

Observe

The magazine of Oxford Brookes University

OXFORD
BROOKES
UNIVERSITY

ROWING MACHINE

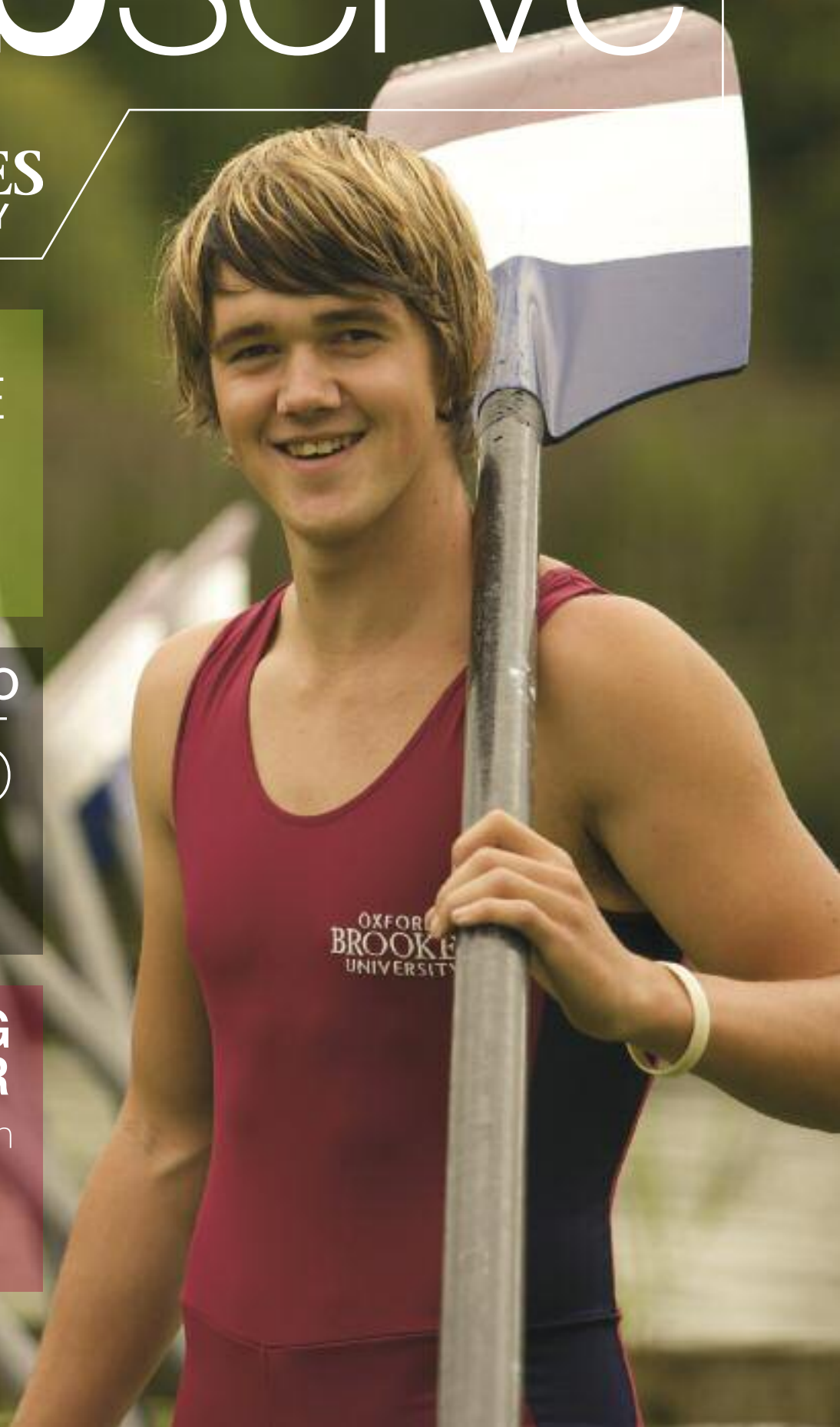
Boat club
glory

LOOKING TO 2015

Building for
the future

WORKING SMARTER

Helping children
succeed



Observe Magazine Autumn 2009

Observe is for everyone who's interested in what's going on at the university. We hope that our former students, our neighbours in Oxford, our donors and supporters will find this a good way to keep in touch with Oxford Brookes. We also want to make sure that colleagues in other universities, colleges and schools will learn more about what we do. And for the staff and students on campus, we thank you for the developments you champion and the innovative projects that we've been able to share.

The magazine is also available on our website, www.brookes.ac.uk/publications/observe

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Cover photograph

With special thanks to rower Mason Shoebridge who appears on our cover, pictured at the Oxford Brookes Boathouse, Cholsey, photographed by Christopher Cornwell. An undergraduate who is studying Sport and Exercise Science, Mason first started rowing when he came to Oxford Brookes. He is proud to have been in the crew that won the novice category at the Head of the River Race earlier this year. 'Considering we only started training last September and actually got to go out on the river in December it was a good year. It just shows how good Brookes is at training people up from complete beginners,' he said.

Find out more about rowing at Brookes on page 10.

Welcome

from the Vice-Chancellor



'We are now ready to make some significant decisions in order to enhance our academic quality – in teaching and research – and our physical environment.'

I write to you at a very challenging time. Universities everywhere are being charged with ever greater responsibilities to underpin the success of local, national and international communities and economies. Here at Oxford Brookes we have every reason to be optimistic about the next ten years, but confidence in our future must be balanced against a backdrop of a squeeze on public finances and increasing international competition.

We are, however, ready to make some significant decisions in order to enhance our academic quality – in teaching and research – and our physical environment. I know that my colleagues and the students of Oxford Brookes will embrace this agenda for change and, later in the year, we will release our new mission and strategy to 2020 (www.brookes.ac.uk/2020). This strategy will be built on the contributions made by staff, students, supporters and alumni when they participated in our strategic discussions over the last year.

Oxford Brookes University is firmly established and admired in the higher education sector in the UK and internationally. But our buildings are increasingly unfit for 21st century learning, teaching and research. We have already put considerable energy and thought into our development plans for the Headington, Wheatley and Harcourt Hill campuses. We have come a long way from our beginnings in 1865, when, as the School of Art, we

occupied a single room on the ground floor of the Taylorian Institute in the centre of Oxford. When John Henry Brookes became Principal, he had 19 sites scattered around Oxford. As we move towards our 150th anniversary in 2015 we need to transform our campuses. We have an ambitious development programme and I hope that we will have new, stunning spaces in which to hold our 2015 celebrations and I look forward to keeping you up-to-date with our progress.

Whichever chapter of our history you are part of, I hope you will enjoy reading about some current activities in this magazine and take an active interest in the plans we are making.

With every good wish

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Janet Beer". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Professor Janet Beer
Vice-Chancellor
Oxford Brookes University

PARLIAMENT BACKS BROOKES TO DRIVE TECHNOLOGY FORWARD



The Oxford Brookes Formula Student team with a conventional and hybrid car outside the Palace of Westminster

A student-built hybrid race car won acclaim from MPs when it went on display at the Houses of Parliament. Parliamentarians dropped by Old Palace Yard to see the fuel efficient car that Oxford Brookes motorsports students designed for the Formula Student competition.

Brookes students have been the top UK university team at Formula Student competitions more times than any other over the past 10 years and were the only university to bring a working hybrid to the starting grid in 2008.

The new hybrid has a much smaller engine than conventional race cars and is assisted by an electric motor.

Secretary of State for the

Environment, Hilary Benn, was amongst the MPs who found out more about the engineering design skills involved.

He commented: 'Hybrid cars are part of the future in terms of trying to get more out of less and trying to reduce emissions. I've been really impressed with the keenness of the students and the efforts they're making.'

He added: 'In the fight against climate change, we're going to need all the help we can get from changing behaviour, through using materials and fuel much more efficiently than we've done in the past and science will be a really important part of this. These young people are helping to build the future and let's hope this car is part of

it.' Koen Sannen is studying for a master's in motorsports: 'Motorsports has always been at the top of automotive engineering, so it's really important that it takes the step to alternative fuels and energies and as a Formula Student team we need to be at the forefront of the latest technologies.'



TRIO SCOOP NATIONAL TEACHING ACCOLADES

Three Oxford Brookes academics have won national recognition for exceptional teaching.

Each year, 50 of the UK's best university and college teachers are awarded National Teaching Fellowships from the Higher Education Academy (HEA). The HEA singled Brookes out, saying it was 'an exceptional achievement' for three to be awarded to one university.

Professor Janet Beer, Brookes' Vice-Chancellor, said the university championed innovative lecturers: 'This award confirms the fact that Brookes is home to some of the UK's best university teaching.'

The three Brookes fellows are Berry O'Donovan, Head of Learning and Teaching Development at the Business School, Dr Helen Walkington, Principal Lecturer in Geography at the School of Social Sciences and Law, and Jude Carroll, Principal Lecturer in the Oxford Centre for Staff and Learning Development (OCSLD).

Berry runs workshops where her students learn how to evaluate their own work prior to an assessed task.

This equips them with a deeper

understanding of assessment needs and criteria. Another initiative is the module assistant scheme which employs students to help lecturers with the administration of their modules. 'Everyone benefits,' she says. 'Students gain insight into academia from "the other side" and valuable work experience while staff learn to work in a productive partnership with their students.'

Helen believes 'geography is learnt through the soles of your feet' and has taken her teaching out of the lecture theatre and into the field, allowing undergraduates to carry out field-based research through placements, expeditions, trips and experiential learning courses.

Helen was awarded a University Teaching Fellowship for setting up a journal of undergraduate research for the geography department.

Jude has led hundreds of educational development workshops around the world that make use of creative and innovative activities to help colleagues deter plagiarism.

SKILLS AND CONFIDENCE BOOST FOR THE SOUTH-EAST

Job-seekers and businesses are being offered a raft of training measures by Oxford Brookes to help steer them through choppy economic waters.

