



# HumSci News

Keeping Friends of Human Sciences in touch

2019

## Welcome from the Head of the Institute

I am delighted to be able to write the introduction to the 2019 Human Sciences Newsletter. Having read all the entries I am filled with pride at the wonderfully important work being conducted all over the world by our HumSci alumni. If ever a degree needed to be more well-known and better celebrated it is Human Sciences. It is clear from the alumni news contained here that the combination of the biological sciences with the social sciences within our degree has led to our alumni being able to make real contributions in the fields of science, the environment, health, welfare and social policy as well as enjoying rewarding careers in the Arts. I cannot think of another degree that so brilliantly prepares its students for such a wide range of important work. I am also proud of the awards and recognition achieved by members of the HumSci teaching team. We are fortunate in having some inspiring teachers with dedicated commitment to the interdisciplinarity of Human Sciences.

Whilst I will still be teaching, this is my final year of a three year stint as Head of Institute. I leave this role at a time of great change for Human Sciences at Oxford. It looks increasingly likely that Human Sciences will lose its dedicated building at the Pauling Centre in favour of being housed collectively with all the postgraduate courses within SAME in one large building in the science area. There are multiple benefits to this, not least the drawing together under one roof, near the university museums, of the various units within SAME currently scattered in Victorian buildings along the Banbury Road. But there is also a sense of loss among current students and staff alike at having to relinquish the building that has been a very special home to a very special degree for the last forty years. For me there is personal regret because I remember the opening of the Pauling Centre midway through my studies. Having the building made such a difference to our sense of identity and belonging, as well as it being our own dedicated space for lectures and as a meeting point. In addition, I share the view held by some staff and students, that the University should acknowledge and compensate us for the £85,750 donation given expressly for the provision of the Pauling Centre as a centre for Human Sciences. I will be pursuing this in the coming months and would be interested to hear alumni views on both the loss of this donation and the move to locate us physically/geographically within one SAME building.

Looking ahead to 2020 and beyond we are fast approaching our 50 year anniversary as Oxford's only interdisciplinary degree straddling the social and biological sciences. 2020 itself is the 50-year anniversary of the first HumSci matriculated students and this will be celebrated in September during the university's Alumni Weekend. Subsequently, in 2022 we will be holding our official celebrations to mark the 50th anniversary of the first ever Human Sciences graduates. In future Newsletters and alerts we will share with you the events we will be holding to make 2022 a very special year for Human Sciences. Please make a note in your diaries, to be with us if you possibly can, in 2022!

*Dr Amanda Palmer (1983)*

## Congratulations to

**Charlie Foster** who was awarded an OBE in the Queen's 2019 New Year Honours list in recognition of his work to promote physical activity. Dr Charlie Foster is now a Reader in Physical Activity and Public Health at the University of Bristol where he teaches on the MSc in Nutrition, Physical Activity and Public Health Course. He has led scientific reviews to update the current UK physical activity guidelines working with over 50 UK and International academics and practitioners across all age groups. Before moving to Bristol Charlie was the Deputy Director of the Centre on Population Approaches for Non-Communicable Disease Prevention in the Nuffield Department of Population Health and was the convenor of the Human Sciences Health and Disease option between 2011 and 2017. His Labrador, Forest, often accompanied Charlie when he was teaching in the Pauling Centre.

**Andy Gosler**, Vice-Chair of the Institute of Human Sciences, who was made an Honorary Fellow of the American Ornithological Society. Honorary Fellows of the Society are limited to 100. They are chosen for exceptional ornithological eminence and must be residents of a country other than the United States of America or Canada at the time of their election. Andy is Director of Studies for Human Sciences at Mansfield College. He is the convenor of the Ecology part of the Prelims Paper Biology of Organisms including Humans, and the Evolution section of the Prelims Genetics and Evolution paper. He also convenes the Ethnobiology section of the Finals Human Ecology paper and the third year Biological Conservation option. He was Admissions Co-ordinator for Human Sciences in 2018-19. Andy continues to serve as a Curate in the Benefice of Marston with Elsfield as a self-supporting minister and was ordained Priest at St Andrew's Church in Linton Road on 23 June 2019.

**George Hollingbery** who was appointed a Knight Commander of the Order of St Michael and St George (KCMG) in Theresa May's resignation honours on 10 September 2019 for political and public service. He read Human Sciences at Lady Margaret Hall, graduating in 1985. Sir George was elected as Conservative Member of Parliament for Meon Valley in the 2010 general election and was re-elected in the 2015 and 2017 elections. He was Parliamentary Private Secretary to Theresa May between 2012 and 2015 when she was Home Secretary and 2016 and 2018 when she was Prime Minister and he was Minister of State for Trade Policy from 2018-19.

**Ridhi Kashyap** who was the winner of the Allianz European Demographer Award 2019 in the Junior Category where the winner's doctorate must have been completed within the last five years. The award is to promote the most promising talents from the younger generation in demography. Ridhi, who is an Associate Professor of Social Demography and Professorial Fellow of Nuffield College, is the Convenor of the Finals Demography and Population paper and is the co-leader of the Digital and Computational Sciences programme in the new Leverhulme Centre for Demographic Science. She received her degree in social sciences from Harvard University and completed her D.Phil. in the Department of Sociology at Oxford University. Ridhi's research includes the demographic consequences of gender preference in families before and after birth and the resulting differences in the chances of survival between the sexes and many of her previous publications have been described as ground-breaking.

