which fundamentally changed the science of genetic medicine and laid the foundation for today’s research into gene therapy.

Birthday honours

Oxford academics recognised in the Queen’s Birthday Honours List this year are:

**Wendy James**, Emeritus Professor of Social Anthropology; made a CBE for services to scholarship. Professor James has carried out research in Africa, predominantly in the Sudan and Ethiopia, on long-term patterns of cultural history and the relations between minorities and majorities in post-colonial states.

**Christopher Hood**, Gladstone Professor of Government and fellow of All Souls College; made a CBE for services to social science. Professor Hood’s research interests include executive government, regulation and public–sector reform.

**Jeremy Thomas**, Professor of Ecology and fellow of New College; awarded an OBE for services to science. Professor Thomas is interested in understanding the factors that determine change in species’ abundance, distributions and specialisations.

**Richard Darton**, Professor of Engineering Science, senior research fellow at Keble College and President of the European Federation of Chemical Engineering; awarded an OBE for services to engineering. Professor Darton headed the Department of Engineering Science from 2004 to 2009 and helped set up the new course in chemical engineering in 1991. He was previously manager of the chemical engineering development group of Shell International Chemicals.
**BMJ awards recognise Oxford researchers**

**Professor Sir Richard Peto**'s outstanding career in medical research has been recognised by the 2011 Lifetime Achievement Award from the British medical journal *BMJ*, following a vote by the journal’s readers.

Professor Peto, an epidemiologist and statistician, is co-director with Professor Sir Rory Collins of the Clinical Trial Service Unit (CTSU) at Oxford, which studies the causes and treatment of disease worldwide. In collaboration with Sir Richard Doll, he demonstrated the hazards of persistent cigarette smoking and the substantial benefits of stopping, directly influencing public policy in many countries.

Other work, in collaboration with Professor Collins, showed that the importance of blood pressure and blood cholesterol concentrations in heart disease had been underestimated.

Dr Ann McPherson of the Department of Primary Health Care was named as the Communicator of the Year. Dr McPherson, who died in May, instigated a number of health information projects which convey the complexities and technical details of medicine to a wider audience in an imaginative way.

Her work included *Healthtalkonline.org*, a patient website which allows people with different health conditions to benefit from the experiences of others; *The Diary of a Teenage Health Freak*, written with Aidan Macfarlane, which provides adolescents with facts and advice while making them smile; and *Women’s Health*, a leading handbook for GPs which she edited with Dr Deborah Waller.

Most recently, Dr McPherson, who had pancreatic cancer, created the group Healthcare Professionals for Assisted Dying (HPAD), which campaigns for greater patient choice at the end of life, including the option of assisted dying subject to legal safeguards.

**New Fellows of the Royal Society**

The Royal Society has elected eight Oxford academics as new Fellows.

**Professor Hagan Bayley** is Professor of Chemical Biology at the Department of Chemistry and a fellow of Hertford College. He uses a multidisciplinary approach to investigate the fundamental properties of biological transmembrane protein pores and their applications in nanotechnology, and founded the company Oxford Nanopore.

**Professor Alan Grafen** is Professor of Theoretical Biology at the Department of Zoology and a fellow of St John’s College. His research interests embrace inclusive fitness, biological game theory, strategic signalling and statistical techniques for analysing cross-species data. He is currently aiming to provide a mathematical population-genetical justification for the idea that natural selection leads organisms to act as if maximising their fitness.

**Professor Ian Horrocks** is a Professor of Computer Science at the Department of Computer Science and a fellow of Oriel College. His research interests include logic-based knowledge representation and reasoning, including the semantic web, with a particular focus on ontology languages and applications. He played a leading role in the design of the World Wide Web Consortium’s OWL ontology web language standard and developed the algorithms and optimisation techniques underpinning OWL reasoning systems.

**Professor Alex Kacelnik** is Professor of Behavioural Ecology at the Department of Zoology and EP Abraham Fellow of Pembroke College. He founded and heads the Behavioural Ecology Research Group and currently works on decision-making under risk, brood parasitism, and comparative cognition. He pioneered the use of microeconomic models and experimental psychology techniques to investigate problems in the ecology and evolution of animal behaviour, and is co-founder of the spin-out company Oxford Risk.