Brookes won £473,680 to help thousands of unemployed people in the most deprived areas of Oxford boost their skills, qualifications and confidence and to give hundreds of innovative businesses in the region masterclasses in competitiveness.

The cash came on top of a larger £2.7 million pot to train workers in higher skills.

The latest award, made by the Higher Education Funding Council for England, will help Brookes build on ongoing projects and complement existing programmes from organisations like Jobcentre Plus, Train to Gain, Business Link and Oxford Innovation. Individuals, including students, will be steered towards successful careers or given help starting

their own business while innovative firms will get help to ride out the economic downturn and become more competitive in the process.

Funding from the Economic Challenge Investment Fund (ECIF), has allowed Oxford Brookes to offer help in the following ways:

Short courses at greatly reduced rates — *Trading in Difficult Times* covers all aspects of surviving in business in a recessionary climate. *Business for Starters* is a collaborative initiative designed to help individuals in the early years of their new business ventures.

For further details contact +44 (0) 1865 485858 or email business@brookes.ac.uk

Careers Centre — we are able to extend our services until the end of October 2010 to all unemployed graduates (from any year and any university) residing in Oxfordshire. For further details of services contact +44 (0) 1865 484670 or email careers@brookes.ac.uk

BROOKES RATED ONE OF THE UK'S GREENEST

Oxford Brookes has been judged one of the greenest universities in the country. It moved up 13 places to number three in the rankings compiled by the student campaigning group People & Planet.

Institutions are ranked according to their environmental performance in areas such as carbon emissions, recycling rates, and using renewable energy sources.

Brookes has been at the forefront of environmental initiatives which have now been adopted at many other universities across the UK.



Solar-powered electric bike on campus

Harriet Waters, Sustainability Manager, commented: 'It has been lauded for the way it encourages staff and students to use the Brookes Bus. Brookes established its first environmental policy in 1997 and became the world's first Fairtrade university in 2003.'

'The university has been an early adopter in many areas of sustainability such as Fairtrade, sustainable transport planning and environmental management systems and crucially has kept the momentum going.'

Brookes has secured £250,000 in funding for carbon reduction projects through the EcoCampus Scheme.

It has adopted a Corporate Responsibility Programme and last year expanded its Sustainability Team to four.

Brookes is now prioritising environmental issues in the campus redevelopment plans.



ALL ABOARD NEW BROOKES BUS

The UK's most environmentally friendly bus company has teamed up with Oxford Brookes to launch a new fleet of low emission Brookes Buses.

Eleven buses are now running between Wheatley, Headington and Harcourt Hill campuses as part of the new five-year £2.2 million partnership between Oxford Bus Company and Brookes.

One of the first passengers to use their new 'Brookes Key' smartcard was Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Rex Knight, who said: 'This new partnership will bring enormous benefits for both university staff and students and the people of Oxford.'

'As one of the UK's top green universities, Brookes wanted to work with a bus company with an outstanding environmental record. Our travel survey shows the Brookes Bus is already the most popular way for students to travel to campus – with 37% using the bus compared with 8% using a car. As part of our sustainable travel plan we expect the number of journeys taken on the Brookes Bus to increase from 1.7 million a year to 2 million and this will have a positive impact on carbon emissions.'

All the buses boast leather seats, onboard information screens and free WiFi access.

Services include a real-time information system while the smartcards can be topped up over the internet. An independent study carried out by transport consultancy the TAS Partnership ranks Oxford Bus Company as having the most environmentally friendly fleet in Britain.

NEW FUNCTIONAL FOOD CENTRE PUTS WELL-BEING ON THE MENU

Nutritionists at Oxford Brookes University have opened the country's first dedicated Functional Food Centre to scientifically assess the role of ingredients in health and well-being.

Distinguished academics from around the world as well as dozens of VIPs from global food companies attended the centre's launch.

Heart disease, diabetes and obesity are three chronic health problems associated with poor diet.

'Our primary goal is to improve the health and well-being of people around the world,' said Professor Jeya Henry, the Functional Food Centre's Director.

Until now, there have been limited centres in the UK for the provision of reliable and impartial food research.

Professor Henry explained: 'At a time of growing interest in food and nutrition there is a wave of misinformation and mistrust.'

Set up in the university's School of Life Sciences, the centre will work with consumer groups, companies, governments and NGOs.

One of its central aims is to help companies develop new products with specific health benefits.

It will identify functional food ingredients that may help prevent disease, conduct clinical trials, collect data to support food health claims, run feasibility studies for large-scale production and provide training and education for health professionals and the public alike.

Professor Henry and Dr Helen Lightowler lead the centre's 12-strong team.

In recent years they have developed low GI (glycaemic index) bread, a salt substitute and a low fat potato chip. 'We are now able to offer a service that looks at food from the farm to the fork,' added Professor Henry.



Professor Jeya Henry at Millets Farm Centre, Abingdon

HELP FOR AFRICAN SCHOLARS

Top African students are in line for generous financial support thanks to an education charity linking up with Oxford Brookes University.

Trustees of the Allan and Nesta Ferguson Charitable Trust, which provides educational opportunities to students from developing countries, pledged £90,000 over three years to boost Brookes' African Scholarship Scheme (BASS).

Brookes will match funding for each of the nine Ferguson scholarships, which amount to three £10,000 scholarships a year over the three-year period.

The university offers support for students from the developing world to

help build their skills — meaning they can return to their home countries to make a difference.

The university created BASS, a fundraising project, to provide financial support for African students in a range of one-year master's degree courses.

Ian Steadman, Brookes'

Development Director, commented:

'Elnora Ferguson, who sadly passed away in December 2008 shortly after our proposal was submitted to her, would be thrilled to see this development. Brookes will be making a difference to the lives of African students: a project that was always close to her heart.'

ARCHAEOLOGIST IN MAJOR TV DOCUMENTARY

The epic journey of our earliest ancestors out of Africa, and the work of a Brookes lecturer into just how the small tribes survived, featured in the BBC series *The Incredible Human Journey*.

Dr Jeffrey Rose was interviewed by presenter Dr Alice Roberts in the first episode of the major BBC2 series examining how humans colonised the world.

He explained that what looked like a scattering of black rocks was in fact a remarkable array of Stone Age tools, lying abandoned where they were discarded anything up to 70,000 years ago.

The documentary showed Dr Rose exploring the desert by motorbike, searching for signs that early man once lived in a remote corner of

present-day Oman in the Arabian Peninsula.

Dr Rose has secured a prestigious Early Career Research Grant of £205,000 for fieldwork into prehistoric sites in the Dhofar Mountains, southern Arabia.

The project, running from July 2009 until June 2012, involves three seasons of survey and excavation in the Sultanate of Oman, as well as an accompanying PhD studentship.

Dr Rose joined the Department of Anthropology and Geography in September 2007. His areas of interest include prehistoric archaeology, human evolution, stone tool technology, rock art, comparative religions and the mythology of the ancient Near East.



Dr Jeffrey Rose scans a desert in Oman

LOVE WITH LIMITS

Becoming a parent is one of the most – if not the most – important jobs there is. And if families go through a stormy patch it can be difficult for mums and dads to find somewhere to turn for advice, particularly during the turbulent teenage years.

Support is now at hand thanks to a short course developed at Oxford Brookes University proven to steer families through danger periods and help them become stronger in the process.

Dr Debby Allen and Lindsey Coombes from the School of Health and Social Care have been training support workers throughout the UK who then roll the courses out to families in their regions.

The Strengthening Families Programme is aimed at parents from all walks of life with children between the ages of 10 and 14.

Conceived in America, the programme is one of the few proven to reduce antisocial and aggressive behaviour and improve school attendance and attitude to lessons. It also deals with



Sherry Knight took the Strengthening Families Programme with her children Marcus and Stephanie Chambers

issues of how to handle children who parents fear may be experimenting with alcohol and drugs.

'10 to 14 is a period of huge change and stress,' says Dr Allen. 'It is the period families find the most difficult and when problems can develop. It's the riskiest period of childhood for family breakdowns.'

According to figures from the United States, young people who have been on the course are less aggressive and violent and are 40 per cent less likely to get drunk and far less likely (56 per cent) to use marijuana.

The seven-week course, broken up into two-hour sessions, involves games, discussions, skill-building activities and videos.

Teenagers are encouraged to tackle powerful emotions, be responsible and handle peer pressure.

SCHOLARSHIP SCHEME WINS TOP AWARD

A scholarship scheme that enables exceptional pupils from around the region to study at Oxford Brookes has received a prestigious national award. David Lammy, the Minister of State for Higher Education, visited Brookes and met students who have benefited from the scheme.

State schools nominate students who face barriers to studying for a degree. They are then considered for a scholarship worth £1,000 a year over three or four years.

David Lammy said: 'We must ensure that the most talented and hard-working young people are given every chance to achieve their full potential, whatever their background.'

He continued: 'Studying for a higher education qualification can broaden horizons in new and exciting ways, and is a real investment for the future with graduates enjoying better career and earning opportunities.'

Brookes was named one of the top universities in the country for offering the most outstanding student financial support package by the *Times Higher Education* (THE) magazine.

The scheme was launched in 2007 and pupils from 17 schools in Oxfordshire were nominated. It was so successful the university decided to expand the scholarship scheme to all state schools and colleges in Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire (including Milton Keynes) and Berkshire.

Vice-Chancellor Professor Janet Beer, said: 'The community scholarship scheme is there to help break down the barriers that stop people going to university. All our community scholars have, in their own way, demonstrated great drive and determination to reach university level study.'

'Many of their achievements have been motivated by generosity and concern for others and I am delighted that we can recognise and value these qualities as well as academic success.'

All state schools and colleges in the region can nominate a student wishing to study at undergraduate level at Brookes. They need to be committed to study, have the potential to succeed or have overcome personal or other difficulties.