**Fraser MacDonald-Lister** who was highly commended in the 2019 Vice-Chancellor's Social Impact Awards for Campaigns. Fraser, who studied Human Sciences at Keble College, graduating in 2019, is a Movember Ambassador, for the leading charity which raises awareness and funds for men's health issues, including prostate cancer, testicular cancer and suicide prevention.

**Beth Plant** who was the winner of the 2019 Vice-Chancellor's Social Impact Award for Social Enterprise. Beth is a third-year Human Sciences student at Magdalen College and is a social

entrepreneur with United OxMak and SafeBangle. Since starting at Oxford Beth has been dedicated to creating social impact both within Oxford and internationally (specifically in Uganda). She has worked with numerous volunteering groups to achieve this and co-founded a women safety start-up in Uganda, SafeBangle. You can read more about Beth's work with United Oxmak and SafeBangle below.

**Rachel Tanner** who won the 2019 'Women of the Future Award' for Science. The awards, which seek to honour the most talented up-and-coming women in Britain across different industries, were founded in 2006 to provide a platform for the pipeline of female talent in the UK. Rachel is a Lecturer in Human Sciences at Wadham College, and teaches FHS medical genetics and animal behaviour as well as Prelims genetics, evolution and physiology. As the Institute's Access and Outreach Officer she inspires future Human Scientists with talks at open days and other outreach events and was highly commended for her work to ensure greater parity among students at top universities and within STEM fields. Rachel is a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the Jenner Institute (Nuffield Department of Medicine) and was selected for the award on the basis of her significant contribution to the field of tuberculosis vaccine development and her work to reduce the use of animals in medical research.



## United Oxmak and SafeBangle

This year I was honoured to be awarded the Vice Chancellor's Social Impact Award (social enterprise category) for my work with United Oxmak and SafeBangle.

United OxMak is a partnership of students from the University of Oxford and Makerere University in Kampala, Uganda, who work collaboratively to develop projects to help Ugandan communities. This



society allowed me to carry out an internship with United Social Ventures, an incubator for social enterprises based in Kampala, for 10 weeks in the summer of my first year.

During my trip to Uganda, I met 3 Ugandan nationals who were passionate about the problem of gender-based violence, and with help from United Social Ventures we set up a non-profit manufacturing a new innovative rape alarm.

There are many killings and kidnappings of women in Uganda however the cases are often dismissed due to lack of evidence or timely reporting. Fear surrounding rape and gender-based attacks is so high that 80% of female students we interviewed at Makerere University stated they were scared to walk alone through campus at night and try to avoid it despite the fact some mandatory classes are held in the evenings. We wanted to use technology to overcome this and prevent the suffering of women. Our Product SafeBangle is a fashionable bracelet which when pressed creates a loud alarm

and messages 6 pre-programmed emergency contacts with an automated message containing the individual's GPS location.

Working on this project for the last year has been incredible, especially pitching to UN women and managing to secure up to 5 years of funding for this cause by which point we should be self-sufficient. The main reason for SafeBangle's success is my team of co-founders, Saul Kabali, Messach Luminsa and Ambrose Kanya. After my 10 weeks in Uganda, I came back to the UK and worked on the project remotely whilst completing my second year, obviously, this meant I could only do so much. It is thanks to the team who work daily in Uganda that this project has taken off so well.

*Beth Plant (Magdalen College, third year Human Sciences student)*

## **The Human Sciences Year in Review**

The Human Sciences Society organised another very successful careers event in Hilary Term 2019. Speakers included Philippa Baines, Copywriter at Gravity Road; Julia Koskella, Associate at SYSEMQL; Dom McDonald, Head of Education at the Royal Institution; Joanna Romanowicz, International Programme Manager at the National Union of Students (UK), and Rebecca Sutton, Oxfam Ebola Campaigns Manager, West Africa. Thanks are due to Luke Stalley, Tatjana Marks and other members of the Human Sciences Society, our alumni speakers and Harris Manchester College for enabling the event to happen. It is hoped to organise another careers event in Trinity Term 2020 as this provides an excellent opportunity for current students to meet with alumni and to find out about the multifarious and exciting career paths open to them. If you would be willing to take part in a future careers event, please contact [sarah-jane.white@ihs.ox.ac.uk](mailto:sarah-jane.white@ihs.ox.ac.uk)

Later in Hilary Term the students also organised a Symposium on the theme of 'Consciousness' which proved a popular topic and drew a large audience of students from Human Sciences and other disciplines as well as alumni and tutors to hear speakers ranging from Daniel Bor, Neuroscientist from the University of Cambridge to David Luke, Psychologist from the University of Greenwich and from Philip Goff, Philosopher from Durham University to Simon Stringer, Psychologist here at Oxford. We are very grateful to Phoebe Whitehead and other members of the Human Sciences Society for their work in organising the Symposium and to Magdalen College for its generous support of the event.

This year our UNIQ Summer School was expanded to take 24 students who were able to gain a taster of the course in a packed week which included lectures and workshops on animal behaviour, cognitive evolution, ethnobiology and biological conservation, human ecology, human evolution, neuroscience, social anthropology, sociology, statistics, and sustainability as well as trips to many of the university's museums. It is wonderful that so many of our academics are willing to give their time to make this week possible and it has been good to see a number of students who have taken part in UNIQ summer schools go on to become successful applicants.

The Institute took part in the alumni weekend again in September when we were delighted to welcome back one of our alumni, Katrina Lythgoe. Katrina, who is now a research group leader and Sir Henry Dale Fellow at the Big Data Institute, gave a fascinating talk about 'The War on Viruses: From Molecules to Pandemics'. It was great that many of our alumni attended the talks as well as alumni from other disciplines.

