Two major new research partnerships will see Oxford take the very latest cancer research forward. Supported by a £35m grant from the government and over £75m of investment from partners in the project, the Precision Cancer Medicine Institute will carry out research into a wide range of cancer therapies, including advanced cancer imaging, trials of new drugs and proton beam therapy. And, through a research partnership with the Chan Soon-Shiong Institute for Molecular Medicine in the US, the University will create the Chan Soon-Shiong Oxford Centre for Molecular Medicine, which will use the latest techniques to characterise tumour samples from patients in order to understand the particular genetic and molecular changes underlying that patient’s cancer, leukaemia or lymphoma.

Oxford has welcomed 115 postgraduate students from the UK and 13 other EU countries as part of a new postgraduate scholarship scheme. The pilot scheme, funded by a £3m grant from the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) and an additional £750,000 investment by the University, aims to develop a greater understanding of the barriers to accessing taught postgraduate education. The project is also funding internships and a new professional development programme for female masters’ students. The scholarships are part of the Oxford Graduate Scholarships Matched Fund, a long-term drive to significantly increase the amount of postgraduate scholarship funding available at Oxford.

The IT Services Help Centre at 13 Banbury Road provides IT support for staff and students across the collegiate University, from help with registration and passwords to repairing and upgrading personal computers. The opening hours of the centre have recently changed: appointments are available Monday to Friday between 9am and 5pm, and must be booked in advance (call 01865 273200), or you can drop into the centre between 5.30pm and 8.30pm Monday to Friday. Alternatively, you can call the centre on 01865 273200 or contact them via the online form at help.it.ox.ac.uk/help/request.

Do you make use of the University discounted bus pass scheme for commuting to work? The scheme covers season tickets from the Oxford Bus Company (including Thames Travel) and Stagecoach, and includes up to 10% off the standard price and an interest-free season ticket loan. The process for applying for a new pass, topping up an existing pass or reporting a lost or stolen pass has now moved online, which means you no longer have to sign and post hard-copy forms. Details at www.admin.ox.ac.uk/estates/ourservices/travel/bus.

Enjoy a double discount and late-night shopping at the University of Oxford Shop every Thursday in December during the run-up to Christmas. The shop offers a range of Christmas cards, decorations and gifts, including items commissioned exclusively for the shop which have been sourced locally or within the UK. The High Street shop will be open until 7pm on 4, 11 and 18 December, and you can claim a 20% discount by presenting your University Card. You can also enjoy the same discount at www.oushop.com – just enter the code OUstaff20 at checkout.

Would you like to receive, or continue receiving, a print copy of Blueprint? Or would you prefer an email alerting you to a new issue online? From January 2015 the system for managing the delivery of Blueprint, the Gazette and the Oxford Magazine is changing. An opt-in system is being introduced to enable any member of staff to sign up to receive any of these publications in print or online.

Simply register your preferences at www.staffsubs.ox.ac.uk using your single sign-on. You can choose which publications you want to receive in the format you prefer, delivered to any address in the collegiate University. You can also change your preferences or your delivery address at any time using the online form.

If you currently receive a print copy of these publications, you must register your preferences at www.staffsubs.ox.ac.uk if you want to continue receiving them from January 2015. Further information is at www.ox.ac.uk/gazette/subs.
A major new Oxford research project aims to take a fresh look at the Jagiellonians, a dynasty that ruled over the territories of no fewer than 14 present-day countries in central, eastern and northern Europe between 1386 and 1596. The five-year project will investigate the dynasty’s impact on European history and politics, and how they are remembered to this day. Funded by the European Research Council, this €1.4m grant is one of the largest awarded to study the history of pre-modern central Europe. ‘Our aim is that, by the end of this project, far more people will understand who the Jagiellonians were, and the role they played in our shared European history,’ says Dr Natalia Nowakowska of the History Faculty and Somerville College, who is leading the project. ‘The Jagiellonians were cosmopolitan, highly international, and raise questions about the boundaries and identity of Europe itself: in that, they are surely a dynasty for our times.’

A new hepatitis C vaccine being developed by a team at Oxford has shown promising results in an early clinical trial. The vaccine was found to be safe and well tolerated in the 15 healthy volunteers who took part. The researchers also showed the vaccine generated strong and broad immune responses against the virus causing the disease. These results have paved the way for a new trial, now under way in the US, to test whether the vaccine offers any protection from hepatitis C to intravenous drug users – a group at high risk of infection. It is the first hepatitis C vaccine to reach this stage of clinical trials. ‘The size and breadth of the immune responses seen in the healthy volunteers are unprecedented in magnitude for a hepatitis C vaccine,’ says principal investigator Professor Ellie Barnes of the Nuffield Department of Medicine.

More of us are moving down the social ladder rather than going up as in the past, according to a new study. The findings, co-authored by Dr Erzsébet Bukodi and Dr Lorraine Waller from the Department of Social Policy and Intervention, with John Goldthorpe from the Department of Sociology, and in collaboration with the London School of Economics and Political Science, are published in the British Journal of Sociology. Their study looked at more than 20,000 British men and women in four birth cohorts from 1946, 1958, 1970 and 1980–84. They compared the social class of each individual when in their late 20s or 30s with the class of their fathers, and found that around three-quarters of men and women alike ended up in a different class to the one they were born into. The experience of upward mobility has become less common, while going down the social ladder has become more common.