BUDDING ARCHITECTS PLAN THEIR FUTURE

Oxford teenagers drew up exciting plans to transform run-down parts of their neighbourhoods following training in urban design from Oxford Brookes University academics.

The group, from Blackbird Leys and Cowley, drew up concepts for a new youth centre as part of Urban Buzz: The Rootscape Project.

An exhibition of their work, including 3-D images of the centre, was put on display at Brookes' Headington Campus. About 40 youngsters aged between 12 and 16 from Cowley, Blackbird Leys and Littlemore were given professional tutoring in regeneration, urban design, planning and architecture.

Professor Georgia Butina-Watson, Head of Planning at Oxford Brookes, said: 'I have been hugely impressed with the creativity and energy people have given to this project.'

'The proposal for a new youth centre for Cowley is very innovative and in my view has potential to win architecture awards. We want to take

this concept to an architect to work it up and then seek further support and funding from various sources.

'Our programme was designed to help equip young people with the knowledge and skills to assess and analyse the places where they live.'

The teenagers were trained in model making, urban design and film-making. The training programme included visits to the Angell Town in Lambeth, London, which has been undergoing regeneration since the 1990s, and to Amsterdam in Holland.

'Too often young people's ideas are dismissed and we wanted to give them the skills to be able to articulate their ideas on how to improve their neighbourhoods,' said Professor Butina-Watson.

'As a university, we know there is so much untapped potential in this city and by working with local people we can realise this talent to shape the regeneration of our city.'



Professor Georgia Butina-Watson and teenagers Ellia Townsend and Callum Blake who took part in the Rootscape project

STUDENT FILM SCREENED AT CANNES

A group of Oxford Brookes film students showcased their movie at the 2009 Cannes Film Festival.

The second year students, all from the School of Arts and Humanities, created the ten-minute short *Double or Nothing* as part of their Film Production module.

The work was screened in the festival's Short Film Corner.

'It means a lot,' said writer and producer Govind Chandran. 'We had to make a short film as part of our course and wanted to do something fun

and entertaining.'

Actor/Producer, Jason Allitt, added: 'Cannes is the biggest film festival in the world.'

The rest of the team involved in the making of the film included producer-assistant director James Johnson, production manager James Longshaw and cinematographer Alex Rawet. *Double or Nothing* was filmed in and around Oxford and is a witty comedy playing on the clichés of British crime capers.

A MONTH OF LOVE AND JUSTICE



Michelle Montgomery, who is responsible for diversity at Brookes, pictured with entries for the Love and Justice photographic competition

Love and Justice month in February encouraged staff and students at Oxford Brookes and people across Oxfordshire to think about what love and justice meant for them.

A series of thought-provoking events allowed people to celebrate human rights and diversity and showed them how they could make a difference. The events ranged from volunteering fairs through to lectures and debates, workshops and for staff around the county and a Nicaraguan evening in partnership with The Oxford International Women's Festival.

People in Oxfordshire were also encouraged to express the themes of love and justice in a display of poems and photographs.

Oxford Brookes' annual Human Rights Film and Music Festival coincided with the month and allowed people many more opportunities to explore those themes.

Shami Chakrabarti, Brookes' Chancellor and Director of Liberty, opened the film festival.

One of the month's highlights was a chance to meet famous authors. Neil Bartlett, Michael Cordy and Teresa Hayter explored three different perspectives on love and justice.

Michael Cordy, who discussed his novel *The Venus Conspiracy*, commented at the time: 'Love and Justice month is a great initiative because it encourages us all to raise our heads for a moment from the everyday grindstone and consider the values many of us take for granted: relationships, diversity, tolerance and human rights. They shouldn't be taken for granted.'

To learn what Shami has been getting up to in her role as Chancellor of Oxford Brookes over the past year, please turn to page 26.



Tim Smit at the Eden Project

THE GARDEN AND EDEN

Tim Smit, the visionary who created the Eden Project and restored the Lost Gardens of Heligan in Cornwall, gave an inspiring talk about his life as part of the Oxford Brookes' public lecture series.

Dubbed the 'Eighth Wonder of the World' by the media, the Eden Project is a hugely popular tourist attraction, a showcase for scientific applications, a trailblazing social enterprise and powerhouse for economic regeneration.

It tackles and raises awareness of issues such as energy saving, waste management and recycling.

Tim Smit's pioneering role in creating the Eden Project won him

widespread recognition including an Honorary CBE in 2002 and the following year, the Royal Society of Arts Albert Medal, whose past recipients have included Michael Faraday, Marie Curie and Orville Wright.

Before creating the Eden Project he discovered and restored the Lost Gardens of Heligan with John Nelson. They are now the most visited private gardens in the UK.

In 2006, Tim Smit was awarded an Honorary Doctorate at Oxford Brookes University for his outstanding contribution to environmental education.

HOUSE OF COMMONS TRAVELS TO BROOKES

Six Oxford Brookes students experienced the full glare of the political spotlight when a panel of MPs visited the university. The politicians were interviewing staff and students around the UK on a fact-finding mission into standards.

Vice-Chancellor Professor Janet Beer was also interviewed by the House of Commons Select Committee.

The five-strong Innovation, Universities, Science and Skills (IUSS) Committee questioned Professor Beer, her counterpart from the University of Oxford, Dr John Hood and academics from both institutions.

The six students were Sally Tye, David Child, Jun Rentschler, Meagan Pitt, Victoria Edwards and Gregory Andrews. The scope of the committee's investigation meant they were able to ask questions on just about any topic.

During a robust 45-minute session, the IUSS Committee members asked both Vice-Chancellors about the purpose of higher education as well as degree classifications, fees and levels of state school admissions.

When asked what a university education offers students, Professor Beer replied: 'It's the skills that are important. Students have to be marketable for 50 years. Knowledge goes out of date. Skills, capability and flexibility don't.'

THE ROWING MACHINE



Rowing teams facing Oxford Brookes University Boat Club have been getting that sinking feeling lately. The ambitious squad is outpacing its rivals on the water and hoping to stretch those winning margins even further by improving its boathouse by the Thames.

FEW rowing teams, however great, would relish a river battle with an on-form Oxford Brookes crew right now. Supreme performances by our athletes at the Beijing Olympics and Henley Royal Regatta in the past year have placed the squad's colours firmly on top of the rowing summit and Brookes among the top three universities in the country for the sport. Eight undergraduates and alumni from the Taurus crew represented Great

Britain at the 2008 Olympics in Beijing, clinching one gold and three silver medals, while at Henley in July, our men demolished US rivals Yale in the final of the university coxed fours.

These are heady days for a club expected to produce world-class performers at their peak in time for the 2012 London Olympics.

This summer, Brookes launched a £1 million fundraising campaign to double the size of its modest boathouse on the banks of the River Thames near

Wallingford and provide better training facilities for growing numbers in the squad with Olympian dreams.

The boathouse may sit on a heavenly stretch of river looping languidly to Henley but you can forget visions of messing about on boats on summer afternoons.

Brookes is a machine geared to win. In the dying moments of a race as crews row to exhaustion, the losers are the ones who break first. This sport is beautiful and ugly in equal measure.

The Oxford Brookes four in training before their win at this year's Henley Royal Regatta



BACKING THE CAUSE

The rowing club would perhaps not be where it is today without the generous support of Neil Ashley, a successful Oxfordshire businessman and benefactor of Oxford Brookes.

Mr Ashley bought two high performance boats for the crews and contributed substantially to the fund for the existing boathouse at Wallingford. He is one of only two people to have Oxford Brookes boats named after them.

Mr Ashley has also provided support to the university in other ways. Without his input, the lecture theatre at the School of Health and Social Care, named the Jane Ashley Lecture Theatre in honour of his late wife, would not have been completed.

Steve Williams knows exactly what it takes to succeed at the highest level. He joined Brookes in 1994 and went on to win rowing golds in Athens and Beijing.

'I had a great experience at Brookes, learning exactly how hard you had to train to get to the top. There was a great bunch of guys. I grew up a lot, learned a lot, got experience with rowing with really outstanding guys – world champions and

beating Oxford University – and Oxford University need no introduction.'

That historic win, in 1993, came just two years after the team's director of coaching, Richard Spratley, brought his single-minded focus and a new muscular aggression to the university.

Quietly spoken, and with a coaching style to match, Richard is the mastermind of a system that has put

'I had a great experience at Brookes, learning exactly how hard you have to train to get to the top. There was a great bunch of guys.'

Olympic champions – and by the time I left Brookes I knew exactly what I wanted to do.

'I wanted to row at the Olympics and Brookes had really given me that foundation.'

He decided on Brookes after seeing a shot of our rowing team beating the University of Oxford at Henley on the cover of a rowing magazine.

'At school, everyone had a copy and I can still remember the picture on the front cover. It was Oxford Brookes

Oxford Brookes University Boat Club on an equal footing with legendary names like Leander and Molesey.

'We are the strongest university at rowing, in performance terms, outside Oxford and Cambridge,' he explains as he chats in his minimalistic office at Wallingford which is little bigger than a boxroom. 'And at undergraduate rowing we are as good as anybody in the world.'

The crushing win by Hannah Clewes, Karl Hudspith, Chris Abraham, Matthew Tarrant and Scott Durant over



Richard Chambers (right) was one of many Brookes rowers at the Beijing Olympics

OUR OLYMPIANS

Oxford Brookes University Boat Club is a recognised route to the highest levels of rowing. Producing Olympians isn't easy but Brookes manages to achieve that on a consistent basis. The first Brookes golds were won by Fred Scarlett and cox Rowley Douglas in the men's eights at the Sydney Olympics in 2000. Steve Williams followed that up with gold in the 2004 Athens Olympics in the men's coxless four, successfully defending the title in Beijing last year. The silver medal-winning men's eights in Beijing included Al Heathcote, Tom Lucy and Alex Partridge. Matt Langridge, who briefly studied at Brookes, also rowed in that squad. Carla Ashford, Richard Chambers, Caroline O'Connor and Tom Parker also represented Great Britain at Beijing. All the athletes contributed to Great Britain's overall position as winner of the Olympic rowing regatta.



