

Low carbon homes:
Brookes' leading
role in evaluating
performance

Shariah and legal
globalisation

E-mobility accelerator
project: driving green
motoring in Europe

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RESEARCH FORUM

The newsletter for the research community

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WELCOME INSIDE...



This edition of Research Forum centres on one of the university research themes, Cultures and Communities.

It is widely applicable to a substantial body of our research as evidenced by the range of disciplines and variety of topics covered in the publication.

There are contributions from Religion and Philosophy, History, Law, Politics, Anthropology, Business, Architecture and Engineering and these cover topics as diverse as e-mobility; low carbon homes; leisure experiences as gifts; Shariah law and globalisation; marriage, polygamy and family; and cultures of safety.

Much of the research on which the articles are based has been externally funded and/or has been undertaken with collaborators, both within and outside Brookes. All have produced significant outputs that make an important contribution to the reputation of the university. My thanks to all contributors.

Diana Woodhouse
Pro Vice-Chancellor, Research

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3 **Marriage, polygamy and family in early modern Britain and colonial North America**

By Dr Sarah Pearsall

4 **Shariah and legal globalisation**

Brookes conference opens an important ongoing conversation

4 **E-mobility accelerator project driving change in green motoring**

5 **Regeneration and the historic environment.**

Dr Aylin Orbasli explores how heritage impacts on perspectives in Islamic cities

6 **Poverty and poor relief: the experiences of the poor in Ireland 1850-1920.**

Professor Virginia Crossman uncovers individual stories

8 **Low carbon homes:**

Brookes' leading role in evaluating performance

10 **Cultures of safety: the birth of safety education in Britain**

By Dr Mike Esbester

11 **Communities of practice**

Dr Mitchell W Sedgwick examines working across cultures in Japanese corporate communities

12 **Hot air ballooning in a box**

Dr Jackie Clarke describes research into marketing experiences as gifts

13 **'Culture and communities': a key theme in religion and philosophy at Brookes**

14 **Breaking the cycle?**

Richard Huggins describes a multi-agency approach to tackling deprivation in Oxfordshire

15 **Goodbye from Diana**

Professor Diana Woodhouse reflects on her time at Oxford Brookes

15 **New professorial appointments and university readerships**

Marriage, polygamy and family in early modern Britain and colonial North America

By **Dr Sarah Pearsall**, Senior Lecturer in Non-European History, Department of History

In 1780, Great Britain was fighting a long, losing war against its former North American colonies. That same year, the Gordon Riots ripped London apart, killing 300 people. Yet another event of 1780 also captured considerable public attention: the publication of a treatise arguing for the legalisation of polygamy, a strange situation indeed. The book was *Thelyphthora, or a Treatise on Female Ruin*, a two-volume theological tract, by the Reverend Martin Madan (pictured here mocked as Doctor Madman), a prominent minister with Methodist sympathies. It provoked a great rash of reviews and counter-treatises, newspaper notices, debates, poems, plays, and prints, such as this anonymous one from 1780 that satirised the perils of having more wives than one. Despite the fact that Madan's argument for polygamy became a *cause célèbre* in the winter of 1780–1, no one has linked this controversy to its larger cultural and political context. My research does so. This furore over polygamy and marriage, like so many others from the early modern and modern era that I discuss, reveals much about family and gender, as well as about power, difference, empire and race.

My current research on stories told about marriage, polygamy and family in early modern Britain and especially colonial North America is incredibly timely; marriage law has recently become a major political issue in the United States, especially with regard to same-sex marriage. It is helpful to gain a sense of broader historical perspectives on marriage, including arguments that it might exist 'beyond one man and one woman.' Comprehending how long-standing these debates have been deepens our understanding of a number of central issues of interest today. I will be researching these controversies this coming academic year, as a National Endowment for the Humanities Fellow at the Newberry Library in Chicago, Illinois, producing articles as well as a monograph on these topics.

Polygamy might seem peripheral but Americans have literally died to defend it (as in the little-known Guala rebellion against the Spanish in 16th century Florida). In addition, disputes over polygamy, which have occurred in every century of American history, often signal a much larger set of



Reverend Madan - or as he is referred to in the image 'Doctor Madman'

controversies over political and cultural authority. My research seeks to answer questions such as: why did people in early modern America and Britain care about polygamy? How did Enlightenment ideals conflict or come together with more traditional religious arguments for or against polygamy? How were the practices of non-European peoples marshaled in such arguments? How did debates over marriage and polygamy reflect other political, cultural, and intellectual concerns?

These kinds of questions place the history of families at the centre of scholarship on the early modern world; so do other efforts in which I am involved. My prize-winning first monograph, *Atlantic Families* (Oxford University Press, 2008), had a similar aim. My accomplished Brookes colleague **Dr Joanne Bailey** and I also recently organised a successful workshop on 'Telling Stories about Families in the Long Eighteenth Century' with generous funding from the University Central Research Fund. With leading historians, art historians and literary scholars from Great Britain and the USA, this workshop revisited the history of the family in order to revitalise the research agenda for 18th century history. Telling stories about families – whether about abducted Irish brides or multi-racial unions in imperial locales or gentry families in country houses – in all kinds of media, including books, newspapers, letters, paintings and prints, had great resonance. Speakers from different universities

considered the meanings and purposes of stories told about families, as well as the importance of such narratives for individuals, families, communities, institutions and cultures.

