

# BLUEPRINT



Staff magazine for the University of Oxford | March 2017

GENES IN MIND | RESPONDING TO BREXIT | MEET THE PRESS GANG



ROCK GUARDIAN  
TO ROCK GARDENER

# NEWS IN BRIEF



◆ Ticket registration for this year's Encaenia ceremony on Wednesday 21 June, at which the University awards honorary degrees and commemorates its benefactors, opens online on Wednesday 26 April. Tickets are available to members of Congregation and Convocation, staff, students and academic visitors and will be allocated on a first come, first served basis. Visit [www.ox.ac.uk/encaenia](http://www.ox.ac.uk/encaenia) for the registration process, dress code, event timings and FAQs.

◆ IT Services has launched a new online service catalogue to facilitate support and delivery of IT across the University. The catalogue, at [www.it.ox.ac.uk/services](http://www.it.ox.ac.uk/services), has been restructured, the services re-categorised and a new data store and website built to improve the user experience. It also brings together contact, user and business details and enables users to find key information. Please email the Service Management Office ([smo@it.ox.ac.uk](mailto:smo@it.ox.ac.uk)) with any questions or comments.

◆ The University's WARPit reuse scheme – which invites staff to rehome items their department no longer needs or to claim unwanted items – is close to saving the University an estimated £100,000 from reusing

equipment. It is also estimated to have prevented nearly 10,000kg of waste since its launch in 2015 by not throwing unwanted items away. There are hundreds of items to claim including desks, printer cartridges and meeting chairs. Around 600 staff are registered with WARPit. If you're not one of them, visit [www.admin.ox.ac.uk/estates/ourservices/environment/services/warpit](http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/estates/ourservices/environment/services/warpit) to find out more.

◆ Open Access at Oxford has reached a milestone with more than 5,000 author-accepted manuscripts deposited for Act on Acceptance since April 2016. Open Access is about making the products of research freely accessible to all and Act on Acceptance provides researchers with a quick deposit route into the Oxford University Research Archive (ORA). More than 2,400 researchers across the University uploaded their new author-accepted manuscripts to the ORA between April 2016 and January 2017.

◆ We're planning to make changes to Blueprint and we need your help. Please take our short online survey at [www.surveymonkey.co.uk/t/blueprintfeedback2017](http://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/t/blueprintfeedback2017) to have your say about how we might make improvements. If you don't have access to a computer, please complete and return the survey at the back of this issue. Your responses will be kept anonymous and all participants can choose to be entered into a prize draw to win a £100 High Street voucher. The survey closes on 28 April.

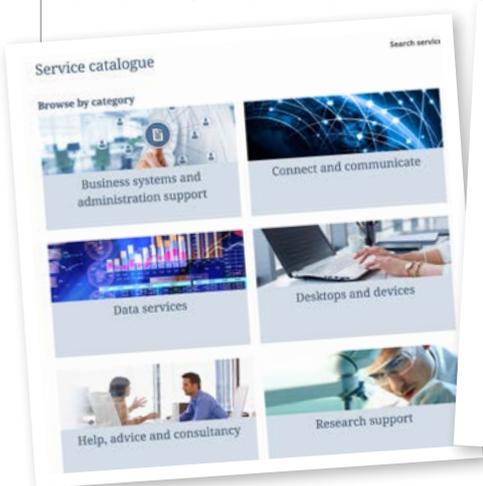
◆ *Blueprint* bids farewell to its picture researcher, Janet Avison, who retires this May. Janet joined the University 17 years ago as an Administration Assistant and Editorial Assistant to *Oxford Today* and has sourced *Blueprint's* photos since the magazine was first launched in newsletter format in 2000. Her most memorable moment, she says, is witnessing the visit to the Saïd Business School by Nelson Mandela in 2002.



◆ Are you active in Public Engagement with Research? The Vice-Chancellor's Public Engagement with Research Awards, now in their second year, recognise and reward those who undertake high-quality engagement activities and have contributed to building capacity in this area. There are up to 12 awards divided into three categories: projects, building capacity, and early career researcher. The deadline for submissions is 5pm on 27 March and the awards ceremony is scheduled for 28 June – with one overall winner receiving a prize of £1,500. For more information and details of how to enter visit [bit.ly/PER\\_Awards](http://bit.ly/PER_Awards).

To sign up for the monthly Public Engagement with Research update please email [publicengagement@admin.ox.ac.uk](mailto:publicengagement@admin.ox.ac.uk); add 'start PER digest' in the subject area and include your email signature.

ABOVE: APPLY NOW FOR ENCAENIA TICKETS; BELOW, LEFT: IT HELP IS CLOSE AT HAND; RIGHT: JOIN THE UNIVERSITY SWAPSHOP



COVER: FROM BRIT AWARDS TO LINCOLN'S GARDENS (SEE P20)

# RESEARCH ROUND-UP



◆ Listening to five minutes of West African or Indian pop music can give the listener more positive attitudes towards those cultures, researchers from the Faculty of Music have found. Research had previously shown that making music can foster affiliation and cooperation among participants, but this study shows that even listening to music can improve someone's unconscious attitudes toward other cultural groups. Music psychologists Professor Eric Clarke and Dr Jonna Vuoskoski used a method called the Implicit Association Test to measure the change in listeners' unconscious cultural bias after listening to a single track of West African or Indian pop music. They found a shift in positive feelings towards the target culture, although not all listeners were equally affected by the music. People with an empathic personality were more susceptible to the effects of music, while those who scored low in empathy remained unaffected.

◆ Oxford researchers have for the first time explained how language develops in large groups of unrelated people, without allowing some members of the group to cheat others. While language plays a key role in enabling individuals in a society to cooperate through the coordination of activities, it also makes it possible for some individuals to benefit unfairly from the hard work of others. This has posed a problem for biologists: how does language evolve in a way that ensures that the few don't take advantage of the many, especially where individuals are unrelated and where there would be no genetic reward for those doing the bulk of the work? Dr Tamas David-Barrett and Professor Robin

Dunbar from the Department of Experimental Psychology created a mathematical model to see how receiving new information affected the time it took a group of individuals to solve a problem. They took into account variables such as the number of individuals, how often they interacted, and the size of the reward for the individual and the group.

◆ Researchers from Oxford's Wildlife Conservation Research Unit (WildCRU) and World Animal Protection have published the first review of how wild animal welfare is reported by the UK media. The study, published in *Bioscience*, shows that animal welfare issues receive varying levels of UK media attention, with some species more widely reported than others. Culling, shooting and hunting receive the most coverage, and marine-related issues such as the effects of debris, commercial fishing and pollution, get significantly less. The team searched some 23,000 articles published in 2014 and analysed the type and frequency of animal welfare stories. The study identified 61 different harmful human activities and used them to categorise the 3,347 relevant articles according to whether they involved land or marine species, an illegal activity, or any intention to cause harm. The research suggests that an animal welfare issue is more likely to attract media coverage if it involves deliberate intention to harm an animal, breaking a law or receives a level of celebrity engagement. Marine animal welfare issues are less likely to attract media interest.

