

Readership Scheme appointments for 2006

To celebrate research achievements, recognise research excellence and provide a career route for researchers, the University has introduced a Readership Scheme.

The first applications were considered in October and the following were awarded the title 'Reader':

Anthropology

Dr Catherine Hill

Dr Hill's research is centred around human-wildlife conflict issues in Africa, including the impact of crop raiding by wildlife on farmers' livelihoods, investigating the conflict within changing ecological and socio-economic contexts and developing a set of non-lethal, humane, crop protection tools. At present she has projects in Uganda and Nigeria.

Dr Anna-Isola Nekaris

Dr Nekaris' research encompasses a broad spectrum of topics in the fields of wildlife conservation, evolutionary process and theory, mammal behaviour and ecology, and systematics. Her current research focuses on the microhabitat use of nocturnal mammal communities in Sri Lanka, and implications for their conservation.

Business

Dr Levent Altinay

Dr Altinay's research interests include internationalisation of organisations and ethnic minority entrepreneurship and he currently leads an Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) funded research project investigating the interaction between culture and immigrant business growth.

French

Dr Nathalie Aubert

Dr Aubert's research is essentially centred on the interaction between text and image and the theory of the image for the modern period (1850-1950).

Geography

Dr Adrian Parker

Dr Parker's research activities fall under the general theme of prehistoric archaeology with specific reference to the Middle East and North-West Europe. His focus is on geoarchaeology, palaeoenvironments and climate change. These fall under two core categories: environmental change and society-environment relationships, and science-based archaeology.

History

Dr Virginia Crossman

Dr Crossman has an established reputation in the field of modern Irish history as an authority on government and administration, and more recently on poverty and welfare.

Law

Dr Caroline Sawyer

Dr Sawyer researches and publishes widely on the law and practice surrounding the representation of children, especially what this demonstrates about the wider conception of legal personality. She also has an interest in immigration and nationality law.

Dr Wenhua Shan

Dr Shan's research interests are in international law, particularly its economic aspects. He is currently conducting research on the legal framework governing EU-China investment relations, with a view to proposing a new international investment agreement between the two sides. In addition, he undertakes research on issues such as World Trade Organisation, trade usages, electronic commerce and commercial arbitration.

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pictures left to right:

Dr Guida de Abreu

Dr Levant Altinay

Dr Gert Westermann



Readership Scheme appointments for 2006 (continued)

Life Sciences

Dr Helen Dawes

Dr Dawes works in the field of movement science, undertaking research examining optimising human physical performance. Her research spans fundamental neuromuscular science through to service delivery, with a philosophy of developing science led clinical and physical activity practice.

Dr Shirley McCready

Dr McCready's research is centred on UV damage and repair, mostly in yeast but also in human and plant cells. Most recently the focus has been on repair in micro-organisms that have characteristics of both bacteria and eukaryotes and are close to the universal common ancestor of life.

Dr Tim Shreeve

Dr Shreeve's research interests are principally involved in understanding the relationship of butterfly species to habitats and microclimates and their conservation in the face of rapid environmental change.

Dr Stewart Thompson

Dr Thompson heads the Spatial Ecology and Landuse Unit (SELU) and his research centres on the use of information technology to develop strategies for conservation. Over the last two years Dr Thompson, with his team has been developing a user-friendly digital key and recording package which operates on handheld computers. The aim is to use the technology as a 'hook' to engage young people in wildlife identification and recording.

Dr David Melcher

Dr Melcher's contribution to the field of cognitive neurosciences has led to him developing a new theory of visual memory that describes the change in what we remember over time. Dr Melcher is also interested in the interdisciplinary study of artistic expression.

Dr Gert Westermann

Dr Westermann's research investigates the links between brain development and cognitive development and the effects of experience on adult brain organisation. His research programme spans developmental and adult cognitive psychology in the areas of speech, language and categorisation.

Psychology

Dr Guida de Abreu

The focus of Dr de Abreu's research is on the relationship between psychological development and culture and includes interests in areas such as: psychology of culture and human development; cognitive development in socio-cultural context and children's experience of the relationship between their home and school mathematics (numeracy).

Many congratulations to you all. The next call for applications will be later in Semester 2.

Professor Diana Woodhouse
Pro Vice-Chancellor, Research

Understanding the processing of verb inflections

How do people form the past tense of verbs? English has regular forms (such as *smile – smiled*) and irregular forms (such as *run – ran*). There are two main theories of the brain mechanisms underlying the production of these forms. One theory claims that regular forms are generated by a mental rule ('add -ed to the verb stem') and irregulars are stored in memory, thereby explaining processing differences between regular and irregular forms found for example in children's errors, adults' reaction times and errors made by brain-damaged people. Another theory claims that all forms are stored in memory and that differences between forms are due to different 'distributional factors' such as word frequencies, length, and similar sounding words sharing the same past tense form (such as *look* and *cook*) or having different past tense forms (such as *fear* and *hear*).

There has been intense debate on this question, because it touches on

larger issues: is rule-like behaviour instantiated as actual rules in the neural structures of the brain? Is the human language system organised according to the principles of grammar?

Dr Gert Westermann, Reader in Psychology, School of Social Sciences and Law, is undertaking a three year research project, funded by the Economic and Social Research Council, to investigate this question. He is using an interdisciplinary approach, combining psycholinguistic experiments with computational modelling. The main hypothesis is that differences in processing arise because some verbs are 'easy' to process and some verbs are 'hard', depending on their distributional characteristics – and hard verbs show more errors and longer reaction times. This would be evidence for the second theory. However, as most of the 'easy' verbs are regular and most 'hard' verbs, irregular, processing differences may seem

to be between regulars and irregulars. This could mistakenly be construed as evidence for the first theory. The need is therefore for careful analysis.