Similar issues animate another collaboration of mine, a major international conference on 'Centering Families in Atlantic Worlds, 1500–1800,' to be held in Austin, Texas in February 2011. I am co-organizing this conference with Professor Julie Hardwick of the University of Texas, Austin and Professor Karin Wulf of the College of William and Mary. This conference, co-sponsored by the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture and the Institute for Historical Studies, University of Texas, takes an integrative approach, covering all geographic regions of the Atlantic, including Latin America and Africa, in order to explore how family issues are intrinsic to explaining larger historical patterns, including migration, commodity production and consumption, racial codification, and imperial projects around the Atlantic. Selected papers will be published as a special issue of *The William and Mary Quarterly*, a platinum history journal, of which I will serve as co-editor and for which I will co-author an article. All of this work will, I hope, demonstrate how families – even seemingly aberrant ones! – reveal much about the cultures and communities in which they have been embedded.

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Shariah and legal globalisation

In June, Brookes hosted an international conference bringing together English speaking secular and international lawyers and Arabic speaking Shariah scholars. The three day, bilingual conference explored issues as diverse as post-colonial criminal law in Morocco, counter-terrorism strategy in the UK and the future influence of Islamic finance on the new international economic order (including a provocative call for a return to the Gold standard). UK contributors included **Professor Peter Edge**, Department of Law, School of Social Sciences and Law, and **Dr Pritam Singh**, Business School. International guests included Professor Shahhat al Jundi, the Head of the Supreme Council for Shariah in Egypt, Professor Jasim al Shamsi, Head of Law at the United Arab Emirates University, and Professor Mohammad Abdu-Salam, Head of Arabic Studies at Ayn Shams University in Cairo.

Professor Edge, the convener, described the conference, made possible by the Central Research Fund, as an important first step in an ongoing conversation. 'It became clear, as we discussed issues of common concern through our translators, just how much we had to learn from each other. Our guests were Shariah scholars whose standing was recognised globally, but who had not engaged with the Anglophone academy. From our time spent together, it is clear that this is going to be a tremendously rewarding, although at times very challenging, conversation between the two intellectual communities.'

Papers from the conference will appear, in both English and Arabic, on the Brookes YouTube channel. The contributors are planning joint projects together, beginning with an exploration of the status of Muslim minorities in European and Shariah law; additional meetings in Oxford and other host institutions, beginning with a conference at Qaraweiin University in Morocco; and other academic links.

Further information about the conference is available at:

<http://ssl.brookes.ac.uk/law/research/groups/shariahlegal-conference-findings.asp>

'It is clear that this is going to be a tremendously rewarding, although at times very challenging, conversation between the two intellectual communities.'

Professor Peter Edge

E-mobility accelerator project: driving green motoring in Europe



Allan Hutchinson

The Sustainable Vehicle Engineering Centre (SVEC), based in the School of Technology, is playing a central role in a European project on electric vehicle mobility, funded by the EU inter-regional POWER programme. This 19-month, five-partner, project began in March 2010 and will end in September 2011. It is led by BOM (N.V. Noord-Brabant Development Agency) in The Netherlands and includes partners from Sweden, Spain, Poland and ourselves. This project complements perfectly the expertise developed within SVEC.

Our transport system is fundamental to our economic strength and the wellbeing of communities. A sustainable future for transport requires a transformative shift to ultra-low carbon, requiring co-ordinated action and public support. This means developments in infrastructure, influencing public attitudes and informing transport options, and employing advances in vehicle technology. The E-Mobility Accelerator Project aims to give direction to local and European authorities and organisations, to accelerate the uptake of electric transportation and thus contribute to CO2 reduction targets. It will offer jointly created policy and strategy recommendations.

Professor Allan Hutchinson, Head of the Sustainable Vehicle Engineering Centre explains:

'We want to understand what it will take to drive a change in green motoring, to achieve the international targets to cut carbon emissions by 80% by 2050. We are delighted to be supported by the POWER programme, providing much needed help to develop sustainable regional business cases to accelerate the appeal, and the successful market implementation, of electric vehicles. We are particularly pleased to be able to work with European partners to share experiences and ideas for best practice that capture the public's enthusiasm.'

One of the exciting outputs from this project will be a series of video-shorts for public consumption that showcase low carbon transport solutions in different regions across Europe.



Medina of Tunis

Regeneration and the historic environment

Dr Aylin Orbasli, Reader in Architectural Regeneration, Department of Architecture, explores the roles of heritage tourism and identity.

The focus of the International Architectural Regeneration and Development master's programme is the regeneration of the historic environment in an international context employing holistic approaches. Our students arrive from all over the world and often have different professional backgrounds. On completing the programme, they enter a broad international professional field, often taking on active roles in the regeneration process. In regeneration there is no 'one size fits all' and our task is to equip the students with the necessary understanding and skills to cope with the many different situations that they will encounter in their future professional lives.