Henley winners: (left to right) Scott Durant, Matthew Tarrant, Chris Abraham, Karl Hudspith and cox Hannah Clewes



ONE TO WATCH

Katherine Douglas, an undergraduate reading Anthropology and Geography, also took part in our cover shoot. Katherine first started rowing as a novice at Oxford Brookes University and her biggest achievements so far have been reaching the semi finals at Henley in the women's IV, as well as winning the British Universities and Colleges Sports (BUCS) competition in the Brookes women's VIII in Nottingham.

Yale in the coxed fours at this summer's Henley Regatta cemented Brookes' international reputation.

'Oxford and Cambridge would view us as young upstarts,' continues Richard. 'But most universities would respect our performance levels. And that includes Oxford. We have been a good feeder for many years into the British Olympic Team and we are the strongest we have been for five years.'

The boat club has about 50 elite athletes (five of whom represent Great Britain) split into three tiers: the high performance rowers coached by Henry Bailhache-Webb, a central group of advanced athletes and the development squad comprising of talented novices.

Brookes' ever-growing status attracts elite schoolboy champions. Three 18-year-old Great Britain internationals joined the university in September 2008. The athletes train for up to 25 hours each week, depending on their experience, and whether stepping into a boat for the first time or arriving at Brookes as fully fledged junior internationals they rapidly slot into the most powerful undergraduate unit in the UK.

Yet today's successful club had extremely humble beginnings; starting

life in the early 1970s renting rack space in whichever Oxford boathouse would offer room.

Throughout the 1980s, the club moved home regularly and, although the squad was steadily improving, the lack of a permanent base and coach before 1991 was telling.

Richard Spratley's arrival also speeded up the important process of finding a home.

Cholsey near Wallingford was eventually chosen for the quality of the river, if not the boathouse that once stood there.

Perhaps best described as a cowshed, the very first building had a leaky tin roof and crumbling walls. There was just one toilet and no shower.

'It was a wreck,' recalls Chris Wilcox, deputy head of sport at the university.

The current boathouse, built in 2004 to replace that rickety shed, now has to expand to store huge amounts of equipment and provide better warm-up and changing facilities.

'At the moment the girls' changing room takes six. The boys' changing room takes 12,' reveals Chris. 'That's got to improve.'



Olympian Steve Williams passes on rowing tips to pupils from The Oxford Academy

STAYING CONNECTED

Taurus is among the privileged few – an alumni sports club that counts Olympic medallists like Steve Williams among its members. 'Without a doubt it makes you feel proud to be a part of that,' explains Taurus secretary and founder member Alex Gandon.

'And perhaps that's why people would want to be part of it. A lot of Taurus rowers haven't rowed to that level, myself included, yet all the members are equal in a sense.' He continues: 'When people join the boat club it becomes a huge part of their lives because of the time commitment of the training and hopefully they want to carry it on after they graduate. It's all about shared experience, shared pain!'

Seeing the boat club grow and win at Henley Regatta has been one of the biggest delights for his generation.

'When I was a student we were one of the first Oxford Polytechnic crews to compete at Henley. We were competitive but I don't think we could have won. Winning two rounds – that was a high level for us.

'However, if we hadn't done what we had, maybe Richard Spratley wouldn't have come on board and taken it to the next level.'

Alex and his fellow founding fathers of Taurus now provide guidance, coaching, cash and equipment for new generations of rowers.

'We support the current boat club – financially mainly. And we provide coaching, leadership or whatever is asked of us.'

The first donation made by alumni to the boat club was a megaphone. Most recently Taurus helped buy two four-seat boats.

Taurus' heartland is Oxford, Henley and London. There about 300 people on Alex's database yet he knows he can reach out to many more. 'The Boat Club is about 100-strong, of which a third leave every year. In theory there should be 30 to 40 potential new members each year.

'We'd like people to feel what they were once part of. It's a Brookes success story and we want them to feel part of that.'

For more information, log onto www.taurusboatclub.co.uk



WORKING SMARTER

In a new project, Oxford Brookes students have mentored Oxford Academy pupils in the run up to their exams. Now there are plans to roll out the scheme in more Oxfordshire schools.

KENNY Kong, a 23-year-old Mechanical Engineering student at Oxford Brookes is one of eight Brookes students involved in a new mentoring scheme at The Oxford Academy.

Over eight weeks, he worked with year 11 student Georgie Lacey in the run up to her GCSEs focusing on maths and English in particular.

'It was really useful,' says Georgie. 'The students were really friendly and helped us with areas that we could improve on and coursework.'

'Every week we filled in sheets and covered maths we hadn't done in a while like shapes and reflections. I got a lot more work done and my coursework up to scratch.'

The Brookes students spent three hours a week supporting a group of ten pupils. Kenny says it's been a good opportunity.

'I hadn't experienced working with young people before and it's been good to give something back. It's been enjoyable and you get an understanding of how teenagers think about education. We've been looking at the work they've been doing and what they want to do in the future.'

'I think it's important for younger students to talk to us because we're still in the loop and we've been in their shoes not that long ago – probably five or six years. They can see how we've managed to get to where we are now and that in time you can get to

university and could be coming out with a degree. The mentoring has been a great way to share those experiences.'

A joint venture between Brookes and the academy, the scheme aimed to give students recognised as having lots of potential but in need of some extra support that additional help ahead of their exams.

'Each week, we had either a maths or an English focus in an area that would be pertinent to the exam,' says Vice-Principal of The Oxford Academy, Chris Davies.

'After the key skill session, the mentors and the mentees broke off to

Academy, Brookes decided to trial the scheme as part of its commitment to inspire and enthuse students to reach their full potential. Next year, there are plans to widen its reach to include students from Years 10-13. With funding from Aimhigher, it is also hoped to roll out the project in more Oxfordshire schools: 'Our goal is to help transform students' aspirations and views about learning, that learning is really important and something they have every right to succeed in,' says Assistant Dean of Oxford Brookes' Westminster Institute of Education, Hilary Lowe.

'Through enrichment and widening

'Our goal is to help transform students' aspirations and views about learning'

have their mentoring time, planned activities for the week ahead and reflected on the targets they had set together.

'It's given our pupils the opportunity to work smarter and useful guidance on how to organise their work.'

'The university students involved have been great role models acting as a conduit between where our pupils are now and where they could be in four or five years' time.'

'Their experiences really do resonate and they've been quite inspirational in providing that crucial link with further learning and education.'

As co-sponsor of The Oxford

participation activities, the university is aiming to make an impact on students' aspirations so they continue with their studies in the future.

'These are just some of the ways we can make an impact and play a direct part in supporting school improvement locally.'

Oxford Brookes also supports The Oxford Academy's Leadership Centre which enables teachers to enhance skills and progress careers and gives students the opportunity to gain accreditation for demonstrating their leadership qualities.

The Brookes mentors and Academy mentees celebrated the success of the scheme with an afternoon of bowling at the Bowlplex, Ozone Leisure Park. The photo shows Brookes student mentor Kenny Kong with Oxford Academy student and mentee, 16-year-old Georgie Lacey.

A team from Brookes is going to learn what it's like to drive a battery-powered car in an ambitious real-world trial taking place in Oxfordshire...

MINI CHARGES UP



Ian Gray (left), chief executive of the government's Technology Strategy Board shows off an electric MINI with Lord Adonis (middle) and Lord Drayson

OXFORD Brookes University is playing a central role in the world's biggest trial of electric cars. Scientists and psychologists at Brookes will analyse data from 40 electric MINIs driven by householders across Oxfordshire to discover exactly how zero-emission vehicles cope with the demands of day-to-day driving.

It is the householders who will reveal just what it's like to own and drive an electric car in a project which could mark the next step in the evolution of the runabout.

In all, 80 drivers will use the cars for six months each and help BMW and the government, who are part-funding the project, weigh up the technical and social aspects of living with an electric vehicle.

The project represents a hugely exciting moment for the fledgling UK electric car industry. About 340 cars and vans built by different manufacturers will be involved in the trials up and down the country.

All the cars are fitted with data loggers so vehicle usage and driver behaviour can be tracked in real time.

Professor Allan Hutchinson, head of the Sustainable Vehicle Engineering Centre (SVEC) within the School of Technology, said he was very pleased the university was chosen by BMW to work on such a prestigious project, which could be a concrete step towards a sustainable motoring future.

'It is essential the environmental challenges facing the global automotive industry are tackled now,' he explained. 'Car makers are increasingly looking at ways to replace conventional engines with low or zero-emission alternatives and help meet climate change targets.'

'We're delighted to be working with BMW Group on this research project and to be able to build upon our extensive

expertise in electric and hybrid vehicles.'

The SVEC is a leading research centre in low emission vehicles and studies the commercial realities of introducing such vehicles onto the roads.

'Experts from the SVEC will be forecasting the business models and market for electric cars across Europe, too,' added Professor Hutchinson. The year-long trial in Oxfordshire will produce huge amounts of data, both from the battery-powered cars and in terms of driver feedback, allowing experts from the SVEC to gauge the feasibility of the commercial roll-out of electric vehicles.

Carefully assessing drivers' attitudes to, and their experiences of, electric cars will give the best clue of future public attitudes towards low carbon vehicles. In-depth driver feedback, gleaned by a team of Brookes' psychologists, will provide one of the best insights yet into public attitudes towards electric vehicles.

Engineers, mathematicians and statisticians from the SVEC will collect and analyse all the technical and subjective data, supported by the psychologists from the School of Social Sciences and Law.