The high visibility of police horses and riders on neighbourhood patrols boosts levels of public confidence in the police, researchers have found. While interviews with police at the start of the research project suggested that mounted units were best employed as a resource for crowd control, the researchers found that police horses and riders were particularly effective in neighbourhood policing because they acted as ‘ice-breakers’, encouraging greater positive interaction between the police and members of the public. Trials of neighbourhood patrols by pairs of mounted police officers in Gloucestershire and London were found to generate around six times more public interest than foot patrols over the same period; although most of these interactions were brief, they were largely positive. The research was conducted by Dr Ben Bradford from Oxford’s Centre for Criminology and Dr Chris Giacomantonio, a researcher with RAND Europe.

New opportunities in robotics and autonomous systems are to be targeted by a spin-out company from the Department of Engineering Science and Isis Innovation. Oxbotica has been founded by Dr Ingmar Posner and Professor Paul Newman of the Mobile Robotics Group (MRG) and will commercialise MRG’s robotics and autonomous systems technologies. Current MRG projects include robotic survey systems for roads and railways, low-speed driverless pods for urban transport, a robot electric car, and robotic rovers for use on Mars. ‘We believe that Oxford University’s robotics expertise can transform a wide spectrum of application domains,’ Dr Posner says. ‘Our intended markets range from devices that survey our roads, buildings and chemical plants to autonomous systems for warehouse logistics and, of course, autonomous driving.’

For more information, visit www.ox.ac.uk/news and www.ox.ac.uk/staffnews

Breaking the ice: mounted police
PEOPLE AND PRIZES

Dr Brenda Boardman, Emeritus Fellow in the School of Geography and the Environment, has been awarded a Lifetime Achievement Award for services to energy efficiency and fuel poverty by the Carbon Action Network.

Martin Booth, Professor of Engineering Science, has been awarded the 2014 International Commission for Optics Prize ‘for his innovative and pioneering research on dynamic optical methods and new approaches to adaptive optics’.

Martin Bridson, Whitehead Professor of Mathematics, has been elected a Fellow of the American Mathematical Society ‘for his contributions to geometric group theory as well as its exposition, and for service to the mathematical community’.

Dame Kay Davies, Dr Lee’s Professor of Anatomy, was selected as the 2014 recipient of the British Neuroscience Association award for Outstanding Contribution to British Neuroscience.

Anna Gloyn, Professor of Molecular Genetics and Metabolism, has been awarded the 2014 Minkowski Prize by the European Association for the Study of Diabetes, particularly for her work on the naturally occurring mutations that cause or are associated with increased risk of diabetes.

Marta Kwiatkowska, Professor of Computing Systems, has been awarded an honorary doctorate by the KTH Royal Institute of Technology, Sweden. The citation acknowledges her as ‘a world-leading computer science researcher and a driving force for the development of probabilistic and quantitative methods within computer science’.

Dr James Maynard of the Mathematical Institute has been awarded the 2014 SASTRA University Ramanujan prize, which recognises outstanding contributions by young mathematicians in areas influenced by the mathematician Srinivasa Ramanujan. Dr Maynard has obtained spectacular results in prime number theory, especially the small gaps problem.

Dr Alec Mullen, postdoctoral research fellow in classics at All Souls College, has won the 2014 James Henry Breasted Prize of the American Historical Association for her book *Southern Gaul and the Mediterranean: Multilingualism and Multiple Identities in the Iron Age and Roman Periods* (Cambridge University Press).

John Norbury, Emeritus Associate Professor of Applied Mathematics, has won the Louis J Battan Author’s Award of the Council of the American Meteorological Society for his book *Invisible in the Storm – the Role of Mathematics in Understanding Weather*, written jointly with Ian Roulstone.

Peter Rothwell, Action Research Professor of Neurology, has won the first Senior Science Award of the International Aspirin Foundation for providing compelling evidence for the substantial role of aspirin in the reduction of cancer incidence, metastasis and mortality.

Michael Sharpe, Professor of Psychological Medicine and consultant psychiatrist, has been named Psychiatrist of the Year 2014 by the Royal College of Psychiatrists. The award particularly recognises his research integrating medical and psychiatric care for cancer patients with depression.

The Revd Dr Jenn Strawbridge, research lecturer and Chaplain at Keble College, has been awarded the first Society for Biblical Literature/DeGruyter Prize for Biblical Studies and Reception History, intended to support biblical scholars at the early stage of their careers.

Kathy Sylva, Professor of Educational Psychology, has been awarded one of the first two British Educational Research Association John Nisbet Fellowships, in recognition of her career-long outstanding contributions to educational research.

Heather Viles, Professor of Biogeomorphology and Heritage Conservation, has been awarded the Ralph Alger Bagnold Medal of the European Geosciences Union in recognition of her outstanding scientific contribution to the study of geomorphology.

Catherine de Vries, Professor of European Politics, has been given the 2014 Emerging Scholar Award by the Elections, Public Opinion and Voting Behavior section of the American Political Science Association.

Anthony Watts, Professor of Biochemistry, is to receive the 2015 Anatrace Membrane Protein Award of the Biophysical Society in recognition of his many innovative approaches to studying membrane proteins.

Sir David Weatherall, Regius Professor of Medicine Emeritus, has been awarded the Anthony Cerami Award in Translational Medicine by the Feinstein Institute for Medical Research and the journal *Molecular Medicine* in recognition of his discoveries in inherited disorders of haemoglobin.

Dr Gavin Williams, Emeritus Fellow of St Peter’s College, has received the Distinguished Africanist award of the UK’s African Studies Association, for his lifetime achievement.

Kathryn Wood, Professor of Immunology, has been awarded the inaugural Woman in Transplantation award of The Transplantation Society. A former president of the society, she founded its Women in Transplantation group.