◆ Brown recluse spiders use a unique micro-looping technique to make their threads stronger than those of any other spider, a

study by researchers from the Department of Zoology and the College of William and Mary, Virginia, has shown. One of the most feared and venomous arachnids in the world, the brown recluse spider has long been known for its signature silk. The study, published in *Material Horizons*, shows that unlike other spiders, which produce round ribbons of thread, the silk of the brown recluse is thin and flat. This ribbon shape is key to the thread's strength, providing the flexibility needed to prevent premature breakage and withstand the knots spun. The looping technique used is extremely resilient: the team discovered via computer simulations on synthetic fibres that adding even a single loop significantly enhances the strength of the material. These findings could potentially be applied to fibre technology, allowing, for example, spider-like webs of carbon-filaments to capture floating space debris.

◆ Researchers from the Department of Engineering Science and the School of Geography and the Environment believe they have discovered a new way to accurately estimate groundwater resources in Africa using low-cost mobile technologies fitted to existing hand pumps. They have found that measuring vibrations as the pump handle goes up and down gives new information about the depth of the groundwater. A sophisticated analysis of readings transmitted to a laptop from an accelerometer fitted to the pump handle shows that different vibration patterns are produced from deep water than when the water level is shallower. The researchers took recordings of pumping at different sites in Kenya and Oxford for the trial but say the study has the potential to be scaled up so a public dataset could for the first time monitor groundwater reserves across Africa.



THE STRENGTH IS IN THE SPINNING

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

## PEOPLE AND PRIZES

**Paul Beer**, Professor of Chemistry, has been awarded an honorary doctorate by the University of Murcia, Spain. His research has focused on host–guest chemistry, illuminating how one molecule recognises and interacts with another and enabling the production of molecular devices, sensors and switches that promise significant impacts in environmental monitoring, personalised healthcare and diagnostic medicine.



**Tim Behrens**, Professor of Computational Neuroscience, has been awarded a 2017 Troland Research Award for young investigators by the US National Academy of Sciences in recognition

of his outstanding research into the neuroanatomical systems mediating learning and decision making.



**Dr Priyanka Dhopade** of the Department of Engineering Science has made it through to the top 72 candidates on a shortlist of people being assessed for space travel by the Canadian Space

Agency. Two individuals will be selected as new members of the Canadian Astronaut Corps. Her research involves creating

computer models of jet engines to better predict heat transfer inside the engine.



**Dr Matthew Erie**, Associate Professor of Modern Chinese Studies, has been named a Public Intellectual Fellow by the US National Committee on US–China Relations, whose Public Intellectuals

Programme is dedicated to nurturing the next generation of China specialists willing to venture outside academia to engage with the public and policy community.



**Marta Kwiatkowska**, Professor of Computing Systems, has been elected a Fellow of the European Association for Theoretical Computer Science. The fellowship recognises her pioneering

work in the development of model checking for quantitative systems and also her outstanding mentorship and serving as a role model for female researchers in computer science.

**Karen Leeder**, Professor of Modern German Literature, has been elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts in recognition of her contribution to scholarship and the arts, particularly her work on modern German

culture and thought and her achievements as a translator of German literature.



**Andrew Martin**, Professor of Systems Security and Director of the Oxford Centre for Doctoral Training in Cyber Security, has been appointed a Trustee of Bletchley Park, the home of British codebreaking during World War II.



**Catriona Seth**, Marshal Foch Professor of French Literature, has been re-elected President of SFEDS (Société Française d'Etude du XVIIIe Siècle), the interdisciplinary association of specialists of the 18th century.



**Dr Annie Sutherland**, Associate Professor in English Literature, has been awarded the Beatrice White Prize 2017 for her book *English Psalms in the Middle Ages, 1300–1450*. This English

Association prize is awarded annually for outstanding scholarship in the field of English Literature before 1590.

## POLAR MEDAL FOR ARCTIC SCIENCE



**Professor Paul Smith**, Director of the University's Museum of Natural History, has been awarded the Polar Medal by Her Majesty the Queen in recognition of his outstanding achievement in the field of Arctic research.

As a geologist and palaeontologist with a focus on the earliest forms of animal life, Professor Smith has more than 30 years' experience of working in the high Arctic, particularly in Greenland and Svalbard. His early research focused on a multinational programme to create the first geological maps of the north and northeast coasts of Greenland within the remote Northeast Greenland National Park.

More recent work has examined the environments in which the first animals evolved, 550 to 500 million years ago, during the Cambrian Explosion. His field work in this area has focused on the exceptionally preserved Lower Cambrian fossil fauna of Siriuspasset in northernmost Greenland, and on rocks immediately predating the Cambrian Explosion in the fjord region of northeast Greenland.

## NEW PROCTORS AND ASSESSOR



The University's new proctors and assessor for 2017–18 take office this month. **Dr Ed Bispham** (right), Fellow of Brasenose College, is Senior Proctor and **Dr Dan Hicks** (centre), Fellow of St Cross College, is Junior Proctor. The Assessor is **Professor Stefan Enchelmaier** (left), Fellow of Lincoln College.

These three senior officers of the University are elected annually by the colleges. The Proctors ensure that the University operates according to its statutes and are also members of key decision-making committees. They deal with University (as opposed to college) student discipline, complaints about University matters and the running of University examinations; they also have ceremonial duties. The Assessor is responsible particularly for student welfare and finance.

# HONORARY DEGREES 2017

Seven eminent figures will be awarded honorary degrees at Encaenia, the University's annual honorary degree ceremony, on 21 June 2017. The honorands are as follows:

## Doctor of Civil Law, *honoris causa*



**Bryan A Stevenson** is a lawyer and social justice activist who has campaigned for fair treatment of children and minorities in the US criminal justice system. He is the founder and

Executive Director of the Equal Justice Initiative, which provides legal representation to those who may have been denied a fair trial. He has been awarded the Olaf Palme Prize for international human rights, the Gruber Justice Prize and the Four Freedoms Award.



**Shirley Williams, Rt Hon Baroness Williams of Crosby, CH, PC,** has had a distinguished career in both politics and academia. Elected as a Labour MP in 1964, she held a number of

ministerial, shadow cabinet and cabinet roles, serving as Secretary of State for Education and Science in the Callaghan government. In 1981 she was one of the 'Gang of Four' who broke from Labour to form the Social Democratic Party; she went on to lead the Liberal Democrats in the House of Lords. She has also been Professor of Elective Politics at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government and is an Honorary Fellow of Somerville College, where she read PPE.

## Doctor of Letters, *honoris causa*



**Dr Robert Darnton** is a cultural historian and academic librarian, who researches the history of the book and the culture of 18th-century France. He is an emeritus professor at Harvard University, where

he has also worked as director of the Harvard University Library. He is a Chevalier of the Légion d'Honneur and Honorary Fellow of St John's College, where he studied for a DPhil as a Rhodes Scholar.

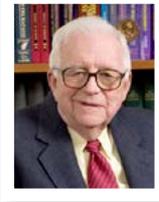


**Frank Gehry** is an architect known for his postmodern style and use of unconventional building materials. His most famous works include the Walt Disney Concert Hall in Los Angeles and the

Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao. He has been awarded the Pritzker Prize, the RIBA Gold Medal and the Americans for the Arts Lifetime Achievement Award.