To learn more about the Oxfordshire trials, visit www.mini.co.uk and register to receive regular updates on the MINI E project.





Babies can teach us how we use language to categorise the world

WORLD OF BABIES EXPLORED

How babies learn language and use it to understand and make sense of the world has long fascinated researchers.

WE know that young babies can distinguish and categorise objects on the basis of what they look like – but when does it start to make a difference what the objects are called?

Researcher Gert Westermann, Reader in the Department of Psychology, has set up a special 'Babylab' to explore and understand this very early stage of human development. He wants to find out how the language spoken around them affects the way babies develop their understanding of the world.

Parents and their 10-month old babies are being invited into the Babylab to take part in his research in a child-friendly and comfortable environment.

The Babylab, which opened in April, comes equipped with state-of-the-art computer technology. This includes an eye tracker that can follow the movement of the baby's eye and record what they are looking at on a display screen.

Gert explains the aim of the project: 'My research is on infant cognitive development. How do babies learn to organise the world around them? And what is the role of the language process?'

The research takes place on a one-

to-one basis. Once the family feels settled comfortably into the Babylab, the young infant is sat on his or her parent's lap to begin the testing process.

In the first stage, the infants are shown a sequence of animal drawings from one category (such as cats) until their looking time decreases (which indicates they have become familiar with the objects).

After this, an object from the same category (such as another cat) is shown together with an object from a new category (like a dog). Infants generally prefer to look at something new, and in this case they often look longer at the dog. This tells us that they find the new cat familiar but the dog novel, indicating that they make a category distinction between cats and dogs.

The same methodology is then used to investigate whether language has an effect on this ability to form categories – even before the infants start to use language. Drawings of novel animals are shown but this time they are given a name, for example 'geepee'.

What the researchers want to find out is, if infants hear the same name given to two categories of different animals, will they then put them into the same category? For instance, if they had

never seen cats and dogs before and were then shown different cats and dogs that were all called a 'mot' would they place all dogs and cats together?

'In infancy research there is quite a bit of discussion about how much knowledge is innate and if it is not, how it can be learned,' says Gert.

'With the Babylab eye tracker we're at the cutting edge in infancy research here at Brookes, and there are many ways in which this methodology can be exploited to learn more about how infants organise the world around them.'

Gert has received £100,000 from the government funding body ESRC to carry out the project.

Its success is entirely dependent on support from the community to visit the Babylab and participate in the study which takes only a few minutes. Gert is appealing to staff and members of the public to take part in the project, as he aims to test 120 infants over the next 16 months.

Anyone interested in participating can look at the project website which gives full details and information on how to get involved:

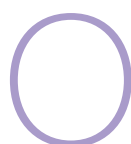
<http://psych.brookes.ac.uk/babylab/>, or email babylab@brookes.ac.uk



LOOKING TOWARDS 2015

After a decade of sustained investment and growth, the next few years look set to be a turbulent time for British universities. Fortunately, Oxford Brookes has strong foundations on which to build for the future.

An artist's impression of the planned Student Centre Building, Gypsy Lane, seen from Headington Road



OXFORD Brookes University is widely seen to be a role model for other universities in the UK and has firmly

established itself as a key player in the regional and national economy. But with the higher education sector facing an uncertain period, can Oxford Brookes approach challenging times with confidence?

'The next few years are going to be a testing time financially, partly because of the state of the economy and partly because higher education funding is set to slow,' says Vice-Chancellor Professor Janet Beer.

'We need to spend wisely and manage carefully, but I have a sense

that the next decade will see Brookes really cement its reputation as a leading university.'

Professor Beer is spearheading the next step in Brookes' successful journey.

The university's soon-to-be-announced ten-year strategy will take it up to 2020 and encompass the 150th anniversary in 2015.

While teaching and research remains at the heart of the strategy (see pages 22 and 23 for more details), a key factor in the university's future will be a £150 million building programme to replace 1950s and 60s buildings on the Headington campus.

'We're going to continue to build our reputation for some of the best university teaching and research in the

UK, and we're going to invest in our campuses to help us do that,' explains Professor Beer.

Those universities that succeed in the future, emerging from a sector that could undergo major upheavals, will be the ones that have made substantial investment. Demographic changes will see the number of 18-year-olds entering higher education fall over the next decade. Competition for those students – who account for half of all Oxford Brookes undergraduates – will intensify.

'That's why creating an attractive campus is so important. Buildings create the progressive learning environment in which students want to study.

'Students will choose universities



The interior of the proposed new Student Centre Building

which give them the highest quality learning experience, and the best start to their careers,' says Professor Beer.

The goal of the redevelopment programme at Headington is to transform the environment and the experience of everyone who uses the campus. Some buildings, erected in the 1950s and 60s, have reached the end of their useful lives. There has also been a fundamental shift in the way students learn and interact.

Technology has been one of the main drivers of this change and technology will be at the heart of the ambitious new student centre housing the library, teaching spaces, lecture theatres, and computer suites together with the Students' Union and student support services.

'Life in higher education has changed beyond all recognition, and technology is driving this forward,' notes Professor Beer.

'You only have to look at the way in which students have embraced the Simon Williams Undergraduate Centre at Wheatley. We understand the importance of flexible learning spaces where students can adapt their environments and work collaboratively.'

Innovation lies at the heart of

developments keeping the Brookes student experience at the cutting edge. The Reinvention Centre – a joint venture between Oxford Brookes and Warwick

Innovation lies at the heart of developments keeping the Brookes student experience at the cutting edge.

University – has revolutionised undergraduate degrees by giving young students the opportunity to carry out entirely new research.

The centre brings students into the heart of the academic community and encourages them to explore the use of exciting non-traditional genres like documentary film-making, multimedia presentations and academic journalism when presenting their dissertations. It was shortlisted in this year's *Times Higher Education Awards* in the Outstanding Support for

Students category.

Brookes is about far more than the Headington campus though: large investments are in train for the Wheatley and Harcourt Hill campuses too.

Wheatley has already seen new purpose-built centres for the Schools of Business and Technology. Future plans include new student accommodation and more accessible, flexible and attractive learning spaces.

The priority at Harcourt Hill will be improvements to student accommodation, with an emphasis on environmental sustainability, making use of a 'green roof' to minimise surface run-off. Rain water will be captured and a combined heat and power system included to save on energy use.

'By the time Brookes marks its 150th anniversary we hope that the university will have one of the most modern, accessible and sustainable campuses in the country' said Professor Beer. 'Looking back at the challenges the university has overcome since it began life as the Oxford School of Art in 1865, the foundations we have laid down give us every reason to be positive about our capacity for improvement. We will face the future confidently.'

We are listening:

The proposed development at Gipsy Lane was submitted after a three-year consultation with our neighbours. Brookes makes every effort to be a good neighbour and tries to maximise the chances for local people to benefit from the university. Managing major redevelopment is never easy and Brookes allowed local people to offer their views and opinions during the design process. Recent plans have seen significant reductions in the building height, helping to address local residents' concerns. An important element of the plans is the public square between the new building and Headington Road. The square will be a venue for everything from public art to community events. It will be home to shops, cafes and social spaces and will help create a sense of 'arrival' at Brookes as well as providing a landmark on the journey into Oxford.



REINVENTING THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE

Our pioneering work incorporating research into undergraduate courses shows how Oxford Brookes can redefine the student learning experience

Since 2006 undergraduate students at Brookes have been able to access support and funding to advance their studies through the Reinvention Centre for Undergraduate Research.

As well as building on the synergies of teaching and research, the Reinvention Centre – a joint venture between Oxford Brookes and Warwick University – has sought to broaden the definition of what is meant by research to include the use on non-traditional genres like academic journalism, documentary film-making and multimedia presentations.

'If it wasn't for the Reinvention Centre I wouldn't have been able to go to Borneo where I was able to get some physical experience of studying primates. So many of my friends were looking at literature reviews or going to the zoo!' said Si Hughes, a third year anthropology student who spent 70 days studying orangutans in their natural habitat.



THE BROOKES EXPERIENCE

The two main strands of the new university strategy will be the student experience and research. Here we give you a taste of what's happening at Oxford Brookes in these fundamental activities which are essential for our success now and in the future.



Graduates Sally Tye and David Child chat about studying at Oxford Brookes and reveal just how much they owe their lecturers...

AN outstanding university experience can change a person's life and Oxford Brookes prides itself on unlocking the full academic and personal potential of its students.

Sally Tye, who studied history, is about to embark on a master's degree: 'History is one of Brookes' very best subjects. But I didn't know how good it was until I got here,' she explains. Her academic career blossomed throughout her course and she achieved a first-class degree before deciding to stay on. 'I had never really thought of doing a master's but there's no better place to do it.'

That's because lecturers on her course offer huge amounts of support. When she first began her degree she had no idea of the volume of help available. She quickly saw her marks improve once she discovered intensive tutorials.

'We had tutorials where you could sit down with an essay plan and lecturers would talk to you one-to-one. You could email them with any problems and they were always very approachable.'

She has much praise for her lecturers, many of whom are at the forefront of their fields. 'I was very lucky. The department is brilliant. The lecturers were very encouraging and we were on

extremely good terms with them.'

Even as an undergraduate, she was exposed to world-class research. 'The lecturers do discuss their research and findings they haven't even published yet. That was a very strong element and that helps you when you are doing your dissertation and individual study module. It's so exciting. The lecturers are so good. Research is such a huge aspect of history and the fact that they're at the forefront of their field inspires you to go off and do your own thing.'

It gave her the confidence to propose her own ground-breaking ideas. 'I argued against a professor with my own research and he said: "This is fantastic. I love that. You proved me wrong!"'

Not only did Sally excel at her studies, she also guided the development of a new curriculum.

'I was a student representative for

three years. I sat on a recruitment sub-committee within the department and helped design a new undergraduate programme.'

