

Oxford Institute for Sustainable Development:

‘a key player in research’

The value and importance of the Oxford Institute for Sustainable Development (OISD) has recently been recognised in a HEFCE report which describes OISD as one of the key players in sustainable development research.

The report, *HEFCE strategic review of sustainable development in higher education in England*, analyses 93 higher education institutions where research is carried out, and concludes that in terms of income, staff and students, OISD is among the most important sustainable development research institutes in England. This view is reinforced in a *Times Higher Education* article dated 31 January 2008 which, while noting that sustainable development is often treated patchily within institutions, sees Brookes as ‘influential’.

Professor Tim Dixon, Director of OISD, said: ‘This report highlights the challenges we face if higher education is to practise what it preaches. In OISD and the wider School of the Built Environment, we closely link research and teaching to integrate the sustainable development agenda in everything we do. Our inclusion amongst the key players reflects this, and also the strong green ethos at Brookes’.

‘We want to ensure our research continues to make a difference in tackling the key



issues in the built environment such as climate change.’

In addition to being home to OISD, Oxford Brookes has a strong tradition of taking environmental issues seriously. The University was recently placed in the top five most environmental universities, and received a Highly Commended in the 2007 Green Gown awards. Brookes good practice in this area was referenced in the recent Universities UK report, *Greening Spires*.

Founded in 2004, OISD has built on this tradition, and now generates income of over £1 million a year from research councils, industry and the public sector. Research addresses issues such as the energy efficiency of buildings; the impact of design on behaviour; what makes sustainable communities; what impacts major infrastructure projects have; and how technology can reduce our carbon footprint and make buildings sustainable.

A recent conference for industry, the public sector and other stakeholders highlighted the Institute’s research in the built environment and drew together more than 80 delegates from across the UK. See report on page 5.

Anti-social behaviour and evidence-based parenting

In March 2007 **Lindsey Coombes** and **Dr Debby Allen**, School of Health and Social Care, successfully tendered for over £300,000 from the Department for Education and Skills – now the Department for Children, Families and Schools (DfCFS) – and the Home Office to deliver parenting training to staff working in 25 Family Intervention Projects (FIPs) in England.

These projects, of which there are 53, are part of the government's Respect agenda and they are responsible for delivering parenting programmes which are intensively tailored and have clear sanctions to improve the behaviour of persistently anti-social households. The delivery of these programmes and the one-to-one support of parents that this entails has required DfCFS and the Home Office to offer training to more than 1,000 practitioners.

The parenting programme training offered is the SFP 10-14 (UK), Incredible Years and Triple P. SFP 10-14 (UK) is a seven-session intervention focusing on reducing family-related risk factors for adolescent problem behaviours and building protective factors in young adolescent children and their parents/caregivers. It was originally developed in the Center for Family Research at Iowa State University in the United States, where it was tested in a high quality scientific research study prior to being adapted for use in the UK by Professor David Foxcroft, Dr Debby Allen

and Lindsey Coombes in the School of Health and Social Care at Oxford Brookes University.

The Iowa study of the SFP 10-14 has been highlighted in an International Cochrane Collaboration systematic evidence review, funded by the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the UK Alcohol Education and Research Council (AERC). A summary of this evidence review is available as an AERC *Alcohol Insight*. The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) has also highlighted the potential of the SFP 10-14 in its reports on alcohol misuse prevention. In 2006, another Cochrane review pointed to the potential of the SFP 10-14 for prevention of drug misuse amongst young people. Both Cochrane reviews highlighted the importance of other scientific studies to replicate the findings from the Iowa study.

As a result of the School of Health and Social Care's successful tender, from May to November 2007 four teams of SFP 10-14 facilitators were engaged in training 24 of the FIPs in the use of SFP 10-14 (UK). Over 300 FIP practitioners working in a wide range of agencies and organisations including social services, health departments, children's trusts, education departments, youth offending teams, criminal justice and police services, have been trained so far. Many of the FIPs have begun to implement the SFP 10-14 (UK) and the teams of trainers will be visiting them to support their efforts and to evaluate their progress early in 2008. The project will be completed at the end of August 2008 and will be the subject of an independent evaluation by the National Centre for Social Research.