A real life project is therefore an important component of the year long programme, putting theory into practice and enabling students to engage in a dynamic project situation. During the field work, students are expected to gather information following various methods and appraise a complex situation with a multitude of obvious and hidden dimensions. Importantly, the field work also allows us, the programme staff, to test some of our ongoing research directly in the field.

My particular interest and research focus over the past five years has been Islamic cities, particularly those in the Middle East and Mediterranean rim, and the way in which a new popular interest in 'heritage' has not only enabled the preservation of

otherwise threatened historic environments but, notably, generated new perspectives on authenticity and promoted a re-invention of the 'traditional'.

A field study programme in the United Arab Emirates in 2009 revealed limited local interest in heritage beyond its value for tourism. Our research, conducted in collaboration with the American University of Sharjah, identified a complex set of variables that determined the levels of identification various groups had with the historic environment. The local Emirati population identify with the past and their traditions in more intangible ways than through historic buildings. Heritage, meanwhile, is promoted as a symbol of a united Emirati identity, while its value to tourism informs the ways in which it is preserved, copied and utilised. At the other end of the spectrum, the largely South Asian immigrant population, inhabiting the run down houses of Ras Al Khaimah, have little affiliation with the cultural or climatic context of the region and use dilapidated historic buildings, regularly ignored by the ruling class, merely as a form of shelter which they adapt to their families' needs. Conservation is thus separated from its social context, and the process becomes solely preoccupied with style and economic gain.

While the Emirates may be a scene of rapidly changing development and a collection of conurbations that are often referred to as being surreal and distinctly lacking a 'sense of place', the ancient

Medina of Tunis, the focus of the 2010 study programme, provided a more stable environment to which comparisons could be made. The study here, working alongside the *Association de Sauvegarde de la Medina*, revealed a much more subtle, yet also a notable, shift towards tourism interests evident in a change of emphasis in project funding from housing projects to streetscape renewal along tourist routes. Most notably, elevations were not only being restored and redecorated but were also being re-authenticated with 'suitable' additions. The Medina of Tunis continues to be an inhabited and lively historic town, and tourism is only a very small part of its socio-economic profile. Nonetheless, growing stylistic concerns in conservation, which further remove a place from the communities that inhabit it and identify with it, have serious implications for the long-term sustainability of these environments.

The research into the role tourism plays in place-making and the creation of new heritage identities is ongoing as part of a book project on heritage, tourism and identity. Meanwhile we have the unique opportunity of combining research and practice with education, where our research and practice experience feeds into the student learning experience. The learning experience furthers our research and both our research and teaching benefit from graduates continuing to feedback from their practice experiences.

Poverty and poor relief: the experiences of the poor in Ireland 1850-1920

Professor Virginia Crossman, Professor of Modern Irish History, School of Arts and Humanities, recovers the experiences of being poor in Ireland during the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

In June 1872, an eleven-year-old girl named Anne Doyle applied for admission to the Enniscorthy workhouse in County Wexford on the east coast of Ireland. She had been given a temporary admission ticket by one of the local relieving officers and was brought before the Board of Guardians on the day of their next meeting to be examined. She told the guardians that she had been living in Dublin with her aunt, who had reared her. She had left Dublin with her aunt, three weeks previously, by train for Gorey and the pair had then walked to Enniscorthy where her aunt deserted her. Anne was admitted to the workhouse. This is all the information we have about Anne and we can only speculate about what caused her aunt to desert her, or what happened to her subsequently. It is possible that her aunt had brought her to Enniscorthy in search of relatives who could look after her and, failing to find them, left Anne behind when she returned to Dublin. It is also possible that her aunt brought her

to Enniscorthy intending to desert her. The aunt's address in Dublin, Francis Street (see illustration), was in one of the poorest areas of the city. We can assume therefore that she had very little money and was perhaps finding it impossible to maintain both herself and her niece. Fragmentary though it is, Anne's story has much to tell us about the experience of being poor in Ireland. It reveals just how difficult life was for the very poor, but it also reminds us that poor people made strategic choices about how to conduct their lives, and that the workhouse could represent a place of refuge, as well as a place of dread.

The poor make only occasional appearances on the stage of Irish history and generally in non-speaking roles. Rarely able to record their experiences, poor people existed on the margins of society, achieving visibility only when their existence impinged on that of their better-off neighbours. The hardships they endured and the problems they faced were difficult

to address and easy to ignore. Within much historical writing on Ireland, the poor appear only as victims of an oppressive system. Little attempt has been made to identify the strategies adopted by poor people to negotiate an inhospitable economic and social climate. My research is recovering the experiences of the poor through an innovative interrogation of the records of the Irish poor law system. Introduced in 1838, the Irish poor law constituted the primary source of poor relief for almost a century. Centred on the institution of the workhouse, it provided food and shelter for the able-bodied poor, as well as relief and treatment for the sick and infirm. One of the defining characteristics of the poor law was its intertwining of central and local responsibility. The central poor law authorities were responsible for maintaining the integrity of the system as a whole, while locally recruited poor law boards were responsible for the actual administration of relief. Poor law records were compiled by,



Francis Street, Dublin

and thus reflect the view of, the administrators of relief rather than the recipients, but the voices of the latter are recorded in the form of letters to relief committees and poor law boards, comments to relieving officers, and evidence given to official inquiries. Such material provides insights not only into the lives of poor people but also into the ways in which they sought to establish a claim to assistance.