## Doctor of Science, *honoris causa*

**Professor Eugene Braunwald** is a cardiologist who has studied many areas of heart disease, including coronary artery disease, valvular heart disease and heart failure. He is the editor of *Braunwald's Heart Disease*, now in its 10th edition. He is Distinguished Hersey



Professor of Medicine at Harvard Medical School and has been awarded the Distinguished Scientist Award of the American College of Cardiology. He has also received the Gold Medal of the European Society of Cardiology.



**Professor Joan Argetsinger Steitz** is Sterling Professor of Molecular Biophysics and Biochemistry at Yale University. Her discoveries in RNA processing have clarified several crucial biological processes, such as the way proteins are formed. She has been awarded the Gairdner Foundation International Award and the Pearl Meister Greengard Prize, and is a Foreign Member of the Royal Society.

## Doctor of Music, *honoris causa*



**Professor Judith Weir, CBE,** is a composer and Master of the Queen's Music. She has written in many forms but is best known for her operas, including *The Vanishing Bridegroom*, *Blond*

*Eckbert* and *Armida*. She has been awarded the Elise L Stoeger Prize, the Queen's Medal for Music and the Ivor Novello Classical

## NEW HEAD OF HOUSE

### ST ANNE'S COLLEGE



**Helen King**, Assistant Commissioner for Professionalism in the Metropolitan Police Service, becomes Principal of St Anne's College on 24 April.

An alumna of St Anne's (PPE, 1983), Ms King joined the Cheshire Constabulary as a police constable in 1986 under the graduate entry scheme. She worked in uniform and CID roles across the county and in 2005 transferred to Merseyside Police as an Assistant Chief Constable. In 2009 she took over the force's operations portfolio, responsible for Merseyside's six policing areas. She was awarded the Queen's Police Medal in the New Year Honours list 2011.

In April 2012 she returned to Cheshire Constabulary as the Deputy Chief Constable and was responsible for performance management, governance, standards and communications. She joined the Metropolitan Police Service as Assistant Commissioner for Territorial Policing in June 2014, with oversight of policing in London's 32 Boroughs and responsible for Roads Policing and Criminal Justice. Since April 2016, she has held the position of Assistant Commissioner for Professionalism, which includes responsibility for Training and Professional Standards.

## NOTICEBOARD



### DIRECTOR OF STUDENT WELFARE AND SUPPORT SERVICES

**Gillian Hamnett**, Senior Tutor at Wolfson College, becomes Director of Student Welfare and Support Services on 1 April.

She has also served as Academic Registrar at Oriel and worked in a variety of organisations including the Prison Service before taking up an administrative position at Wadham in 2006. In her new role she will continue the development of student welfare and support services function, providing oversight of both the Counselling Service and the Disability Advisory Service and ensuring coordination and communication between those responsible for delivering student services across Oxford.

# MPLS IMPACT AWARDS

Five awards were presented last month by Professor Alison Nobel to the winners of MPLS Division's 2017 Impact Awards, which aim to foster and raise awareness of impact by rewarding it at a local level.

The category 1 award 'For research that has had substantial impact since 1 August 2013', had three winners:

**Dr Ivan Martinovic**, Associate Professor in the Department of Computer Science, won for his research into the security and privacy aspects of the communications technologies used in air traffic control and surveillance in civil aviation. His research has shown that even the newest GPS-based systems used for aircraft tracking are vulnerable to attack; Singapore, Sweden and the Netherlands are all using his work to address cyber threats.



**Constantin Coussios**, Professor of Biomedical Engineering, was recognised for research leading to the development of the world's first normothermic perfusion device for improved organ preservation prior to transplantation. Working with Peter Friend, Professor of Transplantation, he co-founded OrganOx in 2009. The first successful transplant using the device took place in 2013 and, following clinical trials, the OrganOx Metra is

now used routinely in countries including Spain, Belgium, Canada and the USA.

**Achillefs Kapanidis**, Professor of Biological Physics, received the award for research leading to the development of the Nanoimager a compact, robust, easy-to-use high-resolution fluorescence microscope based on detecting single molecules. He co-founded Oxford Nanoimaging in 2016 to commercialise the product, which has applications in research, diagnostics, drug discovery and chemical analysis.



The category 2 award 'For excellence in generating broad user interactions that achieved impact in the past year', was won by **Cas Cremers**, Professor of Information Security, for his work on the Transport Layer Security (TLS) Protocol, which has led to significant improvements in internet security. The TLS protocol is now the main technical security mechanism of the internet and is the technology behind the green lock seen in browsers. It is implemented in all computers, smartphones

and nearly all Internet of Things (IoT) devices to secure their communications over the internet. An imminent new version will be implemented in millions of devices, benefiting users worldwide.



The category 3 'Lifetime award for successfully engaging externally and promoting impact' was presented to **Myles Allen**, Professor of Geosystem Science and statutory professor in the Department of Physics, for advancing public understanding of the complex links between climate change and extreme weather events, in particular through public-participation computer modelling experiments under the climateprediction.net and weather@home initiatives – the world's largest ensemble climate modelling experiments. He has worked relentlessly via radio, TV and press briefings to provide a balanced view of the physics of climate change and the causal connections between climate change and the probability of extreme weather events.

## CYCLE SAVINGS AND SERVICES

Does your daily commute involve sitting in lengthy traffic queues? Are you a slave to public transport timetables? If so, why not consider the many benefits the University offers to help you become a cycle commuter.

If you don't currently own a bike you can apply for a staff interest-free loan to purchase a shiny new model – and all the related safety equipment you'll need. Bikes can be purchased from your choice of retailer, with attractive discounts offered by a number of local suppliers. Full details at [www.admin.ox.ac.uk/estates/ourservices/travel/bike](http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/estates/ourservices/travel/bike).



If it's been a while since you last saddled up, or you'd just like to feel more confident behind the handlebars, consider signing up for some free cycle-skill training. The University has teamed up with the Broken Spoke Bike Co-op to provide six hours of free cycle tuition for staff and students. The training is accredited to the national cycling proficiency standard and you can sign up for everything from learning to ride a bike through to advanced skills for handling challenging traffic situations. Visit [www.bsbcop.org/what-we-do/cycle-training](http://www.bsbcop.org/what-we-do/cycle-training) to book your training.

Got a bike that's in need of repair? Want a service before taking to the roads? Bring it along to one of the regular pop-up bicycle repair workshops that take place at a number of University sites. The workshops, run by the Oxford Bicycle Company and Oxford Mobile Cycle Repairs, provide free labour – you're only charged for parts. See [www.admin.ox.ac.uk/estates/ourservices/travel/bike](http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/estates/ourservices/travel/bike).

If you'd find it helpful to use a bike during the day to get to meetings you may be interested in the electric and pedal bike service on offer from the OXONBIKE initiative (of which the University is a partner), not to mention the 20% staff discount on annual membership.

OXONBIKE is a self-service bike hire scheme designed to get you around quickly and cheaply. Visit [www.oxonbikes.co.uk](http://www.oxonbikes.co.uk) for full details and a map of docking stations.