In the project, one research assistant will work on systematically characterising the distributional factors of English verbs to analyse the overlap between regularity/irregularity and these factors. The team will then conduct psycholinguistic studies with adults and will use regression analyses to determine whether grammatical class or 'difficulty' is a better predictor for observed processing differences. A second research assistant will develop computational (neural network) models to investigate how learning verb inflections as a child affects the developing structure of the brain and what consequences this adaptation will have on processing in adults. This study will compare German and English verb inflection in language development, adult processing and after brain damage.

On 4 October Professor Peter Edge from the Department of Law gave the first in this year's series of public lectures. In his thought-provoking lecture, *'Cloths on their Shoes; Sacred places and state power in contemporary England'*, Professor Edge examined the attitude of the government to places of worship, in particular mosques, in the wake of 9/11. Here he summarises the main strands of his lecture.

Oxford Brookes public lecture series

In the wake of 9/11, the UK, following a US lead, began to see places of worship, in particular mosques, as potentially dangerous places. Established views of such places as benefiting the public were supplemented by a new view that some of them were potential centres for supporting terrorism and recruiting terrorists. Immediately after the 7/7 bombings the Prime Minister announced consultation on strong powers to control places of worship.

The Home Office produced a detailed proposal, which would allow the police to initiate regulation of places of worship, including those which did not operate as charities, and private homes used for communal worship. Under the proposal, the police could seek court orders identifying a place of worship as one being used to support terrorists and the controllers of the

place of worship would be required to take reasonable steps to eliminate this support. If they failed to do so, they would become criminally liable. Additionally, the police could return to the court requesting specific limitations on the place of worship, which could include temporary closure. A public consultation on the proposals followed, and led to significant contributions from a range of religious and policing organisations and civil liberties groups. The majority of the responses rejected the proposals as being too radical, too damaging to religious interests, and too inclusive in their reach.

Additionally, the proposed new powers were criticised as unnecessary. The only example of a place of worship being used to support religious terrorism, that of Finsbury Park Mosque, had been dealt with by existing laws. The mosque, which

as a charity fell within the jurisdiction of the Charity Commission, had been subject to strong state control from 1998 to 2005. This included the Commission deciding who could and could not preach in the mosque, and removing existing trustees to replace them with their own nominees. In parallel with this control of the mosque, the Imam, Abu Hamza, was investigated – most memorably through a police raid upon the mosque in 2003 when the police covered their shoes with cloths, as a mark of respect, before forcing an entry (hence the title of the lecture). He was successfully prosecuted for 11 criminal offences, being sentenced to seven years imprisonment in 2006.

In the wake of the hostile consultation the proposals were dropped, but as part of the response to 7/7, the government established a number of Islamic working groups. One of these, Group 5, was responsible for considering the position of mosques and Imams and while its proposals on their face are of no theological significance, on deeper consideration they pave the way for a national (an Anglican?) Islam, consonant with state values, and expressed through British nationals. For instance, religious leaders are expected to demonstrate skills of 'interfaith dialogue' – a particular vision of interfaith relations which is not theologically neutral – and 'citizenship'. The proposals of Group 5 are well on the way to being adopted, and similar thinking can be found in other proposals concerning ministers of religion. In particular, the government is currently consulting on whether ministers of religion from abroad should be required, after one year, to show that they have acknowledged, internalised, and performed particular values such as valuing diversity, and respecting other faith groups. The perceived mischief of radicalising mosques therefore continues to be addressed, albeit through subtler means.

New staff

Professor Philip James recently joined the Business School as Professor of Employment Relations. Professor James comes to Oxford Brookes from Middlesex University where he held the same title post for ten years and remains a Visiting Professor. Previously he had worked as an editor and research officer at the publisher Industrial Relations Services and lectured at the University of Birmingham.

Professor James' research interests span the fields of employment relations and occupational health and safety and he has published widely in both these fields. Current areas of research include regulatory policy in the field of health and safety at

work, the impact of Best Value and the Audit Commission on people management in local government, employee participation in workplace health and safety and the financial and employment consequences of outsourcing in the social care sector.

Professor James is currently Deputy Editor of the journal 'Policy and Practice in Health and Safety' and a member of the Executive Committee of the Institute of Employment Rights.

Professor Margaret Harris joined the School of Social Sciences and Law as Professor and Head of Psychology in April. She also has taken on the role of Director of the new Institute for Research in Child Development. Professor Harris came to Oxford Brookes from Royal

Holloway, University of London, where she was Professor of Developmental Psychology and Director of Teaching. She has an international research reputation in developmental psychology, especially for her research in early language development and language learning in deaf children.



Analysing crop-raiding behaviour by non-human primates and developing techniques to reduce farmer-wildlife conflict

Dr Catherine Hill and PhD student **Graham Wallace** from the Anthropology Centre for Conservation, Environment and Development in the School of Social Sciences and Law received funding from the Rufford Maurice Laing Foundation, the North of England Zoological Society and the Primate Society of Great Britain to investigate the conflict between humans and wildlife.

This conflict is particularly prevalent in rural areas of Africa where people live adjacent to forest reserves and other protected areas. Interactions often have adverse effects for humans as well as wildlife, particularly when they involve ongoing competition for resources (Conover, 2002). Farmers in these areas rely on subsistence agriculture as well as cash crops for their food security. However, these crops are also an attractive, accessible, and predictable source of food for wildlife, and numerous species may raid crops for food and inflict considerable damage with corresponding impacts on farmer livelihoods.

