

# Think Human Festival 2020

## At a glance

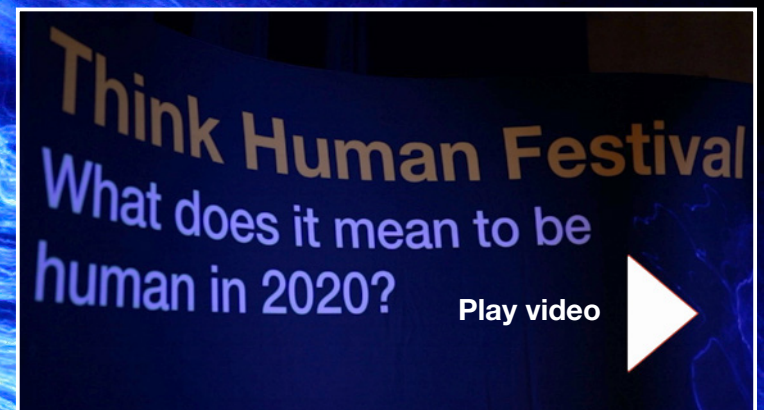
OXFORD  
**BROOKES**  
UNIVERSITY

### What is Think Human Festival?

Think Human Festival showcases research and teaching in the Humanities and Social Sciences at Brookes and demonstrates the relevance of these disciplines to our everyday lives as human beings.

Think Human events are free, open to all and designed to entertain, engage and inspire our diverse communities by communicating our research and teaching through debate, dance, film, theatre, comedy and interactive exhibitions.

Think Human 2020 developed on the success of our 2018 festival and evolved to focus on collaborating across the University to develop and deliver interdisciplinary events. The 2020 festival prioritised performance led events and off campus events held in community venues across the city. The THF2020 programme of 35 events ran across two weeks, delivering a programme for school groups during the second week. Over 2,000 people attended THF2020 events and over 150 secondary school students attended the second week.



**31** Public events

**14** day festival

over  
**2,000**  
attendees - 87%  
were members  
of the public

**1**  
**week**  
of school  
events

more than  
**100,000**  
views on  
facebook



## What our colleagues said

"I had a wonderful time. I loved meeting other people across the campus and bringing the public and Brookes closer together."

"It was wonderful to have a (literal) space in the festival for showcasing new work and ideas"

"it made me want to do more public events and outreach"

"it was a great opportunity to see the contemporary links between my research and current issues"

"I am returning to my current book project with a much clearer understanding of how to approach the difficult issues that both my events dealt with."

## What our students said

"Being a Student Guider for Think Human was a great experience and opportunity, it allowed me to explore my subject area and see the impact it has"

"I really enjoyed this experience. I thought the events programme was varied and all the events I attended were really interesting!"

"I felt super proud to support an amazing department."

## What our audience said

"The Stories of hatred panel discussion was super interesting! Gave me lots of food for thoughts and some books to add to my to-read list."  
(STORIES OF HATRED: HOW WRITERS FIGHT ISLAMOPHOBIA - OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY LIBRARY)

"I felt inspired not to close the door on future educational courses - you gave me the courage to explore this further."  
(THE POWER OF LOVE - HEADINGTON CAMPUS)

"I really enjoyed the play, the fact that this was held in Cowley, and the participation of lots of young mothers."  
(MAKING SENSE OF MOTHERHOOD - ARK T CENTRE)

"Really interesting, the two 3rd year Brookes students were so informed and confident"  
(BULLSHIT POLITICS: WHEN POLITICIANS CAN'T CUT THE CRAP - HEADINGTON CAMPUS)

"Thanks for hiring two of the finest Blues musicians in the country and organising this event! It was fantastic."  
(DISCOVERING THE BLUES: PAUL OLIVER AND THE BLUES - HEADINGTON CAMPUS)



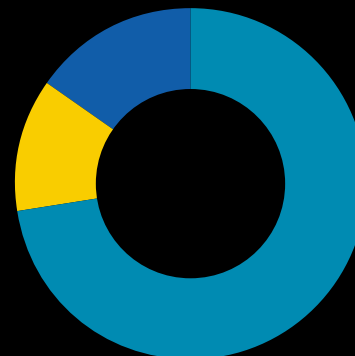
## Public engagement with Think Human events

71% of school students attending Think Human events said their awareness of “what kind of research takes place at a university” had increased and 100% of those attending our “You be the Judge” day said they felt more confident about ‘studying challenging content if I went to university’

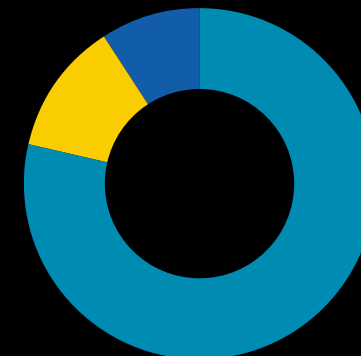
Widening Participation Evaluation Team Report 28/04/2020

## Attitude Change Feedback from our Public Audience

The event changed or challenged my thinking



The event inspired me to find out more



Yes No Not sure







## John Clare: an anniversary celebration with Toby Jones

Registrations for this event celebrating the 200th anniversary of the publication of John Clare's first book reached over 300. A memorable evening of poetry, music and insight into Clare's life and work organised and hosted by Prof Simon Kovesi in collaboration with producer Kate Romano, actor Toby Jones and composer Julian Phillips.