Do you know how to keep your bike safe and secure? The University's Security Services team recommend that you lock your bike to an immovable object using a D-lock and that you mark and register it using Bike Register, a free scheme for all staff and students. Contact the Security Services team to find out more about the scheme or to purchase one of their high-quality discounted D-Locks (just £15) or light sets. Email [ouss.administration@admin.ox.ac.uk](mailto:ouss.administration@admin.ox.ac.uk) to request details.

If you'd appreciate guidance on getting around the city by bike, the Cyclox map shows Oxford's dual cycle route network and details the main and quiet cycle routes. Visit [www.transportparadise.co.uk/cyclemap](http://www.transportparadise.co.uk/cyclemap).

## VIEWFINDER FOUND

THIS 1948 STATUE (P20) BY SIR JACOB EPSTEIN STANDS IN THE ANTE-CHAPEL OF NEW COLLEGE CHAPEL. IT SHOWS LAZARUS, NEWLY AWAKENED FROM THE DEAD BY JESUS, STRUGGLING TO FREE HIMSELF FROM BINDING CLOTHS. ON THE 5TH SUNDAY IN LENT, THE ADJACENT WEST DOOR OF THE CHAPEL IS OPENED UP, EVOKING LAZARUS COMING FROM THE DARKNESS OF THE TOMB TO THE LIGHT OF LIFE.

# REIMAGINING THE RAINFOREST

Dr Laura Rival tells *Maria Coyle* about living with indigenous peoples in the Amazon

Anthropologist Dr Laura Rival vividly describes her first night staying with the Huaorani people on the border of Ecuador and Peru. They are known for their fierce independence, their intimate knowledge of forest ecology and their use of long blowguns for hunting, but nothing could have prepared her for what happened. She was half asleep after a long journey when she heard a powerful male voice chanting outside her door. Only later she found out that this man, the husband of the (female) village chief, was singing about how he wanted to kill her.

As shocking as this might sound, Laura (pictured centre) explains that it is not uncommon for anthropologists to encounter tension and hostility when they arrive in communities as they have to earn acceptance. Her bravery and persistence paid off: a few months later, part of the tribe invited her to join them in venturing further into the rainforest of the Amazon basin. 'Forest life was absolutely beautiful,' she says. 'Lots of walking, hunting, gathering fruit and living with nature. I owe a great deal to the children, though, as I was quite useless; I was slower than the other adults who charged on ahead. The children shared with me the game they hunted and cooked, and showed me how to harvest fruits and dig nourishing roots. Otherwise, I would have gone hungry.'

Maybe Laura inherited an adventurous streak from her French-born parents, as her early childhood was spent travelling around the world with them. Her parents' teenage years in France had been devastated by the Second World War, which is why her father grabbed the opportunity later to use his job as an engineer to explore Burma, India, Iraq and Southeast Asia, among other exotic countries. Laura and her brother were home-schooled up to the age of 11, and she recalls they had 'enormous freedom to roam, with a lot of playing in trees.'

As a student at the University of British Columbia in Canada, Laura initially took a linguistics course, with anthropology as an elective option. She met others on her anthropology course who were North American Indians of the Pacific Northwest Coast. She became deeply absorbed in discussions about their ceremonies, myths and traditions, and her curiosity about the lives of indigenous people deepened.

'Serendipity has played a role in my academic career,' says Laura, who went on to gain a double honours in anthropology. This was followed by her decision to travel to the Amazon basin as a doctoral researcher, based at the London School of Economics.



Her husband, a medical doctor, was originally from Colombia. Then the opportunity to meet the Huaorani tribe as part of her field studies came through a friend who was working as a teacher in their village. Since that introduction to the tribe in 1989, she has been back many times.

Laura is nowadays a fellow of Linacre

## 'It's not uncommon for anthropologists to encounter tension and hostility when they arrive in communities'

College and an associate professor who divides her time between the Department of International Development, where she introduces students to social and cultural anthropology, and the School of Anthropology and Museum Ethnography, where she supervises students interested in native Amazonian ways of life. At the Latin American Centre, she also holds talks about the development, conservation and governance of natural resources, as well as the rights of indigenous peoples and the values of their distinctive ways of living in the forest.

'There are geophysical limits to the world that define our freedoms and our

responsibilities,' she says. 'Indigenous people are part of the diversity that exists on the Earth. Yet there is this idea in some quarters of certain cultures, "civilisations", being superior to others. We should be valuing the differences that enrich us mutually.'

The huge numbers of undocumented tree species that have been wiped out in the rainforests frustrates her. 'Such species are potentially worth more economically and otherwise than the few crops that replaced them,' she believes. Oil exploration is another threat: in 2007 Laura was part of an effort that resulted in President Rafael Correa of Ecuador initiating a project by which Ecuador offered to suspend indefinitely oil extraction in part of the Yasuní National Park with financial backing from the international community. She explains that this initiative to leave oil in the ground was ahead of its time and perhaps premature, as it foundered due to lack of international financial support.

'We need more wisdom, creativity and imagination, and new ways of thinking about nature,' Laura concludes. 'The Amazon is a region where biological and cultural diversity has been sacrificed for oil exploitation. We need to change this paradigm if we are going to be able to help countries make the transition and develop without destroying our children's endowments of ecological wealth.'

► For more information visit <http://anthro.web.ox.ac.uk/people/dr-laura-rival>

# WHAT'S ON



ON THE HUNT FOR EASTER EGGS

## 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](http://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.

### Slow Art Day

Saturday 8 April, 2–4pm  
Ashmolean Museum  
£9 adult/£8 concessions, includes afternoon tea; booking required  
[www.ox.ac.uk/events-list](http://www.ox.ac.uk/events-list)

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](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/newchamberopera)  
Katie Mitchell, Visiting Professor of Opera, discusses the complexities of making a contemporary opera.

## EXHIBITIONS

### Percy Manning: the Man who Collected Oxfordshire

Until 23 April  
Weston Library, Blackwell Hall  
[www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/whatson](http://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/whatson)  
Discover a sample of the diverse materials relating to Oxfordshire, everything from fossils to Morris dancing, amassed by the antiquary and folklorist Percy Manning (1870–1917).

### Degas to Picasso

Until 7 May  
Ashmolean Museum  
[www.ashmolean.org/exhibitions](http://www.ashmolean.org/exhibitions)  
Tickets £10, £5 for age 12–17 years  
A ground-breaking exhibition featuring works by Matisse, Manet, Chagall, Renoir, Degas, Léger and Picasso, telling the story of the rise of modernism.

### Brain Diaries

Until 1 January 2018  
Oxford University Museum of Natural History  
[www.braindiaries.org](http://www.braindiaries.org)  
Find out how the latest neuroscience is transforming what we know about our brains – from birth to the end of life.

## CONCERTS

### Oxford Philharmonic Orchestra – Maundy Thursday

Thursday 13 April, 7.30pm  
Sheldonian Theatre  
Tickets £10 / £20 / £30 / £42  
[www.venues.ox.ac.uk/whats-on](http://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 alongside his uplifting *Clarinet concerto in A Major*.