The project focuses on the interactions between local farmers and wildlife in villages around the Budongo Forest Reserve, Masindi District examining their behaviour on and off farms to:

- understand the behaviour of wildlife while crop-raiding,
- predict how farmer activity influences crop-raiding patterns,
- evaluate the efficacy of current crop protection techniques, and
- use this information to develop a series of locally appropriate and effective mitigation strategies.

Data collection is being undertaken through consultation with local communities and with the consent and support of village councils and participating farmers. The first stage (February to October 2006) is currently being completed and involves assessment of the effectiveness of farmer-initiated mitigation techniques, the behaviour of wildlife during crop-raiding events and the responses of wildlife to current crop-protection methods.

Preliminary results indicate that although baboons (*Papio anubis*) are responsible for a large proportion of crop-raiding incidents and overall damage, other

primates – particularly red-tailed monkeys (*Cercopithecus ascanius*) and vervet monkeys (*Chlorocebus aethiops*) – crop-raid to a greater extent than previously known or perceived by farmers (Hill, 2000). It also seems to be the case that farmers may be unaware of up to 30% of crop-raiding incidents.

Benefits of the research will arise directly from implementation of cost and time effective techniques to minimise or eliminate crop-raiding and associated costs for local farmers. This will not only improve livelihoods and food security for participants but also reduce conflict with wildlife at the forest-agriculture interface, thereby improving relations between farmers, community groups, conservation organisations, and government authorities. Conservation efforts will be further enhanced by minimising the adverse impacts of conflict on wildlife behaviour and demographics. With permission, all deterrence tools trialled on farms will remain in-situ for ongoing use and adaptation by farmers, generating immediate benefits. Given the increasing prevalence of crop-raiding and human-wildlife conflict issues across rural Africa, it is likely that the deterrent techniques developed from the research will be transferable to other areas and contexts with equivalent benefits.

Study of biofilm development

Bacterial biofilms are ubiquitous and in the natural environment most bacteria exist in biofilms. Biofilms have a vital role in recycling natural material and in the Earth's global cycles such as the nitrogen cycle. However they are also medically important as they are involved in chronic infections, infections on implants and catheters; even dental plaque is actually a biofilm. In industry they are important as biofilms frequently form in pipes often blocking them, contaminating products and corroding metal. In addition they are extensively utilised in bioremediation to clean up pollutants and sewage.

A biofilm is essentially a community of bacteria, adhered to a surface embedded in slime. There appears to be a significant difference between planktonic free-living bacteria and those in biofilm cells due to changes in the regulation of gene expression.

With funding from the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC) **Dr Helen Packer** from the

School of Life Sciences has investigated and elucidated biofilm formation and development by the bacterium *Rhodobacter sphaeroides*. Dr Packer and her team took two approaches: first, to study biofilm development itself and second, to develop a heritable promoter trapping technology (recombinase based in vivo expression technology, RIVET-GFP) and successfully applied it to elucidate promoters of genes, induced specifically during development of biofilms. Confocal scanning laser microscopy (CSLM) has been used to probe and quantify the 3-dimensional biofilm structures.

Through the biofilm developmental studies, it was shown that bacterial motility and cell to cell communications are involved in biofilm formation and development. Environmental conditions have also been shown to influence the 3-dimensional biofilm structure with light

and oxygen levels having a significant effect.

The RIVET-GFP gene promoter trapping system, though rather challenging to develop, has proved to be a valuable resource for the identification of *in-situ* relevant genes upregulated during biofilm development. Screening of the whole genome using RIVET revealed 72 different biofilm specific (bir) promoters of genes upregulated during biofilm formation. Some of these genes had been identified in biofilms formed by other bacterial species, many were also deemed 'novel' as they are previously unassociated with biofilm formation. A number of these were studied further to understand their role in biofilm formation. The biofilm specific genes identified in this study will underpin further studies enabling understanding of the complex molecular mechanisms involved in biofilm formation and demonstrates the power of the promoter-trapping technology approach to *in situ* biofilm studies.

picture left:

R. sphaeroides biofilm labelled with green fluorescent protein



Warning on the risk of failure in flagship brownfield regeneration projects

The government and property developers are being warned that high profile brownfield redevelopment projects in the Thames Gateway and Greater Manchester are failing to create sustainable communities.

Professor Tim Dixon of the Oxford Institute for Sustainable Development (OISD) based in the School of the Built Environment is leading a research programme in 'flagship' brownfield regeneration projects including Barking Riverside in Thames Gateway and New Islington, Manchester.

Professor Dixon said: 'Despite the evidence of a number of successful schemes on some sites in Thames Gateway and Greater Manchester, our research shows there is a danger that we are creating transient communities, where residents commute long distances to work, and may end up only staying in the area for a short period.'

There is clear evidence that lack of infrastructure such as transport, schools and health facilities may hinder successful redevelopment and there is an overemphasis on flats at the expense of family-friendly housing.'

Researchers reveal that major housing schemes, currently in the pipeline, have not yet been fully supported by a commitment to provide the new infrastructure, including schools, hospitals, utilities and community facilities, that they need to be truly sustainable. Yet if they are to be successful, there is a clear need in both areas for government and related agencies to work together to ensure that infrastructure is in place before development goes ahead.

The research also examined environmental issues including land contamination and the construction and design of the buildings. Innovative solutions such as Combined Heat and Power (CHP) could play a real role in helping develop new energy systems, but policy and regulation need to be streamlined to encourage their development and use, alongside emphasising the benefits of CHP, energy saving and sustainable construction for the residents.

Said Professor Dixon: 'It is clear the projects that developers are engaging with today are complex, have long lifecycles, and involve people's homes, jobs and future lives. The research suggests that the most successful

schemes balance economic, environmental and social impacts. The challenge will be to incorporate innovative and sustainable products and designs throughout the brownfield lifecycle from cleanup through to development and construction if they are to provide truly sustainable communities.'