David Child also gained a first-class degree – an MEng in Automotive Engineering. He was impressed by the scope of his course. 'When I came to Brookes, it had a very good reputation for its link to industry and for allowing students to apply what they learnt.'

Midway through his five-year course, David took a year-long placement as a project engineer at British Motor Heritage, based in Witney near Oxford.

He found his classroom-based studies translated directly into the workplace. 'You start to apply it to real situations on industrial placements where you develop as a person and understand how industry works.'

The placement complemented his

studies perfectly. 'I was given a lot of responsibility. Having done project engineering work, that certainly improved my understanding of how a project is seen through from initial phases to completion.'

Like Sally, he was impressed by Brookes academics. Many of them had taken very different routes to Brookes. 'Every lecturer is different and they helped in their own way. There was a real mix of lecturers. Some of them had been in industry for many years, some were former students at Brookes and they knew exactly what it was like to be a student here.'

David's time at Brookes has obviously paid dividends as he recently found a job in the industry despite the tough competition for work in the current economic climate.

RESEARCH SUCCESS

The latest Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) confirms the international standing of research at Oxford Brookes, and with funding due to rise by 50%, research looks set to play an even bigger part over the coming years.

PUSHING the boundaries of human knowledge and making discoveries is the lifeblood of a university. In a university like Oxford Brookes, justly renowned for the quality of its teaching, research once took second place. But today, research is not just an equal partner; it is driving undergraduate as well as postgraduate teaching, confirming Brookes' status in research with a constantly expanding international reputation.

As with all publicly funded activities, academic research is carefully measured by the government's Research Assessment Exercise or RAE. Primarily a tool for distributing research funding, the RAE uses a range of criteria to identify high quality 'internationally recognised' research and to reward it with increased funding.

The 2008 RAE results were published at the end of last year, and they reveal a university growing into its new role as a diverse and vibrant research community. More than three-quarters of Brookes research was internationally recognised. History is once again the university's highest-rated department, with 90% of its research judged to be of international quality, and 25% seen as world-leading, while 100% of Art and Design research and 95% of English research was internationally recognised. Strong world-class outputs were also achieved by

History of Art, Music and Computer Science. Other significant growth areas since the last RAE in 2001 include Computing, Business, Law, Education and subjects allied to Health.

Pro Vice-Chancellor for Research, Professor Diana Woodhouse, believes that as Brookes has matured as a university, the challenge has been to show that we could develop a sustainable research culture. 'The 2008 results show that Brookes has succeeded and we are very proud of the recognition that this round of the RAE has brought.'

Recognition of our research quality has brought financial reward: Brookes' 'quality-related' research grant rises from £1.5 million to £4.3 million. It has given Brookes a boost in the research league tables too, including a leap of 13 places in the *Times Higher Education* listing.

But research at Brookes is about far more than a league table result and funding. The list of research areas achieving international recognition clearly demonstrates the true diversity of research and its global reach. One example is Brookes' new relationship with Panjab University in Chandigarh, India which will focus on a joint research programme including climate, life sciences, international law and psychology.

The history of medicine is an area where we are promoting research to a

wider audience. Brookes' Centre for Health, Medicine and Society is one of the leading research groups in the UK. Now, in partnership with *The Independent*, the centre is presenting a series of podcasts exploring contemporary issues such as genetics, IVF, and epidemics like malaria and influenza through the perspective of the past.

Another influential research centre at Brookes – the Institute for Research in Child Development – carries out work which informs best practice in schools, hospitals and social care settings.

Every year the research community at Brookes grows, building strength and attracting new expertise. For example, more than £1 million is being invested in new doctoral training programmes across the university, helping to attract research students and boost departments with excellent research ratings. Measuring research success is set to change in the future, but the growth of research as the centre of Brookes life shows no signs of slowing down.



WEATHERING THE TUDORS



Professor Tom Betteridge pictured outside Hampton Court Palace

A GROUNDBREAKING play inspired by the mighty Tudor monarch Henry VIII was staged in the royal setting of Hampton Court Palace over the summer with the help of Oxford Brookes University.

Professor Tom Betteridge, of the department of English and Drama, is acting as theatrical adviser to Historic Royal Palaces, the independent charity that looks after Hampton Court. The play was staged at Henry VIII's famous royal residence as part of a year-long programme of special events commemorating the 500th anniversary of his accession to the throne.

The *Play of the Weather* was part of Tom's major research project, 'Staging the Henrician Court', which is being funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council.

The *Play of the Weather* was produced during the period when Henry VIII's relationship with Anne Boleyn was common knowledge but had not been formally recognised. Tudor playwright John Heywood's story is a coded message to the court that Henry had secretly married Anne and that she was pregnant.

The plot centres around Jupiter, King of the Gods, who announces that he will allow people on earth to petition him to create one kind of constant weather. Different characters, including a merchant, a water miller and a gentlewoman, come to request their preferred, very different types of weather. The outcome is that there is no one kind of weather to suit everyone – a topical and not too subtle message given the religious reformation that the country was experiencing under Henry's rule.

But it's the audience experience that is the real star of this particular show.

The play was performed in the Great Hall, where Henry VIII and his court no doubt enjoyed plays, dining and other pleasures befitting the court of a king. Men and women were separated down the length of the room and seated along banqueting tables as the actors brought Heywood's story to life in the centre of the hall, with authentic live music from the balcony above.

Whether it's an 8ft lantern being thrust at an unsuspecting person in the front row to hold, or tongue in cheek anachronistic ad libs about public transport, and asides to explain the often amusing Tudor vocabulary, this production goes all out to engage its audience with the themes of this historical period.

Although Henry VIII would not have watched this 1532 play at the Great Hall (it was not yet built), the production was staged there to give a sense of history and to help communicate some of the complex messages to its modern audience.

'The production is more of a hypothesis — this is a way it could have been done,' said Professor Betteridge. 'Choosing an acting style is fraught, for example. There is an argument to say it would have been very extreme like in silent films but I don't believe that as the play is a complex piece of writing.'

'Why put all that effort into the words if you didn't want to act in a way that would make them understandable?'

In a final act of consultation appropriate for a collaborative research project such as this, the audience was invited to submit feedback and suggestions which will have direct influence on the play when it is staged again in 2010.

ALUMNI CRICKET CLUB MAKE SKY SPORTS APPEARANCE



LOCAL cricket club Cairns Fudge CC, made up of former and current Oxford Brookes University students, was featured on Sky Sports throughout this summer as part of the channel's Club Life 2009 programme.

CFCC was founded by Business School alumni Andy Small and Daf Howells. This year, five seasons and 80 matches later, CFCC was accepted to join the Oxford Cricket Association, and played its first competitive league cricket matches.

The club is named after the 'all action New Zealand all rounder' Chris Cairns, who retired from international cricket to run a family business called Cairns Fudge Ltd.

'Chris Cairns will always be remembered as a true icon of the modern game, and one of the best players New Zealand has ever produced,' Andy Small explains. 'What better tribute to the great man than to name our cricket club after his first business venture?'

CFCC has also been heavily

involved in fundraising – both for its own running costs and to raise money for local charities. On Sunday 17 May, the team ran the 10k Oxford Town and Gown fun run, followed by a blind cricket match in the afternoon.

Equipped with a football-sized ball and eyegear to simulate being partially sighted, CFCC took on a team of blind cricketers fielded by the Oxfordshire Association for the Blind. With a total of 99 set by the OAB, CFCC chased down the final runs with three balls to spare to edge a narrow victory.

If you're interested in getting involved with Cairns Fudge CC, Andy would like to hear from you: 'I'd like CFCC to become known a bit more in the Brookes community, which would hopefully help club recruitment. Alumni or current students are more than welcome to join in, whether you've played for Brookes or are just looking to get back into the sport.'

For more information on the club visit the CCFC website at www.cairnsfudgecc.co.uk

Interested in attending an alumni sports day? If you'd like to get involved with a day of competitive fun between current and former Oxford Brookes students, whether as a footballer, a cricket umpire or just a spectator, contact the alumni office by emailing alumni@brookes.ac.uk for more information.



LAUNCH OF THE BROOKES SOCIETY

FORMER members of staff from Oxford Brookes University and its predecessor Oxford Polytechnic are being invited to join the new Brookes Society. It aims to bring former long-term employees together to keep in touch with each other and the university.

Vice-Chancellor Janet Beer hosted the inaugural event, a garden party at Headington Hill Hall, on Wednesday 15 July.

Geoff Bremble, who was Head of Engineering, retired in 2001 after a 20-year career. 'Many people stay on in the Oxfordshire area when they retire, and so a group of us suggested setting up the Brookes Society for former staff,' he said.

Ceri Butcher, Assistant Director of Alumni Relations, is helping to organise the first event.

'The idea is that the members will run the society and decide what they want to do. This might include an annual dinner, and events such as a carol concert and garden party.'

Ceri, who is herself a graduate, has already clocked up 23 years' service since joining the staff as a technician in her early 20s, progressing to Assistant Director level.

'Most people, like me, regard Brookes as a good place to work. There is support for personal development, and help with flexible hours. I've got married, and had my children while I've been working here,' she added.

Brookes is the eighth largest employer in Oxfordshire and has just under 3,000 members of staff.

Anyone who would like to join, or who knows of a retired member of staff who would be interested in the Brookes Society, is asked to contact Ceri Butcher on +44 (0) 1865 484895, or email cebutter@brookes.ac.uk



Vice-Chancellor Professor Janet Beer (fourth from left) and Ceri Butcher, assistant development director (fourth from right) joined former Brookes staff for the launch of the Brookes Society

SHAMI'S FIRST YEAR

Shami Chakrabarti's appointment as Chancellor of Oxford Brookes a year ago sends an important message to students, staff and the wider world about Brookes' commitment to ethical issues and to education that is liberal, progressive and open to all.