### ANIMA: New Music with Animation

Friday 5 May, 7.30pm  
Jacqueline du Pré Music Building  
Gallery £13, stalls £10  
[jdp.st-hildas.ox.ac.uk/events](http://jdp.st-hildas.ox.ac.uk/events)  
Film music played alongside projections of abstract animated films. A collaboration between composers from St Anne's and St Hilda's and video artists from the Ruskin School of Art.

## FAMILY FRIENDLY

### Hidden Treasures

31 March–2 April, 1–4pm  
Pitt Rivers Museum  
[www.prm.ox.ac.uk/whatson](http://www.prm.ox.ac.uk/whatson)  
Peer up high and crouch down low to discover some of the museum's hidden treasures.

### Arboretum Easter Trail

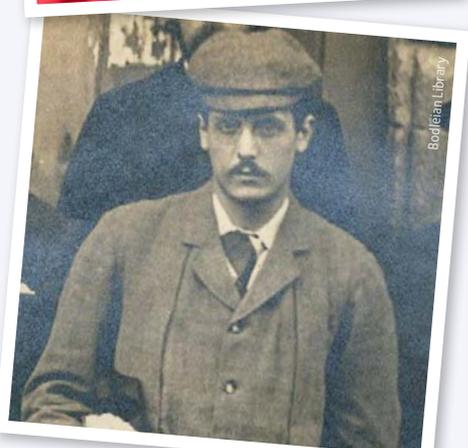
8–23 April  
Harcourt Arboretum  
Free event with entrance ticket (adults £5, children free)  
[www.botanic-garden.ox.ac.uk/family-friendly-events-harcourt-arboretum](http://www.botanic-garden.ox.ac.uk/family-friendly-events-harcourt-arboretum)  
Take a trail around the Arboretum to find the missing eggs and win a prize to take home.

### Easter Holidays: Brain Power!

17–19 April, 1–4pm  
Oxford University Museum of Natural History  
[www.oum.ox.ac.uk/visiting/whatson.htm](http://www.oum.ox.ac.uk/visiting/whatson.htm)  
Drop in to discover the brilliant things your brain does – from your head to your toes!

### Folk Weekend Oxford

22 and 23 April, 10am–3.30pm  
Ashmolean Museum  
[www.ashmolean.org/events](http://www.ashmolean.org/events)  
Tap your toes to the infectious music and moves of over twenty Morris dancing teams performing outside the museum.



TOP: FOLK FUN WITH MORRIS DANCING GALORE; BOTTOM: PERCY MANNING, OXFORDSHIRE COLLECTOR

Visit [www.ox.ac.uk/events-list](http://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](http://www.museums.ox.ac.uk/content/family-friendly-events) for more family activities

# BREXIT: THE PRIORITIES FOR OXFORD

Professor Alastair Buchan, the University's Head of Brexit Strategy, talks to *Stephen Rouse* about the twin challenges of his new job

Not many people can please both *The Guardian* and *The Daily Telegraph* when it comes to Brexit. When Professor Alastair Buchan, Oxford's new Head of Brexit Strategy, gave evidence to a Parliamentary Committee in January, *The Guardian* seized on his comment that quitting the EU, for universities, risked 'absolutely shooting ourselves in the foot'. *The Telegraph*, meanwhile, was enthused by Professor Buchan's emphasis on Brexit's potential opportunities: 'We now have to start figuring out what's possible in order to look at the benefits, rather than what's being taken away.'

The fact that both papers quoted Professor Buchan accurately, and that both comments are simultaneously true, reflects the complex nature of his new post. The twin pitfalls, of Brexit despair and Brexit euphoria, are not lost on him. 'The easiest course is the one many people in higher education have adopted – that there is no way but to refuse the results of the referendum to Remain. It's a view that for the University to come out of the EU with no free flow of students or academics is an unmitigated disaster and there is no band aid, no UK-based substitute, which will have anything like the potency that access to European resources gives us.'

'At the same time, this idea we can regain the standing we had at the end of Empire, or somehow magically join the US in leading the western world, is delusional. If you take more control of your borders, you risk becoming a very small nation state. Research knows no borders. Every student coming here is a gain for the UK. That was true before we joined the EU and it has to be true after we leave the EU.'

It's Professor Buchan's job to navigate Oxford between the two, treating triumph and disaster just the same. From January this year, he has been tasked with defending the University's interests as negotiations with the EU progress and also with developing the new international partnerships and opportunities that will arise from Brexit.

Born in Germany – he now regrets not keeping up the language after the age of three – Professor Buchan's international research career has helped transform the prevention and treatment of strokes. After ten years in Calgary, Canada, where he established a comprehensive regional academically led treatment programme, he returned to Oxford in 2005, continuing his work on limiting and reversing the damage that strokes can do.

He helped establish the NIHR Oxford Biomedical Research Centre, drawing on the research strengths of the University and the OUH NHS Foundation Trust. In 2008 he was appointed Head of the University Medical Sciences Division and for the last six years

straight has seen Oxford at number one in the *Times Higher Education* world university rankings for clinical, pre-clinical and health subjects. Professor Buchan sees the research collaborations he helped establish with the NHS as critical to the rise up the rankings.

He also believes that membership of the EU has been a powerful factor. 'It's very easy to get misty-eyed about how things were before we joined Europe. I came here first as a student in 1977, just as we were beginning to get involved, and things were not good. When I came back in 2005, the quality of the work, the quality of the students, even the quality of the food was transformed beyond all recognition. I wonder if that would have been the case had it not been for Europe.'

**'To stay competitive we must remain open and attractive to the most able students, the most able academics'**

Putting any culinary gains to one side, there are three key areas of EU benefit that Professor Buchan believes are at risk and should be protected in the Brexit deal.

'We are a growing, successful world-leading University. To stay competitive we must remain open and attractive to the most able students, the most able academics. We need to maintain access to quality students, not just from the EU but from the whole world, and whatever settlement we get must maintain the free flow of academics to work in the UK.'

'On research, funding is one priority and we must have an agreement in place to ensure the money currently coming from the European Research Council and elsewhere in Europe is maintained. But the bigger risk is to the pan-European research networks that have been built up, whether at CERN or at Culham or Harwell. It has taken us 30 years to build these networks and we must preserve them.'

'The third area of concern is regulatory. Whether it's on nuclear research through Euratom, or drug discovery through the European Medicines Agency, how do we make sure that the way we do research, the access to data and confidentiality are recognised and reproduced across national boundaries? We cannot wall ourselves off on this.'

Professor Buchan is working with the University's Brexit Impacts

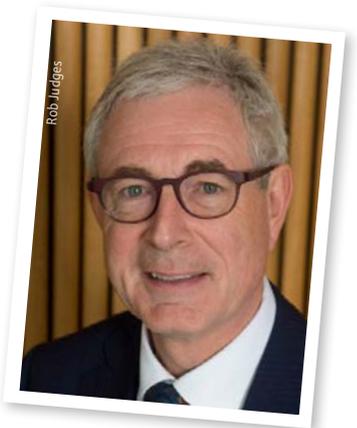
Group, which he chairs, to make sure these messages are widely understood in the upcoming negotiations. He has begun a hectic series of meetings with ministers, union leaders, Universities UK and the European Commission. But he is also keen that the flipside – the advantages and opportunities Brexit offers – is appreciated across all the University's divisions and colleges.