## **Human Sciences Symposium 2020 – Bedtime Stories: Dreaming and Sleeping**

Bedtime Stories: Dreaming and Sleeping promises to be an exciting and informative symposium. With world leading experts on sleeping and dreaming offering interdisciplinary insight, the symposium will draw together different aspects of human sciences as we ponder the perplexing realm of sleep. The Symposium is taking place on Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> February from 2pm – 5.30pm in Magdalen Auditorium (entrance in Longwall Street). The speakers are:

- Nicola Barclay, Departmental Lecturer in Sleep Medicine in the Nuffield Department of Clinical Neurosciences here at Oxford
- Nigel Hamilton, Director of the Dream Research Institute
- Charlie Morley, author and teacher of lucid dreaming
- Kirsten Russell, School of Psychological Sciences and Health, University of Strathclyde

Information about the Symposium can be found at

<https://www.facebook.com/events/189215178804617/> and you can register at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/bedtime-stories-dreaming-and-sleeping-hs-symposium-2020-tickets-92547015615>

## **Meeting Minds Alumni Weekend 2020**

### **Interdisciplinarity: a necessary approach to 21st century challenges? A Human Sciences perspective.**

Human Sciences is the undergraduate degree for interdisciplinarity. On the afternoon of Friday 11<sup>th</sup> September, during this year's alumni weekend, we want to celebrate 50 years of this unique degree and think about how we take Human Sciences teaching, learning and research forward to tackle the major problems of this century. Please put the date in your diary and join the discussion led by our alumni:

*Dougal Jeffries*, a retired GP who was one of first cohort of student to take the full degree and will be able to reflect on the early days of the course.

*Hannah Bradby*, Professor of Sociology at Uppsala University, field chief editor for Frontiers in Sociology and contributing editor at the Cost of Living Blog whose research focuses on health, illness, migration and ethnicity and who will consider writing and researching across disciplinary divides.

*Cathy Rogers* who has worked as a musician, television executive, producer and presenter, as well as running an olive farm before undertaking a doctorate in educational neuroscience.

*Rachel Stancliffe*, director of the Centre for sustainable Healthcare which she founded after taking Masters in Demography and Epidemiology and working in public health in the UK, Georgia and Kazakhstan.

Do you have an interdisciplinary success story you'd like to share? We'd love to hear from you.

## 2019 Prizes

### The Bob Hiorns Prize

This year's Bob Hiorns Prize was awarded to Cecilia Høgfeldt (The Queen's College) for the best performance in the Final Honour School of Human Sciences. Cecilia writes:

"I'm indescribably grateful to have been awarded the Bob Hiorns memorial Prize. The last years doing Human Sciences have been some of the most exciting, rewarding, and stimulating years of my life and I can only thank the extraordinary tutors, the Human Sciences staff, and students I have met over the last years. I started out doing Experimental Psychology for a year, yet, as soon as I met HumSci students and attended a few HumSci lectures, I realised that I was enrolled in the wrong course. In my experience, Human Sciences is everything that other courses at Oxford are not; it is inclusive, holistic, thought-provoking, and it stimulates independent, interdisciplinary and innovative thinking in a manner I have not experienced elsewhere at Oxford. The department is small and inclusive and creates a strong sense of community which made a significant contribution to my experience at Oxford. I'm immensely grateful I got the opportunity to do Human Sciences and for all the wonderful people I have met. I'm excited to come back to events in the future and see all the interesting and impactful paths everyone will take from here!"

### The Wilma Crowther Prize

The 2019 Wilma Crowther Prize was awarded to Nicole Gray (St John's College) for her dissertation on "Missing men: Assessing the influence of evolutionary and socioeconomic factors on the sex ratio at birth in African [origin] populations."

### Gibbs Prizes

This year's main Gibbs Prize was awarded to:

Tom Clark (St Catherine's)

And Gibbs book prizes were awarded to:

Zachary Lim (St Catherine's)

Natalie Montegriffo (St Benet's)

Barney Johnson (Hertford)

Aura Schonfield (St John's)

### Toss it? No way!

This is the strapline of the *Repair Café International* organisation and it sums up the basic ethos of a growing movement that's gathering pace around the world.

Toaster stopped working and can't see what the problem is because it needs special tools? TV sound needs to be turned up high – well, a bigger screen is what everyone else is getting so why not just buy one yourself? Split seam or buttons fallen off a perfectly good dress and no idea how to fix the problem so it goes in the bin or is donated to a charity shop for someone else to sort out. Laptop getting slower but maybe that's just age and they're not expected to last so long anyway so better

get a more up-to-date model. These are just some of the frustrations and factors of life that are part of living in the developed world in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. You buy something for a particular purpose and before too long it no longer fits that purpose. And the usual answer nowadays is – go out and buy something new. Some of this is to do with cost (toasters can be relatively cheap); some is built in obsolescence – it's become accepted that most electric items will probably need to be replaced every 2-3 years anyway. Other reasons include the fast pace of trends and fashion – it's no longer acceptable to wear the same clothes for more than one day at a time.

Some people though, like me, may be able to remember a time when repair shops were quite easy to find and you could get your TV and video recorder fixed fairly cheaply. Or they learnt to sew when they were younger and can do their own clothing repairs. There also seemed to be enough spare time to fit in all these fixing jobs, maybe partly because we had fewer possessions and so



fewer things likely to need fixing.