Research undertaken in Ireland during a three-year project funded by the Economic and Social Research Council has revealed significant local and regional variations in the provision and utilisation of poor relief. An analysis of national statistics, together with a detailed study of the records of eight sample poor law unions, suggests that understandings and experiences of poverty were diverse, unstable and contested, and that local practices frequently diverged from national policy. It has been possible to identify three distinct types of welfare

regime operating in Ireland, shaped by socio-economic, political and cultural priorities. It is further clear that while access criteria reflected ideological imperatives more than need, the poor were active historical agents making calculated choices about how, when and where to apply for aid. Funded by an award from the Leverhulme Trust, I am currently writing up the project's findings. The resulting monograph will integrate analysis of regional, local and individual case studies with discussion of wider issues such as entitlement and eligibility. The stories of individual paupers, like Anne Doyle, will be used to provide a human perspective and to explore the impact of national and local policy decisions on individuals. The aim is to allow local and individual experience to inform our understanding of poverty and welfare in an historical context.

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‘Research undertaken in Ireland during a three-year project funded by the Economic and Social Research Council has revealed significant local and regional variations in the provision and utilisation of poor relief.’



Ecos Homes development, Somerset

Low carbon homes:

Brookes at forefront of performance evaluation

The housing sector is responsible for over a quarter of all carbon emissions in the UK. Until now, however, there has been very little systematic evidence gathered on the performance of new homes designed to significantly reduce these carbon emissions. The government is committed to all new homes being zero carbon by 2016, and has set targets which will increase annually as a means of achieving this. As a result, regulatory requirements in this area are changing rapidly, forcing housing developers to adjust quickly to much tighter performance requirements and to use innovative technology to achieve this. Typically, however, buildings commonly use four times as much energy as they are predicted to use. All of this makes the post-occupancy evaluation of housing and the feedback of findings into the design process more vital than ever.

Oxford Brookes University is at the forefront of two strategic government drives to promote building performance evaluation that will help to identify occupancy issues in new build housing and improve design. This is through the work of the Oxford Institute for Sustainable Development's Low Carbon Building Unit (OISD:LCB) which is co-directed by **Dr Fionn Stevenson**, a Reader in Sustainable Design. As a key advisor to the Technology Strategy Board's current £8 million Building Performance Evaluation programme and the Homes and Communities Agency's (HCA) Carbon Challenge exemplar programme, her particular expertise has been employed to develop guidance for the domestic post-occupancy evaluation carried out in these programmes. OISD:LBC are currently working with the HCA, Barratt Homes, HTA Architects Ltd and Arup engineers on the evaluation process for Hanham Hall in

Bristol, which is currently on site as the first large scale zero carbon housing development to be developed through the HCA in the UK.

Dr Stevenson also chairs the Good Homes Alliance Technical Monitoring Group, which is steering a £300K monitoring and evaluation project funded by the Department of Communities and Local Government. Within this project, OISD:LCB are currently evaluating a zero carbon homes development for Ecos Homes in Somerset. Initial results have established that the external fabric of these homes is performing largely as predicted. The next stage is to establish whether carbon emissions in use also achieve the predicted results. 'We were pleasantly surprised by the initial results', she commented, 'but there is no room for complacency here as we know that user behaviour can account for exactly the same houses having a threefold difference in energy use. Our work now will be to monitor energy and water use against targets. We hope to establish the degree to which the performance of the technology and the relationship with user comfort and control affects the ability to meet these targets'.

The university is also part of a consortium of partners named AIMC4 delivering the government-backed project.

Developers Stewart Milne Group, Crest Nicholson Plc and Barratt Developments Plc, plus building product manufacturers H+H Celcon and consultancy BRE will create 12 sustainable homes that use only energy efficient materials without relying on renewable technologies.

The homes will be built in a range of locations across the UK, sold to consumers, then monitored and evaluated by Brookes researchers to increase understanding of fabric performance, emission levels and to gain valuable customer feedback.

The results will help inform the way zero carbon homes of the future are built and operated.

Each member of the AIMC4 consortium brings unique expertise to the project worth £6.4 million, £3.2 million of which has been invested by the Technology Strategy Board.

Oxford Brookes will lead on the research part of the project and will also be involved with the preparation and evaluation of guidance for the occupants of these innovative new homes. The team from OISD:LCB will monitor and evaluate factors such as carbon emissions, heat loss, indoor air quality, comfort and control, and interview home owners to get feedback about their experiences. The results will provide valuable evidence to help achieve the Government targets, as well as determine how to meet new energy efficiency standards.

Dr Stevenson is in no doubt about the impact of AIMC4: 'This is a very exciting project which could change the way we design our homes in future, by focusing on reducing energy demand first and foremost. Furthermore, it puts the performance evaluation of housing firmly on the agenda - an area in which Brookes has unique expertise.'