**Professor Steffen Lauritzen** is Professor of Statistics at the Department of Statistics and a fellow of Jesus College. His research interests range over a variety of topics within the theory and applications of statistics, most recently focusing on graphical models, which use mathematical graphs to describe and understand interrelationships between a potentially large number of random variables.

**Professor David Manolopoulos** is a Professor of Theoretical Chemistry in the Department of Chemistry and a tutorial fellow of St Edmund Hall. His research has contributed to many different aspects of chemical dynamics, ranging from the exact quantum mechanical description of elementary chemical reactions in the gas phase to the approximate inclusion of quantum mechanical zero point energy and tunnelling effects in dynamical simulations of condensed phase systems.

**Professor Fiona Powrie** is Sidney Truelove Professor of Gastroenterology in the Nuffield Department of Clinical Medicine and an emeritus fellow of Green Templeton College. Her work focuses on characterisation of immune system bacterial interactions in the intestine and how this normally beneficial relationship breaks down in inflammatory bowel disease. Her work has opened up new avenues for treatment of chronic inflammatory diseases.

**Professor Angela Vincent** is Emeritus Professor of Neuroimmunology in the Nuffield Department of Clinical Medicine and an emeritus fellow of Somerville College. Her research, conducted mainly at the Weatherall Institute of Molecular Medicine, has focused on diseases of the nervous system caused by autoantibodies to ion channels, receptors and associated proteins. As a result of her work, patients can be diagnosed appropriately and given treatments that reduce the levels of the autoantibodies, usually resulting in substantial clinical improvement.

**American Philosophical Society**

The American Philosophical Society has recently elected three Oxford academics as members. They are **John Baines** (pictured left), Professor of Egyptology; **Sir Roger Penrose**, Emeritus Rouse Ball Professor of Mathematics; and **Keith Thomson**, Emeritus Professor of Natural History.
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- Stress
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- Loss of direction and creativity
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Parent of bursary pupil

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Arrivals board

Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Personnel and Equality)

Dr Stephen Goss has now been appointed to this post, which he has held on an interim basis since January. Dr Goss is a fellow and tutor in medicine at Wadham College, a lecturer at the Dunn School of Pathology, and Director of the Oxford Learning Institute. He will provide leadership across the University and externally on a range of personnel and equality issues. The role includes overseeing the evolution of the University’s Human Resources Strategy.

Director of Development

Liesl Elder, Director of Development at the University of Edinburgh, will become Oxford’s new Director of Development in September.

Ms Elder has worked in educational fundraising since 1993, beginning her career at the US liberal arts colleges Carleton College and Oberlin College before serving as Campaign Director for Santa Clara University in California. She moved to the UK in 2004 to become Director of Development and Communications at Durham University and managed Durham’s 175th Anniversary Campaign.

In 2008 Ms Elder joined the University of Edinburgh as Director of Development. She managed Edinburgh’s fundraising and alumni relations team during the university’s £350m Enlightenment Campaign.

Professor of Biomedical Engineering

Constantin Coussios, Bellhouse Foundation University Lecturer in Biomedical Engineering and Reader in Engineering Science, was appointed to this post from 1 January 2011. He is a fellow of Magdalen College.

Professor Coussios is Director and founder of the Biomedical Ultrasonomics and Biotherapy Laboratory, part of the Oxford Institute of Biomedical Engineering. His research interests include therapeutic ultrasound such as the use of high-intensity focused ultrasound for non-invasive cancer therapy, and the use of ultrasound for targeted drug and gene delivery. He is also a founder and the technical director of OrganOx Ltd, a University spin-out company which is developing and commercialising a normothermic isolated organ perfusion device for organ preservation and repair prior to transplantation, drug testing and targeted drug delivery.

In 2009 he was elected as the youngest Fellow of the Acoustical Society of America for his contributions to therapeutic ultrasound.