This research, which is the latest output from the two and a half year EPSRC-funded programme based at OISD, focuses on six case study sites. Some 54 face-to-face, structured interviews were carried out with key stakeholders in the two areas, including developers, regeneration specialists, community groups and local authorities. The full report, 'The Role of the UK Development Industry in Brownfield Regeneration' (Volume 3) is available from the OISD website www.brookes.ac.uk/schools/oisd

Superconductive compounds

Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) scanning machines, particle accelerators, nuclear fusion reactors and Nuclear Magnetic Resonance (NMR) molecular analysers are amongst the most technologically advanced machines around today, and they all have superconducting magnets as a key component.

One of the most common superconducting compounds used in the magnets is Nb_3Sn (a compound of niobium and tin). It is present within the wires of the magnet coil and takes the form of super-fine filaments within a bronze or copper matrix. The performance of a superconducting magnet is strongly influenced by the strain state of this Nb_3Sn . One of the major factors affecting the strain state is the mechanical properties of the wire, and these are themselves influenced by the reaction heat-treatment process that is required to form the Nb_3Sn .

To obtain a greater understanding of how the mechanical properties are affected by the heat-treatment process, an Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC) New Academic Case studentship funded by Oxford Instruments was awarded to **Dr Neil Fellows**, School of Technology. The doctoral research project was undertaken by **David Harvey**.

The project involved developing a reliable test method for measuring the stress-strain curve and mechanical properties of superconducting wires at room and liquid nitrogen temperature (-196°C). It was also necessary to develop specialised inert atmosphere heat-treatment apparatus to prepare wire samples for tensile testing. Without such apparatus the wires would suffer from extreme oxidation during the two week long heat-treatment. Several batches of samples were prepared using different durations of heat-treatment to produce wires ranging from unreacted to fully reacted. The change in wire length and diameter resulting from the heat-treatment was measured as this has an effect on the external loads that act on the wire and therefore the strain state of the Nb_3Sn . Stress-strain curves at room and liquid nitrogen temperature were obtained for all heat-treatment batches and the mechanical properties were derived. Due to sample to sample variation, a number of tests had to be carried out to obtain average values and standard deviations.

The project also developed a finite element (FE) model of the superconducting wire to predict the stress-strain curve. This was far from simple because of the complex composition of the wire, which

includes 22,000 filaments and seven different materials, most of which have non-linear material properties. The model has to predict the evolution of the internal residual stresses that result from the heat-treatment process, as well as the stress-strain curve of the heat-treated wire. Despite the difficulties, very good agreement has been obtained between the FE model and the experimental results.

Results have been presented at the conference 'Advances in Experimental Mechanics', and published in a number of journals including the leading one in the field, 'Superconductor Science and Technology'.

Oxford Instruments' Principal Development Engineer, Dr Andrew Twin, commented: 'The data obtained represents one of the most comprehensive set of measurements of mechanical properties of superconducting wires to date and are a valuable resource for the superconducting magnet designer. The FE modelling work also shows great potential, ultimately enabling wire manufacturers to optimise wire structures for particular magnet designs'.



forum focus: **Professor Jo Neale**

Sarah Taylor, from Brookes' Research and Business Development Office, interviews Professor Jo Neale, Professor in Public Health and the School of Health and Social Care.

Jo Neale joined Oxford Brookes University in January 2005 as Professor of Public Health in the School of Health and Social Care. Trained as a social worker, she has always been motivated by research that seeks to understand the experiences and circumstances of people who are marginalised within society. She completed her PhD, which explored the needs and views

of homeless people living in hostel accommodation, at the University of York. From there, she moved to the University of Glasgow where she began working in the field of substance misuse. In the last ten years, she has conducted qualitative and quantitative studies investigating drug driving; drug treatment effectiveness; non-fatal drug overdose; homelessness and drug use; pharmacy services and drug use; and drug use in rural communities. She is the author of 'Drug Users in Society' (Palgrave, 2001) and more than fifty publications in the substance misuse field.

Q: What was the first piece of research with which you were involved?

My first piece of research was for my master's dissertation. I was interested in looking at issues of empowerment amongst older housebound women. At the time, my grandmother had become very ill and couldn't get out. I wanted to learn more about the experiences of other women in her position and so I devised a study that involved semi-structured interviews with a number of housebound women in two local towns.

Q: What did you learn from that initial experience and has your focus been affected by it?

The most important thing I learnt was that interviewing people can be very rewarding and very enjoyable. People have the most interesting and valuable things to say, if only we make time to listen. Also, people are very resilient and have an amazing ability to look on the bright side of life, even in very adverse circumstances. This experience has stayed with me throughout my research career and focused me through some of my most challenging research projects.

Q: What is the most current research project you are involved in and what particularly interested you about the work?

I'm currently involved in three studies. One is a project funded by the Department of Health and investigates the barriers drug injectors face when they try to access support. This is a very important subject. The government publicly recognises the need to get drug users into treatment, but many injectors still aren't getting help. This study will provide some answers that should help to shape policy and practice. The second study is funded by the Joseph

Rowntree Foundation and is investigating drug users' involvement in treatment decisions. Across the public sector, we now accept the importance of enabling clients and patients to have a say in decisions about the services and treatment they receive. Drug users' views have, however, tended to be discounted from this process. In our JRF project, we are looking at how best to involve drug users and so better engage them in treatment. My final current research project is a continuation from my work in Glasgow. This is the Drug Outcome Research in Scotland study (affectionately known as DORIS). It is one of the largest longitudinal studies of drug treatment effectiveness ever conducted in the UK, and involves interviewing and re-interviewing over 1,000 problem drug users over a number of years. Whilst I was working in Scotland, I set up and managed this project and I now continue to be involved in analysing and writing up the data.