**"It has sent me away to discover more about John Clare - what a reading of that last poem, and what a composition from Julian Phillips! Sublime."**



## Stand Up for Human Suffering: an evening of comedy

The waiting list grew for this sold out night of stand up at East Oxford Community Centre. Jericho Comedy's Alex Farrow compered a line up of amateur and professional stand-ups, including our own Professor Gary Browning, all sharing their own take on human suffering.

**"A wonderful and moving event. Incredible standard of comedy - and all for free. A stellar example of what a university can do when it pushes beyond the walls of the campus."**



## Human Library: enough is enough

Our Humanities & Social Sciences Academics set up shop as human books in a busy Westgate Shopping Centre for the public to "borrow" their expertise and debate the hot topics of the day. Our colleagues rose to the occasion tackling lively, wide-ranging interactions on history, philosophy, politics, the environment, education and children's literature

**"Wonderful concept! Welcoming event. We enjoyed hearing about the representation of fatherhood in children's literature. Really got us thinking"**



## The Melting Arctic: a ghost sonata

We experienced the far North as we'd never known it before through hypnotic songs, soundscapes, movement and interdisciplinary perspectives. Award-winning theatre company Mechanimal and Dr Ingrid Medby devised a fascinating and thought provoking evening for our spellbound audience.

**"I had an amazing time!  
Thank you for this beautiful art!"**



## Dancing Human Rights

Dr. Dana Mills curated an immersive evening of dance and discussion celebrating art's power to challenge social and political turmoil. Our audience enjoyed performances from acclaimed artists Blakely White-McGuire, Body Politic Dance and Elliot Smith followed by a thought provoking Q&A with Dana's panel of dancers and activists.



## The Power of Love/Songs of Love & Loss

For Valentine's Day we didn't shy away from love and sexuality, power, loss, and the history of emotion. With absorbing talks on gaslighting and the sinister side of love, the history of some very disturbing Valentine's cards, and surprising foods associated with love and sexuality. Our evening's entertainment explored how we express love and loss through music with live performances from David Gedge of The Wedding Present, local favourites Candy Says and our very own Think Human House Band, (talented colleagues Dr. Patrick Alexander, Dr. Roger Dalrymple and Professor Paul Whitty). We invited Grammy award winner Andrew Scheps to join our interdisciplinary panel on conveying emotions in songwriting and production.

**"Great music and thought provoking discussion"**



## Discovering the blues: Paul Oliver and the blues

The Oxford Brookes Paul Oliver Archive in collaboration with the European Blues Association provided the basis for a fascinating insight into the influence of Paul Oliver, pioneering researcher and writer on the blues. Our audience enjoyed a selection of photo's, recordings and interviews from the archive and live performances from acclaimed blues musicians Tom Attah and Michael Roach.

**"WOW amazing musicians. Loved the whole event"**



## What's next?

Oxford Brookes Humanities & Social Sciences colleagues are heavily invested in public engagement and ownership of this activity has embedded further through the planning, development and delivery of Think Human 2018 and Think Human 2020.

Discussions with Faculty senior management following THF2020 have helped envision the purpose and remit of Think Human beyond the idea of a biannual programme of events. Think Human is now being thought of as a brand for HSS public engagement carried out in the spirit of building and evolving mutually beneficial relationships with community partners and schools.

This new outlook for Think Human focuses on an ongoing programme of HSS research and teaching based content co-created with local partners and collaborators to better meet the needs of the communities we serve. Future iterations of Think Human Festival will therefore be viewed as a showcase of our Faculty's ongoing public engagement relationships and activities in the community.

**For further information about Think Human: Oxford Brookes Humanities and Social Sciences public engagement contact Laura Baldock [lsbaldock@brookes.ac.uk](mailto:lsbaldock@brookes.ac.uk)**



## Think Human collaborations

Oxford Brookes Humanities & Social Sciences academics, students and professional services staff collaborated with colleagues from Technology Design & Environment, the Business School and a range of external arts and community centres and charities to develop and host public events on and off campus. A full week of our programme was developed for school audiences in partnership with our UK Recruitment & Partnerships Team and Widening Participation Officers.