Head of Humanities Division

Shearer West, currently Director of Research at the Arts and Humanities Research Council, has been appointed as the next Head of the Humanities Division. She will take up the post on 1 August.

Professor West is currently on secondment from a professorship in the History of Art at Birmingham University, where she has also been Head of the Department of History of Art and of the School of Historical Studies, as well as Acting Head of the College of Arts and Law.

Professor West currently also chairs the Research Councils UK Research Directors’ Group. She has chaired the Association of Art Historians, was a member of the 2008 Research Assessment Exercise sub-panel and has held visiting fellowships at Yale. She is a member of the Academia Europea and a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts, the Royal Historical Society, and the Higher Education Academy.

Professor of Primary Health Care Sciences

Richard Hobbs, Professor and Head of Primary Care Clinical Sciences at the University of Birmingham, National Director of the NIHR National School for Primary Care Research, President of the Council of Cardiovascular Primary Care, European Society of Cardiology, and PMS Principal in General Practice (part-time) at the Bellevue Medical Centre in Birmingham, took up this post in the Department of Primary Health Care on 1 May 2011. He is also a fellow of Harris Manchester College.

Professor Hobbs’ chief research interests centre on cardiovascular epidemiology, vascular risk, and heart failure, and he has served on many national and international advisory committees and on scientific and research funding boards. He is a Fellow of the Academy of Medical Sciences and of the European Society of Cardiology and is an Honorary Life Fellow of the Stroke Society of Australasia.

Peter Moores Dean and Professor of Finance at the Said Business School

Peter Tufano, Sylvan C Coleman Professor of Financial Management at Harvard Business School, took up this post on 1 July.

Professor Tufano studied at Harvard and was subsequently on the faculty there for 22 years. His recent research, course development and engagement with business and policy audiences is primarily focused on topics around consumer finance and is aimed at understanding how this sector of the economy works, and can work better. His work is credited with influencing two US policy initiatives and a new class of savings products in the US. He also works on risk management, financial engineering and mutual funds.

Professor of Economics

Mark Armstrong, Professor of Economics, University College London, has been appointed to this post from 1 September. He will be a fellow of All Souls College.

Mark Armstrong was educated at Cambridge University and held academic posts at the Universities of Cambridge and Southampton before becoming Official Fellow in Economics at Nuffield College, Oxford, from 1997 to 2003. His principal research interests are contract theory, price discrimination, bounded rationality, industrial organisation, regulation and competition policy, and telecommunications and media markets.

Professor Armstrong is a Fellow of the British Academy and of the Econometric Society. He is also a council member of the European Economic Association and a council member and member of the executive committee of the Royal Economic Society.
Open all ours

The collegiate University’s partnership in the ‘Oxford Open Doors’ event is a superb opportunity to both see and be seen, as Jenny Lunnon explains.

Some will purr and some will creak. Some will need a swipe card, others a rusty old key. But one way or another the weekend of 10–11 September will see dozens of Oxford’s doors thrown open to visitors as part of the best ‘Oxford Open Doors’ event yet. Each year, Open Doors offers local people an extraordinary opportunity to get to know each other – and the places where they live and work – better. All are welcome and all venues and activities are free. The event is family friendly and many venues provide access for people with disabilities.

Oxford Open Doors is run by the Oxford Preservation Trust in partnership with the University of Oxford and with the support of Oxford colleges. Financial assistance is provided by the University, St John’s, All Souls and Nuffield Colleges and local businesses. Last year it was the third biggest Heritage Open Days event in the country after those in Brighton and Hove, and Norwich. (London runs an alternative event called Open City.)

Beginning in 2007 with just 25 venues, the event has grown steadily: in 2010 stewards recorded over 50,000 visits to 175 venues and activities. Visitors enjoyed exploring 19 colleges and many University buildings as well as a wide range of other venues, from places of worship to the Oxford Bus Company’s depot and the council’s City Works; from the old City of Oxford Power Station to the Oxford Playhouse. They also explored parks, gardens, rivers and the canal and joined walking tours on subjects ranging from the city’s medieval Jewish community to the building of Florence Park estate. Some 74% of visitors were from Oxford or Oxfordshire.