Nowadays, repairers can be hard to find and it can be costly – only to be told that the part isn't available or too expensive to make the repair worthwhile. The rapid pace of technological change can be bewildering. Many people therefore choose to buy something new with a guarantee, even if it's more expensive. A repair is seen as a cost with no

guarantee and usually means having to manage without the defective item whilst it's being fixed. Fashions change so quickly and cheap clothes abound, making it hardly worth the time to carry out a repair anyway.

*Repair Café Foundation* (<https://repaircafe.org/en/>) provides an alternative to this way of thinking. The movement started ten years ago when Martine Postma in the Netherlands held a community repair event and the idea quickly spread. Events offer free meeting places and the idea is that people repair things together. Visitors bring their broken items from home and, with assistance from volunteer fixers, they work out what the problem is and whether or not it can be fixed. Items range from bicycles, furniture and electrical appliances to clothes, crockery, toys, etc. Some repairs are simple, some much harder and sometimes simply not possible or worthwhile. But, hopefully, people are picking up some simple skills along the way. And as it's a community event, you can usually enjoy a cup of tea or coffee and a chance to socialise with others at the same time.

Why am I telling you this? Well, when I took the offer of redundancy from my job as a social researcher working for DWP, one of the things I did was to get involved with my local *Transition Chesterfield* group. Initially<sup>1</sup>, I just helped out at events that interested me and got involved in one or two campaigns, as I was still doing some part-time work. However, a couple of years ago, the person who had started out local repair cafes wanted to move on to other projects and I offered to

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<sup>1</sup> The Transition movement has been running for over 10 years and is to do with local communities coming together to reimagine and rebuild a more sustainable world.

take over. At that point we were offered a regular venue at a new community centre that was opening up and had obtained funding to support us.

We were only a small group to start with using a small space that had been cleared and we only held events every other month. However, over time we have grown. New fixers have come along – some are even people who brought in something for repair and then joined to help out. The space available to us has gradually increased and we have outgrown it; last month we moved to new premises with better access and facilities to offer refreshments. We now open monthly and are busier than ever. We have welcomed people from other towns who have come to see how we work and have then gone on to open up their own Repair Cafes or found others closer to home and joined them. And what was a small part of my life is gradually becoming more like a full-time job!

Our local MP, Toby Perkins, visited a few months ago and Derbyshire County Council will next month be promoting the County's growing network of Repair Cafes in their household magazine. On top of that, I have had the dubious pleasure of appearing briefly on TV.



*Photo credit: Mark A. Phillips*

Why am I doing this? All sorts of reasons. When I first applied to study Human Sciences, one of my motivations was concern about the growing mountain of waste and the idea of the Earth's finite resources. I had picked up the book 'Only One Earth' by Barbara Ward and Rene Dubos almost by accident whilst studying for my mostly mathematical A levels. It's been something of a puzzle to me that this problem seems to have accentuated over the years rather than coming closer to resolution. Obviously, the small amount of repairs we achieve in each Repair Café won't do much more than make a small dent in the landfill problem of our country (and others). But we can begin to show people why there's a problem and start a discussion on how this situation has arisen and what might be done about it. And, by making it a Repair **Café**, rather than a Repair **Service**, we can also provide a means of bringing people together.

I won't pretend it's easy. I hadn't realised when I started how hard it would be to manage volunteers – quite different from working with paid employees. Volunteers can commit quite irregularly and will often have their own ideas which they try to enforce and it can be hard to deal with this. They also have to be skilled in interacting with visitors about their repairs, not just good at doing the repairs. I also hadn't realised that my main problem would be finding storage for the various tools and spares that we need so that the fixers don't have to wear out their own tools and maybe lose them. Nor had I worked out how much time would need to be given to publicity and other small jobs outside the events.

However, last year I attended a meeting of like-minded activists in Manchester run by a parallel organisation based in the UK: the *Restart Project* ([www.restarters.net](http://www.restarters.net)). This group specialises in electronic and electrical repairs as they feel that, although the idea of 'repair' in general is gaining credibility again, we seem to have a bit of a blind spot with regard to electronic products. With these, for some reason, we think that the latest products have to be best and upgrades, new models etc encourage this thinking. But much of the environmental impact of these products is concentrated during the development and construction phase so it makes sense to get the best value of these wherever possible.



At the *Fixfest*, as it was called, I wasn't a fish out of water as I'd expected. I got a surprise – the demographic was not mainly older and male – quite the contrary, a sign I saw as encouraging. One of the things that came out of that event was what became known as The Manchester Declaration: Right to Repair. <https://manchesterdeclaration.org/> Many groups have signed up to this and the campaign has since been taken to a European level. Initial hopes that something new might be on the horizon have been somewhat dashed as manufacturers lobbied hard against these changes, but there have been some gains. Manufacturers now have to ensure that appliances can be easily disassembled and key components replaced with readily available tools. They are required to provide spare parts when key components fail and also repair manuals (although these will only be made available to professional repairers). Spare parts should also be available for a number of years after the last unit of a model is sold – something that can be a frustration with current repairs. ([www.therestartproject.org/news/massive-right-to-repair-precedent/](http://www.therestartproject.org/news/massive-right-to-repair-precedent/) )

What happens on the above post-Brexit is uncertain but there is nothing to stop the UK aligning with European standards or even exceeding them. The more I get involved in this area, the more I see that there are so many issues to consider. Some academics have argued that repair may not always be the answer and sometimes recycling might be more appropriate. It has also been pointed out that the repair movement does not always appreciate the legal issues that may arise when people undertake their own repairs. (Svensson et al: The Emerging 'Right to Repair' Legislation in the EU and the U.S., paper given at CARE Innovation Conference, 2018). We also need to ensure that we don't alienate existing commercial repairers with what we do; they have to be part of the movement for change. I would like to see the small number of events we have been able to manage in Chesterfield being extended to something more permanent but that needs more time and more support than I currently have. However, I'd like to think it's not impossible.