Q: What book/article/piece of art etc has most inspired in your work?

I have two favourites: 'Asylums' by Erving Goffman and 'Talking Heads' by Alan Bennett. Both highlight the tremendous power of observation and show remarkable and fascinating insights into the lives of very ordinary people. In their very different ways they reinforce the point that everyone has an important story to tell and that story will always resonate with someone somewhere else.

Q: Who would you most like to have worked with in your field?

I'd like to cop out of this question. My aim is to work with as many different and talented people as possible. Who knows, the next student to walk in the door might be the next Goffman or Bennett.

Q: Of what outcomes from your research are you most proud?

In Scotland, I conducted a study of recreational drug use and driving. The results of this work fascinated the media, politicians and the road safety campaigners. Two of the most important findings were the lack of knowledge that drug drivers had about the legal consequences of their behaviour and the futility of trying to moralise to this population group. The findings became the basis of a national anti-drug driving campaign with TV and radio adverts. In a very different way, I'm also proud to have provided new data on the link between non-fatal heroin overdoses and suicidal behaviour. However, I still don't think that this connection is sufficiently recognised by other academics, politicians and policy makers and I believe that more work in this area is needed.

Q: If time and/or money was no restriction, what areas/issues would you most like to investigate?

I would very much like to do more research into suicidal behaviour amongst problem drug users as I feel this is unfinished business. At the same time, I'd like to focus less on the dramatic aspects of problem drug users' lives and more on the mundane and routine aspects. Hard drug users are often marginalised and stigmatised, but in many ways their needs and aspirations are little different from anyone else's. They want a stable family, a nice house, a job, and time to do what they enjoy. If we could perhaps focus a little more on understanding how best to bring problem drug users into society rather than demonising them as separate and different, we might begin to make more progress in tackling the very complicated social problem of illegal drug use.

Inclusive design for getting outdoors

The Wellbeing in Sustainable Environments (WISE) research unit in the Oxford Institute for Sustainable Development has been ranked top in the latest Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC) EQUAL round of funding awards, and can now continue their I'DGO (Inclusive Design for Getting Outdoors) Research Consortium for a further four years. The total amount of the grant is £1.5 million, shared with their partners at the OPENspace Research Centre for Inclusive Access to Outdoor Environments, Edinburgh College of Art/Heriot-Watt University and the SURFACE Inclusive Design Research Centre, the University of Salford. The Consortium also has a wide range of non-academic collaborators from central and local government, and practitioner and user groups. The Brookes proportion of the grant is £418,000, with a further shared budget of around £200,000 and the investigators, **Dr Elizabeth Burton** and **Lynne Mitchell**, will be recruiting a new Postdoctoral Research Assistant and a research student to work on the project.

The overall aim of the Consortium is to investigate ways of designing the outdoor environment to improve the quality of life of older people. During the first stage, from 2003 to 2006, OISD:WISE explored how urban form influences older people's uses and experiences of their local neighbourhoods and how this affects their sense of independence and wellbeing. For this second stage (known affectionately as I'DGO TOO!), Elizabeth and Lynne will be focusing on the implications for older people of urban renaissance housing and land use policies, in particular in terms of the provision of residential outdoor space (private and shared gardens, balconies, parking space etc). Compact city policies are attempting to encourage people back into towns and cities to live in higher-density developments and it is often argued that such developments are beneficial for older people because of their easy access to public transport, local facilities and because of increased opportunities for social interaction. A common misconception is that older people do not generally require or desire their own outdoor space due to worries over its physical or financial upkeep. Consequently older people's housing often provides little or no outdoor space. Yet, the first stage of the I'DGO research found that, for the vast majority of the 200 participants, it is very important to their quality of life to have some form of private or semi-private outdoor space where they can enjoy fresh air, exercise and stimulation. The second stage of the research will, therefore, aim to identify how residential outdoor space in higher-density urban renaissance housing can best be delivered to optimise older residents' quality of life.

New research

Dr Virginia Crossman, School of Arts and Humanities, has been awarded over £450,000 by the Economic and Social Research Council to undertake the first detailed analysis of poor relief in Ireland in the period from the end of the Great Famine to the establishment of the Irish Free State, thus opening up a major new area of Irish social history.

The project builds on Dr Crossman's previous research on local government and, most recently, on the politics of poor law administration in Ireland. Unlike the English poor law which has long been the subject of sustained research, the Irish poor law has attracted little attention from historians. The aim of the project is to rectify this situation by investigating how the relief system operated in Ireland at both national and local level. Irish experiences of the poor law will be examined in relation to welfare provision within the United Kingdom as a whole. At the same time, attention will be paid to

the way in which factors such as religion, national identity and regional economics impacted on Irish welfare practices. By analysing both general trends in relief policies and the micro-politics of relief, the project will provide a historical context for contemporary debates on the position of the poor and marginalised in Irish society.

Dr Helen Dawes, School of Life Sciences, has been awarded almost £244,000 from the Department of Health under their Long Term Neurological Conditions Research Initiative for the study 'Long-term Involvement in Fitness Enablement' (LIFE). People with neurological disorders, such as Muscular Dystrophies, Multiple Sclerosis and Cerebral Palsy, have been shown to benefit from involvement in physical activities that are prescribed specially for them. The study aims to work with service users to investigate participation in physical activities in people with neurological disease living in Oxfordshire.

