



# CONNECTIONS

OxRSS provides Oxford research staff with a voice and networking opportunities

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## CONNECT WITH US

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✉ [committee@oxrss.ox.ac.uk](mailto:committee@oxrss.ox.ac.uk)



@ResStaffOxford



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## WITTENHAM CLUMPS WALKING TOUR

It has been a few weeks since our last walk tour around Wytham woods before the summer. With the new term approaching, we started a new series of walk tours with a lovely trip to Wittenham Clumps. The clumps are a pair of grassy hills along-



side the Thames, which are known for their iconic 'clumps' of Beech trees on the respective hilltops. In addition to providing excellent views of the surrounding area, being an Iron Age fort the hills are also rich with history. We took bus X40 from Oxford to the old Roman town Dorchester, and crossed the river Thames to visit the clumps. After exploring the hilltop and the neighbouring woods, we walked to the village Benson for a break at the Waterfront café, with a stunning view over the river. The weather was particularly nice, with the beautiful sunshine lighting up everything in shades of gold and green. This was a joint walk with the Oxford University Walking Club, and we gathered a good number of people from both societies. The full length of the walk was 17km, while people also got an option to return at 10km after a short break at the café. With fascinating views along the Thames path and over the clumps, there is nothing quite as lovely as exploring a corner of Oxfordshire that most had not visited before.

By Miaoqing Yang

## FORTHCOMING EVENTS

- Every Thursday, Pub Socials, check social media for location
- 15 October, Board Games Night, Thirsty Meeples
- 26 October, Uncomfortable Oxford Walking tour "literary edition"
- 31 October, End of month social, University Club, Mansfield Road
- 18 November, Fellowships and interviews workshop
- 28 November, End of month social, University Club, Mansfield Road
- 13 December, Somerville College Christmas Dinner

## SECOND NATIONAL POSTDOC MEETING – SHAPING POSTDOC CULTURE

By Gwilym Rowlands, Aino Jarvelin, Anjali Shah

Friday the 13th, unlucky for some, but not all of us as we joined over 350 post-docs (the largest staff group within OxRSS) attending (in person or remotely) the Second National Postdoc Meeting - “Shaping Postdoc Culture”. How would our experiences at Oxford resonate with other attendees?

A buzz of energy filled the room as we sat down to hear plenary speaker David McAllister, Associate Director of Research & Innovation Talent UK Research and Innovation (UKRI). Did you know there are ~65,000 Post-docs in the UK? David gave a passionate and at times refreshingly frank talk about the many challenges facing Post-docs. With frequent references to the Researcher Development Concordat (more on that in the next issue), David acknowledged the importance to UKRI and the research councils of nurturing the research talent pipeline; that post-docs push the frontiers of knowledge and, while unnamed on most grants, represent more than 60% of funding. He described the responsibilities of funders, institutions, managers and researchers themselves to build a ‘supportive and inclusive research culture’.

David’s talk was followed by a rich and vibrant

discussion, with Dr Candy Hassall - Welcome Trust, Tinu Cornish – Director Sea Change Consultancy, Samyukta Mukhopadhyay - Civil Service Fast Stream, Dr Emma Williams - EJW Solutions, and David Payne - Chief Careers Editor, Springer Nature all fielding questions. Some key messages: Post-docs are ‘professional researchers’ – consider yourself as such; you can get co-investigator status on UKRI grants; that post-docs have so much to offer society in terms of skills and expertise.

An afternoon filled with workshops gave us a chance to reflect on career paths and progression both within and outside academia. We’ll be taking much from the meeting and hope you’ll join us to shape a positive culture for post-docs, and all research staff at Oxford.