If you'd like to get in touch to discuss further, contact me at: [repairs@transitionchesterfield.org](mailto:repairs@transitionchesterfield.org)

*Margaret Hersee (Lady Margaret Hall)*

## ***Darwin's Psychology aka Human Sciences***

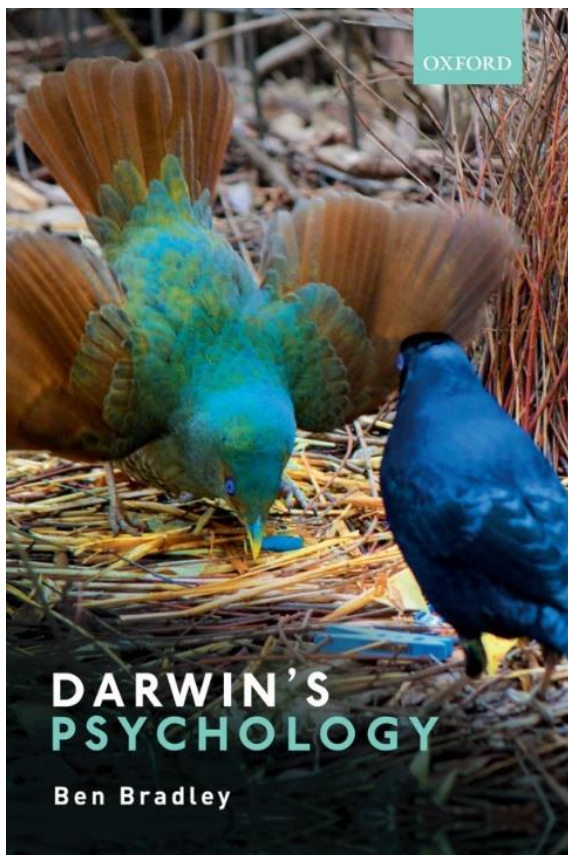
One shift in the Human Sciences since my time is the proliferation of evolution-related courses. The degree attracted me because Niko Tinbergen taught on it – undergraduate ethology being almost impossible to find at British universities in 1970. Lucky bonus: I got a term of lectures from Richard Dawkins, who, deep in composing *The Selfish Gene*, unveiled to us his now-famous DNA-driven vision of nature. He owed this to Dobzhansky's and Huxley's 'Modern Synthesis' in evolutionary biology, which casts organisms as passive shuttlecocks in the red-clawed fight between genes and environment.

Another shift in today's degree is the loss of any named course in psychology – which I find less surprising. HumSci always offered an alternative to straight psychology degrees, prioritising as it did: inclusive intellectual breadth over disciplinary straitening; methodological diversity over an idealised experimentalism; and, most important, the need for rich *in vivo* description – ethological, ethnographic – to ground any study of the human.

So when in 2012, I was contracted to write the first-ever book examining Darwin's writings on psychological topics, imagine my pleasure at unearthing a fellow Human Scientist! Demography, ethnology, the study of inheritance, animal behaviour, social institutions, and geography – plus philosophy, poetics, geology, taxonomy, and botany – all figure large in Darwin's books. And evolution of course. But, unlike Modern Synthesisers, Darwin called natural and sexual selection

laws not ‘mechanisms’ – ‘sequences of events as ascertained by us’ – akin, *Origin* tells us, to the law of gravity. Just as physicists (still) disagree about how gravity works, so *how* natural selection works required further debate. Darwin hypothesised two contributory processes: inheritance; and the metaphorical ‘struggle for existence’ – a metaphor that embraced, alongside competition, collaboration between and within species, so producing sociality and myriad inter-specific co-adaptations, as celebrated in his book on orchids and insects.

Darwin underlined that ‘inheritance’ means not just *transmission* (of his ‘gemmules’; our ‘genes’) but *development*: the genesis of anything and everything of which an organism grows capable –



including its actions. His sense of *agency*, the key to Darwin’s understanding of the economy of nature (‘ecosystem’), was nipped out in his studies of purposive movement in climbing and insectivorous plants, and of intelligent problem-solving in worms.

Any organism’s actions cause reactions, and so bind it into increasingly intricate webs of interdependency, organic and inorganic, interspecific and conspecific. Variation gets produced via the reproduction, development, and purposive habit-formation of entangled organisms participating in a given habitat – ‘the struggle for life.’ Simultaneously, interdependencies *between* conspecifics, other organisms, and the inanimate parts of a habitat, winnow better-fitted variants from less. So, evolution by natural selection—and by sexual selection—result from the complex theatre of agency which constitutes the natural world, not *vice versa*.

All of which would solely be of historical interest, did not all the above points loom large in current critiques of the Modern Synthesis by biologists.

Most notably, Mary Jane West-Eberhard’s *Developmental Plasticity and Evolution* (2003) unearths a Darwin bypassed by twentieth-century scientists, who cast the ‘mechanism’ of natural selection as his only significant idea. Today’s biology is rediscovering Darwin’s outlook: phenotypic agency—including culture—leads the evolutionary charge, and genes follow.