Dr Tristram Wyatt, senior research associate in the Department of Zoology and Emeritus Fellow of Kellogg College, has won the Society of Biology’s 2014 award for the Best Postgraduate Textbook for his book *Pheromones and Animal Behavior* (Cambridge University Press).
Isis Innovation wins Technology Transfer Unit of the Year

Isis Innovation, the University’s research and technology commercialisation company, has been named ‘Technology Transfer Unit of the Year’ at the Global University Venturing 2014 Summit. Isis Innovation spin-out NaturalMotion, bought by US games company Zynga earlier this year for $527m, also won ‘Exit of the Year’.

‘I and my colleagues at Isis are honoured to be recognised in what has been an extraordinarily active and exciting year, both for us and the industry generally,’ says Tom Hockaday, managing director of Isis Innovation. ‘We got off to a fantastic start in the first few months with the NaturalMotion exit, the launch of our University of Oxford Isis Fund, and the investment of a record £12m in one of our spin-outs, Nightstar. We’ve already launched seven spin-outs this year, and we’re very excited by the potential of our pipeline of further spin-outs and intellectual property from Oxford, as well as the promise of the start-ups from our Isis Software Incubator.’

Fellows of the Academy of Social Sciences

Two Oxford academics have received Academy of Social Sciences Fellowship status.

Craig Jeffrey, Professor of Development Geography in the School of Geography and the Environment, is an internationally recognised expert in South Asian and Development studies, specialising in the social geography and political anthropology of contemporary India, in particular Indian youth. He is currently leading a large international project on the politics of educated unemployed youth in South Asia and is working on a book on corruption in modern India, based on four years of fieldwork in Uttar Pradesh, north India.

Louise Fitzgerald, Visiting Professor in Organisational Change at the Said Business School, investigates organisational change in complex organisations, especially healthcare services, and organisational development. Recent research examined health care managers’ use of research evidence and how they share their knowledge, both across professions and with relevant organisations.

Fellow of the Royal Academy of Engineering

Paul Newman, BP Professor of Information Engineering and Fellow of Keble College, has been elected a Fellow of the Royal Academy of Engineering.

Professor Newman is co-leader of the Mobile Robotics Group in the Department of Engineering Science and has led research into mobile autonomy, developing machines which map, navigate through, and understand their environment. One of the group’s flagship projects is the RobotCar, a Nissan Leaf electric car that can drive itself for stretches of a route.

New Zealand Honour

David Paterson, Associate Head of the Medical Sciences Division (Education) and Professor of Cardiovascular Physiology, has been elected as an Honorary Fellow of the Royal Society of New Zealand.

Professor Paterson, who was born in New Zealand, is a leading cardiorespiratory physiologist and a world authority in cardiovascular control. His work focuses on the relationship between cellular and molecular mechanisms in cardio-respiratory control during physiological stress.

Bodleian Energy Project Praised

The Bodleian Libraries’ energy project has been highly commended in the 2014 Green Gown Awards, which recognise sustainability initiatives being undertaken by universities and colleges across the UK.

The aim of the project was to reduce the libraries’ annual utility costs by at least £100,000. By identifying opportunities for energy saving, including building insulation, LED lighting installation and heat metering, the libraries have saved 925 tonnes of carbon, and the project will see a yearly saving of nearly £170,000.

The Green Gown judges commented: ‘A very well-presented project which achieved good carbon savings across a range of buildings and providing a demonstration project for other departments. A clear target was set at the outset which motivated staff to get involved and was more than achieved.’

The project is now being used as a springboard to create collaborative projects on carbon reduction between Estates Services and other departments across the University.

www.ox.ac.uk/blueprint
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Professor of Corporate Law

Luca Enriques, Full Professor of Business Law at LUISS Guido Carli University, Rome, Italy, took up this post in the Faculty of Law on 1 October. He also became a Fellow of Jesus College.

Professor Enriques’ chief areas of research are corporate governance, European company law, comparative company law and securities regulation. In addition to holding many academic posts, he has worked at the Bank of Italy and with law firm Cleary Gottlieb Steen and Hamilton, acted as an advisor to the Italian government and served as a member of the European Commission’s Forum of Market Experts on Auditors’ Liability and its Reflection Group on the Future of EU Company Law.

Professor of Musculoskeletal Sciences

Fiona Powrie, Sidney Truelove Professor of Gastroenterology and Fellow of Green Templeton College, took up this post in the Nuffield Department of Orthopaedics, Rheumatology and Musculoskeletal Sciences on 1 October. She has also become Director of the Kennedy Institute of Rheumatology and is now a Fellow of Wadham College.

Professor Powrie’s research focuses on the interactions between the immune system and the large number of intestinal bacteria and how this normally beneficial relationship breaks down in inflammatory bowel disease. Her research has identified regulatory T cells that police the immune response in the intestine, preventing it from attacking beneficial bacteria. Deficiencies in these immune cells can lead to chronic intestinal inflammatory disease, offering new research avenues for the treatment of these conditions.

White’s Professor of Moral Philosophy

Jeff McMahan, Professor of Philosophy at Rutgers University, USA, took up this post in the Faculty of Philosophy on 1 October. He is a Fellow of Corpus Christi College.

Professor McMahan specialises in the ethics of war, legal theory, and applied ethics generally. He has published a number of books with Oxford University Press, including The Ethics of Killing: Problems at the Margins of Life (2002) and Killing in War (2009). Forthcoming OUP books include a collection of essays called The Values of Lives and The Right Way to Fight, a book on war for both academic and non-academic readers.

Arrivals Board

Allen & Overy Professor of Corporate Law

Dr Samina Khan, Deputy Director of Undergraduate Admissions and Outreach (UAO) office, has been appointed as the University’s new Director of Undergraduate Admissions and Outreach. She is responsible for coordinating admissions, access and student recruitment activity across the University, and for media liaison in this area.