AS Director of the campaigning organisation Liberty, Shami is widely regarded as the UK's leading advocate of human rights and civil liberties, speaking out on everything from ID cards, torture and terrorism to free speech and protecting the right to asylum. Shami applauds Oxford Brookes' ethical stance and sense of social responsibility. 'Oxford Brookes is a university with a growing

reputation for engagement with the most important issues of our time,' she says. 'I have been especially impressed with its deepening links with the third sector, with the award-winning MA in Emergency and Development Practice, and with Brookes' students, who run an annual Human Rights Film Festival.'

Despite her busy schedule, Shami makes sure she finds time for Oxford Brookes and looks forward to her visits. 'I always enjoy myself when I am here, especially meeting the students. It's always refreshing to talk to people 20 years younger than I am, and find out that we care about the same things.'

One of the year's highlights was co-hosting, with Vice-Chancellor Janet Beer, the Changing People and Places event at the House of Lords in March, which showcased some of Brookes' world leading projects. Shami says she relished representing Brookes at the Palace of Westminster and introducing students and staff to a range of parliamentarians. 'I'm proud to be associated with a university whose trajectory and growth and achievement are unrivalled among modern UK universities.'

In addition to presiding over two graduation ceremonies, she has opened a children's nursery in Oxford designed by a Brookes student, launched the university's 2009 Human Rights Film Festival, and spoken to a packed audience at the Students' Union.

She says she is looking forward to the forthcoming public lecture series, and contributing to a debate on human rights and literature on a panel with Vice-Chancellor Janet Beer, award-winning writer Philip Pullman and Chief Constable Sara Thornton. 'I think it is really important that the university takes this role in the community, of opening up the debate, and reaching out to local people,' she explains. 'Brookes has led the way in creating this kind of engagement.'

'I'm looking forward to the next seven years, and the build-up to 2015. It's been an absolute pleasure so far, and it will be fantastic to be part of the celebrations for the 150th year.'

'It's been fascinating to be involved in the work of the university, and to be part of a place where ideas – and idealism – flourish,' she adds.



Shami Chakrabarti opens a children's nursery designed by Brookes architecture students

BROOKES STUDENTS PAST AND PRESENT JOIN FORCES TO BENEFIT THE COMMUNITY

Community groups in Oxford and beyond are benefiting from the generosity of Brookes' alumni and the talents of Brookes' students through an exciting new funding initiative. The Student Innovation Fund set up in 2008 has raised over £12,000 and has funded a wide range of projects. Students too are benefiting from some of the projects including a book swap website, seminars on entrepreneurship and an on-line forum for art students.

Caroline Cage, a postgraduate on the Diploma in Architecture course, enlisted the support of fellow students to design a sustainable eco shelter for the Barracks Lane Community Garden in East Oxford. Caroline says of the project: 'It's been fantastic and shows what students can do working with the local community. Together we have

achieved something that will last.'

The shelter, which is currently being constructed, will enable the users of the garden to extend their activities to include workshops, performances, and refreshments.

'It is possible to change someone's life with support from the Student Innovation Fund,' says Tom Newton-Smith, a Youth and Community Work and Applied Theology student. Tom has set up a music tutoring group for local schools in the South West to teach DJ-ing. Tom has teamed up with MC Tyte, a former UK champion beat boxer, to run classes which will reach out to young people who are disaffected by school or society.

Two youth clubs have also benefited from the fund with one student setting up a drop-in cafe in a youth centre in

Botley while another enlisted club members to create a female friendly revamp of their facilities. A further project held events to raise awareness of autism

Helen Shone, alumni development project officer, says that the Student Innovation Fund has caught the imagination of students and alumni alike. 'We'll be launching a new round of funding next semester enabling us to support a fresh set of community projects inspired and lead by our students. These projects wouldn't be possible without the ongoing support of our alumni and it is thanks to these generous individuals that our students are able to grow themselves and make such a difference for others.'

JULIAN'S REMARKABLE RAINFOREST DISCOVERY

Former Life Sciences researcher Dr Julian Bayliss has harnessed cutting edge technology to discover a vast area of unexplored rainforest in Mozambique, which has in turn led to the discovery of several new species of butterfly and other creatures. 'It's as close as you can get to a modern version of the David Livingstone-type experience — those Victorian expeditions,' he enthuses.

As co-ordinator of a project funded by the British Darwin Initiative scheme, Dr Bayliss used Google Earth to identify mountains over 1,500m, close to the Mount Mulanje Mountain Forest Reserve in southern Malawi. The satellite image of Mount Mabu in Mozambique showed a huge patch of green, an area of 7,000 hectares which Dr Bayliss calculated as the largest tract of mid-altitude rainforest in southern Africa. In 2005 he visited the area to confirm his calculations.

More recently, Dr Bayliss had the opportunity to explore Mount Mabu's

forest as part of an expedition organised by the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew and the Department of Agricultural Research in Mozambique. The expedition found 'a lost Eden' with no sign of logging or burning. 'It's absolutely unheard of,' says Dr Bayliss. 'With everything we see or pick up, there's a high possibility that it's going to be a new species.'

Since the start of the project, Dr Bayliss has discovered five new species of butterfly, one new species of bat, a new species of snake and three new species of crabs. 'I've been collecting and studying butterflies since the age of seven, and I dreamed of going out to study butterflies in rainforests one day. And now I'm here doing it.'

At a recent meeting in the capital Maputo, the Mozambican government pledged its support of the conservation of these mountain sites, particularly Mount Mabu.



Dr Julian Bayliss used Google Earth to find a 'lost world' in Africa teeming with new species

FIRST BROOKES GRADUATE TO CO-ORDINATE LOCAL CHARITY

Life Sciences and Westminster Institute alumna Kate Sankey has become the first Oxford Brookes graduate to be appointed as co-ordinator of KEEN (Kids Enjoy Exercise Now) — a children's charity run jointly by students of the University of Oxford and Oxford Brookes University.

Kate's role will involve co-ordinating volunteers from across both universities, who help run a wide range of activities for children and young adults with special needs. Kate has been volunteering with KEEN herself since joining Brookes in 2006.

'Volunteering has been a huge part of my life while at Oxford Brookes, especially with KEEN,' she says. 'I've mainly attended the drama and sports sessions, but I've also been a session leader at ZigZag (the drama session) and have been the president of the Students' Union KEEN society for the past year.'

'KEEN has given me the opportunity to meet so many new people and take part in some amazing activities, including an adventure camp last summer. It has also made me realise how by giving up just a couple of hours a week you can really make a difference in the lives of others.'

After her year as co-ordinator, Kate plans to stay on at Brookes to complete a PGCE in Primary Education. 'I feel so privileged to get the chance to take on this role. I am hoping that it will aid me on the path towards becoming a teacher when I undertake the PGCE course.'

KEEN was founded in 1998 by New College graduate Elliott Portnoy, who developed the charity from a small tennis coaching programme for a handful of children into the thriving organisation it is today. Until now, the co-ordinator has always been a graduate of the University of Oxford.



ALUMNUS IN EPIC ROWING ADVENTURE

Built Environment graduate Andrew Delaney earned a brace of world records this summer as he and friend Guy Watts crossed the finish line of the Woodvale Indian Ocean Rowing Race 2009 first in their class.

Andrew and Guy set off from Geraldton, Australia in April as part of the first ever rowing race to take place in the southern hemisphere. The race took place over more than 3,000 nautical miles, from the shores of Australia to the island of Mauritius.

The pair took the challenge to raise money for UK male cancer charity Orchid, and achieved the first and the fastest ever crossing from land to land over the Indian Ocean.

'Rowing an ocean has always been a dream of mine,' Andrew said. 'It was a chance to test my skill, endurance and mental capacity. Being involved with rowing at Oxford Brookes definitely set me up for the challenge. It instilled in me a discipline and passion for rowing.'

'However those early mornings and long hours on the Thames at Wallingford being shouted at by the university rowing coach Richard Spratley seem like heaven now, compared with the endless rowing, food cravings and sores that I experienced in unmentionable places!'

Andrew started rowing at the age of 12, and has enjoyed competitive successes with the Oxford Brookes University rowing team, Leander Club and Great Britain. But the Indian Ocean Rowing Race was undoubtedly his biggest challenge.

'To say it is hard is an understatement, but the immense support for us and our chosen charity Orchid and the unique experiences we are having makes it so worth it!'

ALUMNUS RETURNS FOR NEW BBC TWO SERIES

The no-nonsense expertise of Business School graduate Sarah Willingham will return to the small screen later this year in a new series of BBC Two's popular reality show *The Restaurant*.

The Restaurant sees several pairs of hopeful restaurateurs compete against one another in a series of tasks and challenges. Sarah acts as one of two inspectors, alongside fellow expert David Moore, providing feedback on the contestants and their efforts to Raymond Blanc, who leads the show.

'I'd never really thought that the opportunity to work in television would appear,' Sarah explains. 'I was lucky to be contacted, mainly because the producers wanted a balance on the panel and sadly there aren't many women with the sort of experience they were looking for.'

Sarah says that she assumed she would just be working on the one series, and that would be it. But then momentum built up around the show, and the second series was very popular. 'I think it's the subject matter. A lot of people dream about opening their own restaurant business. But I think the whole treatment is great. The production team are very strong, and the show is very well made. There's just the right mix of jeopardy, reality, success and failure — all the ingredients to keep you watching.'

Sarah has recently set up a private equity business in the UK, and is working on more television with the BBC while pursuing a number of other business interests. You can read more by visiting the news section of the alumni website at www.brookes.ac.uk



BROOKES CREATIVE WRITING FELLOW AWARDED MBE

Novelist and Oxford Brookes Creative Writing Fellow Bernardine Evaristo has received an MBE in this year's Queen's birthday honours list. The MBE — recognising her contribution 'as a major voice in the multicultural panorama of British Literature' — came as a surprise to Bernardine. 'I was so shocked when the Cabinet Office contacted me. I consider it a lovely and unexpected honour from my country.'