The 2010 event’s special theme was science; this year, pre-Olympics, it is ‘Oxford’s Sporting Heritage’. Visitors will be able to see the Iffley Road running track where Sir Roger Bannister broke the four-minute mile in 1954 and a collection of his memorabilia at his alma mater, Pembroke College; explore the cricket pavilion in the University Parks designed by Victorian architect TG Jackson; and watch demonstrations of real tennis – the ancestor of lawn tennis – in the court at Merton College. Vincent’s, the club for Blues in King Edward’s Street, will be open, and Walters, the men’s outfitters in Turl Street, will display University sports kit in its window. Oxford City Football Club – one of the oldest in the country – will welcome visitors, and Oxford Brookes University will offer use of its sporting facilities for free.

But sport is just one aspect of 2011’s Open Doors event. This year Christ Church will hold its regular biennial open day to coincide with the weekend and once again the voices of thousands of visitors will echo round the Great Quad of All Souls. University buildings opening for the first time will include the Faculty of History in the Old Boys’ High School in George Street, and the Bate Collection, one of the most extraordinary collections of musical instruments in the world,
at the Faculty of Music in St Aldate’s. Balliol will offer a preview of its new Historic Collections Centre in the restored Church of St Cross, Holywell, and the Ashmolean Museum will let visitors see work-in-progress on its Egypt galleries.

Oxford Open Doors is a great opportunity for colleges and departments to showcase not only their history and architecture but what they do today, and to get young people in particular interested in academic research. One visitor last year reported: ‘My teenagers visited three science labs and sat telling me excitedly about them for two solid hours.’

Some venues are not open to the public except during Open Doors. Others are open but charge for entry, but many, including the University museums, are both open and free all year round – it is just that many people do not know this, or perhaps do not feel comfortable visiting an unfamiliar place. Debbie Dance, Director of the Oxford Preservation Trust, reflects: ‘Every year we hear people say “We’ve never been into a college before, though we’ve lived in Oxford all our lives”. What we’re doing is giving people confidence. It’s about being asked. It’s about colleges and the University inviting people in.’

The very best way this can happen is through someone receiving a personal invitation from a friend. Last year a college porter described how he had accompanied some of his neighbours to his college because Oxford Open Doors had given him the chance to show them the beautiful place where he worked and what his job involved. One visitor summed up the experience of many: ‘I have learnt so much about places I didn’t even know existed.’

What we said

‘Our Open Doors event was a fantastic success. We counted 250 visitors including 50 children. People were already queuing up at the door when we opened and we had to go past our 3pm closing time because people were still queuing up to try the demos.’
Dr Mihaela Duta, Oxford Babylab (Oxford Centre for Developmental Science)

‘There were almost 400 visitors here during the day and everything ran very smoothly ... We are very pleased to hear that people appear to have enjoyed visiting Somerville so much.’ Paul Francis, Somerville College

What you can do

Help with publicity
The Oxford Preservation Trust wants to generate even more publicity for this year’s event, especially in neighbour-hoods and sections of the community where people are less likely to know about Oxford Open Doors or to have taken part in it before. They would welcome your help with this, so please:

- Tell your friends and neighbours and invite them to accompany you on visits.
- Print off a poster to display on a local notice board or shop window, or ask a friend to put one up in their workplace. Available from the website (details below).

Programmes will be available from the first week of August in libraries and leaflet racks around the city, and from the University Offices in Wellington Square. The programme will also be available online at www.oxfordopendoors.org.uk

Become a volunteer steward
Around 100 stewards welcome visitors at each venue, answer their questions and generally enrich their experience. To volunteer, please contact Jane Baldwin, Assistant Director of Oxford Preservation Trust, by email: volunteer@oxfordpreservation.org.uk.