Lindsey Coombes



Trust across cultures

Over the past two years the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) has funded a seminar series, led by **Professor Mark Saunders** from the Business School, on 'Trust across cultures'. The aim of the series was to develop a cross-disciplinary research capability and capacity to address conceptual and empirical issues associated with the building, maintenance and repair of trust across cultural groups within and between organisations and across national borders. Working jointly with Dr Nicole Gillespie, (Warwick), Dr Graham Dietz (Durham) and Professor Denise Skinner (Coventry) seminars have been held to explore:

- The conceptualisation of trust across cultures
- Intra-organisational trust

- Inter-organisational trust
- Trust across national cultures
- Epistemological and ontological issues in researching trust across cultures.

The seminars featured papers given by key trust scholars and were attended by an international audience. The final seminar took the form of a one-day conference for practitioners and academics during which issues of trust and organisational competitiveness were explored.

Professor Saunders and his colleagues are editing a forthcoming special issue of the journal *Management and Organisation Review*. Based on the seminar series, it focuses on building, maintaining and repairing trust across cultures. It will highlight the capacity of cultures to facilitate trust whether

within or between organisations; trust across cultural boundaries within and between organisations and professional groups; and how individuals accommodate and respond to multiple cultural influences on their own attitudes and behaviours in relation to trust.

A book to be published by Cambridge University Press is also planned. Entitled *Organisational trust: a cultural perspective*, it will serve as a staging post in mapping the research terrain of cross-cultural trust-building.

Further information can be obtained from the seminar series web site www.business.brookes.ac.uk/research/esrc/. This contains summaries of the keynote speakers' presentations and details of selected delegates' research.

Sasakawa Foundation to fund new post

The School of Social Sciences and Law has recently received nearly £250,000 from the Great Britain Sasakawa Foundation to support a new post in Economic Anthropology of Japan.

Dr Mitchell W Sedgwick, Director of the Europe Japan Research Centre (EJRC), and Senior Lecturer in Anthropology, says: 'Oxford Brookes is a global leader in the Anthropology of Japan, and through this new post we will maintain a profile built up over many years. Our new colleague, who is expected in post by July 2008, will not only contribute substantively as a member of the Europe Japan Research Centre but will also dovetail with the teaching and research interests of colleagues in the Department of Politics and International Relations in the School of Social Sciences and Law and with the Japanese Language and Society programme in the School of Arts and Humanities.'

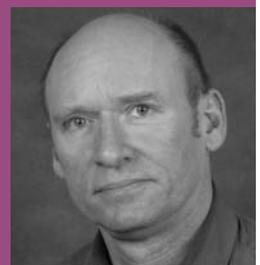
Oxford Brookes is distinctive in its approach to the anthropology of Japan. Dr Sedgwick notes that while in many UK universities the emphasis of Japan academics is on Japanese business, economics and/or political science, or on anthropology, 'we seek to demonstrate the power of anthropology to bring depth in all of these subjects as well as in anthropology's traditional intellectual terrain.'

As a result of this approach and to complement the knowledge base and research of current staff who work on contemporary Japan the School is looking for applicants with research interests in specific areas. Firstly, the anthropology of

Japanese assistance in, so-called, 'developing countries' (eg through research on Japanese governmental and non-governmental organisations and their activities 'on the ground'). Through in-depth research on Japan's aid initiatives and modes of delivery, lessons may be provided for other donors and this may assist in also understanding 'aid' as it relates to foreign policy and its macroeconomic effects on host countries. Secondly, environmental projects put Japan at the forefront of the development of new, less polluting technologies. These may provide an example to others through its success in convincing its citizens and businesses of the need to conserve and hence to shift their patterns of behaviour and industrial practice. Thirdly, tourism and leisure activities are the means by which the majority of Japanese persons interact with non-Japanese 'others'. Younger Japanese are now fully integrated into the circuit of 'international travellers' traditionally dominated by western young people, while a rapidly growing population of older Japanese have time, and often, disposable income available for leisure activities. How does leisure play out among the Japanese: the most rapidly ageing population in the world?

The generosity of the Great Britain Sasakawa Foundation to Japan studies at Brookes has not been confined to this academic appointment. It has also provided general support to the Europe Japan Research Centre over the last two years and during the current academic year the Japanese Embassy has funded a programme of guest speakers to the EJRC, many coming from abroad, under the general rubric of 'Global Japan'. In 2008-09, in celebration of the new post holder, the EJRC plans a guest speaker programme on the theme *Contemporary Politics and Japan Anthropology*, among other events. Further details are available at http://ssl.brookes.ac.uk/JIG/ejrc/ejrc_home.htm

Dr Mitchell W Sedgwick



Evaluating the learner experience of e-learning at Brookes

In 2006 Brookes was selected to be one of eight higher education institutions to be recognised by the Higher Education Academy (HEA) as e-learning 'Pathfinders'. As part of the pilot Pathfinder programme the Oxford Centre for Staff and Learning Development (OCSLD) was awarded £170,000 and tasked with finding a path towards the embedding of e-learning.