Samina studied at King’s College London, gained a doctorate in organic chemistry at Loughborough University and completed a PGCE at St Hilda’s College. Prior to joining the University UAO office two years ago, she worked for the Department of Education; for the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills; for the regulators of national qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland; and for Edexcel Pearson. Samina has represented the Examination Boards nationally as a Director for the Federation of Awarding Bodies and as a member of the Joint Council of Qualifications. She is also a parent governor at Chalfont Community College.

Noticeboard

It’s easy to give as you earn

It’s good to give a little back. According to last year’s World Giving Index, 76% of people in the UK give money to charity in a typical month. The University’s Give As You Earn (GAYE) scheme makes it easy and tax effective to support your favourite charities by making tax-free donations directly from your salary.

The scheme is run through the Charities Aid Foundation (CAF), a registered charity to help people and businesses support the causes they care about. The CAF database contains over 160,000 charities, covering almost every registered charity in the UK, as well as organisations that have a recognised charitable purpose such as community groups.

Giving directly through payroll has tax benefits as your donation is taken from your pay before income tax is calculated and deducted. So if you’re on the 20% tax rate, a £20 donation will cost you just £16, while the £4 that would have been paid in tax goes direct to the charity (less a small administration fee deducted by CAF). On the 40% tax rate, the tax reduction is £8 on a £20 donation, and on 45% it is £9.

Once you have decided how much you would like to give each month, you have three options:

• You can nominate a charity or group of charities to benefit from your monthly donation. The contribution is deducted from your salary and CAF forwards the donations to the charity(ies) concerned.

• If you give more than £10 a month, you can create a ‘Personal Charity Account’, allowing you to donate to any charity at any time using a charity chequebook (for example, supporting an emergency appeal or a friend doing a charity fun run).

• You can club together with colleagues and pool your donations to form a ‘staff charity fund’, which has a chequebook facility.

To find out more, visit www.admin.ox.ac.uk/finance/processes/payroll/gaye.
Life in the ‘Land of the Gods’

Dr Jane Dyson tells Maria Coyle how she charts the lives of a community in the Himalayas

Many of us want to get away from it all once in a while, but social geographer Dr Jane Dyson has taken it to a different level – living in a Himalayan village for 15 months, with no electricity, no phones, and no road in or out.

In 2003 Jane arrived at a place in the Indian Himalayas known locally because of its beauty as the ‘Land of the Gods’. She had been travelling on her own in Uttarakhand, intending to find a village where she could live with a community and conduct her doctoral research on children’s work. By chance, a villager on the same route up the mountain led her to his village, where she was welcomed. Perched 2,500m high on a wind-swept ridge, it was 40km from the main road and half a day’s uphill walk from the nearest dirt track. After assessing its suitability for her research, she lived among the people and has returned to them many times. Indeed, she now regards them as her second family.

On that first visit, she was studying children’s everyday lives and spent time in the fields and surrounding forests, weeding potatoes, harvesting crops or hay with a sickle and caring for livestock. She spoke in Hindi and enlisted a local research assistant who helped her pick up the local dialect, Garhwali. ‘It’s basic living, but I love the outdoor lifestyle,’ says Jane. ‘I got used to the idea of communal living, with people popping round all the time. There is no privacy; there is a lot of laughter and joking and teasing. I am looked after as part of the community. That’s what I miss when I come back to England.’

As Jane has continued to work in the village over the past decade, her project has broadened in response to quite dramatic changes in the area. Drawing on her research and her relationship with villagers, she has written an academic book, Working Childhoods (Cambridge University Press), and also made a 15-minute film called Lifelines, with accompanying teaching materials to open up this world to geography students at secondary and higher education levels in the UK, USA and India.

So where did her wanderlust come from? Jane explains that her father, who was a doctor, liked to move around. As a young child she lived in a remote part of Scotland, Australia and – the place that influenced her most – Hong Kong. Jane was only five at the time, but even then was struck by the stark contrast between the rich expat community and the poverty of the Vietnamese boat people.

This interest in inequality is at the heart of her work today. Jane began with an undergraduate degree in zoology at Edinburgh University, and spent several years working on conservation projects in Africa. It was while conducting elephant research in Zimbabwe that she began to realise that she was more interested in the people – how they made use of their resources and managed their environment.

Later, in Edinburgh, she met her future husband Craig Jeffrey, who is now Oxford’s Professor of Development Geography. They share an interest in contemporary society and global development, but while his research focuses on the urban youth of India, hers is in the rural communities. Jane is currently a Fulford Junior Research Fellow at Somerville College and a Research Associate at the School of Geography and the Environment.

Recently, she and Craig stayed in the village for a few months with their own two children. They arrived via a newly built dirt track that allowed transport for the first time. Their daughter, Florence, adapted well; it was getting back to England that proved to be a problem. Jane explains: ‘When we got back she felt isolated by living indoors. She would say, “How will people come and go if we always have the front door closed?”’

This year, Jane took filmmaker Ross Harrison to the village to chart the changes. By 2012 the village had a road, irregular electricity, and a telecommunications tower for mobile phones. It is now relatively straightforward for villagers to study; some even take a higher education course by correspondence. Yet many of the youth are frustrated by the lack of employment opportunities, and the older people (who are largely illiterate) find it hard to support this younger generation. ‘This is the story of a particular village, but it represents many places across the world now,’ says Jane. ‘There is hope for many people, but also a real sense of uncertainty.’

This month she returned to the Himalayas to follow this same cohort she once observed as children, who are now on course for a very different life to the generations that have gone before.

More at www.geog.ox.ac.uk/staff/jdyson.html. You can watch Jane’s film at www.lifelinesfilm.com and find teaching resources and other related materials at www.lifelinesfilm.com/resources
Many of the world's most serious diseases, from influenza to Ebola, began life in animals. But while we may despair when they spill over to humankind, researchers at the Department of Zoology are pinpointing their origins – because finding out may enable us to better handle future outbreaks.