Get your college or department involved next year!
Contact Jane Baldwin via info@oxfordpreservation.org.uk
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While many of her friends were sitting in university lecture theatres last year, 20-year-old Fay Chicken was investigating banging noises coming from a £1m electron microscope in the University’s Department of Materials. The microscope was running at high voltage when it suddenly ‘went bang’, as she describes it, and turned itself off. She opened the top to find a huge burnt crack down the entire side of the machine’s ceramic insulator, which put the machine out of use for several weeks while she and her supervisor fixed it. ‘Days like that at work do make me think how things like this would never happen in an office job, or if I were sat in the library at university,’ she says.

Fay is one of four apprentices finishing a three-year placement this year as part of a University-wide apprenticeship scheme. Apprenticeships have been a part of training and recruitment for support staff for decades at Oxford, though the scheme in its current form began in 2007 after the University took steps to expand and centrally formalise the structure of apprenticeships already in use by the Department of Physics. Seven apprentices have now completed the programme, which includes on-the-job training from department mentors and supervisors, along with formal training at a technical college one day a week, resulting in a technical certificate and qualification such as a National Vocational Qualification (NVQ). Apprentices are funded for the costs of the formal training and paid an apprentice salary by the University, and posts range from equipment engineers and lab technicians to bookkeepers and IT support.

Apprentices such as Fay, who typically start apprenticeships after completing GCSE exams, play an important part in recruiting junior staff as well as succession planning, according to Dr Stephen Goss, Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Personnel and Equality. Apprenticeships provide staff skilled in the exact areas departments need when vacancies in those areas arise. ‘We think apprenticeships are an important aspect of staff planning in the University and an important contribution to people from the local community,’ he says.

Two or three graduating apprentices a year is not a huge number for a university that employs nearly 5,500 non-academic staff, though many colleges have their own long-standing apprenticeship training programmes. But Jaya John, who is based in the Physics department and leads the central apprenticeship scheme, has plans to expand the number of apprentices and range of departments taking them on. He also wants to work more closely with local schools and careers counsellors to encourage applications to the scheme. ‘Our departments have seen that apprentices become highly effective and motivated support staff,’ he says. ‘And not only do departments gain staff with the right skills, but also retention of those skilled staff is very high.’

The University has formalised its commitment to increasing the number of University apprentices and raising awareness of apprenticeship schemes in the community. On 31 March the University, along with Oxford Brookes and the City and County Councils, signed an apprenticeship pledge to support further recruitment of apprentices in the local community. Both Dr Goss and Mr John believe that competition will be strong for imminent new training posts in audio-visual and media production. Many apprentices who stay in posts at Oxford when their training is completed join support staff who themselves started their careers as apprentices. While departments such as Physics have trained apprentices for more than 40 years, Fay’s supervisor in the Materials department, Ron Doole, notes that she is the first apprentice his department has taken on in 20 years. ‘I think that the country as a whole virtually stopped apprenticeship schemes in the 1980s and we are now suffering from a lack of well trained technical staff in the middle of their careers when they should be at their most productive,’ he says. ‘Unless we train staff now, we will suffer in the future.’

For more information, see www.mpls.ox.ac.uk/apprenticeships
What’s on

Exhibitions
An Artist looks at Old Masters
Until 18 September
Christ Church Picture Gallery
www.chch.ox.ac.uk/gallery
The artist Jeff Clarke has selected over 30 Old Master drawings from Christ Church’s own collection to explore the principles of draughtsmanship which cut across centuries; the exhibition includes works by artists like Correggio, Carracci and Pisanello.

People Apart: Cape Town
Survey 1952
Until 8 January 2012
Pitt Rivers Museum
www.prm.ox.ac.uk
For the first time in 50 years an extraordinary collection of photographs by Bryan Hesletine offers a glimpse into the lives of South Africans who would feel the full force of the apartheid state through the 1950s and beyond.

Summer theatre
As You Like It
Until 31 July
Old Schools Quadrangle, Bodleian Library
www.oxfordplayhouse.com
For the fourth year running, the Bodleian and Oxford Playhouse are hosting Shakespeare’s Globe in the beautiful setting of the Old Schools Quadrangle.

The Comedy of Errors
The Importance of Being Earnest
Until 26 August
Wadham College gardens
www.oxfordshakespearecompany.co.uk
The Oxford Shakespeare Company performs these two productions in-the-round in Wadham College gardens.