Agentic interdependency proves central to Darwin’s take on humans. The significance of any facial expression, for example, did not stem from an inner ping-pong of emotional states in the expresser, but from its recognition as meaningful *by others*. In blushing, this process rebounded: I blush because of the way I imagine you to be judging my appearance or actions. Lust worked likewise: both peacocks’ fanned tails and ‘savages’ flashy ornaments were fashioned to hook the desires of desirable others. Developed fully, this mirror-dynamic became Darwin’s theory of conscience, where approbation and disapprobation by group-members, however toxic or arbitrary, cemented the social coherence from which evolved humanity and its cultures.

*Ben Bradley (St. Catz, 1971-1974) is Emeritus Professor of Psychology at Charles Sturt University (Australia). His book Darwin’s Psychology: The Theatre of Agency (Oxford University Press) will be published in April 2020.*

## Oxford-Berlin Open Research summer school

Is there a reproducibility crisis in the biomedical sciences? If so, what can early-career researchers do about it? This was the theme of the second edition of the Oxford-Berlin Summer School on Open Research. For five days in September sixty PhD students and postdocs from Oxford, Berlin and other universities came together at Green Templeton College and the Weston Library to attend lectures and interactive workshops on how to incorporate open and reproducible research practices in their own projects. The summer school was co-organised by Reproducible Research Oxford (RROx, <http://ox.ukrn.org/>) and the QUEST Center at the Berlin Institute of Health (<https://www.bihealth.org/en/research/quest-center/mission-approaches/>) with generous support from the Oxford-Berlin Research Partnership and the Bodleian Libraries. The aim was to promote skills training in areas that are not routinely covered in undergraduate or graduate curricula.



The ten lectures and twenty workshops focused on different aspects of open and reproducible research across the cycle of a research project. Participants could pick from a range of workshops, covering topics such as the importance of systematic literature reviews when developing hypotheses, avoiding biases and confounding in study design,

introductory courses in Python and R to produce reproducible workflows for data analysis, and publishing research outputs such as data and materials. Many participants said afterwards that it was extremely difficult to only choose one workshop for each day because they would have wanted to attend all of them. Highlights of the week were the keynote lecture on “Data liberation” given by Professor Denise Lievesley, Principal of Green Templeton College, and informal discussions among early-career researchers on advantages of, and barriers to, working more openly within the current incentive structures.

The event was very successful in delivering training for participants and it brought together a large number of lecturers and tutors from Berlin and several departments in Oxford, from the Medical Sciences Division (Experimental Psychology, NDPH, Biomedical Services, NDORMS, NDS, PHC, Psychiatry), Social Sciences (Anthropology and Museum Ethnography, Social Policy and Intervention), MPLS (Physics, Engineering Science), IT Services and the Bodleian Libraries. Reproducible Research Oxford will continue to harness the expertise and energy of everyone involved in the summer school and plan to deliver more training to Oxford-based early-career researchers in the future. If you would like to hear more about their work, have a look at their website, follow them on Twitter (@RR\_Oxford), or contact Verena Heise on [verena.heise@ndph.ox.ac.uk](mailto:verena.heise@ndph.ox.ac.uk).

## “Untagged” – an exploration of migration, culture and identity through Kathak dance

I am a chartered accountant (ACA), leading a finance team at Byrne Dean, a company that supports corporates in creating kinder, fairer, more productive workplaces. I am also pursuing a career in Indian classical dance and am excited to be returning to Oxford for a one-off performance of my new solo dance show – UNTAGGED at the OFS Theatre on Thursday 27 February 2020.



Photo credit: Matthew Cawrey

'Untagged' explores issues of migration, culture and identity through the medium of dance. More specifically, it questions notions of binary identity encouraging us to break away from 'labels' that society, and we ourselves, attach.

The show features me performing a triple bill of solo Indian classical (Kathak) and contemporary dance, alongside spoken word poetry and specially created music scores.

This is my second show at the OFS – I premiered a previous production 'Eleven, Twelve, Thirteen' at the 2019 Offbeat Festival along with my husband, poet and fellow Oxford University

alumnus, Avi Tillu (Mathematics, Magdalen College 2007 – 2010).

Tickets are £12 and can be booked via the OFS website [www.oldfirestation.org.uk](http://www.oldfirestation.org.uk). For more information on my dance work with Sona Lisa Dance Company, visit [www.sonalisa.co.uk](http://www.sonalisa.co.uk)



Photo credit: Simon Richardson

**Sonia Chandaria Tillu**  
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## Graduate News

### 1972

**Patrick Shea** (New College) taught at Stanford University last Winter Quarter (January – April 2019) a course on Public Lands and Their Management. He has been invited back for this Winter Quarter to teach two classes, one on Public Lands and their Management, and the second, on Wildland Fires. Students are delighted. His teaching has the strong memory of Geoffrey Harrison, Richard Dawkins, Niko Tinbergen and Professor Halsey, how they taught and moved young minds. Patrick continues to teach biology at the University of Utah and with a USAID program in Pakistan. Human Sciences was a critical intellectual building stone. He would be happy to discuss with any students how Human Sciences opens many doors of employment opportunities. Human Sciences allowed him to be a lawyer, a biology Professor and director of the US Bureau of Land Management, the world's largest land manager.