Bernardine, who has written several novels as well as poetry, short stories and plays for radio and theatre, has also had plenty of experience in passing on her expertise to others through readings, talks and workshops and international tours and residencies. As a Creative Writing Fellow on Brookes' MA in Creative Writing she visits classes, giving students new perspectives on their writing as well as a sense of what it's like to be a working writer. For instance, she says, many people think that once their book is written and published, their job is done. 'That's not so true these days. One has to engage with the many ways a book needs to be promoted. In one sense publication is just the beginning.'

Bernardine's latest novel, *Blonde Roots*, has also recently won an 'alternative' Orange prize. Having been longlisted for this year's overall Orange prize, it was chosen by a panel of young people as winner of the Orange Youth Panel Award. The novel is a slavery story with a difference: the slave-masters are black Africans and the slaves are white Europeans. Creative Writing MA Programme Director Dr Simon Kovesi believes that having working writers on the course who are successfully exploring their themes in innovative ways, reinforces the idea that you can do anything you want in fiction: 'You can literally rewrite the world in any way you want to.'

Life continues to be busy for Bernardine: she is working on a new novel and has just finished a novella aimed at people who don't normally read fiction. She is also editing a black British issue of *Wasafiri*, a contemporary literature magazine, which is out next year. For more information visit her website www.bevaristo.net

DE ROTHSCHILD HEIR ON HIS QUEST TO BEAT WASTE

David de Rothschild is on an extraordinary ocean adventure that will take him across the Pacific in a remarkable boat built almost entirely from reclaimed plastic bottles.

The boat, called *Plastiki*, has been largely constructed from reclaimed plastic bottles, srPET plastic and recycled waste products. David will sail from San Francisco to Sydney to raise awareness of the dangers of waste.

David is the founder of Adventure Ecology, an organisation that uses expeditions, adventures and stories to illustrate environmental issues, inspiring others to help change the world for the better.

His voyage will pass the Great Pacific Garbage Patch, an immense area of waste suspended in the ocean. The route also takes in areas of ocean acidification, sea level rise and coral bleaching off the coast of Australia.

'The *Plastiki* voyage is a platform showcasing smart thinking, idea exploration and uninhibited curiosity,' David says. 'Through this expedition we hope to create a global youth-based community of change-makers that learn, share, speak and most importantly act on addressing our global sustainability issues.'

A student of Political Science and Information Systems, David's interests saw him become the youngest Briton to reach both geographical poles after crossing the Arctic in 2006, having already become one of only 14 people ever to traverse the continent of Antarctica.

In 2007, David led an Adventure Ecology expedition to the Ecuadorian rain forest, documenting damage caused by oil drilling. He also wrote the official companion book to the Live Earth concert series: *The Live Earth Global Warming Survival Handbook*.



FORMER STUDENT DIES ON ACTIVE DUTY IN AFGHANISTAN

The death of Lieutenant Mark Evison of 1st Battalion Welsh Guards, who was shot on patrol in Afghanistan in May 2009, has prompted many heartfelt and moving tributes from family, friends, fellow soldiers and former colleagues at Oxford Brookes.

Following his graduation in Real Estate Management in 2006, Lieutenant Evison trained at the Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst, and was commissioned into the Welsh Guards in December 2007. He was shot whilst leading a patrol in Helmand Province, Afghanistan. Despite medical treatment he showed no signs of recovery, and was flown back to Selly Oak Hospital in Birmingham where he died three days later.

Those who knew Lieutenant Evison have paid tribute to his inspiring leadership skills and his warmth. His family said: 'Mark led a charmed life in many ways, because of who he was: he was charismatic, caring, optimistic, and always happy, and he drew to himself a wide circle of friends from all walks of life.' According to his commanding officer, Lieutenant Colonel Rupert Thorneloe, who

subsequently was also killed in action, he was a natural leader: 'Tactically astute, clear-sighted and cool and decisive under pressure. His platoon gave him the affectionate nickname '007' – testament to their high regard for his capability, style and charisma. They would have followed him anywhere.'

Staff in the School of the Built Environment have also been remembering Mark. David Shiers, senior lecturer in the Real Estate and Construction department, and his personal tutor, paid tribute to his drive and resourcefulness, and his ability to work with others. 'Projects and assignments which involved team working always brought out the best in him and he consistently attained good marks for this work. It was no surprise to us that he had forged his talents and abilities into a mature sense of duty and responsibility to others. We are all deeply saddened by the loss of someone who we know would have gone on to achieve many more excellent things in his life and who would have continued to bring so much into the lives of others.'

Mark's family have set up the Mark Evison Foundation to promote leadership in young people. Each year, applicants between the ages of 16 and 30 will receive a financial contribution that will allow them to complete a challenge to help them develop. For more information, please log onto www.markevisonfoundation.org

THE LAST WORD...



You met John Henry Brookes when you were a young man. What do you remember of him?

Back in the late 50s, I passed the 11 plus exam and chose to go to Cheney School. John Brookes had founded the school and had moved it to the Headington site, next to what is now the university, a few years earlier. He had appointed most of my teachers and was particularly friendly with the art master Kenneth Wade. I remember John Brookes visiting the sixth form art class. He brought with him a small portfolio of drawings of letter forms. I particularly remember him, a short rather unassuming man, talking enthusiastically about the lettering on the Trajan column in Rome, the classic Roman letter form. He talked about the proportion of the letters, the thick and thins, the serif — I was inspired.

In your lecture you talked about his passion for quality in design, which he developed working with the great names of the Arts and Crafts movement. You must share that passion for art and design?

Yes I do. My career has followed a similar path to JHB. I went to the school he founded, then spent a year at the Oxford School of Art which he had led and developed for 28 years. I then went on to an industrial city; I chose Manchester, he chose Leicester. I then followed a career in the commercial world and JHB obviously in education. However, I have always been involved in art and design and business education; acting as a visiting lecturer, external examiner and adviser. Often when I've given talks to students I've articulated ideas I thought were mine. But on

Bryan Brown is an honorary fellow of Oxford Brookes University and has helped to shape the university's reputation, including the decision to name the university after John Henry Brookes. In a public lecture earlier this year, he outlined the vision and values that guided John Henry Brookes. Bryan's long and successful career has seen him chair the first design group to become a public company, build a hugely successful brand and advertising agency, and continue to be involved in art and the work of the Design Council. *Observe* asked him:

researching his life over the past year or so, I realise many of those ideas I had absorbed from John Brookes. I believe creativity, of which art and design are a component, is a vital factor in civilised society and the creation of wealth.

You've built and guided large and influential businesses. What does John Henry Brookes' belief in 'education for livelihood' mean to you?

'Education for livelihood' he said was more important than the often quoted phrase 'education for life'. He thought it was important that students were prepared at college for the world of work. Forming links with industry and commerce was a central plank of his educational philosophy. This is a key part of his legacy to this university; the closeness to the world of work is one of our main distinguishing characteristics. By the way, he saw no incompatibility in a full and rounded college education, widening students' horizons, with preparing them for their future careers.

These are tough times for businesses. What advice would you give to others in these challenging times?

Stay positive; think creatively, look upon problems as challenge not defeats. Be honest particularly with yourself and colleagues, analyse and share the issues and deal with them with timely action. Don't shirk the difficult issues, face them squarely.

What's the best piece of advice you ever received?

I don't know who said it; many people have quoted it but I think this advice

rings true: 'There is no such thing as luck, it's where preparation meets opportunity.'

What's the worst piece of advice you ever received?

I've received poor advice but mostly I think I've disregarded it. I take advice from people I respect and trust.

Oxford is known all over the world. What is it about the city that you find inspiring?

The mix of the old and the new, the city and the country, the academic and the fun. I enjoy the magnificent medieval colleges, the beautiful river setting, the Oxfordshire countryside and above all the inspiration of young people. I love walking the High from east to west on a Sunday morning.

Which piece of art do you wish you owned?

I collect art from artist friends who have been part of my life — tutors, fellow students and students that I've taught. Their work provides a reminder of friendships. Visual art, design, music and dance are a key part of my life and I don't have a great desire to own things.

And if you had to give our students and staff one piece of advice, what would it be?

Enjoy what you're doing. People achieve when they are fulfilled in their work. Give it your best and if after a reasonable period you don't enjoy it — change. We're too often afraid of change but once you take a well-considered step change, it can be so energising.

JOHN HENRY BROOKES

1891 – 1975



Were you taught by John Henry Brookes? Have you heard stories from those who knew him? What do his achievements and ideals mean to you? Please let us know and we'll pass your thoughts to Bryan.

Contact Bryan Brown via jhb@brookes.ac.uk or phone 01865 483129 or write to Oxford Brookes University, Headington Campus, Gypsy Lane, Oxford, OX3 0BP.



To obtain a large-print copy of this publication or to enquire about other formats please contact +44 (0) 1865 484848 or email query@brookes.ac.uk

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www.brookes.ac.uk/events

September 16 2009

How the British became French:
Britain's gastronomic journey 1960-2010

Nick Lander and Jancis Robinson OBE MW

October 21 2009

Sustainable energy – without the hot air

David J C Mackay

November 4 2009

Into danger

Kate Adie OBE

November 5 2009

Is design just bollards?

Dr Richard Simmons

November 11 2009

Shakespeare and religion

Professor Tom Betteridge

November 16 – 22 2009

Global Entrepreneurship Week

November 26 2009

Inspired by books

**Shami Chakrabarti CBE, Professor Janet Beer, Philip Pullman
and Sara Thornton**

December 2 2009

Designing world class engines for formula one
and road cars

Professor Geoff Goddard

OPEN DAYS 2009

University wide Open Day **Saturday 10 October** Postgraduate Fair **Wednesday 28 October**

For more details on open days please visit www.brookes.ac.uk/events