'The silver lining is the possibility to attract new resources and to build new networks beyond the EU,' he says. 'Some of the biggest research challenges we face – whether it's climate change or threats to health – require us to work across disciplinary boundaries and national boundaries. So we should be looking for opportunities to work with people on the kind of scale we've been working with the EU – whether that's in Australia, Latin America, the US, China or India. The qualities that have made Oxford attractive as a research partner in Europe will make us attractive to them as well.'

But there is a wider point. Professor Buchan believes that universities must shoulder some blame for not getting their message across during last year's referendum. If people have had enough of experts, it's partly our fault.

'This University should be leading the way in understanding Brexit. We should research and teach what happened last year, what is happening now and what will happen. Oxford should be the place to understand and be educated about Brexit. It's the Government's job to negotiate the settlement with the EU. But we want to make it clear to them that we, as a university, are here to help, to teach people about Brexit and to get the right evidence which will enable the Government to get the right deal.'

It's no mean agenda: a Brexit deal that does not disadvantage Oxford; an ambassadorial role to build networks with the wider world; and a mission to re-connect the public with experts. If Professor Buchan can pull that off, both *The Guardian* and *The Daily Telegraph* – not to mention the University itself – should be applauding once more.



► Staff updates on the implications of Brexit for Oxford, along with expert analysis of the latest developments, can be found at [www.ox.ac.uk/news-and-events/oxford-and-brexit](http://www.ox.ac.uk/news-and-events/oxford-and-brexit)

# GENETICS SHINES NEW LIGHT ON PSYCHIATRIC DISORDERS

Understanding how individual genes impact on the complex brain functions that are altered in psychiatric illnesses could lead to new therapies, reports *Chris McIntyre*

**Huge strides have been made in recent years toward decoding the human genome. But while we are starting to understand how the coded blueprints translate into components of our bodies, working out what has gone wrong in illnesses is an even bigger field of research.**

At the forefront of this search for genetic answers is Dr Liz Tunbridge of the Department of Psychiatry, whose work focuses on the genes responsible for schizophrenia and bipolar disorder. 'It's not the case that there's a single mutation that causes schizophrenia or bipolar disorder,' Liz explains, 'but rather that lots of little genetic effects that when combined can increase or decrease your risk of developing the illness. I try to understand how genes affect brain function, and the mechanisms in the brain that link specific genes to schizophrenia and bipolar disorder.'

A big challenge is finding the genes involved in the disease. The human genome contains an estimated 20,000 genes, and is more than three billion base pairs long. A single change in a base pair – the letters that make up the genetic code – can affect a gene's function.

'The starting point for finding the bits of the genome involved in illness is really large studies,' Liz says. 'In the last ten years it has become cheap enough and technically feasible to assess the entire genome in detail in lots of people. Now we can compare tens of thousands of schizophrenia patients to controls, which can reveal very subtle differences in the genome that are what account for a lot of the risk in these disorders.'

Once a piece of the genome has been identified, the next step is to determine how it affects the healthy body, and how this differs in individuals with the disease. Much of the focus of Liz's current work is calcium channels within the brain, which play a role in how messages are transmitted by controlling the flow of calcium in and out of brain cells.

'The work that we're doing now is taking that first step from genes to whole brains – trying to identify precisely what the molecular changes associated with disease risk look like,' Liz explains. 'The genes that control calcium channels are very large and complicated, meaning that they haven't been very well characterised in the human brain, and there is a large range of different types that the channels come in. We are starting to look in post-mortem human tissue to see which of these different types or isoforms are there, because we think that we might see subtle increases or decreases in particular isoforms of these calcium channels, which might underlie the disease.'

While Liz is identifying the problems at a molecular level, on the clinical side Professor Paul Harrison in the Department of Psychiatry at the Warneford Hospital is working to find new therapies that target these biochemical pathways.

## **'Our understanding of what is going wrong in psychiatric illnesses at a biochemical level is expanding rapidly'**

'The current treatments that we have for psychiatric conditions were mostly discovered by chance around 50 years ago, based on drugs that were developed for other conditions,' says Paul. 'When physicians noticed that these drugs had some benefits for people with major psychiatric problems they developed new drugs of similar pharmacology.'

Calcium signalling is also an area of focus for Paul, as it has long been thought to be involved in schizophrenia and bipolar disorder. 'There are already calcium channel-blocking drugs that are used in cardiology,' he explains. 'These aren't perfect for what we want to do in psychiatry, but they give us tools in the short term to study what these already-licensed drugs do to people's mood, behaviours and memory. We can use them as proof of principle that drugs targeted at these calcium channels may be of value.'

As with all conditions, no two patients are exactly the same, meaning that not all will respond to treatments in the same way. But this

is another area where studying the disease at a genetic level can give clinicians a new way of approaching treatment.

'The evidence is that schizophrenia isn't one single disease genetically, but neither is it 100 separate diseases,' Paul says. 'None of the individual genetic changes associated with increased risk is sufficient to cause the illness alone, so what we see is overlapping profiles of genetic risk between patients. This is encouraging from a drug discovery point of view, because it means that you're not looking to develop 100 different drugs for schizophrenia, but instead looking at a few specific biochemical pathways that we can target.'

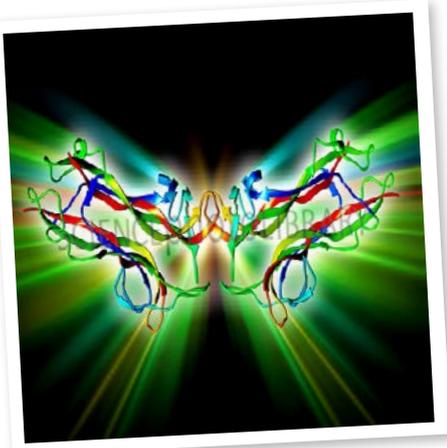
The team have also been working with other groups in Oxford, such as the Structural Genomics Consortium, whose forte is working out the structures of complex proteins, like those involved in calcium channels. 'We're working with the SGC team to make sure that the isoforms that we're looking at are the types of calcium channels that are found in the brain, rather than the heart, which we think will be more relevant for psychiatry,' Liz explains.

While our understanding of what is going wrong in psychiatric illnesses at a biochemical level is expanding rapidly, the complexity of our own brains is likely to remain a challenge for researchers for some time.

'Schizophrenia is a neurodevelopmental disorder – essentially something happens during the development of the brain that means that it's not quite wired up correctly,' says Liz. 'This means that if you wanted to modify the disease process you would have to do that during childhood and adolescence, but this is often before people are showing the symptoms.'

However, the scope and challenge of deciphering the nature of the illness, and the opportunities for changing the lives of patients and their families are part of the attraction for Liz.

'Psychiatric illnesses affect the core aspects of what make us human, so it's fascinating that we are starting to be able to interrogate this from a biological point of view,' she says. 'Compared with diseases like cancer we're still in the relatively early stages of discovery, but it's the fact that we still know relatively so little about it that first attracted me to psychiatry and continues to make it a fascinating field of study.'