The Pathfinder team led by **George Roberts** looked at the existing research activities in e-learning. Together with **Rhona Sharpe** and other colleagues a literature review was undertaken aimed at revealing evidence of the impact of blended learning on the learner experience. The team found that embedded, sustainable examples of blended e-learning were underpinned by radical course redesigns, informed by evaluations of the

learner experience. Throughout the review, staff repeatedly identified engaging in course redesign as critical to their success.

The Pathfinder project presented an opportunity to put these recommendations into practice at Brookes. The main themes of the project activities were:

1. Evaluating learners' experiences of e-learning at Brookes.
2. Supporting course redesign within communities of designers.
3. Creating a repository facility for learning objects and representations of course designs.

The evaluation of learners' experiences of e-learning at Brookes employed a mixed method designed to investigate how students experience social uses of technology in different learning contexts. Exploration of the data examined how study strategies (such as the use of peers or help-seeking) or views of learning (such as the perceived degree of independence) are related to patterns of technology use.

Preliminary analysis showed that students preferred to study from home or their student residence and tend to go online using their own laptops. They are familiar

with using a wide range of communication technologies but show differences in which technologies they use for different purposes. Contacting course tutors for instance is mainly limited to either email or face to face contact or a combination. Students vary their patterns of learning and use technology for entertainment or to support their university studies. The Pathfinder team saw that the nature of technology use is context specific, influenced perhaps by the course, programme or School context. Further analysis is continuing and will allow the team to elucidate the differences in patterns of use and their relationship with demographic variables and learner attributes.

The Pathfinder project comes to an end in May 2008 and OCSLD have received additional funding from the HEA to set up a national network for those involved in the evaluation of the learner experience as well as a number of funded projects continuing the interest in repositories and course redesign.

An open forum, eL@B (eLearning at Brookes), has been created for those interested in innovation and evaluation of e-learning and more information is available at <http://mw.brookes.ac.uk/display/c4e1/Home>

Elizabeth Jennings

Elizabeth Jennings is one of the most significant and widely-read lyric poets of the 20th century but, despite this, no noteworthy study of her work has yet been published. **Dr Rachel Buxton** in the School of Arts and Humanities together with **Dr Emma Mason** from the University of Warwick are working to address this deficiency.

A British Academy Small Research Grant enabled them to visit archives in the UK and America to uncover an untapped source of information on Jennings, including her notebooks, diaries, correspondence, and little-read autobiography. These provided them with a far fuller overview than they would otherwise have had of Jennings'

biography and career and of the contexts within which she wrote, and they have been able to chart some of the key intersections between her poetry and her life. These include the influence on her poetry of two events in her fairly early life: the first was an extended trip to Rome in 1957 where she overcame her early uncertainties and ambivalences about her Catholicism; the second was her mental breakdown in the early 1960s.

Drafts of her autobiography disclose the distance she felt from her religion in the first few decades of her life and enabled the researchers to see her early work and its relationship to the largely rational and secular Movement more clearly and accurately, and to recognise the extent of the shift that took place in her work from 1957, as her faith deepened and stabilised. Her poetry and correspondence from her years in the

Warneford Hospital also helped them contextualise the trajectory her poetry took in the 1960s and 1970s, for example, her experiments with free verse and her subsequent return to writing in stricter forms.

The research highlighted how little of Jennings' poetry was actually published – probably less than 5% – and the researchers' access to the unpublished material revealed the discrepancy between the often wide-ranging poetry she was writing, and the poetry that was selected for publication.

Drs Buxton and Mason are co-authoring a critical introduction to Jennings' work to be published in 2009 and Dr Buxton has written a contribution to a forthcoming collection entitled *The Movement Revisited* (ed. Zachary Leader). Their publications will provide access to the wider scholarly community of otherwise inaccessible material.

Dr Rachel Buxton



Can the built environment change to survive

In 2050, when we look back on the first decade of the 21st century as the time the world woke up to climate change, where will the finger of blame point for our slow response?

Certainly, there will have been no shortages of warnings. On 15 January 2008, **Change to Survive: Creating a 21st Century Sustainable Built Environment**, a conference organised by the Oxford Institute for Sustainable Development (OISD), highlighted the seriousness of the problem and the need for academic and industry/public sector partnerships to provide solutions.