'It's unheard of to be able to point to a creature and say: this was the animal that a human interacted with and eventually caused a pandemic,' explains David Pigott from the Spatial Ecology and Epidemiology Group at the Department of Zoology. 'But there's often a narrative in the scientific literature about hunters or butchers being the link between the two populations.'

'What's happened with Ebola in West Africa in the past year has been like rolling a dice and getting a six, then another, then another...' ,

Perhaps the most famous example is HIV. The virus is known to have been transmitted from monkeys and apes to humans at least 13 times, but only one of those led to the pandemic we live with today: HIV-1 group M, which accounts for over 75 million of all HIV infections to date. There are many genetic forms of HIV-1 group M, but they're all believed to stem from a single transmission from animal to human – we just don't know exactly when or where.

Now, thanks to Dr Nuno Faria and his colleagues at the Department of Zoology, we're getting closer to understanding. 'For the first time, we've been able to analyse a large sample of HIV-1 genetic variants from Central Africa, to reconstruct their ancestral history in time and space,' explains Faria.

The team used dated and located genetic sequences collected from blood specimens between 1959 and the 2000s – including the oldest-known HIV-positive sample – to create a timeline of the evolution of the virus. 'We reconstructed the family tree of HIV-1 group M viruses in the Congo River basin in Central Africa, where the greatest diversity of HIV-1 forms has been found,' explains Faria. Then, using modern-day understanding of how fast the virus evolves, they traced the original ancestor of the pandemic to Kinshasa, capital of what is now the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in around 1920.

From Kinshasa, their findings suggest, the virus spread further across the country between the 1930s and 1950s, most notably to the mining cities Mbuji-Mayi and Lubumbashi in the south. Comparing their results to historical archives, they realised that Kinshasa was growing rapidly at the time, with a very active railway network that carried people – and the virus with them. 'By 1922, 300,000 passengers were using the railway annually,' explains Faria. 'By the end of the 1940s over a million were travelling through the country each year.'

By the 1950s pockets of HIV existed across the entire country. Then, in 1960, the Republic of the Congo as it was then known achieved independence from Belgium, and with it came changes in commercial sex work and public health initiatives against tropical diseases using unsterilised needles. Such social change likely contributed to the explosion in viral infections in the region, and helped HIV become established in the rest of southern Africa. By the time the virus was officially discovered in 1983, it was too late to stop it.

Ultimately, then, the pandemic is a result of bad luck. 'Our research suggests that there was only a small window of opportunity for group M to emerge and spread into a pandemic,' explains Faria. Sadly, it seized it.

It's not, of course, an isolated bout of misfortune. 'What's happened with Ebola in West Africa in the past year has been like rolling a dice and getting a six, then another, then another...' explains Pigott. 'A cascade of rare events that have happened in the right – or wrong – order.' He should know: for the past few months, he's been probing data sets about the transmission of the disease from animal to human in order to establish where future outbreaks are likely to occur.

As with all Ebola outbreaks, West Africa's began when a human came into contact with an infected animal, most likely a bat. Thought to be the major carriers of the disease, at least three different species of fruit bat carry the virus while displaying no symptoms – but they can pass it to humans. 'There's one documented case of ten people sharing a bat carcass – both the butchering process and subsequent consumption,' explains Pigott. 'They all contracted Ebola.'

But what Pigott's really interested in is how likely a new spillover event from the animal kingdom is. Taking known examples of Ebola transfer into humans and information on infection in various animals, he was able to plot their longitude and latitude across Africa. Then, using data about the environment across the entire continent – rainfall, temperature, vegetation and the like – he was able to work out which factors were most common amongst the spillovers. From there, he could predict how likely a new transmission was at any point across Africa.

'The most common factor is vegetation,' he explains, 'which fits with the narrative of Ebola – because the suspected bats live in forested areas.' In contrast to Faria's historic pinpointing, then, Pigott's analysis reveals more broadly where other outbreaks could occur. 'Our map can't do much to help stop the West African situation,' he explains. 'But we can use it to prepare for the future.' If we can test for the Ebola virus in animals where Pigott's maps show the virus could most easily spill over, pre-emptive interventions could ensure that local populations – and the rest of the world – don't fall foul of disease again.

But now, with so many diseases stemming from animals, how do these researchers work out where to focus their attentions next? 'We already figured that out,' smiles Pigott. 'One way of considering it is by weighing how many cases of each disease there are in the world with the amount of work being done to understand where they are. But last time I checked, there were about 45 on my list.'
Teachers looking for new ways to bring mathematics to life have a new resource thanks to a collaboration between Oxfam and Oxford researchers involved in Young Lives, an international study examining the causes and consequences of children’s poverty.

Young Lives is tracking the lives of 12,000 children in four developing countries over 15 years. Its surveys and interviews with the children have yielded insights into the drivers of inequality and provided data for further research in fields ranging from health and gender to early childhood education. Now the stories of some of the children who have taken part in the project are being used to teach core maths skills and engage British children in critical thinking about poverty and inequality.

Called ‘Everyone Counts’, the free resource is available for teachers to download from the Oxfam website.

‘One of the key aims of Young Lives is to highlight the daily reality of poor children’s lives to improve policies for children – and this partnership with Oxfam is a great way of sharing this knowledge with a wider audience in the UK,’ says Caroline Knowles, the Young Lives communications manager based at the University’s Department of International Development.