OISD:LCB utilises a range of expertise and methods when carrying out building performance evaluation and has recently purchased a state-of-the-art high resolution thermal imaging camera to assist with analysis of the heat loss from homes. The work of the research unit feeds directly into teaching in the Department of Architecture, where Dr Stevenson and her team help students to learn the latest theories and methods of building performance evaluation on key undergraduate and postgraduate programmes.

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Cultures of safety: the birth of safety education in Britain

History Department AHRC Early Career Fellow **Dr Mike Esbester** describes his work on safety culture in 20th century Britain.

Before too long, we can expect to see the annual Christmas anti-drink driving campaign – on posters, in newspapers and on the TV and radio. However, the origins of this technique of safety education – in which the media convey messages that try to persuade people to change their behaviour and adopt ‘safe’ habits – are virtually unknown. My new project *Living in Safety: the Culture of ‘Safety’ and Accident Prevention in Everyday Life in Britain, c.1900-2000*, funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) will remedy this absence.

I am exploring how and why safety education started, and what techniques were used to prevent accidents. Rather than the characteristically Victorian approach of stern warnings, using dense text and unfamiliar language, early in the 20th century a new method was adopted: visually attractive, using photographs to show people what and what not to do, and using a friendly, persuasive tone of address. Accordingly, I am making use of a range of appealing sources: films, posters, leaflets, booklets, badges, games, cigarette cards and more. One of my aims is to analyse how messages have been conveyed, something of particular importance given the continued use of safety education in today’s Britain. My research will also shed light on the role of the government in producing advisory messages for its citizens; this will show how the state extended its influence into virtually all areas of the community for many, if not all people during the 20th century.

I am concentrating on three areas: work safety, public safety, and home safety. Safety education started, and was shaped, in the

workplace. My research will examine why employers tried to improve worker safety by using posters, films, pamphlets and the like (such as the National Coal Board’s 1978 ‘Do it the safety way’ record, sung by Max Bygraves). By looking at public safety – specifically road safety – it will be possible to see how and why safety education spread throughout the community. This part of the research will draw on material such as the Tufty and Green Cross Code campaigns; it will explore how safety and safety education started to become part of everyday life.

Finally, examining safety education intended for use at home (such as the 1962 *Safety in your Home* booklet, which advised women on safety in the kitchen and men on safety in the garage) will show the extent to which the state tried to influence the most private areas of people’s lives, and how there came to be no hiding place from safety education. This all links strongly with the Centre for Health, Medicine and Society: Past and Present’s research, especially the current *Health Care in Public and Private* strand.

Over the course of the project, one of my key aims is to disseminate findings as widely as possible. Hopefully I will make the origins of contemporary safety culture more widely known and provide critical historical perspective on ‘health and safety gone mad’ stories so beloved of certain sections of the media. I will be working with local and national media, local history groups (including a public lecture at Brookes), policy-makers and safety professionals, as well as producing more traditional academic outputs, such as articles, and conference and seminar papers.

In the longer-term, I hope that this project will lead to a larger, international collaborative research programme on the history of safety, stretching back earlier than the 20th century, and involving specialists from disciplines beyond history. I’m certainly keen to explore synergies with colleagues across the university, to expose the diverse ways in which safety and accidents have had, and continue to have an impact upon our lives, both at the level of individual experiences and at a community-wide level. For further information contact: mesbester@brookes.ac.uk



‘Communities of practice’ and working across cultures

By **Dr Mitchell W Sedgwick**, Senior Lecturer in Social Anthropology, and Director of the Europe Japan Research Centre, School of Social Sciences and Law



In social anthropology we pay a good deal of attention to ‘community’ as people themselves define it, recognizing that, across any one day, people participate in any number of communities: in their workplace or school, in their family, their neighbourhood, etc. These social relations, within any particular community, frame or guide our activities. We play a particular role in the workplace, another at home, in each place dealing with problems as they present themselves. Working with and against the expectations of others regarding our behaviour, and vice versa, we elaborate across time what might be called a ‘community of practice’. While changing according to circumstance, ‘communities of practice’ also conserve expectations of behaviour between people, otherwise we wouldn’t know what to do next.

More abstractly, the communities we participate in are usually guided by larger, often unconscious, norms of society: what might be called our ‘culture’, with a small ‘c’. Most basically, direction is provided by the particular language ‘we’ use. Meanwhile, we share similar experiences in school and knowledge of the general outline, say, of ‘our’ history: things that, writ

small and large, and according to our age, help us to understand ourselves and link how we do things, in our many communities, to each other.

While all that seems rather straightforward, the fact is that these days we can assume less and less about similarities of background, culture and even language use in our communities. Happily, any teaching room at Brookes has students working in English as a foreign language, while our staff come from many different societies. While especially pronounced in universities, cross-cultural tensions seem increasingly common to our communities and they are endemic in all forward-looking organisations. My research has focused over the last several years on organisations where members’ understandings of ‘culture’ and ‘community’, and language, are very different indeed.