Antony and Cleopatra
Until 3 September
Said Business School
www.creationtheatre.co.uk
Creation Theatre presents an outdoor performance of Shakespeare’s passionate historical love story in the rooftop amphitheatre of the SBS (indoors if wet).

Talks and lectures
From Alligator Wrestling to Fossil Skeletons
12 August, 7pm
Museum of the History of Science
www.mhs.ox.ac.uk/events
Dr Vicky Carroll, manager of the William Morris Gallery and Vestry House Museum, will talk about scientific eccentricity in the early 19th century.

Music
13th Oxford Philomusica International Piano Festival
31 July–7 August
Various venues
www.oxfordphil.com/piano
The 2011 festival includes recitals by Menahem Pressler, Leslie Howard and Shai Wosner.

Staff event
UAS Conference
Tuesday 27 September
Examination Schools
www.ox.ac.uk/uas_conference
A one-day information and training event for university and college staff involved with administrative activities. The event will consist of workshops, training sessions and a range of information stands.

Make your charity donations go further

Do you want to make a bigger difference to the causes you care about? The University operates a Give as You Earn (GAYE) scheme through the Charities Aid Foundation, which is a tax-efficient way of giving money to charity.

GAYE allows you to set up a regular charity donation that comes straight out of your monthly salary before tax. For a basic rate tax payer, a monthly gift of £10 will cost you £8; for a higher rate tax payer, it will cost just £6. The scheme, which has been in operation at the University for just over a decade, can be used to give to any UK registered charity.

Not only is GAYE an easy and tax-efficient way for individuals to make donations, it also has advantages for the charities concerned as it allows them to estimate future income and so plan their activities for the longer term, something which is not possible with occasional one-off payments.

To join GAYE, simply complete a donor instruction form, which is available on the Finance website. You can then choose to give in one of three ways:

1. Nominate a charity or group of charities to benefit from your monthly donation. The contribution is deducted from your salary, and the Charities Aid Foundation forwards the donations to the charity or charities concerned.
2. For those who give more than £10 per month, you can pay donations into a Personal Charity Account with the Charities Aid Foundation. This acts like a bank account and comes with a charity card and chequebook, enabling you to give to any charity at any time.
3. Join together with colleagues and pool your donations to form a Staff Charity Fund, which has a charity chequebook facility.

The University’s GAYE scheme is administered by the Charities Aid Foundation, which takes a small percentage of each donation to cover its costs.

For more information, visit www.admin.ox.ac.uk/finance/payroll/gaye
When I look over my list of publications, I can’t help but notice they include words like “revolution”, “chains” and “barricades” – a lot of anger turns up in my work,’ admits Robert Gildea, Professor of Modern History and a fellow and tutor at Worcester College. ‘Although I “missed” the protests in Europe in 1968 – I was doing my O-levels at the time – 1968 has always been part of my consciousness.’

It is fitting, then, that Professor Gildea is leading ‘About 1968’, a five-year international study, which has produced an online database of nearly 500 interviews with former activists from the 1968 protests which shook Europe, recorded 40 years after the events. Activists from 14 countries have been interviewed in what is the first study of 1968 to put the riots in a truly European perspective, even studying its impact in Mediterranean Europe, Eastern Europe and Scandinavia.

Sixty of the interviews carried out by Professor Gildea were with French activists. His specialism in the history and politics of France stems from an exchange with a family in the Champagne region at age 14. ‘My father was committed to the idea of Europe and his children learning a foreign language so, slightly reluctantly, I was sent to stay with a French family for three weeks,’ he explains. ‘But the experience was transformative – and not just because of the five female cousins of the boy I was staying with, who were something of a revelation to me given that I came from a single-sex school!’

Professor Gildea’s father also influenced his choice of career, but this time with the opposite effect to his intention. ‘My father and I used to have rows about my future,’ he says. ‘He was a civil servant and wanted me to join the civil service too, arguing that as a top civil servant you can change the world. But as an undergraduate at Oxford (matriculating at Merton College in 1971), I realised that you can have more influence by writing books and teaching students.’