The Everyone Counts project came about after Knowles shared a copy of a book of profiles of some of the Young Lives study children with Oxfam’s Education and Youth team. The Oxfam team then worked with her on adapting the material into teaching materials for schoolchildren at Key Stage 2 (ages 8 to 12), a process which included piloting in several schools. The Young Lives material has been adapted to focus on the maths curriculum, in particular handling data and measuring time and distance. For example, the school students use data about the daily activities of Young Lives children to calculate and compare time spent on tasks, using analogue clocks and digital 12- and 24-hour clocks. They also use this information to compare how and in what ways their own lives may be similar or different to those of the featured Young Lives children.

‘Even skills such as plotting line graphs can be practised in the context of real-world social awareness’

After being introduced to several of the Young Lives children, such as Afework from Ethiopia, Harika from India and Lien from Vietnam, the school students are encouraged to examine concepts that affect their lives, such as what it means to be ‘doing well’ in life, or the unequal distribution of resources. Even skills such as plotting line graphs can be practised in the context of real-world social awareness, as Everyone Counts includes sessions where the children construct their own graphs based on data about life expectancy around the world or interpret graphs showing changes in GDP per capita in Young Lives countries.

Liz Newbon is Oxfam’s Education and Youth Adviser, and was a writer for Everyone Counts. She explains: ‘Real-life data is in constant demand by teachers for two reasons: first, its use is encouraged by the curriculum and by Ofsted, and second because it has the capacity to engage pupils more effectively in their learning. In this case, Everyone Counts enables pupils to explore how inequality affects the lives of children in different parts of the globe, at a time when a growing gap between rich and poor is being seen in many countries around the world.’

While the material has already been endorsed by the Maths Association in the UK, the Young Lives team hopes to develop Everyone Counts for use in developing countries themselves. Knowles recalls visiting Peru in 2010 with a Young Lives researcher and discovering children in shanty towns outside Lima using English-language teaching materials that included exercises in identifying tube stops on the London Underground.

‘Nothing could have been further from their world or the possibilities open to them,’ she reflects. ‘We have already adapted some of our research material to be used for English-language textbooks in Ethiopia and are looking for ways to adapt these materials as well to give children in developing countries access to more resources that are child-focused and relevant to their lives and contexts.’

More information at www.younglives.org.uk and maths teaching resources at www.oxfam.org.uk/education/resources/everyone-counts
Rich data from the Young Lives study have been used by Oxfam to develop teaching materials for children in the UK.
The University's pilot Temporary Staffing Service is proving a big success, finds Sally Croft

What do you do when a vital admin or clerical worker suddenly calls in sick or hands in his or her notice? How do you arrange some holiday cover or get extra help when it’s particularly busy or there’s a special project underway? For many departments, the answer is to call a recruitment agency and arrange for temporary staff to come in. Sometimes that works fine, but sometimes your temp just isn’t up to speed with University systems and practices and actually needs quite a lot of support.

In June this year the University launched a pilot project to explore the feasibility of running its own internal agency-style bank of temporary workers, available to be deployed at short notice when departments need them. Working with pilot departments across all divisions, the Temporary Staffing Service (TSS) has set about recruiting people who want to work at the University, initially focusing on clerical and administrative roles but with a view to expanding in due course into other areas such as finance and project management.

‘Candidates mostly come to us as a result of our advert on the University website or via word of mouth,’ says Annie Harris, TSS Manager. ‘We’re getting about six to ten enquiries a day. We have a phone conversation to check they have relevant experience, vet them and look at their CV and then ask them in for a more detailed assessment. If we then take them on, we do any necessary checks, such as their right to work in the UK, and also – and this is a big plus for the departments – we organise their University Card, email and single sign-on, so they’re all ready to be parachuted into a job. We can also organise online information security training and there are plans to develop this to include other online training courses.’

Many of the candidates who apply already have University experience – perhaps a previous fixed-term contract – or are keen to become familiar with University systems to enhance their CVs. The flexible nature of temporary work – full or part time, short or longer contract – is also very attractive. ‘Some candidates may be existing University part-time workers who want to take on a few more hours, or perhaps they’ve retired but still want to do some work,’ explains Annie. ‘We also take on some DPhil students and the Careers Service sometimes refers suitable people to us if, say, they want some temporary work while thinking through their career options. It’s also very pleasing that we’re now seeing departments pointing good applicants who were shortlisted for permanent posts in our direction.’

‘We organise their University Card, email and single sign-on, so they’re all ready to be parachuted into a job’

An important aim of the TSS is to retain candidates with University-based expertise within the University by finding them successive posts in different locations, thus broadening their training and experience. There are currently 65 candidates working for the TSS and 150 assignments have so far been filled. One temp has already worked in five areas.

Another goal is to offer departments a fast, tailored service that understands their needs and saves them both administrative time and money. As soon as a department asks for a temporary worker, TSS staff identify available candidates whose skills closely match the requirements. The hiring manager chooses who to interview (if required) from a shortlist and the TSS arranges the interviews.

The TSS aims only to cover its set-up and what we do. To date we have filled 34 three posts via the TSS, and each candidate has subsequently gone on to be appointed to the permanent post they initially filled while we were recruiting.’

Lynne Hirsch, Head of Humanities Administration and Divisional Secretary, has used the TSS to fill administrative posts in the divisional office, including the Executive Assistant to the Head of Division. She comments: ‘It’s been a genuine pleasure engaging with TSS, owing to its very high quality and personalised service. It understands better than external agencies the University’s administrative requirements and does a much better job in matching candidates with posts. It’s a fantastic initiative that saves administrators filling temporary vacancies time and trouble.’

With a successful pilot behind it, TSS looks set to roll out across the University in early 2015.