New generation of biological recorders

Over the past two years, the Spatial Ecology and Landuse Unit, based in the School of Life Sciences, has developed a user-friendly digital key and recording package which operates on handheld computers. The aim is to use the technology as a 'hook' to engage young people in wildlife identification and recording and thereby inspire a new generation of wildlife recorders. A key to British butterfly species was the first to be developed and since then the suite of keys has been expanding. An Oxford Brookes 'spin-off' company, WildKey, has resulted from this work and through this venture more digital keys, including 'rocky shores', 'garden birds', 'lichens', 'wild flowers' and 'wildlife on your doorstep', have been, or are being, developed as commercially available software packages.

In spring 2006, the Unit was successful in its application for a Heritage Lottery grant to pilot the software with Oxfordshire children through a project entitled 'New Generation of Biological Recorders'. A project officer, **Lynn Hughes**, was appointed and over spring and summer 2006, around 1,000 children have been given the opportunity, in their school grounds or at field sites across Oxfordshire and London, to take part in workshops in which they use the digital keys to help them identify wildlife.

In addition to the original butterfly key, four further keys were developed in

collaboration with partner organisations: playing field plants with the Field Studies Council, ladybirds/woodlice with the Natural History Museum, pond animals with Pond Conservation and common trees with the Woodland Trust.

Children have spoken and written excitedly of their computer-led field experiences, making comments such as; 'Both of us rated the handheld computers 10 out of 10. We now know a lot more about trees and now we can recognise them by looking at the leaves' and 'We loved the handheld computers and found it much easier to learn the names of trees that way'. The identification skills of participants were evaluated prior to and following the workshops and teachers completed questionnaires which asked them to rate the educational effectiveness of the software. Responses were very positive. For example, in the first analysis, 86% of participating children said they enjoyed using the handhelds to identify wildlife, while 100% of teachers involved strongly agreed /agreed that the handheld computers motivated students and assisted learning and 95% strongly agreed / agreed that the handhelds increased teacher confidence.

The findings of the project along with the data collated by the workshop participants is available at www.wildkey.co.uk.

New publications

Inclusive urban design: streets for life

Dr Elizabeth Burton and **Lynne Mitchell**
Oxford Institute for Sustainable Development,
School of the Built Environment.
Publisher: Architectural Press (March 2006),
ISBN: 0750664584

It is a truism in transport planning that when you design streets for the most vulnerable members of society – children, older and disabled people – you will be getting it right for everyone. But did anyone think this would be true of people with dementia? This book sets out wide-ranging guidance not only on critical but well-rehearsed subjects like crossings and pavements but also on street layout and appearance, street frontages, orientation points, street hierarchies and much more to make recommendations on how streets should be designed to be ‘dementia friendly’.

Critical and Post-Critical Political Economy

Professor Gary Browning, School of Social Sciences and Law and **Andrew Kilmister**, Business School
Publisher: Palgrave Macmillan (July 2006),
ISBN: 0333963555

This book is original in focusing on critical political economy, identifying its character and reviewing its continuing legacy. In doing so it throws new light on Hegel and Marx and a range of subsequent theorists including Foucault, Baudrillard, Gorz, Lyotard, Fraser and Hardt and Negri. It also develops a perspective on topics such as postmodernism, globalisation, identity politics and the cultural turn.

Risk Management in Projects (2nd Edition)

Professor John Raftery, Pro Vice-Chancellor (External) and Dean, School of the Built Environment, Martin Loosemore, Charles Reilly and David Higgin
Publisher: Taylor and Francis
(December 2005), ISBN: 9780415260565

Project Managers in construction and civil engineering need to base their decisions on realistic information about risk and public perception of risk. The second edition of the original practical and straightforward text has been expanded to encompass the entire risk management process and to give a fuller presentation of how risk is generally perceived.

Chapters cover risk identification, risk response, crisis management and recovery, system development, risk perceptions and risk analysis. There is greater emphasis on the theory behind the principles, and de-mystifies risk management by presenting the subject in simple and practical terms.

The New Professional's Handbook: a guide for the early career teacher

David Wood, Director of CPD,
Westminster Institute of Education (Editor)
Publisher: Phillip Allan (June 2006),
ISBN: 9781844895045

The main aim of this book is to help new professionals meet the challenges of teaching; to complete the induction standards in their first year of teaching and to develop professionally in the years beyond, with contributions from several members of staff in the Westminster Institute.

The activities can also form part of a portfolio of evidence of meeting the induction standards, or subsequently for performance management interviews, for the Teacher Learning Academy and even as part of assessment for a postgraduate qualification. Chapters are also provided on vital areas of school effectiveness, for example, understanding achievement data and target setting, about which many teachers claim they understand very little. Finally there are chapters which will help the new professional to anticipate and plan their future career profile. The chapter on leadership may prompt them to consider joining the much-needed cadre of tomorrow's school leaders. The chapter on CPD will help them to organise their professional development needs and career trajectory.

Urban Tourism and Development in the Socialist State: Havana during the 'Special Period'

Dr Andrea Colantonio, School of the Built Environment
Publisher: Ashgate (March 2006),
ISBN: 0754647390

After the collapse of the Soviet bloc in 1989, Fidel Castro announced the beginning of a ‘Special Period’ for Cuba. During this time, the Cuban government has been obliged to look outward to other economies of the developed world, specifically targeting tourism as a mechanism for economic growth and development. This book examines the role played by international tourism in Cuba's institutional and economic restructuring and the country's reinjection into the capitalist world economy. It provides the most comprehensive, in-depth analysis of the economic, social, environmental and political realities which have emerged in Cuba as a result of the redevelopment of urban tourism since the early 1990s. By analysing the allocation of tourist resources and its impacts, the generation of tourism policy, and the politics of tourism development, it focuses on the political economy of urban tourism in Cuba and the balance of power between domestic and foreign stakeholders involved in the Cuban tourist industry.