While I have a lot of experience as an anthropologist of Japan, the success of Japanese manufacturing firms – or, more

‘These days we can assume less and less about similarities of background, culture and even language use in our communities.’

directly, the high quality of their automobiles and consumer electronics – is common knowledge to everyone. That high quality is woven by the knowledge and experience generated within Japanese corporate ‘communities’, which, until quite recently, were almost exclusively found in Japan itself. But, as organisations in any particular society are ‘communities of practice’ reflecting ‘cultural’ expectations of that society, what happens in Japanese factories when they move abroad; where Japanese people are suddenly rubbing up against people in Swindon or Sunderland or, in those places where I have conducted extensive ethnographic fieldwork – in Bangkok or in France – that is, in overseas subsidiaries of ‘Japanese’ firms? How are the communicative forms upon which such

organisations evidently depend in order to produce high quality goods, combined with those of local, non-Japanese staff, who hold their own distinctive organisational (cum cultural) inclinations, who speak no Japanese, and have diverse educational and technical backgrounds and varied work experiences before joining the Japanese firm? In turn, do the Japanese work differently with ‘local’ colleagues in France from how they work with Thais or Brits?

The answers to these questions are nearly always, ‘it depends’. We need to address them according to the particularities of context, keeping an eye on what we mean by ‘community’. Obviously there are expectations of behaviour based on language use and culture for the Japanese – as there are for French, Thai and British people – but there are also particular ‘communities of practice’ in each organisation or company. Meanwhile there are particular ways of doing things among engineers, accountants, marketers, and on

assembly lines, where people work intimately together across a long period of time. After gaining an understanding of many communities, at what point are we able to generalize about the Japanese working ‘cross-culturally’ with the Thai, the French or the British? Or would it perhaps be more useful to understand how ‘communities of practice’ among a particular group of people coming together cross-culturally, evolve over time, and encourage members of communities to understand that as well?

Further information is available in my book *Globalisation and Japanese Organisational Culture: An Ethnography of a Japanese Corporation in France*, Routledge (London), December 2007

<http://www.routledge.com/books/details/9780415492164/>

Hot air ballooning in a box: experience gifts and consumer behaviour

By **Dr Jackie Clarke**, Marketing and Operations Management Department, Business School

The practice of giving and accepting gifts is a human behaviour exhibited across cultures and long studied by anthropologists and sociologists. It is also a contemporary phenomenon that interests marketing academics, firstly because it is about purchasing products for use by others rather than oneself, and secondly because gift giving engenders reciprocity or a cultural duty to repay, which results in a virtuous circle of purchases. As individuals move through life their network of immediate family, relatives, friends and colleagues with whom they have voluntary (and sometimes obligatory) gift giving relationships expands and contracts. Gift giving is a cultural mechanism used to develop, maintain and even end human relationships.

The opportunities and occasions for gift giving are, of course, well understood and exploited by marketers, and different cultures offer different occasions, rituals and expectations for gifts. As you read this edition of *Research Forum* the Christmas Season is upon us. It was while shopping for Christmas presents that I stumbled upon beribboned boxes on a Department Store table – a merchandising lure for impulse buying. Yet, despite the physical presence of the box, the actual gift was absent. Why? The gift itself was an experience. Should I buy a box, I could give my loved ones a day of white water rafting, or the chance to improve their culinary skills with a celebrity chef. These experiences were the packaged products of an experience company – specialist companies (eg Red Letter Days of *Dragons' Den* fame), who target the gift buyer. The products offered by experience companies are increasingly imaginative ('walking with wolves', 'sleeping with the SAS' etc). Yet all products from leisure, hospitality and entertainment enterprises, whatever their guise, can be purchased as gifts even if they are not marketed as such, and much of this gift giving behaviour lies below the commercial radar.

This Christmas shopping spark led to



my programme of research into the consumer behaviour associated with the decision-making, giving, receiving and consumption of experiences as gifts. As an interpretative qualitative researcher, I used a mix of in-depth interviews, telephone interviews and a written instrument, and incorporated consumers who had given or received any type of experience gift and consumers who had just experienced a historic plane flight as a gift. I also included the perspectives of companies who were involved – openly or 'below the commercial

being, representing opportunities to share experiences and enhance relationships, and donor input of time and effort (both into the decision process and as co-consumers) emerged as the valued resource ahead of monetary investment. Intriguingly the intangibility of the experience gift facilitated the possibilities of surprising the recipient, with donors inventing creative strategies for gift disclosure in place of traditional wrapping of physical gifts. In western cultures gift giving theory indicates that surprise is valued by recipients as an

The products offered by experience companies are increasingly imaginative.

radar' – in the experience gift business. Developed as a stream of research in distinct phases, the findings and eventual model of experience gift giving behaviour have been published in marketing journals (eg *European Journal of Marketing*, *Journal of Consumer Behaviour*) and services, tourism and leisure journals (eg *Annals of Tourism Research*, *Journal of Service Industries*).

The comparative wealth of many consumer segments in UK society and a re-alignment of values and lifestyles led to the labelling of physical gifts as 'dust collectors'. By comparison experience gifts were regarded as better aligned with well-

attribute of the perfect gift, granting experience gifts an intrinsic advantage over physical objects. This snippet of the findings – as with the whole study – has to be appreciated in its cultural context. The value of surprise in a gift, for example, is likely to play out differently in other cultures.