More information at www.admin.ox.ac.uk/tss
WHAT'S ON

EXHIBITIONS

William Blake: Apprentice and Master
4 December 2014–1 March 2015
Ashmolean Museum
www.ashmolean.org/exhibitions/williamblake
Major exhibition focusing on the life and work of William Blake (1757–1827), printmaker, painter and revolutionary poet of the prophetic books.

Remembering Radcliffe: 300 years of science and philanthropy
Until 20 March 2015
Exhibition Room, Bodleian Library
www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/whats-on
The Bodleian’s winter exhibition celebrates the life and legacy of John Radcliffe, the physician and philanthropist who left a lasting mark on the University and city of Oxford.

LECTURES AND TALKS

‘Mine angry and defrauded young’
Tuesday 2 December, 5.30pm
Examination Schools
www.english.ox.ac.uk/news-events/regular-events/professor-poetry
Lecture by Professor of Poetry Sir Geoffrey Hill.

Strategies for vaccines for the 21st century
Thursday 4 December, 3.30pm
Oxford Martin School, 34 Broad Street
www.oxfordmartin.ox.ac.uk/events
With a new outbreak of the Ebola virus claiming thousands of lives in Africa, does a successful strategy for creating and delivering new vaccines require a whole new approach?

The 2015 UK elections and the role of leader-writing
Friday 5 December, 5pm
Butler Room, Nuffield College
reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/page/seminars
Talk by associate editor of The Guardian Martin Kettle.

Anglo-Saxon Christmas
Thursday 11 December, 2pm
Lecture Theatre, Ashmolean Museum
Tickets £5 / £4
www.ashmolean.org/events
Talk by Professor M J Toswell of the University of Western Ontario about the Anglo-Saxon Christmas, the earlier traditions of midwinter festivals and how they merged with Christian nativity stories.

CONCERTS

Simply Gershwin
Wednesday 3 December, 7.30pm
St John the Evangelist Church, Iffley Road
Tickets £18 / £16.50
www.sje-oxford.org/events.html
Pianist Viv McLean and soprano Sarah Gabriel perform a selection of Gershwin favourites. All proceeds from the concert will go to the St John the Evangelist building restoration fund.

OSJ Proms 2014: Christmas Concert
Sunday 14 December, 7.30pm
Ashmolean Museum
Tickets £25 / £10
www.osj.org.uk
Programme of Christmas music with OSJ Ashmolean Voices, taking inspiration from the museum’s collections.

DRAMA

First Episode by Terence Rattigan
Friday 28 and Saturday 29 November
Simpkins Lee Theatre, Lady Margaret Hall
Tickets £15 / £35 (gala performance)
www.lmh.ox.ac.uk/events
First-ever revival of Terence Rattigan’s earliest play, written while he was still a student. Proceeds from ticket sales will support Lady Margaret Hall’s new building project.

WORKSHOPS

Christmas wreath-making
Saturday 6 December, 10am–12.30pm or 1.30–4pm
Harcourt Arboretum
Tickets £45
www.harcourt-arboretum.ox.ac.uk/whats
Make your own moss-based wreath using natural materials from the Botanic Garden and Harcourt Arboretum, including berries, seed pods, dried flowers and pine cones.

FAMILY FRIENDLY

Christmas Carol Tea Party
Monday 1 December, 3pm
McKenna Room, Christ Church
Tickets £25
www.chch.ox.ac.uk/conferences/chch-events/teas
Celebrate the festive season with an afternoon tea inspired by Dickens’ description of Scrooge’s first encounter with the Ghost of Christmas Present.

Creatures of the Zodiac
Saturday 13 December, 2–4pm
Museum of the History of Science
www.mhs.ox.ac.uk/events
Discover the Zodiac and make decorative hanging stars or a magical celestial dial. Drop-in event suitable for children aged 5 upwards.

SPECIAL EVENTS

AfterHours: Folklore and Storytelling
Thursday 4 December, 6.30–9.30pm
Pitt Rivers Museum
www.prm.ox.ac.uk/afterhours.html
Late-night event at the museum – explore the rich folkloric collections, listen to a talk about Victorian anthropologist Edward Burnett Tylor, and enjoy live music and poetry reading.

Geek out!
Saturday 6 December, 10am–5pm
Museum of the History of Science
www.mhs.ox.ac.uk/events
A day of retro-gaming with the Sinclair ZX Spectrum and the BBC Micro, plus a recreation of Mahler’s First Symphony for an orchestra of Spectrums!

Bone density screening day
Tuesday 20 January
Iffley Road Sports Centre
Test fee £30
www.ox.ac.uk/event/bone-density-screening-day
Find out whether you could be at risk from osteoporosis by undergoing a short test to measure your bone density.
Some 350 years ago, Oxford University struck a deal to put a new building on a site formerly occupied by seven widows’ cottages. It was agreed that the University would pay £7 twice a year to a small charity – one pound for each cottage. That same year, the foundation stone of what was to become the Sheldonian Theatre was laid on the site.

The Sheldonian was the first major building designed by Sir Christopher Wren, who was at the time Oxford’s Savilian Professor of Astronomy. He chose a classical style evoking the amphitheatres of ancient Rome, which made the building look strikingly different from other buildings in Oxford in the 17th century. The theatre was built between 1664 and 1669 and was funded by Gilbert Sheldon, the Archbishop of Canterbury and Chancellor of the University, after whom it is named. Inside the building is a famous painting on the ceiling by Robert Streater; it depicts Truth descending upon the Arts and Sciences to expel ignorance from the University. The theatre was built to hold the University’s degree-giving ceremonies, with a printing house underneath to accommodate the developing Oxford University Press. It remains the University’s ceremonial hall today and is also used for concerts, drinks receptions, meetings, lectures and talks.