The conference attracted over 80 delegates, including property developers, local authority planners and politicians, property investors, architects and others to hear what academics from Oxford Brookes University have to offer. Recently appointed OISD Director and Professor of Real Estate, **Tim Dixon**, outlined some of the questions OISD researchers were addressing:

- How can we make existing buildings energy efficient?
- Is it possible to influence people's behaviour through design?
- What is the impact of major infrastructure projects?
- What makes healthy and sustainable communities?
- How can we reduce our carbon footprint?

Some of the research highlighted at the conference included **Elizabeth Wilson's** focus on ways of adapting to and mitigating the effects of climate change and her current work with partners across Europe to influence future policy funded by the EU Framework 6 Programme.

Professor Georgia Butina Watson has worked extensively on the concept of identity

and what makes a place. In her recent book, *Identity by Design*, she identifies what she calls 'the four pillars of sustainability': permeability, variety, legibility and resilience. Her ideas are being put into practice, for example, at the Thames Gateway, where researchers have recently evaluated development proposals in Hackney, with regard to both sustainability and urban design.

OISD (in partnership with Brookes' Business School) is also developing the concept of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) through an Oxford Brookes University network aimed at business, and is working on developing the sustainable use of materials in the building industry and new methods of construction. It also has the skills required to analyse existing buildings, showing how green credentials can be improved.

The conference heard that social sustainability is as important as environmental sustainability, and **Professor Elizabeth Burton** outlined research into the link between well-being and the design of neighbourhoods which has disproved the notion that older people like living in the new high density urban neighbourhoods being created in city centres. Another stream of research, the Sustainable Lifestyles Plus project run by **Dr Carol Dair**, seeks to establish whether sustainable development can bring about a change in behaviour in residents. For example, if better provision is made for cycling, will people be more likely to give up their cars?

Summing up the conference, Professor Dixon said that University researchers were working closely with industry and government on a range of sustainability projects. 'Our mission is to make a real difference, and contribute to a more sustainable environment and better quality of life. We face tremendous challenges, but we hope by building on our strong research partnerships with industry and the public sector that we will have an impact on the outside world. As Mahatma Gandhi said in a different context, "We must be the change we wish to see".'



Dr Jake Piper, Dr Nicola Dempsey and Professor Elizabeth Burton

Professor Georgia Butina Watson



Professor Tim Dixon





Dr Kathryn Ecclestone

Sarah Taylor from Brookes' Research and Business Development Office, interviews Dr Kathryn Ecclestone, Professor of Post-Compulsory Education in the Westminster Institute of Education.

Kathryn has worked in post-compulsory education for the past 20 years, first as a practitioner in youth employment schemes and further education and as a researcher specialising in the principles, politics and practices of assessment and its links to learning, motivation and autonomy. She has a particular interest in socio-cultural approaches to understanding the interplay between policy, practice and attitudes to learning and assessment.

Between 2002-2004, she was associate director for further and adult education in the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) funded Teaching and Learning Research Programme. She is currently directing a project on Improving Formative Assessment in vocational education and adult literacy and numeracy programmes, funded by the Nuffield Foundation, National Research Centre for Adult Literacy and Numeracy and the Quality Improvement Agency for Lifelong Learning, and is finishing an ESRC-funded seminar series for the Teaching and Learning Research Programme on Transitions through the Lifecourse.

Kathryn is a member of the Assessment Reform Group and the Access to Higher Education Assessment working group for the Quality Assurance Agency. She is on the editorial boards of *Studies in the Education of Adults* and is books review editor for the *Journal of Further and Higher Education*. She also works as a consultant to the National Board of Education in Finland on reforms to assessment and evaluation in Finnish vocational education.

Kathryn has published a number of books and articles on assessment in post-compulsory education, extending this work to explore the rise of a 'therapeutic ethos' in curriculum content, teaching and assessment, across the education and welfare system. This ethos prioritises emotional well-being as a key goal of education and her current work challenges many current political and professional assumptions about assessment and the purpose of education.

Q: What first sparked your interest in your current field of research?

It came from my work with young people and adults in further education in the 1980s and 1990s when there was a spate of different initiatives trying to change the way they were assessed. There were many goals behind new assessment initiatives at the time, all of which I supported then and which I have researched extensively, but which I now question.

My research has focused on the links between policy that creates different assessment systems, and the effects of those policies on everyday assessment practices in colleges, universities and adult education. It sounds pretty boring to anyone outside education, but assessment drives the content of the curriculum, the teaching and of course the methods used to assess students and it reflects broader cultural concerns about education and its purposes as well.