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# INNOVATION IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Oxford has great strengths in innovation, knowledge exchange and entrepreneurship; *Stuart Gillespie* reports on a new strategy to highlight and foster the University's role as a global leader

**What does innovation mean to you? Is it the latest scientific research, emerging technologies, entrepreneurship or simply new ways of doing things? If that's a tricky question to answer, what's much easier to pin down is the importance of innovation – to the future prosperity of our universities and to the country as a whole. When Chancellor of the Exchequer Philip Hammond delivered his Autumn Statement in November, he chose to open his speech to Parliament by highlighting the need for the UK, in a changing world, to capitalise on its existing strength as a centre for science, technology, research and innovation. We must ensure, he said, that the next generation of discoveries is made, developed and produced in Britain.**

Oxford itself received a namecheck as part of the planned Oxford to Cambridge rail link – a potentially 'transformational tech-corridor', according to the Chancellor, 'drawing on the world-class research strengths of our two best-known universities'.

But, to return to the difficulty of the original question, one of the challenges of promoting the innovation agenda is to communicate what innovation actually means and why it's as important as people say it is.

Victoria Pearson of the University's Public Affairs Directorate is at the centre of these efforts in Oxford. She has been responsible for drawing up an innovation communications strategy that will help raise the profile, internally and externally, of Oxford's strength in innovation, knowledge exchange and entrepreneurship. Launched in November, the strategy outlines the importance of Oxford's being – and being seen to be – a global leader in these areas, for reasons that range from attracting the most talented and creative minds from around the world to continuing to secure vital research and research-related funding.

'The ultimate goal of all this work is that when people think about innovation, they think about Oxford,' says Pearson. 'To achieve that, we need to raise awareness of innovation among staff and students and highlight its significance to the University, as well as changing the wider public perception that research happens in universities and innovation happens in industry. We often associate innovation with technology and gadgets, but it is essentially about being

creative and pushing boundaries, and this can look very different across disciplines. For example, the recent Humanities Innovation Challenge held by TORCH The Oxford Research Centre in the Humanities and the University's research commercialisation arm, Oxford University Innovation OUI, was won by food distribution startup Azure Foods, which is using European distribution of pinole, a traditional Mexican "superfood", to support indigenous farming and cultural practices in Mexico and Central America.'

2016 was a successful year for innovation at Oxford, with 24 new companies being created from Oxford research via OUI – a figure believed to be a new record for the UK and Europe. Those 24 companies attracted more

## 'Oxford has produced more founders of \$1bn business startups over the past decade than any other university in Europe'

than £50m combined in early-stage funding, much of which came from the Oxford Sciences Innovation fund set up in 2015 to invest in Oxford research with commercial potential, and which has since risen to nearly £600m. A recent study by the software company Sage UK, meanwhile, found that Oxford has produced more founders of \$1bn business startups over the past decade than any other university in Europe.

As well as highlighting the truly pan-University nature of the innovation project, Pearson is keen to stress that the University exists not in isolation, but as part of an innovation cluster comprising a host of partners across the region in academia, scientific facilities, health and business – a view echoed by Professor Ian Walmsley, Oxford's Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research and Innovation and chair of the University's Innovation Working Group. He says: 'The University plays a key role in what is a complex and thriving innovation ecosystem in Oxfordshire. Communicating these strengths and partnerships is going to be critical in making sure the University, local industry and, more broadly, the UK can capitalise on this.

'We live in an innovative world and it's hugely important that universities have the capability to generate, analyse, disseminate and exploit good ideas. Growth in productivity – which everyone agrees is key to the UK's future – is rooted in the kind of technological and organisational innovation fomented within universities.

'UK universities deliver more influential research per pound spent than any other system in the world, and they are the predominant venues for making the fundamental discoveries that underpin impact in areas as diverse as industry, health and government policy. Such basic research is the best route we know of to deliver major advances such as lasers or the internet.

'The University needs to be part of a vibrant innovation ecosystem that can help turn new ideas into societal and economic benefit. That's why we're taking innovation so seriously at Oxford, and that's why it's so crucial that innovation at Oxford is communicated properly to both internal and external audiences.'

The innovation communications strategy kicks into gear this spring with planned activities including an 'Innovation Question Time' event featuring a panel of University experts led by Professor Walmsley, plus a series of campaigns across social media and other channels highlighting Oxford success stories in innovation.

FOOD DISTRIBUTION STARTUP AZURE FOODS SELLS PINOLE, A TASTY FLOUR MADE OF TOASTED BLUE CORN (LEFT)



► For more information visit [www.ox.ac.uk/research](http://www.ox.ac.uk/research)

# HOT OFF THE PRESS

The Bibliographical Press teaches letterpress printing and linocut printmaking to University staff and students, as well as the public, reveals *Matt Pickles*

It is perhaps not well known that the Bodleian Library maintains hand presses in order to teach practical printing. The Bodleian Libraries' Bibliographical Press is based in the Old Bodleian's Old Schools Quadrangle, in a room which has the feel of a museum of the history of printing: it contains five free-standing iron printing presses from the 19th century, one proofing press and one etching press. But unlike a museum, the presses are used regularly to teach students, staff and visitors about the history of printing.



The press was set up in 1949 to teach Oxford students about hand-press printing methods. 'It is very useful for students to understand how a book is printed because the process can affect the detail of what appears in the book,' says Richard Lawrence, who is the Superintendent of the Press. 'If you study Jane Austen or William Shakespeare, you will notice little quirks of punctuation and spelling in the books, and these come from how they were printed.'

Richard studied materials science at Cambridge University and he likes to think of the press as a laboratory. 'If you have a theory about something, you have to test it out,' he says. 'So for theories about why a book was printed in a certain way, we have the tools to

**'It's very useful for students to understand how a book is printed because the process can affect the detail of what appears in the book'**

test them in the Bibliographical Press.' Last year, for example, mathematical historians came to the Press to print sections of Euclid's works. They were puzzled that Euclid's books used different types of capital letters, but Richard found the answer. 'Capital letters are used more often in trigonometry than in prose, and a printing typeface would only have a set number of them, so the printers would have had to borrow more capital letters from other typefaces,' he explains.

The Press is used for teaching by a number of faculties. A class of English language Master's students takes an eight-week course at the Bibliographical Press in which they learn how and why things were printed, and

*RIGHT: HANDROLLING TEXT ON A FLATBED PRESS AT THE BIBLIOGRAPHICAL PRESS. LEFT, FROM TOP: ROSIE FAIRFAX-CHOLMELEY (ON THE RIGHT) WITH PARTICIPANTS AT A PRINTMAKING WORKSHOP; RICHARD LAWRENCE PRINTS A TITLE PAGE USING RESTORED EQUIPMENT AT THE PAPËTERIE DE VAUX IN FRANCE; A LONDON-BASED DESIGNER ON A COURSE AT THE BODLEIAN*

are taught how to produce a pamphlet. Last year, students from the Faculty of Medieval and Modern Languages used the press to set and print Martin Luther's *95 Theses*, which was published 500 years ago in 1517. 'I got so much out of this project, not only gaining some pretty awesome new skills, but above all meeting some great new people and getting absorbed in the creation of such a meaningful piece of European history,' says Charlotte Hartmann, a student who took part in the project.