For enterprises in the service sector this research offers new understanding of one particular form of consumer behaviour. For academia it starts to plug a gap in the theory of gift giving. And for anyone thinking of Christmas presents it might just stimulate an idea that's that little bit different.

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‘Cultures and communities’: a key theme in religion and philosophy at Brookes

The university’s research theme of ‘cultures and communities’ is integral to the work of the Department of Religion and Philosophy at Westminster Institute of Education.

Cultural identity and an understanding of communities are inextricably connected to beliefs and values that lie at the heart of our interests. Philosophy sometimes appears to be an overly abstract discipline but it is always grounded in the concerns of the culture and communities which give rise to its expressions. And this is the case at Oxford Brookes. **Dr Stephen Boulter**, **Dr Mark Cain** and **Dr Constantine Sandis** edit Palgrave Macmillan’s *Modern Studies in Philosophy* series, which provides introductions to individual philosophers. And **Dr Dan O’Brien’s** work on Hume and his forthcoming monograph, *Sick Men’s Dreams: Hume’s critique of Religion*, also focus on Hume’s contribution to wider community interests. Given the contribution that science makes to our culture, its relationship with philosophical enquiry is an important field of interest. Stephen Boulter and Mark Cain research the relationship between evolutionary biology and philosophy. Mark’s book, *The Philosophy of Cognitive Science*, will be published in 2011 and Steve is currently working on *An Apology for Medieval Philosophy*. Constantine Sandis’ book on the philosophy of action, *The Things We Do and Why We Do Them*, is to be published later this year.

Philosophy provides useful tools for investigating the shaping of global identities. The shaping of identity through culture and communities is a distinctive aspect of the department’s research. **Professor**

Beverley Clack’s research uses feminist and psychoanalytic sources to explore the complex relationship between individuals and the cultural forces that shape us. Her new book on Freud comes out in 2011 and she is currently working on a psychoanalytic philosophy of religion. **Michele Paule’s** research considers communities of discourses in gender and ability. In July she was keynote speaker at an international conference in Sydney where she spoke on the construction of the gifted girl.

Dr Tom Tyler’s research examines the roles of animals and forms of

Cultural identity and an understanding of communities are inextricably connected to beliefs and values that lie at the heart of our interests.

anthropocentrism in cultural theory. His monograph, *CIFERAE: A Bestiary in Five Fingers*, is published by Minnesota University Press in 2011. Tom has held research positions at North Carolina State University and Clark University, Massachusetts. **Dr Federica Frabetti** applies critical theory to computer language and is currently working on a monograph on software as a form of writing.

In the field of Religion our research engages with matters as diverse as global religious cultures, the historic role of the churches in the creation of modern culture and national identity, the material and artistic culture of religion in the past and the role identity plays in religious belief and practice. There are a number of major projects which exemplify this research.

Professor William Gibson is one of the

editors of the *Oxford Handbook of the Modern British Sermon* (OUP 2012), which will explore the role of the sermon as a cultural form integral to modern religious identity. His forthcoming general history of Britain between 1660 and 1851, *The Making of the Nation* (Constable Robinson, 2011), shows the role that faith and belief played in the lives of people in the period. He is also a visiting research fellow at Yale University for 2010-11, researching the life of John Trusler, who he describes as ‘clergyman, publisher, entrepreneur and charlatan.’ **Dr Peter Forsaith** is working on

developing an online gallery of more than 2,000 images of John Wesley, one of the most ubiquitous religious images in the 18th and 19th centuries. His jointly edited collection of essays on *Religion, Gender and Industry* will be published in 2011.

Dr Robert Bates is writing a book entitled *Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the Struggle for the German Church*. **Dr Dominic Corrywright** researches new and alternative communities of religion and religiosity, from generic spiritualities to fast growing paganisms. Such research into spiritualities expands into broader contemporary discourses relating to wellbeing, medical practices and conceptions of health.

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Breaking the cycle? Tackling entrenched deprivation in Oxfordshire

By **Richard Huggins**, Associate Dean, School of Social Sciences and Law



For many of us Oxfordshire appears to be a very prosperous area enjoying a high quality environment, low unemployment, high attainment in education and careers, and a pleasant place to work and, in some cases, live. Indeed for many parts of the county this is the case – but less well known is the fact that a small number of areas within the county fall into some of the 20% most deprived areas of the country. In February 2009 the Oxfordshire Partnership asked the five Chief Executives of Cherwell District Council, Oxford City Council, Oxfordshire County Council, Oxfordshire Primary Care Trust and Thames Valley Police (Oxfordshire) to work on a way of tackling the areas of multiple deprivation in Oxford City and Banbury. Evidence demonstrates that long-term, multi-agency approaches with good levels of public involvement are

needed to successfully tackle deprivation. Effective work often includes changes in working practice and delivery as well as innovation in terms of new interventions.

This might include, for example, the co-location of services eg through extended services in schools, expanding the services on offer in Children's Centres, a multi-agency approach to employment brokerage, coordination of work with vulnerable families, and the delivery of education and training opportunities in the work-place, community or by distance learning in partnership with others.