Q: What is the most recent/current project (research project, book, article etc.) with which you have been involved and what particularly interested you about the work?

My latest book, co-authored with Dennis Hayes who is a visiting professor with Brookes, explores and challenges the rise of what we call ‘therapeutic education’ across the education system. We know it will attract a good deal of publicity and controversy when it comes out in June this year, because it offers a serious critique of the way that education policy and practice increasingly emphasise the emotional vulnerability of children, young people and adults, thereby prioritising their emotional well-being over forms of teaching and assessment that are properly educational. This interest came from my work on assessment but it now has broader implications and I’m still working out where it might take me next.

Q: How do you see research in your field developing and in what ways will this affect what you do?

Well, interest in the therapeutic turn that assessment and education generally are taking lends itself to a broader exploration of where this is coming from and why. We address this in the forthcoming book, and it means that we have to look outside education to politics, cultural studies, sociology and philosophy to see how different images of humanity and the self lie behind assumptions about what people are and are not capable of in education. These images are increasingly diminished and pessimistic and this has serious implications for aspirations to educate people.

Q: Multi- and interdisciplinary work is increasingly important these days – what other disciplines/subject areas would you like to work with and why?

That point comes from the one above I think. We have just been given some funding from the University for an inter-disciplinary seminar series that will explore links between emotional well-being and the New Labour government’s particular view of, and approach to, social justice. We have also bid to the ESRC for a seminar series on the same theme and if we got that funding, we can hold a really high profile seminar series with Nottingham and Canterbury Christ Church, that explores these themes from historical, political, psychological and philosophical perspective and which also explores how these themes are being addressed in other political systems, such as the United States.

So, one way or another, we can explore a really important and interesting theme at Brookes! Of course, the ESRC money would make it all much more high profile but if we aren’t successful, we can still do some exciting work.

Q: What are your research plans for the next five years and how does applying for research funding fit within these plans?

I have plans to write another book around cultural, political and educational constructions of the self and how these link to teaching and assessment practices, and to bid to ESRC with a colleague at London Metropolitan University for an empirical study

that takes some of the theoretical arguments of the book with Hayes and explores them in different educational settings – in other words, how is a therapeutic ethos changing teachers’ and students’ perceptions of students’ potential and capability.

We’ve made well-being and social justice an overarching research theme for the Westminster Institute which enables us to bring philosophy and theology and culture together more closely, so research – not just mine – will inform planning for a new education programme. But my role at the Westminster Institute also means encouraging others to bid too!

Q: How do you see your research career developing over the next ten years?

I would like to be known and respected in my field, of course. I would like to influence public debate because too much academic research in education is either too policy driven or too much confined to journals and books that only a few other academics read! I don’t find being seen as controversial very easy but I see it as role that academics should be willing to play if they are to shape ideas and debate in a wider arena.

Q: What do you think has most shaped your research career and why?

So many things – my PhD was a real turning point; in 2001, being part of the directors’ team for the ESRC-funded Teaching and Learning Research Programme was crucial for understanding the profound political pressures on educational research in the UK and for seeing both the threats and possibilities these pressures created; writing the book on therapeutic education; teaching teachers in further and adult education. Hard to know which to single out!

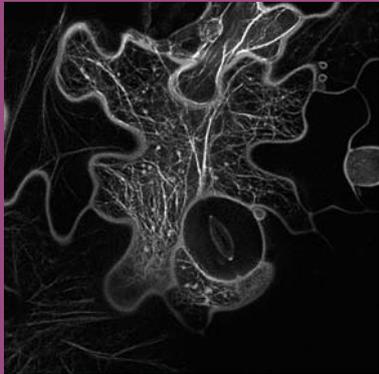
Q: If you did not have a job in a higher education institute, where would you like to work?

I always wanted to be a producer of current affairs for Radio Four or a political journalist. If I had time left, which I don’t, I’d retrain in one of those, or both!

New Research

‘Seeing the cell wide web’

Each cell is enveloped in a membrane yet is able to respond exquisitely to subtle changes in its environment. How communication of environmental conditions to the cell’s nucleus occurs is studied in the area of cell signalling.



Dr John Runions of the School of Life Sciences has been awarded £298,000 by the Biotechnology and Biological Services Research Council (BBSRC) to study one of the integral stages of this process – signal transduction from the cell membrane to the actin cytoskeleton. Unbelievably, each cell has a skeleton that supports it much as our skeletons support our bodies. The cytoskeleton is composed of filamentous protein fibres that are strong yet supple. These fibres not only support the cell but they act as railway tracks along which the small organelles inside cells move around. The latest research findings suggest that, in addition, the cell’s skeleton can receive signals from outside the cell and orchestrate changes within the cell in response.