The Sheldonian Theatre is planning a series of celebrations over the next few years, culminating in an exhibition in 2019 to mark the 350th anniversary of the opening of the building. The celebrations began this month, with a performance of Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony on 16 November by a specially formed Sheldonian Anniversary Orchestra and Chorus conducted by Dr Paul Coones, the Chairman of the Curators of the Sheldonian. ‘Beethoven’s Ninth was chosen because it was the symphony performed by Richard Wagner after he laid the first stone of the Bayreuth Festspielhaus in Germany,’ says Dr Coones.

Unsurprisingly for a building nearing its 350th birthday, significant work has been carried out on the theatre in the last decade. A four-year restoration of the painting on the ceiling began in 2004. The 32 panels were temporarily removed and had their linings replaced, holes in the canvas fixed and over-painting removed before being put back in the ceiling in 2008. During the conservation process, architectural paint researchers noticed that the original colour scheme chosen by Wren had been painted over in the 1720s. The theatre was restored to Wren’s original vision.

With the refurbishment work having been completed, the Sheldonian Theatre began offering tours this summer. Its one-hour guided tour, which runs from May to October, explains the history of the theatre and of the University. Visitors can see the Ladies Gallery, the Cupola, the Clarendon Quadrangle, Radcliffe Square and the Bodleian Quadrangle. Self-guided tours are also available all year round, subject to the opening hours listed on the Sheldonian’s website.

‘The tours have been very popular, with 98% of visitors giving us a rating of “excellent”, and we recently received Visit England Accreditation, which puts us in the top 5% of tourist venues in England,’ says Kay Hogg, Senior Event Marketing Manager at the Sheldonian Theatre. ‘We encourage University staff to visit. All University members can access the theatre for free, with up to four guests, and benefit from a discounted rate for a guided tour.’

The Sheldonian looks set to be busier than ever as it celebrates its anniversary over the next few years – as long as the University keeps paying its biannual £7 lease on the site. ‘We neglected to pay in recent years so now I check regularly to make sure it is getting paid,’ Dr Coones explains. ‘It’s the sort of thing that could only happen in Oxford.’

For more information about tours (which will run from May to October 2015) and other events at the Sheldonian Theatre, visit www.sheldon.ox.ac.uk
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WHY AM I HERE?

RAYMOND KILICK
Head chef, St Anne’s College

How big is the catering team at St Anne’s?
The Brigade consists of the head chef (me), deputy head chef, two second chefs, one senior third chef, four third chefs and one fourth chef – ten chefs in all. A deputy or second chef is in charge of the operation at all times. The kitchen is divided into sections so, for example, two chefs will be working in the main course section, one on the vegetable section and one on the sweet section; the other chefs will be doing the prep for plated dinners. There are also four kitchen porters who wash up (not by hand!) and also clean the kitchen and put stores away. In addition, five or six casual staff will clean and wash up at busy times.

What does your own job entail?
The efficient and smooth running of the kitchen! My job involves the planning of staff rotas, menu compilation, catering costings, health and safety requirements, budget control and food ordering. I’m pleased to report that the kitchen recently scored the coveted 5 stars as ‘scores on the doors’ for cleanliness.

How many do you feed in term time?
On a daily basis we cater for 120 for breakfast, 320 at lunch time and 275 for dinner.

And what about outside term?
St Anne’s has a conference business which generates in excess of £2m a year – mostly academic-related conferences plus summer schools, day events and formal plated dinners. It’s not unusual during the height of the season (June and July) to be hosting eight or more events at the same time.
Our impressive stock of meeting space, together with the can-do approach of the staff, enables us to do this. Last year we organised over 900 events.

What’s your favourite college function?
I’d have to say the staff Christmas lunch – it’s very relaxing and a time when non-academic staff and SCR come together. There is a raffle, unlimited wine and time for a few corny jokes. The money raised from the raffle goes to local charities.

Your childhood ambition?
Just to be happy. But my first actual job was a paper round.

So how did you get to your current job?
I worked in a kitchen on a casual basis at the age of 15 and thoroughly enjoyed the teamwork and atmosphere. I then attended a catering course at the University of Reading and was hooked. I began my career at the Institute of Directors in London, moved to Pergamon Press and then joined St Anne’s some 25 years ago as head chef.

What do you most enjoy cooking? And least?
I love cooking Sunday lunch at home as it’s a lovely way to relax. Pastry is my least favourite item as it can be tricky and I have never discovered the knack – luckily several of my chefs have, though!

What’s the most important meal you’ve ever cooked?
The Guild of Chefs Dinner, which is held at a different Oxford college each year. It is extremely challenging as a number of local catering professionals attend and there is a degree of competition. My menu consisted of quail and avocado salad with raspberry vinaigrette, fillet of beef with baby veg and a red wine jus, and pear tatin.

Any near-disasters in the kitchen?
On one occasion, the gas supply was cut off during service. Fortunately St Anne’s has two kitchens so we had to transfer to the other one. That really was a nightmare when catering for a large number!

Who’s your favourite TV chef?
Raymond Blanc. His passion for using the finest ingredients stands out, together with his eye for detail.

Favourite activities outside work? Football, horse racing, rugby and fine dining. My favourite is the Waterside Restaurant run by Alain Roux. The maitre d’ and his team, together with Alain, are so welcoming and friendly and as a chef I get to have a guided tour of the kitchen and he will throw in an extra course! My partner, Lisa, also loves going there.

What will you be serving in college for the Christmas festivities?
Very traditional: roast turkey with all the trimmings, preceded by melon and followed by Christmas pud.

And finally, what would you choose for your own ‘last supper’?
Seabass with lemon risotto; loin of lamb with a red wine jus, cauliflower cheese and roast potatoes; glazed apple tart with vanilla ice cream; accompanied by an unoaked chardonnay.