Stakeholders: Theory and Practice

Dr Samantha Miles, Business School and Professor Andy Friedman, University of Bristol
Publisher: Oxford University Press
(April 2006), ISBN: 0199269874

The research on social discourse in societies, firms, and organisations written by researchers working in fields such as Management, Corporate Governance, Accounting and Finance, Strategy, Sociology, and Politics often make reference to the term ‘stakeholder’. Yet the concept of the ‘stakeholder’ is unclear, and research around it often muddled. This book provides an analysis, classification, and critique of the various strands of theory about stakeholders. The authors place these theories both in the context of their philosophical underpinnings, and their practical and policy implications. Practical examples based on new data are used to examine a diverse range of stakeholders, and the relationships stakeholders have with their organisations. This is the first book on stakeholder theory to propose a critical analysis, both at the macro and micro level, that is framed and guided by theory. Written both to provide some order and clarity to research into the concept of the stakeholder, the book is also written as an introduction for students. It includes chapter introductions, useful tables and figures, short vignettes on key concepts and issues, and discussion questions.

Accounting and Financial Management: Developments in the International Hospitality Industry

Professor Peter Harris, Business School and Dr Marco Mongiello of the University of Westminster
Publisher: Butterworth-Heinemann Ltd
(March 2006), ISBN: 075066729X

This publication presents new and innovative research and developments in the field of accounting and financial management as it relates to the work of managing enterprises and organisations in the international hospitality industry.

The content contains contributions from a rich source of international researchers, academics and practitioners including; university and college lecturers, professional accountants and consultants and senior managers involved in a wide range of teaching, scholarship, research, and consultancy in the hospitality industry worldwide. The material is drawn from their work and experience and relates directly to the management of hospitality undertakings.

Homeshare: one year feasibility study

In May 2005 **Jane Coffey**, Research Fellow in the School of Health and Social Care was granted £118,000 from Home Office Change Up funds, via the Department of Health, to complete a one year feasibility study looking at the potential for developing a Homeshare programme between older people and key worker university students.

Concurrently, the National Association of Adult Placement Services (NAAPS) looked at Homeshare in West Sussex. One outcome was to produce a joint web based Practice Guide that could be used by organisations and individuals wishing to develop Homeshare Programmes in England. The work was overseen by a Steering Group chaired by the Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) and with a membership drawn from older people and disability organisations as well as regulators and Homeshare organisations.

There are many circumstances that may compromise the independence of a person wishing to remain at home. However, with some support, the option to remain at

home may be viable. Accommodation costs are one of the biggest financial outlays for students. Key worker students, who have to complete practice hours alongside university commitments have fewer opportunities to gain paid employment.

Homeshare is a simple way of helping people to help each other. People who have a home that they are willing to share, but are in need of support, are known as Householders. Those who need accommodation and who are willing to give ten hours of support a week are known as Homesharers, they are matched by programme coordinators.

The two people who share thus form a relationship based on the promotion of independent living, intergenerational support and affordable accommodation.

Homeshare is not a new service but it has many guises both in this country and abroad. The feasibility study drew on these experiences and discussions with older people, students and professionals.

Discussions with older people and key worker university students demonstrated interest in the development of a programme in Oxford. Ultimately it became apparent that a programme within one school of one university might not be viable and by developing a Homeshare programme in the city that could be accessed by all students and others seeking affordable accommodation, the chances of success would be greater.

The launch of the Homeshare practice guide at the Department of Health was attended by senior figures from the Department of Health, the Association of the Directors of Social Services and SCIE as well as people from the voluntary and statutory sectors with an interest in Homeshare. The Practice Guide is available at www.homeshare.org.uk.

A further grant of £142,000 from the Department of Health Section 64 funding has been secured for Oxford Brookes University to evaluate two pilot programmes.

News in brief

Professor Barrie Axford and **Richard Huggins**, Department of International Relations, Politics and Sociology in the School of Social Sciences and Law have been appointed to the Editorial Board of the new *International Journal of Electronic Governance*, a fully refereed inter-disciplinary research journal covering the theory, applications and impact of using the internet, the worldwide web and digital communication media as governance channels.

Professor Laura Spira, Business School, has been appointed to the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) 'Virtual College'. The college comprises 100 senior academics drawn from all disciplines and areas of the social sciences. The purpose is threefold: to be a forum for interactive discussion of ESRC policy; to provide a channel for information and advice into ESRC from the academic social science community; and to assist with ESRC decision making, particularly on small grant applications.

Dr Jane Potter, Department of Publishing, School of Arts and Humanities was awarded The Women's History Network Book Prize. The Prize is awarded for an author's first book which makes a significant contribution to women's history or gender history and is written in an accessible style that is rewarding to the general reader of history. Jane's book *Boys in Khaki, Girls in Print: Women's Literary Responses to the Great War, 1914-1918* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005) convinced

the jury to make her joint winner of the prize, which was presented at the annual Women's History Network conference at the University of Durham in September.

The Oxford Institute for Sustainable Development (OISD) has been in demand for its expertise over the summer. The Sustainable Urban Environments Group hosted academics from Wakyama and Hiroshima Universities who came to find out more about the group's compact city research which has had a significant impact on planning practice in Japan and **Dr Katie Williams** contributed to a Canadian television programme and newspaper article on urban intensification, focusing on the issue in Toronto. **Dr Elizabeth Burton** and **Lynne Mitchell** from the Wellbeing in Sustainable Environments Group within OISD hosted senior staff from Alzheimer's Australia who are involved in the design of retirement villages and came to Oxford Brookes to learn about designing outdoor environments for older people.