Dr Runions’ research and teaching utilise the most advanced cell imaging techniques to study these processes in living cells. By adding fluorescent proteins to the membrane and cytoskeleton of plant cells, he is able to observe the interaction of elements of the signalling mechanism. During the course of the grant, John’s team will use lasers to ‘activate’ the fluorescent molecules which will then be tracked using motion analysis software. Ultimately, he hopes to build an understanding of the dynamic nature of the signalling system.

More information is available at:
www.brookes.ac.uk/lifesci/runions/HTMLpages/index.html

Advanced Composite Truss Structures (ACTS)

The Joining Technology Research Centre (JTRC) in the School of Technology has recently won government funding worth £1.86m, of which 50% is from the Technology Strategy Board R & D Spring 2007 competition, for work on Advanced Composite Truss Structures (ACTS).

This award follows the highly successful DTI CARAD-funded project on Nodal Optimism of Truss Structures (NOTS), in which

Brookes was a key partner. This made a breakthrough in showing the viability of a fully composite load bearing fabricated 2D truss structure for aerospace structural applications using 3D woven reinforcement. ACTS takes this concept to the next stage, expanding the material options and applications and also the joining technologies for innovative fully composite node elements – key features in progressing a spaceframe technology that is at the leading edge of structural composite innovation.

Through the development of node and joint design, the project aims to develop innovative ultra-lightweight, wholly composite, large high-strength truss and spaceframe structures for military and civil structural applications in land vehicles, aircraft, and rail infrastructure. Strength, stiffness and fatigue performance will be

assessed and validated through modelling, design and manufacture of node/strut components. Structural redundancy and repair issues, critical to civil and military applications, will also be investigated and the most suitable non-destructive testing technique determined.

The applicability of this technology is industry wide. This is self-evident from the consortium members. They include Bentley Motors, Network Rail, Airbus UK, Tony Gee and Partners (specialists in rail infrastructure design), NP Aerospace, PIPEX Structural Composites, Composite Integration, CARR Reinforcements, QINETIQ, and Hexcel (composite supplier).

Contact: Dr James Broughton, Deputy Head of the JTRC

New publications

Atlas of Vernacular Architecture of the World

Dr Paul Oliver, Dr Marcel Vellinga and Alexander Bridge, School of the Built Environment

Publisher: Routledge

ISBN: 9780415411516

This is the first world atlas ever compiled on vernacular architecture and illustrates the variety and ingenuity of the world's vernacular building traditions from a multi-disciplinary, cross-cultural and comparative approach. Sixty-nine world and regional maps show the distribution, diffusion and use of vernacular building forms, technologies, materials and function; mapping that is of vital importance for the responsible use of human and material resources in the development of culturally appropriate housing during the 21st century.

In view of the role that vernacular traditions will have to play in the housing of the rapidly growing world population, the *Atlas of Vernacular Architecture of the World* is a vital resource for all those involved in architectural design and research, development work, disaster and resources management, and education. It will appeal to, amongst others, architects, planners, engineers, anthropologists, historians and art historians, non-governmental organisations such as development agencies, geographers, builders, development workers, policy makers and conservation officers.

Blasphemy in the Christian World: A History

Dr David Nash, School of Arts and Humanities

Publisher: Oxford University Press

ISBN: 9780199255160

This book focuses on the development of blasphemy in the Christian world. Tracing the subject from the Middle Ages to the present, it explores the history of blasphemy as a concept, from a species of heresy to modern understandings of it as a crime against the sacred and individual religious identity. Investigating its appearance in speech, literature, popular publishing, and the cinema it seeks to understand why this seemingly medieval offence has reappeared to become a distinctly modern presence in the West.

Regional Planning: Concepts, Theory and Practice in the UK

Professor John Glasson and Tim Mitchell, School of the Built Environment

Publisher: Routledge

ISBN: 9780415415262

This book provides a comprehensive introduction to the concepts and theory of regional planning in the UK. Drawing on examples from throughout the UK, it provides students and practitioners with a descriptive and analytical foundation for understanding this rapidly changing area of planning.

The Philosophy of Religion: A Critical Introduction

Dr Beverley Clack, Westminster Institute of Education

Publisher: Polity Press

ISBN: 9780745638676

This second edition has been revised and updated to include chapters on religious extremists and changes in the study of the philosophy of religion after 9/11.