### 1974

**Geza Tatrallyay** (St Catherine's) has had his third collection of poems, *Extinction*, published in April 2019. Many of the poems show his concern with what we are doing to the world around us, to other species and to ourselves, while still others simply celebrate nature and life. His third memoir, *The Fencers*, was published the previous month and this is the story of a Romanian-

Hungarian fencer Geza helped defect to Canada at the 1976 Montreal Olympic Games. The book also chronicles Geza's fencing career including during his years at Oxford when he started fencing internationally for Canada and ending with the excitement of the Olympics. This year also saw the publication of his fifth thriller, *Rainbow Vintner*, which he wrote largely while living in Bordeaux and which is the story of an American exchange student who gets involved in figuring out whether a series of bombings that kill many members of a leftist French government are being carried out by jihadist terrorists or far-right extremists. All Geza's books are available on Amazon and other online retailers as well as in selective bookstores, or by following the links on his [website](#).

## 1978

**Michael Spiers** (St Catherine's) has been working in the evaluation and research unit at the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Copenhagen since 2016. His responsibilities include managing evaluations of development assistance programmes and organising the selection and quality assurance of research projects involving Danish and international teams at a wide range of academic institutions. Topics and programmes evaluated include farmer field schools (training) in Bangladesh, water supply, sanitation and environmental management schemes in Uganda and support for regional African peace organisations and initiatives. Various themes are dealt with in research funded through the Ministry, ranging from renewable energy and water resource management in South Africa to forest management and occupational health and safety in Myanmar. In his spare time Michael is a blogger. He uses fairly amateurish layout techniques with text and pictures to cover all kinds of subjects, including development issues, places he has visited, books read and films he has seen, etc. etc. Just for fun: <https://mikescaravan.wordpress.com>

## 1984

**Belinda Stewart-Cox** (Lady Margaret Hall) was the part-time Acting Head of Conservation for Elephant Family from January 2018 to July 2019, during which time she launched two reports on the hideous new trade in Asian elephant skin, being sold in markets and online to Chinese speakers, primarily for stomach ailments. Elephant Family now has a new Head of Conservation so Belinda can revert to being a working Conservation Trustee, keeping busy with drafting funding proposals, editing reports and contributing to strategic planning.

## 2003

**Anna Bryden**, nee Carpenter (Magdalen) has worked in Public Health since graduating. She has recently become the Director of Public Health in the London Borough of Ealing, which is her local council. Anna is currently on maternity leave but would be happy to be contacted if anyone is interested in Public Health careers.

## 2012

**Caroline Parker** (St John's) began a Presidential Fellowship in Medical Anthropology at Manchester University in September 2019. Her work combines approaches in cultural and medical anthropology and public health with a geographical focus on the Caribbean and the urban United States. Her anthropological work engages questions of social suffering, poverty and inequality; addiction therapeutics, labour, and the carceral state, and liberalism, boredom and temporality. Her work has been published in *Culture, Medicine and Psychiatry*, *Medical Anthropology Quarterly*, *Culture, Health and Sexuality*, and the *New England Journal of Medicine*. Her first book project, *Labor of Recovery: Superfluity and Livelihood in Puerto Rican Addiction Shelters*, examines the use of unpaid labour as a treatment for drug addiction in Puerto Rican addiction shelters. Through ethnographic research

conducted among Puerto Rican therapeutic communities, this project explores addiction shelters' moral orientation to work, with a view to better understanding what an imperative to "work" might mean in places where there is not enough work. She has also published widely on HIV/AIDS, sexuality and gender, and most recently about the lessons we can learn from the AIDS epidemic to inform the US opioid response. Caroline's research has been funded by the US National Science Foundation, the US National Institutes of Health, the US National Institute of Drug Abuse, the Social Science Research Council, as well as the Biosocial Society and the Institute of Latin American Studies at Columbia University.

## 2014

**Suriyah Bi** (Magdalen) went on to study for an MA at SOAS and then a PhD at UCL in Human Geography, after completing her undergraduate degree. For the last year of her PhD, she was a



research fellow at Yale under Professor Marcia Inhorn's supervision at the Anthropology & Macmillan Centre. Suriyah also worked as a parliamentary researcher for APPG British Muslims, and set up the equality act review campaign which is supported by senior labour parliamentarians. She is happy for any HumScis to get in touch with her regarding academic careers advice and/or policy jobs advice. Suriyah organised a reunion of HumScis in her year, including:

**Rachel Cain** (Mansfield) worked for her local MP in Liverpool, after graduating, setting up an Oxbridge access project with local schools, before going on to work on research, policy and campaigns for the charity Directory of Social Change. Subsequently, she led the Sheila McKechnie Foundation's Social Change Project, culminating in the [Social Power report](#), which explores how to campaign for social change effectively. She currently works on public affairs at Lloyds Bank Foundation, supporting small charities and influencing policy on topics such as welfare, criminal justice and domestic abuse. Last year, she was also part of the [Fabian Women's Network Mentoring Scheme](#), which supports women into politics and public life.

**Hettie Davies** (Hertford) went on to train to be a child protection social worker under the 'Frontline' scheme. She has worked for four years as a social worker in various children and family services, and found the role to be highly stimulating, fulfilling and challenging (in all the right ways!). Through her social work career she also undertook a research Masters degree exploring and suggesting improvements in how the state responds to families affected by domestic abuse. She has now started graduate-entry medical school back at Oxford to extend her passion for working in this area through a new angle. She is very passionate about how social work and medicine are practical and hands-on manifestations of all the best bits of Human Sciences and would very happily talk to any students or alumni interested in these areas.