Professor Gildea continued his studies with a DPhil at St Antony’s and a Junior Research Fellowship at St John’s, before moving as a lecturer to King’s College London. He returned to Merton in 1979 as a fellow and tutor and won the prestigious Wolfson History Prize in 2002 for his book Marianne in Chains: in search of the German Occupation, examining daily life in France in the period 1940–45. He has been Professor of Modern History and a fellow of Worcester College since 2006.

It was following an informal meeting in Worcester College that Professor Gildea became one of the leading lights of the Oxford University Campaign for Higher Education (OUCH), campaigning alongside academics and students he describes as ‘the first crop of radical students since 1968’. Professor Gildea was a proposer of the vote of no confidence in the higher education policies of the government in Congregation on 7 June, explaining that the common themes of his research and his commitment to a publicly-funded university system open to all on the basis of potential came together at that moment.

The conclusions from ‘Around 1968’ will be published by Oxford University Press at the end of 2012 in a book called Europe’s ‘68: Voices and Networks of Revolt. Professor Gildea says: ‘It has been absolutely fascinating to meet former activists and conduct extended interviews – it’s amazing the amount of insight and new material you get from people trying to make sense of their past in light of contemporary views of 1968, which aren’t particularly positive, and it’s been good to exchange ideas with colleagues and be able to bring on younger researchers.’

The book’s publication will represent the end of a major project which has occupied much of Professor Gildea’s time for the last five years and you could be forgiven for thinking he might now turn to a subject which isn’t characterised by anger and protest. ‘Next year I plan to spend a lot of time in France studying French resistance movements, provisionally entitled Fighters in the Shadows,’ he reveals. Plus ça change...

More information at www.history.ox.ac.uk/staff/postholder/gildea_rn.htm
Not so long ago, high-performance computing was almost exclusively the province of scientists carrying out the complicated calculations they needed to advance their research in areas like quantum physics, molecular modelling and climate change.

Not any more, says Dr Kate Pitts, Research Facilitator at the Oxford Supercomputing Centre (OSC), part of the Oxford e-Research Centre in Keble Road. Nowadays the massive computational power offered by supercomputers and concepts like ‘cloud computing’ is increasingly being used by researchers across all areas, including the humanities and social sciences, and OSC staff are keen to ensure that everyone at Oxford understands not only the potential of what’s ‘out there’ but also just how much support and training is available. ‘We want people to come to us with any research ideas where they know they are going to have to handle huge amounts of data or model complex structures or situations,’ says Dr Pitts. ‘We will help them understand the best way of tackling their problem, show them how to do it, give them training and try to hold their hand as much as they need.’

A ‘supercomputer’ is a computer that works at the frontier of current processing capacity, at very fast speeds. ‘High-performance computing’ (HPC) is, broadly, stuff you can’t do on a laptop or server – it requires special resources, such as a supercomputer or a ‘cluster’ or ‘cloud’ of linked computers, and is generally carried out on multiple processors working in parallel. This parallel processing entails splitting the main computing task into separate smaller problems which can be worked on simultaneously – just one of the areas where OSC staff are happy to help.

Uses of HPC in research today can range from the economic modelling of labour supply to visualisations of a beating heart, and from assessing industry competition using real data from product markets to exploring the conformational landscapes of complex carbohydrates. During the 2000s, Dr Georgina Santos, then a lecturer and now a visiting research associate in the Transport Studies Unit at the School of Geography and the Environment, undertook the largest ever study on delays at European airports. Her data comprised 38,007,581 flights across 444 airports and 1,318 airlines, collected over six years. ‘The project was only possible thanks to the OSC’s supercomputers – the database was far too large to run the STATA statistical software I was using on a PC,’ she says. Her research led to policy recommendations such as legislating slot trading at busy airports.