Sustainable Brownfield Regeneration: Liveable Places from Problem Spaces

Professor Tim Dixon, School of the Built Environment, Mike Raco, Philip Catney and David Lerner (Editors)

Publisher: Blackwell Publishing

ISBN: 978 1 40 514403 2

This book presents a comprehensive account of UK policies, processes and practices in brownfield regeneration and takes an integrated and theoretically-grounded approach to highlight best practice.

Brownfield regeneration has become a major policy driver in developed countries. It is estimated that there are 64,000 hectares of brownfield land in England, much of which presents severe environmental challenges and lies alongside some of the most deprived communities in the country.

This book has two principal aims. The first is to examine the ways in which science and social science research disciplines can be brought together to help solve important brownfield regeneration issues, with a focus on the UK. The second is to assess the efficiency and effectiveness of different types of regeneration policy and practice, and to show how 'liveable spaces' can be produced from 'problem places'.

Women and Violent Crime in Enlightenment Scotland

Dr Anne-Marie Kilday, School of Arts and Humanities

Publisher: Boydell & Brewer

ISBN: 978 0 86 193287 0

This book offers important new insights into the relationship between crime and gender in Scotland during the Enlightenment period. Against the backdrop of significant legislative changes that fundamentally altered the fact of Scots law, it examines contemporary attitudes towards serious offences against the person committed by women.

New staff

Professor Waltraud Ernst joined the Department of History as Professor in the History of Medicine 1700-2000, from the Division of History in the School of Humanities at Southampton University in December 2007. She specialises on the history of psychiatry and has a particular interest in the development of indigenous and colonial medicine in South Asia. Professor Ernst is currently writing a book on *Madness and Colonialism*, in which she looks at patients' life stories. She has also won a research grant, which will enable her to collaborate with colleagues in Delhi and Mumbai. The team will work on the development of psychiatry and public health in Indian Princely States.

Dr Munira Kadhim was appointed to the post of Reader in Radiation Biology in the School of Life Sciences in October 2007. Dr Kadhim joins us from the MRC Radiation and Genome Stability Unit at Harwell and is an internationally recognised expert in radiation biology. She brings with her three post-doctoral research assistants and a PhD student.

Dr Yüksel Ekinci was appointed as Reader in Marketing and Operations Management in the Business School in January. Prior to starting a career in academia, Yüksel managed his own business and worked for a wide variety of service sector companies including international hotel chains and tour operators. His research covers a wide range of service industries including retail, telecommunications, call centres, hospitality, tourism, banking, insurance and public sector. Yüksel has been involved in managing both private sector consultancy projects and public sector research projects. He is currently a guest editor of a special issue of *Destination Branding for Tourism Analysis* and a member of the editorial review board for a number of journals.

News in brief

Professor Jeya Henry, School of Life Sciences, has been made a member of the General Advisory Committee on Science. The Committee was established in December 2007 to provide independent advice to the government's Food Standards Agency on the robust use of science and scientific evidence to ensure the safety and health of food.

Professor Phil James in the Business School has been appointed as a Specialist Adviser to the Work and Pensions Select Committee for the enquiry it is currently undertaking into the work of the Health and Safety Commission and the Health and Safety Executive. Also, in conjunction with Cardiff University, Professor James was recently awarded £60,000 from the Institution of Occupational Safety and Health to carry out a study of the impact of supply chains on occupational health and safety.

Professor Meryll Dean, School of Social Sciences and Law, has been appointed as an Independent Member of Oxford City Council's Standards Committee.

The Thames Valley Primary Care Research Partnership has awarded **Dr Helen Dawes**, School of Life Sciences, £23,087 to fund a physiotherapy researcher to work on her NHS Long-term Involvement in Fitness Enablement (LIFE) study.

Dr Fionn Stevenson, School of the Built Environment, has won a contract worth £27,500 with the Stewart Milne Group to carry out a post occupancy evaluation on their prototype Sigma Home which is currently being exhibited at the Building Research Establishment Innovation Site exhibition of modern methods of construction. The evidence and data recorded in the evaluation will shape and influence the design of their low-zero carbon homes of the future.

Professor Jo Neale, School of Health and Social Care, has been appointed to the editorial board of *The International Journal of Drug Policy*.

Dr Wenhua Shan, School of Social Sciences and Law, has been elected a Member of the International Academy of Comparative Law. The Academy founded in 1924 in The Hague has become the premier international body in the area of comparative law, and one of the most influential international legal academies in the world. As an individual-member organisation, its members are elected exclusively in consideration of their academic and scholarly contribution to comparative law and come from over 44 countries.