Professor Mary Boulton, Research Director in the School of Health and Social Care has become a member of the NHS Service Delivery and Organisation Research and Development Programme's Access to Health Care commissioning group. The programme strives to produce and promote the use of research evidence about how the organisation and delivery of services can be improved to increase the quality of patient care, ensure better strategic outcomes and contribute to improved public health.

Professor Meryll Dean, Department of Law, School of Social Sciences and

Law was appointed to the Advisory Board of the Australian Network for Japanese Law (ANJeL). This is a joint project between the Australian National University, University of New South Wales and the University of Sydney. The Advisory Board is selected from leading academics in the field of Japanese law in Australia, America and Europe.

Professor Jeremy MacClancy, Department of Anthropology in the School of Social Sciences and Law was elected as Vice-President of the Royal Anthropological Institute at its AGM in September and has also been made a member of the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) Peer Review College. The College provides independent assessments of research applications.

Dr Esra Kural and her team at the Department of Real Estate and Construction in the School of the Built Environment organised and ran a series of two research workshops. This series was one of the main outputs of Dr Kural's Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council funded project entitled 'Knowledge Creation Capability and Absorptive Capacity of Integrated Project Teams in the Construction Industry'. Both workshops were well attended by professionals and academics, and well received by the delegates especially presentations from industrial partners outlining how academic knowledge was applied in practical contexts, demonstrating our University's expertise in knowledge transfer. The series provided the research team with the opportunity to explore future collaboration prospects with the industry and other UK HEIs.

Diary

February 2007 – April 2007

Full details of research training events throughout the year are available on the Research and Business Development Office website: www.brookes.ac.uk/res/news/training

For details of research seminars taking place in each of the Schools during the year please visit the website at: www.brookes.ac.uk/res/news/seminars

Wednesday 7 February

Adventures with WAMBLE! The influence on children's functional sitting ability through playing with computer games

Dr David Porter and Mr Will Wade,
School of Health and Social Care
Room MR1.09, Marson Road
12:15 -1:00pm.

To book a place please contact Jill Dewhurst
(jmdewhurst@brookes.ac.uk) in the School.

Machines that see!

Professor Philip Torr, School of Technology
Lloyd Lecture Theatre, Gipsy Lane
6:00pm

To book a place please see: www.brookes.ac.uk/about/news/public/bookings/

Wednesday 14 February

The statistics team will be running a series of seven 2-hour sessions for Basic statistical methods for data analysis using SPSS.

Every Wednesday from 14 February to 28 March 12:00 – 2:00pm (inclusive).
Places are limited; contact Louise Wood
(louise.wood@brookes.ac.uk) to book.

Tuesday 27 February

Getting better? Using literary, historical and contemporary accounts in the development of a sociology of recovery from illness

Hilary Thomas, Centre for Research in Primary and Community Care,
University of Hertfordshire
The Conference Room,
Rosemary Rue Building
Institute of Health Sciences
University of Oxford
Old Road, Headington
12:30 – 1:30pm

Please contact Professor Mary Boulton,
(mgboulton@brookes.ac.uk)

Thursday 1 March

Oxford Brookes Poetry Society: Writing for the ear: aural forms in free verse

Katherine Firth
Worcester College, University of Oxford
5:00pm

For more details see: <http://ah.brookes.ac.uk/index.php/events/>

Wednesday 7 March

First three years: good practice in winning external funding

Professor Chris Hawes, Research Director,
School of Life Sciences; Dr Katherine Watson, Research Manager, School of Arts and Humanities; Professor Mary Boulton, Research Director, School of Health and Social Care
Contact Louise Wood
(louise.wood@brookes.ac.uk) to book a place
Room BG11, Buckley Building, Gipsy Lane
12:30 – 4:00pm

Disappearing worlds – the twilight of our primate cousins, their rainforest habitats and the threat of global change

Professor Simon Bearder
School of Social Sciences and Law
Lloyd Lecture Theatre, Gipsy Lane
6:00pm

To book a place please see: www.brookes.ac.uk/about/news/public/bookings/

Wednesday 14 March

The RAE

Professor Diana Woodhouse,
Pro Vice-Chancellor, Research
(repeated from 4 October 2006)
Room BG11, Buckley Building, Gipsy Lane
4:00 – 5:00pm

Wednesday 28 March

Improving organisation relationships – from defining problems to owning solutions

Professor Mark N K Saunders
Business School
Lloyd Lecture Theatre, Gipsy Lane
6:00pm

To book a place please see: www.brookes.ac.uk/about/news/public/bookings/

Wednesday 4 April

First three years: project management

Dr Susan Brooks, Research Training Coordinator; Brian Rivers, Support Services Manager, School of Social Sciences and Law and Tim Bolton, Deputy Director - Finance, Directorate of Finance and Legal Services
Contact Louise Wood
(louise.wood@brookes.ac.uk) to book a place
Room BG11, Buckley Building, Gipsy Lane
12:30 – 4:00pm

Wednesday 18 April

The rebirth of coaching and mentoring: Reinventing the past to build better futures

Professor David Clutterbuck
Westminster Institute of Education
Lloyd Lecture Theatre Gipsy Lane
6:00pm

To book a place please see: www.brookes.ac.uk/about/news/public/bookings/

'Research Forum', the research magazine of Oxford Brookes University, is published three times a year.

Contributions are welcomed from all sections of the University and should be sent to The Editor, 'Research Forum', The Research and Business Development Office, Oxford Brookes University, Buckley Building, Headington Campus, Gipsy Lane, Oxford, OX3 0BP or by email to researchforum@brookes.ac.uk

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