In 2009 a bid to the Public Service Board for £1m from the Local Area Agreement reward grant was successful and agreement was reached on how this money will be used to fund prime work in the target localities. This work is being taken forward under the following broad headings:

Giving children a good start in life and supporting vulnerable families

The overall aim of this stream of activity is to have 100% of young people in employment, education or training. This is an overarching outcome and will be achieved by implementing work to support vulnerable families, improve employability and address health inequality issues.

A second main theme – which has become even more important in the last 18 months – has been to **Improve employability**. This activity stream is providing support for vulnerable young people through mentoring to supplement the Family Intervention Project. In addition a number of partners from education, business, local authorities and JobCentre Plus are working closely with targeted initiatives through the Learning and Skills agenda.

Reducing health inequalities seeks to achieve this outcome through behaviour change initiatives targeting groups seen as at risk of heart disease, teenage pregnancy, infant mortality and cancer. This will include initiatives through local workplaces to improve men's health, health promotion and the prevention of teenage conceptions across the target areas, smoking cessation initiatives, and initiatives to encourage greater physical activity and weight management.

Richard Huggins has been involved in the development and delivery of this project over the last two years (as part of Oxford Brookes University's commitment to the Local Strategic Partnership) and as a member of its steering groups contributes to both the management and governance of the project.

In addition he has secured funding of £34,000 from the partnership to support a meta-analysis of existing secondary data, current measures and new interventions being undertaken in Oxfordshire to tackle long-term and entrenched deprivation. He is also working with colleagues in the Local Strategic Partnership to develop what has been termed the 'Oxfordshire Model', which will detail the approach taken in the county and present a transferable model for tackling deprivation that can be used by other partnerships nationally.

NEW PROFESSORS APPOINTED

The following members of staff were recently promoted to Professor.

Our congratulations go to:

- **Dr Levent Altinay**, Department of Hospitality, Leisure and Tourism Management, Business School
- **Dr Helen Dawes**, School of Life Sciences
- **Dr Guida de Abreu**, Department of Psychology, School of Social Sciences and Law
- **Dr Virginia Crossman**, Department of History, School of Arts and Humanities
- **Dr David Evans**, Head of the Graduate School, School of Life Sciences
- **Dr Keith Moultrie**, Director of the Institute of Public Care, School of Social Sciences and Law
- **Dr Chris Rust**, Head of the Oxford Centre for Staff and Learning Development, Directorate of Human Resources
- **Dr David Sanderson**, Director of the Centre for Development and Emergency Practice, School of the Built Environment
- **Dr Gert Westermann**, Department of Psychology, School of Social Sciences and Law

PROMOTION TO UNIVERSITY READERSHIP STATUS

Congratulations to the following people, who were recently promoted to Reader:

- **Dr Alex Goody**, Department of English, School of Arts and Humanities
- **Dr Anna Barnett**, Department of Psychology, School of Social Sciences and Law
- **Dr Constantine Sandis**, Department of Religion and Philosophy, Westminster Institute of Education
- **Dr Elizabeth Hurren**, Department of History, School of Arts and Humanities
- **Dr Glen O'Hara**, Department of History, School of Arts and Humanities
- **Dr Lucinda Wiggs**, Department of Psychology, School of Social Sciences and Law
- **Dr Marius Turda**, Department of History, School of Arts and Humanities
- **Dr Nicole Pohl**, Department of English, School of Arts and Humanities
- **Ms Brigitte Piquard**, Department of Architecture, School of the Built Environment
- **Ms Sonia Morano-Foadi**, Department of Law, School of Social Sciences and Law



Goodbye from Diana...

As most of you are aware, on 31 December I will be retiring from the university and hence from my role as Pro Vice-Chancellor Research and Knowledge Transfer. This is a role that I have enjoyed immensely, mainly because of the connections it has enabled me to make with individuals and research communities both within Brookes and externally.

I have been very fortunate to be in post during a period when there has been significant growth in our research activity and a steady increase in our research quality, impact and reputation. I hope that the strategic initiatives introduced since I became Pro Vice-Chancellor in 2005 have played a part in these developments. However the main credit goes to all those who have contributed to the research agenda, whether by undertaking research themselves, providing administrative and technical support to researchers or carrying heavier teaching loads to enable other colleagues to fulfil their research commitments. I thank you all for your contribution and for the support you have shown me.

Brookes has made considerable progress in its research and knowledge transfer over the past five years and has

the potential to progress much further. As is evident from the 2020 Strategy, the university's research ambitions are for the longer term and I am sure that thanks to the commitment and dedication of Brookes' staff, it will achieve them.

One final thought, I remain convinced that inter- and multi-disciplinary collaboration is central to the future research success of the university. Not only is it important for capacity building and research sustainability, it also encourages the enrichment and development of ideas. To quote George Bernard Shaw, 'If you have an apple and I have an apple and we exchange these apples then you and I will still each have one apple. But if you have an idea and I have an idea and we exchange these ideas, then each of us will have two ideas.' It is working together on these ideas that helps to build a vibrant research culture from which both staff and students benefit.

My best wishes to you all.

Diana

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