A consortium led by **Dr Rhona Sharpe**, Oxford Centre for Staff and Learning Development (OCSLD) in the Directorate of Human Resources has received £45,000 from the Higher Education Academy (HEA) to create a national special interest group for those involved in investigations and evaluations of learners' experiences of e-learning. The group will support e-learning researchers as they develop their research methodologies, building capacity within the sector as well providing rigorous research to support evidence informed practice. The project will culminate with an e-learning conference in July 2008 where Rhona will be a keynote speaker. Dr Sharpe's team has also received a further £30,000 from the HEA for a landscape study to inform the creation of the Academy's Research Observatory.

Professor Tim Dixon, School of the Built Environment has recently been awarded £49,500 from the Investment Property Databank to study occupier demand for sustainable offices.

Professor David Fell, School of Life Sciences, has been awarded an Agence Nationale de la Recherche (ANR)/Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC) collaborative grant with the University of Bordeaux on "Multi-level modelling of mitochondrial energy metabolism". The value to Brookes is in the region of £240,000. Professor Fell has also been successful in his proposal to the University for funding to establish an interdisciplinary network in Systems Biology.

Dr Luci Wiggs, School of Social Sciences and Law, has secured a research grant of £40,306 from the Department of Health, as part of a collaborative bid with the Royal Liverpool Children's NHS Trust. The research project will look into 'MENDS: The Use of Melatonin in Children with Neuro-Developmental Disorders and Impaired Sleep'.

Professor Scott McDonald in the Business School has been awarded US\$20,000 by the International Labour Office, Geneva, to analyse the impact of trade policy reforms on Brazil. Professor McDonald has also been awarded £23,000 by the Southern African Customs Union for research to analyse the implications of a Free Trade Area and Customs Union in the Southern African Development Community with the University of Botswana, and has received €10,000 for joint research, with the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, Health Protection Agency and University of Antwerp, to evaluate the macroeconomic implications of an influenza pandemic.

Professor Chris Hawes of the Plant Endomembrane Research Group in the School of Life Sciences has been awarded £286,000 from the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC) to continue the group's work on plant Golgi matrix proteins.

Dr Chris McDonough, School of Social Sciences and Law, has been given a recognition award for outstanding contribution to the work of The Centre for Sociology, Anthropology and Politics (C-SAP), part of the Higher Education Academy's National Subject Network. The award was presented at the recent C-SAP conference 'Teaching in Public – The Future of Higher Education?' held in Cardiff.

Diary

April - July 2008

Wednesday 16 April

Public Lecture – Chancellor’s Valedictory Lecture

Main Hall, Headington Campus
6.00pm

To book a place please fill in the booking form at
www.brookes.ac.uk/about/news/public/bookings/

Thursday 17 April

Families and Caring in South Asian Communities

Dr Christina Victor and Dr Wendy Martin, School of Health and Social Care, University of Reading
School of Health and Social Care, Marston Road, Oxford
12.10 – 1.00pm

To book a place please contact jabutler@brookes.ac.uk

Wednesday 23 April

Success in winning external funding from the ESRC (part of the first three years scheme)

Dr Gert Westermann, School of Social Sciences and Law
Room G103, Gibbs Building, Gypsy Lane
12.00 – 1.00pm

To book a place please contact louise.wood@brookes.ac.uk

Thursday 8 May

Older people and homelessness

Dr Maureen Crane, Sheffield University
School of Health and Social Care, Marston Road, Oxford
12.10 – 1.00pm

To book a place please contact jabutler@brookes.ac.uk

Wednesday 21 May

Public Lecture - Supportive cancer care: From discovery to recovery

Professor Eila Watson
Lloyd Lecture Theatre, Headington Campus
6.00pm

To book a place please fill in the booking form at
www.brookes.ac.uk/about/news/public/bookings/

Wednesday 18 June

New Researcher Induction afternoon (part of the first three years scheme)

Professor Diana Woodhouse, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research) and others
Room BG10, Buckley Building, Gypsy Lane
12.30 – 4.00pm, including sandwich lunch

To book a place please contact louise.wood@brookes.ac.uk

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

Details of research supervisor and student training are available on the Graduate Office website:
www.brookes.ac.uk/research/Graduate/Graduate.html

Details of research seminars taking place in each of the Schools are available at: www.brookes.ac.uk/res/news/seminars

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, Gypsy Lane, Oxford, OX3 0BP or by email to researchforum@brookes.ac.uk

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