**Carys Williams** (St Hugh's) followed her undergraduate degree with an MSc in Applied Animal Behaviour and Animal Welfare at The Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies in Edinburgh. After spending some time working in market research, Carys moved on to zoo welfare projects in collaboration with ZSL London Zoo and University of Milan Veterinary School. Carys now works for Dogs Trust, the UK's largest dog welfare charity, as a Canine Behaviour Research Officer. Carys would

love to talk to any HumScis interested in animal sciences, human behaviour change, or the charity sector if they are looking for advice.

**Elizabeth Wilkins** (St Catherine's) who after graduating from Human Sciences went on to work as a researcher in non-communicable disease prevention at the University of Oxford. She then completed a MSc in Population & International Development at the LSE before moving to New York to work for the United Nations Population Fund. In this role, she supports Member States facing population ageing and low birth rates develop evidence-based and rights-based population policies.

And

**Vicky Clayton** (graduated in 2015 from New College) didn't do the statistics module whilst studying Human Sciences but has ended up doing lots of statistics! She now leads on data science projects at What Works for Children's Social Care to better understand and predict outcomes for children involved in social care. She loves using data and evidence to help people make better decisions, in particular to improve policy and how government runs public services. Her route to data science is a bit of a circuitous one. She co-founded a youth charity whilst at Oxford and got very interested in understanding how you know when particularly new initiatives are having an impact. From there, she specialised in impact evaluation. She was attracted to data science because of it allowing her to support more individualised, real-time decisions. She has an MSc in Human Decision Science from the University of Maastricht, and also spent time in San Francisco learning the ropes of data science. Vicky is very happy for HumScis to get in touch re masters abroad and technical jobs.

## 2015

**Rosa Cheesman** (St John's) is finishing her PhD in Psychiatric Genetics at King's College London. This year she appeared in a BBC 1 documentary about anxiety disorders, talking to celebrity chef Nadiya Hussain about how genes and environments influence anxiety. Rosa would be happy to be contacted by anyone interested in doing a PhD, especially.

## 2016

**Ragib Chowdhury** (St Hugh's) moved back to London after graduating and flitted between jobs/internships in marketing, education, and human rights before applying for the Fast Stream, the Civil Service graduate programme. He didn't get it, but was offered a job in an off-shoot of the FS called the Direct Appointment Scheme, which is basically a full-time role in a random government department. He ended up being placed on multilateral trade policy at the Department for International Trade, and has been there for over a year. His job is about making preparations for the UK's independent membership of the World Trade Organization after Brexit. It involves drafting briefings/submissions for senior officials & Ministers, occasional trips to the WTO in Geneva, and endless Whitehall meetings. Ragib says that studying different topics and writing all those essays at university has definitely helped him in this role, as you're writing a lot and expected to understand complex policy areas. A nice moment was briefing former Minister for Trade Policy George Hollingbery MP, also a former Human Scientist. Ragib's team is preparing for Free Trade Agreement negotiations with the US, Australia, New Zealand, and Japan, though he prefers the multilateral stuff. The role starts at £30k, hours are 9-5pm, and flexible working is encouraged. The team has its issues, but the work is engaging, his colleagues are great, and manager is very supportive, so he is pretty happy.

**Misbah Husain** (St Hugh's) now works in TV advertising. She is a Global Account Manager at advertising agency Adam&EveDDB managing Unilever's 'brands with a purpose'.

## 2017

**Sally Hayward** (St John's) has recently started a PhD on the relationship between psychosocial stress, immune function, and tuberculosis risk among migrants, based at St George's University of London and the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. She would be happy to talk to any HumScis interested in pursuing research in public health/epidemiology.

**Sonia Zhang** (St John's) is in the second year of the MA Anthropology programme at the New School for Social Research in New York. Her current research project studies the relationship between affects and technology, more specifically the ways in which engineers in Japan create social robots to address nation-wide concerns on loneliness and isolation. Before enrolling at the New School, Sonia worked with NGOs in China to research rural development and education.

## 2018

**Maurice Lange** (Wadham) spent 6 months of 2019 working as a volunteer researcher in Kolkata, India, leading a comprehensive study of poverty in the city's non-registered slums. He liaised with UK academics throughout the project and is set to be published in the Journal of Poverty and Social Justice in 2020. The organisation he worked for, Calcutta Rescue, is looking for more budding researchers to build on this work to further the NGO's evidence base, and to improve their project evaluation, using both quantitative and qualitative research methods. You can find out more information about the NGO generally by visiting their website: [www.calcuttarescue.org/](http://www.calcuttarescue.org/) Maurice is now guiding the NGO's research projects from the UK, and is leading recruitment of international researchers. For any more info about what he got up to and about the range of projects prospective researchers could take on, do get in touch with him at: [mauricelange@outlook.com](mailto:mauricelange@outlook.com)

## 2019

**Fraser MacDonald-Lister** has been working as a Human Capital consultant for Deloitte in London. His work sits at the boundary between programme leadership and change management; this means he supports a project manager as they take a human-centric approach to helping businesses through big changes.

## Keeping in touch

### Human Sciences E-mail list

If you don't currently receive our newsletter by e-mail and would like to do so and be added to the Human Sciences e-mail list to receive updates on Human Sciences events, please contact [sarah-jane.white@ihs.ox.ac.uk](mailto:sarah-jane.white@ihs.ox.ac.uk)

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The Human Sciences Society has a group on Facebook which can be found at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/93254436688/>

### **Human Sciences Linked-In Group**



You can join the LinkedIn Group for Human Scientists at <https://www.linkedin.com/groups/8607787/>

We are happy for HumScis to post career opportunities (job adverts and details of post-graduate courses) here.