The press reaches a much wider audience than academics and University students. A number of schools have visited in the last year and many members of the public and University staff have taken part in drop-in sessions where they are taught how to print keepsakes on some of the Bodleian's presses. The Bodleian runs keepsake printing in connection with each new exhibition in the Weston Library's Blackwell Hall. The Press also runs courses teaching letterpress printing and linocut printmaking. The workshop is open to visitors each year during Oxford Open Doors in September.

Printmaking played a key role in the University's celebrations of the 400th anniversary of Shakespeare's death. A group of 10- and 11-year-olds from Pegasus School in Blackbird Leys printed sonnets by Shakespeare. At the beginning of 2016, the Bodleian invited printers around the world to submit hand-printed copies of each of Shakespeare's 154 sonnets and received submissions from all over the world in languages including Armenian, Polish and Welsh. Bodleian staff also chose to print Sonnet 59 to mark the anniversary, because of the apt line 'Show me your image in some antique book'.

The expertise of the press has also been used to restore a defunct printing workshop in France. 'During a holiday in Payzac a few years ago, I noticed an old print shop in a preserved paper mill and spoke to the owner,' says Richard. 'I returned next summer with Robin Wilson and Rosie Fairfax-Cholmeley, the artists-in-residence at Wytham Woods, and we restored it to a working print workshop and printed a book about the paper mill using the restored equipment.'

More about the Bibliographical Press and the dates of the next sessions available to staff at [www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/csb/bibpress](http://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/csb/bibpress)

The Bibliographical Press has been supported by philanthropic donations from Lisa Baskin



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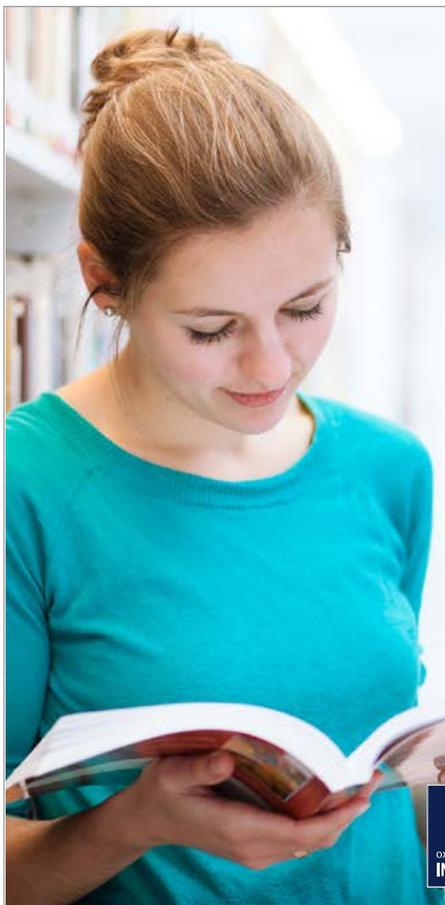
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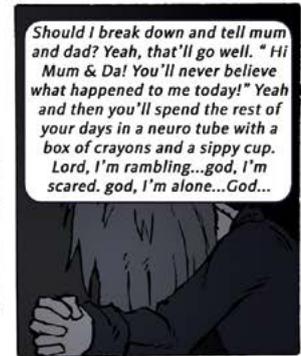
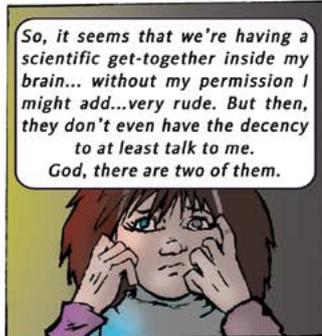
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# WHY AM I HERE?

KYLE RIX

*Head Gardener, Lincoln College*

## Tell us what your job entails

My job as Head Gardener has lots of aspects to it. I manage the small gardens team – me, Pete the Quads man and Tom the apprentice – and we all work together to keep Lincoln looking beautiful through all the seasons. This past year I've also spent a large amount of time redesigning all the gardens on the main Lincoln site.

Lincoln is one of the smaller colleges but the main Turl Street site consists of six gardens, all of which are currently being redesigned. We have three residential annexes dotted throughout the city and also residential homes where we manage the gardens between tenants, so all in all around 14 gardens. It definitely keeps us busy!

## What do you most enjoy about your job?

I love to see people enjoying our gardens. The team work long, hard, physical hours in all weathers and it really does perk us up when we see people just appreciate Lincoln's beauty.

## What's your favourite gardening task?

I'd probably have to say pruning – there's something rather therapeutic about it. It has its own way of making you forget about the little annoying things that keep popping up.

## What's your favourite spot in Lincoln's grounds?

Grove Quad – it's the one part of the gardens where the students are allowed to go on the lawn. It's embraced by a huge London plane tree and is full of nesting birds. During spring, when the bulbs are out and the sun cascades through the tree, it really is a beautiful place to be.

## Your previous job was a bit different, wasn't it?

Ha-ha, yes, I guess you could say that. I worked in the private security industry for over ten years. I worked in night clubs, and was operations manager for large music events like the Brit Awards and Download Festival. I was also a close protection operative (bodyguard) to a few bands, film stars and business men.

## Go on then, impress us with some famous names you worked for!

Now that would be telling...No, I really can't.

## Any favourite memories from those times?

There are both good and bad memories, but the thing that I will cherish is the friends I made throughout my time in the industry.

## So what motivated the career change?

Good question! I've always had an interest in horticulture and I've had an allotment for years which I loved doing. When I saw the Apprentice Gardener job for Lincoln being advertised – I was in Reykjavik, Iceland, at the time – it just felt like the right thing to do. So I applied, got the job and began my training. Within six months I had passed my qualifications and the opening for Head Gardener had become available. Fortunately, Lincoln invested in me and gave me the role. I've now been Head Gardener for just over a year.

## Any garden surprises or secrets you can share with us?

I've just built a rooftop kitchen garden above a garage on Turl Street. It has a large polytunnel and raised beds so that we can grow our own organic vegetables, which we will give to the kitchen for our students and Senior Common Room.

## What's the most unexpected thing you've found yourself doing?

Talking with young people about starting a career in horticulture. I've worked closely with Abingdon and Witney College doing interviews on why horticulture is a great industry. But more recently I've had local children from my old school come in and I'm hoping to start a kitchen garden project with them within the school.

## Any top gardening tips for us at this time of year?

Get on top of the weeds early, do lawn renovations, give everything a mulch – the list is endless. But the most important job is: on a nice day, grab a book and a cuppa, go sit in your garden and appreciate everything it's giving you.

## Finally, what's your most prized possession?

I have two: Blue and Maia, my Harris hawks. I fly them to scare off the pigeons around Lincoln.



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## VIEWFINDER

WHERE'S THIS MIRACULOUS AWAKENING?  
ANSWER ON P6.





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