Dr Richard Katz of the Department of Earth Sciences studies geological phenomena at the surface of the earth (for example plate tectonics, volcanism and earthquakes), which are the result of slow, large-scale motion of the rock deep below. He uses OSC supercomputers to solve systems of equations that describe the physics of these rocks – the mechanics of flow and the thermodynamics of melting, for instance – to create mathematical models of the deep Earth. ‘The OSC’s staff have provided abundant and timely support for my research group,’ he confirms. ‘They’ve installed and maintained the software framework around which my application codes are built, provided training and support to my students, and supplied compute hours at key moments, to complete publications and prepare for grant proposals.’

In the Department of Physical and Theoretical Chemistry, Dr Carmen Domene is using computational techniques to investigate the oxygen-sensing mechanisms of the HIF hydroxylases – enzymes involved in regulating oxygen levels in the body. She is full of praise for the resources available: ‘The OSC has a wide range of software, from the basic all the way up to fully-featured applications and simulation packages required to tackle projects within a wide scientific spectrum. OSC staff are always willing to help: they provide a rock-solid service to Oxford researchers.’

‘We’re planning to hold open events once a term so that people can drop by and investigate what’s on offer,’ says Dr Pitt. ‘Come in and see us!’
Do you love singing?

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Why am I here?

Jacqui Fossey
Conference and Events Manager, Balliol College

What does your job entail?

I’m responsible for booking and arranging all the internal and external functions and conferences here at Balliol College – that involves responding to email enquiries, talking to prospective clients on the phone, and showing the college to new and potential clients.

Balliol has 11 meeting rooms and, out of term time, can provide 200 single bedrooms, 80 of them en suite.

In term, the main focus and priority is an internal bookings – lunches and dinners for fellows, students and Balliol society dinners. There is a need to maintain the balance between these bookings and an ever-increasing external interest for private dining in term time. (At Balliol, a main selling point for us is the food, and we do a lot of private dining, from six to 226 people.) Our focus for the past year has been to increase business outside term, when we can be doing anything from up to three private dinners a night to a summer school for 250 students.

Why do you do it?

I really enjoy the industry, so much so that I studied Hospitality Management at the University of Brighton. I’ve only been in this role for a little over a year and at the moment I’m enjoying the challenge of increasing the business and revenue for Balliol. I also really enjoy meeting new people and the satisfaction that comes when they book their event with us.

As a child, what did you want to be when you grew up?

I don’t remember ever not wanting to do something within the hospitality industry. My mum and dad both work in the industry and it was something I was brought up with.

And how do you come to be doing your current job?

My first real job came as part of my degree course when I opted to take a placement year to get some work experience. I really struggled to find somewhere that would take on a placement student but was eventually offered a position as Trainee Manager at a 4 star, 2 AA rosette, country house hotel and restaurant. I gained experience in all areas of the hotel, particularly enjoying food and beverage, and continued to work there part-time when I went back for my final year at university. After graduating I saw the position of Conference and Catering Coordinator advertised at Balliol and have been here ever since. After a few months in that position I was offered the position of Conference and Catering Coordinator advertised at Balliol and have been here ever since. After a few months in that position I was offered the position of Head Butler, which I was doing until my current job.

Tell us about some of the events you host outside term time

Out of term we can have conferences, bed and breakfast guests, summer schools, and dinners and private dining all taking place at the same time. Many bookings come from within the University and our regular clients include the Said Business School, the Bodleian Library, the Oxford Internet Institute and the Law Faculty. We also have regular external clients such as the NHS, who come every September. This year we have two new summer schools – Oxford Royale Academy for the month of July and Meritas for the first two weeks of August. We are also very busy with weddings in the summer months, most of which are for Old Members.

What surprises visitors most about Balliol?

The sheer size of the college. Because of our location on the corner of Broad Street, visitors are always amazed that the back quad is so much larger than they ever expect.

And what do they most appreciate?

The Grand Hall. The hall is surrounded by portraits of former Masters and distinguished alumni such as former Prime Ministers, so we are always asked by visitors for access to the hall.

And finally, what’s your own favourite event?

Not so much a favourite event, but I do really enjoy the weddings. In the summer, it can be every Saturday. They are so much hard work – time-consuming and pressured, knowing you have to get it right first time – but the sense of achievement when you’ve helped to make a couple’s special day completely overrides everything else.