## NEW EVENTS TEAM: BIGGER, FUNNIER AND MORE CREATIVE!

By Liliana Cifuentes

The events team is having a great time organising a huge variety of activities, thanks to our enthusiastic new Events team members:

- Caroline Korell and Thibault Lestang are leading pub drinks every Thursday in different locations
- Omar Rivas, Raul Toledano, Kata Aruni and Miaoqing Yang invite us to dance with latin rhythms
- Christopher Irving and Miaoqing Yang are leading the walking tours beyond Oxford, the ideal way to relax and have fun

- Louise Bezuidenhout is guiding walking tours across Oxford
- Ines Rombach is leading the Badminton sessions, offering a fun and exciting sport
- Ravi Shivaraman and Caroline Korrell are leading the board games nights

If you would like to join us or you want some events to be organized, please contact:

Liliana.cifuentesgutierrez@ndorms.ox.ac.uk

## NEW PUB THURSDAY SOCIALS

By Caroline Korell

In September OxRSS introduced a new regular Thursday event, which has already been well visited.

The first Thursday Pub Social was held on 5 September in Big Society on Cowley Road, followed by a gathering of 12 people in the Cape of Good Hope on the 12 September.

People have enjoyed mingling with researchers from other departments over a pint or some food in a



relaxed and inclusive atmosphere.

Pub Thursdays will continue to be held in a different pub on Thursday from 6.30pm onwards which allows people to be flexible in their attendance. Looking forward to meet you there!

Another new regular event was trialed last Tuesday 10 September at the Thirsty Meeples Boardgame Cafe. Researchers were invited to sign up and bring a £6 cover fee which gave them access to any board game available for 3 hours. For those who were hungry, peckish or thirsty, Thirsty Meeples catered well for. 10 researchers turned up and split into two tables of 5, each of which enjoyed learning 3 new games. A cafe's own so-called 'game guru' assisted each table with choosing new games and then explaining the rules. There was a good mix of cooperation as well as competition and there has already been queries for more Boardgame events. Keep your eyes peeled for any updates in the future newsletters!

## FEATURED EVENTS

### Group Bike Ride to Brill

By Michael Cadilhac

On 23 June, a group of OxRSS members set on the bike 30 miles - at a leisurely pace. And leisure there was, since the group stopped after 15 miles at a pub in Brill, and after 10 more miles at a beer festival in Littleworth.

### "Pick your own" at Rectory Farm

By Liliana Cifuentes

On Saturday 15 June, despite the wet weather, we wanted to chase our dream, picking and bringing home the best strawberries... and we conquered! My toddler enjoyed the bouncy castle, sandpit and the hay stack.



Riders take a much-deserved break



## USEFUL RESOURCES

### Career development, workshops, fairs and personal development

#### [Careers Service](#)

For one-on-one meetings with a Careers Adviser, and workshops and events specific for research staff.

#### [Code of Practice for the Employment and Career Development of Research Staff](#)

The University's commitment to supporting the careers of researchers.

#### [People and Organisational Development](#)

Obtain support for personal and professional development via courses and seminars on management, teaching, and personal development.

#### [Support for researchers](#)

This website contains information on support available to research staff from across the University.

#### [Vitae](#)

The national researcher development organisation.

### Other resources

#### [Health and safety](#)

For information on occupational health and welfare

#### [IT services](#)

For technological and computing assistance.

#### [New research staff](#)

This website provides information for research staff who recently joined Oxford.

#### [Welcome Service](#)

Welcome service for University members and their partners.

### Social opportunities

#### [Oxford University Newcomers' Club](#)

For partners' of researchers, graduate students and staff to meet each other.

#### [Oxford University Club](#)

Members and staff of the University are welcome to this sports and social club.

#### [Facebook](#)

Like the [OxRSS page](#) for the latest news and events!

#### [OxRSS Email List](#)

To join, please visit [www.oxrss.ox.ac.uk](http://www.oxrss.ox.ac.uk) and click the link "Sign up to the Research Staff Mailing List"

## THE OXRSS COMMITTEE



Contact us: [committee@oxrss.ox.ac.uk](mailto:committee@oxrss.ox.ac.uk)

#### Editorial team:

Fabian Schranz, Anjali Shah

#### Written and photographic contributions:

Michael Cadilhac, Aino Jarvelin, Caroline Korell,  
Liliana Cifuentes, Gwilym Rowlands, Miaoqing Yang